

Gen'ii

Gen'ii History

The Gen'ii are a deer-satyr people that hail from the Fendenglade. In times past, they called the rolling grasslands and dense forests of Southern Grendon home and lived bacchanalian and somewhat carefree lives. However, the expansion of Grendon under King Grend hundreds of years ago forced them to abandon their lands and take refuge in the Fendenglade itself. From then on the Gen'ii reckoned their years in terms of when they were exiled, which happened in -352 AoC. This was year 1 of the Niythe, or Exile.

The early years were the hardest for the newly exiled race. The Fendenglade is a vast and unforgiving swampland subcontinent of Merdensa. It is populated by all manner of ferocious and exotic beasts, all competing for survival. The hordes of ferocious monsters that populated the swamps required the Gen'ii to place an emphasis on defense as well as survival. The Gen'ii found little refuge and migrated, as a people, South until they reached the coast. They gave up their carefree lives out of necessity, taking up residence on the coastline, as far removed from the dangers of the massive swamp as possible.

Slowly, as they fended off the beasts of the glades, the Gen'ii built homes. They called this land Hjordmyrr. Each familial herd built and managed their own hamlet around a longhouse as a community center. These settlements formed a crescent along the coast, with the Grand Hall, or Stórrhal, in the middle. The Stórrhal acted as a meeting place for the Elders to gather and discuss problems that affected the Gen'ii people as a whole. This type of gathering was infrequent and called a Hjordþyng. It usually led to events of great import to the Gen'ii.

Needing a leader to unite the herds completely, the Elders established the Great Hunt, or Mykilljakt. Any of the Gen'ii people could compete, be they the strongest, the smartest, or the most cunning. Once a year, beginning on the autumnal equinox, for three days, the Gen'ii competitors would leave the coast and travel inland. Whoever brought back the most impressive kill from the depths of the Fendenglades, would be made Exarch. The Elders would judge the kills and when the Exarch was named, a feast of meat and mead would ensue.

All familial herds dealt with problems internally. The Elders only brought matters to the Exarch if it involved another family. The oldest and wisest of the Gen'ii were revered as Elders. Every herd also had a spiritual leader known as a Shaman, who was usually also an Elder though sometimes this position was occupied by a particularly devout younger Gen'ii. History was preserved amongst the Gen'ii by skalds. These warrior troubadours created and recited the tales of the Gen'ii people, from their early carefree days in Grendon, in the form of poem and song.

The Great Hunt became a celebration after a time. The beasts of the forest were a plague upon the Gen'ii, and the Hunt would eliminate many problematic creatures and name a new leader in

one fell swoop. It was an honor to compete, even if one didn't win. Those who enlisted were celebrities among the herds and admired for their bravery and skill. Many competitors shared their skills with their herd, training younger Gen'ii in combat, technique, and intellect. Their stories and deeds would be turned into epic poems or songs by familial skalds.

While the Hunt was held yearly, that did not mean that there was a new Exarch each time. Many Exarchs went on to succeed in the Hunt over consecutive years. The longest term to record is held by the current Exarch, Evangelina Calandra Wyldmeadow, who has succeeded in the Hunt since AoC 65 (year 417 of the Niythe). Not the strongest in brute force, she is known for never fighting an opponent on equal ground. She is an expert trapper and herbalist, capable of crafting the deadliest of poisons, or the strongest of healing tinctures.

Life was difficult for the Gen'ii but they were not the only folk of the Fendenglade. Gen'ii sometimes traded with tribes of savage humans in the swamps. There were also tribes of diminutive savage lizard people that the Gen'ii often came into conflict with. The Gen'ii called them lizardfolk and they were markedly different than the Sethen of Merdensa. While Sethen can be as tall as a human, the lizardfolk were short and no taller than a child. The lizardfolk also have elongated snouts and not the flat snake-like faces of Sethen. The lizardfolk culture saw peace as a weakness. As such, the Gen'ii would sometimes go to war against them. In addition, there were countless scores of monsters in the Fendenglade: Unholy, swamp trolls that belched acid and had acid blood, great dragon-lizards that could spray a sticky naptha that ignited on contact with air, the dreaded Fendenbeasts which were sixteen-foot tall moss-covered giants that took a dozen warriors to bring down, and many others.

Gen'ii Culture

Gen'ii appear to be half man, half beast. They have an upper torso of a human but a lower torso and legs covered in brown fur and terminated in hooves which resemble the reverse-jointed hindquarters of a deer. They have elongated ears similar to an elf, but also sport a pair of deer-like antlers which sprout from the forehead or just above the hairline. Both male and female Gen'ii have horns. Unlike other cervine species, these horns do not shed yearly. Gen'ii keep their horns all year round, however they have been known to fall off if a Gen'ii becomes sickened or if the horns are damaged. A healthy Gen'ii can regrow lost horns in three to six months. A Gen'ii reaches maturity at about 12 years old and can live to around 60 years of age.

Gen'ii speak the common tongue of Merdensa, given their history associating with humanity. Gen'ii family names are the only connection that remains to their bacchanalian roots, having been established by their ancestors. Examples include Wyldmeadow, Lightfoot, Everheart, and Morningshine. Gen'ii given names are usually similar to those used in Ancient Grendon, such as Calliope, Antigone, Cicero, and Erasmus.

Though the Gen'ii settlements in the Fendenglade were coastal, they are not a naturally seafaring people and have no history of shipbuilding other than rudimentary rafts and longboats.

Additionally, the rocky shoals and powerful ocean currents around the Southern tip of the Fendenglade made nearly any seagoing voyage extremely dangerous.

Gen'ii are naturally subsistence hunters and fishers. They never adapted to farming due to the constant encroachment of the Fendenglades and the necessity of building their villages in rocky areas. Most Gen'ii villages have a small central garden for various fruits and vegetables. The remainder is supplemented with what can be gathered from the swamps.

The traditional dress of the Gen'ii is a long tunic with interlaced knot patterns and interlaced geometric patterns on the cuffs and hems. However, as they have begun to branch out into the world, many Gen'ii have taken to the garb of different areas of Merdensa.

Due to the constant intrusion of the Fendenglade, Gen'ii tend to carry axes for hacking and slashing at vegetation. Swords were usually reserved for Elders and other revered Gen'ii. Since large quantities of metal are somewhat rare in the Fendenglade, it was much easier for Gen'ii smiths to forge axe heads and small blades. These axes are often ornamented with the same knot and geometric patterns of Gen'ii garb. Many Gen'ii also carry a type of knife called a seax, which has a single bladed edge and could be used for chopping.

Many Gen'ii had no access to metal armor in the Fendenglade, so for protection they often carried large round wooden shields. Gen'ii shields would be decorated with sigils and symbols of their familial herd.

The Gen'ii initially worshipped Kishar and Oberim more than anything else before their exile to the Fendenglade. Life in the Fendenglade also made the worship of Qos more prominent. Even in death, many Gen'ii still pay homage to Qos. It is the general belief amongst Gen'ii that when mortals die they are taken to the Halls of Qos, or Qos'hal, where they drink, make merriment, tell tales, and sing songs for all eternity. In the Halls of Qos, at the head of the main feast table, Qos himself would sit and listen to the tales of the Gen'ii and join in their merriment. However, when the deity was slain by Icarvoudo it is believed that the great chair now sits empty, though the Gen'ii of the Halls still celebrate in his honor. Few Gen'ii worship Icarvoudo as his purview of hedonism and patronage of vampires was seen as an anathema to the hard work that kept the Gen'ii alive in the vast swamplands.

When a Gen'ii passed away they were usually given a sea burial since the Gen'ii settled lands had little space where a grave could be dug in the rocky soil. This was the only time a Gen'ii would go on a sea voyage and "going over the sea" was often a metaphor for death or dying amongst the Gen'ii. A Gen'ii familial herd would carve an elegant raft or canoe for the fallen. The body would be placed in it, along with items that identified that individual in life. Then the boat would be pushed out to sea and be taken away by the strong currents around the Southern Fendenglade where it would journey to the Halls of Qos.

The End of the Niythe

Over the centuries the old tales of the homeland of the Gen'ii faded into myth and fairy tales told by skalds to youngsters. They spoke of giants in the north that nearly killed all of the Gen'ii and drove them into the Fendenglade.

During the year 71 AoC (year 423 of the Niythe) the runner up in the Great Hunt was Leto Dawnrunner. For six straight years Leto had been bested by Exarch Wyldmeadow. Despite this the two were great friends and had a friendly rivalry with one another. Leto was always entranced by the songs of the skalds about the carefree days of the Gen'ii, before the Niythe. After the Hunt celebration ended and Evangelina was named Exarch once again Leto made a vow to his friend that he would travel north to find the lost Gen'ii homeland of old and return with the head of a giant; that foul race who had been the cause of the Niythe.

Leto gathered a scouting herd of friends, family, and fellow Great Hunt participants and headed North. The group traveled through the deepest parts of the swamp and the journey took several months, but at last they entered a land of verdant fields and lush forests. There were cattle grazing peacefully and strange people planting crops. They had reached Southern Grendon. The Gen'ii were amazed and approached some of the peasants to ask what paradise this was. They thought maybe they had entered the afterlife. Both Gen'ii and human alike were surprised to find they both spoke the common tongue.

The human farmers, being superstitious and having never seen a Gen'ii before fled in terror. Leto's scouting herd wandered through empty villages in wonder. But soon knights of the local duke accosted them. They attacked without warning, believing the Gen'ii to be plundering monsters and not peaceable sentient beings. Leto tried to plead with the humans that the Gen'ii only wished to coexist in this land of paradise outside the swamps.

The Grendon knights were backed up with men-at-arms and peasants carrying whatever weapons they could find. Arrayed against this overwhelming force nearly half of the Gen'ii were killed and some were taken prisoner, including Leto who was gravely injured. The prisoners were taken back to the duke's keep where they were tortured, interrogated, and finally executed. The bodies were impaled outside the keep's walls. In the middle of the night the remaining Gen'ii recovered the bodies of their fallen kin.

What was left of the scouting herd returned somberly through the Fendenglade back to Hjordmyrr. A great Hjordpyng was called, the largest gathering of Gen'ii in living memory. The scouts told their tale of the lands beyond the swamp and the fall of Leto Dawnrunner. The skalds claimed this was their homeland of old; the giants of old must have died out and were replaced by relatives of the savage humans of the swamp.

The Exarch met with the elders of each family and soon a war-herd was formed. They vowed to head north and reclaim their homeland against the savages that killed their brethren.

In the spring of 73 AoC (year 425 of the Niythe) the war-herd entered Southern Grendon. They immediately set to slaughter. The disorganized and non-unified nobility of Grendon were unprepared and outmatched. Additionally, the Grendoners had suffered a massive defeat by Alessandria only three years prior. In short order the war-weary humans of southern Grendon were also defeated. No quarter was given. Grendoners were killed in droves.

The war continued for two years. The Gen'ii carved out a portion of Southern Grendon where all of their people could migrate to, and then held those borders. Every attempt by the disparate Grendon nobility to recapture these lands was defeated. Eventually the Gen'ii made peace with the surrounding humans. They had reclaimed their ancestral lands and paid vengeance for the death of their kin. The Elders declared a new era for the Gen'ii and the 426th year of the Niythe was reckoned as the 1st year of the Gjald, or Recompense. Their reclaimed homeland was called Hjordheim.

Word was sent back to Hjordmyrr and a mass migration of Gen'ii followed. Soon after the Gen'ii were contacted by representatives of the Peace Council. Exarch Wyldmeadow and many Elders met with the ambassadors. They explained that the Gen'ii were good folk and only used war to avenge the wrongs done against them. The Exarch asserted her people's claim to Hjordheim. The Peace Council ambassadors left to confer with their peers.

In 75 AoC, year 2 of the Gjald, the Gen'ii were granted a seat on the Peace Council. In recognition the Gen'ii adopted the Merdensan calendar. The Gen'ii, who always had an inherent wanderlust, began to travel and explore the wide new world now open to them.