

Kuznyetski

The Kuznyetski are a Nepleslian cultural group. Their numbers are few, as a majority of their children fully integrate with regular Nepleslian culture in every generation. Due to their eternally small population as well as other cultural concerns, they tend to occupy large urban areas so that their close-knit groups have access to supplies they cannot produce from within.

History

The Kuznyetski were originally settlers who inhabited Nepleslia's moons before and during the Yamataian Era. When Nepleslia Succeeded from the Empire and unified its government in YE 28, the Kuznyetski began mostly blending back into regular culture. Small groups of Kuznyetski still live in colonies, though they choose large buildings in urban areas to settle in as opposed to the rural areas they maintained in the past.

Culture

In general, the Kuznyetski are a very friendly group. They tend to keep to themselves, mainly because their traditions are slightly strange to Nepleslians and they suffer from attrition due to more children leaving the communities with every generation. When they do interact with mainstream society, however, they are typically kind and generous. They are quick to share a tale or a smoke, and even a few DA if asked. They love to drink, and often travel in groups to pubs if there is no brewery in their community.

Perhaps the one reason that the unique Kuznyetski are still present in an ever-growing melting pot that is Nepleslia, is that they tend to cluster in communities and maintain large families. They try to rely on one-another and keep connections within their communities for convenience's sake. Rooftop gardens, bathtub gin-stills, and closet workbenches are popular additions to every Kuznyetski home. In this way, each community creates its own resources and sells them between one another, as well as sometimes to outsiders through street-side vending booths.

Kuznyetski do not have any sexual restrictions on orientation or occupation. Usually, a couple forms based on a need for companionship more than an interest in children. This isn't to say that they don't love their children; rather just that child-rearing isn't usually assigned to a particular parent. In many cases, the mother or father will stay home and help raise the children of the community. At the same time, it's not uncommon for both parents to continue working while the children are raised by other members of the community. In most Kuznyetski communities, a group of adults raises all of the children, typically the elderly.

Due to these close-knit traditions and wide-reaching social structures, these people are forced to adopt a rather unique set of living conditions in the more urbanized, modern era.

Living Conditions

Kuznyetski people tend to reside in large communities, often in a single urban building or a small rural village. Their living arrangements are very close, sometimes with multiple families sharing the same domicile. On Nepleslia Core, it is popular for a cloister of Kuznyetski to pitch in and gather enough money to purchase an apartment complex. From this point, they will move in and do as they please; even converting the courtyards or adjacent alleyways into common areas where they can gather in large groups. Every square inch of property they own will be put to use for something: rooftops for herb gardens, walls for vine trellises- old planters have even been used as workbenches.

Barter

Although Kuznyetski have and use Nepleslian DA, they prefer to use the barter system as their primary form of economic interaction. This is because so many of Kuznyetski supplies are made by community members within the confines of the community. More than often Kuznyetski find it more convenient to trade, as many members of the community dedicate themselves to their chosen profession instead of finding more traditional work in the city. Furthermore, the wages earned by Kuznyetski workers are typically managed by the chapter's Elders. In this way, they band their income together so that things like housing and utilities can be taken care of for them. Working Kuznyetski typically receive free goods and services, but are just as likely to initiate a trade. As such, trade has become a strong part of Kuznyetski culture.

Death

A Kuznyetski funeral is usually held at night, though there are no written rules about it. The ceremony is more of an oral tradition that is imitated over and over again. When a Kuznyetski dies, his body is laid out in the largest public space with their personal firearm placed over the chest. Once there, every member of the community approaches to place a small sample of their wares around the corpse. In other cases, a simple farewell or a kiss on the cheek will suffice; though even the most greedy Kuznek is usually willing to give a bullet to a resting fellow. Finally, the corpse is burnt and the ashes scattered and disposed of. The Kuznyetski keep no record of the dead except to satisfy government business.

Cuisine

Like most Nepleslians, the Kuznyetski are very fond of meat, although their preferred method of preparation is not as over-the-top as traditional Nepleslian food. Typical meals include greens and meat pan-fried in an iron pot over an open fire, favoring hardy vegetables such as cabbage and carrots over the more fragile spinach. While they are not object to cheese, there is little of it in their cuisine, or much in the way of any dairy product for that matter. Sweets like cake and fudge are viewed as a luxury, and usually have little place at a Kuznyetski dinner table. On the other hand, cookies and tea-biscuits are popular for workers in the field, as they usually contain a small amount of sugar- much appreciated when one is exhausted. Children are taught to only eat such delights when they're feeling tired during the day.

Aside from the basics, Kuznyetski prefer to either cook only for themselves or in public with family and friends. It is not uncommon in Kuznyetski communities to see a crowd gathered around a fire pit, with everyone contributing their own ingredients to create a massive feast. Although the entire community rarely gets together as a whole for such an occasion, there will almost always be a crowd doing this very thing every night.

Social Events

For as much as they like to avoid mainstream Neplesian culture, the Kuznyetski certainly seem fond of each other. There is always some kind of gathering going on within the community. During the day, craftsmen and child-caretakers tend to gather over their work, with the children playing together nearby. In the evening, when the working folk come home, they are prone to gather in a similar manner- chatting and drinking with one another until it's time to sleep. During the evening hours, when the entire community is free, it's not uncommon for more group-oriented events to occur, such as musical performance or spontaneous games of handball. On very rare occasions, Kuznyetski will hold meetings of the entire community; events called 'Nasvehk' in which an important issue is discussed.

Some examples of Kuznyetski social events are:

- The old people gather to gossip about their juniors
- Exchanges of goods and services are arranged upon over a meal
- The community gunsmiths go around looking for parts to add to the junk pile
- Workers sit with their families and neighbors around tables and catch up over a meal
- The community marries two of their younger members
- Community gunsmiths set up shop in common areas and offer to fix weapons in exchange for goods
- Single people gather to exchange hand-made items as a method of meeting and courting
- A Nasvehk is held, and afterwards the community shares a massive feast

Language

It is speculated that the Kuznyetski once had their own language, but at this point they are only left with a unique dialect of Trade. This dialect's closest real-world equivalent is the Russian accent of the English language.

Naming

Kuznyetski do not bear family names. For the purpose of government records, every member of this group uses 'Kuznyetski' as their last name. Within their communities, families are distinguished not by name, but rather by the eldest member's name. For instance, there may be more than one Adamska in a Kuznyetski community, but there will only ever be one 'Adamska, son of Misha'. While there are certainly other Kuznyetski communities which might have a member sharing one's name entirely, the interaction between these communities is so sparse that the chances of the two meeting would be about the same as the chances of any other two Neplesians with the same name bumping into each other.

Some commonly used names for boys are:

- Ivan
- Sergei
- Adamska
- Grigori
- Misha
- Sasha
- Boris
- Roman
- Lazar
- Perchik
- Slon (Pronounced 'Sh-loan')

Some commonly used names for girls are:

- Sonya
- Slava
- Sofiye
- Anya
- Radinka
- Galina
- Hoidel (Pronounced 'Hua-dowl')
- Tanya
- Nika
- Vishka
- Anatevka

Style

The Kuznyetski place a high value on being practical, thus their clothing is typically simple in style and rugged in construction. They favor, thick canvas-like materials and long, sturdy unlined coats. Belts tend to be made of thick leather and accessories are limited to those that serve a purpose; such as wide-brim hats and scarves. It's not uncommon for a Kuznyetski to wear their occupations on their sleeve, so to speak; in that they often wear sturdy work clothes as casual attire.

Gun Culture

There is a very strong respect for firearms amongst the Kuznyetski. Those that are raised in their colonies are all able gunsmiths by the age of twelve. As they grow and get older, they spend time working with their elders to repair and refurbish old weapons; gaining skills and experience. As a coming of age ceremony, between the ages of eleven and fourteen, Kuznyetski children are expected to build a rifle from scratch using parts harvested from a community junk-pile. They may choose from existing designs, or try to create a new one. Typically, this rifle is carried around every day by the individual who

made it for the rest of their life. They even tend to sleep with the rifle over the headboard of their bed.

Aside from this ritual, the Kuznyetski seem to hold superstitions about guns in general. For instance; they seem to act as if an unfired weapon is somehow unfulfilled or depressed, and that every weapon must be fired once, at least for practice. They also feel like too much low-quality ammunition makes the gun unhealthy (perhaps based on surplus ammunition causing fouling in the works of solid weapons) and that high-quality ammunition makes the gun feel bloated and fat. When confronted about this, most Kuznyetski will say harshly, "Of course I don't *actually* believe that! What a silly thing to say." Immediately afterwards, they will continue loading separate magazines with different ammunition types to ensure their rifle is well-fed.

Appearance

Kuznyetski are not restricted to a particular appearance other than 'Nepleslian-looking', but the nature of them as working class people has shaped their typical form in some ways. Kuznyetski usually have darkened, leathery skin and mixed hair colors by middle-age, due to them spending great lengths of time in the sun. Both the men and the women are usually muscular, though not so much with those whose trade is a craft (such as artists, machinists, and caretakers).

OOC Notes

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