

Gunja

The cave-dwellers of [Sirris VI](#), Gunja are a low-tech race of hardened survivors that were pushed into the massive cave systems of their planet due to the strong presence of large and extremely dangerous predators; as these caves only had some fungi to offer up for food, however, the Gunja struck out to hunt and kill these predators for food - thus their entire culture (and economy) began to revolve around hunting, featuring the prominent rise of hunters, legends, and heroes.

Unfortunately, their culture also breeds pillagers and looters in the form of brigands, marauders, cut-throats, and bandit overlords - thus making the planet extremely dangerous to inexperienced travelers.

History

Originally a small-time primate, the Gunja originally roamed the wastes of [Sirris VI](#), thriving from the temperate forests and the fruits and meats they were able to forage and hunt. The discovery of fire led to an increase in protein intake, thus causing their brains to increase in size; having appeared as simple animals to the [Deceivers](#), though, the latter left [Sirris VI](#) with no knowledge of the extent to which the former's intelligence could develop. Soon after, the Gunja became a primal and tribal species, but their evolution and reliance on tools caused their physiology to develop a bit less - causing many Gunja to die from the dangerous flora and fauna present and forcing the survivors into the planet's gargantuan cave system.

In these caves, without the aforementioned circumstances, the Gunja were able to develop more fully. Their physiology changed, evolving over time into a lot of loose joints and cartilage, an increased physical stature, and a very slender average shape. In these caves, their technological advancements were slow but present; first was metal, next was gunpowder, and last was the discovery of several sources of primitive fuels that soon became refinable - thereby leading to the creation of vehicles the Gunja refer to as "cave-crawlers." Currently, there are countless Gunja villages in the caves - and a proportionate number of bandit camps.

Physiology

Gunja physiology is traditionally [human](#), though their blood is black as tar and extremely thick. Their bleeding clots fast compared to traditional humans, though their veins are also much wider, which is often visible across their body during physical exertion and emphasized even further by their extremely pale ashen skin. Gunja have outward horns, most traditionally growing in a fashion akin to a ram - though these don't grow large. Their width is smaller than their elf-like ears.

A Gunja is physically brittle because of the high amount of cartilage in their bodies, thus breaking or shattering bones is very common due to the combination of the aforementioned cartilage and a very low calcium diet. Gunja eyes are traditionally red and similar to that of a cat, as they reflect light extremely well and confer high-quality darkvision. In low-light and complete darkness, Gunja see - and hear -

extremely well, as their ears are closer to that of an [elf](#) than of a human. Their concha is extremely sensitive and can even sense vibrations, rather than just the eardrum. Gunja ears are a dead giveaway of how a Gunja feels; mostly, these elongated tips are tilted downwards - though they can be raised up to rest against the side of their head - and are often used to listen for any foreign sounds in the caves.

Diet

The Gunja diet has gone through a process similar to what the Gunja themselves went through when they fled the surface world and opted to live in the massive cave system on [Sirris VI](#). Where they originally had meat from the smaller predators they could hunt with primitive means, once they moved to the caves, the Gunja began feeding themselves with the fungi and reptilian critters they could find - which lead to the change in their overall physique and the formation of the "modern" slender, over-abundant-cartilage-possessing Gunja.

Now that the Gunja are able to take the fight to the larger predators of Sirris VI with their primitive fuels and black powder, their diet consists of more meat - though they still rely on fungi for both protein and carbohydrates. Grains and such are a rarity and considered a luxury food among the Gunja.

Environment

See: [Sirris VI](#).

The cave systems of Sirris VI consist of extremely large passages where even tanks could roll through, though these often break off in a myriad of smaller passages of varied sizes or lead to one of the larger settlements in a massive clearing. Explosions are often audible and are a telltale sign of a settlement expanding. Gunshots also echo throughout the caverns, though they're extremely difficult to pinpoint by anyone that isn't an experienced tracker.

Life Cycle

The life cycle of a Gunja is short, extremely so. Most Gunja die of old age around their fifties to sixties, which is considered by them to be extremely old; fortunately, they breed likes rabbits - but unfortunately also die like lemmings from the danger of the caves, the criminals that reside within them, and the high mortality rate that plagues both experienced and aspiring hunters. A Gunja is considered an adult at the [human](#) age of sixteen and are often cast out of their parental home at that age. Pregnancy lasts for seven months and infancy lasts for two to three years; at this age, a Gunja toddler is able to walk and has already learned some words. Most Gunja children stay small (around 80 centimeters for toddlers) up until they have a growth spurt between the ages of twelve and fourteen, which allows them to grow to a maximum of 300 centimeters with an average height of roughly 250 centimeters. A Gunja stops growing around the age of sixteen.

Culture

The economy and culture of the Gunja revolves around the hunt, with art, songs of legend, and books that regale the heroism of various hunter-knights. The entire society is concerned with the hunt and romanticises the hunters that partake in it and there are competitions between various hunters, which only adds to their idolization.

From the primal age onwards, the Gunja have been accompanied by other pseudo-human races that didn't make the cut, other tribes, and other intelligent life. These tales and knowledge have been passed on by tongue and have become wildly inaccurate, however, there is one legend that follows a more consistent storyline: that of the [Decievers](#), who are known to the Gunja as "starchildren" and are considered by them to be evil and vile. They're considered demons or bad omens in the Gunja's eyes.

Gunja culture is medieval at best; while they have primitive fuel, printing presses, and blackpowder, they are not terribly advanced and are sometimes even considered primal and tribal in their sculptures, with some settlements being more "primitive" than others. The Gunja are very aggressive towards outsiders.

Clothing

Gunja clothing is minimalistic - with minute details and finetuned decorations to make plain clothes look more appealing - and used to be made from a cave fungus that produced a stretchy, cloth-like fabric; with their technological advancements, however, the Gunja have regained the ability to get to the surface and survive there for quite some time, thereby allowing them to cultivate and farm crops. Their clothing has begun featuring more traditional materials that resemble fur, wool, and silk closely. Traditionally, the Gunja wear darker colours - such as brown, gray, black, a deep and bloody red, or a dark purple - that are directly correlated to their origin if it lies with a kingdom or a collection of hunters; lastly, they don't know of bright colours.

Food

The cuisine of the Gunja originated from cultivating mushrooms and fungi solely, as the Gunja themselves evolved to solely thrive off of these protein-rich cave fungi; when their technology advanced, however, so did their kitchen, as meat became more widely available and crops that allowed grain were cultivated and harvested, leading to grain-based products such as bread - which is still a luxury among the Gunja today.

Language

The Gunja language is a sharp, complicated, and extremely fast tongue with meanings that can be changed entirely by a change in tone. The Gunja alphabet is best described as runic etchings, with new variations on their letters and symbols being made each day - though not every Gunja can read or even write, as only scholars and scientists concern themselves with such things.

Naming

Gunja naming is an anomaly that varies from city to city and stronghold to stronghold, as some parents name their children with deep meaning - while others refer to their offspring as the first, the second, the third, etc. Several common Gunja names are Marrekesh, Bannaat, Barresh, Yukrosh, Fannesh, and Sjarm.

The Gunja don't really differentiate between male and female names - any name is viable for any gender.

Politics

Gunja politics are purely regulated by city, stronghold, or clan. They decide how their governing works, be it a dictatorship, a democracy, totalitarianism, communism, and so on. The Gunja vary heavily in their political views and try to change or even conquer those that disagree - but there have been little to no major power shifts in the cave's various factions thus far.

Technology

The Gunja are a low-tech race that has yet to achieve regular flight. They have the means to produce low-grade fuel, the vehicles that operate on it, black powder, and the weaponry associated with it - though their firearms lack much in the way of capability and are thus used for hunting instead of Gunja-on-Gunja violence, as it would leave little to nothing of the other party. Gunja gunpowder weaponry is colossal - often with just one projectile inside - and commonly fires sharpened tusks made from the large predators they hunt. These weapons have no kind of range and are only effective point blank; while they're great at piercing tough hides, their limited capacity makes them unusable for warfare - thus the Gunja prefer crossbows, bows, and throwing spears.

Cave-Crawlers

Essentially what the Gunja name their vehicles, cave-crawlers are surprisingly well engineered to be adaptable to the cave systems, with most featuring a steam-pressured anchoring system that allows a Gunja to pin the vehicle to any surface at any angle. Common models have two wheels, though four-wheeled buggies are not too uncommon either.

Economy

The Gunja economy revolves around the trade of wares and bartering. Reputation and fame as a hunt grant gifts and help, though any cave-dweller sells what they loot from the caves, while mushroom pickers trade a part of their harvest for meat or clothing. The only thing that resembles a central currency is black powder or fuel; although normal farmers and citizens have little use for such things, hunters and cave-dwellers rely heavily on it - which is why the trade with the aforementioned shifted to

selling their meat, skins, or loot for fuel and black powder.

OOC Notes

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