

Gene Taring / MP Nergigante / Great Grandfather Dragon

Backstory

Name: His real name is Gene Taring; the name MP Nergigante is a running joke started by his PA and Sam

Species: Demon; Nergigante/human hybrid

Sex: ♂

Orientation: Bisexual

Age: Stopped ageing at 35 due to the demonic ritual he took part in

Height: 6ft 1in (6ft 7in with horns)

Weight: 220lbs

Siblings: None



Species Notes

Demons do not mate for life. However, one way that they express affection to their current partner is by grooming one another by licking each other.

Demons are hard for a regular human to kill but are not incapable of dying. They can easily kill each other, and exposure to gold can be lethal.

MP Nergigante is a roleplay character based on the *Monster Hunter World* universe. He started his life as Gene, a boy who was excellent at projecting confidence but who always felt as if he had to impress others in order to keep them around. He had a natural sense of justice and grew up with an interest in politics. A deal with the demon Lilith changed everything and Gene went into hiding. In some ways that turned out to be just the beginning for him.

Trust & Confidence

(newborn)

Gene's father was American, very outgoing and confident indeed, and the CEO of a telecommunications company. As a result Gene was born distinctly silver-spooned.

His mother was easily able to stay at home on Gene's father's salary and worked on a self-employed basis as a seamstress. This made for more of a cottage-industry business than the sizeable telecommunications company Gene's father ran, but she enjoyed running it anyway. Indeed, she was skilled enough that she sometimes made suits for her husband. Personality-wise she was far more easy-going, quiet, thoughtful, and creative than he was. However she certainly enjoyed the expensive gifts bought for her and Gene by his father.

While his mum loved Gene she didn't particularly enjoy looking after a newborn infant. She liked retreating into thought, working on something creative, or being busy, and infant Gene registered the fact that she would prefer anything else to paying attention to him. Even when she fed him she tended to gaze into space rather than into his eyes. As a result he tried appealing to her by trying to look into her eyes whenever she held him. Sometimes this worked and he managed to win her attention, and sometimes it didn't, but overall he learned that he had to keep trying.

Freedom & Self-Determination

(toddlerhood)

As Gene began to move out of the symbiotic relationship he had with his mother and became more aware of his surroundings, he noticed the existence of his father. Gene's dad wasn't around for much of the time but when he was, his personality resonated powerfully in the house. He was larger-than-life, proud, confident, assertive, well-organised, and a consummate businessman. When Gene's dad was in the house there was a sense of order and Gene sensed it keenly.

Gene's mother was keen to get back to work as soon as she could, both for the sake of her own psychological well-being and to keep her business running. Being a seamstress meant that she had a lot of dangerous items around - needles and pins which she didn't want Gene to have access to, and spools of thread that he might choke on if she took her attention off him for any length of time. Because of this she made her studio off-limits to Gene.

She hired a sitter to watch Gene while she was busy in her studio. More to the point, she hired one for enough hours per week that Gene came to see the sitter as his primary caregiver.

The Tarings had an excellent income between them, and therefore a big enough budget to get the best sitter money could buy. However, a friend of theirs, to whom they owed a

favour, had a teenage daughter who wanted a babysitting job for some pocket money. That was how, despite their impressive income, the Tarings hired an inexperienced sitter. The result of this was that Gene and the sitter didn't connect very well. She was generally more interested in playing on her phone, talking or texting with friends, or watching TV than she was in watching over him, and tended to roll her eyes if he wanted to play or needed help with anything.

Gene had his work cut out trying to keep her attention, but he felt that he had little other choice as he didn't want to be alone, so he honed the skills of getting, and keeping, the sitter's attention.

Ambition

(young childhood)

Gene's dad's job obliged him to be away from home for weeks at a time. Up until this time of his life, Gene had always considered this state of affairs normal – after all, he had no other life experience to compare it with. School changed that. When he started going to school he saw that other children had fathers who were much more present in their lives, and this finally brought home to him that he was missing out on having a dad.

He took to mimicking his dad as much as possible, soaking up his general attitude to life and applying it at school and at home. He found that projecting a highly positive attitude worked quite well at home: his mother was used to having a larger-than-life character around so knew how to handle Gene when he behaved like this. This behaviour earned him some friends at school too, and his teachers generally considered it cute, funny, and strangely engaging. Given Gene's dad's positive, can-do outlook on life Gene reflected this too, and his teachers used his desire to mimic this particular aspect of his father's behaviour to nudge him towards being constructive and positive in his early schoolwork.

His father encouraged this can-do attitude. It meant that Gene took to his schoolwork with enthusiasm and generally got good grades.

Like many small children, Gene liked to imagine himself as a bigger, stronger, more idealised version of himself. For little Gene that meant that when he played, he imagined himself as a dragon! Moreover, when he indulged in this fantasy he specifically imagined being big, fearsome, and strong! This was how Gene interpreted the way his dad was perceived by others.

Productivity

(older childhood)

As Gene grew older he began to notice more of the nuances of his parents' beliefs. In particular he noticed that his father was more left-leaning (he supported Labour) while his mother was more right-wing and supported the Conservative party.

Gene personally preferred Labour's ideals to those of the Conservatives. His dad's political preferences may have influenced this.

His parents didn't tend to discuss their political leanings until elections came up, and it was during the latter half of his childhood that he first noticed that. When he came to realise that his parents differed so much ideologically and the implications of this started to dawn on him, he developed an interest in politics. He became keenly aware of the differences between the two main political parties.

Gene continued to do well in school. He was already popular with the other kids and as he started to grow up his social skills got even better. He paid more attention to how his dad behaved around people, his leadership and statesmanship skills, and mimicked that behaviour ever more closely in school. Part of that meant paying attention to the academic side of school - a good leader was hardly a rebel, and was always a hard worker, at least that was the case if Gene's dad was anything to go by - and his grades remained high.

Sometimes when Gene's father returned from a business trip to the US he would give his son gifts. As a result of this Gene kept several quintessentially American items in his room as keepsakes, including a US commemorative coin and two framed menus from IHOP and OK Diner, which he hung on his walls.

These gifts raised a new issue for Gene. Up until his older childhood he'd simply considered his dad a hero who sometimes showed up at home. As he became aware of where his dad was going and how 'America' wasn't just some unfathomably distant, even fantastical faraway place (it was actually somewhere you could buy a plane ticket to and visit) he asked his dad to take him with him there. His father always said no, but he could do the next best thing: bring him gifts.

On the surface of it, this sounded to Gene like a good compromise but its effect was to shut down the conversation without giving Gene the resolution he felt he needed. Gene

wasn't terribly quick to recognise this - indeed, it would have been painful for him to have done so - so he vaguely accepted it, but felt low-level sad about it and tried not to think about it too much.

Child to Adult Transition

(adolescence)

As an adolescent Gene took, if anything, an even keener interest in politics than he had before. Part of this was due to a fairly standard adolescent experience: the realisation that he was growing up and that others were starting to expect him to represent himself rather than see his parents as his keepers and moral and ethical guides. He understandably wanted to be able to define who he was as an emerging person.

That was only part of the story however. The other part was his growing awareness that politics had the potential to split families apart, that two people with different political ideals were prone to conflict and perhaps, ultimately, to alienate one another. In short, he was curious about how his parents were able to tolerate one another's widely differing political opinions, what he might be able to do if those differences started to become irreconcilable, and what might happen if they ever split up.

Gene still preferred Labour as his political party of choice, and he began to use it to form the basis of his approach to making friends. He talked keenly with others about their political beliefs to get a sense of who they were, how to react to them, and what to think of them.

As Gene found himself, he developed a new edge to his self-confidence. Rather than remain passively fearful of a lack of inclusion from others, he began to experiment with being the one who did the rejecting for once. He found this to be a more powerful position than being an emotional 'sitting duck'. As a result of this, during his adolescence he became quite hostile towards the Conservative party and towards anybody who admitted to voting Conservative. Propaganda against this party during these few years was fairly strong but his feelings about them were compounded by two things: firstly the sheer fact that he was going through puberty so was prone to being more aggressive and emotional, and secondly his relationship with his mum, who still had distinctly Conservative leanings.

Gene often felt antsy around his mother, and often a lot more than just antsy. The truth behind this was that he still felt desperately sad and angry that she had picked her seamstress over him, and had closed the door on him so many times, both

emotionally and literally. However, he didn't feel that there was much of an opening for him to explore these feelings, much less openly express them.

As a result he expressed his feelings as anger and used logic, facts, rationalism, and any other objective resource he could find to justify how he felt, using factual arguments to be aggressive in a socially acceptable way. Politics offered him the perfect opportunity to do this, and he discovered a talent for helping out on the campaign trail. Gene would help the Labour party by knocking on doors, asking who the resident was going to vote for, and if they didn't pick Labour then he would give them all the reasons why voting Labour would be morally and ethically correct, and would work out better for them.

Gene's use of debate to get what he wanted set a tense atmosphere in his romantic and sexual relationships. During the early days of his relationships, his partners would often see him as confident, self-assured, and sociable. Over time this appearance could come undone. Sometimes a partner would say 'no' to Gene and he would consider their answer irrational, and see it as his right (or responsibility) to talk them around to his way of thinking.

From the outset Gene was sure he was gay, and all of his early relationships were with other boys.

Gene continued to hone his 'notice me!' skills as he approached his 18th birthday. While he largely remained as aggressive as he had been in his early teens he also learned to charm others more, and found that being charming rather than 'demolishing' them with logic tended to better preserve the relationship. Once again he turned to his dad for inspiration.

Gene went to college and took Government and Politics at A-level.

During his time in college he met a new friend named Sam, and this turned out to be a more serious relationship. Sam was interested in politics but more inclined to sit on the fence regarding which political party was the best to support. Sam was more interested in the arts than Gene was, and that included an interest in mythology. Among many things Sam talked about during their getting-to-know-you stage, was an admiration for the mythical demon Lilith.

Gene had always been masculine in appearance, while Sam was far more androgynous and often cross-dressed. During their relationship Gene saw Sam deal with homophobia

that Gene himself rarely had to tolerate, given that he wasn't obviously gay to a casual observer. He became protective of Sam.

At first it seemed as if the two would get along well given Sam's easy-going nature, but in time Sam grew tired of Gene's dogmatism and the pair split. For Gene this was tantamount to being deserted all over again, and Sam's split from him made a big impression on him. Gene had seen this relationship as a change from the pattern of the relationships he'd had with his family. Where his parents had been distant and prone to 'shutting the door' on him, Sam was present, actively enjoyed his company, and keen to spend time with him.

Their breakup was therefore something of a trial for him and Sam worked with him to make it easier. They ultimately parted on amicable terms.

It wasn't long after this that Gene's parents broke up. His parents had stayed together for as long as they could for his sake, and now that he was no longer a child they saw no further need to stay as a family unit. This too hit Gene hard, especially given the close timing with his breakup from Sam.

Closeness in Relationships

(young adulthood)

During his early twenties, Gene re-evaluated his orientation. He still preferred guys but went on a date with a woman on a whim one day, and it turned out well. After that he thought about his orientation and came to the conclusion that he was homoflexible, male-leaning.

Gene took his first job as an administrator.

He also settled into a relationship with a woman for a while. Being in a relationship with a woman brought back his old issues with his mum - up until this point she had been the main female influence in his life, and her attitude towards him has already been discussed in this profile - but he learned from this woman that she liked being around him and actively sought him out. Ultimately they broke up - Gene still preferred a male partner to a female one - but by the time they broke up, he had learned more about what it meant to be in close contact with a woman who enjoyed his company.

Of course, it took more than just this to overcome his abandonment issues. Dating her only gave Gene a new experience with a woman; it didn't lead to him completely

re-evaluating everything he had been through since birth. But the new experience was powerful as it gave him enough information to allow him to doubt that he was unworthy of attention. This reduced the intensity of his pain.

Like many people who have this type of opportunity for re-evaluation, Gene retained the skills he had learned to prevent abandonment - his projection of confidence, magnetism, leadership skills, and so on, but began to feel that he had the freedom to not do these things and for the outcome to still be good. In other words, he had begun to feel that it was okay just to 'be' rather than having to constantly 'do', to be a valid person.

He continued to date both men and women, and with his energy and assertive nature he often took a dominant role in the relationship dynamic.

Despite Gene's emotional growth he remained strongly action-orientated, which meant that in practice, his permission to 'be' rather than 'do' generally got lost in translation. He retained his enthusiasm for politics, and in his late 20s began campaigning for office. It took a total of 5 years for him to build a strong enough network to get the support he needed to have a fair chance of entering office, but he worked tirelessly at it. Gene's passion in politics was to make sure society's most vulnerable people were provided for and not forgotten. This included people who slipped through the cracks in the benefits system, those who were unfairly typecast (such as the elderly, who were often wrongly accused of not paying their taxes), and LGBT rights.

Gene was 31 when the Brexit referendum occurred, and he voted Leave. For him, the decision to leave was due to the idea of self-sufficiency. He had grown up with self-sufficient parents and had been encouraged to look after himself rather than seek help - that 'you don't have to be alone' vibe he'd gotten from Sam and the woman he had dated still had a weak effect, and ultimately his leaning towards self-sufficiency won out. In terms of applying this attitude to Brexit, Gene just couldn't justify bailing out Greece and being so bound by the EU's rules, so his preferred option was for Britain to leave.

Within a year or so of campaigning, he finally got elected as a Labour MP. By age 35, he had worked his way somewhat up in the Labour Party and had his own PA, named Nadine. Gene enjoyed having the power to make the changes he wanted, but at times found himself stymied by the internal politics within the party.

One day he went into his office and found a scrap of paper on his desk. He checked it and saw that the message inside sounded like some kind of arcane spell. He asked

Nadine about it but she said she had no memory of how it got there. The words of the spell appealed to him in a way he couldn't put his finger on, so he gave Nadine the rest of the day off and cancelled all of his afternoon appointments so that he could experiment with the 'spell'.

The 'spell' (he wasn't sure if that was what it was, but he couldn't think of a better term for it) appeared to invoke Lilith. Gene remembered Sam's description of her: a potent folklore figure known for being one of the first powerful demons, and for her seductive nature. He liked the symbolism of this. That afternoon, alone in his office, he read the spell aloud, and couldn't have been more surprised when Lilith herself appeared to him, with her arms and wings spread! He felt a surge of power and then blacked out.

When he woke up, he felt very different. The first thing he noticed was that his skin had taken on a russet colour and that, instead of fingernails, he now had cream-coloured claws.

His vision had also changed: his range of vision was wider than it had ever been, and he could see to a level of crystal clarity that was both strange and fascinating. His suit lay in tatters around him and he was naked.

However, he hadn't genuinely been alone: unbeknownst to him Nadine had stayed behind, troubled by Gene's sudden wish to be left alone. She had witnessed his transformation. As soon as the transformation had started she'd hidden for her own safety, and she was the first person he saw in the aftermath.

On inspection he discovered that he was some type of heavily-spined, very large dragon. Gene felt ambivalent about this. On the one hand he felt excited about the change. He remembered fantasising about being a dragon in his childhood but had never thought it would actually happen! On the other hand, he had become a monster and knew that his political career was probably over.

He summoned Lilith again, asking her to turn him back. She became irritated with him and punished him by changing his bipedal body into four-legged form. Gene didn't forget about that for a very long time afterwards. For Gene, this whole dragon situation left him feeling as if his humanity had been stripped from him. Being turned into a quadrupedal being made that even more unpleasant. He quickly learned his lesson and never summoned Lilith for this reason again. Thankfully this transformation only lasted a few hours before his body re-aligned into a bipedal pose.

For the first few days and weeks after his transformation Gene went into fight / flight mode often and easily. When he did, his body was prone to hulking up and his dorsal spines would grow. Gene learned the hard way that he had to control his temper. While he was learning how to keep calm Gene remembered Sam, his boyfriend from college. He instructed Nadine to track Sam down and invite them to the office. She did this, and Sam came.

Support with keeping Gene calm wasn't the only help Sam was able to offer. As one of the more artsy people from their college, Sam happened to know which dragon species Gene had become. They identified Gene as a nergigante.

This knowledge helped Gene to settle. However, as he got used to his new life he experienced a few more tests of his zen: he had technically become a demon, and not the only demon around. There were others who sensed his presence - and he sensed theirs.

There were turf wars and Gene got into more than a few scuffles, but Gene was lucky to have incarnated as an Elder dragon and had a powerful enough presence to deter most demon attacks. However, during one fight he lost a chunk of his tail. The spikes grew back but the bite-mark remained. There were also times when Gene had to step in and defend Sam from demon attacks.

With so much danger around, in time Sam made the suggestion that they consult with Lilith to turn Sam into a demon too. At first Gene resisted the idea: he saw demonhood as a taint on human nature and believed that it was better for Sam to retain their innocence. But in time Sam convinced him - partly by pointing out that as a demon they could stop ageing too so that Sam and Gene would never lose each other - and they found Lilith's spell. Sam recited it, and spoke with Lilith.

Perhaps Lilith might have resigned Sam to a similar terrible fate to the one she had assigned to Gene, but she quickly understood that something was unusual about this situation. She saw that Sam wasn't hungry for power like most people who implored her for help, only for security. Therefore she granted Sam their wish, and chose to turn them into an incubus merperson.

In amongst all of this, Gene became determined that he wouldn't lose his political career. So, instead of giving it up he mobilised Nadine and his team to face the public on his behalf. He knew from the outset that he could no longer directly represent himself, nor have his team play the middle-man between him and the public - politics

isn't the kind of arena where one could play 'Banksy' - so he approached a politician with similar values to him and offered all the resources of his team in return for that politician representing Gene's interests.

It was a long shot and it didn't take long for Gene to learn that he couldn't maintain enough control in this relationship to keep it working for him, so instead he quietly disappeared from the political scene.

Passing on Responsibilities

(older adulthood)

Gene's transformation halted his ageing process so he never reached the age traditionally associated with this life stage, but given the circumstances in his life it made sense for him to plan to pass the reins on to somebody else.

Gene decided that retreat was the best option, so suggested to Sam that they find a suitable island to live out the rest of their days. The island that he and Sam chose together was in fact an archipelago off the coast of Turkey, with several substantial islands and a few that were mere, rocky spikes protruding from the ocean. Gene prepared for the move by sending Nadine and those of his team who wanted to remain involved, to mainland Turkey to live in luxury for the remainder of their lives. In return he made one last request of them: to spread stories locally to generate a folk myth. Gene understood how to wrangle crowds and spin and spread information in specific ways, and this came in useful for directing this folk myth project from a distance.

The myth went that a half-human, half-beast lived on the island and demanded homage in the form of regular offerings of food, lest it leave the island and seek food for itself from the mainland - which could include anything from food stores to livestock to small children. They spread this information in a low-key manner among the more superstitious people of the town, especially where fishermen frequented. In time the story became established, and Gene and Sam started getting deliveries of food.

It included an awful lot of fish.

Gene made sure that Nadine, along with every other member of his team, signed an agreement never to reveal his existence, even after their retirements. Aside from this, Gene let contact with her lapse after the myth had been established, as over the years he had become very attached to her and hated the idea of watching her fade as the end of her life drew near.

Gene and Sam settled happily on the biggest of the islands in the chain, but their new life turned out not to be the simplest of happy-ever-afters: Sam became pregnant and laid a batch of eggs. Those eggs proved to be fertile and hatched into a litter of dark-scaled dragons.

Most had wings, while the rest had impressive fins instead. They all liked to eat seaweed and fish from the sea around the island. As youngsters they would bask.

It wasn't long before they started sneezing. Every time they sneezed, a white, crystalline substance would fly from their noses. Gene and Sam checked this more closely and found that their brood had special pits beside their eyes and that this was where the substance was coming from. Closer inspection of the substance itself revealed that it was salt. They called their brood 'salt-sneezers', and the name stuck.

The salt-sneezers thrived on the island. They learned to speak, though their speech was basic. They bred, albeit at a slow rate, and they formed into tribes. Before long Gene and Sam found that they had an entire population under their care, and a range of problems arose: how would they prevent the salt-sneezers from striking out beyond the island? How would they manage the population's growing need for food? What was their place in this new, developing community?

The salt-sneezers accepted Gene and Sam as they spent much time around them.

Gene saw that the salt-sneezers could be thoughtless at times, and foresaw that something might go wrong and need his and Sam's intervention. He suggested to Sam that they position themselves as deities. Sam refused, unwilling to lord it over their babies. So Gene began to prepare the ground alone over a course of several generations. He made public appearances less and less often, and when he did appear, postured - both behaviourally and physically - to imply that he was a strange, powerful, otherworldly being. Sam started to notice this before too long, and took issue with this. It became an inside joke where Sam ribbed Gene for being the tribe's 'grumpy grand-dad' and that if only he could hide behind a newspaper, he'd get along with the salt-sneezers just fine, but there were other times when Gene's distancing felt more problematic to Sam and they would argue.

They called Gene Great Grandfather Dragon, and Sam, Shiny Fin.

Over time though, the need for a moderating influence over the salt-sneezers became clear.

One tribe raided another, using fire-lit torches to scare the defending tribe. There was an accident, and they ended up burning down half of the tribe's huts and other structures, and spoiling their food stores. In the wake of this, Sam finally accepted Gene's suggestion. They were still reluctant, and between them Sam and Gene had a few disagreements about how best to use the power Gene had generated, but when they next appeared to the tribe, they leveraged that power.

Gene impressed upon the salt-sneezers that he was displeased with their actions. The speech he gave about this led the way for Sam to speak in more forgiving terms. Sam spoke about community, love towards one another, and of forgiveness.

This was how the two of them helped Sam to cement their role as a pair of deities, and from then on they behaved as such. They developed several new traditions and customs together, and the salt-sneezers, in their own ways, suggested more.

End of Life

(old age)

Halting his ageing meant that Gene's relationship with death changed. After he stopped ageing it became a very real possibility that his parents and the other people he cared about would die before him, Sam included. It also became highly risky that he might lose Sam in one of the occasional but brutal fights he had with other demons. Because of this, when Sam told him that they had been thinking about the same problem and believed it was best for them to be turned into a demon also, Gene eventually embraced the idea.

After this, they more or less considered themselves invulnerable to death, and their lives continued indefinitely.

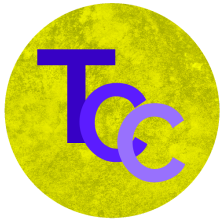
Credits

Based on theory by:

Erikson, E., (1951) 'Childhood and Society', W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. chapter 7.

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~ Hayley, Founder of The Character Consultancy

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