**Introduction**

Neranoids are the result of Nn’s heavy modification of the Neran. After the Neran broke through the storm surrounding the Stone Elemental Civilization, Nn grew angry at the threat to his creations. He destroyed their airships and coastal colonies, and raised mountains around the coastline of the supercontinent they originated from. Tens of trillions of Neran died in the ensuing earthquakes, storms, and floods. Nn stopped himself from eradicating them completely, understanding that life will evolve again. Instead, Nn took a handful of Neran worker drones--one of each element--and forcibly morphed their bodies. The process was excruciating, and cosmically horrifying. Nn connected his power to these individuals and, when he was satisfied with their transformation, began to create more in the image of them. Centuries pass, and Nn oversees and sometimes modifies the slowly spreading Neranoids.

Neranoids soon form tribes based on each element, and begin fighting with those near them. Infighting within Fire and Earth tribes is common, while Wind and Water coalesce more. Lightning stays neutral, facilitating trade and art among the tribes that allow them to. Nn sees this inner tension as a stabilizing factor, and shifts his attention elsewhere for the time being.

**Physiology**

Neranoids are humanoid, possessing two arms and two legs. Two large eyes adorn their faces, but everything below them is obscured by strong mandibles that cover the mouth. These mandibles extend to reveal numerous sharp teeth, and aid in processing food. Many small spots cover the left and right areas of the eyes, acting as an odor detector. Neranoids aren’t very good at detecting smells, but are adept at sound. A line of 3-4 holes going down their sides, under their arms, absorb sound and resonate it through their torsos. Neranoid hearing is nearly as adept as vision. Their eyes are vertical slits that can move left and right. They have a high field of view vertically, but rather weak horizontally. Their pupils can only somewhat dilate.

Black carapace covers most of a Neranoid’s body. The carapace is split into plates that overlap, sliding against one another to allow flexibility. It is strong as bone, and shiny like onyx. Young Neranoids develop their carapace in semi-transparent, soft stages until they gain a more permanent set at adolescence. Losing a plate is painful, as the nerves underneath are damaged. However, the plate can be grown back. This can take a few days. Damaged carapace, say, a cracked one, can heal in as little as hours. This is very variable based on the energy intake of the Neranoid.

Neranoids possess something akin to hair, only on their heads. This hair is actually heavily modified antennae. The strands are usually rather long, about the length of a forearm, and usually have a curl. The hair begins growing soon after birth, but will slow down and stop after a few years. Once it is grown, it stays in its formation. It is rather stiff, but can move some in high winds. The hair has very few nerves, but can still be painful when cut near the base. It also assists somewhat with sound processing.

In the lower center of their bodies, Neranoids have a small hole that can expand to transfer genetic material. The area also hosts a nervous center that assists the brain with audio processing. This is the most commonly attacked area in combat, as any wound is extremely painful and debilitating. Damage to the nervous center also severely limits Neranoid hearing. Lastly, damage to the reproductive organ could eliminate a candidate for reproduction of the enemy tribe.

**Sexual Dimorphism**

Neranoids have male and female sexes. The males are usually larger and have more muscle mass, while the females are smaller and slimmer. Interestingly, males possess an egg gamete that is passed to the female to activate with her gamete. Then, the embryo can then be passed to another individual of either sex to incubate. This carries some risk of harming the embryo, but can be extremely useful when a Neranoid is hurt in combat, and fosters the village connections, essentially forming one large family.

**Culture**

Each tribe, and sometimes each village within a tribe, have very different cultures. There are a few universal aspects, however. Belief in a higher power is essential, but usually in an antagonistic way. It is more commonly seen that the gods will seek to wrong you and you should resist them rather than worship. Community is also a central pillar of Neranoid culture. Neranoids tend to form groups of up to 100 individuals that they trust and frequently interact with. Relationships within this circle are common as well, most commonly involving 2 monogamous individuals, but can range up to about 10 in some cases. It is common for male Neranoids to give a close female partner an egg gamete, and for the female to then hold onto it without activating it with her own gamete. The female will wait until she is in a state where she can care for a growing child before activating the egg. It is seen as a deepening of a relationship to transfer gametes, but not quite on par with the importance of human intercourse. That said, a Neranoid that is near death from battle with an egg will try to transfer it to another member, and this is seen as a life defining event for the new carrier. Rearing the child from this event is one of the most important tasks for a Neranoid. Neranoids born this way are also seen as naturally gifted warriors, and receive special attention from the community. Both males and females can give birth to Neranoids, but it is more common for females to rear them.

**War Trance**

A specific behavioral quirk present in all Neranoid tribes is the appearance of war fervor, or a war trance, during particularly intense combat. High emotion usually leads to this state. The affected Neranoid’s body temperature rises significantly. Their mandibles are bared constantly and their antennae bristle and extend. In extreme cases, the Neranoid grows physically larger, their carapace unfurling with sliding segments.

This form is accompanied by a bestial lack of control. A Neranoid in this state will attack anything in sight until too exhausted to continue, or they manage to get ahold of themselves: a notable mental feat. The form is desired at times of life-threatening strife due to its increased intimidation, as well as greatly increased physical strength. Manipulation of the elements is more difficult in this state, as most of the time it takes some measure of control. Short, violent bursts of elemental energy are possible, however. Exiting the form is physically painful, and liable to cause wounds. The propensity for wounds is increased the larger the Neranoid became. At a certain limit, the Neranoid’s carapace plates will slip fully past each other and no longer be touching. As the Neranoid shrinks back to size, the plates commonly misalign or slide incorrectly. This can cause cracking of the carapace, reverse subsumption of a plate, or the loss of a plate altogether.