

Between Two Species

An Introduction to the Nai-nek-chai

I am Pikku, the bold, the unstoppable, the unflappable, uncatchable, greatest thief in all of Llaza. Pikku the Monkey Girl, and the law can kiss my furry little tail for my name shall be known throughout the lands of the Southern Seas.

W hat do you mean, who are my people? I am my people, me, no-one else! The one, the only, Monkey Girl. So what if there are other stupid animal-people shapechanger idiots? None compare to Pikku The Bold!

W hat have you got there? Shiny things? Let me see! You must think Pikku The Bold is some stupid animal-person who doesn't know real value from cheap trinkets. Not this little Monkey Girl. I go where want, take what I want, do what I want and no-one can stop me because your stupid laws are for humans only and I am Pikku the Great Monkey Girl Thief!

In the World of Conclave there are powerful guardian spirits of animal species, collectively known as the *nai-hempashu*. Legends say that *nai-hempashu* can take human form and have been known to interact with mortals. From this lineage come the shapechangers known as *nai-nek-chai*.

A *nai-nek-chai* can take the form of human or animal (so far, no non-human intelligent species has been found to possess similar characteristics). They are of many different animal types and are not a full race by themselves but more of an offshoot of humanity.

Personality: *Nai-nek-chai* retain some of the animal personality, often manifested as thinking with their stomachs, being attracted to shiny objects or startling easily. Even the most civilised *nai-nek-chai* will sometimes unconsciously behave in an animalistic fashion – eating scraps from the floor, growling when angered and so on. *Nai-nek-chai* of different species may also manifest stereotypical behaviour of that species. A cat *nai-nek-chai*, for example, may be fastidiously clean, or a lizard *nai-nek-chai* may enjoy lounging in the sun.

Physical Description: *Nai-nek-chai* all appear superficially human, but with some trademark characteristic that makes them look faintly like their animal type. A rat *nai-nek-chai* may have a long nose, small eyes and prominent incisor teeth. A badger *nai-nek-chai* will have black and white striped hair and a stocky build, a hawk *nai-nek-chai* a prominent aquiline nose, tawny hair almost like a cap of feathers, a piercing gaze and strong claw-like hands. In their animal form, *nai-nek-chai* are usually indistinguishable from any other animal of that type,

although close observation may show an unusual amount of intelligence in its actions.

Relations: *Nai-nek-chai* usually live amongst humans but the two races make uneasy companions. *Nai-nek-chai* can never fully grasp human behaviour, and humans consider the shapechangers to be lazy thieves, in general. *Nai-nek-chai* have no particular likes or dislikes for other races. They find the more animalistic species, like *tlaxu*, easier to understand but otherwise relate to all species on an equal footing.

Alignment: *Nai-nek-chai* are usually either Chaotic because of their lack of respect for rules and organisation, or true Neutral because of their mostly self-centred nature. *Nai-nek-chai* of pack or herd animals, however, can sometimes tend towards Lawful alignments. They have no particular tendency towards Good or Evil either way, and do not follow mythological associations between animal types and morality. For example, although rats and snakes are often considered 'evil' creatures, *nai-nek-chai* of these species are just as likely to be Good or Neutral as they are Evil.

Nai-nek-chai Lands: The *nai-nek-chai* have no land of their own, as they are in no way an organised, centralised, species. They usually live amongst humans, often attempting to hide their true nature. Other *nai-nek-chai* favour their animal sides and live in the wilds. There are sailor's tales of islands in the Outer Sea inhabited by *nai-nek-chai* (or similar animal shapechangers) but most *nai-nek-chai* deny all knowledge of such places, and the rest of them lie outrageously.

In the Khazarate of Vaarta, the Church oppresses *nai-nek-chai* (known there as

Novodnolaki) and hunts them down as evil spirits. An exception is a regiment of wolf nai-nek-chai (*Volkolaki*) who act as bodyguards to the Khazar.

Religion: Nai-nek-chai adopt any religion they please, and have a wide range of degrees of faith. Those in Imperial lands usually follow the Imperial Pantheon, favouring the minor spirits. The Khazar's Volkolaki regiment are all fervent converts to the Vaartan Church.

Classes: Nai-nek-chai are likely to follow almost any class although most commonly they take the path of fighter or rogue. Nai-nek-chai, perhaps because of their spirit roots, enjoy spellcasting although they tend towards shamans most of all. Bards and sorcerers are the most likely form of arcane caster.

Language: Nai-nek-chai speak the local human language. They have no language of their own, but each nai-nek-chai is able to communicate with animals of their own species.

Names: Nai-nek-chai take the names of the local culture, although notable nai-nek-chai sometimes give themselves nicknames based upon their animal type. These are usually flippant or obvious in nature.

Nai-nek-chai assumed names: Crusher (constrictor snake), Grey Ghost (wolf), Grunter (boar), Inky (squid), Master Fang (viper snake), Monkey Girl (monkey), Nightwing (owl), Wavedancer (porpoise).

Adventurers: Because they seldom feel at home, nai-nek-chai are drawn to the life of a wanderer. Their natural curiosity often draws them to trouble. Some nai-nek-chai adopt causes with great enthusiasm, either turning to a life serving justice, freedom or, on the flip side, cruelty or thievery.

Nai-nek-chai Racial Traits

- +2 Wis, -2 Int. Nai-nek-chai are creatures of instinct, not intellect.
- Nai-nek-chai base speed is 30 feet.
- **Medium:** As medium-sized creatures (in their humanoid form) nai-nek-chai gain no special bonuses or penalties based upon their size.
- **Shapechanger:** All nai-nek-chai are Humanoid with the Shapechanger subtype.
- **Animal Blood:** Although Humanoid, nai-nek-chai are also considered to have the Animal Type for the purposes of spells and effects. For example, a nai-nek-chai could be affected by both a *charm person* and a *charm animal* spell.
- **Low Light Vision.**
Animal Form: A nai-nek-chai may assume the shape of one species of Small or Tiny Animal. To do so is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. A nai-nek-chai may assume animal form a number of times per day equal to 1 + his Constitution bonus. He may remain in this form indefinitely, and may return to human form in the same fashion (this does not count towards the number of changes per day). Any armour or clothing worn at the time of

transformation simply falls off. Magical worn items may remain, at the GM's discretion.

In animal form, the nai-nek-chai's mental ability scores are unchanged. He keeps any skills that he has (although it may not be possible to use some in the new form). He gains a modifier to his physical ability scores depending upon the animal form taken (See Table: Animal Forms below). He may also gain any modes of locomotion that the new form has, and any racial skill bonuses. The change in size will affect armour class, attack rolls, Hide and grapple checks.

In animal form a nai-nek-chai gains any extraordinary abilities of the animal form and any attack forms (and is automatically proficient in their use). Where the creature has a single attack form, the nai-nek-chai applies 1.5x his Strength bonus to damage. Where an animal form has secondary attacks these are made at -5 to the attack roll and x1/2 Strength modifier to damage. A nai-nek-chai may learn the Multiattack feat to reduce this penalty and may also learn feats such as Weapon Focus and apply the effects to his natural attacks. A nai-nek-chai is also eligible to learn Improved Natural Attack, Ability Focus and other applicable 'monster' feats. Improved Natural Armour, if taken, applies only to the nai-nek-chai's animal form.

- **Automatic Languages:** Common. (Low Imperial in the World of Conclave).
- **Bonus Languages:** Any.

Nai-nek-chai Feats

Several feats are available to nai-nek-chai characters:

Medium Animal Form

You may assume the form of a Medium sized Animal.

Prerequisite: Nai-nek-chai, 1st level.

Benefit: Choose a Medium sized animal as your animal form (See Table: Medium Animal Forms). In all other respects your shapechange ability is the same as any other nai-nek-chai.

Extra Shapeshifting

You are able to assume animal form more often than most nai-nek-chai.

Prerequisite: Nai-nek-chai

Benefit: You gain an extra 2 uses per day of your animal form special ability. This feat may be taken more than once. Each time it is taken the total number of shapechanges per day increases by 2.

Table: Nai-nek-chai Animal Forms

Species	Ability Scores	Racial Skills Bonus	Other	Size	Attacks
Badger	-2 Str, +6 Dex, +4 Con	+4 Escape Artist	Burrow 30 ft.	S	Claw (1d2) Bite* (1d3)
Cat	-8 Str, +4 Dex	+4 Climb, +4 Hide, +4 Move Silently, +8 Jump, +8 Balance	Use Dex for Climb and Jump	T	Claw (1d2) Bite* (1d3)
Dog	+2 Str, +6 Dex, +4 Con	+4 Jump, +4 Survival	-	S	Bite (1d4)
Eagle	+4 Dex, +2 Con	+8 Spot	Fly 80 ft.	S	Talons (1d4) Bite* (1d4)
Hawk	-4 Str, +6 Dex	+8 Spot	Fly 60 ft.	T	Talons (1d4)
Lizard	-8 Str, +4 Dex	+8 Balance, +8 Climb	Climb 20 ft. Use Dex for Climb	T	Bite (1d4)
Monkey	-8 Str, +4 Dex	+8 Balance, +8 Climb	Climb 30 ft. Use Dex for Climb	T	Bite (1d3)
Noyaki**	+2 Str, +6 Dex, +6 Con	+4 Climb	Use Dex for Climb	S	Gore (1d4)
Octopus	+2 Str, +6 Dex	+4 Hide, +10 Escape Artist, +8 Swim	Swim 30 ft.	S	Arms (0) Bite* (1d3)
Owl	-6 Str, +6 Dex	+8 Listen, +8 Spot, +14 Move Silently	Fly 40 ft.	T	Talons (1d4)
Rat	-8 Str, +4 Dex	+4 Hide, +4 Move Silently, +8 Balance, +8 Climb, +8 Swim	Climb 15 ft. Swim 15 ft. Use Dex for Climb and Swim	T	Bite (1d3)
Raven	-10 Str, +4 Dex	-	Fly 40 ft.	T	Claw (1d2)
Shri**	-2 Str, +6 Dex	-	Tenacious	S	Claw (1d4) Bite* (1d3)
Snake (Viper)	-6 Str, +6 Dex	-	Climb 15 ft., Swim 15 ft. Poison. Save DC 10+Con modifier	T	Bite (1)
Snake (Viper)	-4 Str, +6 Dex	-	Climb 20 ft., Swim 20 ft. Poison. Save DC 10 + Con modifier	S	Bite (1d2)
Weasel	-8 Str, +4 Dex	+4 Move Silently, +8 Balance, +8 Climb	Climb 30 ft. Use Dex for Climb Attach	T	Bite 1d3

*Secondary attack.

**World of Conclave creature. See <http://www.creativeconclave.co.uk/domesticanimals.html>

Table: Medium Animal Forms

Species	Ability Scores	Racial Skills Bonus	Other	Size	Attacks
Baboon	+4 Str, +4 Dex, +2 Con	+8 Climb	Climb 30 ft.	M	Bite (1d6)
Boar	+4 Str, +6 Con	-	Ferocity	M	Gore (1d8)
Cheetah	+6 Str, +8 Dex, +4 Con	-	Sprint	M	Bite (1d6) Claw* (1d2)
Crocodile	+8 Str, +2 Dex, +6 Con	+8 Swim	Swim 30 ft.	M	Bite (1d8) Tail Slap (1d12)
Dog	+4 Str, +4 Dex, +4 Con	+4 Jump, +4 Survival	-	M	Bite (1d6)
Hyena	+4 Str, +4 Dex, +4 Con	-	-	M	Bite (1d6)
Leopard	+6 Str, +8 Dex, +4 Con	+8 Balance, +8 Climb, +8 Hide, +8 Jump, +8 Move Silently	Climb 20 ft.	M	Bite (1d6) Claw* (1d3)
Monitor Lizard	+6 Str, +4 Dex, +6 Con	+4 Hide, +4 Move Silently, +8 Swim	Swim 30 ft.	M	Bite (1d8)
Pony	+2 Str, +2 Dex, +2 Con	-	-	M	Hoof* (1d3)
Porpoise	+6 Dex, +2 Con	+8 Swim	Swim 80 ft.	M	Slam (2d4)
Shark	+2 Str, +4 Dex, +2 Con	+8 Swim	Swim 60 ft.	M	Bite (1d6)
Snake (Constrictor)	+6 Str, +6 Dex, +2 Con	-	Climb 20 ft., Swim 20 ft.	M	Bite (1d3)
Squid	+4 Str, +6 Dex	+8 Swim	Swim 60 ft.	M	Arms (0) Bite* (1d6)
Wolf	+2 Str, +4 Dex, +4 Con	+4 Survival	-	M	Bite (1d6)
Wolverine	+4 Str, +4 Dex, +8 Con	+8 Climb	Burrow 10 ft., Climb 10 ft.	M	Claw (1d4) Bite* (1d6)

* Secondary Attack

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