

Knights of the High Forest

Knights of the Hart, Part 3

by Chris Tulach

The Knights of the High Forest are an all elven branch of the order, numbering approximately 45 members. They exist to keep Highfolk, Highvale, and the Vesve free of evil influence. The Knights of the High Forest engage in extensive guerrilla warfare in the Vesve Forest (mostly against agents of luz), and also protect the trade route that runs from Highfolk to Perrenland. They are not above using diplomacy and politics to help their cause, as they need money to continue some of their activities.

The knights have a few primary goals; the most important of which is the containment and eventual expulsion of luz from the Vesve Forest. The Vesve is the front line in the war against luz, and the knights fight here savagely. They have vowed not to let luz advance further in the forest. In this, the Knights of Veluna and Furyondy support (if not directly aid) them in any way possible.

The knights also seek to protect the vital trade route that originates in the nation of Furyondy, travels through Highfolk, and ends in Perrenland. This trade route is vital to the continued prosperity of Highfolk and the surrounding area. To this end, knights have employed themselves as caravan guards and scouts for merchants traveling through the area. They also maintain many small lookout posts along Highfolk's stretch of the trade route.

The most common knightly insignia of the Knights of the High Forest is a golden stag's antlers on a green background. They do not use ranks or any authority symbols.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a knight of the High Forest, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria.

Race: Elf or half-elf.

Alignment: Any good.

Base Attack Bonus: +5.

Skills: Diplomacy 4 ranks, Survival 8 ranks.

Languages: Elven, sylvan.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Special: The only way a character may become a knight is through their deeds. Knights periodically watch for prospective adventurers to help fill their ranks. Potential candidates will be approached if the time and conditions are right.

CLASS SKILLS

The Knight of the High Forest's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (local) (Int), Knowledge (nature) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Living Greyhawk Special Requirements

For purposes of the **Living Greyhawk** campaign, the elf or half-elf must be a Highfolk regional character and must take an oath to protect the land of Highfolk. This oath grounds the knight in the regions of Highfolk, Furyondy, Veluna, and the metaregion of luz's Border States. A knight PC may only spend a limited time away from these lands; in **Living Greyhawk** terms, they cannot spend more than 26 time units a year playing adventures set in regions outside these areas. Contact the Highfolk triad for more information on how to meet any other requirements not listed here.

Knights of the High Forest						
Base						
Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Trackless step, improved weapon familiarity	+1 level of ranger
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Uncanny dodge (natural surroundings)	+1 level of ranger
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	One with the Vesve	+1 level of ranger
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Inspire courgae 1/day	+1 level of ranger
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Bonus feat	+1 level of ranger
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Special mount	+1 level of ranger
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Improved uncanny dodge	+1 level of ranger
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Inspire courage 2/day	+1 level of ranger
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Bonus feat	+1 level of ranger
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	<i>Hero of renown</i>	+1 level of ranger

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are features of the Knight of the High Forest prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Knights of the High Forest are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor, medium armor, and shields (except tower shields).

Spells per Day: Starting at 1st level, and at each knight of the High Forest level thereafter, the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in the ranger class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved favored enemies and so on). If the character had no ranger levels before becoming a 1st-level Knight of the High Forest, she gains the spellcasting ability of a 1st-level ranger - that is, no spellcasting ability - when she takes her first knight level. When she becomes a 4th-level knight, she gains spellcasting ability (as a 4th-level ranger) assuming her Wisdom score is high enough to grant her a bonus 1st-level spell.

A Knight of the High Forest's caster level is one-half the sum of her ranger levels and her knight levels.

Trackless Step (Ex): A knight leaves no trail in the Vesve Forest, and cannot be tracked. In other natural surroundings outdoors, the knight may move at half speed to gain this benefit.

Improved Weapon Familiarity (Ex): The knight may treat all elven exotic weapons as martial weapons rather than exotic weapons. A weapon is treated as being associated with the elven race if the race's name appears as part of the weapon's name.

Uncanny Dodge (Natural Surroundings) (Ex): The following uncanny dodge ability only functions for the knight when he is outside in natural surroundings (not a town or city environment, or underground).

At 2nd level, the Knight of the High Forest retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. He still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC when immobilized.

If the knight gains uncanny dodge from another class (such as barbarian or rogue), the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge in natural surroundings (see below).

One with the Vesve (Su): Upon attaining 3rd level, when fighting in the Vesve Forest, the knight has the supernatural ability to avoid blows, through the use of natural surroundings. Tree limbs mysteriously appear to block deadly swings, and falling leaves drop in the opponent's face at just the wrong time. The knight must be outdoors in the Vesve to use this ability. As a free action, the character may choose one opponent each round. The opponent chosen has a 30% miss chance versus the knight (treat like concealment). This benefit lasts until the knight's next initiative, at which time he may choose another opponent, or keep the same one. This ability functions in forests outside of the Vesve Forest, but the concealment is at a 20% miss chance.

Inspire Courage (Su): This ability, usable once a day at 4th level, allows a Knight of the High Forest to use rallying cries and words of support to inspire courage in his allies. This bolsters the knight's allies against fear, and improves their combat abilities.

To be affected, an ally must hear the words of the knight for a full round. The effect lasts as long as the knight continues to rally his allies through his motivating speech, and for 5 rounds after he is done talking (or 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear the knight). While motivating his friends, the knight can fight but cannot cast spells, activate magic items by spell completion (such as scrolls), or activate magic items by magic word (such as wands). Affected allies receive a +2 morale bonus to saving throws against fear and charm effects and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls. Inspire courage is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability. Activating this ability is a standard action. The knight gains an additional daily use of this ability at 8th level.

Special Mount: At 6th level, the knight receives a special mount from the elves of the Vesve (either the High Elven Court or one of the prominent wood elven clans). This mount is a sylvan stag (described below), and the knight suffers no penalty to Ride checks for riding this steed. The stag has been already trained to accept a rider, and fight in combat. Occasionally, this mount has been blessed by Ehlonna (referred to the elves as Ehlenestra), and possesses the celestial template (DM's discretion).

The knight's class levels stack with any paladin levels (or levels of other prestige classes that grant a special mount) the character may have for determining the characteristics of the mount.

Bonus Feat: At 5th and 9th levels, the Knight of the High Forest may select a bonus feat. The feats that can be selected as bonus feats are Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Far Shot, Improved Precise Shot, Leadership, Lightning Reflexes, Manyshot, Mobility, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Skill Focus, Spring Attack, Track, Weapon Finesse, and Weapon Focus. The knight must meet any requirements under the feat's description to select that feat.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Natural Surroundings) (Ex): The following uncanny dodge ability only functions for the knight when he is outside in natural surroundings (not a town or city environment, or underground).

At 7th level, the knight can no longer be flanked; he can react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as he can react to a single attacker. This defense denies others (such as rogues) the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack him. The exception to this defense is that another character at least four levels higher than the knight can flank him (and thus sneak attack him).

If the knight gains uncanny dodge (see above) from another class (such as barbarian or rogue), the character automatically gains improved uncanny dodge in natural surroundings, and the levels from those classes stack to determine the minimum level needed to flank the character.

Hero of Renown (Sp): Upon reaching 10th level, the knight has become a legend in the Highfolk region. Many people of the Fairdells know of her, and respect her. The knight has the spell-like, mind-affecting ability to *enthrall* as the spell cast by a bard equal to the knight's prestige class level. She can use this ability a number of times per day equal to her Charisma modifier (minimum of 1).

SYLVAN STAG

This beautiful creature resembles a large deer, with great curved antlers and a soft brown hide. Its golden eyes seem to possess intelligence beyond that of its animal kin.

SYLVAN STAG - CR2

Usually N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +8, Spot +7

Languages Sylvan (understand but to not speak)

AC 14, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 12

(-1 size, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 30 (4d10+8 HD)

Immune charm, compulsion, poison

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares), woodland stride

Melee gore +7 (1d8+4), 2 hooves +2 (1d4+1)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +11

Abilities Str 16, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 14

Feats Alertness, Run

Skills Hide +3, Listen +8, Spot +7

Ecology

Found in the deepest of forests, the sylvan stag is a creature touched by the fey, often found near sites of quiet contemplation. It is intelligent, and frequently can be found in the company of druids or elves. Some say that the creature is a portent of good fortune, and occasionally, celestial versions of the creatures are encountered (thought to be blessed by the goddess Ehlonna).

Environment: Temperate forests (particularly the Vesve Forest)

Organization: Solitary or pair

Strategies and Tactics

Sylvan stags are often found as mounts for elves, and serve in much the same capacity as a warhorse does. When encountered alone in the wild, sylvan stags often use their great speed and woodland stride to outdistance potential enemies. If cornered or their young are threatened, sylvan stags attack by goring with their antlers and kicking with their hooves.

Skills: A sylvan stag has a +2 bonus on Hide checks.

For Player Characters

A sylvan stag requires training before it can bear a rider in combat. Training a sylvan stag requires six weeks of work and a DC 25 Handle Animal check. A rider may use a saddle similar to that of a horse for a sylvan stag.

Young sylvan stags can fetch as much as 1,000 gp, although elven communities frown upon such purchases. Professional trainers charge 500 gp to rear or train a sylvan stag. Sylvan stags often find their riders, and typically choose elves over any others (although rangers and druids of other races may be accepted as riders).

Carrying Capacity: A light load for a sylvan stag is up to 230 pounds; a medium load, 231-460 pounds; and a heavy load, 461-690 pounds. A sylvan stag can drag 3,450 pounds.

