

KNIGHTHOOD

For the Lady and the King!
- STANDARD BRETONNIAN
BATTLE-CRY.



Ask anyone to talk about Bretonnia, and, while they may chatter on about the beautiful countryside, wonderful food, the wealth of the nobility and the stench of the peasantry, sooner or later, they'll mention the knights.

From the lowest Knight Errant to the King himself, the knights of Bretonnia rule and defend their country. Without their staunch defense of the Realm, Bretonnia would have succumbed to the forces that beset it long ago.

— CULTURAL BACKGROUND —

Not just anybody can become a Bretonnian knight. First, you must be male, or at least pretending to be so. As far as the Bretonnians are concerned, chivalry is a male pursuit. No exceptions to this rule have ever been made.

Second, you must be a Bretonnian noble. Three exceptions to this rule have been recorded in the last two thousand years.

Of course, absolutely everyone who meets those two requirements becomes a knight. The gap between what knights are supposed to be and what a particular knight actually is can be enormous. Some are barely competent with a sword, and others have knowledge of riding that gets as far as the idea that you face the part of the horse that sticks up and neighs. The “knights” who ignore the tenets of chivalry are beyond counting. Still, the ideal is there, and nobles who fall short are looked down upon by their peers. So, what is the ideal? It revolves around three ideas: Valour, Loyalty, and Courtesy.

VALOUR

A valorous knight is one who fights bravely, skilfully, and honourably. Bravery requires the knight to stand firm in the face of foes who are superior, even if to do so is clearly suicidal. Even Bretonnian knights have enough sense to ignore this virtue at times, particularly if no one is watching.

In addition, knights, as the premier warriors of the realm, are expected to actually be the premier warriors of the realm—better than peasants and certainly better than women. Bretonnian knights faced with extremely skilled female mercenaries tend to try to prove their superiority in various embarrassing ways.

Finally, knights must fight honourably, which means hand-to-hand. Missile weapons are cowardly, gunpowder weapons even more so. Bretonnian knights do not regard the magic of the Damsels of the Lady as dishonourable, but any other magic certainly is.

LOYALTY

Loyalty is slightly more complex than obedience. A knight is ultimately loyal to the King, so disobeying the orders of his immediate superior in the interests of the King is still loyal. The immediate superior in question, however, may choose to demonstrate his disagreement with this ethical interpretation at length, from the other side of a besieging army.

Worse, the Bretonnians love tragic stories of knights who were caught between their loyalties to two different lords, had no way to act correctly, and thus died tragically trying to do the impossible. Some knights even manoeuvre themselves into



starring roles in such stories. These knights sometimes turn to non-knightly help to extricate themselves from their self-imposed predicament.

COURTESY

A true knight behaves properly at all times, even on the battlefield. This means showing respect to other knights by allowing your feudal superiors the honour of engaging the most glorious foe. Indeed, the level of courtesy on display as a group of Bretonnian Knights humbly yield the privilege of fighting a Bloodletter of Khorne can truly bring tears to the eyes. Greenskins, of course, merit no special treatment and are simply slaughtered.

Outside battle, knights never insult one another. They may suggest that another knight has been bewitched as the only possible explanation for his opinion of a woman's beauty, but a direct insult is out of place. This rule is generally observed, and Bretonnian knights learn how to couch the deepest insult in terms of utmost politeness. Many knights are too stupid to realise that they have actually been insulted.

Finally, knights are always polite to women. Women are expected to enter rooms first, sit down first, eat first, and so on. They are also to be protected from all danger. Indeed, the importance of protecting the women in his castle from the possibility of attack has prevented more than one bold knight from riding out against raiders. The women, of course, get no say in this treatment: they will eat first and be honoured, whether they like it or not, and they most certainly will not be allowed to put themselves into danger.

THE KNIGHT'S PROGRESS

Imperial knights start their careers as squires to another knight. Bretonnian knights have a different path. Upon reaching adulthood, an age that varies slightly from family to family but is always in the late teens, a male noble is dubbed a Knight Errant and sent out into the world to prove himself.

Knights Errant are supposed to travel the country, eagerly seeking out perilous situations in which to prove their mettle. Those who actually do it enter the Knight Errant career (see **Chapter VII: Characters and Careers**). Some nobles, however, have other interests and thus enter other careers.

Social pressure to pursue the perils of errantry is very strong, and so most nobles at least make a show of it. As a result, at any time there are large numbers of young nobles travelling around the country, looking for trouble. Naturally, they find it. Often enough, it is of their own devising.

Travelling the roads of Bretonnia alone is perilous even for Grail Knights; for young Knights Errant, it is almost suicidal. Some knights travel alone for precisely that reason, hoping to meet with glorious adventure but often finding a cold and lonely death instead. Most knights, then, find travelling companions. Other Knights Errant are the most popular choice, as they are of the same social class and truly understand your concerns. However, this is a case of the blind leading the blind, so wiser or luckier knights find themselves joining up with adventurers from a variety of backgrounds and social classes. Knights expect to be the leaders of such groups, of course.