

Sylvani

The Sylvani are a race of humanoids often described as “half-plant/half-humanoid” due to their unique origins. Many are subtly marked but are nonetheless distinct (green highlights to the skin or hair), but there are also individuals that show more marked characteristics of their plant-based origins (‘bark’ skin, flowers or vines as hair or upon the skin).

Culture

The Sylvani are a nomadic people who rarely settle. They wander across most of the face of Amroth, largely ignoring physical and political boundaries in extended family groups they call **kindred**. A Kindred consists of as few as 10 or as many as a hundred individuals of all ages, led by the elders. Elders are typically knowledgeable in several arts or skills typically earth magic, survival and area knowledge, and the various crafts that Sylvani need to know to survive. No Sylvani will own more than he can carry, for what good are possessions when the entirety of Amroth keeps you alive?

Names amongst the Sylvani are usually simple in nature, can reference ‘natural’ things, and usually pertain to the individual; rarely does an individual have a surname or otherwise, unless there are several individuals sharing that name. For example, there could be an individual by the name of Greystone, or several individuals named Rose, with each of them with a ‘differencing’ to distinguish them (Rose, daughter of Briar; Rose of the grasslands; short Rose). Sylvani typically keep the same name during a lifetime, but it can sometimes happen that an individual changes their name, usually due to some radical event. In cases such as this, the individual is known by both names briefly – for example, “Wild Rose, once known as Oak.”

Etiquette between Sylvani is as simple as the rest of their culture. When Sylvani meet, the younger addresses the elder first, honoring the other’s knowledge and wisdom. At a formal gathering, the elders of each kindred typically bless those present, typically invoking the forces of life and nature to grant wisdom, knowledge or other beneficial boons to those present. Disrespect of elders is frowned upon, and harm upon a life-bearing (i.e. pregnant) female or of a child is one of the few taboos that Sylvani have.

Societal issues amongst the Sylvani are few and far between. However, on the rare occasion that a Sylvani has willfully injured or harmed another Sylvani (directly or otherwise), others of that nomadic group not directly affected gather and discuss the issue. Should they decide that the offender merits punishment, they declare him/her ‘outcast’ for a time. During that time, the offender does not exist to the Sylvani and is completely shunned, forbidden from participation in with other Sylvani. Once the period has passed, the offender may return and ask to rejoin; only in the rarest of cases is this denied.

Due to their passive nature, and their skill at herbal arts and affinity for earth magic, Sylvani are tolerated in most areas. They do not recognize any authority other than the elders of their own kindred, but they also avoid cities and populated areas. Many people of Amroth appreciate the healing services a Sylvani kindred can provide, and trade local goods for healing services.

In the late fall, a kindred will typically find a low area, such as a valley or basin, to root down for the season. This is the only time of year they do not travel. In the spring, when the warmth of the season encourages them to stretch their legs, they travel again once more.

Legends and Tradition

Few traditions are native to the Sylvani race as a whole; most traditions are passed through the various nomadic groups. However, the Rite of Birth is one that is shared by all. During the child's birth from its pod, all family are present, serving as witness for the event, though it is not uncommon for non-family members to be present as well. Once born, the child is named, typically by the parents, though that honor may be granted to a respected individual (usually in advance, and consultation of the parents in regards to the name is acknowledged as 'good manners'). Once named, all then attend a celebration – not only of the child but of the continuation of life as well.

Sylvani legends speak of their creation during the Seventh Cataclysm by Amroth itself, as a response to the destruction of the planes and the growth of necromancy. Some races say that the Sylvani are immune to fate; that the young race has no role to play in the future of Amroth. The Sylvani speak of their role in the preservation of the magic of the lost planes, and their tie to the lands themselves. Certainly, with the coming of the Oasis, they are discovering that druidic magic suits their nature well.

Stats

Advantages:

½ cost Herbal Lore, Healing Arts, First Aid
May purchase Resist Toxin (max of 3)

Disadvantages:

Double damage from fire
Cannot run during winter months (Nov-Feb)
May not specialize as a Healer or Necromancer

Makeup:

Green/brown hair and brown skin, with leaves and (if spring) flowers in the hair
- If green, recommend to have 'patches' of green, to differentiate from orcs; likewise for brown and ogres
Optional – twigs, bark

Costuming

Sylvani wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing suitable for travelling: very few of their outfits are loose-fitting. They carry many of their possessions in backpacks made of woven baskets. They never wear hats - much of their sustenance comes from their leaves.