

Eikki's Puukko

(*Christian Hagga*)

An old Mercanian tale, the Saga of Eikki Valkonien, tells the story of a young trapper who returned home from a winter collecting furs to find his village razed and its people killed or enslaved by the army of the Krarthian Warlock-Lord, Jzardek the Scourge of the West. The Saga describes how, over the course of seven years, Eikki Valkonien lived in the wilderness, planning his revenge against Jzardek and hunting the warlord's apprentices. It tells of Eikki's many deeds of courage and cunning during this time. In return for saving a forest spirit from Jzardek's greatest apprentice, she imbued Eikki's puukko knife – a Mercanian forester's most important tool – with great magical power to aid his hunt against sorcery-wielding enemies. The saga later tells how Eikki confronted Jzardek at the top of a great cliff, using the puukko to cut through the Warlock's sorcerous attacks before plunging the knife into his eye and hurling him to his death, hundreds of metres below.

Eikki's Puukko is a simple-looking, single-edged knife with a blade under four inches long. The maple handle is capped with a reindeer antler pommel (from Eikki's first kill during a hunt), and its simple sheath is made from the hide of the same animal. The pommel is engraved with Old Mercanian runes meaning simply "This knife belongs to Eikki". As well as being an ideal knife for crafting in the wilderness, it holds an incredible edge and its magic guides the wielder in battle; it functions as a +2 weapon (1d4 +2, 5). Further, the enchantment placed upon the puukko by the nature spirit confers specific benefits to an owner who is 'beloved of nature' (GM's discretion, but this may include many herders, trappers, shepherds, foresters, druids, and of course, characters of the Hunter profession). Such wielders gain a +2 MAGICAL DEFENCE and ignore the first 4 points of damage caused by spells, so long as their hand is on the knife's handle.

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