

paths of battle

Paths of Shadows for Shadow of the Demon Lord

In these dark times, the signs of the apocalypse are everywhere. The orcs have thrown off their chains and broken the back of the Empire. The hordes of beastmen gathering in the wilderness grow larger than ever, while strange cultists brazenly practice in the open, carrying out their hideous rituals and summoning vile things to hasten the end of all things. Once more, the jotun in the frozen wastes turn their eyes northward, seeing vulnerability in their ancient enemies, and plot accordingly. All the while, wave after wave of the undead pour out from the Desolation to crash against the bulwarks of the beleaguered defenders in the Northern Reach, whose strength and resolve weaken with each onslaught.

To meet these formidable and never-ending challenges, men and women take up arms to fight, to defend, and to destroy. Some are hard-bitten mercenaries, veterans of countless conflicts. Others are called by their faith and convictions to take a stand when no one else will. Others still are thrown into the violence by fate, bad luck, or circumstance. And while their stories vary and their reasons for fighting differ—whether for gold, gods, or glory—all walk the paths of battle, finding their destinies.

Paths of Battle continues the *Paths of Shadow* series, which was launched to examine and expand on the expert paths presented in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. This supplement focuses on paths allowing characters to develop their martial skills, and presents again the berserker, fighter, paladin, and ranger, each gaining new background options to help players better fit them into the game. Several paths also gain new benefits to make them even more appealing as potential character options.

Finally, *Paths of Battle* introduces the knight, a brand new path for characters devoted to protecting the innocent and championing noble causes as the Shadow looms ever larger. Do you have what it takes to fight the Demon Lord with cold steel and gritty determination?



~CREDITS~

WRITING, DESIGN, AND ART DIRECTION:

ROBERT J. SCHWALB

EDITING: TOM CADORETTE

PROOFREADING: JAY SPIGHT

ART DIRECTION: ROBERT J. SCHWALB AND HAL MANGOLD

GRAPHIC DESIGN: KARA HAMILTON AND HAL MANGOLD

LAYOUT: KARA HAMILTON

ILLUSTRATIONS: LUKA ARH, ERIC LOFGREN,
AND BRITT MARTIN

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PO Box #12548, Murfreesboro, TN 37129

info@schwalbentertainment.com www.schwalbentertainment.com

BERSERKER

A vital energy for those in the thick of battle, anger enables a combatant to push through extreme pain and injury in order to return it twofold to those who dealt it. For berserkers, anger is more than just an emotion: it is a living thing always raging within them, desperate to be unleashed, always rattling the cage of self-control containing it. So when a berserker's temper slips—even by a little—all the rage, hatred, and frustration boils out to transform the warrior into a wild killer, a bloodthirsty brute seeking nothing but the utter destruction of any foe who dares to stand before them.

The transformative power of a berserker's rage might come from a variety of sources. Many are simply unbalanced, having witnessed so many awful things that they now snap under the pressure. Some have divine or supernatural causes for their anger; for example, dwarf berserkers believe they are taken over by one of their ancestor spirits. Others might be haunted by spirits or, worse, demons, and when they surrender to their anger, the entity haunting or possessing them takes over.

BERSERKER STORY DEVELOPMENT

d6 Story Development

- 1 You are possessed by a minor demon. You can keep it under control most times, but in a fight, it struggles to break free and take control. You might have become possessed after handling a demonic relic, encountering a demon in battle, or being subjected to strange magic.
- 2 An abundance of pain, death, and horror taxed your mind to the point of breaking, so that when you come under intense pressure, you snap, becoming a deadly killer.
- 3 A spirit, perhaps one of your ancestors, dwells within you and, when you are endangered, takes over your body to help you survive. You have spotty memories of what happens when you go berserk.
- 4 You have always had a bad temper, but now it's nearly ungovernable. Any provocation can make you enraged and you lose all restraint and free will when in the grips of your rage.
- 5 You wronged a hag, witch, or some other powerful supernatural creature, and were cursed by them as a result. Now, whenever you fight, the curse turns you into a brutal, unrestrained killer.
- 6 You hope to earn a place at the gods' table in the afterlife by seeking a glorious death. In battle, your eyes go wild and froth flecks your lips as you cleave through your foes in anticipation of the end you crave.

LEVEL 3 BERSERKER

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +6

Berserk If you are not fatigued when you take damage, you can choose to go berserk. If you go berserk, you gain all of the following benefits and drawbacks for 1 minute or until you become unconscious.

- You gain a +10 bonus to Health.
- You cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

- You make attack rolls with 1 bane.
- Your attacks with weapons deal 2d6 extra damage.
- You must take a fast turn whenever possible, and use an action on each of your turns to attack, relaying on a charge if necessary.

When your stop being berserk, you become fatigued for 1 minute and you must get a success on a Will challenge roll or gain 1 Insanity.

Fury Unleashed If gaining Insanity would cause you to go mad, you go berserk instead, even if you are fatigued. While you are berserk in this way, the GM controls your character. At the end of each round, the GM rolls a d6. On a 5 or higher, you stop being berserk and reduce your Insanity total by 1d6 + your Will modifier (minimum 0). You then become fatigued for 1 minute. If you were already fatigued, you instead take 1d6 damage.

Iron Hide You have a +1 bonus to Defense if you are not wearing medium or heavy armor.

LEVEL 6 BERSERKER

Characteristics Health +6

Ferocious Wrath While you are berserk, you have a +2 bonus to Speed and you make attack rolls against frightened targets with 1 boon.

Frightful Wrath When you go berserk, each creature within short range who is not a member of your group must get a success on a Will challenge roll or become frightened for 1 round.

LEVEL 9 MASTER BERSERKER

Characteristics Health +6

Reckless Strike When you attack with a melee weapon, you can choose to make the attack roll with 1 bane to deal 2d6 extra damage on a success.



FIGHTER

Some of the greatest warriors to ever walk the world were fighters. Unmatched when it comes to combat training, fighters display incredible excellence at arms, and the tenacity to withstand the worst battle conditions. From hard-bitten mercenaries to keen-eyed archers, they include any who devote time and training to the mastery of arms and armor.

Fighters demonstrate their combat prowess with any weapon they wield, but most favor certain styles over others. Some fighters prefer to hang back and loose missile after missile into their foes, while others roar and leap into the thick of battle, methodically swinging axe and sword upon their foes, as ribbons of blood and severed limbs fling about into the air.

FIGHTER STORY DEVELOPMENT

d6	Story Development
1	You turned away from the path you were following to focus on improving your combat capabilities and become a weapons expert.
2	A veteran of many battles, becoming a fighter is merely an evolution of your combat training.
3	After a few near-defeats, you decided to hone your fighting skills so you can survive the challenges ahead.
4	You sought out a master to refine your training, enhance your existing skills, and develop new techniques.
5	You lost your faith—in your god, your nation, your family, or even yourself. Now you seek a new path free from old obligations, carving your destiny from the future.
6	You throw yourself into training, knowing you will become the greatest warrior the land has ever known.

LEVEL 3 FIGHTER

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You speak another language or add a profession to your list of professions.

Fight with Anything If you attack with a weapon or improvised weapon whose damage die is less than 1d6, you treat the damage die as 1d6. In addition, when you attack with a weapon or improvised weapon, you make the attack roll with 1 boon. Finally, your Strength counts as 2 higher for the purpose of meeting armor and weapon requirements.

Fighter Talent Choose one fighter talent from the ones described below.

LEVEL 6 FIGHTER

Characteristics Health +5

Durable When you would heal damage equal to your healing rate, your healing rate equals your Health divided by 3.

Fighter Talent Choose one fighter talent from the ones described below.

LEVEL 9 MASTER FIGHTER

Characteristics Defense +1, Health +5

Fighter's Resolve You make challenge rolls to resist attacks with 1 boon.

Weapon Mastery When you make an attack roll with a weapon and the number on the d20 is 9 or less, you can reroll the d20. You must use the second number rolled, even if it is 9 or less.

FIGHTER TALENTS

Fight with Two Weapons When you attack with two weapons, you reduce the number of banes from the attack by 2.

Haft Attack When you attack with a polearm or a staff, you can use a triggered action to attack with the other end of the weapon. Make the attack roll with 1 bane and the attack deals 1d6 damage.

Powerful Attack When you attack with a heavy weapon, you can make the attack roll with 1 bane to deal 2d6 extra damage.

Precise Attack When you attack with a swift weapon, you can make the attack roll against the target's Agility instead of its Defense.

Shield Bash When you get a success on an attack roll made using a shield, you bash the target and make attack rolls against the same target with 2 boons until the end of the next round.

Swift Reload You can use a triggered action on your turn to reload a weapon that has the reload property.

Swift Shot When you make an attack with a ranged weapon that does not have a reload property, you can use a triggered action to attack with the same weapon. You make the second attack roll with 1 bane.



KNIGHT

Knights have always held an important place in the Empire—in fact, exemplars of their skills and devotion existed in Rûl long before the Kalasans arrived. A breed of combatant bound by certain principles and expectations of behavior, knights were warriors paramount, being true champions of the lords and ladies they served. They proved their worth on the battlefield, clad in plate, armed with lance and shield, charging into battle astride powerful steeds. They could ride down infantry and skewer vile monsters with their lances.

And off the battlefield, most knights were paragons of courtesy and honor, their code of conduct guiding them through any situation. Even though new developments in arms, such as the emergence of gunpowder, threaten to make their kind obsolete, knights still roam the Empire's lands, righting wrongs, fighting for the innocent, and dispensing justice wherever they travel.

While most knights are valiant and principled, not all are. Some knights are little better than mercenaries, selling their swords to whomever can afford their price, while others live as robbers, using their arms and fighting skills to take what they want. Then again, not all people who become knights have backgrounds in courtly training. Some might be noble warriors from primitive societies, fierce protectors who seek to right wrongs, or holy men and women who have taken up arms to fight in the name of their gods.

KNIGHT STORY DEVELOPMENT

d6 Story Development

- 1 You squired for a knight, learning to care for your steed and equipment and how to conduct yourself. You earned your title after you completed your training.
- 2 You witnessed war, strife, and suffering, and found you could tolerate it no further. You took up arms to bring justice and order into the world.
- 3 A monarch or noble knighted you after you performed a great service for the land.
- 4 You found a dying knight, tended to him as he departed the world, taking his armor and gear upon his death. You have since dedicated yourself to hone your fighting skills to be worthy of the armor you wear.
- 5 You hold yourself to a higher standard than most and strive to do right in all things. You have all the qualities that would make you a knight, even if you do not have the title.
- 6 You hold close to a personal code of conduct impelling you to treat others fairly, to be fearless in battle, and, above all, be the paragon of courtesy and noble behavior to one and all.

LEVEL 3 KNIGHT

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You speak another language, learn to read and write a language you know how to speak, or add an academic profession to your list of professions.

Armor Specialization While wearing medium or heavy armor, you gain a +1 bonus to Defense.

Devastating Charge When you charge, your attack deals 1d6 extra damage or 2d6 extra damage if you are riding another creature.

Warding Shield If you are armed with a shield when a creature attacks another creature within your reach, you can use a triggered action to impose 1 bane on the triggering creature's attack roll.

LEVEL 6 KNIGHT

Characteristics Health +5

Chivalry When a creature within your reach would take damage, you can use a triggered action to halve the damage the creature would take.

Inspire Courage You make challenge rolls to resist or remove the frightened affliction with 1 boon. As well, you grant 1 boon on such rolls made by creatures you choose who can see you and are within short range.

LEVEL 9 MASTER KNIGHT

Characteristics Health +5

Knightly Resolve When you become injured or incapacitated, you can use a triggered action to heal damage equal to your healing rate. Once you use this talent, you must wait until you complete a rest before you can use it again.



PALADIN

Holy warriors possessed of great courage and determination, paladins take the fight to darkness, waging war eternal against the forces of wickedness and unrest threatening to upset the foundation on which civilization stands. Most paladins hear their gods calling them to take up arms and join the struggle against demons and foul monsters. Others take up the paladin's life out of a sense of obligation, concern over troubling events, or from a need for vengeance against those who have brought ruin to the world.

Any religion or faith can produce paladins. Paladins affiliated with the cult of the New God might be temple guardians, valiant crusaders, or even inquisitors. Those with ties to the Old Faith rely on Nature and Primal magic to give them strength against their foes. And there are even some paladins with ties to witchcraft who take on the role as a coven's protector or a witch's guardian.

PALADIN STORY DEVELOPMENT

d6 Story Development

- 1 Your research into ancient and forbidden texts revealed unspeakable truths about the coming apocalypse. You set aside your other goals to take up a weapon and fight against the shadow spreading across the world.
- 2 You were called to carry the fight to the enemies of your faith and you seek to destroy demons, devils, undead, and any other creature that misleads and corrupts.
- 3 You swore sacred oaths to complete a quest important to your faith. You might seek a relic, a holy site, or an individual who will play an important part in the future.
- 4 You vowed to fight tyrants and lift the chains of oppression they lay upon the innocent.
- 5 You experienced significant loss at the hands of evil. You crave vengeance and nothing will stop you from getting it.
- 6 You are a noble warrior of unwavering faith. You defend the innocent, perform acts of charity, heal the sick, and alleviate suffering wherever you find it.

LEVEL 3 PALADIN

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1

Magic You discover one tradition associated with your religion or you learn one spell.

Divine Cause When you would make a challenge roll to resist an attack, you can expend the casting of a spell. You make the roll with a number of boons equal to the rank of the spell whose casting you expended (minimum 1 boon).

Divine Smite When you get a success on an attack with a weapon, you can expend the casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting you expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target of your attack was a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, you increase the extra damage by 1d6.

Faith Healing You can use an action to touch one living creature you can reach that has 0 Corruption and expend a casting of a spell. Choose one of the following effects.

- The target heals 1d6 damage per rank of the spell expended (minimum 1d6).
- If you expended a rank 2 or higher spell, you can remove the diseased or poisoned affliction from the target.

LEVEL 6 PALADIN

Characteristics Health +4

Magic You learn one spell.

Divine Vigor You take no damage from disease or poison and you are immune to the diseased and poisoned afflictions.

Sense Enemies You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to attune your senses to detect creatures around you for 1 minute. Until the effect ends, no creature within short range can be hidden from you and no creature with 1 Corruption or more within medium range can be hidden from you. Such creatures derive no benefits from being obscured from you. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

LEVEL 9 MASTER PALADIN

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1

Magic You learn one spell.

Holy Radiance You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to cause light to shine from a point within your space out to a number of yards equal to twice your Power. The light moves with you, remaining centered on the point in your space. It lasts for 1 minute.

Until this effect ends, you and creatures you choose within the light cannot be frightened and make challenge rolls to resist attacks with 1 boon. Demons, devils, faeries, spirits, and undead in the area of light are impaired for as long as they remain in the area. (You are not impaired by the light if you yourself are a faerie or undead.)

You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.



RANGER

The first line of defense against the darkness outside the civilized lands, rangers prowl the wilderness, always on the move, never staying in one place for too long. Consummate survivors, rangers know how to get along in the wild. They know how to find water, what foods to forage, and how to hunt and trap game. Whether they climb the trackless mountains or stalk through the deepest forests, rangers are no more in their element than when they are in the midst of the wilds.

The ranger's life is one of isolation. Many feel called to set out into the most dangerous lands, where they wage war against the monstrosities that pose the direst threat to ordinary people. Others have cut ties to their homeland, preferring to keep their own company to the crowds and stench of the cities. Most rangers see it as their duty to protect the natural places and those who struggle to make a life on the frontier, though some feel no obligation to the world, and might even join forces with other wild things to curb civilization's encroachment upon the untamed lands.

Rangers come from all backgrounds. Warriors might become rangers after fighting monsters in the wild or blazing trails into unknown lands, while rogues might develop ranger talents after being outlaws or bandits forced out of urban environments. Many priests of the Old Faith and magicians focused on Nature and Primal magic become rangers to champion their gods or to deepen their connection to the natural world.

RANGER STORY DEVELOPMENT

d6 Story Development

- 1 Circumstances forced you to abandon your homeland and live in the wilderness. You have honed your wilderness skills to survive.
- 2 You abandoned the civilized world after becoming sickened by the decadence and corruption you saw all around you.
- 3 You took up arms to defend the gods of the Old Faith against the despoilers who would assault the natural world.
- 4 A skilled hunter, you put your talents to use hunting down and destroying strange monsters spawned in places stained by darkness.
- 5 A yearning to travel drives you to seek out new lands and peoples. Your knowledge makes you the quintessential guide, since there are few lands you have not yet explored.
- 6 The gravest threat to the civilized lands hails from the unknown wilds. To protect your homeland, you venture into the wilderness to take the fight against beastmen, ogres, giants, and other hideous creatures.

LEVEL 3 RANGER

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +8, Perception +1

Languages and Professions Add one wilderness profession to your list of professions.

Alertness You make Perception rolls with 1 boon. In addition, you cannot be surprised while you are conscious.

Hunt Prey You can use an action, or a triggered action on your turn, to designate one creature you can see as your prey. The target remains your prey until you use this talent again, you become unconscious, or you complete a rest. Your prey grants you 1 boon on attack rolls you make against it and to challenge rolls you make to track it.

Natural Lore You make challenge rolls to recall useful information about animals, plants, geography, and nature with 1 boon.

LEVEL 6 RANGER

Characteristics Health +4

Expert Guide You always know which direction is north, and you can always retrace your steps. In addition, when you travel over land, everyone in your group that has Speed lower than yours moves at your Speed.

Expert Tracker When you find tracks, you can make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, you learn a useful piece of information about the creature or creatures that made the tracks.

LEVEL 9 MASTER RANGER

Characteristics Health +4

Master Hunter Creatures you designated as your prey from your use of the Hunt Prey talent cannot hide from you. As well, your attacks against your prey deal 1d6 extra damage.

Relentless Pursuit When a creature you designated as your prey from your use of the Hunt Prey talent moves, you can use a triggered action to move up to half your Speed.

