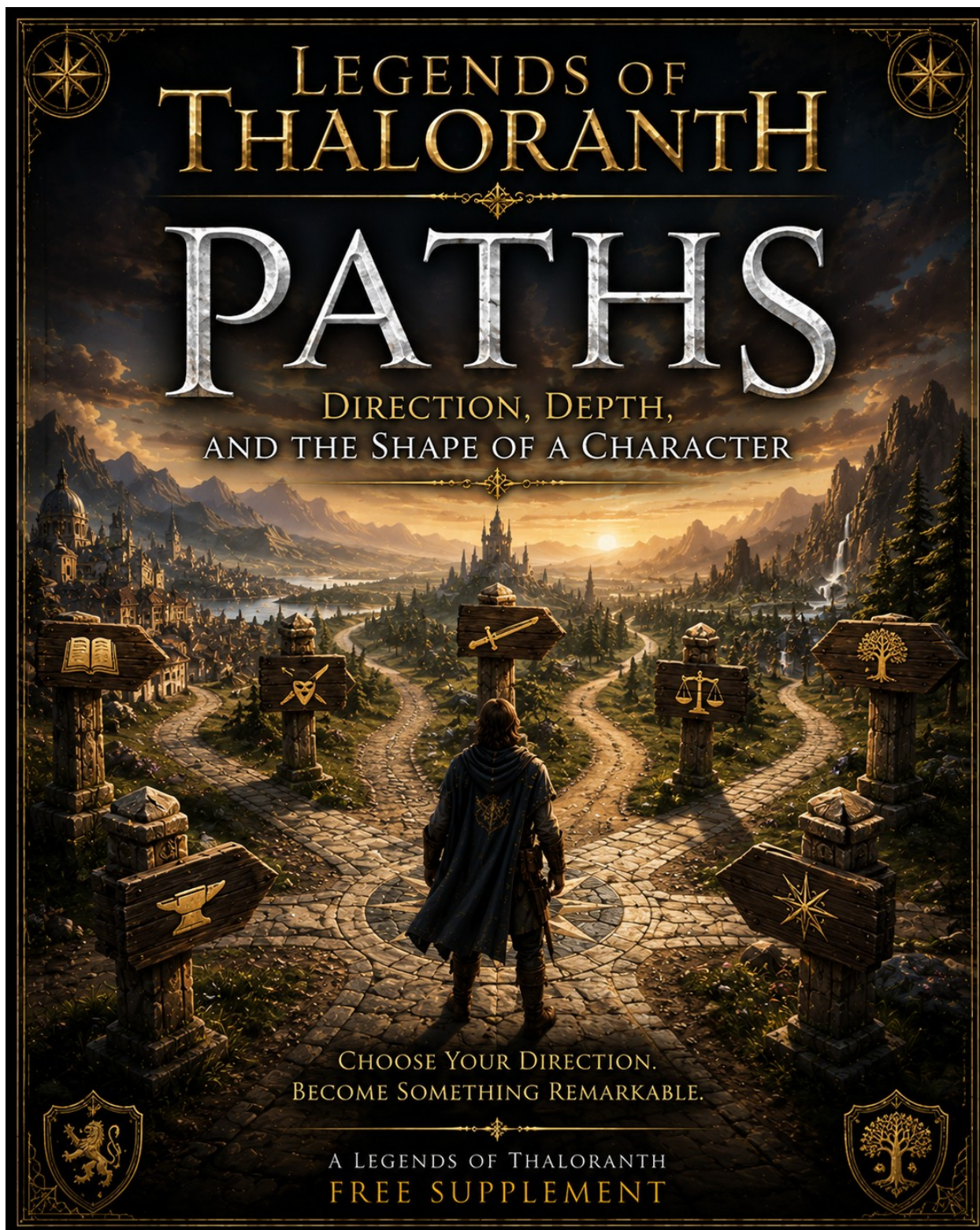




PATHS IN LEGENDS OF THALORANTH

Direction, Depth, and the Shape of a Character

A Legends of Thaloranth Free Supplement

This guide introduces the Path system in Legends of Thaloranth: what Paths are, how they differ from character classes, how Path Points develop capability over a campaign, and what each of the ten Paths offers. The complete Path reference, every Sub-Path with its full ability set, the Tier Two and Tier Three ability lists, and the Prestigious Path entries, is documented in the Player's Guide.

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INTRODUCTION: A PATH IS NOT A CLASS

The woman at the end of the bar had been watching the group for twenty minutes before she moved.

Not watching them the way most people watched strangers, assessing threat, cataloging exits. Watching them the way someone watches a puzzle they already know the answer to, waiting to see if the pieces will figure themselves out.

The former soldier was obvious. The academic was obvious. The one who kept her back to the wall and her eyes on the door was interesting.

She moved when the academic pulled out a ledger and started asking the soldier about supply routes. That combination didn't happen by accident.

She sat down at their table without being invited.

"The question," she said, "is what you can do together that none of you can do alone."

In most roleplaying games, the first question of character creation is: which class? The class determines what the character can do, which abilities they access and when, what equipment they can use, and broadly how they will play across an entire campaign. Two characters of the same class, regardless of how different their players intend them to be, will share the same capability profile at every level of advancement.

Legends of Thaloranth does not work this way. There are no classes. There are Paths.

A Path is not a template for what a character is. It is a direction they have chosen. Two characters who have both invested in the Fighter Path will share certain capabilities, the

broad weapon competence and combat endurance that all Fighters develop, but the specific expression of that investment is determined by which Sub-Path they chose, which skills they developed alongside it, which Advantages they carry, and what they have done with their Path Points over the course of the campaign. One is a Knight whose disciplined armored technique makes her a shield for the people behind her. The other is a Wilder whose relentless physical pressure overwhelms opponents before they can manage the engagement. Both are Fighters. Neither is the same character.

This supplement explains how the Path system works: what Paths and Sub-Paths are, how Insight governs how many you can have, how Path Points develop capability over a campaign, and what each of the ten Paths offers to the characters who choose it.

WHAT A PATH IS, AND WHAT IT ISN'T

A Path represents a chosen direction of development, a body of training, technique, and specialized knowledge that a character has committed to building. When you choose the Rogue Path, you are not declaring that your character is a rogue in the categorical sense. You are declaring that your character has invested in the specific capabilities that the Rogue Path represents: stealth, cunning, the particular skills of someone who moves through the world by working around its expectations rather than through them.

This distinction matters at the table. A class defines what a character is allowed to be. A Path describes what a character has chosen to pursue. The first is a constraint. The second is an investment.

Paths Are Not Skills

Skills describe what a character has learned to do. The Swordsmanship Sub-Skill makes a character better with a sword. The Rapport Sub-Skill makes them better at building relationships. The Arcane Tradition Sub-Skill allows them to cast spells of that tradition. Skills are specific, learned capabilities that improve with investment and produce measurable bonuses to specific checks.

Paths represent who a character is in the broader sense of their specialized identity. They unlock capabilities that do not live in the skill system, specific combat techniques, specialized knowledge, particular ways of operating in the world that reflect deep commitment to a chosen direction. A Knight's Command Presence ability, which gives allies in the same zone +1 to combat checks when the Knight demonstrates visible

leadership, is not a skill bonus. It is an expression of the particular quality that committed, practiced leadership produces in the people being led.

Skills and Paths work together and reinforce each other. A Fighter who has also invested deeply in the Melee Combat skill tree is more capable in combat than a Fighter who has not. A Diplomat who has also invested deeply in Persuasion, Etiquette, and Leadership is more capable in social situations than a Diplomat who has not. The Path opens doors. The skills determine how effectively those doors are walked through.

A Character Can Follow Multiple Paths

The classless system exists precisely because interesting characters rarely commit to a single dimension of capability. A character who has invested in both the Fighter Path and the Diplomat Path brings physical capability and social sophistication to every situation, and the combination produces approaches that neither Path produces alone. A Magus who has also invested in the Explorer Path combines arcane scholarship with the practical knowledge of someone who has spent significant time beyond city walls, which shapes how they apply their magic and what problems they can solve with it.

The number of Paths available to a character is governed by their Insight stat, the same stat that governs magical capability, available knowledge, and intellectual depth. This is not accidental. The capacity to pursue multiple directions of focused development simultaneously is an expression of the same quality that makes a character perceptive, knowledgeable, and capable of sustained complex engagement with the world.

PATHS, SUB-PATHS, AND INSIGHT

Your Insight score governs both the number of Paths you may follow and the total number of Sub-Paths you may choose across all your Paths.

A character with Insight 1 may follow 1 Path and choose 1 Sub-Path within it. A character with Insight 2 may follow 2 Paths and choose 2 Sub-Paths, distributed however they choose across their available Paths, both in the same Path, or one in each. A character with Insight 3 may follow 3 Paths and choose 3 Sub-Paths.

A character with Insight 0 begins with no Paths or Sub-Paths. This is not a failure state. It is a valid character concept: someone who arrives at the beginning of their story with broad foundational capability and no focused direction yet, whose Paths emerge through play as their Insight grows. That development is part of the story.

How Paths Grow After Creation

The only way to add new Paths or Sub-Paths after character creation is to raise the Insight stat through XP investment. When Insight increases, the character immediately gains the ability to add one new Path and one new Sub-Path within it, without additional XP cost beyond the Insight investment itself. The choice of which Path and Sub-Path to add is made at the time of the Insight increase and reflects who the character has become through play.

This design is deliberate. Insight governs magical capability, social sophistication, and intellectual depth. Characters who become more insightful become more capable of pursuing complex directions of development simultaneously. The connection is not arbitrary: the person who can genuinely engage with multiple areas of specialized knowledge is the person whose understanding of the world has deepened enough to hold those areas in relation to each other.

Sub-Paths Within a Path

Each Path contains multiple Sub-Paths representing specific directions of focused expertise within that Path's domain. The Fighter Path encompasses five Sub-Paths, Knight, Wilder, Scout, Duelist, and Holy Warrior, each representing a distinct approach to the core capabilities of a fighter. Sub-Paths are chosen at character creation alongside Paths. They are not unlocked through advancement, they are part of who a character is when the story begins.

What advancement develops is the depth of capability within the chosen Sub-Path, through the Path Points system.

PATH POINTS: HOW CAPABILITY DEVELOPS

Path Points are the resource that develops a character's capabilities within their chosen Sub-Paths over the course of the campaign. Each Path Point costs 3 XP. A character may invest a maximum of 3 Path Points in any single Sub-Path, producing three distinct stages of development.

Investment	Cost	Effect
First Path Point	3 XP	Doubles the numerical effects of all three Tier One Sub-Path abilities.
Second Path Point	3 XP	Unlocks one Tier Two ability chosen from the Sub-Path's category list. Choice is permanent.
Third Path Point	3 XP	Unlocks one Tier Three ability chosen from the same category list. Choice is permanent.

The three-stage structure is worth understanding in full before making Sub-Path choices.

First Path Point: Doubled Effects

The first Path Point doubles the numerical effects of all three of the Sub-Path's Tier One abilities. A Knight's Shield Defense grants +2 AR against melee attacks. With one Path Point invested, it grants +4 AR. A Minstrel's Persuasion bonus of +2 becomes +4. A Tracker's +2 to tracking checks becomes +4. The capabilities the Sub-Path already provides become significantly stronger without changing what they do.

This is the most efficient single investment in the Path Points system. Three XP for a doubling of every Tier One ability is substantial, and characters who invest their first Path Point in a Sub-Path early in a campaign will feel the difference immediately.

Second Path Point: Tier Two Ability

The second Path Point allows the player to choose one Tier Two ability from the category list that corresponds to their Sub-Path. The choice is made at the time of purchase and is permanent. Sub-Paths are assigned to one of five categories, Combat, Social, Utility,

Magic, or General, and some Sub-Paths draw on more than one category, in which case the player chooses which category's list to access when they reach the second Path Point.

Tier Two abilities are qualitatively different from the doubled Tier One abilities. They do not simply make existing capabilities stronger, they add new dimensions to what the character can do. A Combat Tier Two ability like Focused Assault (designate one target and gain +2 to all combat checks against them for the scene) changes how the character approaches an engagement. A Social Tier Two ability like Insightful Negotiator (spend 1 LP to accurately read one NPC's primary motivation) changes what information is available to the character in a social encounter. These are not incremental improvements. They are expansions of what the character is capable of.

Third Path Point: Tier Three Ability

The third Path Point allows the player to choose one Tier Three ability from the same category list. Tier Three abilities represent the ceiling of what Path Point investment unlocks within a single Sub-Path, and they are among the most significant single capabilities available in the system.

A fully invested Sub-Path, three Path Points, produces doubled core abilities, one Tier Two ability, and one Tier Three ability. That is a substantially capable character in their chosen direction. It is also a character who has spent 9 XP on a single Sub-Path, which is nine scenes of baseline XP, roughly two to three sessions of play. The investment is significant. The result is a character whose capability in their chosen direction is genuinely deep.

The Five Categories

Every Sub-Path belongs to one of five categories that determine which Tier Two and Tier Three ability lists are available at the second and third Path Points. Understanding the categories helps in choosing Sub-Paths that will develop in directions aligned with the character concept.

Combat Sub-Paths develop through direct physical capability, defense, and tactical engagement. Social Sub-Paths develop through interpersonal influence, information management, and social navigation. Utility Sub-Paths develop through practical problem-solving, exploration, and non-combat operational capability. Magic Sub-Paths

develop through magical practice, ritual, and arcane or spiritual working. General Sub-Paths draw broadly across multiple domains or do not fit cleanly into a single category.

THE TEN PATHS

The following entries describe each of the ten Paths available in this volume. Each entry includes the Path's Sub-Paths and General Path Abilities, the capabilities shared by all characters following that Path regardless of Sub-Path. The full Sub-Path ability listings are in the Player's Guide.

Read through all ten before choosing. The right Path for a character is not always the most obvious one.

Fighter

Physical capability as the foundation on which everything else is built. The Fighter Path is for characters who have committed to the physical dimension, not to the exclusion of everything else, but as the bedrock of their approach to every situation.

Sub-Paths: Knight, Wilder, Scout, Duelist, Holy Warrior

General Abilities: Weapon Mastery: when using a weapon type with no Sub-Skill investment, a Fighter treats the Base Skill as if they had the relevant Sub-Skill (+1). Combat Endurance: in combat scenes extending beyond three rounds, gain +1 to all combat checks (+2 at six rounds).

Rogue

Movement through the world by working around its expectations. Stealth, cunning, and the particular discipline of someone who understands that the most powerful position is often the one nobody knows you're occupying.

Sub-Paths: Urban Rogue, Wilderness Rogue, Assassin, Minstrel

General Abilities: Agile Movement: +1 to all Agility-based checks involving movement, evasion, and repositioning. Quick Reflexes: +1 to initiative in all situations.

Magus

Arcane scholarship and the technical mastery of magical practice. The Magus approaches magic as a discipline: reproducible, extensible, and in continuous development. Every Magus Sub-Path requires Arcana Base Skill investment and the relevant Tradition Sub-Skill.

Sub-Paths: Illusionist, Elemental Magus, Enchanter, Necromancer

General Abilities: Extended Reserves: once per scene, recover 3 SP without a full rest. Arcane Reading: can identify magical effects, traditions, and approximate power levels of any spell or enchantment encountered, without a check.

Priest

Service to something larger than the individual, expressed through ritual, divine capability, and the particular authority of someone whose power comes from a relationship rather than from personal achievement. Priests in Vaeloraranth serve the gods who remained after the Night of Emerald Fire.

Sub-Paths: War Priest, Ascetic Priest, Healer Priest, Divine Scholar

General Abilities: Divine Resilience: +2 to all saving checks against supernatural effects, fear, and conditions imposed by creatures of unnatural origin. Ritualist: can conduct formal religious rituals that produce effects documented in the Divine Tradition spell list, given adequate time and appropriate materials.

Artisan

The philosophy that the quality of what you make is a direct expression of who you are. The Artisan Path produces characters whose primary capability is creative and constructive, in materials, in alchemical compounds, in mechanical invention, or in the intersection of craft and magic.

Sub-Paths: Blacksmith, Alchemist, Inventor, Runesmith

General Abilities: Craft Assessment: can accurately assess the quality, origin, and approximate value of any crafted item with a successful Crafting check. Quick Repair: can perform basic repairs to weapons, armor, and equipment in the field without a dedicated workspace, at a cost of 2 AP per repair action.

Diplomat

The management of relationships between people, institutions, and factions at a level that shapes how power operates. The Diplomat Path produces characters whose primary capability is social and political, not simply charm, but the sustained, strategic management of how the world's institutions regard each other and the party.

Sub-Paths: Envoy, Courtier, Herald, Lorekeeper

General Abilities: Protocol Mastery: automatically succeeds on Etiquette checks at Easy and Moderate DC. Cultural Literacy: can identify the cultural context, appropriate register, and likely expectations of any social situation encountered, without a check.

Shaman

Connection to forces beyond the social and institutional landscape, spirits, elements, and the natural world that the Night of Emerald Fire changed but did not end. The Shaman Path produces characters who access magical capability through relationship rather than scholarship.

Sub-Paths: Spirit Walker, Totem Warrior, Elemental Shaman

General Abilities: Spirit Sense: can perceive the presence of spirits, elemental forces, and residual magical energy within one zone, without a check. Commune: once per day, enter a brief meditative state to ask one question of the spirits present in a location. The GM answers honestly within the limits of what the spirits know.

Sentinel

Defensive commitment at scale, the discipline of protecting something or someone, sustained over time and under pressure. The Sentinel Path produces characters who define themselves by what they stand between, and who develop the specific capabilities that sustained defensive commitment produces.

Sub-Paths: Guardian, Warden, Defender of the Realm

General Abilities: Protective Instinct: once per scene, may interpose to take damage intended for an ally in the same zone, without a check. Alert: cannot be surprised. The Sentinel is always aware of threat before it manifests, and acts in the first round of any encounter regardless of initiative.

Bounty Hunter

The practical discipline of finding specific people in a world that contains many people, and the particular skill set that sustained work in that profession produces. The Bounty Hunter Path produces characters who are exceptional at acquiring targets, extracting information, and operating independently in conditions where most people require institutional support.

Sub-Paths: Tracker, Combat Hunter, Investigator

General Abilities: Mark: designate one target as a Mark at the start of a scene. Gain +2 to all checks involving locating, tracking, or gathering information about the Mark for the duration. Resilient: +1 to all saving checks against exhaustion, environmental hazards, and conditions imposed by sustained physical stress.

Explorer

The discipline of being useful in the places where useful people are rare, beyond city walls, in ancient structures, in situations that require the combination of physical competence, knowledge depth, and the particular judgment that extensive experience in unfamiliar places produces.

Sub-Paths: Cartographer, Historian, Relic Specialist

General Abilities: Pathfinder: when navigating unfamiliar terrain, can always determine general direction and approximate distance traveled, without a check.

Appraisal: can accurately assess the age, origin, and approximate significance of any artifact, document, or location encountered, with a successful Investigation check at Easy DC.

COMBINING PATHS

The most distinctive character concepts in Legends of Thaloranth emerge from the intersection of Paths rather than the depth of a single one. Two Paths that seem unrelated often produce a character with capabilities that neither Path provides alone, and that combination is frequently more interesting than either Path pursued in isolation.

A Fighter and Diplomat combination produces a character who can move through both physical and social conflict with genuine capability, the specific quality of someone whose credibility in a negotiation is backed by the visible ability to handle what happens if the negotiation fails. A Rogue and Magus combination produces a character whose stealth and cunning are amplified by magical capability that operates below most people's awareness. An Artisan and Explorer combination produces a character whose craft expertise is applied in the field to problems that city-based craftspeople never encounter.

The classless system rewards these combinations deliberately. There is no mechanical penalty for investing in multiple Paths. The cost is opportunity, Path Points spent deepening one Sub-Path are Path Points not spent deepening another. A character who pursues breadth will have more capability across more situations. A character who pursues depth will have exceptional capability in specific situations. Both approaches produce interesting, capable characters with different profiles of strength. The choice is a statement about what kind of person this character is.

What You Choose Not to Pursue

The PG states this plainly and it is worth restating: what you choose to pursue defines your character's distinctive capabilities. What you choose not to pursue defines their limitations, the gaps that make them interesting, that make them depend on their party, that make the question of who we are together as meaningful as who I am alone.

A character with no Path investment in social capability is going to find certain doors closed to them regardless of their skill investment in social skills. A character with no Path investment in combat will manage physical confrontations with skill investment alone, which is possible but not the same as having a Path behind it. These gaps are features, not flaws. They are the reason parties need each other and the reason the combination the woman at the bar identified, what you can do together that none of you can do alone, is the actual unit of play.

PRESTIGIOUS PATHS

Beyond the ten standard Paths sits a separate tier of recognition: Prestigious Paths. These are not Paths in the standard sense, they do not replace a character's existing Paths, do not have Sub-Paths, and do not have a Path Points system. They are formal recognitions extended by specific institutions to characters who have met demanding skill and narrative requirements.

The Prestigious Paths documented in the Player's Guide include the Shadow Hand (elite operatives of Mirelle's guild), the Azure Knight (the Order of the Azure Star's formal investiture), the Arcanist (the White Tower's highest scholarly recognition), the Spymaster (Council of Lords' intelligence apparatus), the Crown Envoy (diplomatic credential issued by the Office of the Herald), the Economic Strategist (Merchants' Guild inner circle), the Military Leader (Crown's military commission), and several others.

Earning a Prestigious Path is a character moment, not a mechanical transaction. The skill requirements establish that the character has done the foundational work. The narrative requirements establish that the character has engaged with the relevant institution in ways that make the recognition meaningful. Meeting both conditions together is when the Prestigious Path becomes available, and the session in which it is formally conferred is a session worth marking.

The full mechanical content of each Prestigious Path, the specific capabilities it provides, is documented in the Game Master's Guide rather than the Player's Guide, because these capabilities are most appropriately managed at the GM's side of the table.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE OVER A CAMPAIGN

Character creation establishes who a character is at the beginning of their story: their Path choices, their initial Sub-Path, whatever Tier One abilities that Sub-Path provides. What a Path-based character looks like six months of play later is substantially different from what they looked like at the first session.

Consider a Fighter who chose the Knight Sub-Path at character creation with Insight 1. She begins with Shield Defense (+2 AR vs melee), Lance Charge (+3 damage on mounted attacks following zone movement), and Command Presence (+1 to allies' combat checks when she demonstrates leadership).

Over the campaign she earns XP, spends it on Path Points. After spending 3 XP on her first Path Point, her Shield Defense provides +4 AR, her Lance Charge deals +6 damage, and her Command Presence gives +2. She is substantially more capable as a Knight without having become a different kind of character.

She raises her Insight to 2 through XP, which costs 3 XP and opens a second Path and Sub-Path. She adds the Diplomat Path with the Envoy Sub-Path, a choice that reflects what the campaign has asked of her and who she has become through it. Now she is a Knight who can negotiate, who has the social credential to speak for the party in institutional contexts, whose physical presence in a negotiation carries the same weight as her physical presence on a battlefield.

She spends a second Path Point on her Knight Sub-Path, choosing Focused Assault from the Combat Tier Two list, the ability to designate a target and gain +2 to all combat checks against them for a scene. The Knight who began as a shield for her party has become a focused, tactically capable fighter who can also conduct a diplomatic conversation. Both halves of that character existed in potential at creation. The campaign revealed which direction they developed.

That development arc, from a capable beginning to a genuinely distinctive character, is what the Path system is designed to produce. Not a predetermined progression toward a fixed endpoint, but a framework for development that responds to what the character does, what the campaign asks of them, and what the player wants them to become.

WHERE TO GO NEXT

The Player's Guide

The complete Path reference: every Sub-Path with its full Tier One ability set, the complete Tier Two and Tier Three ability lists for all five categories, the Prestigious Path entries with their skill requirements and entry conditions, and the character creation chapter that integrates Path selection into the full creation process. The Fighter Path's five Sub-Paths, the Rogue Path's four, the Magus Path's four, all of them are documented in full with the specific abilities that make each Sub-Path distinctive.

Character Creation: Getting Started

The companion freebie in this series demonstrates the complete character creation process using Mira Stoneclad from the Player's Guide, including Step Five: Path selection in context. If Path selection is the piece of the process you want to understand in full before making any decisions, the Character Creation freebie shows how it fits into the complete picture.

Getting Started with Experience Points

The XP freebie explains how Path Points are purchased through play and what the complete advancement economy looks like. Understanding how much XP Path Points cost relative to other advancement options, skills, stats, Advantages, Wealth Points, gives the Path system its full strategic dimension.

The complete Path system, including all Sub-Path abilities, Tier Two and Three lists, and Prestigious Path entries, is documented in the Legends of Thaloranth Player's Guide, available as part of the Legends of Thaloranth Core Line at thaloranthpublishingllc.com.

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