

riders of the wind



Poisoned Pages for Shadow of the Demon Lord

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The repeated failed attempts by the warlords of Rûl to expand their dominion into the Endless Steppe blot the pages of history, and the wreckage of their fruitless efforts litters the western slopes of the Shield Mountains. Each misguided, foolhardy, and greedy campaign brought no new lands and no new riches. Instead, the countless legions sold their lives cheaply to the staunch defenders of the Steppe, the centaurs, who have dwelled in these lands long before the coming of mankind.

The centaurs make no claim on the Endless Steppe. Rather, they see themselves as its protectors chosen by the spirits of the plains to preserve the lands against the invader, to keep their lands pure, sacred, and free from the rapacious humans who would transform it to suit their needs. Thus the centaurs roam the Steppe, watchful for interlopers from beyond the mountains so they can drive them back as they have so many times before.

This installment in the Poisoned Pages series makes it possible to play centaurs in *Shadow of the Demon Lord*. A more powerful ancestry than those presented in the main rulebook, centaurs use special rules to make them compatible with other characters in the group.

CENTAUR

The nomadic centaurs have roamed the Endless Steppe for over a thousand years, following the herds of bison they raise for meat, clothing, and other goods. They travel the Steppe extensively, moving as the seasons change. Few centaurs leave their tribes; they all feel an obligation to protect their kin and preserve their way of life.

Hybrid Forms: Centaurs combine the forms of humans and horses, such that a human upper body replaces the neck and head of the horse. They tend to be strongly built with prodigious body hair. They have a wide range of coloration, both in skin and in coats covering their lower bodies, though members of the same tribes tend to fall within a particular range. Centaurs feel no shame for nakedness and see little point in garbing themselves in coverings. In times of war, they protect themselves with hardened leather armor and barding made from bison hides.

Wild and Free: Recognizing no borders, centaurs go wherever they please and regard everyone in their tribe as equals. They prize freedom as the highest ideal, and outsiders tend to see their promises as being worthless since centaurs cannot be bound by oaths. Being free spirits does not absolve centaurs of their obligations to their tribes, however. The health and security of a tribe always take precedence over the individual centaur's desires, and thus centaurs curtail their wildness whenever it would come into conflict with their people's needs.

Spirits Everywhere: In the clouds scudding across the dome of the world, in the sighing wind that stirs the grasses, in the rich earth underfoot, and in the waves crashing against the western shores exist the gods of the centaurs. The sense that the mortal world is alive with the divine contributes to their belief that the Endless Steppe is sacred ground and must be protected from outsiders and nonbelievers. In the minds of the centaurs, the world itself is divine and the wind, rain, grass, earth, water, and more are their gods. The few outsiders to explore the Steppe report hearing odd voices and other unexplained phenomena, leading many to believe that genies or spirits of some kind haunt the lands.

Words of Wind: The centaurs speak Centauri, a flowing, breezy language others find difficult to master. Centauri has no written form. Linguistics scholars note it has much in common with the language of sylphs.

Common Names: Aeze, Epheral, Feela, Hithren, Iyeotha, Leeth, Luua, Ossah, Saan, Seese, and Uruul.

CREATING A CENTAUR

Attribute Scores Strength 12, Agility 11, Intellect 8, Will 11

Perception equals your Intellect score

Defense equals your Agility score

Health equals your Strength score

Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health

Size 2, Speed 12, Power 0

0 Damage, 0 Insanity, 0 Corruption

Languages and Professions You speak Centauri and rather than start with two professions, choose two of the following options: speak the Common Tongue, Gatherer, Guide, Hunter, Nomad, Rustler, or Tracker.

Equine Body Due to the nature of your form, you cannot ride other creatures. As well, you cannot ascend or descend sheer, vertical surfaces by climbing. For the purposes of talents related to mounted combat, you count as if you were mounted, and effects that apply to the rider and the mount apply to you.

Natural Weapons You can attack with your hooves. They count as basic weapons that deal 1d6 damage.

Gallop You can use an action to move up to three times your Speed.

Powerful Ancestry When your group attains level 1, you do not choose a novice path. Instead, whenever the Advancement table in Shadow indicates you would gain benefits from a novice path, you gain the benefits from your ancestry for that level.

Starting Equipment You do not roll to determine your wealth. Instead, you gain the items described in the bulleted text below, making choices as directed.

- You have a spear or club
- You have a small shield or a bow with 12 arrows
- You have a backpack, tinderbox, 1d3 torches, a week of rations, and a waterskin

LEVEL 1 CENTAUR NOVICE

Attribute Scores Increase two by 1.

Characteristics Health +5, Perception +1, Speed +2

Nimble Recovery You can use an action on your turn to heal damage equal to your healing rate and move up to half your Speed without triggering free attacks. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

LEVEL 2 CENTAUR NOVICE

Characteristics Health +5, Perception +1

Trample You can use an action to move up to your Speed in a straight line. If you enter the space of another creature, that creature must get a success on an Agility challenge or take 1d6 damage and fall prone.

Gain one of the following benefits:

Magic Increase your Power by 1, discover a tradition, and learn a spell from that tradition.

Weapon Training When you attack with a weapon, you make the attack roll with 1 boon.

LEVEL 4 CENTAUR EXPERT

Characteristics Health +5, Speed +2

Gain one of the following benefits:

Magic Either discover a tradition or learn a spell from a tradition you have already discovered.

Strike and Kick You can use an action to make an attack with a weapon you are wielding and an attack with your hooves. You make each attack roll with 1 bane.

LEVEL 5 CENTAUR EXPERT

Characteristics Health +5

Critical Move When the total of your attack roll is 20 or higher and exceeds the target number by at least 5, the attack deals 1d3 extra damage, and you can move up to half your Speed without triggering free attacks.

Gain one of the following benefits:

Magic Increase your Power by 1 and either discover a tradition or learn a spell from a tradition you have already discovered.

Combat Prowess Your attacks with weapons deal 1d6 extra damage.

LEVEL 8 CENTAUR MASTER

Characteristics Health +5

Powerful Hooves Attacks you make with your hooves deal 1d6 extra damage.

Gain one of the following benefits:

Magic Either discover a tradition or learn a spell from a tradition you have already discovered.

Combat Expertise When you use an action to attack with a weapon, you either deal 1d6 extra damage with that weapon or make another attack against a different target at any point before the end of your turn.

AGE

3d6	Age
3	You are a child, no more than 11 years old. Reduce your height and weight by 50%.
4-5	You are an adolescent, from 12 to 17 years old. Reduce your height and weight by 25%.
6-8	You are a young adult, from 18 to 25 years old.
9-12	You are an adult, from 26 to 35 years old.
13-15	You are a middle-aged adult, from 36 to 55 years old.
16-17	You are an older adult, from 56 to 75 years old.
18	You are a venerable adult, 76 years old or older.

COAT COLOR

3d6	Color
3	Brindle—You have any color skin and hair marked with stripes.
4-5	Black—You have black skin with black hair.
6-7	Buckskin—You have tan skin with yellow, cream, or gold hair and black mane, tail, and legs.
8-9	Bay—You have brown skin with brown, red, or bright red hair with black or dark brown tail and lower legs
10-12	Chestnut—You have tan or brown skin with brown or red-brown hair
13-14	Gray—You have black skin with white or white and black hairs.
16-17	Pinto—You are any color skin with multi-colored hair with brown, white, or black patches.
18	White—You have pink skin with white hair.

BUILD

3d6	Build
3-4	You stand about 7 feet tall and weigh about 1,000 pounds.
5-7	You stand about 7-1/2 feet tall and weigh about 1,200 pounds.
8-13	You are about average for a centaur, standing around 8 feet tall from hooves to head and weigh about 1,300 pounds.
14-16	You stand about 9 feet tall and weigh as much as 1,400 pounds.
17-18	You stand about 10 feet tall and weigh 2,250 pounds.

ORIGINS

d20	Origins
1	You were cast out of your tribe for a crime you committed against your people.
2	A disease laid your people low. You set out to find a cure, but you did not return in time. You are the sole survivor of your tribe.
3	Your tribe's shaman spoke of dark times ahead. You and several others were sent into the Empire to join the struggle against the shadow.
4	Your people betrayed you, so you left in anger, vowing never to return.
5	You challenged your tribal leader and lost. You left in disgrace.
6	Human raiders crossed the mountains and into your lands, slaying many of your kind. You have set out to bring them to justice.
7	You saw a dragon overhead and followed it to see where it went. You became lost in the mountains.
8	After enemies slaughtered your spouse and children, you set out to exact vengeance.
9	You witnessed great magic and set out to learn more.
10	You led an uninteresting life and left to find your purpose in the world beyond the Steppe.
11	The spirits spoke to you and sent you from the Steppe to recover a relic of great power.
12	Horrible monsters annihilated your people and you left to seek vengeance.
13	You stumbled into a faerie borderland and emerged somewhere in the Empire.
14	You befriended a human and ventured across the mountains to learn more of your people's ancestral enemies. Add the Common Tongue to the list of languages you know.
15	An envoy from the salamander people came to your tribe requesting aid. You volunteered to help them.
16	Wanderlust drew you from the Steppe to see what lies beyond the mountains.
17	You were part of a patrol sent to watch for human invaders, but your unit was wiped out and you were taken prisoner.
18	Monsters wiped out your people's livestock. You left your tribe before you starved.
19	You scout human lands to learn about the lands beyond the mountains so your people can invade.
20	You set out to find your destiny in the wider world.

PERSONALITY

3d6	Personality
3	You are nervous, preferring to flee adversity rather than confront it.
4-5	You are erratic and changeable; your moods swing from one extreme to another with almost no warning.
6-8	Aggressiveness rules your personality, and you never back down from a conflict.
9-12	You are wild and fierce, but you curb your aggressive impulses when they would put your friends and family in danger.
13-15	You are courageous, eager to take risks.
16-17	You are bold, charismatic, and others are drawn to you.
18	You are calm, restrained, and patient.

HORSE ARCHER

Master Path

An ancient and effective fighting technique that has made sporadic appearances throughout the long and tangled history of Rûl, horse archery gives combatants a significant edge in battle, allowing for superior maneuverability that lets them loose arrows and speed away from danger. Innovated by the elves in their struggles against the trolls, it was later picked up by the Woad tribes to fight a skirmish war against the Men of Gog. Of all the peoples to master the technique, however, none have come close to the centaurs who have used the techniques to frustrate human expansion into their lands.

LEVEL 7 HORSE ARCHER

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a common, military, or wilderness profession.

Parting Shot When you use an action to retreat or rush while mounted, you can use a triggered action to make an attack with a bow. You make the attack roll with 1 bane.

Deft Rider If you move on your turn while mounted, creatures make attack rolls against you with 1 bane until the end of the round.

LEVEL 10 HORSE ARCHER

Characteristics Health +4

Bow Mastery When you make attacks with a bow, you make the attack roll with 1 boon.

Master Rider Your mount gains a +2 bonus to Defense and Speed.

NEW CREATURES

The following statistics boxes expand on the centaur entry presented in the *Demon Lord's Companion*.

CENTAUR ARCHER

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 2 centaur

Perception 11 (+1)

Defense 13; **Health** 25

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 10 (+0)

Speed 14

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hooves (melee) +2 (1d6)

Bow (long) +3 plus 1 boon (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Twin Shot The centaur archer uses an action to attack twice with a ranged weapon. It makes each attack roll with 1 bane.

Trample The centaur can use an action to move up to its Speed in a straight line. If the centaur enters the space of another creature, that creature must get a success on an Agility challenge or take 1d6 damage and fall prone.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Gallop The centaur uses an action to move up to three times its Speed.

CENTAUR CHAMPION

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 2 centaur

Perception 10 (+0)

Defense 15 (large shield); **Health** 34

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 11 (+1)

Speed 16

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hooves (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6)

Lance (melee; reach 4) +4 with 1 boon (1d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Stab and Kick The centaur attacks with its lance and with its hooves. It makes each attack roll with 1 bane.

Trample The centaur can use an action to move up to its Speed in a straight line. If the centaur enters the space of another creature, that creature must get a success on an Agility challenge or take 1d6 damage and fall prone.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Gallop The centaur uses an action to move up to three times its Speed.

CENTAUR WIND-CALLER

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 2 centaur

Perception 11 (+1)

Defense 12; **Health** 26

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 16

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hooves (melee) +1 (1d6)

Spear (melee or long) +1 (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Trample The centaur can use an action to move up to its Speed in a straight line. If the centaur enters the space of another creature, that creature must get a success on an Agility challenge or take 1d6 damage and fall prone.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Gallop The centaur uses an action to move up to three times its Speed.

MAGIC

Power 2

Air *wind blast* (3), *flense* (2), *thunderclap* (1)

