

by Jesse Decker • illustrated by Peter Bergting

*There are no shadows in this world save those  
that serve the will of the shadar-kai.  
—Sallan Kath-Moran, shadar-kai adept*

## THE ECOLOGY OF THE

# SHADAR-KAI

Cursed by shadow, the shadar-kai hunt in twilight. They seek revenge for some half-forgotten wrong, emerging to steal power and information then slipping back into the shadows. The shadar-kai, also known as the shadow fey, have a great affinity for subtlety, cruelty, and stealth, yet they also carry a deadly curse, a curse that dooms their souls to a netherworld of shadows. Like many fey, they are bound to nature and despise those who despoil it, but where other fey protect nature for its own sake, the shadar-kai do so that they alone might draw upon nature's wealth and power.

### HISTORY OF THE SHADAR-KAI

What joy and light once dwelt within the hearts of the shadar-kai was long ago lost to the shadows of their own history. In the early days of the world the shadar-kai lived

as other fey, bound in peace to nature and life. Yet always shadow and shadar-kai were as one, the pale-skinned fey harboring secrets of and influence over the mysterious Plane of Shadows. As eons passed and mortal creatures began to rise in power, the greatest spellcasters of the shadar-kai gazed deep into the swirling, timeless tides of that darkened plane, revealing a prophetic vision of nature pillaged by the mercurial whims of lesser races. The mighty among the shadow fey called for some strike against the races that would one day wreak this destruction, but the shadar-kai were never great in number and they could not through might or guile alone prevent the future they foresaw.

Thus, while their goal to prevent a ruinous future might have seemed innocent, their solution was not. Calling upon their innate intimacies with shadow and potent magical

skills, the shadar-kai sought a way to darken the world.

The legends of the shadar-kai tell of a hundred shadow fey—each a master of ancient magics—joining together to perform a ritual, one that would irreversibly bind the world of mortals and the Plane of Shadow together. From this twilight, their innate bond with shadow and their long-practiced rituals would give the shadow fey mastery over this new environment, allowing them to secure the sanctity of nature as they saw fit.

Yet even the shadar-kai could not see the dangers lurking within the shadow.

As their mighty ritual progressed, the shadow fey stared into the depths of the realm of shadow and learned that they as an entire race would become that place's conduit into their world. Forming a darkened nexus upon the Plane of Shadow, the shadow mages' magics bound the souls of every living shadar-kai to this single point. At the culmination of their great ritual, the very essences of the shadar-kai would drag this shadowy

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE SHADAR-KAI

The following table shows the results of a Knowledge (nature) check regarding shadar-kai. Those who study the magic of the natural world, the Plane of Shadow, and the most ancient of histories might possess this information.

#### Knowledge (nature)

##### DC Result

10	The shadar-kai are evil fey with a strange relationship to shadow and darkness.
15	Shadar-kai are extremely stealthy and skilled at attacking from the shadows. It is their stealth and cruelty rather than physical or magical might that makes them dangerous.
20	An ancient curse draws the souls of the shadar-kai to the Plane of Shadow, where they cannot escape without great magic. They make special devices called gal-ralan to help combat this curse.
25	The shadow curse affects the shadar-kai constantly, making them partially out of touch with the material world. Certain magic and rendering them unconscious can weaken the shadow fey and eventually banish them to the Plane of Shadow.

anchor into the Material Plane along with the entire dark realm, joining the two forever.

There were those, however, who opposed the shadow fey. Heroes of this forgotten age, servants of primeval orders, and outsiders guarding what their masters had created sought to stop the shadar-kai and their dark ritual. Through countless shadow

fey guardians, these bygone warriors entered the Plane of Shadow and found the cyst the shadar-kai were creating, the nexus of extraplanar darkness bound to the very souls of the shadow fey. At the apex of the shadow mages' ritual the opposing heroes made a great and forgotten sacrifice, interrupting the rite to bind the two realms. The resulting magical backlash was



## THE MAGIC OF THE SHADAR-KAI

Since the ritual that brought the shadow curse down upon them, the shadar-kai have struggled to escape its incessant pull, developing a variety of magic—like the *gal-ralan*—meant to loosen its grip or strengthen their own waning abilities.

### Shadowslip

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Brd 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Targets: Creature touched

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

Shadows twist and twine about the target, forcing many blows directed against it to go awry. The subject of this spell benefits from a 20% miss chance as if it had partial concealment.

In addition, any time the creature moves, it can move through the Plane of Shadow rather than through the Material Plane. Moving in this manner slows the creature to half speed, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The creature moves only through the fringes of the Plane of Shadow and cannot pass through any barriers or other obstacles on the Material Plane. The creature remains in the Plane of Shadow only while moving and returns fully to the Material Plane at the end of each move action.

**Special:** Shadar-kai under the effects of a *shadowslip* spell do not suffer the effects of the shadow curse. While any negative levels they had gained as a result of the curse previous to casting this spell still affect them, they cannot gain further negative levels from the shadow curse for the duration of the spell.

### Shadowlight Oil

Shadowlight oil is a slow-burning oil that contains some small touch of the Plane of Shadow and can be burnt in any regular lantern. A lantern filled with shadowlight oil does not provide bright illumination over any area, but instead provides double the area of shadowy illumination that a lantern burning normal oil would. The table below summarizes the effects of shadowlight oil in normal lanterns.

Lantern	Bright	Shadowy	Duration
Common	n/a	60 ft.	6 hr./pint
Bullseye	n/a	240-ft. cone	6 hr./pint
Hooded	n/a	120 ft.	6 hr./pint

One pint of shadowlight oil weighs 1 pound, costs 5 gp, and requires a DC 25 Craft (alchemy) check to create.

titanic, scattering and killing countless shadar-kai and scouring both planes of any evidence of the sinister shadar-kai mages and the mortal realm's champions.

While the eternal twilight of the Plane of Shadow remained apart from the mortal realm, what ties the shadar-kai had forged could not be undone, only altered. The shadowy chains

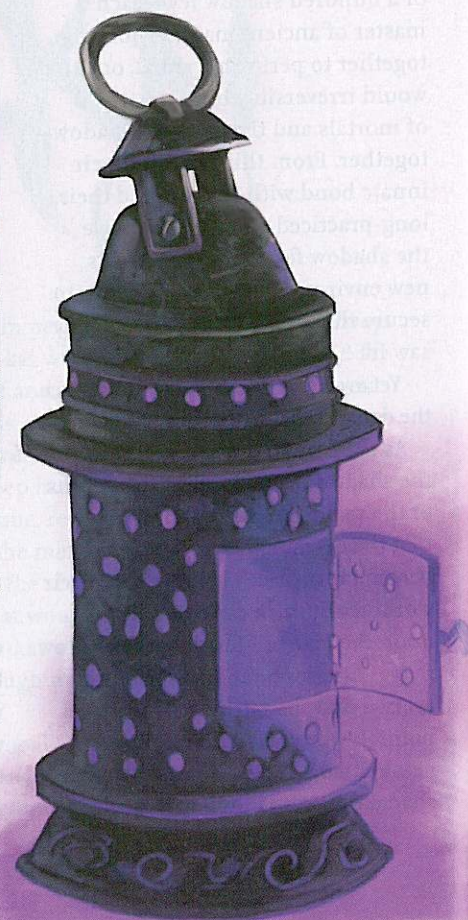
bound to the souls of the shadar-kai reversed their pull, dragging their very essences into the realm they had hoped to enslave, forever corrupting the bond into the dreadful shadow curse.

Today, their homes decaying and empty as their populations are claimed by a darkened netherworld, the shadow fey obsess over their past folly and failure. Turning crueler

with each generation, the shadar-kai have largely become a race of scavengers and unrepentant murderers, all desperately searching for some means to keep their souls from the shadow's grasp.

## PHYSIOLOGY OF THE SHADAR-KAI

Shadar-kai stand slightly taller than the average human and move with a speed and grace that few mortals can hope to match. The slender shadow fey weigh about 10 pounds lighter than humans of equal height and their long limbs are swift and flexible rather than delicate. The shadar-kai have extremely keen vision, allowing them to see twice as far through shadow or weak light as even the most keen-sighted elves. Being fey creatures, shadar-kai have incredibly long life spans, possibly even bordering on immortality. Although no—or extremely few—shadar-kai still live who remember the time when the shadow curse was bestowed upon their race, there are many who heard the ancient tale from their ancestors' first hand.



Darkness is always with the shadar-kai and their bond with the twilight is easy to see. Shadows seem to bend to conceal the soft movements of the pale fey and with the slightest effort they can wrap this shade around them. This almost physical manipulation of shadow allows the shadar-kai to be seen only when they wish, and even the most wary sentries have failed to notice groups of shadar-kai slipping by in the darkness.

Yet, despite their control over darkness, every shadar-kai lives in fear of the debilitating shadow curse and the ghostly Plane of Shadow. As muted visions and dulled sensations pervade the realm of shadow, the shadar-kai have found that vivid and sharp sensations serve as precious handholds to the Material Plane. While moments of ecstasy and joy might serve their needs, the embittered mindset of the shadow

## SHADAR-KAI ON THE PLANE OF SHADOW

Only a small population of shadar-kai actually exists on the Material Plane, the vast majority having been drawn to the Plane of Shadow over the centuries. While shadow fey regain lost levels and abilities upon submitting to the shadow curse, this is of small comfort. Being fey, shadar-kai are creatures of the Material Plane, specifically bound by nature to the world they dwelled upon. Separation from this home is an endless torment and all shadow fey feel like devoted guards forcibly separated from their posts, ever awaiting news of some calamity they've lost all opportunity to oppose.

The shadar-kai of the Plane of Shadow are more subdued than their brethren who still struggle upon the Material Plane. While some still toil to find a way back to their natural homes, most have submitted to a kind of race-wide despair. Living either as crazed brigands or despairing vagabonds in the shadowy doubles of their ruined cities, no passion, happiness, or hope fills the lives of these fallen fey. While these shadar-kai no longer scar and torture themselves, their hatred of all humanoid races is even greater than that of those on the Material Plane, and travelers through their shadowy domains are mercilessly hunted and gruesomely punished. The merest suggestion of a way back to the Material Plane, however, results in the immediate attention—even subservience—of the shadow fey, although those who make and fail to follow through on such claims meet lengthy and unimaginably agonizing ends.



fey makes extreme pain one of the most useful tools for keeping their souls anchored to the mortal realm. As such, shadar-kai regularly scar themselves with deep and complex tattoos, pierce their bodies with hoops and nails, and cut their flesh with blades of cold iron—the bane of all fey. The last of the shadow mages have even invented wearable torture devices called gal-ralans, excruciating cold iron armlets enchanted to further aid their struggle to remain on this world (see page 151 of the *Fiend Folio*).

Shadar-kai hunt and eat much as many humanoids do. With their bodies numbed by the touch of shadow, they seek out the strongest flavors and tastes they can find. Even the most powerful spices seem bland and distant to the shadow fey, though, and few take to food with any joy. For shadar-kai, eating is but another reminder that they will someday be drawn into shadow.

## PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIETY OF THE SHADAR-KAI

The shadow fey were never great in number, raising only a handful of small hidden cites even at the height of their numbers. Once the shadow curse took hold the shadar-kai's sparsely populated holdings began to empty and decay. Now, what shadar-kai redoubts remain are elegant half ruined dwellings cut into the sides of shadowy cliffs and slender towers rising beneath the densest forest canopies, home only to the oldest and most crazed shadow fey.

In the centuries since the fall of their homes, the shadar-kai have lived on the fringes of other societies, clustered in small groups and cabals, often led by skilled shadow mages. These groups of spies, assassins, and the occasional spellcasters haunt the shadows, hunting for any means of escaping the shadow curse. Rarely numbering more than fifty members, they steal what they need to survive, eagerly attacking any humanoids they encounter along the way.

## ADVANCED SHADAR-KAI

Desperate to make the most of their dwindling numbers, shadar-kai frequently train as assassins, rogues, and deadly shadow dancers. The most cunning of shadar-kai society take up the mantle of the shadow mage, wizards skilled in the arts of illusion and darkness. Some even adopt the shadow adept (see *Player's Guide to Faerûn*), daggerspell mage, or shadow-mind prestige classes (both from the *Complete Adventurer*), giving them far greater control over darkness and their enemies' perceptions.

### SHADOW MAGE AGAZTRE CR 8

Male shadar-kai wizard 7

NE Medium fey (Extraplanar)

*Fiend Folio* 150

**Init** +3; **Senses** superior low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Sylvan, Undercommon

**AC** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 11

**hp** 28 (10 HD)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +12; +2 bonus on all saves against death effects, energy drains, and the shadow curse

**Spd** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Melee** +1 kukri +8 (1d4/18–20 + large scorpion venom)

**Base Atk** +4; **Grp** +3

**Special Attack** sneak attack +1d6

**Combat Gear** wand of magic missiles (3rd, 22 charges)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 7th, ranged touch +8):

4th—shadow conjuration (DC 18)

3rd—haste, keen edge, shadowslip

2nd—darkness, mirror image, silent magic missile, Tasha's hideous laughter (DC 15)

1st—disguise self, mage armor, shield, ray of enfeeblement (DC 14), ventriloquism

0—daze (DC 13), ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation

**Spellbook** all prepared spells; 0—all; 1st—cause fear, grease, identify, unseen servant, shield, sleep; 2nd—blur, minor image, scare, sound burst, web; 3rd—invisibility sphere, major image; 4th—phantasmal killer

**Abilities** Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 12, Cha 12

**SQ** hide in plain sight, shadow curse, summon familiar (Azae)

**Feats** Alertness, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (kukri),

Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)<sup>B</sup>, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell

Focus (illusion), Weapon Finesse

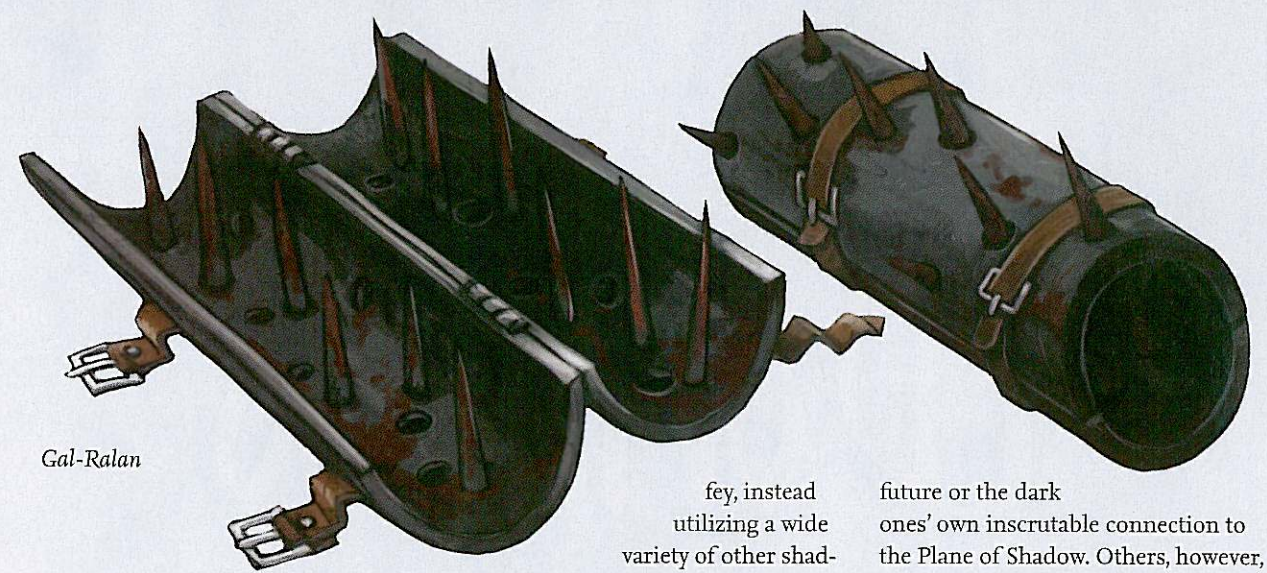
**Skills** Craft (alchemy) +11, Hide +13 (+23 in dark or shadowy conditions), Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +14, Move Silently +13 Search +11, Spellcraft +13, Spot +11, Survival +5 (+7 following tracks), Tumble +9

**Possessions** +1 kukri, amulet of natural armor +1, +2 gal-ralan, hooded lantern, 2 doses large scorpion venom (one on kukri, see page 297 of the *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*), 2 pints of shadowlight oil, spellbook, spell components

**Azae, bat familiar:** 1 hp, *Monster Manual* 268.

Despite the bloodthirstiness they indulge upon others, shadow fey bands are savagely loyal to one another, like traumatized siblings clinging to their orphaned brethren. Passions run deep between shadar-kai, but the heights of tenderness this might manifest as in some races

instead gives rise to masochistic relationships, sometimes between merely two individuals but just as likely incorporating an entire band. These affairs culminate in agonizing orgies of tattooing, piercing, scarification, and mutilation. Yet, despite their painful nature, these trysts prove just as



Gal-Ralan

intimate and cherished to the shadar-kai as do the romances of other races.

As passionately as shadar-kai guard one another, centuries of loss and festering anger have left the shadar-kai intent on taking revenge on the civilized races that drove them to their doom. That the shadar-kai brought the shadow curse upon themselves is of little import to the cunning hunters and devious adepts of the shadow fey. It was the pain of nature giving way to younger races that caused the shadar-kai to seek aid in shadow and it is those younger races that the shadar-kai blame for their curse.

Regardless of their lack of race-wide organization, the shadow fey have universally adopted the spiked chain as their weapon of choice. Both a tool and a symbol of their wrathful crusade against the younger races, the shadar-kai delight in the spiked chain's versatility to mete out a variety of painful deaths, from brutal strangulations to slowly carved mutilations. As such, all shadow fey are skilled in the use of these weapons.

## ENEMIES AND ALLIES OF THE SHADAR-KAI

As a result of their attempt to radically alter the natural world, even if just to protect it, shadar-kai are not well liked by other fey. While the shadar-kai still respect and honor their people and their courts, the shadow fey have been disowned from the hearts and minds of their brethren. As such, the shadar-kai have little to do with other

fey, instead utilizing a wide variety of other shadowy creatures in their plots.

While shadow mastiffs most commonly appear alongside shadar-kai hunters, shadow asps (see the *Fiend Folio*) and creatures with the shadow template (see the *Manual of the Planes*) might also be trained to serve the shadow fey. Powerful shadow creatures, like darkweavers (see the *Fiend Folio*), shadow dragons (see the *Draconomicon*), and shadow fiends (see the *Book of Vile Darkness*, mature audience only) have also been known to bend shadow fey to their whims, at least for a time. Shadar-kai ally with humanoids only when it serves some greater purpose or to eventually betray and steal from them.

Of all the fey, only the murderous redcaps (see the *Monster Manual III*) willingly have dealings with the shadar-kai, but only out of their wild bloodlust and not out of any sense of kinship. Embodiments of rage and natural bloodletting, redcaps eagerly indulge the shadow fey's fall into frustration and revenge. Sadistic voyeurs, redcaps flock to groups of shadar-kai, opportunistically hoping to bathe themselves in the vengeful ways of shadow fey warriors.

Despite their overlapping tactics and abilities, dark ones (see the *Fiend Folio* and "The Ecology of the Dark One" in *DRAGON* #322) and shadar-kai share a violent hatred of one another. While the dark ones revile the shadow fey out of jealousy and their isolationist tendencies, the shadar-kai seem to hold a deeper grudge. Some researchers speculate that this hatred perhaps ties to some new shadar-kai revelation of the

future or the dark ones' own inscrutable connection to the Plane of Shadow. Others, however, hold that the dark ones' mysterious history might lie with the ancient mortal heroes who thwarted the shadar-kai adepts' dark ritual so long ago and that a potent racial enmity remains.

## SHADAR-KAI TACTICS

As skilled as they are stealthy, many of a shadow fey's opponents never even see their attacker, at least not until they're restrained for a protracted and agonizing revenge.

**Advanced Ambushers:** Both cunning and stealthy, the shadar-kai use their hide in plain sight ability to launch surprise attacks whenever possible, appearing and sneak attacking only to melt into the shadows. The shadar-kai regularly repeat this tactic, dropping foes one by one over the course of multiple ambush encounters, each lasting little more than a single round. Such ambushes most commonly occur in shadowy surroundings as shadar-kai gain a significant bonus to hiding in such areas.

**Cursed Combatants:** Above all things, shadar-kai fear the shadow curse. Forced to make DC 15 Will saves or suffer negative levels whenever they are stunned, dazed, staggered, or unconscious, shadow fey adepts constantly seek out spells like *owl's wisdom* and magic items like *cloaks of resistance*, *periapts of wisdom*, various *ioun stones*, and similar saving-throw augmenting and Wisdom-bolstering magics. Shadar-kai swiftly flee from opponents, making use of spells such as *daze*, *sound burst*, or *word of chaos* that capitalize upon this failing. ☞



**Rend (Ex):** If a senmurv hits a single target with both claws, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack deals 2d6+6 points of damage.

**Smite Evil (Su):** Once per day a senmurv can make a normal attack to deal additional damage equal to its HD total (maximum of +20 additional damage) against an evil foe.

**Spell-Like Abilities:** At will—*detect good*, *detect evil*.

**Scent (Ex):** A senmurv can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

## SHADAR-KAI

**Medium-Size Fey (Extraplanar)**

**Hit Dice:** 3d6 (10 hp)

**Initiative:** +3

**Speed:** 30 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather), touch 13, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+1

**Attacks** Spiked chain +4 melee, or shortbow +4 ranged

**Full Attacks** Spiked chain +4 melee, or shortbow +4 ranged

**Damage:** Spiked chain 2d4, shortbow 1d6/x3

**Face/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft. (10 ft. with spiked chain)

**Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6

**Special Qualities:** Hide in plain sight, shadow curse, superior low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +4

**Abilities:** Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9

**Skills:** Hide +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +6, Spot +8, Survival +6 (+8 following tracks)

**Feats:** Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain) (B), Weapon Finesse

**Climate/Terrain:** Any forest and underground (Plane of Shadow)

**Organization:** Solitary, patrol (3–6), or raid (7–12)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** +1 *gal-ralan* plus standard

**Alignment:** Usually neutral evil

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +1

The shadar-kai, or shadow fey, are a race of bitter, determined folk whose souls are poisoned by shadow. Gray-skinned and dark-eyed, the slender shadar-kai stand slightly taller than average humans, and their soft movements exude grace and uncanny stealth. Shadow follows the shadar-kai wherever they go. Shadows cast by the folds of their clothing seem deeper than those on humanoids, and a shadar-kai can seemingly fade out of sight by simply stepping into any common shadow.

The shadar-kai prefer light weapons suited for grace and agility, especially spiked chains. Many shadar-kai favor a variety of piercings and tattoos.

Long ago, the shadar-kai thought to preserve the world from the rising humanoid races. Skilled in shadow magic, the shadar-kai made a pact with a dark power of the Plane of Shadow to cast the world into an endless twilight in which the shadow fey would rule supreme. But the experiment went awry, and the shadar-kai were left bound to the Plane of Shadow, cursed to lose their souls in its dark depths. This shadow curse affects shadar-kai to this day, and every member of the race is engaged in a lifelong struggle to stave off inevitable doom.

The continuous pull of the Plane of Shadow has left the shadar-kai grim and embattled. Few races understand the plight of the shadow fey. Even the temporary solutions the shadar-kai have found leave them struggling with constant pain, making them vicious. Their willingness to commit acts of cruelty and violence has increased with each generation.

Shadar-kai speak Common, Elven, and Sylvan.

## COMBAT

Cursed and blessed with a great affinity for the Plane of Shadow, the shadar-kai are subtle and deceptive. They steal without being detected when they can, striking from ambush when necessary. Spellcasters among the shadar-kai favor shadow and illusion magic, and few groups of the shadow fey are without a powerful spellcasting leader. Skilled at stealth and gifted with visual acuity greater than that of most other creatures, the shadar-kai have little trouble making sure that combat occurs on their terms.

The shadar-kai described in the statistics block wears a +1 *gal-ralan* (see Shadar-Kai Items, below).

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Anytime a shadar-kai's target is denied a Dexterity bonus, or when a target is flanked by a shadar-kai, the shadar-kai deals an additional 1d6 points of damage on a successful melee attack. This damage stacks with sneak attack damage from other sources, such as rogue levels.

**Hide in Plain Sight (Su):** Shadar-kai can use the Hide skill even while being observed. As long as they are not illuminated by natural daylight, the *daylight* spell, or a similar magical light, shadar-kai can hide themselves from view in the open without having anything to actually hide behind.

**Shadow Curse (Su):** The Plane of Shadow exerts a tremendous pull on shadar-kai's soul, which is only tenuously connected to its mortal body. Any time a shadar-kai is stunned, dazed, staggered, or unconscious (other than from natural sleep), the shadow fey must make a Will save (DC 15) or lose a portion of her soul to the Plane of Shadow. The shadar-kai must also attempt a save any time she removes a *gal-ralan*, if she has one (see Shadar-Kai Items, below).

A shadar-kai with a damaged soul gains one negative level that cannot be removed until she restores her soul



completely. If exposed to another event that requires a save against the shadow curse, a shadar-kai may gain additional negative levels. A shadar-kai on the Plane of Shadow can transfix her soul to her body again with a *greater restoration* spell. A shadar-kai on the Material Plane (or elsewhere) must use a *wish* or *miracle* spell to restore her soul.

A shadar-kai afflicted with the shadow curse cannot be raised from the dead or resurrected, and cannot gain experience. The touch of the shadow curse galls a shadar-kai, filling her heart with an icy emptiness that eventually drives all but the most determined individuals to capitulate and leave the Material Plane altogether.

A shadar-kai who goes to the Plane of Shadow and remains there ameliorates the effects of the shadow curse and suffers no ill effects. However, if she leaves the Plane of Shadow without restoring her soul, she suffers the effects of the shadow curse until she returns to the Plane of Shadow or restores her soul.

**Superior Low-Light Vision (Ex):** Shadar-kai have extraordinary vision in low-light conditions. They can see four times as far as a human in low-light conditions.

**Skills:** \*Shadar-kai have a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks made in dark or shadowy conditions (anything other than daylight or the area of a daylight spell).

## SHADAR-KAI SOCIETY

The shadar-kai have developed a predatory society. They have few permanent cities of their own but can often be found in other settlements. The cities built by humans and other intelligent races have little chance of keeping out a determined group of shadar-kai infiltrators because such cities are full of shadows.

The few shadar-kai cities that remain on the Material Plane are concealed by illusions and shadow magic, and well guarded by bands of shadar-kai scouts leading shadow mastiffs. Many shadar-kai have been subsumed into the Plane of Shadow, and even the greatest cities of the shadar-kai are desolate, sparsely populated places.

Most shadar-kai realms are magocracies, ruled by powerful illusionists. Shadar-kai hate other fey, and they hunt and

kill those fey unlucky enough to cross their path. Occasionally shadar-kai make alliances with other evil fey, usually to deceive or infiltrate a population of good humanoids.

## SHADAR-KAI ITEMS

The shadow curse haunts every aspect of shadar-kai culture, and remaining on the Material Plane is a constant struggle for these creatures. Most shadar-kai use a gal-ralan (described below) to fix their souls to their bodies and stave off the shadow curse.

**Gal-Ralan:** When this cold-forged iron armband is donned (taking up the spot where a bracer would be worn), it pierces the wearer's forearm with long needles of the same metal.

The device fixes its wearer's soul to her body but also causes never-ending pain. As long as a character wears a gal-ralan, she takes 1 point of Constitution damage that cannot be healed until after the gal-ralan is removed.

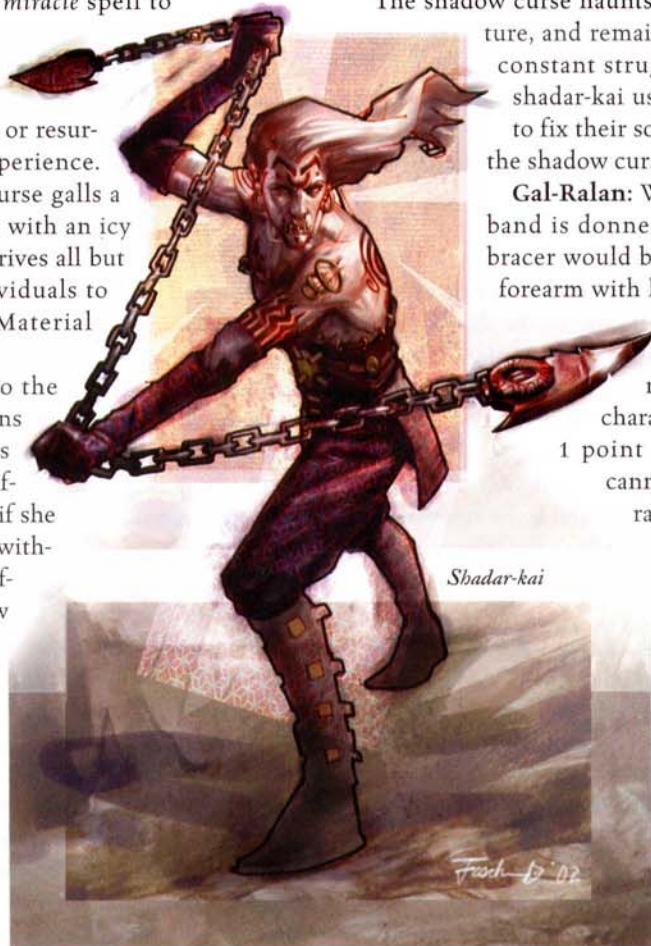
A gal-ralan provides its wearer with a +1 to +5 resistance bonus on her saving throws. This bonus increases by an additional +2 against death effects, energy drains, and effects that affect the wearer's soul (such as the shadow curse). For example, a +2 gal-ralan provides a +4 resistance bonus against these effects, a +3 gal-ralan provides a +5 resistance bonus against these effects, and so on.

**Caster Level:** 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, resistance, caster level must be three times that of the gal-ralan's bonus; **Market Price:** 625 gp (+1), 2,500 gp (+2), 5,600 gp (+3), 10,000 gp (+4), or 15,600 gp (+5). **Weight:** —.

**Blackstone Rune:** Shadar-kai overcome by the shadow curse often make use of the *blackstone rune*. The rune is a complex sigil drawn on a small, glossy stone. On command, a *blackstone rune* allows its bearer to *plane shift* between the Plane of Shadow and the Material Plane (in either direction), along with up to 50 pounds of objects. A *blackstone rune* can be used three times before its magic fades.

**Caster Level:** 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, plane shift; **Market Price:** 3,300 gp. **Weight:** —.

**Night Extract:** When thrown or dropped, one vial of this magic liquid reduces the ambient light level to that of starlight in a 20-foot radius. Magical light still functions in the area (and counters the effect), but torches, lanterns, sunrods, and other mundane light sources are suppressed until removed from the area. The DC of Spot checks made



Shadar-kai



against targets within the *night extract's* area increases by +10, although creatures with darkvision or superior low-light vision ignore this increase, and creatures with normal low-light vision gain a +5 bonus on Spot checks made in starlight. The *night extract* provides nine-tenths concealment (40% miss chance) against creatures without low-light vision, one-half concealment (20% miss chance) against creatures with low-light vision, and no concealment against creatures with darkvision or superior low-light vision. The effect lasts for 10 minutes.

**Caster Level:** 1st; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, light; **Market Price:** 50 gp. **Weight:** —.

## SHADAR-KAI CHARACTERS

A shadar-kai's favored class is rogue. Although rogues are by far the most common characters among the shadow fey, many other shadar-kai become wizards or clerics. Few shadar-kai are strong in melee combat, so they rarely do well as fighters, rangers, monks, or barbarians.

Due to their starting Hit Dice and unique powers, a shadar-kai's effective character level (ECL) is +4. Thus, a 1st-level shadar-kai rogue has an ECL of 5 and is the equivalent of a 5th-level character.

## SHADOW ASP

### Tiny Magical Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1d10+2 (7 hp)

**Initiative:** +5

**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 10 ft.

**AC:** 19 (+2 size, +5 Dex, +2 natural), touch 17, flat-footed 14

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+9

**Attack:** Bite +8 melee

**Full Attack:** Bite +8 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d3–2 plus poison

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

### Special Attacks:

Create spawn,  
poison

### Special Qualities:

Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal form, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 7, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 4, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +6, Hide +16, Listen +7, Move Silently +6, Spot +7

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse

**Climate/Terrain:** Any tomb or underground

**Organization:** Solitary or clutch (3–12)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** 50% coins, 50% goods, 50% items

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 2–3 HD (Small)

Shadow asps are dark versions of their more common reptilian cousins. They often guard the tombs of kings and other important members of royal families. Naturally observant, quiet, and capable of creating even more guards, they are perfectly suited to this task.

The average shadow asp measures 4 feet long. Its dark, scaled body often seems nearly translucent due to the potential the creature has to become incorporeal. No pattern adorns its scales, making the creature nearly invisible in the gloomy surroundings it favors.

Thought to have originated on the Plane of Shadow, shadow asps quickly found a niche on the Material Plane as "watchdogs" at the tombs of pharaohs and other great leaders, which is where they're most often encountered. Clutches might also be found near portals to the Plane of Shadow or in out-of-the-way Underdark locales.

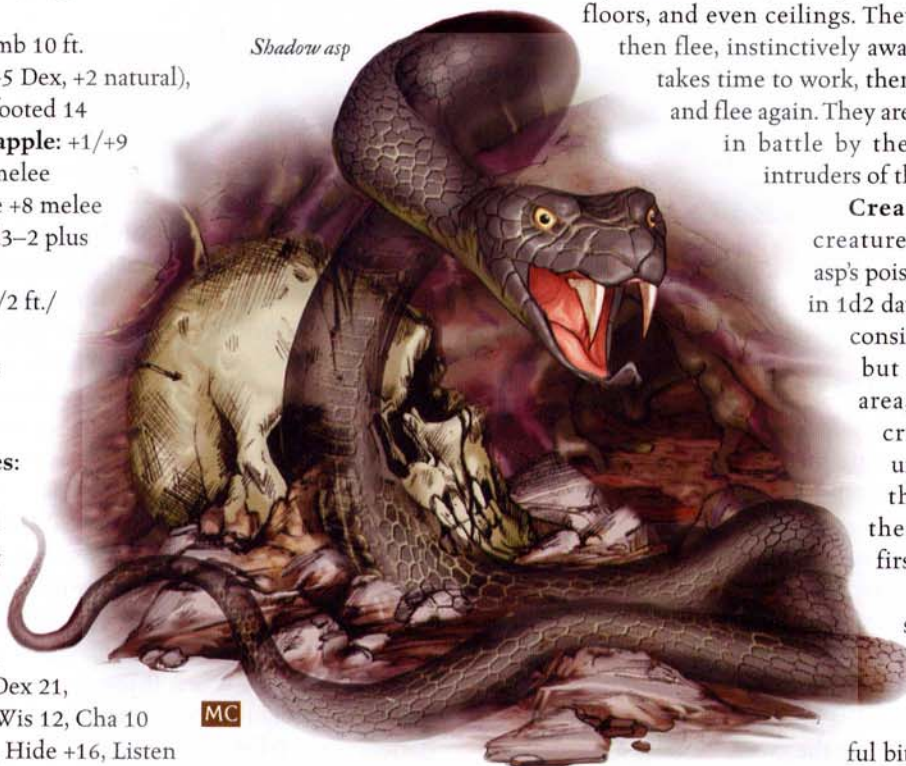
## COMBAT

Shadow asps are smarter than normal snakes, and anyone observing their tactics can easily see this. They use their ability to become incorporeal to mob intruders in the tombs they're set to guard, emerging to bite from the walls, floors, and even ceilings. They prefer to bite and then flee, instinctively aware that their venom takes time to work, then returning to strike and flee again. They are often accompanied in battle by the shadows of slain intruders of the past.

**Create Spawn (Su):** A creature slain by a shadow asp's poison rises as a shadow in 1d2 days. Such a shadow is considered uncontrolled, but it is bound to the area, usually a tomb or crypt, as a guardian, unable to stray more than 100 feet from the spot where it was first spawned.

**Poison (Ex):** A shadow asp delivers its poison (Fort DC 12 negates) with each successful bite attack. Initial and secondary damage are the same (1d6 Str).

**Incorporeal Form (Su):** A shadow asp can become incorporeal for up to 1 hour per day. It can activate this



MC