

Random Encounters

The Shadow Glade

By Jesse Decker



The Touch of Shadow and the Shadow-Bound

With the mastery of shadow that they learned in perfecting the ritual that formed the Shadow Glade, the shadar-kai wizards also learned to bind the stuff of shadow to living creatures. These creatures, although not as powerful as shadow creatures from the Plane of Shadow, make excellent scouts and provide the shadar-kai with expendable troops.

Although the shadar-kai wizards have used this ritual to corrupt many of the forest's creatures, their most powerful success came in the form of a group of human druids. The druids, not expecting to encounter spellcasters as powerful and stealthy as the shadar-kai, fell one-by-one to the spells of the shadow fey and then became bound to shadow itself. As the DM, you may determine the exact number of druids bound by the shadow fey. A druid who escaped the machinations of the shadar-kai would also make a great hook to bring the characters into conflict with the denizens of the Shadow Glade.



Shadow-Bound Druid

Shadow-Bound Druid: Male human Druid 7; CR 7; Medium humanoid; HD 7d8+14; hp 45; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base Atk +5; Grp +6; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, +1 *shortspear*) or +7 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1 *shortspear*); Full Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/x3, +1 *shortspear*) or +7 ranged (1d8+1/x3, +1 *shortspear*); SQ animal companion (brown bear), low-light vision, nature sense, resist nature's lure, shadow blend, shadow curse, *shadow walk*, trackless step, wild shape (Small or Medium animal 3/day), woodland stride; AL NE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Handle Animal +9, Heal +14, Hide +5, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Ride +3, Survival +6; Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration.

Animal Companion (Ex): This druid has a brown bear as an animal companion. This creature is a loyal companion that accompanies the shadow-bound druid on adventures as appropriate for its kind. See the Monster Manual page 269 for the brown bear's statistics. The druid gains the following benefits.

Link with Companion (Ex): This shadow-bound druid can handle his animal companion as a free action, or push it as a move action, with a +4 bonus on wild empathy and Handle Animal checks made while dealing with that animal.

Share Spells (Ex): This shadow-bound druid may have any spell he casts on himself also affect his animal companion if the latter is within 5 feet at the time. The shadow-bound druid may also cast a spell with a target of "You" on his animal companion.

Nature Sense (Ex): This shadow-bound druid gains a +2 bonus on Knowledge (nature) and Survival checks (these bonuses are included in the statistics given above).

Resist Nature's Lure (Ex): This shadow-bound druid gains a +4 bonus on saving throws against the spell-like abilities of fey.

Shadow Blend (Su): In conditions other than full daylight, a shadow-bound druid can wrap himself in shadows, giving him concealment. Attacks against a creature with concealment suffer a 20% miss chance (see Chapter 8: Combat in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on concealment). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this

ability. A *daylight* spell, however, will.

Shadow Curse (Su): The shadow-bound druid does not suffer the effects of the shadow curse while within the Glade of Shadows.

Shadow Walk (Sp): The shadow-bound druid can use *shadow walk*, as the spell of the same name, except that the ability works only on the shadow-bound druid. Caster level 7th.

Trackless Step (Ex): This shadow-bound druid leaves no trail in natural surroundings and cannot be tracked.

Wild Shape (Su): This shadow-bound druid can change into a Small or Medium animal and back again three times per day, as per the polymorph spell (except as noted in the *Player's Handbook* in the druid entry in Chapter 3).

Woodland Stride (Ex): This shadow-bound druid may move through natural thorns, briars, overgrown areas, and similar terrain at its normal speed and without damage or other impairment. However, thorns, briars, and overgrown areas that are magically manipulated to impede motion still affect the druid.

Druid Spells Prepared (6/5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level, or 15 + spell level for conjuration spells): 0 -- *cure minor wounds, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, read magic, virtue*; 1st -- *cure light wounds, entangle, faerie fire, longstrider, produce flame*; 2nd -- *barkskin, bull's strength, flaming sphere, resist energy*; 3rd -- *call lightning, cure moderate wounds, greater magic fang*; 4th -- *cure serious wounds, flame strike*.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 shortspear, *potion of bear's endurance*, *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2), *cloak of resistance* +1, *periapt of Wisdom* +2, 38 gp.

Creating a Shadow-Bound Creature

"Shadow-bound" is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or vermin.

A shadow-bound creature has all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: Animals and vermin with the shadow-bound template become magical beasts (with the augmented animal or augmented vermin subtype respectively). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. All other types remain unchanged. The creature's size remains unchanged.

Special Qualities: A shadow-bound creature has all the special qualities of the base creature, plus the following special qualities.

Low-Light Vision (Ex): A shadow-bound creature can see twice as far as a human in dim lighting.

Shadow Blend (Su): In conditions other than full daylight, a shadow-bound creature can wrap itself in shadows, giving it concealment. Attacks against a creature with concealment suffer a 20% miss chance (see the Chapter 8: Combat in the *Player's Handbook* for more information on concealment). Artificial illumination, even a *light* or *continual flame* spell, does not negate this ability. A *daylight* spell, however, will.

Shadow Curse (Su): The Plane of Shadow exerts a tremendous pull on shadow-bound creature's soul, which is only tenuously connected to its mortal body. Any time a shadow-bound creature is stunned, dazed, staggered, or unconscious (other than from natural sleep), the creature must make a Will save (DC 15) or lose a portion of her soul to the Plane of Shadow. The shadow-bound creature must also attempt a save any time she removes a *gal-ralan*, if she has one (see *Shadar-Kai* Items, from the *Fiend Folio*). A shadow-bound creature with a damaged soul gains one negative level that cannot be removed until it restores its soul completely. If exposed to another event that requires a save against the shadow curse, a shadow-bound creature may gain additional negative levels. A shadow-bound creature on the Plane of Shadow can transfix her soul to her body again with a *greater restoration* spell. A shadow-bound creature on the Material Plane (or elsewhere) must use a *wish* or *miracle* spell to restore her soul. A shadow-bound creature afflicted with the shadow curse cannot be raised from the dead or resurrected, and it cannot gain experience. The touch of the shadow curse galls a shadow-bound creature, filling its heart with an icy emptiness that eventually drives all but the most determined creatures to capitulate and leave the Material Plane altogether. A shadow-bound creature who goes to the Plane of Shadow and remains there ameliorates the effects of the shadow curse and suffers no ill effects. However, if it leaves the Plane of Shadow without restoring its soul, it suffers the effects of the shadow curse until it returns to the Plane of

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Shadow or restores its soul.

Shadow Walk (Sp): The shadow-bound creature can *shadow walk*, as the spell of the same name, except that the ability works only on the shadow-bound creature. Caster level equals the creature's HD.

Skills: A shadow-bound creature gains +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently.

Challenge Rating: Same as base creature.

Alignment: Same as base creature (often changes to evil)

Level Adjustment: +1

In addition to the statistics noted above, shadow-bound creatures in the Shadow Glade have been turned to evil and follow the instructions of the shadar-kai wizards at the glade's heart.

Note: DMs making regular use of the shadow-bound template in their game should be prepared to quantify the ritual needed to bind a creature to shadow and apply the template. Characters can learn the ritual by making a Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 35). The day-long ritual requires the casting of the *shadow walk* spell by an arcane spellcaster of at least 9th level. The ritual requires the caster to expend 100 XP and must be performed in a place with a close natural connection to the Plane of Shadow, such as the Shadow Glade.

Bringing the Parts Together

As the taint of shadow spreads, the characters might seek to penetrate the depths of the Shadow Glade, encountering scouts, denizens, and the touch of the Plane of Shadow itself over the course of several adventures.

Coming in Part 4 of the Shadow Glade

In the final part of The Shadow Glade, you can confront the shadar-kai wizards lurking at the heart of the glade.

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