

# **A TOUCH OF SHADOW**

## **SUMMARY**

A Touch of Shadow is a solo adventure for a 1st-level paladin PC. The PC is asked to protect a village that has suffered a series of attacks by unnaturally vicious animals.

## **INTRODUCING THE ADVENTURE**

If the player has played through the two previous adventures, Rat Warren Rescue and Life Pod Hunt, the PC has now completed his training and his mentor assigns him a final examination of sorts. A nearby village has recently suffered a series of attacks by unnaturally vicious animals, and his mentor asks him to protect the village and, if possible, put a stop to the attacks. He provides the PC with a map showing the location of the village, and suggests that the PC seek out the village clerk, Joel Fleurman, on his arrival.

The DM may substitute another adventure hook depending on the needs and details of his campaign. For example, the PC may receive a request for help from an old friend, perhaps Joel Fleurman or another of the NPCs in the village detailed subsequently. Alternatively, the PC may encounter a village in need of help on his travels, or he may discover that his home village is facing problems when he returns from his training.

The PC starts out with the standard equipment for a trained paladin of his order: plate mail, a heavy shield, a longsword, 2 javelins, and a standard adventurer's kit (100 gp value). The DM may also allow the player to customize the PC's gear within the standard 100 gp starting wealth for a 1st-level character.

If the DM wishes, he may allow the PC to gain an additional 20 gp worth of gear as a parting gift from his mentor if he succeeds at a DC 20 Diplomacy check.

## **A TOUCH OF SHADOW (KEY NPCs): JOEL FLEURMAN**

Joel Fleurman is an extremely busy young man. As the village clerk, he handles administrative work such as the recording of births, deaths, and other important events. As the local representative of the Five Stars Trading Company, he runs the general store, co-ordinates the shipment of farm produce out of the village, and arranges for the purchase and delivery of items needed by the villagers. As the village healer, he is often asked to visit the farmhouses to tend to the sick.

**Adventure Role:** Joel's role in this adventure is to provide information, direction, and some basic support services to the PC. Though technically only a minor bureaucrat (and not even a full-time one, at that), he is the closest thing the village has to a representative of the local government, and he does have the best interests of the village at heart. Hence, if he thinks that the PC can help solve a problem faced by the village, he will bring it to his attention and will also help him to the best of his ability. If the PC contracts a disease, Joel can use his healing skills to help him recover. If the PC wants to buy or sell equipment, he may do so through Joel.

**Physical Description:** short; thin; freckles; brown eyes; short brown hair.

**Personality Traits:** bureaucratic, excitable, often complains about how overworked he is.

### **Key Game Stats:**

**Alignment** Lawful Good

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Heal +6, History +6, Insight +6, Streetwise +6

**Str** 10 (+0) **Dex** 12 (+1) **Wis** 13 (+1)

**Con** 11 (+0) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+1)

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW (KEY NPCs): SYLVIA ESTARRION

Sylvia Estarrion is the local wizard's apprentice. Though still relatively inexperienced, she has picked up the basics of alchemy and is able to make a few simple alchemical items.

**Adventure Role:** Sylvia's investigation into the origin of the attacking animals triggers the second part of the adventure. She may also serve as a source of alchemical items for the PC. She is able to make 1st-level alchemical items, but the PC must pay the necessary component costs. Although combat statistics are provided for Sylvia, she is generally unwilling to accompany the PC on adventures. Nonetheless, if a fight is going badly for the PC, the DM could have Sylvia show up fortuitously to render assistance.

**Physical Description:** average height; slim; fair complexion; black eyes; black shoulder-length hair.

**Personality Traits:** serious, pragmatic, cool-headed.

### Key Game Stats:

#### Sylvia Estarrion, Level 1 Artillery

Medium natural humanoid, human wizard (XP 100)

**Initiative** +2

**Senses** Perception +2

**HP** 17; **Bloodied** 8

**AC** 14; **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 15

**Speed** 6

m **Dagger** (standard; at-will) \* **Weapon**

+3 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

r **Magic Missile** (standard; at-will) \* **Force**

Ranged 20; +4 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 force damage.

A **Scorching Burst** (standard; at-will) \* **Fire**

Area burst 1 within 10; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 fire damage.

C **Thunderwave** (standard; at-will) \* **Thunder**

Close blast 3; +4 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

R **Chill Strike** (standard; encounter) \* **Cold**

Ranged 10; +4 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 4 cold damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Sylvia's next turn.

**Wand of Accuracy** (free; encounter) \* **Implement**

Requires wand; Sylvia gains a +2 bonus to a single attack roll.

**Alignment** Good

**Languages** Common, Draconic

**Skills** Arcana +9, Dungeoneering +7, Nature +7

**Str** 10 (+0) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

**Con** 11 (+0) **Int** 18 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Equipment** robes, wand, dagger

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW (KEY NPCs): KAIL GREENBOUGH AND BLACKIE

Kail Greenbough is a prosperous local farmer, and Blackie is his pet dog.

**Adventure Role:** Kail Greenbough plays a key role in Challenge #4, when the PC is asked to mediate a dispute between him and the elf ranger Rumil Amanth. Knowledge of Kail's full name and Blackie's name should also help the PC solve the lock puzzle in Challenge #2.

**Physical Description:** middle-aged; tall; burly; tanned skin; black eyes; graying black hair. Blackie is a black, wolf-like dog similar to an Alsatian.

**Personality Traits:** blunt, gruff, stubborn.

### Key Game Stats:

#### Kail Greenbough, Level 1 Adjunct

Medium natural humanoid, human (XP 50)

**Initiative** +0

**Senses** Perception +1

**HP** 14; **Bloodied** 7

**AC** 14; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 12

**Speed** 6

m **Club** (standard; at-will) \* **Weapon**

+5 vs. AC; 6 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** Common

**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 10 (+0) **Wis** 13 (+1)

**Con** 12 (+1) **Int** 13 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+0)

**Equipment** club

#### Blackie, Level 1 Adjunct

Medium natural beast (XP 50)

**Initiative** +4

**Senses** Perception +6

**HP** 15; **Bloodied** 7

**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12

**Speed** 6

m **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 6 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** -

**Str** 13 (+1) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 13 (+1)

**Con** 14 (+2) **Int** 2 (-4) **Cha** 10 (+0)

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW (KEY NPCs): RUMIL AMANTH AND FAERWYN

Rumil Amanth is elven ranger, and Faerwyn is his wolf companion.

**Adventure Role:** Rumil Amanth plays a key role in Challenge #4, when the PC is asked to mediate a dispute between him and the local farmer Kail Greenbough. The PC may also be able to obtain Rumil's help when he is fighting the black wolf (see Challenge #5).

**Physical Description:** tall (for an elf); wiry; tanned skin; blue eyes; dark brown hair.

**Personality Traits:** dignified, guarded, reserved.

### Key Game Stats:

#### Rumil Amanth, Level 1 Skirmisher

Medium fey humanoid, elf ranger (XP 100)

**Initiative** +2

**Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision

**Group Awareness** aura 5; non-elf allies in the aura gain a +1 racial bonus to Perception checks

**HP** 20; **Bloodied** 10

**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13

**Speed** 7; see also *wild step*

m **Longsword** (standard; at-will) \* **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

r **Longbow** (standard; at-will) \* **Weapon**

+4 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.

M **Predator Strike** (standard; at-will) \* **Beast**

Target must be adjacent to Rumil and Faerwyn; Faerwyn attacks the target; +5 vs. AC; 1d8 +5 damage, or 1d8 + 7 damage if Faerwyn has combat advantage against the target.

M **Synchronized Strike** (standard; encounter) \* **Beast, Weapon**

Target must be adjacent to Rumil and Faerwyn; Faerwyn attacks the target; +5 vs. AC; 1d8 +2 damage, or 1d8 + 4 damage if Faerwyn has combat advantage against the target.

*Effect:* Rumil makes a secondary attack against the target; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 damage.

M **Partnered Savaging** (standard; daily) \* **Beast**

Target must be adjacent to Faerwyn, but need not be adjacent to Rumil; Faerwyn attacks the target; +5 vs. AC; 2d8 + 2 damage, or 2d8 + 4 damage if Faerwyn has combat advantage against the target.

*Effect:* If the target is Rumil's quarry, he can shift 3 squares and make a basic attack against it.

**Elven Accuracy** (free; encounter)

Rumil can reroll an attack roll. He must use the second roll, even if it's lower.

**Hunter's Quarry** (minor; at-will)

Rumil can designate the enemy nearest to him that he can see or the enemy nearest to Faerwyn that he can see as his quarry. Once per round, he or Faerwyn can deal +1d6 damage to his quarry. This effect remains active until the end of the encounter, until the quarry is defeated, or until he designates a different target as his quarry.

**Wild Step**

Rumil ignores difficult terrain when he shifts.

**Alignment** Good

**Languages** Common, Elven

**Str** 16 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+2) **Wis** 16 (+3)

**Con** 12 (+1) **Int** 11 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+0)

**Equipment** hide armor, longsword, longbow, 30 arrows

#### Faerwyn, Level 1 Wolf Companion

Medium natural beast (XP -)

**Initiative** uses Rumil's initiative

**Senses** Perception +7; see also Rumil's *group awareness*

**HP** 22; **Bloodied** 11

**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 14

## **Speed 7**

m **Bite** (standard; at-will)  
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.

### **Combat Advantage**

Faerwyn gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls when it has combat advantage against a target.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Skills** Endurance +7

**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+2) **Wis** 14 (+2)

**Con** 14 (+2) **Int** 6 (-2) **Cha** 6 (-2)

Rumil and Faerwyn are separate creatures and have separate hit points, but they share the same pool of actions in each round of combat (except for move actions; see below). As a standard action, Rumil may use one of his own basic attacks. If Faerwyn is able to attack, he may also use a standard action to command it to make a basic attack, or to activate one of his powers with the Beast keyword. If Rumil is unable to command Faerwyn, it may use a standard action to make a basic attack only. If Rumil takes a move action, he may also command Faerwyn to take a move action. The two move actions need not be the same.

## **A TOUCH OF SHADOW: MEETING JOEL FLEURMAN**

Since the road to the village is well-travelled and well-maintained, the PC should have little trouble making his way there. Once he has reached the village, he should be able to find Joel Fleurman quite easily by asking the villagers there for directions.

After introducing himself and thanking the PC for responding to his call for help, Joel will give him the following information:

1. The village has recently been troubled by two unnaturally vicious animals. The first, a giant rat, has been raiding the village fields at night. The second, some sort of flying lizard, has been preying on the villagers' chickens during the day.
2. The flying lizard has already attacked earlier that day, so the next attack on the village will likely be by the giant rat at around midnight.
3. Sylvia Estarrion, the apprentice to the village wizard, has asked that the bodies of the dead animals be delivered to her so that she can examine them and try to discover what is causing them to become so aggressive.

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #1

**Challenge Summary:** The PC fights a shadowtouched dire rat.

**Introducing The Challenge:** Shortly after twilight, Joel brings the PC to the farm that was attacked by the giant rat. The farm lies at the edge of the village, close to a forest. Joel carries an everburning torch with him to provide light for the PC. The giant rat emerges from the forest a few hours after the PC arrives at the farm.

**Running The Challenge:** Joel's everburning torch provides bright light in a 5-square radius around him. The rest of the squares in the area are dimly lit.

If the PC has low-light vision, he notices the rat as it emerges from the forest. Start the rat 10 squares away from the PC and roll initiative normally. If the rat wins initiative, it moves until it is 6 squares away from the PC and then charges.

If the PC does not have low-light vision, the rat moves until it is 6 squares away from the PC and makes a Stealth check at -5 (for a net modifier of +3). If the rat's Stealth check result beats the PC's passive Perception, the rat surprises the PC. Otherwise, the PC notices the rat at the end of its movement; roll for initiative normally. If the rat surprises the PC or wins initiative, it charges.

The rat simply makes a bite attack against the PC each round on its turn. Once the PC bloodies it, it gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against him and uses *necrotic smite* on its next attack. It fights until it is killed.

Joel takes no offensive actions against the rat, but if the PC becomes bloodied and has not yet used his second wind, he attempts a DC 10 Heal check to allow the PC to do so without spending an action.

If the PC is bitten by the rat, he contracts filth fever unless he makes a successful saving throw at the end of the encounter. If the PC is infected, Joel will treat his disease when he takes an extended rest. This enables the PC to use the better of his Endurance check or Joel's Heal check to determine whether he improves, worsens, or maintains his condition.

### Shadowtouched Dire Rat, Level 2 Brute

Medium natural beast (XP 125)

**Initiative** +3

**Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

**HP** 48; **Bloodied** 24; see also *bloodied retaliation*

**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11

**Immune** filth fever; **Resist** 5 necrotic

**Speed** 6, climb 3

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) \* **Disease**

+4 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target contracts filth fever; see also *bloodied retaliation*

M **Necrotic Smite** (standard; encounter) \* **Necrotic**

The shadowtouched dire rat makes a bite attack. If it hits, it deals an additional 6 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

#### **Bloodied Retaliation**

The shadowtouched dire rat gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the creature that first bloodies it in an encounter.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Skills** Stealth +8

**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)

**Con** 18 (+5) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)



## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #2

**Challenge Summary:** The PC must solve a puzzle before he can open a vault in the village Constable's office.

**Introducing The Challenge:** After the PC has defeated the giant rat, Joel takes him to the Constable's office. He explains that the current Constable was called away three days ago on official business. However, he has left some equipment for the PC in the armory. The armory is locked with a puzzle lock, but he has also left instructions on how to open it. Joel hands the PC an envelope.

The envelope contains a piece of paper that reads:

"Kail is taking his dog, a white goose and a bushel of yellow corn to market. To get there, he has to cross a river. The river can only be crossed with a boat. There is a boat on the river bank that he can use, but it is small, and he can only bring one other thing with him each time that he crosses the river. The dog, the goose and the corn cannot cross the river themselves. He cannot leave the dog alone with the goose, as the dog might attack the goose. He cannot leave the goose alone with the corn, as the goose might eat the corn. How can Kail, his dog, the goose and the bushel of corn cross the river?"

The door to the armory is made of iron. On the wall next to the door are four levers: one black, one white, one green and one yellow. All the levers are currently pointing up.

**Running the Challenge:** The puzzle uses a classic river crossing problem as its base. However, the PC also has to relate the elements of the puzzle (the farmer, the dog, the goose, and the corn) to the colored levers on the door. A bit of local knowledge will enable him to do so correctly.

This puzzle can be run as a modified skill challenge, or the player may use his own ability to solve it.

### Step One: Linking the Puzzle Elements to the Levers

The white lever represents the goose and the yellow lever represents the corn. "Kail" is the farmer, Kail Greenbough, and the green lever represents him. The black lever represents Kail's dog, Blackie.

If the PC asks Joel if he knows anyone named Kail, he will be able to tell him both Kail's surname and the name of his dog. The PC may also ask Kail himself if he has not yet solved the puzzle by the time he meets him in Challenge #4. Once the PC discovers this information, linking the puzzle elements to the levers should be trivially easy. However, if the player is having trouble, the PC can complete this step with a DC 16 Intelligence check, or a DC 12 Intelligence check if he has found out Kail's surname and Blackie's name from either Joel or Kail (reveal the information stated above to the player). If the check is failed, the PC may re-try the Intelligence check after an extended rest.

### Step Two: Interpreting the Instructions

The instructions should be interpreted as follows:

- A lever "crosses the river" when it is pulled from its up position to its down position, or vice-versa.
- The green lever (Kail) may be moved up and down freely.
- The black (Blackie), white (goose) and yellow (corn) levers can only be moved when the green lever is moved, and only in the same direction as the green lever.
- At most two levers can be moved at any one time: the green lever and one other lever.
- The black and white levers cannot both be pointing up or down, unless the green lever is also pointing up or down. Similarly, the white and yellow levers cannot both be pointing up or down unless the green lever is also pointing up or down.
- The armory door will be unlocked when all four levers point down.

If the player is having trouble, the PC can complete this step with a DC 16 Intelligence check (reveal the information stated above to the player). If the check is failed, the PC may re-try the Intelligence check after an extended rest.

### Step Three: Solving the Puzzle

The solution to this puzzle is as follows:

1. Move the green and white levers down.
2. Move the green lever up.
3. Move the green lever and either the black lever or the yellow lever down.
4. Move the green and white levers up.
5. Move the green lever and either the yellow lever or the black lever (whichever is still up) down.
6. Move the green lever up.
7. Move the green and white levers down.

If the player is having trouble, the PC can complete this step with a DC 16 Intelligence check (reveal the information stated above to the player). If the check is failed, the PC may re-try the Intelligence check after an extended rest.

The PC may also try to seek advice from Sylvia Estarrion, the wizard's apprentice. If he does so, it can be run as a more conventional skill challenge. Each successful DC 16 Diplomacy check allows the PC to complete a step. However, if he fails three Diplomacy checks, Sylvia refuses to help him further.

If the PC manages to open the door, he finds a *+1 javelin* and a *potion of healing*. The PC does not earn any XP for overcoming this challenge.

## **A TOUCH OF SHADOW: FIRST INTERLUDE**

After the PC has solved the puzzle in Challenge #2, is unable to progress further, or decides to come back to it at another time, Joel takes him to the local inn so that he may rest for the night. The PC may take an extended rest. If the PC has contracted filth fever, Joel will treat his disease, so the PC may use the better of his Endurance check or Joel's Heal check to determine whether he improves, worsens, or maintains his condition.

Joel informs the PC that he will be back in the early afternoon to take him to the farm that was attacked by the flying lizard. In the morning, the PC may continue working on the puzzle if he has not already solved it. If he is still unable to solve it himself, he may attempt to seek help from Sylvia Estarrion.

When Joel returns, he has important news and another request for the PC. A black wolf attacked some sheep last evening, so he asks the PC to stand guard over them that night.

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #3

**Challenge Summary:** The PC fights a shadowtouched spiretop drake.

**Introducing The Challenge:** After informing the PC about the black wolf, Joel brings him to the farm that was attacked by the flying lizard (the drake). It flies into sight in the late afternoon.

**Running the Challenge:** Start the drake some distance from the PC (further away than twice his move) so that if he wins initiative in the first round of combat, he can only attack by using a ranged weapon. The drake makes use of *flyby attack* to try as far as possible to never end its turn adjacent to the PC. Once the PC bloodies it, it gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against him and uses *necrotic smite* on its next attack. It fights until it is killed.

Joel takes no offensive actions against the drake, but if the PC becomes bloodied and has not yet used his second wind, he attempts a DC 10 Heal check to allow the PC to do so without spending an action.

### Shadowtouched Spiretop Drake, Level 2 Skirmisher

Small natural beast (reptile) (XP 125)

**Initiative** +7

**Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

**HP** 37; **Bloodied** 18; see also *bloodied retaliation*

**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 11, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

**Resist** 5 necrotic

**Speed** 4, fly 8 (hover); see also *flyby attack*

M **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage; see also *bloodied retaliation*.

M **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The shadowtouched spiretop drake flies up to 8 squares and makes a bite attack or a necrotic smite attack at any point during that movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

M **Necrotic Smite** (standard; encounter) \* **Necrotic**

The shadowtouched spiretop drake makes a bite attack. If it hits, it deals an additional 6 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

### Bloodied Retaliation

The shadowtouched spiretop drake gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the creature that first bloodies it in an encounter.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Str** 11 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 16 (+4)

**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 11 (+1)

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #4

**Challenge Summary:** The PC mediates a dispute between a local farmer and an elven ranger.

**Introducing The Challenge:** After the PC has defeated the drake, Joel takes him to the farm that was attacked by the wolf. On his arrival, he finds the farmer, Kail Greenbough, arguing with an elf ranger, Rumil Amanth, while Kail's dog Blackie and Rumil's animal companion Faerwyn growl at each other. Joel will ask what has happened if the PC does not do so. Kail will say that Rumil's pet wolf killed one of his lambs, but he has refused to either compensate him for his loss or stay to work off his debt. Rumil will counter that he is prepared to compensate Kail, but he has no money on him at the moment and cannot stay to work because he is on his way to attend a meeting. He offers to return to repay Kail at a later date. However, Kail refuses to allow Rumil to leave before he pays him. Since the two of them have reached an impasse, Joel will propose that the PC mediate the dispute as a neutral third party.

**Running the Challenge:** This challenge may be run as a skill challenge, or the player may use his own ability to work out a solution.

### What Kail Wants

Kail's primary objective is to be compensated at least 1 gp, or the equivalent in goods or services, for his lamb. His secondary objective is to ensure that Rumil pays for the lamb in some manner before he leaves the village. He will automatically accept any solution that allows him to meet both his objectives (no skill check required).

### What Rumil Wants

Rumil is on his way to attend a meeting with his fellow rangers that he does not want to be late for. His primary objective is to leave the village by the next morning at the latest. His secondary objective is to pay for the lamb through his own efforts, though not necessarily immediately. He will automatically accept any solution that allows him to meet both his objectives (no skill check required).

If the PC proposes a solution that does not meet an NPC's primary or secondary objectives, he must succeed at two skill checks with that NPC to persuade him to accept it. In most cases, the DC of the skill check will depend on how well the proposed solution meets the NPC's primary and secondary objectives. The PC may make use of the following skills during this challenge:

**Bluff:** This skill will come into play if the PC attempts to fool an NPC into believing that his primary or secondary objectives will be met. A failed Bluff check imposes a -2 penalty on subsequent Bluff and Diplomacy checks with the same NPC.

**Diplomacy:** This skill will come into play if the PC simply attempts to persuade an NPC to accept his solution. The PC will need to succeed at a DC 16 skill check if the proposed solution meets the NPC's primary objective but not his secondary objective, or a DC 20 skill check if the proposed solution does not even meet his primary objective.

**Insight:** This skill will come into play if the PC attempts to figure out what an NPC wants. If he succeeds on a DC 12 Insight check, he discovers the NPC's primary objective and gains a +2 bonus to his next Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate check with that NPC. If he succeeds on a DC 16 Insight check, he also discovers the NPC's secondary objective and gains a +2 bonus to all subsequent Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks with that NPC. If he succeeds on a DC 20 Insight check, it also counts as a success with that NPC. Bonuses from successful Insight checks do not stack.

**Intimidate:** This skill will come into play if the PC attempts to threaten an NPC into accepting his solution. The PC will need to succeed at a DC 16 skill check if the proposed solution meets the NPC's primary objective but not his secondary objective, or a DC 20 skill check if the proposed solution does not even meet his primary objective. A failed Intimidate check imposes a -2 penalty on subsequent Diplomacy and Intimidate checks with the same NPC.

The PC may propose as many solutions as he wants, but once he has failed three skill checks, both the NPCs lose patience. Rumil turns to leave, and Kail orders Blackie to attack Faerwyn while he fights Rumil. If the PC does not interfere, Rumil and Faerwyn will defeat Kail and Blackie and leave. If the PC

decides to fight one or the other, run the fight normally. When the fight is over, Joel will try to stabilize the dying and tend to the injured. The defeated party (if he survives) agrees to the other NPC's demands.

Award the PC 100 XP if he is able to get Kail and Rumil to agree to his proposed solution. Otherwise, award him 25 XP for each success that he earned. One solution that both NPCs would agree to automatically would be for Rumil to help the PC guard Kail's sheep and defeat the black wolf. If Rumil fights alongside the PC in Challenge #5, the DM may use a tougher monster in order to make the fight more interesting.

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #5

**Challenge Summary:** The PC fights a shadowtouched grey wolf. If he has help from Rumil Amanth, he may fight a shadowfused grey wolf instead.

**Introducing The Challenge:** Whether or not the PC successfully resolved the dispute between Kail and Rumil (and even if a fight broke out and Kail was killed), Joel urges the PC to stay and fight the black wolf. As with the farm in Challenge #1, Kail's farm is at the edge of the village, close to a forest. The black wolf emerges from the forest shortly after twilight.

**Running the Challenge:** As in Challenge #1, Joel's everburning torch provides bright light in a 5-square radius around him. The rest of the squares in the area are dimly lit.

If the PC has low-light vision, he notices the wolf as it emerges from the forest. If the PC does not have low-light vision, but Rumil is with him, Rumil will alert the PC when the wolf appears. Start the wolf 10 squares away from the PC and roll initiative normally. If the wolf wins initiative, it moves and charges at the target which is closest to it.

If the PC does not have low-light vision and Rumil is not with him, the wolf moves 2 squares (so that it is 8 squares away from the PC) and makes a Stealth check with a +3 modifier. If the wolf's Stealth check result beats the PC's passive Perception, the wolf surprises the PC. Otherwise, the PC notices the wolf at the end of its movement; roll for initiative normally. If the wolf surprises the PC or wins initiative, it charges.

If the PC is fighting a shadowtouched grey wolf, it simply makes a bite attack against him each round on its turn. Once the PC bloodies it, it gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and deals additional damage against him with its bite attack. It also uses *necrotic smite* on its next attack. It fights until it is killed.

If the PC is fighting a shadowfused grey wolf, it uses *necrotic smite* in the first round after it is hit, against the creature that dealt the most damage to it in that round. Otherwise, it will attack the PC if he challenges it. The wolf's *necrotic backlash* is not considered an attack and the wolf does not take damage from the PC's *divine challenge* if one of the PC's allies is damaged by this ability. Once the wolf is bloodied, it gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and deals additional damage against the creature that bloodied it with its bite attack. It also recharges its *necrotic smite* and uses it against that creature on its next attack. It continues to attack that creature thereafter (even if it means taking damage from the PC's *divine challenge*) until the creature is dead or dying. It fights until it is killed.

Joel takes no offensive actions against the wolf, but if the PC or one of his allies becomes bloodied and has not yet used his (or its) second wind, he attempts a DC 10 Heal check to allow the character to do so without spending an action.

### Shadowtouched Gray Wolf, Level 3 Skirmisher

Medium natural beast (XP 150)

**Initiative** +5

**Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

**HP** 46; **Bloodied** 23; see also *bloodied retaliation*

**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13

**Resist** 5 necrotic

**Speed** 8

m **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, or 2d6 + 2 damage against a prone target or against the target of its *bloodied retaliation* (see below)

#### Combat Advantage

If the shadowtouched gray wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

M **Necrotic Smite** (standard; encounter) \* **Necrotic**

The shadowtouched gray wolf makes a bite attack. If it hits, it deals an additional 6 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

#### Bloodied Retaliation

The shadowtouched gray wolf gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the creature that first bloodies it in an encounter.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Str** 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

### **Shadowfused Gray Wolf, Level 3 Elite Skirmisher**

Medium natural beast (XP 300)

**Initiative** +5

**Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

**HP** 92; **Bloodied** 46; see also *bloodied retaliation*

**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 13

**Resist** 10 necrotic

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 8

**Action Points** 1

m **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, or 2d6 + 2 damage against a prone target or against the target of its *bloodied retaliation* (see below)

#### **Combat Advantage**

If the shadowfused gray wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.

M **Necrotic Smite** (standard; recharges when first bloodied, encounter) \* **Necrotic**

The shadowfused gray wolf makes a bite attack. If it hits, it deals an additional 6 necrotic damage and the target is weakened (save ends).

#### **Necrotic Backlash**

An adjacent creature that damages the shadowfused gray wolf with a melee attack or an attack with the Weapon keyword takes 3 necrotic damage.

#### **Bloodied Retaliation**

The shadowfused gray wolf gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the creature that first bloodies it in an encounter.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Str** 13 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 3 (-3) **Cha** 10 (+1)



## **A TOUCH OF SHADOW: SECOND INTERLUDE**

After the black wolf has been defeated, Joel takes the PC back to the local inn so that he may rest for the night. The PC may take an extended rest. If the PC has contracted filth fever and has not yet recovered, Joel will treat his disease, so the PC may use the better of his Endurance check or Joel's Heal check to determine whether he improves, worsens, or maintains his condition.

In the morning, Sylvia Estarrion comes to see the PC. She tells him that she has examined the bodies of the rat, the drake and the wolf, and found traces of necrotic energy in them. She suspects that an ancient rift to a plane of necrotic energy must have recently re-opened. In order to prevent more of such creatures from being created, the rift will have to be closed. She informs the PC that she has a scroll that contains instructions on how to perform a ritual that will close the rift. However, since the ritual is religious in nature, she feels that the PC has the best chance to perform it successfully. Hence, she asks him to travel to the cave that contains the rift and perform the ritual to close it.

Sylvia provides the PC with a map to the cave and one final warning: once the PC has started performing the ritual, he must complete it or the rift will stabilize and the ritual will no longer be able to close it.

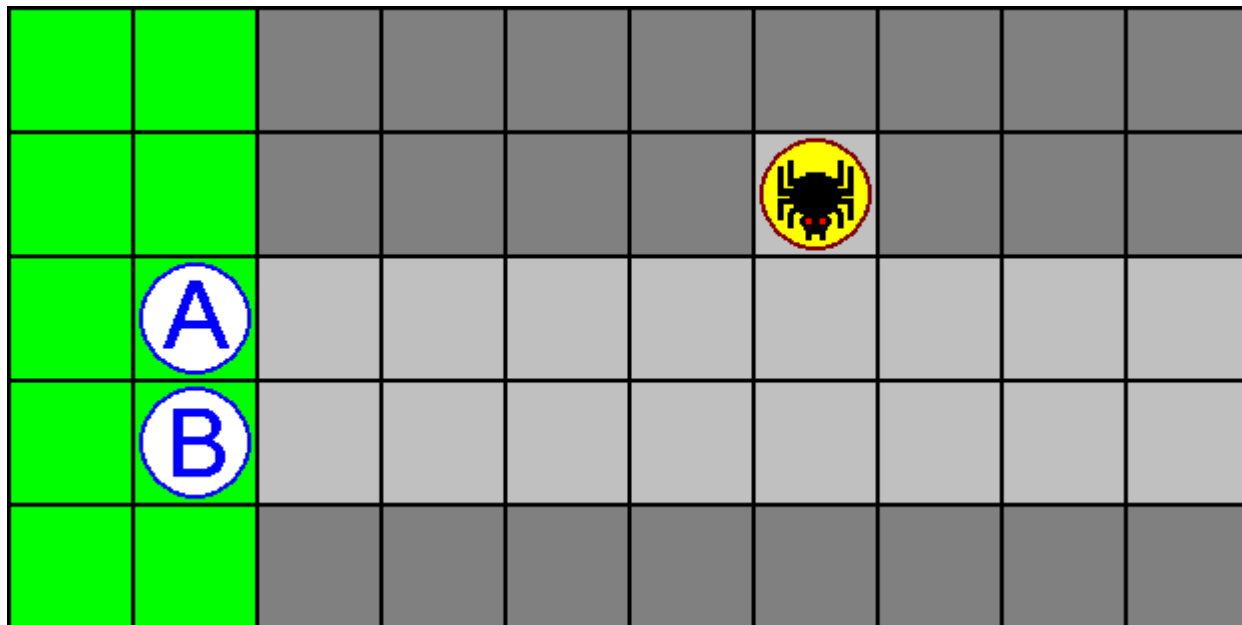
Before he leaves, the PC may continue working on the puzzle if he has not already solved it. If he is still unable to solve it himself, he may attempt to seek help from Sylvia Estarrion if he has not already done so.

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #6

**Challenge Summary:** The PC fights a shadowtouched web terror spider.

**Introducing The Challenge:** The map is easy to follow, and the PC arrives at the entrance of the cave without incident.

**Running the Challenge:** If you use a battlemat, the initial setup is as follows:



The spider starts the encounter hiding in a convenient nook in the cave tunnel and relies on its tremorsense to alert it to the presence of prey. When the PC enters either square A or square B, the spider makes a Stealth check with a +9 modifier. If the spider's Stealth check result beats the PC's passive Perception, the spider surprises the PC and makes a web attack against him. Otherwise, the PC notices the spider; roll for initiative normally.

If the PC does not carry a light source, the four squares at the tunnel entrance are brightly lit, while the rest of the cave tunnel is dimly lit.

The spider will not move to attack the PC unless he is immobilized. If it starts its turn 2 or more squares away from the PC, it makes a web attack. If the web attack hits, it moves adjacent to the PC and attacks, gaining combat advantage against the PC because of its *web advantage* ability. If its web attack misses, it keeps its distance, but readies an action to bite the PC if he moves adjacent to it. If it starts its turn adjacent to the PC, it makes a bite attack and shifts away so that it can make a web attack without provoking an opportunity attack. Once the PC bloodies it, it gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls against him and uses *necrotic smite* on its next attack. It fights until it is killed.

### Shadowtouched Web Terror Spider, Level 3 Controller

Medium natural beast (spider) (XP 150)

**Initiative** +3

**Senses** Perception +7; darkvision, tremorsense 5

**HP** 46; **Bloodied** 23; see also *bloodied retaliation*

**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16

**Resist** 5 necrotic

**Speed** 6, climb 6 (spider climb)

m **Bite** (standard; at-will) \* **Poison**

+5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both); see also *web advantage* and *bloodied retaliation*.

r **Web** (minor 1/round; at-will)

Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).

**Web Advantage**

The shadowtouched web terror spider gains combat advantage against an immobilized target.  
M **Necrotic Smite** (standard; encounter) \* **Necrotic**

The shadowtouched web terror spider makes a bite attack. If it hits, it deals an additional 6 necrotic damage and the target is weakened in addition to being slowed and taking ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends all three).

**Bloodied Retaliation**

The shadowtouched web terror spider gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the creature that first bloodies it in an encounter.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** –

**Skills** Athletics +8, Stealth +9

**Str** 12 (+2) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 8 (+0)

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #7

**Challenge Summary:** The PC fights a gravehound zombie (Monster Manual).

**Introducing The Challenge:** After defeating the spider, the PC may venture deeper into the cave. Eventually, the cave tunnel opens out into a large natural cavern. The air in the cavern is cold and heavy with the smell of death and decay. At the far end of the cavern, a jagged line that seems to be made of dark purplish, glowing energy hangs in the air. A gravehound lurks in one of the far corners of the cavern.

**Running the Challenge:** The cavern covers a 10-square by 10-square area. The rift is along the edge of the cavern opposite the entrance, and the gravehound is in the corner of the cavern furthest away from the entrance. If the PC does not carry a light source, the area is dimly lit.

If the PC has low-light vision or a light source that makes the entire cavern brightly lit, he notices the gravehound immediately; roll for initiative normally. If the gravehound wins initiative, it moves until it is 8 squares away from the PC and then charges.

If the PC does not have low-light vision or a light source that makes the entire cavern brightly lit, the gravehound moves until it is 8 squares away from the PC and makes a Stealth check with a +2 modifier. If the gravehound's Stealth check result beats the PC's passive Perception, it surprises the PC. Otherwise, the PC notices it at the end of its movement; roll for initiative normally. If the gravehound surprises the PC or wins initiative, it charges.

The gravehound simply makes a bite attack against the PC each round on its turn. Due to its *zombie weakness*, a critical hit by the PC reduces it to 0 hit points instantly. It fights until it is killed, at which point it makes a final attack due to its *death jaws* ability.

The rift randomly discharges necrotic energy. Do not roll initiative for the rift; simply allow it to take its "turn" after the gravehound. This is treated as an attack:

**R Necrotic Discharge** (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) \* **Necrotic**

Ranged 5; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d10 necrotic damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.

If the rift's attack recharges, but there are no targets within range, the necrotic energy discharges harmlessly into a random empty square within 5 squares of the rift. This might give the PC a clue that it is dangerous to get close to the rift.

## A TOUCH OF SHADOW: CHALLENGE #8

**Challenge Summary:** The PC performs a ritual to close the rift.

**Introducing The Challenge:** After defeating the gravehound, the PC may turn his attention to closing the rift.

**Running the Challenge:** This is basically a skill challenge, but the PC may also perform other actions to earn successes.

In addition to providing instructions on how to perform the ritual to close the rift, Sylvia's scroll also advises that focusing radiant energy and healing energy on the rift will help weaken it and make it easier to close it. The scroll further recommends doing so before commencing the ritual. If the PC has any powers that deal radiant damage, a DC 12 Intelligence check will enable him to realize that he can use his powers to weaken the rift (the rift's AC is 14 and its other defenses are 12). Similarly, a DC 12 Heal check will enable him to realize that he can use *lay on hands* to channel healing energy into the rift.

### **Effects of Special Actions**

**Lay on Hands:** If the PC uses *lay on hands* on the rift, he earns one success. However, he also takes 1d10 necrotic damage from touching the rift. The PC may earn at most one success from using *lay on hands*.

**Radiant Delirium:** If the PC uses *radiant delirium* and hits, he earns one success. In addition, he gains a +2 bonus on Religion checks to close the rift. Each round, the DM rolls a d20 for the rift as if it was making a saving throw. If the result is 10 or higher, this effect ends. The PC may earn at most one success from using powers that deal radiant damage.

**Radiant Smite:** If the PC uses *radiant smite* and hits, he earns one success. The PC may earn at most one success from using powers that deal radiant damage.

**Holy Strike (and other powers that deal radiant damage):** The PC earns one success once he has dealt 10 points of radiant damage to the rift. The PC cannot mark the rift to deal additional damage with *holy strike*. The PC may earn at most one success from using powers that deal radiant damage.

### **Performing the Ritual**

Allow the PC to make an Arcana check as a free action when he starts performing the ritual to close the rift. Although the ritual is religious in nature, knowledge about magical lore could still help the PC. If he succeeds on a DC 12 Arcana check, he gains a +2 bonus to his next Religion check. If he succeeds on a DC 16 Arcana check, he also gains a +2 bonus to all subsequent Religion checks, and if he succeeds on a DC 20 Arcana check, he also automatically succeeds on his first Religion check to close the rift. A failed Arcana check does not count as a failure for the challenge. However, the PC may only make one Arcana check during this challenge; this represents the extent of his knowledge at the time.

In order to perform the ritual to close the rift, the PC must be adjacent to the rift (and thus be within range of the rift's *necrotic discharge*). Performing the ritual is a standard action. Each round that the PC performs the ritual, he makes a Religion check to determine the outcome of his efforts. If the result of his Religion check is 11 or less, he performs the ritual incorrectly and accumulates one failure. If he succeeds on a DC 12 Religion check, he makes a minor error that threatens to stabilize the rift. If he has healing surges remaining, as a minor action, he may spend a healing surge to disrupt the stabilization. If he does not, or if he has no healing surges remaining, he accumulates one failure. If he succeeds on a DC 16 Religion check, he performs the ritual correctly and earns one success. If he succeeds on a DC 20 Religion check, he performs the ritual so efficiently that he is able to concentrate better in the next round. The PC earns one success and gains a +2 bonus to his next Religion check.

Once the PC has started performing the ritual, he must continue to spend a standard action to do so in each round until the rift is closed. If he does not, he automatically accumulates one failure for each round that passes before he resumes performing the ritual.

While the PC performs the ritual, the rift continues to randomly discharge necrotic energy. Do not roll initiative for the rift; simply allow it to take its "turn" after the gravehound. This is treated as an attack:

R **Necrotic Discharge** (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) \* **Necrotic**

Ranged 5; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d10 necrotic damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.

If the rift's attack recharges, but there are no targets within range, the necrotic energy discharges harmlessly into a random empty square within 5 squares of the rift.

### **Effects of Successes and Failures**

For each success that the PC earns, reduce the recharge rate of the rift's *necrotic discharge* attack by 1, i.e. to 4 5 6 after one success, to 5 6 after two successes, and to 6 after three successes. Once the PC has earned four successes, the rift closes and no longer makes *necrotic discharge* attacks. It also loses its *necrotic aura* (see below) if it has gained one.

After the PC has accumulated one failure, the rift starts to stabilize and to release a steady flow of necrotic energy into the area. The rift gains a *necrotic aura*.

**Necrotic Aura** aura 5; creatures that enter or start their turns in the aura take 1 point of necrotic damage. Increase damage to 2 points of necrotic damage after two failures, and to 5 points of necrotic damage after three failures.

Once the PC has accumulated three failures, the rift stabilizes fully, and continuing to perform the ritual has no further effect.

Award the PC 25 XP for each success that he earned. If the PC managed to close the rift, he also earns a quest award of 100 XP. In addition, the PC's mentor gives him a *belt of vigor* (heroic tier) as a graduation present.