

Shadower Tactics

The Shadower

In the sweltering depths of the untamed jungles of Southern Yulong, a mysterious creature lurks. An ephemeral predator, the Shadower moves through the dense foliage with unearthly grace, its presence only betrayed by the subtle rustling of leaves or a barely discernible shift in the air.

Beware, for the Shadower is not a typical predator of the jungle. With an insatiable appetite for the life essence of others, it preys upon unsuspecting creatures, numbing and feeding on them until they succumb to a silent demise. Yet the true horror lies in the aftermath of its grim feast. For when the Shadower finally claims its prey a sinister metamorphosis takes place. Within the corpses of its victims, a dormant force stirs, unseen to the world. From stolen life, another Shadower emerges, birthed into existence to continue the macabre cycle.

There are those who say the jungle itself conspires to propagate these monsters, perpetuating their unknowable legacy. Wuzei, a coastal city in Southern Yulong, echoes with whispers of the Shadower's dreadful presence. The city's inhabitants share tales of unexplained vanishings and unsettling encounters with these elusive entities.

Legend has it that the Shadower was born of the jungle's ancient magic, an embodiment of nature's most cryptic secrets. Some scholars believe that it embodies the spirits of those lost in the jungle, seeking revenge on the living. Others speculate that it is a manifestation of the jungle's relentless thirst for life, a primordial force that craves the vitality of all living things. Curiously, all agree that the Shadower only ever targets sentient creatures.

Regardless of its origin, the Shadower remains an enigma, a deadly predator that embodies the raw terror of the untamed jungle. To encounter a Shadower is to dance with the unknown – a dance that may cost one's life, only to see that life reborn in the malevolent shadow of another.

Introducing the Shadower to your players requires planning and execution to stretch out the encounters and build tension over time. Here are some tips to achieve this.

Foreshadow the presence of the Shadower. Let the players overhear rumors from locals and come across creatures inexplicably drained of life. Build intrigue and curiosity about the unseen threat.

Start with smaller, less critical encounters where the players face the aftermath of the Shadower's attacks. Allow them to investigate, gather clues, and start forming theories about the creature. As they begin to comprehend the threat, they'll become more invested in the ongoing mystery.

During downtime, have the Shadower make occasional stealth attacks. Describe eerie sensations and rustling sounds, creating an atmosphere of mounting tension.

Introduce red herrings or other jungle creatures that might be mistaken for the Shadower at first, leading the players on wild goose chases before the true nature of the threat is revealed.

Kill one of the party's allies, and remember what happens to the body if another Shadower might emerge. This adds a personal dimension to the threat, encouraging the players to feel a sense of responsibility to protect others. Let them realize that *something* has emerged from within the corpse if enough time has passed.

As more Shadowers emerge, let the newborns be overly bold. Use the minimum number of hit points possible and make it inexperienced so the players can defeat it and learn about its natural traits and characteristics.

As the players learn more about the Shadower, have it adapt its tactics, becoming more cunning and harder to predict. This challenges the players to continually reassess their strategies. Remember, the Shadower wants to feed and spread above all else, but is patient enough to wait...

Shadower

Small Elemental, Neutral

Armor Class 16 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d6+24)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	13 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Wis +3

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +5, Stealth +8, Survival +5

Damage Immunities. Poison

Condition Immunities. Charmed, Exhaustion, Paralyzed, Petrified, Poisoned, Restrained, Unconscious

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Understands Common But Doesn't Speak It

CR4 | Proficiency Bonus +2

Amorphous. *The Shadower can move through a space as narrow as 8 inches wide without squeezing.*

Non-magical Invisibility. *The Shadower is impossible to see without the aid of magic or a special sense. For the purpose of hiding, the creature is heavily obscured (the seeker cannot see the Shadower and automatically fails any ability check that requires sight). The creature's location can be detected by any noise it makes or any tracks it leaves.*

Merge With Shadows. *If the Shadower attempts to Hide it has advantage. The Hide check determines how much noise the Shadower makes, not whether it is seen.*

Blinding Speed. *All opportunity attacks made against the Shadower are made with disadvantage.*

Spider Climb. *The Shadower can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Shadower can make 1 Sting attack or 2 Slash attacks.

Sting. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 5 (1d2+4) non-lethal piercing damage. If the target is a creature other than a construct or undead, it must succeed a DC15 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 24 hours.

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) slashing damage

Feed. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., 1 Paralyzed target. *Hit:* The target's number of Hit Dice is reduced by 1. The target dies if this reduces its Hit Dice to 0. A new Shadower emerges from the corpse 1d6+6 hours later.

BONUS ACTIONS

Cunning Action. *The Shadower can use its bonus action to Hide, Dash, or Disengage.*

REACTIONS

Astounding Reflexes. *The Shadower makes all opportunity attacks with advantage.*

CREATURE LOOT

1 Claw. Acts as a dagger. Because the claw has the non-magical invisibility of the Shadower, the claw is invisible. Hiding the dagger gives you ADV on sleight of hand, as well as ADV on attacks if a creature is surprised.

1 Liver. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a creature to harvest the liver. Consuming this liver is unpleasant, but grants you the ability to climb like a spider: For 1 minute, you gain the ability to move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving your hands free. Your climbing speed becomes equal to your walking speed.

Poison. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a creature to extract the Shadower's poison. You can use this poison to coat a slashing or piercing weapon, or up to four pieces of ammunition. Applying the poison takes an action. A creature hit by the poisoned weapon or ammunition must make a DC15 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 24 hours. The creature may repeat the saving throw each hour.

NOTES

Curing the paralysis. Requires Lesser Restoration, Protection from Poison, or similar ability. The paralysis can also be ended with a successful DC 14 Medicine check using an Herbalism Kit over a period of 1 hour (only if proficient).



Pictured here: The Shadower