

A 5E ADVENTURE

THE GATHERING SHROUD

WHEN THE MIST TAKES HOLD, EVEN THE
BRIGHTEST SOUL CAN VANISH INTO SHADOW...



THE GATHERING SHROUD

BY



WRITING & DESIGN:
CONSTANTINE "KELFECIL" CHRISTAKIS

MAP ARTWORK:
HEROIC MAPS



TOKEN ARTWORK:
DUSKY CAT



Version 1.0 - First published in June 2025

A SHADY MIST

The sun had not risen in full over Lake Minelos for nearly a week. A gray film of mist clung to the waters like a second skin, and the morning breeze carried with it a strange silence; no gull cries, no lapping waves. In Seesby, shutters closed early and whispers filled the market alleys, as if the townsfolk feared their very words might echo too loudly into something listening beyond the fog. Tradesmen spoke of strange shapes on the water, of boats returning without their rowers. But worst of all were the dreams: vivid, endless, and watched.

Far to the southeast, where the mountain teeth bite into the horizon, clouds churned in unnatural spirals. There, among the narrow cliffs and forgotten observatories, something ancient had stirred. The stories say the black dragon Ansarion was slain decades ago, burned to cinders, vanished in the Astral Conflict's wake. But shadows lengthen where memories fester, and death is not always the end. What rose again was not just a dragon; it was a hunger wearing his name.

Now, vengeance walks with purpose. Voldrac Ghexurn carries flame in his blood and a blade in each hand, driven by a history soaked in venom and grief. He does not come to save Seesby. He comes to kill a ghost of the past. But the shadows that answer Ansarion's call do not obey memory alone. They feed on sorrow, thrive in silence, and spread like smoke on windless days. And as the mists rise, the time to act has already begun.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A SHADOWY MIST	3
INTRODUCTION	4
ADVENTURE SUMMARY	4
MAPS USED	4
QUICK ADVENTURE INFO	4
BACKGROUND.....	5
RUNNING THE ADVENTURE	5
NPC BACKSTORIES.....	6
PROLOGUE.....	7
ACT 1: SHADOWS ON THE BRIDGE.....	8
ACT 2: THE KEEP THAT FELL.....	9
ACT 3: THE OBSERVATORY OF DREAD	11
EPILOGUE	13
APPENDIX: STAT BLOCKS	16

INTRODUCTION

Kelfecil's Tales is all about strong and deep narratives. We create stories and adventures inspired by art. We believe that well-designed narratives in TTRPGs can be extremely important if we want to create memorable and meaningful stories. For that reason, we put a lot of effort into designing our adventures, so that you and your players can later leave the table with something that you will find difficult to forget.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In the blighted lands of Central Latakar, a shadow curse spreads like rot. Swamps boil with poisonous mist, the sun is veiled in fog, and once-proud settlements sink beneath despair. Voldrac Ghexurn, a red dragonborn scarred by ancestral vendetta, seeks mercenaries to aid him in hunting the source of this spreading darkness. Voldrac believes that the source is a black dragon that was long thought to be dead.

What he finds instead is a rising force far more insidious: Ansarion, now reborn as a shadow dragon, feeding off sorrow and watching from afar. This three-part adventure follows the party as they explore cursed land, fend off twisted creatures, and uncover the truth behind the curse and the dragon that sustains it.

MAPS USED

You can find the maps used in this adventure without the GM notes on DTRPG through the following links:

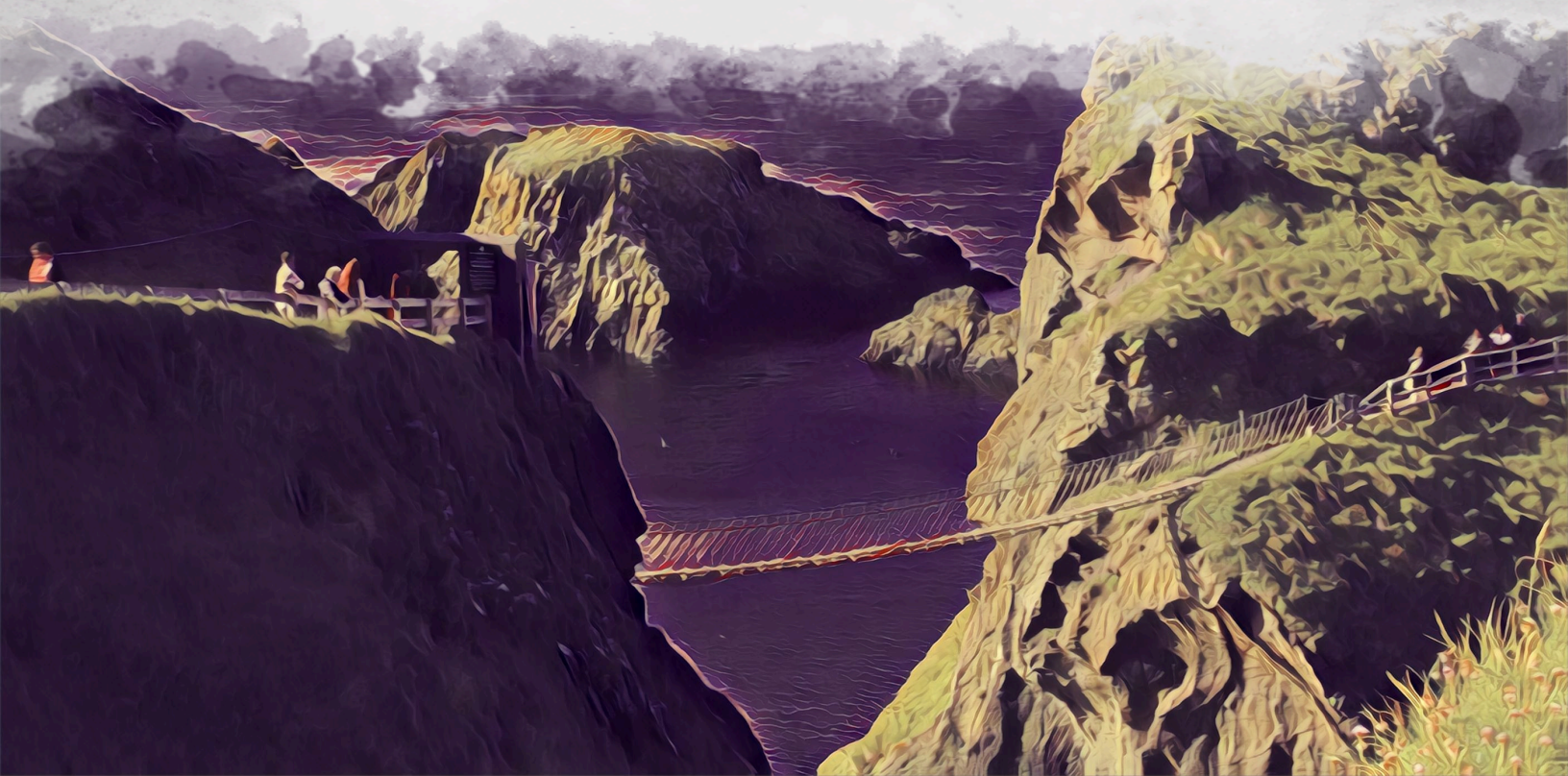
- [Pikebridge Watchhouse](#)
- [Gruffods Fort](#)
- [Starfall Spine](#)

For more maps, visit the following link: [Heroic Maps on DTRPG](#)

QUICK ADVENTURE INFO

Some quick information about the adventure:

- **Recommended Average Party Level (APL):** 8
- **Themes:** Investigation, Shadow, Curse, Dragon, Legacy
- **Setting:** Any, Starlight Chronicles (Central Latakar)
- **Time - Sessions to Finish:** 2-3 sessions (6-10 hours total)





BACKGROUND

Decades ago, the black dragon **Ansarion** was believed destroyed during the Astral Conflict, his body seen falling into the chasms beyond the eastern mountains. But something lingered. Ansarion's death did not end his influence; it merely changed it. What remained of his soul latched onto the echoes of that war, feeding on grief, isolation, and the silence that followed. Over time, that essence coalesced into something darker: a shadow dragon, no longer tied to flesh but to sorrow and memory itself.

In the region surrounding Seesby, a creeping malaise has begun to spread. The lake lies still. Dreams twist into nightmares. Villagers return from the woods hollow-eyed or not at all. As Ansarion's influence grows, his curse reshapes the land. Shadows lengthen unnaturally. Creatures become warped echoes of themselves. Ansarion does not rule with fire. He rules with despair.

The dragon's power extends from a hidden lair high in the southeastern cliffs, once an abandoned observatory now reclaimed for malevolent purpose. Through it, Ansarion observes the region and targets his victims. The dragon does not need to fly. He watches. He whispers. He waits.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The Gathering Shroud is built as a story-driven investigation that escalates into a perilous confrontation. The party is given room to explore and question what they find, with combat serving to increase tension rather than resolve it. A companion NPC, Voldrac, joins early and serves both as support in battle and as a narrative anchor whose perspective evolves with the story.

This adventure assumes access to a central region of Latakar and is set near **Seesby**, a culturally rich trade town on the southern shore of Lake Minelos, bordering the eastern slopes of Central Latakar. Known for its vibrant mix of eastern traditions, artisan guilds, and mercantile influence, Seesby now struggles beneath the weight of a growing shadow curse, its once-busy docks and lakefront alleys haunted by fear and mist. It features recurring monster types (shadows and shadow-touched creatures) and introduces the theme of being watched, a motif that becomes clearer as the party uncovers the role of the observatory and the cursed telescope.

GMs are encouraged to emphasize emotion, corruption, and fear of what's unseen. Each act introduces increasing pressure, and by the final act, players should feel they are on the edge of something vast and dangerous. The story concludes with the revelation of Ansarion's location, setting up the second half of the duology: *To Kill a Shadow*.

NPC BACKSTORIES

VOLDRAC GHEXURN

Voldrac is a red dragonborn warrior born into a proud lineage decimated by black dragon raids during the Astral Conflict. His ancestors were poisoned, their lands ruined, and their legacy shattered. He was raised in the ashes of that loss. Where others sought peace, Voldrac embraced revenge. For years, he hunted whispers of surviving black dragons, and now he believes he has found one. Voldrac is driven, hardened, and initially dismissive of local suffering. But as the adventure unfolds, he must reconcile the difference between revenge and redemption. His arc mirrors the players' own realization: that the fight is not only against a dragon, but against a growing tide of despair infecting the land.

- **Unique Phrase:** *"My ancestors bled for silence. I will roar until the skies remember."*
- **Desire:** To slay Ansarion and restore his clan's honor.
- **Fear:** That his vengeance will blind him to the suffering of others.
- **Misbelief:** That destroying the dragon is all that matters.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- **Mercenary Contract.** Voldrac Ghexurn, a battle-scarred red dragonborn, has arrived in Seesby seeking mercenaries and adventurers. He offers generous coin in exchange for help investigating strange phenomena and gathering clues related to an ancient black dragon's potential survival.
- **A Mission from the Church.** Though Seesby resists the Church of Stars' influence, recent reports of unnatural fogs and vanishing citizens have drawn the attention of the faithful. A visiting agent of the Church discreetly calls upon adventurers to investigate the source of the corruption and protect Seesby from spiritual collapse.
- **Seesby in Shadows.** The townsfolk themselves are desperate. Mist chokes the alleyways, neighbors have begun disappearing, and those who return seem... changed. A local guildmaster, innkeeper, or family member pleads with the party to help uncover the mystery behind the growing curse before it swallows the town whole.



PROLOGUE

THE MISTS OVER LAKE MINELOS CLING LIKE SORROW TO THE STREETS OF SEESBY. EACH MORNING, THEY LINGER LONGER, TRAILING BETWEEN STONE HOUSES AND LAPPING AT WOODEN DOORWAYS WITH UNSEEN HANDS. FISHERMEN RETURN WITH EMPTY NETS AND PALE FACES. CHILDREN STIR FROM RESTLESS SLEEP, WHISPERING OF BLACK EYES WATCHING FROM BENEATH THE FLOORBOARDS. AND THE LIGHT, IT FADES EARLIER NOW, AS THOUGH AFRAID.

Voldrac Ghexurn, a red dragonborn warrior, arrives in Seesby to seek adventurers. His clan suffered greatly during the Astral Conflict, poisoned and attacked by black dragons. Voldrac believes the black dragon Ansarion has returned, but as he investigates, it becomes clear the situation is more complicated. A shadowy curse is spreading through the region.

THE PARTY MEETS VOLDRAC NEAR SEESBY'S SOUTHERN TRAIL, WHERE MIST GATHERS THICKEST AND THE TREES GROW QUIET. HE GREETES THEM WITH A NOD AND FEW WORDS. A SIMPLE MAP IN HAND, HE GESTURES TO THE HILLS BEYOND THE LAKE, TO A LAND NOW TWISTED. VILLAGERS VANISH. SHADOWS WALK. "SOMETHING IS WATCHING," HE SAYS, EYES NARROWED. "AND I INTEND TO RETURN THE GAZE."

● **Gathering Dread. Insight (DC 14).** The villagers near the trail exhibit a strange quietness, avoiding eye contact and speaking only in hushed tones. They appear visibly strained, jumping at the slightest noise or sudden movement. A successful check reveals that this psychological strain is unnatural, caused by prolonged exposure to an oppressive force that emanates subtly from the surrounding environment. Those who succeed will also notice that some villagers repeatedly glance over their shoulders, as though sensing something just beyond their sight.

● **Lingering Tracks. Survival (DC 13).** Tracks leading from the outskirts of Seesby into the surrounding lowlands are clear at first, suggesting hurried travel by multiple individuals. However, after a short distance, the tracks abruptly vanish, seemingly swallowed by the thickening mist itself. Further investigation reveals disturbed earth and broken branches nearby, hinting at a sudden and possibly violent disappearance. Those succeeding in the check will also find fragments of clothing and personal items discarded in haste, reinforcing the sense of urgency and fear.

● **Echoes of the Curse. Arcana or Religion (DC 15).** Close examination of the mist and surrounding vegetation reveals subtle, unsettling signs of magical corruption. Those who succeed sense an unnatural coldness clinging to the air, a faint, oppressive hum resonating at the edge of their perception. This indicates shadow magic permeating the area, manifesting through fear and visual distortion. Characters proficient in Religion recognize that the magic's nature aligns with curses used historically by creatures of shadow to spread despair and weaken communities gradually.

Voldrac offers no grand speech. He only begins walking, trusting the party to follow. Their path winds through fading trails and blackening trees, toward the bridge beyond which the world begins to lose its shape.

When the players finish speaking with Voldrac, you can proceed directly to **Act 1**.



ACT I: SHADOWS ON THE BRIDGE

THE MIST THICKENS AS YOU FOLLOW VOLDRAC ALONG THE TRAIL FROM SEESBY. SOON THE SHAPES OF TREES TWIST AND BLUR INTO UNCERTAIN FORMS, AND THE AIR GROWS COLDER. AHEAD, THE PATH LEADS TO AN ANCIENT STONE BRIDGE SPANNING A SLOW, DARK RIVER. THE QUIET IS HEAVY, DISTURBED ONLY BY THE FAINT RUSTLING OF LEAVES AND THE DISTANT, MOURNFUL CREAKING OF OLD WOOD. ACROSS THE BRIDGE, BARELY VISIBLE THROUGH THE FOG, STANDS A RUINED WATCHTOWER, ITS SILHOUETTE JAGGED AGAINST THE GREY SKY.

Voldrac halts, signaling caution. The shadows here move strangely, almost as if alive. Allow the players to explore the area freely, but emphasize the unsettling stillness and the unnatural darkness growing around them.

NORTHERN PATH

THE TRAIL FROM SEESBY ENDS HERE AT THE EDGE OF THE MISTY CLEARING. THE PATH BEHIND YOU FADES QUICKLY INTO THE FOG, AND THE QUIET OF THE WILDERNESS FEELS OPPRESSIVE.

● **"Whispers in the Fog." Perception (DC 15).** Characters hear faint whispers drifting on the breeze. Those who succeed can identify snippets of conversation, fearful and pleading, as though carried by the mist itself. This unsettling phenomenon suggests the presence of spirits or echoes lingering from those who vanished here.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 1. on the map are x4 **Shadows** and x2 **Wailshrouds**, standing motionless at the midpoint of the bridge. They remain passive until a character approaches within 15 feet, then immediately attack. The Shadows fight aggressively and attempt to retreat toward the ruined tower if reduced below half hit points, drawing the party closer to danger.

GM Notes: This encounter is not designed to be a deadly ambush, but rather an overwhelming and chaotic first contact with the shadow-touched. The enemies' retreat tactics and eerie behavior should unsettle the players and give a foreboding sense of a spreading threat.

RUINED TOWER

THE CRUMBLING STONE TOWER STANDS AT THE FAR END OF THE BRIDGE, ITS WALLS CLOAKED IN IVY AND SHADOWS. FLICKERING MOVEMENT INSIDE HINTS AT SOMETHING WAITING.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 2. on the map are x12 **shadow-touched villagers** waiting inside, eyes glazed and expressions vacant. After a moment, their forms distort and shift into **Shadows**, attacking the party relentlessly. Soon after combat begins, x4 more **Shadows** and x2 **Wailshrouds** emerge from the shadows around the tower, intensifying the assault and filling the area with mournful cries that unsettle and distract the adventurers.

GM Notes: This encounter is meant to drive home the horror of the shadow curse. The sudden transformation and large number of enemies should make the players feel cornered and alarmed. It's recommended to emphasize the unnatural nature of the curse and how it strips away any remaining humanity from its victims.

● **"Insight of the Shadow Curse." Arcana or Nature (DC 15).** Investigating the tower after combat reveals clear evidence of the shadow curse affecting the villagers, gradually transforming them into shadowy horrors. Characters succeeding understand that the curse targets living beings, draining their humanity and emotions to reshape them into creatures of despair and shadow.

When players resolve these encounters and fully explore the area, Voldrac grimly suggests continuing their investigation further south. Proceed to Act 2.



ACT 2: THE KEEP THAT FELL

THE FOG THINS SLIGHTLY AS THE PARTY MOVES SOUTH, THE TERRAIN RISING GENTLY UNTIL THE BROKEN SILHOUETTE OF A SMALL STONE KEEP COMES INTO VIEW. ITS WALLS ARE CRACKED, ITS BATTLEMENTS CRUMBLING. FROM THIS DISTANCE, THE STRUCTURE APPEARS LIFELESS, BUT A CLOSER LOOK REVEALS SIGNS OF RECENT STRUGGLE: SCORCHED STONE, BROKEN GATES, AND COLLAPSED FIGURES LYING STILL IN THE COURTYARD. VOLDRAC NARROWS HIS EYES AND SAYS "THIS WAS ONCE A CHURCH OF STARS OUTPOST..."

The players may enter and explore the area, revealing pieces of the shadow curse's expansion. This Act emphasizes escalation. The curse is spreading, affecting entire settlements, and now threatens to consume the region.

NORTHERN APPROACH

THE PATH FROM THE FOREST OPENS INTO A SLOPING TRAIL OF CRACKED COBBLESTONE LEADING TO THE GATES OF THE RUINED KEEP. FAINT MOANING AND SHIFTING SHADOWS CAN BE SEEN JUST BEYOND THE THRESHOLD.

● **"Weight of the Curse." Insight or Religion (DC 14).** Characters who examine the area feel the lingering spiritual weight in the air. The keep was likely overrun in a matter of hours. Broken wards and traces of divine energy suggest the defenders held out until their power failed. Voldrac visibly recoils at the scent of shadowed death, whispering that this is no ordinary blight. It is devouring the soul of the land.

● **"Echoes in the Ground." Arcana or Survival (DC 15).** Scattered among the dirt are stone fragments etched with celestial runes. A successful check reveals they were once part of protective wards designed to repel extraplanar threats. Their destruction marks the moment the curse penetrated this sanctuary.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 1. on the map are x10 **Shadows** and x4 **Corvid Shades** hiding in ruined outbuildings and tree cover.

AS THE PARTY APPROACHES, THE SOUND OF RUSTLING WINGS AND SKITTERING FOOTSTEPS ECHOES FROM THE STONEWORK. THEN, WITH A BURST OF MOTION, THE SHADES DESCEND AND SHADOWS RISE FROM THE EARTH, THEIR ATTACKS COORDINATED AND MERCILESS.

GM Notes: This ambush is designed to overwhelm the players. The Shadows aim to flank and harass spellcasters while the Corvid Shades harry the frontline. Reinforce the chaos of the encounter and how quickly the keep has fallen.



KEEP ENTRANCE

THE WOODEN DOORS HANG LOOSE ON BROKEN HINGES, AND THE ENTRY HALL IS A MESS OF COLLAPSED BENCHES AND SCORCHED HOLY SYMBOLS. CRIES OF PAIN ECHO FAINTLY THROUGH THE STONES.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 2. on the map are x6 **Shadows** dragging the lifeless bodies of fallen knights into shadowed corners. A seventh figure, a **shadow-touched Church of Stars priest**, sits slumped at the altar, hands blackened with cursed energy.

AS THE PLAYERS ENTER, THE PRIEST RAISES HIS HEAD BRIEFLY, EYES FILLED WITH SHADOW. A SCREAM TEARS FROM HIS THROAT AS HIS FORM VANISHES IN A BURST OF BLACK SMOKE, AND THE SHADOWS SURGE FORWARD.

GM Notes: The emotional weight of this encounter should hit hard. Use the surroundings (such as damaged icons, broken hymnals, scorched benches) to show the loss of faith and the sanctuary's fall. Let Voldrac show visible signs of emotional fatigue.

● **"Fading Light." Religion (DC 15).** Characters who inspect the altar or the priest's remains discover a faintly glowing Glimmerstone clutched in their hand. The stone pulses weakly with light and warmth, a flicker of resistance against the shadow curse. Voldrac identifies it as a relic once used by clerics of the Church of Stars to repel creeping dark forces. It still holds power, but only just.

THE GLIMMERSTONE FLARES GENTLY IN YOUR HAND, EMITTING A WARMTH THAT EASES THE TENSION IN YOUR CHEST. THE PRESENCE OF SHADOW RETREATS SLIGHTLY, AS IF REPELLED BY THE LINGERING LIGHT.

● **"The Last Rite." History or Religion (DC 15).** A successful check reveals that the priest died mid-ritual. His attempt to repel the curse failed only moments before it overtook him. Characters who pass the check can read a portion of the ritual's chant, which might help if they attempt to cleanse future shadow-touched victims.

CENTRAL COURTYARD

THE KEEP'S CENTRAL SQUARE IS CRACKED AND CHOKED WITH CREEPING VINES AND SHADOWY RESIDUE. SEVERAL VILLAGERS' BODIES LIE WHERE THEY FELL, MANY WITH EXPRESSIONS OF FEAR OR CONFUSION, THEIR ARMS RAISED AS IF TO SHIELD THEMSELVES FROM SOME UNSEEN THREAT.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 3. on the map are x8 **Shadows** and x4 **Corvid Shades**, disguised among the rubble and corpses.

AS THE PLAYERS ENTER, LIMBS JERK, WINGS FLARE, AND THE SILENCE SHATTERS WITH A UNIFIED SHRIEK. THE COURTYARD EXPLODES INTO MOTION AS THE CURSED CREATURES RISE FROM HIDING.

GM Notes: This is a pressure encounter meant to wear down the party's resources and highlight the endless nature of the curse. Add psychological pressure such as with shadows whispering in familiar voices or mimicking the party's recent conversations.

● **"Trace of Will." Arcana or Insight (DC 14).** Characters notice that when a shadow is destroyed, a momentary pulse of warmth radiates from the Glimmerstone. It seems to feed off their victories, briefly shielding them from the effects of the curse.

● **"Lost Faces." Perception or Investigation (DC 13).** Searching the bodies reveals identification tokens, mostly trinkets and items that are clearly from the town of Seesby. Some of the dead were villagers who tried to flee south. This hints that the curse overtook them in their attempt to escape.

● **"Muttered Remnants." Insight or Arcana (DC 16).** Some of the shadows repeat cryptic phrases from their past lives: half-sung lullabies, names of loved ones, or fragmented prayers. Characters who succeed can piece together that the curse erodes memory, consuming personal identity and emotion first.

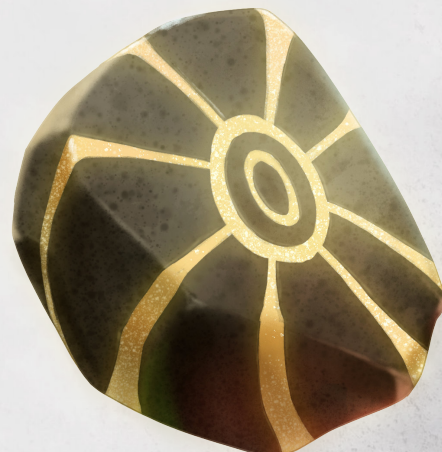
GLIMMERSTONE

Wondrous Item, Rare (requires attunement by a Cleric or Paladin of the Church of Stars)

This pale blue stone holds a fragment of celestial magic. When held by a divine practitioner of the Church of Stars, it provides a protective aura against the shadow curse.

- The Glimmerstone has 3 charges. When you reduce a shadow-touched creature to 0 hit points, you may expend 1 charge to attempt to restore its original form. The creature must succeed on a DC 15 Charisma saving throw or be cleansed, reverting to their original form (unconscious and stable).
- The stone regains no charges naturally. Charges may only be restored by expending spell slots into the stone as follows:
 - **1st-level spell slot:** 1 charge
 - **2nd-level or higher:** 2 charges
- Only spell slots expended by Clerics or Paladins of the Church of Stars can restore the Glimmerstone.

A successful use brings a sense of warmth and clarity to the surrounding area, repelling the effects of the shadow curse briefly.



ACT 3: THE OBSERVATORY OF DREAD

THE PATH NARROWS AS THE PLAYERS MOVE SOUTH AND ASCEND A WINDING TRAIL CARVED INTO THE SIDE OF A MIST-VEILED MOUNTAIN. THICK FOG CREEPS ALONG THE GROUND, SWALLOWING THE VIEW BELOW. THUNDER ECHOES FAINTLY OVERHEAD, AND THE AIR IS THICK WITH TENSION. AT THE SUMMIT LIES AN ANCIENT OBSERVATORY, ITS GLEAMING DOME CRACKED OPEN TO THE SKY. A FLIMSY WOODEN BRIDGE TO THE EAST CONNECTS TO A SECOND PEAK, WHERE A THREE-ROOM HOUSE WAITS IN SHADOWED SILENCE.

The party must battle their way up the cliffside, encountering waves of shadow-touched creatures. At the observatory, they will uncover a grim truth: the Shadow Dragon sees his victims before cursing them. In the house beyond the bridge, they will face a final ambush before learning where their true enemy waits.

FIRST PLATEAU

THE ASCENT BEGINS WITH A FLAT, ROCKY LEDGE SURROUNDED BY STEEP DROPS. THE MIST PARTS JUST ENOUGH TO REVEAL MOVEMENT UP AHEAD. YOU SEE SLOW, CRAWLING SHAPES WRITHING ON THE GROUND.

⦿ **"Lingering Horror."** Arcana or Nature (DC 14). These malformed shadows appear to be failed transformations. A successful check reveals they are former animals or vermin twisted by the curse. It is an early sign that the affliction can warp all life.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 1. on the map are x6 **Shadows** and x2 **Wailshrouds** that lurch forward once the party steps onto the plateau.

THE CREATURES MOVE UNNATURALLY, AS IF DRAGGED FORWARD BY INVISIBLE STRINGS. THEIR FORMS FLICKER WITH UNSTABLE EDGES, AND THEIR EYES GLOW WITH COLD HATRED.

GM Notes: This encounter sets the tone: the curse is intensifying. Emphasize the unnatural behavior of the enemies. The Wailshrouds should scream from the cliffs to disorient the players and make footing feel uncertain.

SECOND PLATEAU

THE SECOND PLATEAU IS PARTIALLY COLLAPSED, FORMING A JAGGED OUTCROP WITH LITTLE COVER. BONES LITTER THE STONE, PICKED CLEAN AND STACKED IN RITUALISTIC SPIRALS.

⦿ **"Shadow Rituals."** Religion or History (DC 15). These bone arrangements mimic warding patterns from the Church of Stars, but they are reversed. A successful check reveals they were placed here by cursed followers attempting to protect themselves, only to make things worse.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 2. on the map are x4 **Corvid Shades**, x6 **Shadows**, and x2 **Veilsteppers**.

THE CORVID SHADES BURST FROM THE NEARBY EDGES OF THE CLIFF, LEAPING ONTO THE ROCKS WITH CRUEL SCREECHES. VEILSTEPPERS PHASE INTO VIEW FROM THE EDGES OF THE SPIRAL, AND SHADOWS SLITHER UP FROM BELOW, THEIR MOVEMENTS MATCHING THE SPIRAL PATTERNS ON THE GROUND.

GM Notes: Corvid Shades target spellcasters and archers, forcing players to adjust positioning. Veilsteppers use their shifting movement to harass the rear line. Use the terrain to create tension since there's little safe space here.



THIRD PLATEAU

THE MIST THICKENS, CURLING UP AROUND THE PLAYERS' LEGS. FLICKERING SHADOWS AND MANIFESTATIONS OF HUMANOID-LOOKING CREATURES ALL SWAY AS IF THE WIND IS CARRYING THEM, DESPITE THE FACT THAT YOU CAN TELL THE AIR AROUND YOU IS STILL. THE SENSE OF BEING WATCHED IS OVERWHELMING.

● **"Watcher in the Fog." Perception (DC 15).** Characters hear faint breathing or movement all around them. A successful check allows them to spot lurking creatures before they're ambushed.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 3. on the map are x10 **Shadows**, x2 **Wailshrouds**, and x1 **Veilstepper** lying in wait behind stones and trees.

THE SHADOWY SHAPES SUDDENLY DISSIPATE, ONLY TO SUDDENLY APPEAR AGAIN AS SHAPES SURGE FROM THE DARKNESS WITH SHRIEKING CRIES.

GM Notes: Use this moment to drain the party's resources. The enemies attack from all angles, giving a feeling of claustrophobia. The Wailshrouds should appear during combat, not at the start, for a second wave effect.

FINAL ASCENT

THE FOURTH AND FINAL PLATEAU OPENS INTO A NARROW LEDGE. TO THE SOUTH LIES A CRACKED STONE STAIRCASE LEADING UP TO THE OBSERVATORY. TO THE EAST, A NARROW WOODEN BRIDGE SWAYS OVER A DEEP GORGE, CONNECTING TO A SEPARATE PEAK WITH A SMALL BUILDING.

● **"Cliff's Breath." Survival (DC 13).** A check here helps the party safely navigate the crumbling edge and avoid a steep fall during combat or retreat.

THERE ARE NO ENEMIES HERE, ONLY THE WEIGHT OF WHAT LIES AHEAD. VOLDRAC TAKES A LONG LOOK ACROSS THE BRIDGE AND TOWARD THE DOME OF THE OBSERVATORY, HIS GRIP TIGHTENING ON HIS BLADE.

OBSERVATORY DOME

THE OBSERVATORY DOME IS CRACKED AND WEATHERED, ITS TELESCOPE STILL INTACT AND POINTING TOWARD THE VALLEY BELOW. ARCANE EQUIPMENT LIES SHATTERED ON THE FLOOR, AND A THICK SHADOW CLINGS TO THE WALLS.

● **"Instrument of the Curse." Arcana or Investigation (DC 15).** A successful check reveals the telescope has been magically linked to the valley. The curse spreads through observation. What the dragon sees, it can claim. The observatory was used to mark targets, turning entire villages into victims.

THE EYEPiece OF THE TELESCOPE GLOWS FAINTLY. AS A CHARACTER LOOKS THROUGH IT, THEY SEE AN IMAGE OF A VILLAGE NOW CONSUMED BY SHADOW. THEN THE VIEW SHIFTS TO A NEW VILLAGE, ONE THAT IS NOT YET TOUCHED BY THE CURSE.

Voldrac tightens his jaw. "So... that's how it spreads. The dragon sees. And through that gaze, he claims."

THE HOUSE

THIS SMALL HOUSE IS BUILT OF PALE STONE AND DARK WOOD. THE DOOR CREAKS OPEN TO REVEAL OVERTURNED SHELVES, PAGES FLUTTERING ACROSS THE FLOOR, AND DEEP CLAW MARKS IN THE FURNITURE.

● **"Shadowed Research." Arcana or Religion (DC 16).** Notes from the house's former inhabitant detail theories on the curse. It seems the dragon's gaze opens a rift in the target's soul, allowing the shadow curse to invade. The final pages include coordinates and sketches of a hidden cave, maybe Ansarion's lair.

➤ **"Encounter!"** At 4. on the map are x4 **Paleshrieks** and x3 **Veilsteppers** erupting from the bridge and windows to trap the party.

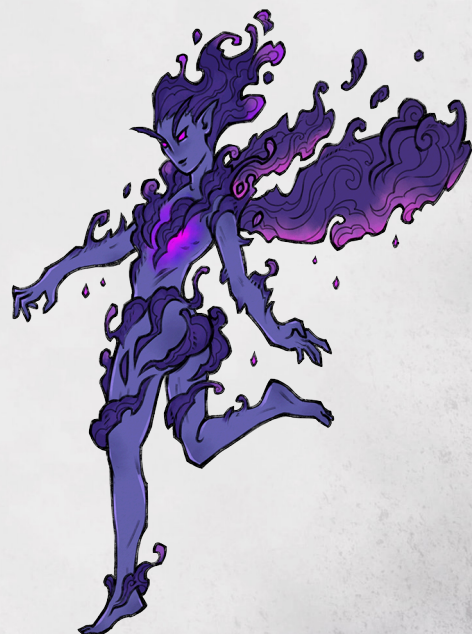
THE MOMENT THE PLAYERS BEGIN READING OR SEARCHING, SHRIEKS RISE FROM THE MIST. PALESHRIEKS GLIDE ACROSS THE BRIDGE IN A WAVE OF SOUND AND FEAR, WHILE VEILSTEPPERS BURST FROM THE WALLS AND SHADOWS INSIDE THE ROOM, SURROUNDING THE PARTY.

GM Notes: This is the final combat of the adventure. Paleshrieks bring devastating psychic damage and horrifying screams. Veilsteppers disorient and isolate players. Allow the fight to feel like the culmination of all they've faced so far, very desperate, chaotic, and deeply personal.

WHEN THE LAST SHADOW FALLS, VOLDRAC WIPES BLACK ICHOR FROM HIS BLADE AND STARES INTO THE ORB.

"WE KNOW WHERE IT NESTS NOW. WE KNOW HOW IT SEES. THE TIME HAS COME, FRIENDS. WE TAKE ITS HEAD."

Proceed to the Epilogue.



EPILOGUE

THE SKIES BEGIN TO CLEAR ABOVE THE MOUNTAIN PEAK, THOUGH THE VALLEY BELOW REMAINS CHOKED IN MIST. THE OBSERVATORY BEHIND YOU STANDS STILL ONCE MORE, ITS PURPOSE REVEALED AND ITS MAGIC FADING. THE BLACK ORB CRADLED IN VOLDRAC'S HANDS PULSES FAINTLY WITH A TERRIBLE STILLNESS... A RELIC OF SHADOW, AND A KEY TO WHAT LIES AHEAD.

With the final confrontation behind them, the party now possesses vital knowledge: the Shadow Dragon Ansarion spreads his curse through sight, and he has marked his next victims. More importantly, they have uncovered the location of his hidden lair, nestled deep within the cliffs to the far east of the Southern Valleys.

The journey ahead will be perilous. Ansarion will not sit idle. He has seen the threat that you now pose, and his gaze will turn toward you. But for the first time, the balance has shifted. The players are no longer walking blind into shadow. They now carry the light of understanding, a weapon far more dangerous than steel.

Voldrac sheathes his blade and turns to the horizon.

"Let him watch. Let him fear. We are not done."

This is where the adventure ends!

Players may now pursue the final chapter of this saga in *To Kill a Shadow*, where the lair of the Shadow Dragon awaits.



BLACK CRYSTAL ORB

Wondrous Item, rare (requires attunement)

This smooth obsidian orb is cold to the touch and seems to absorb nearby light. When held, faint whispers echo in the mind, and distant places sometimes flicker across its surface like reflections on water. The orb is a remnant of Ansarion's influence, used to spy upon distant settlements and spread his shadow-born curse.

While attuned to the orb, a creature gains the following properties:

- **Gaze of the Shadow.** As an action, the wielder can choose a location they have previously visited. The orb reveals a hazy image of the chosen location as it currently appears. This ability can be used twice per long rest.
- **Mark of Sight.** When the wielder uses the orb's scrying feature, any creature in the viewed location must succeed on a **DC 15 Wisdom saving throw** or be lightly affected by the shadow curse. Symptoms include cold sweat, mild hallucinations, and difficulty sleeping. This effect lasts for 1d4 days. If a creature fails this saving throw three times cumulatively, they become shadow-touched.
- **Lingering Influence.** While attuned, the wielder must make a **DC 14 Charisma saving throw** at the end of each long rest. On a failure, they suffer disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened until the next rest. On three consecutive failures, they become vulnerable to the shadow curse and cannot benefit from effects that remove exhaustion until they pass another Charisma save.

A character attuned to this item can sense where Ansarion has most recently gazed, as a faint trail of shadowy vision imprints itself in the orb. This grants advantage on any check made to locate his lair or predict his next target. In addition, Ansarion also knows the location of any creature that uses this magical item.



KELFECIL'S TALES

EXPLORE THE WORLD OF
MYSTERY, DRAMA AND STARLIGHT!
NEW PROJECTS AND CONTENT
EVERY MONTH



HEROIC MAPS

PATREON

www.patreon.com/heroicmaps

Numerous high detail,
beautiful battlemaps each month



Fantasy & Sci-Fi Tiers



VTT Vault with hundreds
of maps ready to use



Foundry VTT modules
available



Amazing value - charged
monthly, not per creation



Voting, updates and
exclusive discounts



www.patreon.com/heroicmaps



NEW TOKENS, PORTRAITS
AND OTHER STARRY ARTWORKS
EVERY DAY!



APPENDIX: STAT BLOCKS

Here you will find all of the stat blocks for all the NPCs and monsters involved in the adventure.

VOLDRAC GHEXURN

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (scale mail)

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +4

Skills Athletics +5, Perception +2, Survival +2

Damage Resistances fire

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Brave Resolve. Voldrac has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Dual Wielding. Voldrac can engage in two-weapon fighting even when the weapons aren't light.

ACTIONS

Handaxe (x2). Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage. Voldrac makes two attacks per turn.

Draconic Breath (Recharge 5–6). Voldrac exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Coordinated Strike (1/Day). Voldrac marks a target he can see within 30 feet. Until the end of his next turn, the first attack made by an ally against that target gains advantage.

MONSTERS USED

Act 1

- x8 Shadows
- x4 Wailshrouds

Act 2

- x6 Shadows
- x3 Wailshrouds
- x3 Corvid Shades

Act 3

- x3 Veilsteppers (1 on each plateau)
- x6 Shadows (2 on each plateau)
- x1 Paleshriek (appears at the final plateau)
- x3 Veilsteppers (final house encounter)
- x3 Paleshrieks (final house encounter)



SHADOW

Medium Undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder;
bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled,
paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages —

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Amorphous. The shadow can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the shadow can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Sunlight Weakness. While in sunlight, the shadow has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

ACTIONS

Strength Drain. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) necrotic damage, and the target's Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest.

If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, a new shadow rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

SHADOWS

These lurking horrors are fragments of cursed souls twisted by Ansarion's presence. Lurking in doorways, ruins, and under beds, they appear as flickers of movement and cold shivers down the spine. They are formless watchers, waiting to strike when the veil between worlds thins.



CORVID SHADE

Medium aberration, Chaotic Evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 49 (11d8)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +2, Perception +4

Damage Vulnerabilities starlight

Damage Immunities void

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands Deep Speech but can't speak

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Sense Magic. The Corvid Shade senses magic within 120 feet of it at will. This trait otherwise works like the detect magic spell but isn't itself magical.

Corrupted Essence. The Corvid Shade is made of the Void and any creature that comes in direct contact with it takes **x1 point of corruption**. Direct contact means that the creature's skin must touch the creature.

Mimicry. The Corvid Shade can mimic any sounds it has heard. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check.

Sneak Attack (1/turn). The Corvid Shade deals an extra 1d8 damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 ft. of an ally of the Corvid Shade that isn't incapacitated and the Corvid Shade doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Keen Hearing and Smell. The Corvid Shade has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Corvid Shade makes two attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Caw of Corruption. The Corvid Shade lets out a shrieking sound as it opens its mouth widely, forcing anyone who hears it (60ft. range from the Corvid Shade) to make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed roll, the creature must take 1d4 force damage and becomes disoriented for one round. Anyone standing 30ft. or farther from the Corvid Shade has advantage on the saving throw.

CORVID SHADES

Once ordinary scavengers, these crow-like creatures now bear twisted, humanoid faces beneath their feathers. They speak in riddles and scraps of past conversations, relaying memories they've stolen. In battle, they descend in flocks to claw and confuse, acting as dark messengers of Ansarion's intent.

(Corvid Shades were first created as void monsters but are used in this adventure as shadow creatures.)



WAILSHROUD

Wandering apparitions draped in flowing grief, Wailshrouds echo the voices of those lost to sorrow. They do not attack immediately; instead, they mourn, calling to others with their dirges until provoked. Some believe they are those who succumbed to the curse but refused to leave.



WAILSHROUD

Medium undead, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Wis +4, Cha +4

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning; piercing; slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages understands all it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shadow-Touched Sorrow. The Wailshroud emits a soft, continuous weeping audible within 30 feet. Creatures that begin their turn within this range must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on the first attack roll or ability check they make that turn.

Incorporeal Movement. The Wailshroud can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Haunting Remnant. When the Wailshroud is reduced to 0 hit points, it releases a final anguished moan. Each creature within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be deafened and frightened until the end of their next turn.

ACTIONS

Withering Caress. Melee Spell Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (3d6 + 2) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 13 Charisma saving throw or be unable to speak until the end of its next turn.

Wail of the Forgotten (Recharge 5–6). The Wailshroud unleashes a chilling wail. Each creature of the Wailshroud's choice within 30 feet that can hear it must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 14 (4d6) psychic damage and is frightened until the end of its next turn. On a success, it takes half damage and isn't frightened.

PALESHRIEK

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 65 (10d8 + 20)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +6, Intimidation +5

Damage Resistances acid, fire, lightning, thunder, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing, cold, necrotic, poison; bludgeoning; piercing; slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages understands all it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Violent Echo. When the Paleshriek is first reduced to half its hit points, it releases a surge of tortured energy. All creatures within 15 feet must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or take 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and be pushed 10 feet away.

Haunting Remnant. When the Paleshriek is reduced to 0 hit points, it releases a final anguished moan. Each creature within 10 feet must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be deafened and frightened until the end of their next turn.

Incorporeal Movement. The Paleshriek can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

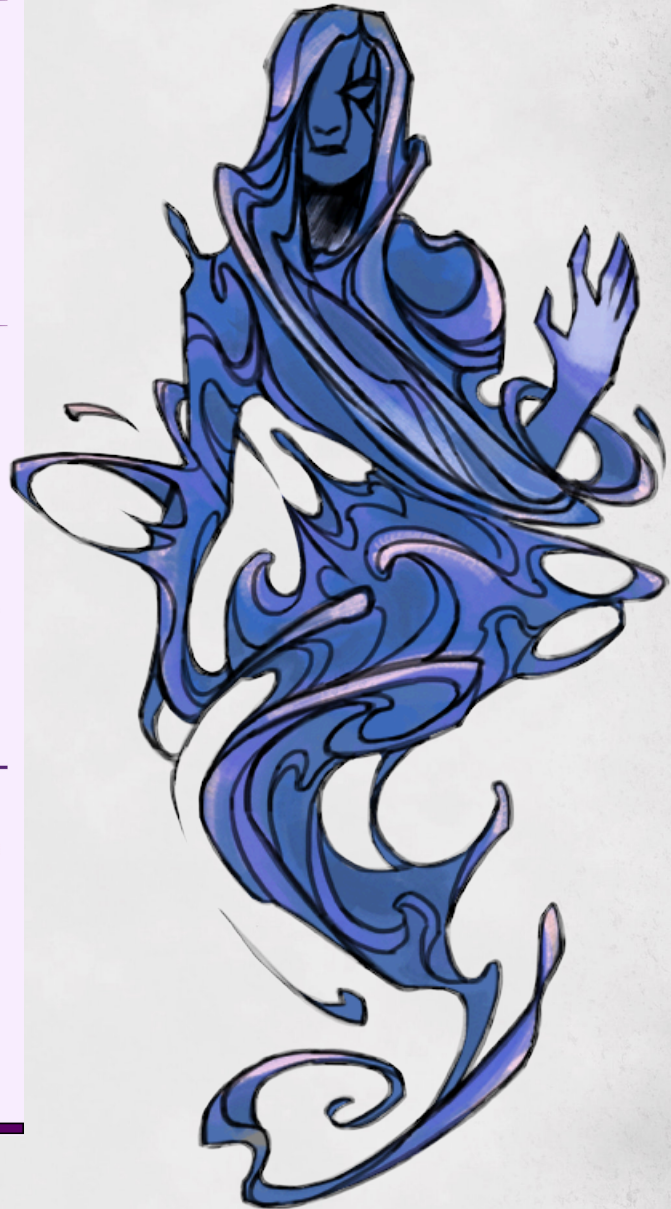
ACTIONS

Rending Screech. Melee Spell Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (4d6 + 1) thunder damage. The target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be silenced (as if affected by silence) until the end of its next turn.

Shriek of Rage (Recharge 5–6). The Paleshriek emits a piercing, hate-filled scream audible out to 100 feet. Each creature within 30 feet that can hear it must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 18 (4d8) psychic damage, is frightened for 1 minute, and cannot take reactions until the start of its next turn. A frightened creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

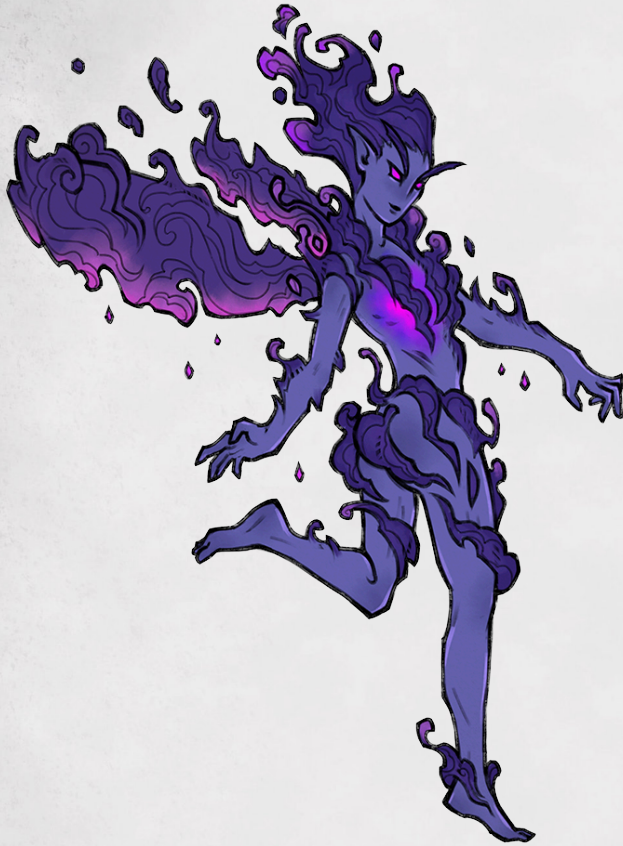
PALESHRIEK

Unlike their mournful cousins, Paleshrieks embody the rage of corrupted spirits. They lash out with piercing screams and lash-like limbs of congealed shadow. Their presence causes unease and panic, and their screeches often summon additional cursed creatures to their side.



VEILSTEPPER

These sly, fey-touched entities move between shadows like dancers in fog. Rarely seen and never still, they toy with the minds of travelers, misplacing gear, untying knots, and whispering lies. Though not inherently violent, they serve Ansarion by seeding paranoia.



VEILSTEPPER

Small fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (6d6 + 6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Cha +4

Skills Stealth +5, Deception +4, Perception +3

Damage Resistances psychic, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing; bludgeoning; piercing; slashing

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Sylvan

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shadowblend. While in dim light or darkness, the Veilstepper can take the Hide action as a bonus action. If it remains motionless in such conditions, it is indistinguishable from a patch of shadow.

Mischief Incarnate. The Veilstepper has advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to confuse or avoid enemies. It can attempt to distract a creature within 5 feet as a bonus action, forcing a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or granting advantage on the next attack against that creature before the end of the Veilstepper's next turn.

ACTIONS

Needle Slash. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage on its next Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Blinkstep (Recharge 5–6). The Veilstepper teleports up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space it can see in dim light or darkness. Until the start of its next turn, attack rolls against it are made with disadvantage.

© 2025 Kelfecil's Tales. All rights reserved.

All artwork used in this product is used under a specific commercial license, be it public or via private agreement with its creator.

- Layout, footers, borders and other things that give this product its distinct identity are all © 2025 Kelfecil's Tales.
- The original story, characters and other story-related material in this product is © 2025 Kelfecil's Tales.
- All NPC and Token artwork used in this product is © 2025 Dusky Cat.
- All Map artwork used in this product is © 2025 Heroic Maps and is used with permission and under a private agreement.
- Item Artwork by [Ari Pockily](#) (used under private agreement).
- All other artwork used is credited in the "Art Credits" section and in some cases under the artwork itself.

LICENSE INFORMATION

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 ("SRD 5.1") by Wizards of the Coast LLC which is available [here](#). The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at [CC-BY-4.0](#).

ART CREDITS

All extra artwork and images used are either commercially available images (under specific licenses) or bought from websites like Shutterstock.

- [Picklecombe Fort - Arcturus Aldebaran - CC BY 2.0](#)
<https://flickr.com/photos/42973403@N07/8236127580/>
- [Turkey Mountains - Alexander Cahlenstein - CC BY 2.0](#)
<https://flickr.com/photos/tusken91/21007325616/>
- [Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge - Chris - CC BY-SA 2.0](#)
<https://flickr.com/photos/mrbs/7516531452/>

RESOURCES

Here's a whole bunch of links of where you can find more of the stuff I create:

- [Cat Tales!](#)
- [Space Tales!](#)
- [All Releases](#)
- [Setting Lorebook](#)
- [DriveThruRPG Store](#)
- [Our Reddit Community](#)
- [YouTube: Narrative Design Videos](#)
- ["How to adapt to the Starlight Chronicles setting"](#)

CONTENT LINES

I am always busy creating something different, so much so that I've started all sorts of different and amazing content lines, such as:

- Adventures
- Side Quests
- Monster Hunts
- Treasure Hunts
- Setting Lorebook
- The Driftveil Bazaar
- The Midnight Gazette
- Monster Codex Supplements

And more...

