

# Campaign Notes – Prestige Classes

## PRESTIGE CLASSES

The following prestige class is designed for the world of Baledar. All content, except for flavor text, is designated as open game content as described in the Open Gaming License.

### Shadowblade

Almost everyone is keenly aware of the deep-seated hatred between elves and drow. Long ago, the elven race was divided by great racial wars. The surface elves never forgot the betrayal of those that fled underground. Out of this racial hatred arose the Shadowblades. Refined in the furnaces of racial hatred and forged on the anvils of experience and time the shadowblades train to take the fight directly to the drow. The shadowblade is the eye at the center of a whirling storm of blades. Masters of two-weapon fighting the shadowblades hone their senses to effectively fight in the lightless environment of the Underdark. Their highly acrobatic fighting style is a wonder to behold as their blades criss-cross in unison. Storytellers use colorful terms such as dancer to describe the movement of a shadowblade and his two blades, but mastery of this fighting style is not about dancing. Nor is it about impressing anyone-least of all poets or storytellers. The shadowblade focuses on learning the ultimate secrets of two-weapon fighting for a single purpose-the destruction of the drow. For this purpose they train to overcome drow defenses and to resist drow tactics and spells.

Typically hardy individualists, shadowblades rarely learn their skills through any sort of formal training. Instead, they master their art through constant application of its disciplines, research and experimentation on their foes. They spend countless hours in introspection and meditation in very dark places. Similarly, no matter how famous shadowblades become, it's rare for them to take on students. Their art, they say, is one that can be learned but never really taught. This prestige class is open to all classes, though fighters, rangers and multiclass fighter/rogues are the most common. Even then, shadowblades are very rare.

**Hit Die:** d8.

### Requirements

To qualify as a shadowblade, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

**Base Attack Bonus:** +9

**Feats:** Ambidexterity, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, and Weapon Finesse (any) or Weapon Focus (any).

**Balance:** 6 ranks

**Hide:** 6 ranks

**Move Silently:** 6 ranks

**Tumble:** 6 ranks

### Class Skills

The shadowblade's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pocket (Dex), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), and Use Rope (Dex).

See Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook* for skill descriptions.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6+ Int modifier.

### Class Features

All of the following are features of the shadowblade prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** Shadowblades are proficient with all simple and martial weapons, light armor and medium armor but not with shields. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a –1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armor and equipment carried.

**Improved Two-Weapon Fighting:** Beginning at 1<sup>st</sup> level, a shadowblade can fight with two weapons as if he had the Improved Two-Weapon Fighting feat when he is wearing light armor or no armor. He loses this ability when fighting in medium or heavy armor, or when using a double weapon (such as a two-bladed sword).

**Darkvision:** At 1<sup>st</sup> level, a shadowblade can see in the dark as though he were permanently under the effect of a *darkvision* spell. This is a supernatural ability.

**Blind-fight:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, a shadowblade gains the ability to fight even when unable to see his opponents.

**Off-Hand Parry:** At 2<sup>nd</sup> level, the shadowblade gains Off-Hand Parry as a bonus feat. As he gains shadowblade levels, his AC bonus from this feat increases, rising to +4 at 4<sup>th</sup> level and to +6 at 6<sup>th</sup> level.

**Evasion:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, a shadowblade gains the extraordinary ability evasion. If exposed to any effect that normally allows him to attempt a Reflex saving throw for half damage (such as *Fireball*), he takes no damage with a successful saving throw. The evasion ability can only be used if the shadowblade is wearing light armor or no armor.

**Shadow Jump:** At 3<sup>rd</sup> level, the shadowblade gains the ability to travel between shadows as if by means of a *dimension door* spell. The limitation is that the magical transport must begin and end in an area with at least some shadow. The shadowblade can jump up to a total of 20 feet each day in this way, although this may be a single jump of 20 feet or two jumps of 10 feet each. The distance a shadowblade can jump each day doubles at 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> level (40 feet at 5<sup>th</sup> level, 80 feet at 8<sup>th</sup> level and 160 ft at 10<sup>th</sup> level.) This amount can be split up among many jumps but each jump, no matter how small, counts as a 10-foot increment. (For instance a 5<sup>th</sup> level shadowblade who jumps 32 feet cannot jump again until the next day.)

**Poison Resistance:** At 4<sup>th</sup> level, a shadowblade gains a resistance bonus equal to his shadowblade class level to saves vs. poison from spiders or poison manufactured by the drow. This is a supernatural ability.

**Defensive Roll:** Starting at 5<sup>th</sup> level, the shadowblade can roll with a potentially lethal blow to take less damage from it. Once per day, when a shadowblade would be reduced to 0 hit points or less by damage in combat (from a weapon or other blow, not a spell or special ability), the shadowblade can attempt to roll with the damage. He makes a Reflex saving throw (DC=damage dealt) and, if successful, takes only half damage from the blow. He must be aware of the attack and be able to react to it in order to execute his defensive roll. If he is in a situation that would deny him any Dexterity bonus to AC, he can't attempt the defensive roll.

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| The Shadowblade  |                   |           |          |           |  |
|------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--|
| Class Level      | Base Attack Bonus | Fort Save | Ref Save | Will Save | Special  |
| 1 <sup>st</sup>  | +1                | +0        | +2       | +2        | Darkvision, Improved Two-weapon Fighting           |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup>  | +2                | +0        | +3       | +3        | Blind-fight, Off-hand Parry +2                     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup>  | +3                | +1        | +3       | +3        | Evasion, Shadow Jump (20 ft.)                      |
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | +4                | +1        | +4       | +4        | Poison Resistance, Off-hand Parry +4               |
| 5 <sup>th</sup>  | +5                | +1        | +4       | +4        | Defensive Roll, Shadow Jump (40 ft.)               |
| 6 <sup>th</sup>  | +6                | +2        | +5       | +5        | Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Off-hand Parry +6     |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | +7                | +2        | +5       | +5        | Spell Resistance, Improved Evasion                 |
| 8 <sup>th</sup>  | +8                | +2        | +6       | +6        | Shadow Jump (80 ft.), Slippery Mind                |
| 9 <sup>th</sup>  | +9                | +3        | +6       | +6        | Absolute Ambidexterity                             |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> | +10               | +3        | +7       | +7        | Shadow Jump (160 ft.), Supreme Two-Weapon Fighting |

**Greater Two-Weapon Fighting:** At 6th level, a shadowblade can fight with two weapons as if he had the Greater Two-Weapon Fighting feat when he is wearing light armor or no armor. He loses this ability when fighting in medium or heavy armor, or when using a double weapon (such as a two-bladed sword.)

**Spell Resistance:** The 7<sup>th</sup> level shadowblade gains spell resistance equal to 10 plus his class level. This is a supernatural ability.

**Improved Evasion:** This extraordinary ability, gained at 7<sup>th</sup> level, works like evasion (see above). While the shadowblade still takes no damage on a successful saving throw against attacks that allow a Reflex saving throw for half damage (breath weapon, *fireball*, and so on.), he now takes only half damage on a failed saving throw (the shadowblade's reflexes allow him to get out of harm's way with incredible speed).

**Slippery Mind:** This extraordinary ability, gained at 8<sup>th</sup> level, represents the shadowblade's ability to wriggle free from magical effects that would otherwise control or compel him. If the shadowblade is affected by an enchantment and fails his saving throw, one round later he can attempt his saving throw again. He only gets to attempt this extra chance once. If it fails as well, the spell's effect proceeds normally.

**Absolute Ambidexterity:** Beginning at 9<sup>th</sup> level, the shadowblade's attack penalties for fighting with two weapons lessen by 2 when he is wearing light armor or no armor. Thus, if he fights with a light weapon in his off hand, he suffers no penalties on his attack rolls for fighting with two weapons. (If the off-hand weapon is not light, he suffers a -2 penalty on attack rolls with both his primary hand and his off-hand.)

**Supreme Two-Weapon Fighting:** At 10th level, a shadowblade gains an additional attack with his off-hand weapon when he is wearing light armor or no armor. In addition to the three attacks he already has each round with his off-hand weapon (for improved Two-Weapon Fighting and Greater Two-Weapon Fighting) at penalties of 0, -5, and -10, respectively, he is also entitled to a fourth attack with his off-hand weapon at a -15 penalty (see Table 8-2: Two-Weapon Fighting Penalties in the Player's Handbook). He loses this special ability when fighting in medium or heavy armor, or when using a double weapon (such as a two-bladed sword).

## Design Notes:

The prestige class is based on three published prestige classes, the Ancestral Avenger (Dragon 279), the Shadowdancer (Dungeon Master's Guide) and the Tempest (Masters of the Wild). The class provides select advantages from each of these classes but it places much more stringent requirements than any of the requirements for the published classes.

A fighter or ranger character can become this class when they reach 10<sup>th</sup> level. A well-planned multiclass fighter/rogue can become this class by 11<sup>th</sup> level and a rogue character can get this class by 16<sup>th</sup> level. Notice that most characters will have to use cross-class skills or multiclass to meet the stringent requirements.

The class is designed to use two-weapon fighting as effectively as possible. It also has special class features that make the class effective against drow and other Underdark creatures.

Even though the class is specifically designed for elven characters the class is broad enough that it can be open to any race with a grudge against the drow.

The skills for this class were selected so that the class can perform well as an infiltrator. After all you wouldn't want to attack an opponent without first having some information on them. The class skills allow the character to work well in disguise.

I've tried to balance the class so that it stays balanced with each of the classes it is based on. Because the class is slightly more versatile each of the class features occur at a higher level than the original class to keep it balanced.

For example the Ancestral Avenger is available at 6<sup>th</sup> level. It receives poison resistance at 2<sup>nd</sup> level. Making that class feature a 7<sup>th</sup> level feature. The Shadowblade gets this feature at 4<sup>th</sup> level making it the equivalent of a 13<sup>th</sup> level feature.