

Shargaas

(The Night Lord, the Blade in the Darkness, the Stalker Below)

Intermediate Power of Gehenna, NE

PORTFOLIO:	Darkness, thieves, night, stealth, assassination, the underdark, undead
ALIASES:	None
DOMAIN NAME:	Krangath/the Night Below
SUPERIOR:	Gruumsh
ALLIES:	Baghtru, Ilneval, Luthic, Yurtrus
FOES:	Gorm Gulthyn, Great Mother, Gzemnid, Ilsensine, Maanzecorian, Psilofyr, the dwarven and gnomish pantheons, the Seldarine, the drow pantheon, the goblin pantheon, the kobold pantheon
SYMBOL:	Red crescent moon with a skull between the moon's horns
WOR. ALIGN.:	LE, NE, CE

Shargaas (SHAR-gas) the Night Lord is the orcish god of night and activities best kept hidden in darkness. As the Blade in the Darkness, he is the patron of orcish thievery, stealth, and assassination; stealing the power, lives, and treasure of rivals to further his own goals. He is also the Stalker Below, the god of the deepest underdark reaches in which orcs dwell, as well as the representation of the danger that lurks there. He hates all life other than orcs, and is a force of swift and hidden death, preferring to use a blade from behind rather than coming face-to-face with a foe.

Shargaas is something of an outsider within the orcish pantheon. While subject to Gruumsh's will and rule, he has managed to carve out an independent domain for himself beneath the plains of Gehenna. While not an active participant in the eternal war on Acheron between the pantheons of the orcs and goblins, the Night Lord cannot ignore the demands of One-Eye for assistance. However, after supplying the necessary forces of assassins, Shargaas withdraws so deeply into his pitch-black realm that not even Gruumsh can contact him for a year and a day. He typically spends this time scheming and plotting against those he hates. The Blade in the Darkness maintains rivalries with the other orcish gods, encroaching on their areas of concern where he can while claiming it is they who are encroaching on his own portfolios. In particular, the Stalker Below claims dominion over all underground warfare, despite the presence of dedicated war gods. As the god of the underdark, Shargaas also sees Luthic's domain of surface caves as encroachment, and his claim over undead comes close to the portfolios of Yurtrus' own of death and decay. Gruumsh's power keeps Shargaas from acting against the other gods, although for how long he will suffer such is unknown. The Blade in the Darkness is known to have assassinated at least one minor orcish demigod in the distant past, and he may choose to do so again in the future. His schemes are more complex, colder, and far more calculated than any of his brethren; even when he lashes out at his enemies, they are well planned with many contingencies.

Outside of the orcish pantheon, the Night Lord has few allies, and a great many enemies. In particular, Shargaas is deeply hated by Gorm Gulthyn, as the Stalker Below is the only being to have ever stolen an item that the Sentinel was guarding. For his part, Shargaas takes great joy in spreading the word of this achievement, causing Gorm's hatred to deepen even more. His followers constantly struggle with the other races of the underdark, and this has caused the Blade in the Darkness to consider their gods enemies as well. In addition, he has distinct rivalries with other gods of darkness and thievery; in particular, he hopes to one day murder the Torilian goddess of darkness, Shar, and subsume her power for his own. He has thus far kept his plots against the Mistress of the Night from reaching her ears.

Shargaas commonly sends his avatar to assist orcs in their confrontations with underdark races. The Blade in the Darkness is almost certain to send an avatar if he notices Gorm Gulthyn assisting the dwarven races, hoping to use stealth to foil Fire Eyes' assistance. The Night Lord almost never sends an avatar to the surface of a world unless it is to acquire a specific and valuable treasure, piece of information, or

assassinate a rival's avatar. He also sends an avatar to gather more corpses for animating as undead.

Shargaas' Avatar (Thief 31, Cleric 18, Fighter 16, Illusionist 12, Necromancer 12)

Shargaas appears as an orc with jet-black skin and eyes, taller than normal, and gaunt, but not emaciated. He wears a cloak of the blackest cloth over leather armor that appears to be made of swirling shadows. He can only cast wizard spells from the schools of illusion/phantasm and necromancy, and while he can cast priest spells from any sphere, he rarely uses any spells from spheres other than combat and elemental earth, and reversed spells only from healing, necromantic, and sun.

AC -1; MV 12; HP 177; THAC0 5; #AT 5/2 or 2/1
Dmg 1d6+12 (*quarterstaff* +3, +7 STR, +2 spec. bonus in staff) or 1d4+10 (*dagger* +3, +7 STR)
MR Varies; SZ L (8 feet tall)
STR 19, DEX 21, CON 18, INT 19, WIS 17, CHA 13
Spells P: 10/10/9/8/6/4/2, W: 6/6/6/6/3*
Saves PPD 4; RSW 4; PP 7; BW 10; Sp 5

* Numbers assume one extra illusion and necromancy spell per spell level.

Special Att/Def: Shargaas carries the *Staff of Shadows*, a *quarterstaff* +3 that blinds any victim struck by the weapon who fails a save vs. spell, and the dagger *Darkest Death*, a *dagger* +3 that is made of solid shadow and causes maximum damage on any successful backstab attack unless a save vs. death is made by the victim. The Night Lord also wears the *Brumecloak*, a *cloak of protection* +2 that allows him to cast *cone of cold* at the 10th level of effect once per day.

The Blade in the Darkness can cast *enervation* and *animate dead* each three times per day, and can cast *darkness* at will. The Stalker Below can climb any surface without slipping or losing his grip, and can always Hide in Shadows with a 99% chance of success in darkness or partial light.

Shargaas can only be hit by weapons of +1 or greater enchantment. While the Night Lord has 50% magic resistance in total darkness, it drops to 25% in partial light and disappears entirely in full daylight. Similarly, the Stalker Below can see for a mile in absolute or magical darkness, but is utterly blinded by sunlight.

Other Manifestations

Shargaas utilizes omens far more than many of the other members of the orcish pantheon. Typically, such omens warn of danger to his followers, although the danger may not be immediate; the Stalker Below is known to form long-ranging and complex plans, so danger could be a number of days or weeks off. Careful interpretation by the priests may be required to decipher the obscure messages contained in the omens. The most common form of omen he sends are sudden chills that cause a shiver to run down the recipient's spine. Sometimes he sends lamenting moans echoing through tunnels which, if listened to carefully, may reveal a specific message. In addition, following the moans can lead the faithful to safe havens such as hidden shrines or grottos, while enemies could be lead astray to their doom, usually in the form of abrupt pitfalls or crevasses. Finally, if danger is immediate or a valued follower has missed or ignored other signs, he may inflict a dreaded "cold fever" upon a follower. such an affliction causes a swift rise in body temperature, which the individual feels frigidly chilled; this combination sends them into violent and painful convulsions for no more than ten minutes, at which time the body returns to normal.

The Night Lord's manifestations often take the form of enveloping darkness that moves with a being, but through which they can see perfectly clearly. Depending on the situation and the needs of the follower, the darkness will have a radius between 10 and 40 feet. If the Blade in the Darkness takes a particular interest in one of his priest's assassination attempts, he may manifest as a preternatural silence that envelopes the individual, adding a bonus of 20% to any Move Silently checks, and allow them to backstab as a thief four levels higher than their current level, regardless of class.

Shargaas often works through servitor creatures. His primary servants are bats (normal, large, and mobats), meazels, shadows, and gacholoths, but he is also served by assassin imps, bainligor, darkness elementals,

darkweavers, death dogs, dopplegangers, gremlins, galtrits, mites, hook horrors, horgar, invisible stalkers, linqua, nightmares, phiuhls, puddings (black, dense, gray, and stone), shadow dragons, slow shadows, vaporighu, and vargouilles. He expresses his favor through the discovery of black or black and red onyx, garnet, jet, obsidian, and tourmaline, as well as the corpses of other races that have obviously been slain from behind or in ambush; all such corpses are suitable for animating. The stalker below expresses his displeasure through sudden rockfalls and tunnel collapses, often which expose phosphorescent plant life that foil attempts at stealth, as well as sudden, violent rampages by powerful subterranean monsters.

The Church

CLERGY:	Clerics, specialty priests, mystics, shamans, witch doctors, thieves, assassins
CLERGY'S ALIGN.:	LE, NE, CE
TURN UNDEAD:	C: No, SP: No, Mys: No, Sha: No, WD: No, T: No, Ass: No
CMND. UNDEAD:	C: Yes, SP: Yes, Mys: No, Sha: No, WD: No, T: No, Ass: No

All clerics (including multiclassed cleric/thieves), specialty priests, shamans, and witch doctors of Shargaas receive religion (orcish) as a bonus nonweapon proficiency. All clergymembers must have a minimum Dexterity of 9, and they can take proficiencies from the rogue group with no crossover penalty. Lastly, all single-classed clerics, mystics, shamans, and witch doctors will have one or two (50% chance) random minor thieving abilities (between 5–30 points in each ability, adjusted for armor and race), other than open locks and read languages.

The clergy of Shargaas dominates few orcish tribes; generally only those found deep within the Underdark. Amongst most other tribes, they tend to be secretive, and often masquerade as simple scouts and spies. The clergy of the Night Lord operate almost exclusively in shadow and darkness, and are often distrusted and feared, for they secretly cull weak members from the tribe. While usually done to strengthen the whole, the priests are not above eliminating rivals and troublemakers from outside the faith and even leaders are not immune to such intrigue, especially if the clergy feel they have been ineffectual or cowardly. Their interests extend beyond the borders of their tribe as well. They work to better the tribe's position by secretly obtaining items of wealth or power from enemies, be they dwarves, elves, or even rival orcs. In addition, they work on the fringes of battle groups, eliminating enemy scouts and guards, so the tribe's warriors can take their foes by surprise. In the most civilized of orcish lands, followers of the Stalker Below form the backbones of any thieves' guilds and assassins' guilds found in the communities.

Full temples to Shargaas are uncommon; typically found only in the deepest orc-inhabited levels of the Underdark, and they are never found on the surface. Shrines, however, can be found wherever orcs live, if one knows what to look for. In all cases, holy sites dedicated to the Stalker Below are cloaked in shadow, with few fires or other sources of light to be found. Sacred items, furniture, and cloth hangings are common, favoring the colors of black and dark red. The entrances to all shrines and temples, with the exception of those found within tribes dominated by the followers of the Night Lord, are hidden and disguised.

Novices in the service of Shargaas are called Shadows, while full priests are known as Nights. Specialty priests are called shadowblades. The church is well organized and hierarchical. In ascending order of rank, the titles Shargaathan priests use are Disciple of Twilight, Master of Twilight, Disciple of Shadow, Master of Shadow, Disciple of Night, Master of Night, Disciple of Pure Darkness, and Master of Pure Darkness. Priests above these ranks have unique titles granted to them for deeds they have completed. The Night Lord's clergy contains mostly orcs (60%), followed by roughly even numbers of ologs (20%) and half-orcs (17%), and a smattering of scro (2%) and ogrillons (1%). Because most orcs discount females as a threat, the Shargaathans find them to be useful members of the clergy; even so, males make up the overwhelming majority of the priesthood (92%). The bulk of the clergy of the Night Lord is composed of shadowblades (25%), shamans (17%), clerics (16%), and witch doctors (11%), with smaller numbers of

shadowblade/thieves (8%), cleric/thieves (8%), thieves (8%), assassins (4%), and mystics (1%) rounding out the priesthood.

Dogma: Darkness is the mantle from which the hidden blade strikes. Through stealth of night and shadow, cull the weak from the tribe and slay those who dare to dwell within the realms Shargaas calls his own. Through darkness and shadow, discover that which is hidden and secret, take that which is guarded, and slay the unsuspecting enemy. Wage subterranean war against all the foes of the orcish race, and remember that all the world's races are your enemies. Take no slaves, as other creatures are fit for nothing but slaughter or food; instead, utilize their corpses for your labor.

Day-to-Day Activities: In those tribes that do not primarily follow the Night Lord, his priests masquerade as any other orc, although they may take the roles of scouts or spies. They perform whatever duties these roles require, keeping their affiliation with the church of Shargaas secret. They steal items and information of value to increase their own personal power, and to use as sacrifices for their god. In underdark tribes, the Shargaathan priesthood dominates the tribes, although other priesthoods are present. In these environments, the priesthood advocates endless war against other subterranean races in order to enlarge their territory, and gain corpses for animation into servitor undead.

Important Ceremonies/Holy Days: The night of the new moon is sacred to followers of the Night Lord, when they believe Shargaas's power is greatest. Deeds performed on this night are believed to have an even greater chance of success than would be indicated simply from the lack of moonlight. On these nights, followers are expected to make a sacrifice of stolen items to the Stalker Below, by throwing them into pits or crevasses of impenetrable darkness. The actual value of the items is less relevant than the amount of effort taken to acquire them; a sacrifice of items that were difficult to steal are more likely to gain the Night Lord's favor than valuable items that were easy to steal.

Major Centers of Worship: Few major temples dedicated to the Blade in the Darkness are known, as they are always well hidden and the priesthood goes to great lengths to slay those who discover their location. It is known that a major temple lies somewhere deep beneath the southern Lortmill Mountains on Oerth, and likely has political connections with the orcs of the Pomarj. There are also strong rumors of a temple located deep beneath the Spiderhaunt Forest on Toril, although this has never been confirmed. It is also believed that there is a hidden temple of the Night Lord somewhere in Greatspace and is all that remains of an attack force from the first Unhuman War, although most discount this as wild speculation.

Affiliated Orders: The priesthood of the Blade in the Darkness has no associated martial orders, but an extremely secretive order of assassins, spies, thieves, and specialty priests known as the Blackened Blades of Shargass performs the will the church from outside the tribal bounds. They maintain secret bases near large concentrations of orcish tribes where ever they may be found. They ensure the safety and secrecy of the priesthood, as well as assassinating those who are considered a danger to the clergy and gathering information on their enemies. Outside of these duties, they are a thoroughly mercenary group, taking on jobs of thievery, assassination, or information gathering based solely on the price willing to be paid, so long as it does not conflict with the work of the Night Lord's priests. In the case of information gathering jobs, they virtually always pass a copy of the information to the regular clergy as well. They often use blades permanently enchanted with the *weaponblack* spell (see below) in order to improve their chances of a stealthy kill.

Priestly Vestments: When performing religious services, Shargaathan clergy wear black robes with deep hoods, lined with dark red cloth. Beneath the robes, they wear leather armor and a leather cap, usually of black and dark red; such armor signifies the hidden protection of darkness. They wear few other adornments; anything that could catch the light or make a jingling sound are strictly prohibited. The priesthood's holy symbol is a crescent moon made of iron, and painted a dull, dark red. This symbol is hung around the neck on a leather or twine cord and not a metal chain.

Adventuring Garb: When adventuring, the clergy of the Night Lord wear dark clothing and light, quiet armor, so they aren't noticed when they don't wish to be. They use light weapons that are easy to conceal or disguise. Black, dark grey, or dark brown cloaks are favored as well. Otherwise, they use whatever equipment is typical for their tribe.

Specialty Priests (Shadowblades)

REQUIREMENTS:	Dexterity 13, Wisdom 9
PRIME REQ.:	Dexterity, Wisdom
ALIGNMENT:	NE
WEAPONS:	Same as thieves
ARMOR:	Any up to leather, and silenced chain
MAJOR SPHERES:	All, combat, healing (reversed forms only), sun (reversed forms only)
MINOR SPHERES:	Creation, elemental earth, necromantic (reversed forms only), travelers
MAGICAL ITEMS:	As clerics and thieves
REQ. PROFS:	Blind-fighting, hiding (PHBR10)
BONUS PROFS:	Tracking

- Shadowblades must have orcish blood. Most shadowblades are orcs or half-orcs, but orogs and scro may all become shadowblades.
- Shadowblades are allowed to multiclass as shadowblades/thieves.
- If the DM allows kits from *The Complete Book of Humanoids*, shadowblades and shadowblade/thieves may take the shadow kit. If using *The Complete Thief's Handbook*, shadowblades and shadowblade/thieves may take the assassin kit. If using the *PLAYER'S OPTION: Skills & Powers* rules, shadowblades and shadowblade/thieves may take the assassin kit from that book.
- Shadowblades may select nonweapon proficiencies from the rogue group without penalty.
- Single-class shadowblades have limited thieving ability as defined in the Limited Thieving Skills section of "Appendix 1: Demihuman Priests" of Demihuman Deities. Multiclassed shadowblade/thieves receive no extra thieving skill points or bonuses for their shadowblade class; their thieving skills are based solely off their thief class.
- Single-class shadowblades may backstab as a thief half their level, but they may use the THACO of a thief of an equivalent level when making a backstab attempt.
- Shadowblades suffer double the effects for exposure to direct sunlight; for example, orcs would have a -2 penalty to attack rolls and morale. Those races that do not have any normal penalties, such as half-orcs, suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls and morale while in direct sunlight. In addition, all nightblades suffer a -1 penalty to saving throws vs. *light* spells or sunlight-related spells and effects (*sunscorch*, *Sol's searing orb*, etc.)
- Once per day, shadowblades may cancel the effects of a single *light* or *continuous light* spell within 15 feet, just as if they had cast the reverse spell against them.
- At 3rd level, shadowblades can cast *quench fire* (as the reverse of the 4th-level priest spell *produce fire*) or *weaponblack* (as the 1st level priest spell) once per day.
- At 5th level, shadowblades can cast *continual darkness* (as the reverse of the 3rd-level priest spell, *continual light*) once per day.
- At 7th level, shadowblades can cast *cloak of Shargaas* (as the 4th-level priest spell) or *animate dead* (as the 3rd-level priest spell) once per day.
- At 10th level, shadowblades are completely unaffected by magical darkness of any sort, and can see through it to their normal visual range, depending on the external lighting conditions.
- At 15th level, shadowblades can cast *shades* (as the 6th level wizard spell) once per day.

Shargaathan Spells

In addition to the spells listed below, priests of the Night Lord may cast the 3rd-level priest spells *blacklight*, detailed in *Faiths and Avatars* in the entry for Ibrandul, *shadowcloak*, detailed in *Faiths and Avatars* in the entry for Mask, and *armor of darkness*, detailed in *Faiths and Avatars* in the entry for Shar.

1st Level

Weaponblack (Pr 1; Enchantment/Charm)

Sphere:	Combat, Sun
Range:	Touch

Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	1 hr./level
Casting Time:	4
Area of Effect:	1 single blade
Saving Throw:	None

By means of this spell, a priest may turn the blade of any sword, knife, or dagger of size M or smaller pitch black. The blade will not reflect any light, and will blend into any shadows; it can only easily be seen in direct sunlight or magical light of a similar strength. The casting priest need not use the weapon and may turn it over to another creature capable of using it; if this individual has thief skills, they gain a +10% bonus to their Hide in Shadows skill so long as they keep the weapon bared. The blade counts as magical for what creatures it can strike, but does not gain any bonuses or penalties against normal creatures. If used against undead with a connection to the Negative Energy Plane, it only deals half damage. Against beings of light or radiance, or with a connection to the Positive Energy Plane, the blade strikes as a +2 weapon, with suitable attack and damage bonuses, and deals double damage. The spell ends immediately after such a strike, however. The spell can dispel *light* or *continuous light* if it comes into contact with those spells, and such a use immediately dispels the *weaponblack* spell. It can be dispelled if a *light* or *continuous light* spell is cast directly upon it.

The material component for the spell is a small lump of coal or charcoal, half the size of a clenched fist.

4th Level

Cloak of Shargaas (Pr 4; Conjunction/Summoning)

Sphere:	Charm, Sun
Range:	0
Components:	V, S, M
Duration:	Special
Casting Time:	6
Area of Effect:	The caster
Saving Throw:	Neg.

The *cloak of Shargaas* empowers the caster to radiate a personal aura of fear and impenetrable darkness, at will, out to a 15-foot radius. All other characters and creatures within this shadowed aura must roll successful saving throws vs. spell or run away in panic for 2d8 rounds. Affected individuals may or may not drop items, at the DM's option. The caster is unhindered by the darkness, seeing perfectly well, but the darkness is entirely impenetrable to other creatures' normal vision or infravision. The *cloak of Shargaas* dispels all magical lights of brightness less than full daylight. If a spell is as bright as full daylight, but of fifth level or less (such as *continual light*), the spell is temporarily extinguished while within the *cloak*, returning to full brightness upon exiting.

The fear aspect of this spell has no effect upon undead of any sort. The effect can be used but once, lasting for one round per casting level of the priest, and the spell expires after eight hours if not brought down earlier. Members of the recipient's party are not immune to the effects of the spell.

The material component for the spell is the tail feather of a chicken coated in tar or pitch.

5th Level

Enervating Blade (Pr 5; Necromancy)

Sphere:	Necromantic, Sun
Range:	0
Components:	V, M
Duration:	1 rd./2 levels
Casting Time:	8
Area of Effect:	The caster
Saving Throw:	Neg.

By means of this spell, the caster forms a short sword from raw shadowstuff and can wield it in battle with no penalty, regardless of his proficiency status. This blade lasts for one round per two caster levels of the priest, although it can be dismissed earlier, and strikes as a +1 weapon for 1d6+1 points of damage per successful strike. In addition, each

successful hit forces a foe to make a saving throw vs. spell. If the save is successful, no further ill effects are suffered, but if the save is failed, the creature struck is treated exactly as if they had been drained of one energy level. Hit Dice, spells, and other character details dependent on level are lost or reduced. Those drained to 0th level must make a system shock roll to survive and are helpless for the duration of the temporary level loss. The spell effect eventually wears off, either after 1d4 hours plus one hour per caster level, or after six hours of complete and undisturbed rest. Level abilities are regained, but lost spells and hit points must be regained normally. Undead are immune to this spell.

The material components for this spell are the priest's holy symbol.