

Fred's Intangible Reflection: Extinguishing Brightness And Lowering Luminescence

(A handbook for the Pathfinder 2E Shadow Archetypes)

Fred's Thoughts:

The shadows are a powerful source of magic for some, granting abilities beyond the light for those known as Shadowcasters or Shadowdancers. Shadowcasters draw their power from the shadows, renouncing light in order to focus on casting magic from the darkness. Shadowdancers flicker through the shadows, moving in and out with grace. While both may be shady individuals, they can contribute strongly, both in and out of combat, if you can manage to induce them to join your party.

Ratings:

Broken (***)** So good it's probably banned.

Best (**)** Absolutely take this

Better (**)** an optimal choice

Average (*)** Situationally useful or average.

Situational (?) Useful for niche builds or highly variable options.

Poor ()** rarely useful or worse than other options

Bad (*) you don't want this.

Tips:

If you like what you see here, and would like to support more handbooks like this one, the team behind this document does accept tips (which they'll probably spend on more coffee and source materials). Also, feel free to contact us on Reddit at [u/fredsguide](https://www.reddit.com/u/fredsguide) or Twitter at [@fredsguide](https://twitter.com/fredsguide)

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Discussion Thread: [Reddit](https://www.reddit.com/r/Shadowdancer)

Shadowdancer

Prereqs:

Performance (Expert)

Stealth (Master)

Level 8 Archetype Dedication Feat

Flitting from shadow to shadow, Shadowdancers gain some powerful Focus spells and bonuses from staying Hidden or Undetected. Shadowdancers are very good in Dim Light or Darkness, with several abilities that are limited to those areas. The Prerequisites will be difficult to meet for classes other than Bard or Rogue, particularly the Performance ranking, but it can easily be worth the investment for the Focus spells.

Shadowdancer Archetype Feats:

Shadowdancer Dedication: (**) (8)**

Greater Darkvision: (***)** See perfectly in black and white, even in magical darkness. This is great for casters, and very useful for anyone. It also has beautiful synergy with a lot of later Shadowdancer features.

Sneaky: (**)** Gain +2 to Stealth in dim light or darkness. +2 is actually a lot, so this is really good, particularly if you can get a caster to drop Darkness on you.

Shadow Magic: (***)(10)**

Gain one of Focus spells below and one Focus Point, cast as an Occult spell using Charisma. You become trained in Occult Spell Attacks and Saves, but that's kind of irrelevant because neither of the Focus spells requires an attack or save.

Dance of Darkness: (***)**

Take two Actions to Stride at half speed, creating a 10 foot burst of Magical Darkness at the beginning or end of your movement. Make a

Performance check to determine duration, but it will be at least 1 round even on a Failure or Critical Failure. It will mostly be 2 rounds, but potentially a full Minute. Magical Darkness is amazing for you, and totally worthwhile. This is the better focus spell if you're going to spend time in the light, like in a desert campaign, and probably the better first pick if you plan to take Additional Shadow Magic.

Shadow Jump: (*****)

If in Dim Light or Darkness, take two actions to teleport to another area in Dim Light or Darkness within 120 feet. The limitation on light is inconvenient, but the ability is great. If you expect to spend a lot of time in Dim Light or Darkness, expect this to come up a lot. Incredible utility.

Shadow Sneak Attack: (**) (10)

Gain the Sneak Attack feature, with 1d6 precision damage. Does **not** stack with other Sneak Attack sources. 1d6 damage is not very good compared to the other options.

Uncanny Dodge: (**) (10)

Gain Deny Advantage, which keeps you from being flat-footed most of the time. This is nice, but kind of boring. It also lists Rogue Dedication as a prerequisite, which seems incorrect, but is worth noting.

Additional Shadow Magic: (*****) (12)

Prereq: Shadow Magic

Gain the Focus Spell you didn't pick from Shadow Magic and another Focus Point. Generally better to pick Shadow Jump here, so you can use the two in conjunction. Notably, you don't increase your proficiency in Occult Spells, but you don't need that for these.

Shadow Illusion: (*****) (12)

Prereq: Shadow Magic

Gain another Focus Point, the Shadow Illusion Focus spell, and become Expert in Occult Spells. Shadow Illusion is Illusory Creature that only works in Dim Light or Darkness. It's incredibly powerful and a lot of fun to use. Additionally, there are all sorts of creative uses you can come up with. You need the Charisma to pull off the saves though.

Shadow Power: (***) (14)

Prereq: Shadow Magic

Gain the Shadow Blast spell as an Innate Occult Spell 1/Day and become Expert in Occult Spells. Cast Shadow Blast at Level -1. Choose the type of damage you want, the shape of the AoE, and deal 5d8 damage (+1d8 per +1 heightening) of that damage type to the creatures inside on basic Reflex or Will save (target's choice). Very powerful to choose damage type, very nice to have as a free spell. You need a high Charisma though, and letting enemies pick their save makes this much weaker. Still a very nice blast option, and becoming Expert in Occult Spells can be very powerful if you've multiclassed. The 1/Day limitation is really the major drawback.

Spring from the Shadows: (***) (14)

Take one Action to Stride up to a creature you are Hidden from or Undetected by and Strike them. You remain hidden until after you Strike. If you're Hidden, the target is Flat-Footed (-2 AC). Basically just gives you a free melee Strike, which is really nice if you're melee-based.

Sense the Unseen: (****) (16)

If you fail a Seek check, use your Reaction to sense any Undetected creatures, making them Hidden rather than Undetected, which lets you know what space they're in. This is huge if your enemies tend to sneak up on you.

Cognitive Loophole: (****) (18)

When effected by a mental effect at the end of your turn, use your Reaction (even if normally prohibited by the effect) to ignore one mental effect until the end of your next turn. You can't use it twice on the same effect though. Useful ability, mental effects are nasty, but limited utility.

Shadow Master (****) (18)

When in Dim Light or Darkness, gain Resistance 5 to everything but Force or Ghost Touch, and roll twice on Reflex saves and take the higher result. This is amazing, especially when you can create Darkness.

Shadowcaster

Prereqs:

Ability to cast spells.

It's all in the name; Shadowcasters are stealthy Casters who use Shadow spells. Shadowcasters get a sprinkling of bonus spells and a lot of great Focus spells, which are always strong. Probably best if you have a Free Archetype Feat, but does double down on Focus Spells, giving some really stellar options at later levels. It also opens very early, giving some strong benefits for stealthy casters. If you're considering Shadowdancer as a caster, Shadowcaster is almost definitely better, with lower entry requirements and more spell options. Of note are Shadow Magic, Shadow Illusion, and Shadow Power for increasing your Occult Spell to Trained or Expert, which can be very useful, paired with other multiclassing. Additionally, Shadow Reservoir at level 10 can give you a spare spell slot for each of your spell levels except your two highest, which is amazing.

Shadowcaster Archetype Feats:

Shadowcaster Dedication: (****) (2)

Lightless: (*) Lose the ability to cast any spells with the Light descriptor. This isn't a huge deal, just expect your party to use torches or Darkvision, and give them some warning. The big spells you lose are the Chromatic and Prismatic spells, but they're easily replaced.

Cloak of Shadow: (**)** Gain a Focus Pool with one Focus Point and the Focus Spell Cloak of Shadow. The spell gives you or a willing target Dim Light radius of 20 feet, which can be used to Hide. This is great for the party Rogue, Caster, or Shadowdancer.

Familiar: (**) (4)**

Familiars are amazing, even if you just use yours to get two more cantrips, and having this count as an Archetype feat is great, especially if you're getting Free Archetype Feats.

Shadow Spells: (**) (4)**

Add the spells below to your class spell list, you can learn them as class spells. Important to note you still have to learn these as a spontaneous caster, but can just prepare them as a prepared caster (once you pay to copy them into your spellbook).

Shadow Projectile (3) ()** Heavily depends on a Ranged Ally who benefits from Flat-Footed substantially. That said, any Ranged Attack Roll that can Crit will. Also gives you a useful Reaction.

Replicate (4) (**)** Make a weaker duplicate of a creature. Like a Summon, but probably stronger and with more utility.

Shadow Blast (5) (*)** Great for a Blast, pick your damage, but much higher chance of enemy saving since they get to pick Reflex or Will.

Shadow Siphon (5) (**)** Use Reaction to cast this spell to halve another spell's damage on a successful Counteract check. This is actually a really good alternative to Counterspell, but only for damage spells.

Shadow Walk (5) ()** Very limited utility, only for long distance travel.

Shadow Raid (7) ()** AoE Shadow Spell with concealing effects. Can be useful, but Reflex or Will choice to save for targets is brutal.

Shadow Army (10) (**)** This is really good, but it's a level 10 slot and will almost always be worse than Wish.

Disciple of Shade: (**) (6)**

Gain a Focus Point and the Inscrutable Mask spell. Inscrutable Mask gives you situational bonuses to Deception, Intimidation, or Stealth for 10 minutes. Good duration, probably most useful for Stealth. Inscrutable Mask isn't that great, but the extra Focus Point is nice.

Enhanced Familiar: (**) (6)**

Gain two more Familiar Abilities. Excellent, Familiars are great, and this is solid.

Shadow Spell: (*) (8)**

Take an Action to give either +2 to Stealth or -2 to Perception for one round on the target of a successful Shadow trait spell cast on your next action. Basically, lets your Shadow trait spells that are buffs buff further, or debuffs debuff a bit harder. This is much better because your Focus spells count as Shadow, so they basically can give you an extra +2 on Stealth.

Shadow Reservoir: (*****) (10)

Prereq: Ability to cast spells from spell slots.

Gain an extra spell prepared of every level except your two highest, which must require a saving throw or attack roll. The spells gain the Shadow trait, and can be disbelieved with a Will save. Extra spell options are awesome, even if they can be disbelieved. You do still use a spell slot, but it's a really nice option to have.

Secrets of Shadow: (*****) (12)

Prereq: Shadow Reservoir

Gain an extra Shadow Reservoir spell of your second highest spell level and gain Negative Resistance equal to your highest spell level case from slots. Extra spells are the best.

Shadow Magic: (*****) (12)

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Unending Emptiness: (*****) (14)

Gain a Focus Point and Darklight Domain Spell. Darklight is *incredibly* powerful, using three actions to create a 20 foot burst of magical darkness anywhere within 120 feet for 1 minute. You can choose up to 4 allies to ignore the effects and see through it. Enemies, in addition to the normal darkness effects, take damage from starting in or entering the Darklight. For a Focus spell, this is completely insane. The one downside is that you'll never want to cast a different Focus Spell instead.

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