

Shadow Thief Guide

LEMURKIN STRATEGY

GUIDE TO SHADOW THIEF



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Okay so, this is my shadow thief strategy guide go ahead take a seat drink a soda etc etc.

The following is a summary of how I typically approach Shadow Thief. The rest of the guide will justify this strategy and provide context and exceptions.

- **General Play**

- Treat Dagger Strike and Pickpocket as fallbacks.
- Sell cards unless they're really good to buff your straights and ultimate.
- Sixes aren't very good unless you can hit your ultimate.
- If you're high on resources, look to use dice mods for 5 or more "health advantage". The fewer resources you have the pickier you should be.

- **Offensive Roll Phase Priorities**

- Low resources
 - Prioritize Carducopia and Straights to generate resources.
 - Weigh Straights higher if you have Sneak Attack.
- High resources
 - Prioritize Large Straight and Ultimate
 - Mod into large straight second roll if you want safety

- Carducopia is still good, don't fight it too much.
- **Upgrades**
 - Good
 - Carducopia II, Large Straight II
 - Situational
 - Dagger Strike II, Shadow Defense II, Shadow Dance II, Counter Strike II
 - Very Situational
 - Pickpocket II, Small Straight II
- **Defense**
 - If you lack Sneak Attack, use Shadow Defense.
 - If you would spend a dice mod for Shadows, use Shadow Defense,
 - Use Counter Strike otherwise.

Preamble: It's The Economy, Silly

I realize that as I go over the various abilities, I need to talk about why I value things relative to one another.

Your four main resources are as follows

- Combat Points
- Cards
- Poisons
- Health

All of these represent either win conditions or parts of win conditions, and as such, need to be understood before you really understand the role that each ability on Shadow Thief's board plays.

Poisons: Your worst value engine???

Poison might seem really good on the surface, after all 1 damage a turn in an 8 turn game adds up! But the ways you can actually inflict poison on the opponent actively often require you to essentially sacrifice the entire turn. You can get just as much value over time, if not more, by generating combat points and cards.

Combat Points: Really quite good

The faster you get loaded up on combat points, the better. It buffs your straights and your ultimate, which are your main damage engines. Every 2 combat points you have will buff your Small Straight by 1 and Large Straight and Ultimate by 2, so make sure you're stocked up before using your big swings. You can often expect each combat point in the early game to cause 3 more damage over the course of the game.

Cards: An Incredible Value Engine!

I'll be going over the cards in more detail, but essentially a lot of your cards are fairly competitive with 0 CP deal 3 damage, which is pretty crazy.

You're going to want to have a clutch of dice mods in hand for a long period of time. You don't want to be caught with your shields down against a 15 defensible attack, you don't want to be short on dice mods when two sixes show up on your first roll.

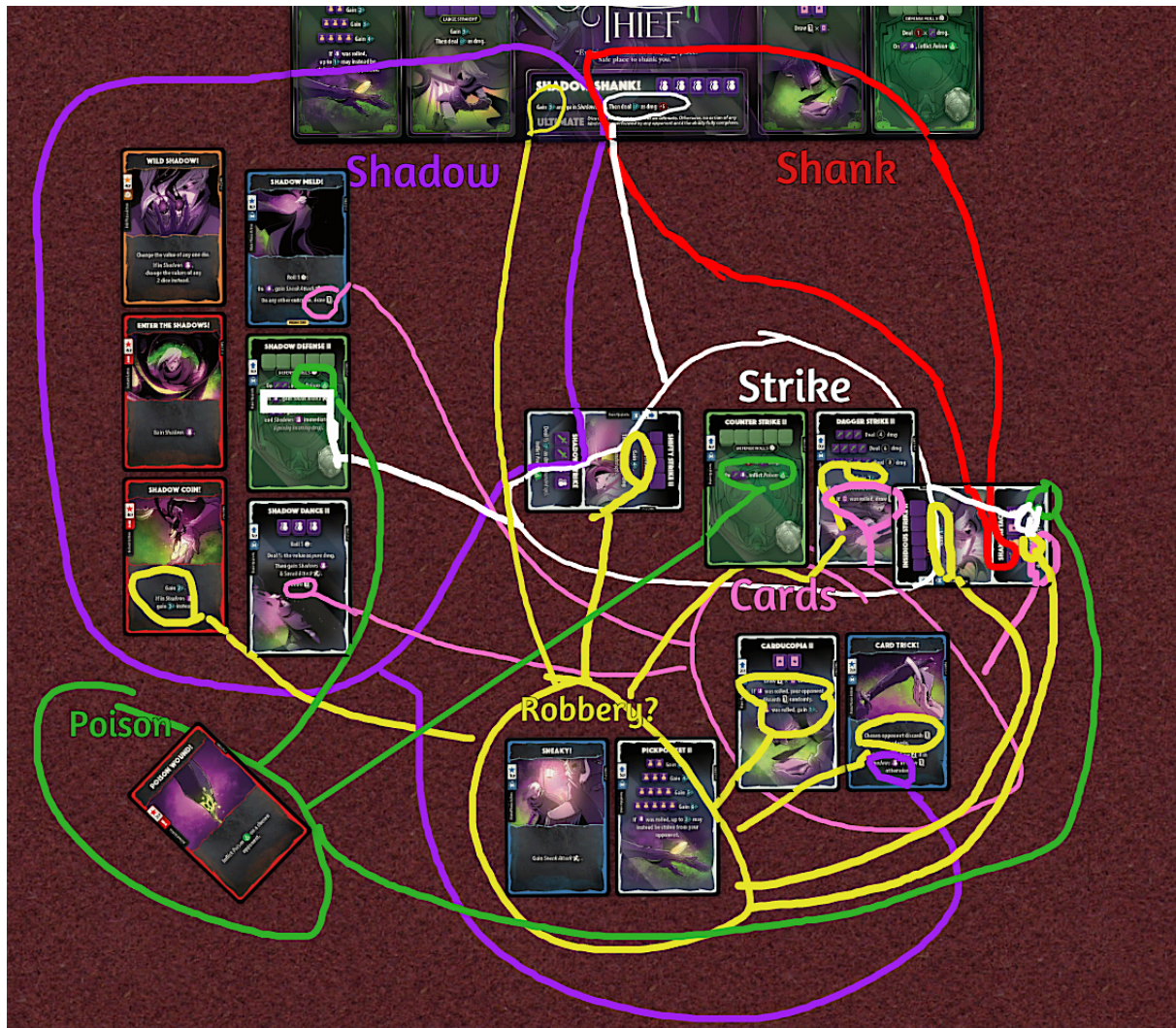
While poisons obviously generate value over time, cards *also* generate value over time. When you draw cards early, you give yourself more opportunities to spend those cards at the right time. Being able to use a card at exactly the right moment is extremely valuable, and you should treat a hand full of cards as generating value over time, just like Combat Points and Poisons do.

Health: Who Needs It

While your other resources generate value over time, health sure doesn't! It's very important to have at least one of it of course, since if you run out you lose the game. However, you only really need enough to keep you alive.

Shadow Thief will often want to fall behind on health early instead of throwing resources to stay above water, since if he can aggressively generate resources he can generate so much passive value that the opponent just can't recover. Of course, don't fall so far behind that you just lose.

Abilities and Upgrades



A brief overview of how all of Shadow Thief's abilities and cards connect to each other.

Dagger Strike (Three to five daggers)

This ability is **fine**, but is just about always outclassed by your small straight. The upgrade is nice, but not needed. You really don't care that much about this ability unless it gets down poison, and that's a problem because it doesn't overlap with basically anything else on your board **AND** it's quite a difficult thing to roll. However, it's one of your few ways to actually pay off your Sneak Attack and get poison down in matchups where your opponent refuses to hit your defense.

It's tempting to think of an early poison generating a ton of damage in a game of Shadow Thief, but I think it's more accurate to think of it as "skipping" your turn. By using Dagger Strike, you're not generating any of your other passive value engines of cards or combat points.

Upgrade is nice but it doesn't change your dynamics too much; I'd say to play it about 50% of the time. It's very cheap and quite likely that it can pay itself off, but if you don't think you're ever hitting basic then of course it's not helping you. The primary function it serves is to give you a card and combat point on AAAC, which is a perfectly fine fallback to Carducopia.

In most cases, I'll never go for dagger strike, instead hitting it basically on accident and then saying, well, I guess it's a way to pay off my sneak attack. Beyond that, most other things are preferable.

Pickpocket (Two to four bags)

This ability is fairly weak, but at the same time it's a huge deal that it's there. Bags are on Threes and Fours, which overlap neatly with straights. If you have a 3 or a 4, you almost always have this ability. While it's your weakest, it's a whole 3-ish CP better than nothing!

This ability existing helps quite a bit for chasing more "risky" Small Straights. As previously noted, each combat point generated in the early game can be roughly expected to deal about 3 damage over the course of a game.

The upgrade on this is quite rough. You really don't want to be activating this more than once, which is what it'd take for it to "pay off" in terms of returning CP. It's just not your goal to do this, and you're better off taking the CP from selling it and "buffing" your straights by 1 or 2 dmg instead of playing this. I'd avoid playing this unless my opponent's defense is very very good.

Shifty Strike (Small Straight)



Your Small Straight deals something between pitiful and respectable damage and gives you three combat points. Now, don't get *too* distracted by the "potentially respectable damage" part of this ability. Three combat points is great and getting a 4 damage swing in matters in a lot of matchups.

This is one of Shadow Thief's most important abilities, and is typically right behind Carducopia in terms of "relatively easy abilities I can activate".

I'll say to compare this to Pickpocket. You really aren't counting on getting a fourth CP from Pickpocket unless you're hard chasing it, but even then if you get Small Straight you can also fall up into Insidious Strike, which is quite nice as well. If you manage to get a 3 or 4 damage hit in, that's typically better than not attacking at all. The small straight also overlaps more nicely with your other roll objectives, meaning that if you keep yourself open to them, you

might just fall into your better roll objectives anyways. Overall, consider small straights to typically be your main source of CP throughout the game. It not only provides CP, it also provides a fair amount of damage *and* an opportunity to offload sneak attacks.

Since Small Straight deals half your combat points rounded up, you're going to want to have an odd amount of combat points when resolving the damage. Since it gives you 3 combat points, you typically want an even amount of combat points in your first main phase. I'm usually thinking about how I can get to an even amount of combat points in my first main phase because of this, and selling cards a little more aggressively to get there.

In general, this is a very solid turn one ability. If you start your first ORP with 4 combat points and attack with this ability, it deals all of four defendable and gives you 3 combat points. If each combat point gives you 2 damage over the rest of the game, you're doing 10 defendable with 3 combat points on top.

The upgrade adds 1 combat point and a new roll objective that deals half your CP as damage and inflicts poison. The upgrade is quite bad most of the time. I'd say that I'd play it about 2% of the time. It can pay itself off if you activate small straights three times, and if you get a fourth small straight then you're money positive! That's uh, not likely to happen, but it's possible. Even if you do activate the small straight thrice, you're actually losing damage compared to if you just sold the card in the first place. It being a whopping 2 CP really hurts it. I basically play it if I think I have literally nothing better to do with my CP. I'd much rather have the 3 CP than the Poison in most cases, and AADD is not easy to roll.

Insidious Strike (Large Straight)

It's everything the Small Straight is, but better! By some amount of damage, who knows. This is certainly nice to have, and is a big reason that Small Straight is as encouraged by me as it is, sometimes you can just luck into a Large Straight and feel really good.

I'll often think about my resources as wanting to spend 1 dice mod for a large straight to generate me combat points and swing in for 15. I'll also often want to get my Large Straight on my second roll, that way if I'm modified out I can reroll into my resource abilities.

The Insidious Strike upgrade is a huge deal. Shank Attack is an *amazing* roll objective that does everything that the Small Straight does but better. Completely ignoring the Sneak Attack on it, 1 CP, 1 card, and a poison is typically better than a 2 card carducopia. I'm playing this about 70% of the time, and the 30% remainder is typically because it's late enough that I can't really justify playing this. However, if it's early, slam it down and don't pass up Shank

Attacks! Even without the Sneak Attack the ability is good, and with the sneak attack it's amazing.

Shadow Dance (Three Sixes)

Shadow dance's power level is dependent on your matchup. Basically, most of its value just comes from giving you shadows and "pushing" the game for a turn. It's your fallback to your ultimate and it deals very low damage and gives you shadows and sneak attack. In some cases it's worth shooting for since you might want the Shadows, but the majority of the time (against a good player in a scary matchup), getting the Shadows here is of very low utility. In most cases, if you **do** manage to get Shadow Dance, you want to be modding into ultimate, as well as having enough redundancy to overcome all of your opponent's dice mods.

The matchup where it is most powerful is Spider-Man, where this can push an entire turn **if** Spider-Man has no answer for the Shadows. Most other matchups will have the opponent able to shoot for a "setup" ability, generating more value than the sneak attack and 2 dmg on average, which makes this ability a relatively hard ability that also makes Shadow Thief "fall behind". Even Spider-Man can pretty reasonably just activate C-C-C-Combo and threaten a double ORP next turn unless you remove the Combo.

If you just get Shadow Dance without trying, it's fine, but try not to mod into Shadow Dance. You're better off holding your mods for your defense or for your ultimate.

The upgrade is in a weird spot. If you see yourself activating Shadow Dance even once this game it's playable, and if you hit it twice the upgrade is huge. However, that's not exactly a reliable idea and it's often better to just "upgrade" your straights and sell it for CP. I've found myself playing it about 10% of the time, but that's because I'm going up against Shadow Thief "counters" and not just random heroes, and these counters are typically very good at answering Shadow Dance effectively.

Carducopia (Two or more Fives)

This is your best ability! Cards are typically how you plan to win a game and not lose a game, and you have a TON of huge hits in your deck that can get you there. However, it's definitely not the easiest thing to roll. Sure, you can try and force it and *typically* expect to get it, however there's always a chance that you end up stranded with not a lot going for you if you "just" chase this with no regard for anything else. I typically find myself chasing Carducopia with at least one 5 showing up in my first roll, as well as rolling my dice a little more aggressively if I don't get it. However, it's important not to force your Carducopias. Hard chasing

cards and whiffing is how Shadow Thief can lose games! It's also important to remember that as good as this ability is, it's only a means to an end. Cards alone won't win you the game, you need to use them to multiply your force.

The upgrade is huge, even activating the random discard once and getting a CP back is a worthwhile trade, let alone doing it twice or thrice or quadrice. I'm playing this about 80% of the time; even though it's pricey, the benefit of discarding my opponent's cards is massive, and it typically pays for itself if played early enough. I mostly pass on it when it's late and I don't have time to hit it. Damage is good!

Shadow Defense (The Really Good Defense)

This is the defense that people like to activate and for pretty good reason. It's **absurdly** strong. To break it down:

In four dice, you have:

50% chance to get a 6 and therefore one Sneak Attack. (Sneak Attack is worth 3.5 dmg, so if you can attack this generates 1.75 dmg)

13% chance to get double sixes and therefore a shadows (Say nuh-uh to the damage. Worth however much damage you blocked, let's say 7? this on average would generate .91 health)

41% chance to apply poison (This is a bit tricky to evaluate, but let's lowball it and call it 3 damage. This is 1.23 damage on average. 4 delta is probably more accurate in most cases, but I think that 3 helps to accommodate the cases where either the game isn't going to go long enough for it to matter as much or the poison overstacks etc etc.)

So, summing those numbers up we get 3.89 delta on average. If you already have Sneak Attack, it goes down to a "mere" 2.14 delta.

When you upgrade it, the numbers get better but not by such an obscene margin that it's at all mandatory. It costing a hefty 3 CP means that if you're running this upgrade out, you're essentially down 4 CP for straights fuel and only making your defense one die better.

It depends on the matchup, but I think I sell this card in most matchups. The reason being that most matchups I don't really think I'll be activating my defense a whole lot, since players (rightfully) are scared of the defense here. If I think I'll be activating my defense four more times

in the matchup, I'll typically play this. Otherwise, I think I'll sell it, and in most cases I end up selling this.

Counter Strike (The Less Good Defense)

This defense is less good than Shadow Defense in most cases, but a lot of people have the heuristic to never use or upgrade it, which I don't feel is correct.

With five dice, we have:

50% chance to apply poison (let's say that's 1.5)

1.33 dmg from Daggers

So that adds up to a neat 2.88 delta on average.

So, when to take Counter Strike as opposed to Shadow Defense? As a general rule of thumb, you should really only consider Counter Strike if you already have Sneak Attack, which is a huge reason to activate Shadow Defense in the first place.

Even if you already have Sneak Attack, there are still times where hitting your Shadow Defense anyways is still good. You essentially need to ask yourself, do you want the chance to get to spend a dice mod to fully dodge whatever damage the opponent is doing? I find this typically isn't really worth it unless it's at least 10 damage coming at Shadow Thief. Of course dying instantly is dying instantly and that's bad too.

Also keep in mind that you only have a 50% chance to get a single six from the Shadow Defense in the first place. You might be two dice mods away from a Shadows, in which case it's very infrequently worthwhile since that probably means you're falling behind on resources.

The upgrade on this makes it go from 2.88 delta to 4.21 delta. While that's not too much more impressive than Shadow Defense getting 3.89, there's a big advantage that this doesn't need to be offloaded by attacking and that this is going to be better against lower damage attacks since it always just converts into raw damage instead of preventing all. I find that this defense is decent into matchups where you are constantly being bombarded with low defensible, such as Ice Man or Spider-Man. Other than that, this is usually a sell.

Shadow Shank (Ultimate)

This ultimate ranges from obscenely strong to actually kinda bad, depending on how many resources you've activated this game (see, how many small straights you've done).

You also can really only expect to activate this if you've drawn some dice mods off Carducopia. All in all, you **really** need to set up to comfortably capitalize on Shadow Shank.

The Shadows on this ability is often very relevant as well. Being able to force your opponent into a non-damaging turn is huge, as well as forcing them to use status removal on your shadows instead of on your poisons or sneak attack.

The trickiest part of this ability is knowing when and how to shoot for this. In the late game when I'm above 12 CP and have three or more dice mods in hand, I'll often be looking to "hard chase" Shadow Shank by just chucking in everything but my sixes. I'll also often have a bit more nuance and hold my 5s to "fork" cards and ultimate.

Win Conditions

You have three primary win conditions as Shadow Thief, all of which require some amount of cards and resources. These win conditions are going to become better or worse in different matchups, and it's somewhat your responsibility to know how to weave between them and when they're going to be relatively better or worse.

I've ordered these three win conditions in order of general power level, though of course all three of them are generally ways to generate value and therefore win games. However, keep in mind that all three of these win conditions generally feed into each other in different ways.

High Roller

The High Roller strategy focuses around getting a lot of dice mods and combat points, then expending them to either hit Ultimates or your Large Straight.

Ideally, you can line up your Large Straight to deal 15 and your ultimate to deal somewhere between 18 and 20, as well as expending Sneak Attack. Your ultimate also provides shadows and dodges defense, the value of that shadows is matchup dependent but typically it's quite good to have.

The rate at which I consider them to be worthwhile is generally one dice mod for a large straight or two dice mods for an ultimate, but the ultimate is usually noticeably better if you can get it.

I'll also note that I typically want to have more than two dice mods when going for an ultimate, as I like to assume that I'm going to be disrupted and Shadow Dance is a lot worse than the ultimate.

Straight Rushdown

A big part of Straight Rushdown is gaining and spending Sneak Attack, as well as constantly putting in damage and other value. Straight Rushdown is more valuable the more you're getting Sneak Attack from your defense consistently.

Note that this win condition also generates a lot of combat points while doing its thing, and enables you to hit a lot of Carducopias for value and eventually switch over to High Rolling.

Wound and Wait

If you can get a bunch of poisons on the opponent, all of your "stalling moves" now also get you ahead by three health. This means your carducopia drawing you defensive cards can keep you in the game and generate more and more advantage. Furthermore, the more defense you can generate, the more time you can spend on generating defense. In a sense, if you can "get past" your opponent's threat, you can kinda endlessly compound. Of course, it's best to end the game at some point, as you can't heal and every ORP your opponent takes is technically a chance for them to get absurdly lucky, so it's within your best interest not to stall *forever*.

Tips and Strategies

How To Set Up Safely and Profitably

In general, you're going to be spending quite a few turns early on just "setting up" to get your payoffs later. It's best to approach your setup with flexibility in mind, after all even though you're a very unfair character this is still a dice game and you can still get unlucky and lose if you're not being adaptable.

For my setup turns before I have my boatload of combat points and dice mods, I'm generally targeting Carducopia and Insidious Strike. If my Large Straight is upgraded, Shank Attack is also quite good. Of course, Pickpocket is a lot better than nothing, but I'm basically never going for that unless I'm up against a very scary defense.



Your best setup abilities are Carducopia and Shifty Strike in most matchups. Shank Attack is great if you can get the upgrade.

You'll notice that on your base board, you don't really care about sixes or daggers like, at all. They *can* be used for straights, but you always need a 3 and a 4 for a straight (1234, 2345, 3456 all need 34), so 3+4 is far more relevant. In general, unless you're confident you can hit ultimate or you already have Shadow Dance, you ought to roll past your sixes.

Notably, while Pickpocket also generates you combat points, it cannot utilize 5s at all. That means that if you're just hard chasing Pickpocket, you're rolling past 5s which could potentially turn into a Carducopia. So even if Pickpocket is "just as good" as Small Straight, in practice it means you'll be drawing fewer cards than if you played for your small straight and let yourself "fall into" cards rather than strictly chasing either pickpocket or carducopia.

When it comes to abilities you want to be activating, it's mostly just straight or carducopia. Which one I activate often depend on how the dice are feeling. I like to "switch gears" depending on how much I desire combat points or cards. Early in the game, I really want both, so I won't try to force one more than the other too much.

I think it's also worth mentioning that I like to *deprioritize* my small straight once I get to 10+ Combat Points. That doesn't mean I won't activate it, but rather I just consider it less important since I'm seeing the combat points as the main draw to the ability and not the damage. Once I have enough combat points, I'm good to go for my other more impressive win conditions rather than trying to just swing in for a mere 8 damage with a small straight.

To go over what some Offensive Roll Phase decisions might look like, let's go through an example roll attempt



First Roll

There are a lot of options here, and let's briefly go over all the pros and cons of them:

- Keep nothing: This option is best for when you are already "flooding" on Combat Points and you don't really need your small straight or your pickpocket. This will let you hard chase Carducopia and potentially get enough sixes to threaten your ultimate.
- Keep 3+4: This option makes more sense when you want to use a sneak attack or you're a bit behind on combat points, but aren't too desperate for them. Both of these details weigh me more towards this keep, and in general I'd consider this a pretty safe option to go for.
- Keep 4: This option is a compromise between the last two options. Keeping either the 3 or 4 doesn't really matter too much, theoretically there's some tip-its that matter and maybe the 4 is better but I've never cared. If I'm *okay* with combat points but really prefer to get something else, I'll find this keep more reasonable.
- Keep three or four bags: I'm just lumping these two together because they do largely the same thing. I'm basically saying I'm okay with Pickpocket here, and am hard chasing it. I'll basically only do this if I'm really desperate for combat points. Note that I'm just about always giving it a roll instead of locking in Pickpocket on roll one, after all if my opponent spends their dice mods on this that's *even better* than getting all the combat points.



Second Roll

Lets again go over the potential options:

- Keep 6: This is a pretty *crazy* roll, and makes the most sense if you are really desperate for getting an ultimate. It's pretty risky but it can make sense if you really need a Shadows to stay alive or if you're looking to close out the game.
- Keep 5: This roll makes sense if you're just desperate for cards. I mean, I guess it's kinda self explanatory.

- Keep 3+4+5+6: This is essentially saying that you want the small straight, and want to potentially "fall up" into large straight. This is a pretty sensible roll most of the time, after all it's +3 combat points and can let you get some chip in.
- Keep 4+5: This is a spicy roll! It's basically saying that you really want cards and would rather have cards than a guaranteed small straight, but you're still okay with falling back on Pickpocket and small straight if things don't go exactly your way. I think this is a pretty sensible roll, even though it might look crazy on the surface, it's safer than just holding 5 and still lets you draw cards if you luck into them.
- Declare Small Straight: Cashing in here is definitely safe, but I'd usually want to hold 3456 and let my opponent mod me if they want to mod me. After all, I'd rather they mod my setup turn than my ultimate. There are some rare circumstances where I'd want to do this, but they usually involve a Sneak Attack.

In general, I really like holding bag + 5 while I'm setting up. It's a great way to get straights or my carducopia, and doesn't really sacrifice all that many cards to also make stuff.

Cashing Out



Your best payout abilities are your straights and your ultimate. Your small straight is, of course, your worst one, but it's definitely a lot better than nothing.

There are some strange nuances with cashing out that really vary depending on what matchup you're in.

Let's say that when you're cashing out, you're just hard rolling for sixes. The amount of sixes you're expecting to get are 2.1 on average. To further break that down, you're expecting to get are approximately

Number of Sixes	Expected Probability
0	6.44%
1	23.57%
2	34.46%
3	25.16%
4	9.02%
5	1.35%

Or going by "getting at least this many sixes"

Number of Sixes	Expected Probability
0+	100%
1+	93.56%
2+	69.99%
3+	35.53%
4+	10.37%
5	1.35%

As you can see, you can reasonably expect to get two sixes. However, three and above is where things start to get tricky. You can feel reasonably entitled to finding two sixes in a given roll, but I usually like to go for three sixes with a one more time and getting at least one six on my first roll attempt.

Tricky Matchups

Your trickiest matchups are Jean Grey, Rogue, and Spider-Man. You still have more than a fair shot against them, so don't be discouraged if you see these heroes in your opponent's lineup.

Jean Grey and Rogue both generally play the same way, you're going to want to "race" the opponent by generating a lot of cards and combat points quickly, then paying it off with ultimates or large straights until the opponent falls to all of your passive value. Your Shadows tends to be somewhat weak in this matchup as both Jean Grey and Rogue have excellent abilities to that mostly don't care about Shadows, Rogue can just activate Leach and Jean Grey can just activate Psychic Multiplier. It still matters as it greatly throttles the opponent's output, but it matters a lot less.

With Spider-Man, you're looking to make sure that he can't get too far ahead with his early aggression, after all Webbed is a guaranteed two damage plink on you. You're looking to more efficiently and effectively deal damage, as well as noting that your proactive Shadows Gain is a lot better in this matchup than the other two, so hitting your Ultimate or even your Shadow Dance can be very rewarding.

Most of your other matchups are much less problematic, but some are definitely trickier than others. In most cases though, ask yourself if the opponent is going to take it slow or fast. If they're taking the matchup slow, the Jean Grey and Rogue sections are going to be most relevant, and if they're taking it fast, the Spider-Man section is more relevant.

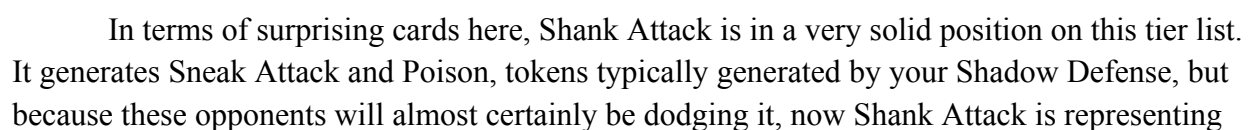
Beating Rogue and Jean Grey

These characters aren't the fastest, but they're also quite inevitable. You can only handle so many Leaches or undefendable 11 dmg before you eventually croak. You really want to outpace them, you can't heal so you need to win before they can. They'll give you the time you need to do that, but if you're flailing and spending your resources inefficiently, they'll catch up to you.

Early on, you're looking to do your generic build up strategies. Rogue's defense isn't very scary and she primarily activates Leach, so the Ionic from small straights isn't that big of a deal. Jean Grey's defense is also not **too** scary, though you prefer to hit her on the Jean Grey side instead of the Dark Phoenix side. Basically, roll for both Straights and Carducopia at the same time, the more dice you roll the more cards you'll draw, but the more bags you hold the safer you'll be going for your CP abilities.

In these matchups, I'm usually looking for ultimates or large straights to close out the game. Large Straights are worse against Jean Grey a lot of the time due to her forcefield. They also will just about always avoid your defense, so both Counter Strike II and Shadow Defense II

A way to think about these matchups is that you want to generate as much "advantage over time" as you possibly can. Poisons are big here, but remember your CP and your cards generate more advantage over time, so your Dagger Strike inflicting Poison is still not great here.



huge amounts of advantage on a roll objective that makes your straights and carducopia way safer.

Evaluating Shank Attack, compare it to a 2 card Carducopia. Imagine if the second card you drew off of Carducopia read "0 CP: Gain 1 CP, Sneak Attack, and inflict Poison". That's a *pretty sweet card*, and would be one of your best cards in your deck, up there with Not This Time. Shank Attack not only representing a very powerful ability but also partially refunding itself if you hit a large straight and making your board much safer makes this a very solid ability, the only reason it's not in A is because Shadow Thief values combat points **that** highly.

Dagger Strike is in C tier, even though it's nominally "free". This is because, again, Shadow Thief **really** likes combat points. It makes your board safer in the sense that you now have access to a bit of card draw and a bit of damage, but your Small Straights and Carducopia interface is so much better than this. Activating Dagger Strike 0 times in a game is very preferable.

Your D tier cards are best played when you hit a bit too much CP gain and need to offload. Why play Sneaky for a 2 CP swing when you can just have 2 CP and deal +2 damage on your large straight and ultimate? The answer is if you're getting to 15 CP anyways.

Your E tier cards are almost always sold. Entering Shadows on your turn is not very valuable in these matchups, usually representing preventing like, 2 damage or doing literally nothing. As such, Shadow Dance should be avoided; if you get three sixes you want an ultimate. Shadow Defense II and Counter Strike II are also bad since your opponent won't be hitting your defense. Notably, Shadow Dance is better against Dark Phoenix projecting to do a large attack, but it's still unreliable enough and you'd still rather have saved up for an ultimate if you can hit it.

Pickpocket II is a pretty weak ability, and is outclassed by just hitting your straights. As mentioned before, your straights are just very good as Shadow Thief. Great source of Combat Points! You'd need to activate Pickpocket twice in a game for it to pay itself back, and that's just not very likely. It also lets you remove CP from your opponent, which makes it nichely playable, but in most cases you're going to prefer to just keep up the pressure. I may be underestimating the card, Rogue for example values her combat points quite highly, but I'd be worried about after this ability getting online, the opponent just not holding more than 1 CP into my turns anyways.

Beating Spider-Man

Spider-Man is not exactly like Jean Grey and Rogue, he's much scrappier and looking to apply enough pressure early and develop enough of a lead that your passive value can't catch up with him. A big part of Spider-Man's threat is that he tries to get an early lead, then by the time Shadow Thief stabilizes, he is too far behind on life to actually win by the time Spider-Man can

just win off of his chip or his undefendable.

As such, you really don't want to let Spider-Man sit on a comfortable health lead all game. You're looking to get any damage you can against him without disrupting your own plans.

I typically use Counter Strike if I already have Sneak Attack against Spider-Man. The extra bit of damage is big, and I don't want to spend an entire dicemod just to save myself 5 health. (Let alone, have a chance to spend a dicemod to save 5 health). It's tempting to think of being able to put off Spider-Man from spending his Combo as something that makes you superior into the matchup. Sorta true; proactive Shadows is very very good into Shadow Thief, but being forced to spend resources after your defense roll is much less so.

It's also very notable that Counter Strike has a 50% chance to inflict poison, which is about 20% more poison than Shadow Defense's 41% chance to inflict poison (IE, after 10 activations, Counter Strike generates 5 poisons to Shadow Defense's 4). Every bit goes a long way, again, you need to make sure that Spider-Man can't get too far ahead of you.

In this matchup, I prioritize spending Sneak Attack when it's comfortable. This means that I'm angling for my straights a bit harder than I would be against a lot of heroes, and begrudgingly accepting roll 2 Dagger Strike at times. In a sense, spending my Sneak Attack gets my Shadow Defense back online.

In this matchup, if Shadow Thief is not giving me my sneak attack, Shadow Dance is also pretty online. Both Ultimate and Shadow Dance's proactive Shadows means that Spider-Man can't do a whole lot on his turn. As such, what I'm really looking for as Shadow Thief is to get into a lategame where I'm going between turns of Proactive Shadows by hitting my ultimate or Shadow Dance, then a reactive shadows with my defense. Ideally, after one or at most two ultimates, Spider-Man should be down.

Wild when you do at a pretty big tax. As such, if I failed to hit my straights this game to generate CP, I find myself begrudgingly selling this card.

Carducopia and Dagger Strike are both in B tier, though Carducopia is better. Dagger Strike is a very notable fallback as Shadow Thief in this matchup, again, offloading the Sneak Attack is a huge source of value. You frequently want 3,4, and 5s, so making your 1s and 2s a bit more valuable can go a long way. Still, selling the card frequently happens, but I'll actually play it on turn one.

Carducopia is in a similar spot where I'll play it on turn one, but it's not a windmill slam if I'm struggling a bit on combat points. It's a very very strong card, B tier cards are quite good. However, don't auto-play them, sometimes +3 damage on your ultimate and your large straight is going to be better.

Large Straight Upgrade moves to D tier as opposed to B tier in the other matchup. Your defense already gives out Sneak Attacks and Poisons, so the bonus ability isn't nearly as relevant.

The defenses are interesting here. Shadow Defense is still a very expensive card, but you can more often expect to play it and get really good value from it, more frequently getting all your goodies down is a huge deal. However, don't underestimate the value of selling the card, especially if you're in a stage of the game where Spider-Man frequently has Webbed on you anyways.

Counter Strike II is in D tier and not E tier. This card isn't amazing for sure, your Shadow Defense is already quite good and this is barely an improvement to it and gets most of its value from damage. However, there are absolutely niche cases where you want to play this, IE, if Spider-Man failed to get an early lead, this card can solidify your position by making it so every time he wants to hit you, he gets bonked back with about 2.88 raw damage. 4 C-C-C-Combos might deal 20 to you, but now he's taking 11.5 back, stack that with the poisons and it'll be very difficult for Spider-Man to actually come back at all. It's definitely usually a sell, but not automatically.

Finally, Shadow Dance is in C tier. This is because, as mentioned previously, Shadow Dance is a pretty solid ability in Spider-Man. If this card generates even one card draw, that's not bad at all, and there are many circumstances where it can generate two. It's very difficult for Spider-Man to win if you're spamming shadows, and this upgrade just gives you another way to do so and never letting Spider-Man actually get a foot into the door.

Training for Shadow Thief

All these are simple "Training Dummies". To fight a Training Dummy, play as Shadow Thief. Shadow Thief always goes first when fighting a dummy.

When attacking with defendable damage, the Training Dummy will prevent 3.

During the Dummy's turn, resolve its attack.

The Batter

Easy: 15 Defendable

Medium: 20 Defendable

Hard: 25 Defendable

Legendary: 50 Defendable

Supernova

Easy: 12 Undefendable

Medium: 14 Undefendable

Hard: 16 Undefendable

Legendary: 20 Undefendable

Leech

Special Rules: Leech has no maximum health.

Reminder: Stealing health goes past shadows!

Easy: Steal 3 Health

Medium: Steal 4 Health

Hard: Steal 5 Health

Legendary: Steal 6 Health

Bringer of Light

Special Rules: Bringer of Light has no maximum health.

Easy: Shadow Thief starts at 60 health instead of 50. Use Easy attacks.

Medium: Use Easy attacks.

Hard: Use Medium attacks.

Legendary: Use Hard attacks.

When attacking, roll a die. On 1-3, attack as The Batter. On 4-6, attack as Supernova.
(yes you can modify this)

If Shadow Thief has Shadows, skip the roll and attack as Leech.