

SHADOWS OVER WESTGATE

Design by Erik Scott de Bie

NEW ROGUE ARCHETYPE: SHADOWDANCER

You specialize in striking unseen, then vanishing into the shadows before your opponent can retaliate. Infiltrators, saboteurs, and artful killers pursue this path, as do many adventurers who call the night their ally. You dance in the darkness, a creature of grace and deadly beauty, efficient at killing. The longer and deeper the shadows, the greater your power grows.

Shadowdancers in the Realms: There exist many throughout Faerûn and beyond who describe themselves as Shadowdancers. Some wield magic from the shadows, some have transcended life but cannot quite be called undead, and some embrace their inner darkness as a means of achieving a deep inner peace. Still others some simply spend so long in the gloom that it attaches to them, infusing their souls with the cold embrace of the night.

The Fox-at-Twilight: Ilira Nathalan—she who once called herself the Fox-at-Twilight—has followed none of these paths exactly, and the source of her powers is unclear. What is known for certain is that the mastery of shadows she displays now far exceeds her meager power over them as a youth, and her eyes turn blacker than black when her abilities manifest. Perhaps there is truth to the tale that she was once the infamous Shadowfox, a deadly Netherese assassin, whom the shades infused with their potent dark magicks. Perhaps her powers flow from a darker source altogether.

Whatever the truth, Ilira has taught her own brand of shadowdancing to a very few over the decades. The secrets contained herein reflect that particular brand of power.

Moves in Shadow

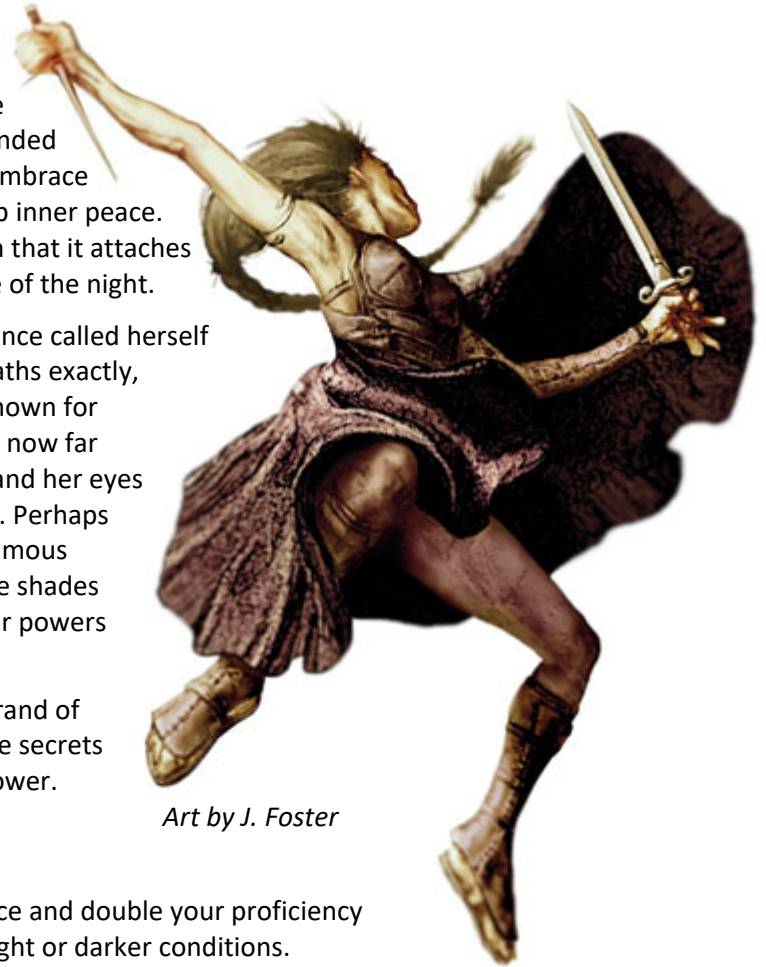
Starting at 3rd level, you gain training in Performance and double your proficiency bonus on Stealth and Performance checks in dim light or darker conditions.

You can hide while being directly observed as though you were not observed.

You also gain Darkvision to 60 feet.

Shadow Jump

When you choose this archetype at 3rd level, you gain the ability to slip between shadows, vanishing into one and springing from another. As a bonus action, you can teleport to a shadow you can see, traveling up to a daily limit of 20 feet per rogue level. You can use this ability multiple times, making smaller jumps until you reach this limit. You can carry one creature your size or smaller on a jump. You must begin and end your jump in a shadow (including one cast by a creature your size or larger) or an area of darkness. Once you have exhausted your limit, you cannot use this ability again until you complete a long rest.



Art by J. Foster

Living Shadow

Starting at 9th level, after focusing for ten minutes and sacrificing one hit die, you can instill life into your own shadow, which serves you as a companion until destroyed.

As an action, if your shadow is within touch range, you can attach or detach the shadow to yourself. While detached, it has its own initiative and takes its own turns in combat, has hit points equal to half your own, and adds your proficiency bonus to its attack rolls and Stealth checks. While touching the shadow, you can spend your own hit dice to heal the shadow as though it were yourself. While the shadow is attached to you, it is immune to all damage but can take no actions; it is, after all, only your shadow.

The shadow is in every other way identical to the shadow presented in the *Monster Manual* (page 269), though it cannot create more shadows.

The Dancer's Shadow

A living shadow moves unlike a mundane shadow, often stretching unexpectedly considering the light or moving while the shadowdancer is at rest. The shadows tend to reflect the inner emotions and thoughts of their masters, regardless of their outward behavior. Ilira's shadow can frequently be seen gnashing its teeth and clawing at the ground with her inner turmoil, while she sits or stands at perfect ease.

Some shadowdancers infuse their shadow companions with the essence of deceased friends by using their bodies or objects of great importance to them as part of the summoning ritual. The shadow companion takes on characteristics of the dead friend, providing a constant reminder for the shadowdancer who summons it. For some, this provides sweet nostalgia, while for others it is a ghoulish sort of masochistic torture—a constant reminder of the lost.

Shadow's Embrace

By 13th level, you have spent so long in the shadow that your body has begun to absorb it. You gain resistance to cold and necrotic damage and have advantage on saving throws against necromantic effects. While exposed to bright sunlight, however, you have disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Shadow Striker

When you reach 17th level, you have grown truly adept at striking from the shadows to catch enemies unaware. If you use your shadow jump ability to travel at least five feet to appear adjacent to a creature, you can make an immediate melee attack with advantage on that creature, and your movement does not provoke opportunity attacks from that enemy this round. You may use this ability no more than once a round.

NEW FEAT: WALTZ OF GRACEFUL TWILIGHT

Not all who dance the shadows embrace the path fully, and some have merely adapted some of the steps—such as the Waltz of Graceful Twilight—for use in their own endeavors. Full-fledged shadowdancers can also make use of this ability to supplement their own powers.

Benefits: You can use *misty step* as a warlock of your character level. Once you have used this power, you cannot use it again until you have completed a short or long rest.

LADY ILIRA NATHALAN, SNEAKY MERCHANT QUEEN

The elf who calls herself **Ilira Nathalan** is a creature born of shadow: mysterious, alluring, and very, very dangerous. A purveyor of fine clothing and fashions as well as the owner of numerous taverns and festhalls, Ilira is deeply connected with the economics and culture of Westgate and several other cities in Faerûn. Slender and of average height, with pale skin, blue midnight hair, and vivid gold eyes like those of a wolf, Ilira always wears black clothing and a pair of elbow-length gloves. She is never without her star-sapphire amulet. She is extremely controlled and gives off an air of intrigue wherever she goes, her intense charisma setting folk off balance. She loves to dance and does so with palpable mastery: she can often be found at the heart of a horde of revelers, like the graceful eye of a raucous hurricane.

Despite her prestige and mercantile empire, the so-called Lady Nathalan has not always been so noble. Born with the mark of Erevan Ilesere—a multi-pointed golden sun like a tattoo on her lower back—she was destined for a life of chaos and deception. She spent most of her youth as the adventurer Fox-at-Twilight, so titled by an Uthgardt tribe on one of her early travels. For a century, she drifted from city to city, fencing, stealing, and conning her way through a series of daring misadventures. Along the way, she spun increasingly more elaborate and impressive tales of her exploits, claiming to walk beside gods and casting herself as a key figure in the tapestry of Faerûn's history. Along the way, she knew love in the arms of many, though one truly disastrous love triangle has chased her for over a century.

Ilira disappeared after the Spellplague struck Toril and was lost for a time. A common tale holds that she was the **Shadowfox**, a powerful assassin in service to the Princes of Shade in Netheril. Whether this is true, Ilira does have significant power over the shadows, able to dance through them like a path, disappearing into dark corners or even the shadows cast by her opponents, only to emerge elsewhere in the darkness. Her attitude as well has been profoundly changed over the past century: gone was the happy, whimsical rogue and in her place stood an embittered, ruthless killer. Recently, her consort **Myrin Darkdance** has been indispensable in pulling her back up out of the darkness, and for that Ilira owes Myrin greatly. Myrin's magic makes her one of the few people unaffected by Ilira's spellscar curse.

Spellscar. Unbeknownst to most, during the Spellplague, Ilira was struck by wild magic and it profoundly tainted her. While her skin looks flawless, anyone touching her skin-to-skin suffers horrendous pain. Sustained contact causes their flesh to unravel and slough off. Ilira can use this as a melee attack (touching someone with her bare skin) but does so only rarely and when truly angered.

Inflicting Skin Spellscar: Whenever a creature touches Ilira with an unarmed strike or otherwise engages in skin to skin contact, that creature suffers 1d10 necrotic damage per touch or 3d10 necrotic damage per round in the case of sustained contact (similar to an *Inflict Wounds* spell). If Ilira attacks with an unarmed strike, she inflicts 1d10 necrotic damage with a successful hit. Constructs, undead, and similar creatures are immune to this effect, as are shades or certain other creatures altered by dark magic.

Relationships

Ilira considers the semi-retired **Kalen Dren** to be her chief rival in combat and for Myrin's affections. She once swore vengeance on him for a crime he didn't commit, and while they have resolved that feud, they still treat each other with wariness. There is a strong physical attraction between them as well, in part because his spellscar has proved successful at blocking her damaging touch.

She loves her consort Myrin Darkdance more than anything else in her world. Ilira is very protective of Myrin, to the wizard's frequent consternation. Myrin is one of the few people who can touch Ilira without being harmed, and the two are very intimate. At the same time, Ilira hasn't committed fully to

Myrin, as people close to her tend to become targets of her enemies and secrets. So far, she's convinced her love that it's a political barrier between them—that Myrin has to appear available for marriage.

After a tempestuous fling, Ilira and **Badger** settled into a jovial friendship and enjoy each other's company, where they flirt endlessly. Their bond doesn't prevent them working against each other.

Despite her pointed efforts, Ilira has not succeeded in seducing **Rigante Bleth** to break up her friendship with Myrin. She is continually looking for leverage to remove the Fire Princess's bad influence.

Ilira was once married to **Lilianviaten Dlardraeth**, who convinced her (somewhat rightly) that he was the chosen of Erevan Ilesere at the time. She learned his true nature and their relationship collapsed, but not before he grew obsessed with her and has spent decades stalking her across Faerûn. She refers to him occasionally by an elven phrase that most closely translates to "Uncle Nemesis." She knows he's operating in the city and has warned him directly to give both her and Myrin a wide berth.

Lilianviaten's chief knight **Fayne** made an attempt on Ilira's life some dozen years ago, only to discover that she is immune to Ilira's unraveling touch. Intrigued and unsettled by this apparent connection between them, she and Ilira are working warily to forge a relationship of some kind. It's not going well, as Ilira never seems fazed by quips or mockery, which Fayne finds endlessly frustrating.

Ilira has recently taken on an apprentice and frequent lover, one **Sha'iira Mae'val**, also called **Shae Darksong**. Shae is a half-drow, half-moon elf, a mischievous sort of shadowdancing priestess.

Interests in Westgate

Entertainment and revelry. Ilira is a free spirit. She delights in dance, music, and wine—preferably all three at once—and always in the most pleasant of company. She can and frequently does charm and flirt with anyone and everyone, and she has a knack for knowing exactly what folk want in a companion. At the same time, she often carries herself above the party: ever the elegant hostess, dressed always in raven black silks and elbow-length gloves (mostly to avoid unintentional skin-to-skin contact).

Business expansion. Ilira is a shrewd businesswoman and an upstanding (if rather untrustworthy) member of the mercantile community. She continually works to expand her empire, primarily because growing up with nothing, she learned early on to prepare constantly for the worst.

Roleplaying Lady Ilira Nathalan

Ilira is extremely charming and she well knows it. Everything she says sounds like an innuendo or subtle suggestion, and folk have been known to fall a little in love with her after just a few words exchanged. She is slow to trust or get closer than surface flirtation, but she makes for a lasting, unshakeable friend once that barrier is overcome. There is a darkness to her, and she wears the mantle of her life of tragedy at all times. It rarely shows in her behavior or through her careful, beautiful mask, but those of keen insight can see the weight on her shoulders, which often makes her all the more intriguing.

Ilira has a preferred style of contacting would-be agents. She summons them to a revel at the Purple Silks, often seemingly at random (she picks out folk she believes will be useful but who don't know each other), and gives them some time to enjoy themselves with food and drink and entertainment. At some point, perhaps an hour in to the party, servants usher them into a private banquet room, where they have yet more food and drink and can interact amongst themselves. Ilira will be watching all, of course, counting on her superior stealth skills (the average DC to notice her is 25), only revealing herself at the most dramatic moment to appear mysterious, alluring, and dangerous. Which she absolutely is.

Personal Interests: mystery, intrigue, secrets, dance, skill, history.

LADY ILIRA NATHALAN

Medium humanoid (moon elf) chaotic neutral

Armor Class 19 (+2 leather armor)

Hit Points 104 (16d8+32)

Speed 40 ft, teleport 160 (see Shadowdancing, below)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Deception +13, Insight +11, Perception +11, Performance +9, Stealth +15, Thieves' Tools +13

Damage Resistances cold, necrotic, poison; advantage on saving throws against necromantic effects

Damage Vulnerability disadvantage on attack rolls and saving throws in bright light

Senses Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Draconic, Abyssal

Saving Throws Dexterity +10, Intelligence +8, Wisdom +6

Challenge 8

Cunning Action. Ilira can take a bonus action on each of her turns in combat. This action can be used only to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action, or to make a weapon attack immediately after she has teleported adjacent to a creature using her Shadowdancing.

Shrouded. While she wears *Erean's Shroud*, Ilira is immune to divination magic.

Evasion. If Ilira is exposed to an effect that allows her to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Hide in Plain Sight. Ilira can hide while being directly observed.

Inflicting Spellscar. If a creature hits Ilira with an unarmed attack, it takes 1d10 necrotic damage. A creature grappling her takes 3d10 necrotic damage at the start of its turn. Undead and constructs are immune to these effects.

EQUIPMENT

Neveren's Betrayal. This rapier grants a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls and inflicts an additional +4 damage when attacking with advantage. Its hizaghuur construction inflicts an additional 2 points of fire damage and 2 points of lightning damage on a hit.

Erean's Shroud. This star-sapphire pendant functions as an *amulet of proof against location and detection*.

Reliable Talent. If Ilira makes a skill check using one of the above noted skills, she treats any roll of 9 or lower as 10.

Shadowdancing. As part of her movement, Ilira can teleport between shadows up to a maximum of 160 feet. She may use this range in multiple smaller trips or all at once. In order to teleport in this way, she must begin the teleportation in an area of dim light or less illumination, or adjacent to a creature. She cannot teleport while in the area of a *daylight* spell or similar magic. Once this limit is exhausted, she cannot use Shadowdancing until she has completed a long rest.

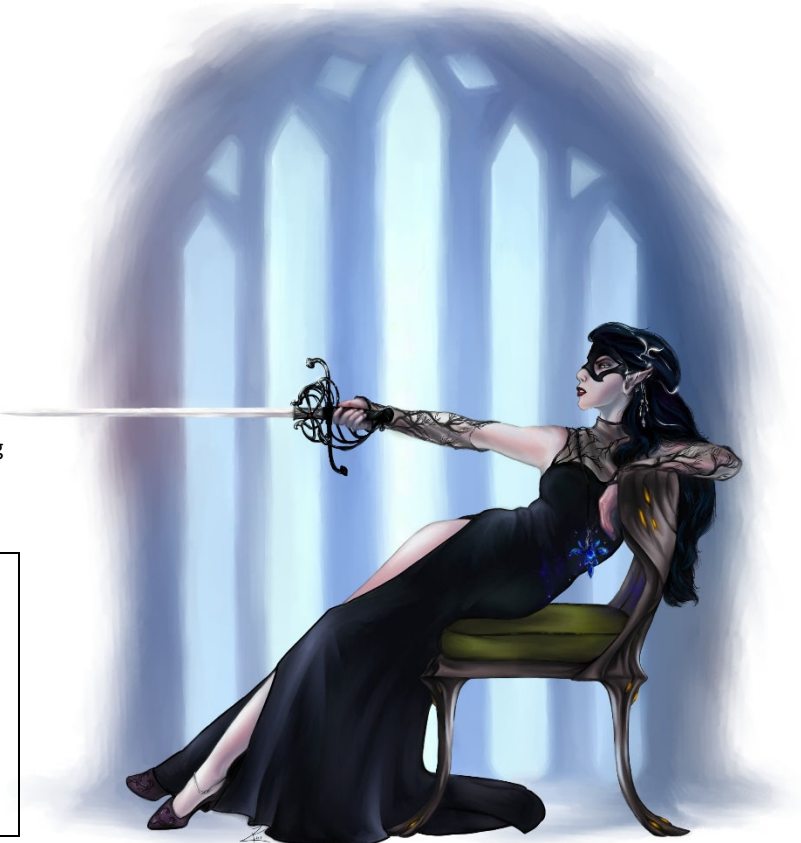
Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ilira deals an extra 28 (8d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of Ilira that isn't incapacitated and Ilira doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Actions

Multiattack. Ilira makes two *Neveren's Betrayal* attacks.

Neveren's Betrayal (rapier). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8+2) piercing damage plus 2 fire damage and 2 lightning damage or 10 (1d8+6) piercing damage plus 2 fire damage and 2 lightning damage if Ilira had advantage on the attack roll.

Unarmed strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) necrotic damage.



Art by Lori Krell