

Shadow Gate

(by John Taber, Updated: 5/31/02 @ 12:20 PM)

Summary: Shadow Gate deals with the study of a realm trapped between the land of the living and the underworld. This realm is often referred to as the “Shroud” or as the “Shadowland”. The Shroud is a sort of “cracked mirror” version of our own dimension. If one could view into that dimension they would see a dull gray place where everything appears decayed and dark. The only creatures present are spirits that have not yet made their journey to the underworld. These spirits repeat events that lead up to their deaths in never ending cycles.

Shadow Gate is an obscure discipline that allows the users to create small rifts into the Shroud. By creating these “gates” practitioners allow some of the Shadowlands to leak into the land of the living. As the two dimensions are not meant to cross the results can be quite disturbing at the higher levels of mastery.

Opening these portals is very straining on the user. Thus starting any of these disciplines requires the use of blood. For some levels of mastery a blood point must be spent on every use but for others this is not a requirement. See the individual discipline for details.

Shadow Gate is a rare discipline practiced by a very small sect of Lasombra and Giovanni kindred. As the ability is very rare it is not considered a clan discipline.

Storyteller Notes: This discipline was created for Jeff’s Vampire Game. It is intended for use by initially 1 PC (i.e. Adrienne). My goal was to create something that would be fun and unique for the PC to develop over the course of the campaign.

John’s Notes: Here are some comments about the latest revision of Shadow Gate:

- Deleted Unearthly Wail and replaced it with Dimensional Window.
- Made some minor corrections. In many place the old name for Materialization Tunnel was used (i.e. Materialization Tear).

● Dark Tendril

By using this ability practitioners can leak energy from the Shadowlands to add substance to existing shadows in the land of the living. By doing this then shaping the energy that emerges shadows can be made to lift and move small objects.

System: By using Dark Tendrils a kindred can lift or move small objects as long as they are within deep shadow. To form a single tendril the practitioner must make a Manipulation + Occult roll at difficulty 6. For every success on this roll the user can lift 5 pounds with the tendril.

Tendrils formed in this manner are very small and can perform fairly delicate tasks but they are still a single thread. Thus tasks that require full manual dexterity will be more difficult to handle. For example, holding a calculator and typing at the keypad would be a difficult task for a single tendril. If the caster wants to perform a difficult task they should be forced to make a Manipulation + Occult roll at a difficulty determined by the Storyteller.

The shadowy tentacles that are formed by Dark Tendril are not sentient. They can't perform tasks on their own. All tendrils must be actively controlled by the user. If a practitioner is attempting to control several tendrils in a coordinated fashion this will take a lot of concentration and the difficulties imposed in these cases should be more significant.

Using Dark Tendril inside Shroud of Night is more effective. For each success on the roll the user can lift 10 pounds with the tendril.

●● Materialization Tunnel

After the first level of Shadow Gate is mastered practitioners learn to open small stationary gates into and out of the Shroud. These gates take the form of very small rips in the fabric of our space. Tears glow with an eerie black light that seems to emanate with death and decay. By opening one gate in front of the wielder and another some distance away the user is able to tunnel through the small gate and affect something on the other side. The effect is not unlike a short pipe. For example, the practitioner could open a gate to a table that stands 10 meters away and grab something off the table. They could then pull the object through the far portal to their hand as long as it fit through the small opening.

Kindred who use Materialization Tunnel must be very careful as reaching through the gate puts the object that passes through the rift into close proximity with the Shroud. Forcefully moving the user while this discipline is in effect can cause the user to touch the Shadowlands and suffer great distress.

System: To use Materialization Tunnel the user opens a fist-sized portal into the Shroud that starts at one place and ends at another within their line of sight. The wielder spends a blood point then rolls a Wits + Occult roll at difficulty 6 to open the portal. If the portal opens the user must then roll a Dex + Occult roll at difficulty 6 to center the two portals. The difficulty of the targeting roll may be increased if it is in a particularly distant or precise target location. A failed roll means that the portals do not end up in the proper location.

Once the portals are open the Materialization Tunnel user may reach from one portal to the other by physically stretching their hand through the breach. Once inside the tunnel the user will be able to manipulate objects on the other side of the far gate. This can be used to perform touch attacks or any other action within reason but since the hole is so small anything but the simplest actions are at +2 difficulty. In certain cases the Storyteller may also apply additional penalties if the target portal is very far away. See below for details.

Note that these portals cannot be gazed or listened through. Thus the practitioner must be able to see the far gate to perform actions through it. This may limit what the user can do through the portal. For example, from 10 meters away the practitioner could reach through the gates, flip open a book, and start leafing through the contents but they could NOT read the pages of the book as it is 10 meters away.

If the user attempts any type of gross physical action while reaching through the small gates they may be forced to touch the Shroud. If this happens users must roll a Dex + Athletics roll at difficulty 8. If they fail the roll they have touched the side of tunnel in the gate and are affected by the Shroud. The user suffers an immediate 1 dice loss on

action pools. If they continue to perform physical actions and miss Dex + Athletics rolls the total loss will advance in 1 dice increments until it reaches a maximum of 4 dice. Note that these dice are taken from the total dice making up the users action pools. The minimum pool for a user is always 1 dice. For example, a Materialization Tunnel user has Dex 2 and Firearms 2. They are trying to fire at a target after touching the gate 3 times. They get to roll 1 dice for their action (i.e. $2 + 2 - 3 = 1$). Note that even if the user touched the side again the minimum dice pool is still 1 dice.

Maintaining Materialization Tunnel is quite easy as the opening is very small and contained. Thus it may be maintained with only minor concentration.

●●● Veil

Veil creates a stationary “weakness” in our dimension which leads into the Shroud. In the material world this weakness appears as a sort of gray mist that hovers in the air like an eerie piece of shimmering silk. If this undead energy touches a creature it fills them with a deep sense of “spiritual decay”.

System: To open a Veil the practitioner must first select a target hex within her immediate field of vision. In poor lighting the maximum range will be approximately 15 hexes (i.e. 30 meters). With stronger lighting the range can be longer. The user then spends a blood point and make a Wits + Occult roll against a difficulty 6. If they roll at least 1 success a veil to the Shadowlands is created. The amount of success should be totaled to determine the effect if the field is touched by someone from the land of the living. Once the field is created it must be targeted. The user must roll a Dex + Occult roll at difficulty 6 to center the portal. The difficulty of the targeting roll may be increased if it is in a particularly distant or precise target location. A failed roll means that the portal does not end up in the proper location.

Anything that touches this field while it is formed feels a deep sense of foreboding. Often this sensation is accompanied by a chill that runs down the person’s spine. Some Lasombra have been known to intentionally subject themselves to Veil in an effort to bring themselves closer to death. In game terms this sense of dread causes dice losses on all action pools. The amount of dice loss is proportional to the amount of successes rolled by the user. The more successes the deeper the veil’s connection to the Shroud and the more intense the emotional response. The minimum effect from Veil is always at least 1 dice and the maximum effect is 4 dice. As noted above the dice pool of a target can never be lowered below 1 dice.

If a target is tainted by kindred blood, or if they are a kindred, they are closer to the Shroud and thus less effected by this power. For kindred the effects of the Veil are halved to determine the effect. (Note that 8 successes on the roll will still cause a kindred to lose 4 dice on all action pools.) For ghouls the effect is reduced by 2 dice.

As long as the target stays out of the effect of the veil the dice pool losses will slowly diminish. The user is in effect fighting off the chilling effect. For every round out of the effect of the veil 1 dice of this foreboding effect is lost.

Until the practitioner draws her attention away from the field it will remain open. Maintaining the veil takes only light concentration. Only one veil may be opened by a given kindred at any time.

●●●●● Shroud Portal

This ability allows the user to create a door-sized portal into and out of the Shroud similar to Materialization Tunnel. By stepping through the portal the user may essentially teleport from one location to another. Using this ability is dangerous as any violent movement that is attempted during travel through the doorway may cause the user to touch the realm of the Shroud.

System: The use of this ability is similar to that of Materialization Tunnel. The user opens a manhole-sized portal through the Shroud that starts at one place and ends at another within their line of sight. The wielder spends a blood point then rolls a Wit + Occult roll at difficulty 6 to open the portal. If the portal opens the user must then roll a Dex + Occult roll at difficulty 6 to center the two portals. The difficulty of the targeting roll may be increased if it is in a particularly distant or precise target location. A failed roll means that the portals do not end up in the proper location.

Once the portals are open the user can carefully step from one portal to the other. By careful use of this ability a wielder could appear at the top of a building or several blocks away. Another use of this ability is to send enemies away or into danger. By placing the field under a target in a horizontal fashion a person would slip through the portal. Remember that the opening is only manhole sized so targets affected in this fashion would be able to hold out their hands and stop the traverse. This would likely cause them to touch the Shroud (see below for details) but they would not traverse the distance.

Note that like Materialization Tunnel these portals cannot be gazed or listened through. Thus the practitioner must be able to see the far gate to perform actions through it. This may limit what the user can do through the portal.

If the user attempts any type of gross physical action while stepping through the gate they may be forced to touch the Shroud. If this happens users must roll a Dex + Athletics roll at difficulty 8. If they fail the roll they have touched the side of tunnel in the gate and are affected by the Shroud. This is akin to getting caught in a Veil. The user suffers an immediate 1d10 loss on action pools. If they continue to perform actions and miss Dex + Athletics rolls the total loss will advance in 1 dice increments until it reaches a maximum of 4 dice.

Maintaining Shroud Portal is quite taxing as the opening is large. Thus it costs 1 blood per round to hold open the gate. Only 1 person or creature may pass through the gate at a time unless they are very small.

●●●●● Dimensional Window

At the highest level of mastery the Shadow Gate wielder can create static window like openings through the Shroud that can be seen, heard, and reached through. In many respects the result is a like an advanced crystal ball. By creatively using this discipline a user can unobtrusively spy on a given target location or retrieve small items from a memorized target location.

System: Utilizing Dimensional Window is a two step process. First the user must setup the destination location. After the destination is memorized the practitioner creates a tear leading to the preset destination. When the tunnel is opened the visible effect is similar to that of Materialization tunnel. In other words, the tear into the Shroud is visible on

both ends as a shadowy rip in space that glows with a faint black light. This means that to use Dimensional Window as a scrying device the target location must be carefully selected so that it's location is hidden.

To place a given target location the user must setup a static memorized link to the target location in the Shadowlands. This is done by attuning the wielder's senses to that location by totaling 50 successes on extended Int + Subterfuge roll at a difficulty of 6. One roll may be attempted each minute. Configuring the target location is not visible but does require complete concentration from the Shadow Gate user. If the practitioner is interrupted they must restart from 0 successes. A botched roll encountered during this process forces the user to restart from 0 successes and immediately burns a blood point as the user's senses are ejected from the Shroud. Up to Int target locations may be remembered by the Shadow Gate kindred.

Once the destination is determined the wielder may open a fist-sized window to a memorized target location which can be seen, listen, and reached through. Unlike Materialization Tunnel, Dimensional Window is not a tunnel but a flat window. In other words, the effect is not a "pipe" but a "hole". The portal that is created by this level of mastery is a two-way window. Thus users at the target location can see, hear, and reach through to the Shadow Gate user. As the opening from Dimensional Window is infinitesimally thin there is no way for the practitioner to breach the tunnel wall and accidentally touch the Shroud.

Opening a window is done with an Int + Occult roll at difficulty 6. Since the portal opened by this level of mastery is so complete it costs the user 1 blood point to open. A user may open as many portals as they want at any given time but the blood expenditure must be done for each Dimensional Window.

Note that once the target locations are set they may be reached even if they are out of sight of the user. Dimensional Window has an effective range of 1 mile. After that distance the users senses cannot accurately pinpoint the target location through the Shadowlands.