

# THE SHARD OF MIDNIGHT



## CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

**Title:** The Shard of Midnight

**Theme/Genre:** Fantasy / Mystery with light Horror elements

**Tone:** Suspenseful with moments of lighthearted banter

**Target Level:** Level 5

**Expected Duration:** 2 hours

**Player Focus Preferences:**

- Combat: Medium
- Roleplay: High
- Exploration: Medium

## BACKSTORY AND SETTING

### SETTING OVERVIEW

In the land of Liranae, a lush and fertile kingdom, an eternal rivalry exists between day and night, and both are revered as divine forces. The moon is said to hold immense power, its shards capable of granting wild boons—or unleashing untold horrors. At the heart of this adventure is the Shard of Midnight, a rumored fragment of the moon itself, held by the Astral Collective, a secretive group of scholars. Recently,

rumors have surfaced that the Shard has been stolen from the Collective's headquarters, leaving behind a haunting trail of vanishing townsfolk and unnatural shadows. The theft threatens the celestial cycle's delicate balance, which governs time itself.

### LOCAL SETTING - THE TOWN OF SILVERVEIL

Silverveil is a quiet, unassuming town nestled near the edge of the Twilight Woods. Previously full of life, the town now feels eerily empty, with its lanterns swinging on their posts amidst a thin, unnatural mist.

- **Historical Context:** Centuries ago, Silverveil served as a waypoint for the Astral Collective to study celestial cycles. While the locals revered the Collective, their secretive nature sometimes bred unease.
- **Current Atmosphere:** The mist-cloaked streets are unnervingly silent save for whispers and fleeting shadows glimpsed out of the corner of one's eye.

### IMPORTANT NPCs

- **Professor Elvira Moonshade (Quest Giver):** A stern but desperate scholar from the Astral Collective obsessed with recovering the Shard. She becomes more agitated as time passes, fearing cosmic balance may shatter.
  - **Motivation:** To reclaim the Shard to ensure celestial safety.
- **Bennick Duskwander (The Villain):** A brooding ex-member of the Collective who believes the Shard should prolong night dominion, disrupting the solar balance. He has hidden the Shard in Silverveil's abandoned Keep.
  - **Motivation:** Revenge on the Collective for his exile and harnessing the Shard's power.
- **Daria Wynlow (Local Survivor):** The last remaining inhabitant of Silverveil, hiding in the ruined tavern and terrified of the "shadow monsters" since the Shard's theft.
  - **Motivation:** Survive and safeguard Silverveil, hoping for its restoration.

## PLOT HOOK

The party arrives at Silverveil's fringes by moonlight, summoned by Professor Moonshade's cryptic letter. They are promised handsome payment to locate the Shard and prevent its dark misuse. Upon arrival, they encounter unsettling silence and ghostly remnants of a once lively town.

**Opening Scene:** As the players enter Silverveil, they hear hushed sobbing from a nearby tavern—a lone lantern flickers desperately in the fog. Approaching, they meet Daria Wynlow, who warns of malevolent creatures stalking the shadows. Suddenly, a chilling growl emerges as shadowy figures stir in the mist.

**Primary Objective:** Recover the Shard of Midnight before Bennick Duskwander completes his dark ritual.

## KEY LOCATIONS

### LOCATION 1 - THE SILENT TAVERN

**Atmosphere:** The tavern is in disrepair, with shattered windows and strange, claw-like scratches on the wooden door. A dim lantern flickers near the bar, with Daria's trembling voice the only sound piercing the silence.

- **Details and Challenges:**
  - Players must persuade Daria to share her knowledge about Bennick and the shadow creatures. Roleplay carefully, as she is traumatized and paranoid.
  - **Combat Encounter:** After gaining Daria's trust, two **Shadow Hounds** attack the tavern. These hounds dissolve into inky mist upon defeat.

### LOCATION 2 - THE OVERGROWN GARDEN

**Atmosphere:** A once tranquil garden filled with overgrowth and blue flames flickering above forgotten graves, casting shadows on a shattered sundial pointing deliberately at midnight.

- **Details and Challenges:**
  - **Puzzle:** Align the sundial to match the moon's phases, opening a hidden stairway to the Keep. Incorrect attempts summon three **Lunar Wisps** (Will-o'-Wisps with radiant and cold abilities).
  - **Roleplay:** While solving, echoes of soft lullabies and benevolent laughter drift by, comforting some and unsettling others.

### LOCATION 3 - THE MIDNIGHT KEEP (FINAL AREA)

**Atmosphere:** A ruined stronghold suffused with darkness, pulsating with eerie light from the Shard of Midnight. Shadows twist and writhe as players advance, guided by its dark allure.

- **Details and Challenges:**
  - **Combat Encounter:** Bennick Duskwander, warped by the Shard's power, fights with four **Shadow Constructs** (psychic-modified Animated Armors).
  - **Environment:** Shard-infused terrain creates magical darkness zones and shifting obstacles. Players can interrupt Bennick's ritual using magic, persuasion, or by destroying his wards.

## ENCOUNTERS AND CHALLENGES

### SHADOW HOUNDS

- **Tactics:** Target spellcasters, use invisibility to flank.
- **Stats:** Use Dire Wolves, add 1d6 necrotic damage per attack.

### PUZZLE MECHANICS (SUNDIAL)

The sundial's four rotating rings display symbols of moon phases. Players must match these phases to a celestial diagram to unlock a secret stairway.

### BENNIK DUSKWANDER (BOSS)

- **Stats:** Mage stat block with Legendary Actions, including summoning more constructs or creating darkness zones.
- **Tactics:** Uses hit-and-run spellcasting, shields himself with constructs.

## CLIMAX AND RESOLUTION

The climactic confrontation with Bennick Duskwander decides Silverveil's fate and the celestial balance. Success means returning the Shard to Moonshade, dispelling shadows and restoring peace. Failure plunges the world into eternal night.

## REWARDS

- **Loot:**
  - **Shard-touched Cloak:** Grants necrotic resistance and stealth advantage in dim light.
  - 500 GP each for returning the Shard to Moonshade.
- **Story Rewards:**
  - Favor from the Astral Collective and renown as celestial guardians.

## SUPPORTING DETAILS

### STAT BLOCKS

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- **Shadow Hounds**
  - Based on Dire Wolves with added necrotic damage.
- **Lunar Wisps**
  - Variant Will-o'-Wisps with radiant and cold damage.
- **Shadow Constructs**
  - Modified Animated Armors with psychic damage.
- **Bennick Duskwander**
  - Mage with Legendary Actions and unique ritual abilities.

### MAPS

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- Silverveil: Highlight key locations and atmospheric details.
- Overgrown Garden: Visual puzzle component and stairway location.
- Midnight Keep: Detailed battle map with environmental hazards.

### HANDOUTS

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- Sundial puzzle diagram or descriptive journal entry.
- Professor Moonshade's summoning letter.

### ATMOSPHERE

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Utilize audio cues like creeping violin music, whispers, growls, and wind for immersion.

## FLEXIBLE OUTCOMES

- **Unexpected Alliances:** Players showing compassion might convince Bennick to relinquish the Shard voluntarily, though releasing its power unpredictably.
- **Player Detours:** Offer improvised encounters in nearby locations like crypts or observatories if players scout beyond the outlined path.
- **Player Betrayal:** Should any player covet the Shard, Bennick's motivation adjusts to ally or rival dynamically.

## POST-GAME WRAP-UP

- **Debrief Questions:** Gauge player enjoyment, clarity, and engagement regarding combat and roleplay balance.
- **Epilogue Options:** Consider Moonshade offering further missions or players noticing lingering effects from their encounter with the Shard.

Good luck bringing **The Shard of Midnight** to life! 🌙