



Dark shadows gather in the East. You underestimate the power of the Dark Side. Shining knights, incorruptible in their righteousness. Clerics turning from their gods towards the shadow.

The ever encroaching darkness is a theme of many fantasy and sci-fi settings. Our heroes struggle against the dark side, or the ring's influence, or against overwhelming despair. The battle is between good and evil, light and dark, hope and corruption.

In WOIN, this battle is played out on a **Shadow Track**. As despair takes hold, characters fall down into the dark; as they perform heroic deeds, they rise up into the light.

The track works in a very simple way. It's much like an attribute, except that it

LIGHT and DARK

can be positive (Light) or negative (Dark). Characters start off with a score of zero, and gain points for goodly acts and lose points for evil acts. They can also gain and lose points for external influences, too — a demon's psychic influence might push them towards darkness, while their nation's great victory might lift them into the light.

THE SHADOW TRACK

You gain and lose Light and Dark points whenever you perform an act that your GM deems worth a point of either light or darkness. When this happens, simply move those involved up or down the Shadow Track. Typically, this will be by just one point, but the GM might deem something worth two points if the deed is particularly despicable or heroic. A knight who stays behind to cover his allies' retreat with little hope for survival might be worth two points, for example.

A good act must be something which costs a character in some way. Giving a penny to a beggar would not earn a point of Light; it's too easy. Indeed, it should be

Good act	+1
Evil act	-1
Heroic act	+2
Despicable act	-2
Regular cursed environment	-1/week
Extreme cursed environment	-1/day
Using a good magical item	+1
Using an evil magical item	-1
Major act (ritual, penance)	+/-1d6

easier to earn Dark points than Light points - after all, isn't the trope that evil is easier, more seductive?

Some acts - including fell rituals or lengthy penance - can add or deduct as much as 1d6 to your Shadow Track.

If your Light or Dark points reach 10 in either direction, you automatically gain that virtue, and detect as such. At this point you have truly succumbed to light or the dark.

psychic damage

Psychic (mental) damage from a creature with a virtue (evil or good) pushes you up or down the Shadow Track one point when you take more than 5 points of psychic damage. This only affects you once per day at most.

LIGHT	
10	4d6 + <i>good</i> virtue
9	3d6
8	3d6
7	3d6
6	3d6
5	2d6
4	2d6
3	2d6
2	1d6
1	1d6
0	-
1	1d6
2	1d6
3	2d6
4	2d6
5	2d6
6	3d6
7	3d6
8	3d6
9	3d6
10	4d6 + <i>evil</i> virtue
DARK	

CURSED ENVIRONMENTS

A new environmental effect, *Cursed*, also affects the Shadow Track. Cursed regions can include evil nations ruled by dark necromancers, hellish planes of existence, and the lairs of evil demons. This works much like any other environment such as hot, cold, or low-gravity environments. At the regular degree, a Cursed environment inflicts one Dark point each week. At the extreme degree, it inflicts one Dark point each day. Note that entire regions, even worlds, can be Cursed.

BLESSED ENVIRONMENTS

The *Blessed* environment is not the diametric opposite of Cursed. Instead it causes damage to those opposed to it. Evil beings are not corrupted by holiness; rather they are burned by it.

A creature with the evil virtue takes 1 point of holy damage per hour when in a blessed environment. At the extreme degree, the creature takes 1 point of holy damage per minute.

Additionally, no creature or character can gain Dark points in a Blessed environment.

MAGIC ITEMS

You can also gain or lose points by using magical items with a virtue. Using a good item gains you a point of Light; using an evil item costs you a Dark point.

The equipment penalty from an item with a virtue opposed to the user is equal to the die bonus noted in the table. For example, a person who is at 5 Light points on the track suffers -2d6 using an *evil* item; and a person who is at 6 Dark

TAILORING TO YOUR SETTING

Depending on your setting, you may wish to rename Hallow to something else. Below are some examples.

Light/Dark
Hope/Despair
Good/Evil
Holy/Unholy
Honor/Corruption

points on the track suffers -3d6 using a *good* item. Of course, even just using these items pushes them one point along the track.

You do not get a die bonus for using an associated item, just a penalty for using an opposed item. This penalty *replaces* any quality bonuses the item offers; it does not stack with them.

"All this last day, Frodo had not spoken, but had walked half-bowed, often stumbling, as if his eyes no longer saw the way before his feet. Sam guessed that among all their pains he bore the worst, the growing weight of the Ring, a burden on the body and a torment on his mind. Anxiously Sam had noted how his master's left hand would often be raised as if to ward off a blow, or to screen his shrinking eyes from a dreadful Eye that sought to look in them. And sometimes his right hand would creep to his breast, clutching, and then slowly, as the will recovered mastery, it would be withdrawn.

Now as the blackness of the night returned Frodo sat, his head between his knees, his arms hanging wearily to the ground where his hands lay feebly twitching. Sam watched him, till night covered them both and hid

them from one another. He could no longer find any words to say; and he turned to his own dark thoughts."

-JRR Tolkien

RESISTANCE AND VULNERABILITY

The first thing that being on the track does is grant you SOAK and vulnerability to holy and unholy damage, respectively.

Your SOAK to the associated damage type is equal to the number of points you are at on the shadow track. If you are at 4 Dark points, you have SOAK 4 to unholy damage.

Your vulnerability to the opposed damage type is shown in the table. The same character at 4 Dark points is vulnerable (2d6) to holy damage.

You are also susceptible to influence by creatures with your associated damage type, and resistant to influence by creatures with your opposed damage type. This takes the form of a MENTAL DEFENSE bonus or penalty equal your score.

MANIFESTING SHADOW

At each point on the Shadow Track where the die changes (1, 3, 6, and 10), characters manifest an element of Light or Dark. The GM should devise a physical manifestation; alternatively, roll 1d6 on the following charts. You lose that manifestation if you drop below the threshold which caused it.

Remember, if your Light or Dark score reaches 10 in either direction, you automatically gain that virtue, and detect as such. That also means that the *secret of*



good or the *secret of evil* (if you are using magic rules) work on you.

LIGHT

1. Your touch heals 1 point of damage. Nobody can benefit from this ability more than once per day.
2. You gain an aura of virtue that people can palpably sense. Those with virtues opposed to you on the Shadow Track (i.e. evil creatures if you are on the Light side) can sense your presence within 30', although they cannot sense your exact location or direction.
3. You lose the ability to lie effectively, suffering a -1d6 penalty to all attempts to deceive or bluff.
4. Your skin appears to glow healthily, and your hair is slightly more lustrous.

OPTIONAL GROUP SHADOW

Shadow is tracked for the entire group as one score. After all, if you're standing by while somebody does something evil, you're still culpable. If you travel willingly with somebody without morals, you are not opposing them.

Therefore, if one member of your group performs an evil act, it affects everybody. If one member performs an heroic sacrifice, that benefits everybody, too.

5. You gain SOAK to poison equal to your points of Hallow.
6. You gain an additional LUC die.

DARK

1. Your touch causes unholy damage once per day.
2. You gain darksight equal to 5' per point of INT.
3. You gain an aura of iniquity that people can palpably sense. Those with virtues opposed to you on the Shadow Track (i.e. good creatures if you are on the Dark side) can sense your presence within 30', although they cannot sense your exact location or direction.
4. Your skin pallor changes to a dull, unhealthy, almost greyish complexion. You look ill.
5. You take one point of damage whenever you enter a holy sanctified place. While this is technically holy damage, your holy vulnerability does not add to it.
6. Dogs dislike you. Rats seem to like you just fine, though.

SCIENCE FICTION

Virtues (good and evil) are as much a sci-fi trope as they are a fantasy one. *Star Wars* exemplifies that perfectly with the Force, which features light and dark side users.

While virtues are not described in the core NEW rules, they are found in OLD. However, you should feel free to use them in both.

A virtue is essentially a trait which can be sensed by those with the ability to do so. In the core rules, the virtues of Good and Evil are used as examples.

USE THE FORCE LUKE!

This optional rule makes Shadow a very prominent aspect of your setting. Characters will need to constantly ensure they act in accordance with a certain philosophy lest they succumb to the opposition.

Your dice pool (*not* the raw score) on the Shadow Track, positive or negative, is added directly to your PSI, MAG, or CHI attribute (*not* the dice pool). For example, if you have 6 Dark points, you add 3 to your attribute; if you have 3 Light points you add 2 to your attribute. However, you cannot more than double your attribute in this way - if your PSI score is 3, you can only add 3 shadow points to it. If your PSI score is 0, you cannot add any shadow points to it.

However, you cannot use your supernatural attribute to commit acts contrary to your current Shadow status. It simply doesn't work when you try to use the Light side to choke an innocent victim.

In order to use this optional rule, you must select the below universal exploit.

UNIVERSAL EXPLOIT

Devotee. Your supernatural attribute becomes subject to the above virtue-based restriction, and you gain bonus PSI, MAG, or CHI points according to your level of Light or Dark.

The following exploits may be used by monsters or evil creatures. They require that the creature have the Evil virtue, and so they will rarely be available to player characters who are usually free willed (unless they have taken an exploit which grants them a virtue, or they have reached 10 Light or Dark points on the Shadow Track).

MONSTER EXPLOITS

Corruption (requires Evil virtue). Make a CHA mental attack against one target. If you are successful, the target gains one Dark point.

Infernal Wound (requires Evil virtue). Your wounds carry the trait of despair and undeath. Each time you do 5 or more damage to a target, it gains one Dark point.

Unhallowed Aura (requires Evil virtue). You have an aura (usual radius for your size). Any creature which enters or starts its turn in that aura is subject to a CHA mental attack or gain one Dark point.

DIVINE POWER SOURCES

If your power source is a divine one - such as one of the gods described in the fantasy core rules - you should use your

free Universal Exploit to take the Devotee exploit above.

Additionally, your Shadow status cannot differ from the virtue of your god. If it does, your god will not grant you miracles until you rectify the situation.

If your god does not manifest a virtue, then you should endeavour to keep your Shadow points from exceeding 5 (2d6). If it reaches 6 (3d6) in either direction, your god will not grant you miracles until you rectify the situation.

Good gods include The Artist, The Builder, The Druid, The Father, The Lighbringer, The Lover, and The Mother.

Evil gods include The Devil, The Hangman, The Leper, The Reveller, and The Trickster.

Gods which do not manifest a virtue include The Dragon, The Fisherman, The Gambler, The Hunter, The Judge, The Scholar, The Tempest, The Traveller, and The Warrior.

EVIL CHARACTERS

Of course, these rules can tempt players to play evil characters. Succumbing to darkness grants them abilities, allows them to use their supernatural exploit to commit evil acts, and more. It is easy to see why that might be tempting.

The GM should think carefully about how to handle evil characters. It can make for a fun campaign, but it can also create conflict between characters - and players - which might detract from the overall gaming experience. It very much depends on the players in question.