

## DAKKON, SHADOW SLAYER

Dakkon was once a gifted blacksmith who some say had sold his soul for his uncanny ability to shape steel. Many in his village would hear him working at night as he chanted unknown litanies to the fire and steel. They say the litanies were taught to him by the fire, turning his forge into a portal so that he could bring forth a being of shadow—a master—to teach him the art of steel. Many nights a plume of red-hot embers crackled into the darkness as his hammer rang to the incessant gasping of the bellows. Some who spied on him as he worked swore that they saw a shadow appear from within the forge and slide up the glowing steel, entering the veins that bulged on his powerful arm.

As his clientele grew, Dakkon became less and less aware of those who peered into his smithy. They were gawkers and mere strewers of tales about town, chickens who clucked and kicked the dirt with nothing better to do. He was more focused on the voice in his head. A voice that sounded like a silver wind and the swelling sigh of the incoming tide. It told him how hot the forge should be, what metals to mix together, and where to strike the steel. The voice spoke in words and images; it showed him beautiful shapes and revealed complex secrets of the steel. Then the voice mentioned Shadow Slayer. It gave Dakkon a glimpse of a sword beyond the skill of any mortal master, a sword that longed to be alive. As the painter might dream that their work could walk off the canvas, so this voice spoke to Dakkon of Shadow Slayer, infusing his mind with inspiration and desire to make a sword of legend.

As Dakkon labored harder and harder, increasing his prowess so that he could one day attempt Shadow Slayer, the voice began to shift its way of speaking. It was now as if Shadow Slayer itself was speaking to him, giving him instructions on how it wished itself to be made. As Dakkon followed the voice, the more his skill progressed and the more secrets it divulged. He learned how to fold and forge spectral symbols into the steel to suffuse his work with magic. Under the guidance of the voice, he fashioned armor—a shield, a helm, and pauldrons—all of which would imbue his body with the unearthly power needed to wield Shadow Slayer.

With the armor complete, he followed instructions to prepare the forge to birth his final masterpiece. By this time, he was no more than a mortal shell, his body wasted away by neglect. Without any conscious understanding, guided by Shadow Slayer, he inscribed demonic sigils into the interior of the forge and over his body. When he did, he could feel arcane forces flood into his limbs, instilling them with enough energy to continue. On some level, he knew the energy from the sigils also bound him to the forge and would destroy what remained of his body, but the drive to complete Shadow Slayer was too great. He had come too far to



turn back. To withstand the final process, he donned the armor and drew on its magic, and began to heat the steel. With each blow of his hammer, Dakkon could feel a part of his soul being consumed by Shadow Slayer. He could feel its hunger; the blade was starving for life and Dakkon suddenly became aware of the pulsing energy of the village and its inhabitants as he pulled Shadow Slayer from the fire. He left the forge, Shadow Slayer still glowing, and went into the village to quench its hunger.

## DAKKON AND SHADOW SLAYER

Dakkon and Shadow Slayer are entangled in a cursed dance. Shadow Slayer needs Dakkon so it can access the Material Plane and reap a harvest of souls. Dakkon needs his armor to sustain his life so that he may wield the power of Shadow Slayer. Very little of the original Dakkon remains, but what does cling to sanity with an iron grip. Although it fills his body with power enough to wield Shadow Slayer, his armor is essentially a prison, for should he remove it, Dakkon would skeletonize and turn to dust in a matter of seconds.

When Shadow Slayer needs souls, it becomes the dominant persona until its otherworldly hunger is slaked. In these moments, Dakkon must hunt. Where once a lowly commoner would satisfy Shadow Slayer's thirst, now only the most powerful souls will suffice, forcing Dakkon to track down ever more dangerous prey. Once it is satiated with souls, Shadow Slayer's influence lessens and Dakkon has more control over himself. Although, as time has gone on, one could say that differentiating between the two is becoming harder and harder.

## EPIC LEVEL ITEMS

*Caveat emptor!*

Dakkon is meant to be a quest giver or a terrible threat monster to lower level characters and his items remain with him. Only epic level characters should even dream of trying to get some of Dakkon's items—and DMs should consider each item carefully within the context of their campaign. A way of avoiding an overpowered character is to have Dakkon's items be annihilated or become depowered when they are separated from their master.

Epic level items should be handled with care. Allowing a character access to the full suit of Ur-Armor can tilt the power level in a campaign; DMs are advised to tread carefully and make sure all suitable countermeasures are considered when giving over a single one of these items.

Now enjoy some epic items!

## DAKKON'S ITEMS

Dakkon has forged his own arsenal of powerful magic items.

### WYVERN SHIELD

Dakkon's Wyvern Shield works like a *figurine of wondrous power* that contains **Razharak**, an elder wyvern (see stat block for Razharak below). Whoever attunes to the shield becomes the new master of Razarak. Razharak can materialize for up to 24 hours or until she is reduced to 0 hit points. Once it has been used, the shield can't be used again until 2 days have passed. As a magic item, it is a *shield +3*.

### UR-ARMOR

The secrets of creating the Ur-Armor were given to Dakkon by the evil entity that inhabits Shadow Slayer. Donning and attuning to the armor provides the wearer the power and protection to wield Shadow Slayer, otherwise any attempt to attune would instantly result in Shadow Slayer consuming their soul.

Once the armor is donned, it takes over as the source of life force for its wearer. If the armor is removed, the wearer's drained body cannot support itself and turns to dust. Only three *wish* spells cast in unison can reverse this effect of the Ur-Armor.

The Ur-Armor as a whole is a suit of *plate mail +3* and each individual piece also provides the following properties:

**Helm.** Wearing the helm grants darkvision 120 ft. and covers the wearer's eyes in a shroud of darkness that cannot be dispelled by magic. It also allows the wearer to speak and understand Infernal.

**Pauldrons.** Wearing the pauldrons allow the wearer to speak Draconic and grants the wearer immunity from fire. The faces on the pauldrons animate from time to time to grimace and snarl.

**Breastplate.** The armor allows the wearer to regenerate 20 hit points at the beginning of the wearer's turn as long as they have 1 hit point.

**Belt.** The belt contains an *onyx eye*, a magic gemstone, which is set into the buckle. This onyx eye grants the wearer the boon of immortality (see Epic Boons in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

**Vambraces.** The left vambrace of the Ur-Armor has two *onyx eyes* that imbue damage dealt by the wearer with Abyssal energy, dealing double damage to Celestial creatures.

**Greaves.** The greaves grant the wearer resistance to non-magical damage.

## SHADOW SLAYER

Shadow Slayer is an evil entity that has brought itself into being using Dakkon's skills as a blacksmith, and now inhabits the sword known as Shadow Slayer. It is an ancient intellect that understands a type of magic powered by the consumption of souls. If Shadow Slayer isn't fed a steady diet of souls (100 hit points per week), it begins to cause a conflict that can result in Shadow Slayer consuming the soul of its wielder.



Every morning Shadow Slayer's persona attempts to supplant the wielder's. The wielder must make a DC 20 Charisma save or be taken over by Shadow Slayer's will for 12 hours or until Shadow Slayer's 100 hit point soul requirement is fulfilled.

Anyone wielding Shadow Slayer gains +3 to attack and damage rolls. It has the following additional properties:

**Psychic Intensity.** While holding Shadow Slayer, you can't be charmed or frightened.

**Consume Soul.** When Shadow Slayer reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it consumes its soul (if it has one). That creature can only be restored to life by a wish spell.

**Soul Sense.** While holding Shadow Slayer, the wielder can sense the direction of the nearest soul within 300 yards and feels a growing hunger the closer they get to it.

**Necrotic Bolt.** Shadow Slayer can discharge a bolt of necrotic energy which does 16 (3d8 + 3) necrotic damage.

## USING DAKKON IN YOUR GAME

There's one main question to answer in order to unlock the mystery of Dakkon: Is he in accord with Shadow Slayer, is he locked in conflict with it, or is he the master of it? Here are some related questions to ponder:

- Is Dakkon just a death dealer, bent solely on harvesting souls for Shadow Slayer, or is there still humanity left that is looking for a way out of this curse?
- Has Dakkon become a mouthpiece for Shadow Slayer, his body and mind now a puppet for its ancient intellect or does he now enjoy his existence, wielding the power of Shadow Slayer to achieve his own goals?
- What does Shadow Slayer want other than more souls?
- Is there an endgame that Dakkon and Shadow Slayer are seeking together or are their ends separate and in conflict with one another?

Here's one story possibility:

### CURSE OF SHADOW SLAYER

In this scenario, Dakkon, in a moment of lucidity, wishes for the end to his cursed existence. He has caused so much bloodshed and pain that he longs only for the end. But Shadow Slayer is no fool and is slowly taking over the tiring Dakkon, grinding him down and crushing his will. He's desperate; there may only be one last chance before he is subsumed entirely under the might of Shadow Slayer. He reaches out to the party, believing that they are the ones who can free him from his prison of torment. Dakkon knows of the "kill switch" for Shadow Slayer, but it's a quest that is not to be taken lightly.

From here, you can make the quest to release Dakkon as hard or as easy as you'd like. It could be that the solution to ending Shadow Slayer's hold on Dakkon is on another plane, which opens up the whole multiverse to your adventure. If the journey takes the characters into Celestial and Abyssal realms, Dakkon might be willing to pry out two of the *onyx* eyes from his armor. As they bounce from plane to plane, Dakkon becomes a hub for the adventurers to return to after they have completed their missions. You can have fun switching personas for Dakkon—one time he is himself but the next time the adventurers might encounter Shadow Slayer. This makes for a dangerous game, especially if your adventurers are not epic level. One slip and they could be found out, making their souls an easy banquet for Shadow Slayer.

At the end of the quest, the adventurers have a choice—allow Dakkon to end Shadow Slayer's curse and be freed from his torment or try to steal Shadow Slayer and the Ur-Armor. Be sure to have a moment where Shadow Slayer appeals to one of the characters—it chooses the one most tempted by its power—and tries to make a deal with them. If Dakkon breaks the curse, Shadow Slayer shatters—its essence banished to the Abyss—and Dakkon turns to dust.

## DAKKON, SHADOW SLAYER

Medium Humanoid (Human)

**Armor Class** 21 (Magic Armor)

**Hit Points** 256 (27d8 + 135)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	21 (+5)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)

**Saving Throws** Str +13, Dex +12, Con +12

**Skills** Athletics +13, Intimidation +12, Perception +13

**Damage Resistances** necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** poison, fire

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 23

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

**Challenge** 22 (41,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +7

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Dakkon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

**Planeswalker.** Dakkon can use an action to cast the *plane shift* spell (no spell slot or components required), targeting himself only, and travel to the chosen plane, or from that plane back to the Material Plane. Once he uses this boon, he can't use it again until he finishes a short rest.

**Rampage.** When Dakkon reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on his turn, Dakkon can take a bonus action to move up to half his speed and make a shield bash attack.

**Regeneration.** Dakkon regains 20 hit points at the start of his turn if he has at least 1 hit point.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Dakkon makes three attacks with Shadow Slayer.

**Shadow Slayer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (3d6 + 9) slashing damage, or 22 (3d8 + 9) slashing damage if used with two hands to make a melee attack, plus 16 (3d8 + 3) necrotic damage.

**Wyvern Shield.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

**Necrotic Bolt.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (3d8 + 3) necrotic damage.

### Legendary Actions

Dakkon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Dakkon regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Charge.** Dakkon moves up to his speed.

**Backhand.** Dakkon makes a *Wyvern Shield* attack. If the attack hits, the target must succeed on a DC 21 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 10 feet away and knocked prone.

**Feast of Souls (Costs 2 Actions).** Dakkon makes a Shadow Slayer attack against each creature within 10 feet of him.

## RAZHARAK, DAKKON'S WYVERN

Under the arcane instruction of Shadow Slayer, Dakkon forged the soul of a wyvern into a shield. The wyvern, Razharak, can be summoned from the shield by speaking her name aloud.

## RAZHARAK

Large Dragon

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 178 (17d10 + 85)

**Speed** 20 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** –

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP) **Proficiency Bonus** +4

### Actions

**Multiattack.** Razharak makes two attacks: one with her bite and one with her stinger or tail. While flying, she can use her claws in place of one other attack.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage.

**Stinger.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (4d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 19 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 20 feet away and knocked prone.