

DARK STALKER

Medium-Size Humanoid (Dark Stalker)

Hit Dice: 2d8+4 (13 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft

AC: 18 (+2 Dex, +4 clothing, +2 natural)

Attacks: Short sword +1 melee

Damage: Short sword 1d6+1 and poison

Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft/5 ft

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, poison, death throes

Special Qualities: Detect magic, light blindness, armor, darkvision 60 ft

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +0

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 13

Skills: Climb +6, Hide +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +7, Pick Pocket +3, Spot +3

Feats: Blind-Fight

Climate/Terrain: Temperate forest, mountain, and underground

Organization: Solitary or troupe (one dark stalker and 2-5 dark creepers)

Challenge Rating: 4

Treasure: Standard coins; standard goods; double items

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral

Advancement: By character class

Dark stalkers are the rarely seen leaders of the dark creepers. They are nearly a race apart, for they breed almost exclusively amongst themselves. They are instantly noticeable amongst a group of dark creepers as they are man-sized and stand head and shoulders above their underlings.

Dark stalkers speak a language only they and the dark creepers can understand.

COMBAT

When confronted with a combat situation, dark stalkers will use their *fog cloud* to complement the darkness being generated by their minions, but will usually reserve their second *fog cloud* and their own *darkness* abilities for escape in the event of imminent defeat.

If forced to fight, they will first attempt to escape by use of their *darkness* and *fog cloud* abilities. If unsuccessful, they will wield their short sword.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—*darkness*; 2/day—*fog cloud*. These abilities are as the spells cast by an 8th-level sorcerer (save DC 11 + spell level).

Death Throes (Ex): When killed, the dark stalker spontaneously explodes in a flash of white-hot flame equal to the *fireball* spell as cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer; 3d6 points of fire damage, Reflex save (DC 14) for half.

Poison: Blade—Fortitude save DC 14; initial damage 1d4 Strength, secondary damage 1d6 Strength.

Detect Magic (Su): A dark stalker can continuously detect magic as the spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Light Blindness (Ex): Abrupt exposure to bright light (such as sunlight or a *daylight* spell) blinds dark stalkers for 1 round. In addition,

they suffer a –1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls, saves, and checks while operating in bright light.

Armor: Dark stalkers rarely remove clothing. They add layer after layer as the ones underneath molder away. This grants them a +4 armor bonus.

Skills: Dark stalkers receive a +4 racial bonus on Climb, Hide, and Move Silently checks and a +2 bonus on Spot and Listen checks.

DARK STALKER SOCIETY

Dark stalkers are the ruling elite of the dark creepers. They are man-sized and almost always encountered with 25 or more dark creepers. Dark stalkers are feared and obeyed by dark creepers and often direct the attacks of dark creepers during a large-scale battle. Stalkers have never been seen to work or do any sort of manual labor. Instead, they stand impassively, directing the activities of dark creepers, while other creepers attend to their needs. The stalkers appear to be ruthless and vicious masters. Dark creepers have been seen to offer up their magical items to a dark stalker. Whether this is done as a matter of worshipful obeisance, or is an outright bribe, is unclear.

DARK STALKER CHARACTERS

The favored class of a dark stalker is rogue. Dark stalkers are likely to be fighters or fighter/rogues as well. Unlike their lesser kin, dark stalkers do sometimes follow the magical professions. Most magic-using dark stalkers are sorcerers.

The Dark Stalker first appeared in the 1e FF (1981).