



SHADOW MASTIFF

The howling sound of the dogs in the wilderness can chill one's soul, gripping your heart in icy terror even from the safety of your warm hearth. This howl is often the howl of the fell hound known as the shadow mastiff. Hulking dogs of darkness and terror, shadow mastiffs hunt in baying packs, pursuing their prey – which may include people – over many miles, howling in hunger the whole time.

Thrill of the Hunt. Shadow mastiffs are fueled by the terror their prey experience, finding a panicked victim much more enjoyable to chase than one brave enough to face them. The baying of a shadow mastiff carries for quite some distance, and nearby mastiffs often come to join in the hunt as much for the pleasure of the chase as for the chance to capture the fleeing victim.

Guardians of the Dark Places. Shadow mastiffs aren't simple beasts – they possess a dim cunning that allows them to be trained easily, especially if raised from a whelp. Those who frequent the dark places of this world – shadow-cultists, priests of dark gods, and the restless dead – have been known to employ a pack of shadow mastiffs to keep potential curious onlookers at bay, and to chase down more determined investigators. Typically, the creatures are called via a *planar binding* or *planar ally* spell. The mastiffs are all too happy to hunt intruders, and their terrifying baying keeps the weak-willed from discovering too much. The strong-willed are simply dealt with via fangs. Given this potential, there is a robust black market in shadow mastiff pups – one could get 200-500 gp for one, depending on the potential buyer.

Unseen Teeth. When a hunt reaches its conclusion – when the prey is cornered or exhausted – the mastiffs surround the victim. They hunt at night, employing the darkness to remain unseen, so that their victim only knows their doom is nigh when the baying suddenly stops. The mastiffs encircle their prey and then, all at once, lunge for it en masse. The only thing that can keep a group of hunting shadow mastiffs at bay is a healthy, bright light – the creatures fear to tread into well-lit areas.

SHADOW MASTIFF

Medium fiend, neutral evil

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	17 (+3)	4 (-3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8+12)

Speed 40 ft.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Baying: The baying of a shadow mastiff is an eerie, unsettling thing. A creature other than a shadow mastiff who hears a pack of shadow mastiffs baying must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 10, +1 per shadow mastiff in the pack) or become frightened and drop whatever is in their hands. A creature can repeat the save at the end of each of their turns, ending the effect on a success. Once a save is made, the creature is immune to the baying for 24 hours. While frightened, the creature can only take the Dash action on their turn, cannot take reactions, and must spend their movement moving away from any shadow mastiff they can see or hear.

Keen Senses: The shadow mastiff has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks involving sound or smell.

Shadow Blend: In dim light or darkness, the shadow mastiff is considered invisible and, if not baying, it can take the Hide action as a bonus action on its turn. When not in dim light or darkness, the shadow mastiff has its speed halved.

ACTIONS

Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 8 (2d4+3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

DARK ONES

In great caverns deep below the surface of the earth, entire civilizations rise and fall without the awareness of the outside world, where strange magic and eons of isolation breed bizarre kings and warped subjects. One such civilization, only known to outsiders through rumor and hearsay, is the kingdom of the dark ones.

Inhuman. The dark ones resemble ugly humans with pale white skin, either squat and short (in the case of dark creepers), or elongated and stretched (in the case of dark stalkers), and in either case wrapped from head to toe in stinking, rotten rags. However, they are deeply unnatural creatures, forged in the strange arcana of the tunnels in which they dwell. Their society is a complete mystery to outsiders, their language incomprehensible, and their leaders unable to be determined.

Seekers of Spellcraft. Magic seems to be a core component of their being, as they seek out magical items and these goods play a key role in their hierarchy, with dark creepers giving the magic they find to dark stalkers. Their magic seems to manifest in their explosive death throes as well – the goal seems to be to deprive others of their magical items, with the damage dealt to nearby creatures merely a delightful side-effect.

Trusted Lackeys. Dark ones are skilled sneaks and rogues, and their ability to see magic and ability to create darkness and obscurment makes them very valuable to other creatures in the Underdark. Though their motives and origins are shrouded in mystery, many depend on them, and trust their work.

DARK CREEPER

Medium humanoid (dark one), neutral evil

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
11 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Armor Class 16 (leather armor)

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

Skills Athletics +2, Stealth +6, Sleight of Hand +6, Perception +4

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Dark One

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Death Throes: When a dark creeper dies, it explodes in a blinding flash of white-hot energy. All creatures within 10 ft. of the dark creeper when it dies must make a DC 12 Dexterity save or be blinded. A blinded creature regains sight after their next short rest.

Detect Magic: Dark creepers can naturally tell magic items from non-magical items simply by looking at them.

ACTIONS

Dagger: *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Create Darkness. All light sources within 50' of the dark creeper are extinguished, and all creatures other than dark ones with darkvision in the same area must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or lose their darkvision. A short rest is required to reactivate magical light sources or darkvision.

DARK STALKER

Medium humanoid (dark one), neutral evil

Str	Dex	Con	Int	Wis	Cha
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)

Armor Class 16 (leather armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

Skills Athletics +4, Stealth +7, Sleight of Hand +7, Perception +5

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Dark One

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Death Throes: When a dark stalker dies, it erupts in a fireball. All creatures within 10 ft. of the dark stalker when it dies must make a DC 13 Dexterity save or be take 10 (3d6) points of damage.

Detect Magic: Dark stalkers can naturally tell magic items from non-magical items simply by looking at them.

ACTIONS

Shortsword: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft, one creature. *Hit* 7 (1d6+4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) poison damage.

Dagger: *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60, one creature. *Hit:* 6 (1d4+4) piercing damage.

Fog Cloud (2/long rest). The dark stalker creates a 20-ft radius sphere of fog that spreads out from any point within 120 ft., around corners. Its area is heavily obscured. If the dark stalker is struck, the fog cloud disappears.

Create Darkness. All light sources within 50' of the dark stalker are extinguished, and all creatures other than dark ones with darkvision in the same area must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or lose their darkvision. A short rest is required to reactivate magical light sources or darkvision.