

Monster ENCyclopedia: Jackalwere

This is a series of articles about specific monsters from D&D's history. Each entry takes a look at the origin of one D&D creature, and tracks its appearances and evolution across different editions. The ENCyclopedia series is busy with an alphabetical browse through the creatures of Dungeons & Dragons, with an article on one monster for each letter A-Z. We've reached the tenth letter in the alphabet, and although there aren't many "J" creatures with a presence across multiple editions, the jackalwere has featured in every edition of the game except basic D&D.

Contents

Shapechanger terminology	Jackalweres and other monsters	Historical Reference
Origins	Jackalwere parts	Ravenloft
1st Edition	Jackalweres and magic	Spelljammer
2nd Edition	Birthright	Computer games
3rd Edition	Eberron	Jackalwere names
4th Edition	Forgotten Realms	Comparative statistics
5th Edition	Greyhawk	References

Shapechanger terminology

Before we delve into the origins of the jackalwere, we're going to take a short detour into the terminology used for creatures capable of changing shape between human and animal form. D&D uses "lycanthrope" as a collective term for werewolves, werebears, wererats and other humanoids able to take animal form. This is, however, technically incorrect. Lycanthrope is simply a synonym for werewolf, made from the Greek words for "wolf" (lykos) and "human" (anthrōpos).

A more accurate word for part-human, part-animal beings in general would be "therianthrope", which is "beast" (theríon) plus "human" (anthrōpos). However, in 2002, Necromancer Games published *The Tome of Horrors*. This isn't an official D&D book, but with Wizards of the Coast's permission it did include 3rd Edition conversions of a large number of creatures from D&D history. Unfortunately, this book repurposed "therianthrope" as a collective term for animals capable of taking human form—the opposite of D&D's "lycanthropes", if you like.

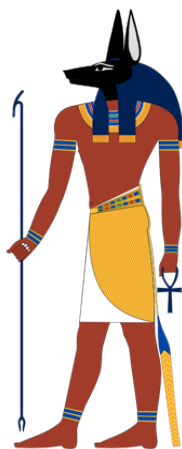
Even without that added confusion, therianthrope is not ideal in a D&D context, since "theríon" implies mammalian, and there have been many non-mammalian werecreatures over the years, including werecrocodiles (*Monsters of Faerûn*), wereowls (*FR7: Hall of Heroes*), wereravens (*MC10: Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix*), wererays (*Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III*), weresharks (*Monster Manual II*), werespiders (*FR7: Hall of Heroes* again) and even one wereeel (*Dungeon #66*). Also, in mythology, therianthrope is used to describe both human-to-animal and animal-to-human shapechangers, so it isn't particularly useful as a word to differentiate the two.

Perhaps the most obvious collective term for humans capable of taking animal form is simply "werebeast", and that was indeed the word used for the title of the Ravenloft accessory *Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts*, one of D&D's more comprehensive looks at shapeshifting humans. But is there a good collective word for animals able to take human form, such as the jackalwere? The 2nd Edition *Monstrous Manual* suggests "antherion", but that seems to be the only time that term was used, and it probably isn't linguistically correct in any case. *Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts* settled on "animalistic shapechangers", or just "shapechangers".

From a game mechanics point of view, the key difference between werebeasts and shapechangers is that werebeasts can pass on their affliction to others, while shapechangers cannot. The creature which is the focus of this article—the jackalwere—falls firmly into the latter category, and is thus not a werebeast, but merely a shapechanger.

Origins

Quite why Gary Gygax decided that AD&D needed the jackalwere is a mystery. One possible source of inspiration is the Egyptian god Anubis, guardian of the dead, who has the head of a jackal. He most likely has this head because of a strong association between cemeteries and jackals in ancient times; the digging up of human bodies for food by jackals and other wild dogs was a common problem. While Anubis may have inspired the jackalwere, the creature's shapeshifting ability doesn't seem to have any mythological basis, nor is there any association between Anubis and jackalweres in D&D lore.



Anubis, image from Wikipedia

1st Edition

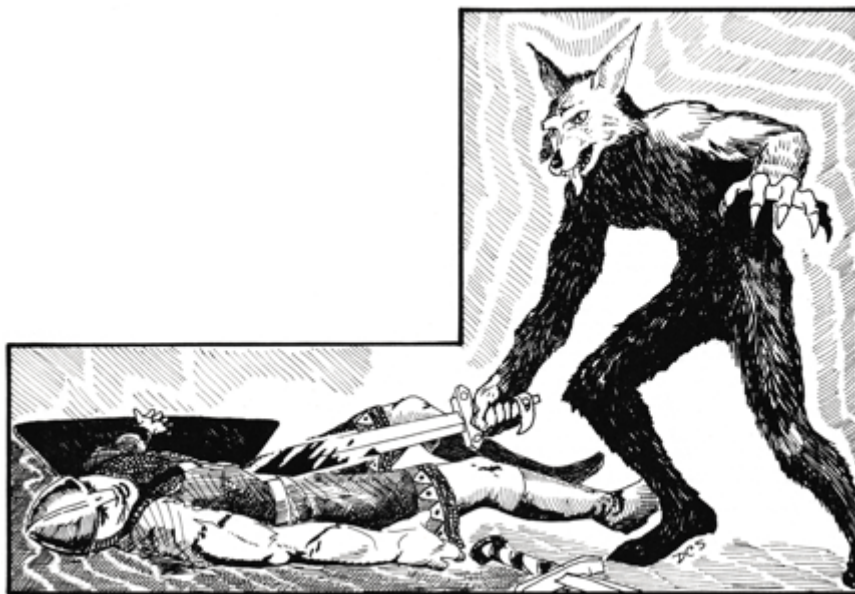
The *Monster Manual* describes the jackalwere as a malign foe of humankind. Its natural form is that of a jackal, but it is able to take the form of a human, and does so in order to trick potential victims. Provided that a target is unsuspecting, the jackalwere can use its gaze as a *sleep* spell. A target failing a saving throw falls asleep, and the shapechanger will then murder him or her, devour the body, and steal any valuable possessions. The *Monster Manual* is careful to note that the gaze will not work on a hostile target, so it is not useful in combat situations.



Monster Manual (1977)

Jackalweres are encountered in groups of 1-4, and near their lairs 30% of the time. They are chaotic evil, have 4 hit dice, an armor class of 4 and a movement rate of 12". They have a single attack (presumably a bite) which does 2-8 damage, and they can also use human weapons. They are very intelligent and can only be hit by iron weapons or weapons with at least a +1 magical bonus. Jackalweres are classified as rare monsters, and are medium-sized, except when in smaller jackal form. They are sometimes found with normal jackals, and may accumulate a variety of treasures including copper, silver and gold coins, gems, jewelry and even sometimes magic items.

The jackalwere is one of the better illustrated creatures in the *Monster Manual*, getting two pictures. One shows a sword-wielding jackalwere in the process of finishing off a fallen warrior, while the individual in the smaller picture is gnawing on what looks suspiciously like a human femur. Although there is no mention at this stage of the jackalwere having a hybrid humanoid/jackal form, all of the artwork depicts the shapechanger as something in between dog and human.



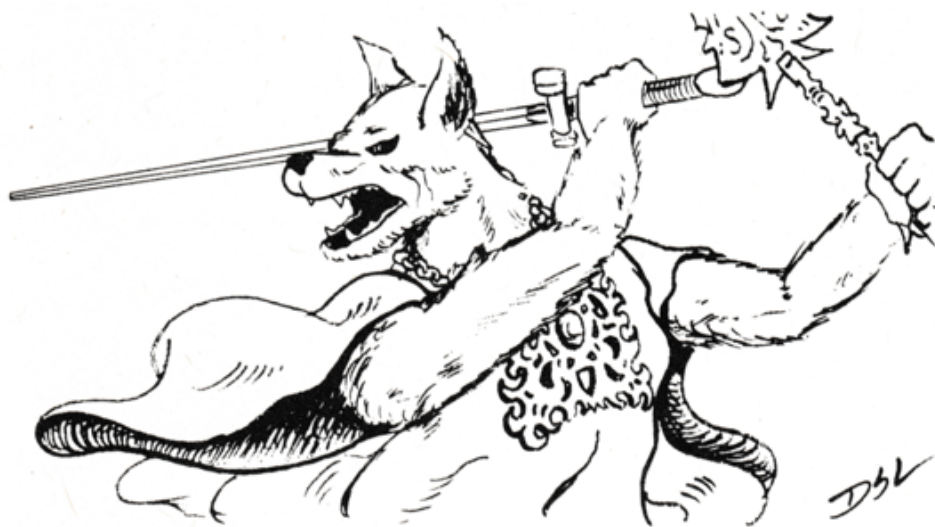
Monster Manual (1977)

Where jackalweres appear in 1st Edition adventures, it is often only in random encounters. *I2: Tomb of the Lizard King* has some detailed encounter tables which includes a group of four jackalweres in human form, on their way to pay their respects to Sakatha, the titular lizard king. Two or three jackalweres might be encountered at night in the foothills in *UK4: When a Star Falls*, and another group of three disguised as pilgrims can be encountered on the road to the Shrine of Nevron in *N3: Destiny of Kings*. They will try to join the adventuring group for "protection" as pretense for a surprise attack. A pair of jackalweres in human form uses exactly the same tactics in a mountain encounter in the adventure *The Long Way Home* in *C6: The Official RPGA Tournament Handbook*. The adventure *Ravager* in *Polyhedron #31* includes two jackalweres who serve as tomb guardians. They remain in a sort of magical stasis, awakening only to challenge intruders and occasionally to eat fish or a passing snake.

In *Q1: Queen of the Demonweb Pits* there is an encounter with a group of four jackalweres in the Chamber of the Peace-Speakers. Predictably, they are disguised as humans. However, the lengths to which this group has gone to support their subterfuge is extraordinary. The room has been set up to look like it contains shrines to "good and pacifist" gods, and the jackalweres are kitted out in gold-fringed robes and ornamental pectoral

plates. The shapechangers obviously have nothing better to do all day than to pretend to be priests, and when the adventurers arrive in the chamber, they offer them comfort and safety from the terrors of Lolth. So well organized are these jackalweres, that they even have platters of fruit and meat to offer to their guests. Assuming that this elaborate ruse works, and that the PCs aren't the least bit suspicious of a group of friendly clerics living in the middle of Lolth's web, the jackalweres will eventually revert to their natural forms and attack. One can only assume that once they have feasted on the latest group of adventurers, the jackalweres carefully wash the blood off their priestly garments, tidy up their fake temple and go shopping for some fresh snacks to offer their next batch of visitors.

Like the [ixitxachitl](#), the jackalwere is one of the possible forms taken by someone reincarnated while in Lolth's realm. Also like the ixitxachitl, jackalweres are natives of one of the alternative worlds that can be reached from portals within the Demonweb. In this case, they dwell within the Nightworld of the vampire Vlad Tolenkov.



Q1: Queen of the Demonweb Pits (1980)

T1-4: Temple of Elemental Evil has another rather implausible jackalwere encounter. In level three of the dungeon, there is a room in which two human prisoners are chained. They are being tormented by rats, foxes, jackals and harpies when the PCs arrive. Most of the room turns out to be an illusion. The rats and foxes are entirely fake, and the harpies are magically disguised gargoyles. The two prisoners are actually jackalweres and their chains and wounds are entirely illusory. Only the jackals are real. This is another encounter where the participants seem to have nothing better to do than wait for PCs to stumble onto their overly complicated trap. Players who conquered *Queen of the Demonweb Pits* before visiting the *Temple* might be disappointed with this encounter's lack of catering.

The pages of *Dragon* and *Dungeon* magazine during the 1st Edition generally follow the same trend of using jackalweres in human disguise, often in implausible situations. A welcome exception is in the adventure *The Fell Pass* in *The Dragon* #32. Here, the jackalweres make no attempt to trick the PCs, but instead wait until they have finished a nearby encounter with some giant snakes, and then attack only if the party doesn't seem too powerful to be taken on. It's just as well this group isn't serving aperitifs, since their pantry contains only the dismembered remains of three elves.



Dragon #52 (August 1981)

Dragon #42 lists the jackalwere as a creature that might be sent by a demon prince to aid a player character who has made a pact with him. There is a jackalwere (improperly referred to as a “lycanthrop”) in the one page cartoon/advert on the inside cover of *Dragon #52*. *Dragon #54* notes that jackalweres sometimes lair within ruins.

The jackalweres in the adventure *In Defense of the Law* in *Dungeon #8* are as likely to help as hinder the heroes. Elsewhere in the adventure there is a group of clerics with a bugbear ally. If warned of the approaching PCs, the clerics send the bugbear to fetch the jackalweres. Instead of assisting, the jackalweres put the poor bugbear to sleep and then eat him!

Dragon #130 has a lengthy article on gaze attacks of all sorts, including the jackalwere’s sleep-inducing gaze. It clarifies that sleeping characters are subject to double the normal number of hits and take maximum damage from each one, but that if they survive, they will automatically wake up. The article also pegs the range of the jackalwere’s gaze at 30 feet, and notes that the resulting sleep lasts for two turns. A footnote in this article confirms (apparently for the first time) that jackalweres can take three different forms—jackal, human or a hybrid of the two. It is also suggested here that jackalweres may not be immune to the gazes of other jackalweres, since they instinctively avoid each other’s gazes when in combat.

2nd Edition

The jackalwere received a dedicated page in the *Monstrous Compendium Volume One*. Its statistics are exactly the same as they were in 1st Edition, except for a change to the jackalwere’s experience point value. A few additional details are provided: jackalweres are confirmed as carnivorous, a group is called a pack, they can be active during the day or at night and they have steady morale (11-12). Jackalweres are found in temperate climates. *Monstrous Compendium Volume Two* refines their environment to be temperate, subtropical or tropical plains or scrublands.

Like most 2nd Edition creatures, the jackalwere has a much more detailed description and background. Earlier sources mentioned only humans as potential prey for the jackalwere, but this is now extended to include demihumans. The three forms that a jackalwere can take are more explicitly described, with the

hybrid form being the same size as human form. When in jackal form, a jackalwere has most of the statistics of a jackal, but a careful observer might note that it behaves more aggressively than an ordinary jackal. One interesting point is that the human appearance adopted by a jackalwere is not constant, but can vary according to its desires.



Monstrous Compendium Volume One (1989)

The motivation for the jackalwere is rather one dimensional; its sole goal in life is to hunt and kill humans and demihumans. A master of deceit, a jackalwere usually adopts human form at first, often pretending to be injured or in need of assistance to gain the confidence of its target so that it can use its gaze attack. If subterfuge doesn't work, the jackalwere will carefully assess its victim's strength before deciding whether to flee or press the attack.

Because of its appetite for human blood, the jackalwere prefers to use its bite in combat, but it will use weapons if that is more likely to secure a victory. It is able to use both weapons and its bite while in hybrid form, but only weapons while in full human guise. Despite this, jackalweres have been observed feasting on the bodies of fallen enemies while still in human form. Even in its choice of weapon, the jackalwere's bloodlust comes through. It prefers weapons which cut and tear the flesh of a victim. Both the jackalwere's gaze, and its special defenses (iron or magical weapons required to hit) function in all three forms.

Jackalweres can only mate while in jackal form, and only produce jackalwere offspring with other jackalweres. They can mate with ordinary jackals, but this union merely produces young jackals which are unnaturally aggressive. The gestation period of a jackalwere is five months, and a litter consists of up to four pups. Youngsters begin with a single hit die and gain one per year until they reach adulthood at the age of three. For their first two years, they cannot change shape. At the age of two they can shift into hybrid form, and once they reach adulthood they can take human form. They age approximately three times as quickly as humans, so a newly adult jackalwere appears to be a nine-year old child when in human form. If encountered with young, adults tend to pretend the pups are their pets. In death, jackalweres revert to their jackal forms.

When it was reprinted in the *Monstrous Manual*, the jackalwere received its first color illustration, and a small adjustment to its experience point value (down to 270 from 420 XP). It is otherwise unchanged. There is also a picture of a "jackalwere" in the 1993 *Cardmaster Adventure Design Deck*, but this is actually an incorrectly recycled illustration of the wolwere from the *Monstrous Manual*.



Monstrous Manual (1993)

PHBR11: The Complete Ranger's Handbook suggests that a ranger from a desert environment could choose the jackalwere as a favored enemy. *Villains, Like Fine Wine* in *Dragon #238* suggests that a jackalwere would make a good sleeper agent because of its ability to sow misinformation, but that doesn't seem consistent with what we know about their bloodthirsty personalities.

There are some jackalwere encounters in *CR4: Deck of Encounters, Set One* and *CR5: Deck of Encounters, Set Two*. In *Sly Jackal*, there is a slight improvement on the pervasive 1st Edition jackalwere tactic of pretending to be humans in need of protection. Here, two jackalweres in jackal form are encountered chasing two jackalweres in human form. They hope that this fake pursuit will increase the odds of the adventurers offering the "humans" succor, giving them the element of surprise for their *sleep gaze*. In *A Dangerous Guide*, a jackalwere named Kanda poses as a city tour guide. His goal is to separate one of them from the rest and lead him or her into an alley where five others of his kind wait in ambush. In comparison, the two jackalweres in *The Deceivers* are poor strategists. They approach the traveling heroes pretending to be humans in need of protection, but only *after* being seen following the group for several days in jackal form.

The story of the Wraj family is told in the mini-adventure *Best Served Cold* in *GR4: Treasure Chest*. This family of jackalweres is in the catering business. They operate the *Happy Den Inn*, which they use to lure their victims and as a base to raid surrounding farms. Despite the fact that they've been doing this for at least two decades, it doesn't seem as if any of their neighbors have become suspicious. At least not recently; the adventurers stumble onto the family while investigating a twenty year old murder case. The victim was a local who had learned the Wraj family's secret.

A jackalwere named Asaph abdul Anat features in *The Rod of Seven Parts*. He is the owner of the fourth and fifth segments of the rod, which he has joined together. Unfortunately for him, the only threat he poses to the PCs is if he is dropped on them, since he was turned to stone by a medusa some time ago. Curiously, the adventure includes a complete stat block for the jackalwere, despite his petrification. However, this provides us with two new nuggets of jackalwere lore; elven and half-elven resistance to sleep is confirmed as applying to a jackalwere's gaze, and the gaze's range is from 9-30 feet, depending on available light. Perhaps surprisingly, this is consistent with the range offered back in the footnote in *Dragon #130*.

Dungeon #21 predates the Planescape setting by a few years, but it contains an adventure titled *The Chest of Aloeids* which is set on the plane of Arcadia. One of the random encounters is with a lone jackalwere who attempts to separate the party, so that it can feast on a straggler. Interestingly, some of the plane's native inhabitants, Athena's giant owl and a beekeeper and his bees, are able to sense the jackalwere's duplicity.

3rd Edition

The jackalwere appeared in the 3rd Edition *Fiend Folio*. Here it remains a 4 hit dice (26 hp) creature, with much the same abilities as in 1st and 2nd Edition. There are a few small changes, however. It can now take the form of any medium-sized humanoid (not just humans), and in addition to speaking Common, is able to communicate with ordinary jackals in any form. Jackalweres are found primarily in temperate climes, either alone, or in a pack of 2-4 accompanied by up to six jackals. In jackal form, a shapechange is indistinguishable from the rest of the pack, except perhaps in behavior. Their alignment is slightly more flexible, now only "usually" chaotic evil.



Fiend Folio (2003)

Jackalweres are given a scimitar as a signature weapon, but can still use other types of weapons if necessary. In hybrid form they can wear light or medium, but not heavy armor. As in 2nd Edition, the jackalwere can use weapons in humanoid for (1d6+1 damage for a scimitar) or hybrid (1d6 damage) form, and can use its bite attack in hybrid (1d6+1 damage) or jackal (1d4+1 damage) form. There is some clarification of what happens to carried equipment when a jackalwere changes into a jackal. Its gear is absorbed into its jackal form, but magic items temporarily cease functioning.

The range of a shapechanger's gaze attack remains 30 feet, and now lasts only 5 minutes. Contradicting *Dragon #130*, jackalweres are now immune to their own gaze attacks and those of other jackalweres. A jackalwere can use its gaze during combat, but the target enjoys a +4 bonus to save. When in jackal form, a jackalwere is small in size and has a speed of 40 ft. In hybrid or humanoid form, it is medium-sized and has a

speed of 30 ft. A jackalwere has an armor class of 17, and gains the *alertness* and *dodge* feats. Jackalweres have both darkvision (60') and low-light vision (the only edition where this is the case).

Published at the tail end of 3.0, *Fiend Folio* was largely compatible with 3.5. However, the *D&D v.3.5 Accessory Update* amended the jackalwere's damage reduction from "15/+1" to "5/iron".



Dungeon #120 (2005)

Nicholas Logue and Brendan Victorson contributed *The Obsidian Eye* to *Dungeon #120*. This adventure features a triad of jackalweres, and for a change they all have fully developed personalities with individual quirks. Their leader, Khalogo, has fur which is brighter orange and deeper black than most of his kind, and he takes a measure of pride in his appearance. He even practices oral hygiene, chewing on roots and leather to counter his naturally fetid breath. It helps that all three of these jackalweres have class levels; one is a sorcerer, one a ranger, and the third a druid.

4th Edition

The first two *Monster Manuals* for 4th Edition were quite light on monster lore, but by the time the jackalwere was published in the *Monster Manual 3*, more attention was being given to each creature's place in the world. The jackalwere gets a brief mention in the *Alumni* article in *Dragon #387* as one of the top ten returning creatures from the original *Monster Manual*, but the preview article adds nothing new to jackalwere lore.

In 4th Edition, for the first time, we get an origin story for the jackalwere. In ancient times, while the war between the primordials and the gods raged, there lived a great nation of exceptionally intelligent jackals. After a series of fierce battles, this nation was destroyed by a tribe of humans, leaving only a few destitute survivors. These survivors howled in anguish at the heavens and a primal spirit known as Dark Sister heard their cries. She bestowed her gifts on the jackals and they became the first jackalweres.

Jackalweres roam the frontiers of humanoid lands, dwelling in remote villages, roadhouses and isolated trading posts. They are skilled hunters but also enjoy deception, and use their shapechanging talents to divert suspicion once their attacks on settlements and caravans are noticed. A group of adventurers probing such

raids might partner with another party also investigating the killers, only to have the members of that party reveal themselves as the true perpetrators when they change shape and attack during the night.

Although most jackalweres avoid civilization, some lone individuals gravitate towards treacherous followers of Zehir or cults of Asmodeus. Their abilities make them excellent spies or assassins for these groups.



Monster Manual 3 (2010)

The *Monster Manual 3* details three different types of jackalweres. Jackalwere bravos are the younger members of the pack. Treated as servants or menial laborers by their elders, these youngsters struggle to contain their bloodlust, and usually enter combat in a furious rage. Unless directed by their elders, they do not use complex tactics, and never back down. Mechanically, they have 56 hit points, an armor class of 15, and a +8 bite attack which does 2d6+2 damage and causes the target to fall prone. Bravos also have a *howling frenzy* attack which is a double-bite with a chance to *daze*, and *bravo's fury* which gives them extra damage (1d6) against dazed, helpless, or prone opponents. When in human form they prefer a falchion as their weapon (+8 attack, 4d4+4 damage).

Jackalwere harriers represent those of their kind who prefer to run wild. They are cautious fighters who attack only in large groups, unless accompanying jackalwere deceivers and bravos. Treated as minions in 5th Edition mechanics, harriers have 1 hit point, and an armor class of 19. Their bite is a +8 attack doing 5 points of damage which knocks prone any opponent granting combat advantage. In the rare cases that harriers are encountered in human form, their weapon of choice is a simple dagger (a +8 attack doing 3 damage).

The jackalwere deceiver most closely resembles the jackalweres from earlier sources. They are the most cunning of foes, and the only variation with a *gaze of sleep*. Equally likely to be found hunting alone or leading a pack of lesser jackalweres, they prefer to gain the trust of their enemies before striking or signaling the rest of their pack to attack. In jackal form they have a bite (+9 attack, 1d6+4 damage) and a *vicious howl* attack (+7 attack, 1d6+3 damage) both of which can knock opponents prone. In human form, they favor the

short sword (+9 attack, 2d6+5 damage). Deceivers have 54 hit points, and an armor class of 17. A deceiver does not necessarily hunt, but might instead pose as the proprietor of a remote roadhouse, one which may be a final resting place for many of its patrons.

The jackalwere's hybrid form is now its default. It can change from this form into either a jackal or a human as a minor action. Unlike 3rd Edition, a jackalwere's equipment does not change with it, it can only assume the form of an individual it has seen previously and there is a chance for other creatures to realize that the human or jackal form is a disguise. Jackalweres have a speed of 6, use the Common tongue and are evil in alignment.

5th Edition

In the lengthy development period leading up to the release of 5th Edition, WotC published a number of articles on their web site providing insights into their design strategies and goals. In a *Legends & Lore* article titled [*Whose Story Is It, Anyway?*](#) Mike Mearls wrote about building links between different creatures to create a more cohesive D&D world for 5th Edition.

The example used in this article is the jackalwere. In 5th Edition, jackalweres are created by the demon lord Graz'zt to serve his devoted servants, the lamias. He bestowed jackals with the gift of speech and the ability to take on humanoid form. Mearls acknowledges that not everyone will want to use this lore in their campaign, so the mechanical design of the jackalwere remains independent of this background.



Monster Manual (2014)

The jackalwere is included in the *Monster Manual* and other than this new link to Graz'zt and lamias, the latest incarnation of the jackalwere is fairly loyal to previous lore. They are still manipulative murderers, patrolling roads and trails, often in the company of jackals and other jackalweres. They use their shapechanging abilities to gain the trust of strangers, but their victims aren't always murdered, some are kidnapped to serve as slaves of their lamia masters, perhaps a worse fate than a quick death. Jackalweres are

chaotic evil in alignment. The encounter tables in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* place them in deserts and grasslands, as previously.

Jackalweres still have three forms, but are once again limited to a human appearance (rather than any humanoid). The text isn't entirely clear but seems to imply that they have one specific human form, which is unusually gaunt. As in 4th Edition, the equipment carried by a jackalwere is not transformed when it changes shape. In death, they return to their natural jackal form. Jackalweres speak common, but only in hybrid or humanoid form. One delightful new twist is that they are born to lie, so sometimes wince in pain if forced to tell the truth.

Mechanically they are 4 hit dice (18 hit points) creatures with a bite attack (+4 to hit, 1d4+2 piercing damage) in jackal or hybrid form and a weapon attack (+4 to hit, 1d6+2 slashing damage) in hybrid or human form. The scimitar returns as their weapon of choice. They have an armor class of 12 and a speed of 40 ft. The shapechanger's gaze attack still has a range of 30 feet, but a target that succeeds in a saving throw becomes immune to that jackalwere's gaze for the next 24 hours. Undead and creatures immune to being charmed are singled out as unaffected by the gaze. Iron weapons are no longer the Achilles' heel for the jackalwere. Instead, silvered or magical weapons are required to hurt it. The jackalwere gains keen hearing and smell as well as *pack tactics*, which give it an advantage when fighting with allies.

Jackalweres and other monsters

Jackalweres have been associated with ordinary jackals right from their first appearance in the *Monster Manual*, which pegs the odds of the two being found together as 20%. Conversely, the encounter tables in the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* and *Fiend Folio* indicate that 10% of encounters with what appear to be jackals are actually with jackalweres. The *Monstrous Manual* repeats the 20% figure and notes that accompanied jackalweres travel with 1-6 jackals, and will often run and hunt with them while in jackal form. Jackals under the influence of jackalweres become more fierce and are hunters rather than scavengers.

The *Monstrous Manual* notes that the shapechangers will only serve the most evil of humanoids, and then only if that means they have more opportunity to slay humans and demihumans than they would otherwise have. The 4th Edition *Monster Manual 3* suggests that yuan-ti are willing to partner with jackalweres for a short time as a means to an end. It also notes that jackalweres dislike the flesh of half-orcs, goliaths, and (obviously) warforged, and will thus sometimes hire them as mercenaries to disguise their true nature.

5th Edition introduces a new relationship with lamias. Jackalweres operate as their servants, using their gazes to knock targets unconscious, before binding and kidnapping them into a lifetime of slavery under a lamia master, or an agonizing death. The shapechangers still prefer to fight alongside jackals, who are fierce and loyal companions to them. *Volo's Guide to Monsters* lists jackalweres on a table of potential minions populating a hag's lair, and in *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* Granny Nightshade counts jackalweres as her foremost minions.

Jackalwere parts

The article *Better Living Through Alchemy* in *Dragon #130* suggests a jackalwere heart as a typical ingredient for a *potion of polymorph self*. The *Book of Artifacts* notes that jackalwere spittle is used to create an *aroma of dreams potion*.

Jackalweres and magic

The 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide* classified scrolls into two types, those that replicate spells, and protection scrolls. A scroll of *protection from shape-changers* is listed as a sub-type of scrolls of *protection from lycanthropes*, and is effective at keeping jackalweres at bay. The spell form of this scroll, *protection from shapechangers—10' radius*, is detailed in *FR6: Dreams of the Red Wizards*.

The *Dungeon Masters Guide* also provides some clarification of the effect of a *polymorph other* spell on a jackalwere or other type of shapechanger. The target is affected for only one round before returning to its previous form.

The *amulet of protection from sleep* detailed in *Dragon #91* provides effective protection against the gaze of a jackalwere.

Birthright

Blood Spawn: Creatures of Light and Shadow notes that jackalweres appear with very rare frequency in the setting's Shadow World.

Eberron

The jackalwere is suggested as a suitable creature to use for urban encounters in *Sharn: City of Towers*.

Forgotten Realms

The most notable appearance of a jackalwere in early Forgotten Realms products is in the novel *Shadowdale*. A silver-haired “man” named Torrence mistakes Kelemvor Lyonsbane for one of its kin, and attempts to lure him into sharing a meal in the form of a hapless resident of Tilverton. Kelemvor is actually a werepanther as a result of a curse, and does not take kindly to Torrence's overtures. He eventually slays the jackalwere. One unusual aspect of this encounter is that the jackalwere seems to be able to enchant a companion of Kelemvor by singing to her. No explanation is given for this ability, so we can only theorize that Torrence perhaps had some bardic training.

This encounter is mirrored in the adventure *FRE1: Shadowdale*. In the section on Tilverton, it is noted that something strong enough to tear its victims limb from limb is preying on Tilvertonians. Given the fact that jackalweres aren't really known for their heightened strength, this description seems to mostly be a set-up so that Kelemvor (a potential PC in this adventure) falls under suspicion if he is forced into panther form in front of the townsfolk.

Jackalweres are found in many parts of Faerûn, and are a popular inclusion in random encounter tables. They might be encountered in the sewers beneath Waterdeep (*FR1: Waterdeep and the North*), in the Rat Hills (*City of Splendors*), at night in the High Moor (*FRE3: Waterdeep*), in the depths of Undermountain (*Undermountain: Stardock*), in the temperate plains of Cormyr (*Four from Cormyr*), in the wildness areas around Zhentil Keep (*FRC2: Curse of the Azure Bonds*), in post-spellplague Elturgard (*ELTU3-6: True Blue* and *SPEC5-1: Morthac's Mansion*), or near Hillsfar (*DDEX3-1: Harried in Hillsfar*). More recently, *Princes of the Apocalypse* confirms that jackalweres can still be found in the north, as they feature as a very rare encounter on the night time encounter tables for the Dessarin Valley. *Acquisitions Incorporated* details a jackalwere and her pack living in the ruined courtyard of Tresendar Manor in Phandalin.



Korvala, *Candlekeep Mysteries* (2021)

The adventure *Mazfroth's Mighty Digressions* in *Candlekeep Mysteries* involves the Amberdune Pack of jackalweres, who are now in the business of selling books and scrolls in the markets of Baldur's Gate, under the guidance of their new leader, Korvala. Uncharacteristically for jackalweres, this pack is neutral evil in alignment as a result of the influence of their beloved but deceased previous leader, an unusually kind and learned lamia. The jackalwere's mercantile activities have the goal of raising enough money to pay for the lamia's resurrection.

The malicious shapechangers have also been spotted in locations beyond western Faerûn. The article *Backdrop: Moonshae Isles* in *Dungeon #196* details a jackalwere spy named Twaine Stone. He has infiltrated the army of Caer Moray and is leaving secret messages outside the city walls for the Black Blood Tribe, a group of Faerûnian lycanthropes who revere Malar, the Lord of Beasts. Jackalweres are also found in Calimshan; in the novel *Star of Cursrah* there is an encounter with a pack in a valley not too far from the city of Memnon.

The novel *Murder in Halruaa* features a jackalwere named Cunningham who has been lured by false promises to travel further south than his kind are usually found. Although first encountered by the protagonist as a menacing foe, it becomes apparent that the jackalwere is primarily motivated to find food for his starving jackal children. Despite being driven by animalistic urges, Cunningham is shown to be sympathetic to the plight of two mongrelfolk who feature in the story, and ultimately makes a heroic sacrifice.

The Horde boxed set notes that jackalweres can be found roaming the prairies on the edge of the steppe and in the South Forest. The *Maztica Campaign Set* indicates that jackalweres can be found on that continent, but it includes the caveat “as coyote”. *FMA1: Fires of Zatal* refers to this variation as “coyotlweres”, and notes that they are usually loners, only occasionally commanding a pack of coyotes. They can be encountered in deserts and on plains. *FMQ1: City of Gold* includes coyotlweres as potential encounters in the deserts and scrublands of the Pasocada Basin.

Prior to 4th Edition jackalweres were not particularly pious creatures, but at least in the Realms, a relationship with Malar is not unusual. *Faiths & Avatars* notes that the Lord of Beasts frequently acts through all sorts of predators, including jackalweres. *Halls of Undermountain* includes a jackalwere named Ulquar who fancies himself a priest of Malar, despite having no clerical abilities whatsoever. Malar doesn't have a monopoly on jackalwere followers though, as *Serpent Kingdoms* lists them amongst the followers of Sseth.

The Forgotten Realms novel *The Devil You Know*, published in 2016, includes an encounter with a pack of jackalweres led by a lamia in the service of Graz'zt, consistent with the mythology presented in the 5th Edition *Monster Manual*.

Greyhawk

Jackalweres seem to have appeared only intermittently in Greyhawk sources. *A Serenade Before Supper* in *Dungeon* #53 is set in the Iron Wood, about fifty miles west of Verbobonc. This adventure begins by tricking the PCs into thinking they have been swallowed by the Mists of Ravenloft, but in fact they are just experiencing very bad weather.

The protagonists are a wolwere and two jackalweres who have taken up residence in a remote inn, and instead of feeding passing travelers, they are feeding **on** passing travelers. However, they are cautious about who they are willing to fight, and on a few occasions when large groups have visited the inn, have kept up the pretense by entertaining guests for an evening. One of the jackalweres has even learned to cook using the previous owner's cookbook, suggesting that these jackalweres might be distant relatives of the ones operating a catering side business in the Demonweb Pits.

Jackalweres appear on the encounter tables for plains and scrublands in *MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Adventures Appendix*. can be found within the Valley of the Mage (*WG12: Vale of the Mage*). There are three jackalweres in one of the encounters in the *Crypt of Lyzandred the Mad*. They attack if the adventurers are unable to answer the following riddle: "What is it that everyone wishes for, and yet wants to get rid of as soon as it is obtained?" The answer, which should be apparent to anyone familiar with the close association between jackalweres and catering, is "a good appetite".

Several *Living Greyhawk* scenarios include encounters with jackalweres. *DYV1-01: Dine and Dash* features three, but one of them is actually a deluded human assassin who acquired a cursed *ring of mammal control* (*jackals*) and is now convinced he is a jackalwere. Despite the fact that they have never seen him change shape, the two real jackalweres follow him faithfully simply because they have prospered under his leadership. A curious plot hook in this adventure is the fact that centaurs are apparently completely immune to the gaze of a jackalwere.

Less interesting jackalwere encounters are documented in other regions of Oerth, including Nyronnd (*NYR6-M01: A Lament in Entrell*), Furyondy (*FUR7-03: Illusions and Dreams*), and the Free Town of Highfolk (*HIG8-06: Dawn*). In the 5th Edition adventure *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* jackalweres are listed as a random encounter in the outer fringes of the Dreadwood forest in southern Keoland.

Historical Reference

Thrills and Chills in *Dragon* #68 includes jackalweres as suitable creatures for a campaign set in the ice age. *DMGR5: Creative Campaigning* lists the jackalwere as a suitable creature for an African-themed campaign, as does *The Dark Continent* in *Dragon* #189. However, *HR6: Age of Heroes* indicates that jackalweres are not appropriate creatures for a campaign based in historical Greece.

Ravenloft

Jackalweres feature prominently in the Ravenloft adventure *Hour of the Knife*. Set in Paridon, which is the Ravenloft analog of pre-industrial London, the adventure is a complicated murder mystery in which Sodo,

the doppelganger darklord of the domain, and his right-hand-man-turned-traitor, Sir Edmund Bloodsworth (also a doppelganger) both play an important role. Sir Edmund Bloodsworth is in league with a pack of jackalweres, led by his huntsman, Bardan. So integral are the shapechangers to the story that the adventure offers a number of clarifications of how jackalweres' special abilities work.

We learn that a jackalwere can, in fact, not imitate a specific person, but can only choose up to three main characteristics of its human form. The remainder are determined randomly. So, for example, a jackalwere could choose to be female, with red hair and a distinguishing feature of livid scar across her face. But the woman's height, build, and overall level of attractiveness/ugliness will be outside of the control of the creature. The jackalwere's body does have a shape "memory" though, enabling it to return to a form that it has previously taken. This means that jackalweres (at least in Ravenloft) tend to have a few favorite human shapes that they regularly return to. They can retain up to four different patterns in this shape memory.

As detailed here, jackalweres are also able to use their gaze in combat, provided that the target is unsuspecting. Even if an opponent is actively trying to avoid its gaze during the battle, there is still a 20% chance each round of meeting the jackalwere's gaze.

The official Ravenloft fan site released an unofficial sequel to *Hour of the Knife* titled *Shadow of the Knife*. Jackalweres feature in this adventure too, although not quite as prominently as in the original.



Hour of the Knife (1994)

Deceptive, bloodthirsty shapechangers are a pretty good fit for the Ravenloft setting in general, so it isn't surprising that jackalweres show up in other domains. They can be encountered in Kartakass (*RA1: Feast of Goblins*), the deserts of Har'akir (*RA3: Touch of Death*), and even rarely in Count Strahd's domain of Barovia (*Ravenloft Campaign Setting*). Jackalweres are also listed in the general Ravenloft encounter tables in *MC10: Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix*.

The darklord of the woodland domain of Farelle is a jackalwere named Jack Karn, but his domain gets only the briefest mention in the original Ravenloft boxed set, before becoming lost in the changes wrought by the Grand Conjunction, an event which forever changed the composition of the demiplane. The secret history of Jack Karn is detailed in *The Book of Sacrifices*, another Netbook released by the official Ravenloft fan site.

The *Cryptic Allegiances* booklet in the *Forbidden Lore* boxed set details the Ata-Bestaal, a secret society who seek to transform themselves into animals, to benefit from the peace and serenity that they believe this will bring them. This group is currently fixated on lycanthropy as a means to this end, and have a number of infected werebeasts held captive in underground cells. Unfortunately, this includes a jackalwere, who is an “infected” member of the Ata-Bestaal. Of course, we know that this makes no sense whatsoever given that jackalweres cannot pass on their condition to anyone else.



Musaf ibn-Talir, *Dragon Magazine Annual #2* (1997)

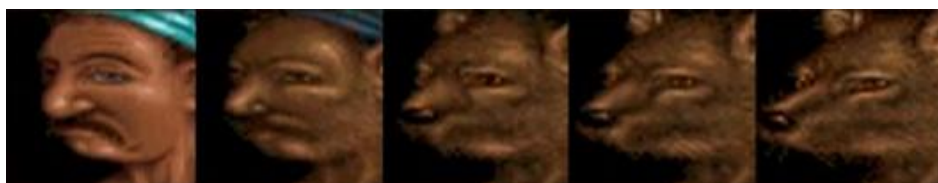
The Gothic Earth Gazetteer lists the jackalwere as an appropriate creature to use in *Masque of the Red Death*, Ravenloft’s alternative Earth subsetting, and *Dragon Magazine Annual #2* presents a jackalwere as one of its *Villains of Gothic Earth*. Named Musaf ibn-Talir, this wretch began life as an ordinary human resident of Jerusalem but fell into a life of crime, at first as a street thug, then as a robber, and finally as a blood-thirsty murderer, killing only for pleasure. Eventually he embraced the whispers in his head and became a servant of the Red Death, transforming into a jackalwere, so better to spread his evil, violence and pain.

Spelljammer

Early in her career, Chilla Irontooth, a warrior residing on the legendary *Spelljammer*, is said to have won a pitched battle with a jackalwere thanks to the eponymous cold iron canines she has implanted in her jaw (*The Legends of Spelljammer*). Since she is from the Land of Kasros in the sphere of Homespaces, we can infer that jackalweres may be found in Homespaces.

Computer games

At least two D&D computer games have featured jackalweres.



Sethir Ra, *Ravenloft II: Stone Prophet* (1995)

Ravenloft II: Stone Prophet features a cleric named Sethir Ra who can join the party, and in *Icewind Dale: Trials of the Luremaster*, there is an encounter with an elderly female jackalwere named Rikasha. She is quite friendly, and provides some important quest clues. The other jackalwere residents of the caves are much less amenable.



Icewind Dale: Trials of the Luremaster (2001), image from [Black Isle Studios Games](#)

Jackalwere names

Ahln-Veer, Archaix, Asaph abdul Anat, Avani, Bardan, Cunningham, Elfskinner, Erdlo, Hamebi, Hekkyl, Inbar, Jack Karn, Jeane Wraj, Jydde, Kanda, Sister Kaylen, Khologo, Korvala, Mahlmet, Marliza, Marnis, Musaf ibn-Talir, Ramah, Relix, Rikasha, Sethir Ra, Theryn, Torrence, Twaine Stone, Ulquar, Zan.

Comparative statistics

For 4th Edition, the jackalwere deceiver was used for comparison purposes.

					
Edition	AD&D (1st Edition)	AD&D 2nd Edition	D&D 3.X Edition	D&D 4th Edition	D&D 5th Edition
Source	Monster Manual	Monstrous Manual	Fiend Folio	Monster Manual 3	Monster Manual
Size	S (M)	S (3' long) as a jackal M (6' tall) as a human or hybrid	Small/Medium	Medium	Medium
Type			Beast (Shapechanger)	Natural humanoid (shapechanger)	Humanoid (shapechanger)
Alignment	Chaotic evil	Chaotic evil	Usually chaotic evil	Evil	Chaotic evil
No. Appearing	1-4	1-4	1 or 2-4 plus 1-6 jackals		
Armor Class	4	4	17	18	12
Hit Points	4 HD	4 HD	4d8+8 (26hp)	54 hp	18 (4d8)
Speed	12"	12	40 ft. (as jackal), 30 ft. (as humanoid or hybrid)	6	40 ft.
Abilities	Int Very	Int Very (11-12) Morale Steady (11-12)	Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 12	Str 15, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 16	Str 11, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 10
Senses			Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision	Perception +3	Perception +2, Keen Hearing and Smell
Saves			Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3	Fort 15, Ref 16, Will 16	
Attacks	1	1	Bite +5 melee (jackal or hybrid), scimitar +5 as humanoid	Bite +9 vs. AC, short sword +9 vs. AC	Bite +4 (jackal or hybrid), scimitar +4 (human or hybrid)
Damage	2-8	2-8 (2d4)	Bite 1d4+1 (jackal); bite 1d6+1, scimitar 1d6 (hybrid); scimitar 1d6+1 (humanoid)	Bite 1d6 + 4 and target falls prone; short sword 2d6+5	Bite 4 (1d4+2), scimitar 5 (1d6+2)
Special Attacks	Gaze causes sleep	Gaze causes sleep	Sleep gaze	Vicious Howl, Gaze of Sleep	Sleep gaze, Pack tactics
Special Defenses	Iron or +1 weapons to hit	Hit only by iron and +1 or better magical weapons	DR 5/iron		Immune to non-magical weapon damage from weapons that aren't silvered
XP	800 + 4/hp	270	CR 2	175	Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)
Treasure	20% 1-12 x 1000 copper 30% 1-6 x 1000 silver 10% 1-4 x 1000 electrum 25% 1-6 gems 20% 1-3 jewelry 10% any 2 maps or magic items	20% 1-10 x 1000 copper 30% 1-6 x 1000 silver 10% 1-10 x 100 electrum/platinum 25% 1-6 gems 20% 1-3 art objects 10% any 2 magical items	Standard		

References

[*Monster Manual*](#), p56 (December 1977)
[*Dungeon Masters Guide*](#), p45, 128, 205 (August 1979)
The Dragon #32, pM8, The Fell Pass (December 1979)
[*Q1: Queen of the Demonweb Pits*](#), p5, 11, 18 (June 1980)
Dragon #42, p12, Patron Demons (October 1980)
[*Fiend Folio*](#), p113 (July 1981)
Dragon #52, inside front cover (August 1981)
Dragon #54, p11, Ruins: Rotted & Risky But Rewarding (October 1981)
Dragon #68, p73, Thrills and Chills: Ice Age Adventures (December 1982)
[*I2: Tomb of the Lizard King*](#), p19 (January 1983)
[*Monster Manual II*](#), p82 (August 1983)
[*UK4: When a Star Falls*](#), p6, (June 1984)
Dragon #91, p57, Treasure Trove (November 1984)
[*T1-4: Temple of Elemental Evil*](#), p78 (August 1985)
[*N3: Destiny of Kings*](#), p5 (February 1986)
Polyhedron #31, *Ravager*, p14-15 (September 1986)
[*C6: The Official RPGA Tournament Handbook*](#), p57 (March 1987)
[*FR1: Waterdeep and the North*](#), p27 (October 1987)
Dungeon #8, p24, In Defense of the Law (November 1987)
Dragon #130, p40, Better Living Through Alchemy (February 1988)
Dragon #130, p71-78, If Looks Could Kill (February 1988)
[*FR6: Dreams of the Red Wizards*](#), p45 (November 1988)
[*FR7: Hall of Heroes*](#), p37 (February 1989)
[*FR2: Curse of the Azure Bonds*](#), p92 (March 1989)
Shadowdale (April 1989)
[*FRE1: Shadowdale*](#), p28-29 (May 1989)
[*MC1: Monstrous Compendium Volume One*](#) (June 1989)
[*MC2: Monstrous Compendium Volume Two*](#) (August 1989)
[*FRE3: Waterdeep*](#), inside cover (September 1989)
Dungeon #21, p55, The Chest of Aloeids (January 1990)
[*WG12: Vale of the Mage*](#), p28 (January 1990)
[*MC5: Monstrous Compendium Greyhawk Adventures Appendix*](#) (April 1990)
[*Ravenloft: Realm of Terror*](#), p83 (June 1990)
[*The Horde Barbarian Campaign Setting, Volume II*](#), p117, 123 (August 1990)
[*RA1: Feast of Goblyns*](#), p5 (September 1990)
[*MC10: Monstrous Compendium Ravenloft Appendix*](#) (February 1991)
[*Maztica Campaign Set, Maztica Alive!*](#), p63 (June 1991)
[*FMA1: Fires of Zatal*](#), p18, 19, 21 (August 1991)
[*The Legend of Spelljammer, Captains and Ships*](#), p37 (August 1991)
GR4: Treasure Chest, Best Served Cold (February 1992)
[*FMQ1: City of Gold*](#), p43, 46 (March 1992)
[*Forbidden Lore, Cryptic Allegiances*](#), p18 (October 1992)
[*RA3: Touch of Death*](#), p6 (October 1992)

[DMGR5: Creative Campaigning](#), p25 (January 1993)
 Dragon #189, p13, The Dark Continent (January 1993)
 Cardmaster Adventure Design Deck (June 1993)
[Monstrous Manual](#), p210, 230 (June 1993)
[RR7: Van Richten's Guide to Werebeasts](#), p20 (July 1993)
[Book of Artifacts](#), p122 (September 1993)
[PHBR11: The Complete Ranger's Handbook](#), p20 (December 1993)
 CR4: Deck of Encounters, Set One (January 1994)
[HR6: Age of Heroes](#), p63 (March 1994)
[Ravenloft Campaign Setting](#), Domains and Denizens, p10, 83 (May 1994)
 CR5: Deck of Encounters, Set Two (June 1994)
[City of Splendors](#), Campaign Guide to the City, p63, 66 (July 1994)
[Hour of the Knife](#), p4, 7-8, 20, 28, 30-31, 34, 38-39, 41-42, 44-45 (September 1994)
[Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium Appendix III: Creatures of Darkness](#), p83 (October 1994)
 Dungeon #53, p33-36, A Serenade Before Supper (May 1995)
[The Gothic Earth Gazetteer](#), cover (November 1995)
 Ravenloft II: Stone Prophet (1995)
[Faiths & Avatars](#), p106 (March 1996)
[The Rod of Seven Parts](#), Book II: The War Against Chaos, p3, 15 (August 1996)
 Murder in Halruua (October 1996)
[Undermountain: Stardock](#), inside cover (January 1997)
 Dragon #238, p21, Villains, Like Fine Wine (August 1997)
 Dragon Magazine Annual #2, p115, Villains of Gothic Earth (November 1997)
[Four from Cormyr](#), p127 (November 1997)
 Dungeon #66, p22 (January 1998)
[Crypt of Lyzandred the Mad](#), p25 (October 1998)
 Star of Cursrah (February 1999)
[Monsters of Faerûn](#), p92 (February 2001)
 Icewind Dale: Trials of the Luremaster (June 2001)
 DYV1-01: Dine and Dash, p3-4, 9, 16, 20, 21, 25 (2001)
[Blood Spawn: Creatures of Light and Shadow](#), p81 (January 2002)
[The Book of Sacrifices](#), p85 (January 2002)
 The Tome of Horrors, p306 (November 2002)
[Fiend Folio](#), p107 (April 2003)
 D&D v.3.5 Accessory Update, p24 (July 2003)
[Shadow of the Knife](#), p3, 8, 20, 29 (October 2003)
[Serpent Kingdoms](#), p189 (July 2004)
[Sharn: City of Towers](#), p176 (November 2004)
[Dungeon #120](#), p20-37, The Obsidian Eye (March 2005)
 NYR6-M01: A Lament in Entrell, p11-12, 18, 20, 23, 27, 30-31 (2006)
 FUR7-03: Illusions and Dreams, p11-12, 15, 27-30, 32, 35 (2007)
 HIG8-06: Dawn, p7 (2008)
[Dragon #387](#), p83, Alumni: Monster Manual (May 2010)
[Monster Manual 3](#), p120-121, 212 (June 2010)
 ELTU3-6: True Blue, p33 (August 2011)

[Dungeon #196](#), p66, 73, Backdrop: Moonshae Isles (November 2011)
[Halls of Undermountain](#), p65, (April 2012)
SPEC5-1: Morthac's Mansion, p19 (January 2013)
Wizards of the Coast website, [Legends and Lore: Whose Story Is It, Anyway](#) (March 2014)
[Monster Manual](#), p193 (September 2014)
[Dungeon Master's Guide](#), p302, 303, 306 (December 2014)
[DDEX3-1: Harried in Hillsfar](#), p25-29 (August 2015)
[Princes of the Apocalypse](#), p30 (April 2015)
The Devil You Know (October 2016)
Volo's Guide to Monsters, p62 (November 2016)
[Ghosts of Saltmarsh](#), p22, 24 (May 2019)
[Acquisitions Incorporated](#), p109 (June 2019)
[Candlekeep Mysteries](#), p27, 30-34 (March 2021)

Other ENCyclopedia entries

Visit the [Monster ENCyclopedia index](#) for links to other entries in this series.

Comments? Suggestions?

Visit the [discussion thread](#) on ENWorld.
