

## Monster ENCyclopedia: Lamia

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. We are covering one creature from a hypothetical *Utterly Complete Monster Manual* for each letter of the alphabet, and the letter "L" entry is dedicated to the lamia.

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### Contents

|   |                                      |  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <a href="#">Origins</a>                   | <a href="#">Lamias and magic</a>     | <a href="#">Kingdoms of Kalamar</a>    |
| <a href="#">1st Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Al-Qadim</a>             | <a href="#">Mystara</a>                |
| <a href="#">2nd Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Birthright</a>           | <a href="#">Nerath</a>                 |
| <a href="#">3rd Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Dark Sun</a>             | <a href="#">Ravenloft</a>              |
| <a href="#">3.5 Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Dragonlance</a>          | <a href="#">Spelljammer</a>            |
| <a href="#">4th Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Eberron</a>              | <a href="#">Theros</a>                 |
| <a href="#">5th Edition</a>               | <a href="#">Forgotten Realms</a>     | <a href="#">Miniatures</a>             |
| <a href="#">Lamia gods</a>                | <a href="#">Ghostwalk</a>            | <a href="#">Lamia names</a>            |
| <a href="#">Lamia relatives</a>           | <a href="#">Greyhawk</a>             | <a href="#">Comparative statistics</a> |
| <a href="#">Lamias and other monsters</a> | <a href="#">Historical Reference</a> | <a href="#">References</a>             |
| <a href="#">Lamia parts</a>               | <a href="#">Hyborian Age</a>         |  |

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### Origins

In Greek mythology, Lamia was a queen unwisely involved in a dispute with Hera over her husband's infidelity. Hera cursed her, causing Lamia to hunt and devour children, in the process turning into a horrible monster. It isn't clear what role Zeus played in Lamia's transformation but it seems that he gave her the ability to remove her own eyes and with it the gift of prophecy. Some versions of the legend have Lamia drinking the blood of children, or refer to vampire-like lamias (plural), who seduce young men to feed on their blood. Common to most lamia myths are the lamia's gluttonous thirst for blood, its general uncleanliness and limited wits.



*The History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607), image from [The Public Domain Review](#)

The greek word for lamia is Λάμια, which is a species of fierce shark, and the lamia may have originally been envisaged as having the form of a large shark. A more common image is that of a half-woman, half-serpent monster, but the D&D version was likely inspired by the picture of the half-beast/half-woman in *The History of Four-Footed Beasts*, published by Edward Topsell in 1607. This was a treatise on the animals of the world, not based on Topsell's own observations, but on accounts from a variety of sources, some clearly a lot less reliable than others.

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## 1st Edition

In the three and a half centuries between *The History of Four-Footed Beasts*, and the *Monster Manual*, the lamia gained a few points of comeliness, shed its scales and grew two additional limbs. The D&D lamia has a pair of arms attached to the human torso in addition to two hooved legs at the rear and two pawed legs at the front. Despite being larger than a human, they are listed as only medium sized. Gone (for now) are the lamia's scales and any connection to serpents. Lamias are very rare, solitary, chaotic evil creatures. According to the *Monster Manual*, they make their homes in ruined desert cities, or desert caves, but the *Dungeon Masters Guide* extends their habitat to include forests and rough terrain, and *Dragon #54* notes their preference for ruins. Lamias accumulate a decent pile of treasure, mostly coins, but perhaps some gems, jewellery or magic items. They can speak common, and in 1st Edition, also the chaotic evil alignment language.



*Monster Manual* (1977)

The statistics in the *Monster Manual* paint a picture of a fast moving (24"), reasonably powerful creature which spends most of its time (60%) in or near its lair. They have 9 hit dice and an armor class of 3. Lamias have a single physical attack for a mere 1-4 points of damage, and are usually armed with daggers. They have access to a number of spells each day: *charm person*, *mirror image*, *suggestion*, and *illusion*. D&D lamias are more intelligent than the mythological versions, and put their spells to good effect. Victims lured in by the lamia's spells are consumed in three stages. First, the lamia drains wisdom, with each touch draining one point. Someone with a wisdom reduced to two will do whatever the lamia tells it, which often involves the next step, where the lamia consumes the hapless victim's blood. Finally, the lamia feasts on the victim's flesh.

Four years later, the *Fiend Folio* introduced the lamia noble. These are half-woman (or half-man) and half-serpent, reflecting the serpentine lamias from mythology. Noble lamias have one additional hit die (10+1), poorer armor class (6), and move more slowly (9"), but are otherwise similar to ordinary lamias. They have the same spells and wisdom draining-touch that lamias have, but gain other abilities depending on gender.



*Fiend Folio* (1981)

Males wield short swords (1-6 damage) and are mages of level 1-6. Females do not use weapons but are mages of level 2-8. Lamia nobles rule over the other lamias and the areas they inhabit, and they can take human form to infiltrate human societies, aided by the ability to speak all human and demihuman languages. Characters of level 7 or more have a chance to see through this guise (10% per level over 6), with clerics particularly likely to notice (+15% chance). Lamia nobles are given to outbursts of senseless violence. Random encounters with lamias are with nobles 10% of the time.

Both lamias and noble lamias appeared several times in 1st Edition adventures and supplements. *EX2: The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror* contains encounters with lamias (on the chessboard) and a lamia noble. The noble maintains the illusion of a well-stocked shop on a river bank, just to lure in victims. Because this is an adventure based on *Through the Looking-Glass*, the encounter doesn't feel out of place and the illusion is enticingly described. The more the adventurers attempt to inspect the shelves, the more vague and uncertain the contents become. Where they stare, the shelves appear bare, but in the corners of their eyes they constantly glimpse glowing magic items, glittering gems, and tantalizing food supplies. The lamia's trickery doesn't stop after her death. One of her treasures is a bracelet set with *wish*-granting gems. However, the only possible way to find out that the gems store *wish* spells is to cast a *wish* spell.

In *UK4: When a Star Falls*, a lamia has been trapped by a rock-fall triggered by the impact of the shooting-star. In their investigations of a derro lair, the adventurers are likely to accidentally free her. Another lamia is tending a fungi garden in *T1-4: Temple of Elemental Evil*. She combines her powers of illusion with the suggestion that the fungi have dangerous spores which can trigger insanity, hoping that sympathetic characters may restrain any "insane" companions who try to attack her. A lamia is a possible random encounter in the desert of Arir or sewers of Khaibar in *I9: Day of Al'Akbar*. There is an encounter with a lamia in the *AD&D Adventure Gamebook Curse of the Werewolf*. Although the text refers to it only as a lamia, from the description, it is probably a lamia noble.

The first mention of a "lamia" in *Dragon Magazine* seems to be in issue #17, but there it is used simply as a synonym for vampire. A review of the then recently-released *Fiend Folio* in *Dragon* #55 criticizes the lamia noble as an unnecessary mutation of an existing creature. *Dragon* #93 gives the pronunciation of lamia as LAY-mee-a, LA-mee-a, or rarely, la-MY-ah.

Towards the end of 1st Edition, a lamia noble graced the cover of *Dragon #136* in a work by Ken Wilings titled “Holding Court”. The byline notes that it isn’t only humans who rule cities or nations, and a lamia noble’s ability to command obedience by touch makes her particularly suited to rulership. Of course, since nobles are also given to outbursts of senseless violence, the fate of her captive is questionable.



*Dragon #136* (1988)

In *The Ruins of Andril* in *Dragon #81*, an adventurous lamia named Feyodena is one of the monsters investigating a monument in a disappearing city. She is there because she thinks that it will attract adventurers, whom she wishes to rob and/or eat. To achieve this, the lamia has an illusionary spirit solicit “offerings” from them early on in the adventure. Later she partners with a gynosphinx to attack the group. Feyodena appears to be half-horse rather than half-beast, and has four hooves.



**Feyodena**, *Dragon #81* (1984)



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## 2nd Edition

In the 2nd Edition *Monstrous Compendium Volume Two*, the lamia and lamia noble share a page. In both cases, the statistics are unchanged, but the climate and terrain (“deserts, caves and ruined cities”) and diet (“carnivore”) are now specified. The lamia noble gains 30% magic resistance, which it did not have in 1st Edition. Both types have elite (14) morale. Strangely, lamias now sometimes smell like perfume flowers, to attract unwary victims. This odor is a uniquely 2nd Edition characteristic.

Lamias no longer have front and hind legs from different creatures. They now have complete lower halves of “beasts”, with specific examples being goats, deer, and lions. The lamia’s quadruped nature is given as the reason for its speed, even though the quadrupeds it is based on do not move as swiftly. The artwork in the *Monstrous Compendium* isn’t consistent with the description. The text says that lamias wear no clothing or jewelry and are usually armed with daggers, but the picture shows a lamia wearing a headband, armband and hair braidings, and she is holding a spear.



*Monstrous Compendium Volume Two* (1989)

It’s interesting to notice that in the transition from 1st Edition to 2nd Edition, TSR became more cautious about depicting breasts. So too has the descriptive text been made slightly less visceral. Lamias are still “flesh-eating” creatures who carve people up with their daggers, and they still drain wisdom on touch, but they seem to have lost the desire to also drink the blood of their victims. When humanoid prey is rare, lamias will stalk and kill game animals for food. A lamia rarely roams more than 10 miles from its lair.

A lamia gets exactly the same spells as in 1st Edition, and casts them at 9th-level spell ability. Sometimes a lamia uses her spells to disguise herself, assuming the role of a lovely damsel in distress, a tough but beautiful female ranger, or an elf maiden. The attractiveness of the lamia is emphasized a lot more in 2nd Edition, with the human half of a lamia said to resemble a “beautiful woman” even without active spells. A lamia might also use its spells as a distraction, conjuring up lost children or villagers under attack, before launching a surprise rear attack.

The descriptive text for the lamia noble is a tidied up version of the *Fiend Folio* entry, but with one additional snippet of lore. We learn that it is rumored that normal female lamias are born from the union of two noble

lamias. Although this might seem like a trivial addition to lamia lore, it was to become the seed for much of the lamia's *Ecology* article. There is also a slight change to the noble's spellcasting abilities. Instead of being a mage of level 1-6 or 2-8 as the *Fiend Folio* stated, the text now says that they have 1d6 or 2d4 "levels of wizard spells". This could be interpreted as simply meaning that they gain a few additional spells, rather than having wizard class levels, but the NPC lamia nobles in *Dungeon #44* and *Labyrinth of Madness* assume that this means class levels.

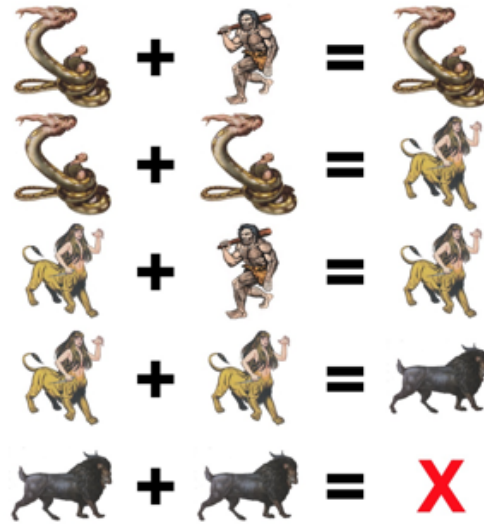


*Monstrous Manual* (1993)

When the *Monstrous Manual* collection was published four years into 2nd Edition's release, the ordinary lamia received its first color illustration. The *Monstrous Compendium* text was reprinted almost exactly, but in this version the lamia's THACO is reduced to 11 (from 12), and the lamia noble's THACO is increased to 11 (from 10). It isn't clear why the editors saw a need to harmonize the two creatures' attacks.

The lamia's *Ecology* article appears in *Dragon #192*, which was the annual April Fool's issue for 1993. Writer Spike Y. Jones focuses heavily on the love-life of the lamia in both the short story and the accompanying game notes. Although it has a humorous tone, it isn't as tongue-in-cheek as the treatment of the [catoblepas](#). Building on the note in the *Fiend Folio* that ordinary lamias are the offspring of two noble lamias, *The Ecology (Love-Life) of the Lamia* outlines a reproductive hierarchy which includes lamias, lamia nobles, and an entirely new creature, the sa'ir.

Both common and noble lamias prefer to mate with humans. Noble lamias can be male or female, and mate only with humans or noble lamias of the opposite gender. The offspring of a human and a noble lamia is a noble lamia. The offspring of two noble lamias is a common lamia. The lower half of a common lamia is determined randomly at birth, with a rough breakdown of 60% lion, 25% goat, 15% deer/antelope. Although they all appear female, common lamias are hermaphrodites, and mate with humans of either gender, or with other common lamias. The offspring of a human and a lamia is a lamia. Human females impregnated by lamias will unfortunately carry the young. The offspring of two lamias is a sa'ir. Sa'irs can be male or female, but cannot produce offspring.



**Lamia reproduction chart**

All three types of lamia experience an overwhelming desire to reproduce during at least one week of each year, but the presence of humans can trigger mating behavior outside of the normal season. After mating, lamias quickly break up. If the father is a human male, his mate may not bother to spare his life. Whether the mother is human, lamia or noble lamia, up to four lamia young are born after an eight month gestation period. Few reach maturity, as deaths are common between competitive siblings and as a result of fickle parents, so lamia numbers remain low. Surviving cubs reach maturity after four years.



**Sa'ir**, *Dragon #192* (1993)

A sa'ir is a beast of animal intelligence. It has the hindquarters of a goat and the foreparts of a lion, with a lion's head and the horns and beard of a goat. Both male and female sa'irs have lion manes. They are territorial and omnivorous. They can survive by eating only plant material but greatly prefer—even carrion—over plant matter. Sa'irs stalk prey by pretending to be grazing herbivores until they get close enough to pounce, at which point they attack with two horns (1-3 damage), two claws (1-3 damage) and a bite (1-6 damage). Since they appear to be harmless at first glance, they tend to gain a bonus to surprise. A sa'ir has 4 hit dice, an armor class of 6 (or 5 for the area protected by its thick mane).

Their social structures are similar to lion prides. Like lions, sa'irs will gorge themselves on larger prey given the opportunity. Unlike their evil progenitors, sa'ir are neutral in alignment. Sa'irs roam in small groups in the vicinity of their lamia parents. They are capable of obeying simple commands from lamias, but

communicate with each other using simple bleats. Lamias themselves are seldom found in groups, only overcoming their natural hatred of their own kind to mate, or in rare cases, to cooperate against a particularly attractive target. If the natural resources of a region are limited, then lamias are more likely to be found clustered together, but it usually takes a noble lamia to force a group to collaborate.



**Lamia noble**, *Dragon* #192 (1993)

Lamias prefer to avoid combat, and try to use their proficiency at disguise to get close enough to be able to drain wisdom from their targets. Common lamias use their *illusion* spell to disguise themselves, while noble lamias can change shape at will, leaving them free to use their *illusion* for more practical purposes, such as disguising the remains of their last victim. Maintaining an illusion requires the lamia's concentration, although the creature can still move and talk while sustaining it. Patches of an illusion may fade if the lamia is sufficiently distracted. Adventurers above 6th level, clerics and children all have a chance of seeing through any lamia's attempts to disguise itself as a human. The disguises of lamia nobles are harder to see through because of their increased skills. When in disguise, lamias sometimes pick forms which give them an excuse for minor mistakes—children, foreigners or confused peasants.

Noble lamias, who may have additional spellcasting abilities, do not have the ability to make spellbooks nor copy spells from one spellbook to another (according to the *Ecology* article) so their spell choices are limited to those in spellbooks they possess. This means that they have an inflated view of the value of human wizard slaves, so much so that competing lamia nobles may fight to the death for the possession of a competent mage. Their preferred choice of spells are illusions and mind-control spells or other spells involving deception (examples given include *feign death* and *wall of fog*). Lamia nobles generally do not choose destructive spells, as they prefer to control rather than damage potential slaves or mates.



The *Ecology* article gives more detail of the wisdom draining process. It requires that the lamia's hand touch the victim's bare skin for "most of a minute" to drain each point, so is rarely used in combat. A lamia may try to surreptitiously drain a target's wisdom over a period of time, but lamias tend to be impatient creatures, and struggle to mask their violent tendencies long enough for an effective infiltration; an intelligence ability check is required each hour for a lamia to avoid losing its temper. A victim fully drained of Wisdom lacks all judgment, and forms an irrational bond with the lamia, making him or her unable to leave the enslavement, even if given the opportunity to do so. If forced into combat, a lamia slave takes a -6 penalty on attacks and saving throws because of their impaired judgement. Any emotional torture faced by such a slave is usually short lasting, because lamias seldom keep slaves or mates alive for very long. However, there have been rare reports of humans released unharmed by lamias because of an emotional bond formed by the lamia.

When forced into physical combat, a lamia will use its hooves and/or claws as well as wielding weapons with its upper limbs. If the lamia's treasure trove contains magical weapons, it will put them to use. Male noble lamias prefer swords; common lamias and female nobles prefer daggers (a change from the *Fiend Folio*). The *Ecology* article provides some variations in the statistics for lion-type, goat-type and deer-type lamias. Lion-types have 9 hit dice, goat-types 7 hit dice and deer-types 5 hit dice. Deer-type lamias have a faster speed. Lion-type lamias have stronger attacks, and a bonus hind claw rake. Experience values vary between 650 and 4,000 for the three sub-types.

Most 2nd Edition supplements were linked to campaign settings, but lamias do appear in some generic adventures and accessories. *Terrible Trouble at Tragidore*, a rather subpar adventure packaged with the 2nd Edition *REF1: Dungeon Master's Screen*, has a lamia in league with a drow. They are responsible for kidnapping citizens of Tragidore to work as part of an illegal mining operation. In the adventure *Train of Events* in *Dungeon #44*, circumstances force a lamia noble named Montalaina into working with derro and duergar in an adventure involving a dwarven steam train. *HHQ4: Cleric's Challenge* has a lamia named Chamille who pretends to be a recently rescued maiden. Her dwarven guards support this story because they have been drained of wisdom and charmed. Unless the heroes see through this subterfuge, they face a surprise attack.

*She-Beast* is an encounter in *CR4: Deck of Encounters, Set One* with a lamia who conjures up the illusion of a stampeding herd of beasts to drive the adventurers towards her so that she can *charm* and then kill them. A more interesting encounter is *The Ladies' Tea and Hospitality Society* in *CR5: Deck of Encounters, Set Two*. Here, the adventurers are at a high society gala event when they realize that the hosts are disguised lamia nobles, setting up a potential confrontation while the heroes do not necessarily have their weapons and armor with them. Another encounter in *Set Two*, titled *Ghost Town*, has the PCs returning to a recently visited small town to find it decimated by a lamia. They stumble on the creature, clearly not yet sated, devouring the carcass of a horse.

*Labyrinth of Madness* includes an encounter with a female lamia noble, Shslinsi, who isn't really committed to the fight, and likely to flee if outmatched. The last adventure in the collection *A Hero's Tale* is titled *The Abados*. It takes place in an extradimensional fortress in the Ethereal Plane. The lamia noble Shalshinis has inherited this demiplane from its wizard creator and she is served by slaadi summoned from Limbo. It turns out that Shalshinis is Shslinsi's twin sister. At the beginning of this adventure she is away, searching the Labyrinth of Madness for her lost sibling.



**Shalshinis**, *A Hero's Tale* (1996)

Two of the *Complete Handbooks* make mention of lamias. *PHBR11: The Complete Ranger's Handbook* notes that the lamia is a suitable desert species enemy. *PHBR13: The Complete Druid's Handbook* presents a new branch of the class, desert druids, who gain the power to speak the languages of desert-dwelling intelligent creatures, including lamias.

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### 3rd Edition

The most striking thing about the 3rd Edition *Monster Manual* lamia is that he's male. This dispenses with two things: large chunks of the lamia's complicated reproductive cycle, and any lingering 2nd Edition need to show the lamia in a pose which hides its breasts. Instead, we get to see a muscular torso and an angry red-eyed face draped with hair resembling a lion's mane.



*Monster Manual* (2000)

The entry states that most lamias are a cross between a stunningly attractive human, and either a lion, a deer or a goat. Their basic nature is unchanged; they are evil, cruel, and enjoy causing suffering. They are given a slightly more specific focus for their sadism, seeking to target those who serve the causes of good. The text doesn't mention their solitary nature, and according to the statistics, lamias can be encountered in pairs or in gangs of up to four. The fact that this entry reflects only "most" lamias seems to be the only hint that noble lamias still exist.

Mechanically, the 3rd Edition lamia is still a 9 hit dice creature. It has a speed of 60 ft., an armor class of 17, and is medium-sized, although it can advance to 27 hit dice and become huge in size. Despite the muscular illustration, the description implies that this lamia is physically weak. It has fairly feeble claw or hoof attacks (no damage is even listed for these) supplemented by weapons (daggers) wielded in its upper arms. It has the *dodge*, *iron will*, *mobility*, and *weapon finesse* feats.

Lamias prefer to lure their victims into perilous situations before attacking. The spell list remains almost unchanged from 1st/2nd Edition, with the lamia able to cast (once per day) *charm person*, *mirror image*, *suggestion* and *major image* replacing *illusion*. Lamias retain their wisdom drain, permanently draining one point with a successful touch attack. If possible, they try to drain wisdom before using spells, to improve the target's susceptibility.

As we'll soon see, the lamia was revised heavily for the *Monster Manual v.3.5*, but the 3.0 version made a few appearances in supplementary material first. *Dragon Annual #5* contains *101 Evil Schemes*, which notes that if something is feeding off the local population, adventurers are much more likely to think of a vampire than a lamia. It suggests that a lamia might take advantage of this by spreading rumors of vampires to hide its own insidious plans.

One of the *Fight Club* series of articles on the Wizards of the Coast website details a lamia wizard named Sowellleile who stumbled onto the evil arcane knowledge of how to bond a demon's skin to one's own. Versions of Sowellleile are presented as 1st and 5th level wizards, and then with an additional five levels of the acolyte of the skin prestige class from *Tome and Blood*.



**Gleir**, *Dungeon #88* (2001)

A lamia named Gleir plays a significant role in the adventure *The Seventh Arm* and on the cover of *Dungeon #88*. She is a wily opponent and makes good use of both her magical abilities and a neighboring water elemental to deceive and trick the adventurers. Gleir has a *potion of fire breath* and a *potion of cure light wounds* which she readily uses, if needed.

The *Book of Challenges* contains a surprisingly detailed encounter with a green hag and a lamia, which uses the set-up of a preceding encounter with a friendly nymph and dryad. The hag uses her *change self* ability to pretend to be the nymph and cunningly warns that looking at her will cause blindness, making it less likely the heroes will see through her disguise. The lamia creates an illusion of a hill giant attacking the dryad's tree. This illusion masks a cluster of assassin vines, luring any PCs charging the giant into the plant's grasp. Even if the heroes prevail over the vines and the illusionary giant, the lamia still has a card to play. Pretending to be the grateful dryad, she rewards one of the heroes with a wisdom-draining kiss.

There was some limited mechanical support for playing a lamia character in 3.0 Edition. *Monsters with Class* in *Dragon #293* lists the lamia as having an Effective Character Level (ECL) of 12. This was adjusted to 13 in *Savage Species*, where more detailed rules for playing monstrous characters were presented. The lamia is only mentioned in the summary tables of *Savage Species*, but someone wanting to play a lamia would be much better off waiting for the 3.5 version, in any case.

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### 3.5 Edition

In previous Monster ENCyclopedia entries, it has been safe enough to treat the 3.0 and 3.5 versions of each creature in one entry. Not so for the lamia! The *Monster Manual v.3.5* gives the lamia a potent update. It has grown into a large creature, about 8 feet long and weighing about 700 pounds. This size upgrade reduces the lamia's armor class slightly, but it gains an increase in strength from 10 to 18, and a corresponding increase in melee attacks and damage. It has an extra claw attack (1d4+4 damage) and the *spring attack* feat to make use of it. Instead of being physically weak, the lamia is described as powerful and dangerous in close combat, but still preferring to use its illusions to lure victims into an unfair fight.

The lamia's touch permanently drains not just one point of wisdom now, but 1d4 points, and the text clarifies that this ability doesn't provide any healing to the lamia. The spells previously available to the lamia once per day (*charm monster*, *major image*, *mirror image* and *suggestion*) can now be used three times daily, and *deep slumber* is an additional daily ability. A lamia can use *disguise self* and *ventriloquism* at will. Some of the non-combat details are also updated. The lamia's environment changes from "any desert, hill, and underground" to "temperate deserts", and it gains darkvision 60 ft and low-light vision as additional senses. Remarkably, all of these changes leave the lamia's challenge rating of 6 unaltered.

Following its promotion in the *Monster Manual v.3.5*, the lamia appeared in a few supplementary sources. An article in the *Tactics and Tips* series on the Wizards of the Coast website provides knowledge (arcana) lore entries for the lamia, but notes that lamias are slippery enough to deliberately sow misinformation about themselves. In another website article from the *Random Encounters* series, a trio of lamias has taken a band of desert nomads as slaves. Although their numbers fall whenever the lamias get hungry, the surviving nomads are kept charmed and used to lure other travelers into the creatures' grasp.



As well as featuring ordinary lamias in several encounters, *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* updates lamia nobles for 3rd Edition, and restores them to their position as the progenitors of the normal lamias. Following the trend set in the *Monster Manual*, the artwork depicts another male specimen.



**Lamia Noble**, *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* (2007)

In 3rd Edition, all lamia nobles have sorcerer levels; one to six for males or two to eight for females. The statistics block provided is for a 7th-level female lamia, and already incorporates her sorcerer levels. Like the 3.5 Edition lamia, nobles are large creatures and the example has 15 hit dice. They favor longspears in melee, but also have a tail slap and a special *constrict* attack.

Before engaging in melee combat, a lamia noble is likely to use its spells and spell-like abilities. In addition to sorcerer spells, nobles can use *charm person*, *mirror image*, *persistent image*, and *suggestion* three times each day. The *silent spell* feat gives them the element of surprise for some magical attacks. The lamia noble's touch only drains 1 point of wisdom, but it gains 1 point of temporary charisma whenever it uses the ability.

Nobles enjoy assuming human form in order to trap and drain humanoids. Their disguises are imperfect, and more observant opponents might notice snakelike eyes or patches of scales. Lamia nobles take a particular delight in draining cleric, monk or paladin victims. Some humanoids are kept as slaves, but others are simply eaten. Nobles are just as prone to senseless outbursts of extreme violence as they were in earlier incarnations.

Lamia nobles are solitary creatures, living in deserts, caves and ruined cities on the edges of civilizations, where they sometimes guard places or objects of power. They value gems and magic items, particularly scrolls, books, rings and jewelry. Although the description notes that common lamias are the offspring of lamia nobles, there is no mention of how new nobles are created, nor any reference to nobles mating with humans.

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## 4th Edition

The first hint that the 4th Edition lamia is a little different from its predecessors comes from a black and white drawing included in the Feywild chapter of the preview book *Wizards Presents: Worlds and Monsters*. The image depicts a female humanoid covered in beetles.



*Wizards Presents: Worlds and Monsters* (2008)

The *Monster Manual* confirms that the lamia is no longer a half-human, half-beast/snake creature. In its true form, a lamia is now a swarm of black scarab beetles clinging to the bones of a powerful fey creature. The swarm has a collective intelligence, and the lamia can still take on humanoid forms (usually human, elf, eladrin or drow) to trick and lure its victims, but that's about all they have in common with the lamias of earlier editions. These lamias have a strong association with fey, and know the Common and Elven languages. They seem to be motivated by a desire to consume other sentient creatures.

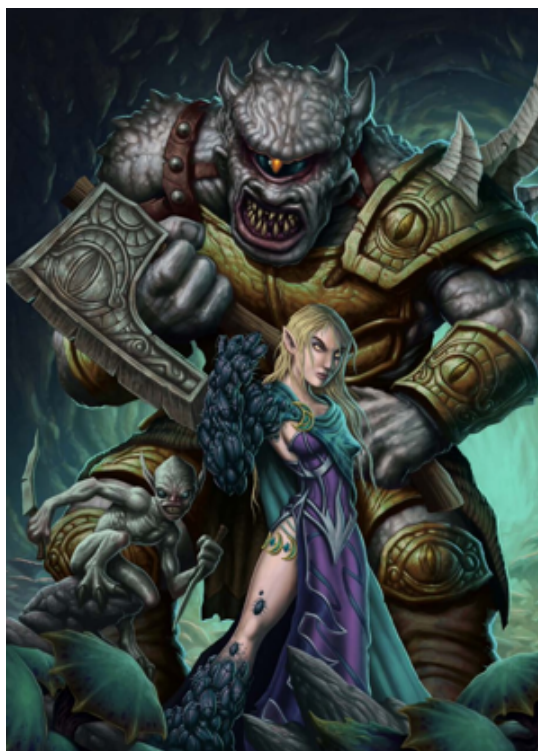
The lamia's beetle composition gives it the ability to squeeze through small openings, and it has a *devouring swarm* combat ability which can be sustained to deal significant (3d6+4) ongoing damage. It also has an aura which does constant damage (10 points) to nearby creatures. It gains a swarm's resistances to melee and ranged attacks and vulnerabilities to close and area attacks. This lamia has only limited magical abilities. It has *change shape*, a *cursed touch* (1d6+4 damage) which also dazes victims and heals the lamia, and a close-range *pacifying burst* which it can use to stun targets roughly every three rounds. Mechanically, it is a level 12 medium-sized fey magical beast. It has 244 hit points and an armor class of 28. It has a "walking" speed of 6 as well as climbing speed of 6. A lamia is evil in alignment and has 1 action point to use in combat.

As seems to be thematically appropriate for the lamia, the 4th Edition version has an unusual reproductive cycle. Each time it slays a humanoid foe, one extra beetle joins the lamia's swarm. Eventually, when the number of beetles in the swarm grows excessive, the lamia seeks out a powerful eladrin or other fey creature, slays it, and then divides in two, leaving half of its swarm inside the fresh corpse. These beetles eventually devour the body, and arise as a new lamia. Interestingly, the process of consuming the corpse leaves the resulting lamia with many of the victim's memories.



*Monster Manual (2008)*

The 4th Edition lamia featured a number of times in adventures and encounters. *Dragon* #365 includes an encounter with Maze the Enchantress, the lamia leader of a group of adventurers called the Daggerhall Explorers. Her colleagues include a vampire lord, and a hobgoblin hand of Bane. The adventure *Dark Heart of Mithrendain* in *Dungeon* #157 focuses on the lamia Jelvistra's efforts to corrupt the eladrin city of Mithrendain. She has already infiltrated the city's Council, and the adventurers must unravel the lamia's complex plots in order to confront her.



**Jelvistra**, *Dungeon* #157 (2008)

A lamia named Elesdri inhabits the 4th Edition version of the *Tomb of Horrors*. The encounter indicates that she is an undead lamia, but this doesn't seem to have any impact on her stat block. Elesdri is accompanied by two venomous scarab swarms.

In the orchards of *Vor Rukoth*, a lamia calling itself Mara formed spontaneously from beetles who fed on a tree soaked in evil energy. Disguised as a little girl, Mara sells fruit on the streets of Coyote's Refuge, but each fruit contains one of the lamia's beetles. This beetle dominates anyone who swallows it, and leads its victim deep into the surrounding fens, never to be seen again.

The *Dungeon Master's Guide 2* presents a slightly more powerful version of the standard 4th Edition lamia, a lamia devourer named Arthani, in the adventure *A Conspiracy of Doors*. She is part of a plan to disrupt trade to the planar city of Sigil, by destroying an important portal in the town of Tradegate.

As 4th Edition drew to a close, it seems that the fey lamia was replaced in the minds of designers by the desert-dwelling version of earlier editions. Both *Nerathi Legends: The Knights of Rethmil* in *Dragon* #405 and the adventure *Legacy of Ghore Thau* in *Dungeon* #218 make this mistake, including lamias on a list of potential desert encounters even though the fey version has no particular affiliation to the desert.

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## 5th Edition

James Wyatt discusses the fate of both the half-beast and beetle variations of the lamia in two *Wandering Monster* articles on the WotC website ([Creepy and Crawly—Simultaneously!](#) And [Monster Mashups](#)), which were published during the development phase of 5th Edition. He highlights the existing relationship between Graz'zt and lamias (discussed below), and suggests a connection with [jackalweres](#). The idea of lamias being immortal as a gift from Graz'zt for their services also surfaces here for the first time. While it is clear from these articles that the lamia will again be a half-beast creature in 5th Edition, Wyatt notes that he also likes the 4th Edition version of the lamia and suggests making it a variation of the larva mage as a way of keeping it in the game. The larva mage was eventually published in *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* as a type of star spawn, so it would seem that this idea was unfortunately abandoned.



*Monster Manual* (2014)



The most recent *Monster Manual* restores the lamia firmly to a half-human, half-beast form. The upper body is that of a beautiful humanoid (male or female) but the lower half is now always that of a lion. The lamia maintains the large size it had in the *Monster Manual v.3.5*, but it has a much more regal appearance, wearing clothing, jewelry and other adventuring gear. Lamias lair in ruined desert cities and lost tombs, and decorate their homes with a combination of stolen finery and magical illusions. They often have breathtaking gardens and well decorated dwellings, at odds with the ruins they inhabit. Lamias surround themselves with sycophantic servants and numerous slaves. They now know the Common and Abyssal languages.

Lamias are less solitary creatures than previously. They have a special relationship with jackalweres, who serve them by capturing slaves, and attacking caravans and villages aided by the lamia's magic. Lamias are anxious to gain more wealth and slaves, and constantly use a pool of water or mirror to *scry* trade routes and nearby settlements to look for targets. They use their magic to lure victims to their lairs. Beauty and strength are prized by the lamia, but it is a hedonistic creature that hungers for torture and humanoid flesh. Slaves who fall short are eaten or abandoned to die in the desert. Some slaves are beguiled with *geas* spells and forced to fight against each other for the lamia's amusement.



*Monster Manual* (2014)

Despite its noble appearance, the lamia still enjoys torture and hungers for humanoid flesh. It delights in seducing and corrupting pure-hearted adventurers, savoring their destruction. The wisdom-draining touch has been replaced by an *intoxicating touch*, which gives the target disadvantage on wisdom saves and ability checks for an hour. This makes the lamia's target more susceptible to its spells, which include *geas* (daily), *charm person*, *mirror image*, *scrying*, *suggestion* (all thrice daily), and *disguise self* (humanoid form) and *major image* at will.

Lamias have 13 hit dice (97 hit points), an armor class of 13 and a speed of 30 ft. Lamias prefer to fight from the fringes, behind their slaves. If forced into melee, they fight with vicious black claws (+5 to hit, 2d10+3 damage) and daggers (+5 to hit, 1d4+3 damage), but attempt to spring to safety as soon as they can. *Multiattack* permits a lamia to attack with both claws and either a dagger or *intoxicating touch*. They have *darkvision* with a 60 ft. range and are chaotic evil in alignment.



*Monster Manual* (2014)

The *Monster Manual* description confirms the lamias' fealty to Graz'zt who, as we'll see shortly, makes the lamias immortal in return for their servitude.

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### Lamia gods

The lamia's *Ecology* article cites both the curses of demons and the curses of gods as potential explanations for the origins of the (noble) lamia, but it is the demon lord Graz'zt who has been the most closely associated with the lamia in all of its incarnations.

In his first appearance in the *Monsters and Magical Items* booklet of *S4: The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, it is stated that Graz'zt is served by lamias and will have 1-3 lamias with him at all times. This is repeated again in the *Monster Manual II* and sure enough, if the heroes get as far as an audience with Graz'zt in *H4: The Throne of Bloodstone* there are indeed three lamias by his side.

In 2nd Edition, demon lords took a back seat, so it is only in 3rd Edition material that the relationship with Graz'zt was expanded on. *Fiendish Codex I* notes that Graz'zt's temples are often guarded by lamias with class levels. In *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*, Graz'zt is said to include lamia nobles among the beautiful creatures he surrounds himself with. The largest city in the demon lord's realm of Azzagrat is Zelatar, and it houses the Grand Shrine of the High Lamia, a domed palace dedicated to the praise of Graz'zt. The High Lamia is Eniff of the Joss Desert, and she is the greatest priestess of all of the demon lord's lamia followers.



*Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* (2007)

Between the last print version of *Dragon Magazine* (#359) and the first 4th Edition issue (#364), Wizards of the Coast released a number of articles loosely groups into *Dragon* issues #360-#363. Unlike the print issues, and issues #364 onwards, which are available as PDFs, these issues are sadly now lost to the transience of the Internet. Issue #360 included the article *Demonomicon of Iggwilv: Graz'zt, the Dark Prince* which provided a detailed treatise of the Dark Prince.

In the article, Graz'zt is presented as a challenge rating 32 opponent, and one of his daily special abilities is that he can automatically summon 2d6 lamias or 1d4 lamia nobles. His realm is described as rife with lamias. They serve among Graz'zt's personal pleasure slaves, deal with any public insults to the demon lord made in his realm of Azzagrat, and function as his priests and representatives in dealings with mortals. The Dark Prince even has a half-field lamia daughter named Belyara. Rumor has it that she recently escaped from a powerful eladrin and seeks revenge against Graz'zt for allowing her to remain imprisoned for so long.

Even in 4th Edition, while the lamia was a beetle-swarm, it retained its allegiance to Graz'zt. The *Manual of the Planes* details the chosen of Graz'zt, lamias who are elevated to the leaders of the demon lord's cults. These creatures are much more powerful than ordinary lamias in combat, with the ability to dominate their opponents. They are also privy to rituals enabling them to conjure an aspect of Graz'zt.

The 5th Edition *Monster Manual* reveals that it is Graz'zt who is responsible for the very existence of lamias. He transforms his most loyal mortal servants into immortal lamias in return for an oath of fealty. Although Graz'zt occasionally requires that his lamias guard important locations, they are generally given free reign to spread evil as they see fit.

Despite being the creations of Graz'zt in 5th Edition, the loyalties of some lamias have previously been with other powerful beings. The *Fiendish Codex I* mentions that lamias serve Malcanthet, Queen of the Succubi, as well as noting that Iggwilv's *Demonomicon* portrays the obyrith known as Pale Night as the mother of several monstrous races, including the lamia. *Dungeon Delve* mentions a lamia loyal to Asmodeus.

*Dragon* #390 introduces several dead gods who might still be worshiped in a 4th Edition campaign. One of these is Sagawehn, a god of vermin. Because no astral corpse remains of Sagawehn some say that her legacy continues on in the beetles who make up lamias. The 4th Edition version of the lamia also has several Feywild allegiances. *Dungeon* #185 notes that lamias serve the powerful fey Selephra, the Bramble Queen. In *Dragon* #420 lamias serve as spies in the armies of Mag Tureah, the mightiest fomorian lord in the Feydark. Lamias form part of the retinue of the Prince of Satyrs, Hyrsam, as detailed in *Dragon* #422.

For some unrevealed reason, the god Valarian particularly despises lamias. Valarian is detailed in 3rd Edition's *Book of Exalted Deeds*, and has the domain of good-aligned magical beasts.

The lamias of the Anauroch desert in the Forgotten Realms worship many different gods and are said to be searching for a "true faith" (*FR13: Anauroch*). The Faerûnian god Sseth counts lamias among his acolytes (*Powers & Pantheons*). The lamias living in the Abbor-Alz ruins in the world of Greyhawk allegedly worship an ancient Suloise snake-goddess (*Dragon* #191).

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## Lamia relatives

Lamias have few direct relatives in D&D, although there is conjecture in their *Ecology* article that chimeras and wemics are also part of the lamia family. *Dragon #158* suggests that centaurs, forlarren, hybsil, korreds, satyrs, lamias and wemics together form a group of creatures it refers to as callicantzari. *Dragon #138* introduces a kind of female demon from Greek folklore known as gelloudes, and suggests that they are related to lamias.



**Carnevus Demon**, *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* (2007)

The most direct relative to the lamia is the carnevus demon, introduced in *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*. The product of a ritualized union between a tanar'ri (demon) and a lamia noble, a carnevus is a nightmarish combination of two humanoids. It has two mouths, four arms, shaggy fur and forked tongues. Unusually for demons, carnevuses have an affinity for magic. This gives them a special status in Graz'zt's realm, where many serve as members of his court. Carnevus demons with access to *invisibility* or *disguise self* spells will hide their true appearance as they move among humanoids, often doing the demon lord's bidding. Outside of Graz'zt's influence, carnevus demons are looked down upon by other demons, because of the dilution of their demonic bloodlines with those of mortal creatures.

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## Lamias and other monsters

Lamias have allied themselves with a wide variety of other evil creatures in D&D lore. They are said to lair with derro in *S4: The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth* and are described as having an affinity for vampires in *Dragon #126*. They have been known to cooperate with leucrotta (*Dragon #91*) and sirrush (*Dragon #248*), and can even be effective leaders for groups of evil humanoids (*Dragon #199*). The dragonkith prestige class in *Dragon #284* and the *Draconomicon* indicates that lamias sometimes serve and aid dragons. The lamia in *REF1: Dungeon Master's Screen* is working with a dark elf, but has been forced to assist, rather than being a willing collaborator.



According to *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*, lamia nobles sometimes live with hyenas, gnolls or ordinary lamias, and they make use of ogres and giants as companions when they travel. Lamias who serve Graz'zt and other demon lords in the Abyss may drain lesser demons to keep as slaves, instead of the humanoids they would ordinarily keep. As noted earlier, the lamia noble Shalshinis uses summoned slaadi as her guards (*A Hero's Tale*). The article *Tag Team Terror* in *Dragon* #288 suggests that formians *dominate* lamias in order to leverage their wisdom-draining powers to aid formian conscription teams.

The 4th Edition fey lamia is sometimes partnered with quicklings during missions in the Feywild (*Dragon* #362), and may enslave weaker creatures such as mezzodemons or cyclopes to use as bodyguards. Lamias might also be served by flesh golems (*Monster Manual*). A lamia in *P1: King of the Trollhaunt Warrens* has four pet [hook horrors](#), and one in the adventure *Worse than Death* has an ogre as a lover and a ghost as an ally (*Dungeon* #164).

As noted above, the 5th Edition lamia has a special relationship with [jackalweres](#), as the demon lord Graz'zt created them to serve his devoted lamia servants. *Fizban's Treasury of Dragons* mentions a young brass dragon inhabiting the same desert ruin as a lamia. They mostly leave each other alone, but the lamia hopes to corrupt the dragon.

Lamias also have a fair number of documented foes. According to *Dragon* #36, forest minotaurs (the good kind) hate lamias, and the *Monstrous Manual* notes that lammasu also harbor an especially strong dislike for lamias. *PHBR5: The Complete Psionics Handbook* mentions that lesser shedu speak lamia, and going by the two creatures' alignments, the relationship between them is unlikely to be amicable. *Elminster's Ecologies* says that manticores are reputed to hate lamias, who often use sorcery to enslave them. It also notes that the phaerimm consider the lamia dwelling in the city of Hlaungadath to be a threat. The pernicon, a brightly coloured, two-foot long insect (detailed in *MC14: Monstrous Compendium Fiend Folio Appendix*) is a favored snack for lamias.

In *Fiendish Codex I*, a group of lamias has traveled all the way to Azzagrat to present Graz'zt with the special gift of a gilded unicorn horn, so there is probably also no love lost between lamias and unicorns. This might also be why the god Valarian (see above) despises lamias so much, since unicorns are part of his domain.

*Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* notes that lamia nobles hate and fear all nagas, and that the feeling is mutual.

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### Lamia parts

According to *Better Living Through Alchemy* in *Dragon* #130, the typical ingredient for *dust of illusion* is a lock of lamia hair or a rakshasa brain. The *candle of charming* (*Dragon* #179) is made using a few drops of blood from a dryad, lamia, or sirine. Among the spell components for the spell *Neja's unfailing contempt* in *DM's Option: High-Level Campaigns* is a lock of hair, freely given, from a succubus or lamia. One of the ingredients the alchemist Turan is looking for in *REF3: The Book Lairs* is lamia teeth, but what he intends to make with them is not revealed.

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### Lamias and magic

*Song and Silence* claims that lamias are not well disposed to being studied. The entry on the College of Arcanobiological Studies notes that lamias tend to want to "dissect the dissectors". Nonetheless, a few D&D articles have provided more detail of how the lamia's abilities work.

The *Sage Advice* column in *Dragon* #76 confirms that a paralyzed lamia can still use its innate spell-like powers, and *Adventure Trivia!* in *Dragon* #117 notes that the victim of a lamia's charm does not need to be able to understand the lamia's language in order for there to be effective communication between them. The *Dungeon Master's Guide v.3.5* explains the limits of the lamia's supernatural wisdom draining ability. The ability is not triggered when an unarmed enemy strikes the lamia, but only when the lamia itself attacks.

The *Ecology* article in *Dragon* #192 explains that a lamia noble's available spells are limited by their inability to create or copy spellbooks. This, incidentally, makes human wizards attractive targets for slaves. Lamia nobles' choice of spells tends towards illusions and mind-control spells, and they tend to steer clear of high damage spells so that they do not harm potential human mates. If they are forced to use non-deceptive spells because of a lack of choice, they will do so, but their lack of expertise gives targets a +2 bonus to saving throws against those spells.

In *Q1: Queen of the Demonweb Pits*, the lamia is one of the possible forms taken if *reincarnated* while in the Abyss. *Sage Advice* in *Dragon* #267 notes that a *restoration* spell will restore all of the wisdom points lost in a battle with a lamia. The article *Polymorphology* in *Dragon* #280 looks at the benefits of different forms available using the *polymorph self* spell. The lamia is noted as a form with good speed and extra upper limbs for spellcasting.

The *Book of Vile Darkness* details *oil of the lamia*, which is said to have been created by an evil lamia wizard. When the oil is applied to a magic item, it makes the item more effective against good creatures, increasing the difficulty of any saving throw. The oil lasts for one hour. In the computer game *Icewind Dale 2*, there is a dagger named *Lamia's Tongue*. Forged of black steel, the blade is engraved in the shape of a barbed tongue and the handle with minute scales. The barbs add an extra 1d6 damage to the weapon's damage and it returns to the thrower's hand once it has struck an object. The *Dungeon Master's Guide II* suggests that mixing a pint of lamia's blood into the moon-pools of the Arthagian Forest can spawn a magic event.

One of the waist chakra soulmelds available in *Magic of Incarnum* is the *lamia belt*. Totemists willing to risk being tainted by the evil cruelty of the lamia can benefit from the creature's competence at deception, and even gain its leonine lower half and claw attacks. The *strongheart vest* soulmeld, also from *Magic of Incarnum*, reduces the lamia's wisdom drain. *Adventurer's Vault 2* makes mention of a group of lamias who have found a *cloak of the desert*, and are using its sand-blasting powers to flay members of passing caravans. In *Dungeon* #200, the Coughing Banshee Inn sells a "strange brew" known as Lamia Lager, but it isn't clear if this has magical properties, or indeed, if it has anything to do with lamias.

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## Al-Qadim

Lamias are listed as appropriate monsters for encounters in the ruins of Al-Anwahr, detailed in *ALQ3: A Dozen and One Adventures*. In *ALQ4: Secrets of the Lamp*, a dao is described as riding a black lamia in the races held at the Maidan in the fabled City of Brass. The article *Campaign Journal: Scimitars against the Dark* in *Dragon* #198 presents a horror genre spin on Al-Qadim, and in talking about the setting, author Wolfgang Baur mentions cannibalistic lamias.

A cursed lamia princess named Ophidia as-Sokkari dwells in the Necropolis of Sokkar in *Cities of Bone*. She is not a true lamia, but was cursed to take that form by a powerful priest whose son she had executed after

growing bored with him as a lover. Centuries of introspection have reformed Ophidia, and depending on how the heroes interact with her, she stands a chance of redemption. The Guardian of Sokkar will lift her curse, and restore Ophidia to human form.



**Ophidia**, *Cities of Bone* (1994)

*Corsairs of the Great Sea* mentions a lamia noble named Faridah bint Halah who is masquerading as a corsair captain. Her ship is crewed by her wisdom-drained slaves, and has gained a level of notoriety among the merchants of the Free Coast. Although the Council of Hawa is concerned that Faridah may be illegally trading in slaves, they have no idea she is really a lamia noble.

According to *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*, lamia nobles have been known to single handedly destroy entire caravans in Zakhara and the areas south of Faerûn's Marching Mountains.

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## Birthright

The Lamia of the Birthright setting is a unique being, one of Cerilia's powerful and malicious awnshegh. The *Birthright Campaign Setting* notes that she occupies a ruined old castle once known as Cravengate in the center of Rhuannadaraight. The Lamia is defended by hundreds of *charmed* warriors, and she constantly seeks to lure new travelers into her domain.

*Blood Enemies: Abominations of Cerilia* provides more detail on the Lamia. Once a proud and beautiful human woman named Keta Pechaya, she worked as an exotic dancer and used her wiles and beauty to rob male customers. The blood taint of a dying man she had murdered began Keta's transformation into the creature she is now. She has ruled over her domain for more than five hundred years in that form.



**The Lamia**, *Blood Enemies: Abominations of Cerilia* (1995)

The Lamia featured in the Birthright expansion for the *Spellfire* collectable card game as card #67, but the artwork was recycled from *Blood Enemies*.

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### Dark Sun

*Windriders of the Jagged Cliffs* has a vault room which includes pictures of a lamia or lamias, but it implies that they are now extinct. Lamias do not feature in any other Dark Sun products.

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### Dragonlance

Lamias exist on Krynn, but are not common. *DL5: Dragons of Mystery* mentions lamias as allies of derro. *DL16: World of Krynn* details the five watchtowers on the southern shore of Mithas. The beacon in the third tower is tended by a lamia who has been tamed by a minotaur leader. The minotaurs bring her occasional slaves as reward for her services. This particular lamia is cowardly, and happily reveals one of the minotaur's secrets if confronted by a powerful adventuring party. A lamia noble features in a very brief encounter in *DL4: Dragons of Desolation*, where she is chained in a dungeon. The noble is also listed in the encounter tables in *MC4: Monstrous Compendium Dragonlance Appendix*, although the ordinary lamia, strangely, is not.

Lamias are mentioned in a few 3rd Edition Dragonlance books. *Key of Destiny* indicates that they are found in Kendermore, and the *Bestiary of Krynn, Revised* lists them on the encounter tables for the Plains of Dust and the Northern Wastes. *Spectre of Sorrows* has a detailed random encounter with a lamia seductress named Shilandra. She will try to persuade one of the male members of the party to return (alone) with her to assist her wounded brother. This "brother" is her previous victim, charmed, wisdom-drained, and currently unconscious. Shilandra has grown tired of him and hopes to find a replacement toy from the PCs' group.





**Shilandra**, *Spectre of Sorrows* (2005)

The illustration of Shilandra is missing a front pair of legs, so perhaps it represents what the heroes start to perceive if they see through her damsel-in-distress illusion, and begin to observe some elements of her true form.

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## **Eberron**

In Eberron, lamias can be found living in the monstrous nation of Droaam in western Khorvaire (*Eberron Campaign Setting*), in the western Talenta plains (*Five Nations*), and one in Xen'drik serving as consort to an efreeti (*Dragons of Eberron*). *Exploring Eberron* confirms that lamias rule over some of the ancient Dhakaani ruins in Droaam.

*Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* gives the impression that lamia nobles are more widespread in Eberron than ordinary lamias. They can be found in the Demon Wastes, Droaam, the Blade Desert, the Talenta Plains, dry parts of Xen'drik and even near the glowing chasm in the Mournlands. A noble lamia typically fulfills a role as the guardian of a monstrous community, protecting the tribe in return for occasional sacrifices.

In the Eberron setting, the carnevus demon (also from *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*) comes from Shavarath, the Realm of Battle. There, these demons battle against angels and archons in a legion led by Graz'zt himself.

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## **Forgotten Realms**

One of the many places in Faerûn where lamias dwell is the Great Desert of Anauroch (*FRE1: Shadowdale*), although they are rarer here than in more southerly deserts. They are primarily found on the western edges of the desert, in the Frozen Sea and west of the Sword. Their largest community (ninety lamias and twenty nobles) is in the city of Hlaungadath in the far northwest. This community keeps a breeding colony of humans, which they use as both slaves and food. The lamias of Hlaungadath feature in two articles in the *Perilous Gateways* website series and in the *War of the Spider Queen* novel *Condemnation*. Their leader, a lamia sorcerer named Koreeis controls a lost portal in the city's ruins.

Lamias can also be found due east of Hill's Edge and at the Lion's Eye Oasis. A striking, beautiful and wealthy lamia noble named The Glaendra leads the lamias of Lion's Eye; she commands considerable wealth and a formidable collection of magic weapons and items, most of which is stored in sunken chests hidden in the oasis (*FR13: Anauroch*). According to *Elminster's Ecologies*, lamias roam the Plain of Standing Stones in large numbers. At least one lamia with the lower form of a camel has been seen in this area, and even more exotic

variations might exist. Lamias can also be found in the ruins of the Lost Cities of the High Ice and in the Underdark below Anauroch. *Elminster's Ecologies* notes that one way to tell lamias apart from the Bedine woman native to the region is that lamias refuse to wear jewelry, while a Bedine is likely to wear both a veil and an assortment of regalia.



*FR13: Anauroch (1991)*

The fight to save the village of Bloodstone from the bandit armies in *H1: Bloodstone Pass* is complicated by the presence of the Circus of Doctor Trundles. The circus includes a number of dangerous creatures: a bulette, a chimera, a blue dragon, a lamia, a foxwoman, a xorn and a gibbering moulder. Predictably, they all break free and the adventurers are forced to protect the town from the consequences. This circus is mentioned again in *FR9: The Bloodstone Lands*, but the exhibits have changed slightly. The escaped bulette has been replaced by a pair of leucrotta, a mantichore, and an umber hulk. After the earlier disaster, Doctor Trundles has been forced by the Lords of Imphras II to improve the security of his operations.

Rumors tell of lamias living in the Surague Escarpment region to the east of Thay, and in the Sunrise Mountains which lie beyond (*FR6: Dreams of the Red Wizards*). Certainly, in the slave markets of Tyraturos in Thay, even lamias can be purchased (*Spellbound*). In the novel *Crimson Gold*, albino lamia nobles are said to slither down the slopes of Thaymount in their dozens.



**Transtra and Uliss, *Skullport* (1999)**

In Skullport, the lamia noble Transtra is a member of the powerful Iron Ring. She is a business associate of Mirt the Moneylender and the proprietor of the House of the Long Slow Kiss festhall. Transtra is secretly working with the mad archmage Halaster, and has a pet behir named Uliiss (*Skullport*). In *Expedition to Undermountain*, Transtra is listed as a lamia sorcerer, rather than a lamia noble, perhaps because the 3rd Edition lamia noble had only appeared in *Expedition to the Demonweb Pits* two months earlier. Transtra first appeared in the short story *A Slow Day in Skullport*, in the *Realms of the Underdark* anthology.

Lamias are not uncommon in the city of Scornubel in the Western Heartlands. Doppelgangers, lamias and other monsters able to assume human form have always dwelt in the Caravan City (*Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast, Ruins of Zhentil Keep*) but disguised lamias have been unmasked more than once in Scornubel's taverns (*Forgotten Realms Adventures*).

One particular lamia stands out in the history of Westgate on the Dragon Coast. In the Year of the Lamia's Kiss (615 DR), the lamia Nessmara charmed Lyonarth, the Winter Sphinx of Westgate. They ruled over the city together until the next year, when a wizard shattered her illusions. Nessmara killed Lyonarth, but was defeated by the wizard (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting, Cloak & Dagger, The Grand History of the Realms*). In the ruined city of Ilimar in the Gulthmere Forest dwell lamia nobles descended from Nessmara (*Serpent Kingdoms*).

Larithylar is a lamia sorceress who may dwell in Westgate. She has devised magic to give herself human, humanoid and draconic forms, and has learned to possess and control true dragons. Centuries ago she was notorious as the "Chameleon Dragon" until she faked her own death (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*).

In the anthology novel *Realms of the Elves*, the lamia Leis'anna is the leader of the Deep Coven cult, based in Elversult on the Dragon Coast. The lamia is also the Chosen of Graz'zt, but she is defeated by a sun elf wizard who takes her place.

Voraya, a lamia noble, controls the black market in Calimport for the benefit of her dracolich patron (*Empires of the Shining Sea*). Also in Calimport, the Veiled Lamia Inn has a petrified lamia noble at the centre of its taproom. It was defeated in the ruins of Shoonach by the barkeep (a retired adventurer) more than two decades ago (*Calimport*).



FR10: *Old Empires* (1990)

In Unther, the undercity of Unthalass is ruled by a tribe of lamia, led by a lamia noble named Ereshkigal. She is also known as the Queen of Tortures (*FR10: Old Empires*). In the post-Spellplague period of 4th Edition, Unthalass lies in ruins, and the lamias are firmly in control of what's left (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*). According to *TYMA2-2: The Hand of Darkness*, in the 4th Edition era the lamia queen of Unthalass is named Sisay. By the time of the novel *The Devil You Know*, published in 2016, the queen of the lamias is now Zillah.

Other locations in Faerûn where lamias occur include the ruins of Myth Drannor (*FRC2: Curse of the Azure Bonds*), the warm plains of the Shaar and Dambrath (*Shining South*), the Raurin Desert (*The Horde Barbarian Campaign Setting*) and the ruined city of Shoonach in Tethyr, where both lamias and lamia nobles dwell (*Lands of Intrigue*).

Lamia nobles can also be found in southern Faerûn leading gnoll legions, packs of hyenas and clans of lamias (*Expedition to the Demonweb Pits*). There are rumors in Arabel of a lamia-riding wizard named Golkont the Hawk-Mage (*FRE1: Shadowdale*). The mysterious Returned Abeir organization known as the Eminence of Araunt counts among its leaders an undead lamia known as Meremoth (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*).

There is a 4th Edition lamia named LeShanna in the *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure *MOON1-5: Lost Love*, but she is composed of tiny spiders rather than beetles. Her complicated relationship with an ancient eladrin incanter forms the basis of this adventure. Another 4th Edition lamia, named Joella, features in *DALE1-6: The Vesperin Initiative* and *DALE2-2: Agony*. In *TYMA2-4: Stand Against the Darkness*, the lamia Masika is a general in the army of Queen Sisay (mentioned above).

In the 5th Edition anthology *Candlekeep Mysteries*, the Amberdune Pack of jackalweres have been influenced for the better by their deceased leader, an unusually kind and learned lamia named Nadalia. Amongst their treasures, they have Nadalia's desiccated heart (so that they can resurrect her when they can afford to) and a treatise titled *Daughters of Graz'zt* which is about the origins of lamias. There is also a show, *Kiss of the Lamia*, being staged at the Pink Flumph theater in *Waterdeep: Dragon Heist*. This is a play about an evil Mulhorandi prince banished to a desert, charmed by a lamia and sent back to conquer his homeland in the lamia's name.

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## Ghostwalk

Below the city of Manifest in the Ghostwalk setting, lamias may be encountered in the Catacombs.

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## Greyhawk

Both lamias and noble lamias are found on Oerth. *WG4: The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun* includes a particularly clever lamia who has persuaded four leucrottas to follow and serve her. The combination of the lamia's *illusion* and the leucrottas' skillful voice mimicry creates a dangerous trap for their opponents. According to *Dragon #191*, lamias lair in the dangerous magical ruins of the Abbor-Alz. This is confirmed in *From the Ashes* which also describes the Valley of the Lamia. This valley lies close to the Bright Desert and is ruled by a lamia queen of great size, strength and spellcasting power (she is a 7th-level priest/12th-level wizard).

*Crypt of Lyzandred the Mad* has a lamia disguised as a desert nomad, who attempts to fleece the adventurers with a game involving small, coloured eggs. The adventure *WG10: Child's Play* has two lamia nobles in command of a few dozen mongrelfolk. They are apparently catching rabbits to sell to the demon lord Yeenoghu. A lamia named Vestath from the northlands of Iuz's kingdom may be encountered in *COR2-01: As*



*He Lay Dying*. She is loyal to the demon prince Graz'zt. Another *Living Greyhawk* adventure, *COR8-10: Chains of Darkness* is set in the Abyss, rather than on Oerth. It details a noble lamia Parmath, who is part of Zelatar's secret police.

In 5th Edition, the lamia appears on the encounter tables for the middle reaches of the Dreadwood forest in southern Keoland (*Ghosts of Saltmarsh*).

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### Historical Reference

In *HR4: A Mighty Fortress*, the lamia is one of the monsters listed as suitable for an Elizabethan setting. The text notes that in this setting, the lamia is a cross between a serpent and an evil spirit, similar to the spirit naga. *DMGR5: Creative Campaigning* suggests lamias as potential monsters for the unexplored lands in a Mesopotamian setting.

The 3rd Edition *Deities and Demigods* suggests the lamia as appropriate for campaigns using either the Olympian or Pharaonic pantheons.

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### Hyborian Age

The Conan D&D adventures (*CB1: Conan Unchained!* and *CB2: Conan Against Darkness*) both reference the lamia when explaining how powerful Hyborian Age monsters typically are, but imply that monstrous creatures are usually summoned from other dimensions rather than occurring naturally in Hyboria.

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### Kingdoms of Kalamar

The Kingdoms of Kalamar setting features a unique lamia variation known as the tigerus or jungle lamia. They have the lower halves of tigers, and tend to be neutral rather than evil in alignment. Tigerus lamias prefer isolation, and tend to be abrasive towards visitors. They are not naturally aggressive, but are nonetheless capable warriors with additional druidic spell powers. They are found in the Obakasek Jungle.



**Tigerus Lamia**, *Dangerous Denizens: The Monsters of Tellene* (2003)

According to *The Lost Tomb of Kruk-Ma-Kali*, lamias can be found in the Elenon Mountains. The high priest of the Cult of Ragg'rt in the Kingdom of Zazahni is a half-fiend lamia named Rarshezzra, according to *Svimohzia: The Ancient Isle*.



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## Mystara

Mystara has creatures called lamaras, which are similar to lamia nobles. First detailed in *AC9: Creature Catalogue*, lamaras differ from lamia nobles in their inability to speak, but they can understand all languages. They are immune to normal weapons, *charm* and *hold* spells. Lamaras do not cast spells, but can produce illusions at will. These illusions have the capability to *charm* members of the opposite sex, and anyone so charmed will defend the lamara to the death, even against the attacks of friends. If the lamara only has one opponent, and is able to charm that opponent, it will create an illusory enemy for the victim to fight, and then kill the victim using a constricting tail attack (this does 3-24 damage). Lamaras have 8 hit dice, an armor class of 4, an intelligence of 14 and chaotic alignment.



**Lamara**, *AC9: Creature Catalogue* (1986)

The lamara was reprinted in *DMR2: Creature Catalog* with the same artwork. According to the *Monstrous Compendium Mystara Appendix*, other lamia varieties are unknown in this setting. This terminology seems to have faltered in later 2nd Edition products though, as the *Heraldry Made Simple* guide in the *Player's Survival Kit* presents a lamia noble as a potential heraldic device rather than a lamara, and *Glantri: Kingdom of Magic* refers to “lamiae” rather than lamaras.



*Player's Survival Kit* (1995)

The adventure *The Object of Desire* in *Dungeon #50* features a lamara named Tamarind, who is working for a wizard because he has promised her immortality. She hides her lower half beneath the illusion of legs. Confusingly, given that a defining feature of the lamara is its inability to speak, Tamarind speaks in a low, melodious voice as she tempts the adventurers into eating the cursed peaches growing in her garden.

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## Nerath

The default 4th Edition setting of Nerath was expanded in a series of *Dragon* articles, using the large scale map from the *Conquest of Nerath* board game. *Dragon* #405 notes that the Feya Basin in the land of Rethmil is home to many desert monsters, including lamias.

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## Ravenloft

The lamia is listed as one of the monsters native to the domain of Hazlan in *Ravenloft Gazetteer: Volume I*.

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## Spelljammer

According to *FR13: Anauroch*, the lamias living in the ruined city of Hlaungadath in the Forgotten Realms setting are in possession of a crashed Spelljammer galleon. Although it still has an intact minor helm, the galleon is too badly damaged to fly, and the lamias are unaware that the helm is the key to the craft's mobility.

*Polyhedron* published a mini-game version of the setting, *Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider Moon*. In this setting, there is a dust world known as Ashen. Lamias are listed as one of the creatures lurking in Ashen's underground caverns.

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## Theros

*Mythic Odysseys of Theros* mentions lamias in several places. They are among the creatures of Tizerus, deepest ward of the Underworld, who compete for the chance to haul away doomed souls. Lamias also dwell in the Canyon Shrine of the dark god Mogis where they lure young nobles into cults.

In Theros, a lamia is created when a mortal mind becomes consumed with rage and despair at the misdeeds of gods. This makes them Nyxborn, a unique type of creature native to Theros, born from the minds of gods. These lamias have wildly varying physical forms, as their physical nature changes to reflect their corrupted instincts and predatory natures. They manifest in forms varying from the feline shape shown in the *Monster Manual* to more serpentine forms reminiscent of the noble lamias of previous editions.

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## Miniatures

In 1993, Ral Partha released a miniature of an ordinary lamia.



Ral Partha #11-462: *Lamia* (1993), image from [DNDLead](#)

This was followed, in 1996, by a miniature of the Lamia from the Birthright setting.



*Ral Partha Birthright #11-751: Lamia* (1996), image from [DNDLead](#)

More recently, in 2008, Wizards of the Coast released a pre-painted plastic miniature of the 4th Edition lamia as part of the *Dungeons of Dread* set.



*Dungeons of Dread #30/60* (2008), image from [Wizards of the Coast](#)

The thought-render lamia from the Theros setting was released in miniature form by WizKids in 2020, as figure #31 in the *Icons of the Realms: Mythic Odysseys of Theros* set. This lamia is based on the artwork from the *Journey into Nyx* set of Magic: The Gathering cards.



*Icons of the Realms: Mythic Odysseys of Theros #31/45* (2020), image from [MinisCollector](#)



**Thoughtrender Lamia** (2014), image from [Art of Magic: the Gathering](#)







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## Lamia names

Arthani, Belyara, Chamille, Elesdri, Eniff, Ereshkigal, Faridah bint Halah, Feyodena, Glaendra, Gleir, Isha-Denarthun, Jaide, Jelvistra, Joella, Koreeis, Larithylar, Leis'anna, LeShanna, Mara, Masika, Maze, Meremoth, Montalaina, Nessmara, Nidalia, Ophidia as-Sokkari, Parmath, Rarshezzra, Shalshinis, Shilandra, Shslinsi, Sisay, Sowelleile, Tamarind, Teadra, Transtra, Uruathis, Vestath, Voraya, Zillah.

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## Comparative statistics

|                 |    |    |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Edition         | AD&D (1st Edition)  | AD&D 2nd Edition  | D&D 3rd Edition   | D&D 3.5 Edition  | D&D 4th Edition   | D&D 5th Edition   |
| Source          | <i>Monster Manual</i>   | <i>Monstrous Manual</i>   | <i>Monster Manual</i>   | <i>Monster Manual v.3.5</i>  | <i>Monster Manual</i>   | <i>Monster Manual</i>   |
| Size            | M   | M   | Medium-Size   | Large  | Medium  | Large   |
| Type            |   |   | Magical Beast   | Magical Beast  | Fey Magical Beast   | Monstrosity   |
| Alignment       | Chaotic evil  | Chaotic evil  | Usually chaotic evil  | Usually chaotic evil   | Evil  | Chaotic evil  |
| No. Appearing   | 1 (60% in lair)   | 1   | 1, 2, 3-4   | 1, 2, 3-4  |   |   |
| Armor Class     | 3   | 3   | 17  | 18   | 28  | 13  |
| Hit Points      | 9 HD  | 9 HD  | 9d10+9 (58 hp)  | 9d10+9 (58 hp)   | 244 hp  | 97 (13d10 + 26)   |
| Speed           | 24*   | 24  | 60 ft.  | 60 ft.   | 6, climb 6  | 30 ft.  |
| Abilities       | Int High  | Int High (13-14)<br>Morale Elite (14)   | Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12,<br>Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12                                 | Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12,<br>Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12                                  | Str 13, Dex 14, Con 18,<br>Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 21                                   | Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15,<br>Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 16                                   |
| Senses          |   |   |   | Darkvision 60 ft.,<br>low-light vision   | Perception +13, Insight +13   | Darkvision 60ft,<br>passive Perception 12   |
| Saves           |   |   | Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7  | Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +7   | Fort 25, Ref 24, Will 26  |   |
| Attacks         | 1   | 1 (THACO 11)  | Touch +9 melee, or<br>dagger +11/+6 melee   | Touch +12 melee, or<br>dagger +12/+7 melee<br>and 2 claws +7 melee                 | Cursed Touch +16 vs.<br>Fortitude   | Claws +5 to hit,<br>Dagger +5 to hit  |
| Damage          | 1-4   | 1-4 (weapon)  | Touch 1 Wisdom drain;<br>dagger 1d4   | Touch 1d4 Wisdom<br>drain; dagger 1d6+4,<br>claws 1d4+2                            | 1d6+4, the target is dazed<br>and the lamia heals                                   | Claws 14 (2d10 +3)<br>slashing; dagger 5<br>(1d4 +3) piercing                       |
| Special Attacks | Spells, wisdom drain  | Spells, wisdom drain  | Spell-like abilities,<br>Wisdom drain   | Spell-like abilities,<br>Wisdom drain  | Devouring Swarm, Pacifying<br>Burst, Change Shape,<br>Squeezing Swarm               | Innate Spellcasting,<br>Multiattack, Intoxicating<br>Touch                          |
| XP              | 1700 + 12/hp  | 3,000   | CR 6  | CR 6   | 1,400   | Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)  |
| Treasure        | 10% 1-8 x 1000 copper<br>15% 1-12 x 1000 silver<br>15% 1-8 x 1000 electrum<br>50% 1-6 x 1000 gold<br>30% 1-10 gems<br>25% 1-6 jewelry<br>15% any two maps or<br>magic items plus 1 potion | 10% 1-8 x 1000 copper<br>15% 1-10 x 1000 silver<br>50% 1-3 x 1000 gold<br>15% 1-6 x 100 platinum or<br>electrum<br>30% 1-10 gems<br>25% 1-6 art objects<br>15% any two magic items<br>plus 1 potion | Standard  | Standard   |   |   |

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[Waterdeep: Dragon Heist](#), p74 (September 2018)  
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