

Fig. XIII: The Dwayyo, caught between shapes. House-style plate.

CRYPTID № 13

THE DWAYYO

The monster Frederick County printed in 1965, and then could never describe the same way twice. Its real history, a full 5E stat block built around its shifting shape, and a system-neutral card.

> *"Every witness swore to a different beast. The Dwayyo let them all be right."*

THE LEGEND

The Dwayyo began as a newspaper story. In November 1965, a man in Frederick County called the Maryland State Police. He gave his name as John Becker. Something had come out of the woods near Gambrill State Park. It stood up on two legs and fought him in his own yard. It was dark and furred and as big as a bear. A reporter named George May took the story and ran it. The name Dwayyo came off a police teletype. Within a week the whole county was watching the treeline.

Then the sightings multiplied, and none of them matched. One witness saw a wolf that walked like a man. Another saw a thing the size of a deer, with a narrow head and pointed ears. A third described an upright hound,

six feet tall. College students organized hunts up on the mountain. No two accounts agreed on what they were hunting. The flap ended with a joke. Someone mailed the newspaper a dog license, made out in the Dwayyo's name.

Frederick County had done this once before. In 1909 the same valley press invented a monster to sell papers. The editor of the Middletown Valley Register ran week after week of Snallygaster sightings, a flying horror with one eye and a metal beak, and circulation climbed until the Smithsonian was said to want the hide. Fifty-six years later the Dwayyo flap ran the same play, in the same county, in a different decade. A monster, a reporter, and a town staring at the dark. That rhyme is the truest thing about the Dwayyo.

The rivalry came afterward. At some point the retelling made the Dwayyo the Snallygaster's mortal enemy, two beasts contesting the Middletown Valley since its first settlers. It is a good story, and it is not history. The folklorist Susan Fair notes that the roots are sparse and the bond accreted over time. The two were never a matched pair in 1909. They were stitched together later, by people who liked the idea that the valley kept two monsters instead of one.

So the Dwayyo is the fear of the thing that will not hold still. It has no fixed shape, because it was never seen twice the same way. It has no fixed story, because it grew with every telling. Run it as the creature your players can never quite confirm. The tracks never match the last tracks. The witness contradicts the last witness. Maybe the story keeps changing. Or maybe the Dwayyo does. Keep the question open, because that uncertainty is the monster.

For D&D 5E

STAT BLOCK

The Dwayyo

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger), unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)
Hit Points 93 (11d8 + 44)
Speed 40 ft. (50 ft. in Wolf-and-Hart form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Perception +5, Stealth +6, Survival +5
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP) **PB** +3

Shifting Shape (Shapechanger). The Dwayyo is never one animal. It wears three chimeric shapes, each the front half of one beast over the hind half of another, and it always takes the traits of its upper, dominant half. As a bonus action it changes shape to one of the following; its statistics are otherwise unchanged. **Wolf-and-Hart** (wolf fore, deer hind): its speed becomes 50 ft., and when it moves at least 20 ft. toward a target and hits it with a Bite on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. **Hound-and-Man** (wolfhound fore, human hind): it stands upright, can take the Hide action as a bonus action, and can use Dread Howl. **Stag-and-Man** (stag fore, human hind): it stands upright and attacks with Antlers instead of Bite, and when a creature it can see hits it with an attack, it can use its reaction to

For Every Other Game | CREATURE CARD

The Dwayyo

No stat lines. Just a creature no two people describe the same way, and why that is the whole point. The Dwayyo is the monster a town talked into being and then could not agree on. Where the Kraken cannot be fled and the Squonk cannot be held, the Dwayyo cannot be confirmed.

HOW IT BEHAVES AT THE TABLE

- **It is never the same twice.** Every witness is right, and every witness disagrees. The wolf, the upright hound, the deer-headed figure: all of them are the Dwayyo, and none of them is the whole of it.
- **It grows in the telling.** The more the party asks around, the bigger and stranger it gets. The rumor is part of the creature, not just the noise around it.
- **It would rather be a story than a corpse.** It breaks contact, changes shape, and leaves a trail that does not match itself. Pinning it down is the adventure, not killing it.

WAYS TO USE IT

- **The sighting that does not match the last sighting.** Two reliable witnesses, two completely different

move up to half its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

No Two Tell It the Same. The Dwayyo is never remembered the same way twice. A creature that has seen the Dwayyo in one shape has disadvantage on any Intelligence check to recognize it or recall what it is once it has changed shape. A creature acting on someone else's description of the Dwayyo has disadvantage on its first attack roll against it.

Woodland Stalker. The Dwayyo has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell, and on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made in forest or heavy brush. It leaves no consistent trail: Wisdom (Survival) checks to track it are made with disadvantage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Dwayyo makes two attacks: two with its Antlers while in Stag-and-Man form, or two with its Bite otherwise.

Bite. *(Wolf-and-Hart or Hound-and-Man form only.) Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Antlers. *(Stag-and-Man form only.) Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8 + 3) piercing damage. If the Dwayyo moved at least 20 ft. straight toward the target before the hit, the target takes an extra 7 (2d6) piercing damage and must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

monsters. The party has to work out that it is one creature, not two.

- **The hoax that started coming true.** It began as a story someone printed to sell papers, or to scare a rival town. Now something really is out there, and it fits none of the lies exactly.
- **The thing the other monster hints at.** Hunt one beast and keep finding sign of a second that cannot be the same animal. A ready-made tie to the Snallygaster, the rival it was later given.
- **Cut it loose from Frederick County.** Any place that loves its own tall tales will do. Keep the shifting shape, the contradictory witnesses, and the rumor that feeds it, and drop the Maryland map.

DIFFICULTY DIAL

- Far down the dial it never fights at all: contradictory tracks, a frightened farmer, a description that keeps changing, pure investigation. Up the dial it is a shapeshifting skirmisher that hunts the hunters across a mountain.
- Make it *survivable* by letting the win be proof rather than a kill: the party confirms what it is and breaks the pattern. Make it *dangerous* by never letting them settle on one

Dread Howl (Recharge 5–6). *(Hound-and-Man form only.)* The Dwayyo looses a cry that is half wolf and half something worse. Each creature within 30 ft. of it that can hear it must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the Dwayyo for 1 minute. A frightened creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Running it. The Dwayyo is not a boss and not a brute. It is the monster your players can never quite confirm, and the block exists to serve that. Lead with Shifting Shape and No Two Tell It the Same: let the first witness swear to a wolf that walked upright, let the tracks the party finds belong to a deer, and let the thing they finally corner wear a stag's head on a man's legs. The joke and the dread are the same joke. Mechanically it is a CR 5 skirmisher that wants to hit, shift, and vanish, not stand and trade, so run it across several short encounters rather than one slugfest, changing form between each so no two sightings match. Scale it DOWN to a single eerie non-combat haunt at low levels (all rumor and contradictory tracks, no fight at all), or UP with extra forms and a lair of false trails for a higher-tier hunt. Do not let it read as evil. It is a county's rumor that learned to wear teeth, and it is still, at heart, a story about not being able to trust the story.

description, so every plan is built for the wrong monster.

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