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Not All Monsters Live Under Your Bed

Rebecca Davis

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Not All Monsters
Live Under
Your Bed



A Bestiary of Monsters
Rebecca Davis

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WHAT MAKES A MONSTER?

The answers to this question can have a wide variety of answers depending on the person responding and the context. Is it something that isn't human? Is it something that is different from what we expect? Is it a being with wicked, cruel intentions, with actions to follow through? Is it something that scares humans?

It is hard to find a concrete definition for what makes a monster. I found that the lines that define a monster are very easy to blur. For example, what is the difference between a monster and a mythical creature? What about monsters and mythical beings? Or monsters and spirits? And even if I could determine the differences between the aforementioned subjects, the definition is constantly evolving.

When I started to collect information on the monsters for this bestiary, I had to create my own criteria for the monsters I would choose. The monsters I chose are not human, they have to be tangible, and they have to have some sort of element that is unknown, scary, or frightening to humans.

For the criteria of 'not human': the monsters cannot be human at the time they are considered monsters. The monster could have previously been human, but their state in the stories must be not human. So, a vampire or werewolf would qualify. Even though they may have started out human, in the stories told about them, both subjects were no longer human.

For the criteria of 'tangible': the monsters must have a physical presence. Someone should, theoretically, be able to touch the monster. So, monsters like Marsh Lights (also known as Will O' The Wisp) or ghosts do not qualify.

For the criteria of 'an element of the unknown that is scary or frightening to humans' the monsters must have an element that frightens people. Without this element, a unicorn could qualify as a monster, as it is not human and has a physical presence. This element ensures that the monsters described have some element to them that matches the negative connotations that the name 'monster' brings.

HUMAN EATING MONSTERS

These monsters specifically target humans and go above and beyond in their efforts of inflicting pain, before devouring their victims. The monsters in this category are aware enough to be selective in those they target.

ALSO KNOWN AS...

CAUTION:
PLAYS WITH
ITS FOOD...

THE YARA-MA-YHA-WHO

The yara-ma-yha-who is a monster native to Australia and is seen in stories from the Australian Aboriginal people.

The yara-ma-yha-who is an oddly shaped monster, in a way that would be comical if one did not know the nature of it. This monster is described as a small red man, generally noted to be around four feet tall. Its head, mouth, and stomach are disproportionately big in comparison to the rest of its body. The yara-ma-



yha-who's large head is like a snake's and has a mouth that functions the same way. With no teeth, the yara-ma-yha-who can unhinge its jaw and swallow its prey whole, just like serpents. However, the yara-ma-yha-who is a blood sucking monster, and only eats its victims as part of a feeding ritual. The yara-ma-yha-who drinks its victim's blood through suckers on the ends of its tube-like fingers and toes.

The yara-ma-yha-who is capable of walking as a biped and as a quadruped when on the ground. While perfectly capable of living on the ground, the yara-ma-yha-who prefers to live in wild fig trees. From the leafy branches, the yara-ma-yha-who waits for victims to wander by. Like an ambush predator, this monster will drop on top of people unfortunate enough to

Its like the Australian drop bear! The drop bear is used to scare tourists, did the Yara-ma-yha-who inspire the murderous, human eating koala?

wander beneath its limbs.

Upon overwhelming its prey, the yara-ma-yha-who will use its fingers to suck the victim's blood. However, the yara-ma-yha-who does not drain the victim completely, rather it leaves just enough blood to keep the victim alive. After consuming the blood, the yara-ma-yha-who will swallow the victim whole, just like snakes. Some legends say that before swallowing the human, the yara-ma-yha-who takes a walk to work up an appetite.

Once its prey rests in its stomach, the yara-ma-yha-who does a dance. What sort of dance the yara-ma-yha-who does is unclear, but many accounts agree that the yara-ma-yha-who dances to settle its stomach.



Following its dance, the yara-ma-yha-who will then regurgitate the victim, and test to see if the victim is dead. The yara-ma-yha-who will walk five paces away, and then check on the victim, then ten paces and checks, and so on until the yara-ma-yha-who is fifty paces away. Provided that the victim does not respond to the monster's tests, the Yara-ma-yha-who will lay down and take a nap.

At this point, the victim can escape. If the yara-ma-yha-who wakes up as the victim is escaping, it is fairly easy to outrun the monster. A yara-ma-yha-who who has had its prey escape is punished by the spirit of the fig tree and is turned into a tree fungus.

However, if the victim is recaptured by the yara-ma-yha-who, the ritual will repeat itself, without the chance to escape. The yara-ma-yha-who will drink the victim's blood, then swallow the victim, regurgitate the victim, and test if the victim is alive. The Yara-ma-yha-who will take a nap but will always be able to catch the victim after the first time.

And each time the victim is regurgitated after the first time, the prey becomes shorter, gains a red tint to their skin, and slowly becomes a yara-ma-yha-who themselves.

There are ways to prevent an encounter with a yara-ma-yha-who. The yara-ma-yha-who prefers solitary figures, especially children who are alone. When around fig trees, stay with another person or in a group. One could also avoid walking under the branches of the wild fig trees.

If you are caught by a yara-ma-yha-who, play dead. And when you escape, don't get caught.

Ah, yes, I will just avoid walking in the shade of trees for the rest of my life. THAT'S NOT REALLY A VIABLE SOLUTION!!!!

Also, "don't get caught", very helpful.

THE MYLINGAR

Mylings can be found in stories from Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

Mylingar are often referred to as 'Children of the Night', a name that comes from the origin of the creature. In the simplest of terms, mylingar are physical manifestations of the souls of children who were abandoned.



Mylingar are born from infants who were born out of wedlock and then killed by the mother, or by a family abandoning children in harsh winters with little hope for survival. In the case of wedlock, the social stigma would drive the mother to kill her child and bury them in secret in the woods. And for the children abandoned in the winter, in very harsh conditions, people would limit the number of people that needed to take care of.

Mylings take the appearance of the child they were when they died. In addition to appearing as children, the mylingar possess bodies in the early stages of decomposition. Because of this, often the mylingar are depicted without a nose. In some versions of the stories, the mylingar have glowing or blank eyes. And because of the darkness of the mylingar tales, mylings are described to have dark and gloomy features.

The mylingar desire a proper burial because they never received one. Mylingar haunt forests, distracting travelers with piercing wails and

haunting, mischievous giggles. When happening upon solitary figures among the trees, the mylingar will jump on the back of its victim in a mockery of a playful piggyback ride. The myling will ask to be brought to a cemetery so it can be buried properly. At first the myling will ask politely, then it will use manipulative techniques to cajole the victim. As a last resort, the myling will threaten the victim to get what it wants.

There is no escape in this solution, if you are caught, game over.

Why is it the child-like ones that are always creepy?

The myling gives false promises to release the victim, once the myling is properly buried. However, this is an impossible task with no hope for success. With every step that the victim takes towards a graveyard, cemetery, or proper resting place, the myling on the victims back becomes heavier. Just before reaching the graveyard, the myling becomes too heavy for the victim to continue carrying, and the victim will collapse under the burden.

As punishment for the inevitable failure to complete the task, the myling will devour the victim. After consuming the victim, the myling will return to its quest to find someone to lay it to rest.

In addition to the lone traveler in the woods, the mylingar are known to be vengeful should they ever come across the parent or guardian that killed or abandoned them.

In the event that you encounter a myling, do not let it grab onto you. Although they are not particularly fast monsters, should they latch on, there is nothing that can be done.

For preventative measures don't travel alone in the woods and be wary of unusual noises should you choose to wander in the woods in spite of the warnings.



THE CĂPCĂUN

Stories of the căpcăun can be found in folklore from Romania and Moldova.

The căpcăun is a mix of canine and human, with a reputation that matches that of an ogre. Most accounts agree that the Căpcăun possesses the head of a dog, and has a humanoid body, much like the Minotaur in Greek mythology. However, after the head and body, there are various contradictory descriptions. Some accounts say that the Căpcăun is a biped, while others claim that the monster is a quadruped like the animal it shares a head with. Sometimes, the Căpcăun is said to have eyes at the nape of its neck making it impossible to sneak up on, some accounts declare there is a single eye at its throat. Sometimes, the eyes are a second set on the monster's face.

The căpcăun is one of the embodiments of evil in Romanian folklore. It is often mentioned with a connection to Zmeu, a humanoid dragon shapeshifter, and Balaur, a seven headed stocky dragon.

Regardless of the varying depictions, the tales all agree that the căpcăun is a wily monster that wins

The



*Reeks of death
and despair?*

*That describes about
75% of rooms belonging
to teenagers*

And 75% is a low-ball estimate

battles with wits more often than it loses.

The căpcăun likes to live in caves. Its said that a cave that reeks of death and despair is most assuredly the home of a căpcăun.

Much like the ogres in typical fairytale stories, the căpcăun likes to prey on princesses. The căpcăun will also kidnap children and will bring both kinds of victims back to its cave to eat them. Passersby that are unfortunate enough to wander near a căpcăun's cave also become victims on the menu.

There are mentions of quests to recover the princesses that were taken, however there are very few reports of successful rescue. It seems that the majority of the would-be rescuers were not able to defeat the cunning of căpcăun.

In the event that you are taken by a căpcăun, there is not much hope. The best you can do is take preventative measures. If you find a secluded area where you notice the smell of death and despair, flee as fast as you can.

You should be safe if you are not a child, and not royalty.

Basically, you caught = you dead

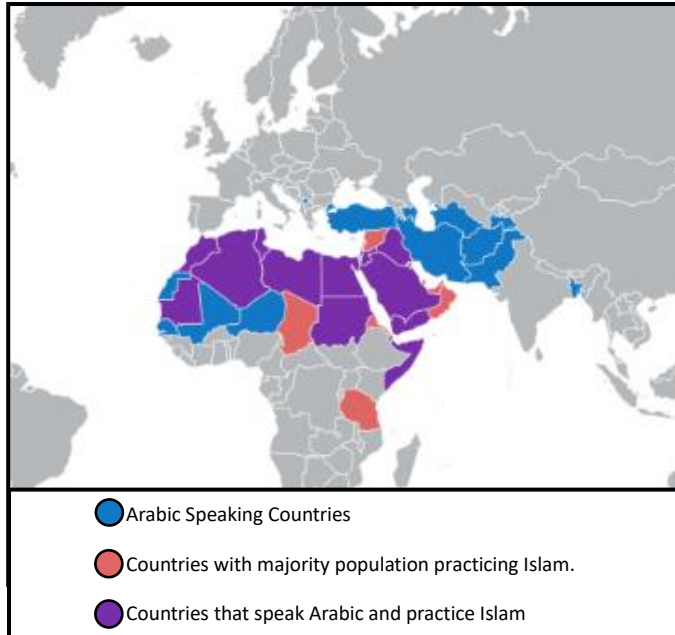
Either:

A. you are a princess, and someone will most likely fail trying to save you,

B. you are not a princess, and no one is coming... I don't see a plus side...

THE GHUL

Stories of the Ghul can be found in Arabic speaking countries, and in places that practice Islam.



The ghul is an interesting monster due to the fact that ghuls are able to shift form constantly and not limited to a specific appearance.

In order to identify a ghul, there are contradicting ideas. Because of their ability to shapeshift, some claim that there isn't a way to identify a ghul based on appearance alone. Other accounts mention that regardless of the shape the ghul chooses to

embody, a ghul will always possess donkey hooves rather than feet.

Ghuls are known to haunt graveyards or abandoned places, but are not bound to one specific location. They are also known to meander through the desert looking for victims. The ghul eats human flesh, preferring young children. There is much debate over if the ghul only eats dead bodies (the reasoning being the ghul's the fondness for graveyards) or living bodies.

Some tales say that ghuls, when wandering in the desert, try to confuse weary travelers until they tire. After eating an exhausted victim, the ghul is able to take that victim's form.

In the event that you are attacked by a ghul, the recommended course of action is to kill it with a single strike, given that hitting a ghul more than once will allow it to come back to life and devour you. This defense is largely speculative, as there aren't many accounts of people surviving ghuls.

For preventative measures, learn what donkey's hooves look like, avoid graveyards and deserted places, and stay vigilant if traveling through the desert.

How did ghuls go from shapeshifters to the zombie-like creature in pop-culture?



THE PSOGLAV

The psoglav is from Balkan folklore, specifically in the countries of Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The psoglav is a bizarre and terrifying creature. While not overwhelmingly large, a psoglav has the head of a dog, the legs of a goat or a horse, and the arms and torso of a man. The head can be any kind of canine but is most often depicted with a jackal-like head. A psoglav possesses a single eye, much like a cyclops and a set of iron teeth line their jaws.

Fortunately for humans, psoglav like to live in dark and damp places that have minimal light. Caves and dark forests tend to be the top choice for psoglav. However, there are also stories of psoglav settling near populated areas that have a history of famine.

Like the canines they resemble, a psoglav has a strong sense of smell. With their enhanced sense, the psoglav will track down the living to consume them. In the event they are unable to find a living person to devour, psoglav will sniff out graves to eat instead.



Psoglav are willing to dig out a grave just to scavenge a corpse.

In addition to eating flesh, a psoglav will also consume bones. Using their impressively strong iron teeth, a psoglav will crunch on bones until they are ground down to nothing.

Even though their teeth are frighteningly strong, the psoglav itself does not possess a great amount of strength. Psoglav are also supposed to have a weakness with sunlight.

If you encounter a psoglav, stay out of reach, and keep in mind a psoglav's strong sense of smell. While you cannot change your scent, you might be able to mask it. In the worst-case scenario, avoid its teeth, but try to use your strength to overpower it.

As a preventative measure, avoid dark, moist environments when possible.

Is there a reason that for a number of monsters, the 'preventative measure' is just to avoid areas they might live?

LYREBIRD MONSTERS

These monsters draw in their prey rather than hunting prey down. Weaponizing their unique voice acting skills, the prey comes to these monsters, making them amazing ambush predators.

ALSO KNOWN AS:

A HORRIFYING
GAME OF
MARCO-
POLO...

THE CROCOTTA

The crocotta screams from India and some countries in North Africa, most often in Ethiopia.

The crocotta is a monster that would lure humans and their canine hunting partners to their deaths.

The size of a donkey, the crocotta looks like a mix between a wolf, dog, and hyena. Sometimes a crocotta is described to have hooves instead of paws. Additionally, the crocotta has amazing jaw strength, similar to a hyena. Its mouth does not have any gums, making the teeth and the jaw bone be connected as one continuous piece.

Outside of the power in its physical appearance, crocottas are known to be devilishly intelligent, so much so that very few stories ever tell a tale of triumph over these creatures.



They seem to have the same reputation as the laughing hyenas.

Who had it first? Did hyenas get the reputation from the crocotta?



Crocottas imitate the world around them to easier capture and kill prey. Some stories say that a crocotta is able to camouflage itself into its background by changing colors. Furthermore, crocottas are known for mimicking sounds. Whether it is a baby's cry, a dogs snarl, or a cough from a sick person, crocottas can mimic it masterfully. Because of the skill the crocotta weilds, victims have no choice but to follow its call. Using this ability, a crocotta will lure victims away from safety and attack. In some cases, a crocotta will learn the different names and voices of the people it is hunting. Then using the voices of friends and loved ones, a crocotta will use that knowledge to lure a victim more effectively.

In the event that a crocotta is unable to find food, they are known to dig up graves to eat corpses instead of the living.

Even though few people have defeated a crocotta, it is said that by carving out its eyes and placing the pair under your tongue, you could see the future.

In order to minimize your chances of encountering a crocotta, don't follow voices from a source that is not visible. If you must follow such a sound, don't go alone.

THE KUSHTAKA

The kushtaka are well known among the indigenous tribes along the Pacific Northwest Coasts in North America.

Kushtaka are beings that are half otter, half-man. There are some that suggest that the Kushtaka are shapeshifters, capable of appearing as an otter, a human, and a mix of both.



A kushtaka will lure a human to their death or will trap a human and turn the victim into a kushtaka. Like the crocotta, the kushtaka is a master at mimicking sounds. Sometimes they will imitate a crying baby to lead victims out into the cold. They are also able to imitate travelers to gain sympathy.

After capturing the attention of a victim, the kushtaka will lure them into a secluded area, often into the woods, but into a stream or even the ocean are also possibilities. Once the human is away from help and defenseless, a kushtaka will tear into the victim, leaving nothing but shreds.

The kushtaka kill humans for one of two reasons, to stop reincarnation or to change a human. Being killed by a kushtaka makes

it impossible for your soul to reincarnate and continue to cycle through life. The other reason a kushtaka will kill is to transform a human into a kushtaka.

There are mixed sentiments in stories of kushtaka. In some stories, a kushtaka will transform a human while they are drowning or dying of hypothermia, to persevere their life. In other stories, the kushtaka will comfort a soul as its body approaches death. But, for the most part, the stories of the kushtaka involve the kushtaka luring people away from safety and then tearing apart the isolated prey.

In the event you encounter a kushtaka, and it is trying to kill, instead of comfort or save, there are a couple of things that may protect you from the kushtaka. Some say that kushtaka are afraid of dogs and will avoid them altogether. Copper is also supposed to be a deterrent, along with fire and urine.

Aren't otters supposed to be cute?

So... apparently sea otters can be anywhere from 60 to 100 pounds?!?!

THE AHUIZOTL

Stories of the ahuiizotl were told in Aztec civilizations in Mexico.

This monster is like the chimera in Greek mythology, as the body is made up of a collage of many different animals. Known sometimes as the “water dog”, an ahuiizotl appears in a size similar to a Labrador retriever. Its

dark fur is similar to that of an otter, sleek and insulating when wet but also slightly poofy when dry. Instead of four paws like a dog, the ahuiizotl has four monkey or raccoon hands. It’s tail, streamlined and serpent-like, has a single human hand with clawed fingers at the end of it.

Ahuiizotl were said to be guardians of the lakes, specifically the protectors of fish and other water creatures. Because of this duty, a large portion of stories detailing an ahuiizotl have a fisherman as the unfortunate victim.



There are several different tactics the ahuiizotl can use when attacking. Sometimes, when an unfortunate soul wanders too close to where an ahuiizotl has made their home, the ahuiizotl will break through the surface and latch onto its prey with the hand on its tail.

Another method that an ahvizotl will attack is by capsizing a fisherman's boat. Although, there are accounts of an ahvizotl releasing a fisherman if he gifts some of his catch to the ahvizotl.

Is the monster right handed or left handed?

Early written accounts were from Spanish Missionaries.

Would they be left-handed, the 'devil's hand' because they were monsters from the local religion, not Christianity?

The last method that an ahvizotl can use is through human cries. The ahvizotl is capable of crying like a baby and whining like a young child. Drawn in by the instinct to protect the youngest of our species, victims become helpless to the ahvizotl's call. Once the person wanders close to the water's edge, an ahvizotl will drag them into the water with the hand on its tail.

In all the hunting methods, once the prey is in the water, there is a great struggle which causes disturbance in the water. Like an alligator performing a death roll to subdue prey, an ahvizotl will use its strength in the water to tire out their victim, and letting the victim drown.

Eventually, the body will return to the surface, but it was often found without its eyes, teeth, and nails. While it is possible that the ahvizotl keep these as trophies of some kind, most likely the ahvizotl eat these missing pieces.

THE PAO XIAO

China has stories and art that depict the horrors of Pao Xiao since the beginning of the bronze age.

Also known as the Tao Tie, Pao Xiao are called one of the Four Evils of the World in classical Chinese texts. And the Pao Xiao are horrifying monsters that are said to symbolize gluttony.



While there are a few details that vary between the names, a Pao Xiao has the body of a sheep or goat, the head of a human, and the mouth of a tiger. Additionally, instead of hooves, each of the legs of a Pao Xiao end in a human hand. But the most horrifying detail of the Pao Xiao concerns its eyes. The Pao Xiao's eyes rest, protected, in its armpits, not on its face.

Pao Xiao consume humans as their primary source of food. But because of the insatiable appetite that they possess and the single-minded focus that a Pao Xiao has while eating, often a Pao Xiao will start to eat their own lips while devouring the victims in front of them. And if a Pao Xiao is unable to satisfy themselves with the human prey they



Slender man
in goat
form????

gathered, some stories claim that they will start to consume themselves.

Like other monsters in this category, the Pao Xiao have the ability to mimic human sounds to lure humans to them, rather than 'hunting'. Crying out with the voice of an innocent baby, a pao xiao will lure in its meals. Once a victim has noticed the sounds, it is nearly impossible to escape their hold.

The origins of the pao xiao can be found with the other three great evils in Chinese texts. The stories depicting the birth of the pao xiao say that in 'ancient times', five gods ruled the known world. Of those gods, two had eight virtuous sons. And the other three gods each a monstrous, immoral son each. Those three immoral sons became three of the great evils, Hun Dun, Qiong Qi, and Tao Wu. Their evils grew with each generation, until the rule of Emperor Yao. During his reign, Tao Tie appeared as the fourth great evil, because of his greed and voracious appetite. Tao Tie was the first pao xiao.

Should you come across this monster, run away. Very few people survive its call, and once in a pao xiao's grasp, death is inevitable.

HUMAN SKIN MONSTERS

ALSO KNOW AS:

MONSTERS
HIDING IN
PLAIN SIGHT

These monsters can pass as human and take advantage of that to encounter their victims.

Whether the monster's normal appearance is similar to a human or can change its appearance to fit in, these monsters are hard to pick out in a crowd.

THE MANANANGGAL

The manananggal stems from stories in the Philippines. The name comes from the word “tanggal” meaning to separate.



The manananggal is a monster that masquerades as a woman during the day. Some accounts say that the ‘human’ form resembles a hag-like older woman while others describe her as a beautiful younger woman. When nighttime comes, the manananggal reveals her true form.

With the head and torso of a woman, the manananggal uses large bat-like

wings to fly around at night. The wings are her main way of moving around, as in her true form, she only has the torso. She appears sans her lower body, and often is seen with organs and intestines dangling from her body as she flies from one home to another.

In addition to the leathery wings and the lack of legs, the manananggal grows sharp fangs and their tongue stretches to become long and flexible. Their fingers lengthen to accommodate sharp claws while their eyes grow to an eerily large size.

The manananggal preys on sleeping victims and both drinks human blood and eats human flesh. The preferred prey of the manananggal is pregnant women but they will also target grooms to be and newlywed couples.

*Will either be young and beautiful or old and ugly
Two very polarized ends of a spectrum*



The manananggal will hunt in the dark hours of the night, flying around until they find a desirable meal. Using its long, twisty tongue, a manananggal will feed on its victim from outside of homes. Their tongues will glide through open windows or doors and slide into their prey through the eyes, nose, ears, or mouth. If her

victim is a pregnant woman, the manananggal will use its tongue to devour the woman's heart, intestines, and other organs before reaching the fetus, and devouring the fetus's heart.

In other victims, the manananggal will eat the lungs, heart, intestines, blood, and strangely enough, flem.

One way to eliminate a manananggal is to hide her lower half. If the manananggal does not rejoin her legs with the rest of her body by sunrise, the manananggal will be killed. Hiding the lower body, so the manananggal cannot find it is often an effective method. Banana groves are known to be good hiding spots, as the tree limbs can look like legs.

Similar to hiding the manananggal's legs, someone can also prevent the manananggal from reattaching her legs by covering the lower half's intestines with ash, salt, garlic, or other spices.

There is another method to destroy a manananggal, with is to dangle her from a tree, upside down, and spin her around or beat her until she vomits a black chick. It is said that a woman can become a manananggal by eating a black chick that was born from

another manananggal. The woman will become a manananggal when the chick matures in her stomach. Removing the chick later will reverse the transformation.

And, like the stereotypical vampire, stabbing a manananggal in the back with a bamboo stick will get rid of the monster.

There are some things that you can do to minimize your chances of having an encounter with a manananggal. At night, lock all windows and doors to prevent the manananggal from sneaking in. Surrounding your home with pots of ash, salt or uncooked rice should act as a deterrent to a manananggal. Vinegar, garlic and spices can also be used in a similar fashion.

There are mentions that the manananggal goes after specific victims because they resemble personal tragedies. Some stories say the original was left at the altar, hence targeting newlywed couples

regardless, there are better ways to deal with trauma

THE ENCANTADO

Details on the encantado comes from Brazil, specifically around communities near rivers. Stories can also be found in the surrounding countries, like Bolivia and Paraguay.



The encantado is a monster that can shift between their animal form of a boto (the name of a river dolphin) and the form of a man. In its natural form, encantados are a large pink river dolphin with a very prominent forehead.

However, some nights encantados will shift into humans to attend parties and seduce humans. As humans, the encantados appear to be very attractive, charismatic men. The encantado has a strong connection to music that helps them attract partners. After successfully mating with a woman, an encantado will abandon her, return to the river, and transform back into a boto.

More often than not, a night with an encantado will leave the woman with an illegitimate child. Sometimes the encantado can erase the memory of the conception of the child,



leading to a very unexpected pregnancy. In some cases, a lover or favored child will be kidnapped by an encantado and brought to live beneath the surface in the underwater paradise Encante. Those who are taken are rarely returned to the surface. Those unlucky enough to be returned to land are found dead or insane.

There are a couple of ways to identify an encantado, should one crash your party. Some say that the encantados hypnotize potential partners while dancing. For physical identifiers, encantados tend to wear extravagant clothes and headwear when galavanting through parties. You will not see an encantado without some sort of head

This seems like the communities near the amazon river's way to teach abstinence...

Surprise, surprise, it doesn't seem to work any better there than it does here...

covering, as when they transform from dolphin to human, their large pink forehead and blowhole remain. To be able to travel inconspicuously, they always cover their heads. One other thing that can help identify an encantado is their hands. Occasionally an encantado's hands will still resemble the flippers that the encantado has as an animal.

Should you encounter an encantado, there is not much you can do to protect yourself.

Although, fishermen have found that averting their eyes anytime a boto is seen can prevent bad luck in general.

THE JORŌGUMO

Stories of this yokai were originally told in Japan.

Known by the names “Binding bride” and “woman-spider”, the jorōgumo is a monster that seduces its victims before killing them.

While targeting men, the jorōgumo will appear before them as a beautiful woman. After trapping them in its web, a jorōgumo use her venom to cause a long and painful death. It is said that she has two kinds of fangs, one that contains venom to paralyze the victim, and the other to deconstruct victims, just like a spider would do to a fly caught in its web.



Other than the striking beauty she wields, a jorōgumo is said to also be able to spin silk strong enough to capture a man. It is also said that she can command other spiders.

The jorōgumo tends to settle in dark places, but also is attracted to waterfalls. Many stories are told of woodcutters being warned not to rest near a waterfall, only to be covered by the jorōgumo silk and yanked away to their death. There are also several stories where a

woodcutter fools a jorōgumo using tree stumps as decoys.

Jorōgumo have been known to keep a kind of trophy. Should you find a jorōgumo's lair, the corpses of past victims may be bound up in the webs throughout a jorōgumo's home.

One of the ways to detect a jorōgumo is through its reflection. While jorōgumo are very cunning and can tell lies with ease, a mirror is supposed to tell the truth, even if the jorōgumo will not. In the mirror, a jorōgumo will appear as a gigantic spider, rather than the human skin she is likely wearing.

*I don't do spiders.
Not touching this
with a ten foot pole.*

*Now excuse me, I am
going to scrub every
inch of my skin for a
bit...*

Men are the only people in danger should they encounter a Jorōgumo. And as long a potential victim can steer clear of a jorōgumo before she strikes, you should be safe.



THE LANGSUIR

The stories about the langsuir come from Malaysia.

The langsuir is a blood sucking monster that takes the shape of a woman. A langsuir is made when a woman dies during childbirth. After the woman's body is buried for forty days, the langsuir will claw its way

out. The langsuir is similar to the pontinak, which is born when a baby dies with its mother in the same situation.

JUST HOW?!?! The logistics please...

How do the angles work? Also, that is not the most discrete way to 'feed'.

Can you imagine a langsuir bending backwards over a fallen body in order to suck up blood...

A langsuir appears as a beautiful woman with long black hair. The langsuir are also often described as wearing long green robes. Unlike other blood suckers, the langsuir drink blood through a hole in the back of their necks. Long hair plays an important role in protecting the area.

When hunting, the langsuir transforms into a giant owl, and searches for a meal from above. Although she will drink the blood of any human, the langsuir prefer the blood from infants and young children.

There are accounts of langsuir in owl form snatching children from the streets before flying away. In addition to the shape shifting, a langsuir also possesses a fearsome wail, not unlike a banshee's scream.

Should you encounter a langsuir, there is a way to overcome it. If you can cut off the nails and hair of a langsuir and fit both into the hole in the back of the neck, the langsuir will become docile and obedient. There are some accounts of people who have married a langsuir and continued to live normally, after having tamed the langsuir.

However, should you accomplish subdueing a langsuir, beware. A controlled langsuir lives a very tranquil life, should that be disturbed, the langsuir will revert to its original state. So, avoid high energy activities, joyous music, and any form of happiness.

Should you have a loved one who died during childbirth, there is a method to prevent them from returning as a langsuir. By placing a chicken's egg in each armpit, putting glass beads in the mouth, and sticking needles in the hands, the loved one should be safe from that transformation.



THE MAVKA

Traces of the Mavka can be found in Slavic folklore, specifically from Ukraine and Bulgaria.

Mavka, also known by the names of navka and nyavka, are monsters that are said to represent the soul of a young girl who died a tragic,

unnatural, or premature death. Mavka are also said to represent the souls of unbaptized babies.

Having the appearance of a young, beautiful girl, a mavka would entice young men off the path in the woods. The mavka are tall and delicate. They wear light flowy clothes and let long hair fall down their backs. But the hair hides the main feature that gives away the identity of a mavka.



THE MONSTER
VERSION OF A
GLASS FROG OR
BARRELEYE FISH
(cause only the back of
mavka is see-
through...)

The back of a mavka does not have any skin, anyone looking from behind can see into the mavka. Some accounts say that the organs are visible, others only specify the spine being visible.

Mavka kill their victims in several ways.

Sometimes, when drawing the prey off the path, they lead the victim straight into a swamp (or other body of water) to drown. The way that the mavka are most known for is their ability to 'tickle' one to death. After being tickled to death, sometimes a

mavka will decapitate the victim posthumously.

There are several ways things to look for if you suspect someone to be a mavka. First, can you see their spine or organs through their back? Mavka also do not cast shadows

and do not have reflections. There are also some stories that say when walking, a mavka does not trample the grass, and leaves no footprints behind.

Luckily, there are some accounts of mavka helping humans. Several stories claim that a mavka aided a farmer by maintaining their livestock and protecting the land by driving out wild animals. There are also stories that show the mavka testing possible victims. In one such story, a mavka asked a young man if he had a brush or comb. If he was able to provide one to her, the mavka would brush her hair and leave. If he was not able to provide a comb, the mavka would become angry and kill the man.

Should you encounter a mavka, stay on the path, and be polite. To be prepared, always have a comb or brush with you.



TECHNICALLY A MONSTER

MONSTERS

These monsters fit the criteria of what makes a monster and are labeled as monsters by the world. But these monsters possess a fraction of the cruel or grotesque or frightening nature of that is expected from in a monster. While they may be mischievous, or justifiably angry at times, these monsters don't quite fit in with the other monsters.

ALSO KNOWN AS...

**HAVE TO
READ THE
FINE PRINT
MONSTERS**

THE LOCH NESS MONSTER AND THE OGOPOGO

The Loch Ness Monster belongs to Scotland, and Canada lays claim to Ogoopogo, but lake monsters like Nessie and Ogoopogo are found all over the world.

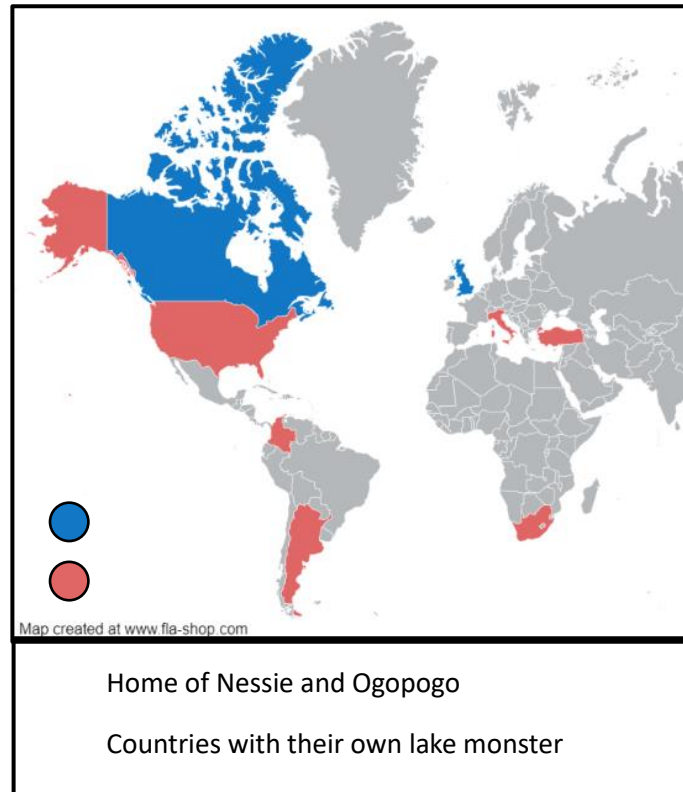
Nessie is named after the lake she calls home, Loch Ness, in the Scottish Highlands.

The Loch Ness Monster supposedly is large and has flippers, but various sightings don't agree on the general appearance of the creature.

In stories, Nessie has been violent to humans, but has also been willing to listen to, understand, and follow instructions. For the most part, Nessie is considered non-confrontational.

Several of these monsters have only been known for a couple hundred years.

Often what happens is settlers hear local stories and rename them and change the meanings behind the monster.



Okanagan Lake, British Columbia, Canada, is the home of the lake monster Ogoopogo. Most agree that Ogoopogo's body is that of a serpent, but the head is debated often. The head has been described with differing accounts: horse-like, goat-like, sheep-like, and snake-like.

Even though Ogoopogo is called a monster, he is also referred to as a guardian. This monster is not

noticeably violent, nor does he attack people just because he can.

Neither Ogopogo nor Nessie meet the criteria for what we consider a monster in a straightforward sense. Both do cause fear on a small scale, many who claim to have seen the monster describe a jolt of fear, like a jump scare, being caught off guard. But other than that, they have done nothing to create a fearsome reputation. The lake monsters are not scary because of the harm they may do, rather the monsters are scary because of what they can represent: the unknown. Sightings of the lake monsters are frequent, but never of the entire monster. How big is he? How does she hide? Where are they, in the depths below? Not knowing the answers to questions like these cause fear of the unknown. Even if it is a small amount of fear, it is enough to make the lake monsters monsters.

Nessie and Ogopogo are not the only lake monsters out there, many countries around the world have a lake monster of their own.

In Argentina, Nahel Huapi Lake, lives Nahuelito.

In Colombia, Lake Tota, lives Muysu I.

In Turkey, Lake Van, lives Van Gölü Canavarı.

In South Africa, Howick Falls, lives Inkanyamba.

In Italy, Lake Como, lives Lariosauro.

Do we actually know what these monsters look like? Most of how we imagine them is based off of faked 'evidence'...

THE SQUONK

Stories of the squonk are told in Pennsylvania, US in the northern forests of the state.

The squonk is a monster that is easy to pity. About the size of a small pig, the squonk has leathery, loosely fitted skin that is interwoven with scales. In addition to the folds of hide, the squonk is covered in warts.



These monsters tend to be timid and quiet and are said to always be unhappy. They prefer to move around twilight and dusk to avoid being seen.

Despite its grotesque appearance, the squonk is fairly valuable, as it cries silver tears. Given that the squonk cries constantly, the monsters are easily tracked and hunted. But the squonk has a unique skill to protect itself from hunters. When a squonk feels frightened, cornered, or trapped, it can melt itself into its tears. A squonk will dissolve itself and only leave a small silver puddle behind.

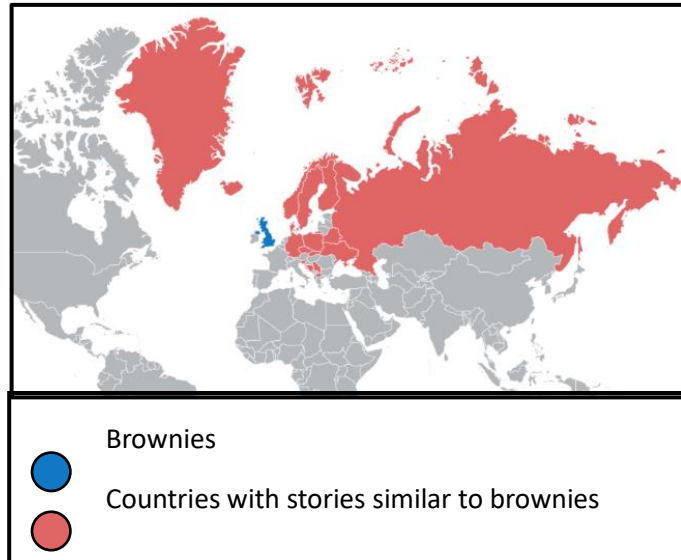
The squonk is not a monster in the traditional sense. It is not its behavior, nor is size that inspires fear. Some claim that the sight of the squonk will make your skin crawl and repulse you. It is the grotesque appearance of the squonk inspires subtle fear that categorizes it as a monster, regardless of its pitiful disposition.

Its like idea
behind the ugly
dog contest in
Pasedina: So ugly
its cute!

THE BROWNIE AND OTHERS LIKE IT

The tales of brownies originate in Scotland, but many countries have their own version of brownies.

are a kind of fairy that helps or hinders a home. They are also called elves, gnomes, and sometimes dwarves. Similar to the stories of *The Elves and The Shoemaker* in the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, will help complete household tasks when the other occupants of the home are asleep.



Known to be fairly short, brownies tend to stand about three feet tall and are said to be brown, in both complexion and clothing. For the most part, brownies are male, although there have been a few records of female brownies.

How does someone 'look brown'???

In general brownies are considered good and benevolent. However, they are very easily angered. When a brownie is angered, offended, or feels disrespected, it will transform into a boggart. Stories of boggarts range in severity, sometimes the boggart plays pranks, sometimes the boggart steals, sometimes a slighted brownie will destroy a town's entire crop harvest.

In English folklore, a hob functions in the same way as a brownie.

Germany also has a similar spirit known as the kobold. The kobold fulfills the same chores and services that a brownie does and is constantly mischievous. A kobold will

help around the home, but don't be surprised if various tools and appliances are misplaced or reported missing during its stay.

But beware, kobolds are more easily offended than brownies and are willing to dole out more severe retribution. In one story, a kobold was insulted by a kitchen boy. The kobold beat the boy, dismembered him, and then added the remains to the evening stew. When discovering the kobold's actions, the cook scolded the kobold. In retaliation, the kobold killed the cook.

In addition to kobolds that work in homes, there are also mining kobolds and sea kobolds who are less human-friendly.

In dutch folklore, the brownie-eque creatures are known as kabouters. In general, kabouters live in mines, but they are also known to protect the areas surrounding mines. In one story, a community of kabouters, with the help of gnomes, dwarves, and imps, aided the 'good' people and terrorized the 'bad' people. The kabouters rewarded those how respected them by creating a symphony of bells. Those who disrespected the kabouters found themselves with sour milk, their beds flipped upside-down, gravel thrown down chimneys into fireplaces, and hats and shoes missing.

That
escalated
very quickly...

Other brownie-like spirits in other countries include:

The Domovoy from Slavic folklore.

The Nisse from Norwegian and Danish folklore.

The Tomte from Swedish folklore.

The Tonttu from Finnish folklore.

The Húsvættir in Nordic folklore.

The Lares and Penates in Roman mythology.

For the most part, brownies are helpful, so what makes them monsters? They check the boxes of tangibility and not human. But what is their fear factor?

One fear that the brownie brings to the table involves lack of control. When a brownie is insulted, there is not much you can do. And we can't control how the brownie will retaliate. Being out of control is one of the things that can cause panic and fear.

Another fear that brownies spread is the fear of the unknown. Brownies, and many variations of them, work out of sight. We don't know what the brownie will do, and the possibilities for retaliation are endless for this creative creature. It is hard to protect yourself from something you can't see, and that sentiment gives brownies the title of 'monster'.

There could also be arguments on distrust and betrayal, but those can be a little bit of a stretch. Regardless, because of the association with a lack of control for humans and the concept of the unknown, brownies, and their counterparts, do have a 'fear' factor.

MONSTERS: A FINAL THOUGHT

Monsters come in all shapes and sizes. Monsters have different motivations and methods. Monsters have different origin stories and different places their stories are told. But the thing that unites them all is they scare humans in one way or another.

Different cultures around the world sometimes have monsters that are very similar, despite these stories were developing independently. Monsters are one of the constants around the world. Whether we are afraid of being killed in horrific ways and then eaten, being killed by something that sounds familiar and safe, or being tricked by someone who seems to be the same as us on the surface, we all have monsters. And not all of those monsters fit under our beds.

Interested in weird monsters? Check out some of the monsters that I came across:

The Aqrabuamelu, or the scorpion men, from Babylonian mythology.

The Kasa-obake from Japanese folklore.

The Bunyip from Australian folklore.

The Nuckalavee from Scottish folklore.

The Bakhtak from Persian folklore.

The Surale from Bashkir folklore.

The Wolpertinger from Bavarian folklore.

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