

# Blurb

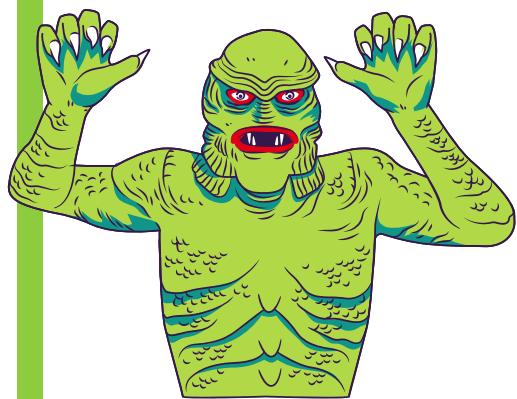
FOR READERS OF CHILDREN'S NOVELS

FALL 2024

MCCRACKEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY, PADUCAH, KY

## THE MONSTROUS ISSUE

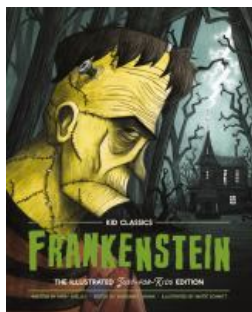
Monsters are as ancient as stories. The oldest known recorded story in the world, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, is a monster story.



Since then, monsters have ruled the pages: witches, werewolves, vampires, zombies, ghosts, alien creatures, science experiments gone wrong, mummies, and so many more. Why are monsters so popular do you think? Maybe it's because life can be scary sometimes: bumps in the night, dark fears, shadowy corners. Monsters give a face and body to those fears. And if the hero in your favorite book can beat the monster, what's to stop you from conquering the monsters that scare you?

### Mr. Matt Recommends FRANKENSTEIN

by Mary Shelley



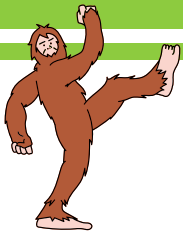
Did you know that Frankenstein was written by a teenager? On a summer vacation in 1816, 18-year-old Mary Shelley went on vacation with some friends. Bad weather kept them indoors a lot, so in the evenings while sitting around the fire, they challenged each other to come up with the best horror story.

Shelley's friends devised vampire and ghost stories. Shelley came up with the idea of a scientist who was horrified by his own creation. Thus the story of Frankenstein and his monster were born. It took Shelley about a year to write the short novel, and on January 1, 1818, she published it. Only 500 copies were made in the first printing. Now, Frankenstein sells 50,000 a year. A few years ago, one of the original 500 copies of Frankenstein sold for \$1.2 million.

### 1816: The Year with No Summer

Several factors influenced Mary Shelley in the writing of *Frankenstein*, and one of the biggest was the weather. 1816, the year she started *Frankenstein*, was called **The Year With No Summer**. A volcano eruption in Indonesia sent global temperatures plummeting. Cold and wet conditions persisted through the summer months. Crops died. Nothing would grow. It snowed in New York in June! And in England at a lakeside summer retreat, the sun wouldn't shine, so Mary and her friends had to huddle around a campfire to stay warm. No wonder science and monsters came to mind.

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# BIG WORD CRYPTOZOOLOGY

CRYPTOZOOLOGY is the study of animals which don't exist, like Bigfoot, the Loch Ness Monster, and dragons. If any of the creatures is ever proven to exist, then the study of them would just be ZOOLOGY.

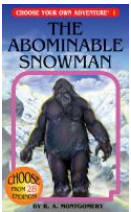
## CRYPTO CRITTERS

### Beast: Face to Face with the Florida Bigfoot by Watt Key



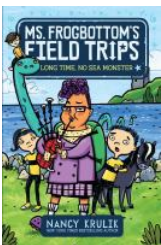
Adam says he can't remember where he was for the two months he went missing in a Florida swamp. That's not true. He does remember. The truth: He was driving with his parents, and the car crashed when his father swerved to avoid colliding with a giant Sasquatch-like creature standing in the highway.

### The Abominable Snowman Choose Your Own Adventure



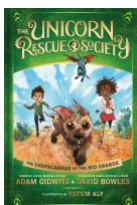
You are a mountain climber, headed to the Himalayas to find proof that the mysterious Yeti really exists. When your best friend Carlos goes missing from base camp, the fate of the expedition is in your hands. Are the Yeti out there, among the dangerous crevasses and icefalls?

### Long Time, No Sea Monster Ms. Frogbottom's Field Trips



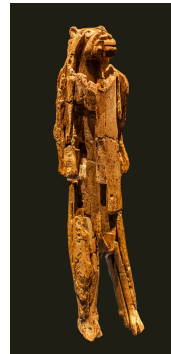
Learning is an adventure in Ms. Frogbottom's class because she's got a magic map that takes her students all over the world to do battle with mythical monsters. When her crew lands in Scotland, they come nose to nose with the legendary Loch Ness Monster!

### Chupacabras of the Rio Grande Unicorn Rescue Society



Professor Fauna bursts into the classroom with a frightening report from the Texas-Mexico border: something has completely drained the blood from a cow's body! Time for the Unicorn Rescue Society to investigate.

# THE WORLD'S OLDEST MONSTER?



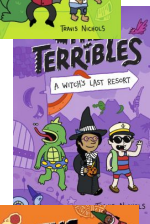
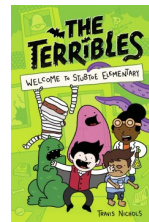
This is the world's oldest-known sculpture. Now called Lion Man, it dates back about 40,000 years, toward the end of the Ice Age. It was carved from a woolly mammoth tusk. Because it represents something non-human, a half lion/half-man creature, some say it represents a monster.

**But how do we know for sure? It may look monstrous but perhaps this character was considered kind. Or wise. Is it bad or good? Is it a villain or a hero? Or maybe the artist was having fun and it doesn't represent anything at all.**



The oldest character that we can certainly call a monster is Humbaba from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* is the oldest known written story, and Humbaba was definitely written as a monster, an ogre-like figure who battles the hero. The recorded stories of Humbaba date back about 5000 years ago.

# THE TERRIBLES



Any monster you can think of is probably in this book. The Terribles, as these monsters are called, all go to Stubtoe Elementary, and except for the monster part, they're a lot like regular kids. You'll meet Vlad the Vampire, Bobby the Blob, Lobo the Werewolf, Lizzie the Kaiju, Allie the Alien, Emma the Mummy, Frankie the Mad Scientist, Griff the Invisible Kid, and many more. There are three books in the series.



## MUMMY ISSUES

### What exactly is a mummy?



Upon hearing the word 'mummy,' most of us think of a monster wrapped in bandages, slowly walking out of a sarcophagus with its arms outstretched. That's the type of mummy portrayed in Hollywood. But what is a mummy exactly?

By definition, a mummy is any dead human or animal whose body has been preserved through intentional or accidental means. Examples of mummies have been found on every continent.

Egyptian mummies are intentional mummies. As part of religious ceremonies, some ancient Egyptians were embalmed after death with various chemicals. Like in the movies, the mummies were wrapped in bandages and placed in tombs. The dry and airless conditions of tombs was good for preservation after death. In addition to humans, more than one million mummified animals have been found in Egypt, mostly cats and birds. Similar intentional mummies have been found throughout the Americas and Asia.



Accidental mummies are dead humans or animals whose bodies were preserved because they died in the right weather or

environmental conditions. For instance, the bodies of woolly mammoths frozen in ice for thousands of years are considered mummies. Accidental mummies can form in extremely dry conditions, like in deserts. In parts of northern Europe, mummified bodies have been discovered in bogs. A bog is a cold wetland comprised mostly of compacted, decayed plant matter. The conditions in bogs are so perfect for creating mummies that scientists have been able to determine what the last meals that these 2000 year old mummies ate!

## SPEEDY ATKINS - PADUCAH'S MUMMY



On May 28, 1928, Charles Henry "Speedy" Atkins was fishing in the Ohio River in Paducah when he fell into the water and drowned. Two days later another fisherman found his body and brought him to shore.

Atkins was born in Tennessee in 1875. It is not known when he moved to Paducah, but we do know that he got his nickname "Speedy" by being so fast at his job in a tobacco plant. Atkins was a pauper, meaning he was very poor, and he had no family in town to take care of his body after his death. However, one of his friends in Paducah, Mr. A.Z. Hammock, happened to own a funeral home.

Hammock took possession of Atkins body after the drowning and tried an experimental method of preservation on the body. The embalming turned Atkins skin reddish but preserved all his facial features. Even more curious, the embalming transformed the rest of Atkins into a wood-like statue.

Instead of burying Atkins, Hammock decided to put the body on display in his funeral home. Over the decades, generations of school children went to the Hammock Funeral Home to view the mummy. Posthumously, Speedy Atkins appeared on many TV shows and his story was told in many newspapers.

Atkins was kept on display for 66 years before he was finally buried in Paducah's Maplelawn Cemetery in 1994.

**Discussion question: Do you think it was right to keep Mr. Atkins body on display for so many years?**

## THE CREEPOVER SERIES BY P.J. NIGHT

### OFF THE WALL



Fifty girls are spending the whole night at a museum. It's a blast until some of them decide to tour the ancient artifacts after lights out. There are rumors that one of the ancient mummies comes to life after the museum closes. But mummies don't really come back from the dead...do they? There are 22 books in this series.

## MONSTERS OF THE 1800S

Stories about monsters are as old as storytelling itself. But these stories didn't start gaining worldwide popularity until the printing press became more accessible. Amazingly, many of the monsters we recognize today got their start in the 1800s, just as book publishing became more common.

### 1812 - The Witch from Hansel and Gretel



The story of Hansel and Gretel dates back many centuries, it first appeared in print in *Grimm's Fairy Tales* in 1812. That witch in her candy cottage has been scaring children ever since.

### 1818 - Frankenstein's Monster

Mary Shelley published her masterpiece in 1818. Today, readers still ask themselves, who is the real monster in the story...the scientist or his creation?



### 1820 - The Headless Horseman



Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* remained so popular that Walt Disney made his own version 130 years later.

### 1827 - The Mummy

Jane Loudon is credited with writing the first book (called *The Mummy!*) about an Egyptian mummy that comes back to life.



### 1843 - Marley's Ghost



MARLEY'S GHOST

Are there any ghosts more famous than the four that appear to Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*?

### 1886 - Mr. Hyde

It is said the Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the first draft of his novel, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in three days.



### 1897 - Dracula



Several books about vampires were published in the 1800s, but Bram Stoker's *Dracula* remains the most popular.

## BIG PROBLEMS

Some monsters are scary because they have fangs. Some have claws. And some are simply scary because they're big.

### THE BFG by Roald Dahl



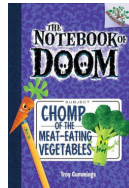
BFG stands for "Big Friendly Giant." But don't get too comfortable...there are nine more giants in this book who are all much bigger and much more willing to gobble up children.

### THE IRON GIANT by Ted Hughes



The Iron Giant is a massive, metal being from outer space who roams the countryside eating up tractors and barbed wire. Of course, everyone is scared. Only a boy named Hogarth knows better.

### Chomp of the Meat-Eating Vegetables by Troy Cummings



A lot of kids don't like to eat broccoli. But even more kids would hate broccoli that tried to eat them...especially if that broccoli was big as a human and had sharp teeth.

### Gargantis by Thomas Taylor



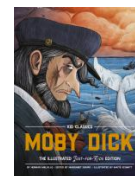
The ancient creature Gargantis sleeps in the watery caves near the sleepy town of Eerie-on-the-Sea. Why has she suddenly woken up? And why is she so angry?

### Tussle with the Tooting Tarantulas by David Bowles



You know what's worse than giant spiders? Giant spiders that fart!!

### Moby Dick by Herman Melville



Moby Dick is the classic tale of a giant white whale that takes revenge on a whaling ship. It's based on a true story.