

# 108 European Monsters

The description of the monster as it appears in mythology and folklore is in unitalicized font. Original content (e.g. adventure hooks) is in italics.

1. **Aatxe:** Basque shapeshifting mountain-spirit, who sometimes appears as a man but more often as a red bull. Like Batman, it lives in a cave and fights criminals, but will also scare innocent people so that they stay away from dangerous places. It emerges most often on stormy nights, perhaps because it has a flair for the dramatic. *Probably well-known for adopting small birds from the carnival. What happens when people misunderstand its intentions or take the threat as a challenge?*
2. **Adar Llwhch Gwin:** Welsh bird monsters given to a mortal man as a gift from his fae wife. They can understand verbal commands and obey orders decently enough but apparently cannot recognize faces, because their master told them to kill the first man who entered into a particular battle and, as fortune would have it, that man was delayed and their master entered first. *If one fae could give some as a gift, others could likely do so as well. Any such gift is likely to come with a catch, as the above story illustrates, but outright refusing the gift could insult the fae and lead to worse consequences. Hence the old saying, "Caught between a fairy and some birds pecking my face off."*
3. **Aitvaras:** Lithuanian nature spirit. It is described in some stories as always having the form of a rooster, and in others as having the form of a rooster indoors and a dragon outdoors. As a rooster, it is colored either black or white, and it has a fiery meteorite for a tail. Old roosters may occasionally lay eggs, which may hatch normal chickens or an aitvaras. It often adopts a household and is a mixed blessing in this respect, for it gives gold and grain but acquires these things through theft. *Does the aitvaras shapeshift or cast an illusion? If the latter, which, if either, is its true form? Perhaps, to those who see things as they really are, there is nothing there--an emptiness in the world, and nothing more than nothing.*
4. **Alkonost:** Russian chimerical monster with the body of a brightly-colored bird and the head of a woman, probably related to the Greek myth of the siren. The alkonost is so beautiful that it entrances anyone who hears it and makes it into the object of their greatest desire. It lives in the underworld but lays its eggs on beaches and then pushes them into the sea, and when the eggs hatch they cause a tempestuous, roiling storm. *If the alkonost travels between the underworld and the ocean then there must be some physical connection between them, and the simplest way to connect them is to say that they directly border each other--one reaches the underworld by sea (or at least it is possible to do things that way). This, of course, leads immediately to thoughts of Ghost Vikings...*
5. **Ankou:** Cornish monster who is either a servant or an incarnation of Death. There are multiple Ankous, one to each graveyard, and they are in charge of gathering souls and protecting the remains of the dead. *An ankou might be a threat, something to defeat because the locals are trespassing on some forgotten graveyard or have neglected importance rituals, but it might also be a more direct source of adventures: ankous and necromancers are unlikely to get along with each other, and if the ankou is unable to personally prevent the theft of the corpses under its care, then it might look elsewhere for help.*
6. **Araleze:** Armenian winged dog that lives in the sky or on mountains. Like valkyries, they visit dead and dying heroes, but they lick the heroes' wounds in order to heal or resurrect them. Corpses have occasionally been brought left at mountaintops or on towers so that the aralezes (or aralezner) would visit and revive them. *There are not enough heroes anymore, but the heroic blood that the araleze licks up is what sustains them, so now the aralezes have started to tutor heroes. Remember, however, that "heroism," in the original sense, is about being legendary, not about being good. Also, consider giving them a vulture aesthetic, since the tradition involving them is reminiscent of Zoroastrian sky burials.*
7. **Aspidochelone:** Giant sea creature described in Medieval English bestiaries but not limited to England. It is so large that it is often mistaken as an island, and there are many stories of a ship setting down anchor to collect food, only to die when the "island" wakes after its long slumber and suddenly dives into the ocean. Though usually portrayed as a turtle, it is sometimes a fish or whale instead. *If only you could train the aspidochelone to stay at the surface, or at*

*least warn you ahead of time so that you could go into some specially-constructed diving chamber, then taming the megaturtle would represent a significant advance in naval technology. Rather than build ships, you could grow them, and if you could just design the chamber right then you would even have a submersible, generations before it would have otherwise been possible.*

8. **Balaur:** Romanian monster that is sometimes but not always portrayed as a dragon. It has three, seven, or twelve heads, is enormously large, and has fins. Between the fins and related words (like *buljar*, meaning “water snake”), the balaur is probably a water monster at some point. When its saliva hits the ground, it turned into gems. *The balaur is a dangerous monster, but not one that you want to kill. That, after all, would be killing the goose that lays golden eggs. A party of famous adventurers are likely to be hired to capture one, instead, but how do you capture a twelve-headed anaconda?*
9. **Bauk:** Serbian monster that hides away in secluded and dark places, like deep holes and abandoned buildings. It is an ambush predator, but can easily be scared and kept at bay by bright lights and loud noises. It is sometimes regarded as a cultural memory of bears, made into legend after they were driven out of the region. *If it is a bear, then the bauk gives a new meaning to the joke about “drop bears.” Hidden places will be that much scarier if a small, camouflaged, and incredibly stealthy bear could be hiding behind any corner.*
10. **Bluecap:** English fairy or ghost, not to be confused with the better-known redcap. Like kobolds, they seem to inhabit mines, and if they are paid fair wages (by depositing coins somewhere in the mine) then they will lead the miners to rich deposits and warn of danger. Their appearance is that of a blue flame that floats in the darkness. *There is a similarity to the will-o'-wisp here, and some stories report that they are ghosts, but they can be found even in new mines. Perhaps they are very old ghosts. Perhaps ghosts migrate. There may be a connection to the landvaettirs, described elsewhere in this list.*
11. **Boagane:** Manx shapeshifter that preferred a large, ogrish form with black hair, bright eyes, and sharp tusks that, strangely, have been described as “glittering.” It cannot cross running water (but lived near the sea) or stand on hallowed ground, and has been known to eat people from time to

*time. Shapeshifting would allow an ogre to insinuate itself into the community, but ogres aren't known for their brilliance. Perhaps the usual cycle is one of joining a community and eating people until, soon enough, people get wise to what's going on and the boagane is driven out. Hansel and Gretel's old gingerbread witch, who was famously tricked into climbing into an oven, might have been an ogre in disguise.*

12. **Bolla:** Albanian snake monster that hunts for just one day out of the year, then hibernates the rest of the time because it cannot see on other days. It was said by some people that the female version of this monster will grow up into a *kulshedra*, and that it is invisible in its juvenile state. In some places the bolla is said to live in water, and in others that it prefers grass. *Perhaps it lives in wetlands, where the grasses are inundated for most or all of the year. Whether in tall grass or water, its environment of choice is one which would allow the keen-eyed to just barely notice its presence, in the ripples of the lake or the rustling of the grass.*
13. **Bonacho:** Cattle monster described in Medieval bestiaries. Its horns curve inward, its neck is adorned with a horse's mane, and its fur is reddish-brown or black. To defend itself, the bonacho makes explosive shits in the direction of its foes, which would be unpleasant enough even if its waste weren't caustic. The bonacho's accuracy, moreover, is extremely bad (for anyone that it is aiming at, anyway). *The bonacho would seem to be an undesirable choice of livestock at first, but nothing was ever said about the meat having a poor taste or the milk coming out wrong, and it would seem to be more than capable of protecting itself from predators. It is likely that ninety-percent of the training that bonacho-herders undergo is about not startling the creature (the other ten-percent is about cleaning up).*
14. **Boobrie:** Scottish shapeshifter that most often took the form of a water bird of unusual size, but could take on the appearance of other watery beasts, including monsters like the water horse and water bull, as well as a large mosquito. It attacks ships to snatch the livestock being transported on them, and eats marine mammals when its preferred food is unavailable. In some forms, like the water horse, it can walk on water. *The stories don't specify what “large” means in relation to a mosquito, so it might well be able to take a form that is small enough to be easily overlooked, and spy on people. Clearly the locals want to get rid of this monster that is killing their cattle and wrecking*

*their boats, but first they need to figure out why all their plans go awry.*

15. **Bugul Noz:** Briton fae which is so ugly that even the animals do not go near it, and they make loud noises so that humans will not approach. In some stories it is said that they are so ugly that they are deadly to look upon, but they are probably dangerous to each other as well because even the stories which speak of several Bugul Noz describe them as being very lonely. *The stories are reminiscent of Medusa and the gorgons, who did not have a petrifying stare (as some modern reinterpretations portray) but faces which were petrifying to look upon. The loud noises seem like an auditory form of warning coloration, so they may sound instinctively terrifying to any being which evolved here—and, to everyone else, might be scary but also might sound beautiful, like poison-dart frogs and blue-ringed octopi look beautiful. If there are multiple bugul nozes, perhaps they are not so lonely after all, because they themselves are eyeless (or at least travel by night) and use echolocation to find each other.*

16. **Bukavac:** Serbian water monster that would leave its home in the lake at night and make freakish, shrieking noises. It has six legs and twisting horns like old branches. If the monster encounters anyone at night, it will jump on them from behind and strangle them with its long, sinuous body. *It's like a monster-water-deer, though actual physical descriptions of this monster are hard to come by. If the branch-like horns are supposed to be reminiscent of antlers, then, as a six-legged ungulate, it is also reminiscent of Sleipnir, Odin's eight-legged horse. Considering the further connection between water monsters and shapeshifting, and the fact that Sleipnir's father, Loki, was a shapeshifter, it would be easy to establish such a connection in your world.*

17. **Caballucos del Diablu:** Cantabrian ghosts, called the "little horses of the devil." These spirits of the damned have the form of giant, brilliantly-colored dragonflies, and tend to make an appearance when the living make bonfires and offer burnt sacrifices. They do not tend to inflict physical harm to people, but that doesn't mean that their visits are pleasant or looked forward to. *Since they are called "horses," they are probably ridden by demons (and maybe also witches, sorcerers, and so on). Most dragonflies are not attracted to bright lights, but some are. Perhaps the caballucos del Diablu are the same, and inhabit (what is to them) a dark world illuminated only by the light of sacred fires. They visit these*

*places because they are the only places that they can see, and where they can see.*

18. **Caladrius:** Roman bird with feathers as white as snow. It is possibly a dove, heron, white plover, or other white bird, but may have been an entirely unique, fantastical bird. The caladrius has healing properties, for it is able to take a person's illness into itself, healing that person, and then heal itself in a more traditional manner. Whether it can heal a person's physical wounds is unclear. *What does a person have to do to win the caladrius' favor? Perhaps the transfer is automatic, requiring only body contact, and so it is possible to catch caladriuses and force them to cure people. If it is intelligent, then it may be well-versed in modern healing lore, and even in secrets that have been forgotten by others.*

19. **Căpcăun:** Romanian boogeyman or ogre. They kidnap children and adolescents, especially if they are female or of noble blood. According to some accounts they have a dog's head, and may have a pair of eyes on the back of the neck, or four legs. *Do they kidnap people for food or for ransom? Perhaps every Căpcăun was once human, as is often the case with ogres, and they steal children in order to make more of themselves. Given the preference for noble blood, do they consider themselves to be counterparts to the local nobles in this case? Do they still eat people?*

20. **Carcolh:** Gascon chimerical monster that has the long, sinuous body of a snake, the shell of a snail, and the tentacles of an octopus. It lives in a cave and its hairy, slimy tentacles can extend for miles, searching for prey to ensnare and drag back to its lair. *The tentacles are probably covered in small hairs capable of detecting its environment. By registering temperatures, the tentacles would be able to tell roughly where a human-sized person was. How strong are the tentacles, though? Perhaps several of them are necessary to restrain a person, so you have a chance if you see just one (but, of course, the carcolh knows its limitations too, so there are likely to be others just out of sight).*

21. **Cerastes:** Greek snake monster with two large horns, like those of a ram, or eight smaller horns. It lies in wait with all of its body concealed under dirt or leaves, save for its horns, which it causes to twitch, and kills any animals that come near to investigate (if the horns are small, they are usually said to resemble worms, and attract birds). Some say that it has no spine because it is so flexible. *A*

*cerastes of a certain size has horns like worms and preys on birds. Perhaps a cerastes of greater size has horns like branches or snakes, and one that is bigger yet has horns like trees. It is not quite a treasure-imitating mimic, but one can still come up with individual variations with which to bedevil adventurers--a cerastes with what appears to be a magical sword for a horn, for example--and it is easy to imagine the sort of annoying wizard who would design such an infuriating trap.*

22. **Cikavac:** Serbian bird monster which had to be magically created under specific circumstances. The cikavac will suck out the honey from beehives, drain the milk from cattle, and steal other liquids in a like manner, and bring them home and deposit them in a bucket for its owner. In addition, it is able to give its owner the ability to talk with animals. *Grants the spell "Speak With Animals" doesn't seem to pair naturally with "flies around sucking things up and then spitting them out," but maybe it is simply able to speak both human languages and the tongues of animals, and acts as a go-between. This would be a very useful starting familiar for a young wizard, even one who wasn't interested in theft, and the linguistic application probably gives some wizards a certain amount of plausible deniability regarding their true intentions, especially if animal communication is otherwise hard to come by.*
23. **Cinnamon bird:** Greek bird monster also called Cinnamologus. They were useful because they flew to far-off lands and there harvested cinnamon, which was brought back and could be retrieved by clever people. Like the gold-collecting ant, it was necessary to use meat (and a lot of it) in the course of tricking the gigantic cinnamon birds from their namesake cinnamon, which was incorporated into their nests. *Bird's nest soup is a real food, and cinnamon is reportedly delicious. Perhaps cinnamon bird's nest soup is also a thing, in which case cinnamon birds use saliva in the creation of their nests, as swiftlets do in real life. They are reportedly very large, and apparently eat people from time to time, but domesticating them and training them to bring cinnamon back for their handlers rather than themselves would still be lucrative, if done successfully.*
24. **Coco:** Iberian boogeyman with either a pumpkin or a naked skull for a head, and a crocodilian or dragon-like body. It disguises itself as a mere shadow and hunts for misbehaving children, whom it steals away for its dinner, and often commit itself to following specific children for a long period of

*time. The skull should, of course, be from whichever child it ate last, or perhaps it has a head of many skulls, in a circle or melded together and each talking, crying and asking for help. The coco is not malicious, merely hungry, and its cunning is no greater than that which belongs to its prey. In fact, it knows everything that was known to the children it has eaten (and hardly anything more), so it often goes after their friends next, and imitates their voice to sweeten the bait.*

25. **Cuegle:** Cantabrian monster with three arms but no hands or fingers, which sort of defeats any advantage that having a third arm might grant. It also has one stubby horn, three eyes (each one a different color: blue, green, and red), and five rows of teeth. Babies may be stolen by the cuegle, but it is repulsed by holly and oak leaves. *Make the arms into tentacles, or at least super-flexible and multi-jointed in a way that human arms are not, so that they effectively have a set of three giant opposable thumbs. It's still not a pair of hands, but hey, beggars can't be choosers. Does each eye have a different magical power? Perhaps the teeth wear out and get replaced over time as with a shark.*
26. **Culebre:** Asturian winged and limbless dragon lives in caves and guards treasure, as dragons do, but it kidnaps water nymphs rather than princesses. As they grow older, their scales grow harder and their wings grow bigger, but their insides are still vulnerable and at least one has been slain by eating a loaf of needle-filled bread. Culebres are said to never die of old age, but eventually they all fly to a land across the sea if heroes don't kill them first so nobody can say for sure. *Perhaps this land across the sea is a "culebre graveyard." The remains of dragons are often said to possess miraculous properties, and there would be great profit in making off with such a storehouse, if only one can evade the heavily-armored culebres that are waiting there to die, and who will not be pleased at the sight of would-be grave robbers. They breed like salmon, and die here too, but die standing vigilant over their eggs.*
27. **Dev:** Armenian humanoid monster of giant proportions and heads too large even for their already-massive size. They tend to come in two colors, black and white. According to some stories they are the descendants of demons, but there are those who are benevolent as well as those which are malicious. *There's something oddly baby-like in the devs' overly large heads. How long do demons take to mature? They're eternal beings, after all, so maybe the devs, even those*

*which are thousands of years old, are still infants (or toddlers at the most). They're unusually intelligent, sure, but they're the children (or at least the descendants) of demons, so maybe that shouldn't be surprising. What will happen, then, when the devs finally grow up?*

**28. Dip:** Catalan dog monster that serves the Devil and sucks blood like a vampire. One of its legs is lame, which is a running theme in Catalan demons. *If a lame leg among the Devil's servants is so common, this implies that working for the Devil in some way causes that injury. Perhaps the Devil does it, carefully aiming the hammer to crack your kneecap and prevent you from ever forgetting the contract you have signed, or maybe the Devil forces you to do it yourself to test your dedication. Some servants of the Devil don't have a crippled leg--they asked for leniency, and a harsher price was paid.*

**29. Drangue:** Albanian winged humanoid that exists solely to combat the *kulshedra*. This is an instinctive desire of theirs, and the drangues go into a frenzy when they encounter one of their immortal foes. It is said that they cannot be victorious unless they sacrifice their lives, so each drangue can beat only one *kulshedra*. *Some arthropods are famous for having short-lived males whose mates eat them, and something similar may be happening here. Rather than an entirely different species, drangues may be "male kulshedras," who engage in fights to prove their fitness as mates, and they always die because even the worthy ones are eaten for nutrition. After mating, the kulshedra secludes itself to give birth and then, like the octopus, dies, so bystanders mistakenly believe that the drangue has killed it.*

**30. Dunter:** English goblin or dwarf-life monster that makes its home in abandoned forts and towers, where it makes a sound like the grinding of barley. This might be because the dunter is actually preparing food but, whatever the cause, it is taken as an omen of death. Some legends say they were created, or bound to their homes, by human sacrifices made when the buildings were constructed. *Are dunters ghosts that have been bound to a place, who are likely to remember what life was like outside the walls which trap them, or are they entirely new beings who were merely created by the sacrifice? A ghost may not be happy at all with the people responsible for its death, and may actually collude with a third party to destroy the building. On the other hand, a dunter who is content with its lot may be sad when the building is no longer in use, and ask for someone to fix the situation and bring people back.*

**31. Elder Mother:** English monster that is either a troll or a witch and guards elders (the type of tree) or elderberries. Some stories say that they can shapeshift or that they are vulnerable to fire as a tree is, and they can turn people to stone to protect their trees. They are also called Old Lady and Old Girl. *What do you do when the trees get tired of your shit? They may not move much, most of the time, but don't take a lack of interest for lack of ability. The trees are old and they've learned a lot in their time, just by listening to the birds and the soil and the occasional wizard who walks through here, and now they're taking your shape and coming into your town and plotting the doom of everyone who's ever held a wood-axe.*

**32. Elwetrish:** German chimerical monster with the body of a chicken and the antlers of a deer, with scales instead of feathers. Its wings are small and are no good for flying, so it walks on the ground and hides in overgrowth. Some stories say that they are the result of breeding chickens, ducks, or geese with goblins or elves, and as a result of their magical lineage their eggs grow while incubating. *The idea that the elwetrish is a crossbreed between animals and intelligent beings is troubling, to say the least, though one supposes that goblins, at least in many of their depictions, might actually be an active party in this. A preferable alternative, I think, is that an elwetrish is just what happens when poultry hang around goblin-magic for too long and get warped, rather than what happens when a goblin hangs around dwarf-mead for too long.*

**33. Etiäinen:** Finnish apparition that, like the doppelgänger, is the double of a person. Unlike the doppelgänger, however, they are said to appear and imitate a person's actions ahead of time, before that person ever arrives. It is said that everyone has one, though they do not make their presence known on a regular basis, and it is likewise said that they can foretell (or perhaps forewarn of) bad events. *Because the etiäinen appears before you do, the presence of Time Shenanigans is strongly implied. Rather than a monster, it might be some kind of temporal reverse-echo produced by strange magics. Alternatively, perhaps it does not imitate the future but instead performs some action which, by magic, then compels the person whose appearance it took.*

**34. Fext:** Czech undead monster that was first spoken of during the Thirty Years' War. Its chief attribute is that bullets that are fired at it will turn back on the attacker (except for glass bullets). Some

generals were reputed to be fexts, but it was unclear whether fexts were born as such (not uncommon, for Slavic “undead”) or had to make a pact with the Devil. *The obvious question concerns whether the fext is immune to other weapons or just bullets, and for a typical fantasy setting the best answer might be that it is immune to ranged weapons in particular. Perhaps the dividing line is whether it is being held: you can stab a fext with an arrow but can't throw a knife at one (unless the knife is glass, presumably).*

**35. Finfolk:** Orkney shapeshifters who live in the ocean. In a reversal of the selkie myth, both sexes kidnap humans in order to get spouses (and possibly slaves). They live in vast palaces beneath the waves and can take the form of any animal, plant, or even object that might be found in the sea, and can go so far as to transform into a boat, its oars, and the fisherman who sits in it. One can distract the finfolk by throwing silver in another direction, however, or send them away with the sign of the cross. Some own cats that can transform into fish (or perhaps fish that can transform into cats), and are regarded as having other magical abilities. *An interesting inversion of a common mythical trope, and a way to get your Lovecraftian Deep One fix if you want a folkloric aesthetic (or, conversely, a way to introduce Deep Ones to your Scottish Cthulhu campaign). The shapeshifting cats are interesting in their own right, and could probably be found in a wizard pet shop (which is a pet shop run by a wizard, not a shop for pets which are wizards, though that, too, should exist somewhere).*

**36. Gamayun:** Russian chimerical monster with the body of a large, black bird with the tail of a rooster and the head of a woman, probably related to the Greek myth of the siren. The gamayun is all-knowing, and speaks portents and prophecies to those who are worthy to hear them. It lives on an island somewhere to the east, near where Paradise is said to be. *If you combine this with the story of the alkonost then you get the implication that Paradise, as in the former home of mortal beings, is located in the underworld, which is a geographical location that can be reached by ship. Perhaps the first murder is what turned the immediate area into the land of the dead. Perhaps the first murder happened a long, long time ago--and the gamayun can make prophecies not because she can tell the future but because she is very old, history tends to run in cycles, and she has seen your kings and your priests and she knows how small their hearts are*

*and how all this will end because that is the way it has always ended.*

**37. Gjenganger:** Scandinavian undead monster. They were those who cannot rest after death, and their origin can be either sympathetic (e.g. murder victim) or sinful (e.g. murderer). People who commit suicide are especially prone to returning, but whatever the cause they usually had some kind of task to attend to. They are usually violent and cause sickness by their touch, and have to be put down even when they have become revenants out of no wrongdoing on their part. Their name means “walking again” or “walking after death.” *The gjenganger is a pitiable monster, one who must be put down for the sake of others--but then, why can't the gjenganger just go somewhere else, far from where people are? Perhaps they are incapable of understanding the effect that they're having on the world, or maybe they are compelled to remain around people. It may have to do with that vague 'purpose' which brought them back, something which is so important to them that they'll risk unleashing a catastrophe in order to see it accomplished. A great number of them are suicides, but what unfinished task would a suicide have? Vengeance, perhaps, especially if the suicide had ritual or political ramifications (the practice of suicide in both Japanese and Roman cultures comes to mind). What if someone had a purpose which they couldn't achieve in life, but committed suicide and banked on the possibility (the hope) of becoming a gjenganger in death? How badly would somebody have to want a thing done, to commit suicide and become a monster?*

**38. Groach:** Breton fairy or ogre with the appearance of an old woman with very long fingers and two long teeth like the tusks of a walrus. They are polite and usually good-natured to those who are polite with them, and may offer magical treasures and personal favors to such people, but their standards are high and they eat people who are not respectful enough. They often live in wells, and may feed on the children who fall down those wells. *They're nice enough, but sometimes they kill you. That's pretty standard so far as fairies go, I suppose. Perhaps they make magical items specifically out of the bones of the children that they eat. If one comes across a groach in a good mood and is given a gift, but it is obviously a toddler's skull, then how can this rather awkward situation be resolved without offending the groach and getting eaten?*

**39. Gold-digging ant:** Greek monster described as a “furry ant” the size of a fox, and said to live in

India. The ants collected gold dust as they dug their burrows, and nearby tribes would take the gold when the ants weren't paying attention (in some stories the ants valued the gold, and in others they cared nothing for it but regarded trespassers as a threat). In reality, the ants were probably Himalayan marmots. *Everyone goes with "giant furry ants," or even just "giant ants," but I present to you an alternative: eusocial marmots. They're already social animals who live in burrows, so you can take some cues from naked mole rats. Marmots hibernate in the winter, so that might be the season to raid their territories for gold, but winter in the Himalayas (or a mountain range analogous to the Himalayas) presents its own dangers.*

**40. Guajona:** Cantabrian vampire with a yellow face, a yellow and disfigured face, the legs of a bird, and a single, black tooth that goes all the way down to her chin. The guajona uses this tooth to suck the blood out of people like a mosquito, then goes back to her hiding place underground to sleep during the day. Her favorite victims are children but, whether for sustainability, to ward off mobs, or out of compassion, the guajona is not known to take so much blood that she kills anyone. *The tooth is probably a proboscis, like that of the mosquito whose behavior she imitates. If she is able to feed without killing people then it is conceivable that the guajona could gather a group of willing donors, but what could she offer to them? Assassinations on demand, perhaps, in which case her donors/employers probably also protect her body while she is asleep, transport it from place to place during the day, and so on.*

**41. Guivre:** French dragon with poisonous breath and just one set of legs. According to some accounts, the guivre also has a horn on its head. They can probably be considered a kind of water monster, because they can be found in small bodies of water and even in damp places, and are sometimes likened unto eels. *A naturalist account of the guivre will probably make it an amphisbaenian, a kind of lizard with either no legs or just one set of legs. If this is the case, then it probably also hunts by night and drags its prey underground to feed (and feeds on a variety of subterranean critters), and may have a detachable tail (which more dragons should have, anyway). The poisonous breath pairs very well with the tunnels which it must dig to get around. Probably, the guivre's breath is heavier-than-air so that it can build underground hollows full of the stuff as a trap.*

**42. Hala:** Bulgarian storm demon that causes bad weather of various kinds in order to destroy crops and damage buildings. They are very hungry and have been known to try to eat everything from children to the sun and the moon (in the latter case they cause eclipses). It is nevertheless possible to get on the good side of a hala, which can be materially beneficial. They are described variously as "black winds," snakes, dragons, or ravens, and are said to be able to possess the bodies of human women (they are always female). *I prefer the "black wind" depiction, not least because the hala make for interesting elementals. The bottomless hunger is more in line with a fire elemental, but the discrepancy just makes them more notable as spirits of the air or of storms. Perhaps they can also cause visions of other shapes in their swirling dark mists. If you'd like to make a hala into a major antagonist, a real "sleeping evil" kind of deal, then consider the idea that there were multiple moons and one was eaten permanently, long ago.*

**43. Helhest:** Danish horse monster with three legs. Very noisy, but one should not look in its direction because the sight of it will cause a person to grow ill and die. It is ridden by the goddess Hel, who takes it out at night when she goes about her rounds and gathers the souls of those who are meant to die, but one can bribe it to go elsewhere by offering it a bag of oats. *Make this a thing that literally happens in your world. Everyone needs a psychopomp, either the goddess of death or one of her duly-appointed representatives (there is an exam to qualify), and if the psychopomp doesn't make it to the scene of your death then you might un-die (which is often but not always the same thing as becoming undead, depending on the circumstances of your death and, well, a bit of luck). There are all sorts of ways to challenge the psychopomp for your life, flee its presence and escape capture, or what have you, but a classic strategy is bribing the horse. Don't forget your oats!*

**44. Hercinia:** German bird monster with feathers that shine "like fire" at night. It is possible that the monster was inspired by real birds with iridescent feathers. Less plausibly, some have suggested it might have been a bird infested with bioluminescent fungi. Its feathers are said to be useful to travelers even a long time after they have been plucked. *If fungi are the explanation, then the "condition" of being a hercinia may be contagious to other birds, including bird-people (if such exist in your setting). Depending on the specifics, that might not be so bad: now*

*you have a perpetual torch-in-a-box, activated by letting your bluebird out of its container (or taking off your cloak, if you're a bird-person). On the other hand, there are some similarities to phoenixes: what if phoenixhood were somehow contagious?*

**45. Hippalectryon:** Greek chimerical monster that has the front part of a horse and the wings and back half of a chicken or a vulture. Like many horse-themed Greek monsters, it is associated with Neptune. Its image may have been considered to have a protective effect, because it was painted on shields and ships and used in apotropaic magic. *The image of the thing is important... Here's an idea: the image of the thing is all there is. It's a common point of confusing, but there's no such thing as a flesh-and-blood hippalectryon. Rather, there's a spell for giving life to an illustration, so that it can move around, take watch, and use a little bit of magic (to protect people, naturally), and the spell is traditionally used on this particular image (for runic reasons, the image's behavior depends on the animals which compose it, so other combinations have undesirable results).*

**46. Indus worm:** Greek monster said to live in the Indus River. Described as an enormous, white worm with a pair of sharp teeth, it has sometimes been explained as a kind of crocodile, or even a dolphin, whose nature was misunderstood over the course of transmission from India to Greek. It sleeps beneath the mud in the daytime and hunts by night, and is in turn hunted by people for its oil, which may be used to make incendiary bombs. *If its oil secretions can be used to make bombs, then obviously it should be easily ignitable (though just as obviously it should also be immune to fire). Perhaps it is set on fire immediately upon contact with oxygen. There isn't much in this world that's more terrifying than a fiery crocodile, except maybe a fiery crocodile that's screaming at you. Even so, there must be a healthy market for that oil, and some very well-paying customers.*

**47. Jaculus:** Greek snake or dragon monster with wings and, occasionally, two legs at the front of its body. Also called the "javelin snake," the jaculus hurls itself from tall branches with such force that the impact can kill its prey, and they travel too quickly to be dodged. They are very good at remaining concealed until the opportune moment. *Crocodiles aren't thought of as social animals but it turns out that they engage in cooperative hunting, and the jaculus might do so as well. It is an ambush predator which needs to*

*"reload" by climbing or flying back to an elevated position, so a colony of jaculuses (jaculi?) who shared their kills would be better able to survive. Imagine a forest full of these things.*

**48. Joint-Eater:** Irish fairy that is small of stature and capable of both shapeshifting and invisibility. Also called the Just-Halver, for it will go down a person's throat and, parasitically, eat half of everything that the person consumes. They were regarded as pests in the past, but in modern times they might be useful for those who want to lose weight. *Some enterprising wizard is probably selling joint-eaters to a particular kind of clientele, but they'd also be useful for assassinations: if one joint-eater will eat half your food, will a second eat the other half? Imagine having to figure out why the king is wasting away to skin and bones, and nobody can figure out the magic that's responsible--because there is no magic, except for the spell that encouraged or emboldened or transported a small host of joint-eaters.*

**49. Kallikantzaros:** Greek goblin that live underground for most of the year, sawing at the roots of the world tree, but regularly cease their work in order to make trouble for surface-dwellers. Upon their return, the kallikantzaroi inevitably find that the tree has healed itself in their absence. They are blind, with horse legs and the tusks of a boar, and are very large in some stories and very small in others. *There are probably a great many kallikantzaroi, and they never stop growing as they get older, so you have the younger ones that are as small as you would expect goblins to be, the middle-aged ones who stand as tall as humans, and the ancient ones who are like small hills. These rarely stir, for it is hard to make tunnels big enough to accommodate them, and as soon as their wisdom ceases to be useful, their brethren refuse to work any longer on widening their chambers, so that they are inevitably crushed by the walls and their own girth in the years to come.*

**50. Khalkotauroi:** Greek bull monsters with fiery breath and some bronze body parts. They were created by Hephaestus, the divine blacksmith, and were set to the task of guarding a fleece of golden wool. *If they were manufactured once, then they can be manufactured again, and they seem to have been pretty good at guard duty right up to the point that somebody was given a Potion of Fire Immunity. Short of wizardly assistance, they would probably continue to be good at their job. One wonders, though, whether the khalkotauroi are made from scratch or if normal bulls have to be modified into them.*



51. **Kratt:** Estonian monster that is physically formed from hay by a witch and then given life by the Devil, like an evil golem. They perform all kinds of tasks for their master but, much like a cat, will become dangerous if allowed to grow bored and so one who has no more need for a kratt will assign it an impossible task to keep it occupied until it overheats and catches fire. *It should be possible to use a kratt to help you host a children's television show about animals. They're probably sentient, though, and that opens up some complications when it comes to animal abuse or, if it's really smart, labor rights.*

52. **Kuga:** Serbian plague demon with the appearance of an old woman dressed entirely in white. They have their own homeland but are frequently known to travel away from it, which is how they end up where normal people live. Dirtiness and disorder are perceived as personal insults, so they will curse people with sickness if they notice a house that is not properly organized, and the only way to undo the curse is usually to offer it food and to clean up the entire house. *In addition to having to deal with a kuga who has come here, it should be possible to go to the land of the kugas and deal with them there. They probably have many strange customs, if they're all so uptight as to get a universal reputation for cursing people for disorderliness, and anyone who goes to visit them will have a full-time job in keeping on top of the rules and regulations. What treasure could be so valuable that it would inspire one to travel into a country full of plague demons?*

53. **Kulshedra:** Albanian snake/dragon monster with seven to twelve heads, red hair, and (somehow) large breasts. The kulshedra spits fire and causes droughts, flooding, and other water-related natural disasters, and their milk and urine is poisonous. It is said in one source that the male form, the kulshedër, "acts as a devil," but no elaboration is given. *Does the male form "act as a devil" by going to and fro in a very small form, small enough to hide in your hair and whisper evil things in your ear? Perhaps it is really is a devil, implying that the female form is one as well, and that devils grow up from temporarily-invisible snakes.*

54. **Lamia:** Basque water monster not to be confused with the serpentine lamia of Greek myth. They mostly resemble humans but have duck feet (or fish tails, according to other stories). If given gifts, they will perform work for the giver, building structures or plowing fields at night, but will flee at the

rooster's dawn-time crowing. They live in stone houses and may be the original inhabitants of the land, but have grown less numerous with the appearance of churches in the places where they once roamed. *Why did spread of churches make the lamias less common, or at least more reclusive? What do they have against the god, or gods, worshiped by the newcomers? They are unlikely to be antagonists (one might see them more easily as dispensers of "ancient lore regarding this region, which other people have forgotten"), but they could also be driven to violence due to a worsening of their circumstances or because they desire to reclaim their land.*

55. **Landvaettir:** Norse spirits which are sometimes associated with the dead, but also with areas that have specifically never been inhabited. They live in large rocks, which are left where they stand even when they sit on good, arable land. When given their space, they can hand blessings out in return, but their wrath is fearsome. *The souls of the dead break down like everything else does, but souls are made of a different substance than crude matter and are not eaten by the worms and mushrooms. Instead, the fragments mingle and merge with other fragments, till they become a great mass that has lived the life of a human, a bear, a deer...and yet never lived at all, because it is not really any of those things, no more than you are whatever it is you ate. The landvaettirs are very old, and they have different interests than mortals do, but they are also capable of reason, and so they were the first gods that people worshiped.*

56. **Lauma:** Latvian sky spirit with one eye, which could take the form of a human, a bear, a dog, or a goat, and might also take a form somewhere in-between two or more of these. They have a certain amount of control over the weather and keep fantastic cattle, but also abduct human men and eat them for dinner, so they make complicated neighbors at best. *Laumas must make dangerous opponents, with the minds of tool-making beings and the ability to take the form of a bear, but people need not have an antagonistic relationship with them. They pose a fantastic solution for towns who don't know what to do with their criminals, after all. Unfortunately, they also pose a temptation for those same towns to raid their neighbors once they run out of criminals. The laumas, who don't really care where their dinner comes from, are happy enough to side with anyone who will keep the dishes coming, or stay out of it altogether so long as they stay fed.*

**57. Lidérc:** Hungarian shapeshifting monster that preys upon people in their sleep and draws some vital essence from them. Also called a “miracle chicken,” it is hatched from the egg of a black hen that has been incubated under particular conditions, and then finds an appropriate victim/owner. It feeds on the blood, the breath, the body heat, or even the soul of the person it has chosen, and in exchange, the person will become rich and supernaturally powerful for the rest of their (short) life. *It is not clear whether the lidérc always attaches itself to the person who hatches it, but, regardless of the details, one could easily imagine a business selling these things, whether one can incubate all the things personally or resorts to selling the procedures (this could invite theft, but woe to the sorry soul who steals a wizard’s intellectual property!).*

**58. Longana:** Italian chimerical monster with the body of a human and the legs of a goat. Besides the goat part, they are considered beautiful, and they converse with spirits in order to learn the world’s secrets. As with many half-animal women, there are stories of human men who married one and later lost both their wife and their children due to some wrongdoing on their own part. *This is a standard sort of tale, but there’s something unique here in the interaction with spirits and their purpose. If the longana have such lofty aims, why do they tend to marry woodcutters and shepherds? Perhaps it has to do with their children. Whether the intent is to build some kind of bridge between themselves (and the spirits?) and humans, or create infiltrators, or make something to remember humanity by when the latter passes away into history, they can avoid attention by sticking to the outskirts of society.*

**59. Mandagot:** French spirit that is described as having the form of a cat, cow, dog, fox, or rat (different individuals have different forms). They must be lured to their owners with a fresh chicken, then fed the first bite and first sip of meal dish from that day forward, in exchange for which they will produce a gold coin for their master every day. However, ownership of the mandagot will eventually cause great physical pain, especially when one is already old and suffering from other ailments, so it must eventually be freed or given to another person. *Ownership of a mandagot is valuable, because anything that makes money is, itself, worth money, so one must consider why a person would transfer ownership of their mandagot to a specific candidate. Probably, what the*

*soon-to-be-former owner will be after is something that can’t be bought: an heirloom (lost in a troll’s board, of course) or a wizard’s journal (lost at the bottom of the sea) or the secret name of the king of the cats (locked in a casket and kept hidden even from the king himself).*

**60. Many-finned serpent:** Chimerical monster from Medieval bestiaries. Described as sea serpents with an unusual number of fins, lobster-like tails, and large nostrils with hair and capable of growing up to 45 meters long. Referred to as the “cetacean centipede” as early as the 1500s, it has occasionally been suggested that the many-finned “serpent” is actually an invertebrate. *That’s “tails” in the plural. The many-finned serpent is also a many-tailed serpent. They may be stingers, if the serpent is an invertebrate, just as the hair of the “nostrils” may setae, or sensory hairs.*

**61. Mari-morgan:** Breton water spirits blamed for heavy flooding, and known to lure men to death by drowning. They live in an underwater city with buildings of gold and crystal, and magnificent gardens. It is possible for people to become mari-morgans, and some people have adopted them as orphans, though the mari-morgan will inevitably be lured back to the sea by some strange instinct. *If normal people can be turned into mari-morgans, do they really drown anyone or are they simply taking husbands for themselves in the same way that humans are known to take selkies and swan maidens? Perhaps their floods are an attempt to wage war against the people who live along the shore, and they are looking for someone who might be willing to dam a major river and permanently flood the region in exchange for joining the ranks of the immortal mari-morgans.*

**62. Mouro:** Portuguese giants who were the original inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, and now live underground. They were reputed to make many grand treasures and to have great hoards of precious metals and gemstones, and they go outside only to gather (or steal or take) food. *The mouros are rather like fantasy dwarves, except bigger and with a generally more antagonistic relationship to their neighbors. It does explain how they manage to grow food underground (or rather, clarifies that they don’t). They might also rely on trade: large burgs typically didn’t grow their own food in Medieval Europe, but were a source for manufactured goods that couldn’t be produced in local villages.*

**63. Muladona:** Catalan monster not unlike a centaur, except that it has no human torso, only a human head (but also human breasts on the animal part, somehow). Rather than a horse, the muladona is part mule. The muladona wanders around at night and tries to join groups of mules, who (understandably) get frightened after a while and (less understandably) will leap off cliffs if there are any nearby. Apparently, humans cannot tell the difference between a mule with breasts and a human head apart from other mules, and have to count their mules one by one to confirm that the muladonna is not among them. *Like the mule, the muladonna may also be a crossbreed (probably between centaurs and donkeys, in this case), but hopefully not. If so, though, the muladonna is probably sterile. Does the human head appear only some of the time, or does it cast an illusion? It seems to have a fear aura, but one which applies only to mules. There may be muladonna-equivalents for other animals, with fear auras that target those species in particular. Is there a muladonna for humans, if so?*

**64. Nachtkrapp:** Austrian boogeyman with the appearance of a giant nocturnal raven, exactly as suggested by its name, which means “night raven.” It likes to abduct children (in some stories it puts them in a bag before flying off) and devours them in its nest: first their limbs and then their heart. Like the basilisk, it can be dangerous to look upon: the one who sees its empty eye sockets will die, and the one who sees the holes in its wings will become sick. *Like the tarantula hawk, the nachtkrapp’s most distinctive hunting behavior is for the sake of its young: the children which it abducts are put in the nest to serve as fresh meat for babies. The limbs are usually not so much eaten as just shredded, so that the child can’t pose a danger to the nachtkrapp’s egglets, but when they get older and begin to learn to hunt, it will leave the arms alone so that the child can crawl, then hobble just one leg so the next abducted child can walk but not run, and so on until its darlings are competent hunters like itself.*

**65. Nitus:** Catalan monster that is so incredibly tiny that it cannot be seen with the naked eye, and of whom descriptions are therefore impossible. They enter the ears of sleeping people and go to the brain, where they feed on memories and dreams, reproduce, and spawn more nituses. Those who are suffering from such an infestation will be tired and forgetful. *You can’t see a nitus infestation, but you can feel it (headache, swelling, nausea) and you can see the signs (little*

*white specks around the nose and ears, which are the nitus colony’s droppings) and you can tell from talking with someone (progressiv amnesia and dementia). Unfortunately, by the time that you can tell that someone’s “got the nitus,” they’re probably too far gone. The only thing you can do is treat everyone else who might have (and probably has) been infected.*

**66. Nuberu:** Asturian dwarves with thick beards, wings, and a large leather hat. They travel in chariots pulled by wolves and dress in goat hide, and they spend their days making thunderbolts in their workshops, and then travel around at night throwing them about. The nuberus are not exactly evil, but they are definitely inconsiderate and don’t care much for the damage that they cause. *They’re probably holding some kind of competition. “Making things and then throwing them” sounds a lot like javelin tossing, albeit with the added wrinkle that you have to make your javelins first. Obviously they pride both craftsmanship and athleticism. Storms tend to not happen every day, so what determines the occasion?*

**67. Nucklavee:** Orcadian chimera monster with the entire body of a horse and a human’s torso planted on its back, and a single red eye between them. Like many monsters, its breath sickens both animals and plants (particularly those which produce food). As a monster of the briny sea, it was believed incapable of crossing a river of fresh water. *Rather than planting the eye in either the human’s head or the horse’s, imagine making the eye removable. Two heads implies two brains, so maybe they fight over possession of the eye. The human-part, who has hands, may seem to have the advantage, but the horse-part can walk wherever it wishes, even into danger, and it can choose to stop walking and stay in one place forever, too.*

**68. Odontotyranos:** Also called the dentityrannus, or “tooth-tyrant,” and dantesvara or “lord of teeth,” a Greek monster with three horns and the head of a black horse. It was said to be well-known in India, where it lived, and had the tusks of an elephant but was greater in size and carnivorous--it preyed on elephants, in fact. Some have suggested that it is a crocodile or a rhino, though neither animal matches the description perfectly. *The odontotyranos is probably called the lord of teeth on account of its huge tusks, but maybe that’s a red herring and there’s another reason. Perhaps it collects teeth: like an owl, it coughs up the bones of its meals, and then, not at all like an owl, it sifts through*

*the remains for teeth and stores them away in a hidey-hole. The odontotyrannos knows the story of every tooth it has collected, and might be willing to give up a magically valuable tooth which it has extra copies in exchange for a tooth that it has never collected.*

**69. Onocentaur:** Greek chimerical monster that greatly resembles a centaur, but is part-donkey rather than part-horse. In some accounts it also has only two legs, and occasionally some have two legs and others have four. They are well-acquainted with spirits, and seem to be nomadic. *Perhaps the offspring of their union with a centaur is a muladonna. On that note, do they get along with centaurs? Are there -taur beings patterned after other equine animals, like zebra-taurs?*

**70. Ophiotauros:** Greek chimerical monster with the body of a snake and the head of a bull. The smoke of its entrails, if inhaled, can grant power sufficient to defeat gods, whose enemy it was. It might well be said that snakes and bulls are each “part-ophiotauros,” because it is one of the timeless beings which emerged from the primordial chaos that predates the world. *If we say that snakes and bulls are part-ophiotauros,” then maybe there are many other primordial chimerical monsters, like an Ur-Griffin, and every pair of animals is descended from one of them. Perhaps they, too, were once combined, and so there were many generations of primordial monsters splitting apart and splitting apart again. For the sake of simplicity, we might say that Ophiotauros split into the Ur-Snake and Ur-Bull, which then became snakes and bovines in general.*

**71. Orthrus:** Greek dog monster with two heads. He was the brother of the three-headed Cerberus and guarded the cattle of the three-headed giant, Geryon, so having multiple heads seem to have been a thing in Orthrus’ neighborhood. *If there are two-headed dogs and three-headed dogs, it raises the question: just how many heads can a dog have? Hydras, after all, are just reptiles with a lot of heads. Maybe in Geryon’s land, “number of heads” is just another trait that you can breed for, like fur color, and some eccentrics breed dogs with nine heads, or ten—or one! Maybe there are even zero-headed dogs, weird-looking things with stump necks that you have to shove food into.*

**72. Paasselkä Devil:** Finnish monster that, like the will-o-wisp, takes the form of a ball of light and appears in swamps and forests (specifically, around

Lake Paasselkä). It will chase fishermen and can move very quickly, and may appear in groups. *If they resemble the will-o-wisp then they must be ghosts of some sort, so what if they’re the ghosts of fish? Imagine a whole group of Paasselkä devils “swimming” through the air and gathered close together as a school. It isn’t hard to guess why they might have it out for fishermen. Glub glub.*

**73. Peluda:** French monster often described as a porcupine-like creature that has a scaly neck, the tail of a snake, the feet of a tortoise, and green fur, and which is as large as an ox. According to some accounts, its “quills” are actually tentacles with stingers, but whether they are tentacles or quills the peluda can fire these at its enemies. *A considerable amount of an octopus’ nervous system is tied up in its arms. If the quills are tentacles, then maybe they can still do stuff after being launched. Imagine some nasty critter shooting you with a venomous appendage and then, as your chest burns and you begin to feel light-headed, the quill untenses, becomes flexible again, wraps itself around your neck, and begins to squeeze. Taking inspiration from starfish, maybe each quill-tentacle will grow into a new peluda if it gets the chance (and it usually does, if you die and it’s allowed to feed on you), or maybe it pumps you full of eggs.*

**74. Peri:** Armenian winged humanoid who tend to keep to themselves in mountain refuges. They were cast out of paradise long ago but will be allowed to return at some point in the future, after they have (as a nation) demonstrated sufficient penitence. Though they are mostly benevolent, they are tricksters and will avenge themselves on hunters who kill too much game or intrude on their territories. *The nature of their crime is usually not elaborated on, just implied by the resemblance to similar tales. Their present behavior indicates that either they were cast out of paradise for a crime other than malice or that they have since repented of it, but not repented enough. A running theme in Abrahamic mythology (from which the peris are obviously derived) is the absoluteness and infallibility of God’s decrees, so what if their sin was not cruelty but an excess of compassion? In Greek mythology, the Noah analogue, Deucalion, was warned of the coming deluge not by its creator, Zeus, but by the titan Prometheus, who was later bound and tortured for the many times that he betrayed the gods on humanity’s behalf. Something similar may have happened with the peris.*

**75. Pesanta:** Catalan dog monster that, like a nightmare, sits on people’s chests and causes

nightmares. Some say that it is a cat, but all accounts agree that it is furry. Its paws are made of steel but have holes in the palms, which prevent it from taking anything (which is what most people worry about when they think of demon housepets breaking into their house at night). *The steel should be flexible, and either controlled by thought or highly connected to the nerves, so that the pesanta can make the most of its paws (or perhaps it has hooves rather than paws, and the steel is its "shoe"). Since accounts differ, one wonders if there are multiple types of pesanta or if they look like a cat and a dog, like a civet or a fossa. Perhaps it has an old man mustache, like the binturong.*

**76. Psoglavac:** Croatian monster with a human body, the legs of a horse, the head of a dog, one cyclopean eye, and iron teeth. They live in caves and in a dark land underground filled with gemstones, like diamond dogs. It is generally agreed that they eat humans but some stories say that they only eat the dead, and dig corpses out from beneath their resting places. Their name means "doghead." *There are some similarities to Lovecraft's ghouls here. They are evidently not good at pursuit, hence the scavenging behavior. The red-toothed shrew has iron deposits in its teeth as well (to harden the enamel) and they are red, as the name suggests. This may be true for the psoglavac as well.*

**77. Quinotaur:** French chimerical monster that is part-bull, with five horns, and part-fish. Called "the beast of Neptune," it sired the first of the Merovingian kings, thus making them partly divine. It is possible that the monster was intended to be a minotaur or the white Bull of Crete that Neptune sent, and whom Minos' wife laid with. *In a fantasy world where hybridization is far from unknown and reliably grants unusual abilities, the "divine right of kings" might well be directly connected to the king's nonhuman ancestry. The only qualifications which dynastic founders usually have are "good at swinging sharp things into other people" and "good at giving directions to some folks who have some sharp things of their own," and having some of the agility of an elf, or some of the strength of a minotaur, might reasonably be expected to give someone an edge in this. Moreover, it would justify the inbreeding (well, justify it a little bit) if conserving the nonhuman blood which already existed was easier than introducing more.*

**78. Ramidreju:** Cantabrian mustelid monster that is born every hundred years to either a weasel or a

marten. It is described as "long like a snake," though one might think that "long like a weasel" would be at least as valid. Their fur is green and heals illnesses, their eyes are yellow, and have a hog-like nose with which they dig deep holes in the search for gold. *Humans probably wouldn't be able to do it (unless it were a family enterprise), but long-lived beings like elves might manage "ramidreju farms" that somehow promote whatever circumstances are necessary for the centennial births of these creatures. A villain might even wreak havoc on the land in order to rearrange ley lines if that could speed up their birth rate somehow.*

**79. Rasselbock:** German chimerical monster with body of a rabbit and the antlers of a deer. They are sometimes described as having sharp canine teeth, and may be carnivorous or at least scavengers. Other stories say that it is shy, however, and that its most dangerous attribute is its antlers. *Meat-eating rabbits can prove to be quite a shock, especially if they hunt in groups (oh, you laugh now, but just think of piranha, or the big game that wolves can take down by working in unison). Even an herbivore, however, can be dangerous if its teeth are sharp, its antlers are pointy, and it has been cornered. Size, too, can be an interesting dimension: a rabbit the size of a horse is going to pose a different kind of threat than a normal one, and there's no reason that a rabbit (or rabbit-like creature, at any rate) couldn't be bigger. Just look at guinea pigs and capybaras.*

**80. Sacamantecas:** Spanish boogeyman. Usually, he steals children outright, but sometimes he will buy them from parents who are tired of their misbehavior. His purpose is to harvest their fat or, less commonly, their blood, sometimes in order to treat the ill children of people who are rich enough to pay his fee and unscrupulous enough to hire him, and sometimes to eat them or to make soap. Though he is usually portrayed as a human, he is sometimes unusually thin and makes strange noises when he has caught a child. Today the myth is sometimes conflated with organ traffickers. *Sellers need buyers, and Sacamentecas may have more kinds of customer than one (after all, how many deathly-sick rich kids can there be in the world?). Moreover, "Sacamentecas" may represent a type of person, a whole profession, rather than just an individual. Surely there's a thriving market in naughty children: wizards who need alchemical test subjects, tyrants who need slave labor to work their wheels of pain, dragons who want a little snack between princesses...*

**81. Sárkány:** Hungarian dragons that share in the nature of the material and spiritual worlds. They make storms and cause floods as they fight, and they have been used as mounts by brave humans. According to some stories, a sárkány is made when either a pike or a rooster becomes old enough, or when the rooster is allowed to remain in a person's house for too long. They live in the trunks of hollow trees or in mountain caves. *The transformation legend is reminiscent of Asian dragons, regarding whom it was said that a carp could become a dragon if it accomplished some great feat. Other things, from foxes to umbrellas, were also said to acquire special properties if they became old enough. The sárkány would fit very nicely into this kind of model.*

**82. Seps:** Reptilian monster from Medieval bestiaries, and possibly a kind of dragon. Though the seps is referred to as a "snake," it is depicted with two legs. The venom of this creature is so deadly that it will eat away at even the bones of its prey, dissolving them into a black liquid. *Another probable amphisbaenian, though the mechanism of the venom is more reminiscent of centipedes. The venom is probably very useful to alchemists, who regarded dissolution as an important step in the creation of a philosopher's stone, and the seps' venom might well be a key ingredient in the production of alkahest, the universal solvent. Assassins, on the other hand, will find it useful only in those situations where they do not need to pretend that a well-connected murderer was involved in their target's death.*

**83. Shellycoat:** Scottish boogeyman that lives in the water, sometimes in rivers and sometimes along the coast. They do not usually cause harm, preferring to stay in their territories and play pranks on passersby, but will repay in kind any harm that is done to them. The name comes from their custom of stringing together shells for clothing. *Shells imply molluscs, and molluscs imply clams and oysters and so forth, and those imply pearls. What does a shellycoat do when it is not making a fool of somebody else? Perhaps it collects bivalves to eat (and make clothing from), and trades the pearls to local villagers in exchange for other goods. The "shelly-coat" might well be a badge of occupation, like a baker's apron or a barber's pole, meant to alert others to its place in society.*

**84. Shurale:** Tatar monster with one horn, lots of fur, and long fingers with which he tickles people to death. Shurale can reportedly shapeshift into many

forms but mostly takes the form of ordinary peasants, and is identifiable by his glowing eyes and backward shoes (it is not clear if the glowing eyes are a thing in other shapes). Those who befriend him can learn magic and receive protection for their crops, but Shurale can also make people sick, get them lost, and steal their belongings. *Everything about Shurale suggests that he's something that's just messing around, and doing so with things (and people) that he doesn't totally understand. If you wanted to kill somebody, why would you tickle them to death? Maybe Shurale has a sick sense of humor, but it could also be that Shurale, who is not acquainted with beings like us, is entertained by the reaction and doesn't really understand why, after people can't catch their breath for long enough, they stop moving. Not every eldritch abomination has to have it out for us.*

**85. Skvader:** Swedish chimerical monster with the body of a rabbit and the wings and tail feathers of a bird. It is no doubt related to such beasts as the *wolperdinger*, *rasselbock*, and American jackalope. *A skvader in the hand is worth two in the bush. The meat no doubt tastes interesting (like chicken!), and a flock of skvaders sitting on a branch or a telephone wire must be quite a sight as well, though with rabbit feet they might have trouble perching, and may be better off as ground birds. Are they the result of magical experimentation, or a natural animal?*

**86. Squasc:** Lombard chimerical monster with the body of a tailless squirrel and the face of a human. It is a prankster and can be summoned to frighten children or play tricks on them. *Who summons something just to mess with some kids? Other kids, mostly. The squasc sounds a lot like Baby's First Summoning, something small and innocuous, probably easy to summon and not the least bit dangerous. It might be annoying but, so long as you warded the potions laboratory well enough, you could probably have a dozen of the things running underfoot and not have to worry about what your apprentices were getting up to (especially if you vetted each squasc beforehand).*

**87. Stoor Worm:** Orcadian sea serpent that may be related to Jormungandr, of Norse mythology. Kingdoms were held hostage by the threat of its deadly and poor-smelling breath, which would be unleashed if it were not fed a diet of human sacrifices, and it was large enough to drag entire towns into the sea. *There are quite a few serpents of this type in mythology, which suggests that there may be a whole group of them. Among those monsters mentioned in this list,*

*it specifically is reminiscent of the guivre. That one has two legs, though, which suggests (if the poisonous breath is anything to go by) that they have a more distant common ancestor who also had poisonous breath. Perhaps it goes back even further, to whenever dragons branched off that lineage.*

**88. Storm kelpie:** Scottish water monster, probably related to the water kelpie (more commonly known as the “kelpie”). They resemble humans with blue skin, but can float on the water and swim through it as well as fish do, as well as summon storms. They are known to converse with the crews of the ships that pass them by, but may punish those who cannot answer their riddles. *So far as the riddles go, they bear a certain resemblance to sphinxes. There may be another reason for two distinct riddle-loving monsters to develop, but the first one which comes to mind is that they were made by wizards for some purpose. Perhaps it has to do with security, though any password which a sufficiently clever person could effectively guess is not a very good password. Maybe determining your intelligence is the point: in a world where wizards can turn themselves, and other people, into animals, it might just be common courtesy to make sure that your guard monster doesn't accidentally kill a wizard-pigeon.*

**89. Surma:** Finnish chimerical monster with the body of a dog and the tail of a snake. They can turn people into stone with a look and are known for mauling people. The gates of the underworld are guarded by the Surma. *Do surmas always turn people to stone? Can they choose the kind of stone that a person is turned into? If surmas are dogs, then that means there should be different breeds of them, so perhaps the different breeds turn people into different kinds of stones. The most important question: Are they good boys?*

**90. Taraxippus:** Greek monster ghost name translates to “horse disturber.” Also, in some accounts, considered to be a location rather than a kind of being, and usually associated with specific places even in other cases. Some say that they are the ghosts of giants, and others that they are the ghosts of people who were killed by horses. *Ghosts are often associated with revenge and, while this detail is not made explicit, it is not hard to see how the taraxippus might be frightening horses in order to work out some past trauma at the hands (at the hooves?) of some other unrelated, probably long-dead horses. The strong association with a location, to the point that it might well be the location, is reminiscent of the landvaettir.*

**91. Tatzelwurm:** Alpine chimerical monster with a blend of dragon and feline characteristics, like the face of a cat. It has up to four legs but may have just two or even none, and has claws on its feet (if it has any). They carry their young on their backs, steal milk from cows, and are venomous. *This is a simple kind of monster, the sort that even some peasants might get involved in fighting. Your flocks are being killed, your cows are being drained and their calves are going hungry, and the magistrate is going to pull your teeth if you don't have enough to pay your taxes, so the only thing left to do is gather your friends and family and go on the hunt for this thing. A snake with the legs of a cat would probably be good at climbing, and have tunnels to hide in.*

**92. Telchine:** Greek monsters who were variously considered spirits, demigods, and wizards. Their eyes had the power to destroy, they produced poisons from their hands and controlled the weather, and they were capable of changing their shape as they pleased. Like some other monsters in this list, they were regarded as the original inhabitants of the land and were responsible for teaching its current inhabitants after the manner of their learning. *These are some very interesting maybe-wizards, and their capabilities are varied. A telchine might be looking to pass on the last of its lore, recover some artifact which was ancient even in the days when the telchine itself was young, or judge the people for failing to live up to some forgotten oath which their ancestors made.*

**93. Teumessian fox:** Greek fox monster of unusual size, which had been blessed so as to never be catchable. It was a punishment by the gods upon the city-state of Thebes, which had, as a group, committed some great sin. Eventually, someone set upon it a dog with the magical property of catching whatever it set out to chase, and the gods resolved the paradox by turning both into constellations (which, if you ask me, only cemented the Teumessian fox's status as uncatchable). *How can a fox be totally uncatchable? It should be fast, so that its pursuers cannot overtake it, but it also needs to be clever, so that it will not fall into traps. Unless fate simply intervenes at every turn, then, a Teumessian fox is blindingly swift and terrifyingly brilliant, and, unfortunately for everyone in the local area, it is very large and it likes to eat people. Dragons can breathe fire and ghosts can look very scary, but The Giant Fox That Is Smarter Than You would also be a worthy opponent.*

**94. Trasgu:** Spanish household spirits which were, unlike many domestic divinities, thoroughly undesirable. They made noises in the dark, moved objects around when nobody was looking, and only helped out when they were feeling charitable. Moreover, one could not simply move away to get rid of a trasgu, because it would follow. In some places they are said to live in the woods rather in people's houses and cause trouble for travelers. *If some live in the forest and others live in people's homes, then it may be that, even when a home is destroyed, the resident trasgu can't move very far away. Maybe those forest-trasgu are all that remains of old families that died out long ago, or perhaps the trasgus normally live in the forest, attach themselves to interesting people, and then return after the family no longer exists. At any rate, they might not speak any contemporary languages, but if one could communicate with them, they would probably have some interesting things to say (and might share what they know just for the sake of company, and maybe news from the outside world).*

**95. Valravn:** Danish monster that begins life as a normal raven but gains shapeshifting powers and great knowledge after eating the heart of (depending on the story) a child, a king, or a wizard. Some say that they can shapeshift into humans, and others that they can turn into wolves. Their name means "raven of the slain." *The first thought which occurs is that valravens can adopt a hybrid form that lies between human and raven, but that ignores some other interesting possibilities. There may not be any shapeshifting at all, and the valraven is simply some kind of hybrid of a raven and a wolf, a hybrid that people are going to be very suspicious about if they see it skulking around on the battlefield. Can the valraven mix and match bits from their three shapes as desired? If they acquire knowledge upon eating a heart, then perhaps they are used as mentors. Indeed, depending on where that knowledge comes from (absorbed from the soul of the person whose heart was eaten, and therefore dependent on their knowledge, or produced from nothing), one might intentionally feed someone's heart to a raven.*

**96. Vampire fruit:** Romani monster with a peculiar origin. It was believed that vampirism is a condition which can befall all manner of things, including fruit (and most commonly pumpkins and watermelons). Such vampiric fruits are usually not dangerous to humans, but they can still be troublesome and, if need be, can be killed by dousing them in boiling water. *If even vampire*

*watermelons are possible, then vampirism seems less like a disease, even a supernatural one, than some kind of distortion of the world itself. There are legends of statutes that bleed, so can a rock be vampiric? What do you do when you enter a village only to find that the village itself, not just the people and their animals but the buildings, the land, the very name of the village, have become vampires as well?*

**97. Vodyanoy:** Czech water monsters with the body of a man and the head of a frog, the scales and tail of a fish, and long green hair. If angered, or simply not properly appeased, a vodyanoy may destroy the works of land-dwellers, drown people, and store the souls of their victims in teapots to serve as slaves in their underwater households. Others live more peaceably with humans, and work as ferrymen or fishers. Even on land, they are always dripping water, but they are strictly beings of rivers and lakes, and seawater is dangerous for them. *Either a vodyanoy is continuously sweating or producing water (do they have some subtle connection to the Elemental Plane of Water?) or the "water" is mucus, which would make sense in connection to their frog-like attributes.*

**98. Vough:** Irish water monster whose name translates to "hate." They are covered in yellow fur, are noseless, and have webbed digits and a spiked tail. When they interbreed with humans, which occurs from time to time, the children have a mane rather than a full coat of fur. Sunlight, steel, and running water are all anathema to a vough. *It gets dark in the ocean, and cold, too. The voughs are probably not just furry but fat with blubber, and may be eyeless as well. They live in the abyssal depths of the ocean, where sunlight doesn't reach, and sense their environment by sound. Once upon a very distant time they were human, though, and they return to the shores from time to time to mix with their distant cousins and reflect on what they have both gained and lost.*

**99. Water bull:** Manx shapeshifter, and a counterpart to the water horse. It may be more like a peculiar kind of cattle than a separate kind of being, because it mates with ordinary cows, who then die in the act of giving birth to shapeless, boneless mass of flesh. This lump must be killed (though it cannot be drowned) before it heralds a disaster for the herd to which it was born. The water bull is often described as malevolent but can still be dealt with if it is in the right mood. *If there are water bulls and water horses, what other water livestock are there? Do the intelligent beings that live in the sea keep them as livestock,*



*or are they as wild as aurochs? The shapeless calf does not merely prophesy of disaster, because killing it can forestall the doom, so it must be involved, but how? Is it diseased, or does it attract some kind of predator from out of the seas?*

**100. Water Leaper:** Welsh water monster that looks somewhat like a frog with wings instead of legs, and a long tail with a stinger. It feeds mostly on fish, but also on livestock and even humans that stray too close to the water. The wings of the water leaper are usually those of a bat, but sometimes a bird. Prey were said to be stunned by its screams, but the venom in its stinger might be an interesting cause for paralysis as well. *The tail suggests a resemblance to the stingray. Consider watching footage of manta rays jumping out of the water, and decide how that might be matched onto the water leaper's frog-like characteristics. It seems to be an ambush predator, but opportunistic. Sound generally travels faster in water, so its sonic attacks might be even more potent in its natural habitat.*

**101. Wolperdinger:** Bavarian chimerical monster with the body of a rabbit, the wings of a pheasant, and the antlers of a deer. Other versions have the legs of a chicken or the body of a squirrel and only the head of a rabbit. It inhabits the alpine forests of central Europe, and in other countries is called the rauraklor or volpertinger. *As you may have noticed by now, there are a number of chimerical creatures that are partly composed of rabbits, but the reasons are not obvious. Birds are useful, because birds can fly, and any wizard with enough magic to blend animals can probably also make sure that the animal still has a capacity for flight, but rabbits don't seem good for much. They breed quickly, though, and they might be magically malleable, so that if you're just bored, or if you want to test the effects of some particular change, it could be wise to start with a rabbit. Perhaps, like rats are in our world, rabbits have been studied well enough that many of the variables are well-understood, and a wizard who tests their spell on a rabbit will easily be able to translate the effects into a theoretical human case.*

**102. Wulver:** Scottish chimerical monster with the body of a human and the head of a wolf. They are generally friendly and cause no trouble if no trouble is done to them. Fond of fishing, a wulver may gift people with fish, leaving a few on the windowsill overnight. In some stories, the wulver is immortal. *If the wulver is immortal, then it may be a singular case, but there are few settings which could not be improved by the inclusion of friendly wolf-people who have a talent for fishing*

*and a charitable spirit to go with it. Unless this is a society of outcasts who regularly pay tribute to their oppressors, it is likely that the wulvers believe that charity should be anonymous.*

**103. Yan-gant-y-tan:** Breton demon who holds a candle on each of the four fingers (plus the thumb) of his right hand. It is bad luck to meet him, but he will give one of his candles to any travelers that he meets, and the candle will light the way for the rest of their journey. There may be a connection to the will-o'-wisp myth. He can be kept away by leaving a small amount of gold outside one's house, in exchange for which payment he will refrain from making a visit. *Will-o'-wisps aren't usually associated with demons, outside of this one case, so it would be an interesting change of pace to have a demon followed by a retinue of the things. That said, he may not be a demon at all, or his status as a demon may suggest that demons are made, not born, because he's rather similar to the English tale of the ghost who had to wander the world forever, with only an ember in a hollowed-out pumpkin to give him light.*

**104. Ysätters-Kajsa:** Swedish troll that was regarded as more playful than aggressive. She had a certain influence over the winds, however, and her power was such that mild mischief-making could cause real trouble for local peasants. The troll was known to look out for those who nevertheless treated her, and each other, well. So long as the winds are blowing somewhere, she is unlikely to die. *"Peaceful giant who doesn't know their own strength" is a common trope, but the peaceful giant usually doesn't have control over the weather. The wind influences a lot, from local temperatures to precipitation to the transfer of nutrients through the air (as from the Sahara Desert to the Amazon), and Ysätters-Kajsa could easily make a wasteland out of paradise by accident.*

**105. Yule Cat:** Giant Icelandic cat who lives with the giantess Gryla. He stalks the land during the days leading up to Christmas and devours anyone who has not recently received new clothing. It is believed that the story of the Yule Cat only began to circulate in the past couple centuries. *Iceland is actually a bit warmer than its name suggests, but then again, so were some regions during the ice ages, so: saber-toothed yule cat. If giants are larger than humans, then they could conceivably get along with tigers and lions about as well as humans get along with house cats. Presumably, this cat would like to eat everyone, at any time, but there's some special*

*magic about new clothes (or maybe the clothes are enchanted, and have to be replaced as it wears off) and so he can only eat people whose clothes have gotten too old.*

**106. Zaingorriak:** Basque goblin which manifests in the form of a swarm of insects (usually bees or mosquitoes). They grow out of a special herb which in turn grows only in dragon- and giant-guarded caves. People catch these goblins, stick them in hollow tubes, and then keep them to release later in order to accomplish everyday tasks (they are more capable than one might expect a cloud of mosquitoes to be). *Depending on how plentiful they are, there is likely to be a thriving market in zaingorriak workers. Wizards would have many uses for them, of course, and so would peasants who want an extra hand around the farm, and generals who want a spy. Dragons and giants are unpleasant folk to deal with, at least when you're invading their homes, so a merchant who wants to get into the zaingorriak trade will probably look for someone else to do the dirty work.*

**107. Žaltys:** Lithuanian spirit with the form of a snake, whose name means "grass snake." People would keep their žaltys near the stove (presumably because this was nice and toasty for the snake) and brought good harvests and wealth to those who cared for it, but killing it brought misfortune. Unlike many household spirits, it was possible to find a žaltys out in the wild, just doing its own thing, and one who found such an unattached žaltys would try to befriend it by offering milk (it is a

strange running theme in European folklore that snakes like milk). *Perhaps any old snake in the grass will do (one supposes that it usually did, in actual practice), and one simply needs to treat it with respect in order to gain the blessings of the žaltys. On whom does the misfortune fall, when a žaltys is killed? Perhaps it always falls on the family, regardless of the perpetrator, so that those with enemies will need to watch their guardian carefully, lest it be killed and disaster strike them.*

**108. Zmey:** Russian dragon which is sometimes portrayed as a human with some of the characteristics of a dragon. They have more than one head (usually in multiples of three), and though they do not grow new heads when they are decapitated, they are able to reattach their fallen heads. In the form of a human, they may go around as adventurers, out to seduce women and get princesses by accomplishing great deeds rather than by kidnapping them. They retain many of the characteristics of a dragon, especially its great appetite, and may be found out, but at least one zmey must have been successful: some stories about a zmey describe it as a czar. *What if the zmey can reattach its heads to things which are not itself? Assuming that the heads are in agreement, it could put extra heads on other bodies and then lead an army at the same time that it is personally directing the construction of a monument, traveling to meet with the queen of a distant land, and researching the mysteries of forgotten gods. With such potential in their grasp, it's no wonder that a zmey had managed to install itself as the ruler of a country.*