



WATER MONSTERS AND BOGIES

1 In the past, people everywhere were afraid of water monsters or bogies. Parents warned their children to be careful when they were in or near water. They said, "Keep away from the water — a bogie will get you!"

While parents worked, they couldn't watch their children all day, but they still wanted to keep them safe from wells, ponds, cliffs and swiftly flowing rivers. The best way to do this was to tell children stories about the demons, spirits and monsters that dwelt in these places.

2 Every stream, lake, river and pond in Britain has its water demon. Green-haired **Peg Powler** lives in the River Tees in England. She drags naughty children into deep water when they disobey their parents.

In Lancashire, **Jenny Greenteeth** grabs children with her long, green fangs and pulls them down into smelly pools at the river's edge. In Yorkshire her name is **Grindylow**. Another water bogie, called **Nelly Longarms**, lives in many English streams. **Rawhead-and-bloody-bones** is the water demon of murky ponds in the clay pits of Yorkshire.

3 Most famous in Britain today is the **Loch Ness Monster** in Scotland, which many people say looks like a large dragon. Hundreds of people have searched for it, without success.

Shellycoat lives in the freshwater streams of the Scottish Lowlands. He is covered with shells that clatter when he moves. He is a playful bogie, tricking and teasing humans.

Greatly feared in Scotland is the **kelpie**, a shape-shifter haunting the rivers. When it takes the form of a horse, it tricks travellers into climbing onto its back, then gallops into a deep pool! Striking the water with its tail, it makes a sound like thunder, then disappears in a flash of light.

4 The **orc** is a people-eating sea monster living along the coasts of Europe. It has hard scales and an enormous mouth with tusks like those of a boar.

Another European sea monster is the **aspidodelone**, which is huge like a whale. It lies on the surface of the water for so long that plants and bushes grow on its back! One story tells that sailors thought it was an island, so they went ashore and built a fire. As soon as the aspidodelone felt the heat, it sank to the floor of the sea.

The rivers and lakes of Russia can sometimes be home to the beautiful, yet deadly, **rusulki**. These are the spirits of young women who drowned in the waterways they now haunt. They use their good looks to lure travellers down to the water, at which point they grab their victims and drown them.

5 The **ogopogo** is a fast-swimming water monster from First Nations Canadian folklore. It lives in Lake Okanagan in the south-west of Canada. A snake-like creature, 30-60 metres in length, it has the head of a goat and a shaggy beard.

Huge and scaly, the **tanniwha** of the Maori people in New Zealand uses its long, sharp fingernails to spear its food — animals or people.

The **makara** of India is a sea creature with the head of an elephant (or another animal) and the body and tail of a fish. **Gwee** live in ponds and rivers in China and Thailand. When children go into the water, gwee grab them and hold them under until they drown!

6 Australia is home to many water monsters, the most common name being the **bunyip**. The most terrifying monster is the **yaa-hoo** or **wowee wowee** of the Hunter River. It looks like a human figure with a frightful face and feet turned backwards. The ugly **wauwai**, that stirs the mud in Lake Macquarie, is said to have once swallowed a canoe that was full of people.

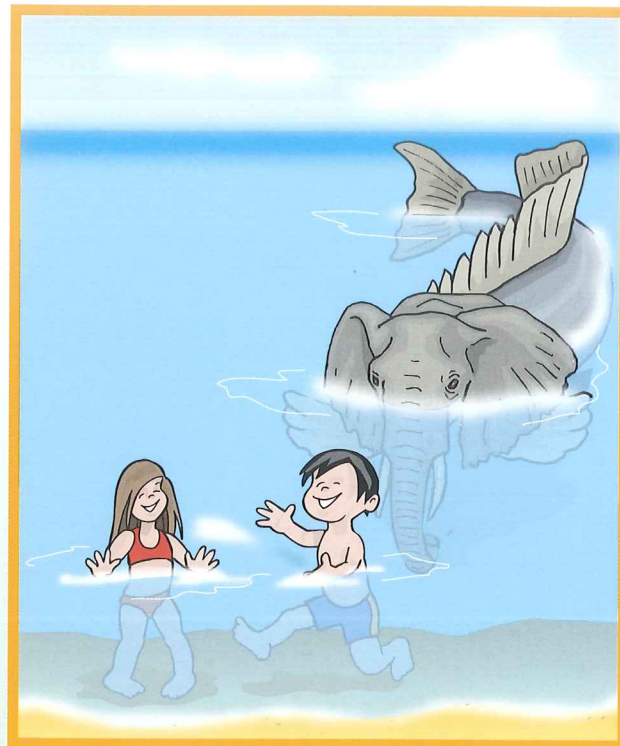
In South Australia, the *Narrinyeri* people of the Coorong fear the **moolgewanke**: half-man, half-fish, with matted reeds on its head. Its booming is often heard in Lake Alexandrina.

7 In the south-west of Western Australia, the **bulyip** is a "man spirit" that watches who comes to the waterholes of the gorges and gullies. When it strikes the water with its large, flat tail, children think they hear people

swimming. They go down to look, and the bulyip grabs them.

- 8 The Murray River water monster has several names. Dragon-like **oorundoo** is said to have caused this great river to flow. The **howie** is a six-legged serpent, about six metres long, living in a cave beside the Murray in the Riverina district. It preys on humans.

Mythical water monsters are guardians of watery places. By re-telling their stories over the centuries, people have tried to keep their children safe. As well, such stories have protected precious and sacred lakes, rivers and water holes from unwanted intrusion.



Questions

- 1 What is the Yorkshire name for Jenny Greenteeth?
a Grindylow
b Nelly Longarms
c Rawhead-and-bloody-bones
- 2 Shellycoat is
a the spirit of a young woman.
b greatly feared in Scotland.
c a playful bogey.
- 3 What water monster was mistaken for an island?
a ogopogo
b tanniwha
c aspidodelone
- 4 Two of the Murray River water monsters are
a yaa-hoo and wowie wowie.
b oorundoo and howie.
c makara and gwee.
- 5 Which of the following monsters doesn't drown people?
a Peg Powler
b rusulki
c tanniwha
- 6 Why do lots of water monster stories involve people being eaten or drowned?
a to teach children about a monster's diet
b to warn children about playing in the water by themselves
c to teach children to save water

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 The opposite of obey (2)
- 8 Dark or gloomy (2)
- 9 Hairy and untidy (5)
- 10 Tangled and knotted (6)
- 11 Imaginary and fabled (8)

Grammar

Find a **noun** (person, place or thing) in these sentences from the text.

- 12 It has hard scales.
- 13 It grabs young children.
- 14 Keep away from the water!
- 15 It preys on humans.

Back To The Text...

- 16 Many of the water demons and bogies from Britain have
a boys' names.
b girls' names.
- 17 In which part of the library would you find this text?
a fiction
b non-fiction

- 18 Another good name for this text would be
a Jenny Greenteeth
b Don't Go Near the Water

Think About This

- 19 The image on the front of the card shows
a a salt water scene.
b a freshwater scene.
- 20 In section 4 the word *lure*, means
a to drag.
b to guide.
c to entice.
- 21 Which water monster is shown in the diagram on page 3?
a wauwai
b makara
c rusulki
- 22 Which water monster shares its name with a canine?
a bunyip
b kelpie
c Shellycoat
- 23 Brackets are used in section 5 to
a suggest these words should be left out.
b give further information.

Challenge Option

Drawing: Imagine what the Scottish Shellycoat looks like. Draw him.