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Mythical creatures like the unicorn, mermaid, and leprechaun have woven themselves tightly into our modern society, almost to the point where they seem commonplace and real. Yet there are other lesser-known fictitious creatures that have been largely forgotten as the centuries pass. These mythical beasts aren't nearly as widely celebrated as their more famous counterparts, but that doesn't mean that they aren't worth learning

about. In fact, they are in some ways more entertaining and memorable than any old fairy or dragon. Here are four of the strangest mythical creatures that mankind has dreamed up through history.

The Grootslag is a massive serpent from South African legend. It was one of the first creatures the gods created, and they quickly realized that creating a serpent that was bigger than an elephant and capable of crushing anything in seconds wasn't really a great idea on their part. Oh, and it was also

more intelligent than any man, which is a fantastic quality in bloodthirsty snakes. The gods tried to correct their massive lapse in judgement and tracked down every Grootslag, which probably was no pleasant task. They magically separated all the found Grootslags into two species: the elephant and the snake. Of course, these crafty serpents weren't going to go down without a fight. One escaped and became the mother of all Grootslags on the earth today. Apparently the gods were (quite understandably) fed up with dealing with these giant nightmare snakes, so they didn't intervene. As a result, Grootslags live quite happily in many of South Africa's bottomless

pits and caves, to the irritation of literally everyone else. Grootslags love diamonds, and so victims can barter for their release if they happen to take some gems with them into a bottomless pit. The most famous Grootslag currently resides in a cave in Richtersveld, South Africa, where it enjoys waiting for innocent passerby to stumble into its domain. It can also be found luring elephants into its cave in order to swallow them whole, which must be quite the rewarding pastime.

The legend of the Splinter Cat was created by 19th century American lumberjacks. This feline is just like a regular house cat, but has questionable methods of obtaining food. The Splinter Cat's main hobby is destroying hollow trees, hoping to find some tasty raccoons or bees by doing so. Its technique is subtle but masterful: the cat climbs a tree and propels itself straight into a nearby tree trunk. The force of the sturdy feline's

head colliding with the tree causes the trunk to rupture. Hopefully, the cat finds a nice meal in the newly destroyed tree. If not, it does the next logical thing: it finds another tree trunk to smash and continues the process until it finds some food. Apparently, Splinter Cats are not fazed by head trauma and are above catching mice. However nonsensical this story may seem, the shattering of hollow trees is a real phenomenon. When lightning travels through the core of the trunk, the tree explodes, sending wooden shards

flying in every direction. The lumberjacks behind this legend, quite understandably, just chose to believe it was the work of the world's most impervious and brainless cat.

The Monopod is from medieval European legend. They are humanoid creatures said to live in Ethiopia and have one leg with a giant foot, which they hop on to get around. This feature comes in handy, because monopods are fond of lying on their backs and shading themselves with their disproportionately large foot when it's especially hot. This is perhaps something to envy during the summer months, since humankind was sadly not given such a wonderfully solitary foot. Not only do monopods have awesome built-in umbrellas, they are also apparently impressively speedy and agile. How they managed to be so fast despite only having one leg is a mystery lost to time. Maybe it has something to do with always being refreshingly cool in the blazing sun?

The Vegetable Lamb of Tartary has both Jewish and Celtic origins, and its tale is especially sad. The lamb is one of a few elite creatures that can make the enviable claim of being both animal and plant. A type of oddly specific plant has a stem that connects to the underside of the Vegetable Lamb like some kind of botanical umbilical cord. The lamb is free to graze the land around the plant and can wander as far as its stem will reach. Hopefully, it lives a very long and fulfilling life before the foliage around the plant runs out and both the lamb and plant starve. If not, at least it had simultaneously being both a plant and an animal going for it.

These creatures range from frightening to amusing to heartbreaking, but they are all interesting illustrations of mankind's imagination throughout time. Although they are fictitious, they will always remain alive in the stories of the past and will continue to inspire and enthrall human minds for years to come.

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