

Monster Anatomy

The Book of Beastly Biology

*The unauthorised edition
by Bai Ze*

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NOT FINAL**



The world is full of monsters.

Those of us who wander from the beaten path encounter strange and terrifying things. Throughout my long life, I have ventured into the thickest forests, scaled the highest mountains and explored the deepest caves. And in those far-flung places, signs revealed themselves – ragged claw marks on ancient trees, giant paw prints in the snow, hair-raising howls echoing through the darkness. Most would turn back – but not me. I'm an adventurer, driven by the thrill of the unknown, and I brave the risks to discover what lies behind them!

If you're reading this book then you must be an adventurer, too. Welcome, my courageous friend. I have much to share with you.

My name is Bai Ze, an ancient being with secrets to reveal. I live alone in the mountains of China where I spend my days at study and my nights gazing up at the stars. Yet, ancient scrolls and starry constellations can only reveal so much – the path to true knowledge must be earned through experience of the wider, wilder world. That is why I have set forth time and again to explore the seven continents and sail the seven seas. During my travels I discovered, observed and even conversed with a multitude of monsters, ghosts and spirits.

Monster Anatomy is the fruit of my labours, and now, I offer it to you. This book is unique because it focuses on the monsters' inner workings – their anatomy, biology and how their bodies function. I have (metaphorically) peeled away the scales, skin and muscles of each creature to reveal the secrets beneath.

When I began studying monsters, I realised I needed a way to classify them into groups. So I created that divides them into the four elements: Fire, Water, Air and Earth. This – along with the reference cards included at the back of the book – will help you compare each entry, uncover what makes them unique and understand how they are connected.

I won't say 'Be safe' because the world is a dangerous place. Instead, I say 'Go well, go carefully, go armed with this book and explore the wild unknown.'

Bai Ze



Bake-Kujira

The Ghost Whale

Many years ago, while sailing to Japan, a fierce and sudden storm engulfed us.

The wind howled, rain lashed the deck and monstrous waves tossed our ship. A piercing scream cut through the gale – it was the lookout stationed at the prow. He turned away from the sea, his face twisted in terror. In that instant, I glimpsed a massive pale shape break the ocean's surface. Before I could grasp what I had seen, the captain ordered me to close my eyes and not open them until he said it was safe. Once the storm subsided, I dared to ask what had so terrified the crew. The captain leaned in close, his voice trembling with fear. "Bake-Kujira," he whispered. "The vengeful spirit of a whale. All who lay eyes upon it are cursed!"

Bake-Kujira has no brain, yet is unnervingly intelligent. Its huge skull is marked with fractures, perhaps from ferocious underwater battles, or ramming ships.

The exaggerated jaw structure is more monstrous than a typical whale's, with jagged teeth designed for tearing through far more sinister things than fish. Another tool for this creature's unquenchable taste for vengeance!

The empty ribcage pulses with a haunting, glowing energy, suggesting an unknown power sustaining it.

Glowing orbs suspended inside the eye sockets create the impression of sentience.

Although Bake-Kujira resembles a humpback, it defies classification, existing solely as a stark white skeleton stripped of skin, blubber and muscle. Joints move with a strange fluidity, despite the absence of cartilage or synovial liquid to lubricate them, suggesting an otherworldly force guiding its movements.

Its unnaturally twisted spine has spikes protruding outward, giving the skeleton a menacing, armoured look.

Harbinger of Doom

Bake-Kujira never swims alone. A sinister shoal of silver fish moves in unnerving synchrony through its creaking bones. Eyewitnesses describe them as 'strange' and 'eerie', unlike any known fish. Why do they follow Bake-Kujira? What purpose do they serve?

Vengeance on Waves

Is it true that all who see Bake-Kujira are cursed? I sought out one of its victims, finding a woman living alone in a cave. Her hollow face told the tale of the horror she'd endured. Bake-Kujira had risen from the depths alongside her fishing boat in a surge of darkness and bone. Terrified, she rowed to shore, unknowingly carrying a curse. In the months that followed, disaster struck – the village was devastated by fire, crops failed and a plague spread. Blamed by the villagers, she fled into solitude. After hearing her story, I believe Bake-Kujira is the vengeful spirit of a hunted whale, seeking revenge on humankind.

Its skeletal flippers have long, spindly projections. Grotesque, dark tendrils move independently as it glides on unseen currents.