



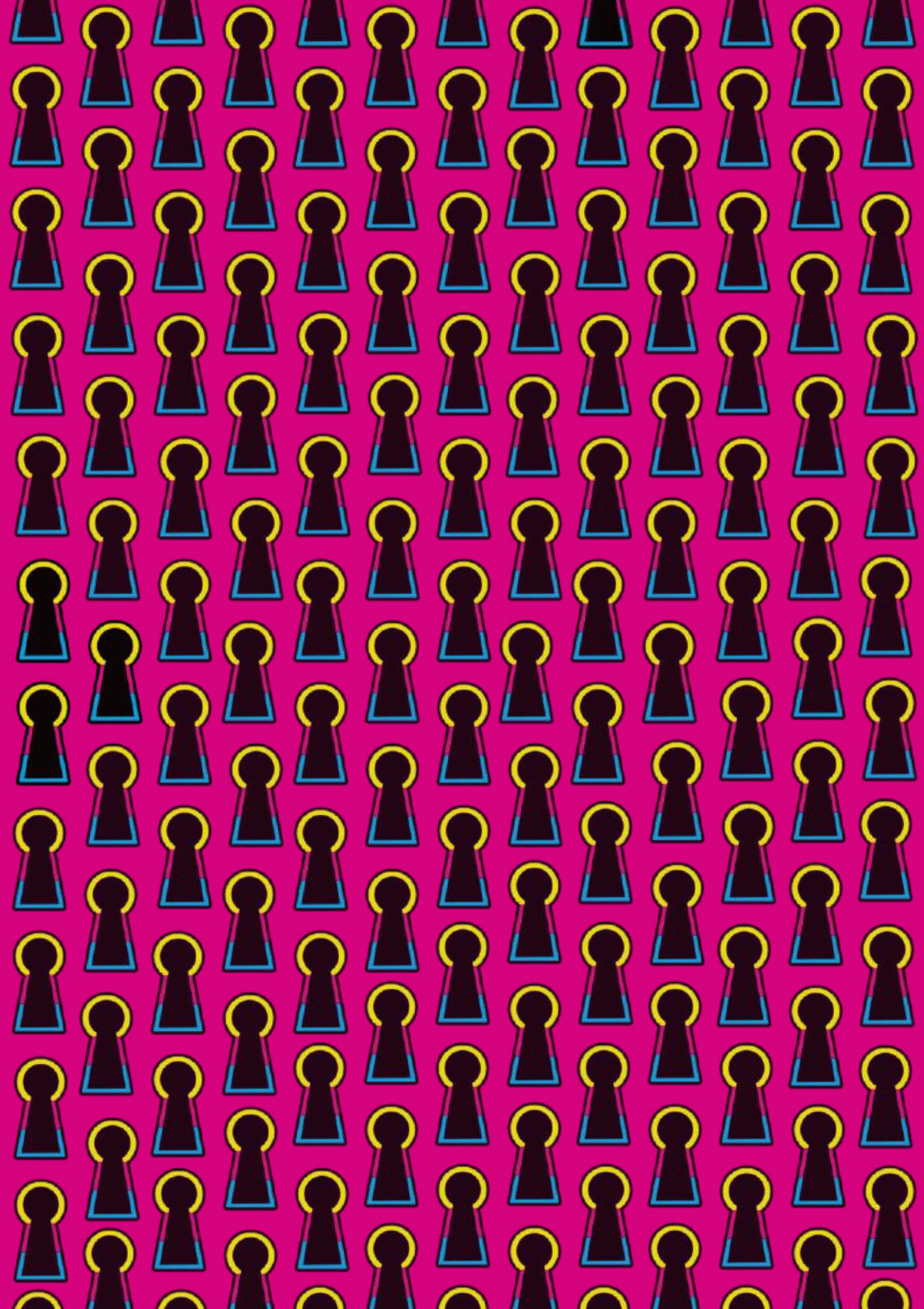
Have you heard about
The

beast?

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(and dead people)





ave y'all heard about the **Dire Bear of Grimdank Woods?**

Well I heard it has 16 eyes and a tentacle in place of one of its legs. Suckers like dinner plates, it'll pull your face off as soon as look at you.

Well I heard the reason we call him 'old peculiar' is on account of his fearsome stench. It knocked farmer

Graham out from 60 feet away and he couldn't smell nothing else for a week!

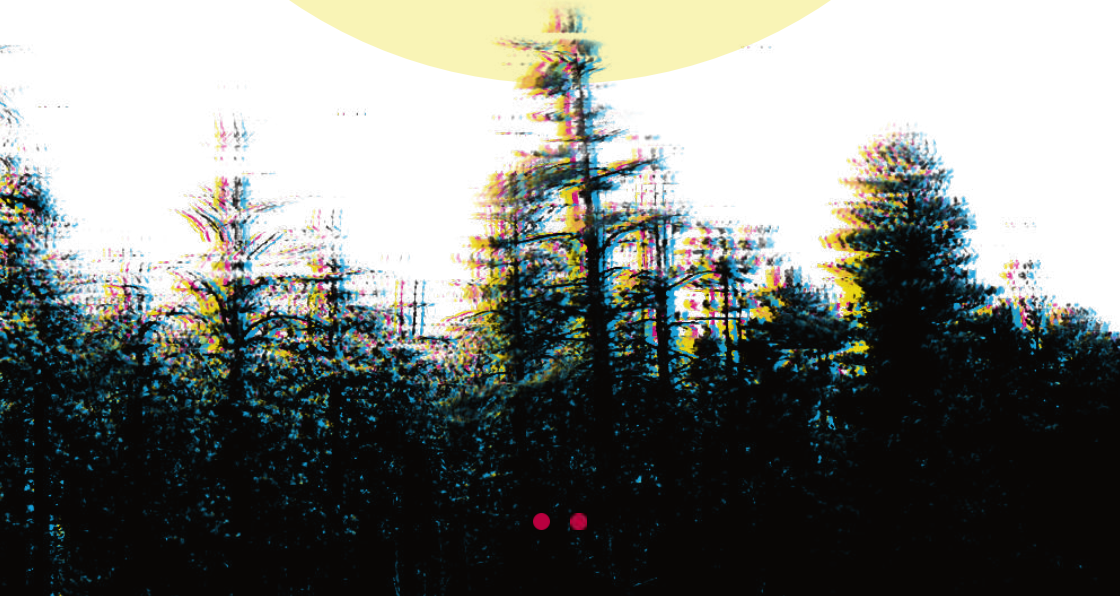
Well I heard it can shoot fire from its eyes. Great black scorch marks on the ground by the big stump on the road. I've seen them with my own two eyes.

Well I heard it's as big as a barn and older than even Samuel Todger, the village elder. He says it ate his great-grandfather's leg and that wooden leg above the bar is the one made for him way back when.

My pappy told me he once stole a whole cow from the farmer's auction, right in front of everybody, ate that sucker whole and now the bell rings in his stomach wherever he goes. If you hear that noise at night you're basically already dead.

I heard it lives in the trunk of a fallen oak tree with a roost of ravens. They peck out the eyes of any that approach and act as an alarm. Hard to get a drop on the damned thing when there's ravens cawing left and right.

I heard in that trunk there is the skull of a witch that will tell how you'll die. Tom Higgins said he heard it chattering away in the woods one night as the beast walked with it on its shoulder. Wouldn't tell me what it said though, just went pale and stared into his beer.



Instructions

on how to play the game, of course!

1. Write the categories on small scraps of paper, fold them, and put them in a bowl.
2. Choose who draws first.
3. Players draw out categories until there are none left. Save your ideas for later.
4. Whoever has 'What it is' starts by saying what kind of creature it is.
Begin with "Have you heard about the...?" (If they need help, use the table for ideas.)
5. The next player adds an embellishment using one of the categories they have and "Well I heard..."

GO AND
FIGHT
THE DAMN
THING!

playing the encounter:

However ridiculous the tall tales you hear are, they're all **true**, to the very letter of what you were told. Embrace the ridiculous nature of it, make its stats up, and go save someone from whatever it is that's terrifying them

categories

- 1- Where are you?
- 2- Who is telling you about it?
- 3- What it is?
- 4- Where does it live?
- 5- What else lives nearby?
- 6- What has it done?
- 7- How old/big it is?
- 8- What does it look like?
- 9- What ability does it have?
- 10- What does it guard?
- 11- What trap lies ahead?
- 12- What is its nickname?



It's **ok** to vary from
"well I heard". (Ideas: "Someone told me" / "my
father says" / "legends tell us".)

It's **ok** *to skip* one or more
categories
if you want to.

If you're playing **online**,
simply appoint one person to draw and assign the categories.

When you generate the *rumours*, roleplay as *taverngoers*.

When you go and fight the **beast**, you
can play existing characters, or use the riled up
taverngoers as

PCs

for an
excellent
funnel

adventure •

“Where are you?”

Suggested Answer

- We are...

1. ...in the village tavern, snowed in on a bleak winter's night.
2. ...at a roadside camp with a travelling caravan.
3. ...huddled around a small sputtering fire in a mountain cave.
4. ...quaffing beer and swapping stories at a village fete.
5. ...passing the time on the back of a slow-moving cart on a muddy road.
6. ...arriving at the bustling docks of a port city and scouting for rumours.
7. ...hunting deep in the forest, miles from the nearest farm or village.
8. ...playing cards in the hold of a ship as a storm rages outside.
9. ...waiting for corrupt guards to 'certify' your weapons and enter town.
10. ...trudging along a beach, battered by wind and rain.

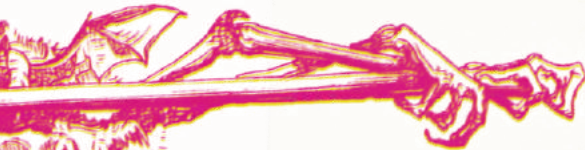




Who is telling you about it?

Suggested Answer
We are listening to...

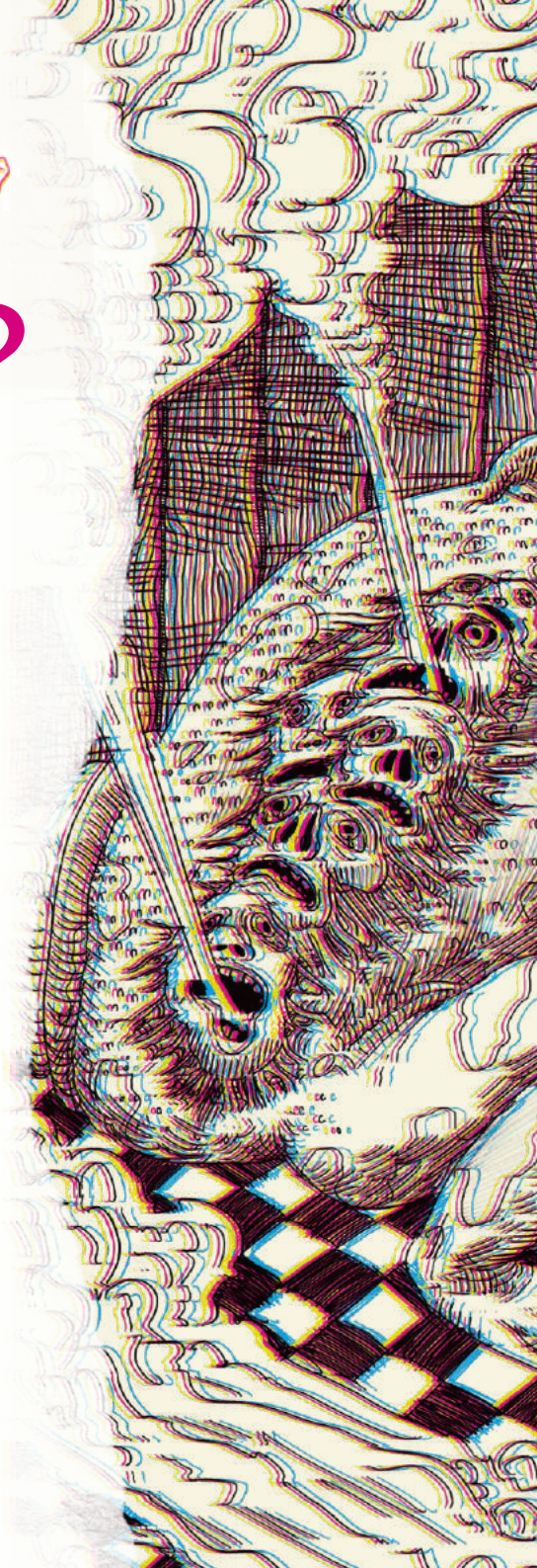
- 1 ...a wild-eyed old person who you're pretty sure has leaves and twigs in their hair.
- 2 ...a scarred and muscled veteran soldier who has clearly seen more battles than most.
- 3 ...a pale and sickly young hermit who is rarely seen away from their hideout.
- 4 ...a travelling salesperson who has lost most of their goods.
- 5 ...a garrulous elf who feels the need to one up everyone else.
- 6 ...an ancient wizard bedecked with jingling trinkets.
- 7 ...a mumbling drunkard with a missing hand.
- 8 ...a scruffy looking street urchin who speaks with a gap-toothed whistle.
- 9 ...a farmer who jumps at every loud noise and has dark bags under their eyes.
- 10 ...a talking horse who constantly complains about the quality of turnips these days.

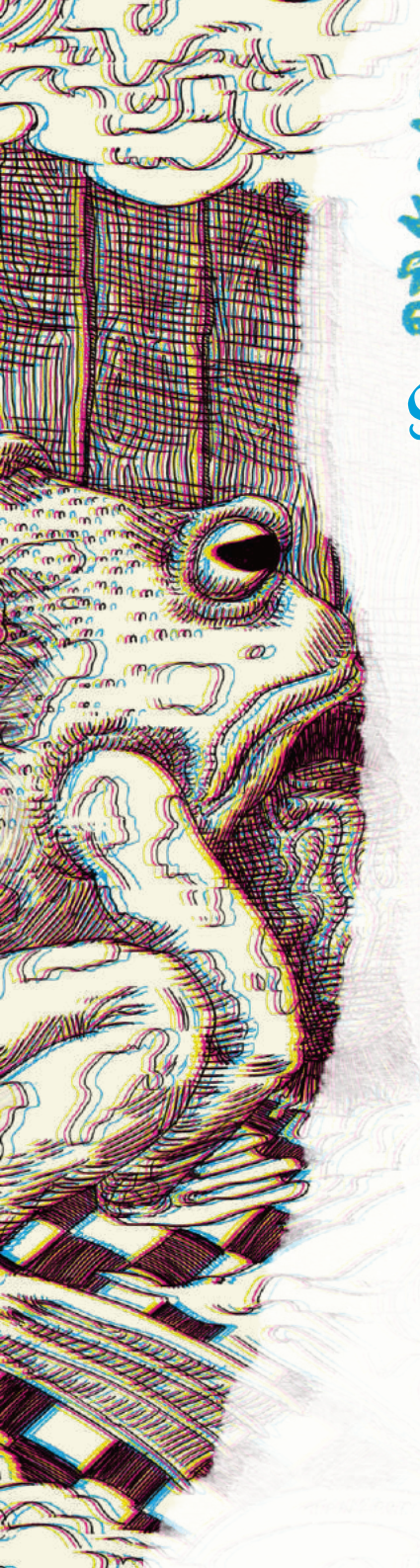


What is it?

Suggested Answer
- Have you heard about the...

1. ...fearsome dire bear?
2. ...ogre?
3. ...ghost of someone from town?
4. ...crocodile?
5. ...dragon?
6. ...giant spider?
7. ...snake?
8. ...troll?
9. ...octopus?
10. ...cow?

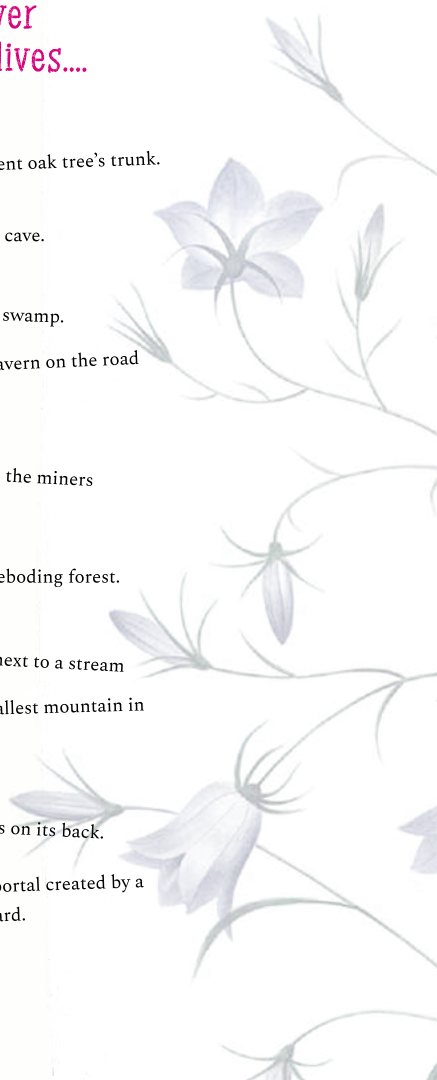




Where *it* lives?

Suggested Answer
- Well I heard it lives....

1. ...inside an ancient oak tree's trunk.
2. ...in an insect-filled cave.
3. ...in a malodorous swamp.
4. ...in an abandoned tavern on the road out of town.
5. ...in a quarry where the miners delved too deep.
6. ...in a dark and foreboding forest.
7. ...in a muddy hole next to a stream
8. ...at the top of the tallest mountain in the range.
9. ...in a shell it carries on its back.
10. ...in a dimensional portal created by a mad (and dead) wizard.





What lives nearby?

roll 3d10
this time

1 venomous	GIANT	crocodiles
2 fire-breathing	j u m p i n g	leeches
3 really grumpy	<i>ethereal</i>	monkeys
4 <i>stealthy</i>	Deceptive	Ghosts
5 blood-sucking	invisible	b a t s
6 intelligent	poison-spewing	mushrooms
7 TREE-HOPPING	<i>prehensile-tongued</i>	FROGS
8 flesh-eating	team-working	wolves
9 <i>beast-worshipping</i>	pitchfork-wielding	Cultists
10 Soul-Sucking	terror-inducing	Darkness

What HAS it **DONE**?

Suggested Answer - *Well I heard it..*

1. ...ate some prized livestock.
2. ...demanded tribute every harvest for many years.
3. ...stolen the mayoral chain.
4. ...kidnapped a child from town.
5. ...**raided trade caravans for food.**
6. ...burrowed tunnels under the village, some of which come out in peoples' houses.
7. ...**brought a plague upon the crops.**
8. ...made every boot in town a left boot.
9. ...insulted the mothers of everyone in town.
10. ...recited poetry that is literally agonizing to hear.



How old/big is it?

Suggested Answer

- Well I heard...

1. ...it's 15 feet long but surprisingly thin.
2. ...it can change size to fit through a keyhole or flatten a barn.
3. ...as old as the bones of the earth.
4. ...dies every night and is reborn every morning, it knows no age.
5. ...is the biggest damn creature you ever laid eyes on.
6. ...big enough to swallow a horse in one bite.
7. ...the size of a dragon.
8. ...as old as the town, in fact it was the town founder's pet back in the day.
9. ...just a baby, let's hope its mother never shows up.
10. ...twice as big as any you've seen before.

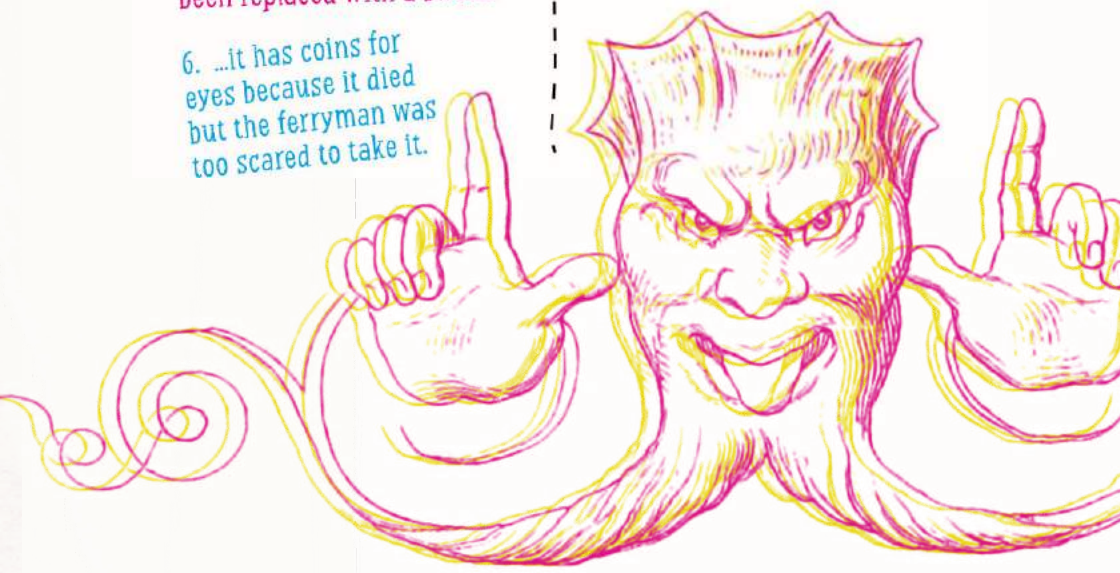
What Does it look like?



Suggested Answer
- Well I heard...

1. ...it's got two tails.
2. ...it's eyes glow in the dark and suck in light during the day.
3. ...it's got two heads that whisper secrets to each other.
4. ...it has two extra arms, each with double the number of fingers.
5. ...its missing a leg that has been replaced with a sword.
6. ...it has coins for eyes because it died but the ferryman was too scared to take it.

7. ...its skin is rotting and oozes bright green slime
8. ...it has a thick shaggy coat of fur, thick enough to swallow a dagger.
9. ...it's translucent in the moonlight.
10. ...it has the face of a man on each of its palms.

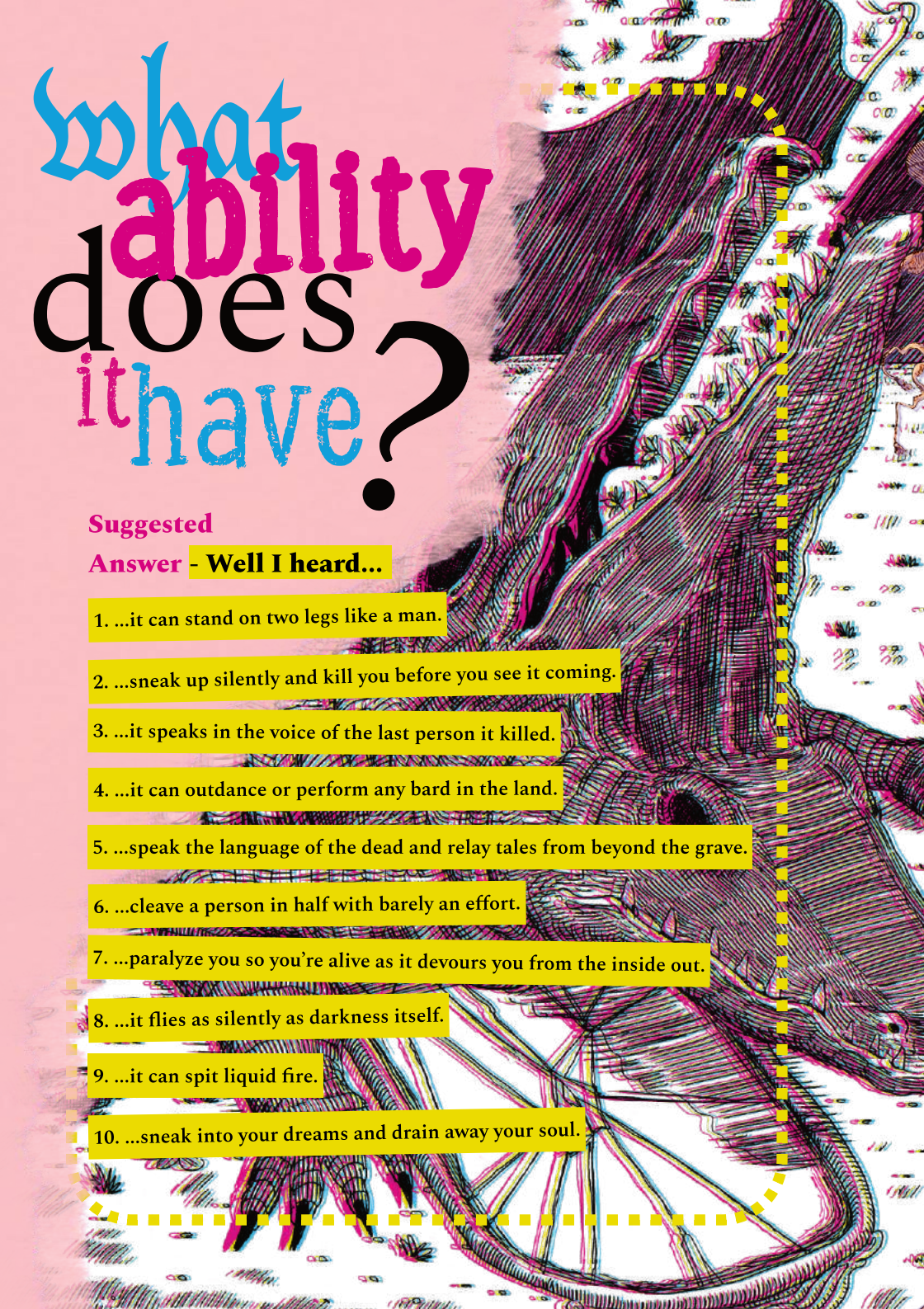


What ability does it have?

Suggested

Answer - **Well I heard...**

1. ...it can stand on two legs like a man.
2. ...sneak up silently and kill you before you see it coming.
3. ...it speaks in the voice of the last person it killed.
4. ...it can outdance or perform any bard in the land.
5. ...speak the language of the dead and relay tales from beyond the grave.
6. ...cleave a person in half with barely an effort.
7. ...paralyze you so you're alive as it devours you from the inside out.
8. ...it flies as silently as darkness itself.
9. ...it can spit liquid fire.
10. ...sneak into your dreams and drain away your soul.





what does it guard?

Suggested Answer - Well I heard...

1. ...a magic sword that can cleave through the strongest armour.
2. ...a mirror that reflects only the evil in you.
3. ...a pile of gold fit for a king's ransom.
4. ...a helmet that makes you invulnerable to arrows.
5. ...a glowing diamond the size of a man's fist.
6. ...a lost book of lewd poetry by the Lost Bard.
7. ...a mysterious black ball that will answer questions.
8. ...a dagger that forbids those it kills from making a sound as they die.
9. ...a sentient rope that will obey its owners commands.
10. ...a bottomless beer stein.

What trap lies ahead?

Suggested Answer
- Well I heard you need
to be careful of...

1. ...a head on a spike that screams loud enough to make your brain bleed if woken up.

2. ...a curtain of hanging vines that'll grip you round the neck and pop your head right off.

3. ...a collapsed mineshaft just waiting to swallow up someone who steps too heavily.

4. ...a treasure chest that'll spring shut and take your arm off. No treasure in it, just skeletal arms.

5. ...piles of venom-dripping teeth the beast has shed but that can still paralyse you.

6. ...floating lights that'll lure you off the paths and into the jaws of carnivorous plants.

7. ...mist that'll burn your eyes out.

8. ...heaps of licked clean bones that'll topple and trap you in a bony avalanche.

9. ...six rusty beartraps left by a hunter that tried, and failed, to kill the beast.

10. ...a sentient sword that gives awful advice nine times out of ten.



What is its nickname?

Suggested answer

- Well I heard...

1. ...some of the farmers have started calling it

Big Bertha.

2. ...the mayor put up a poster calling it

The Menace.

3. ...my mother said it reminded her of

Uncle Boris
and the name kind of stick.

4. ...its true name is

The Lord Shadows,
Arbiter of the Void.

5. ...it answers to the name

Shinwell Jones

6. ...it has the letters

J, A, C, K

scratched outside its lair

7. ...it's called

Old Peculiar

8. ...some of the old folk in town called it the

Beast of Knowledge

9. ...the kids in town called the

bogglemunster

10. ...folk who've seen it just call it

it.



Running the Beast

As a GM, suddenly needing to run an encounter you didn't even design can definitely feel a little intimidating. That said, flying by the seat of your pants like that is a wonderful experience we strongly recommend.

Here's some simple guiding principles to help you if you need them:

1.

Use what you've got already. Grab a monster book, a couple of bookmarks and give your group a five minute break while you make a frankenstablock.

2.

Don't be afraid to decide it in the moment. Things are going badly and don't want that PC to die? Use a d4 for the poison damage. The PCs are kicking ass? Go up to d12.

3.

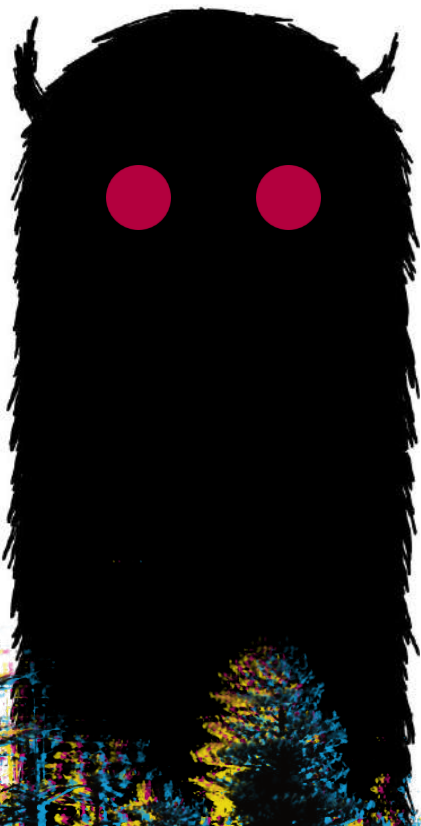
Sidestep the rules.

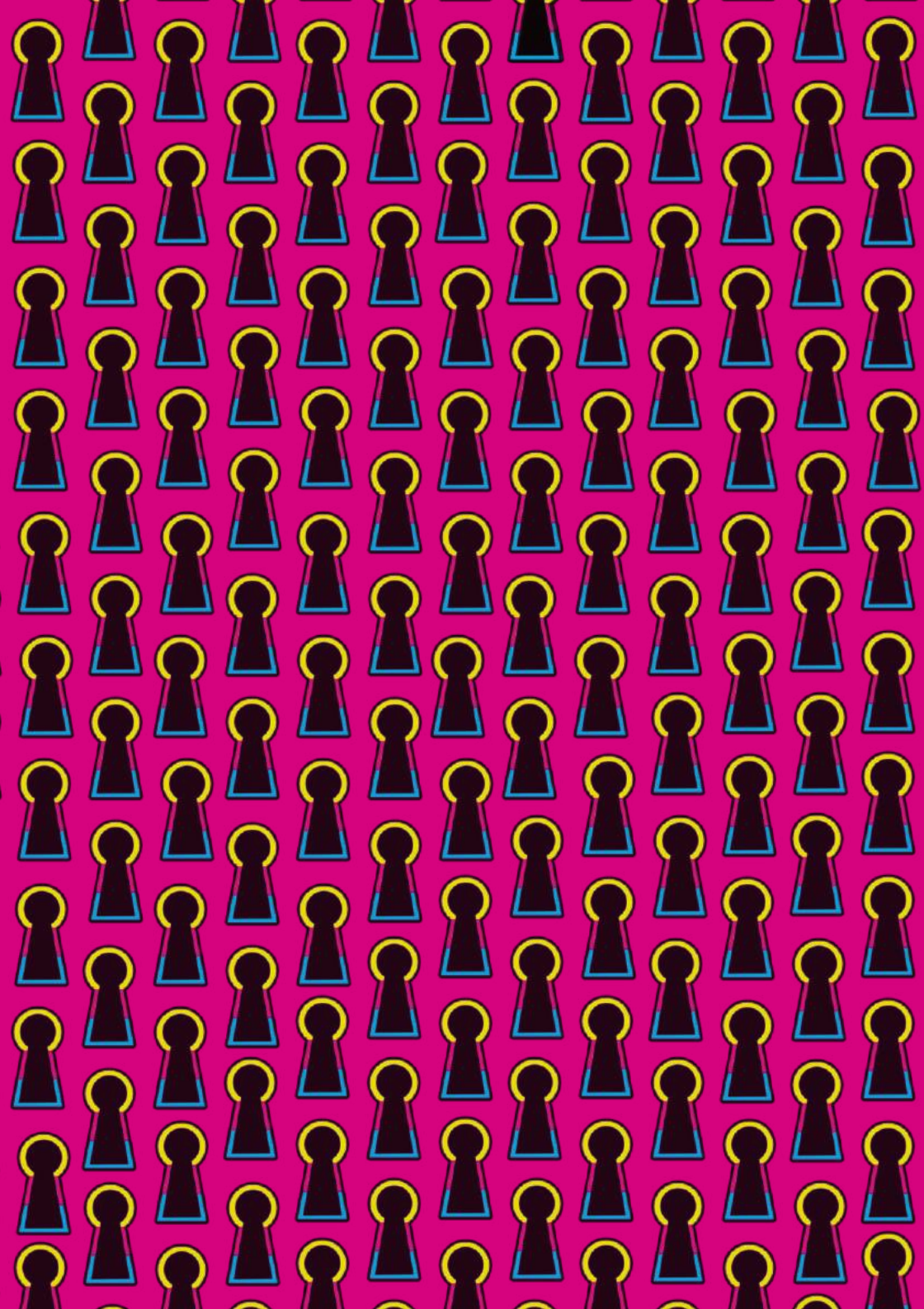
4.

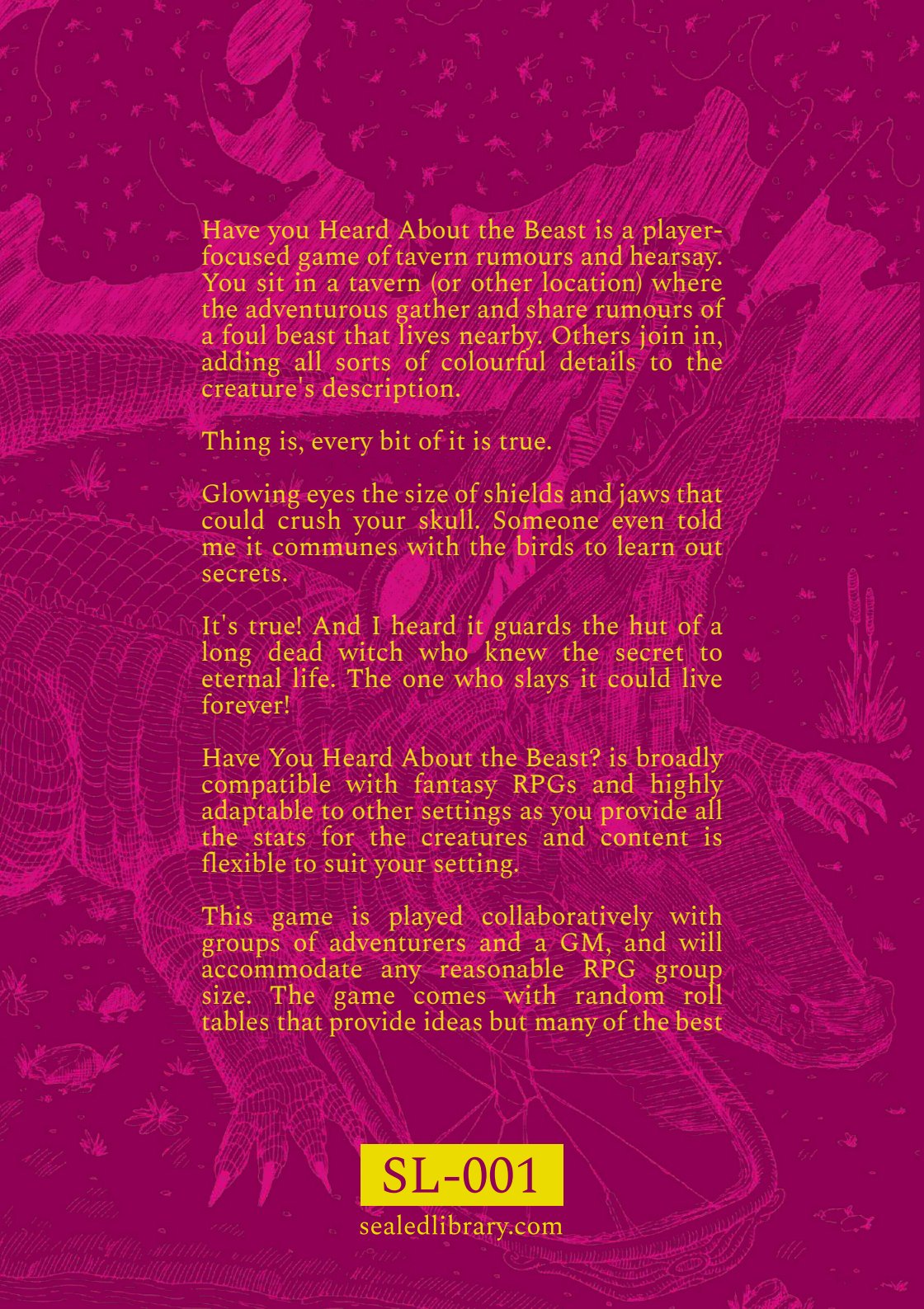
Ask the players. If someone said it breathes fire, when they fight it you can ask them how big the flame is, hot deadly, what colour it is, etc.

5.

Add or remove elements. If the party know exactly what the encounter will be like, it'll be too easy.







Have you Heard About the Beast is a player-focused game of tavern rumours and hearsay. You sit in a tavern (or other location) where the adventurous gather and share rumours of a foul beast that lives nearby. Others join in, adding all sorts of colourful details to the creature's description.

Thing is, every bit of it is true.

Glowing eyes the size of shields and jaws that could crush your skull. Someone even told me it communes with the birds to learn out secrets.

It's true! And I heard it guards the hut of a long dead witch who knew the secret to eternal life. The one who slays it could live forever!

Have You Heard About the Beast? is broadly compatible with fantasy RPGs and highly adaptable to other settings as you provide all the stats for the creatures and content is flexible to suit your setting.

This game is played collaboratively with groups of adventurers and a GM, and will accommodate any reasonable RPG group size. The game comes with random roll tables that provide ideas but many of the best

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