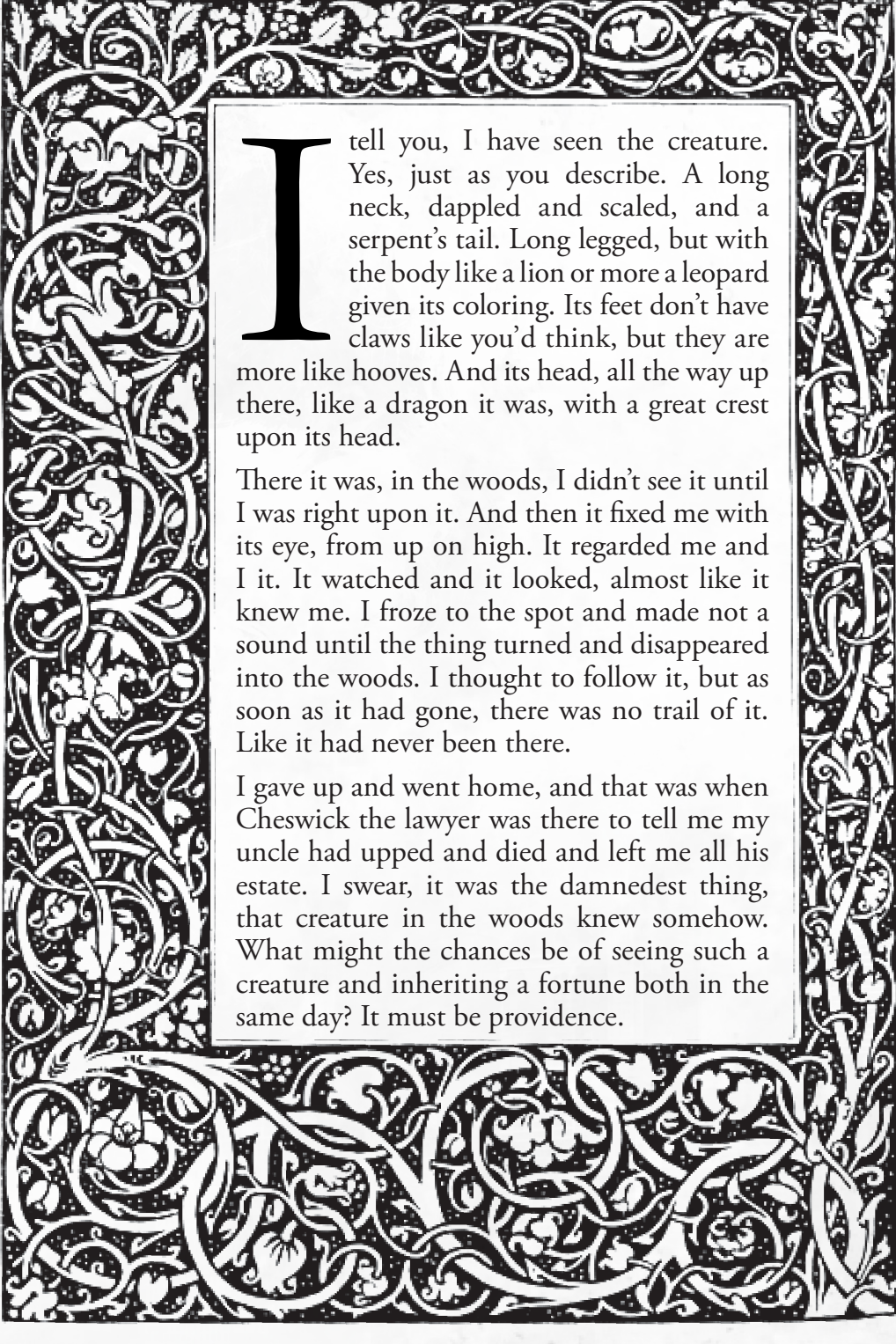


THE THING THAT SHOULD NOT EXIST

The Questing Beast



To seek the Questing Beast is to invite a change in one's fortunes



I tell you, I have seen the creature. Yes, just as you describe. A long neck, dappled and scaled, and a serpent's tail. Long legged, but with the body like a lion or more a leopard given its coloring. Its feet don't have claws like you'd think, but they are more like hooves. And its head, all the way up there, like a dragon it was, with a great crest upon its head.

There it was, in the woods, I didn't see it until I was right upon it. And then it fixed me with its eye, from up on high. It regarded me and I it. It watched and it looked, almost like it knew me. I froze to the spot and made not a sound until the thing turned and disappeared into the woods. I thought to follow it, but as soon as it had gone, there was no trail of it. Like it had never been there.

I gave up and went home, and that was when Cheswick the lawyer was there to tell me my uncle had upped and died and left me all his estate. I swear, it was the damnedest thing, that creature in the woods knew somehow. What might the chances be of seeing such a creature and inheriting a fortune both in the same day? It must be providence.

The Questing Beast has a long serpentine or draconic neck that runs the length of the animal becoming a snake-like tail. Its body broadens and becomes feline, with the shoulders, chest, and haunches of a leopard. The legs narrow and lengthen, ending in cloven hooves like a stag. The beast's head is like that of an elongated snake and the beast has two horns sitting one above each eye. It is a fussy eater and stretches up to reach the highest tree branches rooting around for birds, vermin, fruits, and leaves. Those who have seen the creature say they saw it in the deepest woodlands, but they have never been able to take anyone back to the spot and they have never seen the creature more than once. The Questing Beast of old Arthurian legend comes from a story of forbidden love, violence, and betrayal, summoned into existence after an affair between Arthur and Morgana and the birth of Mordred. It became symbolic of all the ills that would ultimately be the undoing of Arthur's kingdom. It is easy to see that a creature so obviously formed from many different animals may represent corruption and a fall from a beautiful ideal. It is a naturally docile creature and wary of contact with both man and other faerie-kind. It chooses to remain out of view where it need not have its shame exposed.

The Questing Beast may be heard before it is seen and its barking call, as it tries to find others of its kind, sounds like a pack of hunting dogs, its long neck home to many voice-boxes. The creature can only be encountered in the deep and ancient woodland and only then by chance as it has a constant magical power that distorts any trail it might leave, meaning anything less than magical means of tracking is fruitless.

In summer, The Questing Beast finds it difficult to slake its thirst and may drink at a brook or pond for nearly an hour without stopping. But in doing so, the beast's venom leaks into and befouls the waterway. The venom becomes offensive even to The Questing Beast and it abandons its drinking in frustration. The summer is the only time the beast's normal docility is put in question.

Given the creature's rarity, characters chancing upon the Questing Beast are considered to have reached a Milestone, as per the Advancement rules. Characters who actively seek and find the Questing Beast experience a Breakthrough.

The Questing Beast

Aspects

High Concept: Fantastic (+5) *Chimeric Beast That's Nigh Impossible to Catch*

Trouble: *Blamed for the Greatest of Misfortunes*

At Home in the Deep Woodlands

Skills

Fantastic (+5): Physique

Great (+4): Perception

Good (+3): Athletics, Fighting, Will

Spells

Good (+3) *A Trail That Cannot be Followed.*

All signs of the Questing Beast's comings and goings are falsely and magically shifted. A branch may break on a tree the beast did not pass and its hoof-prints appear to be from some other animal. Even reports of sightings are affected, with witnesses unable to correctly lead anyone to where they encountered the beast or to even reliably describe the location.

Stunts

Venomous Bite: The first time it hits a character with its bite attack, its venom does 2 additional Shifts of damage.

Equipment

Scales, Armor: 1

Draconic bite, Weapon: 2S

tomping hooves, Weapon: 2

Whipping tail, Armor: 1

Stress

Physical:

Mental:

PLOT HOOKS

The Poisoned Weir

A monastery's fishing weir becomes jammed with hundreds of dead fish and there's an iridescent oily film on the surface of the water. Wizards are summoned by the abbot to examine the fish and the toxic substance in fear that it might soon affect more than just the fish. Nearby, a disinherited bastard son with nothing to lose is convinced that the demonic Questing Beast of old is responsible for his downfall and he'll stop at nothing to slay the creature and restore his position no matter who gets in his way.

Cries in the Woods

The wizards are called to investigate the woodlands forming part of a large estate. The sounds of hunting dogs have been heard night after night, but no signs of any hunt can be found. Investigating, it seems there may be two packs of dogs at either end of the woods, but the physical evidence suggests otherwise. Is this actually a pair of Questing Beasts, issuing their mating calls and unable to find each other? Can the wizards play matchmakers before the landowner grows weary and sends in his militia?



CREDITS

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