

THE SALAMANDER REPORT



It was way past bedtime when Alexander put down his pencil. He smiled at his drawing of a bug-eating, wall-climbing, tongue-flicking creature.

KNOCK-KNOCK! Alexander's dad stepped into the room.



“How is your homework going, kiddo?” he asked.

“All done,” said Alexander, holding up his report. “I hope my teacher likes it.”



“Dr. Tallow’s going to *love* it!” said his dad. “Now, get some sleep!”

Alexander climbed into bed.

“Sleep tight, Al,” said his dad. He turned out the lights.

Alexander thought about how much fun he’d had writing his salamander paper. He had been writing similar reports ever since moving to Stermont. But these other reports were not about animals. They were about monsters.

Alexander pulled a beat-up old notebook from beneath his pillow.

Salamanders are not really fire monsters, he thought. Then he opened the notebook to read about a *real* fire monster.




FLAME-DEER

Gentle, woodland creature
THAT BREATHES FIRE!



DIET

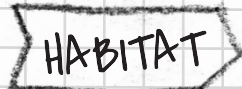
Burnt marshmallows, overcooked popcorn, toast the color of charcoal.



TSSSS! On rainy days, a flame-deer becomes a steam-buck.

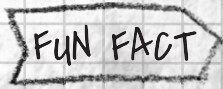
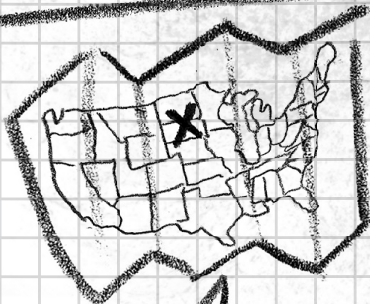


WARNING! Don't touch the antlers! YEOWCH!



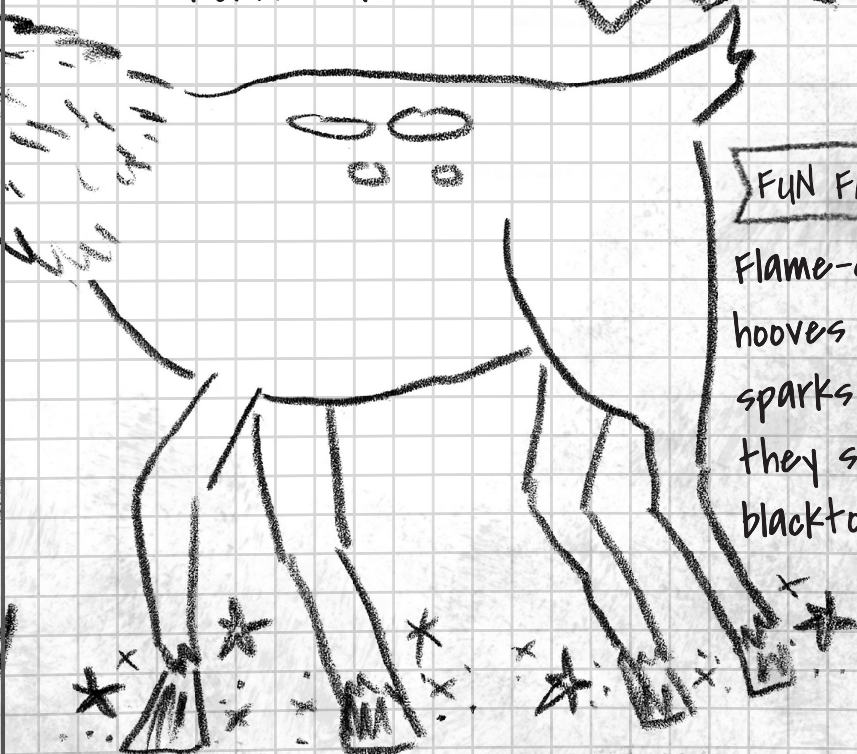
HABITAT

5 miles south of North Dakota.



FUN FACT

Flame-deer hooves shoot sparks when they scuff blacktop.



Alexander closed the notebook.

A flame-deer must have burned those pages when it battled the old S.S.M.P.! he thought.

S.S.M.P. stood for “Super Secret Monster Patrol.” The original S.S.M.P. had created the notebook to protect Stermont from monsters. The monster patrol now had three members — Alexander and his two best friends:

SUPER SECRET MONSTER PATROL CLUB MEMBERS



Alexander

The leader!



Nikki

Brave and clever!



Rip

Short but ~~sweet!~~
strong

And tomorrow, we might be adding a new member! Alexander thought. He smiled, and drifted off to sleep.