

Unterherz

#2019



Tony 'Mr Krane' Carter

first of an (hopefully) irregular fanzine, compatible with

The Veins of the Earth

by Gregorius217778

V1.0

LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
WEIRD FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING
COMPATIBLE PRODUCT

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Unterherz, das;
noun. A [coinage](#) made of the two German words "unter" ("below") and Herz ("heart").

I run a blog. So far, so common. I fill it mostly with RPG-related articles, often OSR-themed, often written with LotFP or VotE in mind. In 2018, I began to release the LotFP material as a should-be-annual zine I called "[Gregorius'Notes](#)".

This here is the attempt to create a sister for it. Unterherz. This issue contains next to all Veins-of-the-Earth relevant material up to 2019. Articles about in food in the Veins, a religion, lots of magic items, even a little "side quest". Enjoy.

Food in the Veins

Food is rare in the Veins. Deserts hold more life than the womb of the Earth, and with all the solid matter there is so little space to start with. Still, the explorers (I do not dare to say “heroes”) will have to eat from time to time. Here are eight ideas for food and provisions in the Veins of Earth. The estimated nutrition values have been determined with the help of [The Meat Lover's Guide To The Post Apocalypse](#) (and a LOT of gut decisions). Some have options for additional information that a character may learn with a successful Bushcraft test.

#1: Black Soup: this soup is made of blood, salt and a few scraps of meat. It will be available in cities or settlements with a butchery. While it fills the rumbling stomach and quenches the thirst, a bowl only counts as 10-30 sp worth of food.

#2: Cave Fish: the blind things that swim in the waters below are not carp. Often, they are bony and rich in gristle. Still, they make for one of the best and easiest meals one may hope for, especially when roasted, salted or dried proper. A BIG fish may be equal to 45 – 200 sp worth of food (but costs a little more when cured). The bigger ones count as one item each (half of the mass is inedible, no matter how hungry you are).

#3: Cave Crickets: It takes a few dozen of them (30 to 50 individual crickets, depending on size) to make even for a meager meal (50 sp worth of food), and they are everything but easy to capture without a net, blanket or other large piece of cloth. Still, they are one of the more frequent edible, non-dangerous things found. The fact that bestial predators have an even harder time to prey on them make them more available to intelligent, tool using dwellers of the Veins. An encountered swarm will usually count 5d20 insects.

Bushcraft: the presence of Cave Crickets either indicates that some fungus or lichen is nearby, or that some nearby fungus or lichen is no more...

#4: Albino Lobster: these are rare in the Veins, even in places where water is plenty. In regard to food, they are really just worth 12 to 16 sp, but the upper class of established societies of the Veins may pay twice or thrice that much, because it is a delicacy.

#5: Blind albino rats: these rodents either have an exceptional sense of smell or a form of infrared vision. The latter appear to be blind as well, but the dark, sunken-in patches of skin where eyes would be expected may give their true meaning of sight away. Cave rats are more hunters than scavengers, as there

are not many leftovers in the Veins. Predators guard their kills, and the rats survive by quickly or quietly stealing some scraps. They are no threat to a grown human, even when cornered. The big ones make for a nice meal (25 sp worth of Veins food per animal).

Bushcraft: solitary rats may be found in many places, as they act as scouts for their pack. When a larger number is encountered, there must be a large predator in the area as well that the rats do follow. Only those kind of beasts may provide enough carcass for a group of rats to survive. That, or there is a carcass nearby large enough to make the rats gather. The latter does not exclude the former.

#6: Mussels: Mussels are more common than Lobster, but still not common in the rivers and lakes of the Veins. They are a lot more salty and bitter than their above ground equivalent, and depending on the water they are found in, they may even be unwholesome or poisonous. 20 or 30 usually make for 40sp of Veins food, and it is a rare thing to find more than d200 (d100 +d100) in one spot.

Bushcraft: when there are mussels, it is worth checking their condition. If some of them are cracked, there may be a lobster as well. Nearby groups or settlements usually plunder edible mussels colonies quickly. Finding a large one thereby means that one is far away from the next intelligent being or that they are not edible.

#7: Cave Salamander: Underground streams and lakes that are not completely dead are usually inhabited by cave salamanders. These look very much like worms, but with short pairs of limbs at the front and the rear of the body. The number of digits on their feet vary. Webbing is common, and all cave salamander have a long tail that flattens laterally. Often, they have fins near the end of the head, the back and/or the tail. They are blind and without eyes, their skin is without pigmentation and of pinkish-yellow color. Their heads are elongated: some look like a blunted lance tip, others like a thick toe or thumb. Most of them are too small to make a proper meal (about 1d6sp worth of Veins food), but once in a while a truly fat salamander may be encountered with up to 10 or 50 lbs in weight. These make for a good meal, once butchered. (175 to 800 sp in Veins Food).

#8: Cave Lichen: these are not mushrooms. They are a stringy slime that sticks to the surface of caves when there is water and mineral, or organic residue, that allows them to thrive. Scratching off the lichen from the walls hardly counts as work, but it takes a lot of time to fill the own belly this way. Going about it for about three hours yields 2d6 x10 sp worth of Veins Food. Doing it for about five hours will yield 2d6 x20 sp and doing so all day long means 2d6 x50. This makes for a good way of resting while sustaining oneself, but most lichen infested caves hold no more than 1d20 x 100 in Veins Food, and it takes weeks and month for the harvested lichen to recover.

Bushcraft: a skilled spelunker will identify a "scraped" lichen patch (even if it has been completely harvested), and can tell if it had been scraped within the last 1d4 days.



Post-Battle Cannibalism

The Veins of the Earth are a realm of hunger. Nobody can afford to ignore a potential source of food. ALL flesh should be eaten (save for those types known to be poisonous or inedible), and the end of a battle is almost always the beginning of a feast. But slaughter is not butchery, and those who are of the latter trade have an easy time to make a living in any larger community: they know how to make the most of a human body, as long as it is presented rather complete to them (preferably: alive): the victims of a fight with tooth, claw, spear and ax often have their best parts ruined already.

Credit where credit is due: the underlying math of the following approach as well as overall inspiration was (again) provided by [Fishwife Games' The Meat Lover's Guide To The Post Apocalypse](#). If you want to the details about calories, consumable parts and how different kinds of killing waste a different amount of actually good, tasty MEAT, do not hesitate to pick up this title. I recommend it wholeheartedly to all, no matter what their RPG system is.

Post-Battle Cannibalism: Slaughter vs. Butchery

The human body is as good a source of meat as a deer. As gruesome as it sounds (and is), properly butchered you can make A LOT of meals out of a fresh (and perhaps: still warm) human corpse. But exactly there lies the problem: proper butchery. Fact is, most human(oid) corpses a character will get their hands on will hail from a melee or, even worse, a fatal drop. Cuts and steps to the guts release bodily fluids that spoil a LOT of good meat within mere moments. That the characters may not have the proper tools (or the needed knowledge or skill) to dress a slain opponent (or fallen ally) like a hunter would dress a kill is not helping it, either.

As a rule of thumb, consider an average adult to be worth 30.000sp in edible meat in the Veins. Further, expect the characters to be unable to "salvage" more than 10.000sp of this when the corpse hailed from a recent melee, and even less (5.000 to 1.000 lumen) if the body is the result of a deadly drop. The full 30K should only be achievable by a skilled butcher that killed the human(oid) in a clean way (say, a cut throat) and was able to harvest all edible organs (and even collected the blood for use as well as cracking the bones for the marrow).

A skilled butcher (Bushcraft) with some tools may get a few thousand more out of the corpse than the base lines given above. Skill point x 2.000 on a successful test. If the test had been failed, the skill is halved (rounded down) for the calculation. This assumes rather low number of a calorie per pound of meat. Comparisons with other omnivorous mammals suggest a better yield. But then again, the body of a Veins adventure is unlikely to be rich in body fats anymore.

This difference in "harvest" may encourage a party to go through the trouble of taking a captured enemy back to a nearby city, and to a butcher there. If the butcher gives 15.000 to 20.000 lumen of meat (especially if cured!) to the party while keeping the rest, both parties will be happy.

The Soup-Wyrm

"Far from here, there is a cave with numerous fused stalagmites and stalactites. In the floor, a large round hole with very smooth edges and walls may be found. It leads down like a tunnel, and from it emanates a green glow. This is the entrance to the cave of the Soup-Wyrm, but nobody goes down there. Instead, people come to this place to exchange food for Wyrms Soup. And they get more than they give..."

[Mother Margery, on the Legend of the Soup-Wyrm]

Characters that come to the cave with the entry to the Soup-Wyrm's lair and hail it with loud calls will have it rise from the opening in the floor after 2d6 rounds. It has the body of a giant caterpillar, 4 feet in diameter. Its head is akin to that of a human infant, but it has only one eye. The other socket is empty. Over its head hangs a veil like a spider web, with thick, milky strands. The uppermost four pair of legs are not that of a caterpillar: one is like the raptorial limbs of a praying mantis, one is a pair of fleshy tentacles and one like that of a spider. The lowest is a set of vestigial human arms, akin to that of a T-Rex.

Soup-Wyrm: Armor 10, Move 90', 5 Hit Dice, 21hp, 1x grab attack, Moral 7.

The Soup-Wyrm will make a grabbing attack with its mantis limbs. Armor does not protect against it, a shield and/or Dexterity bonus does. After a successful attack, the victim is immobilized and the monster will lower itself with it into its lair. This will take three rounds. The victim may break free according to the grapple rules, but may not take control of the grapple (the Soup-Wyrm is too large for that). The Wyrm will begin to strangulate an immobilized victim with its tentacles. If it does not break free, it will die after 8 rounds (modified by Constitution bonus). The victim will be dropped by the Wyrm on a failed Moral test after an successful attack against it.

The Soup-Wyrm will ask the characters in a child-like voice if they came for some soup. If they affirm it but brought no food to trade, the Wyrm will yell at them to "Come back with something for the soup then!!" before it lowers itself back into its lair. Otherwise, the response of the Soup-Wyrm is determined according to the following table (d12). Any character above the first adds a +1 to the result, a character that came alone means a (-3) penalty.

Soup-Wyrm Reaction Table

9+: "There is not enough soup for you! Come back another time!" With these words the Soup-Wyrm will lower itself back into its lair, and won't come out for hours.

2-8: "Very well! Give me the ingredients and your dishes, I will give you some soup." For every 200sp worth of food the characters brought along to trade, the Soup Wyrm will fill one ration of hot soup into whatever container the characters brought along.

1 (or less): The Soup Wyrm will attack the lone character to kill it, devour its juices and add its remains to the soup.

Wyrm Soup is pale green, thick, tastes bland and smells unwholesome. It has a satisfying oily feel in the mouth and warms the stomach. This warmth slowly spreads from there to the rest of the body. A bowl or tankard of Wyrm Soup will keep a character from slipping from the current stage of hunger to the next for five days (see Veins of the Earth; p.322). A tankard or bowl of Wyrm Soup may be had for 200sp worth of food from the Soup Wyrm. It will accept no other form of payment.

The day after a meal of Wyrm Soup was consumed, a character needs to Save vs. Poison. If she was *Starving* while eating the soup, the Save receives a (-1) penalty, and a (-3) penalty if the character has been *Dying* then. On a failure the character will begin to feel weak and either lose a point of Strength or Constitution, whatever is lower. To recover from the attribute loss, a character must eat according to the current stage, see p.320. If this does not happen before the character enters the *Dying* stage the next time, the loss is permanent.

Credit where credit is due: the idea for this thing sprang up in my mind after I watched the "Soup Dragon" episode of [The Clangers](#). Said jolly little figure from a tv series for children was crossed in my mind with impressions from the music video of the song "Prison Sex" by the band "TOOL" and those of the "Slürm Queen" from an episode of the cartoon series "Futurama".

The Lair of the Soup-Wyrm

If anybody sneaks around the opening without hailing the Soup-Wyrm first, there is a 2 in 6 chance that the Wyrm will become aware of it. In that case it will jut out of the opening (those around will have to check for Surprise unless they were prepared for that) and attack (see above).

The hole that leads down to its lair is neither very large (about 4 to 5 feet in diameter) or very deep (12 or 14 feet from the upper ledge straight down to the floor). Yet, somebody that ends up down there will have a hard time to climb back up without help from above. No matter how long one studies the route, it will not become easier than Hard [3] to climb back up from the ground. As soon as somebody is half way down the tunnel, the character will smell the soup.

Trap: Webbing

The Soup Wyrm secured this entry to its lair with an organic webbing it is able to produce. This is the origin of the "veil" its head is covered with as soon as it emerges. The webbing is milky, sticky and thick. When the web is fumbled with, the Wyrm will notice it, as it is attached with a strand to itself. It is not overly sticky.

A character that carefully removes the web, balls it up and takes care to hold the strand connecting it to the Wyrm at roughly the same tension (2 in 8 chance, modified by the character's Dexterity bonus) may surprise the Soup-Wyrm.

The cave that it made its lair is large, but the ceiling is only 6 feet high. Near the entrance sits a large iron cauldron with four long feet, right above a number of fist-sized black stones that seem to burn on their accord own with a green flame (Light Strength: 25). Inside of the cauldron bubbles and boils Wyrm Soup. On the other side of the cave there is a letter box squeeze (rather wide, but not much higher than a foot). It leads deeper down into the Veins.

The Soup Wyrm will either be found stirring the soup with one of its spider legs or coiled up against the wall far from the entry and the soup. It sleeps a lot (2 out of 6 chance to find it awake).

The Soap & the Diet of the Wyrm

The Wyrm feeds on the fluids and very soul of its victims. Once the monster strangled them to death, it sucks both out of them. All of it. What remains, it throws into the cauldron, together with its own excretions. This it boils till it has soup. What the other bring for trade, it simply adds to it. The whole reason for doing it is to lure people to its lair. When there is just one, and only one, it strikes. Not always, but often. That is why it sends away larger groups of people.

The Cauldron & the Burning Stones

The Cauldron is a simple iron cauldron. There is nothing special about it, aside from the fact that it somehow ended up in the Veins of the Earth.

Each of the stones are the compact evil and sin of a soul, consumed by the Soup-Wyrm. It excretes them separate from the other waste fluids (which are the base of the soup). Once they are dried, they start to burn on their own and will continue to do so for 1d4 month. Then, they break apart and turn to ashes. They only stop burning when they are immersed in water or near a Lawful or "innocent" character. Once removed from this condition, the green flames will light up again after 1d4 rounds. Their flames are a Strength 25 light source.

Rumors about the Soup-Wyrm (d4)

#1: It had once been summoned be a Deep-Janeen to be its cook, but was then banished for its terrible cuisine.

#2: It is a nightmare that has been released by the Aelf-Adal into the real world, and is still allied to them.

#3: The Soup-Wyrm is the son of a fair maiden and a dragon from the world above. It grew so hideous and monstrous, that it fled into the Veins, were everything is hideous and monstrous in one way or the other.

#4: In ancient times, a cook was to prepare a feast to be left untouched, for the honor of the gods. The cook, knowing that no-one would taste it, only bought ingredients that started to turn from the gold given by the temple, and thereby kept most of it himself. This cook was then cursed by the gods. This cook is the Soup-Wyrm.

Encounters Near a Veins' City

The Veins are vast. The Veins are deserted. The Veins are horrible, and brutal. People you meet there are a meal, a danger, an obstacle, an oddity or a rarity. Most of the time. This changes a bit when you are near one of the very few cities in the Veins. Civilization has a corona, those within it knowingly become a bit more civil themselves. Sometimes. (d10):

#01 Mad Dwarf Miner

His very small, and looks haggard. His beard and hair are iron gray, wiry and spread out in all directions. An undefinable piece of rotting meat, covered in a glowing sheet of -something-, provides him with a little light. It dangles from a piece of chain wrapped around the top of a worn and stained pick-ax, held in one hand. His skin glistens with sweat and grime, his stumpy teeth are turning black. All but for one, which is a roughly cut emerald. His leather apron, boots and heavy gloves are worn, the rags below them are falling apart. With one hand, the dwarf secures a large back made of sewn skin, heavy with... something. His unsteady eyes watch everyone warily.

If given some time, **Irzin** will remember his name. He is a miner that works a large lode of gems "not far from here..". He will never, NEVER!NEVEREVER!! tell you where it is. Irzin only comes to town to barter some of the raw gems for rations and light. Sadly, the dwellers of the city don't offer him much for the raw gems. He needs to trade whole pounds to gain anything. But he knows that those from "above, like me" value those things. "It will make me rich. Give me food and light, and I'll make YOU rich, too!"

Irzin has been down here for far to long. He came down here with his brother. His brother is long dead now, he killed him, HAD TO KILL HIM, for he had become mad. Irzin still works the lode. Right now, he has more raw gems stored up in nearby cave than he could ever carry, but wants more. There is A FORTUNE to be made.

The lode is the nightmare-work of the Aelf-Adal, a cruel but simple trap. As long as anybody comes back for mining, there will be more. But as soon as a miner decides not to return, a Save vs. Magic needs to be passed. On a failure, the poor wretch will come back and continue to work till starvation sets in. If three Saves in a row are failed OR if a character returned three times (free will or not), he or she is *cursed* to come back to the lode till death.

#02 Blackfoot Gigaferret (Vote; p.30)

The predator stalks the tunnels around the city. They have become its hunting ground. The ferret is often absent for weeks or even month, but always returns. There are tales in the city about it, killing it will give the characters a bonus in the interaction with other city dwellers. But to hunt it, one must camp near the city instead of inside its (relative) safety. This may give the Gigaferret the one chance it needs to kill a PC.

#03-04 Cambrimen (Vote; p. 34)

They are a nuisance for the guards of the city, for they ALWAYS come back within 2d6 days after they have been scared of last time (see Vote "What They Want" Table; result 11). The guards stopped killing them and just shoo them away, as killing one of them drives the whole lot into mad fury (result 4). It is not that they are overly dangerous, but they are numerous, and combat with them results in a mess. When the characters meet the Cambrimen, they are the first after a long, long time to (perhaps!) gain a different reaction from them.

#05 Fungal Ambassodile (Vote; p.56)

The first time the characters encounter it, it will be on its way towards the city. In its jaws, a negotiator from a different city enjoys the diplomatic immunity and the security of being carried by a hulking monster of a cave-dwelling THING. The Ambassodile may be met in the city from there on, but will not be ready for further missions until it finished its current diplomatic errand. On the next encounter, it will be heading out of the city, finishing said mission by returning the envoy. If it is ever meet again, it will want to meet the PC alone, outside of the city. There, it will regurgitate a partially digested envoy with an offer for the PC. The envoy wants them to... (roll d4)

1# ...sneak back into the city and kill an important person there, to then bring its head back to the Ambassodile (that will then regurgitate their payment). The target lives in a "nice" home, with guards and traps.

2# ...venture to a nearby cave system (a map on a stone tile is provided), open up a (provided) very large (over-sized item) clay bottle there and spill a hand full of the contained fluid every turn on their way back towards the city. Then, they are to pour out the rest near the city. This will lure something NASTY there. (There is a chance that the Ambassodile will NOT be waiting to give a reward. The envoy gave the promise, NOT the Ambassodile).

3# ...wait at a certain tunnel crossing/large cave and kill the first group of three or more humanoids that enter it. The PC need to bring back the heads to the envoy before the Ambassodile releases the payment, and it will take 1d4 days before the group shows up.

4# ...wait till a slave trader comes back to the city, and get a certain slave back (alive!), no matter how. Payment is provided when the slave is returned alive, and the Ambassodile will take the slave away. To make room for it, it will throw up the half-digested diplomat, who will die within a minute. How hungry are the PC...?

It is up to the GM what the payment is, but it should be something that cannot be digested.

#06-07 Olm Traders (VotE p.90)

The two Olm have brought a small number of items (weapons, tools and/or armor parts) made of iron and steel to barter with. All these things were found or salvaged by their brethern, and stored by the tribe till it was enough to make it worth a trip to the city. They will trade their goods for food, bone or wood.

Roll 6d10 to determine the items offered for trade. If a result comes up twice, it is available two times unless it is 7# (in that case, discard the die). If a result comes up more than twice, discard the "access results" unless it is item 1 to 4. In that case, the item is available multiple times.

- 1# Iron dagger , slightly rusty
- 2# Metal arrow tips; 2d4
- 3# The head of an ax, rusty
- 4# Head of a shovel, very rusty;
- 5# Blackened cooking pot
- 6# Old helmet, slightly rusty
- 7# Chain mail, ripped and rusty; (AC: 14)
- 8# Head of a pick ax, slightly rusty
- 9# A golden tooth
- 0# A grappling hook

#08 Trilobite-Knight (VotE p.141)

It will meet the PC on their way, and show itself to them. It will act calm, but challenge one of the characters (a fighter, if possible). Depending on how the fight goes, it will either surrender or accept surrender. If the PC are wise enough to accept, they will meet the Knight again when they are in dire need of an ally, and can count on it then to fight on their side, till death.

#09 Halfling Hunter

Tabbit is a 5th level specialist and out here to kill the GigaFerret (see #02). He is a little sadistic, and ready to use the characters as bait. In the meanwhile, he hunts for anything he can easily dispatch to sell the skin and some of the meat in the city. His weapons and armor are up to the Referee, but soft leather armor, throwing knives, a large knife and a blow pipe are suggested, as well as perhaps a small number of jaw traps. Tabbit may follow the PC, and tries finish off monsters they attract, or them if they end up badly wounded. His willingness to fight over prey is very limited (he did not survive in the Veins by picking fights), but an "are you sure..?" will imply that he is willing to cause them trouble on their way back. If attacked, he flees quickly and throws either crow feet or marbles behind him.

#10 The Dwarven Explorers

Real dwarfs. Not "*those hollow-souled, liverless Dvargir bastards*". There are 2d4 of them, their names are: Grizwalt, Kirsten, Reygar, Thurwyn, Ambrose, Hammek, Tilda, Sargath.

These 1st level dwarfs came down here to explore and to find riches. They came with iron rations, lamps and oil, climbing gear, leather armor (some with chain), rope and all the usual trappings of spelunkers. They started out as a team of eight. The first time the characters meet them, the result of 2d4 decides how many are still alive. When they are met again (only once or twice per session, the GM should ignore further encounters) their number is rolled for again. If it is lower than before, a few more bit the dust. Otherwise, those that were alive last time will still be alive (there number does not grow). As soon as only three or less of them are left, it will be the last time the characters will see them alive. They may find their corpses later on. Their moral is equal to their number +2.

Aside from their more mundane gear, they will have Veins loot with them: roll 2d6 and subtract half their number. That is the number of rolls on the "I search the body" table (VotE p.282) to determine their current loot. Depending on how and where the PC meet them, they could be interested in bartering.



Stupid, Stupid Cambrimen

The Veins of the Earth are home to a lot of strange beings. On a second thought, I would be hardly pressed to name even one creature or sentient being within that is not strange, horrible or both. A thing that the procedures of the MPAA taught us is that whenever there is horror, there must(?) be comic relief. In the Veins, comic relief comes in the form of proto-cell based organisms that dabble at being a failed mimicry of human life: the Cambrimen.

They have no clue, they try to hard, they never notice how much they fail. And the way they react to others is absurd. If the movie industry ever told me one thing, than that something that works somehow should be expanded upon till the customers are overfed. But let me tell you....

I am not the creator. You are not a customer. I am not the movie industry. This is not PG13. No. It. Is. Not.

These are three more things that encountered Cambrimen may want.

#1 "...DA SZEYN! ...DA SZEYN! ...DA SZEYN!"

(Impossible if the characters have no light source with them).

The Cambrimen come crawling out of the dark, awed and enticed by the shine of the light the characters carry. They actually had forgotten what light was like. They approach, chant and "dance" (more like: wobbling and tumbling) around the characters. Each turn, roll again for the number encountered. If it is larger than the current number, other Cambrimen have been drawn in by the chanting (till the maximum number is reached). The noise they cause may although draw (other) unwanted attention to the characters.

If the PC try to chase them off, they will begin to rage and attack to "CAPSURE DA SZEYN!!!". If the characters quench their light source, all Cambrimen will give a regretful "Oooooooh..." and whisper among themselves "...da szeyn gone...yes, gone, wer da szeny?...gon...? oooooh... szat..." After the first round, 1d6 will slip away to where they came from, and another 1d6 will follow every round. If the light is lit again when even just 1 Cambrimen is still around, the whole thing will start all over again. If the characters sneak away, they may be able to evade the Cambrimen in the dark.

#02 "HUnn-TAh!! Biii-ek HUNn-TAH!"

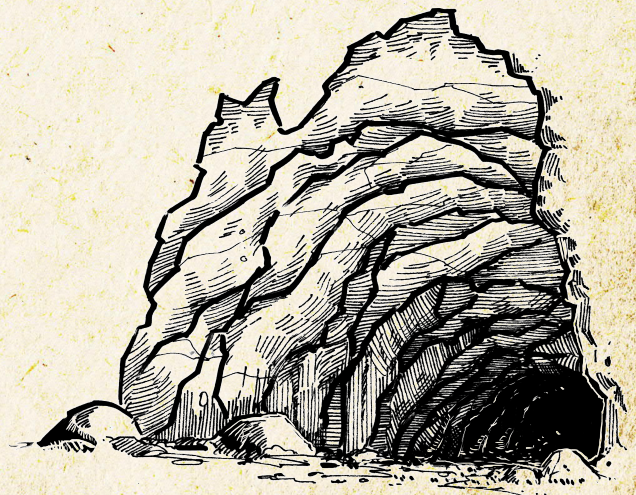
Some of the Cambrimen remember that there is some monster (or other characters) around that they want to hunt... and think that the PC are here to hunt those, too! They will follow the characters, hushing each other (and the characters if they speak out loud!), and will act like kids would act when they pretend to be hunters. They will follow the PC till they meet anything else or are chased away (they simply flee in panic then, suddenly believing that THEY are hunted by the PC).

Perhaps there is no other being around for miles and the Cambrimen just fooled themselves somehow. But the first being encountered while they follow the characters they will attack in mindless bravery. Even if it is completely harmless...

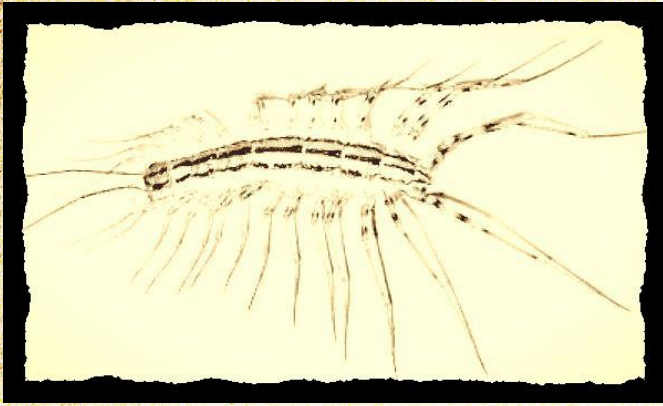
#03 "EET! FEYVOR! FUR U! EET!"

The Cambrimen will hold one of their own by the "arms" (it will not try to escape) and want to sacrifice it to the characters. They want a PC to eat the Cambrimen (perhaps they have witnessed some sacrifice somewhere) and believe to gain the PC's favor this way. If the PC reject the offer, the Cambrimen will be baffled. They will try again, and then give up if they are rebuffed twice. They do not understand, let go of their fellow and ALL of them will have their head sink visibly before they turn round and wobble away (like children that were told to stop fooling around).

If the PC take the (disgusting!) sacrifice and then do not do them a favor ("U EET! NOW FEYVOR! GIV FEYVOR!"), the Cambrimen will get enraged and attack. They really have no idea what favor they are supposed to get, so giving them (or doing for them) ANYTHING will do the trick.



Giant Scutigera



Scutigera coleoptrata, more commonly known as House Centipede (or "Spinnenfüßler" in Germany).

Armour: 12

Hit Dice: 4

Hit Points: 16

Move: 240'(80')

Damage: Limb Stab (1d3) / Limb Stab (1d3) / Bite*

Climb: 6 in 6

Number Encountered: 1

Blind: Yes

Experience Points: 400

Morale: 8

Combat: Two attacks with the limbs. If one of them was successful, an attack with venomous pincers follows. It may engage up to two victims at a time, as long as the second one is not coming up from behind. Two leg attacks per opponent per round, but only one bite per round.

Smells: like dead, dry leaves kicked up in the air by unruly children.

Sounds: like a very quick, light tapping of many things on a hard surface.

It is a hunter, and as quick as you might expect from a centipede, even from one 12 feet long (mouth to rear), three feet tall (ground to back), hovering up to three feet over the ground on its numerous long, spider like legs. These legs are flexible. It may squeeze through any opening that is just a bit larger than its body.

The pincer-like appendages close to the mouth, the "forcipules", are really busy after it has set its sights on you. It does not see you, but it senses that you are there. It feels vibrations, and the movement of the air. For the latter, it has these tiny, translucent folicels all over its body. These you will only be able to appreciate if you make it your meal, not the other way around. It understands that you want the same, but has made up its mind in regard to that. Its mandibles are already slick with its poison.

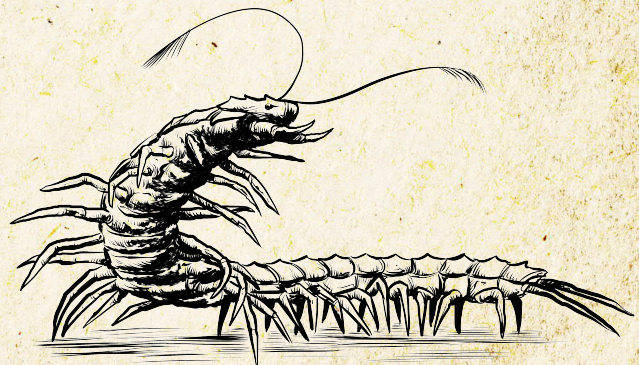
All those legs! Fighting a Giant Scutigera is like fighting a crazy team of men-at-arms with spears. It actually uses its limbs to stab and clubber. As long as it suffered no damage, it gains a **+3 bonus on its melee attacks and its AC**. Each point of damage after the first two reduces this bonus till it reaches zero, as some of its limbs are broken or chopped off.

It is fast: Once it senses prey in a nearby tunnel and decides to attack, it will come rushing out so quick that it might take characters by *Surprise*. It will act first in combat, unless it has been surprised somehow.

It is poisonous: If it is successful with a bite attack with its pincers, a character must Save vs. Poison after 1d4 rounds (modified by Constitution bonus).

From that point on, the victim will begin to twitch and suffer from heartburn, which leads to a cumulative (-1) penalty to AC and attacks each round. Magic-Users have a 2 in 6 chance of failure while casting a spell (spell stays memorized, but the Magic-User must try again).

If the Save was passed, the "cap" on the penalties is equal to 3 (modified by reverse Constitution bonus), otherwise there is no cap and the victim will also lose a hit point each round as soon as the penalty is higher than the CON bonus of the character. The duration of the venom is 2d4+3 rounds (again, modified by Constitution bonus).



Little Lightthieves

"You do not see them. It does not matter if you can see in the dark or not, how bright your light is or not. Even if you could see ghosts and invisible things, or notice the movement of the air around you, you would not notice them. They are just too tiny. The dot-like flies around overripe mushrooms are bigger than them. They are like dust, and rest in the dust when inactive. When you pass by, you stir them up along with the dust and they follow you for the light you carry. Not the light source, the light that shines from it. Light brings them back to life. Fleeting life. You will only notice that your light grows dim. Likely not right at the start, as this takes a while..."

[Tavern talk of Tabbie, the Halfling Hunter]

When Lightthieves are encountered, the light loses a point of Strength in the first hour, then two points in the second hour, three in the third and so on. At some point the PC will notice it, but it is unlikely that they will know what the reason is. They may think that their light is failing, and just light another one. This will not change a thing, of course, as the light is just leeching away by the Lightthieves, and they multiply while they do.

Only when the Strength of light becomes 10 or less will the Lightthieves be noticed, as small dots that are barely brighter than the surrounding. They drift around the PC and their light source. When there is no more light, they become visible: dozens of them (2d6+2 for every point of Strength they have leeching from the light source). Little glowing particles, just like dust-sized fireflies. They slowly circle around and glow with a light Strength of 4. They will then disperse and lazily drift apart from another. Some will sink to the floor.

After a couple of hours, they will all stop drifting and start sinking. Their glow dies and they become inactive again. That is, unless another light shines on them.

Dispel Magic will render the Lightthieves inactive for a turn (and they will not rise again if no light shines on them then). *Protection from Evil* will merely force them to keep a distance. If this does not force them to leave the shine of the light, they will still leech it away, hour by hour, and grow in number.

Four Peculiar Light Sources

Leech Coral (Strength: 25):

"It was no oil lamp, but one with a frame of coral, in a shape very similar to the oil lamps I know from above. Instead of a glass body with a lit wick, it held a large egg, whose outside was a membrane instead of a shell."

[Report of an adventurer, after leaving the Veins]

A Leech Coral slowly turns the life force of things closer than a foot to it into orange light while it feeds of it, but may only do so with very small beings. Usually, eggs are placed in a lamp made of harvested and shaped Leech Coral. Its light will last for 6 to 24 hours, depending on the size and quality of the egg placed in it. 6 is the common duration, but the life force of an exotic or big egg may achieve better results. The nutrition value (in sp, as per the rules for Veins of the Earth) of the egg may be calculated by multiplying the remaining hours of light by 5.

Dvargir Crank-Lamps (Strength: variable)

A metal box the size of paperback, with a hand crank at the side and a cylindrical light bulb at the top. The bulb is protected by a wire mesh guard, leather fasteners may be used to strap the lamp to a belt.

A Dvargir Crank Lamp shines with a white light for 1 minute for every round that it has been "cranked up". The Strength of the light is equal to the Strength of the person that cranked it. It cannot be cranked up for more than 3 turns of use (no benefit from overdoing it, cranking it for longer will burn out the wires and break the device). The crank lamp is delicate and has a X in 12 chance of breaking when dropped, where X is the height of the drop in feet. After each fight, there is a 1 in 10 chance that wires inside of the lamp become loose. It may then be repaired by somebody with a Tinker skill of at least 4, on a successful skill check.

Dvargir only employ them in areas they consider "safe", and are reluctant to trade them.

Soullight Tattoo [Strength: Variable]

A magical tattoo that is inked into the left palm of a character. The secret of its creation is only known to a few within the Veins of the Earth: some of the Deep Janeen know it, but usually do not bother to reveal this knowledge, as they see it as a rather boring curiosity. A few Aelf-Adal do know it, but consider it to be too beneficial to offer it to those who are

Magic Items in the Veins

capable of dreaming. Some Gnonmen do know, but they will have to pity you a lot AND consider you an absolutely hopeless case to put such a thing into your hand. Actually, the Substratals are the most likely to grant a Soullight Tattoo.

The maker has to spend a week with the one to get it, both talking and meditating, so that she may learn enough about the recipient's soul to know what the tattoo must be like to ignite it. Once created, the bearer may ignite the inner self by blowing onto the open, up-turned palm that carries the tattoo.

When it is lit, the character's heart will beat stronger, the own mind will become clearer (+1 to Intelligence) while a white light with a colorful hue licks out of the palm. The hue will be of the color the character enjoys the most. Black is no color, nor is white. The light of this astral flame will not burn nor hurt, and shines with a Strength equal to the character's Wisdom. Upon activation and every turn thereafter, the character suffers one point of attribute damage to Wisdom. The damage will be recovered at a rate of one point per (30 minus current Wisdom) hours. If more than half of the Wisdom is burned up this way, a Save vs. Devices needs to be passed or 1d4 points of the loss are permanent instead. The flame will die and the light will cease when the palm is turned face down or when the palm touches anything (even briefly).

Pages from the Book of Light (Strength: 5)

Nobody knows the real name of the so called "Book of Light". It was found in the crumbling and squashed ruins of a city that had been discovered deep within the Veins. Stumbling upon somebody who owns some of these pages means that the ruins cannot be all too far away. The paper is old, the writing on it is a language nobody seems to know anymore, and even magic does not reveal its meanings. But the golden writing on the thin paper shines, every single letter of it.

Rumor has it that the book used to have about 300 pages, and at least half of them have been torn out and traded in the Veins, for their light is permanent. A Magic-User may treat a page as spell scroll of *Continual Light*, but this will rob the page of its shine. Some say that the book itself, once opened, shines with a much brighter light than just the individual pages (Strength: equal to the remaining pages), and that anybody reading the book would have the own eyes shine like daylight till the next time they go to sleep.

In most LotFP game worlds, magic items are very rare. There are no court wizards creating them for kings and heroes, no guilds producing them for sale or as a token of influence. Those found are one-of-a-kind and come with a backstory. I as a Referee adhere to this mindset, but for the Veins I break it up a little. This place where no sun shines is so rich in fantastic elements that adding a selection of magic items does not seem wrong. Still, they are not to be found at every corner and in the hands of every corpse. They are still a rare thing. Just not a very rare, nearly unheard of thing anymore.

Those in the following list that start with an # are supposedly* unique items. They do not come with a history, which I admit is part laziness, part fitting them into the game world: the Veins are not a place where scholars write volumes of history books.

Those without an # are items that are part of the inherited achievements of one of the cultures of the Veins. There are people that know how to make these items, and do so to use them as tools. They are not common or something everyone has. But, it is known that "they" make use of them, and if you deal with "them" a lot, you may be confronted with such an item sooner or later.

The Referee is encouraged to add a limit to the number of uses, per person or in total, to items.

**Who I am to tell you what is what? If you think something should appear again at some point in your adventure, have it so! Still, I advise to limit the instances of any given item to turn up in your campaign to 1d4+1 times. Do exist more of those in the world? For sure! But will the PC see more than that number in their life times? Surely not!*

#Deathglow: A short spear made from two thigh bones (sawed and cut, then fasted to another with wraps of tanned skin and bone-glue), with a span long crystal shard for a tip. The weapon counts as a light weapon (but not as a spear, as it is rather short). If it is used to kill a living being AND the tip is kept inside of the body for up to six rounds after the kill, it will begin to shine with red a light. The Strength of the Light is equal to the CON of the slain opponent (or HD x3, or x6 for large monsters). The duration depends on the time the tip has remained in the victim's corpse (to leech away the life force): 1 turn if it was just one round, otherwise the duration in turns is determined with a 1d4 if it were 2 rounds, d6 if it were 3, d8 if it were 4 and so on...

#Veil of Blinding Red: a face veil made of gossamer silk, the color of freshly spilled blood. To those with supernatural or thermal vision, it shines so bright that it actually blinds them to look at the wearer (but gives out no other visible radiance). If the veil is not worn by a sentient being, there is no effect.

#Stomach Pouch: a pouch made from a LARGE creature's stomach. It is always glistening wet, and never dries. Food will not go off as long as it is stored within. It is large enough to hold the equivalent of four items.

#Pouch of 69 Eyes: a small leather pouch that contains 69 eyes. When the wearer would fail a check for surprise, the check is passed and one of the eyes dissolves into goo. A d100 roll follows, and when the result is larger than the remaining number of eyes, all eyes turn to goo. The pouch may be filled up again, but when more than 69 are put into it, all of them will dissolve to goo at once.

#Blackhair Braid: a very thin and complicated braid made of long black hair, a total of 10 feet long. It may be used as a rope, and will automatically knot or untie itself when the wearer wills it. It may as well be used as a whip, which strikes will leave bloody cuts (stats for a regular whip, but counts as a magical weapon). After 2d6 days, the braid will unravel itself. Turning it into the former braid again is a demanding task (one roll with a d20 that may not exceed Wisdom nor Dexterity). When the roll is failed, the braid will lose its magical powers for this character forever (but may be used by another, if he or she braids it correctly).

#Shellhorn of Undisturbed Passage: a signal horn made of the winding shell of an aquatic snail. When its wide opening is placed against a water surface and the horn is blown, all submerged creatures within earshot (sound travels far underwater) must Save vs Devices: on a failure, they are pacified and may not attack for 1d4 turns unless actively disturbed. On a success, the effect only lasts 2d4 rounds.

#Clawknife of the Bloodlead: a knife made of a beast's claw, with a handle of bone and leather wrappings. It may be used to determine if a path will lead towards an edible creature reachable within less than a day's travel or not. This is done by cutting the own hand, sprinkling the blood onto the ground and interpreting the patterns. A character may use it only once per day, but it may be used during the same day by a different character.

#Amber of Protection: a single piece of coal that will never cease to smolder. When put and kept into the mouth, it will grant a character a +3 bonus on all Saves against spells or other magical effect. After it has been removed, the tongue will turn out to be so burned that the character will be unable to speak for a time period thrice as long as the time that the amber was kept inside the mouth. If the amber had been used for two hours or more, a Save vs. Death determines if the tongue will be burned so much that it will fall off within a day. Characters without a tongue cannot make use of the Amber of Protection.

#Idol of Worms: a crude clay idol, larger than a man's fist, that depicts a knot of worms. A character that meditates for an hour while holding it in both hands may travel through a squeeze with the same ease as if it would be a crawl, for one hour.

#Eyestones: a pair of small, flat and smooth stones. Both have the likeness of an open eye painted on them. A character that puts those on the closed eyes before going to sleep cannot be surprised during sleep, but will wake up just in time instead.

#Spine Talisman: a talisman made of a small animal's spine, threaded onto long hair and worn around the neck on a leather string. The wearer may re-roll any damage from falling once or may have the spine talisman break to only take the minimum possible damage from a fall.

#Iron Ring of the Empty Eyes: a finger ring of dulled iron, with the likeness of open but "blank" eyes engraved all over its surface. The wearer may become completely unnoticeable to creatures that count as BLIND (by the rules of VotE) for a turn by turning the ring once around the own finger. Doing so will also leave the character blind for a turn.

Aelf-Adal Harbinger of Wounded Dreams

Any weapon of the Aelf-Adal may be an enchanted Harbinger of Wounded Dreams. These count as magic +1 or +2 weapons against any foe that is capable of dreaming (aka "A Dreamer"). When a Dreamer is hit by such a weapon, these wounds always heal last. As long as the wounds are not healed, the Dreamer must pass a Save vs Magic during every sleep to avoid nightmares. When a Dreamer that still bears wounds of such a weapon has a nightmare, natural healing is interrupted for a day -and- there is a 1 in 6 chance that the wounds worsens instead (loss of another hit point).



Aelf-Adal Dreamhaunter Amulet

A Dreamhunter Amulet always incorporates a gem in which center tiny dark shades swirl around another. Each of those is a nightmare harvested and entrapped by the Aelf-Adal. A typical amulet holds 5d10 nightmares. The wearer of the Amulet may touch it to slip into a trance for a turn, and act as a medium for the captured nightmares within. If there are any characters capable of dreaming (aka "A Dreamer") within the larger area (exacts meaning of this within the Veins is up to the Referee), a nightmare will then escape from the amulet for each of them. Dreamers personally known to the character may be excluded, so that no nightmare is released for them. Every non-excluded Dreamer in the area of effect will have a vivid nightmare the next time he or she sleeps. This cuts the effective time of rest gained through sleep in half (see LotFP core rules p.36 for sleep deprivation).

When a Dreamer wears this amulet, her or she must pass a Save vs. Devices after donning it and/or after each sleep while wearing it. Otherwise, a Nightmare will escape and plague the wearer during the next sleep.

Deep Janeen Scroll of Declaration

A scroll made of the finest tanned skin, on rollers of ivory. When a character unrolls the scroll, he or she may have a demand appear on it, written in golden letters. Every other character that reads the roll will read, in his or her own language, "These are the words of...", followed by the name of the erstwhile character, a brief description of what the "writer" considers to be their greatest three deeds, and the demanded action or item(s). Characters that cannot read will still find themselves able to read these words. Characters whose language have no written form will still be able to read and understand the content.

Technically, every character holding the scroll may will it to form a new demand, which will change the writing on it. Some Deep Janeen use such scrolls to have their orders delivered to their minions, vassals or "allies". Sometimes, they are even used in audiences where the addressee and the Deep Janeen are in the very same room.

Deep Janeen Brass Gong of Menials

A brass gong the size of a fighter's round shield, to be suspended on two chains. It comes with a mallet made of wood. Two characters must hold the gong for a third to strike it (unless it is somehow attached to a structure). When it is hit, the sound summons three *Unseen Servants* of 3rd level that will carry out the first order given to them by the one that has hit the gong. After being used to summon the unseen servants, the gong will lose its power for four hours.

dErO Cipher Lens

A glass lens in a copper ring. A cipher lens will reveal the hidden message in every text it is used to read. Every text. No cipher is so strong that it cannot be broken. Magic is strong. dErO magic IS STRONGER! If used to find a cipher when there is none, the paranoid mind may perceive a cipher that is not there on failed Save vs. Devices, a message that is not there. WE ARE NOT PARANOID! WE CANNOT BE FOOLED! WE BREAK YOUR CIPHERS! A dErO Cipher Lens cannot decipher dErO ciphers. IT CANNOT! DO NOT USE IT THIS WAY! IT WILL NOT WORK! THE LENS WILL SHATTER AND EXPLODE! YOU WILL BE BLINDED BY SPLINTERS! DO NOT TRY TO READ OUR CIPHERS! YOU CANNOT!! dErO place Cipher Lenses to be found by others, so that these hamstringing their own plans by using them to uncover non-existent schemes. YOUR ACTS ARE FOOLISH!!!!!!!

dErO Mind-Crystal Headband

A headband of macemaker silk with a clear crystal affixed to it. When worn, the majority of the mind of the wearer is transferred into the crystal. This gives the wearer an increased resistance to all forms of magic to control or confuse the mind (+3 to all saving throws). When the headband is removed, the character suffers 2d4 temporary attribute damage to Wisdom and Intelligence (rolled separately), which will regenerate at a rate of one point per day each. The character loses a level till the damage is fully regenerated. As long as the damage is not fully regenerated, residue of the character's mind remains in the crystal. A character cannot save against spells to control or confuse the mind cast by a Magic-User that holds a crystal with the character's residue.

Wearing a dErO Mind-Crystal Headband calls during sleep calls for a Save vs Devices. If failed, the character will be unable to speak, cast spells, understand languages or communicate coherently for 1d4 hours after waking up.

Dvargir Blood Syringe

A very large silver syringe that is used by Dvargir to extract blood. The needle can never become contaminated, using the syringe is always save. The blood within its glass barrel is preserved indefinitely. It may be injected into vials of luminol to create light, but it has another use.

Each day, a character may harvest some of the own blood, without causing harm. Re-injecting the own blood on a later day has a "x in 6" chance to provide a +1 bonus to all rolls for a number of hours equal to the own CON; x is the number of daily harvests re-injected. The syringe may hold up to five daily harvests. A character that has a mix of different blood donors injected will die within an hour.

Dvargir Movement Harness

A steel exoskeleton for the lower half of the body, from the hips down. It is covered in pneumatic pumps, leather air containers, winding springs and many gears. Getting in or out of it takes a turn, and while wearing it a character counts as one step more encumbered, as he or she actually moves against the resistance of the harness. After x hours, the harness may be activated via a dial at the hip for y hours. The character may then walk and climb using the stored energy of the harness, as the springs and pneumatics release the stored force of movement. The character actually counts as resting although still moving (as long as nothing stressful happens).

Y is half of the value of X. Y cannot be greater than 8. If more force of movement is stored, the gears lock up till the force of movement is released. Otherwise, the machinery would break. A character may climber, run and do any other action using the gear, but will not profit from a Dexterity bonus while wearing it. It counts as AC:13 in battle, but the mechanics will be destroyed after the third hit that deals 4+ damage to the wearer.

Substratal Radiant Rocks

Not a magic item, but actual residue some Substratals produce. One may think of it as feces. It looks like a regular splinter, piece or chunk of rock, but it shines without glowing. The actual Strength of the light depends on the level/HD of the Substratal that left the residue, multiplied by the size of the item (a splinter is x1; a fist size chunk is x3, a piece as large as an item is x5 and anything that counts as an over-sized item is x10). The light will continue to shine indefinitely. There is a 3 in 6 chance that its radiation is detrimental to organic life. If so, anybody near it will suffer Constitution damage after 10 days, then after another 9 days, then after another 8 days and so on. The damage depends on the size of the item (1d4 for a splinter, 1d6 for a fist sized chunk, 1d8 for a piece as large as an item, 1d12 for something that counts as an over-sized item). A successful Saving Throw halves the damage.

Some rocks affect Strength, Wisdom or Intelligence instead of Constitution.



Substratal Sparkflies

Not an item, but a form of parasite that some Substratals bring along, and leave in the Veins. In this world, Sparkflies look like sparks from a fire, glow like them and burn like them, but they do not fade. Usually 3d12 of them may be found in a loose cluster on an infested Substratal, or on a nearby rock surface once the Substratal left this plane of existence. The glow they produce is a light with a Strength equal to 1/3 of their number. They will stay where they are until a piece of metal comes within a foot or two. Then, they will fly up, swirl about briefly and finally attach themselves to the metal. The elemental force of the Sparkflies is enough to make it warm to the touch. The object will begin to corrode after (50 minus number of Sparkflies) days. Steel and similar substances resist the effect twice as long, inferior metals corrode to uselessness in about half the time. Once the item is corroded, the Sparkflies will detach themselves again.

Exposure to magnetic forces (certain ores or actual magnets) will drive them away, and they will then (as a swarm) fly 2d6 x5 feet into a random direction before they rest again. They may continue to exist for years in this plane before their elemental force ceases. They may be disenchanting or turned as a level 0 spell and/or chaotic being. Dowsing them in icewater will have them cease to exist as well.

Gnonmen Lightflute

A simple yet polished flute made of silver. When played with even a modicum of skill, any light within 100' feet of the flute will increase its Strength by between 20% and 100% (depending on the skill of the flute player). Playing the flute for at least a turn has the musician enter a trance-like state. At this point, it takes a Save vs Devices to stop playing the flute on the own accord (one attempt per hour). The character may otherwise act freely, but will not stop playing the flute. Any physical contact by another character allows for one re-roll (per different character), any kind of actual damage will end the trance immediately.

Gnonmen Stone Clap

Two small stone slaps, carefully worked and polished, in the shape of span wide rectangles. Through one end of each a hole has been drilled, and a leather string attached to each hole links them. A Gnonmen would wear them hanging around their shoulders and down their chest. When both rectangles are struck against another to produce a clapping sound, the next deed that is undertaken within the same round by the character doing so receives a +1 bonus on all relevant rolls. Every time the Stone Clap is used, there is a 1 in 12 chance that one of the stones shatters. The magic is then lost.

The King That Was and Will Be

A Religion for the Veins of the Earth

Credit where credit is due: the ideas for the concept have been rolled with the [Dark Fantasy Religion](#) generator.

Back in the days, just after civilization had finally came to mankind, when Atlantis was still remembered by many people instead just being a myth, there was a god among the kings. His name has by now been effaced by forces greater than himself, as it often happened among the early deities of mankind. This god has left his own realm behind and fully entered that of men by his own choice, for he wanted nothing more than to rule them. The influence he had as a god over his followers was not enough for him, he craved the direct ruling of his subjects and being worshiped in bodily presence, the ability to be face to face and right with those that made up the body of his domain. He build himself a city and laid to waste those he was not able to claim or conquer. He forged alliances, only to subdue his allies after a few generations, when they finally had outlived their usefulness. His claim to power was absolute, and he was unwilling to accept another reign beside him. All was just a matter of time, for in the end it was only him to rule over it all. His empire grew and may have become known in history as one of the largest there ever was to span the earth, but the gods of that time that had not bound themselves to earth agreed to a pact with the gods who had done so, and the remaining great kings of that time, to stop the God that Would Rule. Thus, the war began.

In the end, his great empire was shattered and divided. His subjects – man, not-man and being not from earth – where liberated, subjugated, divided up among the victors to whom they swore alliance, scattered or obliterated. The god-king himself, nobody could subjugate or obliterate. So, with joined forces, the other gods bound him to his throne instead, and moved the throne room deep beneath the earth, so far away from the surface that his throne should never be brought back to daylight again. There, they left him imprisoned for all eternity. The power of the god-king waned over time, as his name became forgotten and he had nothing left to rule but a deserted hall, unable to leave his throne to exert any influence over the world of man. Centuries passed.

Centuries during which he plotted to become a ruler again. Eventually, his throne room was uncovered by one of the civilizations of the Veins of the Earth. Which one it was is a point of much debate among those that worship him know, for everyone wants to

claim the honor of belonging to the kind of the first new subjects of the Kingdom to Be. **The King that Was and Will Be** does not answer the question. He issues orders instead, and makes his new subjects obey. He demands loyalty, promises might and regency, and lends power to those who swear to enforce his will. For his new kingdom shall come!

Followers of The King that Was and Will Be:

He sends out his faithful to wrest the power of any rulers they find, and to replace them with the rule and worship of the King himself. Having been usurped himself in the end, he decided to become usurpation itself. Those of his subjects who want a power or a right my claim it, if they can. Ritual combat shall solve everything and the strong shall rule the weak. Any ruler may do as he pleases, as long as he is willing to do whatever *the King that Was and Will Be* wants, whenever he makes his will known. “Follow me and rule under me!” is the credo, “follow me and you shall rise to the top” is the promise. Those too weak to lead must follow, and obey those of the faith that they cannot (or dare not to) remove from charge.

Clerics of the King That Was and Will Be:

There are only few communities (and even less cities) in the Veins, the followers and clerics of this deity are most likely to encountered within them, en route to one of them or are on a daring expedition to a place of power.

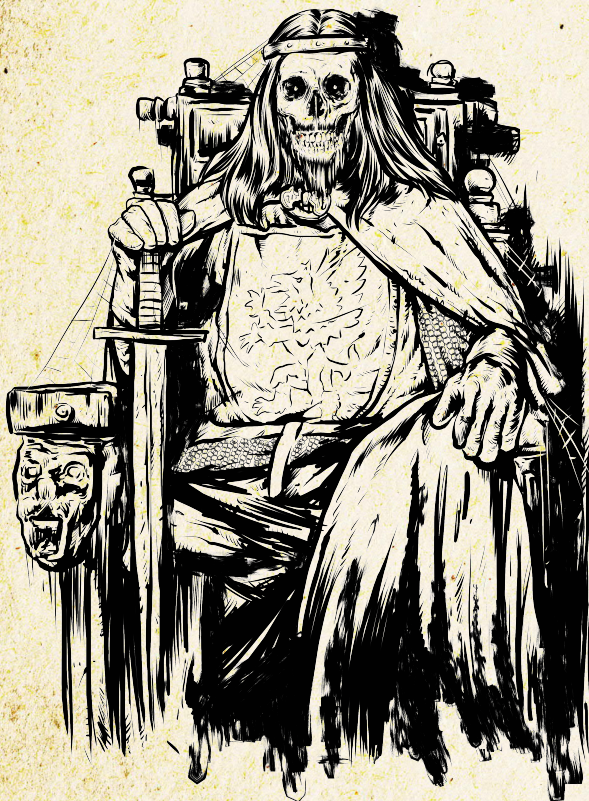
Aside from being prompted to strive for power and to obey the King, there is little that an adherent of the faith must follow. They only taboo is to carry a sign of lordship -not- issued by one of the clerics of the cult. This includes items powered by clerical magic of a different faith. As the followers are supposed to be loyal to the King and those he had put in charge, they do not get a *Save* against any *Command* spell of any cleric of their faith.

His clerics are furthermore forbidden to carry or use any scrolls or religious text of another faith. As their faith is based on dominance, all clerics of *the King That Was and Will Be* may always “drop” any of their prepared spells in exchange for a *Command* spell. The clerics get no *Save* against *Command* spells of clerics that are of the same faith -and- of a higher level.

The religious symbol of the faith is a scepter. Every cleric will have a personal one, and more often than not it may double as light weapon or medium weapon. All of the faith recognize such a scepter as a symbol of their faith upon sight.

Fight for Power: every decision may be directed by a ritual trial by combat. For a ritual combat, a cleric must be present and bless the duel (a usual ritual action that no spell is needed for). It must be a duel, but “champions” may fight on behalf of the people calling for it. Both parties involved may use whatever weapon or armor they have at their disposal. Spells and throwing weapons are allowed, any other kind of ranged weapon is not. The combat will start at a distance of three steps, and the cleric to oversee the ritual will choose the time and the place. The side that is favored by the cleric that initiates the ritual combat will gain a +1 bonus on all attack rolls during the fight (a fact that is not common knowledge).

The ritual ends when one of the combatants is dead or gives up and pleads for mercy. It is up to the winner if mercy is granted.



Lair of the Child-Robber

A Dungeon for Veins of the Earth

This dungeon is -not- for beginners among the Referees. It is not a room-by-room affair, but will at some point become a running battle. Read through it carefully, make notes of what might become important.

Far from the light of day, only reachable after more than a day of spelunking, lies **the Cave of Crying**. It has its name from the wails of children that come out of it from time to time. They echo in a vast crevice right before its opening, a crevice so wide and deep that the PC's light will not be able to reach its other end or bottom. It is part of the Veins of Earth. The entry may be reached via a ledge that leads to it. At some places, it is a yard wide, at others as narrow as two feet. Its occupant does not have any trouble to reach the entrance, for it is a **Trogloraptor (Vote p.143)**.

Disclaimer: this is not “official” or “cannon” in regard to the Veins. I am not affiliated with Patrick Stuart, and my work may be a horrible use of the Veins' very own Trogloraptor. I made some abilities up on a “need-to-have” basis. Never the less, this piece will be good as a bid of fodder or quick one-evening session for the Veins

How do the characters become aware of the Cave of Crying? Why should they bother to go inside?

#1: The characters hear the horrible echoes of a child's screams as it is eaten alive by the Trogloraptor, and they do not happen to be soulless monsters (yet).

#2: They find a trail of child fingers and toes (that the Trogloraptor left behind for the parents, which are WAY behind the characters) and decide to investigate: either out of curiosity or for the hunger that gnaws away at them so much that they REALLY do not care anymore what they may eat as long as it does not mean a(nother) inter-party-kill.

#3: A Knotsman (p.73) hired them. The Trogloraptor crossed a line by stealing one of THEIR children. They already had send Weeping Knights after it, but they did not return. It is more convenient for the Knotsmen as a whole to send outlandish adventurers after the Trogloraptor than to risk more of their own (who are, after all, some other Knotsman's children). They want the beast DEAD. If the PC are able to bring any Knotsmen victims back alive, all the better.

#4: The Aelf-Adal (p.156) hired them to steal living children from the Trogloraptor. They could have done this themselves, but why doing so if a few trinkets (light, food, some baubles) motivate somebody else to enter a situation that is likely to give THEM nightmares in the aftermath...?

#5: The characters are all from the world above and have never been in the Veins before. Their attempt to rescue the lately kidnapped children on their parents behalf will lead them down there. The Trogloraptor is not pleased with the situation. This is not what it had planned...

#6: The characters ARE the parents of the lately kidnapped children (as well as -their- brothers/sisters or other relatives). This may be played with a "character level ZERO; funnel style" approach.

The way to the Crevice

The Crevice (which is not named, to make it easier to add it to a given Veins' World) should be at least six hours of travel away from the character's current position (much more if they are not in the Veins, see above). As the Trogloraptor is described as having "the size of an affordable car", most of the route should lead through rather large shafts, tunnels and caves. It is up to the Referee to include a few dangerous climbs and/or other encounters and obstacles. The travel should, however, be free of encounters with other dangerous Veins' dwellers, as the Trogloraptor will have picked an isolated spot for its own lair. Having the PC encounter old and rotting human bones (adult, child or both) should be fine: after all, the Trogloraptor usually has its prey exhausted BEFORE it can reach its lair, and may devour it on the spot instead of wrapping it up and tugging it along "for later".

The Ledge to the Cave Opening

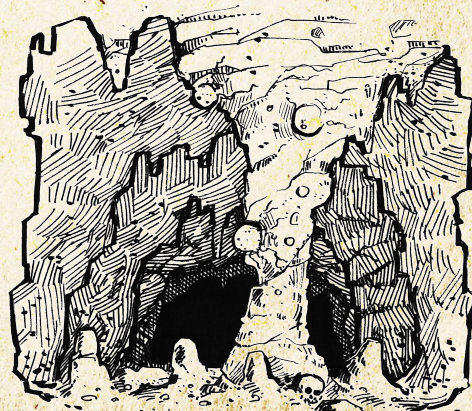
Two things need to be emphasized about it: it is at some points narrow to the point of being dangerous, and it takes quiet some time (perhaps one or two turns) till the entry to the *Cave of Cries* comes into sight. If the characters are smart enough to check the surface of the crevice wall below them, they will see lots and lots of thick silky strands (the Trogloraptors "webbing lines"), about 10' feet below. **These may become important in the final.** If the characters want to deal with them AND have the means to (fire, something to reach so deep) and the time to melt away the strands foot by foot, they deserve to "sabotage" possible "final".

The characters will have to enter the cave (truly, a set of sub caves) from the west. The exits to the east opens into another vast cave, the wall of which is nearly vertical. The floor is out of sight (and a drop would be deadly) while the ceiling is about 20' above. This is the Trogloraptor's "exit route".

The inside of the caves that make up the lair have been mostly formed by water, their surfaces are thereby smooth. The central tunnel (that leads right through from west to east) has a diameter between three and almost 10 yards at its largest point (its opening into the northern part is about two yards wide. **Take this for scale**). The only exceptions to this rule of thumb is the passage that leads out of the main tunnel into the norther part (it is 2 yards wide but 6 yard high, with a cross section akin to a "0") and the small passage in the last part of the main tunnel that leads into the southern part (one yard in diameter).

The "steps" on the map are changes in level (large = upper end // small = lower end) that are equal to slopes: traversing them is not a problem outside of a combat situation. The other elevation lines are 80 degree and (if not noted otherwise) end about 2/3 of the height of the tunnel or cave. The "webbing lines" are exactly that: a cluster of thick strands that criss-cross the path and block it entirely.

The Trogloraptor may part them with one pair of limbs and slip through before letting go again (which has them snap back), but characters will have to cut through them: this takes one round with a suiting bladed weapon (but reduces its damage by one till 3 rounds were spend cleaning the blade), two rounds with a minor bladed weapon or three rounds with any other tool. Burning (or better: melting) through them with fire takes only 1 round. The small "bulges" on the map are cocoons in which the Trogloraptor keeps its prey (see the different entries for the description of their content). Opening them up takes as much time as it does to by-pass a web barrier. Melting them away with fire deals damage to what is inside. The webbing is so thick that it is impossible to tell what is inside each cocoon before it has been opened.



The Trogloraptor and You

This 3 HD monster is no threat for any group of armed and armored adventures in a stand-up fight. Luckily, next to none of what I just wrote fits the situation of the PC's actual encounter with it.

The Trogloraptor is cunning, encountered its own lair, and will rather play a cat-and-mouse game with any intruders instead of facing them head on. The characters will have traveled through the Veins to reach this position: they are perhaps exhausted and at least unlikely to wear heavy armor/gear.

The PC will give themselves away with their light, which will shine through the webbing. The Trogloraptor will be aware of -where- they are. The characters, on the other hand, cannot see through the webbing. They will not know if the monster is behind one or not.

The monster will deliberately make noise while it moves around in plain sight of the intruders, only to have an extra element of surprise once it sneaks back in without making a sound (see below).

Due to its long limbs, it may attack an opponent from a distance, and thereby gets an attack long before the opponent may strike, and make use of "Defensive Fighting" (**LotFP Player Core Book, p.57**)

It will wait behind webbing and attack those that step through or try to cut through from the other side (blind attack), and remains out of range for a melee counter attack (as long as the webbing blogs the way).

It will move backwards at half speed when the enemy closes in, still able to part webbing behind it to slip through (see above). It will !NEVER! Enter area 09 while there are intruders in its lair, as it knows that it would be trapped there.

If pressed or wounded, it will try to get to one of the eastern exits. Once there is some webbing between it and the intruders, it may very well turn around and run. Out of the tunnel, it will at first wait ABOVE the opening it left through, to grab anyone cutting through the webbing in an attempt to THROW a pursuer into the chasm (grapple). If nobody appears or the attempt fails, it will move up along the wall and out of sight, before it tries to get back in again through a different entry.

When it loses more than half of its hit points, it will retreat and literally throw the two children it currently has on its back at the intruders. Afterwards it will flee through one of the eastern exists and not enter its lair again before a turn has passed.

Afterwards, it will still try to avoid the characters in its lair, but if it finds it to be empty it will follow them outside. There, it will move along the sharp slope down into the chasm, and attack from below the ledge when the PC are on it. From this point on, it will try to grab a character to pull her over the edge UNLESS it takes another hit. If this happens and it is still alive, the hit will cost it one of its hook-finger limbs and it will give up for good.

The Detailed Areas on the Dungeon Map

[01] The entry to the cave has a diameter of about four yards, and the natural tunnel stays this way four about five. Webbing covers a niche at the northern wall (but neither contains nor hides anything). Two feet before a downward slope is reached, the ground is littered with the bones and skulls of about a dozen children.

The slope leads 10' down for about 2 yards, and the ceiling becomes lower as well. Getting down is no problem, **getting up in a hurry calls for a Climb check** (due to the smooth surface). After the slope, there is a smooth outcrop at the southern wall. Its edge is between two and three yards above the floor. About a yard after the end of the slope, the whole of the tunnel is blocked by webbing.

[02] The tunnel continues after the webbing and stays about 4 yards high and wide. An opening into a sidearm in the near southern wall has been blocked with webbing. 10 yards towards the east, two further smooth outcrops at the northern and southern wall oppose another. The top of both outcrops is about two yards above the general ground level.

After 10 yards, the tunnel seems to split briefly, and thereby forms a massive natural column in the middle of the passage. Heavy webbing blogs the route around it to the left, and further webbing blocks the other way around a few yards later. The webbing suggests that there is at least one more such column that has been used as the corner post for it.

[03] The height of the ceiling remains the same (about 4 yards), but the tunnel widens to about 8. Thick webbing covers some of the northern wall, and a large cocoon is located near it on the ground. Behind the webbing is another tunnel opening [14].

The cocoon contains the remains of a **Knotsman Weeping Knight (Vote; p.73)**. He still wears a helmet, chain mail, and a undergarment. The cocoon also contains a harpoon bow.

[04] The height of the ceiling remains the same (about 4 yards), but the tunnel narrows again (first to 6 and later to 4 yards). Heavy webbing is found on some of the south-eastern wall (which hides the entrance to a much smaller tunnel [11], only about a yard height but two yards wide) and further webbing blocks it to the east. Two large cocoons rest in a recesses at the northern wall. The second one is much smaller than the other.

The first cocoon holds the remains of another Weeping Knight (armed with chain mail, helmet, two smoke bombs and a bola), the other contains a still-alive young Knotsman (about 6 years old). The boy is in a half-awake state due to the monster's poison, and will remain in it for a few more hours. He is easy to lead, but only moves with 3/4 of the normal speed.

The webbing that blocks the tunnel in the east covers about two yards of it and was placed right in front of an exit into the chasm. Characters that try to hurry through it need to check for *Surprise by Ambush* or will stumble into it. In that case, a further Save vs. Paralyze determines if they are able to cling to the webbing or the edge, so that their comrades may help them back into the tunnel. If all this happens because the characters followed the Trogloraptor, they are in tough spot as the monster will be waiting above the exit then.

[05] The side tunnel is four yards high and wide, but increases in height and depth the further it goes. Thick webbing strands block the whole of it after about 8 yards. **The Trogloraptor will be in this place at the start.** It will have noticed the intruding characters and wait. If somebody tries to open up the webbing from the other side, it will attack. From then on, it will be a running battle. If the characters pass by, it will wait a little longer and then try to sneak up from behind.

[06] The ground will be much lower than in area [05], and the ceiling is about 8 yards above it, from here on till the end of the tunnel [08]. To the southwest, there is a three yard high and four yard wide opening, about five yards up in the wall. The ascend is very steep (Hard/3) but far more manageable part at the southern end (Slope/2). More webbing blocks the way.

[07] This area contains a prepared trap of the Trogloraptor. There is an overhang high up in the southern wall. On top of it a lot of loose rocks have been put up by the monster, and have been secured with webbing. The web has been constructed in a way that has it come apart and release the rocks when tugged hard at at a certain part. The Trogloraptor will do this while moving through this area, to catch any pursuing characters in a downpour of fist-sized rocks (1d6 damage, non on a successful Save vs. Paralyze).

[08] The part that opens into the depth follows the same rules as listed under [04]. A cocoon in a niche in the northern wall contains the remains of the parents of one of the already devoured children (both humans from the surface).

[09] This elevated section of the cave is only about 2 yards in height. Getting here is easy as long as one is not in a hurry (see the general rules for this cave).

The cocoon holds the remains of a woman from the surface. She still clutches a steel dagger (1d4 dmg) which is *cursed* by the grief of the now-dead mother that was not able to save her children. Whenever an unsaved child is within 100 yards, the wearer will hear the woman's final, exhausted weeping and moaning as she had to watch powerlessly while her children were killed. The sobbing will soften the closer the wearer comes to the child. Against a Trogloraptor, the dagger counts as a +2 magical weapon. When the wearer ever kills a child, he or she will hear the constant maddening screams and wailing of the grieving mother as long as the cursed dagger is kept (the character counts as hard of hearing and will always be surprised).

[10] This vast cave section is more than 12 yard across and 8 yards between webbing. The domed ceiling is 10 yards high (and likely out of the characters' sight). An overhang to the west may be scaled (hard/3). The entrance to a small tunnel (1 yard in diameter) is hidden beneath thick webbing in the northwest. Attentive characters may hear the soft sobbing of a scared child from there. A cocoon at the eastern wall holds the remains of three Gnommen. Another cocoon that is hidden high on the overhang contains the remains of four Gnommen children.



[11] The small, slightly winding tunnel is only 1 yard in diameter, both of its ends are blocked by webbing. Inside, a Knotmen child, underfed but awake and alive, sobs helplessly. The Troglodyte herded it there and blocked the tunnel with webs. It is a living lure for its parents. The monster does not care that it cannot reach it anymore. Its larder is well stocked, it just needs it as a bait. Something else rests in the tunnel as well: **the Rapture** (Vote p.107). It has been a day since it last attacked the child in the tunnel, and it will attack anyone that removes the child from its terrifying prison.

[12] The ceiling is about 3 yard in height in here, and turns into a crawlspace in the southeastern end of it. The cocoon in the northern end has been opened up and is empty.

[13] The cocoon contains a **still living Olm** (Vote p.90) that had been outcast for violating a taboo (it ate one of "the Waiting"). The monster caught it by chance as it intruded into its lair. The Olm is on the edge of waking up. If the characters free it from its cocoon, it will be back to its senses within 1d6+4 rounds (counts as stunned before). It is an unarmed HD:4 Olm with 8 hit points, and willing to help the characters in their fight against the monster. But it is after its cocoons in the first place, and will object at freeing any further victims. Whenever another victim is freed, a Moral test decides if the Olm upholds the alliance or just leaves, as "all of you are just wasting good food".

[14] This side-arm of the main tunnel is 2 yard in diameter and opens up into a wider set of caves. The complete ground has been covered with sticky webbing. The ceiling is 3 yards above the ground.

[15] Thick webbing blocks the now widening path (6 yards). Unlike all of the other blockages, this is a patch of about four yard depth that has been webbed completely. All of this hides and distracts from a trap: there is a LARGE crack in the floor that a character may fall into. It is 15 feet deep, but narrows towards the end. Spreading the limbs against the walls may catch the fall, but will ruin hands and joints (1 point penalty on AC, melee attacks and matching Saving).

[16] The large cave is 12 yards at its widest, but separated by a slope in a lower part (3 yards from ground to ceiling) and a larger part (5 yards from ground to ceiling, the latter stays at the same level). A cocoon in the upper half contains the remains of two fair haired children from the world above (brother and sister), the two in the lower half contain a dead dwarf each (a man and a woman, both in a miner's garb).

[17] The height of the ceiling increased to that of a large dome (9 yards) that is shrouded in darkness. About a dozen stalagmites fill the lower part of the large cave (12 yards at its widest). A very steep slope leads to an elevation 4 yards higher than the rest of the cave.

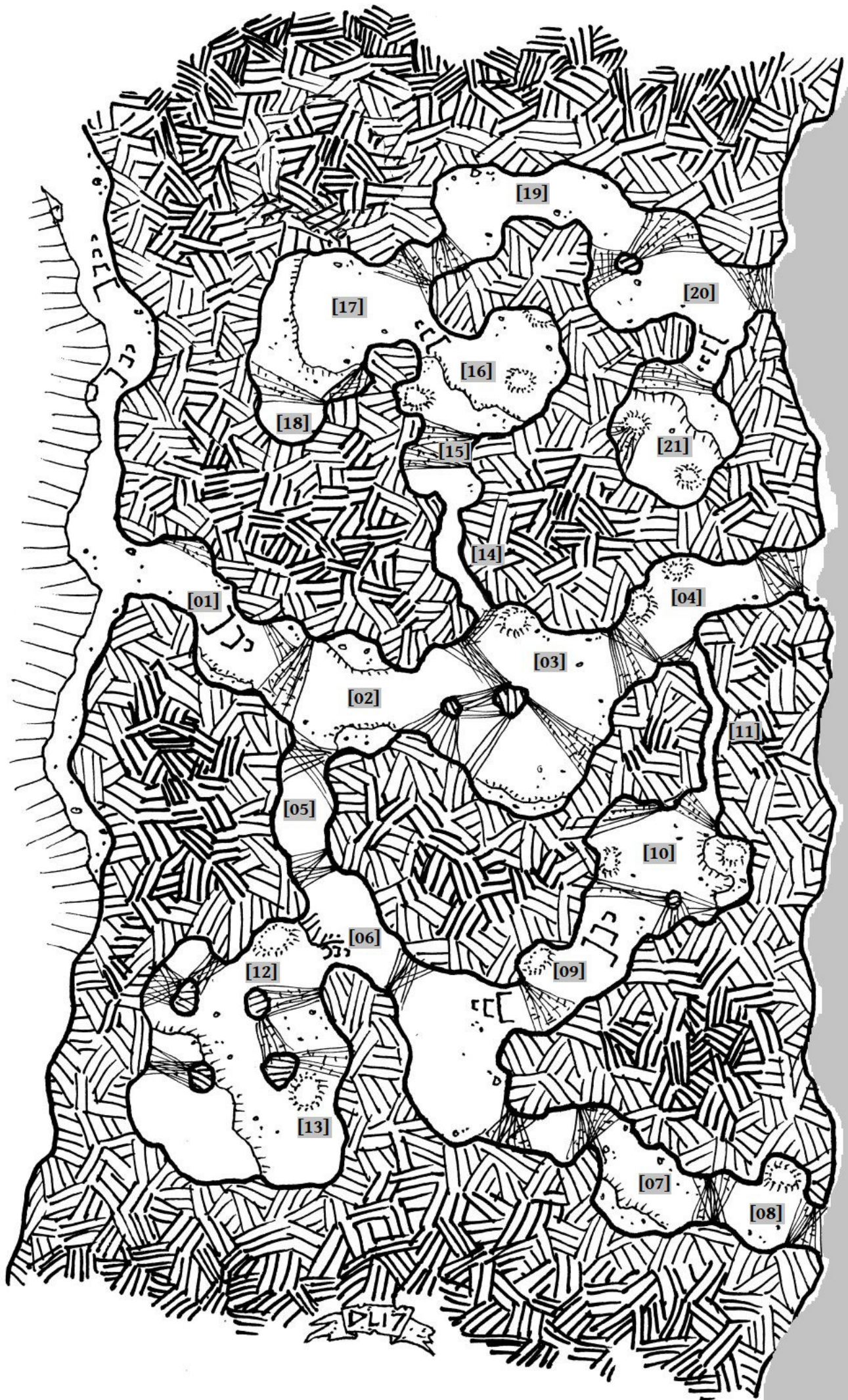
[18] On the elevation, a recess at the southern end has been blocked completely with webbing. Behind this webbing, three comatose children have been cocooned against the wall. One of them is a dwarf child, one is that of a human charcoal burner from above ground (and stained black with soot) and the last one is the 4 year old daughter of the second one (that went after the missing child right away, and was captured by the monster). All of their parents are already dead, they are just food now.

[19] This between four and five yard wide and three yard high passage is a trap. There are several small cracks in the floor and the air is notably warmer once the webbing that blocks the section is passed. This is due to an invisible, odorless gas that vents up from the cracks and has slowly filled the passage. The only warning the characters get in regard to the gas is a slight decrease of every open flame they carry (only notable by characters that have no negative attribute bonus in Wisdom nor Intelligence). After a moment, any character that has inhaled the gas must Save vs. Poison or will suffer the effects of a *Confusion* spell for 3d4 rounds (modified by CON bonus). "Attacks the caster or caster's allies" is treated as "fights imaginary monsters, counts as stunned."

[20] The between 4 and 6 yards wide cave has a ceiling that heightens to four yards at the end. A slope in the southeastern end leads 3 yards down to an opening blocked by webbing. Behind the webbing is a wide ledge (about three yards) that borders at a deep pit (six yards deeper than the ledge).

[21] At the bottom of the pit are two cocoons. One contains the remains of a male and female charcoal burner, and the other those of three small human children.





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