

Unterherz

#2020



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second of an 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. Unterherz is a collection of those articles that were written for Veins of the Earth. This issue contains mine material of the year 2020.

Teats of Stone

Being a trader is a very dangerous profession within the Veins of the Earth. There is very little civilization, and even less ways that allow to transport any substantial amount of goods. Thereby, most goods that traders deal with are costly. Food is the most costly, right after slaves, for slaves are always food as well, and must have abilities that make it worthwhile to feed them, instead of eating them. But in certain areas, traders from far away offer a kind food that is so inexpensive that every sane dweller of the Veins will already guess that it is too good to be true. And in a way, it is... but then... you are *starving*, right?

What these traders from afar have to offer has many names, about as many as there are traders offering it. Some call it "Dvargir Milk", others call it "Milk of Gaia". Those who call it "Milk from Stone" or "Gorgon Milk" are the more honest of their trade.

The milk is always sold in vials of clay, or sometimes even in a stoneware bottle. The latter is most often sold under the name of "Dvargir Milk", for they seem to use that kind of vial more often than others. Never it is sold in skins, for the milk would spoil quickly within anything but a container made of clay, glass or stone while it stays consumable for an indefinite time in any of these three materials. It is milk, or very much like it. It is always cool, even cold, and somewhat more viscous than milk should be. It is heavy, and will not mix with water but sink down and gather at the bottom in puddle of its own. Drinking it is very filling, but has potential side effects that some honorable traders even make their customers aware of.

The milk is sold for 50% or 80% of what it is actually worth in the Veins as food. A large bottle or jar of it (one item) is equal to 250sp in Veins Food. Very large amphora or over-sized jugs hold 800sp worth of Veinsfood, but count as an over-sized item. When a character consumes this milk, no matter how much, she has to pass a *Save vs. Devices* the next time she sleeps. Every failure has her progress on the **Stages of Becoming Stone**. Failing three in a row automatically leads to the sixth stage.

If a merchant is asked about the whereabouts of this milk, a honest one will point to another marked, more than a days travel away. Anybody who asks around there may learn that the milks comes here with other caravans that are known to trade with Dvargir. Anybody that inquires long enough will learn the following:

It hails from large cave, a cave so large that no light will reach from its one end to its other before its middle is reached. Said cave has an outline a little like a footprint, with entrances near the point where the toes would start. The area at the heel is much higher than the rest of the cave, and separated from the lower part by a steep ascend that would be hard to climb, would it not be for the steps that have been crafted into its side. Up there, a huge idol protrudes from the sheer cave wall. It is a woman that the belly, the breasts, shoulders, the throat, her head and her hair. The whole idol is more than 30 feet high, also the lower edge of her full belly is five feet above the ground. Her chin is raised proudly, her full lips are closed and her eyes look stoical forward. From her hanging breasts, out of her teats, this milk pours down steadily and gathers in a depression in the ground and forms a small pond.

Dvargir claim the territory where the cave lies, and guard it. An outpost of them is not far from there. There, they store the milk. Some, they trade. Most of it, their own caravans carry far away.



Stages of Becoming Stone

First Stage: the skin grows grayish and gets a rather rough complexion. The hair becomes harder and grows gray or white as well.

Second Stage: the skin toughens and gains a horn-like appearance while turning gray. The hair loses its flexibility and becomes hard while the eyes gain a "glazed" quality. The "unarmored" AC of the character is now 13. Should the Dexterity have been above 16, it is reduced to 16 now.

Third Stage: there are no visible changes to the body, but the character begins to slow down, both mentally and physically. At the same time, she becomes stronger and more robust. The Dexterity is either reduced to 14 or by 1 point (whichever is the greater reduction). Intelligence is reduced by one point as well. Constitution is increased by +2 points, and Strength by +1 point. Furthermore the character always counts as at least lightly encumbered. Climbing is not hindered by this.

Fourth Stage: the skin becomes stone-like in appearance, and looks "flaky". The hair hardens likewise, while the eyes gain a glass-like quality. The new unarmored AC of the character is 14, and she always counts as one step more encumbered than she really is, unless this would make her "over-encumbered". Climbing is not hindered by this.

Fifth Stage: the skin now becomes hard as stone, and gabs form when the character moves. From this gabs, dust sometimes drizzles down. The eyes are just like glass now. The character's unarmored AC becomes 16, she always counts as +2 points more encumbered than she really is, unless this would make her over-encumbered. All her saving throws get a +3 bonus from now on but the Save against Paralyze, which gains a -3 penalty.

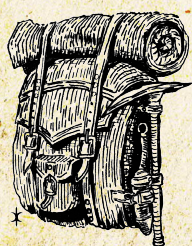
Sixth Stage: the character petrifies, as per the "Flesh to Stone" spell, but worn equipment does not petrify with the body.

Five Dvargir Encounters

#01: Wounded Dvargir

A Dvargir warrior (3rd level Dwarf) with bleeding cuts and a very nasty looking head wound (only 3 hit point left) stumbles towards the PC. It carries a one-handed warhammer (light weapon) and is clad in iron-studded leather (AC: 14). Although it is near death, it will attack anyone and anything it encounters. The Dvargir carries nothing on his person but his weapon and armor. His eyes are wide, and after a pause he will attack the nearest PC (no matter what they do), pause...attack again.. and repeat until being killed. He acts like a damaged automaton.

The encounter is a result of a skirmish between a group of Dvargir and a third party of the Referee's choice (best if inedible!). When the characters follow the trail of blood stains the Dvargir left in its wake for at least '3 turns, they will come upon the site of the skirmish. The Dvargir won, and packed up most of the valuable things before they moved back to where they came from, but there are still two Dvargir corpses with daggers and helmets (and as many corpses of their opponents as the Referee deems fitting).



#02: Mining Operation

An expedition of the Dvargir works a recently discovered minor coal deposit. In the light of a luminol lamp, six laborers (Level 0 Dwarfs) work the cave surface of the deposit with picks, two further workers remove the pieces of coal and rock with spades while another two Dvargir (1st Level Dwarfs clad in studded leather and armed with a spear, a sling and a hatchet each) stand on guard around them. A second lamp has been positioned strategically (exact position is up to the Referee). The guards order anybody to back off, and are unwilling to trade. The situation may escalate quickly if the PC decide to stay or linger in the shadows. Aside from the mentioned equipment and several pounds of coal (that still has to be broken out of the encasing rock), the ten Dvargir have between them ten crampons, ten knives, eight sacks made from rough silk, six picks, two breaking hammers, two 40'ropes (spidersilk), two grapnels, luminol (72 Lumen) as well as rations worth 3300 sp in the Veins.

#03: Scouts

Two Dvargir scouts (2nd Level Dwarfs, armed with hatchet and clad in soft leather (AC: 13)) on a reconnaissance mission. They each have a small, green glowing rock as a lamp, that is strapped to the chest in a flat metal sheet box which they may cover with an iron shutter (Light Strength 10; slightly radioactive: Save vs. Death each day or lose one point of CON). The two will do their best to keep out of sight of the characters, but within earshot. They will try to follow the party for up to a day before they retreat. Aside from the mentioned equipment, they have 300sp worth in rations between them (they stock up with whatever they can harvest from the surrounding while they go on). If the characters do not spot them and/or do not try to hunt them down, they will return to their home base after about a day of observation.

#04: Cleansing Team

A team of six heavily armed Dvargir warriors have been sent into this area to rid it of every potential danger to future Dvargir operations. (2nd level Dwarfs, Strength 15 and CON 15; Light Chainmail over heavy leather aprons, and leather bracers over quilted limb protection (AC:15); spears and short swords; two of them are armed with simple black powder pistols). If the characters are an obviously overwhelming opposition, the Dvargir will retreat to come back with reinforcements, but there will be 2

days before they return. If the characters seem meek or cowardly, the Dvargir will deem a simple show of force to be enough to drive the PC off. If the PC carry themselves like potential trouble or formidable opponents, the Dvargir will attack them.

Between them they have 4.000 sp worth in rations, six bedrolls, two luminol lamps with luminol worth a total of 500 lumen and diverse adventuring gear (that will match the region encountered in). Half of the rations are two days old, chopped up parts of the last opponent of the cleansing team.

#05: Farm Lake

A trio of Dvargir in storm silk guard a large underground lake in a vast cave. The lake itself has many moving lights below its surface (a species of cave fish that glows with Strength 20, even 2d6 hours after their death) and is thick with a brownish algae. In the middle, air bubbles up from it. The water is warm. The Dvargir, who are armed with light crossbows and the equivalent of pole arms, guard this "Farm" which provides food and light for Dvargir operations in the area. Only leftovers of a carcass and about 50 lumen worth of luminol have to be dumped into the water every other month to provide enough nutrients to keep the ecosystem of the lake stable. They -may- be willing to trade the right to catch a few fish for stronger light (at least Strength 30) or special equipment (the more sophisticated, the better.. they will give it to the next Dvargir patrol to come around). The fish, if gutted just the right way (which is known to the Dvargir that guard the lake) may be turned into into a Light of Decay (Vote p. 195). In that case, the fish yields no edible parts.



A Cave of Bones & Coins

What goes up, must come down. Everything you drop will hit some surface at some point, even if it does so FAR out of sight. People tend to throw things they do never want to see again down large holes. Every hole has a ground. The Veins of the Earth are pretty close to rock bottom. Welcome to the Cave of Bones and Coins.

[See separate map files] The cave is about 20 to 22 feet in diameter at its widest point, something close to 12 or 14 feet at its bottom, and it is something more than 30 feet from ground to ceiling. The walls decline sharply towards the bottom, and curve up to the top.

The entry and the largest exit are close to another and roughly at the same height, located at two and three on a clock (if viewed from above). Said exit is about 7 feet in height and wide enough for a man to walk through comfortable, but not wide enough to stretch out the arms completely. A small irregular ledge, not wide enough to walk on safely, leads along the cave wall at its widest point, and provides a good foot hold to get from the entry to the largest exit. Halfway down to the bottom, there is another exit (at about eight a clock), a crawl that is between 3 and 4 feet across. A wide hole gabs roughly in the center of the ceiling, about 5 feet in diameter.

The bottom of the cave is littered with decaying bones and the rotting remains of clothes. There is not one intact skeleton to be seen, the bones are all scattered.

Climbing: Going around the ledge is not easy. No matter how long a character studies the route, the difficulty will not drop below 4 in 6. Climbing down the slope between the ledge and the bottom or up the wall to the hole in the ceiling are slope-climbs, hard or very hard climbs respectively, according to the rules found on p. 212 ff. found in Vote.

Characters that *Search* the bottom will find mummified or rotten, non-skeletal human body parts or pieces. Nothing of this counts as food (but for the few worms, centipedes and mold found down there). With a successful test, the characters will discover run-up and strangely bend silver coins among the detritus. A total of 1d4 x12 sp may be gathered here, 3d6 with every successful *Search* test.

This place happens to be the bottom of a dried-out well, at the edge of a small community in the world above. There, well is known as the witch well. As it

went dry, the by-then village first hunted down the witch responsible for this blight before they dug up a new well. They threw her down the well, along with two pieces of silver "for the ferryman" (in accordance to an old, heathen practice), so that her soul could not return to trouble them. To this day, the bodies of murders, accused witches, feared-to-be-vampires, plague victims etc. are thrown down the well, together with two pieces of silver, so that they may not rise from their graves to plague them again. Would the characters manage to climb up to the whole in the ceiling and then master the feat of climbing up about 1,000 feet (which is the distance of the unnatural link of this place in the Veins to the world above), they would climb out at the witch-well, at the fringe of community. If they would be spotted doing so, a panicked mob would soon try to hunt them down, shove them back from where they came from, and seal the well with a millstone.

Possible Encounters:

#1: The restless ghost of a witch that is willing to teach them a spell if they pick up -her- bones, grind them to flakes and throw them into the next underground river, so that her spirit has a chance to be carried out of here at some day before Gehenna. The ghost may also threaten to *curse* the characters if they do not comply.

#2: A lingering smell of blood leads to a corpse that is only a day old and thereby rather edible if prepared with fire. It is not complete, as it did burst open and came apart on impact. Still, edible limbs and chunks may be found in the pit.

#3: A **Fossil Vampire (Vote p.53)** may be hiding under all the other bones, waiting patiently for years for the next corpse to be dropped.

#4: A lone **Cambriman (Vote p.34)** sits in the pit and fumbles around with the bones. It forgot how to climb out, but will remember how to do so when it sees the characters climb up or down. It will then follow the group (roll for a random reaction).

#5: One of the desiccated corpses is rather intact... and turns out to be a **Panic Attack Jack (Vote p.96)**.

#6: The remains at the bottom are possessed by the souls of the dead. They will only animate when a character that came down to them tries to get out of the pit again. They will not attack (and become dormant again) when the character stops any attempt to leave the pit. Taking ALL the silver coins out of the pit will have the ghastly remains animate as well... but they will not care for the characters (unless they attack them), but crawl up the walls, all the way up to the hole in the ceiling, all the way up to the community above...

Vendors at a Knotsmen Market

As my game current LotFP group were heading to a trading post of the Knotsmen, I had to prepare some other vendors but the one they were to visit. Here is what I came up with, so that you too may have something to provide to your players if they ever come across a place like this.

#01: A **vendor of clothes made of spider silk**. His family is one of the few that was able to purchase iron scissors and needles, which helps greatly in producing quality robes and other garments. Those that come to buy from him but do not at least wear macemaker silk, he will treat with a level of cold, barely veiled arrogance. He buys his fabrics from...

#02: A **local merchant of spider silk** and other fabrics. His family are among the few who own actual looms (made of bone). He is very talkative, and either busy appraising his wares or complimenting his clients.

#03: A **Funginid Slave Trader** who is a quiet, professional slave trainer and seller. His fingers are so twisted by knots that one of his slaves has to act as his hand. The slaves he offers are not (just) those that have been freshly brought in from who-knows-where, but those that were already trained and "raised" to have a certain personality. If something else than "just a worker" is needed, he may have it.



#04: A young dealer in edible dried fungus, actually an apprentice of the owner of the fungal "farm" the goods are produced at. His food is a bit less expensive (about 10 - 15%) than the usual 1-lumen-per-10-calories ratio (see VotE core rules), but will go off after 1d3+1 days. In addition, he will be unable to offer more than 2d6 x 1000 calories worth of food on a given day. There is only so much food available, and the "open market" is only served after those who are "citizens" had their share.

#05: An immaculate clean provider of ropes, dressed in macemaker silk (who is known, among the his peers, as somebody who wear most of his belongings in form of just this robe). His goods are made from spidersilk (sometimes with very long hair added in). He sells rope for 1 lumen per feet in a length up to 20 feet, and twice that much for rope that is longer.

#06: A young and ragged-looking maker of tools. All his goods are made from stone or bone. Most of them are of cavemen-level ("cromagnon", to be precise), but without a local forge to produce iron tools, this is the best what is available. He is timid, thin and desperate to earn just a bit more money so that he may at some point buy some food again.

#07: A leather-worker that provides sturdy clothes, foot wrapping and mittens as well as light armor (AC: 13). The majority of his products are (of course) made of the skins of his own kinsmen and/or fellow citizens. He has a dull gaze and always acts like he would just have woke up or would have been awake for at least 20 hours by now.

#08: A weapon smith whose ears are folded downward at the upper half from the heavy knots that formed in them. Aside from the clubs, spears and monstrous tooth-daggers, he sells axes, maces and swords of iron as well. All these are "cold-forged" (which means: the iron was hammered and grounded into shape without actual heating). They are inferior to steel weapons and will start to rust if not kept dry. Still, these might be among the best available weapons in more than a days travel.

#09: A sage and apothecary that sells simple cures, wound treatments and poisons. His wares are made from cave mushroom, Funginid organs and spores, and different minerals. To those who are obviously rich, he may even be able to offer one(!) stinger of an Atomic Bee (see VotE p.29). As he is among the few that knows how to treat an actual illness, those who are in charge make sure to keep him fed and alive.

#10: A butcher that offers up to 4d6 x 1.000 calories in iron rations in the form of cured meat and sausages (1 lumen per 10 calories). All of his goods are VERY salty. His regular "fresh meat" comes from the work force of the community: those that are to old, ill or crippled to be productive. If approached by somebody who is starving but unable to afford food, the butcher will make an offer: food for his lower arm. He is not a sadist, and actually skilled enough at amputations to make it a quick thing with as little pain as possible. He can even treat and cauterize the wound in a way that will make sure that the poor wretch runs no risk to lose his life due to shock or infection.

#11: Young Knotman hawker with a number of bone made instruments. He has less than a dozen, most are flutes made of bone, but he has one instrument like a banjo, made of bone and sinew and the shell of a large albino turtle. He is not making them for a living, but "on the side". For somebody as cadaverous as he is, he is astoundingly warm, kind and friendly. Perhaps the hunger has numbed him already.

#12: An older Knotmen, with the head and arms twisted in painful ways and a left leg barely fit for walking anymore. He **sells booze** in clay jugs. It is produced from by a Funginid Slave (see number 19 on p.62 VotE). The character will find out that it is actually cheaper to get drunk than to get fed.

#13: An incredible dull, dumb but (for his age) sparsely-knotted Gordianite that sells wide, stumpy candles made from tallow. Each of his candles burns for 1d4+8 turns. He sells them for 40 lumen a piece, for that is what they are worth as food. That you may light them in pinch is just an option.

#15: A Gordianite hawker clad in Stormsilk, accompanied by Funginid Slaves that carries his wares in a large bundles, bound to his back: torches made from human femur (and similar bones), tar and fur (or whatever else was handy to hold the tar). He sells them for a lumen a piece, but each of them has a 2-in-6 chance to only last 5 or even just 4 turns (d6; a 5 or 4 indicates the decreased duration. All other results mean the torch will last the regular 6 turns). He sells his wares in bundles of 10 (as most people will have nothing to barter that is worth less than 10 lumen).

#16: A very hungry shroom gardener that sells his current batch of Fungal Lamps (see p.195 VotE). Any given shroom will continue to shine for 5d6 turns after the moment of purchase, but he will want nothing less than 3 lumen a piece.

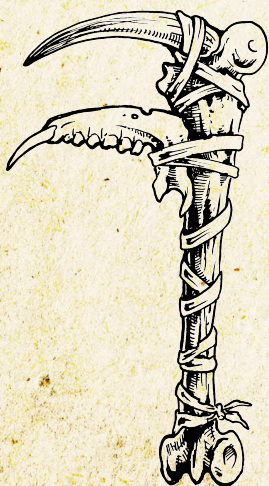
#17: A stuck-up Knotsmen in Macemakersilk that sits in front of a a rock that glows by itself. It is a Magic-Users Apprentice that has two Continual Lights left to cast, and will do so for 30 Lumen per spell. "You will find no light more convenient than the one my magic is able to create, and I will cast it onto anything you own, or onto yourself if you wish so."

#17: A leather-clad Gordianite that sells thick coats of shaggy, dirty-white fur that will provide a +3 bonus to CON against Hypothermia as long as dry (!) and +1 bonus to AC against attacks that deal no more than 1d6. 20 lumen a piece.

#18: Salt merchant that offers his wares (grounded rock salt) in small leather pouches. For 3 lumen, a character may buy enough salt to preserve up to 600 lumen worth of flesh (see VotE p.320).

#19: Far traveling merchant that offers helmets and chain mail, akin to those that the Weeping Knights wear. As good as they may be by Vein's standards, they are inferior to steel weapons from above (-1 in AC against such mediums weapons, -2 in AC against Great Weapons).

#20: An old and twisted storyteller that whispers to those that want to hear them descriptions and allegories of the moon and the starlit sky. Listening to those will make the listener feel dazed, and any conscious thought will seep away. If the storyteller's whispers are still listened to, the character doing so loses 2d6 x100 xp (or all that are there), but whenever the character sleeps, his or her dreams of the starlit sky will manifest about him or her (Strength 20 light source). Upon awaking, the character suffer 1d6-2 damage to INT and WIS (regained at a rate of one point per hour).



12 Quest of a Deep Janeen

Everybody familiar with the Veins of the Earth knows that the Deep Janeen are... peculiar. In every aspect, and to the extreme. Here are 12 requests (or "quests") that adventurers may get from a Deep Janeen, after they had a chance to introduce themselves in a proper way (or before they are even allowed to).

#01: Take this flame, that you would call a letter, to what you would call my cousin, and return with the answer. You have five days to do so, and WOE to you if my letter fades while it is in your care!

#02: I thirst for art! Ancient art, unique, of a master who no longer lives. Find a Civilopede and bring me something exceptional.

#03: Here! Take this dagger! Thrust it into the heart of the Aelf-Adal who wrote THIS poem! I will not stand his continued existence!

#04: I have -important- business to take care off. Bring me an Ambassodile, for I need a suiting representative!

#05: I plan to invite the Pyroclasmic Ghouls to a banquet they will not forget in years. My cook will tell you what I need. Go and bring it from the lair of one of those Trogloraptors.

#06: My maze is to silent! Bring me a Sonic Pig, alive and well! It shall bring a certain unique, bizarre quality to it.

#07: The turmoil and dissonant gibberish of this Sonic Pig in my maze is tasteless, and intolerable pedestrian! Venture forth and get rid of it, you will find it in the deepest depth, or so the slaves told me.

#08: Bring me Mondmilch for my Bowl of Wonderment.

#09: My court lags a fitting jester. Bring a Substratal willing and FITTING to take up this role.

#10: I am bored. I want to play a game like chess, but one that I do not know. Bring one, and a worthy set of playing pieces.

#11: The lights I know... begin to bore. I need a new illumination, so that it might grant me new visions. Bring me a kind of light I have not been basked in yet.

#12: A fresh breeze is what I crave. Capture one and release it here. ..how? Bah! If you are unfit to fulfill my wishes without me guiding your every step, what good are you "adventurers" then...? Have some pride and some-self esteem. And now... be gone and on your way!

Sleepstalkers

Sleepstalkers are a kind of centipede. They are not (completely) blind, but rely on thermal vision for sight and otherwise track prey by scent. They do not only hunt smaller insects and mammals (up to the size of a rat), but are also hemovores: they will sneak up on larger creatures (like humans) while those sleep and bite to suck some of their blood. Their venom is paralyzing and sedative, so there is little chance for a sleeping victim to notice it or wake up. The wound is painful and noticeable once the venom wears off, but not dangerous in itself. Their bite, however, does spread diseases.

A typical, adult Sleepstalker is a little longer than a foot, but never larger than a foot and a half. They are discoloured, and their chitin is nearly translucent. They move with the equivalent of Stealth:4 and will only attack sleeping characters. Characters that are standing guard while the others sleep have two chances to spot a Sleepstalker: the first time when it singles out a victim (the Referee makes a Stealth roll for the centipede), and another chance during the turn that it is drinking blood (a Surprise check by the guard).

If the first Stealth roll is failed, the guard will notice the Sleepstalker in time and may either kill it or drive it off. Also big for a centipede, they flee quickly when confronted by anything much larger than themselves.

If it is noticed while drinking blood, the critter will be interrupted while feeding. The victim must Save vs. Poison to see if it caught a disease from the Sleepstalker. If the Sleepstalker manages to feed for a turn, it then retreats back into the darkness. The victim will lose one point of Strength due to blood loss (regular attribute damage) and has to Save vs. Poison to avoid a disease.

The disease: the bite often causes a fever (3-in-6 chance) that will start two days after. It causes the loss of one point of Strength and Constitution per day (unless a Save vs. Poison is passed), and is overcome after three successful saving throws (in total). Attribute healing of any kind(!) will only set in after the fever has been overcome.

HD:0

1 hit point

AC: 18

They are named Sleepstalkers in the Veins of the Earth for a habit displayed only by the female specimen: once they have fed, they will follow their prey and feed up to two further times (4 out of 6 chance each time). This is due to the fact that the females will, upon getting enough blood, begin to lay eggs. The species mates long before giving birth, as the seed of the males is "stored" inside of the bodies of the female for the moment that they actually have access to enough food to reproduce. The female centipede will lay a cluster of eggs in a crack or other place that is hard to access, and continue to follow its food source.



Dark Deception Kills the Light is an excerpt from the lyrics of *The Thing That Should Not Be*, a song by Metallica. It is one of this... phrases... that keeps popping up in my mind. At some point, it had to happen that I work it into something in an RPG. That "something" turned out to be a 3rd Level Magic-User spell.

Dark Deception Kills the Light

Magic-User Level 3

Duration: 3 rounds + 1 round/level

Range: 10'/level

The Magic-User works a nefarious illusion on a number of enemies: that the light source they carry has been darkened completely. The spell will affect a number of targets in range up to the level of the caster. Said targets will be "blind" to the light of a number of light sources up to the level of the caster. The light sources are not really darkened or extinguished: they are still there, but the target's mind suffers the illusion that the light is not there. Targets that pass a Save vs. Magic are immune to the effect.

Both the light sources and the targets have to be in caster's range. When a target or a light source leaves the caster's range, the spell is shaken off completely.

Spell-Sets for Aelf-Adal

In my current LotFP game, I use the Aelf-Adal from Veins of the Earth and their (in my game) Re-awakened Nightmare War against the Dreamers as the cause for much (but not all) of the heinous supernatural occurrences that now begin to emerge in England and the rest of the world. Naturally, this will lead to future encounters with Aelf-Adal, likely with an ever-increasing frequency. As I decided to portray minor NPC of them as Elves with a level between the 1st and the 3rd, I had to think about the spells they might use. To avoid fitting them with "what is most useful in just THIS situation RIGHT NOW", I have put down 10 Low-Level Spell-Sets for Aelf-Adal.

Depending on their level, my minor Aelf-Adal NPC will have access to one or two 1st Level Magic-User spells, and the more powerful will have access to a 2nd Level spell as well. I used a mix of the standard spells from the Player Core Book with the Speleo Spells of the Veins. It was important to me not to simply roll each single spell randomly, but to group them according to some "function" of the Aelf-Adal in question. The first spell in each of the following entries is the 2nd Level spell, and all Speleo spells are marked with an asterix*,but I doubt that most of you folks will have trouble to identify the latter by name alone. Some spells provide a kind of minion or a certain item instead of an immediate effect. Thereby, the knowledge of the spell signals the presence of according minion/item.

#01: The Intruder

Change Self; Charm; Comprehend Languages

The full spell set will allow a 3rd level Aelf-Adal to mingle with a group of randomly met people, befriend them and gain some information. All without revealing the own nature. Those of lower level will still be able to forge "unwilling alliances" with strangers via *Charm*.

#02: The Combatant

Phantasmal Force; Magic Missile; Faerie Fire

I love to equip Aelf-Adal with *Phantasmal Force*. With all the nightmarish creatures -they- have seen, it allows for a plethora of bizzar entities, and the trick suits their nature just sooo fine. The fact that the phantasmal will only exist for a mere moment is... acceptable. *Magic Missile* is a powerful weapon, and *Faerie Fire* should be very useful in the Veins.

#03: The Traveler in the Veins

Levitate; Calcite Gab; Cryobrite Bridge**

I thought about Spider Climb, but no Veins-Dweller should be traveling without means to climb walls anyway. *Levitation* is more graceful, and Nightmare Elves should be just that. Moving through calcite and creating bridges at whim suits my (regal) picture of the Aelf-Adal, too. They should travel in style.

#04: Nightbreed

*Continual Darkness; Darkness; Heat Ghost**

Anybody will notice that this "set" is born of my personal need to use the *Darkness* spells with a breed like the Aelf-Adal. *Darkness*, the sudden unexpected loss of sight, combined with the presence of a hostile entity, is a recipe for terror. Being able to fool those that rely on thermal vision alone with a *Heat Ghost* was just the icing on the cake.

#05: The Disguised Hand

*Invisibility; Unseen Servant, Speleogrowth**

I like the combination of *Invisibility* and the *Unseen Servant*. It allows to come and go unseen while the use of the servant instead of the own hands prevents from drawing attention to the real position of the invisible. Being able to block a path with *Speleogrowth* is a nice trick as well, so not related to the other two spells per se (and thereby perhaps "out of theme").

#06: The Mediator

Un-Suspectable Servant; Charm (x2);*

Would an Aelf-Adal truly negotiate anything with anybody not of the own kind? I think not. Thereby, the list uses *Charm* once more, and on the double. It simply -is- a far to powerful spell to be ignored. The malevolent deeds possible with the *Un-Suspectable Servant* "while already being here" just adds to the poisonous hateful interaction I have in mind when I think about the Nightmare Elves and anybody else. Plus, the deeds of the *Un-Suspectable Servant* will not trigger the possible break of *Charm* that the very same actions may very well do when done by the Aelf-Adal in person.

#07: The Suppressor

Ray of Enfeeblement; Reduce; Shield

The Suppressor is not so much about combat or destructing, but more about being a show of superiority. An Aelf-Adal with this "set" will not come looking for trouble, but when trouble arises he/she/it will deal with it with an air of supremacy. It might also be the spell set for a "Minder" whose task is to act as a liaison to an "ally". Or of an assistant to a slave herder.

#08: The Slaver

Web; Brain Slave; Charm*

This set is meant for those NPC that are either actively hunting (new or escaped) slaves or have to keep a bunch of them in line. Having a *Brain Slave* as a substitute for a loyal dog is just terrific.

#09: The Messenger

*Magic Mouth; Comprehend Languages; Wait**

Sometimes, all that has to be done is to deliver a message, and to make sure that the recipient is listening. For the later, *Wait* is a just wonderful spell.

#10: The Summoner

Phantasmal Force; Matchstick Men; Summon*

At first, I wanted to omit the *Summon* spell from this list. I am afraid I am having way to much fun using it, and thereby end up using it more often than not. But... aawww, screw it! Nightmare Elves that summon nightmarish things are just to enticing to me, and that *Matchstick Men* spell just called for a "set" like that. Personally, I consider everything that an Aelf-Adal brings forth through *Summon* to have the *Dream-Matter* quality (LotFP PCR; p.134), by default.

Phantasmal Nightmare Creatures

While the common warlock will already meet a lot of strange monsters over the course of the own adventures, the Aelf-Adal are born from and living in a literal world of nightmares. There is nothing that they could not have already met in person there. Therefore, what they call forth should be twice as dangerous, or at least beyond the pale. What follows are six phantasmal nightmare creatures, which I created with the help of *The Random Esoteric Creature Generator*

As I often do (and advise others as well), I did not went strictly by the book (such books are meant to help creativity not along, not to put creativity on a leash), but omitted a few steps and/or used some things as pre-set "because..."

In regard to Alignment, all my Nightmare Phantasms count as Chaotic by their very nature. For HD, I decided that all of them should be HD:6 creatures. After all, we talk about nightmares here! For the same reason, I defined the size of each and every creature as large (but ruled that the HD-bonus was already included into this). Yes, there are a lot of nightmares that feature groups of smaller (and perhaps weaker) beasties, but as the *Phantasmal Force* spell will only create one creature, I focused on the Biggie-Nasties.

I rolled for Basic Body, Basic Characteristic, two Features and the Combat Tactic. In case of a target category that might not be present in the group (or make no difference); I added "fall-back-option" (in hint side: that only happened once). Movement I rolled for as well, but treated Attack as "Additional Attack" ("more often than not"). No rolls Special Ability: for something that would dispel itself sooner or later, and each of them will have the Dream-Matter trait (PCR p.134), which means that everyone who touches the Phantasmal or is touched by it (e.g. a successful attack with a body part) must *Save vs Confusion*. I created a special **Nightmare Confusion Table** therefore (see the end of the article). The "Save for" is my personal rule, PCR does not state a save.

Hint side: no, I was not able to omit special abilities. I was only able to keep myself from rolling for them. The pictures that formed in my mind NEEDED a special ability each. And here you have them. In some cases I ignored other die rolls as well. This is what you should always do if your own creativity is boiling up something that does not fit to a dice roll on your table. Trust yourself. Oh! Those of Number 4 are from the generator. Credit where credit is due...

Nightmare #1: The Crow-Thing

Move:	120'(40')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	14
Attacks:	2x Claws (1d8+1); 1x Beak (1d6)
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; Eye-Strike
Save:	as Specialist
Moral:	10

It walks like a man, is tall like a man and has the chest of a man, but its head is that of a crow. Its legs are that of a crow, its arms sport all the long feathers of a crow's wing and end in the same claws as the feet do. The feathers that cover its body shimmer like a rainbow on black. It caws constantly.

The monster will attack the character with the lowest AC and will attack the same target with all of its attacks.

Eye Strike*: When the beak attack was successful with a natural 20, the victim must *Save vs. Paralyze* to avoid the beak hitting an eye. An eye that is hit is blinded, and permanently so if a *Save vs. Death* failed. Otherwise, the eye will recover after 2d6-TB turns.

Nightmare #2: The Sanguine Snakeman

Move:	120'(40')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	15
Attacks:	1x Claws (1d8); 1x Bite (1d10)
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; Blood-Spit
Save:	as Elf
Moral:	10

A snake the size of a man, thick as a woman's waist, with two dragon-like legs and arms like a man. The scales are red, the eyes are yellow, the maw of its pointy head is filled with two rows of wolf-like teeth. The whole of it is covered in blood. Every inch of it glistens red, blood drops down from its scales and

sprays away from its body when it moves quickly. Blood drops down the antlers that protrude from the back of its head (backwards, away from it, the wrong way). Also it has legs, it glides through the air as it would be water.

The monster will attack a random opponent each round.

Blood-Spit*: when it has been wounded, the monster will spit a spray of blood at the beginning of its next round, which will automatically hit a random target that is in melee with it. The victim must *Save vs. Devices* or will be filled with bloodlust, and fight on for 1d4 rounds after all opponents have been disposed off. Additional hits increase the number of rounds by one.

Nightmare #3: The Dancing Devil-Beast

Move:	120'(40')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	15
Attacks:	3x Claws (1d8+1);
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; Dervish; Snake Eyes;
Save:	as Fighter
Moral:	10

It looks like a large, shaggy bear with black fur. The head is round and hosts an ash-gray human face instead of a snout. From the eye sockets, poisonous snakes protrude that hiss while they writhe and sway about. Their fangs drip thick drops of auburn poison. The limbs end in paws with bear-like claws, but black in color and the size of daggers. It jumps and swirls like a dervish, and howls as it does. If it wishes to, it may run up a wall or along a ceiling on all fours.

This devilish thing will attack a random character at the start of the battle, and later on the character that has dealt the most damage to it in the previous turn.

Dervish*: the AC of the monster includes a +2 bonus for DEX. Furthermore, it will not suffer falling damage unless the drop could not have ended any other way but fatal for a mortal being.

Snake Eyes*: on the rounds first attack roll of the monster, the Referee will roll 2d6 together with the d20 for the attack itself. If the 2d6 show a result of 2, the victim of the attack must *Save vs. Paralyze* or will be bitten by one of the snakes the beast has for eyes. If bitten, the skin of the victim will pulsate at the beginning of the following round. At the beginning of the next round and the following, the victim must

Save vs. Poison. If failed, a snake like that of the monster will rapidly grow in the victim's flesh and burst out through the skin (causing an ugly, bleeding wound and 1 point of damage). The snake will slither away quickly, or dissolve in into bloody goo if hit and killed (AC: 17). When the monster is killed, an afflicted victim must roll one more saving throw. If passed, the terrible effect of the snake bite fades.

Cutting off the snakes from the monster is equal to cutting away its eyes, but each of them regrows at the end of the next round. The face of the creature will pulsate horribly while it does.

Nightmare 4: The Grotesque Lion

Move:	150'(50')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	14
Attacks:	1x Bite (2d6);
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; Elongated Neck, Rubbery Body
Save:	as Fighter
Moral:	10

The monster resembles a lion, but its fur coat is like that of a beaver, and wet with water. It has no paws and claws, but over-sized human hands at the end of all its limbs. With them, the aberration walks on air as if it would be solid ground. Its neck is longer than a pike but not thicker than a mans thigh, a lions head on its end. The neck twists, coils and rolls like a snake, and allows the lion's maw to strike where it pleases. When struck itself, the monster's body strangely bends inward, like one would have slapped a waterskin.

It will attack a random opponent each turn.

Elongated Neck: the monster may benefit from any bonus or special tactic/maneuver that a skilled fighter with a spear or polearm may benefit from.

Rubbery Body: Any attack that achieves only up to half of its possible damage with its damage roll "bounces off" harmless instead. This does include hits to the neck.

Nightmare 5: Mantis of Orleans

Nightmare 5

Move:	120'(40')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	18
Attacks:	Grab (2d8);
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; Mantis Grab
Save:	as Fighter
Moral:	10

A monstrous praying mantis, eight feet tall. The body of is covered in additional iron scales, not unlike those of certain types of man-made armor. They dangle and shingle against another when it moves. On its head grows brown hair, like that of a man, and it wears it in a neatly trimmed page cut. It moves cautious, careful and well-planned. A well trained-warrior, whose only display of frenzy are the frantic movements of the mandibles. Its powerful catching limbs with their thorny spikes on the inside may crush a man immediately. If need should arise, it may unfold the wings under the protective shell of its rear body to fly, but will only do so to follow an enemy or to get into a beneficial position. It will never fly away from melee.

Among the opponents facing it, the monster will always choose to attack the one with the most hit points left.

Mantis Grab: a successful attack of the monster automatically initiates an *immobilizing hold, as stated under *Wrestling* (p.63 of the PCR). The monster gets a +6 bonus on maintaining its grasp on its prey. Furthermore, it will walk backwards (with no reduction or penalty to movement) while dragging its victim a long. On the beginning of each following round, its mandibles will begin to deal 1d6 damage to the victim it holds. The Referee should keep in mind that the monster, if followed, will release a victim to attack an opponent with more remaining hit points at some point.

A Careful Beast: this nightmare monster will make use of "Hold Action" if nothing is in reach already (and will only come forth if nobody engages it) and use the *Defensive Fighting* option. Attacks with ranged weapons, it will simply ignore as long as it is not actually damaged by one or a character takes time to aim at it. The Referee may portray it as patiently waiting with its grabbing limbs unfolded, the tips of them high above the heads of the characters, ready to snap at them.

Nightmare 6: An Abomination

Move:	90'(30')
Hit Dice:	6
AC:	17
Attacks:	1x Claws (1d8+1)
Special:	Nightmare Confusion; the Wailing
Save:	as Fighter
Moral:	10

The abomination has the form of a giant centipede which head has been replaced by fusing it to the rear of a likewise tremendous falcon. The falcon-part flaps its wings constantly and shrieks, its talons cut through the air while the centipede body keeps it upright. A multitude of insect legs move its body, but only drag the grotesque thing over the ground. It has none of the speed of a true centipede. The whole form is covered in fist sized rocks that protrude out of its whole body, like metal studs on leather armor. Eleven human faces are dispersed along it, in a line that starts with the side of the falcon's neck and ends after three more faces in a cluster on the erect centipede underside of the horror. The face cluster is broken up by rocks that protrude between and inside them. They silently roll their eyes, grimace and drool.

The abomination will attack humans before it attacks demi-humans, and will furthermore choose the opponent most heavily armored.

The Wailing: the eleven faces will not stay silent. As soon as the thing lost at least half of its hit points, they will start to wail horribly. Everyone able to hear them must at *Save vs. Magic* or is going to be overwhelmed by anguish. Characters overwhelmed by anguish will drop their weapon/s and try to disengage. They may try to regain it (or draw another one) to continue fighting at the beginning of their following round, but will do so with a (-1) penalty. Spellcasters must succeed on a *Save vs. Devices* (repeatable at the beginning of every round) to pull themselves together, otherwise they will not be able to concentrate enough to cast a spell. Killing the thing (unlike dispelling or dis-believing it as a Phantasmal) will summon *The Collective Unconscious Desire for Suicide* (see PCR p. 140; "Abstract Forms").

Nightmare Confusion Table (d6):

1-2: The character breaks into a sweat, but may act normally. Add +2 to the next roll on this table for this character.

3-4: The character begins to panic and therefore suffers a (-2) penalty to all attacks. At the beginning of the own round, the character may *Save vs. Magic* to remove the effect.

5: The character just stammers or sobs uncontrollably, and thereby cannot take any active action on the next round.

6: Confusion and paranoia temporarily seize the characters mind. She will attack the nearest ally on the next round (if there are any).

7+: Screaming, the character turns round and RUNS. She will disengage at the beginning of the next round and run away from the Nightmare Phantasmal for a number of further rounds equal to (1d6 minus Wisdom Bonus; minimum: 1)



Summoned Substratals

One of the “cultures” in the Veins of the Earth are the Substratals. Although they are not even native to the Veins, or have anything akin to a constant enclave there. In the introduction of this peculiar earth spirits, they are compared to what Magic-Users sometimes summon, and that what a Magic-User calls when she summons an earth spirit (or even an Substratal) above ground is so much different from what is in reach when one is inside the Veins.

Of course, I could not help myself but think about having Substratals appear whenever a *Summon* spell would produce an unforeseen result in the Veins (by a failure in Step Two of the summoning ritual). The following article provides guidelines on how to create such a Substratal with the help of a the tables provided in *Veins of the Earth* and a modified d100 tables for powers.

The basic assumption is that, as already stated, the *Save vs. Magic* in Step Two of the *Summon* spell was failed.

Determine the HD of the Substratal with 2d6. This is most likely to produce one with a HD of 6-8, and that fits the description on p.177 in *Vote* in regard to WHAT one might hook up while reaching out from the Veins quite nicely.

#**Use the tables on *Vote* p.179** instead of those from the *Summon* spell to determine the appearance of the Substratal. Consult the “**You Have Actually Summoned...**” table when the Magic-User is not able to exert dominance over the Substratal.

#**Roll for Powers** as usual (or as you like), but on the following table. Each entry with an * in front of it is equal to the original found in *PCR* p.136. Each entry written in *italic* refer to spells, either from the Player Core Book of *LotFP* or from the *Speleo* Spells found in *Vote*.

As basic stats, use the following:

HD: see above

AC: 14 (Substratals should be a bit tougher, right?)

Attack: 1; 1d6 damage

Move: 90 (Ground), 1 Special Movement Ability

ML: 10

Special Movement Ability(d6):

1: Move Stone (as *Move Earth*, but works with solid stone as well. May be worked as clay). Free & Unlimited

2: Move Through Stone (like through underbrush), but without generating a pass

3: As per Dig, but through anything but metal and obsidian (treated as soil)

4: Teleportation (from one place on a stone surface to another, self only)

5: Passwall (only through stone, at will, no daily limited)

6: Dimension Door (but only within the Veins)

Substratal Powers (d100):

01# AC: +2.

02# AC: +3.

03# AC: +4.

04# AC: +5.

05# AC: +6.

06# AC as chain mail & half damage from normal weapons.

07# AC as chain mail & immune to fire.

08# AC as chain mail & immune to minor and small weapons.

09# AC as chain mail & immune to all elemental attacks.

10# Aura of Ashes (character in melee range will begin to choke after (Constitution/2) rounds).

11# *Aura of Silence (Silence 15' Radius, centered on the Substratal, always on).

12# Avalanche (charge attack; doubles damage of a charge, Avalanche charge cannot be “received”, target is stunned for one round after Avalanche).

13# Bleeds Oil (sight of battle may be set on fire; immune to fire).

- 14# Blinding Bright Shine (-3 to all attacks against it).
- 15# *Bonus Attack (if initial attack hits, opportunity for another attack)
- 16# *Bonus Damage on Great Hit (does one greater die damage if it hits by 5 or more, or rolls a natural 20).
- 17# Burning Aura: characters in Melee range suffer 1 point of fire damage at the end of their round.
- 18# Consumer of Light (any light source within melee range loses 1 point of Strength at the end of the Substratals round).
- 19# Corroding Skin (after a successful melee attack against the Substratal, a metal weapon will corrode to uselessness within 2d6 rounds).
- 20# Corroding Touch (metal armor loses 1 point of AC after each successful attack of the Substratal).
- 21# Covered in Chrystal Blooms (the first five successful attacks have their damage reduced by 2 while shattering the blooms).
- 22# Covered in Obsidian Shards (a character that rolls a natural 1 on a melee attack against the Substratal suffers a HD+0 attack that deals 1d3 damage).
- 23# Crushing Grapple (+5 to rolls involving grappling; deals 1d6 at the end of a round to those in control of its grapple).
- 24# Darkness (at will, cannot be cast against a single character).
- 25# Deafening Rumble (always on, nothing else is audible within 30').
- 26# Diamond Studded (AC +1).
- 27# Disassembled Form (may disjoint all its parts and become thereby invulnerable till the end of the next round, but may only move (not attack) in this form).
- 28# Dispel Magic (at will, one target at a time).
- 29# Earthquake (upon its own destruction).
- 30# Encase in Rocks (self only; counts as AC:20; cannot take actions, regenerates 1d3 on all rounds this form is maintained but the first and the last round).
- 31# Explosive (as per *Explosive Runes*, upon destruction).
- 32# Firedamp Breath (breath attack; quenches open flames up to a torch immediately. Characters attacked must Save vs. Poison or will be stunned for one round).
- 33# Flaming Breath (breath attack, every third round, target receives 1d8 damage if Save is failed).
- 34# Flaming Limbs (+1d6 damage, may ignite fires).
- 35# Flying Rocks (ranged attacks, (HD)d4 damage)
- 36# Followed by Fathomless Terror (each character encountering the Substratal must Save vs. Devices or will be haunted by a Raputure (VotE. P107).
- 37# Freezing Aura (everyone within melee range must check for the effects of Hypothermia every other round).
- 38# Freezing Breath (breath attack; 1d4 Constitution damage if save is failed).
- 39# Geyser Breath (Breath Attack; deals 1d8 damage if Save is failed).
- 40# Gravity Pull (at the end of the own round, each character within 20' of the substratal is pulled 1 feet towards it).
- 41# Hammering Limbs (Damage as Great Weapon).
- 42# Hardened Body (damaging attacks against the Substratal have their damage reduced by to the next lower die type).
- 43# Heat Metal (one item at a time, at will, instead of an attack).
- 44# Immense Heat: every character that stays within melee range for more than 1d4+TB rounds will become exhausted (-1 penalty till a turn of rest has been taken). Melee attacks of the Substratal deal +1 damage to due its searing heat.
- 45# *Immune against Magic.
- 46# Immune against missile weapons.
- 47# Immune against piercing / cutting weapons.
- 48# Increase Gravity (at will, one target at a time, doubles encumbrance points for 2d6 rounds).

49# Iron Body (AC:19).

50# *Levitate* (self only, at will).

51# Magma Body (each successful attack against the Substratal deals another 1d6 damage during the next round. Each mundane melee weapon that deals damage is destroyed).

52# Magnetic Binding (after a successful attack with a metal weapon, said weapon will remain stuck to the Substratal unless the attacker is successful with a *Force Doors* test).

53# Magnetic Repelling (-2 to hit with most metal weapons).

54# Massive (increase hit points by 50%).

55# Mighty SMASH (double damage on a hit on a natural 20 or hitting by 10 or more).

56# Mithrilsilverblood (+4 bonus on all Saves vs. Magic).

57# Multiple Attacks* (additional 1d3 attacks).

58# Multiple Heads/Limbs (+1 Attack for each 3 HD, loses one extra attack for each 6 hit point lost).

59# Open chasm (ranged attack; target must Save vs. *Paralyze* or will drop into a 10' chasm that opens up beneath its feet).

60# Petrifying Grasp (as *Flesh to Stone* after taking control of a target in a grapple; at will; takes two rounds instead of one, two saving throws allowed).

61# *Phasing (can move through solid objects).

62# Poisonous Fumes (after each successful hit, those in melee with the creature must pass a Save vs. *Poison* or will suffer 1 point of damage from poisonous gas. Effect continues during the next round).

63# Radioactive Aura (characters in melee range lose 1 point of Constitution after each other round of combat).

64# Raging (+1 attack bonus increase after every second damaging hit it took)

65# Reborn from Rubble (after being destroyed, it will rise again as a smaller version once; half original HD)

66# *Regenerate (regains 1 hp per Round).

67# Resistant (Saves as Dwarf).

68# *Reverse Gravity (at will, one target at a time).

69# Sand Breath (breath attack; target will be blinded for 1d3 rounds if the save is failed).

70# Shard Explosion: 1d3 damage to the Substratal, attack with half HD against all within 10 feet, deals 1d6+2 damage.

71# Shard Minion (after the Substratal lost half of its hit points, the smashed-off pieces of it will form into a HD:1 Substratal with 1d6 damage, AC equal to the original Substratal and hit points equal to ¼ of the original Substratal).

72# Shattering Strike (after each unsuccessful hit due to armor/shield; the AC of the target has a 1-in-8 chance of losing one point due to damage; attacks deal +2 damage per die).

73# *Shield* (at will, instead of an attack).

74# Shockwave (attack; everyone in melee range must pass an Open Doors test, or will be thrown back 1d4 yards and end up prone).

75# Shrouded in Smoke (-4 on all ranged attacks against it).

76# Slanting Surfaces (+2 AC against missile weapons).

77# *Slow** (once every ten rounds).

78# Smashing Tail of Stone (free rear attack, 1d8 damage).

79# *Speleogrowth* (as the *Speleo-Spell*).

80# Spellcasting (as Magic-User of HD levels - random spells).

81# *Spider Climb* (always on).

82# Spits Lava (Breath attack; 2d6 damage if save is failed. Wounds do not heal naturally).

83# Splinter Strike (on a result of 1 or 2 on the damage roll, a splinter of the Substratal got embedded in the wound. At the end of the wounded character's next round, the splinter will grow and thereby deal another point of damage per round till removed).

84# Stoking (increases the own HD after a number of combat rounds equal to the own HD, up to two times. Does not increase hit points).

85# Stone Shards (ranged attack; 1d4 damage to all within 15').

86# Sulfur Aura (characters in melee range that do not hold their breath must Save vs. Death/Poison or take 1d3 points of damage per round).

87# Summon Substratal (may call upon another Substratal that will appear after 2d6 rounds of combat).

88# Throw into the In-Between* (like *Maze*; on a natural 20 or hitting by 10 or more).

89# Throws Hot Tar (Breath attack; 1d6 damage and 1 point continual damage for three rounds or till the tar is removed or cooled down).

90# Thunderous Roar (instead of an attack; everyone within 10' must Save vs. Paralyze or will be stunned at the beginning of their next round).

91# Tooth & Claw of Glowing Steel (increase damage die by one).

92# Towering (+2 Melee Attack Bonus)

93# *Transmute Flesh to Stone (on successful hit, unless Save vs. Devices is passed).

94# *Transmute Rock to Mud (at will).

95# Trembling Ground (within 30' of the Substratal, all movement is halved).

96# *Valuable Innards (worth 500 sp × HD)

97# Wall of Stone (at will, one at a time)

98# Waterfall Caul (as the *Speleo-Spell*, always on, ice cold, thrown items are simply washed down to the ground).

99# Weapon Breaker (will catch attacking weapon on a natural 1 on an enemy's attack roll and break it in twain).

00# (Roll two additional powers)

To Generate A Substratal

The Veins of the Earth include three d6-tables to generate the general archetype/character, overall appearance and a descriptive detail of a Substratal. I hereby provide my version of the tables mentioned above. For the first, I only had d12 valid ideas, the other two are d20. Enjoy!

You have actually summoned... (d12):

01# Some kind of mercenary. May stay longer in your service if you pay good. It accepts souls, magic energies, fires and life sacrifices.

02# A deranged entity. Rather stupid. Or overly aggressive. Or both. Will either mess up your orders without intent or go out of its way to cause destruction and mayhem. Or both.

03# Recluse. It wants to have nothing to do with you or whatever you want. Will finish the task either quickly and with maximum force, or will return to the own plane after about half the time of its service is up (unless a new Domination roll is won).

04# An outcast perversion. Self-loathing, desperate and lonely. Needs fire and warmth, will consume fire no matter what the orders are. Is partially organic, yet still all stone and fire inside.

05# A Turn-Coat. Works against the powers-to-be among the Substratals. Will have you fumble with their business if it can make you. May teach you how to summon -other- Substratals (that belong to the powers-to-be).

06# A Small Fish from a Big Pond. Has spend a century to gain some kind of higher standing, and now sees a chance. Will not go back to where it came from, will bother the characters till it thinks it learned anything they may tell it about this place, which it seeks to turn into a domain to rule upon.

07# A Troublemaker that destabilizes the foundations of things. Literally. Every hour, there is a 1-in-6 chance that the very presence of this Substratal will cause an *Earthquake* (as per the spell of the same name; LotFP p.102).

08# One suicidal in love with the enemy, and the enemy is water. Will dows and "drown" itself in the first large body of water encountered, polluting it in the process for days with its mineral salts.

09# A Pyromaniac. The Substratal adores, longs for and loves the presence of fire. May ignite a fire the size of a torch flame by concentrating on a flammable object for two rounds. Will create fires when there are none within 10 feet.

10# A slaver. Usually hunts for weaker elemental beings. Is shocked to be enslaved now by "strange waterbags". Will locate and return to the summoner after 2d6 days with 1d4 allies. Will try to capture the summoner and make her summon weaker elemental beings to enslave them.

11# Somebody else's slave. Will be confused, but obedient. Owner will show up after a while to reclaim its slave. Will be angry.

12# A Revolutioner. Gets a 1d6+2 bonus to resist domination. Will complain and spout revolutionary rhetoric all the time. Will show up the next time the Magic-User tries to summon ANYTHING, as it tries to thwart the characters' attempt at slavery (by taking their place, in hope of resisting domination).

Looks like (d20):

01# Floating perfect sphere that slowly moves around a titled axis.

02# Strange, thin humanoid with three legs, three arms and three faces; all arranged radial around the center.

03# Inverted pyramid that moves on five spider-like legs.

04# Floating, hairless head.

05# Irregular spike ball, madly spinning and never resting in one place.

06# Crude humanoid.

07# Giant ant.

08# Languidly shifting cloud of tiny fragments.

09# Perfectly conical whirlwind.

10# Slowly rotating obelisk. Moves by grinding over the surface or "jumping" a short distance.

11# Small gnomish being of floating parts that not really join.

12# A slug without eye-stalks formed from rubble.

13# 5d6 fist-sized chunks that float in a cloud of glimmering air.

14# Man-sized rock with four stilt-like legs at the lower and three ant-like limbs at the upper side, and a fat-lipped maw at the middle.

15# Mass of pebbles that constantly flows from the form of a human to that of a boar to that of a table and back.

16# Three floating rings of 4 feet diameter and 1 foot thickness, moving like hula-hoops around an invisible performer.

17# Pincer-less giant crab.

18# Angular and serrated form like an uprooted, leafless small tree. Moves by sudden changes that look like bad stop-motion-film effects.

19# A centipede ending in a three-armed human torso with a hammer-like head.

20# Giant tubular worm that is "all maw" on both sides. Moves by sucking its rear into itself and regurgitating it forward through its maw, to its full length.



Made from (d20):

- 01# Countless match-stick like tiny iron bars.
- 02# A dark breaking crust above a magma-like core.
- 03# Sandwiched slates of granite.
- 05# Jagged shards of obsidian, arranged like a static explosion.
- 06# Packed quartz sand.
- 07# Molten gold.
- 08# Lumps of reddish-brown rock salt.
- 09# Flowstone with a surface like an old wax-candle.
- 10# Yellow-white siderite with a rough surface, shot-through with iron-gray stone.
- 11# Polished-looking yellow-green serpentine with irregular, finger-sized hole-patterns.
- 12# Strangely organic, porous black volcanic stone with gray-white sprinkles.
- 13# Mosaic of thumb-sized white, red, orange and brown zircon
- 14# A multitude of light gray polyeder of grainy dacite.
- 15# Rough chunks of antique-pink rhyolite, punctuated with orange fire opal.
- 16# Porous, brown-red scoria, with grayish ash-like specks.
- 17# Unknown black crystal with purple edges.
- 18# Sand-colored, jagged and porous pumice.
- 19# Heavy, riffled looking chunks for black coal and dark gray slate.
- 20# Star-like clusters of clear quartz

With (d20):

- 01# Six perfectly cut emerald that seem to be its eyes, arranged like the pips on a die.
- 02# A hemispheric dish of chrome embedded into its face, with a vague reflection of the one talking to it as its own "face".
- 03# A ball of licking flames instead of a head.
- 04# A living, moving mosaic of ocher ceramic shards as its face.
- 05# A vertical pool of molten metal in the center of its torso that ripples every time it speaks.
- 06# A single jagged shard of obsidian that protrudes from the center of its head.
- 07# A turtle-like head formed from pieces of dull, hammered-looking iron.
- 08# A glowing, slowly rotating octahedron instead of a head.
- 09# Two smaller and one large hole (eyes, a mouth) in the head, which move and re-shape.
- 10# A red glowing gem in the upper part of where the "face" should be.
- 11# Yellowish sulfur vapors rising from the form constantly.
- 12# The unmoving bas-relief of a human face instead of one.
- 13# A halo of five floating, circling pebbles.
- 14# A lamprey like maw instead of a face, with sharp crystal shards instead of teeth.
- 15# A little mannequin of whirling smoke on its shoulder that acts as its spokesman.
- 16# A rectangular block of granite for a head. When it "speaks", its words chisel itself onto the surface in a language nobody knows but everybody is able to read. The writing disappears after a few seconds.
- 17# A lion head made of fine salt, with a mane of quartz sand.
- 18# A head like an elephant without ears or tusks, with a twin-trunk.
- 19# Butterfly wings made of blue fire, that shoot from the back like the flames of a bunsen burner.
- 20# A single, floating giant eye of gold for a head.

Abandoned River Outpost

Rivers have always been ways of travel. This they are in the Veins of the Earth, too. But as everything in the Veins, they are not as comfortable, not as safe or as navigable as they are in the world above. Some snake right through the stone, with now “surface” that would be exposed to air. Others have currents that are far too strong to be navigable, or sport more rocks to shatter a vessel than even the bravest soul would dare to best. But still, those who find a way to create a boat or a raft use waterways wherever they can. Where a river is navigable and traveled often, outposts may be erected. The following adventure location is such an outpost. One that has been fought over, has been deserted and is yet occupied when the characters arrive.

[See the map that is part of the download. It is a modified version of one from Dyson Logos; used with permission]

The Dvargir had erected the outpost decades ago. They hewed it into the cave walls to assert control over the area. Taking a toll was an “added benefit”. Many times, the Dvargir had to fend off those that would want to take it from them, mostly the Aelf-Adal. It was taken and re-taken many times, but at some point it had lost much of its value to the Dvargir, and so they gave up on taking it back at some point. Thereby, it remained in the hands of **the Aelf-Adal**.

This was much to the chagrin of those merchants passing by it. The Aelf-Adal were capricious and wantonly cruel in their toll taking, where the Dvargir had been calculable in their passionless cruelty. The travel on the waterway decreased, yet the Aelf-Adal kept the outpost manned. Lately, a merchant that came down the river reported that he had found the outpost to be deserted. No light was seen, nobody had hailed or stopped him. The merchant did not investigate, for whatever might have driven off the Aelf-Adal was nothing he was eager to meet himself.

Will the characters be as cautious as the merchant? Or will they dare to inspect the outpost and see if valuable loot is still to be found?

What has happened?

Many rests* ago, a group of **Olm**, lead by two of their “Ageless Braves”, have assaulted the outpost and either killed or driven off any Aelf-Adal they found. They then searched the place and took everything along that was of value to them. From time to time, a patrol of them returns to check if anybody tries to occupy the outpost again, but the goal of the warriors really just was to drive off the Aelf-Adal, to gather fame and honor among their own kind by doing so. Light sources and items made of iron and metal have been left untouched by Olm, as they had no use for them. As they had no real interest in combing the outpost, a secret door and what lies behind it evaded them as well. By now, the absence of residents and the lingering smell of blood has attracted other dwellers of the Veins...

*I use “rests” instead of “days”, as there is no day nor night in the Veins.

The outpost in general: small banks of rocks and pebbles surround the three elevated areas that make up the outpost. Each of them is 15 feet above the water the lowest point. Both the Dvargir and the Aelf-Adal used rope ladders when they wanted to climb up or down, but the Olm took all of them away after their raid. The iron studs that were hammered into the rock to secure them are still there. Due to the many battles between the Aelf-Adal and the Dvargir to take and re-take the outpost, many of the walls have been ruined by now. The Aelf-Adal never really repaired the damage when they took over, and the Dvargir just re-manned the outpost the last time they had it, as they had lost interest in the wider area. There is no light but what the characters bring along. Any light will announce their presence both to the **Ambassodile** and the **Mantis Shrimp** (see below).

Scaling the walls is a *hard* (class 3) climb according to VotE rules. No matter how much time is spent to inspect the walls, the roll cannot get better than 3-in-6. The 3-in-6 places have been marked for each part of the outpost with an [S] at the wall segments. Not the wisest choice of mine, as an [S] is also used to mark a secret door... well, next time. At any other point, the roll will not be better than 2-in-6.

Every six turns (1 hour), there is a 1-in-6 chance for an Encounter with 2d6+1 Olm patrol.

Area 1 was the main outlook, and has several different height levels (each with a difference of 10 feet). A few hours ago, an **Ambassodile** passing through managed to scale the walls and decided to rest here for a while. Its claw marks are clearly visible to anybody that gives the walls at [S] at least a casual inspection. The massive creature does not want to be disturbed.

Area 2 has the strongest remaining battlement and was the main storage location. The Olm took away most of what was in store, but not all. A **Mantisshrimp** took up residents here a few rests* ago. While it considers the whole of the outpost and the surrounding area as its territory, the arrival of the Ambassodile made it hide in its lair. It now waits impatiently for the alpha predator to leave again. The Olm, it has not yet dared to attack. In the past, they came in large groups so that it did not dare, as it knows that Olm do not use sight.

Area 3 held the main barracks. The area is now deserted, but some provisions and loot may be secured.

Area 4 is a hidden area that may only be reached through a "hidden" entrance in a wall of Area 2. The Dvargir made it, the Aelf-Adal "refurbished" it. The Olm did not find it, and so there is loot to be found.. and traps.



1a: The Ambassodile rests here admits the shattered remains of stone tables and banks. It will not even move as it addresses the character with a very simple message: "I do not wish to be disturb". The words are underpinned by a rolling growl from deep within the creatures massive throat. Should the characters still try to get into contact with it, a Reaction roll is necessary. On a result of **Talkativ** or better, it will tolerate it when the characters rummage about for no longer than 2 turns (3 turns on a result of **Helpful**). Afterwards (or otherwise) its patience wears thin: the Referee rolls a d6 on the beginning of each turn. On a result of 1, the Ambassodile moves to attack unless the characters flee from **Area1** at haste. A **Hostile** result means that the Ambassodile will show no patience and attack immediately.

1b: The former quarter of the commander, and also the "toll office". A table and two chairs made of rectangular stone slabs are the only furniture, besides a large stone block whose top has been covered with layers of pelts and spider silk (bed). On the edge of the stone table stands an eight inch iron rod with a two inch diameter (which is a strong magnet). A slightly rusty iron strongbox, the size of a chest, stands in a corner. Said strongbox is secured with a combination log of the Dvargir. The Aelf-Adal were not in the mood to trouble themselves with it, so it still contains toll payments in the form of an assortment of metal ingots, short ropes, lumps of tar, tips for spears and arrows, etc. All in all, 121sp worth of items that take up two slots of equipment. Breaking up the box is impossible without a character with Strength 16 and a crowbar or complex tools and several hours of time. A character with Tinkering 3+ skill could find another way to open it up with specialist tools in about a turn.

1c: The guardroom. A long stone table with a stone bench on each side. The room clearly has been the site of a battle. Strewn about are splinters of bone (from armor and weapons), several ripped and torn metal rings (from damaged Aelf-Adal chain mail), two broken luminol lamps as well as broken and intact pottery (dishes, amphora, etc.). In one corner of the room rests an undisturbed stack of 12 torches (human femur, hair and tar).

1d: Outlook. A large coal pan on a 3' iron socket stands in the middle. Beneath it sits a partially empty leather sack with coal (60sp/lumen), as well as a crossbow and an empty quiver. Metal bolts (9) are strewn all over the place.

2a: Battlement. a leather quiver (human skin) and 10 arrows (bones and Lamenter feathers) lie on the ground, as well as a rotting Aelf-Adal index finger.

2b: The inside of the battlement is stained with old blood splatters. A crossbow, quiver and 9 bolts can be found here, as well as five pieces of broken blades from two different swords, an iron dagger (Aelf-Adal) and an empty wine skin.

2c: This was the main storage area, for both provisions and larger goods that had been taken as toll. The **Mantis Shrimp** made this its lair. It will attack the first character that either enters it or turns its back to the entry. The inside is covered with debris the Olm left behind (broken Aelf-Adal bones and skulls, torn and blood stained pieces of silk clothes, torn apart remains of two large books(!) and several parchments, etc). Among the debris, the characters may find five pieces of Aelf-Adal jewelry (each worth 3d6sp), three rusty iron manacles, three rusty iron keys and a ripped Aelf-Adal chain mail shirt (AC: 14).

3a: A crossbows, quiver and 11 bolts can be found here. An rotten piece of flesh, mixed with pieces of splintered bone, gave growth to some pale toadstool-like mushrooms. They are inedible, and become faintly fluorescent after having been basked in light for more than a round.

3b: The former barracks have as well been the site of a battle. Several large stone blocks, covered in crude furs, had functioned as beds. At the end of each rests a "stone chest": a box made of stone slaps, with another stone slap acting as a lid. Each has been opened and searched thoroughly. There is nothing of value left in here.

3c: The provision storage area has been looted. Only ten loafs of once dry, and now slightly moldy, mushroom bread have been left (150sp as Veins food each; will perish quickly).

3d: The kitchen area. In its center rests a large iron cauldron over a fire place. Metal implements for both cooking and butchery are still dangling from hooks at the wall. A stone block, obviously used for butchering, is blackened by old blood stains.

4a: The entry to the hidden chambers. The "secret door" into it is not a hidden one. It is a large, completely rectangular iron double-door. The secret is how to open it, as the surface is sheer and there is neither a handle nor a knob or a key hole or anything else. Pressing against the doors will have them move inward just a tiny bit, as if they are locked, or barred from the other side. Being a creation of the Dvargir, the gap between the door is not even large enough to get a piece of parchment through it. The "key" is the magnetic iron rod in area **1b**. The door is locked by five iron bars in hollow spaces inside of the double door, placed in regular intervals. Going down the metal surface along the right side of the middle will reveal their position by a "clang!" as the rods jump towards the magnet once it is over their respective space. All a character has to do is to "slide" them all back into the left door with the magnet. The mechanism is one of the Dvargir, but the Aelf-Adal figured it out.

In the recess opposite of the entry hangs an (inactive) Luminol Lamp from a hook (six turns of use left). The doors to the left and the right are made of fused bones, each with a skull at the center and a complete skeleton hand for a handle.

They are an addition of the Aelf-Adal. Touching the door handle (the skeleton hand) leads to the loss of 1d6+1 hit points (half that if a *Save vs. Devices* is passed). If the jaw of the skull in the center is pulled down instead, the door opens without doing damage. A door that is broken down will turn into a HD:1 animated skeleton after 1d6+2 rounds (touch damage equal to the door handle).

4b: The door to this room is the same kind of bone door as found in 4a, the room itself is a trap. A powerful Aelf-Adal has cast a *Rune of Fear* onto the wall opposite of the door.

4c: The room contains a mushroom farm. Aside from a small path through the room, the ground is covered with a mixture of dung and hair, and many mushrooms are ripe for harvest (900sp of Veins wood).

4d: This storage area contains 30 clay amphora with bonesoup powder and 6 tin amphora with Luminol. Each 0,5 lb of bonesoup powder can be turned into 100sp of Veins food by mixing it with hot water, each amphora holds 10 lbs. Each amphora of Luminol holds enough to operate one Luminol Lamp for 240 turns. An amphora counts as an over-sized item.



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