

Lost in the Coldbless Caves

by Gregorius21778 # www.gregorius21778.wordpress.com

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In a cave system far away from the Dwarf settlement of **Kar Narruk** runs an underground river. The river is known as **Coldbless**, and its water is an ingredient for local healing potions. **Troglodytes** have recently been reported in the area, and a Dwarf named **Horgast Truebelt** has not returned from a journey to gather the water. His wife and family promise a reward to those that return him, or his shiny belt buckle as a proof of his demise.

[E] marks the passage through which the PC will enter the area.

[O] are tunnels and passages to other, unexplored areas

The river is ice cold (and in fact mostly fueled by melting ice in the mountains in spring and summer). The current is strong, but not unmanageable. In the north a number of large rocks allows to cross it in relative safety. The icy waters are from a region that is ripe with magical energies. Anybody who drinks the raw water will have minor wounds heal immediately, but at least one quart of water needs to be consumed. After doing so three times the effect of the water on the character is lost for about three days.

The mushroom fields (m) grow on gravel banks at the river. They are mostly edible and harmless, but house many deep cave insects. PC may startle a large kind of poisonous centipede that preys on those: (doubles on 2d6 whenever they cross a field; the bite may leave a grown human shivery for 1d6 hours).

The crevasses (c) on the map are deep enough that a fall will hurt, but not kill. They are wide enough that a jump is a small risk. PC may pass them by climbing down and up again, but doing so costs time and may be strenuous.

The ascends/descends (a) are not steep enough to make climbing gear mandatory, but may be bothersome for unskilled climbers.

The narrows (n) are impossible to pass for a character that wears plate armor, is heavily packed or the size of a troll. Everyone else may squeeze through. It takes a moment and some help to pull or shove those free that became stuck.

Random Encounters may occur every hour (d12):

[1-2]: 1d6 troglodytes [3]: One giant cave spider [4+]: none.

Troglodytes are a little larger than Halflings, but scrawny and with longer limbs. Their skin is gray, next to hairless and they have large black eyes, teeth and nails. Troglodytes are feral, don't speak the common language and are equal in culture to early stone-age people. They see heat signatures and have a 2-out-of-6 chance to attack without provocation when encountered. Most of the troglodytes in this area come here through the [o]ther tunnels, as their tribe begins to seize these caves. Their base camp is at [5].

Giant cave spiders come to this area through the sink in [3]. Their body is the size of a man, and the legs are about the same size again. They are cunning, absolutely silent, see heat signatures and

are able to walk on walls and the ceiling. A spider will not attack a group of PC but rather follow them to single one out later, or to wait till the PC are engaged by a different enemy. In a fight it attacks two times with its legs, and if both were successful a bite attack follows. Its venom is paralyzing. It may create webbing, but only uses it to "tow" a paralyzed victim away (to feed on it undisturbed).

The **Undine** is a hand-sized water pixie that lives in the river, and spends most of its time there. It will emerge out of the Coldbless' surface when the PC disturb it for the second time (cross it, drink from it, etc.). She is appears as a slender nymph purely made of river water. The pixie speaks with a voice like a a river running in a narrow over an assortment of stones. It will demand to know who the PC are. When

they introduce themselves by names it will demand to be named by them as well, and reject the first name given utterly because it is "BORING!". It don't cares for questions and considers most of them "BORING!", but wants the PC to tell her things. The Undine is especially intrigued by everything shiny, and sometimes rummages through the carcass slope [7]. It thereby found **Horgast's shiny belt buckle** and took it with her into the river, where it now lies somewhere at the bottom. She claims it to be "MINE!", but may trade it for more shiny objects.

[1] The flat cavern has a low ceiling (penalties for those taller than a dwarf) and is dotted with stalagmites and rubble. All exits but the passage to the south may be missed unless the cave is explored thoroughly.

[2] The tilted cave has a steep ascend to the west, but a comfortable ceiling. Very small deposits of quartz glitter in the light.

[3] The vast cavern is a dome-sized space with a large, flat rock formation at its center and a huge sink hole in its northern third. A dangerously small ledge along its edge connects it to [1]. The rock formation is used as look-out by a troglodyte. When it sees the PC move past the ledge, it will try to sneak away to [5] to warn the others.

[4] The stalagmite forests are large caves filled with stalagmites. Any encounters here may lead to an ambush.

[5] The troglodyte lair is a large, unlit cave that is occupied by 1d6+6 troglodytes. They rest together near the northeast wall unless they have been alarmed. Stalagmites in the cave give the PC a chance to sneak by. An old pick-ax, 10+2d7 rations of roasted meat and two large water skins from may be found here, which they have looted from [7]. The water skins once belonged to Horgast.

[6] Unstable areas are littered with rubble. Any loud noises (e.g. a fight) here will have large boulders come lose and drop from the ceiling.

[7] The carcass slope is used by the troll [T] to depose of the remains of its prey. Rats skitter around here, which may shriek and perhaps alarm the troll when the PC disturb them. The remains of **Horgast Truebelt** (and other detritus) are here, but not his belt buckle.

[8] The stinking cave reeks of urine and something worse (troll). It leads to the cave of a two-headed, three armed chaos troll that lairs there [T]. The chaos troll killed Horgast at the river, ate him and cast the remains off at [7]. It has two attacks, is immune to all forms of control magic and regenerates wounds. The monster is raving mad and talks to itself most of the time.

