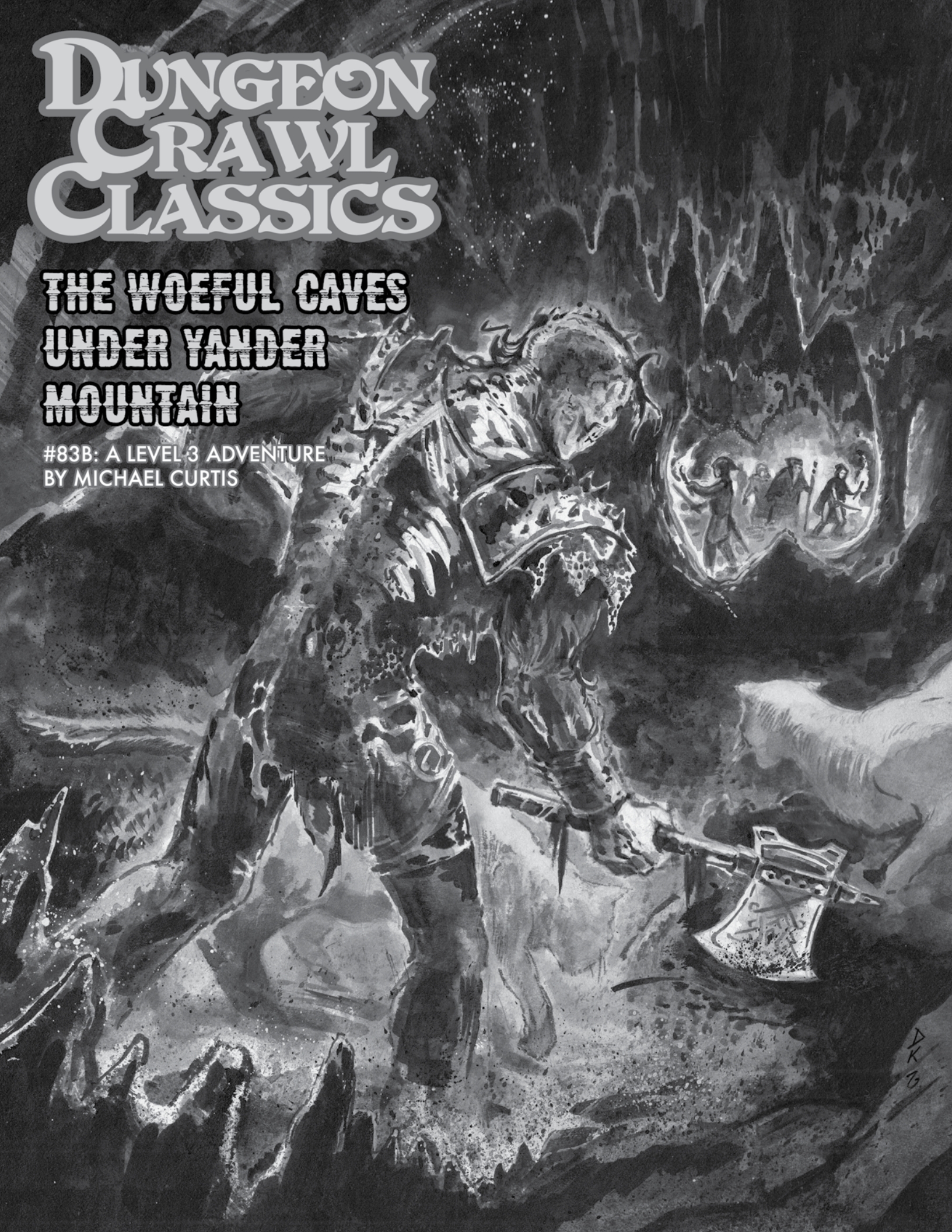


DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

THE WOEFUL CAVES UNDER YANDER MOUNTAIN

#83B: A LEVEL 3 ADVENTURE
BY MICHAEL CURTIS



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THE WOEFUL CAVES UNDER YANDER MOUNTAIN

A Level 3 Adventure

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The Woeful Caves under Yander Mountain is an adventure for DCC RPG designed for use with four to six 3rd-level PCs. Set in the Shudder Mountains, the adventure is a short dungeon crawl involving an immortal blood-drinker who preys upon travelers in the region. *The Woeful Caves under Yander Mountain* attempts to put a new spin on the vampire, changing that type of un-dead foe from an aristocratic monster from Transylvania to something more at home in the backwoods. The adventure can be completed in a single session, but despite its brevity, it can have later consequences in a Shudder Mountains-set campaign.

BACKGROUND

Forty years ago, Shange the Blighted descended upon the Shudder Mountains region in search of plunder and blood. A sellsword and bandit, Shange heard the tales of hidden mines and lost treasures in the forgotten hollows of the mountains and sought to claim a share of that wealth as his own. His campaign of bloodshed, highway robbery, and wanton violence did little to enrich his fortunes, but utterly changed his very existence.

Shange has the misfortune of choosing a traveling conjureman as a victim, springing from ambush to drive three feet of steel through the sorcerer's gut. As the witch man's life blood ran from his veins, he laid a terrible curse upon the murderous bandit. If bloodshed is what Shange lived for, than that would be the sole thing that would sustain him. Forever cast adrift from the natural world and the pure elements of fire, air, water, and earth, Shange would walk the land forever, finding no comfort from the pleasures of wine or women, and doomed to sup on warm blood until he could stand the coppery taste no longer. With the warlock's last breath, Shange's doom was sealed.

The warrior reveled in his new state at first, finding himself immune to the most common ravages of battle. Fire left his skin unsinged and iron swords hewed his flesh but he withstood steel's deadly kiss. Alas, he also found himself, now a creature of supernatural evil, weaker when under the gaze of the clean, living sun. Like the loathsome thing he was, Shange sought a place to hide during the day, eventually discovering a series of caves snaking through the peak known as Yander Mountain. Exploring the twisting tunnels, he encountered a cavern awash with black fire. This place was a spoil, one of the lingering deposits of Hsaalian magic. Intrigued by the strange magic of the spoil and the security of the caverns, he claimed the place as his mountain fastness.

Shange's occupancy brought him into contact with a tribe of wrigglers, a devolved race of troglodytic humanoids descended from the Shudder Mountains' original inhabitants. He swiftly taught the degenerate creatures to respect his claim

on the upper caverns with his axe and his strange powers, powers which were further increased by the spoil's ancient magic. Shange remains enthralled by the spoil and its properties, venturing out only to ambush and feed on travelers who pass near his mountainous redoubt.

Over the decades a number of fearful legends have sprung up about Yander Mountain and the road that passes beneath its shadow. Many of the legends hint of a hungry evil that lurks within the mountains' caverns, grottoes known as the Woeful Caves, but other tales speak of strange lights sighted near the caves after dark. These ghostly lights, known as "fetch lights" by the Shudfolk, are believed to appear near the locations of untapped gold veins or hidden treasures. And while nearby Shudfolk avoid the mountain, the caves, and the road that passes beneath them, there is no shortage of fools drawn to venture into the caverns in search of legendary gold veins.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs can be lured into exploring the Woeful Caves either by avarice or through the desire to accomplish good deeds. If the luster of undiscovered treasure is enough to drive the PCs to exploration, the judge need only have the rumor of the "fetch lights," that are regularly sighted dancing near the caves, reach the PCs' ears. It is a common belief amongst the Shudfolk (including PCs native to the region) that "fetch lights," softly glowing orbs of light that appear after nightfall, mark the location of concealed gold and other treasure. A greedy party will soon be on their way up the mountain to see what treasure lies there for the taking.

PCs motivated by the desire to perform good deeds and help their neighbors may be enticed to venture up the mountain by the "curse of Ridge Road." Ridge Road is a neglected wayfare that leads along the northern slope of Yander Mountain. Although the most direct route to nearby settlements, Ridge Road has seen reduced use over the years as travelers go missing near Yander Mountain and the occupants of nearby farmsteads are occasionally found massacred (the results of both Shange's thirst and wriggler hunting bands). The residents of nearby Hark would gladly pay whoever puts an end to the unknown terrors within the Woeful Caves a modest reward (a few bent gold coins or perhaps a cherished silver family heirloom).

THE WOEFUL CAVES

The journey to Yander Mountain is short, a mere two hour's walk from the nearest Shudfolk community of Hark. A corduroy road of logs and packed dirt climbs up the side of the mountain, gradually becoming a simple dirt road winding between the rocks and trees that crowd the mountain's slopes. Once on the dirt trail, the party sees a pair of caves overlook-

ing the road from 60' up the mountainside. Read the following

A pair of dark caves pierces the side of Yander Mountain further up the slope. These caves are staggered, set in a diagonal line across the rocky face of the peak. The first cave is located some 60' above you on the mountain side, nestled in a slight niche in the mountain. The second cave stands 40' away from the second and is situated 20' higher up the mountain face. Nothing can be seen within the caves from your position on the road and it is impossible to determine how deep into the mountain they may run.

If they continue around a bend in the road, they spot a third cave on the far side of a rocky promontory.

The Woeful Caves are natural limestone caverns filled with the subterranean flora and fauna found in such environments. Bats, birds, and insects live in the caves, frequently darting about just beyond the glow of the party's light source. The sound of dripping water, tumbling stones, squeaking bats and chattering insects, and other, less easily identifiable noises echo through the caverns as the party explores. Mud, stagnant water, and rubble makes moving difficult, and there is little light beyond the entrance caves. The judge should use all these elements to instill a sense of unease into the players as they explore the caves, making their later pursuit, should it occur, (see Shange's Strategy below) an exercise in terror.

SHANGE'S STRATEGY

Shange becomes aware of the party's presence in the caves if they engage in battle in areas 1-1, 1-3, 1-5, or 1-9. Other loud noises also alert the blood-drinker. Once he is aware of intruders, he leaves his lair and seeks out the party, changing into owl or moonlight form to stalk them. Due to his familiarity with the caves and his improved stealth when in these forms, only a DC 15 Intelligence check by a PC detects something untoward shadowing them. The PC that makes the check glimpses a patch of dim light or hears the sound of rustling wings in the dark, but does not see Shange. The judge can use these hints several times to build tension.

Once Shange has spied upon the party, he allows them to explore the caverns unhindered, but prepares to engage in a deadly cat-and-mouse game as soon as the party moves to leave. Once the party heads towards the exit, Shange attacks, attempting to slay one or two PCs and force the rest to flee. If successful, he changes into owl form and flies ahead of the party by the fastest route possible before ambushing them again. He continues this process until the party is slain or the survivors of his assaults escape the caves. Shange then drinks the blood of his victims or deposits the bodies in the spoil in area 1-9 and waits to see what happens.

If the PCs find his lair (area 1-10) before they attempt to leave the caves, Shange emerges from the darkness to slay the interlopers who found his resting place.

Area 1-1 - Cougar Cave: *This cavern serves as a crossroad of tunnels. To the northeast and northwest, passages exit to the surface, bringing drafts of fresh air down their lengths. In the south and southeast, rocky corridors plunge deeper into the heart of Yander Mountain. The floor is uneven, cluttered with broken stalagmites and fallen rock. It slopes slightly downwards towards the northwest.*

A cougar crouches in the southern tunnel (see map for position), watching the PCs as they enter the cave. Under the sway of Shange, the large feline serves as an early warning alarm against trespassers. The cat pounces on any creature approaching the southern tunnel or one who turns its back to that passageway. As it leaps, it roars its snarling cry which echoes down the tunnels, alerting Shange of trespassers. PCs failing a DC 15 Intelligence check are surprised by the cougar.

Cougar: Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3) or claws +1 (1d3+1); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 15; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP two successful claw attacks allows for automatic rake attack that does 1d6+2 damage, stealthy (+4 bonus to surprise); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

If the PCs approach the cougar from area 1-4, the cat detects them on a 4 in 6 chance and it acts as above, springing from the darkness to attack. Otherwise it is surprised.

SPELUNKING IN THE SHUDDER MOUNTAINS

With the exception of the old Hsaal diggings, the caves of the Shudder Mountains are natural caverns formed by flowing water. As such, they are uneven spaces within the earth filled with stalagmites, stalactites, low ceilings, slanted floors, and other subterranean features. As modern cavers know, it's very easy to injure oneself while spelunking and misfortune can strike at any time.

If the judge wishes to introduce the real-life hazards of cave exploration while the party explores the Woeful Caves, have a randomly determined PC make a Luck check every six turns while inside the cave. If the check fails, the PC sustains a minor injury (cracks his head against a low-hanging stalactite, slips in a pool of mud, scrapes exposed flesh badly on a jagged rock, etc.) and suffers 1 point of damage. PCs that roll a natural 20 on their Luck checks hurt themselves severely; taking 1d3 points of damage and suffering a minor complication (knocking themselves out for 10 minutes unless roused with first aid and a DC 5 Intelligence check or twisting an ankle and having their speed reduced by -5'). Dwarves are less likely to injure themselves in caves and add their level to their Luck score for the purpose of their checks.

Several areas of the caves consist of tight passages or low ceilings, as shown on the map. Human-sized PCs moving through these areas must either crawl or sidle along, slowing their movement rate to half normal and causing them to lose any beneficial AC adjustment due to Agility modifiers. The judge may also rule that certain long weapons (longswords, battle axes, pole arms, etc.) cannot be used efficiently while in these tight conditions and impart a -1 or even -2 die penalty to attack rolls when so hampered.

Area 1-2 – Bear Bones Cave: *Cave moths flutter about your light sources as you penetrate this small cavern, throwing winged shadows across the walls. Stands of stalactites hang pendulously from the ceiling above, mirrored by scattered groves of stalagmites on the cave floor. A high ledge rests 15' atop a stone drapery formation to the west. Drifted leaves and small sticks litter the ground, and a pile of brown bones lies in an untidy pile near the west wall.*

The piled bones are that of a medium-sized grizzly and are old and dry. Close examination of the bones reveals that they bear the signs of gnawing and many are cracked to devour the marrow. The bear dwelled in this cave briefly until slain and eaten by the wrigglers.

The cave moths are harmless, normal insects. The sticks and leaf debris have accumulated here over many years, blown inside the cave by storm winds. PCs pausing to listen hear the soft sound of cricket chirps coming from the southern tunnel (actually the wrigglers in area 1-5).

Area 1-3 – Soul Owl Roost: *A soft green illumination fills this cavern and the gentle sound of rustling feathers drifts through the air. Arranged on staggered ledges along the cave walls are more than a dozen ghostly barn owls. The avian spirits are translucent and shine with a pale jade light as they peer down at you from their roosts with wide, unblinking eyes.*

These owls are soul fragments of Shange's victims, trapped between life and death by the mixed power of the blood-drinker's curse and the lingering magic of the spoil in area 1-9. Doomed to a fragmented state, the soul owls fly out from the caverns each night in an aimless search for eternal rest. It is sightings of these glowing birds which are responsible for the legends of the "fetch lights" seen around the cave.

Soul Owls (15): Init +1; Atk talons +4 melee (1d3); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 8 each; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP possession (see below), un-dead traits, immune to normal weapons, affected by magic and silver weapons; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +4; AL N.

If the PCs enter the cave, one owl for each PC alights from its perch and attempts to settle on each character's shoulder. If an attack roll succeeds against a PC, the owl grips his shoulder with its talons, causing 1d3 points of damage and forcing the character to make a DC 12 Will save. If the save fails, the owl-affixed PC's will is overtaken by the soul fragment and the PC becomes possessed by an angry, vengeful mind. While under the owl's control, the PC succumbs to blood lust and attacks all those around him in a berserk rage (gaining +1 to attack rolls and +2 to damage). A PC who succeeds must continue to make a Will save each round he has an owl perched on his shoulder. Only a number of owls equal to the party's membership attack; the rest observe the encounter but do not attempt to dominate a PC...for now. If the party passes through this cave again, they must run the soul owl gauntlet once more.

The possession can be ended by either slaying or turning the soul owl, casting *remove curse* on the victim, or killing the PC (a PC reduced to zero hit points but who makes the Luck check when his body is rolled over is no longer under owl control). A possessed PC who survives the mental domination emerges with a mental vision of a horribly scarred man with blood-stained mouth and teeth lunging from the darkness and attacking him. This was the soul owl's last experience before its mortal death and the terror of that event imprints itself on the possessed adventurer's psyche.

Area 1-4 – Cave Paintings: *The rocky walls of this cavern are stained with pigments, transforming the stone into a canvas upon which images are depicted. Primitive representations of wolves, deer, bears, and other native wildlife are shown being hunted by men. Other odd symbols are interspersed within the hunting imagery.*

The paintings were done by the wrigglers' ancestors before the aboriginal people devolved into their present state. Most of the images are hunting scenes, but other imagery can be identified on the walls. One scene shows the hunters fleeing into caves, pursued by larger man-shaped forms with heads bearing crested ridges. If the party has encountered any mortal remains or images of the Hsaal, the crested-headed race is identifiable as such.

Another image depicts three symbols set in an upside-down triangle. Two glyphs appear to float above a third. These symbols (see *DCC #83 The Chained Coffin* p. 22) are those for "Earth" (bottom symbol), "Shul" (upper left symbol), and "Luhsaal" (upper right symbol), arranged to represent their celestial positions. The sigils mean nothing now, but a note-taking party who copies down the symbols may find a use for them should they play through *The Chained Coffin*.

A narrow tunnel exits this cave to the west, but it is clogged with fallen rocks. This passage connects to the surface, but due to its size and obstruction, it cannot be traversed by the PCs. Shange can pass through the tunnel in his moonlight form as necessary to flee the party or to get ahead of them in the cave system.

Area 1-5 – Wiggler Midden: *Mounds of animal bones are piled into waist-high heaps in this cavern, nearly covering the entire floor. Stalagmites protrude from the morbid debris like islands in a bone sea. The chirping of crickets sounds softly in the cavern and another tunnel exits the cave from the opposite side.*

Seven wrigglers secret themselves amongst the bones, their pale flesh blending in with the carnage. They detect the PCs presence regardless of the party's avenue of approach and emerge from the bone piles to attack the adventurers. Have the PC with the worst Luck make a Luck check. If it fails, the party is surprised.

Wrigglers (7): Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d8) or claws +2 (1d4); AC 12; HD 4d10; hp 22 each; MV 30', climb 20' or leap 10'; Act 2d20; SP crit range 19-20, superior hearing, echolocation, blind, heightened reflexes, uncanny climber (can scale walls and ceilings; +10 to bonus to climb-related actions); SV Fort +3, Ref +6 (auto save; see monster description), Will +2; AL C.

There is a 4' wide hole in the cave floor that connects to the tunnel between areas 1-2 and 1-3. If the party travels that tunnel, they are attacked from above as the wrigglers drop 8' down atop them (gaining a +2 bonus to hit). If a wriggler kills or incapacitates a PC, it hauls the body back up through the hole to this area.

Most of the bones are animal, but a number of human skeletons are mixed into the piles as well. A prolonged search (3 turns or more) accompanied by a DC 10 Intelligence check discovers a trio of old treasures: a silver ring (10 gp value) still wrapped around a bony human finger, a well-made flute carved from hawthorn wood (15 gp value and causes 1d3 damage if used as a club), and an ornamental walking stick shaped into the form of a serpent (a *snake stick*, see *The Chained Coffin Companion* p. 7).

Area 1-6 – Spider Cave: *The ceiling slopes upward, becoming lost among the gloom and stalactites towards the northern end of this narrow cavern. Odd, feathery lumps bearing white thread-like wrappings lie unmoving about the floor.*

The lumps are web-wrapped birds, drained dry by the giant scaffold web spider that dwells at the highest point of the cave. The creature thrives on the birds and bats that regularly flutter through the cave system. Numerous thin lines of webbing crisscross the cave and are only noticeable with a DC 10 Intelligence or *find traps* check. Failing to detect the sticky webs indicates the first two PCs entering the cave walk into the webs and must make a DC 14 Reflex save or become entangled. This alerts the spider of a new meal and it descends to dine.

Giant Scaffold Web Spider (1): Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4 plus venom) or web +4 ranged (entangle); AC 12; HD 3d6; hp 12; MV 30' or climb 35'; Act 1d20; SP poisonous (1d4 plus DC 12 Fort save or 3d4+1 Strength loss), entangling webs (DC 14 Ref save or become entangled; DC 13 Strength check to break free); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +1; AL N.

The spider bears an uncanny resemblance to an albino black widow spider measuring 5' from forelegs to hind legs. It lacks the unique hourglass-shaped marking on its abdomen, but this missing feature is easily overlooked in the cavern's gloom.

Area 1-7 – False Dawn: *A pale green light equal to failing moonlight illuminates this T-intersection of passages. A low-ceilinged, sloping tunnel descends to the east, while the main artery continues on ahead. The light appears to come from the walls themselves as if the living stone produces the ghostly radiance.*

The stone walls contain phosphorus deposits which produce the dim green light. Although eerie, the light has no harmful effects, but it is nearly identical in color and luminance as Shangé's moonlight form. PCs catching a glimpse of the blood-drinker in this shape may easily misidentify the glow as another phosphorus deposit until it is too late.

Dwarves attempting to smell gold automatically succeed in this area, detecting a strong scent of it coming from the south tunnel (this is the gold vein in area 1-8).

Area 1-8 – Gold Vein: *The walls of this cavern glitter with quartz, transforming the drab stone into dazzling edifices sparkling with facets. Beyond the cramped tunnel that enters the cavern, the ceiling rises, allowing even the tallest of you to stand upright once more. As the shadows from your light sources play upon the walls, a gleam of gold breaks through the gloom, catching your eye.*

A small gold vein runs along the south wall of this chamber, reflecting the party's light. Any dwarf in the cave automatically sniffs out the delicious odor of the precious metal. PCs inspecting the southern wall easily sees thin strands of gold ore winding its way through the stone and quartz crystals. They also notice the wall bears signs of tool marks, indicating someone has previously attempted to mine the gold (the dwarves in area 1-9 before they met their demise) but stopped before they made much headway.

The gold requires a great deal of effort to extract. If the PCs work the vein, each day of mining the gold produces 1d6x200 lbs. of ore. When refined, the ore yields gold worth 5 gp per 100 lbs. of ore extracted. The seam is exhausted after 6000 lbs. of ore is removed.



Unfortunately for the PCs, the gold vein isn't the windfall they hope for. The narrow tunnel entering this cave from the southwest dives deep into the earth, leading to the forgotten caverns that are home to the wriggler tribe. Even if the party destroys Shangé the Blighted and the rest of the threats in the upper caverns, the wrigglers constantly pass through this area on their way to exit the caves for their nocturnal hunting trips. The sound of mining also attracts them. Every hour the PCs work the vein, there is a 75% chance 2d10 wrigglers enter the area and attack the party. The only way to safely mine the ore is to descend into the wriggler home territory and dispatch the entire tribe (an undertaking far beyond the scope of this adventure).

A narrow, low-ceilinged tunnel exits this area to the east and leads to area 1-9. Because of the cramped confines of the tunnel, even halflings must crawl down its length, imparting penalties to their actions (see "Spelunking in the Shudder Mountains" sidebar above). In addition, man-sized PC must make a DC 5 Agility check (modified by armor penalty) to avoid becoming stuck in the passage. A stuck PC can be extricated by another PC making a DC 12 Strength check.

If the PC choose to crawl down this passage, a single wriggler slinks from the southwest tunnel and attacks the last party member scrambling through the tunnel from behind. This attack, given the tight confines and impossibility of assistance from his comrades, may prove to be a terrifying and perhaps lethal encounter for the unlucky adventurer!

Area 1-9 – The Spoil: *Ebon fire crawls across the walls and ceiling of this cave, throwing a cascade of black, yet somehow glowing, light across the cavern. The fire limns numerous fossils of prehistoric life embedded in the surrounding stone with grim auras. The hair on your neck and arms stands up, affected by the static charge of unseen power. Six grim dwarves dressed in tattered leathers stand stock still in the cavern, their eyes black as the fire on the walls and their weapons aglow with dark light.*

This cave is a spoil, one of the residual deposits of Hsaalian magic that survived the destruction of the Luhsaal (see *The Chained Coffin Companion* p. 2). The decaying lunar sorcery has strange effects on persons and objects exposed to its radiance, and the dwarves here are no exception.

Originally a band of prospectors, these six dwarves found the gold vein in area 1-8, but were discovered in turn by Shange before they could make much progress mining it. Shange, still seeking to understand the spoil's power, killed the dwarves but restrained himself from drinking their blood. Instead he left their corpses inside the spoil and was amused when they arose with a semblance of life. They've remained here ever since serving as unwitting guardians of the spoil.

Spoiled Dwarves (6): Init +1; Atk pick/hammer +4 melee (1d5+1) or bone-breaker strike +1 melee (1d3+1 plus broken bone); AC 13; HD 3d6+2; hp 15 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP un-dead traits, bone breaking; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +1; AL C.

Haggard-seeming dwarves with ebon eyes and gaunt appearance, spoiled dwarves bear the wounds that killed them. Animated in a grim semblance of life by the spoil, these un-dead miners can strike with their tools to break the limbs of opponents. The bone-breaking attack is less likely to hit, but if it does connect, the target suffers either a (50% chance) broken arm (1-2 left; 3-4 right) or (50% chance) broken leg (1-2 left; 3-4 right). A PC with a single broken leg suffers a -10' penalty to speed, while a PC with both legs broken can only crawl at a rate of 5'. In the case of broken arms, the PC suffers a -2 to attacks if wielding a weapon with his non-dominant arm and a -2 penalty to all spell checks. A PC with both arms broken cannot attack or cast spells. Broken limbs can be healed with *laying on hands* (see *DCC RPG rulebook* p. 30).

The spoil's magic maintains the un-dead dwarves' animated state and they cannot move more than 50' away from area 1-9. If slain and searched, the dwarves has a total of 100 lbs. of

unrefined gold ore on them (see area 1-8 for further details), 27 sp, 12 gp, and a gold bracer worth 40 gp.

The fossils are natural remains of extinct creatures (trilobites, fish, and other aquatic creatures of the dim past). They have no innate powers or threats, but if carefully extracted (requiring a DC 14 Agility check), a fossil may fetch up to 10 gp if sold or have special uses in the crafting of magic items or similar magical wonder-working (judge's discretion). There are a dozen fossils in total.

Area 1-10 - Shange's Lair: *Crude but macabre furnishings transform this cavern into a living space. A table fashioned from a casket lid stands near a raised pallet piled high with blood-stained furs. A goblet encrusted with gore and fashioned from an upturned skull rests atop the table. A pair of packing crates, likewise marked with old blood, rest in a shadowy corner of the cave. A gnawed upon deer carcass lies to one side, with swarms of black flies buzzing about the spoiling meat.*

This cavern is Shange's main place of occupancy, but it is likely the blood-drinker is not at home when the PCs chance upon it (see "Shange's Strategy" above). Two cougars are found here, however, hiding in the shadows and waiting to spring on intruders.

Cougars (2): Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d6+3) or claws +1 (1d3+1); AC 13; HD 3d8; hp 15 each; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP two successful claw attacks allows for automatic rake attack that does 1d6+2 damage, stealthy (+4 bonus to surprise); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N.

THE WOEFUL CAVES SPOIL

The spoil in area 1-9 is a common spoil (see *The Chained Coffin Companion* p. 2). Its power only affects subjects exposed to its tainted radiation over prolonged periods. The PCs can examine the spoil cave safely without worrying about manifesting spoil-born changes during their initial exploration of the Woeful Caves. If they return here many times over a short period, however, they may find themselves subject to its power.

This spoil's magic produces two effects, one on living flesh and one on dead tissue. If a living creature is exposed to the spoil long enough to be affected by it, he must make a DC 12 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the PC undergoes one of following changes:

D4 Spoil-Born Change

- 1 PC gains the ability to transform himself into a great horned owl once per day for up to one hour. See Shange's description on p. 7 for details on this shape's abilities.
- 2 PC transforms into moonlight and cannot return to solid form. Unless subject to a *remove curse* spell within 48 hours, the PC's body dissipates, killing him.
- 3 The PC gains the power to command a single cougar as a faithful pet. When confronting a wild mountain lion, a successful DC 10 Personality check by the PC causes the animal to instantly become his loyal companion and the cat serves the PC until its death. The PC can only have a single cougar pet at one time.
- 4 The PC bursts into black flame, suffering 3d6 damage each round until extinguished. If the PC survives the conflagration, he gains a permanent +2 to saving throws against fire.

Dead tissue exposed to the spoil's power animates, becoming a bizarre and unique form of undead creature. The judge should create an appropriate menace, using the spoiled dwarves above as inspiration. The undead creature cannot venture more than 50' away from the cave.

A subject, either living or dead, exposed to the spoil's power can only be affected once. Subsequent bathing in its radiant magic produce no effect.

If Shange is not present when the PCs battle the cougars, he arrives 1d3+1 rounds later, drawn by the sound of combat. He appears from the opposite tunnel from which the group entered, his horrible visage emerging from the shadows with wicked battle axe in hand. He snarls with a crimson-stained mouth, spinning his axe in lazy, confident circles as he enters. In a soft, evil voice, Shange says, "Welcome to the feasting hall, fools. 'Tis time to die and me to dine." He then attacks with axe and fangs flashing.

Shange the Blighted, Backwoods Blood-Drinker (1): Init +4; Atk *reaver axe* +1+1d5 deed die melee (1d10+1+1d5 deed die) or bite +1+1d5 deed die melee (1d4+1+1d5 damage plus 1 Stamina point), critical special with *reaver axe* (see magic weapon description below); AC 13; HD 3d12+6 (3rd level warrior); hp 35; MV 30' or 40' fly (owl or moonlight form); Act 1d20; SP crit range 19-20, mighty deeds, suffers ½ damage from wooden (non-hawthorn wood) weapons, immune to normal metal weapons, immune to elemental (fire, water, air, and earth-based) damage, sunlight weakness, infravision 60', command cougars, assume owl shape and moonlight form; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL C.

Shange appears as a hulking 6'5" human male. His age is difficult to determine as his body is horribly scarred with old wounds. His nose has been sliced away, his scalp torn and scarred, his arms and legs crisscrossed by a score of gruesome gouges. Shange's teeth are sharp and permanently stained with blood, as is his chin and fingers. He dresses in a mixture of leather and chain armor, worn and rusted from long use. He wields a magical axe known as the *reaver axe* (see below) in battle and can bite to drain blood.

Between the blood curse that afflicts him and prolonged exposure to the spoil, Shange has several unusual powers. He can command up to 12 HD of cougars or other large felines. They obey his spoken command without question. He can also transform himself into a black-feathered great horned owl, granting him the ability to fly. His AC, saving throws, and special properties remain unchanged in this state, but he can only attack with his talons (1d3+1+deed die; 1d3+1+deed dmg). Any held or worn possessions are absorbed into his body when he changes shape. Shange can also transform himself into a patch of pallid light identical to moonlight. In this form, he resembles a human-sized, but indistinct cloud of light. Shange cannot attack in this form, but can fly at a speed of 40' and pass through small openings with ease. While in moonlight form, Shange is insubstantial and can only be injured by magic weapons and spells. As when in owl shape, his possessions transform with him.

Shange cannot be killed by any of the four elements, including iron and steel weapons made from earthly minerals. Wooden weapons inflict half damage, but hawthorn wood weapons do normal damage to the supernatural fiend. The blood-drinker must consume the blood of 4 HD worth of creatures each week or lose 1d6 hit points. Although sunlight does not damage Shange, he is weakened when exposed to it, suffering a -1 die penalty on all rolls. Despite his curse and near immortality, Shange is not un-dead and is unaffected by turning or holy objects.

If encountered here, Shange fights until reduced to 5 hp. He then assumes either owl or moonlight shape before streaking off into the caverns in an attempt to escape the party. His pre-

ferred avenues of escape are the tunnel leading down to the wriggler warrens (area 1-8) or the rock-choked tunnel leading to the surface in area 1-4). Should Shange escape, he'll seek revenge at a later date (see *Concluding the Adventure* below).

The furnishings in the cave are unremarkable aside from their crude construction. The goblet is indeed crafted from the cranium of one of Shange's victims and is worth 5 gp to collectors of the macabre. The two packing crates hold an array of clothing (mostly blood-stained) taken from the blood-drinker's meals, 97 cp, 74 sp, 36 gp, a fine wool cap (6 gp value), an empty arrow quiver of exquisitely tooled leather (10 gp value), a gold torc (25 gp value), and a pair of boots with a hollow heel containing a raw sapphire (50 gp value).

Reaver Axe (Magical Weapon): The reaver axe is a bearded axe with curved handle, resembling a cross between a scythe and a battle axe. The enchantment on the axe grants it two special properties. First, when used in battle its wielder uses a d20 for initiative and not the normal d16 for a two-handed weapon. Secondly, once per day the axe can be used by a warrior or dwarf to critically hit an opponent. The wielder must succeed in a mighty deed of arms against his foe, and if successful, the attack is automatically a critical hit. If the mighty deed fails, the axe's power is not lost for the day and can be attempted again on subsequent attacks. If the result of the mighty deed results in a natural critical hit, the wielder rolls twice on the critical hit table, taking whichever result he prefers.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The Woeful Caves under Yander Mountain ends with Shange's death, should the PCs accomplish that feat. If the immortal blood-drinker meets his demise at the party's hands, they stand to gain a potent magical weapon, one that will be useful in their adventuring careers (and against certain foes appearing in the *The Chained Coffin*). They may also discover a clue that will aid them in that adventure if they record or remember the strange cave paintings found in area 1-4 of the Woeful Caves.

Alternatively, if Shange escapes, the events of this adventure can have long-lasting ramifications. Shange, thwarted by lowly mortals, vows a blood vendetta on the party. He first finds a new redoubt to shelter himself away in, but then begins a campaign of vengeance on the party. Shange strikes the party's friends, family, and allies first, before going for the proverbial jugular by attacking the party directly. Should the judge wish, this campaign of vengeance can stretch on for months, with Shange becoming an ongoing foe of the party. As the PCs gain power, so does Shange. His experience with the spoil in Woeful Caves has taught him the power of such sites and he seeks out other spoils throughout the Shudders, bathing in their radiant magic and gaining new and unholy attributes as a result (to be determined by the judge). The party may gain insight into Shange's plans when witch liquor bootleggers are found drained of their blood at their still sites, a sure sign Shange still lurks in the Shudder Mountains. Only when the blood-drinker is destroyed for good will the party find a modicum of peace and can continue their adventuring careers in the world of *Dungeon Crawl Classics* without nervous eyes cast over their shoulders.



THE WOEUFUL CAVES

ELEVATION +10

ELEVATION +15'

ELEVATION +10'

LOW CEILING
SLOPE DOWN

1-1

1-2

1-4

1-5

1-3

1-7

1-6

1-9

1-8

1-10

TO?

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