

THE



THE DM TOOL CHEST

CAVES OF SILENCE

FIFTH EDITION ADVENTURE

An abandoned mine holds a secret that silently stalks the darkness

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DMDave is an amazingly talented writer and producer who has been creating top tier adventures, monsters, and player options for years. He is also the producer of Broadsword Monthly, an old-school style print magazine of our favourite Tabletop Role Playing Game. This adventure was written as a collaboration for the *Wrath of the Wyvern Kings* campaign printed in the forthcoming February 2021 issue.



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CREDITS

This adventure module was created with the help of all of these talented people:

Production & Design: The DM Tool Chest & DMDave Team

Cover Illustration: Dreamstime

Cartography: TJ Phoenix, [Forgotten Adventures](#)

Interior Illustrations: Dreamstime, [Matias Lazaro](#)

Thank You! To all of the awesome patrons who supported this work and to all the folks on the [DMDave](#) team!

RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE

In order to run this adventure, you will need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

Boxed text like this present descriptions meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. These are just prompts and may be used or not at the DM's discretion.

In this adventure you will come across references that point to information that is presented outside of this module.

Magic Items, Spells, and Equipment will be italicized and will be found described in either the core DM guidebook or the core player's rulebook.

Monster names will be in bold and the appropriate stat block will be found in the core fifth edition monster guidebook if not already presented in an attached Appendix.

ABBREVIATIONS

Common abbreviations used in this adventure:

pp - Platinum Piece(s)	LG Lawful good
gp - Gold Piece(s)	CG Chaotic good
ep - Electrum Piece(s)	NG Neutral good
sp - Silver Piece(s)	LN Lawful neutral
cp - Copper Piece(s)	N Neutral
NPC - Nonplayer Character	CN Chaotic neutral
DC - Difficulty Class	LE Lawful evil
AC - Armor Class	NE Neutral evil
xp - Experience Points	CE - Chaotic evil
hp - Hit Points	



ADVENTURE PRIMER

The Caves of Silence is a Fifth Edition adventure intended for **three to five characters** and is optimized for **four characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters who complete this adventure should earn enough experience to reach two-thirds of the way to level 4. An abandoned mine needs to be cleared of a nest of monsters so the town can reopen it and the miners can get back to work. This adventure takes place in the Omeria campaign setting but is designed to easily be used as a stand-alone or fit into an existing campaign that has an abandoned mine outside of a small town with only a few modifications. The party should be prepared for some difficult battles with the spiders inside the mine.

BACKGROUND

A phase spider and a nest of giant spiders have turned an abandoned mine just south of the town of Steeproost into their home, killing any who would try to take it back. Using the unique properties of a rare mineral that absorbs sound, the giant arachnids lie silently in wait for their meals to come to them. For years they have filled their bellies with the blood of anyone foolish enough to enter their lair, with their screams going unheard once they do.

ABOUT THE GRETSARD IRON MINE

The Gretsard Iron Mine was a major source of work and income for Steeproost until it was shut down five years ago. A small earthquake cracked open a massive sinkhole inside of the mine and before repairs could begin, it became home to a nest of nasty creatures that quickly took control of the entire complex.

The townsfolk tried hiring experts over the years to try to clear out the mines but whoever went down into that sinkhole was never heard from again. This is mostly because of a special mineral that absorbs sound called Red Ruthrophilite that was exposed when part of the mine collapsed years ago. Whenever someone entered the sinkhole, they would be ambushed by the monsters living below and the mineral would absorb any sound they would make.

ADVENTURE HOOK

The Quiet Legend Old Man Tillius loves to weave a tall tale down at the Broken Crossbow as long as you keep his flagon full. Last night he told the story of a local legend of the bottomless sinkhole in the “Caves of Silence” and how no one who has entered has ever been heard from again. He believes there is a treasure hidden below and an unspeakable monster must be guarding it.

Feed the Families. Vienill Faertath comes from a long line of farmers but broke the tradition when he went to work in the Gretsard Iron Mine almost a decade ago. After the mine collapsed and shut down, his family, like many others, were desperate to find any work they could to make ends meet. On the verge of destitution, Vienill and the other former miners reach out to the adventurers in hopes they will clear the mine so they can get back to work.

The Money Pit. With any investment, there is always the risk of losing everything. Lyzina Gretsard learned this the hard way five years ago when she lost it all with the collapse of her family’s iron mine. It was the start of a string of failed investments, but it is now her last chance to restore her family name to prominence. She’s offering a reward of 50 gp per adventurer if they can clear the “Caves of Silence” of all the current inhabitants.



6

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1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

THE CAVES OF SILENCE

The entrance to the mine can be reached by traveling just two hours south of Steeproost. The adventurers will follow a path through the forest and into the foothills where they will come across the abandoned mining camp just outside the overgrown entrance. A battered and bent set of rails leads from the old camp and into the mine entrance.

GENERAL FEATURES

Ceilings. The ceiling height of the mine varies from 8 feet in the side tunnels to 15 feet in the main tunnels and caves. Excavated rooms are made of rough stone supported by thick wooden beams.

Floors and Walls. The floor of the mines are hard packed earth and stone smoothed from travel over time. Most of the rough stone walls are held in place by supports but some have collapsed into piles of rubble.

Webbed Tunnels. There are many sections of the mines that are covered in webbing from the arachnid inhabitants. They are considered difficult terrain and each creature that starts its turn in the webs or that enters them during its turn must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or become restrained by the webs. A restrained creature can use its action to try to escape, doing so with a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Each 5-foot cube of giant webs has AC 10, 15 hit points, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, piercing, and psychic damage. The webs are flammable and any 5-foot cube of webs exposed to fire burns away in 1 round, dealing 5 (2d4) fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the fire.

Illumination. There are no light sources in the mine.

KEYED LOCATIONS

The following descriptions correspond to the provided map:

1 - MINE ENTRANCE

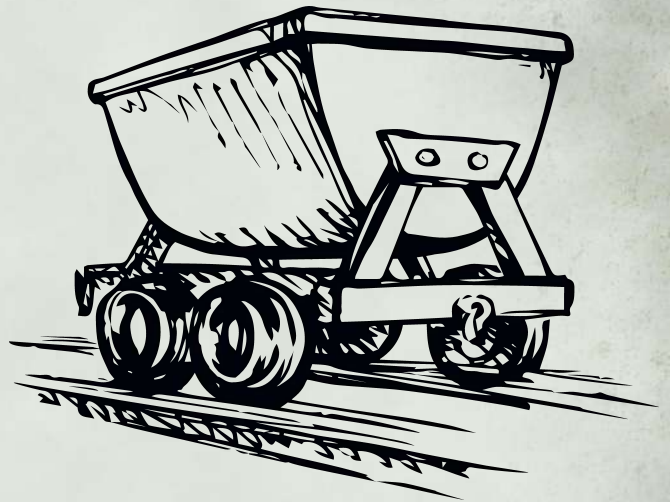
The trek on the path through the woodlands ends abruptly at a clearing at the base of the foothills. A few scattered planks and bits of rusted metal are all that remain of what was once a thriving mining camp. The broken remains of tracks still lie twisted and snapped from the strength of the earthquake years ago. They lead into the gaping maw of the mine's mouth, disappearing down into the waiting darkness.

Sitting on a piece of broken machinery staring into that black pit is an old Anorian man wearing a dusty leather coat that hangs to his knees, a red kerchief around his neck, and his chin on his knuckles. His brow is so deeply furled in thought, it's as if it is holding up the weight of the world by itself.

The Anorian will be surprised at the sight of the adventurers and will introduce himself as Veldrin Godeth, of Imfe Caan Asaari. He will explain that he sits here looking to gather the courage to enter the mine and retrieve a lost family heirloom,

a silver signet ring, from a family member who went missing in the mine. He will promise a great reward if the adventurers would do it in his stead and return it to his family home.

Veldrin is actually the **ghost** of a miner who was killed in the collapse five years ago; it is his own remains that lie at the bottom of the collapsed shaft (area 5). The adventurers will be able to determine his spectral nature with a successful DC 25 Wisdom (Perception) check.



2 - MAIN TUNNEL

The main tunnel slopes downward deeper into the earth the further it travels. Discarded mining gear litter the corners, rusting away or collapsing into heaps of debris. A thick layer of dirt and fallen rock covers everything; some of the wooden supports have completely fallen away and walls have crumbled down.

The largest section of the mine tunnel (near area 4) has collapsed and is closed off completely; it will require heavy work over a period of days to dig out the tunnel.

Trap: Weakened Tunnel The mine is still unstable, especially the closer to the collapsed shaft one goes. The tunnel leading to area 5 is so weak that anyone putting more than 5 pounds of pressure on that spot will cause a 5-foot-wide and 10-foot-deep sinkhole to appear. An adventurer will avoid falling into the collapsed floor with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check, with a failed check resulting in 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

Treasure: A Heavy Load There is 200 pounds of iron ore worth 100 sp sitting in a mining cart.

3 - DARKMANTLE LAIR

The oldest part of the mine, the sturdy supports in these tunnels mostly remain intact. Discarded stacks of old planks and other equipment lie in haphazard piles along one wall. Thick strands of webbing cover the individual mining tunnels jutting out from the main tunnel.

Encounter: A Mantle of Darkness. Four **darkmantles** live here in the side tunnels. They will use their Darkness Aura ability to ambush the party from above.

Hazard: Webbed Tunnels. Thick, sticky webbing covers the four individual tunnels (see "General Features").

4 - WEBBED CAVE

Thick webbing covers this entire section of the mine. Barely visible bundles of wrapped objects and corpses, as well as barrels and crates poke out between the web strands as well.

Encounter: Ambush. An **ettercap**, a **giant spider**, and two **giant wolf spiders** nest in the corners of this cave. As soon as anything touches the webs, they will move to attack. The giant spider and giant wolf spiders will engage the party with a direct attack, drawing them into the cave, while the ettercap will attempt to scuttle behind them and hit them with its Web ability.

Hazard: Webbed Cave. This entire area is covered in thick, sticky webbing (see “General Features”).

Treasure: Corpse Cocoons. There are a total of three corpses cocooned deep in the webbing. Two of the corpses are miners with a combined total of 17 sp and 24 cp on them. The third corpse can be found crammed into a crevice in the ceiling with a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. This one is of a former adventurer with 10 gp and two *potions of healing* in a satchel. A small journal in the satchel tells the short-lived story of his life from fisherman to mercenary whose crew took a job to clear out Gretsard mine over two years ago.

5 - COLLAPSED SHAFT

There's a slight sense of vertigo that can be felt the closer one gets to the edge. The feeling is faint and fleeting, but noticeable.

The bottom of the mining tunnel suddenly drops down into a stygian pit of pitch-black darkness. The mining track's rails project over this pit, twisted and reaching towards the other side but unable to span the width. Its partner rails sit on the other side of the expanse, reaching towards them but unable to touch.

The pit itself is broader than it is wide with the bottom indiscernible and small flecks of red crystal embedded in the walls.

The pit is 50 feet deep with webbing strung between the walls that begin halfway down. Touching the webs will alert the guardians of the pit.

Hazard: Muffled Sounds. The crystal in the walls is Red Ruthrophilite and any creature within 5 feet of the walls of the pit will be under the effects of its sound absorption attribute (see sidebar) as if holding one ounce of the mineral.

Encounter: The Silent Killers. A **giant spider** and three **giant wolf spiders** nest at the bottom of the shaft in area 6. Their Web Sense ability will alert them once a creature moves halfway down the tunnel and they will all climb up to attack them.



RED RUTHROPHILITE

This crystalline mineral has a unique property that is magnified by how much is held. When a creature is touching at least one ounce of this mineral, that creature will have any sound it makes absorbed by the crystal to a certain percentage.

With one ounce held, the crystal suppresses sounds made by the holder, granting them a +4 bonus on Dexterity (Stealth) checks. The holder will also have a 20% (+10% per additional ounce held) chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components or using abilities that require audible components.

A *silence* spell cast while using one ounce of this mineral as a material component will negate the need for concentration to maintain the spell and will double its duration to 20 minutes.

6 - SILENCED CAVE

The bottom of the pit ends in a small cave covered in old webs with a southern path leading down and into area 7. Bits of splintered wood and bent metal from the fallen mining track lay scattered across the ground. They lie mixed with the broken skeletons and equipment of the miners and would-be heroes who have fallen to their deaths over the years.

Hazard: *Silenced.* The Red Ruthrophilite crystals in the walls are noticeably bigger in this section of the shaft and the entire room is under the effects of a permanent *silence* spell.

Treasure: *The Heirloom.* The skeletal remains of Veldrin Godeth lie here tucked into a corner of the room where he fell and broke his neck. A silver signet ring (5 gp) with an ornately carved capital letter “G” upon it is still attached to one of his finger bones.

7 - SPIDER NEST

This large cavern is almost completely covered in webbing. The ceiling is 30 feet high and covered in stalactites that thrust down into the cavern with webbing strung between them all. The Red Ruthrophilite crystals are much smaller in the walls here to the point of having no effect unless the walls are specifically touched. Dozens of cocooned bodies are hung like so many sides of beef from the ceiling and in the massive webs.

Hazard: *Webbed Cavern.* Webs cover most of the cavern (see “General Features”).

Encounter: *It's Just a Phase.* The **phase spider** and **giant spider** in the home nest will coordinate their attacks. The giant spider will use its Web ability to entangle weaker opponents while the phase spider will attack the strongest. The phase spider prefers to use its Ethereal Jaunt ability to “blink” behind an opponent and then use its Bite action.

Treasure: *The Spider Hoard.* After cutting down all the corpses and looting them, the hoard contains 280 cp, 112 sp, 42 gp, three *potions of healing*, and a set of *Chain Mail of the Spider* (see sidebar).

AFTERMATH

If characters succeed in clearing the mine, they will not find Veldrin Godeth because his spirit has moved on. If they seek him out in Imfe Caan Asaari, whoever they ask will look at them oddly and then point them in the direction of the Godeth family home, a middle-class dwelling not too far from the Dragonwatch Inn. There they will meet Veldrin's widow Belardara and their son, Veldrin, who was named for his father. She will tearfully thank them for returning the signet ring, explaining how it was lost when her husband died in the mine's collapse five years ago. She will give the adventurers 5 gp each and a hearty dinner as a thank you.

If the adventurers failed to clear out the mine, their bodies will never be found as the spiders wrap them up tightly in their cocoons and feast on them. Eventually, the town will slowly forget about the mine as the forest to the south of town becomes increasingly dangerous, and the giant spider population blooms over the years. Growing ever larger, the spider threat eventually comes knocking to Steeproost's very door.

ADVENTURE HOOK RESOLUTION

The Quiet Legend. After clearing the mine and returning to Steeproost, the locals at the Broken Crossbow are eager to hear the tale, buying round after round of ale. Old Man Tillius will sit quietly in a corner grumbling at not being the center of attention but absorbing every word for his future renditions of the legend of the “Caves of Silence”.

Feed the Families. The mining families will shower the characters with praise and take them to the Broken Crossbow where they will eat, sing, and dance in their honor; the party's cups will overflow, and their bellies will be filled. The families will pay for their food and lodging for the next week.

The Money Pit. Lyzina Gretsard will honor her word and pay the adventurers what was promised. She will promise to reach out to them if she's ever in need of help clearing out monsters ever again. Once she announces to the town that the mine will reopen, the former miners rejoice with the adventurers in the Broken Crossbow. Ω

CHAIN MAIL OF THE SPIDER

Armor (chain mail), rare (requires attunement)
You gain a +1 bonus to AC while you wear this armor.

While wearing this armor, climbing doesn't cost you extra movement.



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