

REACH OF THE ROACH GOD



KICKSTARTER
PREVIEW



Here is a preview of QUIET LAKE, one of three adventure scenarios in REACH OF THE ROACH GOD!

This is almost the full first adventure; missing are its introduction and orientation sections, and various endpapers -- loot tables, what-happens-now tie-ins to other sections of ROTRG's overarching campaign, etc. We hope this gives you a glimpse at what we are trying to achieve with our book!

Two notes:

- The amount of art that you see in this preview is the amount we'd ideally like to have throughout ROTRG;
- The layout in this preview is quite basic, and is close to what I can achieve, working on layout myself.

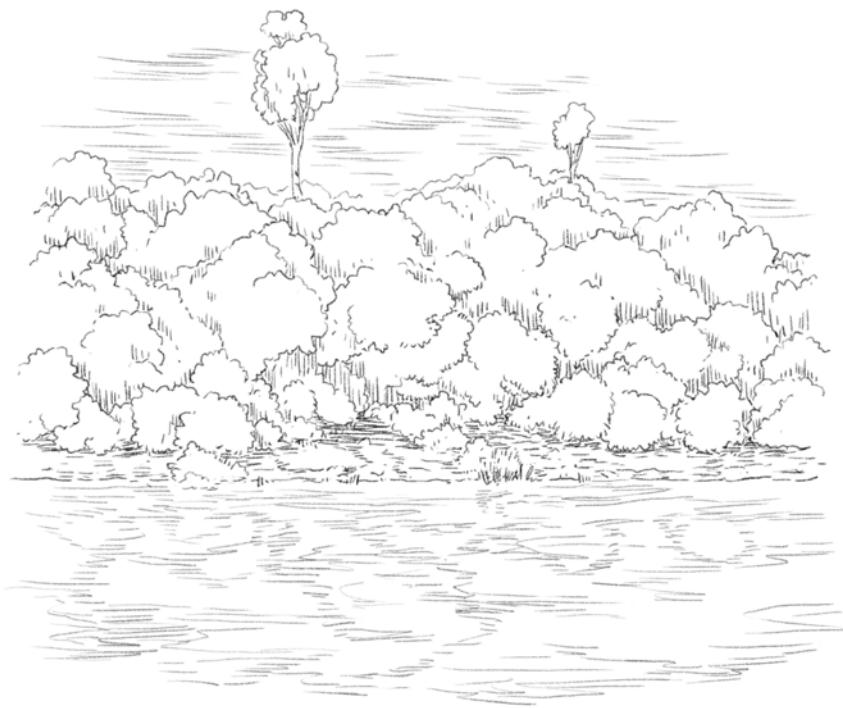
Both art and layout in the final version of the book depend on hitting stretch goals. If the Kickstarter campaign for ROTRG raises enough funds, we will be able to:

- Create more art for the remaining chapters, so they are as visually sumptuous as QUIET LAKE;
- Hire professional designers (in this case, awesome Malaysian studio **hrftype** to create ROTRG's layout.

We hope we hit those stretch goals. We really need your help!

If you enjoyed this preview, do support us by pledging to and sharing the REACH OF THE ROACH GOD Kickstarter campaign! Check it out [HERE](#).

Best,
Munkao



TWO DAYS, WEST ON THE RIVER

People tell you they have seen a shape in flight, at night. You hear something keening, far overhead -- "Eh-hueh eh-heeee!"

All things hush. Three breaths pass. Somewhere a baby, startled awake, starts to scream

GINTA'S TEA STALL

Travellers sleep on the floor, after closing time. But now the lamps are relit. Ginta is cutting nuts, folding them into betel leaves; he's put a wine-jug on the stove.

Locals are arriving. They come armed. They will try to **gossip** their worry away.



LURA, WORRIED MOTHER

Ordinary. Hale. Weapon arts, drinking, surviving. Hand axe. Unprotected.

Hefts her axe in one arm, and her bawling infant daughter in the other.

“Warm milk, Ginta? Put some wine in it?” But before Lura can feed her, baby Ika is out again, like a wick pinched out.

Lura will fear for her daughter. Tomorrow Ika will sit upright, her eyes turned black-brown, chanting nonsense: “**O do yoq o do yoq o do yoq**.”



GHIKRI, GOAT HERDER



Ordinary. Frail. Goats, knots, running. Fencing mallet. Unprotected.

Gangly. Their words come out quivering, as if dosed by too much caffeine.

“A kid! A **kid’s missing!**” They found the gate unlatched (pg xx), the goats huddled on the shed roof, bleating like spooked aunties.

They found a **chitinous spike** stuck to a fence post. “Look! A barb. From the monster? Ow!” They’ve **pricked their thumb**. It soons swells with pus.

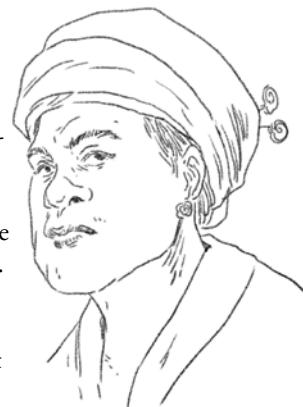
IBA, BAMBOO CUTTER

Ordinary. Hale. Machete-craft, forestry, singing. Machete. Unprotected.

Weightlifter’s bearing, light moustache. Answers in low monosyllables.

Iba is too brave, her neighbours say. Unwise to visit Quiet Lake (pg xx) at the best of times, much less now, her neighbours say. She should stay away.

“Okay,” Iba says. But **she’ll be at the lake tomorrow**. She met somebody, bathing there. They **rendezvous every day**, now.



MUSUN NUN, BEAD PEDDLER

Ordinary. Frail. Bead-craft, boats, negotiating. Dagger. Charmed beads.

Clinky, jingly -- covered in bead loops and bangles. No indoor voice.

Musun refuses to leave any merchandise in her boat (pg xx). Two nights ago she found a **bat monster** hunched on the bow, rifling through her boxes.

“Giant bat! It **stole my pearl necklace!** Capsized my boat!”
Not satisfied unless said necklace is returned, and reparations paid.



GALAK DENG, VILLAGE HEALER

Ordinary. Frail. Healing, histories, spitting. Blowpipe. Brass amulet.



Terrible breath, skin like rough bark. Sentences choked by phlegm.

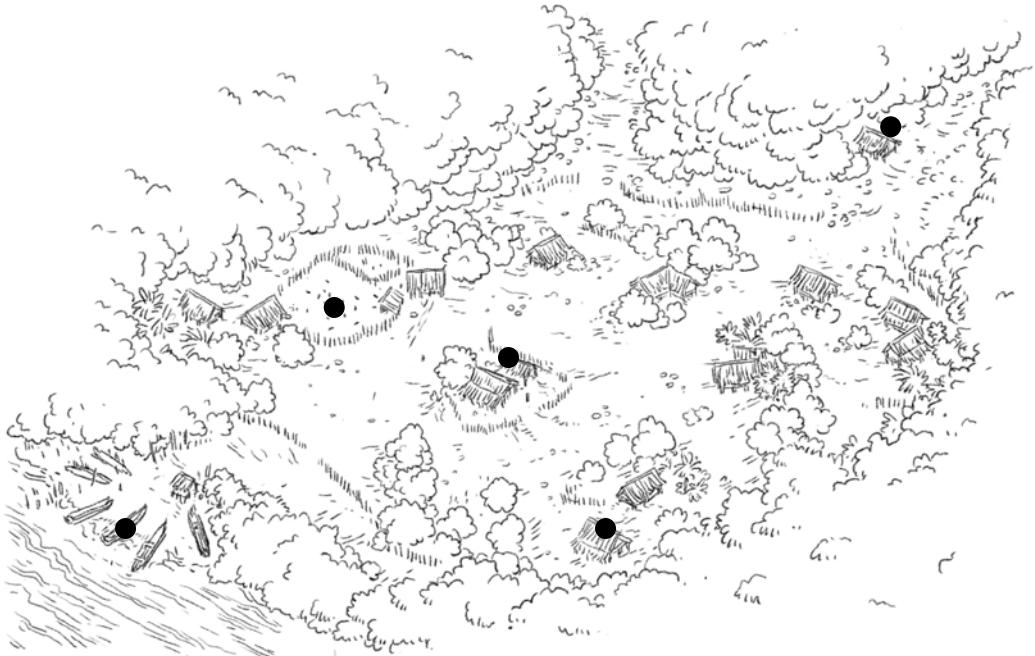
Handing out paper charms to everybody he meets. These charms make their bearers **invisible to tiger-shaped creatures.**

Galak warns you against visiting Quiet Lake. “It is a sacred place. It is not evil. But it is not inclined to involve itself in our troubles.”



Locals know the story of Elalela (pg xx) , and how Quiet Lake came to be. They do not know Odoyoq's name; in their tellings, he is always referred to as “**the ogre**”.

VILLAGE CENTRE



- MUSUN'S BOAT

Caulked with hex-paper, **nobody aboard may tell a lie.** Except Musun.

- LURA'S

Stowed in the rafters: a **brass shield** fringed with faded campaign ribbons.

- GOAT SHED

The largest billy has a bite on his neck, as if made by **mandibles**. It festers. After a day: **roaches** erupt from the wound.

- GINTA'S TEA STALL

Sells **fresh food** that spoils after two days; sells jars of **wine** that keep.

- IBA'S

Musun's **pearl necklace** hangs from a windowsill. Iba swears she knows nothing about it. She suspects her **lover** (pg xx).

Blood spatter leads to **Horsehead Cave**

(pg xx).



STAR'S SHRINE

Nine person-sized megaliths in a circle. Vague carvings, worn by time. Each stained with **recent honey and lime juice** -- devotions by Dee Wee Shree (pg xx).

Pomelo-wide hole in the circle's middle: **Star's Well** (pg xx). You glimpse a palm-leaf book with gold covers, on a teak desk.

This is as close to Quiet Lake as the roaches will come.

HORSEHEAD CAVE

Garlanded with giant taro leaves. Inside: gore and bone. The kid's **left leg remains**.

At the back of the cave: a **chitin spear** and a **chitin club**. Jam-jar-shaped **droppings**, wedged among the rocks.

Office-vent-sized entrance to **Ma Blat's Passages** (pg xx), exhaling the odour of warm almond milk.

RIVER CAVE

Wade against a languid current into darkness.

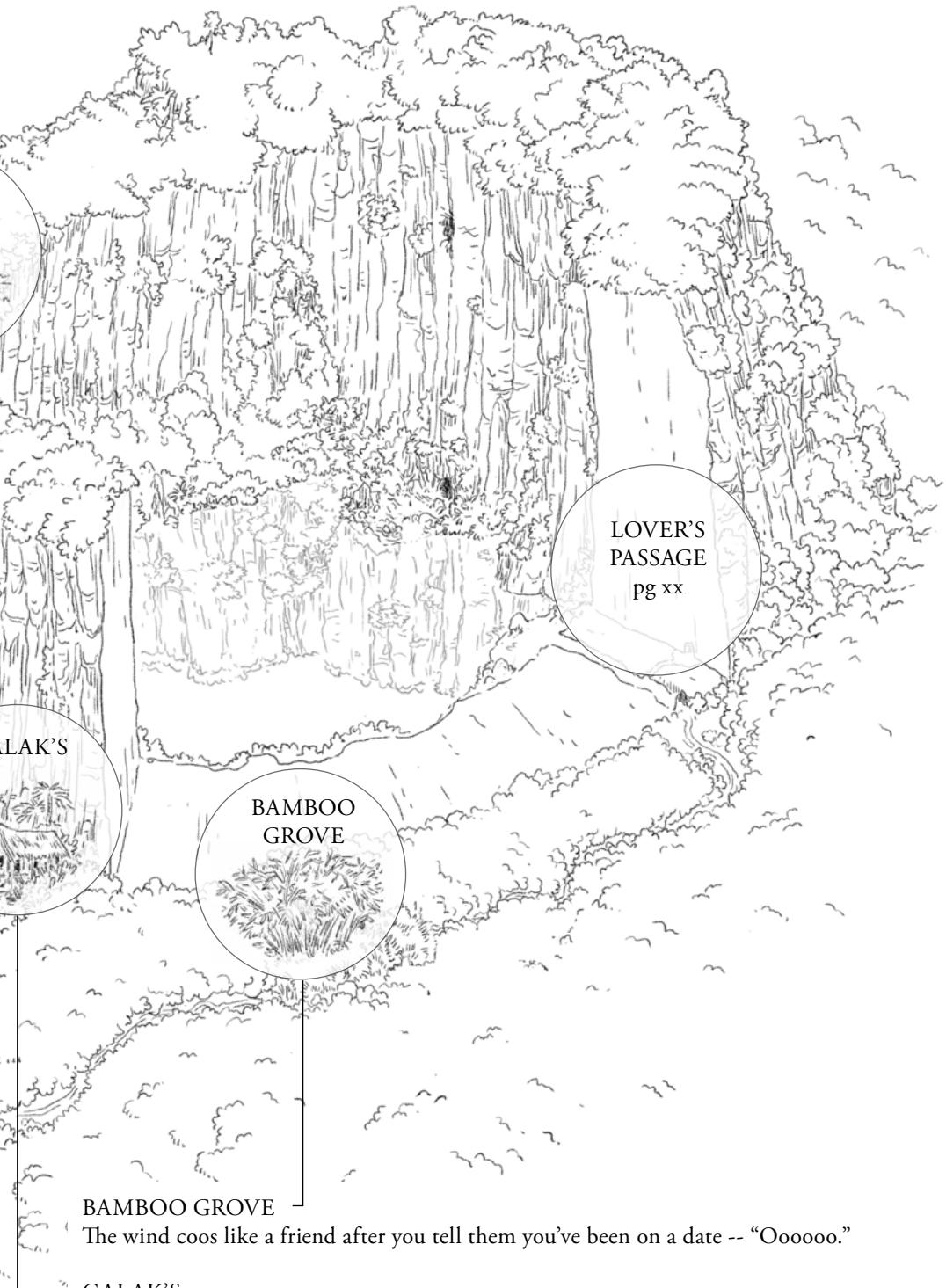
"Cola-can-shaped droppings bumping the waterline, caught between rocks. This trail leads to **Ma Blat's Passages** (pg xx).

STAR'S
SHRINE

HORSEHEAD
CAVE

RIVER CAVE

VILLAGE
CENTRE
pg xx



BAMBOO GROVE

The wind coos like a friend after you tell them you've been on a date -- "Oooooo."

GALAK'S

Sells **medicines**. Conducted with all his accoutrements, Galak's ceremonies have a 1-in-6 chance to **cure a roach malady** (pg xx).

TRAVEL ARQJND QUIET LAKE

Travel between unconnected locations generally takes a half-day, through rough forested ground.

ENCOUNTERS ARQJND QUIET LAKE

There is always something. Roll whenever you travel outside the village centre:



- 1 The sudden and total lack of insect-song

- 1 Unwittingly announcing

- 1 The witch apprentice
1 Grippa, with spider hands.

- 2 A **boar**, with corkscrew tusks and a limp

- 2 Momentarily spooking

- 2 A **banded krait**: venomous, beautiful, retiring.

- 3 A **cockerel**, frozen mid-strut, comb bright

- 3 Intentionally baiting

- 3 A sudden commotion of breeze-swept leaves.

- 4 A cicada. It hisses: “**O do yoq o do yoq!**”

- 4 Successfully losing

-  A swarm of flying **roach-es**, scouting ahead.

-  A cat-sized **roach soldier** (pg xx), missing a limb

- 5 Pointedly ignoring

-  A raiding party: six dog-sized **roach soldiers** (pg xx).

- 6 The shadow of **giant bat** (pg xx), swooping low

- 6 Clumsily trailing

- The bat ascetic **Dee Wee Shree** (pg xx), gliding high.

When you roll an encounter with roaches , they begin to attack the village.

ROACH ENCOUNTERS



After One Encounter With Roaches

Signs of struggle by the river. Upended box of painted shells. Trail of beads (pg xx) leads to River Cave. **Musun is missing.**



After Two Encounters With Roaches

Yelling. **Lura's home** (pg xx) **is under attack**. She cuts down three roach soldiers by herself, but a fourth books it, baby Ika in their arms. Attempts to escape down Horsehead Cave (pg xx).



After Four Encounters With Roaches:

Ma Blat (pg xx) and her soldiers attack the village in force. They **abduct all creatures present.**



You never encounter roaches at Quiet Lake, only in the surrounding area (pg xx). If forced within sight of the lake they retreat, terrified.

TRAVEL AT QUIET LAKE

Spiteful, Dee Wee Shree (pg xx) may use his liquid-ogre form to **capsize boats crossing the lake**. Deposits swimmers onto the closest shore.

The limestone walls are sheer, but riddled with ledges, lianas. Climbing takes time and care: **a half-day to any cave entrance or Star's Shrine**.

ENCOUNTERS AT QUIET LAKE

There is always something. **Roll whenever you embark on a climb:**



1 Dancing butterflies with sizzling blue stripes

1 Assisting

1 Spider-handed **Grippa**, apprentice insect witch.

2 A circling **kite**, wingspan wide as your height

2 Just before

2 A **goat**, late of Ghikri's shed, lost, bleating sadly.

3 A five-minute **down-pour**, slicking the stones

3 Scolded by

3 A loud treeshrew: “**O do yoq o do yoq o do yoq!**”

4 A **gap** in the ledge, about twelve paces long

4 Unnoticed by

4 A **giant gecko**, camouflaged in a shallow crack.

5 A bundle of rattan -- swaying, snapping loose

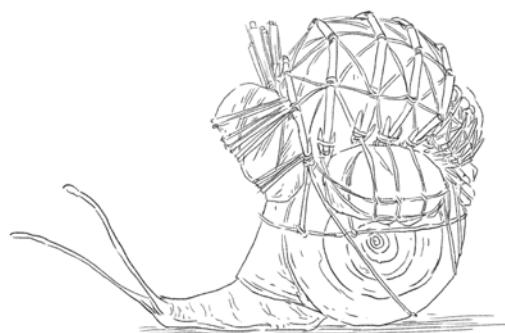
5 In the way of

A troop of **spectacled langurs** -- leaping, laughing.

6 Grippa's **pack snail** -- empty harness; grazing

6 Endangering

6 The bat ascetic **Dee Wee Shree**, creeping down.



QUIET LAKE

The water swallowed Odoyoq's regret -- at all that he longed to say to his heart's desire, yet never did. Things are hushed, here. Sound carries. The distant chirrup of swiftlets.

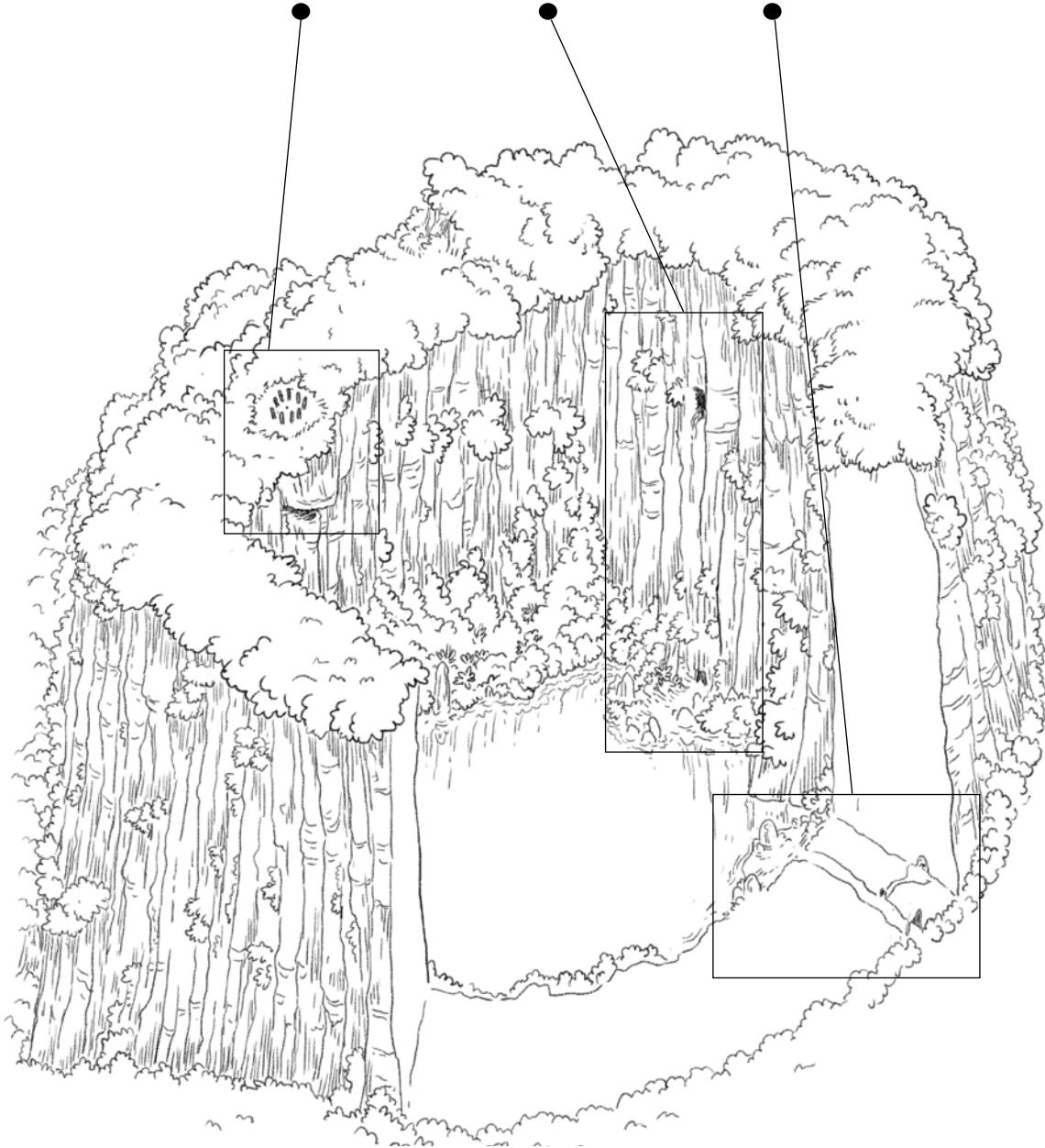
The lake inspires an ancestral, existential horror in roaches. **Roaches may never be goaded into its presence.**

ASCETIC'S CAVE SWIFTLET CAVE LOVER CAVE

pg xx

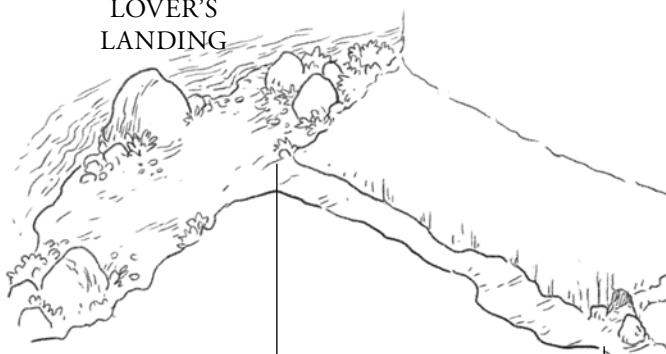
pg xx

pg xx



LOVER CAVE

LOVER'S
LANDING



LOVER'S LANDING

A **boulder** broad enough to spread-eagle on, facing the lake's mirror surface.

Every afternoon: a bamboo bundle, folded clothes. A splash. **Iba is singing**. Entangled with a liquid pillar shaped like an idealised, underwear-model **ogre**.

Red gourami swim in the ogre's pecs. They stream towards his fingers. Iba giggles and moans.

LOVER'S PASSAGE —

Hewn-rock **tunnel**. Light at the end, to **Lover's Landing**. The air is sweet and stings your eyes. Incense.

LOVER'S SHRINE —

An alcove, an **altar**. Iba has been burning benzoin for the figure of a woman, spearing the chest of an **ogre**.

The alcove is walled with piled rocks. Behind them:

Lover's Spiral.

LOVER'S SPIRAL —

Dripping, gurgling. Fed by Quiet Lake: five pools connected by wet vertical squeezes.

Final squeeze ends as a light drizzle into **Lover's Rest**.

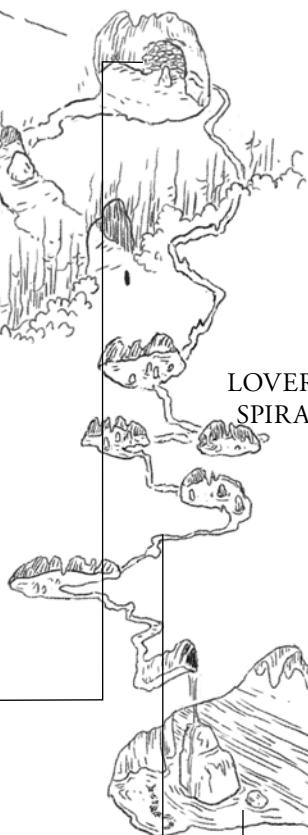
LOVER'S REST —

Water rains on a stone. It could have been a seated stone idol, once. Behind it: an alcove of dug earth. The **river centipede retreats here** if injured.

Open mouth to **Must-Not's Way**.

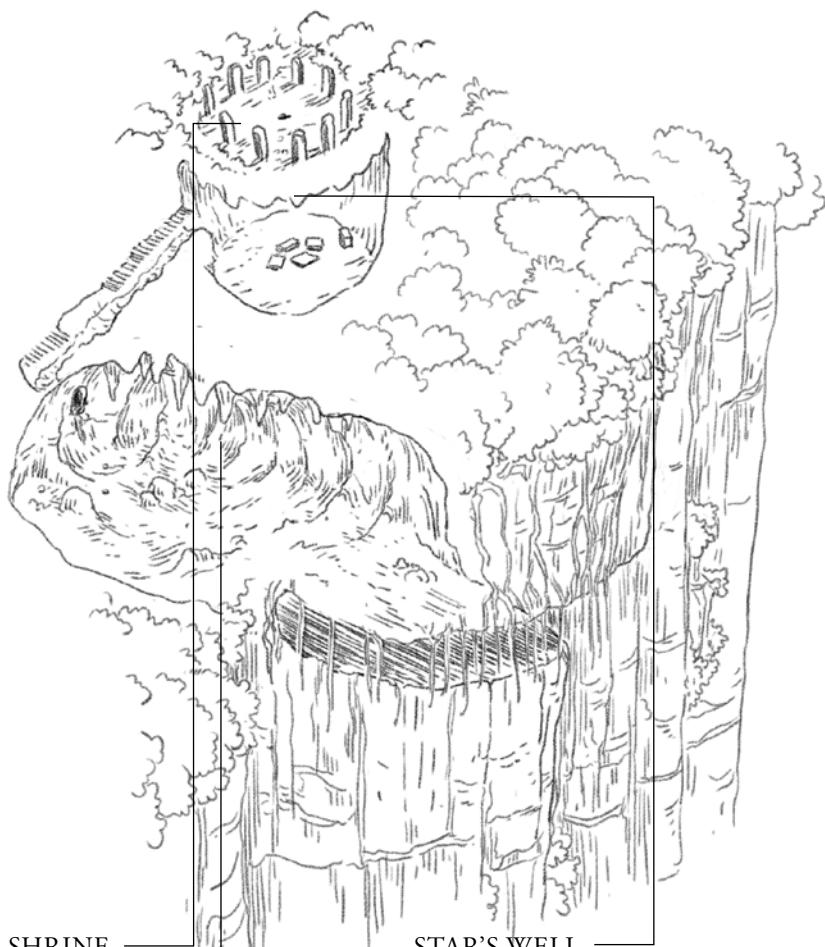
This is as close to Quiet Lake as the roaches will come.

LOVER'S SHRINE



LOVER'S
REST

ASCETIC'S CAVE



STAR'S SHRINE

ASCETIC'S PAVILION

A hole in an overhang. Vines like stage curtains. Commands a view of the whole lake.

Brass handles in the ceiling. Usually present:
Dee Wee Shree, trying to meditate. If he sees
you **he leaves in the opposite direction**.

Afternoons: he conjures his liquid-ogre form
to tryst with Iba.

Stepped ceiling leads to a locked brass door:
Star's Well. Dee Wee Shree has the **key**.

STAR'S WELL

Oubliette with a pomelo-wide **skylight**--
Star's Shrine.

Here, the **Quiet Lake Scripture** sits on a teak desk. Gold covers, archaic bat-folk script. The book:

Explains the benefits of abstinence from
carnal acts;

Teaches a ritual mantra to help one focus: "**O
do yoq**";

Details two spells: **Control Water**; **Com-
mand Small Creatures**.

SWIFTLET CAVE

SWIFTLET COLONY

Noise batters you. **No floor**; it is a ten-storey drop to **Guano Cave**.

Half-cup nests honeycomb the north wall. Air thick with birds. Approach and be **viciously pecked**. The colony is upset; Grippa has been **collecting nests**.

GUANO CAVE

Chirping din from **Swiftlet Cave** above. Poop patters on an **elephant-sized pile** against the north wall.

Clicking mass movement. They scatter from your every step -- beetles, isopods, spiders, pseudoscorpions. **Hurry and risk a venomous sting**. Conspicuously missing: roaches.

Mornings: **Munta** (pg xx) sits still, so insects crawl over them. Gently picking and boxing specimens.

PALM LANDING

Fan-palm-choked beach.

Afternoons: **Grippa** (pg xx) spies on Iba and her lover.

Entrance to **Guano Cave**. It breathes compost and lacquered, rotting wood.

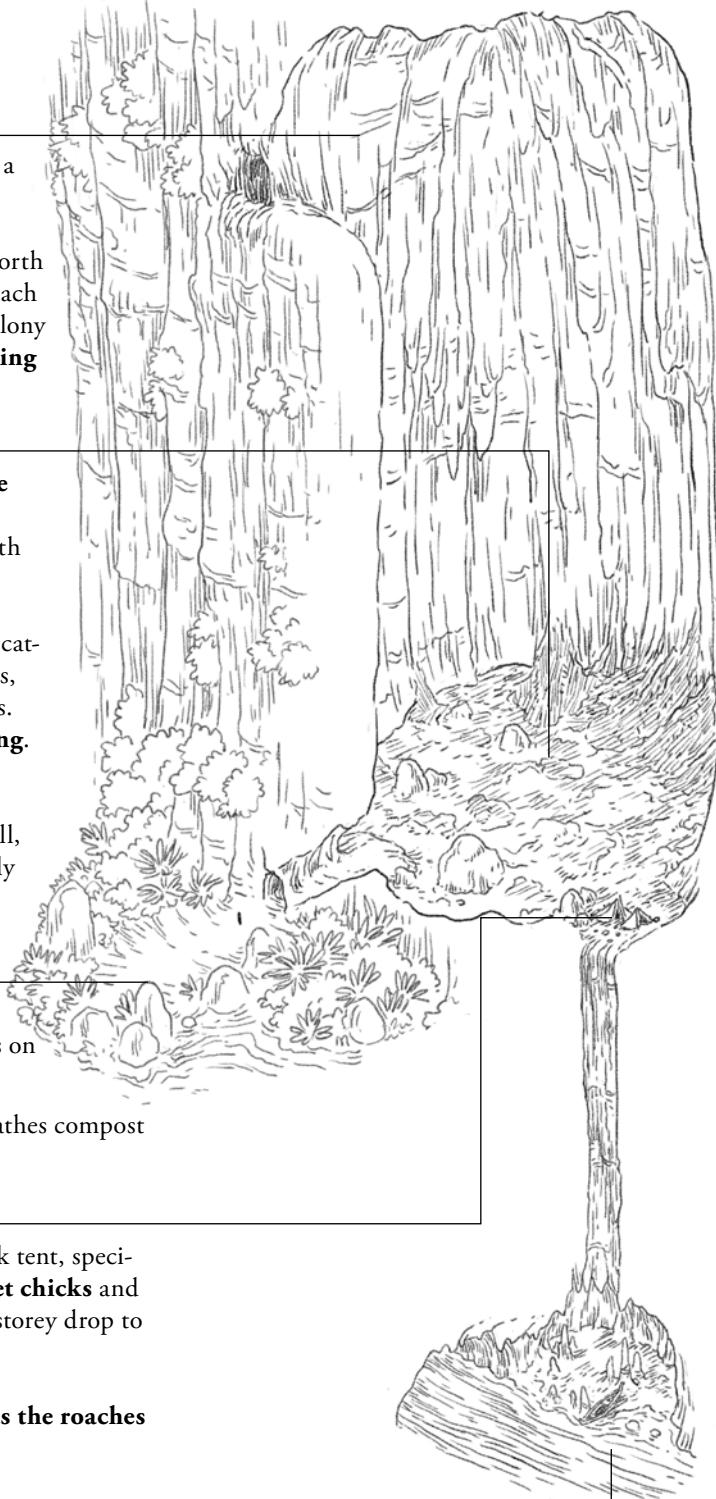
MUNTA'S CAMP

Red glow from a resin torch. Silk tent, specimen boxes, dissections of **swiftlet chicks** and nests. Around the corner: a five-storey drop to **Munta's Landing**.

This is as close to Quiet Lake as the roaches will come.

MUNTA'S LANDING

pg xx

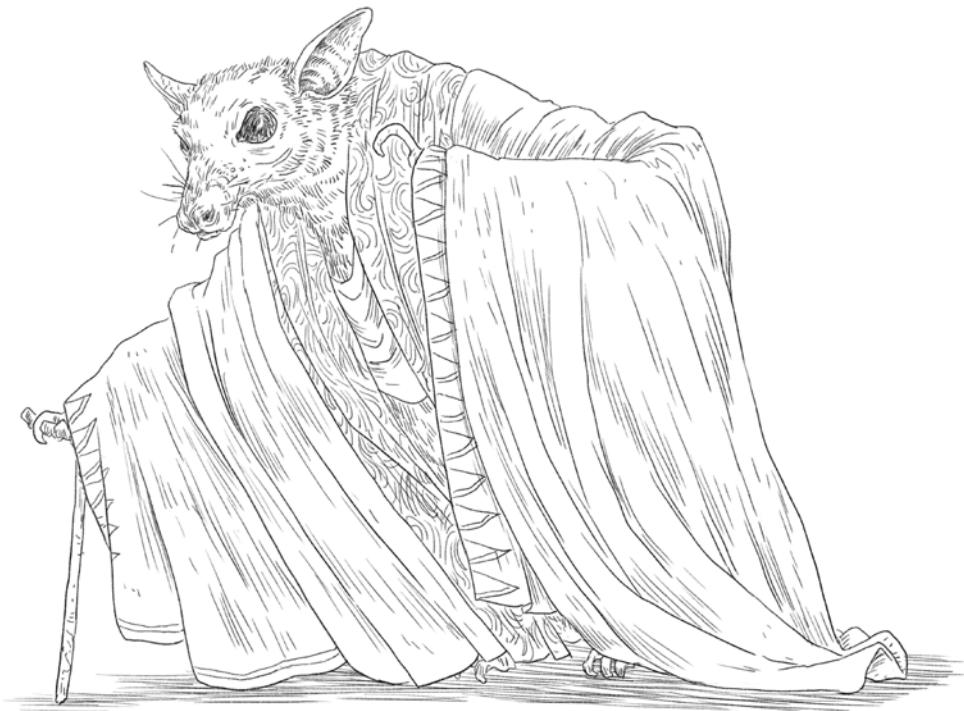


THE BAT

Dee Wee Shree belongs to one of the priestliest lineages of the City of Bats. He flew in **a month ago**, intent on a year in pious seclusion.

He **causes the chants** that small animals and Lura's baby speak -- his mindfulness leaks.

He has been distracted. The villagers **see him flying**, at night. They **hear him scream** his lovelorn anxiety: "Hueh eh-heeee!" He stole Musun Nun's **pearl necklace**.



DEE WEE SHREE, ANGSTY ASCETIC

Powerful. Frail. Spells, fashion, love-making. Control Water. Charmed earring, charmed anklet.

Saucer-wide eyes. Swaddled in dull-coloured silk. Emotes like a stage actor.

Will **hurt no living creature**. Dee Wee Shree is seeking enlightenment. Truly! But he has been sorely tested. First the swiftlets were too loud.

Then he met the girl. He doesn't even know her name. She thinks he is a handsome ogre. **What if she discovers he is a bat?** What then? What to do? He begins to hyperventilate: "Eh-hueh heeee!"

THE ORANG UTAN

Munta; their students **Grippa** and **Dooboo**; their **three pack snails** -- they came up **one week** prior.

They **do not trust daylanders**. They assume you ignorant and unreliable.

Munta is curious about the **local caves' lack of roaches**. Perhaps this quality may be instrumentalised as a defence against Odoyoq's armies? **Unaware of Quiet Lake's history**.



MUNTA, INSECT WITCH

Extraordinary. Frail. Insect-lore, poisoning, mocking. Charm Spiders. Charmed necklace.

Moves like your grandparent getting up from a chair. White hair.

A monomaniac. To Munta you are either a tool to **help them test theories**, or you are getting in the way. Dew-headed fool. Shoo!

Their **current theory**: something in the swiftlets is a roach repellent. They just have to isolate the correct property.

GRIPPA, FURTIVE APPRENTICE

Extraordinary. Hale. Spider-lore, climbing, watching. Spiders. Charmed hair-tie.

Huddles so he seems smaller than you. Embarrassed mumble.

Understands spiders. Grippa talks to them, trains them. Spiders are not easily tamed. He lost both hands to spiders. He replaced his hands with spiders.

Too shy to meet the bathing woman. Jealous of the water ogre. Knows said **ogre is related to the bat** he's spotted in Ascetic's Cave.



DOOBOO, AMOROQS APPRENTICE

Extraordinary. Hale. Sword-craft, feeling, tasting. Stalagmite sword. Stone head, stone arms. necklace.

Slurred speech, noticeable sway. Dooboo denies being drunk.

She has been licking the drips and rivulets in these caves. Tasty water -- mm. "And aren't you a tasty soft-skin!" Aggressively **crushes on the first daylander** she meets.

Will not admit she is **afraid of the sun**. Stay in Munta's Landing. "Am keeping watch," she says. "For, um, dangers. And stuff."

ROACH SOLDIERS

Ordinary. Frail. Polearm-craft, flying, abducting. Chitin spear. Chitin back.

As tall and as cruel as children get, when raised by cruelty. As chatty as children. “Where did I come from? Does that hurt? Are you good to eat?”

As foul as children get. Any injury they cause has a 2-in-6 chance of transmitting a **roach malady**.

Roach swarms obey them. Additionally, this roach soldier is:



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Missing three eyes. Bumbles. | 4 Wearing another roach's leg. |
| 2 Wearing a belt of chitin darts. | 5 Missing their head. Stumbles. |
| 3 Covered with ritual scratches. | 6 Wearing a ragged silk cloak. |

ROACH MALADIES

Odoyoq was never mightiest among his siblings; he prevailed by other means. Ma Blat's brood carries particular virulent malaises.

You are showing **symptoms**:

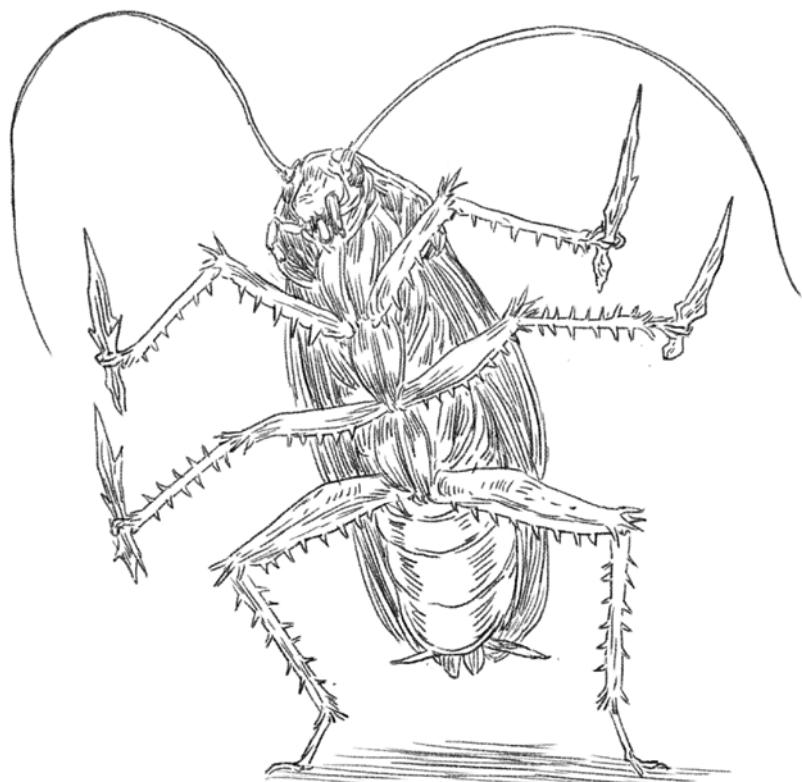
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|---|--|
| 1 Eggs. The site of your wound swells. After a day, a roach swarm emerges. Concentrate, and you feel what they feel. | 2 Belly spasm. Hereafter, when you defecate, you pass roach-like, jar-shaped droppings. This symptom is incurable. |
| 3 Parasites. Wriggling under your skin. You require twice your usual rations. Each day the worms double in size. | 4 Fever. Breaks in three days. Hereafter, you sweat milk. Attracts roaches. If they drink it they obey you for an hour. |

5 **Vomiting.** Last a day. Hereafter, only food that has gone through another creature's digestive tract will nourish you.

6 **Rashes.** Spreads from the site of your wound. The itch is distracting; after three days, you only think of scratching.

Attempting treatment requires a **clean environment**.

Catch **three roach maladies?** Reality itself begins to see you as a roach soldier -- you are susceptible to Ma Blat's influence, and fear Quiet Lake.



THE ROACH CENTIPEDE

She was a daughter of the roach god Odoyoq -- a creation of his wizards' twisted chitin-craft. She escaped, taking her brood with her.

Fleeing down the Forbidden River, she arrived here. Her soldiers have seen **three days**, since.

Settling these passages is a calculation. True: they are close to a **nameless watery dread**. But this means her family is less likely to pursue.

They are close to the dayland: a world of inexhaustible food, no foes -- a new world, **a new way for roach-dom to be**.

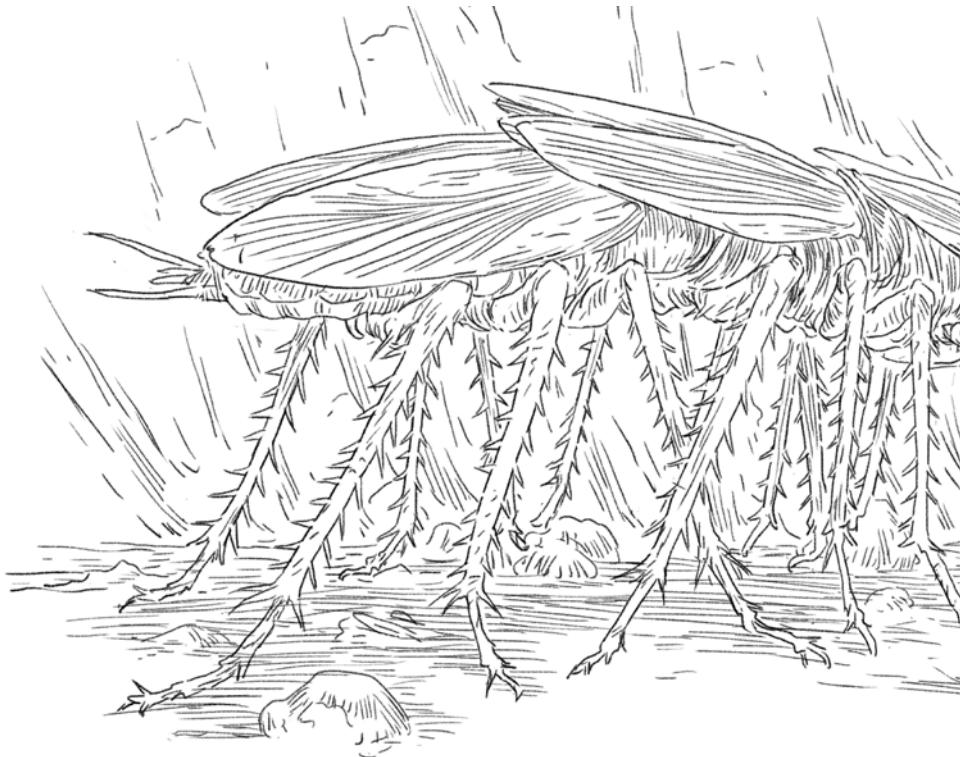
MA BLAT, ASPIRING QUEEN

Powerful. Hale. War arts, skulking, debating. Forty-eight legs. Chitin back, chitin belly, chitin head.

Ordure of spoiled blood and rusted pen knives. Buzzes her wings when excited.

Roaches obey her. Her new society must have a new philosophy. So she quizzes **guests and prisoners:** "What is power? Who has right to rule? How many babies is it moral to eat?"

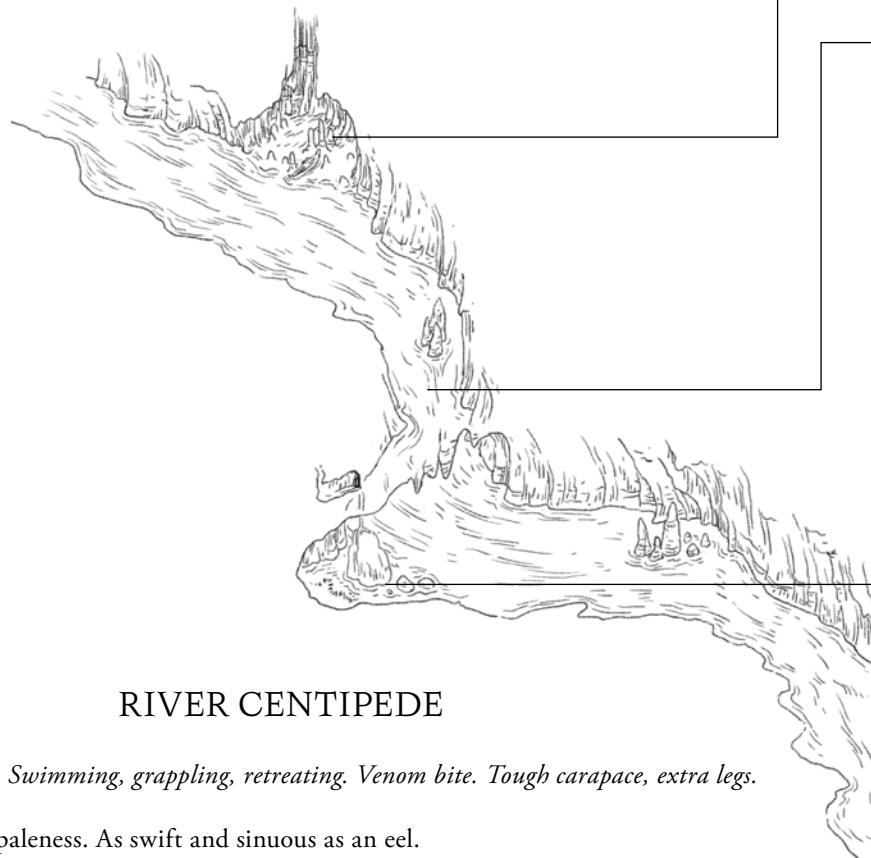
Will consider your answers. May have trouble accepting daylander values, though. Filth is good; the weak are food; the brood cannot stop growing -- these are the principles Ma Blat was born to.





UNDER QUIET LAKE

The whole world moves -- shadows, leaning away from your lantern. You'd better have brought a lantern. Otherwise: utter dark, utter chill. Only sound. Everything echoes.



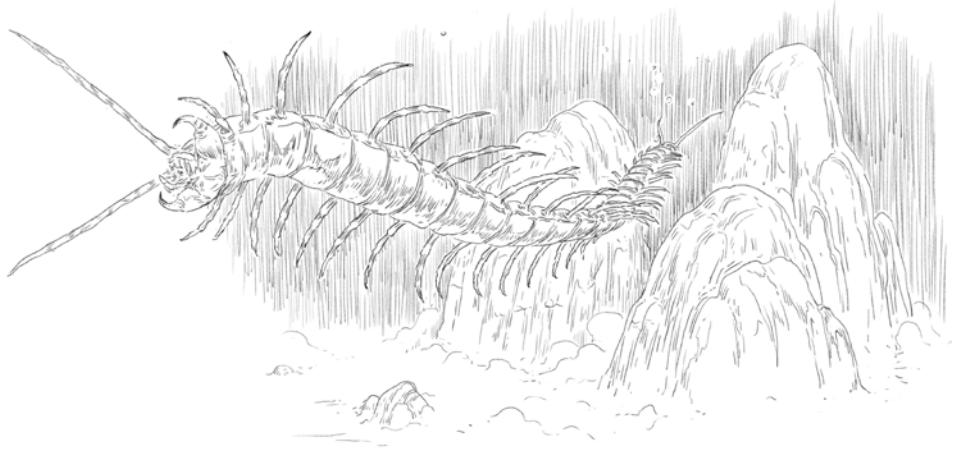
RIVER CENTIPEDE

Extraordinary. Hale. Swimming, grappling, retreating. Venom bite. Tough carapace, extra legs.

An almost-glowing paleness. As swift and sinuous as an eel.

Blind, but as **sensitive as a shark in water**. Attacks if you trail a body part in the river, or if violence breaks out. Will target the weakest creature present.

The centipede's bite feels like being burnt alive.



— MUNTA'S LANDING

A river, lapping -- **Must-Not's Way.**

A boat is tethered to a stalagmite. Another stalagmite has luminescent eyes. Dooboo has seen roach soldiers **flying over the water.**

— MUST-NOT'S WAY

Roaches call it the Forbidden River. In using it Ma Blat declared her apostasy.

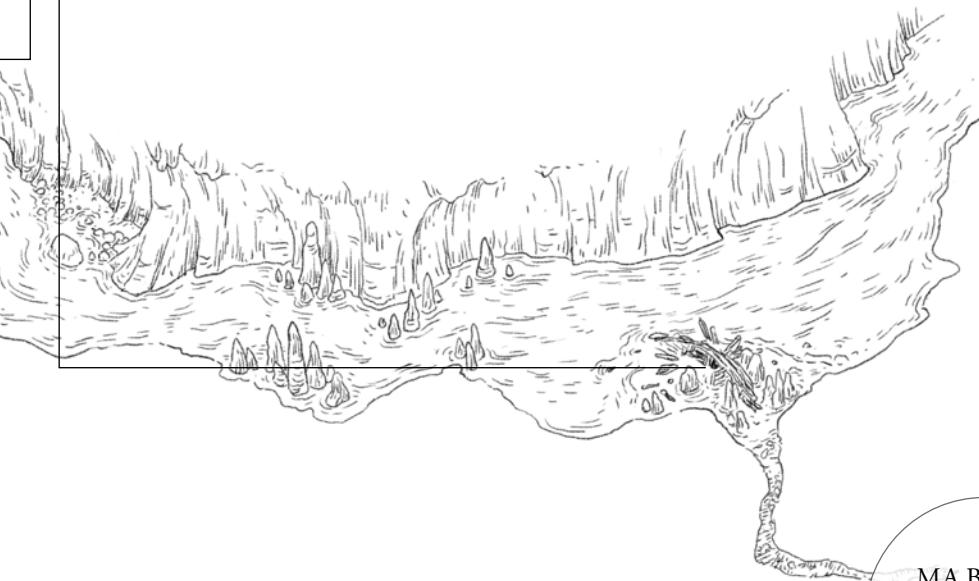
Travel between locations takes an hour. You think the current breaks oddly behind your boat. It does. A **river centipede** follows.

— LOVER'S REST

— BARGE WRECK

Carcass of wood and insect shell, broken on a shoal. **Six roaches**, meant to stand watch.

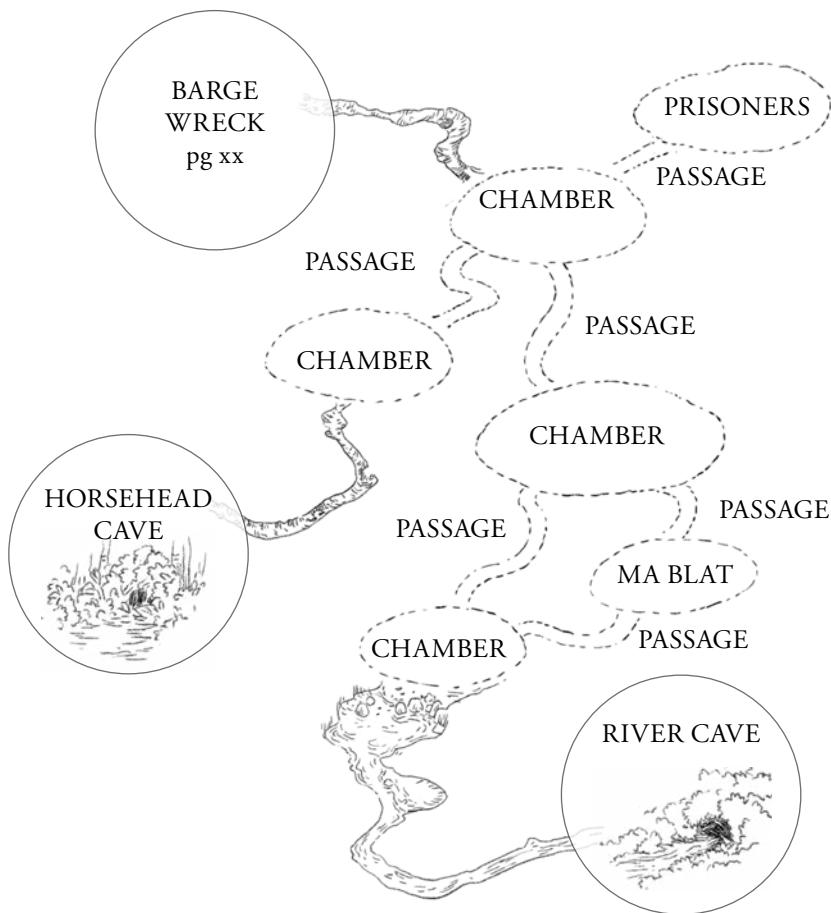
Three egg cases left in the hold. The river centipede steals them when it wants a snack.



MA BLAT'S
PASSAGES

pg xx

MA BLAT'S PASSAGES



(Note on the map bit marked "Ma Blat") Ma Blat is **overseeing operations** here, if you haven't yet encountered her.

(Note on the map bit marked "Prisoners") Abducted villagers are kept here. Ma Blat has put them to **work**.

It is hard to keep your sense of direction. **Roll at every new passage.** This is a:

- 1 **Tight gap.** You must shimmy sideways, slow.
- 2 **Slide.** As wide and steep as a playground slide.
- 3 **Sheer wall.** Next chamber is four storeys up.
- 4 **Hole in the floor.** A three-storey drop. Rope?
- 5 **Curving corridor.** Lots of corners to hide behind.
- 6 **Tunnel.** Roach-dug. 1-in-6 chance of collapse.

ENCOUNTERS IN MA BLAT'S PASSAGES

There is always something. **Roll whenever moving between passages:**



1 Six **roach soldiers**, marching in line

2 **Firefly**, its green glow very welcome

3 Wind moaning low, in almost-words

4 Screaming -- deer? Woman? Ghost?

5 **Roaches** in a swarm, a rolling wave

6 **Ma Blat**, her sixteen wings buzzing

1 Aggravating

2 Leading

3 Running from

4 Lusting after

5 Biting at

6 Whispering to

1 The smell of a granary, infested with vermin.

2 A **villager**, limbs tied, weeping from wounds.

3 A **single goat**, bleating in utter hopelessness.

4 A **roach soldier**, an egg case hanging off her.

5 A captured **boar**. Chewing through its bonds.

6 **Ma Blat**, twerking her eighth segment's cerci.



CHAMBERS IN MA BLAT'S PASSAGES

The stone feels covered with feathers. Raise your light -- caramel scales, ever rearranging. Roaches.

1 A low roof. You **cannot stand upright**. The roaches are fine.

2 A **ceiling of stalactites**, hanging like threats over your head.

3 A chasm. You cannot see its bottom. **Gap too wide to jump**.

4 A sticky discharge, coating most surfaces. **Gag at its stench**.

5 A floor **carpeted by beetle shells**. Your every step crunches.

6 A cascade. You are **immediately damp**. Mist obscures space.

Ma Blat's brood is using this chamber as:

1 A **larder**. Meat and bones; textiles and plant-matter; the bodies of their dead -- sorted into three separate mounds.

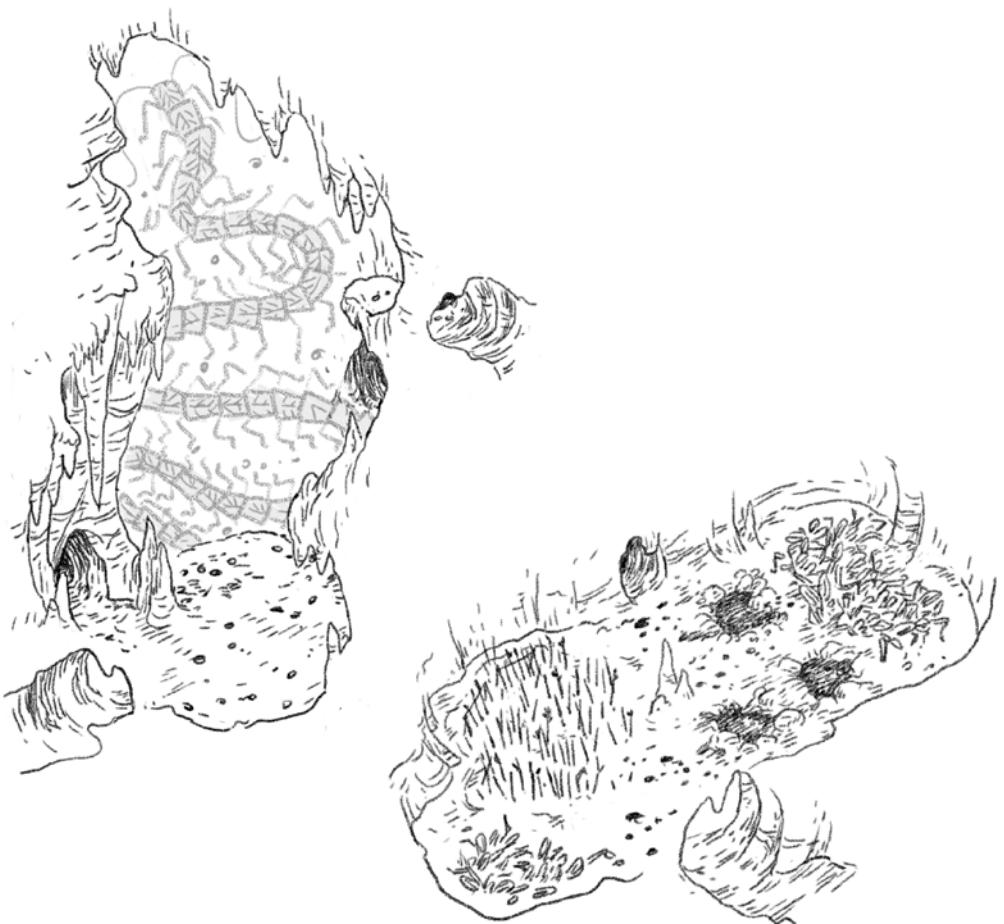
2 A **nursery**. Egg cases coated in a sour bile, changing the nymphs within into stranger, more specialised roach-spawn.

3 A **barracks**. Heaped droppings -- cylinder-shaped, ash-urn-sized -- arranged into nests. Soldiers sleep and mate.

4 A **workshop**. Roaches, dissolving in bile. The resulting goo may be shaped and cured into tools, jewellery, weapons.

5 A **temple**. An assemblage of debris and discarded skins. Six limbs, but no face. Odoyoq is no longer their god, after all.

6 A **gallery**. Ma Blat's revolution, told in crude figures, painted on a flat wall in black secretions, decorated with beadwork.





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