



I'M sure if one could probe-but deep enough, he'd find this globe just tunnelled through with caty-combs and resonant with hollow domes and yawning gulfs, abysmal spaces and divers dark, unfathomed places where echoes die through mere excess of nothingness. There's mystery in holes—a solid thing is never half so interesting; it's fun to poke around in them—to draw the screen away from things long hidden and unseen, like those in Josephine.

Ten miles of thickest Douglas green the little trail winds through, that leads you to old Gray Back with his half-closed, crooked eye. How long he's dosed that way, without a blink, who knows. Until Elijah found the chink that day he shot the bear—just crippled her enough to tear down through the rocks—a bloody track into the big, black crack and that was back there in the seventies. Dick Rawly tells the story, he's the guide; and how he beams with pride to see outsiders rave about the marvels of his cave—as proud of every chamber, niche and shelf as if he'd chisled it himself.

And Lord! the more you snoop around down there and scrape and stoop to see things you see, the more you think he has the right to be. Dick's different too. He says his say as if he'd learned it yesterday instead of when he did. With all the ardor of a kid

THE CAVES OF JOSEPHINE

By Anthony Euwer.

he rambles on; it's always new to him just like it is to you. He tells you how the place was formed in glacial days, when waters stormed and roared and cut their channels through the very spot where you stand marvelling. Then comes the change. The glaciers pass; along the range they ride no more. The streams are dried; the conflict stops. On every side lime-laden drops begin to percolate and filter in. The long, cold sweat appears. For several hundred thousand years, away from light, away from time, those little drops have oozed their lime.

Relentless patience must have played its part when all this under-world was made and infinite variety took hand when it was planned or was it planned? Was it intent, or some sublimely perfect accident, that caused to be that marble-fluted canopy above the many-pillowed throne that's shown in brilliant, bold relief against our light in this Lost Paradise of night? And see up-flooding toward the canopy, a scurrying, those baffling forms that cling, and swarms of pudgy shapes that ride in half-lights, side by side. And was it chance that made the Coral Garden's gray arcade and pillared it and set in place each tiny statuette and grotesque face; and petrified the water-falls and hung the walls and roofs of all

the halls with rows of frescoes, pendant, bright, and gleaming like a starry night; and made the sweetest chimes to ring—we heard their clear notes echoing?

If it was chance, I didn't find it so. To me it seemed a master-mind was lurking there—some spirit born of endless night, transfusing each slow-dropping mite into a wonder-thing by deft, fantastic fashioning. Dick said the place was uninhabited, except for a few bats at times and some pack-rats that nested near the mouth; but how could he tell what had been? To me the place was just deserted, that was all; because we heard no laughter fall or voices ring, proved not a thing. And when the first intrusion came of mortal men, there must have been a merry muss and universal exodus down through those dark recesses where no man may hope to go.

I would have witnessed such a show—those trooping little refugees of divers personalities in babbling groups, by twos and threes, with all their house-hold goods—they must have moved them all—the fact is proved conclusively, as there's no trace of such effects in any place. Perhaps the Pix went first, they're fearsome, so I've heard, and cursed with nerves. And then the Nixie crew, the Pix's shapely cousins who are beautiful as Nixies go, and no less slow to move when trouble stirs the air. Now comes a flare of lurid light, the rhythmic tramps of Gwells who bear their swinging lamps of

cocobol; a roll of music like bassoons, the beating wings of Dragleons, their patterned pinions show their sheen and glow with iridescent green—out trails the light—a glint of scales gives hint of flashing rainbow tails.

Now Master Goblin falls in line, the chills are jumping in his spine; his eye-balls bulge with speechless fear, his mouth's a slit from ear to ear, he goes galumping in his boots—behind him thump the Dormizoots and then the Elves. From all the crannies, nooks and shelves the Wiffles come, and scrambling Wools and Blurbs and jibbering Gabools. They stumble, tumble, now they run, each fumbles for the other one, mate calls for mate—a seething flux conglomerate of cave-born entities. They pant and grunt and squeak and wheeze; they stampede, yell and chase pell-mell. Through tortuous tunnels walled with light the pigmy pageant makes its flight. The last far turn is made, the swinging flicker-flashes fade, the clamor and the cries are dimmed, the babbling tumult dies.

The palace rooms are dark, the halls of state, the coral gardens all are desolate. No music falls. The conclaves and the carnivals, the mystic rites, the colors bathed in mellow lights, the throbbing life and mirth of all this chambered, nether-earth are gone. Nor will one Elf return to ring the crystal chimes nor burn strange incense at the pillowed throne, because no Elf was ever known to tread again where mortal man has been; nor any of the hybrid clan who must have scampered out of there that day Elijah shot the bear.