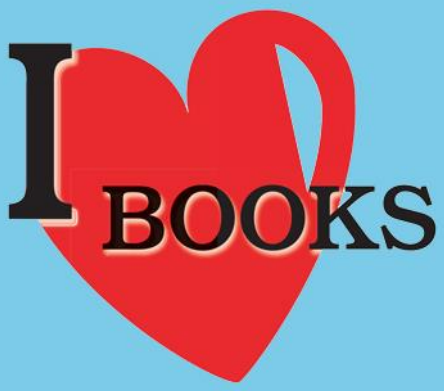


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Blue John

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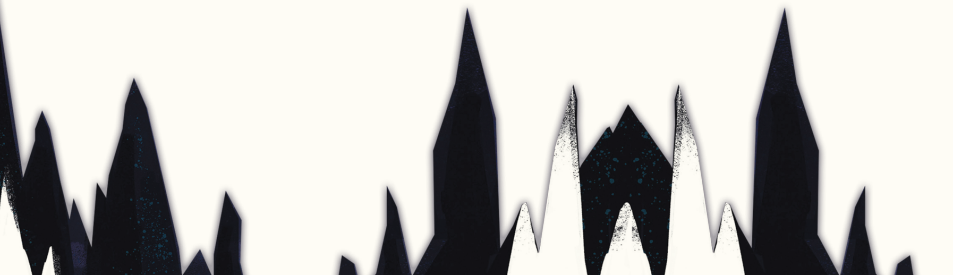


Imagine a world that is locked in ice. Imagine the purple-blue heart of a glacier opening up to the gold of the sun. The mountains of ice crack, and the gush of rivers forces rocks apart.

Imagine the water surging into all the hollows of the earth and billowing down and down under the ground to hollow out huge caves, massive chambers of darkness.

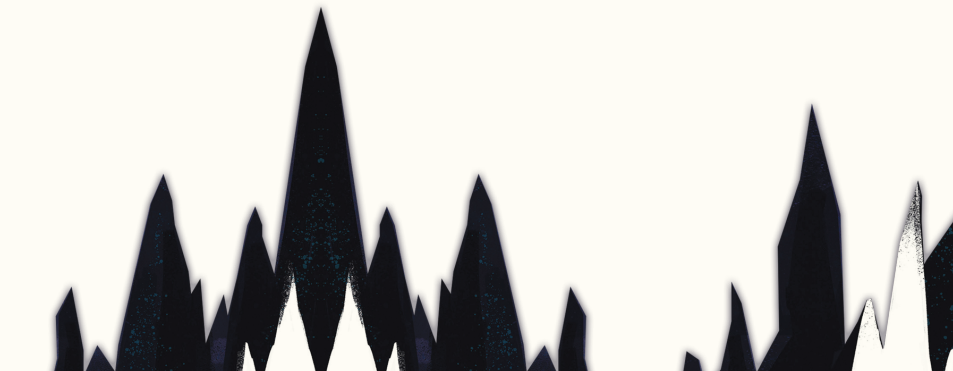
That's where the Queen of Darkness lives. She lives for ever under the ground in the shadow of the mountain called Mam Tor. She loves the darkness, the velvet-cool, the long, long hush of silence. It is her home.

Before the thawing ice mountains rushed her downwards into the shelter of the cavern, the Queen of Darkness snatched two things that she could not bear to leave behind.



"I will take the purple-blue heart of the glacier," she sang, "because it is the most beautiful colour in the world. And I will take the gold of the sun."

She clasped the colours close to her as the waters swept her down into darkness, down and deep, deep down into the cavern that she was never to leave again.



"I don't know which of you I love the most," the Queen of Darkness crooned to her colours. "The blue of the glacier or the gold of the sun. Ice or fire. I love you both."

She pressed them to her, the one ice-cold and the other burning hot. She held them close and moulded them together like clay. Then she breathed on them and made a child, who was blue like the ice and gold like the sun.