



The Spider Farm

by Stuart Marshall

An AD&D Mini-Adventure for 4–8 1st-Level Characters

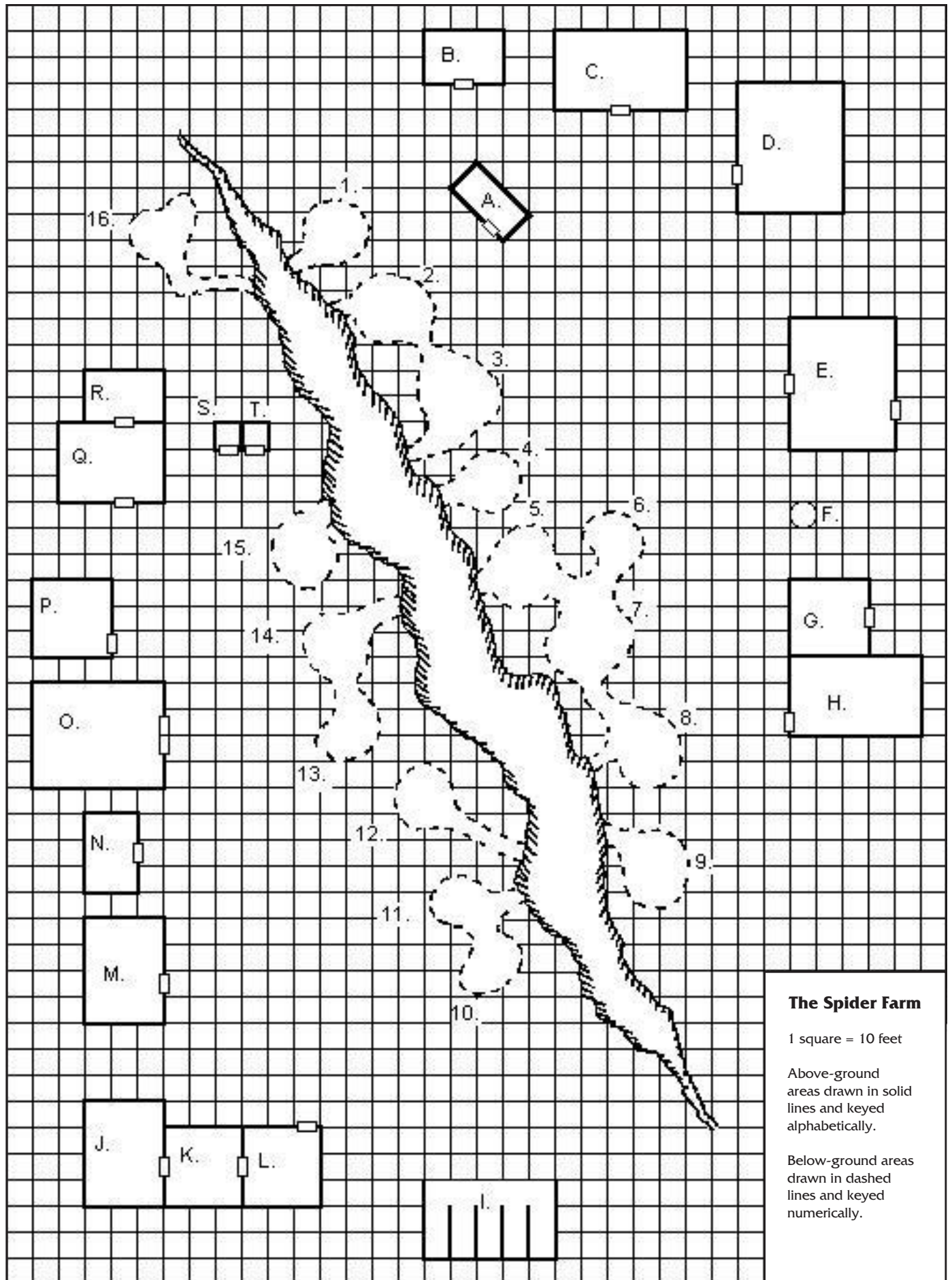
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Thank you to the Grogard's Tavern for much help and support in the development of this adventure. Visit the Grogard's Tavern at <http://grogardstavern.proboards29.com>.

Unlike most maps, the spider farm has two keys. The first key is for use if the spider farm is visited either before or after the shadow goblins invade it. The second key is for use during the actual rescue.

Full stats for shadow goblins are provided later in the adventure. When the shadow goblins attack the spider farm, one of the farm workers escapes and runs to a nearby town to give warning and ask for help. This is how the player characters are introduced to the adventure.

Above-ground areas are designated by letters; underground areas (basically the spider tunnels) are designated by numbers.

First Key: The Spider Farm in the Hands of Humans

Spider Farm Roster

Name	Level	HP	AC	Alignment
Ulayah Reyn	0	3	10	LN
Heri Reyn	0	2	10	LN
Farm workers (26)	0	3	10	LN*

*With a couple of exceptions.

Ulayah Reyn is the farm's owner. He is a 58-year-old human, and immensely fat. He is mainly concerned with business, and if encountered prior to the shadow goblin attack, he will be very suspicious of people who approach his farm in armour or bearing weapons.

Ulayah has a massive prejudice against anyone who asks him about spider poisons. He will refuse to deal in poisons from his spiders or to give any information about the subject. If pressed about this, he will become hostile.

Heri Reyn, Ulayah's daughter, is 24 years old and rather plump, although she's nowhere near the size of her father. She's desperately bored with life in a farm village, and she will be very interested to talk to visitors from elsewhere. She will listen to tales of adventure with wide eyes for hours on end.

There are 26 workers on the farm (a spider farm takes a lot of manpower). They are generally taciturn and will direct any enquiries to Ulayah, who handles visitors personally (he's very sales-minded).

Area Key

The Spider Pit: The spider pit is covered with a grill-work of massive timbers (a foot thick) to prevent the spiders from escaping. There are hatches at both ends through which feed can be thrown in, but when not in use these hatches are kept weighted down with massive rocks (15 Strength to roll them aside, 50+ Strength to lift one).

There are 19 large spiders in the pit. They cannot escape, so unless the player characters release them or physically climb into the pit, they won't be encountered. The "mother" is an ancient and hugely fat spider who lives in her own cavern at the bottom of the pit. She is even bigger than the normal "large" spider and moves slowly owing to her bulk. She won't come out even if the rest of the spiders escape, being too old and too comfortable in her nauseating lair.

Large Spider Roster

	AC	MV	HD	HP	# Att.	Dmg.
Large Spiders (19)	8	6**15"	1+1	5	1	1 + poison
"Mother" (1)	9	4**12"	1+1	9	1	1 + poison

A—Pinstock Shed: A pinstock is a wooden pole with a spiked end, resembling a very long-handled morning star. It is used to collect spiderweb by inserting the spiked end of the stick between the wooden slats and twirling it around.

Pinstocks suitably laden with spiderweb are returned to this shed and placed in a trough containing a specially-formulated fluid. (The formula for this fluid is known only by Ulayah and he will not reveal it.) After about eight hours in the fluid, the web will have lost its sticky properties.

This building will be filled with pinstocks which are either soaking, or drying out. Once dry, the pinstocks are taken to area B.

B—Weaving Room: Here is where the silk is removed from the pinstocks, teased, and then woven into silken cloth on gigantic looms. During the daytime it is a bustle of activity and will contain 1d6 workers from the roster.

C—Tailoring Room: Here, the woven silk is fashioned into garments. During the daytime there will be 1d6 workers from the roster working here.

D—Warehouse: Bolts of cloth and finished garments are stored here ready for sale.

E—Sales Floor: This is where prospective purchasers are introduced to the spider farm's range of products. During the daytime Ulayah will normally be here with 1d4+1 of his workers. The cash register (a locked iron box, Ulayah has the key) will contain 1d100 copper, 1d100 silver, and 1d100 gold at any time; larger sums are stored in area J.

F—Well.

G and H—Feed Stores: The spiders are fed mostly on goats and sheep. This area will contain hanging carcasses ready



to dump into the spider pit. There is a small chance (10%) of encountering a worker from the roster here.

I—Stables: Ulayah's horse and Heri's pony are kept here. If the farm has any guests, their horses will also be stabled in this area.

J—Ulayah's Room: Ulayah sleeps here. His accounting books are on the table, showing very limited profit, but these are for the benefit of the tax collectors; in reality, the farm is doing very well. There is a loose floorboard under the bed containing a box of 28 gold pieces. Ulayah's real savings, another 573 gp, are in a second box buried in the ground a couple of feet underneath the first one.

K—Heri's Room: Heri sleeps here. Her room is very "girly" and pink, heaped with lace and ruffles. She has several books lying around (romantic poetry, trashy novels featuring willowy elven heroines and their lovestruck swains, etc.) and these would fetch maybe 5 gp each. She also has a silver inlaid comb worth 10 gp and a bronze brooch worth 8 gp, but no actual money (Ulayah doesn't trust her with money of her own).

L—Living Room: This is where Ulayah and Heri go to relax. Important clients are also invited here. The room is a showcase of spider silk-related products, with everything imaginable being draped with cloth wherever possible.

M and N—Dormitories: Ulayah's farm workers sleep in these buildings. Area M is for female workers and area N is for male ones. During the night, all but 1d4 of the workers will be here. Most of the bedrolls contain a few copper or silver pieces.

O—Dining Hall: Here is where the farm workers go to eat. It also doubles as a cooking area, and there will be 1d4 workers here during the day, probably spit roasting an animal for later consumption.

P—Pantry: Food for the workers is stored here. The building is kept locked and only the cook and Ulayah have keys.

Q and R—Dissection Area: Dead large spiders provide a number of useful products which are prepared in these areas:

- Their digestive juices degrade flesh very effectively, and a flask of the stuff can sell for 5 gp in a city (thieves and assassins have uses for it, and it forms an ingredient in the formula for several kinds of scroll ink and even a couple of potions). Workers handling this stuff wear heavy leather gloves!
- Spider poison also has uses as an ingredient in scroll ink. Ulayah extracts it here, although he is careful only to sell it to people he trusts to use it for that purpose. It

is stored in small clay flasks which are sealed with wax; the poison will degrade within a couple of hours of the seal being broken.

- Spider silk glands store the silk as a fluid. This substance is one of the ingredients in the preparation of a homonculus, as well as being an invaluable component of several kinds of scrolls. This liquid is also stored here.

There is a 20% chance that area R contains a spider carcass which is being worked upon by a worker from the roster. The flasks are all stored in area Q. If there is no spider carcass the building will be locked.

S and T—Latrines.

Underground Areas

The Spider Pit: If the characters actually climb down here, they'll find their movement (and visibility) is severely restricted by the webs. Assume a maximum movement rate of 3" per round in the web-choked areas, and visibility is no more than that.

The characters are very likely to try to respond to this by burning the webs. This will only work up to a point. The pit is far too moist and damp (the webs are beaded with moisture), and contrary to what some AD&D players would have you believe, webs don't burn particularly well. (You can verify this by taking a match to a spiderweb in your garden.) Flame will char and crisp the webs it actually touches, but it certainly won't clear the whole pit in a huge blazing inferno! A party which is clearing the webs using fire will be able to move at 6" per round, but will receive no other advantage.

Damage to the webs, whether by burning or by cutting, will start to attract spiders in 1d6 rounds. Remember that the spiders can move very quickly through the web. 1d4 spiders will arrive every 1d4 rounds until the characters have been driven back or killed, or until there are no more spiders (except the Mother) remaining on the roster.

A party exploring the spider pit may try attracting the spiders into a trap (probably with food) and taking out as many as possible with a sleep spell or other area effect attack. This will work up to a point, attracting 1d20 of the spiders depending upon how recently they have been fed.

It is also possible that party members will try thrusting brushwood between the gaps in the grill and burning all the webs at once. This will require many turns of gathering wood and forcing it down to have any real effect, and in any case the spiders will retreat into the tunnels, so they will not be wiped out by this approach, though the webs will be cleared enabling normal visibility and movement. In this event you should place the spiders by rolling 1d20 for each of them and putting the spider into the room which corresponds with the number rolled; on a 17–20 the spider is burned to death.

The Spider Tunnels: These are hollowed out of the earth and reinforced with webs, similar to the lair of a trapdoor spider.

Shadow Goblin Roster

Shadow Goblin	AC	MV	HD	HP	# Att.	Dmg.	Weapon
Infantry (8)	6	12"	1d4+1	4	2 (at -1/-3)	1d6/1d4	Shortsword/dagger
Archers (6)	6	12"	1d4+1	3	2	1d6	Short bow
Leaders (3)	6	12"	1d8+2	6	2 (at -1/-3)	1d6/1d4	Shortsword/dagger
Illusionist/Thief ^a	5*	12"	2d8+4	12	2 (at 0/-2)	1d6/1d4	Shortsword/dagger
Cleric/Thief ^b	5*	12"	2d8+4	13	2 (at 0/-2)	1d6/1d4	Shortsword/dagger

^aMemorized spells: *Phantasmal Force*. Wearing **Vaenu's Robe**. The goblin illusionist's spellbook is well hidden, and will only be found if the player characters manage to catch the goblin alive and find some way of interrogating it (it does not speak Common). If the characters do this, they will find the book well hidden in some out-of-the-way location to be determined by the DM, and guarded by the illusionist goblin's pet poisonous snake. The book contains the following spells: *Phantasmal Force*, *Detect Illusion*, *Gaze Reflection*, *Read Illusionist Magic*.

^bDue to 17 Dexterity.

^cMemorized spells: *Bless*, *Command*, *Cure Light Wounds*. Wearing **Melve's Marvellous Mask**.

The mother will normally be found in area 7.

The other areas are not individually keyed with the exception of area 6: this is where the mother's egg sac is to be found. There are 94 baby spiders in the sac (no effective attack, hp 1 each). Next to the sac is the baby spider's first meal: the body of a foolish halfling cleric who sneaked into the spider pit a few weeks ago, believing that Ulayah had hidden a vast treasure down there. The halfling is wearing the *Amulet of Galidor* (q.v.)

Second Key: The Spider Farm in the Hands of the Shadow Goblins

Summary of Events before the PCs Arrive

The shadow goblins attacked and captured the farm with considerable ease. Their plan was well-formulated and well-executed. They attacked under cover of darkness and the human defenders were quickly demoralized and subdued; not a single goblin was injured.

The goblins don't know that one of the humans escaped, so they aren't expecting reprisals so soon.

The captured humans were imprisoned in the Dining Hall under guard. Parties of shadow goblins are out exploring the farm and trying to locate objects of value, while the priest goblin and the illusionist goblin interrogate Ulayah in a nearby dormitory.

Heri's location depends on whether the DM wishes to force the characters into the spider pit (see page 4).

If there is a delay before the characters arrive then the goblins will have the opportunity to finish scavenging the farm and collecting all its treasure. They will also sacrifice 1d6 farm workers per day to Lolth by throwing them into the spider pit. After three days, the goblins will have finished carting away the loot and will throw the remaining workers into the pit before vanishing, never to be seen again. In other words, the characters had better react to the situation promptly!

Events here depend upon how the player characters approach the farm. If the PC's approach at night then they run a serious risk of detection. If the characters walk up to the farm bearing torches or other light sources, detection is automatic and the shadow goblins will respond with lethal force.

(Note: The shadow goblins are very clever, and they will presume that any such obvious approach is a trap. They will

attempt not to close with the party in melee initially. Given the opportunity they will use hidden archers to ambush the characters with a volley of short bow fire. Meanwhile another group of goblins will attempt to encircle the party and attack from the rear—remember that the shadow goblins backstab as thieves do. In this event the party is very likely to be totally wiped out. As a DM, you are under a moral obligation to permit this! Slaughtering a party which walks up to a known monster lair with torches blazing isn't DM cruelty, it's just evolution in action.)

If the characters approach the farm more intelligently than this, you should determine the chance of detection according to their approach. If they are observed the shadow goblins will sound the alarm promptly and react appropriately.

If the PC's approach during the daytime then their chances of detection are reduced, because the shadow goblins can't see very well. Their reaction time will also be slower because most of them will be asleep. Allow a base 75% chance of the characters being seen if they approach openly, reduced to 25% or less if the approach is cautious and covert.

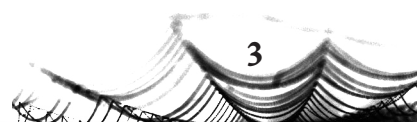
The encounter key which follows assumes that the shadow goblins are unaware of the PC's.

A—Pinstock Shed: At night, there is a 25% chance that 1d3 shadow goblins (from the roster) will be nosing around in here. During the day it will be deserted.

B—Weaving Room: At night, 1d3 shadow goblins (from the roster) will be plundering this room, systematically carrying away bolts of cloth. During the day it will be deserted.

C—Tailoring Room: At night, 1d3 shadow goblins (from the roster) will be plundering this room, systematically carrying away bolts of cloth and finished garments. During the day it will be deserted.

D—Warehouse: At night, 1d4 shadow goblins (from the roster) will be plundering this room, again systematically carrying away bolts of cloth and finished garments. During the day it will be deserted.



E—Sales Floor: This area has already been plundered by the time the characters arrive. The shadow goblins easily picked the lock on the cash register, and the money has already been carted away. At night, there is a 25% chance of encountering a lone shadow goblin (from the roster) who's goofing off from the plundering.

F—Well.

G and H—Feed Stores: As well as the goats and sheep, two farm workers who were killed in the capturing of the farm are stored here. At night, there is a 25% chance of encountering a lone shadow goblin (from the roster) who's sneaked in here to look for a snack.

I—Stables: Ulayah's horse and Heri's pony are still here, although they are enormously spooked from all the fighting, noise, and unfamiliar smells.

J—Ulayah's Room: This room will be deserted. On the first night, the goblins won't yet have found Ulayah's money; they will locate all of it during the second night (because Ulayah will crack under torture and tell them where it is).

K—Heri's Room: This room will be deserted. Heri's books, comb and brooch have already been plundered and carried away.

L—Living Room: This room has already been plundered. At night, there is a 25% chance of encountering a lone shadow goblin (from the roster) who's checking it over one more time for extra loot.

M and N—Dormitories: These buildings have already been plundered. The illusionist shadow goblin and the cleric shadow goblin will be here (whether it's night or day), interrogating Ulayah. They will have 1d4 shadow goblins (from the roster) with them. If the characters have delayed in getting here (i.e. second night or after) Ulayah will be down to 1 hp from torture and sleep deprivation.

O—Dining Hall: The sixteen surviving farm workers and all the shadow goblins not encountered elsewhere will be in the Dining Hall. During the day, 80% of the shadow goblins will be asleep; during the night, 20% of them will be asleep.

P—Pantry: The shadow goblins easily picked the lock on this room and have fed well! During the night there is a 25% chance of encountering a lone shadow goblin (from the roster) here who is munching on a snack.

Q and R—Dissection Area: The shadow goblins easily picked the lock on this building. To them, the practise of cutting up dead spiders and selling off the bodily fluids is extremely disgusting, so discovering what went on here sent them into a fury. The bodies of four farm workers are still lying around here, and all the bottles and flasks will have been smashed.

S and T—Latrines: There is a 25% chance of encountering a lone shadow goblin (from the roster) here, during the day or night. It's probably best not to speculate on precisely what the goblin is doing here, but its weapons will be on hand even if its garments are in disarray.

Rescuing Ulayah

If the characters manage to rescue Ulayah, he will be very grateful to them. He will pay them a bounty of 10 gp per farm worker who survives, plus 50 gp for his own life, plus 50 gp for Heri's life if she survives, so the characters can earn a tidy 260 gp over and above what they collect from the shadow goblins.

In addition, Ulayah will reward a party which rescues him with the *Book of the Apprentice* (q.v.), the *Wand of Identification* (q.v.), and the *Belt of the Veteran* (q.v.)

Heri and the Spider Pit

You may wish to have a part of the adventure involving the characters descending into the spider pit.

Deliberately, Heri has not been placed in the encounter key above. If, as DM, you want to make use of the spider pit in the adventure, you can have the PCs observe a couple of shadow goblins flinging Heri into the pit during the fighting. In this case, Ulayah (presuming he lives) will offer them a reward for rescuing his daughter.

Heri will be bitten almost at once, and then hung in a random area in the spider tunnels (use a d8 and a d6 to get a random number from 2 to 14, Heri will be in that area). She will be rendered unconscious immediately, but the characters have four hours (24 turns) to get her out before she dies of the poisoning; if she is returned within this time, Ulayah will be able to administer an antivenin. He will also be able to remove the poison from any character suffering from a spider bite during this time.

If the characters do not employ fire to burn away the spider webs, and if they search the web-encrusted walls of room 15 carefully, they will discover a magic-user scroll of *Pelin's perplexing puzzle* (see page 6).

If you prefer not to include this section of the adventure, Heri can be found with Ulayah or elsewhere in the spider farm, ready for sacrifice to Lolth but not yet flung into the pit.

Note regarding experience: The experience point awards for large spiders killed during this module should be cut in half, because their poison is unlikely to be fatal (note the presence of Ulayah's antivenin).

Shadow Goblin

FREQUENCY: Very rare
NO. APPEARING: 4–24 (wandering) or 10–120 (in lair)
ARMOUR CLASS: 6 or better
MOVE: 12"
HIT DICE: 1d4+1 or better
% IN LAIR: 25%
TREASURE TYPE: Individuals K; P, T in lair
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1 or 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: By weapon type
SPECIAL ATTACKS: Backstab; some individuals spells
SPECIAL DEFENCES: Usually none; some individuals spells
MAGIC RESISTANCE: Standard (save as thieves)
INTELLIGENCE: Very or high; some individuals exceptional
ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil
SIZE: S
PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil
Attack/Defence modes: Nil
LEVEL/XP VALUE: 1/7 + 1 per hit point or better

A degenerate and degraded tribe of the Drow? A race of goblins favoured by Lolth? Or a weird hybrid of the two? Nobody really knows the origin of these unpleasant black-skinned creatures, but sages agree that they associate with neither Drow nor goblins nowadays, preferring the company of their own kind.

Shadow goblins stand 3'6" to 4' tall. Physically they resemble whip-thin goblins with yellow or golden eyes and jet black skin. Their hair is naturally thin, lank, and white, resembling cobwebs, but most shadow goblins dye their hair black or purple for better camouflage in darkness. Their teeth are needle-sharp, like a shark's teeth, and if disarmed they can bite for 1d3 damage. Their tongues are forked.

In battle, they wear war paint in weird, asymmetrical patterns.

Shadow goblin equipment lacks the magical properties of Drow gear, but is always neatly-made and of very good quality, the leather being tooled with patterns appropriate to their clan and religion, and the blades of their weapons are frequently inlaid with evil runes.

All shadow goblins are stealthy and dexterous (Dex 16 or better), hence their armour class. Most wear no more than a simple leather jerkin as armour. They all possess the abilities of at least a first-level thief, and generally fight with shortsword and dagger (65%) or with a short bow (35%). Many of them fight with a weapon in each hand (DM's should note the –1 main hand/–3 offhand "to hit" penalties from a Dex 16 NPC doing this).

For every four normal shadow goblins, one will be a leader type with 1d8+2 hit points and the abilities of a second-level thief. For every twelve normal Shadow Goblins, there will be an exceptional leader type with 2d8+4 hit points and the abilities of either a third-level thief (40%), or a second-level thief/first-level illusionist (30%), or a second-level thief/first-level cleric (30%). Cleric types will be clerics of Lolth and will possess three first level spells rather than one because of their wisdom. Leader types are in addition to the number appearing shown on the die.

If the shadow goblins are encountered in their lair, there will also be a subchief with 3d8+6 hit points. The subchief may



be a fourth-level thief (40%), or a third-level thief/second-level illusionist (30%), or a third-level thief/second-level cleric (30%). If more than 60 shadow goblins are encountered in their lair there will also be a chieftain with 4d8+8 hp who may be a fifth-level thief (40%), or a fourth-level thief/third-level illusionist (30%), or a fourth-level thief/third-level cleric (30%).

If encountered in their lair, there is a 25% chance that the lair will also contain 2–12 large spiders as guards or pets.

No figures for females and children are included. As with the Drow, shadow goblin females fight alongside the males, so the number appearing shown includes both genders; children are non-combatant.

Shadow goblins are very long-lived, up to five hundred years. They speak their own language which is very similar to Drowic, and leader types sometimes (20%) speak Common.

Shadow goblins are nocturnal, being debilitated by sunlight in much the same way that orcs are.

I am indebted to Barney Sloane for his prototypical Shadow Goblin, originally published in issue 26 of White Dwarf (Aug./Sept. 1981.)

In consideration of the fact that over 23 years of any copyright have now expired, and the White Dwarf title no longer deals with AD&D, and I have no way of getting in touch with Mr. Sloane, I have used his basic idea without his permission. The monster has been heavily revised by me in almost every particular.

Unique Spells and Magic Items

Pelin's Perplexing Puzzle (Enchantment/Charm)

Class: Magic-User

Level: 1

Components: V, S

Range: 6"

Casting Time: 5 segments

Duration: 4 rounds + 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Special

Area of Effect: Up to 6 creatures

Explanation/Description: A *Pelin's perplexing puzzle* spell will summon a pattern of glowing lights which will form a maze, riddle, or puzzle of another sort. Such is the allure of the puzzle that up to six creatures will be occupied with trying to figure it out for the duration of the spell—even if they are in melee or in full flight when they see it, provided that they fail their save.

Creatures with less than "Low" intelligence will not be affected (they are too stupid to be interested in puzzles), and neither will undead of any sort. If a creature is attacked while it is engrossed in the puzzle, the spell will be broken.

The saving throw for the spell is to roll the creature's Intelligence or less on 3d6. All creatures which are engrossed in the puzzle may attempt a fresh saving throw each round. A successful save indicates that the puzzle has been solved, and all the creatures which were engrossed will be released.

Amulet of Galidor

This magical necklace can only be used by a single-classed cleric or druid. While wearing the amulet, the priest or priestess' *cure light wounds* spells become more efficacious: he or she may roll the d8 for number of hit points healed twice, and choose which of the two results will apply.

The *Amulet of Galidor* is worth 100 xp to the party, and could be sold to a NPC cleric or temple for perhaps 1,000 gp.

Apprentice's Workbook

This blotted copybook may be used by members of any class. The notes contained therein always relate to the profession of the reader—theological treatises for clerics, studies of battle stances and combat techniques for fighters, etc.—and they will be sufficient to guide the reader through the transition from first level to second level without incurring the usual costs (see DMG p. 86) and in half the usual time.

The *Apprentice's Workbook* is worth 100 xp to the party but could be sold for no more than 500 gp, because very few of the people who would need it can afford a higher price.

Belt of the Veteran

This magical belt will only function if worn by a single-classed fighter, paladin, or ranger. The *Belt of the Veteran* adds 2 hp to the wearer in excess of the initial number of hp rolled, which are lost when the belt is removed. Thus, for example, a first-level fighter rolls 7 hp; if she dons the *Belt of the Veteran* she becomes a 9 hp fighter.

Note that there is no way of using the belt to regain hit points any faster than normal.

The belt is worth 100 xp to the party and could be sold for perhaps 1,500 gp to a NPC fighter.

Melve's Marvellous Mask

This mask of black cloth may be used only by a single-classed thief or assassin. While wearing it, the character may add +10% to his or her chances of success in the skills Find/Remove Traps and Open Locks. *Melve's marvellous mask* is not cumulative with *gauntlets of dexterity* or other items which add to thieving skills, and it cannot raise a skill above 99%.

The mask is worth 100 xp to the party and could be sold to an NPC thief for perhaps 1,000 gp, although there is obviously a serious risk of the NPC thief simply pilfering the item!

Vaenu's Robe

This magical garment would fit an elf, half-elf, or human. Flame red in colour, the robe is embroidered with a pattern of flames in yellow. Its true power does not become apparent until it is donned by a single-classed magic-user or illusionist, for only single-classed magic-users or illusionists may make use of its dweomer, but to them its effect is invaluable, for it enables them to memorize and cast one additional first-level spell per day.

Vaenu's Robe is worth 250 xp to the party and could be sold to an NPC mage for perhaps 2,000 gp.

Wand of Identification

Unlike most wands, the *wand of identification* may be used by any class. It may store up to 100 charges, but when found, there are only 7 remaining. Using a single charge will enable the holder to cast the *identify* spell.

It may be recharged, but only by casting the *identify* spell once per charge (and therefore using up a 100 gp pearl per charge).

It is worth 250 xp to the party and could be sold for perhaps 2,000 gp.