



RIVERAXE VILLAGE



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Rumours & Hooks:

The *Riveraxe* barbarians of the old forest are the unmatched masters of herbalism in the midlands. They have a place of special importance amongst the tribes.

Mistress Rhea, a herbalist from *Crow's Keep*, wants an order of rare herbs and poultices collected from Riveraxe village in *Drennor Forest*. She offers her expert services in return for completing this task.

Lord Bergolt of *Northgate* is dying of the *White Ash Rot*. He believes the healers of Riveraxe village in Drennor Forrest have a cure for him, and is willing to pay handsomely to get it.

The Tribe

Few forest tribes have the luxury of settling in one area, but the small (less than 100 members) Riveraxe tribe have earned themselves a permanent home by becoming experts in herbalism.

The larger tribes rely on their secret skills for rare healing remedies, and the Riveraxe clan stay out of the various blood feuds and turf wars that erupt from time to time, maintaining a scrupulous neutrality.

Unfortunately for the tribe, a plague of giant tree spiders have decimated their ranks and taken over the area. By the time the adventurers arrive, the spiders have eaten most of the barbarians, and cocooned the remainder in a handful of huts.

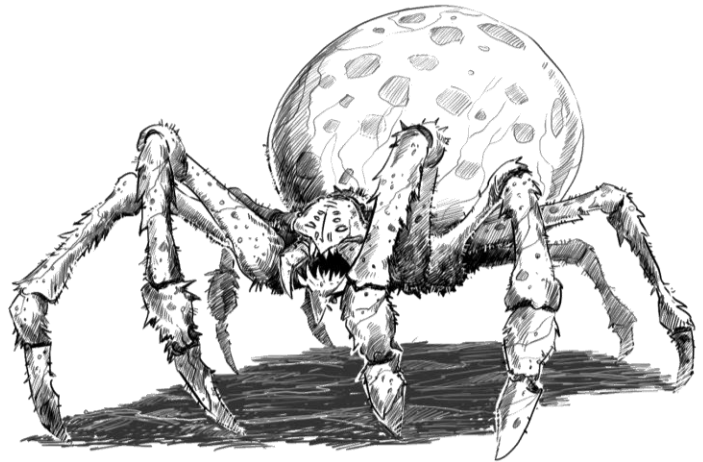
The village appears strangely quiet. If the adventurers study the area before entering, they notice no voices or people moving about the huts, and there is no challenge by any sentries at their approach. If they arrive at night, there are no cook fires or light sources visible.

A successful Perc (Detection) Test also notices that there are few birds or other game in this area, which is unusual.

Unlike most giant spiders, the tree spiders do not build obvious webs. Instead, they lurk high in the trees, waiting to drop their webs on unsuspecting victims. After a successful hunt, the spiders gather up their silk, which is re-absorbed and reused.

Although there is no obvious webbing, an adventurer carefully studying the trees might notice stray strands of black silk (caught on a tree branch, tangled around a protruding root, etc) with a successful Perc (Detection) test at disadvantage.

100 ft up in the trees, behind trunks and in the shadows of the thick canopy, the spiders wait with nets of silk to catch their next meal. Areas 1-4 on the map (p.3) indicate the trap sites. There are 2d4 spiders at each site.



Giant Tree Spiders

No. Appearing: 3d4

Armor Class: 13

Hit Dice: 3+1

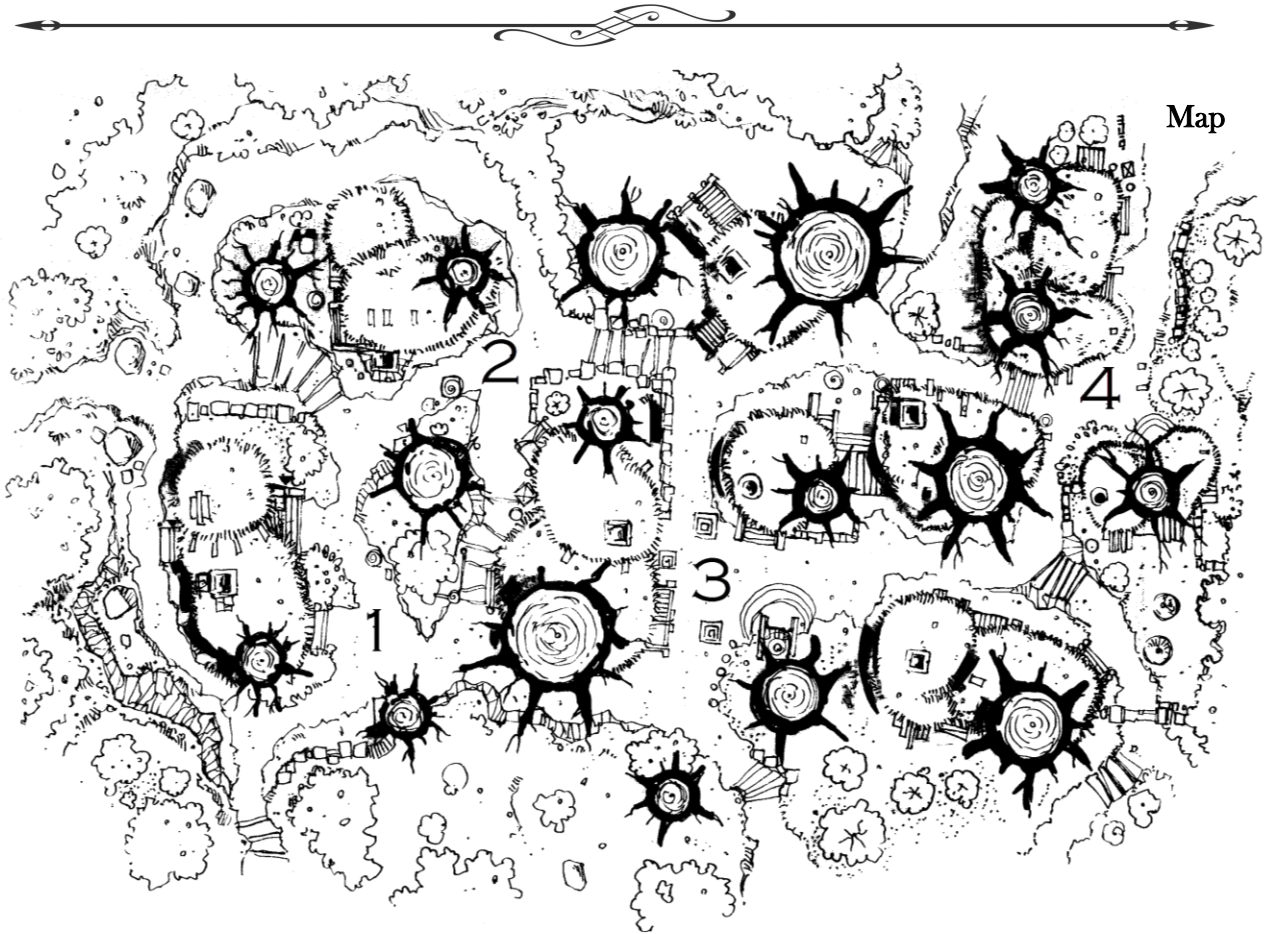
Attacks: Bite (1d6+1 + poison)

Nat 19: special

S:14 D:16 C:12 I:2 P:12 W:10 Ch:4

Luck: 6

Move: 50 ft and may climb walls, ceilings, etc



Map

Male Giant Tree Spiders are 7 ft long, camouflaged like the leaves and branches they hide within (+2 bonus on hide checks). They display basic teamwork and hunt in packs, stalking their prey from the high branches before dropping 5 ft nets of black silk. A *Luck* (Dex) save is required to prevent becoming entangled and helpless. On their turn, a trapped victim may spend an action to attempt to break free (an opposed Str check vs Str 17). On a natural 19 attack roll, the victim is subject to a web attack.

The spider's poisonous bite causes 1d2 Con loss (a *Luck* (Con) save resists). An adventurer reduced to zero Con falls into a coma, and is later eaten or used to lay eggs in. An adventurer has a 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead spider.

The spiders have strands connecting all of the trap sites, enabling them to signal each other. Once an ambush is triggered at one site, the spiders at the next closest site will converge on the

same area in 1d4+1 rounds, and so on, attacking the party in four waves.

If the male spiders are defeated, there remains one other threat to contend with: high in the trees, in the very uppermost canopy, sleeps the female brood mother. This horrific beast is 15 ft long, and takes 3d4 rounds to awaken after the last set of male spiders signals her.

The brood mother is a canny, ancient creature, and will observe the party before deciding what to do.

If the party appears badly wounded, or splits up, she will attempt to pick off individuals with her web hooks, hoisting victims into the canopy to face her alone.

If the party appears strong, and stays together, she will attempt to avoid them whilst she sneaks through the branches. If she gets the opportunity, she will seek to retrieve some of her eggs and/or baby spiders from the huts.

Brood Mother

No. Appearing: 1

Armor Class: 12

Hit Dice: 14

Attacks: Bite (1d10+1 + poison)

Nat 19: special

S:18 D:16 C:16 I:4 P:12 W:15 Ch:5

Luck: 13

Move: 50 ft and may climb walls, ceilings, etc

The Brood Mother is 15 ft long, possessed of sly cunning and often hunts in packs with her smaller males. As an action, she may drop web hooks onto a target below her, hoisting them up into the trees at a rate of 60 ft per round (a *Luck* (Dex) save resists). Such a victim is not entangled, but cannot move away from the monster without spending an action to cut themselves free (requires a Dex check). The brood mother makes *Off Turn Attacks*.

On a natural 19 attack roll, the brood mother leaps onto the target, crushing it beneath her bulk and forcing a roll on the *Injuries & Setbacks* table.

The brood mother's poisonous bite causes 1d6 Con loss (a *Luck* (Con) save at a -2 penalty resists). An adventurer reduced to zero Con falls into a coma, and is later eaten or used to lay eggs in. There is a 25% chance of harvesting 1d3 doses of poison from a dead female.

The Huts

If the party investigates the huts, roll 1d8 to determine what is inside:

- (1) 1d4 cocooned tribe members, each with a 50% chance of being a corpse implanted with eggs or 6 inch baby spiders. Otherwise the victim is still alive.
- (2) A ramshackle hut of broken furniture, shelving and rugs: nothing of value.
- (3) Amongst the ruins are 1d4 clay pots of healing poultices. The poultices have a

50% chance of curing any disease or restoring lost Str, Dex or Con, within 1d4 days.

- (4) 1 x Carry Loot (LFG p.136) stashed under a fur rug.
- (5) A lone male spider, tending 1d3 cocooned tribe victims. The victims are still alive and awaiting being implanted.



- (6) A female child named *Barbula*, who somehow managed to hide from the spiders. She is scared but hopeful at the sight of the party. She is ravenously hungry and thirsty. Reroll subsequent (6) results.
- (7) 1 x Potion (LFG p.150) in a clay bottle decorated with teeth.
- (8) A blood stained willow staff adorned with green crystals. The staff is magical, a relic from a lost druidic order. Once every 1d4 days the user may cast *Speak with Plants*. In addition, hostile plants will only target the wielder if there are no other potential targets. Reroll subsequent (8) results.

Aftermath

If any of the villagers are saved, they are indebted to the party, and will provide them with numerous instances of free healing poultices, food and shelter.

They can also offer passage through the forest under the auspices of their tribe, providing protection against rival barbarian clans. This requires particular paint markings and the wearing of a “safe passage” necklace.



If the adventurers are here on behalf of the dying Lord Bergolt, one or more of the surviving villagers might be able to make up a healing elixir for him (80% chance).

If none of the villagers are saved, their secret healing skills are lost to the ages. If they're lucky, the party might locate a healing salve suitable for Lord Bergolt's condition among the ruins (30% chance).



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