

Smile with

U.S.

Friend...



Violent Media

# SMILE WITH US, FRIEND...

A WEIRD-SADNESS ADVENTURE LOCATION  
BY EDWARD LOCKHART



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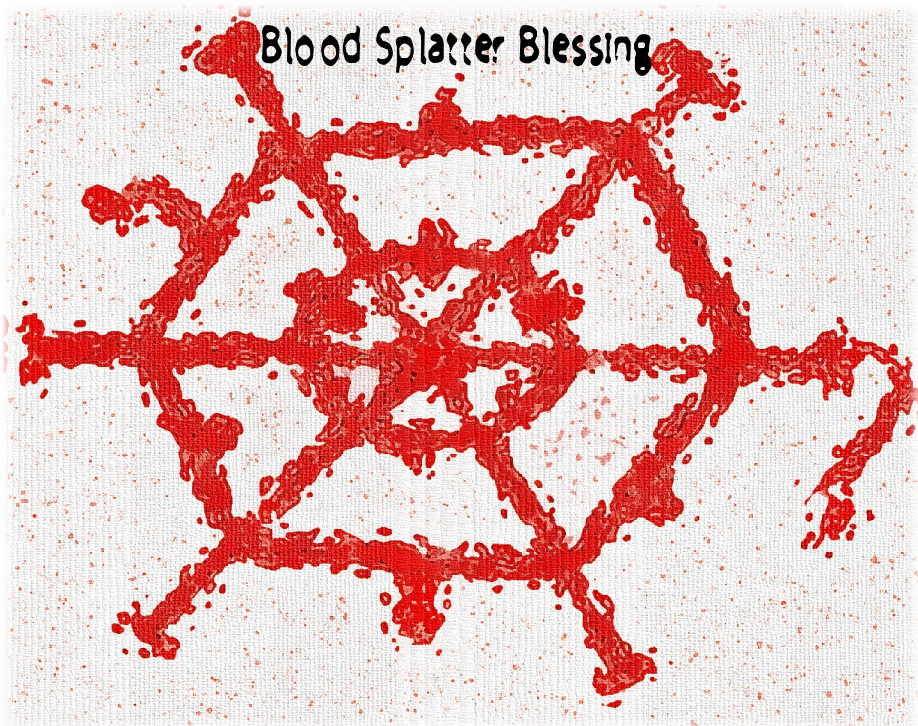
❧ An Afterword?

## THE SAD TRUTH OF IT ALL:

This is little more than a strange hole in the ground filled with pitiable people who mean no harm at all. Sure, they're mostly man-sized spiders worshipping a malevolent goddess, but they're peaceable spider-things.

The whole thing could (and probably would) be safely ignored if it were not for these unfortunate facts:

- ☞ When one is directly asked to join the cult, any negative response results in a foul magical mutation. (The spider-things don't mean for this to happen, but it does, **every single time**.) Nearby homesteaders live in fear of the spiders' friendly calls and invitations. Many also live with preternatural disfigurements.
- ☞ A rich widow had her entire luxurious household moved into the underground complex. Word spreads; desperate ne'er-do-wells will come calling...
- ☞ Further ensuring no good will come of this, the Consumptive Prophet coughed up a blood-splatter blessing, "depicting" the inside of the complex. He will gladly share the knowledge from his sacred disease, for a nominal fee and small percentage of the loot. Fee up front. No Refunds.



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# FRIENDS OF THE SEVEN

**Aaron Woodruff** was a sorcerer of middling power and grand hubris. He beseeched favor from the Seven-armed Spinner in Darkness. She showered him with favor, far beyond the limits of his soft, meaty form.

Now, he is hers. He loves the goddess with fervent and naked longing.

High Priest Woodruff wishes to bring the Seven-armed Spinner in Darkness back unto the world so that he might mate with her or possibly be consumed by her. He's a bit fuzzy on the details but is not at all concerned by this.

Aaron believes if he manages to convert 49 followers (including himself) into Friends of the Seven, he shall then free the goddess from her watery prison. *Leaf-green Orchard Orbweaver*.

❖1 HD. AC as Leather. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. Unless unable to flee, Aaron will not enter into combat himself. He is more than willing to sacrifice everyone in the Friendship.

❖He is capable of assuming almost human form at will (though only his own). Some portion of him must remain spidery; a single eye hidden behind a patch, a leg hidden within his pants, etc.

❖1/day he can teleport himself instantly to any point he can see.

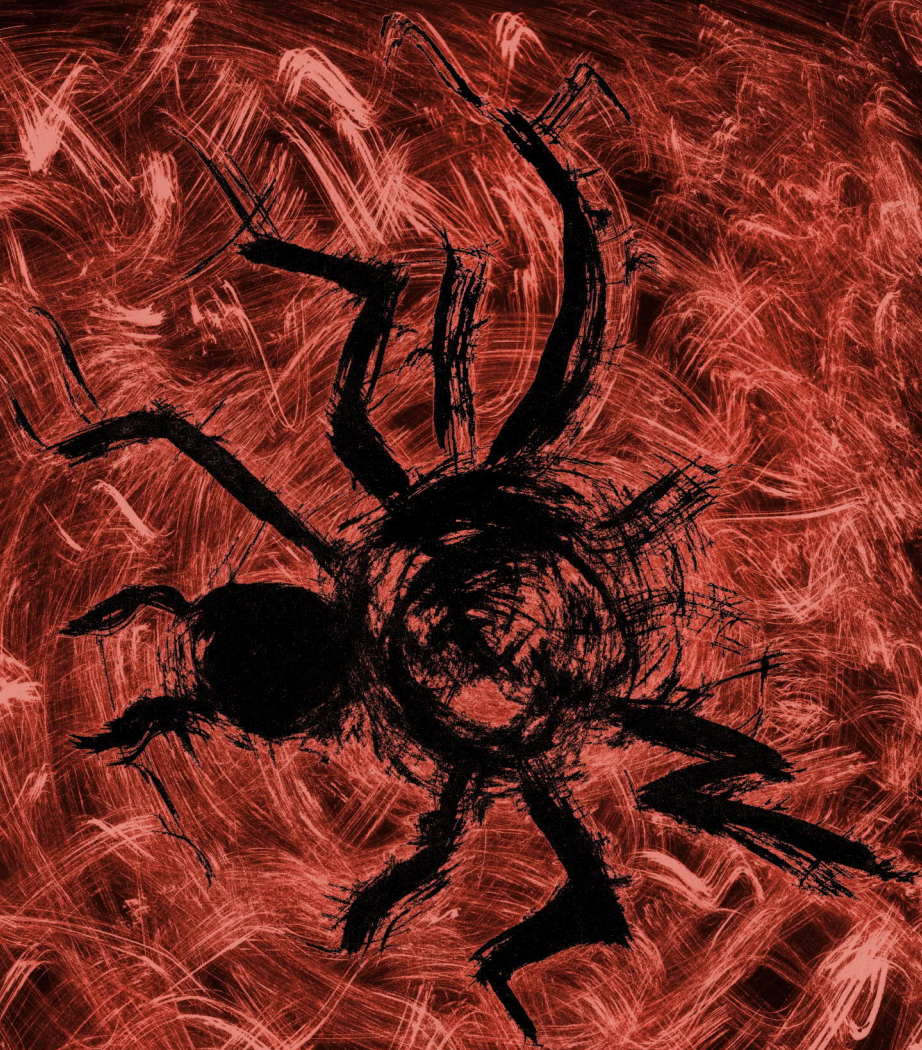
❖1/day he can cause himself to weigh no more than a feather or cause some other person/object to weigh twice as much. (Acts last in combat, ½ movement, tires easily, -2 on rolls to do physical things.) Lasts until the next sunrise, until Aaron is slain, or until dismissed.

## **General Notes Concerning the Spidery Friends:**

Each of the Friends were once human beings. Now, they are large and mostly made of spider. Like their patron goddess, each has seven spider legs. Only their right arms and smiling mouths remain human. As men and spiders, the Friends cannot see in the dark; most will carry a dim candle or glowing mug of Red Fish.

Direct denial of a Friend's invitation to "true happiness" results in a disfiguring and unnatural mutation(Sv. vs Magic to avoid); oblique deferrals are an excellent tactic... for a while at least.

# THE SEVEN-ARMED SPINNER IN DARKNESS



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## FRIENDS OF THE SEVEN

**Geoffrey Dwindle** walked with a bit of a limp, always squinting at his feet. A gangling figure bent beneath too many jackets.

Now, Geoffrey stands tall, a smallish grinning orb on 7 long legs. He has found his voice, a friendly whisper. *Daddy Long Legs*.

❖ 1 HD. AC as Leather. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. Moves twice as fast as a human. Long legs have pike-like reach.

**William Westin** smiled wanly, if often, belying tight and nervous eyes. He used to only diffidently nod and never would speak.

Now, William skitters in nervous joy, trailing web thoughtlessly behind him. He bubbles enthusiastically on any and all topics though he defers readily to experts. *Chartreuse and Vermillion garden spider*.

❖ 2 HD. AC as Leather. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. No Attack Bonus. Web can entangle pursuing opponents as he flees. He will probably flee.

**Arthur Robin** always reeked of whiskey and punctuated every sentence with a wink. He tended to touch those he trapped in conversation.

Now, the new teetotaling Arthur speaks often of the wickedness of rum, through a perpetual cloud of pipe-smoke. He remains clingy and desperately joyful; he talks with myopic closeness, even when hanging from the ceiling. *Common House Spider*.

❖ 2 HD. AC as Leather. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. When dangling from ceiling, attacks with all legs in a frenzy 1d8.

The widow, **Gwendolyn Wallace**, became stuttering fountain of inane chatter. She was never to be found at her lonely country abode; instead, she endlessly invented business about town.

Now, Gwendolyn smiles in contended silence. In a soft, clear voice she may beckon new friends forward, but more often than not she quietly seeks the council of Friend Aaron. *Tarantula*.

❖ 3HD. AC as Leather and Shield. 1 attack 1d4+1 or by weapon. She is reticent to fight, but will wildly pursue violence if ordered by Aaron.

# GEOFFREY WHISPERS FROM ABOVE...



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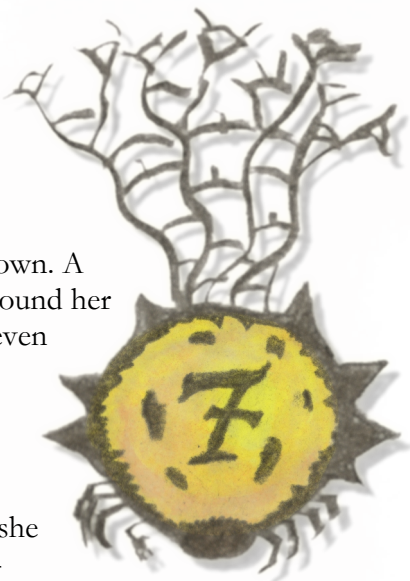
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## FRIENDS OF THE SEVEN

**Amanda Smythe** would merely glide quietly in the wake of her ponderous father. Her hands were always hidden.

Now, Amanda shines brightly on her own. A brilliant yellow orb with 7 jet spikes around her rim, she sings loudly and often. Her seven short legs are always busy, always weaving beautiful fractal-webs. *Jewel Spider.*



❖ 1 HD. AC as Leather and Shield. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. Typically she will attempt to use her current web-work as a sticky net; treat as normal attack. Sv. vs. Paralyzation to escape on each subsequent round with cumulative -1 penalty.

**Liz Jennings** spat often and ran as wild as she pleased. Though, she was never really pleased and kept no company.

Now, Liz lunges at any chance to speak with new friends. She's abrasive and short but smiling. She will likely be the first to ask a visitor to join the Friendship of 7; she is dogged in this (and all other) pursuits. Her large eyes will reflect torchlight before the rest of her can be seen. *Wolf Spider.*

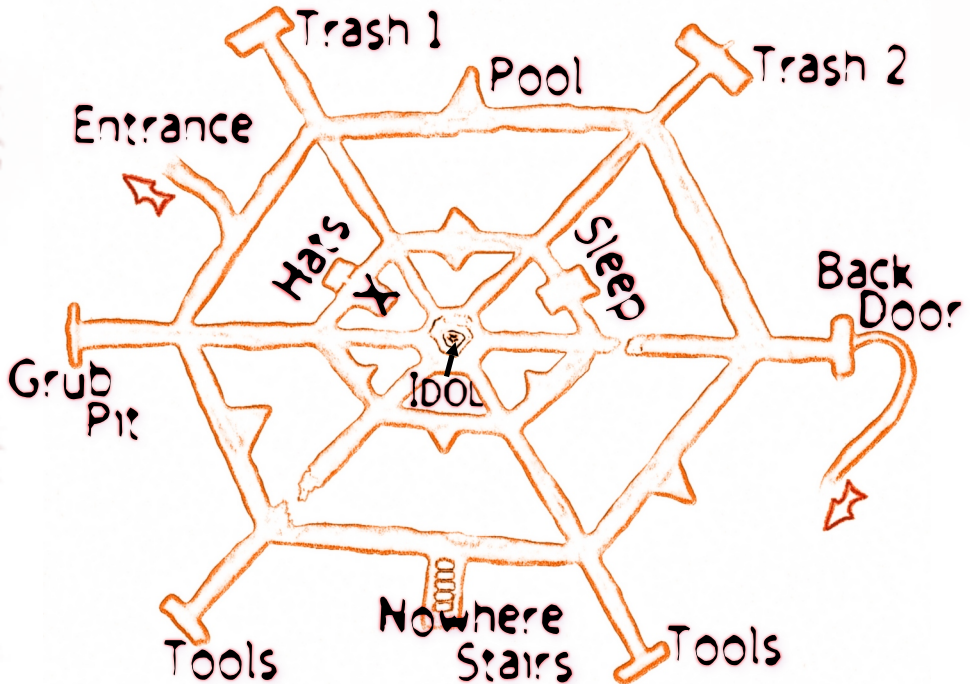
❖ 2 HD. AC as Leather and Shield. 1 attack 1d4+1 or by weapon. She is likely to grab a mattock or shovel from the tool room if she suspects trouble, 1d6+1.

**Jean Dumas** had been happy enough with his shallow, laudanum-fueled existence. He only joined the Friendship of 7 to cure the many diseases eating away at his mind and genitals.

Now, Jean's tight smile lasts only so long as someone might be looking. He hates his "Friends" and Aaron most of all; for Aaron refuses to give Jean the secret to taking human form. The bitter and toxic bile always burning in his throat does little to aid his disposition. *Fiddleback.*

❖ 1 HD. AC as Leather. 1 attack 1d4 or by weapon. 1/day on a successful melee attack Jean can spit necrotic bile on an opponent for 1 extra damage. Sv. vs. Poison or take 1d4 rotting damage for 1d8 days.

# HALLS OF THE SMILING SPIDER



## ENTRANCE :

It begins with a crudely painted sign planted on a hillock:

*Enter Friend*

*&*

*Smile with Us*

*- 7*

Below it, a twisting stone tunnel gapes, revealing a shallow 100' descent into chthonic darkness.

The entirety of the complex is composed of crude barrel-vaulted tunnels, cobble sized stones pressed into clay soil. These halls should not stay open especially at 12' wide, yet with few exceptions the complex remains intact.

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# ENCOUNTER CHART

|    |                                                                                                                                                 |   |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1  | <b>Geoffrey Dwindle</b> - Daddy Long Legs                                                                                                       | 1 |
| 2  | <b>William Westin</b> - Garish Garden Spider                                                                                                    | 2 |
| 3  | <b>Arthur Robin</b> - Common Brown House Spider                                                                                                 | 3 |
| 4  | <b>Amanda Smythe</b> - Yellow Jewel Spider                                                                                                      | 4 |
| 5  | <b>Liz Jennings</b> - Big Black Wolf Spider                                                                                                     | 5 |
| 6  | <b>Gwendolyn Wallace</b> - Hulking Brown Tarantula                                                                                              | 6 |
| 7  | <b>Jean Dumas</b> - Small Furtive Fiddleback                                                                                                    | 7 |
| 8  | <b>Aaron Woodruf</b> - Leaf-green Orchard Orbweaver                                                                                             | 8 |
| 9  | 2 Cultists having a loud conversation. (Roll 1d8 twice)                                                                                         |   |
| 10 | 3 Cultists carrying buckets of trash to Grub Pit or Trash 2. (Roll 1d8 thrice)                                                                  |   |
| 11 | 6 Hunting Crabcats. Any protein heavy foods will be viciously sought out by the crabcats. (¼ HD. 1d2 pinch attack.) Encounter only occurs once. |   |
| 12 | Rock falls from ceiling after slight tremor. If left alone, the rock will float back into place.                                                |   |
| 13 | Thick Orange Mists fill this and adjacent hallways. Lasts 1d20 minutes. Visibility of less than 3 ft.                                           |   |
| 14 | Eel Maiden appears in a splash and begins to suffocate. It will die in 5 minutes unless submerged in water. 10 minutes if kept wet.             |   |
| 15 | Thin layer of wet, blood-red sand sprinkles down from the ceiling.                                                                              |   |
| 16 | Nearby walls begin to sweat seawater. This lasts for about an hour.                                                                             |   |
| 17 | Mild tremors, barely felt through soles of feet.                                                                                                |   |
| 18 | School of glowing Redfish rains down from above.                                                                                                |   |
| 19 | 3 Encounters happen at once. Treat 19 as Nothing if rolled again.                                                                               |   |
| 20 | Nothing                                                                                                                                         |   |

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## ROOMS:

### TRASH 1:

This hall reeks of stale urine, old garbage, and festering shit. Towards its termination, the smell reaches an unbelievable zenith. Nothing wishes to be here. Do not roll for an encounter in this hall.

In the room itself, a rough woven mat of willow branches and scraps of oiled canvas cover a large pit,  $\frac{3}{4}$  filled with garbage and excrement. Stepping more than a few inches into the room is functionally a pit trap. 1d4 damage from the fall. Save vs. Poison or the character's wounds will go septic. This deals 1d4 damage each day as the infection spreads. Only healing magic or expert medical care can prevent or cure septic wounds.

### POOL:



The ruddy red glow of this place can be seen from either flanking intersection. Unlike the rest of the structure (including all the other notches throughout), this triangular room appears to have been wetly eroded from a single piece of stone.

Crabcats (12) cast strange shadows on the ceiling as they petulantly stalk the shallow algal pool. Every so often, one of them works up the will to snatch a splashing Red Fish.

In the far back corner, three feet below the saltwater surface an opening awaits, leading to the Bloodsand Bottoms.

❖ **Crabcats** - chimeric abortions of haphazard mutation. Eight long, spined legs and two pinching claws protrude from the fat furred form of angry tabby cats. The melancholic things remain torn between their ultra-feline detestment of being wet and an overwhelming desire to scoop flopping fish from the Pool.  $\frac{1}{4}$  HD. 1d2 pinch attack.

❖ **Red Fish** - squirming finger-sized wormlike fish which phosphoresce in soft, bloody burgundies. 5 of them glow like a dim candle; 10 or more shed light like a guttering torch. They joyously feast on the euphoriant orange algae of the Pool. Sunlight is lethal for these fish. Consuming red fish or orange algae comes with about a 40% chance of experiencing euphoric and very vivid hallucinations. Crabcats appear sullenly immune to this effect.

❖ **Eel Maidens** - Though they look remarkably like sad women's faces swimming about with strange algae encrusted hair-tails, Eel Maidens are thoughtless creatures. Their large, soulful eyes connect to a pea sized brain. The tiny teeth lining their pursed, sphincter like mouths pose no threat.

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## ROOMS:

### TRASH 2:

Similar but less potent than Trash 1. This latrine and garbage dump is still in use by the Friends of 7 and only  $\frac{1}{4}$  full. Accidental Pit Trap - 1d6 damage from fall. Save +1 vs. Poison to avoid septic wounds.

Any cultist encountered in this hall will be shitting.

### GRUB PIT:

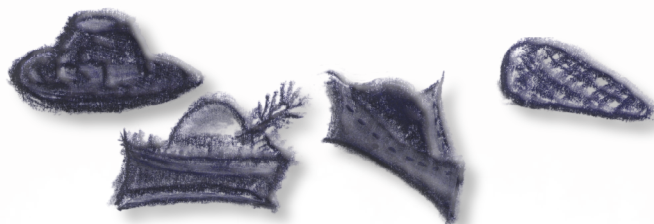
This hall truncates with a collapsed room, rubble still resting wherever it fell. Directly before the collapse, a wide open pit echoes with the sounds of thousands of wet exoskeletons sliding past one another. Therein fat grubs feast on mounds of rotten wood and other decaying vegetable matter.

Any cultists encountered in this hall will be using long nets to fish fistfuls of delicious grubs and beetles from the pit.

### HATS:

A locked oaken door leads into largish room; its walls are festooned with hats, scarves, bonnets, hoods, and head-coverings of all kinds. Two particularly fine tricorne hats (both of the finest beaver-felt lined in silk, one a study in blue with silver highlights and bordered in brilliant peacock feathers, the other glossy black with gold piping, buttons, and elaborate tassels) are worth 150 silver each. The other 52 hats are fine specimens worth around 10 silver a piece, though many are antiques only worthwhile to collectors...

These hats are Aaron's secret passion, and the only possessions he refused to cede to the discarded treasure/junk pile across the hall. If Aaron has not yet been encountered, there's a 50% chance he will be inside, trying on an antique wimple made of delicate gauze.



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## ROOMS:

### X:

X marks the spot. This is where (almost) all of the material wealth of the cultists has been unceremoniously dumped. Crude furniture, silken pillows, rough linens, broken jars, and silver trays lay in a jumbled heap.

For every 5 minutes of digging through the mess roll once on the following treasure chart. However, all the ensuing racket risks 1 in 4 chance of an encounter with a cultist (roll 1d8 on the encounter chart). Extremely quiet and careful searching takes twice as long, but only risks 1 in 8 chance of an encounter. After 10 rolls there are no more valuables to be had.

### *TREASURE FROM THE JUNK*

**1** Embroidered Linen Cushion (5 sp)

**2** Coinpurse with 3d6 sp

**3** Elaborate Lacework Shawl (12 sp)

**4** Brass Candelabra (3 sp)

**5** Lockbox with 1d12 gp and 2d20 sp

**6** Silver Candlestick (15 sp)

**7** Fancy Cutlery (10 sp)

**8** Silk Kerchief (15 sp)

**9** Lifelike, Very Fragile Porcelain Doll (60 sp)

**10** ½ of a Silver Plated Tea Set (8 sp)

## ROOMS:

### SLEEP:

A haphazard tangle of ropery spider webs and hammocks spills across the hall from either side. It would be quite difficult for non-spiders to cross this space without becoming entangled.

During the night, any unencountered cultists will likely be sleeping here.

### BACK DOOR:

An overlong trestle table sticks out into the hallway. Benches or other seating remain conspicuously absent. Large barrels of water line the north and south walls.

There is a 1 in 6 chance that all the cultists are present are having a communal meal of sweetcorn and fresh grubs. Yum! If any cultists have been captured or killed thus far, the rest will be loudly discussing the absence(s). Otherwise, any encountered cultists in this hall will be clearing the table or bringing in baskets of corn (50/50).

The exit lies behind a large spider-silk tapestry with a 7 crudely stained into it. 100' of winding tunnel opens into a large cornfield. During the day any unencountered cultists will likely be tending to the fields.

### TOOLS:

Tools are stored in mostly empty racks on the back walls: 1d4 hoes, 1 shovel, 3 burlap sacks, 1 heavy mattock, 2 long handled nets, and 35' of sturdy rope.

### NOWHERE STAIRS:

Incongruously well-cut stone steps descend into the darkness. In defiance of banal physicality, these stairs lead downward ad infinitum. No matter the actual speed of those involved, it always takes twice as long to climb the steps as it does to descend them.

Stepping foot upon them instantly alerts Aaron. Within 5 minutes he and Gwendolyn will turn up at the head of the stairs, with the rest of the cultists filtering in over the next 10 minutes.

Theoretically, one could spend forever tumbling down the Nowhere Stairs.

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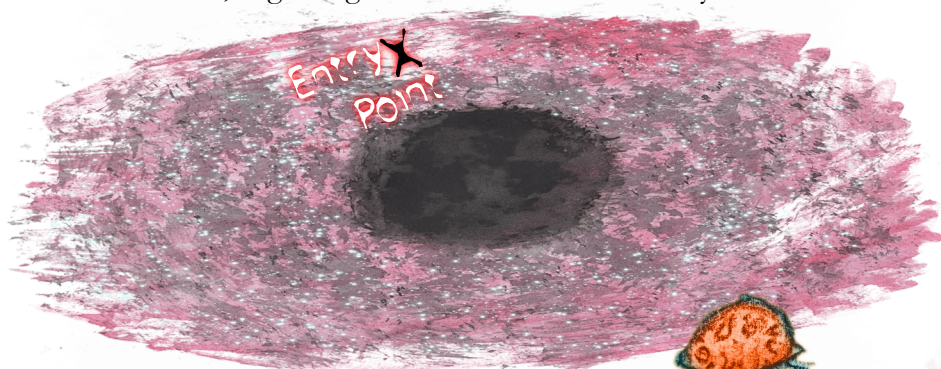
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## ROOMS:

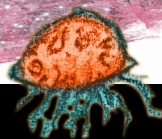
### Idol:

What appears to be a natural cluster of rubies dangles upon asbestos strands from the ceiling (400 sp, 300 sp without the unusually long asbestos fibers). The size of a child's outspread hand, the gems form the vague shape of a seven legged spider. 50% chance Aaron will be here, muttering love poetry to the idol.

Moving the idol causes minor tremors to run throughout the complex. Removing it from the room causes the complex to collapse in 3d20 minutes, beginning with the inner-most hallways.



### THE BLOOD SAND BOTTOMS:



Maroon colored sands shift slowly in the gentle current. Sunlight scatters and bends through 80' of clear seawater. The pressure of such depths is conspicuously absent. Eel Maidens flit to and fro, occasionally slurping up Red Fish or Neon Jellies. Across the sanguine sands, starfish twinkle at one another forming intricate patterns. (10% chance that viewing the current arrangement of starfish will function as a scroll of Waterbreathing. Everyone looking will ONLY be able to breathe water for the next 1d4 hours.) In the dead center of the sands, a bottomless abyss gapes with obvious menace. Dozens of miles below, still forever falling into that lightless hole, The Spinner in Darkness seethes and schemes.

Breaking the surface shows this to be an ocean in miniature, the size of a middling lake. Deep, thick pine forests ring the red sand beaches. This is a place of odd fairy tales and living nightmares; dream logic and unbridled passion suffuse every inch of a wild unbounded world.

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# Basic Terrible Mutations Chart

Roll 1d8 for Type and 1d6 for severity.

- 1 Extra Leg : Small, useless extra leg erupts from the victim overnight. With concentration it can be made to twitch, but otherwise it simply dangles pointlessly, soft, weak, and easily damaged. 1-3 | from back; 4 | from Left Leg; 5 | from Right Arm; 6 | from Forehead.

- 2 Demon Tongue : Tongue elongates and bifurcates, sort of like a snake's. 1-3 | Grows 3 inches, slight lisp at first; 4-5 | Grows 6 inches, slight lisp, turns black; 6 | Grows 12 inches, prehensile, heavy lisp, cannot be kept in mouth, always thirsty now.

- 3 Toe Boils : Toes erupt from the victim's skin, complete with gnarled toenails. 1-2 | Only on feet and lower legs; 3-4 | Below the waist; 5 | Below the Neck; 6 | Everywhere.

- 4 Motile Vines : 1d6 semi-motile vines sprout from the victim's back. At best each vine can slowly and clumsily move light-weight items. Reduction in ration needs by 10% per vine if victim is in sunlight for 4 hours that day. The vines can be painfully trimmed away, but they will grow back.

- 5 Teeth and Horns : 1 | Victim develops fangs; 2 | Victim's jaw lengthens; 3-4 | Tusks painfully erupt (Difficulty speaking, -1 Charisma); 5-6 | Horns extrude overnight (Players choice in type, headbutt for 1d3).

- 6 Greasy : 1-2 | Victim's pores exude a substance almost exactly like olive oil; 3-5 | Victim sweats something almost exactly like rancid bacon grease; 6 | Victim constantly dripping with slick, viscous, bright blue goo.

- 7 Flesh Pockets : Develop 1d6 flesh pockets. Each is capable of comfortably holding objects up to the size of the victim's hand. These usually appear on the torso and thighs.

- 8 Metallic Skin : 1-2 | Tin Foil (shedding skin and hair turns into tin, if skinned hide will turn into a sheet of pure tin worth 45 sp); 3 | Mercury (victim now sweats quicksilver, prolonged contact causes mercury poisoning, sweat now valuable to alchemists, +2 Sv vs. Poison); 4 | Bronze (+1 AC, skin now counts towards encumbrance, heal at  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal rate unless 1 oz. of bronze is consumed weekly, hide worth 80sp); 5 | Silver (+1 AC, skin now counts towards encumbrance, heal at  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal rate unless 1 oz. of silver is consumed weekly, hide worth 250sp); 6 | Gold (+1 AC, skin now counts towards encumbrance, heal at  $\frac{1}{2}$  normal rate unless 1 oz. of gold is consumed weekly, hide is worth 500+sp).

# WILLIAM WAVES IN EARNEST GLEE...



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## An Afterword or Something:

❧ *So what is it I have here?*

❧ Basically: a weird locale, sad-strange people inside it (spider-monsters are people too [sometimes]), and a portal to another world...

❧ *What do I do with it?*

❧ Let your players know about this strange fucking hole in the ground... Hopefully they will go inside it; from there it becomes a big volatile fucking mess.

There are both strong and soft personalities; conflicting aims; the potential for diplomacy and for violence and for exploitation and maybe religious conversion; there are also some few valuable items... there's just a lot of possibilities down there.

This odd situation, this very particular place, lies ready to explode at your players' intrusion.

❧ *What if my players go into that fairyland crazy place?*

❧ Throw every weird idea you've ever had at them. Trawl the internet for even weirder ideas... They crawled through a magical portal in a smiling spider cult's lair; what the fuck did they expect?!

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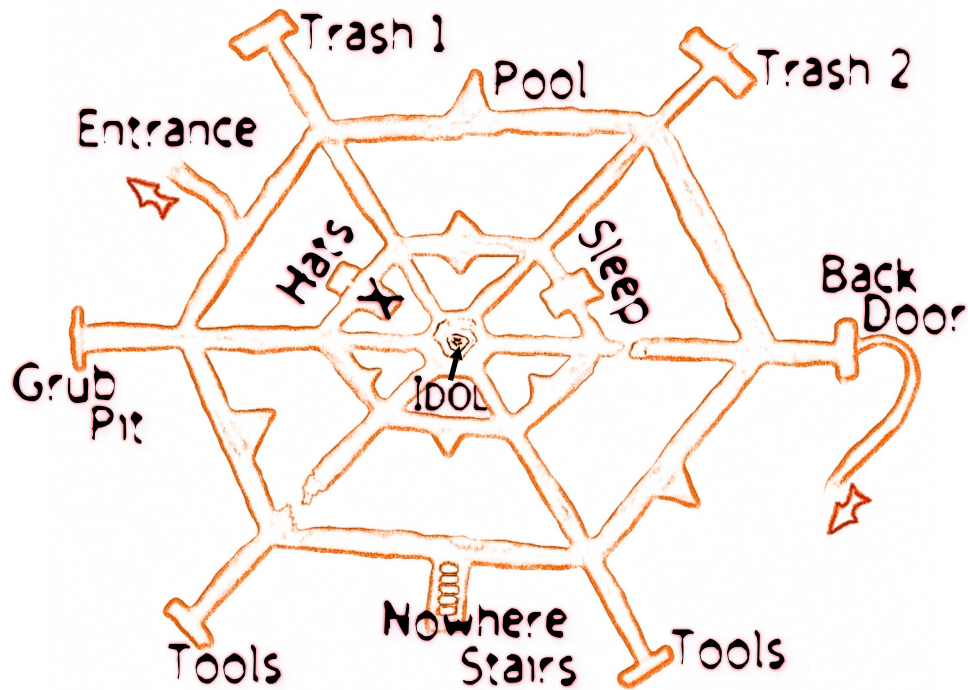
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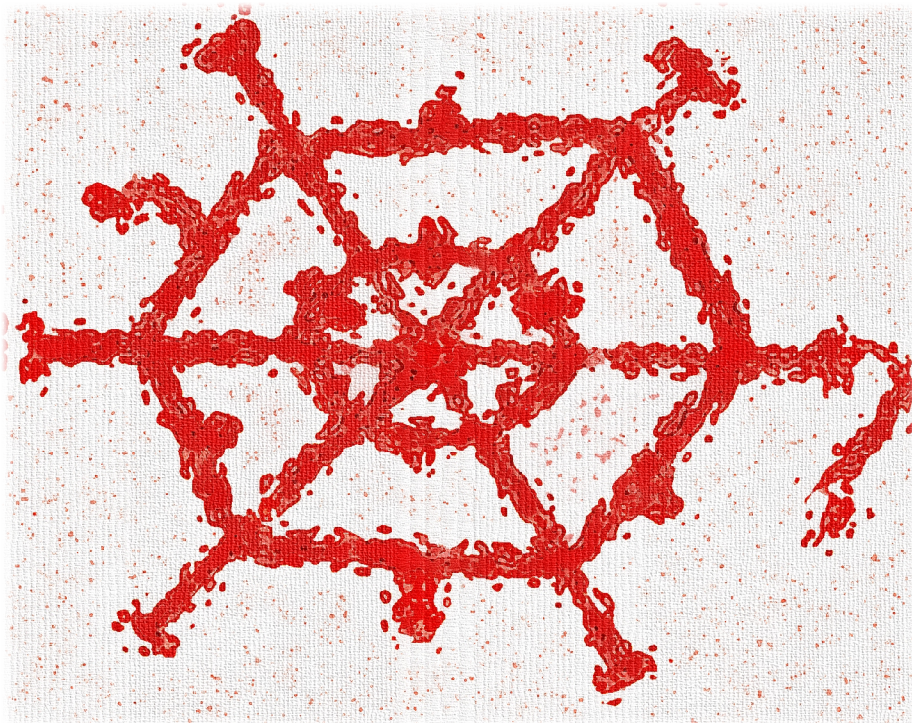


# HALLS OF THE SMILING SPIDER



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## Blood Splatter Blessing



## NOTES ABOUT THE FRIENDS

**Geoffrey Dwindle** - Daddy Long Legs

**William Westin** - Garish Garden Spider

**Arthur Robin** - Common Brown House Spider

**Amanda Smythe** - Yellow Jewel Spider

**Liz Jennings** - Big Black Wolf Spider

**Gwendolyn Wallace** - Hulking Brown Tarantula

**Jean Dumas** - Small Furtive Fiddleback

**Aaron Woodruf** - Leaf-green Orchard Orbweaver