

Curse of the Weaver Queen

by Tim Kask



ENT31002



A remarkably deadly adventure for 5-7 players of moderate level
For use with most fantasy role playing systems

The Lunar goddess Arianhrod

presides over the great wheel of life.

But centuries ago,
some saw the Wheel as a Web:
a spider's web.

And so began the Cult,
and so it has festered,
hidden, malignant... waiting.

Now they come
scuttling out of the dunes at night,
silent and deadly.

Only a very lucky few have survived
the ravaging horde.
The bugs. The huge spiders.

The Gatherers,
taking what is man's
and returning to their lair.

That area of the dunes is strange.
You'll see. You can find it easily.
And with luck, you may live
to tell the tale.

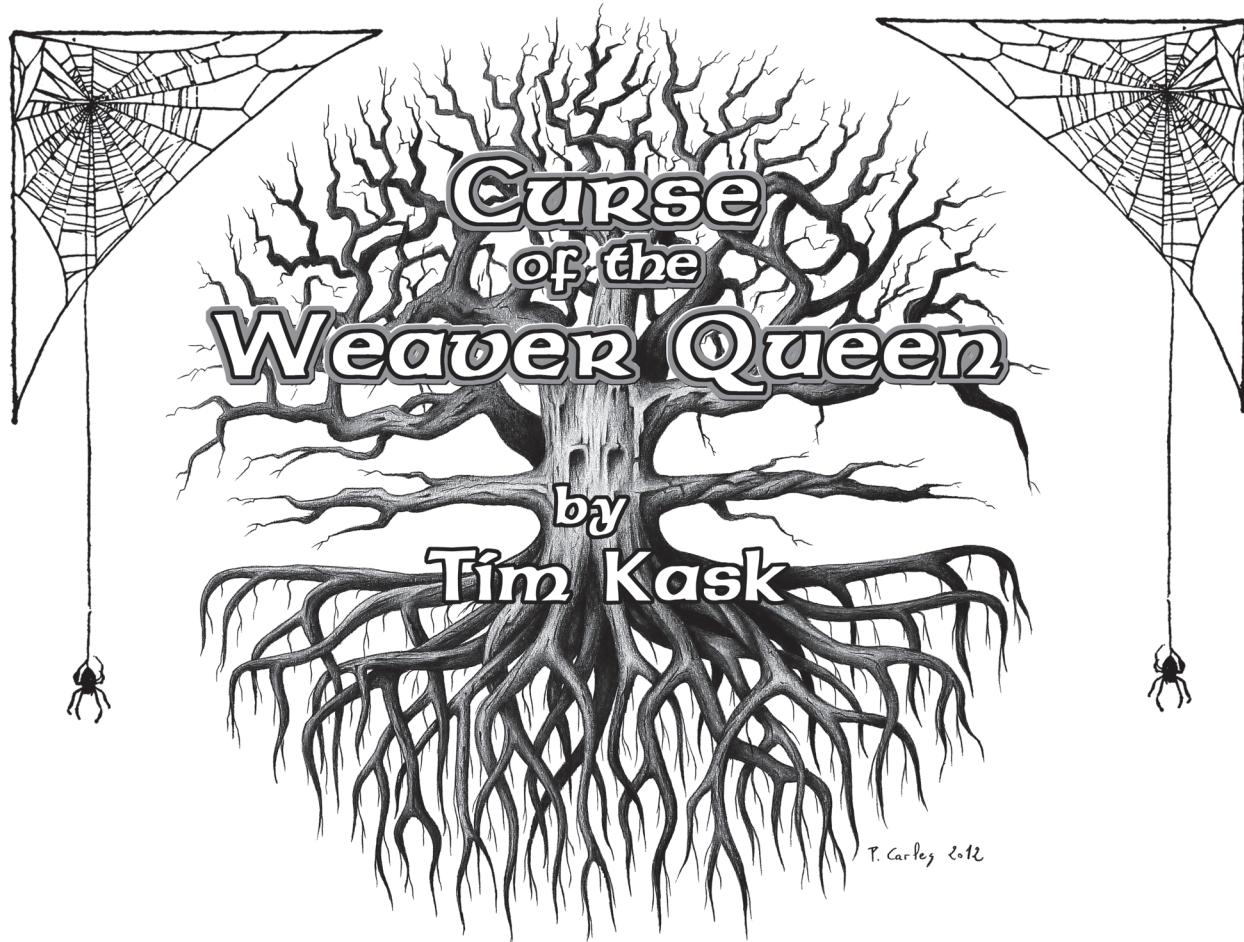
Curse of the Weaver Queen uses a generic language
compatible with any set of fantasy roleplaying rules.

It is a stand-alone adventure and will
easily drop into any existing campaign.

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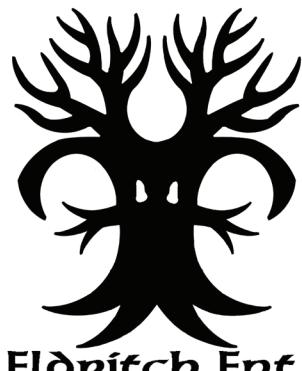
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Preface

This adventure is structured in such a way that it can be used with any rule set. What I cannot anticipate is the economics of your campaign. In describing values of various items I have been purposefully vague, as some campaigns are parsimonious while others are awash with riches. The cost of a night's lodging in one game might pay for a fortnight in another. Assign values and worth as fits your economics; inflation is always a danger. But, as I always say, "A character and his money are soon parted."

Do not feel compelled to slavishly follow any guidelines I have provided as to numbers of foes and their ferocity. One player group might consist of a handful of very high ranking characters; another may have a horde of lower-rated's. My wish is that you twist and bend this adventure to fit into your gaming style and/or world as suits you. On the other hand, if you are looking for a one-off and a night or two of fun, then ramp it up. The ingredients are contained within. The soup you make of them must please your palate; feel free to season it however you choose.

This adventure contains a number of *might-happens*; the players *might* find something, or they *might* elect to try something, or they *might not* find something or *might not* go somewhere. Rather than clog up the pages with things that might not happen, I have resorted to Appendices. If the players elect to pursue a given trail, there is an Appendix for that path.

There is an element of uncertainty in this adventure that I urge you to explore. I very much enjoy the idea that magic is not infallible. In my cosmos there are areas that I refer to as Mana-rich and Mana-lean. Mana is that power, or energy, that spell-casters manipulate to do what they do. In the metaphysics of my world, too much mana can be as dangerous as too little. In *The Undercroft* there is an overabundance of mana. How you choose to use that fact, beyond what I have already specified, is entirely up to you. Personally, I favor making some spells even more treacherous than normal, to both caster and target. But that's just me.

I have chosen to write this adventure in a somewhat different style from my usual methodology. In some cases I used paragraphs of text that are intermixed; they contain flavor text, GM Notes and general information changing from one to the other line by line. Please be sure to look this over well before you run it. While I am a leading proponent of "seat of the pants" gaming, this might not be the best time to try that. No, I'm sure it isn't.

Have fun. And let me know how it all worked out for you.



A handwritten signature of Tim Kask in black ink.

kaskoid

Background

An ancient abomination has reawakened.

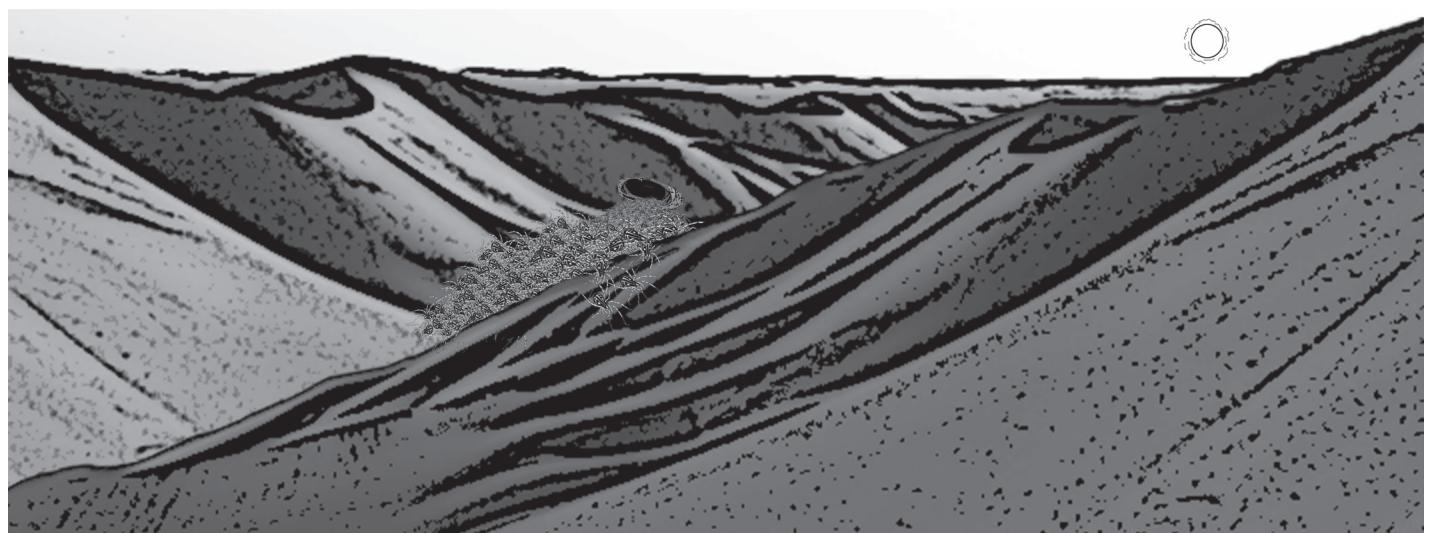
They come scuttling out of the wilderness at night, silent and deadly. Only a very lucky few have lived to talk about what it was they saw, or thought they saw: bugs, huge bugs, in swarming masses. Not just any bugs, but more accurately, arachnids. The survivors gabble on about hordes of huge spiders the size of a warrior's shield. They prattle on, once their wits return, of enormous scorpions, bigger than a hunting dog, and centipedes as long as a tall man's leg. Dazed survivors tell of being pursued by giant harvestmen for hundreds of yards until they out-distanced them.

There is a Problem. Small livestock are missing. Local farmers tell of whole farrows of piglets missing from their sties in the night and finding the sows scratched and bloody and lashing out uncontrollably. Oxen and horses have bolted from their paddocks and stables only to be recovered with their legs and bellies scratched and torn. Small pets are long gone and the disappearance

of several infants left momentarily unattended or toddlers that wandered is being blamed on the phenomena. A huge trained warhorse found hamstrung, partially dismembered and missing various bits, is the latest cause of tongue-wagging and idle speculation.

Just recently an old gaffer made the observation that "out thataways" was rumored to be the sand-buried and barely remembered "...temple of them spider-lovers..." Only the very oldest of the locals can recall hearing vague talk around their parents' tables of the sect, now so old as to have been mostly forgotten. That idle comment, tossed into a conversation at a very low-rent watering hole, has led to outlandish idle speculation and old tales wildly embellished. The embellishments got so bizarre at one point that they began to feed upon one another, each tale of likely doom more creative than the last.

That set off the organized clamor of alarm and pleas for help.

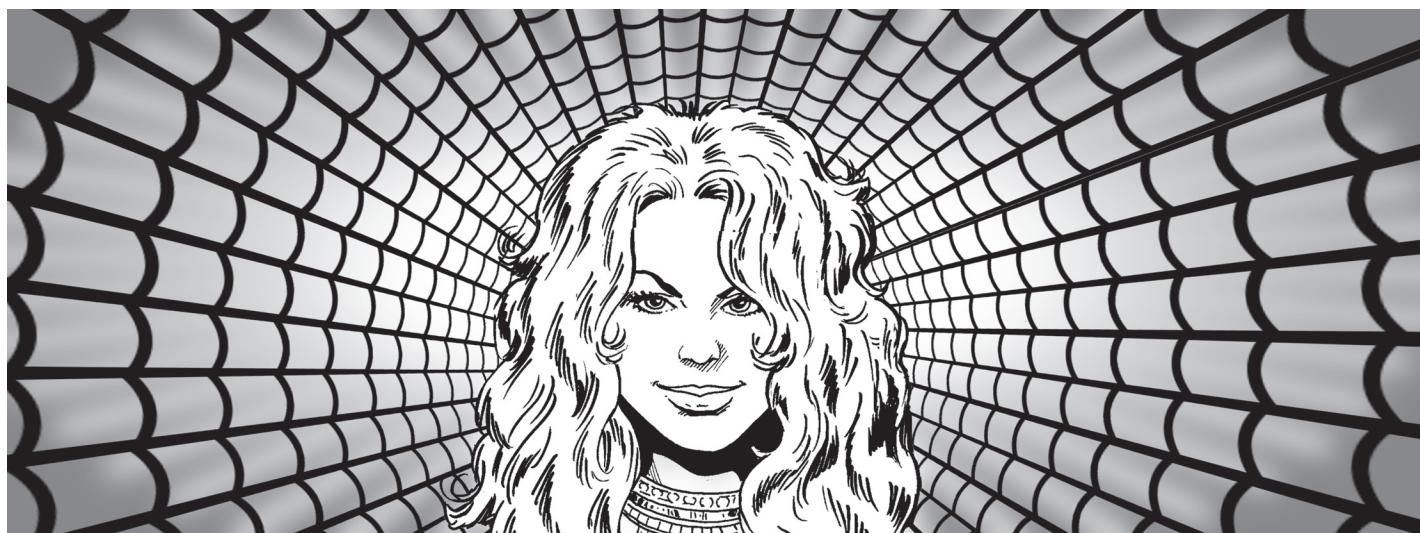


The Disciples of Arianhrod

Arianhrod (ah-ree-AHN-hroh) was a god-like being of the ancient Kelts in The Age of the Fey (a long, long time ago). Her symbol was a silver wheel and was a metaphor for the silvery moon in her lunar goddess aspect. She was also revered as the goddess of weaving. Some adherents thought that the silvery spoked wheel that was one of her symbols actually represented a spider web, and honored her accordingly as queen of the spiders, or goddess of the spiders. Thus did the first rift appear in the worship of Arianhrod; the wheel-as-web adherents founded a new temple far to the south of the original. As a result of The Great Rending, that

series of earthquakes, hurricanes, tectonic shifts, tornadoes, energy storms and thunderstorms that changed the world forever, the temples were on separate landmasses hundreds of leagues away across seas that no sane man dared.

Little is known of this sect. They broke off from the mother abbey before The Rending, some 8 centuries ago, and have had no contact. The Rule of Arianhrod holds that she is the goddess of weaving and the creatures that weave, spiders and weaver-birds, and she is generally regarded as beneficial and helpful.



The Disciples of Arianhrod (the “Arians”) started out as the schismatic element that adhered to the tenets of the goddess of spiders. Sometime during the first half of The Shambles (that period of almost four centuries when fierce energy storms lashed the planet and more than half the humans and other sentient races died) their tenets of worship took a sinister twist. The aspect of benevolent goddess of weavers and spiders got perverted into something much more sinister and wicked.

It was near the beginning of the Goblin Wars that the great winds shifted and buried the cities, villages and temples now lying beneath the Shimmering

Sands. Some said it was divine retribution for the evils committed by many of the residents of that land, primarily the Arians, as they began to call themselves.

They may well be right. The sect twisted the goddess from queen of spiders into some sort of travesty of woman and spider combined. As with all spiders, she must feed. The followers would capture non-believers, bind them in ropes and send them to her in the sky (actually pull them up on a cunning pulley system in the roof of the cavern in which she was said to reside) as sacrifices to her. Eventually the coils of rope would, each in their turn, fall from the ceiling, empty of anything non-metallic.

Standard Terminology

 as used in all generic products from Eldritch Ent.

“Flavor text” is printed **boldface**. This is intended to be read aloud or otherwise shared with the players in whatever manner you wish. Feel free to edit or embellish at your discretion.

“You” refers to the Game Master, the presumed reader of this work. *Facts that are important and relevant to the Game Master* in particular, and which must be discovered by the characters, are printed in *italics*.

The usual abbreviations for feet and inches—’ and ” respectively (e.g., 5’ 6”)—are used throughout. These English units are used in this American edition, while Metric is used in those customized for most of the world.

A reference to 10’y indicates a distance of 10 feet if indoors or 10 yards if outdoors, a common feature of some of the wargame rules whence role-playing derived.

Creature information appears in the following order. **AH** indicates a rating that applies to an **Average Human** (a typical non-combatant), a baseline for comparison.

Appearance is the first impression when a creature is encountered. It may be incomplete (lacking hidden items, for example) but will be sufficient, including general height, garb (if any), and immediately noticeable features.

Demeanor describes the general attitude (and often intelligence) of a creature, which is often helpful in determining its first actions when encountered.

Power is an overall rating describing the comparative degree of challenge a creature presents. A creature with Power 25% (5) presents about 5 times the challenge as one with Power 5% (1). AH Power is 1-5%.

Defense is a measure of the difficulty of damaging a creature. In most systems, a die roll equal to or greater than the Defense stat indicates that an attack is successful and inflicts Damage. AH defense is 1-5%.

In some game systems, a defense rating starts at zero (unarmored) and rises. In others, it starts at a positive number and decreases. If your defense system decreases, subtract the Defense rating given here from the starting number.

Percentile statistics are used in some game systems. When divided by five, each percentile rating also applies to systems designed for a 1-20 range. Both figures are given here. Example: Power 30% (6).

In most game systems, the **abilities** of player characters in roleplaying games are usually specified in ranges of either 1-100 or 1-20. Common ‘personal’ stats include the traits of Strength, Agility (Dexterity), Attractiveness, and Mental ability. ‘Tests’ of such traits are commonly used in variable situations, and each will specify a percentage followed by the 1-20 equivalent. Example: cumulative Strength to open: 110% (22)

For a **Ranged weapon**, the range (in yards or meters) is subdivided into Short/Medium/Long categories, given after the Damage. Example: orc spear 1d6 (2/3½/5).

Health indicates the amount of damage a creature can withstand before dying. Normally this is 1-2 per point of Power. AH health is 1-4.

Move is how far the creature moves per second, measured in feet. AH is 6-12.

Init (short for Initiative) is a bonus or penalty that may determine the sequence of events in a combat ‘round’ or other segment of time. In extreme cases Init may be listed as an absolute: “always first” or “always last”. AH Init is zero (no bonus or penalty).

Damage is the amount deducted from an opponent’s Health score if an attack roll indicates success when compared to Defense (above). Each attack form is followed by the dice used to determine the damage. Numbers in parentheses indicate multiple attacks of one type. Example: “Claw 1d4 (x2)” indicates two claw attacks, each inflicting 1d4 damage. AH (unarmed) Damage is usually 1 or 1-2.

Special is a brief listing of any abilities not explained previously. AH has none.

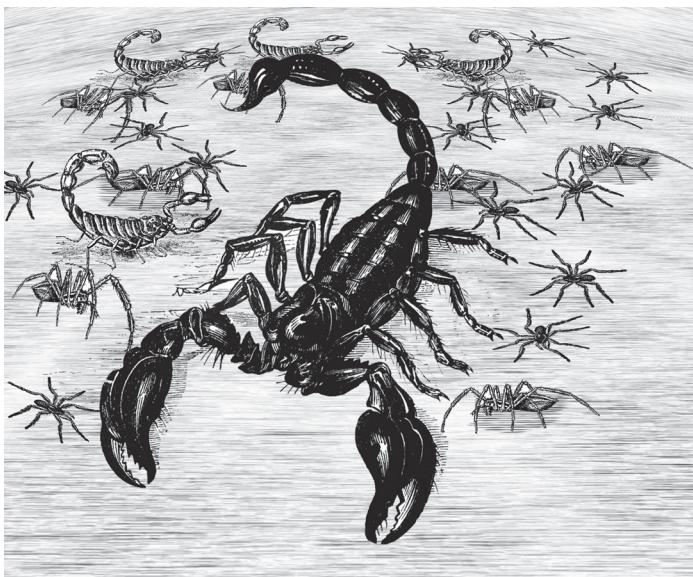
Other provides all details not fully specified above. Certain Special abilities may be here described in greater detail.

Temple of the Weaver

Temple Exterior

There is an odd series of dunes, centered around what looks to be the lair of an enormous funnel spider of huge proportions. One might surmise that the odd "dunes" were formed by parts of the temple now buried in sand. Swarms of spiders and scorpions can be seen issuing from the funnel shaped opening every few hours, ranging in size from what would be normal creatures to specimens hundreds of times bigger than the norm. Every so often a scorpion three or even four feet long will scuttle up the shifting sands. Spiders as big as shields can also be seen skittering up the silica face. Very occasionally one can be seen returning with things in its mandibles, probably better left unidentified.

The only way in is down the funnel, but it is perfectly safe to simply slide down; mysteriously, very little sand will slide with the characters. This method of entrance requires a leap of faith or some other, magical perhaps, means of ingress. The players may try to splice ropes together; there is no anchor on a sand face.



Temple Interior

The temple is in very good condition. The quality of the stonework is quite high, built of native rock. There is quite a bit of sand in the anteroom (#1), but almost none in the Purification Room (#2).

The temple has been buried in sand for nearly half a millennium, with no air currents to disturb dust on the floor. The floor has a thin dust layer everywhere you can see; the catastrophic winds blew for nearly a fortnight before the door was covered.

The air is surprisingly breathable, a bit stale but not dangerous. Torches and lanterns will burn with a normal light unless the dust is stirred up a great deal. In that event, the swirling dust could hamper vision and fighting.

Overall, the temple is quite well made. The floors are tiles or stone, and all the walls are dressed stone, done by master stonecutters. Except where noted, corridors and hallways are about eight feet wide and ceilings are ten feet high.

There is some indication that the temple was abandoned precipitously; "little" items are scarce, but all the bigger things remain, as though the occupants fled with what they could carry. The place having been nearly hermetically sealed, there is very little evidence of decay or rot. While everything has a layer of fine dust, the arid atmosphere has preserved the tapestries and such.

Every two to three hours a horde of arachnids will be spawned and make their way to the surface, attacking anything that gets in the way. They will usually seek to avoid explorers, but if given no option they will relentlessly attack. These are parties of Gatherers setting off into the wilderness to bring food back to The Nest.

Treat as a Wandering Monster unique to this setting.

Curse of the Weaver Queen

The Gatherers

1d20 Roll	Number Appearing	Type	Length	Power	Health	Defense
01-04	2d10+10	Centipedes	1-2'	5% (1)	3	5% (1)
05-12	1d20+30	Giant Harvestmen	4'	5% (1)	2	10% (2)
13	1d6	Giant Scorpions	4-5'	15% (3)	9	35% (7)
14-17	10d10	Scorpions	4-8'	5% (1)	1	5% (1)
18-20	1d20+20	Big Scorpions	1-2'	10% (2)	5	15% (3)

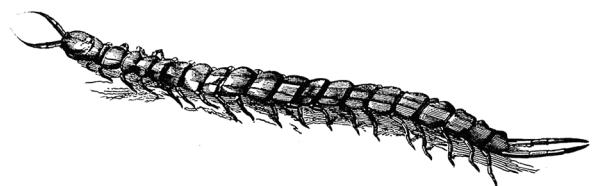
Harvestman: giant-sized 'daddy longlegs'

Giant Scorpion: -15% (-3) penalty to avoid poison

Scorpion: +10% (+2) bonus to avoid poison

Big Scorpion: no modifier to avoidance

Gatherers make a beeline for the narthex to begin their foraging. Check every two or three hours to find the type of the next swarm. If the adventurers do not impede their progress (or even cross their path), they need not clash, at the discretion of the Game Master. Number appearing is a flexible guideline. Should combat occur, the Gatherers will always instinctively attack the weakest first.



Swarm Combat

The Gatherers travel in packs. Modeling combat in this circumstance need not be too difficult, if the GM is willing to do a little abstracting. Trying to determine initiative, position, position relative to the party members, etc., etc. is stultifyingly tedious. In a worst-case scenario, the party could be assailed by 50 harvestmen or 100 scorpions at once. Here is one way to abstract such an encounter.

Based on the number of players, divide the attackers evenly, unless a special circumstance or the terrain prohibits it. Roll a d6 for each attacker (this is a great place to roll a whole handful all at once as that really ramps up the apprehension levels); 6's "might hit". For each "6" that you rolled, roll a d20 against the target for a normal strike. If any of the d20 rolls is successful, the hit is scored and damage assessed.

It would seem grossly unfair to make a party of five, for example, actually hit each of the arachnids one-on-one to dispatch them, especially in view of the fact that

they are relatively feeble as individuals. If you wish to abstract that side of the combat, one way might use the characters' speed, strength or agility. As an example, if you were playing the original fantasy roleplaying game you could have the players roll 3d6 and compare it to the attribute of your choice. For every pip less than the designated attribute, they could strike one of their foes. In this instance, have them roll whichever die is appropriate for their weapon type for each strike to see if it kills or merely wounds. If they exceed the chosen attribute, they have no chance of winnowing the attacking horde in such fashion, instead having to face off until the next determination of initiative for the next round.

If your game system utilizes initiative and/or surprise, factor them in accordingly when the confrontation begins, as a whole. This way, if the party has the initiative they have a chance to kill a number of the attackers immediately and reduce the chances of themselves being hit.

Curse of the Weaver Queen

Normal Centipedes (1d10 +10)

Appearance: The insect has a long body with a great many legs. Black in color, it naturally blends in with the walls and almost vanishes from view as it moves in the shadows and avoids light.

Demeanor: These eat carrion and fecal material and shy away from conflict.

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 3

Move: 6

Init: 20% (4)

Damage: Bite 1

Special: They are never surprised as they sense vibration along any floor.

Harvestmen (1d20 +30)

Appearance: These “daddy-long-leg” spiders have rock-hard legs and a large ball-shaped body. Rarely are they on the ground as they prefer working in the ceiling corners of any area.

Demeanor: They use webbing in their attacks and have no hesitation in attacking a group of three or less. They avoid larger groups if they can.

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 30% (6)

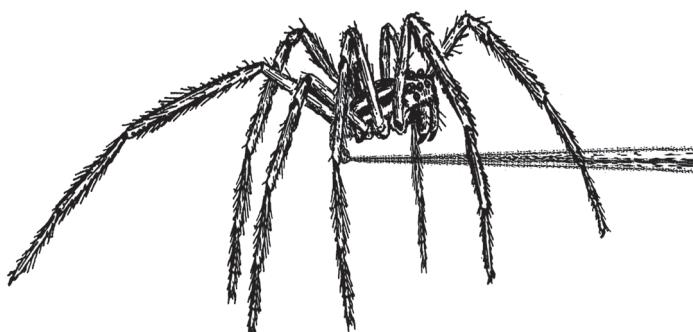
Health: 2

Move: 8

Init: 15% (3)

Damage: Bite 1d6

Special: Webbing lashes out at the same time as the bite attack. Due to the web materials they use adhering to the target, a successful bite attack gives each successive attack an additional +10% (+2) chance of striking, this effect being cumulative.



Giant Scorpions (1d6)

Appearance: These scorpions have chitinous exoskeletons the same color as the stones they live within. Each is over four feet long.

Demeanor: These are aggressive predators that continue attacking until they are down to 2 or less health points.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 35% (7)

Health: 9

Move: 10

Init: 20% (4)

Damage: Pincer 1d4 (x2) and Bite 1d4 and Sting

Special: The monster is smart enough to attack the shortest member of a party group and aims for the center of the target mass.

Other: Poison sting penalty to avoidance -15% (-3)

Scorpions (10d10)

Appearance: Normal scorpions, they are brown and hungry.

Demeanor: These don't attack unless they are attacked first.

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 2

Move: 6

Init: 15% (3)

Damage: Sting 2 (plus poison)

Special: The poison inflicts 3 points of damage.

Big Scorpions (1d20 +20)

Appearance: Each of these is over a foot long. They are all black in color and seem to vanish in the darkness of the area.

Demeanor: Very aggressive and hungry; they think nothing of attacking large parties and singling out the slowest of any given group.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 5

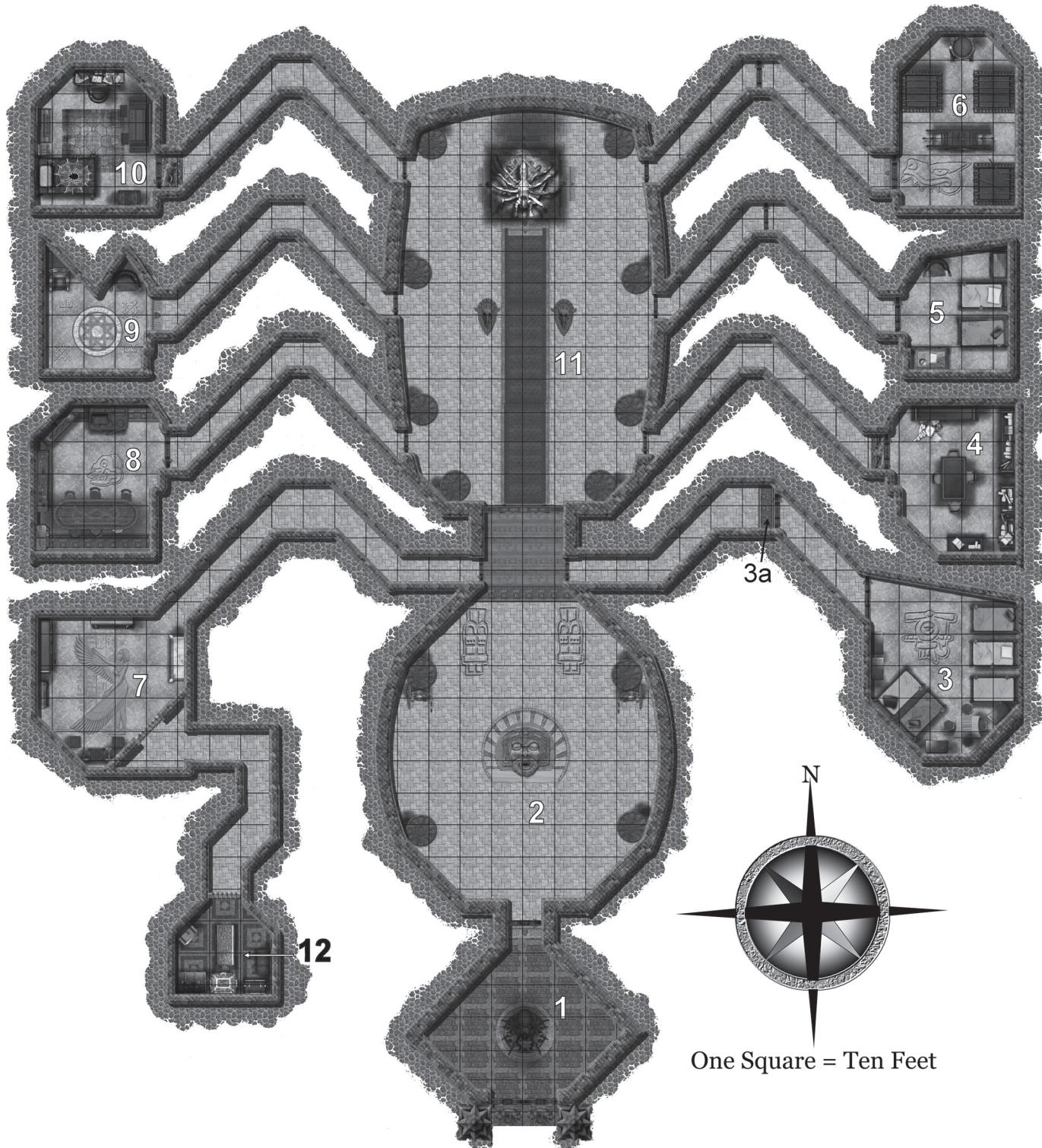
Move: 8

Init: 25% (5)

Damage: Claw (1d4), Sting (1d4 plus poison)

Special: The poison inflicts 6 points of damage.

Temple of the Weaver



The Temple of Arianthrod

The Temple of the Weaver Queen

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Curse of the Weaver Queen

Key to the Temple

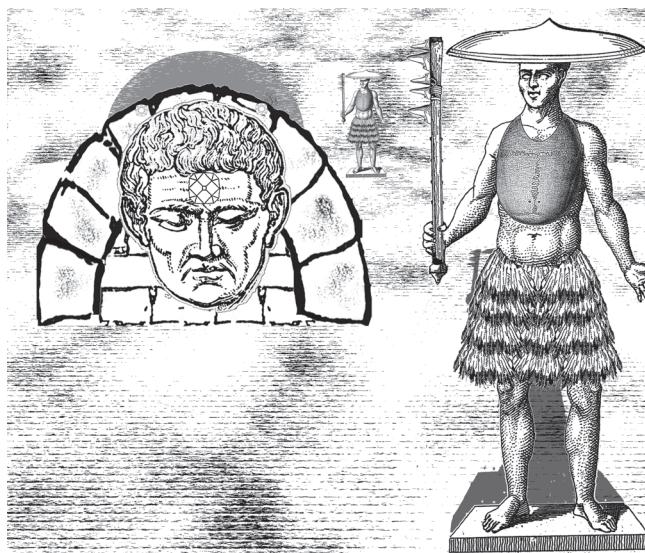
1. Narthex

Beside the door are two pillars with sculptures of a lobster-like shellfish on the top. Inside the room is a raised fire-pit with a 2' sculpture of a spider straddling the pit. The sculpture is blackened and soot-covered, (made of silver,) and portrays a common weaver-spider. The sand is nearly two feet deep in here, blown in through the door before the sand buried the temple. There are no other footprints in the sand. There is an open doorway to the north about six feet wide.

2. Purification Room

Spaced evenly around the room are four stone statues, 8' tall, with disks on their heads. Each is carrying a curious club shaped like half the jaw of a shark. The ceiling is 14' high; the room is roughly oval in shape, about 60' across. Near the far archway are two strange glyphs carved into the floor.

In centuries past, the faithful would stand on one of the symbols and say a prayer of calming and understanding before venturing into the nave (11). Today they are neglected and their real purpose forgotten.



GM Summary (read carefully before continuing)

In the center of the room stands a huge stone face on a low (4') stone arching wall (named Dormuhn) with an emerald the size of a hen egg set in its stone forehead, with two others the size of acorns (250 -750 gp each) set into the stone above the face. The eyes appear closed, as does the mouth. All three stones bear a magical dweomer.

Upon entry of the room, Dormuhn will "come to life" and challenge the party, asking them the purpose of their visit. The correct response is to answer that they are there to give Arianhrod praise and worship. He will then demand payment of two or more live chickens (as that was his task before the Temple was buried beneath the sands; the Arians had a great fondness for chickens).

Dormuhn was formerly an acolyte of the temple who was caught stealing and eating one of the Sacred Chickens. This is his fate. Should the party get on his good side, he is a potential wellspring of information, but most of it is hopelessly outdated. Dormuhn is very, very hungry. Accordingly, he can be talked into accepting almost anything edible, be it tasty traveling rations, a fresh haunch of goblin, or something morphed into "food". Encourage the players to be creative here.

Unless that challenge is successfully answered, he will warn them in the strongest possible terms not to enter. If they choose to do so anyway, one statue animates and attacks the party (with a chance of surprise commensurate with the players' awareness). If they do not defeat the statue in five turns, another of the statues will come to life.

This will continue until all PC's are slain or flee, or, when all four have been defeated, or, if they manage to slay or subdue a subsequently animated statue before the five turns elapse (no animated statues still ambulatory), or, when Dormuhn gets his chickens or an acceptable substitute.

Temple Key

Animated Statue

Appearance: Each of these very lifelike statues is eight feet tall and resembles a very muscular human. It is wearing some sort of kilt-like garment that looks as though it is made of feathers. On the chest it sports a gorget-like device that appears to be made of bone. The disk on its head is actually a shield, though that fact is not apparent at a casual glance. It carries a toothed mace-like club that it wields as such. The weapon looks to be made of very large and sharp sharks' teeth set into the edge of a short flat wooden stave.

Demeanor: Its sole purpose is to attack (and hopefully subdue) heretics and blasphemers (who are anyone that Dormuhn summons them to chastise.) It will not hesitate to attack, nor will it hesitate to kill if subdual is not an option.

Power: 50% (10)

Defense: 55% (11)

Health: 35

Move: 30

Init: First attack has a chance of surprise. In subsequent combat the statue is always last to act each round, due to slowness.

Damage: Toothy Club 5d4

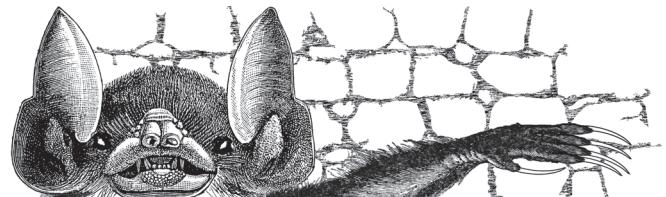
Special: The statues are a matched set and will awaken in a set pattern each time they are triggered, unless they have been destroyed.



Dormuhn cannot be harmed or defaced by any means while the stone is set into his forehead. That large emerald gives it animation, and also controls the minor devil imprisoned under the floor in the next room and keeps it imprisoned (more on that later). How you determine success or failure in prying is entirely up to you. Should a character attempt to pry the stone free, they will take 7d4 damage of lightning energy the first time they try; a second attempt, by any character, results in 4d4 damage; it comes free on the third try with no lightning. When that occurs two things happen: the devil will be released and rush into the Purification Room to wreak bloody revenge, and Dormuhn will cease to function, becoming an inanimate carving.

The devil's name is Bxez Bzos, but he has been known to answer to "Bix". A piece of his being is in that stone; if he can shatter the stone he can return from whence he came. Whoever holds that gem holds command of Bix; he will scheme and plot to escape. The enchantments that hold Bix protect the stone. It can be shattered, thereby releasing the devil from his bondage, only with exceptional strength or magical means. When shattered, every living creature within 20' takes 5 points of damage. It is one of the legendary Stones of Jared.

The two smaller baubles above Dormuhn's forehead are actually the Oculars of Discernment (see page 32).



Bxez Bzos ("Bix"), minor devil

Appearance: Combine the head of a fruit bat, the body of an erect, four foot iguana and the arms of an orangutan tipped with razor-sharp, six inch talons.

Demeanor: Bix is irascible and cruel. He has been bound by the hated stone for centuries and has spent the time thinking up novel things to do to any who cross his path; he hates all living things.

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 40% (8) and hit only by magical weapons

Health: 39

Move: 24

Init: Bix always acts first due to his superhuman speed.

Damage: Hand (x2) 4d4 (See Special)

Special: Every other turn Bix may perform *Demonglare*: a beam of black energy from his eyes that always hits whoever he is looking at. A victim must avoid Spells with a -10% (-2) penalty or be gripped by Terror, and either (50%) stand rooted to the spot or run off blindly terrified for 1d6+4 turns. On the turns Bix does not use *Demonglare* he may choose to make an extra attack with his talons.

Temple Key

3-A. Corridor with Steps Down

The hallway goes about 30' before bending a little NE, then east, arriving at a short staircase. The five steps are formed from grey carved tile. If the upper tread is trod upon, the character must roll to avoid being slowed to half normal rate by a caster with 90% (18) Power. If the lower tread is trod upon a thunderous voice booms from the walls to "SLOW DOWN!!!" (*This was where running acolytes landed when trying to jump the top tread.*) All characters in the corridor take 2 Health damage to their ears. All hearing is reduced by 5% (1) until those two Health are restored. **The passage then proceeds about 40' and comes to an ordinary wooden door.**

3. Acolyte Barracks

You see before you an area roughly 50' x 60', wherein are five beds, each covered in a different colored fabric. A small table and four chairs stand in the center. There is a small trunk under each bed. They contain simple clothes and the personal possessions of the acolytes. As the acolytes take a vow of poverty, there will be no money or valuables in the chests.

There is nothing of obvious value visible; there is a worn glyph carved into the floor.

The symbol is magical; if translated it would be "Be itchy". This gives anyone so afflicted (anyone that stands upon it) a penalty of -10% (-2) to their Defense and a -20% (-4) penalty on attacks for 1d4+2 hours. (It was used as a method of chastising acolytes.)

One bunk has on it as a cover a very large piece of WizardWeave (see Appendix A) fabric (prized by all spell-casters for its affinity to enchantment) worth a great deal.

4. Scriptorium

On the floor is a carved threshold in front of the door that alerts anyone inside that someone approaches; those outside will not hear the alert. If one of the party should be inside and another tread upon it, all sorts of antics might ensue.

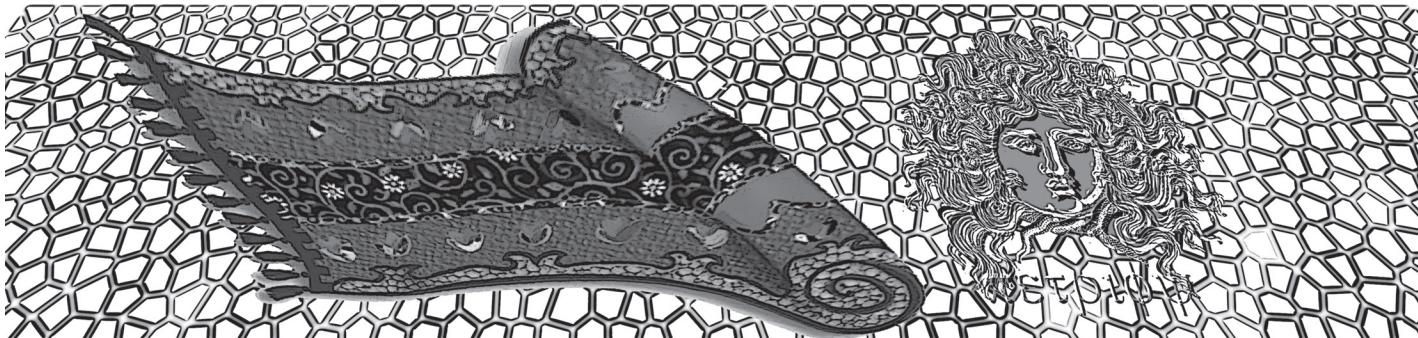
This room contains shelves full of scrolls, books of a non-magical nature and maps, most of which are very old and no longer valid, given the changes to the topography that occurred during the Great Rending. In amongst them all is a crude sketch of the Temple (see page 46); at the bottom it says, in Common: "Cont. overleaf". (*There is no overleaf.*)

A cursory search will yield two magical Scrolls written in a very obscure magical language.

The first is a set of detailed instructions for creating *Rupert's Riata*, a 35' rope capable of many amazing uses. (*See Appendix A*)

The second is *Teodor's Shatterpation* spell, a mentally devastating cantrip confusing the target. (*See Appendix A*)

A more thorough search will reveal a potion (The Elixir of Transformation) and a silver censer (See Appendix B).



5. Assistant High Priest Quarters

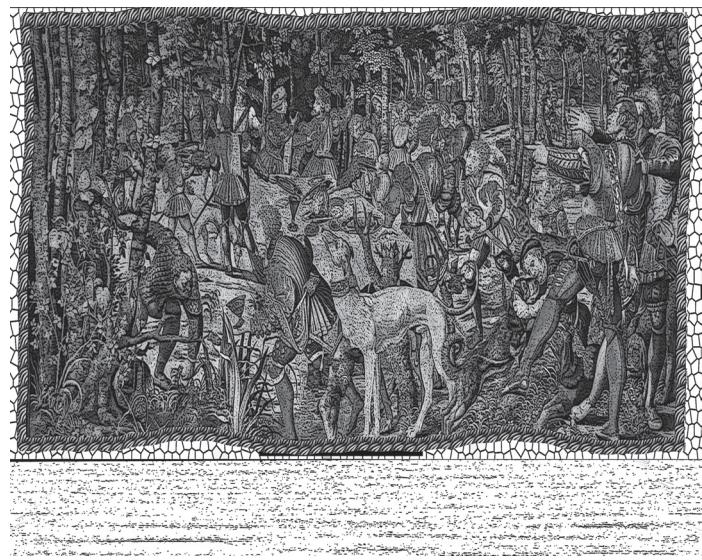
This room, roughly 40' square with a curved north wall, contains two beds (with different colored covers), a desk, a chair and a wooden wardrobe. In the wardrobe is a shimmering black robe with a silver web design on the back. If someone dons the robe and spreads their arms to fan it out, any who look at it fully displayed must avoid the Spell or fall unconscious for 1d4 hours. As one of the players fans out or swirls the pattern, the first symptom is a wave of dizziness or vertigo, possibly alerting the players. If your system uses a comparison method for spell lifting or removal, consider that it was created by spell-casters of Power 60% (12).

6. Cage Room

You proceed about 50' and come to a stout wooden door standing open. Proceeding another 50' feet or so, there is a stout, iron-banded door that is standing open. Beyond is a roughly 40' x 60' room, and you see two steel grates set into the floor by the north wall. Anyone looking down into them will discover two vaguely saurian skeletons and figure out these are cages. Careful scrutiny may reveal two collars made of silver links studded with purple carbuncles worth at least 25 GP each. **On the south wall is a third cage with several of the bars bent and broken.** Some bent outwards and some inwards. Looking



carefully into that one will reveal a staircase down into darkness. *This is the ingress to The Undercroft, and the path that the Gatherers use in and out.* **In the center of the room is a sinister looking apparatus about 6.5 feet tall. It is used to torture elves. Between the two cage doors on the north wall is a silver bowl inscribed with strange symbols.** It is a Scrying Bowl and worth at least 265 GP to the right mage of 55% (11) Power or above. It must be purified before it can be used by anyone not Evil.



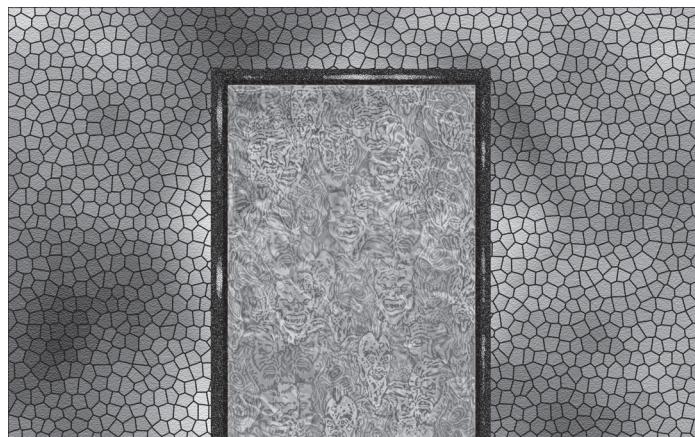
7. High Priest's Athenaeum

Several shelves filled with odds and ends of no particular value, a sideboy and the High Priest's Chair are the only furnishings. On the South East wall is a great tapestry showing a hunting scene in a wooded area in which all the figures are wearing out-dated clothing (hiding a locked door). There is a large glyph of a winged figure carved into the floor. This is a very tasteful room, pristine clean. The glyph on the floor seems to "hum" with arcane power. If a character steps onto the symbol (between the wings) while the Chair is empty, there is a 50% chance (for each character, but the symbol will only work once per day) that they will gain 1d8 Health for 1d12+10 hours. This extra Health could temporarily boost a character above his normal level; the Health bonus lasts for the time determined but can be lost as a result of combat, damage, injury or other mishap. The health bonus will regenerate itself within six turns after the last loss, provided the character was not killed. If the carving is stepped on while someone is sitting in the chair, the previous effects are reversed (another means of chastising the recalcitrant). On the back of the chair, set into a recess that it fits into, is a 6" silver scorpion with diamond-chip eyes. The amulet is Proof Against Arachnids; no arachnid may come within six feet of wearer/bearer. It is not very valuable as jewelry, being rather crudely made and very old but in the present circumstance nearly priceless.

Temple Key

8. Refectory

This room, about 35' x 50', contains a stove, oven, pantries, table and 6 chairs. All food in the pantry is dried and desiccated, except for a small packet of way-bread on a top shelf and a five gallon keg of wine. The way-bread is enough to feed a party of 12 for four days. The wine is medicinal and infused with a very subtle draught of sleep potion; there is only a 10% (2) chance of detecting it. The wine can cause the tippler to sleep for up to 10 hours in a deep natural sleep. There is another symbol on the floor. It has no special meaning or power.



9. Ritual Summoning Room

The door is made of metal and looks like it has faces wracked by pain and anguish embossed all over it, life sized. **The door is locked with a rather tricky lock** (-15% [-3] to attempts to defeat the lock) **that is obviously arcaneously crafted**. If any faces are pushed on or poked, a shrill screaming shriek splits the air, alerting anything within hearing distance (500'). There is a very well hidden, strangely shaped keyhole in the design on the door that will open the door. (The back leg from the spider in #3)

Inside the room are four symbols on the floor surrounding an eight-pointed star enclosed within a circle covered in strange runes. (The Runes are from no one recognizable language, but seem to be taken from several archaic languages long thought dead; they are inscribed there to frustrate the uninitiated or would-be trespassers or interlopers.)

There is a hole in the floor about the size of a man's thumb at each point of the star. In one of the chests in the room are 8 sconces with fittings exactly that size.

Important Note: Before any sconces are placed into any holes, there must be a person standing on each of the symbols of the four elements: earth, wind, fire and water. If not, a minor Vampire materializes on one of the uncovered symbols.

The other chest holds eight, blood-red candles three feet long that fit into the sconces. The candles are made from tallow (some of which is human).

Prespos (Minor Vampire)

Appearance: This cunning predator most resembles a malnourished waif of barely a dozen years, completely naked with wild, flowing hair full of cobwebs and vacant eyes that glow blue.

Demeanor: See below (very detailed)

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 40% (8)

Health: 30

Move: 22

Init: Always goes first

Damage: Touch (x2) 1d6+4

Special: Successful touch drains two Life Levels

Other: Can only be hit with magical weapons; Regenerates 2 Health per Round

Demeanor: Prespos is exceptionally crafty and beguiling (he is just feeling the beginnings of his vampiric power) and will try to pass himself off as a victim of some sort. He may claim to have just escaped from some cruel fate, or he might claim to be lost and suffering from amnesia, or some other sort of subterfuge. He can be extremely convincing: in any circumstance where he may get caught up in his web of lies, he can spin the tale with an almost bard-like ability to make himself believed. If this life-leech is successful he will ingratiate himself with the party and select a victim for the first opportunity he has to feed and not be caught, hoping to feed on the entire party each in their turn. He has not fed in many centuries; if found out he will ferociously attack the weakest party member and seek to feed.

Temple Key

10. High Priest Quarters

The threshold has a decorative tile 2' wide set in the floor. Treading upon the threshold tile may (50%) deliver 1d10 damage and Stun (roll to avoid). The acolytes all knew of this tile in short order as a form of chastisement. It can deliver the chastisement as often as chance allows. **There is a simple wooden (unlocked) door that opens into a 35' x 40' room containing a desk, bookshelves, a chest of drawers, a bed and a trunk.** A large rug is in the center. This room had a more sinister function. A symbol is covered by the rug; if uncovered, anyone standing or stepping on the spot must roll to avoid Petrification or turn to stone in d6+3 turns. This punishment was meted out to blasphemers and schismatics deemed unable to be "saved".

Spread upon the bed is a grey cloak with a web design on it. The cloak allows the wearer to Hide in Shadows and Climb Walls like a Power 100% (20) Thief. In a very well hidden compartment under the bed is a complete set, all four volumes, of The Book of the Avatar. In it all the rites of the sect are detailed by magical means. If found, see Appendix B.

11. Temple of Arianhrod

Eight carved columns line the walls, each about 12' tall. An exquisitely beautiful, hand knotted and vividly colorful rug of the softest wool extends from the doorway all the way up to what looks like an altar (more than 100' away). (Any character that takes more than three paces down the rug must Avoid a spell or be Slowed. Services tended to last a very long time.)

There are many murals and mosaics on the walls, comprising scenes of peaceful, joyous and healthy people living in harmony. In the center of the temple flanking the wondrous rug are two very cleverly sculpted metal images of a demonic face. The mouths on the faces are pierced and open; they appear to be vents for a steam heating source for the Temple. (If Dormuhn is defaced or damaged in any way, a minor devil will issue from one of the mouths and immediately make for the party. The minor devil

is named Bix and has been bound into that stone and held in there by the big emerald, which is really one of the legendary Stones of Jared which have the power to control various demons.

On the altar at the far end is a large gold and silver sculpture of a weaver spider with huge, extremely valuable (worth the value of a fine blooded stallion and a finely crafted suit of armor, complete with shield and helm) **rubies for eyes carved with all the many surfaces of a spider's eyes.** **There is no web.** The left, second "toe" of the spider comes off—it is the key to the Temple Treasury (#12) and Ritual Summoning Room (#9) doors. The keyholes on both are very cunningly concealed.

There are six doors, three on both the west and east wall. Only the door in the upper NE corner is open. The doors are stout, ordinary wooden doors, all virtually identical.

12. Temple Treasury

The now-empty strong-room is protected by a very powerful magic door so cunningly created that a Thief of Power 45% (9) has only a base 5% chance to "pick" the locks. It will open effortlessly with the "key" (leg of statue in #11). To "force" the door will require a strength of 17 or better (10% [2]); if forced, 21–40 (d20 +20) large scorpions will fall from the ceiling, landing behind the party. Each is 2' long.

The 30' x 30' room contains one very large coffer holding 170,000 CP, a somewhat smaller one with 26 SP scattered about the bottom, and another even smaller one with a mere 8 GP stuck in the sides and corners. Very careful searching will find a niche cleverly hidden in the West wall that holds a small, ornately carved box (worth a month's room and board at a fine inn of the second tier) that holds 96 gemstones and a smaller box carved out of jade that holds three pieces of very fine-looking jewelry. The gemstones are of fair to good quality, worth anywhere from 40 to 120 gp each; the jade box is worth at least 120 gp and, upon closer scrutiny, the three pieces of jewelry turn out to be very clever fakes.

(The majority of the gold and silver was transferred to area #3 in The Undercroft before the Temple was abandoned.)

The Undercroft

GM Reminder: This is a mana-rich area.
Magic can be overpowering.

Descending what feels to be about 20 feet, you reach the base of the staircase, an area roughly fifteen feet square, with an open doorway facing North. The stone here has been worked, but the workmanship, while sound, is noticeably shabbier, and later, than that of the Temple itself. Hall and corridor dimensions are roughly the same; unless noted otherwise, ceilings are nine to ten feet tall. All doors are closed unless otherwise noted.

1. Avatar Cinerarium

You see two identical steel-banded doors, obviously heavy. They are closed, barred from without, and marked in several languages, all roughly translating as "Keep the door closed."

Each of these contains a "not alive-not dead" Avatar of the Weaver that has gone insane. These will animate if the door is opened or if the current Avatar frees them.

Insane Avatars (2)

Appearance: Each resembles a very large spider with the torso and head of a hag. They resemble spiders like the cast-off carapaces resemble the cicadas that molted them.

Demeanor: They are thoroughly and completely insane, acting chaotically with malice and ill intent.

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 30 each

Move: 4

Init: always lose initiative

Damage: Bite (x2) 3d8

Special: Their spinnerets have long since dried up.

They are neither alive fully nor completely dead. For that reason they can be repelled as though they were vampires.

2. Room of Penitence

The room, which measures roughly 55' from east to west and 75' from north to south, has four cells and a large common area behind them. The common area is full of scourges, whips, 'cat-o-nine-tails', thorny branches, maguey thorns and the like. There are several sets of manacles on the walls as well as a couple of whipping posts and frames. Two of the cages contain skeletons of the 'very dead' variety, not animated or anything. One set of thumb manacles is magical and will force the victim to tell the truth or suffer having their thumbs crushed.

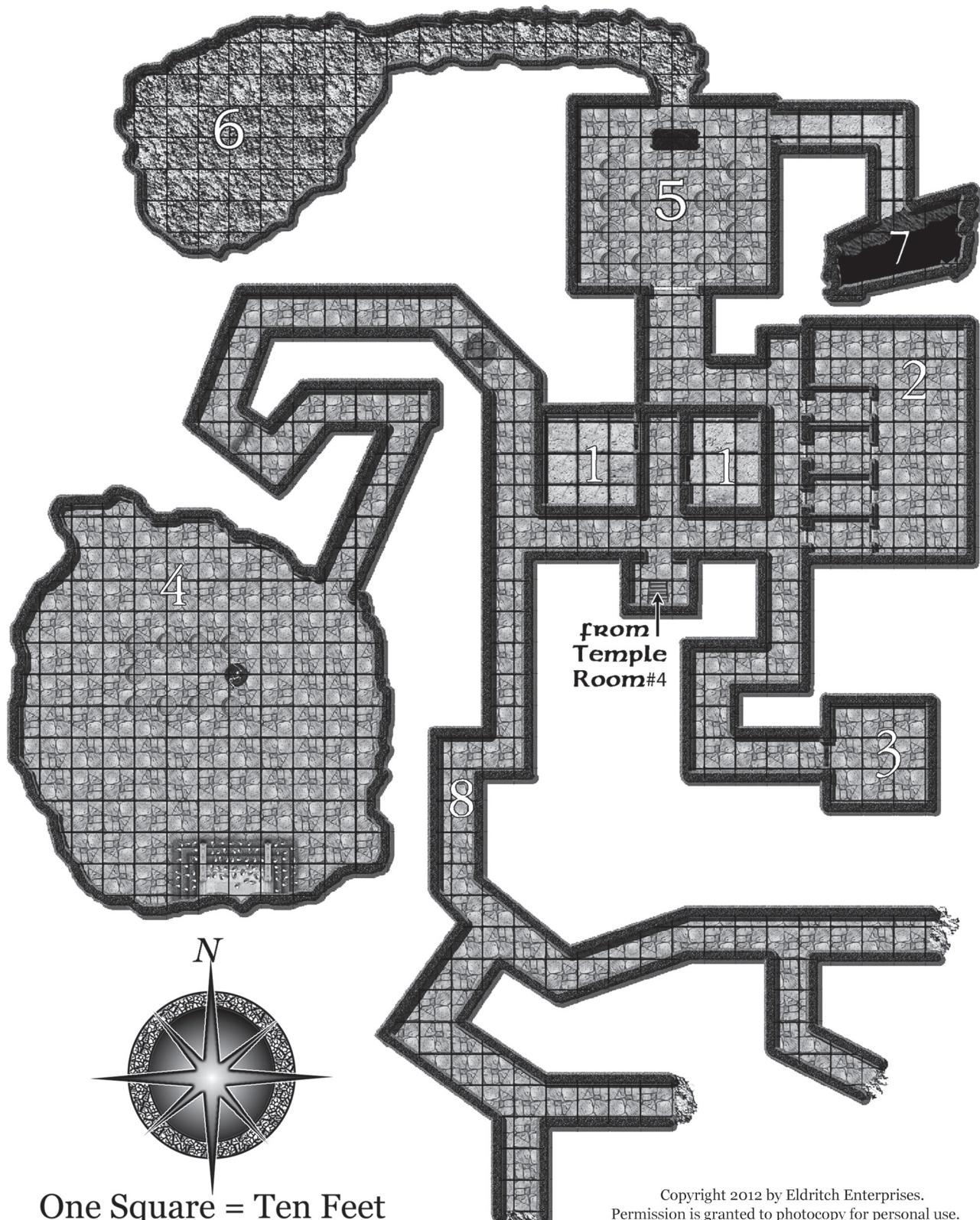
3. Storeroom

This room is barred from outside. Being a storage area, the room has been magicked so that it only has about 20% normal breathable air. Torches and lanterns will go out. Characters within run the risk of passing out if they spend more than two turns in the storeroom (base chance 15% after two turns; add 15% for each turn more than two spent in the bad air).

Inside the 30' square room are old dry goods and comestibles, as well as two very angry wights (stats on next page) who have been trapped there since before the sands came... hence the bar on the outside of the door. They were commanded to carry the treasure here, and then entrapped as guards. The room also contains numerous leather sacks of mixed (gold and silver) coins.

This hoard is substantial, being the accumulated wealth of the temple. The vast majority of the coins are very old. The size of this fabulous hoard should depend upon your campaign economics; I suggest a mixture of coins along the lines of 80% silver, 20% gold. Keeping in mind that many of them are old and rare, and worth more than their face value or even the weight of the bullion from which they were minted, this is indeed a case of "A little can go a long way". If your system equates loot with prowess and progress, go easy.

The Undercroft



One Square = Ten Feet

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The Undercroft

Curse of the Weaver Queen

(3. Storeroom denizens:)

Wight (Undead)

Appearance: Wights have a wispy, translucent quality to their appearance; they resemble diaphanous humanoids.

Demeanor: These wights have been imprisoned for quite a long time and are very hostile to any living thing that opens their door, immediately attacking.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 25% (5)

Health: 26, 28

Move: 9

Init: +10% (+2)

Damage: Life Drain upon hit

Special: A successful touch (hit) by the wight drains the character of one life unit (typically 5% Power). This loss is permanent and includes the corresponding Health loss as well.

Roughly in the center are nine very slender, very tall pillars, four on each side, one in between the two on the end, and a statue between the two on the other end of the box-like arrangement. The air between the pillars shimmers and moves, like looking through murky water. After careful scrutiny, you discern the outline of a structure through the distortion that looks to be some sort of burial structure or mausoleum. This is the radiant source of the energies you feel. It is also the source of an overpowering feeling of evil. *This is an impenetrable web of magical energy confined by the pillars that will inflict upon anyone who touches it 1d4 Health damage at each touch.*

There is only one way to take down the magical barrier to get to the mausoleum visible inside (see below; 12'h, 14'w, 25'd).

In front of the structure is a skeleton clad in beautiful silk robes, unchanged by time or age, free of dust or dirt. The skeleton lacks a skull.

This is the mortal remains of a very powerful sorceress who gave her life to imprison the fiend within. The spell remains inviolate so long as the sorceress remains beheaded.

If the party searches through the skulls in the racks on the south wall, they will find one that has silver rimming the insides of the eye sockets. If this skull is placed atop the spinal column of the skeleton in the silk robes, the web of energy dissipates. Should anyone in the party have the ability to commune with dead beings, they will find that the skull will attempt to warn them that to reattach the head will dissipate the field of magical energy. The sorceress cannot be reanimated or brought back to life, but might impart the following knowledge:

“The mausoleum houses the remains of Khajook, a Wizard of Immense Power, who is now a paranoid, psychopathic, psychotic schizophrenic lich astride the *Tartaros Stallion*. He was lured in and imprisoned ages ago; he and his hellish mount remain in a state neither alive nor dead so long as the energy web remains intact.”

4. The Ossuary

You see stretching into the gloom and shadows before you an immense natural cavern, deeper, taller and wider than torches or lanterns will shine. The walls are flecked with millions of minute particles of silica, giving the walls, ceiling and floor a luminous barely-blue glow. The effect is that everything seems to radiate a nimbus of energy or a lambent shine. The air is dry and as pleasantly warm as an autumn afternoon. The entire cavern ripples with an undercurrent of energy that nearly raises the hair on your arms and makes your ears prickle.

This is where the bones of the priests, acolytes and devotees that came before are cached.

On the south wall is a large rack full of nothing but skulls, at least 200 of them. All around the rest of the cavern are niches carved into the walls where all the rest of the bones are stored, sorted by type; ribs with ribs, ulnae with ulnae, and so on.

The Undercroft

Khajook the Lich

Appearance: Khajook is more yellowed bone than scabrous flesh, clad in the tatters of a once-fine silken robe in shades of dark green, shot through with threads of precious metals and adorned with several fine gems. *Like the lich itself, the robes are held together solely by the force of his will and hatred; like the lich, they will crumble to dust when his unnatural "life" is extinguished.*

Upon his bony brow rests a magnificent crown made of crystal; he wields an enormous mace made of the same glassy substance that is shot through with streaks of light. *The crown and mace channel and focus his power. Should he be defeated, both crown and mace will shatter.*

He sits upon a huge horse-like monstrosity limned in blue flame: **Tersefro**.

Demeanor: Paranoid psychopath with psychotic schizophrenic episodes.

Power: 110% (22)

Defense: 50% (10)

Health: 63

Move: 6

Init: Khajook has Surprise or First Action immediately upon the energy web dissipating. After that he fights as normal.

Damage: The crystal mace he wields has the power to Paralyze the target if hit well, and Stun on a lesser blow. The victim hit must roll less than their Power (with a penalty of +15% [+3]). If successful the target is only Stunned for 1d6+2 Turns; if unsuccessful the target is Paralyzed indefinitely until it starves to death, or until Khajook enlists it in his band of undead slaves.

Special (Spells): He has available to use any spell of a comparable Power wizard.

Other: The crystal crown he wears enables him to *Control Undead* with a total Power of 250% (50).



Tersefro: Stallion King of Tartaros

Appearance: His coat was a glistening blue-black; his hoofs, mane and tail are deep red in color and his eyes a lambent green. His skin is covered in searing blue flame.

Demeanor: Tersefro is consumed by hatred for all humankind and can only be controlled by **Epona's Bridle**. Should he be freed from its constraints he will immediately return to Tartaros carrying whoever, or whatever, is astride him.

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 35

Move: 9

Init: +5% (1)

Damage: Hoof (x2), or Bite; 1d8 or 4d4

Special: May not be struck by non-magical melee weapons. Non-magical missile weapons that seem to strike the target must be rolled for again. There is a 20% chance that the missile weapon is incinerated and inflicts no harm. Magical melee weapons that strike Tersefro must be rolled for again; they lose their enchantment on a roll of a natural 20 on 1d20. When Tersefro leaves the mausoleum, he will bellow *The Stallion's Call*; all hearing it must make an Avoidance Roll against Petrification. Failure results in the character being thrown into complete and utter panic for 2d12 Rounds; they will stand rooted to the spot for one-third of the duration, and function at -30% (-6) for the duration of their panicky behavior.

The Undercroft

5. Inner Temple of the Initiated

You have entered what is apparently some sort of sanctuary or worship area at least 80' square with a ceiling lost in shadows. The very air crawls with energy; it is like the feeling one sometimes gets just before a violent thunderstorm, making your skin prickle and sending your senses into palpitations. There are twelve milky white pillars emitting a wan, sickly sort of glow that partially illuminates the area. There are six on each side in a row of four and a row of two. Lining the walls from floor to ceiling are tapestries and hangings depicting torture, anguish and suffering.

This is where the degenerate element of the order worshipped. This entire area is saturated in mana and reeks of magic, rendering any type of detect spell inoperable or unreliable. This energy flows through the twelve milky-white pillars; the "pillars" emit a sickly, pale light. The twelve pillars are actually stalagmites and stalactites that have flowed together through the ages. Should one of them become fractured, the ensuing catastrophic release of that energy would inevitably be fatal to any but the very hardiest, and even then it would almost surely damage them irreparably. The physical damage would be akin to standing in the vicinity of a smelting furnace that cracked open and released all of that super-heated air at one time.

There is an open doorway on the East wall.

There is a 10' altar made of a black material that seems to absorb light. It is covered with carvings of faces suffering great anguish and pain. Atop the altar is a sculpture of a spider with two large, nearly perfect (and extremely valuable) emeralds for eyes in the head of a woman; the spider is straddling an intricate web that appears to be made of electrum.

This is the most revered item of the sect, its most unholy relic. Anyone seeking to grasp and remove the icon from the black altar risks taking 6d4 damage unless thoroughly insulated from it. The Beast of Gila will be summoned instantly (if still alive) from #6 as soon as the icon is disturbed in any way.

Behind the altar is a roughly hewn hole about six feet wide. The stench of reptilian feces wafting from the hole is nearly overpowering.

6. Guardian Lair

This is the lair of a thought-to-be-legendary horror called the Beast of Gila, an extremely large beaded lizard that guards this area. It is 11' long, stands about 5 1/2' high and is 4' to 5' wide but is rather slow. As soon as anyone enters #5 and makes any noise, he will begin to come out of his den, expecting to be fed. As he has only recently come out of an extremely long period of near-suspended animation, he is extremely irascible and hungry.

Beast of Gila

Appearance: An extremely large lizard. It is 11' long, stands about 5 1/2' high and is 4 1/2' wide

Demeanor: Extremely irascible and ravenously hungry.

Power: 40% (8)

Defense: 55% (11); immune to fire and lightning

Health: 60

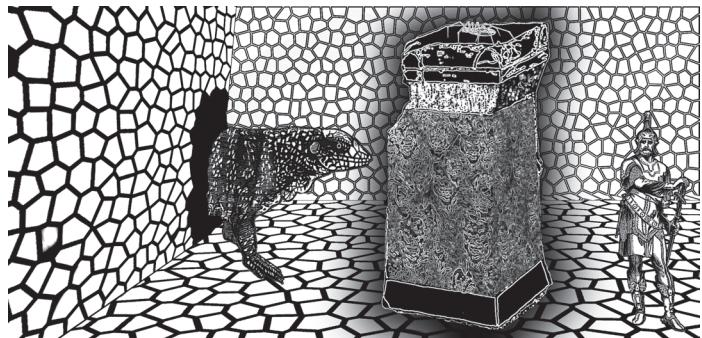
Move: 5

Init: Always acts last

Damage: Bite 4d6, Tail Swat 2d12, Breath weapon

Special: If bitten, roll d100; if less than 35%, suffer -4 Health for saliva and roll to avoid Poison with a bonus of +15% (+3). Successful avoidance results in 1d4 more damage; failure to avoid results in a hideously painful death in two hours.

Other (breath): The Beast can spray gas (60' range and 20' wide at the conical end) three times per day. Roll to avoid Poison with a bonus of +20% (+4). Successful avoidance results in no loss to Health.



Curse of the Weaver Queen

7. Fissure

The corridor ends at an open doorway. A few feet inside the doorway is a very large fissure in the bedrock sloping gently down. (This leads down into *The Nest*. It is also the only way in and out for The Gatherers.)

There is a natural fissure in the earth that leads downwards; careful inspection will find a single set of steps 4' wide chiseled into the stone, descending about 90 feet over some 600 yards. (The various creatures need no such help traversing the fissure.)

GM Note: If the party were to encounter a swarm of Gatherers here, they would find themselves at a severe disadvantage, as the fissure is between 4' and 5' tall and slopes some 600 yards.

8. Corridor

As you come down the corridor, you see that it has been blocked by a massive cave-in of immense boulders.

Everything past here dead-ends in cave-ins.



Introduction

This area is the crudest construction. The walls have not been adequately smoothed, the floors only barely. There is a lingering odor of rot and death.

Lurking herein are 3 Attendants of the Avatar of the Weaver as well as the Avatar Herself, of course. Stats are given on the following pages.

1. Storage Area

You see before you a vaguely triangular shaped room stacked higher than a tall man with the mummified and desiccated corpses of several humans, or human-types, all wrapped in spider silk. There are also several fresher bundles, a couple of which exhibit dried blood. Two are the size of human infants. All of the fresher ones have been drained of blood. The ceiling is so high as to be lost in darkness. You also see an enormous spider leap to attack the party from the shadows on the ceiling. This is one of the Avatar's Attendants; stats on next page.

2. Storage Area

Stretching before you in a large half-circle is a crudely fashioned area piled floor to ceiling with the mummified or desiccated husks of all sorts of birds. There are several fresher ones the size of domesticated fowl wrapped in spider silk. The ceiling is so high as to be lost in darkness, which is why the party is startled to see a huge spider descend upon them, flinging sticky balls of webbing. This is one of the Avatar's Attendants; stats on next page.

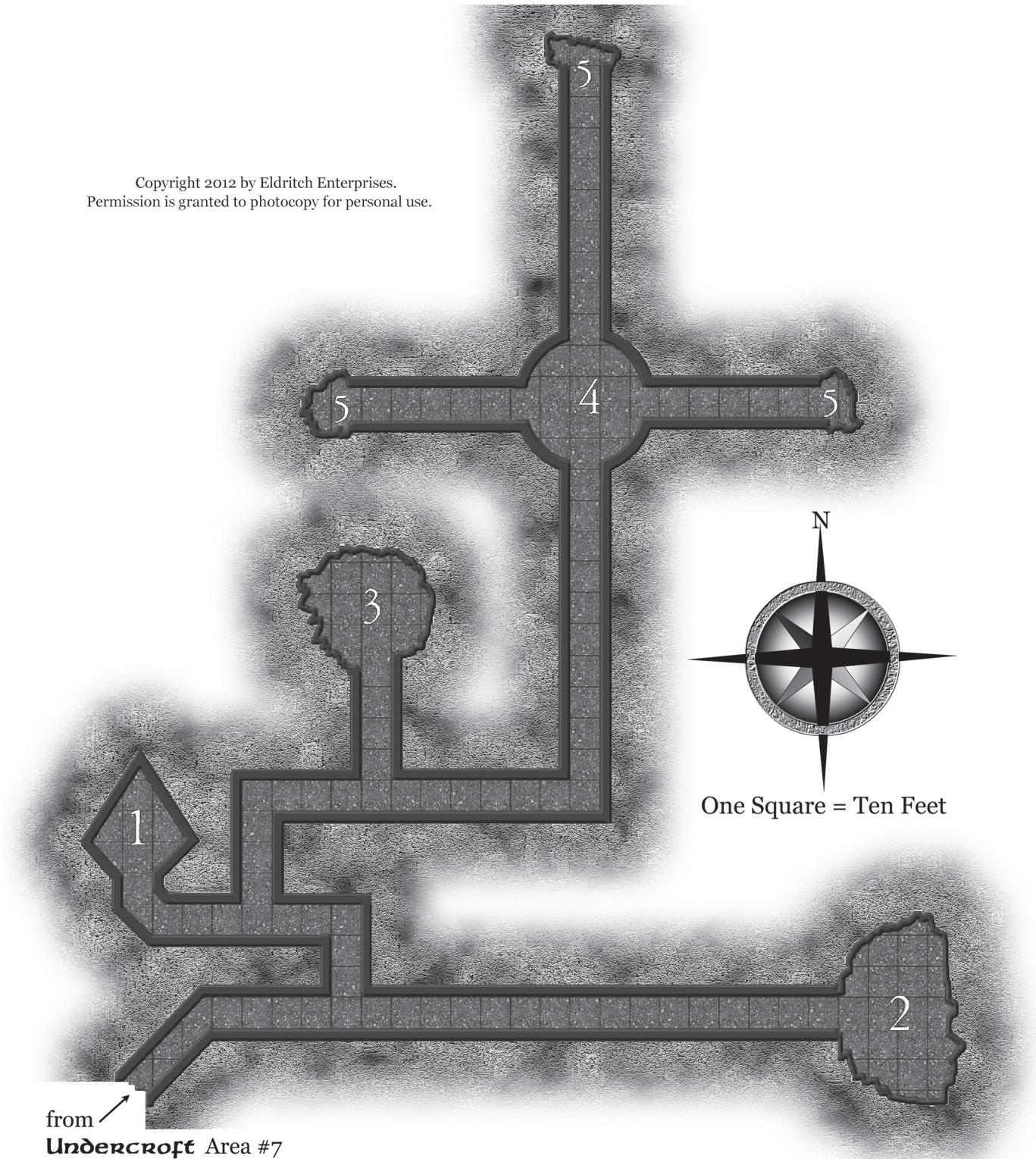
3. Storage Area

The choking stench of death and corruption invades your senses some distance from the opening ahead. This natural cavern contains the mummified and desiccated corpses and parts of corpses of several species of animals, ranging from mice to portions of goats and pigs. There are quite a few fresh corpses that seem to be young sheep, goats and pigs that are encased in spider silk, all drained of blood.

(continues)

The Nest

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The Nest

The Nest

The ceiling is so high so as to be lost in darkness that hides a lurking huge arachnid, which suddenly begins bombarding the characters with cantaloupe-sized balls of sticky goo.

This is one of the Avatar's Attendants:

Avatar Attendants (3)

These horrible beasts could be considered the handmaidens of the Weaver Avatar. Their sole purpose for existence is to serve the Avatar. They see to her dietary needs and tend her larders as well as keep her cavern clean. They are fanatically loyal and will defend her to the death.

These are her "daughters" to whom the Avatar refers in her story (page 42).

Appearance: The Attendants resemble long-legged wolf-spiders. Their coloration makes them extremely difficult to target anywhere in the level of The Nest; they literally blend into the background. The cephalothorax and abdomen measure a combined 3' long. In a normal crouching position the leg-span is about 6'.

Demeanor: They are extremely protective of the Avatar and will attack with their Special Ability anything they perceive as a threat.

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 35% (7) or 55%(11) *vs* Missile weapons
(see *Other*, below)

Health: 16 each

Move: 9

Init: Always has initiative due to blindingly fast jumping ability

Damage: Fangs 1d8 and roll with a penalty of -5% (-1) to avoid the Lethal Poison

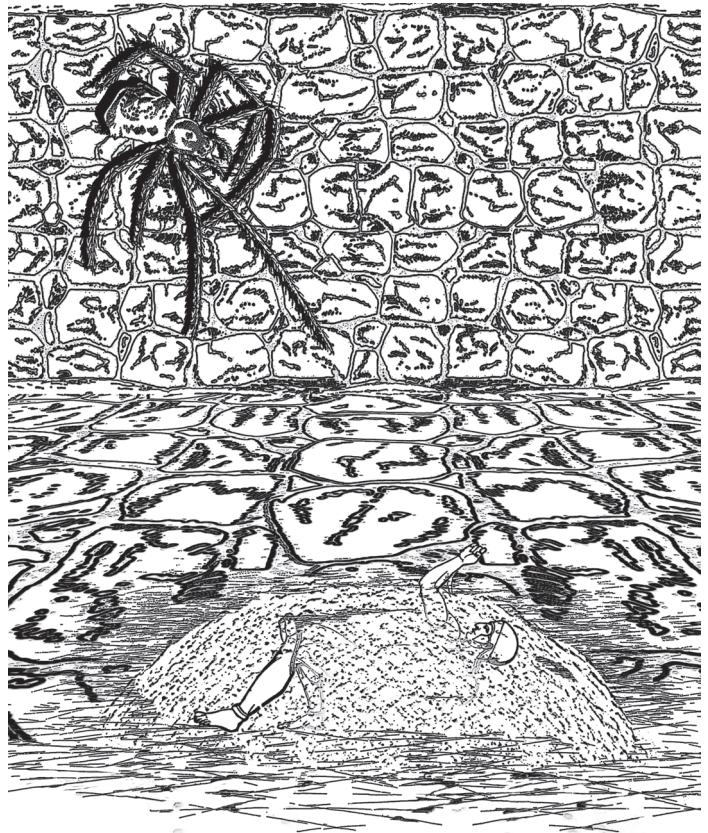
Special: Throw sticky Globs (at right above)

Other: These beasts have unusually good jumping ability and feet that will adhere to virtually any surface. They will not come down to fight on the ground if any alternative exists, and they can suspend themselves on strings of web attached to the ceiling. Their natural camouflage accounts for the difficulty in hitting them with missiles, as well as their speed. All three of the larder areas have jagged, uneven ceilings and unfinished walls above 10 feet.

Globs: The Attendants have very specialized web spinnerets that enable them to readily form a ball of sticky, slightly corrosive silk about the size of a medium-sized melon. At full capacity they can produce and throw two such 'glob' per Turn for 8 Turns; thereafter they may only produce and throw one per turn. Resting (not fighting) for one hour refills their silk producing glands to full capability.

Any target hit is immediately immobilized for at least the remainder of the Turn. The victim hit gets only one chance to break free of the glob: the player dices against the character's Strength attribute. To succeed, the result must be 10% less if the stat is a Percentage (2 less if a 1-20 or similar range).

Failure means that the victim has further ensnared himself and is immobilized until the silk can be dissolved, either magically or with a large quantity of alcohol or similar solvent. The silk has a slightly corrosive property that can inflict injury after prolonged exposure and ruin leather (*solely at the GM's discretion*).



The Nest

4. Her Lair

This is a natural domed chamber at least 100' high; the roof is lost in shadows and reflections. The walls are liberally streaked and flecked with highly reflective quartz-like crystals. Any light flickers and dances about, making it much harder to accurately see things at any great distance. The rock of this cave holds and preserves heat; it is this quality that enabled the Avatar to survive so long in a state of near-death. *Any spells involving heat or lightning can be greatly magnified in the area due to the unique properties of the stone. Due to the deceptive nature of the reflections ranges could look greater than they actually are. Further, the flecks and streaks could cause light and heat to magnify or act erratically.*

Upon entering this area, the characters might hear (40%) (if Eliana is in control): **“Have you come to harm my children?” The voice is sweet and pure, almost otherworldly and coming from somewhere above.** The second time she addresses them, they will see only the long graceful neck and head of a beautiful young woman.

Upon entering this area, the characters may pass unmolested if the spider is in control (60%) and sees no advantage in betraying its presence.

See stats on next page (Bestiary).

The Weaver Avatar

The sect mutated into the veneration and worship of a garbled vision of the original goddess of weavers and spiders. They came to believe that Arianhrod was a construct of a very large spider body and the head and torso of a virgin female human. They would raise a spider to preternatural size with spells and potions, procure a suitable virgin and force each of them to ingest a little of the Potion of Transformation. This enabled the transplantation of the head and torso onto the body of the spider and enough of the nerves to connect so as to give the head control of the muscles and limbs.

The resultant creature is wildly schizophrenic; 40% of the time the head will rule, while 60% of the time the more primal urges of the spider will prevail. The head will tell them of this sad story (see *Eliana’s Tale*, page 42); the body will simply attack. The “other” part of this creature’s psyche can take over at any time, making dealing with her highly risky.

5. Incubation Chambers

The corridor ends at what looks like a doorway that has been walled up with mud. There is a roughly circular hole about 2' in diameter in the center.

These are lined with niches in the walls containing tens of thousands of eggs of all the Gatherers species. They are maintained at a constant 61°F and are the source of the mobs of creatures that periodically scuttle about the area in search of food they can bring to the Avatar, who controls each horde telepathically. Inside each chamber there are four Big Scorpions that will defend the chambers (and eggs) to the death.



Big Scorpions (1d20 +20)

Appearance: Each of these is over a foot long. They are all black in color and seem to vanish in the darkness of the area.

Demeanor: Very aggressive and hungry; they think nothing of attacking large parties and singling out the slowest of any given group.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 5

Move: 8

Init: 25% (5)

Damage: Claw 1d4 and Sting 1d4 (plus poison)

Special: The poison inflicts 6 points of damage.

Curse of the Weaver Queen

Bestiary

Avatar of the Weaver

Appearance: The Avatar, whose original name was Eliana, is a construct; the torso, arms and head of a human female horribly “blended” into the body of a spider whose abdomen and substitute cephalothorax measures seven feet in length.

Demeanor: If Eliana is in control, her reactions will vary (see *Eliana's Tale*, page 44). If the beast is in control at the time of the encounter, it will immediately attack if it perceives any threat or sees any weapons menacing it.

Power: 40% (8)

Defense: 35% (7) but 65% (13) vs. missiles

Health: 67

Move: 7

Init: Always has initiative

Damage: Front legs (x2) 2d4+3

Special: If same target is struck with both legs in same Turn, the victim is jerked off his feet and pulled toward the head, which sprouts 4" fangs and bites the target, hitting automatically. To avoid Paralysis, the victim must roll with a penalty of -20% (-4).

Other: As an automatic action, The Avatar may also *Throw Silk* (see at right) once per turn. Due to near-perfect camouflage, the Avatar is especially hard to fight with missile weapons in her Nest.

Globs (Avatar, Attendants, and Empress Spider)

The Avatar and her Attendants have very specialized web spinnerets that enable them to readily form a ball of sticky, slightly corrosive silk about the size of a medium-sized melon. At full capacity they can produce and throw two such ‘glob’ per Turn for 8 Turns; thereafter they may only produce and throw one per turn. Resting (not fighting) for one hour refills their silk producing glands to full capability.

Any target hit is immediately immobilized for at least the remainder of the Turn. The victim hit gets only one chance to break free of the glob: the player dices

Throw Silk

(roll 1d20):
01-13 throw Web
14-20 throw glob



(A glob is a sticky ball of webbing the size of a cantaloupe on the end of a long ropey strand.)

If hit with web, treat as *Web* spell.

If hit with a glob, the target will be drawn toward fangs in 9 combat rounds.

Base chance to hit:

Human	40%	Elf	25%
Dwarf	35%	Halfling	20%

Modify for:

		Dexterity attribute
Apparel		
Boiled Leather	+10%	15 or 16 -5%
Plate	+10%	17 -10%
Chain	-5%	18 -15%

Chance to escape glob: Use the procedure given below, but equal to (instead of less than) the Strength attribute.

against the character's Strength attribute. To succeed, the result must be 10% less if the stat is a Percentage (2 less if a 1-20 range or similar).

Failure means that the victim has further ensnared himself and is immobilized until the silk can be dissolved, either magically or with a large quantity of alcohol or similar solvent. The silk has a slightly corrosive property that can inflict injury after prolonged exposure and ruin leather (*solely at the GM's discretion*).

Bestiary

Avatar Attendant

These horrible beasts could be considered the handmaidens of the Weaver Avatar. Their sole purpose for existence is to serve the Avatar. They see to her dietary needs and tend her larders as well as keep her cavern clean. They are fanatically loyal and will defend her to the death. *They are the “daughters” to whom she refers in the first meeting.*

Appearance: The Attendants resemble long-legged wolf-spiders. Their coloration makes them extremely difficult to target anywhere in the level of The Nest; they literally blend into the background. Their bodies are about 3' long, and in a normal crouching position their leg-span is about 6'.

Demeanor: They are extremely protective of the Avatar and will attack with their Special Ability anything they perceive as a threat.

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 45% (9) or 65% (11) vs Missile weapons

Health: 16 each

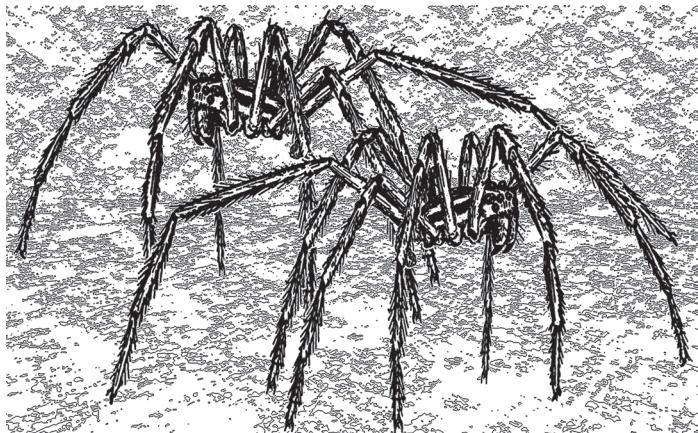
Move: 9

Initiative: Always has initiative due to blindingly fast jumping ability

Damage: Fang 1d10 and deadly poison, -20% (-4) penalty to avoid

Special: Throw sticky Globs (see previous page)

Other: These beasts have unusually good jumping ability and feet that will adhere to virtually any surface. They will not come down to fight on the ground if any alternative exists. Their natural camouflage accounts for the difficulty in hitting them with missiles, as well as their speed.



Avatar, Insane

Appearance: They mostly resemble a very large spider with the torso and head of a hag. They resemble a spider like the cast-off carapace resembles the cicada that molted it.

Demeanor: They are thoroughly and completely insane, acting chaotically with malice and ill intent.

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 20% (4)

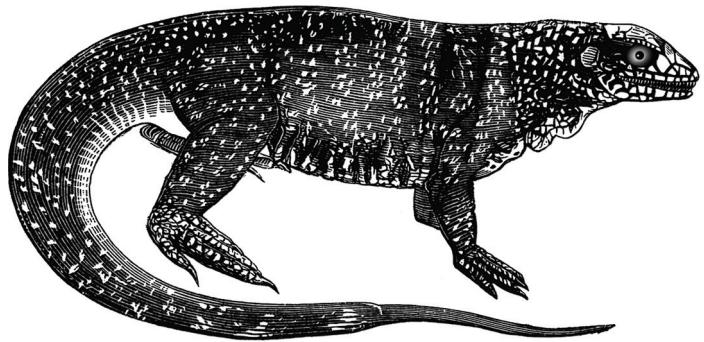
Health: 30 (x2)

Move: 4

Init: They always have last Initiative.

Damage: Bite (x2) 3d8

Special: Their spinnerets have long since dried up. They are neither alive fully nor completely dead. For that reason they can be repelled as though they were vampires.



Beast of Gila

Appearance: An extremely large lizard. It is 11' long, stands about 5 1/2' high and is 4 1/2' wide

Demeanor: Extremely irascible and ravenously hungry

Power: 60% (12)

Defense: 55% (11), immune to fire and lightning

Health: 60

Move: 5

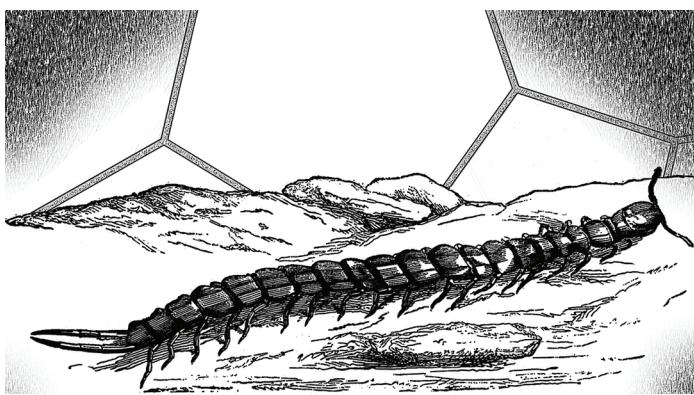
Init: Always acts last

Damage: Bite 3d10, Tail Swat 2d12, Breath weapon

Special: If bitten, roll d%; if less than 35%, suffer 4 damage from saliva and roll to avoid Poison; breathes gas (60' range) 3 times per hour, roll to avoid Poison.



Bestiary



Centipede, Normal

Appearance: The insect has a long body with many legs. Black in color, it especially blends in with the walls and almost vanishes from view as it moves in the shadows and avoids light.

Demeanor: These eat carrion and fecal material and shy away from conflict.

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 3

Move: 6

Init: +20% (+4)

Damage: Bite 1

Special: They are never surprised as they sense vibration along any floor.

Harvestman

Appearance: These daddy-long-leg spiders have rock hard legs and a large ball-shaped body. Rarely are they on the ground as they prefer working in the ceiling corners of any area.

Demeanor: They use webbing in their attacks and have no problem attacking a group of three or less. They leave alone larger groups.

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 30% (6)

Health: 2

Move: 8

Init: +15% (+3)

Damage: Bite 1d6

Special: Whip-like stands of web are used by these arachnids, lashing out at the same time with a bite attack.

Scorpion, Normal

Appearance: Normal scorpions, they are brown and hungry.

Demeanor: These don't attack unless they are attacked first.

Power: 5% (1)

Defense: 10% (2)

Health: 2

Move: 6

Init: +15% (+3)

Damage: Poison sting (2 points plus poison)

Special: The poison inflicts 3 points of damage if not avoided.

Scorpion, Big

Appearance: Each of these is over a foot long. They are all black in color and seem to vanish in the darkness of the area.

Demeanor: Very aggressive and hungry; they think nothing of attacking large parties and singling out the slowest of any given group.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 5

Move: 8

Init: +25% (+5)

Damage: Pincer (1d4) and Sting (1d4 plus poison)

Special: The poison inflicts 6 points of damage if not avoided.

Scorpion, Giant

Appearance: These scorpions have flesh the same color as the stones they live within. Each is over four feet long.

Demeanor: These are aggressive predators that continue attacking until they are down to 2 or less health points.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 35% (7)

Health: 9

Move: 10

Init: +20% (+4)

Damage: Pincer (x2) 1d4, Bite 1d6, Poison Sting (avoid or die)

Special: The monster is smart enough to attack the weakest of a party group.

Bestiary

Statue, Animated

Appearance: The disks on its head is wielded as a shield; the saw-toothed shark-jaw weapon is wielded as an axe

Demeanor: Called upon to attack heretics and blasphemers, and will not hesitate to comply

Power: 50% (10)

Defense: 55% (11)

Health: 35

Move: 30

Init: First attack will always have Surprise; in subsequent combat, the statue is always last.

Damage: Toothy Club 5d4

Special: The statues are a matched set and will awaken in a set pattern each time they are triggered.

Tersefro, Stallion King of Tartaros

Appearance: Coat a glistening blue-black, hoofs, mane and tail deep red, the eyes a lambent green. His skin is covered in searing blue flame.

Demeanor: Tersefro is consumed by hatred for all humankind and can only be controlled by **Epona's Bridle** (page 32). Should he be freed from it he will immediately return to Tartaros, carrying whatever is astride him.

Power: 30% (6)

Defense: 20% (4)

Health: 35

Move: 9

Init: +5% (1)

Damage: Hoof 1d8 (x2) or Bite 4d4

Special: May not be struck by non-magical melee weapons. Non-magical missile weapons that seem to strike the target must be rolled for again. There is a 20% chance that the missile weapon is incinerated and inflicts no harm. Magical melee weapons that strike Tersefro must be rolled for again; they lose their enchantment on a roll of a natural 20 (on 1d20).

Other: If Tersefro leaves the mausoleum, he will bellow *The Stallion's Call*; all hearing it must roll to avoid Petrification. Failure results in the character being thrown into complete and utter panic for 2d12 rounds, standing rooted to the spot for one-third of the duration, and functioning at -30% (-6) for the duration of the panicky behavior.

Undead, Lich (Khajook)

Appearance: Khajook is more yellowed bone than scabrous flesh, clad in the tatters of a once-fine silken robe* in shades of dark green, shot through with threads of precious metals and adorned with several fine gems. Upon his bony brow rests a magnificent crown made of crystal and he wields an enormous mace made of the same glassy substance that is shot through with streaks of light.

He sits upon a huge gaunt and skeletal horse with an oversized head, glowing red eyes and flaming orange nostrils (see *Tersefro*, at left).

Demeanor: Paranoid psychopath with psychotic schizophrenic episodes.

Power: 110% (22)

Defense: 50% (10)

Health: 63

Move: 6

Init: Khajook has Surprise or First Action immediately upon the energy web dissipating. After that he fights as normal.

Damage/Special: The crystal mace he wields has the power to Paralyze the target if hit well, and Stun on a lesser blow. Target must roll less than their Power (at +15% penalty) on d%; if successful target is Stunned for 1d6+2 Turns; if unsuccessful target is Paralyzed indefinitely, or until they starve to death, or until Khajook enlists them in his band of undead slaves.

Special: Lich's Spells; he has available to use any spell of a comparable Power wizard.

Other: The crystal crown he wears enables him to control undead with a total Power of 250% (50).

* Like the lich itself, the robes are held together solely by the force of his will and hatred; like the lich, they will crumble to dust when his unnatural "life" is extinguished.



Bestiary

Undead, Minor Devil (Bxez Bzos, aka "Bix")

Appearance: Combine the head of a fruit bat, the body of an erect four foot iguana, and the arms of an orangutan tipped with razor-sharp, six inch talons.

Demeanor: Bix is irascible and hates all living things.

Power: 35% (7)

Defense: 40% (8), hit only by magical weapons

Health: 46

Move: 24

Init: Bix always acts first

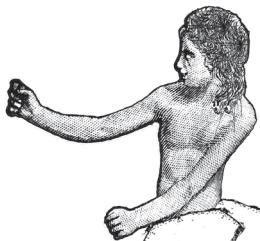
Damage: Hand (x2) 4 d4 (*See below*)

Special: Every other turn Bix may perform

Demonglare: a beam of black energy from his eyes that always hits whoever he is looking at. Victim must avoid the Spell (with a -10% [-2] penalty) or be gripped by Terror and either (d6, 1-3) stand rooted to the spot or (d6, 4-6) run off blindly terrified for 1d6+4 turns. On the turns Bix does not use *Demonglare* he may choose to make an extra attack with his talons. Bix may only be hit by magical weapons.



Undead, Minor Vampire (Prespos)



Appearance: This fell beast most resembles a malnourished waif of barely a dozen years, completely naked with wild, flowing hair full of cobwebs and vacant eyes that glow blue.

Demeanor: As Prespos has not fed in many centuries, he will ferociously attack and seek to feed.

Power: 40% (8)

Defense: 45% (9)

Health: 30

Move: 22

Init: Always goes first

Damage: Touch (x2) 1d6+4

Special: Successful touch drains two Life Levels

Other: Can only be hit with magical weapons; Regenerates 3 Health per Round.

Undead, Wight

Appearance: Wights have a wispy, translucent quality to their appearance. They resemble diaphanous humanoids.

Demeanor: These wights have been imprisoned for quite a long time and are very hostile to any living thing that opens their door, immediately attacking.

Power: 15% (3)

Defense: 25% (5)

Health: 26, 28

Move: 9

Init: +10% (+2)

Damage: Life Drain upon hit (see below)

Special: A successful touch (hit) by the wight drains the character of one 'life level'. This loss is permanent and includes the corresponding Health loss as well.

Worlds of the Weaver Queen

Special: Creatures of the Four Books

Empress Spider

Appearance: Resembles a long-legged wolf spider. Its body is about 3' long; in a normal crouching position its leg-span is about 6'.

Behavior/Demeanor: In the home web it is extremely aggressive, but on the hunt is secretive, silent and surreptitious. This gives a 20% (+4) edge when attempting to surprise or ambush.

Power: 20% (4)

Defense: 45% (9) or 65% (13) vs Missile weapons

Health: 16 each

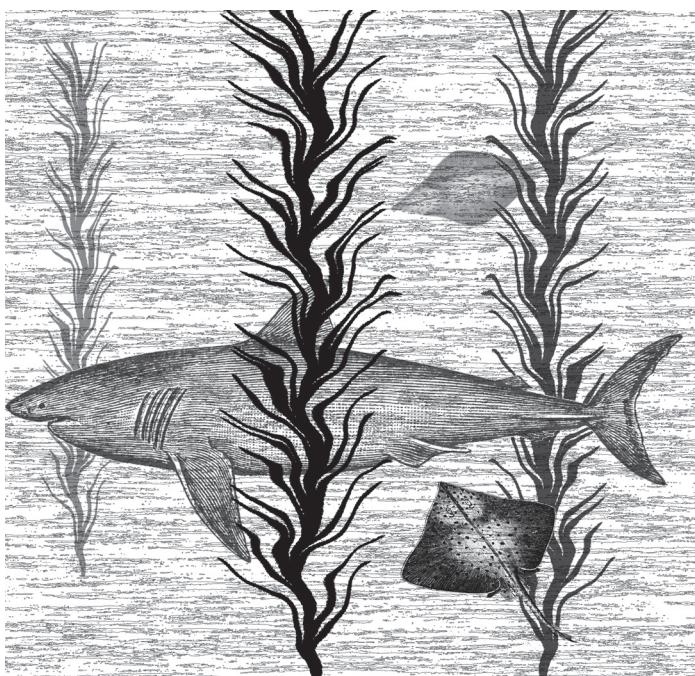
Move: 9

Init: Always has initiative, due to blindingly fast jumping ability

Damage: Fangs 1d10 and deadly Poison, -20% (-4) penalty to avoid

Special: Throw sticky Globs (see page 24 for details);

Other: These beasts have unusually good jumping ability and feet that will adhere to virtually any surface. They will not come down to fight on the ground if any alternative exists. Their natural camouflage accounts for the difficulty in hitting them with missiles, as well as their speed.



Devil Rays (2-16)

Appearance: With a "wing" span of more than nine feet, the devil ray is a silent underwater killer, using the barbed stinger in its tail to incapacitate its prey.

Demeanor: Unless provoked by encroachment on a nesting area, or a threat to its mate, the devil ray is normally very placid. Once motivated to attack, it is relentless.

Power: 25% (5)

Defense: 15% (3)

Health: 15

Move: 15

Init: Always has initiative

Damage: Tail barb 4d4 and avoid Paralysis

Special: The devil ray may make two attempts to strike the same target per Turn; if the first is successful, there is no second attempt.

Other: There is a 10% chance that the barb will remain embedded in the victim, doubling the damage it inflicts. The devil ray can replace the barb in three turns.

Megalodon (1)

(But if a feeding frenzy is triggered, 1-4 more are drawn to the scene.)

Appearance: This relative of the great white shark can stretch more than 40 feet and has jaws capable of swallowing a tall man standing, whole.

Demeanor: This beast is typical of the genus *carcharodon*; one big eating machine. If unprovoked they can be docile, but just six drops of blood can attract them from half a mile and send them into a feeding frenzy.

Power: 50% (10)

Defense: 50% (10)

Health: 40-50

Move: 9

Init: Always last

Damage: Bite 7d4

Special: A megalodon is capable of swallowing a humanoid whole. If the shark scores successful attacks on the same character thrice in succession, the victim is swallowed.

Giant Clam

Appearance: A clam five feet wide.

Demeanor: Passive and immobile

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 75% (15)

Health: 5

Move: 0 (see Other)

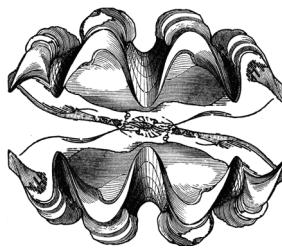
Init: Always last

Damage: see Special

Special: A clam cannot

“attack” in the normal sense, but it can shut itself with crushing force capable of crushing or severing a limb, or even a torso.

Other: If pressed or hurt, the clam is capable of extruding seawater violently through a tubular organ. This can “scoot” the clam across the ocean floor 6’ each turn.



Child of Fire, General Notes

The Child of Fire covets a very special staff, called *Draco's Snout*, made of an unknown metal, both very light and very strong. Part of the stuff of elemental essence is “in” it, and it seemingly calls to him. He will try every trick and every bit of guile to enlist the party’s help in acquiring it. It is suspended from the ceiling of the main chapel with chains of dwarf-forged adamantine, the strongest metal known, over a bubbling pool of lava.

The chains have mighty enchantments on them to prevent him from acquiring it, although we will not tell that part of the tale. The staff can shoot a rolling cloud of flame up to 150’, much like a dragon might, although smaller. At the furthest range, the flames fan out over 60’ wide, inflicting 2 d6 of injury to Health; at 100’ the flames spread 40’ inflicting 3d8; out to 50’ the flames are 20’ wide and inflict 4d12. The staff is exceedingly hot; only a special glove, some fire and heat resistant substance, or some magical means would allow a character to wield it more than once without suffering hideous damage to the hands.

Child of Fire

Appearance: As if an elf, but covered in flames and exuded heat at metal-smelting temperatures

Demeanor: Very friendly and will seek to make friends. It is very enamored of the human custom of shaking hands and would like to shake every hand it meets. Sadly, if it gets within 20’ while making your acquaintance, the heat will become unbearable and possibly injurious. *The Child of Fire is like an overeager, clumsy child, unaware of its own strength.*

Power: 45% (9)

Defense: 20% (4) and see Special

Health: 56 and regenerates 1d4 (see Other)

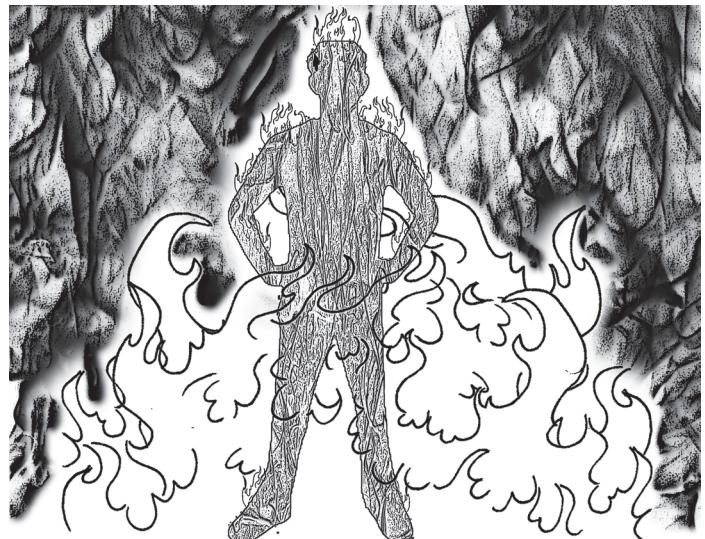
Move: 4

Init: Always last

Damage: Grip 2d8 (x2)

Special: The Child of Fire cannot be hit by non-magical melee weapons, and only hit by those missile weapons imbued with arcane ability or tipped with silver. A magicked arrow with a silver head inflicts double normal damage. Every time the Child of Fire is struck with a weapon made of wood (wholly or partially), the wood is instantly turned to ash unless ensorcelled.

Other: The Child of Fire heals 1d4 of its Health every turn. To be completely destroyed, the Child of Fire would have to be “extinguished” as you would a campfire.



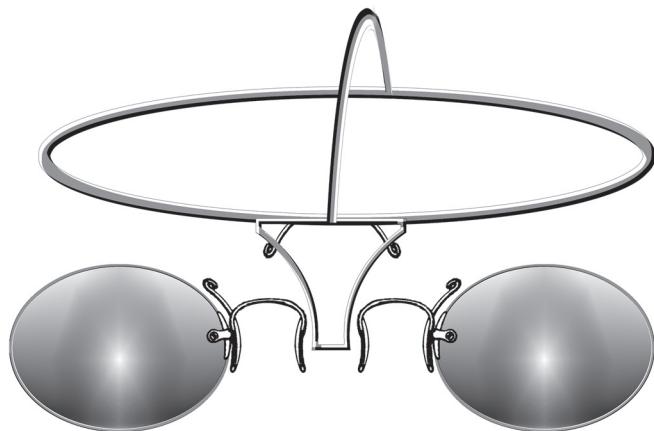
Appendix A: Items & Spells

Oculars of Discernment

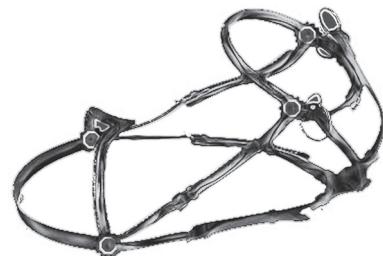
There once was a King of a very powerful nation who was a terrible judge of character and gullible as a young prince. The princeling could be sucked into the silliest and most daring of pranks that all young men love to perpetrate, and invariably was left holding the bag. Every sharper, con man, shyster and rogue was licking his chops, waiting for the prince to inherit.

The princeling's father had in his employ a most learned and erudite adviser named Solomon of whom the grownups strange whispered things whenever they thought the princeling was not around. From snippets of overheard gossip, the princeling soon realized that the courtiers were afraid of Solomon. So of course, the princeling set himself to learning what he could about the strange fellow. He sought him out and found him to be both fascinating in his own right but also a veritable fountain of knowledge and wisdom. Solomon eventually came to tolerate the young man's curiosity and questions, soon discerning that the princeling was rather exemplary in many ways; he just could not see when he was dealing with liars and thieves.

When the princeling, now a strapping young man, was called home to attend his father, the King, on his deathbed, Solomon presented the young soon-to-be King with the oculars. With them he ruled wisely and well for many decades, and under him his kingdom prospered and thrived.



These are a matched pair of cabochon cut oval emeralds, 2" x 3", which will work independently. Independently, one of them allows the user to See invisible things, grants Infravision, sees through Illusions or grants Far-Seeing up to one mile line-of-sight distance. Only one of the stones' powers can be used per turn. If mounted in tandem, in a wire contraption that holds them in place over both eyes at once, something of a wire mask which he made into part of his crown, both gems grant the powers previously mentioned and also allow the wearer to Read the aura on any living creature. This ability allows the wearer to see lies and deception as they are told and show the corruption or purity of the creature.



Epona's Bridle

The horse goddess fashioned this wondrous bit of tack for the purpose of controlling Tersefro, the unfaithful human paramour she turned into a horse. (See *Tersefro in the Bestiary*.)

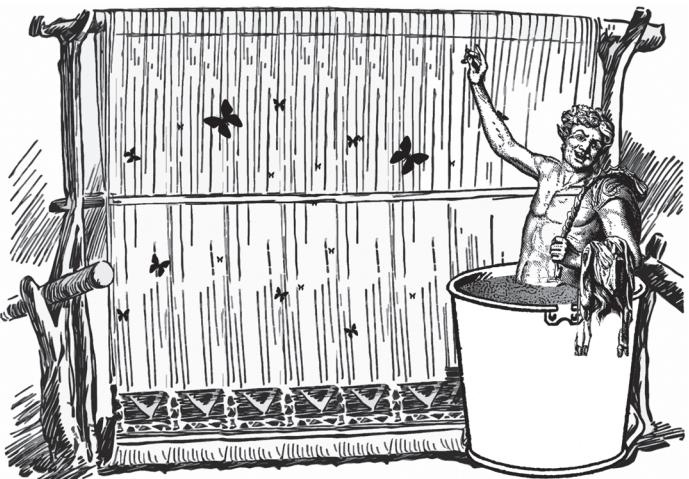
The power of this bridle is such that it allows the owner/rider to control any individual of horse-kind, utterly. The only limitation to its power is that it cannot force the wearer to harm themselves on purpose; wounds in combat or other incidents do not figure in this stricture. Further, the Bridle renders the rider immune from any harm from the wearer so long as the rider is holding it. It can only be damaged by magically charmed weapons, and will magically shrink or expand to fit the head of each wearer.

If used on a mortal or ordinary horse the bridle enhance the natural ability of the animal by one-third. It will run faster, jump farther and carry more than it ever did before.

Items & Spells

WizardWeave

This is an extremely rare and valuable cloth woven by enchanted butterflies under the direction of nixies. It is nearly (95%) impervious to destruction by any but the most potent magical means. It is highly sought-after by spellcasters for its affinity for holding enchantments. It is especially efficacious for such applications as creating a garment that will render the wearer invisible, or blend in perfectly with most surroundings like a chameleon, muffle sounds and even proof against some magics. It is valued by the square yard equal to the price of a trained war horse or a suit of the finest armor.

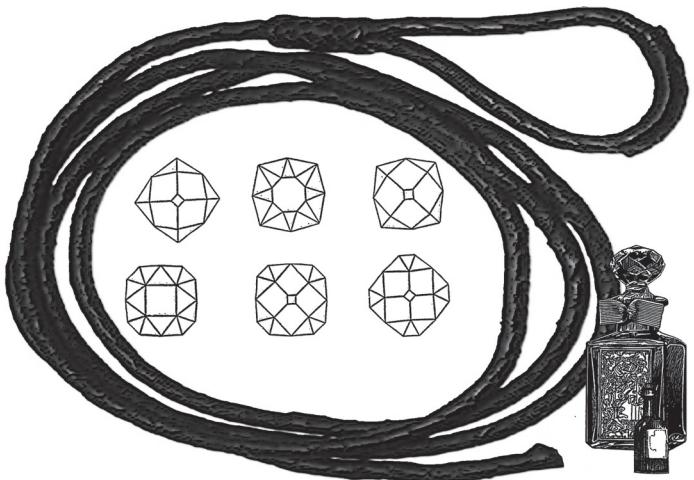


Rupert's Riata

This item never misses when thrown within 25', regardless of whether the target is animal, vegetable or mineral. It is 25 times stronger than the strongest braided leather rope. It can be made to become completely rigid for up to five turns and support 300 lbs. It requires a braided leather rope of dwarven manufacture (sure to be pricey), six gems of at least 30 gp value each, 165 gp worth of various components and substances and eight days work. The scroll will go blank after a second rope is enchanted; the physical component cost is the same for the second. *There is nothing to reveal the fact that the scroll can be used only twice.*

Teodor's Shatterpation (spell)

This dweomer is a spell of Power at least 35% (7) which works against the target's mental faculties. When successful (*i.e.*, not Avoided) the victim is overcome with doubt and confusion and is unable to string together coherent thoughts for a prolonged period of time. This spell is particularly efficacious against high-intelligence spell-casters, causing them to often be unable to cast spells correctly, frequently invoking "backfires" or "hiccups" where spells go awry. It is completely ineffective against any being with Low intelligence, or characters of less than 9 Intelligence (*they are already dazed and confused on a regular basis*). The minimum mental jumbling is 1d4 hours; for every point of Intelligence above 14, add 1d4 hours to duration. *Example:* A mage with 17 Intelligence who fails to avoid suffers 4d4 turns of the effects. Victims of this spell are said to be "shatterpated".



Appendix B: Special Tomes

Rituals of the Weaver

These two books, written in a spidery and crabbed hand, purport to tell of the steps of the ritual that creates the Avatar of the Weaver Queen. There are odd spellings and strange words and symbols indicate that the writer might not have had an extensive formal education, and was likely temple-schooled, but not as a scholar or scribe. Some of the words have phonetic spellings.

The books go on at great detail relating how potentially suitable candidates were identified and the prerequisites needed for their use. The girls had to have been born during certain alignments of the moons and had to remain blemish-free and innocent before they enter the “Purification and Preparation” stage of their novitiate.

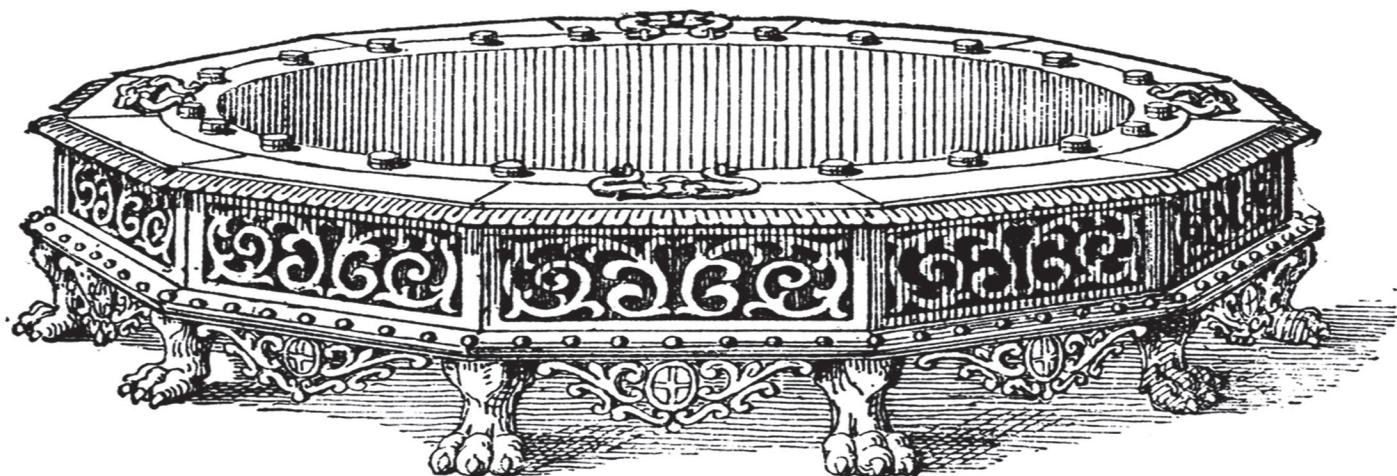
This euphemistically named ‘period of preparation’ began most usually by an abduction of the less-than-thrilled candidates in the middle of the night, sometimes accompanied by the slaughter of some or all of their families; thus their experience begins in terror and fear. They are then cosseted and pampered while being observed every moment of their lives. When candidates disappoint or come up short in one way or another, they “don’t come back” one day.

In the days leading to the ritual, the Selected One is fed a special diet laced with herbs, soporifics and psychedelics. This readies the candidate’s mind and body for the wrenching transformation to come. The rite is not always successful; the decoction does not always work perfectly. It contains magical elements involving changing one thing into another in some sort of multiple-species morphing, and contains so-called medicinal elements that have transformative powers attributed to their use. Some hybrids go insane immediately, for others one or the other of the parts rejects the other and they die.

If your players decide to try to free Eliana from the Curse by reversing the ritual, rather than just killing her outright; the success or failure of that is entirely up to you. If you want to get really random, you could have a partial success with the results of your making to fit your player’s expectations. The very nature of the volatile Poly-Mutate decoction could lead to all sorts of bizarre, interesting or tragic outcomes.

Silver Censer

The silver censer found in the scriptorium is essential for the preparation of the Potion of Transformation. *It is equally indispensable if attempts to reverse the process were ever attempted.* Common sage must be burned in it during the entire preparation process; if it goes out the potion becomes unstable and unusable.



Tomes of the Weaver Queen

The Travel Guides

The other two books are bound in a cured leather of some hitherto unknown species. They each have a different single archaic symbol on their cover. One translates as "Hither" and the other says "Yon."

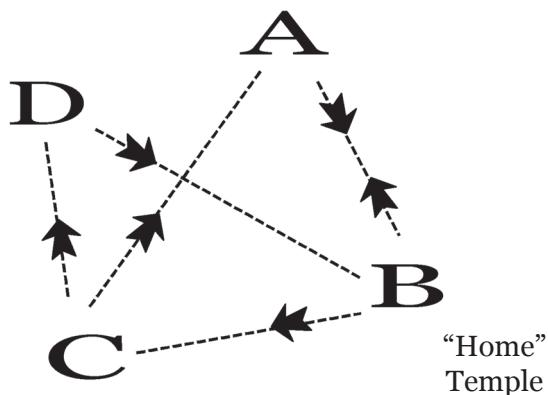
The two books detail the workings of the magical transportation apparatus disguised as an eight-pointed star more commonly used in summoning and bindings in the Ritual Summoning Room (another intentional misnomer meant to deceive).

The book warns of the minor vampire (Prespos) which is bound to protect the device from unauthorized use and tells of how he can be held at bay, revealing an Arcane controlling word that binds him.

The book goes on to tell of the other linked devices and the configuration of the sconces to arrive at the desired destination. Each of the eight points corresponds to a different destination. The pages containing the charts and drawings to all destinations but the one referred to as "Home" are missing from the book.

Inter-Temple Transport

Beginning Temple



Working Transportation Links



GM Note: For the purposes of this adventure there are only a few destination combinations that work. Each destination has, or had, a similar device disguised as an eight-pointed star. For this adventure, the only initial destination is to the Home Temple ("B" for the purposes of clarity); from it they can go back to the temple they started from ("A") or to another temple ("C"). For the purposes of this adventure there are only two destinations at the second temple ("C"): back to the first ("A"), or another temple ("D"). From (D) they can go only to (B).

If this adventure is happening on your world or in your campaign, just consider that the other temple-destinations exist in another world or a parallel universe, or even a dream world.

All Weaver Temples are identical in construction and layout, as well as utilization; Temples "B", "C" and "D" lack the carved glyphs on the various floors, subterranean levels as well as a door guardian such as Dormuhn. Those oddities are confined to the original temple being explored ("A"); they seem to be unique.

If a portion of any temple is not listed, that is because it is inaccessible, for various reasons.

The 'Home' Temple

Three very large Empress spiders in this temple frequently hunt the precincts of the temple and the surrounding area. As they are only 40% likely to be in their lairs at any given time, the chances of encountering them randomly should be correspondingly high, about 10 or 15% in any given 10-15 minute period.

All of the corridors that lead to a spider lair are strewn with web strands that could alert the spider to the character's presence.

1. Narthex

Beside the door are two pillars with sculptures of a lobster-like shellfish on top. The room is otherwise empty.

2. Purification Room

Spaced evenly around the room are four stone statues with disks on their head; the statues are eight feet tall and carrying unusual clubs shaped like the jaw of a shark.

3. Acolyte Barracks

Scattered about are the ruins of several beds, a small table and four chairs. There is nothing of value anywhere.

3A. Corridor steps down

The top five steps are grey carved tile. The rest of the steps consist of brown carved tile. There are remnants of some very large spiderwebs in this passage. It does not appear that they operate the same way as the others like them in the first temple.

Empress Spider (3 Total in Temple)

Appearance: This hairy horror resembles a longer-than-normal-legged wolf-spider. The cephalothorax and abdomen are about three feet long; in a normal crouching position their leg-span is about six feet.

Behavior/Demeanor: In their home web they are extremely aggressive; on the hunt they are secretive, silent and surreptitious. This gives them a 20% (+4) edge when attempting to surprise or ambush.

Defense: 45% (9) or 65% (13) vs Missile weapons (see Other, below)

Health: 16, 16, 19

Move: 9

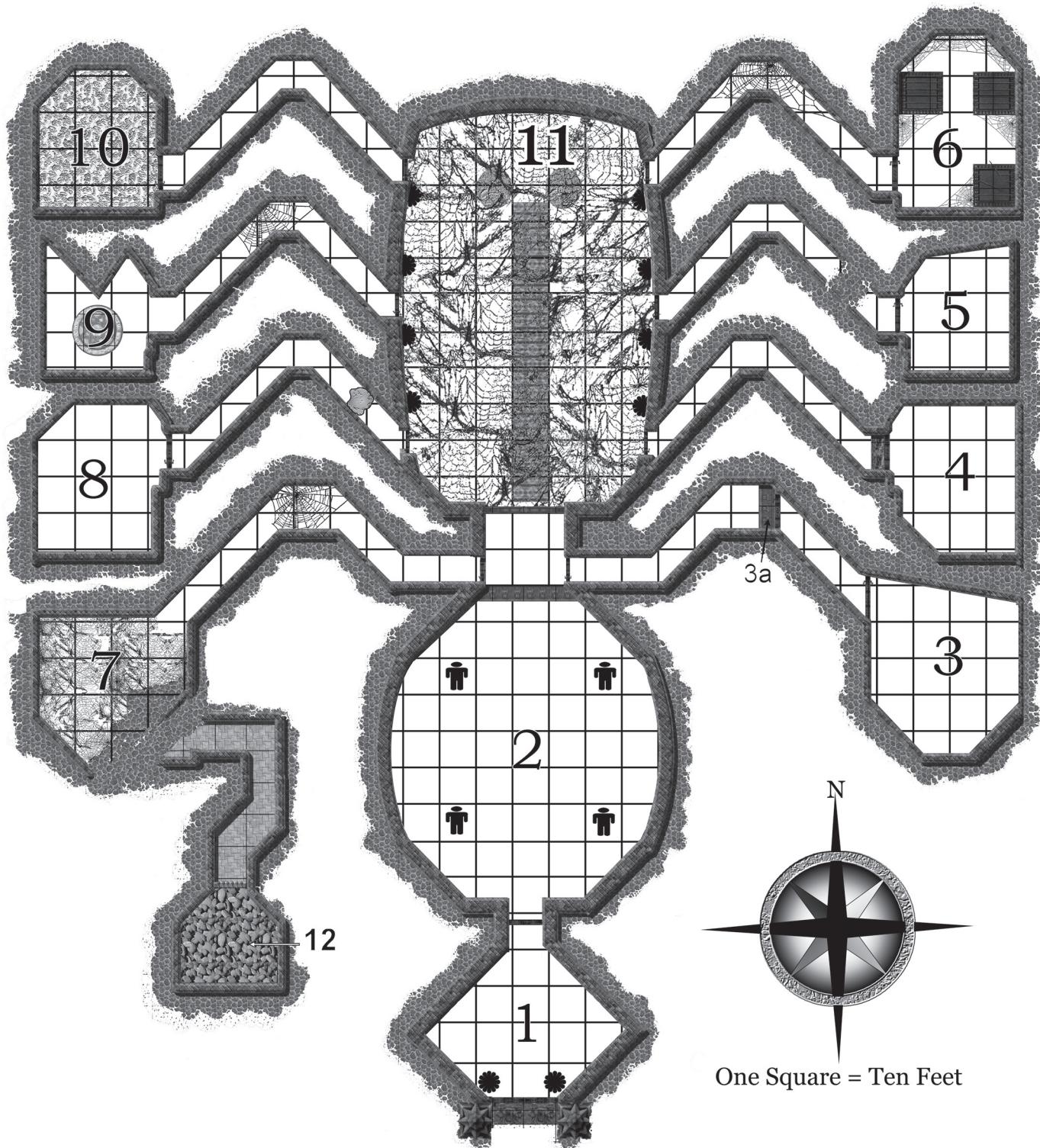
Init: Always has initiative due to blindingly fast jumping ability

Damage: Envenomed Fangs 1d10 and roll to avoid lethal poison with a -20% (-4) penalty

Special: These arachnids have very specialized web spinnerets that enable them to readily form balls of sticky and slightly corrosive silk about the size of a medium sized melon. Any target hit is immediately immobilized for at least the remainder of the Turn. The target has one chance to break free of the glob of stickiness: the victim must roll a d20 and obtain a result that is at least two less than their Strength. Failure means that the victim has further ensnared themself and is immobilized until the silk can be dissolved, either magickally or with a large quantity of alcohol or similar solvent. The silk has a slightly corrosive property that can inflict injury after prolonged exposure and ruin leather (*solely at the GM's discretion.*) They can produce and throw two globs per Turn for 8 Turns; thereafter they may only produce and throw one per turn. Resting (not fighting) for one hour refills their silk producing glands to full capability.

Other: These beasts have unusually good jumping ability and feet that will adhere to virtually any surface. They will not come down to fight on the ground if any alternative exists. Their natural camouflage and speed accounts for the difficulty in hitting them with missiles.

Temples of the Weaver Queen



The 'Home' Temple

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Temples of the Weaver Queen

4. Scriptorium

On the floor is a carved threshold in front of the door which alerts anyone inside that someone is there. It still works. The room contains shelves full of scrolls, books of a non-magical nature, and maps. Hidden behind a false panel in one of the scroll racks are three scrolls with magical incantations inscribed upon them in blood. They reek of evil and malice.

The first is ***Bandar's Bane***; this is a very simple spell that almost any semi-skilled dabbler in the arcane (Power 15%) can master. When cast, the victim's feet begin to swell painfully, rendering him incapable of anything but a slow shuffle.

The second is ***Ancherlyn's Anguish***; overwhelming grief and remorse take hold of the victim and render him incapable of coherent thought and action. The spell can be avoided only with a penalty of -10% (-2) and can only be woven by a practitioner of the Arcane with Power of 60% (12) or more. The effects last 1d6 hours.

The final scroll contains a spell so deadly that it is only known as ***Mortis***. Mastery of this spell is only possible by high (90% [18]) adepts of arcane power. The incantation cannot be Avoided. The target has a 95% chance of slowly stiffening into rigidity and immobility and suffocating to death. There is a 5% chance that they will only be completely paralyzed. Dwarves are especially vulnerable to this spell. *Dwarves and their kin suffocate almost instantly.*

5. Assistant High Priest's Quarters

The corridor to this room has collapsed, leaving tons of rock blocking it.

6. Cage Room

On the North wall are two steel grates set into floor. obviously cages. On the south wall is a third cage. This room is covered in webs, and the floor is littered with the bones of countless small animals and birds. A monstrous web covers the ceiling. There is a 40% chance that the resident Empress Spider who lives there will be present; see stats on previous page.

7. High Priest's Athenæum

The southeast corner of the room has collapsed; tons of rock block access to the strong-room. The area is dense with webs, and the floor is littered with bones. The ceiling is covered with a massive web, home of an Empress Spider.

8. Refectory

The corridor leading to what is most likely the refectory is filled by an enormous basalt boulder, completely blocking it.

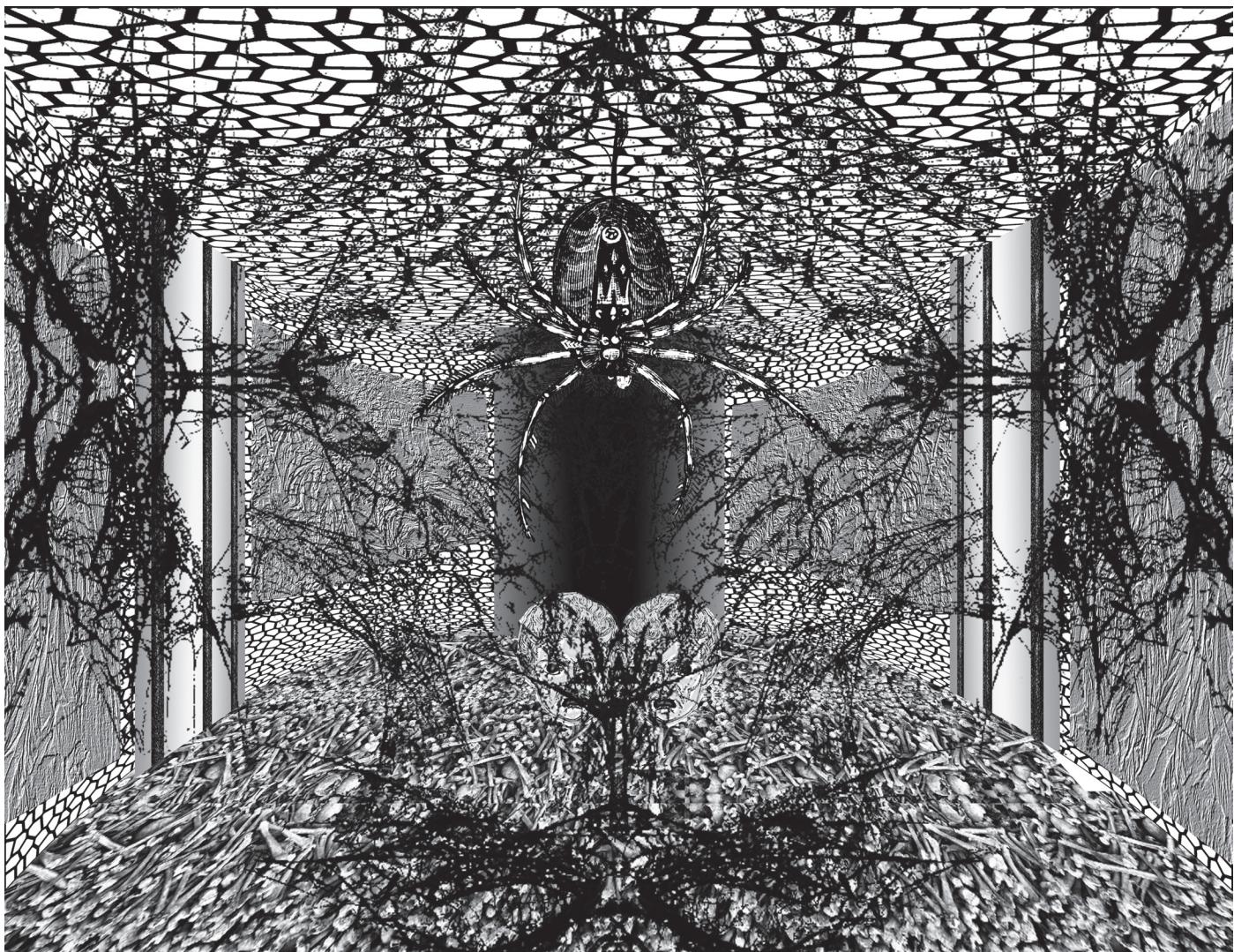
9. Transportation Room

This is always where the characters find themselves after teleporting. It is exactly the same as the corresponding room in the first temple explored. Only the socket that you have identified as where you just came from and one other are not melted into slag. There is no guardian in this room.

The party can go on to a new destination, or back whence they came. If you feel the urge to send them somewhere of your own devising, just make more of the sockets usable.



Temples of the Weaver Queen



10. High Priest Quarters

This room is completely filled with rubble.

11. Temple of Arianhrod

There are eight carved columns that line the walls; from the doorway all the way up to what looks like an altar, there is an incredibly beautiful, hand knotted and vividly colorful rug of the softest wool. *It is not enchanted.* There are many murals and mosaics on the walls, comprising scenes of peaceful, joyous and healthy people living in harmony. In the center of the temple flanking the wondrous

rug are two very cleverly sculpted metal images of a demonic face. The mouths on the faces are pierced and open; they are vents for a hypocaust heating system for the Temple.

This entire area is thick with webs and the floor is nearly ankle-deep in bones and feathers. There are enormous webs all over the ceiling and between several of the pillars. *This is the lair of the third (and largest) Empress Spider; see stats on page 35.*

12. Temple Treasury

This area is filled with nothing but rubble.

The Submerged Temple (C)

The only areas of this temple that are accessible are the main temple area and the room by which the adventurers enter; all the rest are blocked off and under water. The air trapped here is stale. There is a skylight in the ceiling and some sort of strange transparent door leading to area #6 (the Cage Room).

Overhead, in the very roof of the temple, is a long transparent panel through which flickering lights and shadows can be seen. Giant ray-type fish and enormous shark-like creatures swim by overhead.

Upon examining what appears to be some sort of transparent door, you see a clam big enough to swallow a good sized cow a short distance away that has a pearl the size of a baby's head visible when it opens its shell to feed. Near this transparent door is a large stone trunk.

Inside the trunk are 11 very curiously shaped objects that most resemble elaborate 'choker' style necklaces, although too large for most female necks. There are also a half dozen very

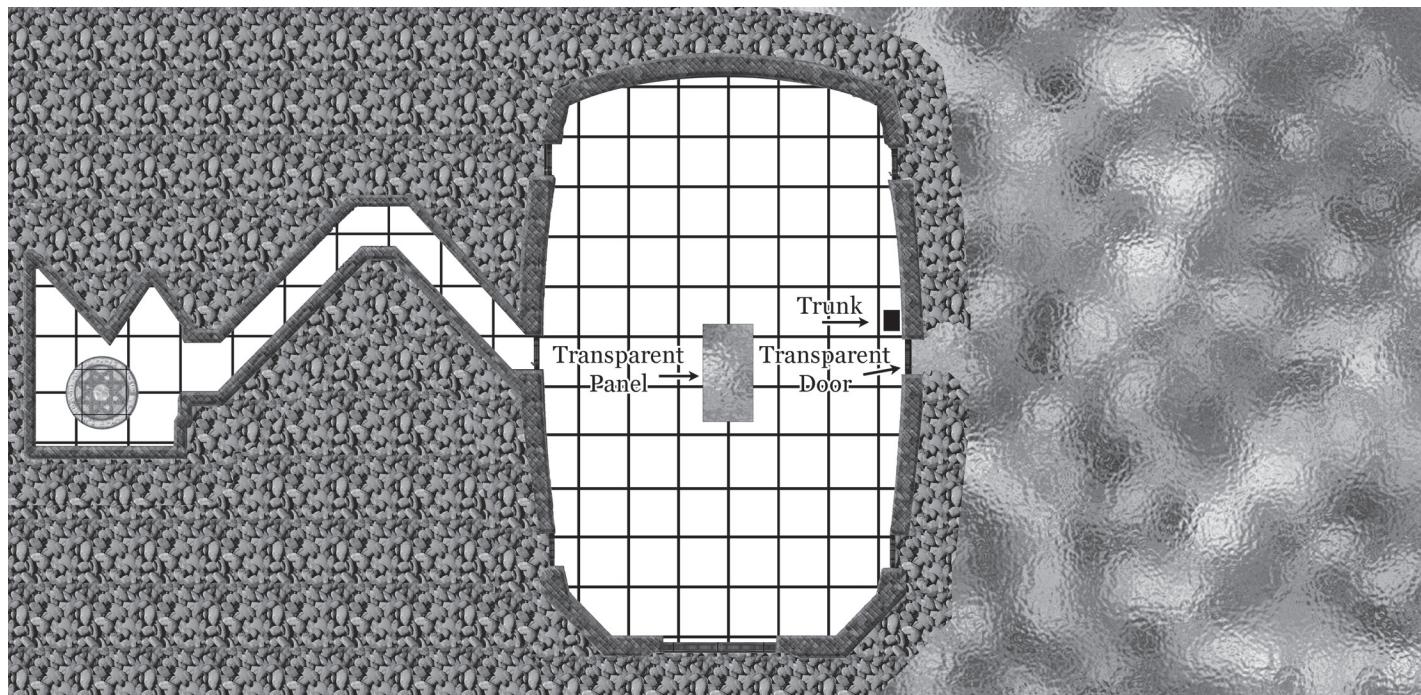
oddly shaped instruments that would appear to be some sort of crossbow. In addition, there are five pairs of boots lined and soled with lead.

The "transparent door" is one side of an ingenious system that enables ingress and egress without flooding the main area.

The wearer of a (magical) choker necklace is able to breathe underwater for 45 minutes if no serious exertion is performed. That time drops if engaged in the event of combat or other strenuous activity.

The oddly constructed crossbows are designed to be fired underwater. They have a maximum effective range of 50' and should be treated as a short bow with the following changes: Damage within 20' range is $4d4$, and at 21-50' the damage is $2d6$. Each weapon comes with a carrier that contains 10 projectiles, and they can be reloaded and fired once every turn.

Note that the only working destinations are back to A, or on to D.



Temples of the Weaver Queen

Underwater adventuring

While walking on the bottom of the sea floor, movement distances should be about half normal. Humanoids need the leaden boots; dwarves, due to their innate density and the salinity of the eater of this world, do not. Visibility for normal-seeing humanoids is never more than 50'. Any reaction or initiative determinations should have substantial penalties for the characters, reflecting their inexperience in that environment. If engaged in combat with other equally inexperienced characters, the negatives balance each other out. If engaging with denizens of the deep, the denizens will have a great many advantages working for them.

Although all creature stats are given on pages 29-30, they are duplicated here for your convenience.

Special note on Clams: In the event that the party kills a clam and cuts it up (as all good players love to do), they find 6d10+12 regular pearls of good quality worth 1d20+25 gp each, and gold dust (which the clam filters from the seawater) worth 10d20+200 gp.



Devil Rays (2-16)

Appearance: With a “wing” span of more than nine feet, the devil ray is a silent underwater killer, using the barbed stinger in its tail to incapacitate its prey.

Demeanor: Unless provoked by encroachment on a nesting area, or a threat to its mate, the devil ray is normally very placid. Once motivated to attack it is relentless.

Power: 25% (5)

Defense: 15% (3)

Health: 15

Move: 15

Init: Always has initiative

Damage: Tail barb: 4 d4, Avoid Paralysis

Special: The devil ray may make two attempts to strike the same target per Turn; if the first is successful, there is no second attempt.

Other: There is a 10% chance that the barb will remain imbedded in the victim, doubling the damage it does. The devil ray can replace the barb in 30 minutes.

Megalodon (1, and 1-4 more if in a feeding frenzy)

Appearance: This ancestor of the great white shark can stretch more than 40 feet and has jaws capable of swallowing a tall man standing, whole.

Demeanor: This beast is typical of the genus *carcharodon*; one big eating machine. If unprovoked they can be docile; just six drops of blood can attract them from half a mile and send them into a feeding frenzy.

Power: 50% (10)

Defense: 50% (10)

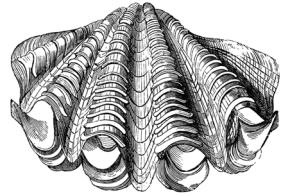
Health: 1d10 +40

Move: 9

Init: Always last

Damage: Bite 7d4

Special: Megalodon is capable of swallowing a humanoid whole. If the shark scores successful attacks on the same character thrice in succession, the victim is swallowed.



Giant Clam

Appearance: This bivalve is more than seven feet wide. The top half of the shell opens and closes through use of the adductor muscle that is the hinge.

Demeanor: Passive and immobile the majority of the time, if the “pearl” is touched in any fashion, the shell snaps shut with blinding speed and savage force. The “pearl” is “bait” for cephalopods, the clam’s meal of choice.

Power: 10% (2)

Defense: 75% (15)

Health: 25 (Only the adductor muscle can be damaged with edged weapons)

Move: 0 (see Other)

Init: Always last

Damage: see Special

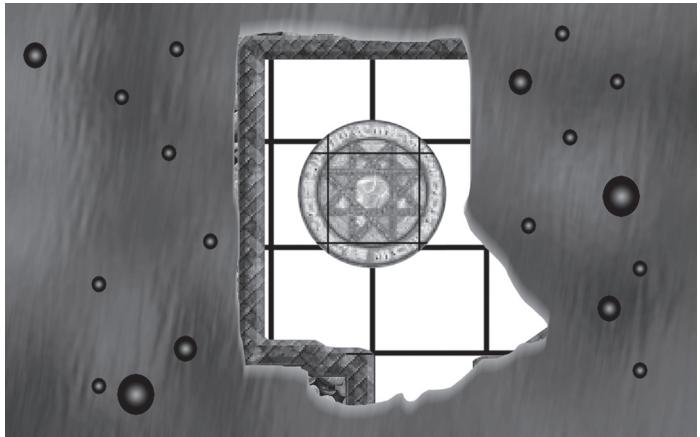
Special: A clam cannot “attack” in the normal sense, but it can shut itself with crushing force capable of crushing or severing a limb, or even a torso. If victim is completely engulfed (the shell is shut on them) they suffer 1d8 loss of health every turn from the digestive enzymes released by the clam. If a limb is caught there is a 25% chance of severing it.

Other: If pressed or hurt, the clam can extrude seawater violently through a tubular organ. This can “scoot” the clam across the ocean floor 6' each turn.

The Fiery Temple (D)

You find yourself in searing heat; the very air shimmers. What little is left of this temple is now located in the middle of a field of flowing lava. All rooms on the opposite side of the temple have been consumed by the lava flow.

An elemental being of fire (*known simply as a Child of Fire*) inhabits in the main chapel area after having pulled down a portion of the roof. The temperature is dangerously high and the atmosphere becomes toxic after prolonged exposure lasting more than one half hour. *After thirty minutes of the heat and gasses, the characters should be at an increasing risk of physical harm. Consider that the characters have a base 20% risk at the end of the thirty minutes; every ten additional minutes of exposure increases their risk by 10%. This assumes normal respiration and minimal exertion. They could pass out, and even suffocate.*



Child of Fire

Appearance: As if an elf, but covered in flames and exuded heat at metal-smelting temperatures

Demeanor: Very friendly and will seek to make friends. It is very enamored of the human custom of shaking hands and would like to shake every hand it meets. Sadly, if it gets within 20' while making your acquaintance, the heat will become unbearable and possibly injurious. *The Child of Fire is like an overeager, clumsy child, unaware of its own strength.*

Power: 45% (9)

Defense: 20% (4) and see Special (see below)

Health: 56 and regenerates 1d4 (see Other)

Move: 4

Init: Always last

Damage: Grip 2 d8 (x2)

Special: The Child of Fire cannot be hit by non-magical melee weapons, and only hit by those missile weapons imbued with arcane ability or tipped with silver. A magicked arrow with a silver head inflicts double normal damage. Every time the Child of Fire is struck with a weapon made of wood (wholly or partially), the wood is instantly turned to ash unless ensorcelled.

Other: The Child of Fire heals 1d4 Health every turn. To be completely destroyed, the Child of Fire would have to be "extinguished" as you would a campfire.

Child of Fire, General Notes

The Child of Fire covets a very special staff, called *Draco's Snout*, made of an unknown metal, both very light and very strong. Part of the stuff of elemental essence is "in" it, and it seemingly calls to him. He will try every trick and every bit of guile to enlist the party's help in acquiring it. It is suspended from the ceiling of the main chapel with chains of dwarf-forged adamantine, the strongest metal known, over a bubbling pool of lava.

The chains have mighty enchantments on them to prevent him from acquiring it, although we will not tell that part of the tale. The staff can shoot a rolling cloud of flame up to 150', much like a dragon might, although smaller. At the furthest range, the flames fan out over 60' wide, inflicting 2d6 of injury to Health; at 100' the flames spread 40' inflicting 3d8; out to 50' the flames are 20' wide and inflict 4d12. The staff is exceedingly hot; only a special glove, some fire and heat resistant substance or some magical means would allow a character to wield it more than once without suffering hideous damage to their hands.

Appendix C: Eliana's Tragic Tale

I was abducted from the bosom of my family when I had just celebrated my 15th Natal Day. They came in the dead of night and carried me off in a stupor.

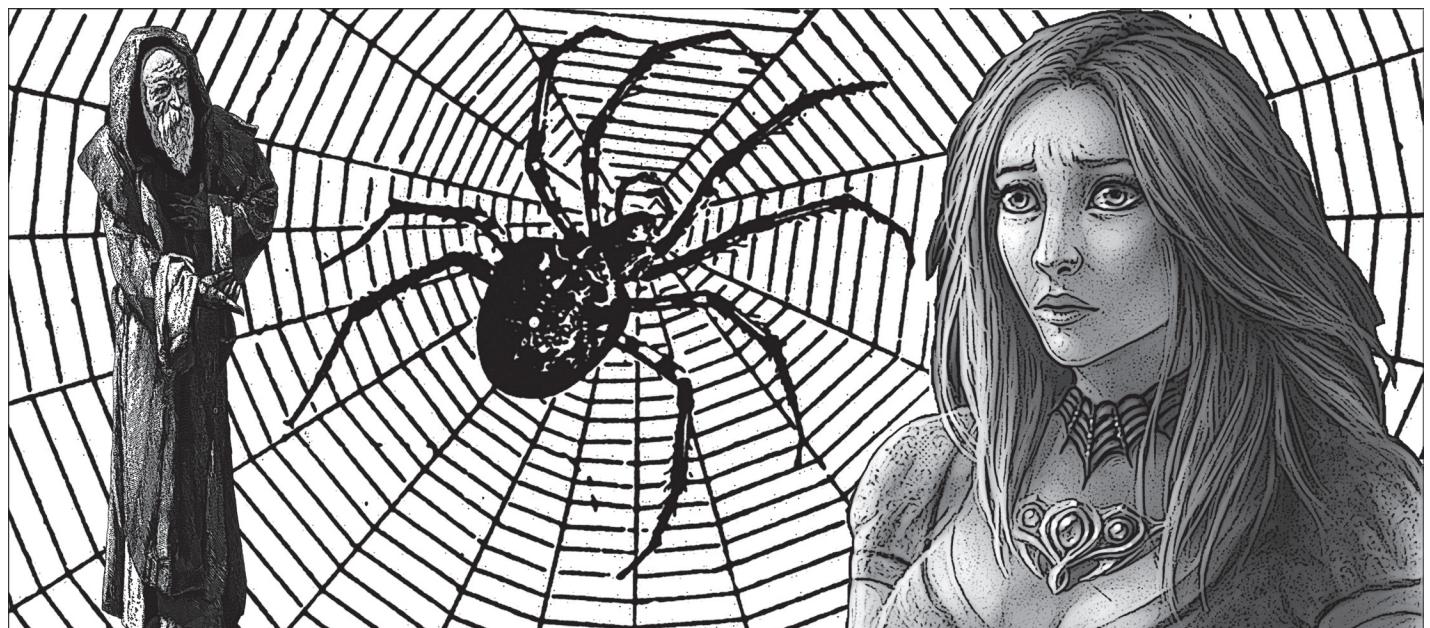
I am not exactly sure what it was that came for me; I was rudely awakened from a slightly muzzy sleep occasioned by my drinking purloined spirits (only a very little) at my party that night; I remember the dogs baying, then shrieking and yelping, then silence. I remember a large, hairy "something" being directed by an impossibly thin and tall human in a mysterious black cape., and then I was violently ill, my stomach suddenly emptied of all that feast's contents.

I do not know what may have happened to my two younger brothers or my parents; I can only hope that they did not meet the same fate as our two wolfhounds , whose throats were cruelly ripped away. As my horrified eyes took in the sight, I felt a sharp pain in my side, like I had been pierced by a long, sharp thorn, and my senses left me.

When next my eyes sought to behold the light of day, they did not as I found myself in an enclosed space with only dimly glowing moss upon the walls for a mean sort of illumination. From time to time I regained my senses and found myself alone but unfettered in the large room of closely fitted stone incised with strange symbols and writings of some sort. There would be a basin and ewer of water and a small towel, mugs of water and juices, some of which I disdained from fear and suspicion. At times there would a platter of edible mushrooms or nuts or root vegetables and sometimes even fruits.

I did not lack for sustenance but longed for something to pierce the terrible aloneness that I felt.

They had removed all of my clothing and taken the spiderweb bone pendant I had worn since finding it in the woods when I was small; I felt like I had been "handled," as though a shoat in the Monthly Market.





Eliana's Tale

The isolation began to tell on me after nearly a handspan of months (we females have our own cycles, you know). When I thought that I must surely be losing my senses from being so alone, one day I had a visitor. It could only have been the skeletally thin and tall nemesis from my abduction, without the concealing and befuddling cloak. It was she who calmly informed me of my fate, the horror that I exist in today.

She calmly explained to that I had been marked since I first found the bone carving, and my youth observed. She explained that her order, as she referred to it, required a chaste maiden for a candidate for what was to come. She went on to say that my diet had been added to while I had been in captivity, to "get me ready." That would certainly account for how my body had suddenly transformed from a coltish young girl to the fully formed female I had become, much as you see me now. She went on at great length about what an honor it was to be chosen to become the Avatar of the Weaver, and how I had been chosen out of several candidates for the honor that would soon befall me. She painted a picture of a life of being worshipped and adored. And then, several days later, she told me what would happen. I wished for death with all my being.

The Ritual, as she called it, would result in the monstrosity that I have become. I was forced to drink a bitter potion that caused my senses to swim. The rest was like the worst fever dreams one could imagine, and I feel I have not yet awakened from the nightmare that my life has become.

I share this "body" with the primitive instincts of the beast. More and more, I find it difficult to maintain my control and my sanity; there are times that I fail, increasingly so as of late. When the beast rules I watch in revulsion and horror at

what "we" do. When I rule, I can feel the beast watching. The beast takes over at the slightest sign of a possible threat; I have no control over that.

I have existed thus for centuries and would end this wretched existence if only I could... but I am prevented from harming myself by the powers of the gorget around my neck and the three ensorcelled stones it holds.

I have seen the fate that awaits me; I have two of my Predecessors locked up as they are quite insane. The Ritual imparts preternaturally long physical life, but nothing preserves the mental health. We do not die in the usual sense, we simply go insane and are immured until our bodies finally fall apart.

I long for the sweet release of Death. The greatest kindness you could do me is to release me from these centuries of anguish. I do not know if it can be reversed; I fear not. Somewhere in this accursed place there is a set of four volumes of their most secret lore and rituals; with careful study who can predict? For the curse to be completely broken, I must die while the human is in control. If that happens the gorget loses its power over me and simply becomes an incredibly valuable piece of jewelry. If the armband I wear is not immediately seized, the magical hold it has on the doors imprisoning the Predecessors is broken and they are immediately released. The armband holds the *Stone of Atherton**.

The beast cannot be resisted by me if it perceives a threat; the mere sight of drawn weapons or menacing behavior will cause it to reassert control and attack. Its paranoia keeps me from coming anywhere within reach of any possible threat. I might kill you while you are trying to help me.

* **The Stone of Atherton** can open any lock or door it is held against. It can also Hold closed any lock or door that it has touched. It also alerts the owner of any attempts to open or close said doors or locks.

Sketch Map of the Temple



cont. overleaf

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