

MINI DUNGEONS



MINI-DUNGEON 253

FLOOR IS SPIDERS



4-5

Characters



Level

5



Underworld



Floor Is Spiders

CLAIRE STRICKLIN

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The demon Yx'larak has waited for untold centuries. An ancient pact binds it to the will of long-dead matrons, and the foul creature maintains its end of the bargain: grant the blessings of the Spider Queen to any that somehow prove themselves worthy. Yx'larak doesn't accept that it's his fault nobody has survived the challenge. But the demon is patient; despite the stymied drow of a bygone era leaving the chambers to rot, it is only a matter of time until they are rediscovered. While scores of ancient drow failed to impress Yx'larak, maybe new challengers will do better?

THE FLOOR IS (LITERALLY) SPIDERS

Yx'larak believes there is wisdom to be gleaned from arachnids. For example, why settle for crawling upon a single surface when perfectly good walls and ceilings are available? From the moment the doors in **Area 1** open, the entire dungeon floor is covered in a 1-foot-thick carpet of spiders. This counts as **difficult terrain**. When a creature either enters a floor space for the first time on a turn, or starts its turn standing on the floor, it suffers a spider bite attack.

Spider Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage. The target must make a **DC 10 Constitution saving throw**, taking 1 poison damage on a failed save.

The swarm never climbs to attack creatures on a non-floor surface. The 15-ft.-high ceilings are covered in stalactites, requiring

a **DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check** to climb up, and the rough walls require a **DC 8 check**. Being damaged when climbing requires a check at the same DC to hang on (characters under the effect of *spider climb* gain advantage on these checks). Effects that deal damage to an area clear the spiders for one round, after which the space refills.

1. SPIDAL WAVE (CR 4)

The Approach. As the party approaches the doors to **Area 1**, a voice like broken violin strings greets them: "Welcome, cadets! Who among you will accept the blessing of the Spider Queen? Trust me, you're going to need it." This is of course Yx'larak, who can see, hear, and speak through all the spiders. A warlock using the *Voice of the Chain Master* eldritch invocation can also do this.

The Gift. After this question, a single black widow spider skulks from the seam between the doors. A glowing green substance, radiating transmutation magic, drips from its mandibles. It moves cautiously toward the party. Anyone who lets themselves be bitten automatically takes 1 poison damage and is affected by *spider climb* for the duration of the adventure.

The Doors. These heavy, ancient doors require a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check** to open, although they burst apart once all adventurers have chosen to be bitten (or not) and a veritable tidal wave of spiders surges forth to cover the floor.

2. EIGHT-LEGGED RODEO (CR 5)

Both of Us Always Lie. The hollow statues by the door to **Area 4** depict two grinning ettercaps. The spiders within proclaim in Yx'larak's voice, "One of us always tells the truth, and one of us always lies. Ask us anything you like, then nobody dies!" Both are inveterate liars. Yx'larak uses these statues to teach the value of deception and mistrust. They willingly serve as 10-foot mobile platforms, with Yx'larak's spiders shifting the statues about the chamber by request, only to move them again at the worst possible moment.

Mechanical Spider. As the "ettercaps" explain, the chamber's central statue is a mechanical puppet operated by tens of thousands of spiders. To open the sealed doors to **Area 4**, a creature must remain on the back of the bucking spider for two consecutive rounds by making a successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks** each round. Failing either means falling into the font of infinite venomous spiders below.

Upon success, a small hatch in the spider's back pops open, but the doors to **Area 4** remain shut. Yx'larak's statues "forgot" to mention that a relic blessed by a drow matron must be offered to the statue. Then the doors will open.

Secret Doors. Secret doors in this dungeon are found and opened with a **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check**, as the spiders are slightly "shallower" near the threshold. Alternatively, the doors in this room (and only in this room) spring open when the statues admit their "forgetfulness." In either case, when one of the doors opens, all four do so.

3. FAILED CADETS (CR 7)

Halfsies. Each crypt contains half a drider. The top and bottom crypts hold the upper body of a slain drow, while middle crypts house the legs and abdomen of a giant spider. When the secret doors in **Area 2** open, all pieces animate and work to reunite with their other halves, crawling to the secret "connector tunnels" in each area at a rate of 20 feet per round. While separate, treat these halves as **common zombies** and **giant spiders** respectively. Unless stopped, the pieces form **driders** (61 hp each). Canny adventurers may sidestep **Area 2** by venturing through these connector tunnels. Creatures from the dungeon's "lower legs" will not follow them.

Crypts of the Failed. Each of the four lower crypts holds one of the following items beneath its shifting spider-floor: some **boots of Elvenkind**, a **cloak of Elvenkind**, a **dagger of venom**, and some **drow slippers of spider climbing**. (N.B., this last one is not the standard magic item. Instead, the wearer can: more easily "climb spiders"; has immunity to spider-floors; and makes checks to ride the statue in **Area 2** with advantage). All can be offered to the mechanical spider in **Area 2**.

4. THE DEMON'S LAIR (CR 8)

Yx'larak waits in the baleful light of unholy braziers, hoping for the defeat that will trigger its return to the infinite planes. It even offers the party a short rest before their climactic duel.

Treat Yx'larak as a **Leng spider** ♦ with the fiend (demon) type and the following abilities:

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Yx'larak fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Legendary Actions. Yx'larak can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Yx'larak regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Go Web! Yx'larak makes a web attack as a **giant spider**.

Arachnid Aura. Yx'larak makes a **Wisdom (Perception) check**.

Floored (Costs 2 Actions). Yx'larak triggers a **reverse gravity** effect throughout **Area 4**. This has no effect on creatures under a **spider climb** effect, but it does cause all the spiders to fall up onto the new floor.

5. BOON OF THE SPIDER QUEEN

The Altar. The altar in this chamber opens once Yx'larak is defeated. Creatures who accepted the boon in **Area 1** gain one of the following abilities:

- Darkvision with a range of 60 feet.
- A climb speed of 20 feet.
- Tremorsense with a range of 10 feet.
- A web attack as a **giant spider** (1/day as a bonus action).
- The **find familiar** cantrip (spider only).



© 2023 AAW Games, LLC.
Author: Claire Stricklin, Artist: Mates Laurentiu, Cartography: Sean MacDonald
Publisher: Jonathan G. Nelson, Editor: Stephen Yeardeley, Layout: Roo Thompson



Product Identity: The following items are hereby identified as Product Identity, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a, Section 1(e) at adventureweek.com/ogl, and are not Open Content: All trademarks, registered trademarks, proper names (characters, deities, etc.), dialogue, plots, storylines, locations, characters, artwork, and trade dress. (Elements that have previously been designated as Open Game Content or are in the public domain are not included in this declaration.) **Open Content:** Except for material designated as Product Identity (see above), the game mechanics of this AAW Games, LLC game product are Open Game Content, as defined in the Open Game License version 1.0a Section 1(d) No portion of this work other than the material designated as Open Game Content may be reproduced in any form without written permission. **Tome of Beasts**, © 2016, Open Design LLC; Authors Chris Harris, Dan Dillon, Rodrigo Garcia Carmona, and Wolfgang Baur.

♦ Tome of Beasts, Kobold Press

