



SPIDERS! EW!

Spiders! *Ew!* is a challenging location-based adventure for four 3rd-level adventurers. It takes place in the non-campaign-specific city of Murktown, but can just as easily be set in any other small to mid-size city of your choice, specifically one with a sewer system and thieves' guild.

While many of the encounters in the adventure are built for 3rd-level adventurers, a few are significantly more difficult. Wise characters will know to avoid these encounters, lest their party lose a life or two. Dwarves will excel here thanks to poison resilience as well spellcasters with area-of-effect attacks.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Murktown is what a lot of folks in the region refer to as a “trash city”, both figuratively and literally. Off the coast of a major peninsula, the majority of Murktown's merchants' income comes from the storage, destruction, and recycling of the region's trash, mundane, magical, and everything in between.

Smoke from the garbage fires are visible for miles. And when the trees and hills finally clear to reveal the city, it's instantly recognizable from the massive pillars of trash that encompass it. In fact, one usually smells Murktown long before they see it, especially if they're traveling downwind.

Despite being a filthy city, Murktown is a wealthy city. And where there's wealth, there's crime. Lead by a wererat named Prat, the Murktown Monarchs are Murktown's biggest and meanest criminal organization. The Monarchs make the majority of their dirty money (no pun intended) in black-market magic item deals. Their specialty is in the theft of chargeless magic items which they restore to their former glory thanks to the gang's expert crafters. Typically forbidden in the kingdom, cursed objects are usually sent to Murktown for destruction. Thanks to a few padded handshakes and a little sleight of hand, the Monarchs put these items back into circulation, moving them through less-than-scrupulous channels.

Lately, the Monarchs have expanded their investments into the trade and care of outlawed beasts and monstrosities. Having taken control of a full city block in Murktown's Rubbish Quarter, Prat seeded the block's sewers with venom crawler eggs. Known for their remarkable intelligence and nasty disposition, venom crawlers are massive, toxic spiders that propagate like eight-legged rabbits. Hence the reason why the majority of the civilized world marked these creatures for eradication. Trouble is, the venom brood's individual body parts are worth quite a bit to black-market magic crafters like Prat and the Monarchs.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

At some point or another, the adventurers find themselves in the city of Murktown. The reasons they are there are ultimately up to the GM, but here are a few suggestions that might work:

- A friend of the characters recently went missing. Last they heard, their friend was working a job for Murktown's local thieves' guild, the Murktown Monarchs. (This friend could be Gordo in area 6).
- The adventurers are tasked with learning more about the Murktown Monarchs and their operation. It's suggested to them (by a member of a faction, or some other patron) that they go undercover within the organization.
- Low on funds (or just bored), the adventurers meet the Murktown Monarchs because they're looking for work.
- Murktown's authorities believe that clues leading to a ten-year-old cold case involving the kidnapping and disappearance of the wealthy heir to the Lungstagger family exist in the old sewer tunnels. They recommend working with the Murktown Monarchs to gain access.

No matter which angle you use to get the characters involved, at some point or another they meet with Prat (LE male **wererat**), the leader of the Murktown Monarchs.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The leader of the Monarchs is a skinny guy with thin eyebrows, a long nose and a mess of crooked teeth. Despite the fact he won't be winning any beauty contests any time soon, he's pretty friendly and dresses well.

"Alo! I'm Prat. Thanks for meeting like this. Looking forward to chatting," Prat cracks his neck and winks, then continues. "I'm told you're looking for work in Murktown. Great news. Prat's got work for you. You've ever hear of a venom crawler? Big spider. BIG spider. Purple and green. Nasty thing. Smart, too. Tear your head clean off."

Prat draws his thumb across his neck giving the appropriate 'KKKKECCCCH!' sound.

"But you're tough I hear. No problem for you I hear. Good. Because there's big money in this for you, you hear? Big money in venom crawler parts. Want to know how much big money?"

Before you can answer, he interrupts, "You can make as much as—not kidding you—1,500 gp for the fangs of one of the big suckers. 1,500 gp buy you a lot of ale at the tavern. Ammarite?"

Prat laughs, snorting as does. In an instant, he's serious again.

"Here's the scoop. Right now there's a mess'a the things down in the sewers. Bunches of them crawling around in the dark. You go in there and fetch me some of the things on my shopping list and Prat'll pay you good. Real good."

Prat hands you a folded piece of paper. There are three items written on the list with prices beside each:

Bundle of webbing – 1 gp per 1-cubic-foot

Venom crawler leather – 40 gp per 1 sq. yd. of leather

Venom crawler fangs – 100 gp per pair of venom crawler's fangs (minimum of 12) or 1,500 gp per pair of queen's fangs

Once you've had a chance to look over the values on Prat's "shopping list," he speaks again.

"Few things to know. We pay big money for the queen's fangs, sure, but I recommend you steer plenty clear of her. She's as tough as twenty of the regular ones put together and usually pretty protected. You'll know her spot when you come upon a whole mess'a eggs. Just walk the other way.

"Also, if you ain't got no anti-venom, I suggest stockin' up. These things spit. One hit's enough to kill a man. Two will drop a horse. Plus, it makes you go blind.

"Finally, don't try touchin' the eggs. One little touch and poof, out come a buncha babies. And they's nearly as nasty as the big fellas."

Prat then takes any questions that the characters might have. While he's no saint, he's at least honest about the spiders that live below Murktown. After all, if the characters die, he doesn't get the parts. No parts mean no money.

Here are a few common questions with answers:

- **Why don't you get the parts yourselves?** "Me and my guys are hardly adventurers. We're businessmen and crafters. You get the stuff, we sell it."

- **What do you do with the parts?** "The stuff is in high demand. But only if you know the right buyers. We know the right buyers."
- **Can you tell us more about the spiders?** Prat answers questions about the spiders to the best of his ability, giving information on size, modes of attack, and anything else that would be useful. He reinforces the idea that the queen is especially deadly and should be avoided at all costs.
- **Do you have a map of the nest?** Prat lacks any modern map of the sewers. He explains that beyond the dock and a few tunnels connected to the main sewage route, he's not that familiar with the tunnels below the city. He does know that the venom crawlers have made their nest a few hundred feet to the north of the dock.
- **Have you hired anyone else for this job?** Prat's honest about this question, too. "Yeah. So far we've had about seven people go in there for us. So far, only two made it back. After those two regained their sight, they quit. What can I say? It's a dangerous gig."

Once the characters have asked all the questions that they're going to, and they've stocked up (assume that Murktown has all the standard equipment available for purchase and an inn of each level of quality), Prat leads them to a litter-strewn beach just outside of the city.

GATHERING VENOM CRAWLER PARTS

A big part of this adventure is centered around the collection of parts from the venom crawlers that lurk below Murktown. Below are instructions on how to remove the necessary goods and preserve them. Then, there's instructions on the types of magic items they can create with them.

BUNDLE OF WEBBING

Webbing is everywhere in the venom crawler's den (see "General Features" below). To collect webbing, a character must target a 5-foot cube of webbing. Then, the character must use an item to spool it, such as a club or a stick. It takes 1 minute to collect the webbing, at the end of which, the character must make a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. On a successful check, the character gains 1-cubic foot of webbing and can place it into a sack. On a failed check, the character makes a mess and fails to properly collect the webbing (and is likely stuck).

CREATING A WEBGRIP RUCKSACK

The most popular use for venom crawler webbing is the creation of a *webgrip rucksack* (see the Appendix). A character proficient in weaver's tools must have a copy of the instructions to create the rucksack plus 5-cubic feet of venom crawler webbing. Also, the character must be able to cast the *web* spell.

If all the above requirements are met, it takes one week of downtime to craft the rucksack.

VENOM CRAWLER LEATHER

Venom crawler leather is a valuable ingredient in the creation of *venombane armor* (see the Appendix).

A character can attempt to remove the hide of a venom crawler of venom queen with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using proficiency with leatherworking tools. On a failed check, the leather is ruined and can't be salvaged. A single venom crawler provides 1-square yard of leather, whereas a queen provides 4-square-yards.

CREATING VENOMBANE ARMOR

In order to create *venombane armor*, a character must have proficiency in leatherworker's tools and be able to cast the *freedom of movement* spell. Plus, the character needs 4-square-yards of venom crawler leather which is consumed in the process.

If all the above requirements are met, it takes two workweeks of downtime to craft the *venomfang armor*.

VENOM CRAWLER FANGS

The most valuable ingredient Prat wants are venom crawler fangs, and naturally, they are the most difficult to come by. In addition to killing the venom crawler or venom crawler queen itself, the fangs must be harvested within 1 minute of the creature's death; otherwise, they're useless. Harvesting the fangs requires a successful Dexterity (Medicine) check using a sharp knife. The DC is 14 for venom crawlers and 18 for the venom queen. A creature that fails the check to remove the fangs by 5 or more is cut by the fangs as if it had been bitten by the respective creature itself (see the Appendix).

Once the fangs are removed, they must be preserved within 1 round through use of a *gentle repose* spell or via an embalming agent (such an agent costs 25 gp for a flask at an alchemist's shop). Failure to preserve the fangs renders the poison within inert, at which point, they lose all value.

CREATING SPIDERBITE DAGGERS

Once removed and preserved, venom crawler fangs can be used to create *spiderbite daggers* (see the Appendix). To create *spiderbite daggers*, a character must have proficiency in both smith's tools and poisoner's kit and the character must be able to cast the spell *cloudkill*. If all the requirements are met, it takes the character 10 workweeks to craft the daggers.

Upon completion, the daggers consume a pair of venom crawler fangs. If a pair of queen's fangs are used, the daggers are created without any issue. However, if the fangs are from a venom crawler, there is a chance the daggers fail to bind properly. At the end of the crafting period, roll 1d20. On a roll of 18 or higher, the daggers bind properly. Otherwise, the process fails—the fangs are ruined and the time is wasted.

TO THE VENOM CRAWLERS' NEST

In the rock face of Murktown's shores, a large cavern gushes tainted water into the harbor. Along the rocky, littered beach leading up to the cavern are three large rowboats. Prat and his crew of six **wererats** pile into the boats and encourage the characters to do the same.

Following the Monarchs, you paddle into the mouth of the cavern, which, after a few hundred feet, expands into an underground pond.

From the sounds above, it's obvious the pond is just below the city. Eventually, a rickety dock makes an appearance on your right.

Prat points to a hewn passageway along the dock.

"That's the best way in. Spiders don't normally come that close, so you should be good for the first fifty feet or so. Good luck to you'ze."

NEST GENERAL FEATURES

Unless stated otherwise, the Venom Crawler Nest has the following features:

Light. There are no natural sources of light, torches, or lamps within most of the Venom Crawler Nest. The descriptions assume that the characters have darkvision, lanterns, or other methods to see.

Ceilings. In the narrow passageways and corridors, the ceilings are 6 feet high. Taller characters will need to bend or even crawl. In rooms and larger caverns, the ceilings are 10 feet high.

Egg Clusters. Areas 5, 10, and 12, and all connecting corridors that show eggs on the map contain highly volatile egg clusters that cover the walls, ceilings, and floors. Each time a character moves through a room covered in egg clusters, he or she must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity check or accidentally rupture the cluster. A ruptured egg cluster spawns 1d12 **venom crawler hatchlings** (see the Appendix) which appear in unoccupied spaces within 5 feet of the character. A character moving through the area at half speed doesn't need to make the save.

Floors. The floors of the chambers and waterways are made from stone brick. In the caverns and cavern-corridors, the floors are made from smooth, hewn stone.

Walls. The majority of the nest's walls are made from hewn stone, although masonry does exist in a few areas, especially along the waterways.

Waterways. Half of the den is made up of waterways for Murktown's sewage. The narrow waterways are rarely deeper than a foot or two with a relatively easy-going current. Pools are deeper, anywhere from 4- to 20-feet deep.

The water is highly contaminated, too. Any creature that ingests the water, intentionally or otherwise, must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or contract a disease. Until the disease is cured, the target can't regain hit points except by magical means, and the target's hit point maximum decreases by 2 (1d4) every 24 hours. If the target's hit point maximum drops to 0 as a result of this disease, the target dies.

Webs. The majority of the venom crawlers' nest is covered in thick, purplish webbing. Treat areas 5-8, 10, 12, and 13 and all connecting corridors as if the *web* spell has been cast in those areas except the webs are nonmagical. Every 5-foot space of webbing has an AC of 10, 5 hp, vulnerability to fire, and immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The venom crawler nest is full of all sorts of nasty critters. Every twenty minutes that the characters are in the venom crawlers' nest, roll a d20. On a roll of 16 or higher, a random encounter occurs. Choose or roll randomly on the Random Encounter table below:

VENOM CRAWLER RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

2d4 Encounter

- 2 1 **ghast**
- 3 1d6 **giant rats**
- 4 1d3 **swarms of rats**
- 5 1 **venom crawler** and 2d4 **venom crawler hatchlings**
- 6 1d3 **venom crawlers**
- 7 1d6 **venom crawler hatchlings**
- 8 1d4 + 1 **bandits**

KEYED ENCOUNTERS

The following keyed encounters reference the Venom Crawler's Nest map on the facing page.

1 – RICKETY DOCKS

Once the characters are standing on the dock, Prat and the other Monarchs leave, keeping one boat tied up for the character's convenience.

2 – I SMELL A RAT

It's hard to believe, but the stench of death actually overpowers the stench of raw sewage in this room. All around you are the corpses of dead rats, their innards exposed. From the looks of it, they haven't been dead for more than a few hours. Small, round tracks are everywhere, eventually departing the dead rats and heading north through a narrow hole in the wall.

A DC 10 Intelligence (Nature) check reveals that the tracks were left by spiders the size of dogs (venom crawler hatchlings). The spiders retreated through a 2-foot by 3-foot hole in the wall at the north end of this room leading into area 3. Getting through the hole is no problem for a Small or smaller creature, but Medium and larger creatures—especially those wearing heavy armor—must make a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check or become stuck. A stuck creature can use its action to make another Strength (Athletics) check, freeing itself on a success.

There is nothing of value in the room.

3 – TOMB

Five sarcophagi clutter this area, each with its lid still securely sealed. A staircase leads up to a temple at the edge of town; the door is locked from the other side. At the northern end of the room, just behind one of the sarcophagi is a passage blocked by an extra sarcophagus lid. The lid's bottom is pushed out just enough that venom spawn hatchlings, giant rats, and other Small or smaller critters can crawl right through.

The lids are extremely heavy, weighing nearly 800 pounds each. Two or more creatures with combined Strength scores of 27 can lift a lid out of the way.

Trap. The five occupied sarcophagi in the room are trapped. Spotting a trap requires a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Removing it requires a bit more effort since the traps' mechanisms are built into the actual walls of the sarcophagi. The only way to disable one of the sarcophagi's traps is to lift its lid no more than 1 inch, then have another person make a DC 16 Dexterity check using proficiency with thieves tools to disarm it.

If a lid is lifted more than 2 inches before the trap is disarmed, 3-inch spikes shoot out from the respective sarcophagus' outer walls. Each creature within 5 feet of a triggered sarcophagus must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 5 (1d10) piercing damage. In addition, an alarm is triggered, signaling the temple clergy upstairs. 1d3 + 1 **acolytes** led by a **priest** arrive in 3 rounds to confront any tomb robbers they find in their basement.

Treasure. Within each of the tombs are the remains of an important priest of the temple above. Each corpse wears 1d3 – 1 pieces of gold jewelry beset with azurite (15 gp each).

4 – KAZEL'S DUNGEON

The door to the north is barred from the north side.

Thick, black mildew grows over everything in this room. Through the fungus, you can make out what look like animal pens, each roughly 4-feet tall and bolted to the stone floor. Within some of the cages, are bones—*human* bones, in fact, those of a dead child by the looks of it.

Long before the Monarchs ran Murktown, there was another gang who ruled the place: Kazel's Army. Kazel's Army was less concerned with profiting on the region's garbage and more interested in kidnapping and holding the relatives of important Murktownies for ransom. Those that Kazel black-bagged and dragged away eventually ended up in this area, Kazel's Dungeon. Ten years ago, Kazel and his companions were caught and executed by Murktown's authorities. Unfortunately, Kazel's last victim, a boy named Delphi Lungstagger was never found; poor Delphi died of starvation in this very room. Now, his **ghost** haunts the area.

After the characters have been in the room for a few rounds, read the following:

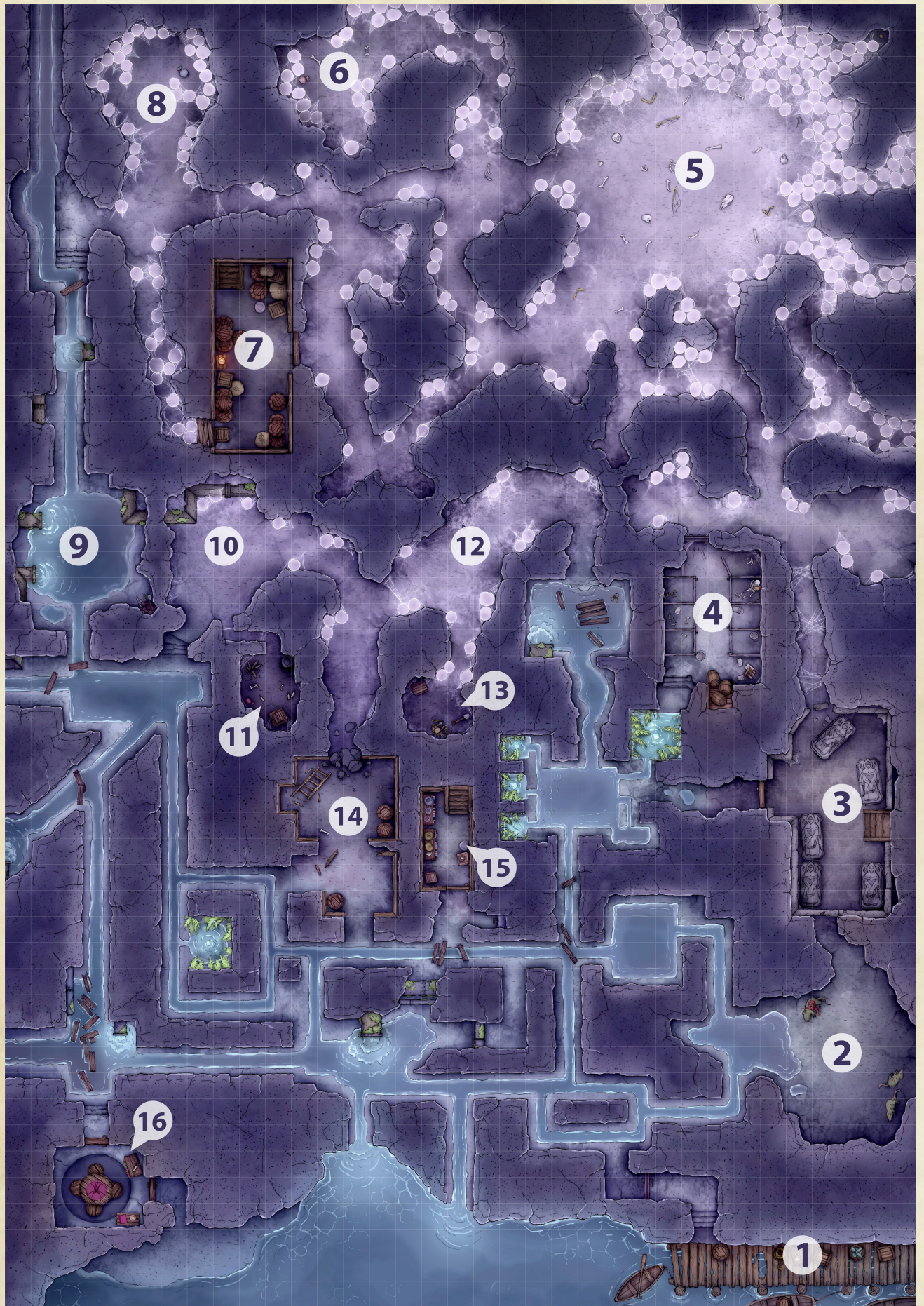
Suddenly, the temperature in the room drops to the point where you can see your breath.

"Can I go home, now?" comes a disembodied voice from one of the cages. "I miss my mommy and want to go home."

Feet floating a few inches off the ground, a semi-transparent boy shimmers into view.

It begins to float towards you.

Encounter. Confused and unaware that he is dead, Delphi only wants to touch a living soul. But as a ghost, his touch is debilitating. Delphi is not aware that he can possess living creatures, so he won't try it, but if a character hurts him with a magic attack, he immediately responds with his horrifying visage and flees.



If Delphi flees or his incorporeal form is destroyed, he returns in 1 hour. The only way to permanently rid this area of Delphi's curse is by consecrating his remains (the skeleton) with holy water, giving him a proper burial with the blessing of a priest, or setting his bones on fire.

Treasure. Each barrel in this room is filled with 10-year old foodstuffs, all rotten and useless. However one of the barrels has a small sack buried below the rotting supplies. The sack contains 10 gp, 255 sp, and 56 cp.

5 – LAIR OF THE VENOM QUEEN

Eggs. Everywhere you look purplish, oozy eggs, each one of the fleshy orbs writhing with something inside it, blanket the cavern, connected by thick, white webbing. Of course, that's not what's got your attention. At the center of this nest is a massive purple and green arachnid, its chest heaving with ragged, monstrous breaths. From all around this "queen", her soldiers emerge and crawl towards you from hidden alcoves.

The queen hisses and clacks her mandibles together; a clear sign that she's not happy with your presence.

Fortunately for the characters, the queen is still establishing her brood so she is not protected as well as she normally would be. Unfortunately, she is still quite deadly.

Encounter. The **venom queen** is guarded by four **venom crawlers**. In addition, the room has twenty-four **venom crawler hatchlings** in it as well, although they aren't as quick to attack as their larger brothers and sisters. (All of these creatures are detailed in the Appendix.)

The venom queen stands back and lets her soldiers do most of the work, relying on her ranged attacks. Most of the soldiers are too large to easily fit through tunnels, so the best move for the characters is to retreat where they can fight the spiders one at a time. As Large creatures, the venom crawlers can squeeze through a space that's 5-feet wide but must spend 1 extra foot for every foot it moves through such a space. While squeezing, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and Dexterity saving throws. Plus, the characters have advantage on attack rolls against a venom crawler while it's in the smaller space.

Fleeing characters will be chased by the venom crawlers for a few rounds, but eventually, the spiders head back to defend their queen.

Warning! This encounter is very dangerous. The GM should do everything in his or her power to drive home the fact that the venom queen is quite deadly and her lair should be avoided at all costs.

Treasure. In the northwestern corner of the queen's den are the webbed up bodies of the last group of adventurers that tried to collect on Prat's offer. They are all dead. However, should they be cut from the webbing (AC 10; 5 hp; vulnerability to fire damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage) the characters can collect the dead adventurers' possessions.

The four adventurers were carrying the following items:

- **Fighter.** 2 *potions of healing*, coin purse containing 75 sp
- **Priest.** 3 *potions of healing*, 1 vial of antitoxin, an expertly crafted mace beset with a bloodstone (worth 60 gp)
- **Rogue.** +1 *dagger*, coin purse containing 35 gp and 10 sp

- **Wizard.** 1 *wand of magic missile* (3 charges remaining), a spellbook containing all the spells from the **mage** stat block, map to a mysterious location

The map can either be of the venom crawlers' den itself, or to another location of the GM's choice.

6 – POOR GORDO

The eggs in this cavern are smaller than the ones in other caverns; they must have just been laid. At the center of the nest, covered in webs, is what looks like a humanoid.

"Help me..." it croaks from under the thick webbing.

By the gods, that man is still alive!

Another unfortunate adventurer hired by the Monarchs was captured by the venom crawlers and taken to this "pantry." The adventurer's name is Gordo (CN male human **scout**), and he's still alive, albeit in pretty rough shape. Freshly laid egg clusters stick the walls, floors, ceilings, and even Gordo. Too fresh to hatch, Gordo is safe for now. However, if left here for another few hours, he'll soon find himself as venom crawler hatchling food.

When the characters find Gordo, he has 2 levels of exhaustion, only 1 hp remaining, and is blind from the crawlers' poison. If the characters cut him free and save him, he will forever be in their debt (GM's discretion on what this means for the characters).

7 – THE FANCY PEACOCK'S STOREROOM

The Fancy Peacock (which is anything but fancy) is a dirty dive bar that calls the Rubbish Quarter its home. Its only saving grace is its cheap ale which tastes just like, well.. cheap ale. In this room, the Peacock keeps its reserve ale, foodstuffs, and cleaning supplies (not that the latter ever get used, mind you).

All it took was a look at one venom crawler hatchling by the bar's owners and it was "nope nope nope!" from them. Thus, the door leading into this storeroom from the cavern is barred and braced from within. Getting past the door requires a DC 23 Strength check to burst open. Alternatively, the characters can hack away the door (AC 15; 50 hp; immunity to poison and psychic damage). The barricade at the southwestern corner of the room has similar statistics.

Of course, destroying the door or barricade alerts the Peacock's bartenders. Two **thugs** arrive in 3 rounds, both ready to clobber whatever is trying to break into the storeroom

Treasure. Although there's nothing of real value in the storeroom, the barrels and crates in the room contain all of the bar's supplies, a combined value of 50 gp.

8 – EGG ROOM

More eggs. Everywhere you look eggs, eggs, eggs. This time, however, the eggs are being put into place by a pair of horse-sized spiders.

Encounter. Two **venom crawlers** (see the appendix) are storing the queen's freshly laid eggs in this chamber. They attack on sight and fight to the death. The egg clusters are not yet developed enough to burst on contact, however, webs do fill the area.

9 – OLD LUMPY’S POOL

Natural light shines from a sewer grate some forty feet overhead, where passersby, unaware that you are below them, walk past. You realize it’s folly to shout up at them. The crash of water falling from pipes twenty feet above you makes it hard to hear anything in this pool room.

The pool itself is pretty dark, partly because it’s deep, and partly because it is filled with all manner of awful.

As soon as a character comes within 10 feet of the water’s edge, tendrils emerge, attempting to grasp a creature and pull it into the pool. The tendrils belong to Old Lumpy, a slime-coated **roper** that lives at the bottom of the pool. Lumpy can hold his breath for hours at a time. He uses this trait to his advantage, pulling creatures into the pool and drowning them. The churning of the water makes it difficult to notice Old Lumpy; Wisdom (Perception) checks to spot him are made at a disadvantage. The pool is 15-feet deep.

Lumpy might be dumb, but he values his life. Should the characters reduce Lumpy to half his hit points or fewer, he releases them, then offers them the gold and treasure lying at the bottom of his pool.

Treasure. The bottom of Lumpy’s pool almost looks like a wishing well. Among the bones of humanoids, spiders, and giant rats, there are 424 cp, 101 sp, and 23 gp (nothing else could make it through Lumpy’s digestive tract). Lumpy also hides a +1 *mace* in the corner of his mouth which he uses as a bargaining chip if the coins aren’t enough.

10 – MOLDY CAVERN

It’s curiously cold in this dark cavern with low-ceilings, much colder than it was in the previous chamber. There is a strong smell in this room, too, almost like lantern fuel.

Mold. The smell comes from a foul, grayish mold that clings to the ceiling. Any creature that moves into the area for the first time or starts its turn there must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (3d10) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

11 – WOGGLE’S HOLE

Woggle was a goblin who once used the sewers to sneak around Murktown. This small room dug into the walls of the sewer’s caverns was Woggle’s home. A few years ago, Woggle met the business end of an adventurer’s sword. Beyond a few rats, nothing has entered this area since. It’s exactly as Woggle left it.

Only a Small or smaller creature can squeeze through the passage leading into Woggle’s Hole.

Treasure. Woggle kept a small pouch of coins with 3 gp in it. In addition, he had a collection of monogrammed, silver-plated flatware he stole from a wealthy Murktownie. The full set is worth 100 gp.

12 – CRAWLER EXPANSION

The moment you set foot in this cave, you notice a giant purple-and-green spider clinging to the ceiling.

Encounter. A lone **venom crawler** is in this room, placing egg clusters.

13 – THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF MORANDA MOEVAER

This cubby in the rock face is home to a grinning skeleton. A lone arrow sticks out of one of the skeleton’s eye sockets. Just in front of the skeleton is a tattered crate with its lid open, revealing leatherbound journals within.

Moranda Moevaer was a well-known treasure hunter who died doing what she loved best: hunting treasure. The last bit of treasure she discovered was in the tattered crate a few feet in front of her skeleton. Always cocky, Moranda failed to check the crate for traps; once she opened the lid, a poisoned arrow flew from the lid of the crate right into her eye. Rest in peace, Moranda. The trap was a one-shot deal; the characters are safe to examine the crate.

Treasure. The contents of the crate aren’t the typical treasure. They’re actually ledgers tying one of Murktown’s wealthiest families, the O’Moore to Kazel’s Army (see area 4). Eleven years ago, Moranda was tasked by Murktown’s authorities to locate the ledgers but never returned. Should the characters realize the importance of the ledgers and turn them in to the proper authorities, there is a potential for a 100 gp reward. Of course, this may result in the characters earning new enemies in Murktown (GM’s discretion).

14 – MAINTENANCE STATION R

Rusted shovels, picks, and other tools lie amid the cobwebs and mildew of this room. Stenciled in peeling red paint on the eastern wall is the letter “R”.

The Murktownie maintenance department abandoned this maintenance station years ago, citing the dangerous nature of the old tunnels.

There is nothing of value in the room.

15 – O’MOORE’S SECRET BASEMENT

The door to this secret basement is locked, requiring a DC 18 Strength check to break down, or a successful DC 16 Dexterity check using proficiency in thieves’ tools to pick the lock. When the characters enter, read the following:

You’ve entered what appears to be a well-insulated basement. On the west wall of this dry room are two shelves, both holding books, and ledgers. Two full sacks rest on top of one of the shelves.

Atop a crate rests an extinguished candle. Judging by the wax around it, it’s been recently lit.

The O’Moore family owns the florist shop just above this secret basement. The steps leading up run into a secret door in the florist’s storeroom (the door is visible from within the basement, but secret on the other side).

The two bags are filled with the contents of a burglar’s pack. The O’Moorees keep the bags ready in case they need to make a hasty exit through the bottom of their shop.

The books and ledgers contain information on their various dealings through the city, many of which would be considered illegal by Murktown's authorities. To determine the shady nature of the ledgers, a character must spend 10 minutes reviewing the ledgers, at the end of which they must make a DC 13 Intelligence check. On a successful check, they immediately realize who the ledgers belong to and what the implications are. Turning the ledgers into Murktown's authorities warrants a 10 gp reward (plus another 100 gp if they find the Kazel's Army ledger in area 13).

Unless the characters make a lot of commotion, their presence in this secret basement won't attract the florist shop's employees upstairs.

16 – KAZEL'S LOOKOUT

Kazel's Army (see area 4) kept a secret lookout post in this small room across the pond from the dock. Two or three of Kazel's guards would sit here and listen for anyone entering the den via the pond. If the authorities or any other trouble came, the group would pull a rope which signaled any of Kazel's Army that were currently stationed in area 4.

To keep themselves preoccupied, the lookouts had a small selection of books and games kept on the shelf in the corner.

Kazel's Army has been gone for nearly ten years. The pair of doors (both unlocked) held tight, keeping most of the elements out. Only cobwebs and light mildew coats the room's surfaces.

Treasure. There are two main clues connecting Kazel's Army to this room. First, the placemat over the table is embroidered with the logo for Kazel's Army, a black spider on a red field. Second, a ceremonial dagger given to Kazel's officers rests on the top of the bookshelf. The dagger is made of solid gold, and worth 60 gp. However, selling the dagger proves challenging; most Murktownies believe that anything related to Kazel's Army is cursed. Whether or not this is true is up to the GM.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

Should the characters collect the appropriate body parts of the venom crawlers, Prat sticks by his promises and pays them accordingly. Impressed by their performance, he may even have more work to offer them—perhaps even a spot in his gang. “I could use a few more thick-necks likes you’ze! Whaddayasay?”

It's possible that the characters also started to unravel the cold case of Delphi Lungstagger, the O'Moores, and Kazel's Army. If they're able to put the pieces together, this could lead to further adventures and intrigue involving those involved in the kidnapping. And many new enemies.

Finally, the real issue is how quickly the venom crawlers are spreading. The queen has only been in these old tunnels for less than a month and already the creatures are taking over. It won't be long before they start pushing into the city above. Ω

APPENDIX

Here are all the assets included as part of this adventure:

[Maps by Cze and Peku](#)

[Miniatures by Paper Forge](#)

[Creature Statblocks by IADnDMN](#)

[New Magic Items by Griffon's Saddlebag](#)

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