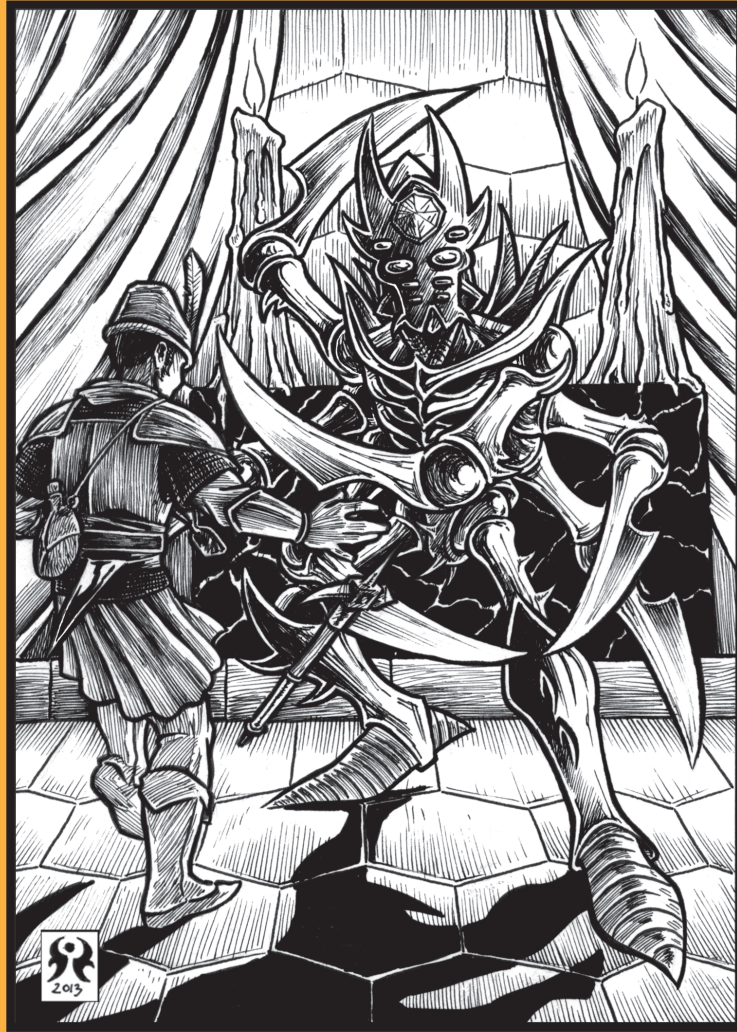


The Falcate Idol



Daniel J. Bishop



COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

The Falcate Idol

An adventure for 2-8 level 2 *Dungeon Crawl Classics* characters. This adventure is also suitable for 1-2 level 3 characters, or a solo level 4 thief who relies primarily upon stealth and caution.

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Introduction

Any role-playing game session can take a left turn at Albuquerque, leaving the poor Game Master wondering what to do next. This is even more true for the dedicated *Dungeon Crawl Classics* judge, who discovers that patron quests, divine disapproval, and the requests of gods to pay back divine favor can make the game take incredible new turns with the roll of a few dice. Add to this the advice urging players to “Quest For It” when they want something unusual for their players, and you have a potent stew for gaming, but also a situation in which the judge may want strong DCC elements with a minimum of preparation required.

The Campaign Element (CE) series attempts to address these specific areas. Now, when your wizard is looking for a spell, your cleric is sent on a mission from her deity, or your thief simply wants to find a location where stealth and a cunning mind are paramount, you will have an answer at your fingertips. Weave these campaign elements into your world, mesh them into other modules and areas of your own creation, and watch the “Appendix N” vibe of your games grow.

In addition, for various reasons sometimes only a few players were available for a night’s gaming. Each Campaign Element is short enough to be played through by most groups in only a single session. That doesn’t mean that the value of the area is limited to a single session – each adventure includes notes on “squeezing it dry”...effectively getting the maximum re-use from your investment.

Background

Ages past, the Harrower was a Neutral god of the moon in its crescent form. He has also a god of death, who cut the living down with His lunar scythe under the curved moon. Although the Harrower has few worshippers now, a few cultists remain dedicated to Him. These maintain His ancient idol in a hidden temple. The spider-like Harrower has eight eyes, and each of those eyes on His idol is a moonstone gem the size of a pigeon’s egg. Many a thief has sought the hidden temple to retrieve those gems, yet the gems are still there, and the thieves are seen no more.

A cleric or sage may know that the worshipers of the Harrower envisioned Him as a silvery-pale spider, whose belly grew lean or distended based upon how many stars he netted in His web. This was their metaphor for the phases of the lunar cycle. They claimed that once the entire sky was dusted with stars, as is the Milky Way, save for the hunger of the Harrower. They viewed stars as cosmic insects not unlike enormous fireflies. The modern cultists – what few remain – no longer believe this, but the symbolism remains.

A wizard or elf may also know that the temple of the Harrower was said to contain a pool that flows from the Egg of Creation. This artifact is said to come from the dim eons before the world was formed, and the fluid which comes from it is nothing less than the forces of cosmic change given material form.

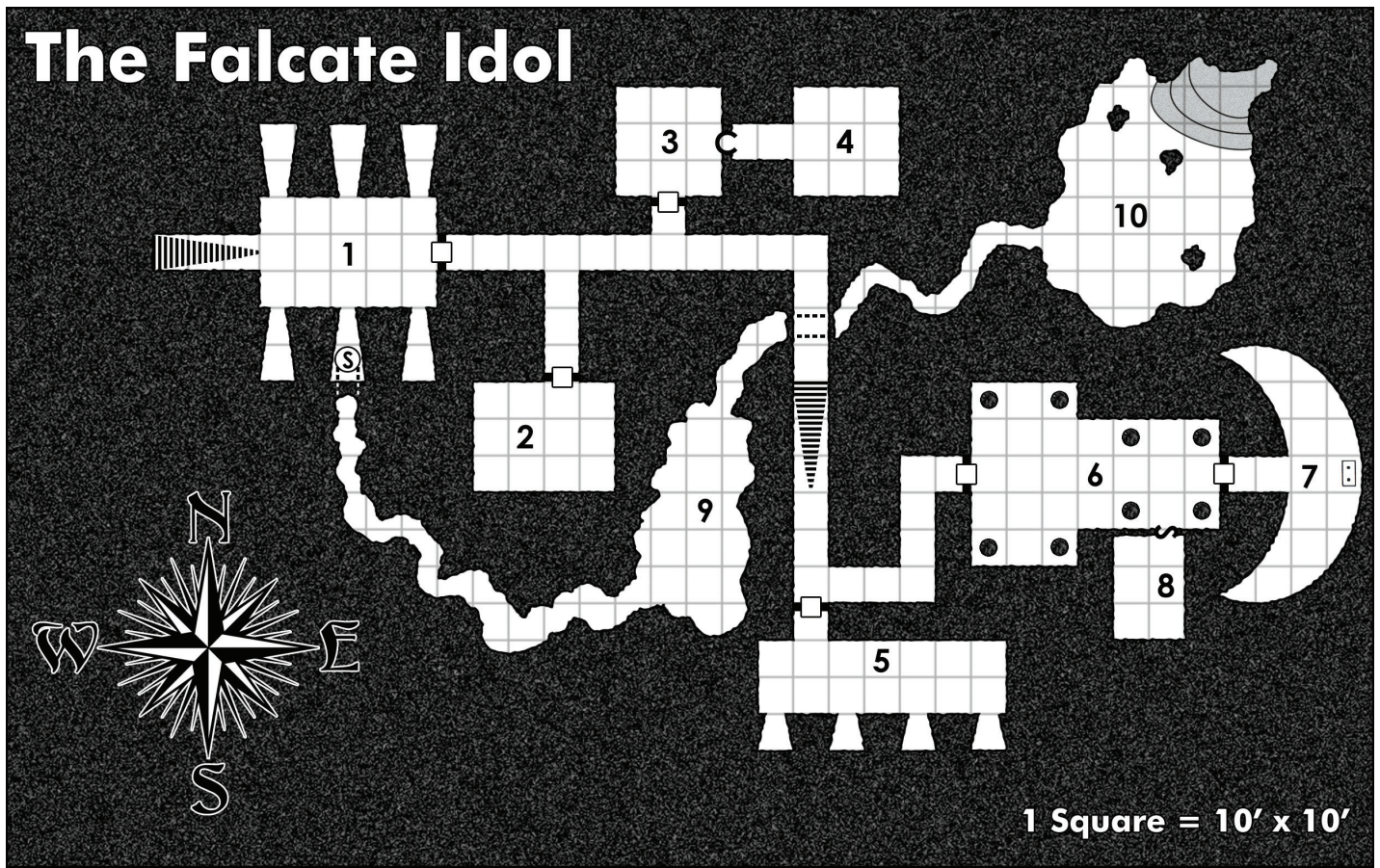
Using this Location

The Falcate Idol can be placed beneath any metropolitan area, within the wilderness, below ruins, or from passing through another dungeon. It is important that the worshipers can get to and from the area, but otherwise there is nothing to require it being placed in one location or another.

Characters can approach this material in many ways. They can attempt a daring raid, with warriors leading the way. Alternatively, a single thief could use this as a solo run, attempting to sneak into the temple complex and purloin the Eyes of the Harrower before any is the wiser. Finally, a wizard or elf may enter the temple complex seeking the hidden pool of the Egg of Creation rather than the gems.

The adventure begins with the PCs descending the age-

The Falcate Idol



old stairs which lead into the temple. The judge may begin here, or create challenges in locating the temple's hiding place, and/or reaching it.

Services

This adventure assumes that the PCs have entered the temple during a period when there are no formal services. Services occur during the nights of the waning and waxing moon, when the moon forms a perfect crescent. They may also occur due to a birth, death, or other event that requires special blessing. The cultists wear dark robes with reflective yellow-white masks (see Area 3), and it may be possible for clever characters to infiltrate the temple by posing as cultists.

During a service, there will be 4d8 cultists in the temple as well as a priest. The traps on the door in Areas 1 and 6 will not be engaged, and Area 6 will not be locked. However, clerical magic of opposing gods is at an additional -1d on the dice chain (see below), as the Harrower's eight eyes watch His worshipers closely. Donning the vestments of another deity is also sinful, and increases a cleric's Disapproval range by 1.

The silver sickles used by the cultists do a base 1d5 damage and are worth 80 gp each, if the PCs can find the right buyer.

The judge may desire to include NPCs specific to his campaign as cult members. This allows the judge to tie the location into other adventures, foster rivalries, or even give the PCs an unexpected helping hand when they need it most. Such a cultist will, of course, not wish to betray the cult, but he may caution or even hide the PCs, if they have not already done great harm. An encounter with a cultist who is equally loyal to the PCs, and who is therefore torn about what to do, offers a great opportunity for role-playing!

Cultists (4d8): Init +0; Atk silver sickle +1 melee (1d5+1); AC 9; HD 1d6+2; hp 6 each; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2.

Priest (1): Init +1; Atk dagger +1 melee (1d4+1) or harmful spell +2 ranged (2d6); AC 11; HD 3d6+3; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP harmful spell 3/day (30' range, no save); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4.

Magic in the Temple

The creatures in this adventure are all susceptible to Turning by Lawful or Neutral clerics. However, the power of the Harrower is such that, within this adventure location, all Turning attempts, spell checks, and Lay Hands checks by other clerics of gods other than the Harrower are at -1d on the dice chain. In Area 7, this penalty is increased to -2d. This penalty is increased by -1d (to -2d, or -3d in Area 7) if the cleric is Lawful or Chaotic.

Spells cast by a wizard or elf which relate to spiders or the moon (at the judge's discretion, but certainly to include *spider climb* and *spider web*) are cast in this adventure location at +1d on the dice chain. Whenever a wizard or elf casts a spell in this adventure, have the player roll 1d7 + Luck modifier and consult the table on the next page.

Random Treasures Found on Fallen Thieves

At several places in this adventure, the PCs may come across the remains of fallen thieves. Fallen thieves (including the transformed thieves in Area 6) have a chance of possessing some armor and treasure.

For armor, roll 1d3: (1) leather armor in usable condition, (2) ruined leather armor, (3) no armor.

For treasure, roll 2d5, and consult the following table:

Roll 2d5	Treasure Found
2	A bronze tube filled with amber lotus powder, a poison that can be puffed out in a 10' x 10' x 10' area. Any creature that breaths the poison must make a DC 15 Fort save or die. If the poison merely touches the skin, a DC 10 Fort save must be made or the victim takes 1d3 Stamina damage. Breathing in or ingesting the powder in the tube kills the victim (no save). A thief can identify the powder with a successful Handle Poison check, DC 15. This substance is affected by winds, and can be blown back at the user. The cloud normally lasts only 1 round before dissipating.

3	3d4 sp, 2d4-2 gp, and 1d3-2 gems worth 1d6 x 10 gp each.
4	Short sword and roll again.
5-7	Nothing of note.
8	Dagger and roll again.
9	Thieves picks and tools. 1 in 7 are so finely made that they offer a +1d3 bonus to a single type of thief's skill check. A thief can combine sets to get bonuses to different skills, but multiple bonuses to the same skill do not stack.
10	A unique item. Each of these items can be found only once. See below
Roll 1d5	Unique Item
1	A gold signet ring worth 100 gp, that identifies the wearer as a high-ranking member of a specific thieves' guild of the judge's choosing.
2	A silver necklace strung with a dozen emerald gems, worth 300 gp.
3	An iron ring that renders its user invisible so long as it is held in the mouth. This makes it impossible for the user to speak freely. Each time the user accidentally speaks, or is injured, he must roll a DC 15 Luck check to avoid accidentally swallowing the ring. If the ring is swallowed, it may be recovered through vigilance and luck, by making a DC 10 Luck check 1d3 days later.
4	A wizard scroll of <i>detect magic</i> , penned by the notable thaumaturge Doctor Arcalcus, and signed by the same. If used successfully, it will give an 18-19 result, regardless of what is rolled (see the <i>core rulebook</i>).
5	A small stone carving of a fascinating owl. A being who stops to examine it must make a DC 10 Will save or spend the next 1d6 minutes contemplating it. At that point, a DC 15 Will save must be made, or he will continue contemplating the stone owl for 1d5 hours. A DC 20 Will save must be made after this, or the owl entrances the victim for the next 1d4 days. If the victim does not then succeed in a DC 25 Will save, he is entranced until he starves to death in 2d7 days, and the stone owl consumes his soul. Only real damage to the victim breaks this fascination.

1d7 + Luck Mod	Result
0 or less	Instead of the intended spell effect, the spell summons a man-sized spider the yellow-white color of the full moon. It attacks the caster in preference to all targets, and if the caster is incapacitated, on its next action it departs, taking its prey with it to the craggy Mountains of the Moon. The moon spider automatically gains surprise on its first attack. Its poison does 1d6 Agl damage on a failed save, and 1 Agl damage on a successful save (Fort DC 12). This damage heals normally. Moon spider: Init +3; Atk bite +3 melee (1d5 + poison); AC 9; HD 5d8; hp 25; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 60', poison; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +4; AL N.
1	When the spell is cast, a swarm of tiny white spiders erupts from the caster's clothing. The caster must make a DC 10 Will save for the spell to go off; otherwise treat the spell as though a natural "1" occurred. If an actual "1" was rolled, this causes no additional effect. The swarm attacks for 1d5 rounds before dissipating; the caster automatically takes 1 point of damage from spiders hiding within his clothing during this time in addition to being attacked by the swarm. The caster, and anyone damaged by the swarm, must make a DC 10 Fort save or also take 1 point of Strength damage from poison. The swarm occupies a 10' x 10' space, and attacks anyone within it with each action. Tiny spider swarm: Init +0; Atk biting swarm +2 (1d3 plus poison); AC 10; HD 2d8; hp 8; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 30', swarm traits, poison; SV Fort -2; Ref +2; Will +0; AL N.
2	A tiny black spider with a mark on its abdomen like a crescent moon drops from the ceiling and bites the caster as the spell is completed. The caster takes 1d3 Strength damage and must make a Fort save (DC 10) or the loss is permanent. On a successful save, the damage heals normally
3 ro 5	The spell goes off as normal.
6	The spell goes off as normal, but the spell's manifestation takes on an aspect related to spiders, the moon, or both, as determined by the judge.
7	In addition to the normal spell effect, the caster gains the ability to spider climb as if he had cast that spell and obtained a result of 12-13. See the <i>core rulebook</i> , for details.
8	As 7, above, but with a result of 14-17.
9	As 7, above, but with a result of 18-19.
10+	Casting the spell attracts the attention of Klek-Tukkack, a powerful servant of the Harrower, who telepathically offers the caster the chance to become a worshiper of the Harrower. If the caster accepts, he gains a +1 bonus to 1d3 random stats. Kleg-Turpath then commands the caster to convince his group to leave the Temple at once, leaving all stolen goods behind, or slay them. If the caster refuses, he loses twice the benefit he just gained, and all of his spells are cast at -1d on the dice chain for 1d7 days. This result can only occur once; reroll if it comes up again.

Standard Features

The temple of the Harrower is very old and dusty, with a great many cobwebs. Tiny white-yellow spiders and black spiders with white crescent marks on their abdomens live in these webs, which do not burn easily. The first attempt to light them clears only a 10-foot region before the threads of flame die. When the webs are burned, the spiders can be heard screaming with tiny, almost-human voices. The second attempt clears only a 5-foot region, and the character attempting it feels a shiver down his spine, as though unfriendly eyes were upon him, as the spiders shrivel and shriek.

The third and subsequent attempts clear nothing, and the character making the attempt permanently loses 1 point of Luck. No character loses more than 1 point of Luck in this way. This loss of Luck represents the Harrier's ill-will towards the character. Worse, the party's light sources dim, and thereafter cast only half the normal light so long as they are within this adventure location.

If the group goes away, and returns after the next new moon, their light sources are returned to normal, the webs burn again as described above, and a character

who has lost Luck can lose another point by trying to burn the webs.

Hallways are vaulted to a height of 14 feet. Stairs descend at a 45-degree angle, so that each goes 30 feet downward as well as 30 feet horizontally.

Doors are of wood, bound with copper bands, and with hinges and handles of copper. This has turned green from verdigris long ago, and stains hands green when doors are opened. If stripped from the doors, the copper is worth 2d8 sp per door, but this is time-consuming work for small reward.

Descriptions assume that the characters are carrying torches – the judge will have to adjust them if this is not the case.

Encounter Areas

1. Entry Hall: *The stairs lead down into a dark hall, some 30 feet wide. The central way is fairly clear, but you can see thick silvery cobwebs to the right and left. Barely seen through the webs and the darkness, narrow passages exit the chamber to both north and south. The room is at least 30 feet deep – the far wall cannot be seen by torchlight.*

The door to the east opens out into the hall, with the hinges to the south. When the temple is not being used, this door is trapped with a sickle-shaped scything blade set into the north wall. As the door is opened, the scything blade sweeps down, making a +6 melee attack for 1d6+3 damage. On a successful hit, the target must succeed in a DC 10 Reflex save or lose the hand used to open the door at the elbow. The trap is DC 15 to locate before the door is opened.

There is a stone that can be depressed on the east wall in the northeast corner. It is DC 20 to find, but a DC 15 Disable Trap check can determine enough of the nature of the trap that the player should be told the nature of the trap and be given an opportunity to come up with some way to disable or bypass it without relying upon the dice.

The “narrow passages” beyond the cobwebs are actually niches that end after 20 feet. At the end of five of these can be found the mummified bodies of would-be thieves enshrouded with cobwebs. There are 1d6+1

per alcove, and the judge may allow the PCs to identify one or more as famous thieves who have disappeared – Arbeth the Mummer, Curlew the Nimble, the Red Mouse, Crafty John of Ipsmoor Town, Butterfoot the Shrewd. These fallen thieves may have random treasures, as detailed above.

The central niche to the south has no bodies, but contains a secret trapdoor leading to a narrow natural cavern tunnel which winds downward into the stone. This is easy enough to traverse for an unarmored character, but anyone wearing armor must make a DC 10 Reflex save, applying his armor’s check penalty to the result, or get stuck in the tunnel. Not only does this block the tunnel, but it requires a DC 15 Strength check to get the character unstuck. If the character proceeds downward, he must make another Reflex save, as above, or become even more stuck (DC 20 to move).

Normally, only one character above and below may aid in these checks (add +1 to the check, or Strength modifier; whichever is higher). A character who is stuck a second time, and who works free, must roll a DC 15 Luck check or his armor is damaged, losing 1d3 points of AC protection. Armored characters going back up this tunnel to the secret trapdoor must make the same saves, but it is even harder to go up, so any required save is at a –2 penalty to the roll.

Once the initial choke point is bypassed, the tunnel is wide enough to walk down, although it winds often, making visibility poor. Large weapons suffer a penalty of –2d on the dice chain to attack rolls, and –1d to damage due to the tight, winding tunnels. If the PCs make significant noise, three of the **guardian brood** from Area 9 will investigate – possibly coming on some PCs from behind while they try to work a companion free.

2. Purification Chamber: *The walls in this chamber are covered with frescos of man-sized spiders dancing with human men and maidens beneath crescent moons, while reapers who seem half-human and half-spider tower over them with great scythes. In some scenes, they are reaping the dancers like grain, and in others they seem to be protecting them from wild creatures. In the center of the far wall, there is a crescent-shaped basin made of pale marble, looking like nothing so much as a horned moon lying upon its back, with its points toward the cobwebbed*

ceiling.

This room is used for ritual purification before heading to the temple at Area 6. The crescent basin has a drain, with a long pipe 1 inch in diameter that twists and bends until emerging in Area 9. Worshipers cut themselves and let their blood drip into the basin (effectively, taking 1 point of Strength, Agility, or Stamina damage, as though using spellburn), which is consumed by the **great guardian** in Area 9. A character that does this is then identified by the Guardian as a worshiper of the Harrower, and is not attacked by the **guardians of the temple** in Area 6 so long as he does not attack them.

A cleric who worships another god commits a sin in making this sacrifice, and that cleric's disapproval rating is immediately increased by 2. See Areas 7 and 9 for further complications performing this sacrifice can cause for a character.

3. Vestry: *This chamber is 30 feet square. A crescent moon, painted in the center of a dark star-dotted sky that covers the entire ceiling some 20 feet above, glows softly, illuminating the entire room. The walls are painted with frescoes of people dressed in dark hooded robes, and wearing yellow-white masks like crescent moons. These masks cover only half of the wearer's faces, either the right or left half, depending, allowing you to see images of painted men and women.*

Black-painted iron nails have been driven into the walls carefully, allowing the three dozen black robes and crescent masks to appear as part of the murals at first. Only entering the room and looking at the murals reveals that some of the masks and robes are real. The masks are made of a light, but reflective metal. If taken from here, they are worth 3d5 gp each to a collector. (During services, many of these masks and robes may be in use.)

Closer examination of the frescoes shows that a few of the faces have eight eyes each, of spider-like palps, and a few of the figures are carrying silvery-looking sickles.

Finally, if the frescoes on the eastern wall are examined, a door which has been painted over to look like part of the wall is automatically discovered. This door is locked (DC 10).

4. Priest's Chamber: *This is a 30-foot square chamber with a cobweb-shrouded ceiling some 14 feet overhead.*

Within the chamber is a bed with a footlocker at its base, a small table with an ewer, a desk and chair, and a wardrobe. The floors have several woven natural wool rugs on them, covering most of the stone flags.

The priest may be here, depending upon when the temple is entered. During services, he is always away. Near to the time of services, or when a service has recently ended, there is a 2 in 3 chance that he is here. Away from normal service times, this chance is a mere 1 in 14. The priest carries a set of iron keys that unlocks every lock in the adventure location.

Priest (1): Init +1; Atk dagger +1 melee (1d4+1) or harmful spell +2 ranged (2d6); AC 11; HD 3d6+3; hp 14; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP harmful spell 3/day (30' range, no save); SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +4.

The footlocker is locked (DC 10), and made of iron-bound wood. Within can be found a dark stole decorated with embroidered white crescents, a silver cup decorated with spiders (80 gp), a curved dagger, and *The Book of Reaping*. This last is the religious text for the cult of the Harrower. It is not written in the Common tongue, but in a coded language of its own. Reading through it with *comprehend languages* or a thief's Read Languages ability will uncover whatever background information the judge deems appropriate, plus these useful clues:

- "They who do give blood to the basin are known to the Guardian of the Temple, and may pass the thieves who once transgressed there."
- "Then the Anger of the Harrower dwelleth there for a space of time, until the Harrower did return."
- "From the Cosmic Egg sprang forth the Pool of Change, and from the Pool of Change sprang forth the Eggsac, and from the Eggsac sprang for the Spider, and from the Spider sprang forth the Moon."
- "Then did the Harrower go forth, to seek That which was His, and ever did He pursue His quarry until nine times did He restore That which was His."

The judge may expand upon these as he sees fit. In any event, the footlocker is empty and unlocked during services. The priest carries a ring of iron keys that unlocks every lock in the temple.

The ewer is ceramic, and is used to keep wine or water for the priest when he is in residence.

Within the desk can be found a supply of quill pens, a small knife for sharpening them, three bottles of black ink and one bottle of red, as well as numerous sheets which are coded ledgers showing donations, births, deaths, inductions into the cult, and marriages. Every worshiper is indicated with a code mark; if the judge wishes, one or more of these marks may be recognizable as particular NPCs to the character examining the documents, as a personal rune or signet.

If the PCs spend much time examining the documents, they should realize that there must be some large amount of treasure somewhere. Moreover, a thief who succeeds in a DC 15 Read Languages check can make out the coded phrase “shard of the Egg” twice, with a listed donation of 100 gp, and “waters of the Pool” several times, all of which elicit large donations (valued at 3d5 x 10 gp). This may offer clever players a clue that some large amount of gold may be nearby, as well as an understanding that the Egg and pool are both real, and have valuable properties.

The locked (DC 8) bottom drawer of the desk contains an inlaid wooden chessboard and carved pieces of coral and onyx. The set is worth 60 gp.

There is also a set of carved finger bones that can be consulted as an oracle. The finger bones can only answer questions with yes, no, maybe, or by pointing north, south, east, or west. In order to gain an accurate forecast, the bones must be cast and a die roll of 12+ achieved on a secret roll made by the judge. A natural “1” always gives a misleading answer. When the bones are first cast during a 30-day lunar cycle, the user rolls 1d24 to consult the oracle. The second time, 1d20 is used. Then 1d16, and so on, down the dice chain. Anyone examining them can determine how to cast them with a DC 12 Intelligence check. A cleric will also understand their limitations.

The wardrobe contains several dark hooded robes

embroidered with white and yellow crescent moons. If a service is not in progress, there is also a mask like two crescent moons facing and overlapping each other, which completely covers the face (worth 15 gp to the right buyer). These are priest’s garb, and are not the standard fare for cultists.

Beneath the bed is a comfortable pair of woolen slippers.

5. Crypt of the Faithful: The door to this room is locked (DC 10).

This room is 20 feet deep. The wall to your right is 10 feet away, but the web-filled expanse extends to the left farther than you can see. There are narrow arches on the far wall, each giving way to a passage. There are at least two such passages – you cannot be certain what lies to the east. Between the two, you can see three mummified men, the corpses shrouded in thick webbing. Your light dimly shows you one more to the east...there may be more beyond that. This room, like all of this complex, is shrouded in webs.

This crypt is the final resting place of the past priests of the Harrower’s cult. At the end of each niche is a jumble of bones, both modern and ancient, which are all which remains of their mortal forms. The nine most recent priests are web-shrouded between the niches (three between each pair), and as new priests die, these will take their place within the niches.

Although there is no treasure here in the conventional sense, the cult honors the bones of these priests, and they are protected. High up in each of the four corners of the room lurks a **moon reaper**. These creatures look like a mixture between crabs and spiders, with crescent shaped abdomens that rise into sharp points and falcate scythes instead of claws. A moon reaper can climb walls like a spider, and it can shoot a mass of sticky filaments from its mouth. These filaments can only be washed off with alcohol, or some form of solvent. A creature struck by these filaments takes 1d3 points of Personality damage every full minute the filaments remain in contact. If reduced to 0 Personality, the target undergoes a hideous transformation, and becomes a guardian of the temple. See Area 6 for more details. A moon reaper must wait 1d4 rounds to shoot filaments after each use.

A moon reaper's bite contains a mesmerizing poison (Will DC 10). On a successful save, the victim takes loses its next action. On a failed save, the victim loses its next action is mesmerized for 1d6 minus Personality modifier rounds, possibly allowing the moon reapers to shoot filaments at him unresisting form at +1d on the dice chain. Even if attacked or wounded, the mesmeric effect continues for its full duration.

When a moon reaper is slain, the body folds in upon itself, getting smaller and smaller until it is nothing more than a 1-inch cube of ivory, each side marked with strange sigils. A character who carries one of these moon dice can reroll a failed Luck check once, but the moon die immediately begins to unfold into a new moon reaper, which then scuttles away unless killed (in which case it folds back into a cube). The character and the moon reaper are linked for 1d3 x 30 minutes after unfolding, though, and any damage done to the moon reaper is done to the character as well. If the moon reaper is killed, the character must succeed in a DC 20 Fort save or die.

Moon reapers (4): Init +3; Atk claw +3 melee (1d5+2) or bite +1 melee (1d3 plus poison) or filaments +5 ranged; AC 13; HD 4d8+4; hp 24, 27, 19, 17; MV 30' or climb 30'; Act 2d20; SP filaments, poison, death throes; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +2.



Moon Reaper Attack

This Seems Extreme!

In playtests, some found the filaments of the moon reapers and guardians (Area 6) too extreme. The judge is reminded that a minute is six rounds in the Dungeon Crawl Classics game, which means that the players have some time to determine how to deal with the filaments before taking any Personality damage. The odds are good that the fight will be over before any character takes damage more than once.

When attempts to brush off the filaments fail, and washing them off with water likewise does nothing, many players familiar with older game modules (or cleaning sticky substances in real life) may well think of alcohol. The judge may give a gentle hint in this direction if a character has an appropriate background occupation or an Intelligence of 13 or higher.

Finally, if the judge deems this attack too much for his players to face, the damage can either be altered to a single 1d4 Personality damage (taken immediately), or the filaments can crumble into dust after 1d3 minutes, even if the PCs do nothing.

6. Lesser Temple: When a service is not in progress, the door to this room is locked (DC 10) and trapped (DC 10 to find, 15 to disarm).

A scything blade is embedded in the floor, centered on the door and running west over the course of 20 feet, potentially striking multiple targets. Finding the trap notes the groove in the floor. Disarming it notes the existence of iron pins set into the sides of the floor that, if extended, hold the blade in place. The control to extend the pins is in the wall north of the door (DC 15 to find), but an obvious discolored brick above of the door releases the trap immediately if pressed .

Otherwise, when the door is opened, the blade is released, attacking all potential targets with a +5 bonus to hit, and doing 1d6+5 on a successful hit. The trap has a critical range of 18-20, and uses 1d6 on Crit Table III.

Opening the door reveals a temple, whose twenty-foot high cross-vaulted ceiling is a maze of heavy cobwebs. The first part of the temple is 50 feet wide and 30 feet deep, held up by four massive pillars at each corner. Beyond that is an area 30 feet wide and 40 feet deep, also held aloft by four massive pillars. In the center of the far wall, you can see a wooden door whose copper banding has been worked to create a great image of a crescent moon or a sickle blade. The room is lit with a soft light, about as bright as moonlight, radiating from sixteen web-shrouded figures that stand, two together, between pillars and doors. Their faces look transparent, like glass which has been filled with a hollow radiance.

These figures are would-be thieves who are now **guardians of the temple**. Although they still wear the gear they wore in life, their bodies have become hollow transparent shells radiating light. If examined closely (at a distance of 5' or less) motes of darkness can be seen moving within them. Their bodies are actually filled with a tight network of shining spider webs, and the black motes are spider-like **moon reaper young**.

The guardians are the result of the transformation caused by **moon reapers** (see Area 5), and they can cause a similar transformation on their victims. A guardian can shoot a mass of sticky filaments from its mouth, but doing so depletes the network that keeps it whole. Each time a guardian does this, it takes 1d12+2

hp damage, and its light becomes dimmer. These filaments can only be washed off with alcohol, or some form of solvent. A creature struck by these filaments takes 1d3 points of Personality damage every full minute the filaments remain in contact. If reduced to 0 Personality, the target undergoes a hideous transformation, and becomes a guardian of the temple.

A transformed creature collapses, writhing in agony for 1d3 minutes, during which it is helpless and can take no actions. During this time, the transformation can be halted with a Lay on Hands check able to heal 3 Hit Dice. Over the next 2d7 days, the webs grow over it slowly, and it becomes a guardian. It takes its place in the temple, allowing another guardian to go to its ultimate rest, but can take no other action until this transformation is done. Successful divine intervention (check of 15+) can reverse the transformation at this point. At the end of this period, it is a full guardian of the temple, and acts in defense of the temple. For 3d12 days at this point, the transformation can be reversed by incapacitating the guardian and bathing it with waters from the Pool of Creation. After this period, though, the transformation cannot be reversed by mortal means.

If a guardian is slain by using its filaments, the body simply goes black and shrivels like a burnt empty husk. If a guardian is slain otherwise, the filaments that bind it together explode outward, and every creature within 5' must make a DC 10 Reflex save or be touched by them. In this case, the filaments merely burn for 1d3 points of damage as they turn to ash, but 1d3 **moon reaper young** that are large enough to attack are also released.

The guardians of the temple are psychically linked to the **great guardian** in Area 9, and will not attack those who have performed the ritual blood sacrifice in Area 2, unless they are first attacked or the great guardian is slain. A character wearing the robes and masks of the cult (see Areas 3 and 4) are not attacked so long as they do not carry the **Eyes of the Harrower**, but a creature carrying even one of these gems attempting to travel west through the temple is attacked.

Guardians of the temple (16): Init +0; Atk searing touch +1 melee (1d3) or filaments +1 ranged; AC 10; HD 1d8+2; hp 6 each; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP fila-

ments, death throes; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2.

Moon reaper young: Init +5; Atk claw +1 melee (1d3) or bite +1 melee (1); AC 15; HD 1d6; hp 3 each; MV 20' or climb 20'; Act 2d14; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +0.

Examining the walls shows that they are carved into elaborate stone panels. One of these panels is actually a secret door which can be opened by releasing a catch shaped to look like the carved abdomen of a spider. This secret door is also trapped – a pressure plate immediately beyond the door causes a scything blade to swing down from the ceiling, attacking at +4 and causing 1d6+4 damage if it hits (DC 15 to locate). A second stud, more cunningly hid (DC 20) disables this trap.

However, this second stud is also trapped, so that, if pressed incautiously, a poison pin remains standing where the stud was. The poison causes 6d6 damage (Fort save DC 15 half), and can be located with a DC 10 check if looked for. The trap is easy enough to avoid – simply press the stud from the edges around the needle.

7. The Falcate Idol: *After twenty feet, the corridor enters into a crescent shaped room, 20 feet across opposite the door, with its curved walls sweeping right and left beyond your vision, the points of the crescent to the west. Directly before you is an altar of dark stone, streaked with phosphorescent green veins. Aton the altar, you can see an iron idol, some five feet tall, made of sharply curved pieces. Its form suggests a bent man with six arms ending in sickle-like blades, or a crab, or a spider. It has eight moonstone gems for eyes, two that are about two inches long, and six about an inch and a half long, cut into oval cabochons. In the center of the idol's forehead is a single emerald, cut into many glittering facets, and about three inches across.*

All of these gems are held to the statue with iron prongs. The large moonstone gems are worth 100 gp each, and the smaller gems worth 50 gp each. The emerald is easily worth 500 gp, but it is cursed.

A character who has sacrificed blood (see Area 2) must succeed in a Will save (DC 15) for each gem he wishes to remove from the idol. Once a save is failed, no power can compel him to make another attempt until



The Falcate Idol

the moon has waned and waxed past the crescent once more (approximately 30 days if the judge is not keeping track of the lunar cycle). A character carrying any one of these gems through Area 6 will be attacked by whatever **guardians of the temple** remain.

A character who takes the emerald finds that it will not leave him – no one will buy it, even under compulsion, threat, or charm. Even if it is thrown away, it is always found in the character's gear later. It cannot be given away, and it cannot be destroyed. Only returning it to the Falcate Idol can get rid of it...and the Idol will not accept it unless it first has all of its moonstone eyes.

Anyone carrying the emerald suffers a permanent –2 penalty to their Luck score, and can be tracked infallibly by the Walking God (see p.13).

8. Treasury: The secret door to this area is trapped; see Area 6, above, for details.

Beyond the secret panel, you can see a stone chamber, 20 feet wide and 30 feet deep. Although shrouded by cobwebs, you can easily see bales of cloth, several urns, small wooden boxes, and three chests.

There are six bales of rough spun wool (2 gp per bale) and eight bales of fine linen (8 gp per bale). These are bulky, requiring two hands for a human to carry, or two halflings to carry a single bale. There are 15 sealed urns, each of which is filled with amber beads. A given urn weighs 50 lbs. and contains 15 gp worth of beads. If taken individually, the beads sell for 1 cp for five. Each of the twelve wooden boxes contains a set of six pewter cups packed in straw. Each cup is worth 5 sp.

The three chests are all locked (DC 10). The first chest contains 1,527 cp. The second chest contains 279 cp and 1,250 sp. The final chest contains 907 sp and 628 gp.

This treasure is neither cursed nor trapped. Taking it will not trigger an attack by the **guardians of the temple** at Area 6. Characters who avoid being too greedy can therefore profit from this adventure, while those whose appetite for gems is greater than their discretion or caution may suffer.

9. Cavern of the Guardian: The passage leading to this cavern is twisted and winding, leading ever downward, and painted with primitive designs indicating the hatching of the universe from an enormous egg. From the egg springs a pool of flowing water. From the water, an eggsac can be seen to emerge. From the eggsac hatch a thousand spiders, one of which is greater than all of the others. The spider can then be seen spinning the moon from its threads.

If the PCs make a great deal of noise in this passage, 1d3 of the **guardian brood** will come to investigate. This is in addition to the three which may investigate as described in Area 1.

The passage opens up into a larger cavern, between 20 and 30 feet wide and perhaps 50 feet long. Along the left-hand wall, a corpulent mass of green-white fungi grows that seems to have encapsulated a pale spider more

than 10 feet in diameter. The fungi itself is covered with blisters and pustules, and smells of sour cheese. Thousands of smaller off-white spiders tend to the greater one, and these are mobile, skittering agilely across floor, ceiling, and walls. These lesser spider range in size from a pinhead to a full two feet across. Thankfully, there do not seem to be many that are truly enormous.

The fungi-encased “spider” is the **great guardian**. It is an extra-planar creature, and does not need much feeding beyond the blood sacrificed in Area 2, which is piped to a second face behind the thing, and which is currently hidden by the fungi.

While encased in the fungi, the great guardian can cause it to rupture once every 1d3 rounds, causing a massive cloud of purple and brown spores to erupt. All humanoid creatures in the cavern must make a DC 10 Fort save or become groggy, taking a –1d penalty on the dice chain to all rolls for 1 hour. The penalty for multiple failures stack. While in the fungal wall, it regenerates 1 hp per round, and has a +2 bonus to AC (included in stats below).

The great guardian can pull itself free from the fungi, requiring 1d3 rounds to do so, although it is reluctant to do so, and will only free itself if it takes 20 hp damage or all of its mature brood are slain. Once free, the secondary face can cast spells, using 1d16 for spell checks. If a character has performed the sacrifice in Area 2, it has a –4 penalty to any saves against the great guardian’s spells.

When the great guardian is slain, it explodes into an enormous cloud of spores. Everyone within 100 feet must make a DC 10 Reflex save if they wish to avoid breathing the spores. Those who fail, or those who choose to breathe in the spores, permanently gain 1 point of Intelligence.

The smaller spiders are the **guardian brood**. Only the largest of these creatures are mature enough to damage characters, and there are only nine here (possibly reduced if some were sent to investigate noises in the tunnel earlier). While fighting in this cavern, the smaller brood swarm over characters, attempting to bite (feeling rather like being pinched, but doing no damage). The judge should still roll dice and make notes – the smaller brood, although harmless, may

distract the PCs into wasting spells, actions, or attacks in this way. When the last of the mature guardian brood is slain, the smaller brood scurry into rocks and crevasses, quickly disappearing.

Great Guardian (1): Init -2; Atk bite +6 melee (2d6+6); AC 16 or 14; HD 8d8+16; hp 60; MV 20'; Act 1d20 plus 1d16 (spell); SP spores, regeneration while in fungi, spells, death throes; SV Fort +10, Ref +2, Will +12. Spells (1d16+4 spell check): *charm person* (p. 131), *choking cloud* (p. 134), and *magic missile* (p. 144). All of these spells have arachnoid or fungal manifestations (50% chance of either when cast).

Guardian brood (9): Init +4; Atk bite +1 melee (1d5); AC 14; HD 2d6; hp 7 each; MV 40' or climb 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6.

10. Pool of Creation: The narrow, winding tunnel goes on for over 100 feet before reaching this chamber. After about 50 feet, the characters can hear water dripping ahead.

The passage comes out into a large cavern, perhaps 60 feet across and 40 feet high, its walls sparkling with motes of iridescent minerals that sparkle in your torchlight. The room is already softly lit, though, from the shimmering water that falls into a pool in the northeast corner of the room. This water looks like silk in the moonlight, and it drips from what appear to be the shards of an enormous egg – perhaps originally 5 feet across – embedded in the wall. Now only a small amount of the iridescent shell remains.

This water is the **Pool of Creation**, also known as the **Pool of Change**. A partially transformed guardian of the temple can be restored by being bathed in these waters, as noted in Area 6. Bathing in these waters can also remove one random corruption, and heals all damage taken, but water removed from here has no special properties, unless the judge requires that it be used for a spell or a ritual. A given creature can only benefit from bathing in this pool once a month.

Embedded in the wall is the **Cosmic Egg**, or the **Egg of Creation**. There are three **large shards** and seven **small shards** of the Egg remaining. If all of these shards is removed, the Pool ceases to be magical after 1d30 days. Any shard can be used as a material com-

ponent to a spell, with the large shards adding +3d10 to the spell check result, and a small shard adding +1d10. If a spell requires spellburn to be cast, using any shard negates that requirement. These shards are of value to demons and various supernatural patrons, and may be traded for spells or other knowledge, and at the judge's discretion may be key components to the creation of powerful magic items. At any time, a shard may be crumbled in wine and consumed to gain +2d7 points of Luck for a small shard and +3d7 for a large shard. This Luck is not permanent, and is not restores to thieves or halflings once it is spent. Finally, consuming a shard mixed with the consumer's own blood (as 1 point of spellburn) will undo 1 specific corruption chosen by the user for a small shard, and all corruption for a large shard.

The Walking God

As described in Area 7, a character who removes the emerald gem from the Falcate Idol will find himself being remorseless tracked by the idol itself. The idol can be stopped only by slaying it, or by returning all of its stolen eyes, followed by the stolen emerald. It takes a full minute for the idol to replace any of its eyes, if that eye is presented to it, and during that time it will neither attack nor pursue, unless attacked.

For each of its eight moonstone eyes the idol has either never stolen or restored, it gains a +1 bonus to its attack rolls and damage. Although the idol is not fast, it is relentless, and the judge is encouraged to have the idol show up for many, many game sessions on and off, whenever the character possessing the emerald remains in one area for any length of time. Unlike the character, the idol never need breathe, drink, eat, or rest. It is immune to most critical hits, has no vulnerable areas to backstab, and is immune to any attack requiring either a Fortitude or Will save. The idol takes only half damage from mundane weapons, rounded down, but it cannot heal any damage it takes, so that it can be potentially whittled away over a series of encounters. Although blind, it can sense objects and creatures within 120', and can sense the location of the emerald's bearer anywhere on the same plane.

It appears as an iron idol, some five feet tall, made of sharply curved pieces. Its form suggests a bent man with six arms ending in sickle-like blades, or a crab, or a spider. It has sockets for eight moonstone eyes and a

single emerald.

The Walking God: Init +0; Atk scything blade +0 to +8 melee (1d3+0 to +8); AC 13; HD 4d6+200; hp 222; MV 20' or climb 20'; Act 6d20; SP construct, immunities, half damage from mundane weapons, cannot heal, gains bonus to attack and damage equal to eyes recovered, senses; SV Fort +20, Ref +3, Will +20.

The Anger of the Harrower

If the Falcate Idol walks, as described above, this entire area becomes cursed with bad luck. Any character venturing within suffers a -2 penalty to Luck until the area is left, and must make a Luck check (1d20 equal to or below Luck) or suffer some minor misfortune of the judge's choosing. In addition, a sending of the Harrower, representing His anger, stalks the area, seeking out any who comes as an unbeliever.

The **Anger** appears as a whirring red crescent, which appears out of nothing, attacks for 1d5 rounds, and then fades away. If it was not destroyed, it reappears and attacks again 1d24 minutes later. This repeats, with attacks becoming more frequent (1d20 minutes, 1d16 minutes, 1d14 minutes, etc., down the dice chain). The Anger has no discernable anatomy, and is immune to backstabs or critical hits that rely on the same.

The Anger: Init +5; Atk sharp crescent form +5 melee (1d5+2); AC 15; HD 6d6+12; hp 30; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SP infravision 100', no discernable anatomy; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +20.

Squeezing it Dry

If the area is explored, but the passage to Area 10 is not discovered, it is always possible that characters may return to seek the Egg of Creation. The judge may mandate obtaining water from the pool as a prerequisite for some spell or the creation of some magic item the PCs desire.

Old or new characters may return to willingly expose themselves to the Pool of the Egg. The temple may have become the habitation of new creatures, depending upon how much time has passed, or the Anger of the Harrower may still stalk the halls.

If a thief character attempts to recover the gems alone, and fails, his companions may investigate what became of him. Add the character to the transformed thieves in Area 6. There may still be time to reverse the transformation.

Finally, the Walking God may be an ongoing issue for the characters, as although it is not fast, it never tires, and may complicate several other scenarios until the characters find the means to dispatch it. If the characters choose to return the Harrower's eyes, it becomes increasingly more dangerous as they do so, so as to maintain a challenge to the characters as their levels increase.

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