

Spidermage Caverns

The Surface Level of the Quezzal Tower map leads directly down to the Below-Ground Level shown there, and that lower Level forms the lower right corner of this map. Around 25 feet (7.5 metres) northeast from the east corner side of the northeastern Tower wall, is the southwestern tip of the curling Wyverns Hollow crevasse, whose steep, rocky cliffsides provide an alternative surface entrance to Spidermage Caverns. A third surface entryway is by the steeply-descending New-Burrowed Tunnel into the Old Summoning Chamber. The outer opening to this Tunnel is in the craggy lower mountainside, around 60 ft (18 m) southwest of the map border, making its full length around 90 ft (27 m). A map toggle in the FCW Atlas file allows the surface footprint of Quezzal Tower to be shown above the lower right map corner here, to assist GMs with orientation. The Tower faces southeast down the mountain valley.

Spidermage Caverns were designed based on a randomly-generated layout using the Inkwell Ideas Dungeonmorph Dice from the Lairs set. Ideas for the Caverns' contents were inspired and adapted from details in the accompanying Inkwell Ideas book for this dice set, "Dungeonmorph: Delves and Descriptions - Crypts, Lairs & Sewers Edition". Some of the non-standard creatures that may be encountered here have been provided with game-specific notes suitable for the Shadowdark RPG system (SD) as a guide. Personal names for a few of the creatures were randomly selected from Mythmere Games' "Nomicon".

Layout Description

Stone steps from the Tower's Surface Level lead down from the marked **Quezzal Tower Entrance** area in a dogleg to a **Magically Locked Door** at their foot, which leads into the **Old Summoning Chamber**. Despite its great age, the magics holding this stone door firmly sealed remain intact. The local clan of Badgerfolk, being unable to open it, have dug the sloping **New-Burrowed Tunnel Down** from the surface mountainside to discover what lay behind it. Aside from the central floor summoning circle design in the Chamber, which has a roughly 10 ft high ceiling (3 m), there are empty metal torch brackets in the centre of each wall, a bookshelf, round table and throne-like, high-backed chair. These have all been knocked about somewhat by the Badgerfolk, although most of the books and scrolls are still intact, and both table and chair remain usable. Scatters of broken wood indicate there was once a wooden lectern here too, and fabric scraps suggest there were wall-hangings as well, the latter now long gone. The broken stonework in the Chamber's north corner and the hole in its northeastern wall there, show the Badgerfolk have battered their way through, creating the **Smashed Secret Door**, leading on into the Caverns proper. In the centre of the ceiling is a gently domed structure with a central attachment point that looks rather like the support for a chandelier or similar hanging light source. This was actually to allow the magical energies collected from outside by the Tower's windmill-like vanes to be transferred through to this Chamber.

Badgerfolk are humanoids of Ogre size and form, with furred skins, striped black-and-white over their faces, heavy, claw-like hands and forearms that are better for digging through soil and rock than fine manipulation, although they are able to open and close normal doors. They have short facial snouts and sharp teeth, suitable to their omnivorous diet. Scratch marks on the stonework in parts of the Caverns, including and beyond this first area, match the spacing of their claws. They have a keen sense of smell, which allowed them to scent-out the concealed door in the Old Summoning Chamber, for instance. SD stats:

Badgerfolk. *Heavy-set, fierce, ogre-sized humanoids, with powerful burrowing claws.* **AC** 11, **HP** 20, **ATK** 2 claw +4 (1d8) or 1 slam +4 (2d8), **MV** near (burrow), **S** +4, **D** +0, **C** +2, **I** -1, **W** +1, **Ch** -2, **AL** N, **LV** 4. **Rage.** 1/day. Immune to morale checks, +1d8 damage (3 rounds).

Beyond the Smashed Secret Door, the rest of the complex is of largely natural stone caves, only occasionally adapted mildly, where noted. Walls, ceilings and floors after this point are irregular in general, with scatters of loose debris, and larger fallen rocks in places. Unless mentioned, it can be assumed that ceiling heights are typically similar to the width of the passages and areas involved, if sometimes variably. Larger and more open cavern areas have heights as noted.

Once past the remains of the Secret Door, the initial cavern passage slopes down northeastwards, towards a junction. There, the northwestern passage levels-off, but the northeasterly one continues to trend downwards, to the first steeper drop-line on the approach to the Pool Cave. The northwest passageway leads past the broad, 9 ft high (2.5 m) cliff up at the entrance to **Lost Lockbox Cavern**, with the narrower neck part of this cave sloping down once more, above the cliff-line, into the small, roughly 12 ft high (3.5 m) Cavern itself. The ceiling at the passage junction is up to 15 ft high (4.5 m), and the northwest passage continues, narrowing and curling around after it, into a small, dead-end cave, roughly 10 ft high (3 m). In the Lost Lockbox Cavern, there is a lot of loose debris, notably towards its eastern corner, amongst which is a fancily-decorated

sandalwood lockbox that holds a star pearl about the size of a cricket-ball or baseball. The pearl is translucent, and a multi-pronged star-shape is visible inside it. It is very valuable, but is guarded by Azultar, an Invisible Guardian; SD stats:

Invisible Guardian. *An intelligent, loosely humanoid, creature made of air, bound to the protection of a place or object by a sorcerer, to retain it intact, or return it to its location.* **AC** 13, **HP** 30, **ATK** 3 pummel +4 (1d8), **MV** near (fly), **S** +3, **D** +4, **C** +3, **I** +2, **W** +1, **Ch** +0, **AL** N, **LV** 6. **Bound.** The touch of a diamond releases it from its magical servitude. **Invisible.** Naturally invisible. **Tracker.** The invisible guardian can always sense the direction of its bound place or object.

As the northeastern passage begins curving around to the north, a narrow entrance in the southern wall leads into a large, usually empty, cave, which has a ceiling up to 18 ft high (5.5 m). The Naga does venture here sometimes, or one or more of her mind-controlled servants may do so, along with all the interconnected passageways, including the Old Summoning Chamber, and even out to the surface by the New-Burrowed Tunnel. Two cliff-lines down, each about 10 ft (3 m) high, along the rest of the curving passage lead into the **Naga Pool Cave**. This has a ceiling up to 25 ft high in parts (7.5 m), with a large freshwater pool forming its western third that is at least 30 ft deep (9 m), although it is fed by hidden springs from below, which may allow passage far deeper into an unmapped flooded cavern system. A sloping ramp of flatter, cracked basalt, rocks has been positioned along the Pool's southern edge, so Madam Benthara, the Whispering Naga, can readily enter or leave the pool at speed, if required. The Pool's water level is ordinarily some 7 ft (2 m) below the cave floor here. The Cave is ordinarily also occupied and guarded by three of her mind-controlled Badgerfolk. She commonly has an additional 1d4 charmed Badgerfolk servants. SD notes for the Naga:

Whispering Naga. Use the Naga (SD Core Rules, p. 237), except she can swim as well as climb, and her poison bite does 1d6 damage instead of paralyzing, if a DC 15 CON check is failed. In addition, instead of making the usual two bite attacks, she may make one tongue attack instead: 1 tongue +7 (1 + charm).

Charm. One humanoid, DC 15 CHA or under naga's control for 1d4 days.

An 8 ft (2.5 m) cliff-line rises at the broad northern Naga Pool Cave exit, narrowing and lowering into a tunnel winding northwestwards, and up a further 8 ft cliff, eventually into the Spidermage Chasm Cavern. Neither the Naga or her controlled minions rarely travel beyond the second cliff rise along this passageway.

Separate from this southerly part of the complex, yet linked to it *via* the Spidermage Chasm Cavern, is the open-air mountain crevasse of **Wyverns Hollow**, in the map's eastern corner. This is a long, curling, rocky and irregular dry valley, ringed by mostly sheer rock cliffs. Its deeper parts lie at least 30 ft below the rocky mountainside crags (9 m), although even this depth makes the entire Hollow relatively higher than any other part of the subterranean complex here, because of the rising steepness of the mountainside it is set into. Two ledges, a deep one at the southwestern end of the crevasse, and a shallower, much longer one on the outer eastern bend, are closer to the upper mountain slopes, with the southwestern one just 12 ft down (3.5 m), followed by a further 18 ft drop (5.5 m) to the Hollow's floor, and the eastern one nearer 20 ft below the top (6 m), with a further 10 ft cliff-line (3 m) on its inner edge. A few hardy bushes and plants grow in the Hollow and its rocky walls, amid the stony crevices, fallen debris, boulders and rock dust. A solitary rock stack stands nearly 25 ft tall (7.5 m) at the narrowest part of the Hollow, just west of the northern end of the eastern ledge, close to the southeastern end of an area still covered by a **Rock-Shelf Roof**, supported by three more rocky stacks, and which also covers the entryway, down an almost 30 ft cliff drop (9 m), to the short passage northwest, then west, into Spidermage Chasm Cavern. Each entrance into this roofed area is roughly as high as it is wide. Three Wyverns use the Hollow as a roosting and nesting area, when not out patrolling the mountains nearby for prey. There is always one here whenever there are eggs, guarding them in the roofed-over area. The small, dogleg, **Store Cave** off this roofed part is partly blocked by boulders, keeping stunned or otherwise incapacitated prey trapped inside, ready to be hunted by any freshly-hatched young. Such prey can include humanoids at times.

Central feature of this underground complex, to which all the entryways eventually lead, is **Spidermage Chasm Cavern**. This huge Cavern is surprisingly low, at no more than approximately 20 ft high (6 m), except over the great central Chasm itself, where the ceiling makes a crude funnel-shape that loosely mirrors the size and Cavern-floor shape of that Chasm, reaching a craggy and uneven 40 ft in places (12 m). All the entrances to the Cavern are uncomfortably low for Human-sized humanoids and larger creatures. The Whispering Naga and Wyverns have learnt not to venture this deep into the complex, because each entrance is also covered with spiderwebs that even the smallest creatures would find difficult to pass through without touching, all of which passage-blocking webs each contain one or more (randomly 1d4) **Silk Warriors**. Silk Warriors are animated humanoid skeletons, wrapped entirely in this magical webbing. They whisper that intruders should leave while they still can, without disturbing the Chasm Cavern, or whichever side-chamber or passage they are guarding. The Warriors are able to move as freely through the webs as in air, and while the webs can be cut by magical weapons or cutting tools (only), they will not burn. Such webbing also covers floors, walls and ceilings throughout the northern part of the complex. SD notes on the Warriors:

Silk Warriors. *Humanoid skeletons covered with magical spiderwebs.* Treat as normal Skeletons (SD Core Rules, p. 251), with AC 14 (web-armour) and only shortsword attacks, which have a +2 magical weapon bonus because of the webs coating them. They are not impeded in moving within or through the webs, and gain the ability to climb while in or on any spiderwebs in the complex.

In the Chasm Cavern, including in the Chasm itself, are several **Spidermages** (randomly 2d4), part of the magical cabal using and guarding the Cavern, which may include their leader, Lady Eukora (although she is often elsewhere in the northern part of the complex). They can command any of the Silk Warriors in the webs, or they may animate fresh ones from web-covered bone piles scattered in places on the Cavern floor and in some of the side-chambers here. They treat the webs blocking passages as if they were simply doors. The great central Chasm is also covered with great, glittering, cable-like, web strands, which emanate a magical aura so strong, even those unattuned to magic can sense it. These webs bow and move upwards from the lip of the Chasm, as if in a strong wind from underneath. They form a net collecting and storing magical energy for later use, from a dimensional rift in the depths of the Chasm. Peering down between the web-strands, the Chasm looks like a glimmering starfield, with points of light at indeterminable depths below. Staring down too long is liable to attract something's attention from far beneath (say 1:6 chance per 10 minutes). SD stats:

Spidermage. *A shapeshifting, female spellcaster, with a humanoid torso, arms and head on a giant spider-form body and legs.* **AC** 13, **HP** 27, **ATK** 1 bite +5 (1d6 + poison) and 1 spell +5, **MV** near (climb), **S** +2, **D** +3, **C** +0, **I** +1, **W** +3, **Ch** -2, **AL** N, **LV** 6. **Animate Silk Warriors.** 1/day. Animate bone piles within near into 1d4 silk warriors. **Poison.** DC 12 CON or paralyzed 1d4 hours. **Shapeshift.** Instantly change to look like any humanoid in place of attacks. **Cancel (WIS Spell).** DC 13. End one spell affecting a target in near. **Ensnare (WIS Spell).** DC 13. Focus. One humanoid target within near paralyzed for duration. **Ironweb Armour (WIS Spell).** Self. DC 12. AC 16 for 2d4 rounds. **Web (WIS Spell).** DC 13. A near-sized cube of webs within far immobilizes all inside it for 5 rounds. DC 15 STR on turn to break free. **Web Dart (WIS Spell).** DC 12. Far, one target. 1d6 damage.

Lady Eukora. *Leader of the spidermages. Similar to them, except somewhat larger.* **AC** 14, **HP** 41, **ATK** 2 bite +7 (1d8 + poison) and 1 spell +7, or 2 spells +7, **MV** near (climb), **S** +2, **D** +4, **C** +1, **I** +2, **W** +4, **Ch** -1, **AL** N, **LV** 9. **Animate Silk Warriors.** 3/day. Animate bone piles within near into 1d4 silk warriors. **Poison.** DC 15 CON or paralyzed 1d4 hours. **Shapeshift.** Instantly change to look like any humanoid in place of attacks. **Cancel (WIS Spell).** DC 13. End one spell affecting a target in near. **Ensnare (WIS Spell).** DC 13. Focus. One humanoid target within near paralyzed for duration. **Mithralweb Armour (WIS Spell).** Self. DC 14. AC 18 for 5 rounds. **Phase Step (WIS Spell).** DC 14. Instantly teleport to any place within far. **Web (WIS Spell).** DC 13. A near-sized cube of webs within far immobilizes all inside it for 5 rounds. DC 15 STR on turn to break free. **Web Bolt (WIS Spell).** DC 14. Far, one target. 2d8 damage.

One of the smaller caves off the western side of the Chasm Cavern is the **Egg Chamber**. This contains numerous Giant Spider-like eggs, actually containing embryonic Spidermages, not yet ready to hatch. It has a 7 ft ceiling (2 m), and there are four Silk Warriors in the webs guarding its entrance passage. The eggs would be very valuable to less-scrupulous magic-using folk, or those seeking a nutritious meal.

The northern exit from Spidermage Chasm Cavern wends off into a variably-sized passageway with several smaller caves off it. These tend to be occupied only occasionally, or for particular purposes, and all are sealed by Silk Warrior Webs. This is also the case for the longer passageway leading southwest, then northwest and quite steeply down, into **Oracle Cavern**. This large, loosely oval Cavern has a central ceiling height of about 25 ft (7.5 m). At its northwestern end is a long, curving cliff rising around 9 ft (2.5 m) from the general Cavern floor nearby, with a series of three openings on its top into the Oracular Spidermage caves. A further cliff off the eastern side of the main Cavern towards its southern end, rises some 12 ft (3.5 m) into a smaller side-cave, along a short passage there. In the more alcove-like parts of the walls around the main Cavern are heaps of web-covered bones, spare parts from which the Spidermages can swiftly construct fresh animated Silk Warriors when required. Towards the cliffs at the northwestern end of the lower part of the Cavern is a roughly circular firepit set on the floor, ringed with stones. Instead of coals or wood in the pit, a series of up to foot-long (30 centimetres) blue crystals are stacked in a loosely conical form, a little like firewood might be in an ordinary firepit. These are magical crystals, fixed in place. When activated, they glow and flicker like a fire, casting blue light all across this end of the Cavern. Gazing into the "fire" will generate images, and sometimes moving scenes, for viewers that the Oracular Spidermage can interpret, using them to foretell coming events. Three wooden benches and a throne-like chair are set around the crystal firepit.

The raised gallery northwest of the firepit area is where the **Oracular Spidermage**, Gotra Barabasoris, makes her pronouncements to the assembled Spidermages from time to time, the acoustics helping project her quiet whispers across the whole Cavern easily. Her quarters are in the larger cave back from the cliff-line, where various items are maintained, including another throne-like chair, a metal brazier stand with normal coals, a bookshelf and table. One of the books here is an extremely valuable, rare, tome of oracular lore. Beyond the normal Spidermage abilities, Gotra Barabasoris has the ability to magically convert curses into obligations to the Spider Goddess, and she can do this for anyone, whether another Spidermage or not. She has the size and form of a young child Spidermage, with eyes that seem terrifyingly old when she

looks directly at someone. She is further guarded by a Mist Spider (an intelligent Phase Spider), that lairs in the smaller double caves east of the Spidermage's quarters, although it may be found elsewhere at times, if never very far from the Oracular Spidermage. SD details for both:

Gotra Barabatoris. *Magical, oracular spidermage, with the body of a young giant spider, the torso, arms and head of a young female child.* **AC** 13, **HP** 19, **ATK** 1 staff +3 (1d4) or 1 spell +4, **MV** near (climb), **S** +1, **D** +3, **C** +1, **I** +1, **W** +3, **Ch** +0, **AL** N, **LV** 4. **Convert Curse.** In place of attacking, may convert one curse on a creature within near into an obligation to the Spider Goddess. **Fate (WIS Spell).** DC 12. One target in near gains or loses a luck token. **Ironweb Armour (WIS Spell).** Self. DC 12. AC 16 for 2d4 rounds. **Poison Web Dart (WIS Spell).** DC 12. Far, one target. 1d4 damage + poison (DC 12 CON or paralyzed 1d4 rounds). **Web (WIS Spell).** DC 13. A near-sized cube of webs within far immobilizes all inside it for 5 rounds. DC 15 STR on turn to break free.

Mist Spider. As Void Spider, p. 241 of the Core Rules, but with INT +1 instead of -1.