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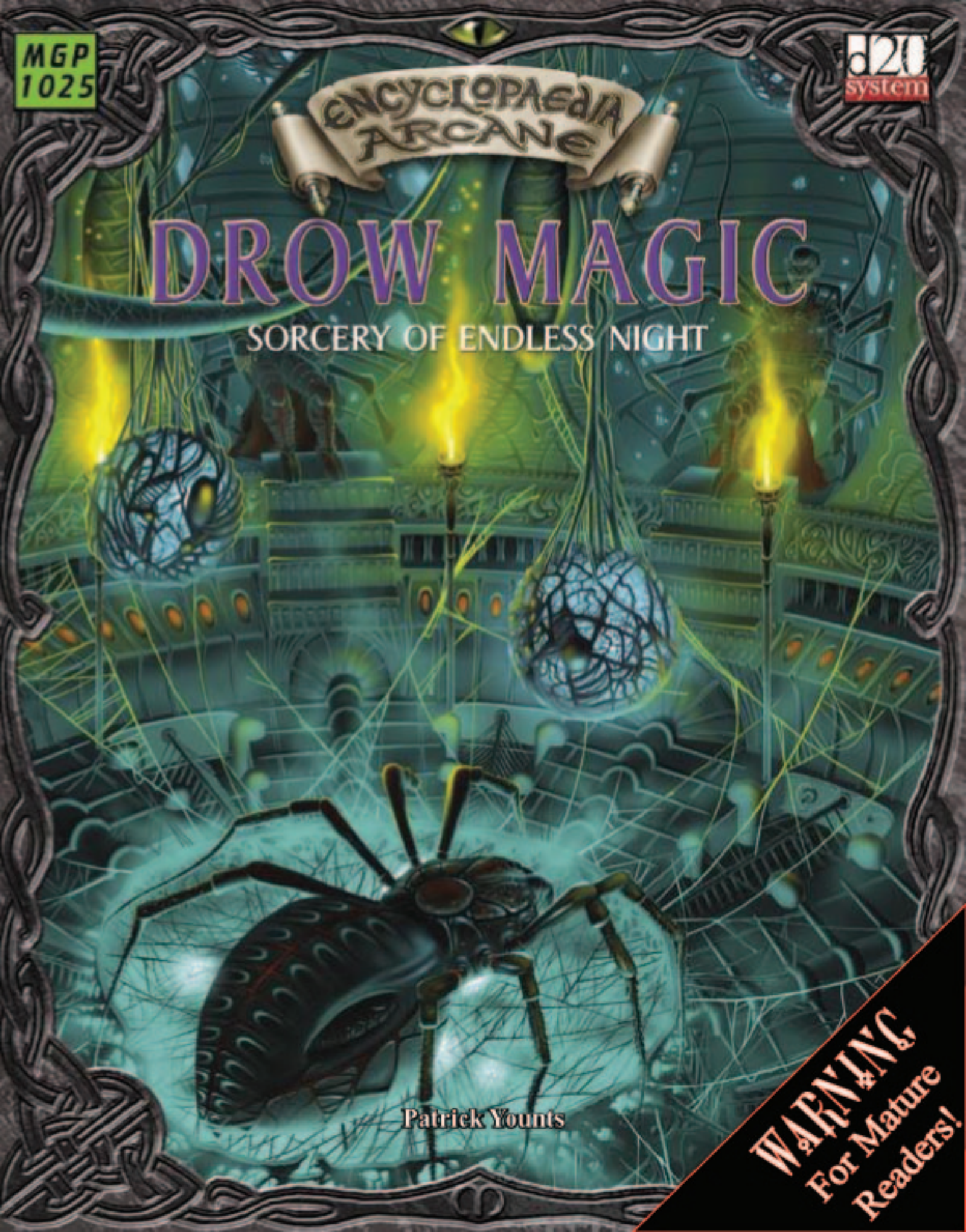
ENCYCLOPEDIA
ARCANE

DROW MAGIC

SORCERY OF ENDLESS NIGHT

Patrick Younts

WARNING
For Mature
Readers!



Encyclopaedia Arcane Drow Magic

Patrick Younts

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INTRODUCTION

There are monsters in the deep, whose flesh is perfect obsidian and whose eyes shine like midnight stars, yearning to hunt again beneath the open sky. They are the drow, and it is their doom to never again feel the light and heat of the sun, until such time as the elven gods are thrown down and all their favoured children slain.

The cities of the drow spread like a cancer throughout the veins of the world, glittering jewels of decadence, soaked in blood and steeped in corruption. Ruled by great, matriarchal families and the will of the Dark Mother of Spiders' clergy, these cities are cosmopolitan nightmares, home to the worst depravities imaginable and swarming with untold legions of drow.

While all drow have earned a reputation for cruelty and deadly cunning, none deserve it more than those who command the primal, arcane forces. This book, the *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Drow Magic* shows why.

In this, the latest in Mongoose Publishing's line of books designed to broaden the horizons of wizardry in fantasy gaming, you will find a host of new options specifically designed with the sinister needs of the drow in mind. You will find page after page of new spells; spells which create living webs, spells which infect enemies of the drow with deadly soul poisons or virulent diseases and spells which summon up gibbering mounds of shadow to bite and tear at flesh and spirit.

You will also be introduced to the drow dark weaver, a contemporary of the wizard and sorcerer whose powers stem from both his arcane studies and his devotion. The dark weaver is the spider in the shadows, the avenger in darkness, the protector and shepherd of the drow and he is the master of those most powerful and feared of all drow enchantments, the black ceremonies.

Given here are all the rules needed to bring ceremony magic, a whole new form of magic, to your fantasy campaigns. Magical ceremonies are those enchantments which require the participation of dozens or hundreds of ritualists, which are powered by the ritual sacrifice of living beings or heaping mounds of treasure and which have the capacity to bring about catastrophic changes throughout the campaign world. Thanks to the power of ceremonial magic, and more specifically black ceremonies, drow, in fantasy gaming will never be seen the same way again.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA ARCANE

Encyclopaedia Arcane – Drow Magic: Sorcery of Endless Night is the latest in Mongoose Publishing's long *Encyclopaedia Arcane* line, presenting a new insight into the magic of one of fantasy gaming's staple races, the dark elves, known as the drow. Designed to be slotted seamlessly into any fantasy-based d20 system, these sourcebooks enhance and expand all arcane spellcasting classes, adding a whole new dimension to a campaigns. Each *Encyclopaedia Arcane* is not just intended for the Games Master to enhance his campaign, however. Players themselves will find full details on the use of new magic systems with new or existing characters, greatly increasing the wealth of options they are presented with in the *Core Rulebooks*.



DROW MAGIC — AN OVERVIEW

The drow are the shadowy soul of the elven peoples, the dark reflection seen in a still, midnight pool. The drow are savagery and grace incarnate, a people who have willingly given themselves over to the worship of all that is raw and brutal in nature and a people for whom no act is too despicable. Their goddess, the Dark Mother of Spiders, is the personification of deceit, a consummate predator whose fangs poisoned the core of the drow people in ancient days and who suck the lifeblood of the universe with delicate grace.

Though they were once like other elves – if, perhaps, more naturally inclined to ferocity – the drow are now and forever more their Dark Mother’s children. They are the fangs in the darkness, the predators in the shadows, the poison in the cup and they, if they had their way, would be the web which smothers the world.

Yet, drow civilisation is also cultured and highly developed, a place where raw, bloody displays of force are looked upon with distaste. For the drow, murder is an art form, one whose best expression is quick, assured and, above all, subtle.

THE DUAL NATURE OF DROW MAGIC

Like the drow themselves, drow magic is equal parts subtlety and savagery. While drow wizards and sorcerers have access to all the traditional spells, they tend to eschew them in favour of potent enchantments of their own design, many of which are themed around darkness, spiders and mental domination.

Drow arcanists of all sorts prefer spells of the enchantment, conjuration, necromancy and transmutation schools. The drow as a race and culture greatly respect those who are able to coerce or otherwise force others into doing their bidding and they also enjoy using their abilities to corrupt and weaken their opponents before destroying them utterly.

The ultimate expression of their arcane magic’s dual nature is the dark weaver, a role unique to members of the drow race. The drow weaver is a equally adept with sword and spell, though unlike his peers, the wizard and the sorcerer, he does not gain access to his most

How magnificent in their hatred they are! How admirable in their devotion to malevolence and death! How enviable in their dedication to our extinction! How remarkable, in their obsession and their unrestrained passion!

Yes, they are our enemies. Yes, they are everything that we despise in ourselves. Yes, they are the betrayers and the kin slayers and the bringers of nightmare. And yes, they must be destroyed.

But for all that, my brothers and sisters, do not ever let yourselves forget, that they are elves. Do not forget the beauty of their perfect corruption, do not forget that for all they are different, for all they are despicable, they are naught but our own dark reflections, as dedicated to their beliefs and gifted in their craft as we are in ours.

They are not of the lesser races. They are our equals.

Do not forget, lest we become as they.


- Illyrian Woodwarden, on the eve of the fourth Kin Slayer Crusade.

powerful of spells as a result of careful study or some mystical spark in his soul. Instead the dark weaver gains his power as a direct result of his devotion to the Dark Mother of Spiders. The dark weaver, like his fellows, prefers spells which are subtler, or at least less direct, than *fireballs*, *meteor swarms* and the like, but this does not mean he is any less capable than other spellcasters. If anything, the dark weaver is *more* likely to attack with the intent to kill; the spider knows nothing of mercy and the dark weaver is naught but a spider in elf form.

THE WAYS OF DROW SPELLCASTERS

Drow magic, while no less advanced than that of other races, is more obsessed with ceremony and the observance of ancient rituals, some of which predate the dark elves’ fall from grace and their exodus to the Dark Beneath. While their hidebound adherence to ancient rituals and superstitions has no mechanical effect on the casting of their spells, it does give drow wizards, sorcerers and dark weavers a character all their own.





DROW MAGIC - AN OVERVIEW

Drow use different components in the casting of their spells than other spellcasters do, often replacing common materials with grave dirt, pieces of burial shroud or choice organs and flesh torn from their victim's bodies, though, most commonly of all, with spiders, both living and dead, and their webs. So, for example, while a traditional *fireball* spell requires a pinch of sulphur and a bit of bat guano, the same spell cast by a drow wizard would require him to ignite a piece of webbing and burn it down to ash. Likewise, while a *hold person* spell requires an arcane focus of a length of iron rod, the same spell cast by a dark weaver would require a length of spider's webbing which has been carefully braided and then petrified.

Drow verbal and somatic components are different as well. While the arcane spells of the surface races require the utterance of eldritch words of power and twisting, complex manipulations of the fingers and arms, drow cast their spells with the aid of specific, short phrases and prayers which honour the Dark Mother of Spiders and by weaving their fingers in symbols and patterns which she considers holy. Though these symbols are divinely inspired, they are not divine in nature and can be recognised for what they are by those who are at all familiar with the practices of drow arcanists.

Drow Wizards

In a role reversal from surface world societies, drow wizards are perhaps the least respected of all the arcane spellcasters. Since drow are naturally intelligent and since they, as a race, are so steeped in arcane lore, the wizard's profession is accorded some measure of prestige but no more than is given to a particularly well practised duellist, for example. Most drow wizards find employ as researchers, specialising in the necromantic arts, or as alchemists and creators of magical items within the great drow houses, where their skills can bring them considerable wealth. The most learned and politically astute wizards are drafted into service

Spellcraft Checks and Drow Magic

Should the Games Master wish to, he can add a -2 penalty to Spellcraft checks to attempt to identify a spell being cast by a drow arcane magic user, in recognition of the fact that drow casters use materials and methods which diverge greatly from their surface world counterparts. This check can also work in reverse for a drow caster's attempts to identify spells cast against him. Should you decide to incorporate this penalty, it should only apply until the first Spellcraft check for each spell is successfully made.

as advisors to the drow matrons who rule each house, here these wizards are accorded greater respect than their peers, if for no other reason than their ability to bend their matron's ear.

Wizards are simultaneously the least superstitious of the drow arcanists and the most traditional. They know full well that their ability to wield magic comes not from their Dark Mother but from their own researching and intense study of practices which predate their goddess' ascension from demon lord to full godhood. While their understanding of their skills frees them from much of the religious baggage some fellow spellcasters carry, their reliance and adherence to ancient methods keeps the wizard community fractious and predictable. Drow wizards group themselves together in loose brotherhoods, which are based upon specific schools of thought and interpretations of spellcasting traditions; these brotherhoods constantly war with one another, usually in secret, though open conflict is not unknown, forever seeking to prove the dominance of their beliefs. The great families and the priestesses of the church of the Dark Mother of Spiders tolerate this warfare, so long as it does not threaten drow civilisation as a whole, it also serves to keep the wizards politically weak.

Drow Sorcerers

Drow sorcerers are greatly respected, sometimes even revered, in drow society. They are seen as chosen ones, blessed directly by the Dark Mother of Spiders to carry out works in her name. Most drow sorcerers believe in their hearts that this is true and those who do not are savvy enough to use this reverence to their own benefit.

When a child with innate sorcerous abilities is discovered, it is an occasion for both great celebration and the commencement of subtle political warfare. The great house who has sired the gifted child is thrown into political uncertainty, as far flung members of the household attempt to take possession of the child, and thus its powers, for their own personal benefit. Typically, the political manoeuvres end before too many hands are stained crimson, but not always; more than one prospective sorcerer has had his head taken from him while still in his swaddling clothes.

Upon reaching maturity, they come into their full power and most drow sorcerers follow one of two paths. Those who are of singular skill are appointed the arcane champions of their great houses, a position which offers limitless potential for power, wealth and danger. These arcane champions are expected to kill and die for his house and most end up doing both within

Sorcerers and Breeding Programs

Since those great houses with an abundance of sorcerers enjoy military, political and spiritual advantages over others, the matrons of each house are always keenly interested in cultivating their sorcerous resources.

All the drow great houses long ago established breeding programs, in the hopes that by carefully selecting and matching mates, they could encourage the appearance of the sorcerous spark. It is for this reason that sorcerers are, whenever possible, married to one another as soon as is possible, so that their offspring might strengthen the family. For much the same reason, the great families often make breeding alliances with powerful magical beings, particularly devils and demons, offering up all sorts of sacrifices in the hopes that one or more of them might give birth to a useful tool. The fact that many of the prospective mothers do not survive the mating is of no consequence to the matrons, nor does it keep hundreds of parents from offering up their children for the duty each year.

a few decades of their appointment. Still, the position of arcane champion is highly coveted and there is no end of hopefuls ready to take up the title. Those who do not show the same degree of arcane skill as their fellows are given over to the tender mercies of the priestesses of the Dark Mother, where they are indoctrinated into service as guards, ceremony leaders and advisors. Sorcerers who serve the church are never offered positions of real power, lest they gain enough leverage to threaten the entrenched priestesses. Still, the duty of a church bonded sorcerer affords the drow a small measure of respect and (theoretically) protects them from the politics of the great families.

Drow Dark Weavers

Dark weavers bridge the gap between arcane and divine and between sorcerer, wizard and cleric. They, alone of all arcane casters, are afforded the same respect and status as the priestesses of the Dark Mother of Spiders, even by most of her priestesses (though they would be loathe to admit it, lest they jeopardise their own political standing).

Drow dark weavers favour magic which best represents the glory of their goddess, so their spells are themed around webs, poison, spiders, darkness and murder, all things she considers holy.

Dark weavers are by far the most superstitious of drow arcanists and their spells are universally a mixture of arcane experimentation and holy fervour. Each spell they cast is a sign of their dedication to the Dark Mother, each ceremony they conduct a testament to her perfect corruption. A dark weaver's spellbook is as much a holy text as it is a collection of mathematical formulae and his lair is filled with holy relics which serve as the foci for many of his more powerful spells. Dark weavers rarely select item creation feats, preferring instead to rely on the spells to hand whenever possible.

Many dark weavers choose to exile themselves to the endless tunnels and catacombs of the Dark Beneath, so that they might take battle to the enemies of the drow. Those who choose this path are more martially inclined than their fellows and more likely to select those spells which cause ruin and destruction to their enemies; spells like *spider gorge*, *night bolt* and *void of the wolf spider* are particular favourites.

The dark weaver is also the acknowledged master of the black ceremony and will often be encountered in the midst of gathering materials for the performance of some great ceremony or other. When gathering materials, they will usually be accompanied by a plethora of armed guards and servants, the better to ensure their efforts are not interrupted.



BLACK CEREMONY MAGIC

The drow are the first and foremost practitioners of ceremony magic, above or below the earth. These ceremonies, known as black ceremonies in the common tongue, are ancient rituals stretching back to the earliest days of life on the mortal plane. Originally, they were great festivals held to offer thanks to, and celebrate the power of, the wilderness which sustained and sheltered those who would later become the drow. With the ascension of the Dark Mother of Spiders, these ceremonies became perverted times of worship, where many grotesque acts were conducted in the Dark Mother's name.

While no two black ceremonies are the same, there are a number of elements which are common to all of them, first and foremost among them ritual sacrifice. The drow incorporate ritual sacrifice into all their black ceremonies, even in those which would not normally need it. In less powerful ceremonies, the drow rely on the sacrifice of animals, most of which they steal from surface dwellers, or from the cavern farms of those few civilised races who also live in the Dark Beneath as well. For more important ceremonies, especially those which call directly on the Dark Mother's favour, they prefer to sacrifice either plane-touched monstrous spiders and other spider-like beings, or intelligent beings which they have captured or kidnapped. Their favoured subjects for sacrifice are, of course, surface elves and they will go to great lengths to capture living elves whenever they can. Certain black ceremonies require the sacrifice, willing or otherwise, of one or more drow and that is a price that the dark weavers and high priestesses of the Dark Mother are more than willing to let others pay. The sacrifice of a living being is never simply a matter of painlessly slitting his throat. Instead, the drow slowly and methodically flay their victim alive, douse him in slow acting contact poison, pour tiny, non-poisonous spiders down his throat until he chokes on their fat bodies or at the least, burn him alive over smouldering ashes. In any case, it is considered a poor omen for a sacrifice to die before the climax of the ceremony, to the point where high priestesses will surreptitiously use magic to reinvigorate a sacrifice who has the nerve to die before the ceremony's master is ready to let him.

Other than when they are used as sacrifices, non-drow are not permitted to so much as look upon a

O' great Mother, O' bringer of death. Thou art the vessel of poison, thou art the black shepherd, thou art the spider whose legs enfold the world, thou art the weaver who hangs the stars.

We your children, we your fangs, we the vessel of your will, we the fruit of your eggs, we your voice, we who love you above all others, beseech thee attend our words and fulfil our desires.

We offer thee in exchange these thousand souls, these sullied usurpers, sons and daughters of those who betrayed us, who murdered us, who thwarted your destiny. Take of them what is your due and give unto us what is ours.

- A typical beginning to a drow black ceremony.

black ceremony, let alone participate in one. Should it be discovered that a non-drow has beheld a black ceremony and survived, the dark weavers will not rest until the spectator has paid for such blasphemy with his life, preferably by serving as the centrepiece sacrifice at the next black ceremony.

Dance and song are other important parts of most black ceremonies, with participants chanting ancient religious songs and writhing in wild abandon, all to celebrate the power of their Goddess. Frequently, participants are moved to acts of violence or wild lust, coupling and killing with enthusiasm, all to the beat of great, skin-bound drums. The Dark Mother, her priestesses and dark weavers look upon both the sex and violence favourably and encourage both in their rites whenever possible to ensure that their ceremonies never want for participants.

Finally, though it has no effect on the actual effectiveness of the ritual, by order of religious decree, all black ceremonies are held only in the Dark Beneath or under moonless night skies. This decree stretches back to the conducting of the first and greatest black ceremony, the ritual which ensured the Dark Mother's ascension to the status of goddess. Under no circumstance will drow begin a ritual while exposed to the light of the sun. This does not mean, however, that they will abandon an ongoing ceremony simply because the sun rises. The restriction is only against beginning a ceremony in the sunlight.

THE DROW DARK WEAVER

The dark weaver is second only to the priest in the Dark Mother of Spiders' favour. He is the spell in the darkness, the creeping death that waits in the shadows and the sword arm of the drow matriarchs. The dark weavers crouch like spiders at the heart of drow civilisation, and their intrigues are silken threads which bind the drow families to one common cause.

Adventures: Dark weavers adventure both to accumulate personal power and to advance the interests of the drow and the Dark Mother of Spiders. They frequently quest to the most dangerous areas of the Dark Beneath, the better to gather rare and precious materials for their black ceremonies and to test the limits of their abilities. Their passion for their dark goddess also leads them to commit lightning strikes against surface elves, travelling by the dark of night, pale blades in hand, to bring death and terror to those they despise most.

Characteristics: The dark weaver's greatest strength is his devotion to the Dark Mother and to the propagation of the drow race as a whole. While he is not so fanatical as his clerical brethren, his magic is no less potent. The arcane energies which the dark weaver wields are a potent mix of the prepared and the innate, and are focused primarily around darkness, the control of spiders, the assumption of their characteristics, mental control and, most importantly, the performance of black ceremonies, wild and debauched orgies of violence and lust which reaffirm the drow's commitment to their dark goddess.

While magic is their primary tool, dark weavers are competent in melee combat as well, a necessity, since they so often prowl the deepest, most twisting and hostile depths of the under earth. Bolstered by their magic, they are formidable assassins and deep strike hunters, scuttling in the shadows like the spiders they command.

Alignment: Dark weavers are never good. Though some are motivated by noble intentions, the protection of the drow families from outsiders, the expansion of the drow race, the promotion of personal strength and the like, they simply cannot fathom the concept of altruism or respect for life. Bound as they are to their

heavily ordered society they are unlikely to simply do evil for evil's sake.

Religion: All dark weavers are expected to worship the Dark Mother of Spiders to the exclusion of all other gods. While a dark weaver can forsake the worship of that loathsome goddess, they must pay a heavy price – the loss of all access to the spells and special abilities gained from their favoured paths, until they take up the mantle of their goddess again. Receiving forgiveness from a high priestess of her church is, as might be expected, no easy task.

Background: An apprentice dark weaver learns his craft at the feet of a more accomplished member of his calling, often an older family member. At the beginning of their apprenticeship, dark weavers trail behind their teachers like shadows, performing menial errands and submitting themselves to all manner of humiliating experiences, the better to hone their innate rage to a razor's edge. Near the end of his apprenticeship, the dark weaver is expected to unleash his full wrath against his teacher, or otherwise prove that he is capable of transcending both his training and any sense of filial obligation he may possess.

Races: Only drow can become dark weavers. The members of other races simply do not have access to the training necessary to become dark weavers, nor do they enjoy the favour of the Dark Mother of Spiders.

Other Classes: The dark weaver holds himself aloof of warriors and other arcane spellcasters, viewing the former as crude and the latter as unworthy of the Dark Mother's attentions. Despite this, they will work with members of those professions, though they view them more as simple, useful tools than as allies or partners.

Dark weavers tolerate clerics, as they recognise clerics have access to powerful spell effects that they cannot replicate. That said, most are secretly contemptuous of those who worship gods other than the Dark Mother, and guarded and cautious with those who do worship her blasphemous majesty, since they are competitors for primacy in drow society.

Role: In an adventuring party, the dark weaver will seek the leadership position by any means necessary. With useful skills both in and out of combat and his speed of mind, he makes an effective commander. While he lacks the breadth of spells the wizard possesses and the raw power of the sorcerer, he is still powerful enough to serve as the primary arcane caster. Finally, the dark weaver's combat and stealth skills make him a good



THE DROW DARK WEAVER

backup scout, though he still pales in comparison to both the rogue and the ranger.

GAME RULE INFORMATION

Dark weavers have the following game statistics.

Abilities: Intelligence is critical to the dark weaver, as it is the sole determinant of his arcane potential. Only dark weavers with exceptional Intelligence can ever master the highest levels of spellcasting, and only they can take advantage of the wide variety of skills the weaver has access to. Dexterity and Constitution are important for those dark weavers who follow the path of the predator or the path of vengeance, and Charisma for those who choose the path of the whip, or the path of the matron – in truth, all three attributes are important for those weavers who immerse themselves in drow politics, at least if they want to live for long.

Alignment: Any non-good alignment is permitted. The majority of dark weavers are evil, but they do not have to be.

Hit Die: d6.

Class Skills

The dark weaver's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) x 4.

Skill Points Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the dark weaver.

Dark Weaver

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Twilight Caster, Favoured Paths
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Familiar
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Web Scribe
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	-
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Black Ceremony +2
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	-
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	-
8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Spider Friend
9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	-
10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	Black Ceremony +4
11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	-
12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	Spider Symbology
13	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	-
14	+10/+5	+4	+9	+9	-
15	+11/+6/+1	+5	+9	+9	Black Ceremony +6
16	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	-
17	+12/+7/+2	+5	+10	+10	-
18	+13/+8/+3	+6	+11	+11	-
19	+14/+9/+4	+6	+12	+12	-
20	+15/+10/+5	+6	+12	+12	Black Ceremony +8

Spells Per Day

Level	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7*	8*	9*
1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	4	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
6	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-	-
8	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-	-
9	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
10	4	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-	-
11	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-	-
12	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	-	-	-
13	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-	-
14	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	-	-
15	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1	-
16	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	-
17	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	1
18	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2
19	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2
20	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2

* Favoured Paths Only

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The dark weaver is proficient with all simple weapons, and with the net, short sword, rapier and scimitar. They are proficient with light armour and with buckler shields.

Spellcasting: The dark weaver is a skilled spellcaster who casts arcane spells as wizards and sorcerers do. His magic is more specialised than those of his peers, but he is no less deadly for that. The dark weaver is unique as a spellcaster in that while he must prepare the majority of his spells ahead of time as a wizard does, he can cast a set number of his spells, his most powerful in fact, without advanced preparation.

To learn or cast a spell, the dark weaver must have an Intelligence score equal to 10 + the level of the spell (Int 10 for 0th level spells, Int 11 for 1st level spells and so on). The Difficult Class for resisting or avoiding a dark weaver's spell is 10 + spell level + the weaver's Intelligence modifier.

Like other spellcasters, a dark weaver can cast only a limited number of spells per day. His base spell

allotment per day is given in the Dark Weaver table. In addition, he receives additional spells per day based on his Intelligence modifier (see *Core Rulebook I*).

A dark weaver's selection of spells is limited in comparison to the wizard, though not so much as a sorcerer's is. The dark weaver selects his spells from the dark weaver spell list. In addition, he gains additional spells from his favoured paths (described below). The dark weaver can potentially learn any spell from his standard spell list, provided

he finds a suitable teacher who knows the spell or a tome or scroll which contains it.

In order to prepare spells, the dark weaver must first rest for a full night and then spend a full hour studying his spell scrolls and books. While studying, the dark weaver decides which spells to prepare (as per the normal rules in *Core Rulebook I*).

A dark weaver begins play with two 0th level cantrips and one 1st level spell in his spellbook, as well as innate knowledge of both the 0th and 1st level spells from his favoured paths.

Twilight Caster: The dark weaver lurks in the darkest tunnels of the under earth and his powers are most effective within the twilight depths. Beginning at 1st level, the dark weaver casts spells at +1 caster level, so long as he is shrouded in complete natural darkness. For the purposes of this ability, only deepest natural darkness will suffice; magical darkness does not provide the caster level bonus, and if the dark weaver



THE DROW DARK WEAVER

finds himself within the circle of even a candle's light, he loses the benefits of this ability.

Favoured Paths: Dark weavers are touched by the bleak spirit of their cruel goddess and by her will alone do they gain access to the most powerful enchantments. At 1st level, the character selects two favoured paths, which represent his ties to his dark goddess.

Each path represents a specific aspect of the Dark Mother of Spiders and consists of a related set of arcane spells and a granted ability which the dark weaver gains immediately. The spells which are included in each path are gained automatically when the weaver gains the appropriate caster level. These spells do not count against the number of spells which he automatically learns at each level.

When preparing spells each day, the dark weaver can choose to prepare favoured path spells exactly as he prepares his standard spells, with the favoured spell occupying a spell slot of the appropriate level. Alternately, the dark weaver can sacrifice a prepared spell slot to spontaneously cast a favoured path spell of the same or lower level instead.

As shown in the chart above, the dark weaver's only access to spells of 7th, 8th or 9th level is through his favoured paths. The dark weaver need not prepare spells of these levels ahead of time and may cast them spontaneously as he sees fit – he can, in fact, use higher level favoured spell slots to cast favoured spells of lower level, on a one for one basis.

Familiar: A dark weaver can obtain a familiar at 2nd level, if he so chooses. In order to do so, he must purify himself with a simple ritual of agony. His familiar is a magical beast which takes the form of an animal sacred

to the Dark Mother of Spiders, and is unusually tough and intelligent.

The dark weaver selects his familiar from the choices below. As the dark weaver gains both power and experience, so to does his familiar (as detailed in *Core Rulebook I*).

If the familiar dies or is dismissed by the dark weaver, the weaver must immediately attempt a Fortitude save against a DC of 15. Failure means he loses 200 experience points per class level, with success reducing that amount by half. The dark weaver's experience point total can never drop below 0 in this fashion. A slain or dismissed familiar cannot be replaced for a year and a day, though a familiar can be raised from the dead just as a character can be, and does not lose a level or Constitution point should this come to pass.

Web Scribe: The spider is the holiest of living things, at least in the eyes of the drow. The dark weaver, as a servant of the Dark Mother of Spiders, understands the way of spiders and can influence them to assist in his spell preparation, at least to a limited degree. Beginning at 3rd level, the dark weaver can direct spiders to craft magical webs on which to store his arcane spells. These magical webs are filled with arcane symbols, which only dark weavers may read – in essence, the dark weaver gains the ability to create scrolls from webbing.

Web scribe works much as the Scribe Scroll feat does. Directing spiders to create the scroll takes one hour per level of the spell to be woven into the web, and the actual scribing process requires one day per 1,000 gold pieces of the base price. The base price of a web is equal to the level of the spell to be cast x its caster level x 25 gold pieces. To successfully scribe a web, the dark weaver must expend 1/25th of the base price in

Dark Weaver Familiars

While the dark weaver has access to several of the standard familiar species, the granted abilities he gains from them are sometimes substantially different

Familiar	Special
Bat	Master gains a +2 bonus to Listen and Spot checks
Cat	Master gains a +2 bonus to Move Silently checks and to torment ceremony checks
Lizard	Master gains a +2 bonus to Climb checks and to saves against Fear
Spider, tiny*	Master gains a +2 bonus to saves against poison and to poison ceremony checks
Snake	Master gains a +2 bonus to Bluff checks and to feast ceremony checks

* as *Core Rulebook III's* tiny monstrous spider, though the tiny spider familiar has an Intelligence score as other familiars do.

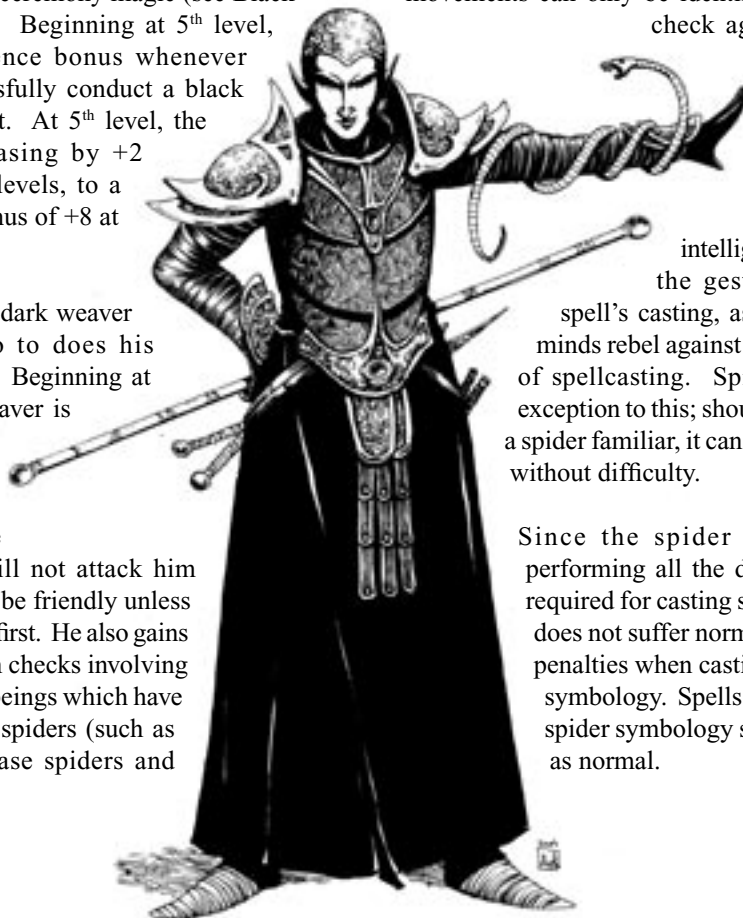
experience points, though he need not provide any raw materials. The dark weaver does not need to be present during the scribing process, though he may create only one magical web at a time – there is, however, no limit to the number of magical webs he may possess at any one time.

Once a magical web has been created, its power can only be unleashed by a dark weaver, though it need not be the dark weaver who first created it. Magical webs are no more fragile than scrolls, but cannot be carried in scroll cases; instead, they are generally carried between forked wand-like devices and hung from belts or robe sashes. Alternately, a dark weaver can direct a magical web to be woven anywhere that spider's webs can normally be found, giving him the ability to place hidden spells with which to surprise unwelcome guests.

Once the spell stored within the magical web is released, the web is destroyed. The web can be dispelled exactly as a magical scroll can.

Black Ceremony: The dark weaver is the undisputed master of drow black ceremony magic (see Black Ceremonies pg. 46). Beginning at 5th level, he gains a competence bonus whenever attempting to successfully conduct a black ceremony of any sort. At 5th level, the bonus is +2, increasing by +2 for every five class levels, to a maximum total bonus of +8 at 20th level.

Spider Friend: As a dark weaver grows in power, so to does his affinity with spiders. Beginning at 8th level, the dark weaver is considered to be an ally and friend to all spiders. Spiders, whether they are intelligent or not, will not attack him and are considered to be friendly unless he should attack them first. He also gains a +4 bonus to reaction checks involving all other monsters or beings which have the characteristics of spiders (such as drider, ettercaps, phase spiders and some demons).



This affinity with spiders carries over to the dark weaver's dealings with other Dark Mother worshipping drow, at least to a limited degree. The dark weaver gains a +2 bonus to all Non-Player Character reaction checks involving drow, or those few other beings that revere the Dark Mother.

Spider Symbology (Su): The dark weaver's mastery of both spiders and magic is such that, once he reaches 12th level, he can command spiders to perform the somatic portions of his spells. In order to use this ability, the dark weaver must be within 10 feet + 5 feet per caster level of one or more spiders, monstrous or otherwise. If he is within that radius, he may cast any spell he knows without need of performing the somatic component, as the spiders do it for him. They do this by going through a complex dance, in a rough approximation of how the weaver moves his fingers; in essence, the dark weaver casts his spell as though by the Still Spell feat, though the level of the spell is not changed in any way.

It is extraordinarily difficult to recognise the spider's actions for spellcasting motions, so even if the spider performing the somatic components is seen, its movements can only be identified with a Spellcraft check against a DC equal to 20 + the level of the spell being cast.

Spider symbology can only be used to command non-intelligent spiders to perform the gestures required for a spell's casting, as untrained conscious minds rebel against the unnatural motions of spellcasting. Spider familiars are an exception to this; should a dark weaver have a spider familiar, it can use spider symbology without difficulty.

Since the spider is responsible for performing all the delicate hand gestures required for casting spells, the dark weaver does not suffer normal arcane spell failure penalties when casting spells using spider symbology. Spells cast without the aid of spider symbology still suffer spell failure as normal.



DARK WEAVER SPELL LIST

0th Level Dark Weaver Spells

Black Rainbow*
Dark Baubles*
Detect Magic
Detect Poison
Ghost Sound
Guidance
Know Direction
Lullaby
Mage Hand
Message
Read Magic
Resistance
Retch*
Virulence*

1st level Dark Weaver Spells

Alarm
Bane
Cause Fear
Command
Darkness
Deathwatch
Detect Secret Doors
Disguise Self
Doom
Jump
Lesser Confusion
Mage Armour
Magic Weapon
Ray of Enfeeblement
Remove Fear
Sleep
Secret Desires *
Speed Poison*
Spider Climb
Summon Monster I
True Strike
Web Bind*
Web Whip*
Wretched Excess*

2nd level Dark Weaver Spells

Bite of the Seductress*
Blindness/Deafness
Blur
Cat's Grace
Daze Monster
Death Knell
Detect Thoughts

Enthral
Fox's Cunning
Hold Person
Invisibility
Razor the Vein*
Rope Trick
Scare
See Invisibility
Silence
Summon Monster II
Summon Swarm
Web

3rd level Dark Weaver Spells

Animated Web*
Arcane Sight
Blink
Clairaudience/Clairvoyance
Corruption's Kiss*
Dispel Magic
Displacement
Fear
Gaseous Form
Glibness
Halt Undead
Haste
Hold Person
Invisibility Sphere
Keen Edge
Lightning Bolt
Magic Circle (evil, chaos, law)
Magic Weapon, Greater
Nondetection
Slow
Spider Gorge*
Stinking Cloud
Summon Monster III
Swarm Boil*
Tongues
Vampiric Touch

4th level Dark Weaver Spells

Arcane Eye
Become Swarm*
Bestow Curse
Black Tentacles
Charm Monster
Confusion
Contagion
Detect Scrying
Dimension Door
Enervation
Globe of Invulnerability

Greater Invisibility
 Illusory Wall
 Lesser Geas
 Locate Creature
 Phantasmal Killer
 Polymorph
 Red Hourglass*
 Scrying
 Shadow Conjunction
 Shriek of Abject Hatred*
 Solid Fog
 Soul Poison*
 Spider Mother*
 Stone Sculpt
 Stone Spears*
 Summon Monster IV
 Zone of Silence

5th Level Dark Weaver Spells

Baleful Polymorph
 Black Wind of Mourning*
 Cloudkill
 Dominate Person
 False Vision
 Feeblemind
 Hold Monster
 Lesser Planar Binding
 Mage's Faithful Hound
 Magic Jar
 Nightmare
 Permanency
 Prying Eyes
 Seeming
 Shadow Evocation
 Shadow Fangs*
 Skittering Darkness*
 Spider Totem*
 Summon Monster V
 Telekinesis
 Teleport
 Transmute Mud to Rock
 Transmute Rock to Mud
 Wall of Stone
 Waves of Fatigue

6th level Dark Weaver Spells

Acid Fog
 Antimagic Field
 Chain Lightning
 Circle of Death
 Contingency
 Disintegrate
 Find the Path

Flesh to Stone
 Geas
 Greater Dispel Magic
 Globe of Invulnerability
 Legend Lore
 Legs of the Spider*
 Mislead
 Move Earth
 Planar Binding
 Repulsion
 Shadow Walk
 Stone to Flesh
 Summon Monster VI
 True Seeing
 Undeath to Death
 Wall of Spiders*
 Word of Recall

* New Spells found in this book

FAVOURED PATHS

Each dark weaver gains access to two of the following paths. Each path is themed to best express one aspect of drow society and of the Dark Mother of Spiders. Once a path has been chosen, it cannot be traded in favour of another.

Corruption

Granted Power: You may use *misdirection* once per day as a spell-like ability.

0th – Daze; 1st – Wretched Excess; 2nd – Hideous Laughter; 3rd – Corruption's Kiss; 4th – Soul Poison; 5th – Feeblemind; 6th – Anti-life Shell; 7th – Symbol of Weakness; 8th – Horrid Wilting; 9th – Irresistible Dance

Darkness

Granted Power: You gain the Blind-Fight feat free.

0th – Dark Baubles; 1st – Darkness; 2nd – Blindness/Deafness; 3rd – Deep Slumber; 4th – Shadow Conjunction; 5th – Skittering Darkness; 6th – Shadow Walk; 7th – Night Bolt; 8th – Shadow Evocation, Greater; 9th – Devour the Shadow

Death Rite

Granted Power: You may use death touch once per day. Your death touch is a spell-like ability that is a death effect. You must succeed at a melee touch attack against a living creature using the rules for touch spells. When you touch, roll 1d6 per your caster level. If the total at least equals the creature's current hit points, it dies.



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0th – Retch; 1st – Death Watch; 2nd – Death Knell; 3rd – Halt Undead; 4th – Phantasmal Killer; 5th – Slay Living; 6th – Undeath to Death; 7th – Finger of Death; 8th – Trap the Soul; 9th – Power Word Kill

Matron

Granted Power: You have the spell-like ability to inspire allies, giving them a +2 morale bonus on saving throws, attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks and weapon damage rolls. Allies must be able to hear your voice for one round. Using this ability is a standard action and lasts a number of rounds equal to your Charisma bonus and can only be used once per day.
0th – Guidance; 1st – Remove Fear; 2nd – Enthral; 3rd – Glibness; 4th – Charm Monster; 5th – Sending; 6th – Heroism; 7th – Mage’s Magnificent Mansion; 8th – Hero’s Feast; 9th – Embrace of the Dark Mother

Mourning

Granted Power: You may use *death knell* once per day as a spell-like ability.
0th – Ghost Sound; 1st – Doom; 2nd – Silence; 3rd – Speak With Dead; 4th – Shriek of Abject Hatred; 5th – Black Wind of Mourning; 6th – Legend Lore; 7th – Song of Discord; 8th – Symbol of Grief; 9th – Soul Bind

Poison and Disease

Granted Power: You gain the divine health special ability, exactly as a 3rd level paladin.

0th – Virulence; 1st – Speed Poison; 2nd – Ghoul Touch; 3rd – Stinking Cloud; 4th – Red Hourglass; 5th – Cloudkill; 6th – Wall of Spiders; 7th – Pestilence; 8th – Horrid Wilting; 9th – Plague

Predator

Granted Power: You gain a favoured enemy, exactly as a 1st level ranger.

0th – Guidance; 1st – True Strike; 2nd – Razor the Vein; 3rd – Keen Edge; 4th – Greater Invisibility; 5th – Shadow Fangs; 6th – Legs of the Spider; 7th – Heroism, Greater; 8th – Void of the Wolf Spider; 9th – Foresight

The Spider

Granted Power: Rebuke or command spiders as an evil cleric rebukes or commands undead. Use this ability a total number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier.

0th – Spider Eyes; 1st – Web Whip; 2nd – Summon Swarm; 3rd – Spider Gorge; 4th – Spider Mother; 5th – Spider Totem; 6th – Wall of Spiders; 7th – Summon Monster VII (drider); 8th – Eyes of the Retriever; 9th – Summon Monster IX (bebelith or fiendish monstrous spider, colossal)

Webs

Granted Power: You may use *spider climb* once per day as a spell-like ability.

0th – Mending 1st – Web Bind; 2nd – Web; 3rd – Animated Web; 4th – Black Tentacles; 5th – Hold Monster; 6th – Planar Binding; 7th – Hold Person, Mass; 8th – Maze; 9th – Imprisonment

Whip

Granted Power: Free Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip) and Weapon Focus (whip) feats. If the character already has the Weapon Focus (whip) feat they gain access to the Weapon Specialisation (whip) feat instead.

0th – Touch of Fatigue; 1st – Web Whip; 2nd – Enthral; 3rd – Fear; 4th – Charm Monster; 5th – Dominate Person; 6th – Geas; 7th – Hold Person, Mass; 8th – Demand; 9th – Dominate Monster



PRESTIGE CLASSES

Drow magic is ancient and highly advanced. Down through the millennia, it has branched off along many specialised paths and evolved many times, leading to endless specialisations and focused schools of study. The dark weavers, especially, are known for their desire and ability to evolve and adapt their magic, to better serve their people and the will of the Dark Mother. This ability to adapt and evolve has served them well, allowing them to compensate for their somewhat reduced spell versatility while improving their value in the community; and improving one's value to the drow community is the best way to ensure your continued survival.

The following new prestige classes are designed with the abilities and talents of the dark weaver in mind, each represents an iconic role that serves to highlight a different facet of the weaver. By combining these prestige classes with the base dark weaver class, you will be able to come up with a near endless variety of unique characters.

THE DROW CEREMONY MASTER

The black ceremonies are one of the most important aspects of drow culture, empowering and guiding the fortunes of all drow, from the lowliest child to the greatest of the drow matrons. While any drow with a natural aptitude for spellcasting can preside over a black ceremony, it is the dark weavers who do so with the most authority and skill.

Among the dark weavers, however, there are those who know how to guide a black ceremony with a precision and grace unmatched by their peers. These dark weavers are known as the ceremony masters and they are blessed by the Dark Mother of Spiders with an understanding of how to best direct drow worship so that the ceremonies they command reach the greatest heights of passionate fervour.

Dark Weavers tend to remain within the boundaries of the largest drow cities, where they are frequently taken under the direct patronage of those drow families who can afford to keep them sated and happily immersed in luxurious decadence. Dark weavers who are encountered outside the great cities will almost certainly

be either gathering materials for their next great work or in transit from one metropolis to another. In either case, even the most powerful of ceremony masters will be accompanied by an honour guard of drow warriors and warrior priests, as their skills are simply too valuable to risk their falling into the wrong hands.

As with all other members of the upper echelon of drow society, ceremony masters do not have many allies among their peers. Instead, they separate those around them into two categories, useful tools and obstacles, with the former used whenever it is convenient and the latter destroyed at the earliest opportunity. There is, of course, no thought given to the notion of friend or enemy; all drow are potential enemies.

The clear majority of ceremony masters are focussed dark weavers, as they have the greatest natural facility with black ceremonies. The requirements of the ceremony master prestige class mandate at least limited familiarity and skill with dark weaver spellcasting, but there is no reason that a more multi-faceted characters cannot become ceremony masters and many dark weaver wizards and dark weaver clerics do indeed take up this path.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

In order to become a drow ceremony master, the character must meet all the following requirements.

Race: Drow only.

Alignment: Any Neutral.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 13 ranks, Perform (any) 4 ranks and Spellcraft 13 ranks.

Feats: Skill Focus (spellcraft).

Spells: Must have knowledge of, and be able to cast spells from, at least two dark weaver favoured paths.

Special: Must have successfully presided over at least two successful black ceremonies, each of which must be done while in the presence of a high ranking drow cleric of the Dark Mother of Spiders.

Class Skills

The ceremony master's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis),



PRESTIGE CLASSES

Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points At Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the ceremony master prestige class.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The ceremony master gains no new proficiencies with weapons, nor is he proficient with armour or shields.

Spells Per day: A ceremony master continues to gain prowess as a spellcaster, even as he learns to preside over black ceremonies with ever greater skill. At every level except 3rd, 5th and 9th, the ceremony master gains a new level of spells, exactly as though he had gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (familiar progression or spider friendship and the like). This means that the ceremony master adds his class levels to the class levels of any one spellcasting class he progressed before, for the purposes of caster level checks, spell levels which may be studied and so on.

Ceremony Mastery: The ceremony master is a naturally gifted performer and leader. As he gains experience, he becomes an orator and performer of almost legendary skill. Beginning at 1st level, the ceremony master may add twice his class level as a bonus to all skill checks involved in the performance of any ceremony he knows. This bonus stacks with any other applicable bonuses he may possess.

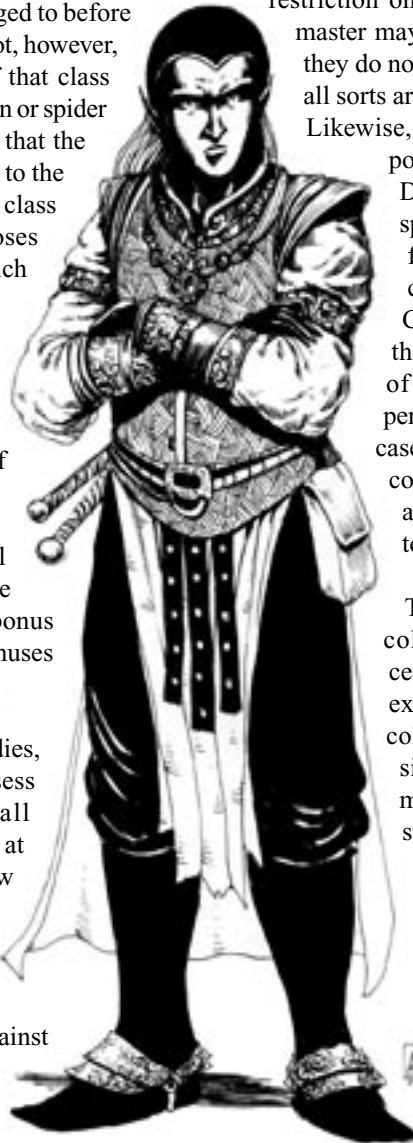
Breadth of Knowledge: In his studies, the ceremony master comes to possess a comprehensive knowledge of all manner of ceremonies. Beginning at 2nd level, he gains knowledge of a new black ceremony every time he gains a new level in the ceremony master prestige class. This is in addition to those ceremonies he may learn independently and does not count against the total number of ceremonies his Intelligence or Wisdom permits him to know.

Leadership: The ceremony master is both a gifted, natural leader and a critical part of the drow community. As such, he quickly attracts a body of followers who obey his commands and would lay down their lives for him. At 3rd level, the drow ceremony master gains the Leadership feat for free. The followers who come to the ceremony master's service are uniformly loyal to him – a rare occurrence in drow society. For the purposes of the Leadership feat, the ceremony master's cruelty and aloofness do not count against his leadership score; rather, they are counted as positive modifiers, as the drow believe both traits to be uniformly positive.

The cohort the ceremony master attracts is likewise completely loyal to him. The cohort must always be a worshiper of the Dark Mother of Spiders and must have a neutral alignment, but there is otherwise no restriction on the type of follower the ceremony master may attract. Most cohorts are drow, but they do not have to be and monstrous cohorts of all sorts are highly prized by ceremony masters. Likewise, while many cohorts are physically powerful warriors, priestesses of the Dark Mother, rogues, assassins or spellcasters, they do not have to be. In fact, many ceremony masters prefer cohorts who are from the Non-Player Character expert class, as drow of that profession have the widest range of skills, a critical advantage in the performance of black ceremonies. In any case, ceremony masters insist that their cohorts possess a useful mix of skills and will always prefer the generalist to the specialist.

There is one specific restriction on cohorts; it is not permitted for one ceremony master to take another, less experienced ceremony master as his cohort. Should a cohort take even a single level in this prestige class, he must leave his master's service and strike out on his own.

Reduced Preparation Cost: Black ceremonies are expensive and the most involved of them are enough to bankrupt lesser drow families and even less prosperous cities. Beginning at 4th level, the ceremony master learns to harvest materials for those ceremonies he presides over



Drow Ceremony Master

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Ceremony Mastery	+1 spell level
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Breadth of Knowledge	+1 spell level
3	+1	+3	+1	+3	Leadership	-
4	+2	+4	+1	+4	Reduced Preparation Cost	+1 spell level
5	+2	+4	+1	+4	-	+1 spell level
6	+3	+5	+2	+5	Reduced Preparation Time	-
7	+3	+5	+2	+5	Bring Forth the Best	+1 spell level
8	+4	+6	+2	+6	Cult of Personality	+1 spell level
9	+4	+6	+3	+6	-	-
10	+5	+7	+3	+7	Absolute Mastery	+1 spell level

more efficiently, reducing the expenditure of materials. When determining the costs involved in preparing and enacting a ceremony, the ceremony master may reduce the materials needed by one step without increasing the DC of the final check (see Black Ceremonies, pg. 46). Reduced preparation costs are not reduced further by the participation of multiple ceremony masters with this class ability.

Reduced Preparation Time: Even the simplest of black ceremonies requires an immense amount of exacting, time consuming preparation and the most difficult ceremonies can require literally months of preparation time before they may be enacted. As he gains in skill and breadth of experience, the ceremony master learns to make his preparations with greater efficiency, allowing him to take a black ceremony from start to completion in a vastly reduced period of time. Beginning at 6th level, the drow ceremony master can reduce all preparation times for black ceremonies by one step, without increasing the final DC of the ceremony check (see Black Ceremonies, pg. 46). This reduced time is considered to be the base time for the purposes of reducing the final check DC by extended preparation. This reduced preparation time is not further reduced by the participation of multiple ceremony masters with this class ability.

Bring Forth the Best: The ceremony master is a skilled teacher, well versed in motivational methods. The fact that many of these methods involve the permanent scarring of the student does not phase the ceremony master at all, since results are all that matters. Beginning at 7th level, when the ceremony master is assisted by his cohort in the performance of a black ceremony, he may add their skill ranks (but not attribute

bonus) in the relevant skill as a circumstance bonus to his final DC check. This bonus is gained in lieu of that gained by the aid another action (see Black Ceremonies, pg. 46). The ceremony master only gains this ability if his cohort possesses ranks in the relevant skill.

Cult of Personality: An experienced ceremony master is like unto a god to his followers, a figure of authority so imposing and majestic that lesser drow flock to him, seeking only to bask in his presence and serve at his whim. Among these fawning sycophants are truly useful servants, those with skill enough to earn a place at their master’s right hand. At 8th level, the ceremony master adds his Intelligence modifier to his class level and Charisma bonus to determine his Leadership score. In addition, his leadership score can no longer be negatively modified by either his behaviour or by outside events (such as political or military failure or the exposure of personal weaknesses). In addition, the ceremony master attracts replacement followers within a month, as new soldiers and assistants stumble over themselves to replace the ‘weak’ who failed in their duties.

Absolute Mastery: The greatest ceremony masters rarely, if ever, fail to carry those black ceremonies they guide through to successful completion, since those who do have a distressing tendency to end up face down in the alley with a knife in their back.

At 10th level, the ceremony master may, once a day per point of their Intelligence bonus, re-roll any failed check made during the conducting of a black ceremony. The decision to re-roll must be made at the instant the first check is failed, but there is no limit to the number of times a failed check can be re-attempted. So, for



PRESTIGE CLASSES

example, a ceremony master with an Intelligence of 22 could re-roll a total of 6 failed checks during the course of a single day meaning he could, conceivably, use all 6 to re-roll a single check which he failed again and again.

In addition to the above bonus, the ceremony master may, 10 times per day, substitute his Intelligence bonus for the normally applicable attribute bonus when attempting any black ceremony sub-check. So, for example, a ceremony master could substitute his Intelligence modifier for his Charisma modifier when attempting a Perform sub-check during an *integration* ceremony (see Black Ceremonies, pg. 46).

THE CROUCHING SPIDER

In addition to being a powerful spellcaster, the dark weaver is a skilled infiltrator and killer. Some dark weavers spend their days stalking the pathways of the Dark Beneath in search of adventure, power and blood. Others, however, see it as their sacred duty to preserve the great drow metropolises from outsiders, invaders and the marauding, ancient beasts which seek to crush and devour all they encounter.

The crouching spider is a dark weaver of the latter sort, a drow who has taken it upon himself to act as custodian and guardian to his fellows. The crouching spider is ably suited to his chosen role, with an arsenal of powerful spells and knowledge of many skills which are useful for prowling the endless night unseen, the better to catch their prey unawares. The crouching spider is a formidable infiltrator and silent killer, but he is also deadly in open combat also.

Let the enemies of the drow beware, the crouching spider is ever able and willing to defend his home.

The majority of crouching spiders are focussed dark weavers, as that class' mix of skills and abilities is especially well suited to the role. Multi-faceted dark weaver rogues and dark weaver rangers are also well represented among the crouching spiders ranks and even a few dark weaver fighters pursue this career.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

To qualify to become a crouching spider, a character must fulfil all the following requirements.

Race: Drow only.

Skills: Hide 8 ranks, Knowledge (dungeoneering) 4 ranks, Move Silently 8 ranks.

Feats: Stealthy, Silent Spell.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast spells of at least 2nd level and must know the spells *true strike* and *invisibility*.

Special: The character must be have access to two dark weaver favoured paths, one of which must be the path of the predator.

Class Skills

The crouching spider's class skills (and the relevant ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Dex), Disguise (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (dungeoneering) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Spot (Wis), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex) and Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points At Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the crouching spider.

Weapon and Armour Proficiencies: The crouching spider is proficient with all simple weapons and with any four one handed, martial melee weapons. The crouching spider is also proficient with light and medium armour, but not with shields. Remember that normal arcane spell failure chances apply when the crouching spider wears light or heavier armour, at least until he gains access to the Unburdened class ability (see below).

Spells: A crouching spider continues to gain prowess as a spellcaster, even as he learns to crawl through the shadows with unparalleled skill. At every level except 3rd, 5th and 9th, the crouching spider gains a new level of spells, exactly as though he had gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added this prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (familiar progression or spider friendship and the like). This means that the crouching spider adds his class levels to the class levels of any one spellcasting class he progressed before, for the purposes of caster level checks, spell levels which may be studied and so on.

Spider's Reflexes (Su): The crouching spider's magic bolsters his muscles and his awareness, giving him reflexes heightened beyond normal mortal limits.

The Crouching Spider

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Spider's Reflexes	+1 spell level
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Uncanny Dodge	+1 spell level
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Unburdened 5%	-
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Still Spell	+1 spell level
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	Improved Uncanny Dodge	+1 spell level
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Unburdened 10%	-
7	+5	+2	+5	+2	Spider's Silence	+1 spell level
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Unburdened 15%	+1 spell level
9	+6	+3	+6	+3	-	-
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Spider's Stillness, Unburdened 20%	+1 spell level

Like his namesake, the crouching spider is difficult to surprise and equally difficult to catch. Beginning at 1st level, the crouching spider adds one half his Intelligence modifier (rounded down) to both his Initiative and to his Armour Class. The bonus to Armour Class applies even when the crouching spider is caught flat-footed; it does not, however, apply when he is bound or otherwise held immobile, as he must have the ability to dodge and weave to use his reflexes to best effect.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): The crouching spider has the amazing ability to react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to Armour Class (if any) even when he is caught flat-footed or is struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to Armour Class if he is held completely immobile.

If the crouching spider already has uncanny dodge from a different class (a crouching spider with at least four level of the rogue class, for example), then he automatically gains Improved Uncanny Dodge (see below) instead. If he already possesses both Uncanny Dodge and Improved Uncanny Dodge, then he instead gains a +1 dodge bonus to his Armour Class.

Unburdened (Ex): As part of his training, the crouching spider learns to economise his movement when spellcasting, to minimise the chance that he will fail the casting of a spell. An experienced crouching spider has nothing to fear when casting spells in light armour and can even cast while wearing medium armour with little chance of failure.

At 3rd level, the crouching spider reduces his arcane spell failure percentage by 5%. At 6th level, he reduces he arcane spell failure chance by 10%, at 8th by 15% and at 10th by 20%. This ability does not reduce the arcane spell failure chance imposed by carrying a shield, unless the crouching spider has gained proficiency with shields (either by selecting the appropriate feat or by gaining proficiency as a result of taking levels in another class).

Still Spell: At 4th level, the crouching spider gains the Still Spell feat for free, allowing him to cast spells without gestures.

Improved Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 5th level and higher, a crouching spider's reflexes are such that he can no longer be flanked; he can react to opponents on opposite sides of him as easily as he can react to a single attacker. This defence denies a rogue the ability to sneak attack the crouching spider by flanking him, unless the attacker has at least four more rogue levels than the crouching spider has crouching spider levels.

If the crouching spider already has Improved Uncanny Dodge from another class, he automatically gains a +1 dodge bonus to his Armour Class. Should he already have gained such a bonus (as a result of gaining the dodge bonus in lieu of Uncanny Dodge at 2nd level), the bonus increases to a total of a +3. In addition, the levels from the classes which granted Improved Uncanny Dodge stack for the purposes of determining the minimum rogue levels a character must possess to flank the crouching spider.



Spider's Silence (Ex): The crouching spider operates best in absolute silence, stalking the shadows invisibly and striking without warning, much as his namesake strikes at a fly in his web. Beginning at 7th level, the crouching spider can, once per day per point of Intelligence bonus, modify a prepared spell on the fly so that it may be cast silently, as by the Silent Spell feat. Unlike that feat, however, the spell's level is not modified, meaning a silenced *lightning bolt* is still cast as a 3rd level spell.

Spider's Stillness (Ex): The spider is a patient killer, squatting motionless in its web until the perfect moment to strike arrives, then it rushes forward in a blur, undetected until it is far too late to react, let alone set up an effective defence. The most experienced crouching spiders are much the same as the spider; they wait in shadow, silent and still as death, while their unsuspecting enemies live out the final moments of their lives.

At 10th level, the crouching spider gains the ability to, once per day per point of Intelligence modifier, modify a prepared spell on the fly so that it may be cast without the need to perform gestures, as with the Still Spell feat. Unlike that feat, however, the spell's level is not modified, meaning a stilled *lightning bolt* is still cast as a 3rd level spell.

Spider's Stillness can be used in conjunction with spider's silence, allowing the crouching spider to cast a stilled, silenced *lightning bolt* as a 3rd level spell.

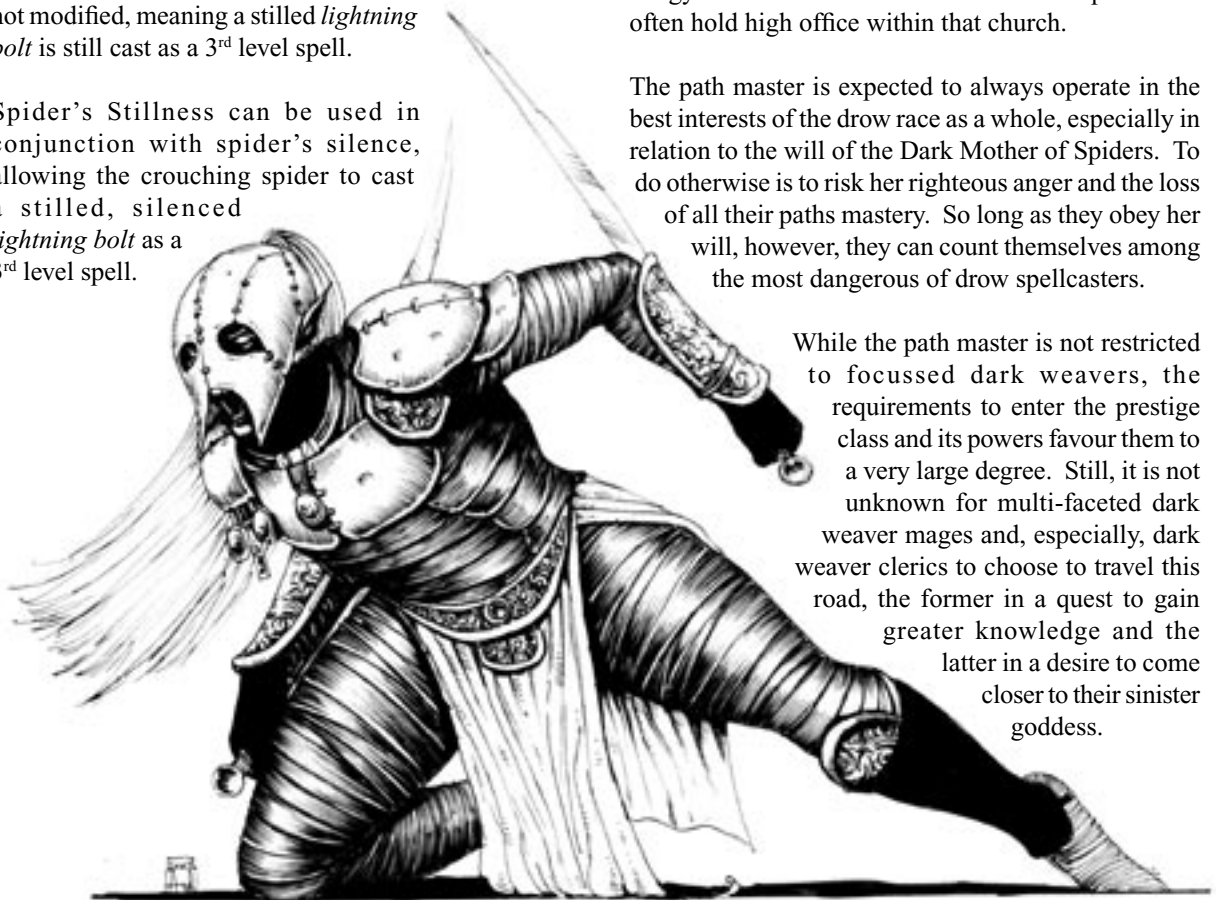
THE PATH MASTER

The ultimate expression of the dark weaver's favour in the eyes of the Dark Mother of Spiders is his access to favoured path magic. Through the favoured paths, the dark weaver expresses his devotion to the goals of the drow race and it is only through the favoured paths that he may cast enchantments capable of shaking the pillars of the world. While all dark weavers have access to two favoured paths, only the most skilled and fortunate among them are capable of handling more. These capable few are known as path masters and it is their duty to bear the brunt of their Dark Mother's will, to wield magic in her service and dedicate themselves eternally to the promotion of her ideals and her desires.

The path master is a drow dark weaver who learns to channel the Dark Mother's will into more than two paths. As he progresses along the road to mastery, he gains power and will enough to shape his goddess' arcane might in many expressions. The path master is among the most respected of dark weavers, with prestige and social influence on a par with that of the ceremony masters and the matrons of the great drow houses. The path masters are also peers to the higher clergy of the church of the Dark Mother of Spiders and often hold high office within that church.

The path master is expected to always operate in the best interests of the drow race as a whole, especially in relation to the will of the Dark Mother of Spiders. To do otherwise is to risk her righteous anger and the loss of all their paths mastery. So long as they obey her will, however, they can count themselves among the most dangerous of drow spellcasters.

While the path master is not restricted to focused dark weavers, the requirements to enter the prestige class and its powers favour them to a very large degree. Still, it is not unknown for multi-faceted dark weaver mages and, especially, dark weaver clerics to choose to travel this road, the former in a quest to gain greater knowledge and the latter in a desire to come closer to their sinister goddess.



The Path Master

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Path Focus	+1 spell level
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Awaken Path	+1 spell level
3	+1	+3	+1	+3	Hone Path	-
4	+2	+4	+1	+4	Path Focus	+1 spell level
5	+2	+4	+1	+4	-	+1 spell level
6	+3	+5	+2	+5	Awaken Path	-
7	+3	+5	+2	+5	Hone Path	+1 spell level
8	+4	+6	+2	+6	Path Focus	+1 spell level
9	+4	+6	+3	+6	-	-
10	+5	+7	+3	+7	Awaken Path	+1 spell level

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

In order to become a path master, the character must meet all the following requirements.

Race: Drow only.

Skills: Knowledge (religion) 13 ranks, Spellcraft 13 ranks.

Feats: Iron Will, Unshakeable Devotion (the Dark Mother) (see Drow Magic Feats, pg. 25).

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast favoured path spells of at least 3rd level, one of which must be the path of darkness, the spider, the death rite or the matron.

Special: The character must willingly submit himself to a *quest* assigned by a senior bishop of the Dark Mother of Spiders. As a requirement of that quest, he must seek out and slay a powerful opponent (equal to him in level or challenge rating, at least) of the Dark Mother using nothing but the spells of his favoured paths.

Class Skills

The path master's class skills (and the relevant abilities for each) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int) and Spellcraft (Int).

Skill Points At Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the path master.

Weapon and Armour Proficiencies: The path master gains no new weapon proficiencies, nor is he proficient with armour or shields.

Spells: A path master continues to gain prowess as a spellcaster, even as he gains a greater versatility with his favoured paths. At every level except 3rd, 5th and 9th, the path master gains a new level of spells, exactly as though he had gained a level in the dark weaver class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (web scribe, spider friendship and the like). This means that the path master adds his class levels to his levels of the base caster class, for the purposes of caster level checks, spell levels which may be studied and so on.

Path Focus: The path master does not simply widen his access to favoured paths by becoming a member of this prestige class, he also strengthens his ability to focus his will through those paths he already travels. At 1st level and then again at 4th and 8th level, the path master gains the path focus ability. The path focus ability adds +2 to the DC of all saving throws to resist spells from one of the path master's favoured paths. The bonus gained from Path Focus stacks with that gained from the Spell Focus feat, so the saving throw DCs of spells on a path master's favoured path which are of schools to which he has applied that feat are increased by a total of +3.

Path Focus can only be applied to a favoured path once, so each time the path master gains this ability he must apply it to a new favoured path.



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Awaken Path: The focus of the path master's journey is the awakening of new favoured paths. As the path master gains power and experience, he gains the opportunity to add new favoured paths several times. At 2nd level and again at 6th and 10th level, the path master can select a new favoured path from the list of available favoured paths (see The Drow Dark Weaver, pg. 13).

Once a favoured path is selected, the path master instantly gains knowledge of all the spells on that path, so long as they are of a spell level he can cast. The path master does not, however, gain access to the path's granted power. In all respects, these favoured paths function exactly as those the path master already possesses. This means that the path master may burn a prepared spell slot to spontaneously cast a spell from his new favoured paths exactly as he would with his original favoured paths.

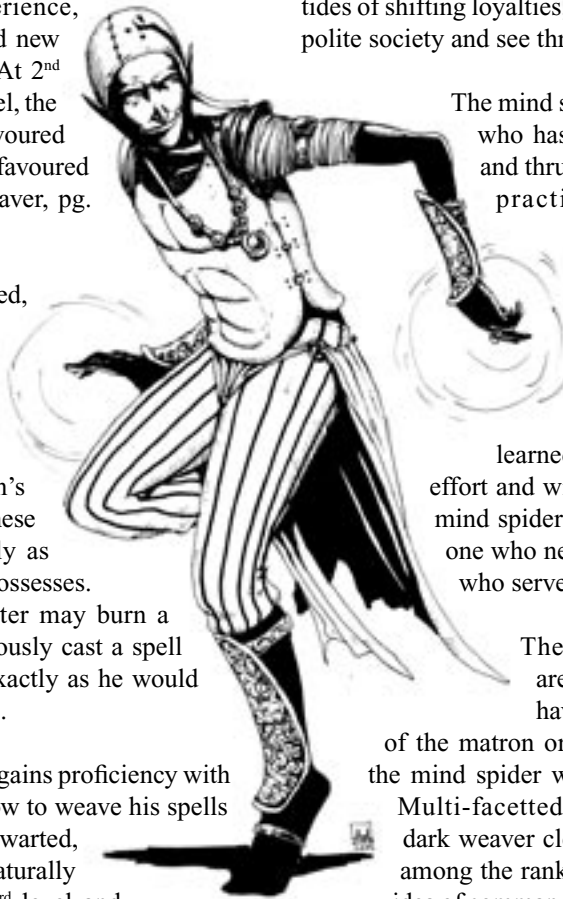
Hone Path: As the path master gains proficiency with his favoured paths, he learns how to weave his spells so that they are not so easily thwarted, even by those beings who are naturally resistant to spell energy. At 3rd level and again at 6th, he selects a favoured path to benefit from a +2 bonus to all caster level checks to penetrate spell resistance. This bonus applies to all spells of the favoured path, but does not apply to non-path spells which are of the same school. The bonuses gained from this ability stack with those granted by the feat Spell Penetration, meaning he gains a total of a +4 bonus to pierce spell resistance when casting spells which are both of a school to which Spell Penetration has been applied and of a path to which the Hone Path ability has been applied.

Hone Path can only be applied to a favoured path once, meaning the path master must select a new favoured path each time he receives this ability.

THE MIND SPIDER

For all that it is infested with ancient hatred, modern jealousy and bitter infighting, drow society is very dependant on close knit bonds of family and obligation. Loyalty is a currency in the drow nation, bought and sold with money, promises of lust and ambition fulfilled

or simply for the chance to live another day. The most successful drow are those who learn to navigate the tides of shifting loyalties, to look beyond the veneer of polite society and see through to the truth beneath.



The mind spider is an arcane spellcaster who has transcended the simple cut and thrust of political gamesmanship practised by drow slaves and great matrons alike, to practice his craft at a higher level. Thanks to his innate understanding of both magic and, more importantly, the minds of his fellow drow, he has learned to dominate them without effort and without the use of spells. The mind spider is the ultimate slave master, one who needs no whip to control those who serve him.

The majority of mind spiders are focussed dark weavers who have chosen the favoured paths of the matron or the whip, as the powers of the mind spider well suit their temperaments. Multi-faceted dark weaver wizards and dark weaver clerics are also fairly common among the ranks of the mind spiders, as the idea of commanding fellow drow as one might command a familiar is an appealing one.

Hit Die: d4.

Requirements

In order to become a member of the mind spider prestige class, the character must meet all the following requirements.

Race: Drow only.

Alignment: Neutral only.

Skills: Bluff 10 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks, Spellcraft 10 ranks.

Feats: Leadership, Persuasive.

Spells: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane spells.

Class Skills

The mind spider's class skills (and the relevant ability modifier for each score) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (nobility

and royalty) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int) and Spot (Wis).

Skill Points At Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All the following are class features of the mind spider.

Weapon and Armour Proficiencies: The mind spider gains no new proficiencies with weapons, nor is he proficient with armour or shields.

Spells: A mind spider continues to gain prowess as a spellcaster, even as he learns to command the minds of his followers. At every level except 3rd, the mind spider gains a new level of spells, exactly as though he had gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (familiar progression or spider friendship and the like). This means that the mind spider adds his class levels to the class levels of any one spellcasting class he progressed before, for the purposes of caster level checks, spell levels which may be studied and so on.

Follower Familiars: The mind spider's consciousness has been irrevocably altered by the flow of magic he controls and has evolved to the point that he can, with a few simple words and a bit of concentration, subconsciously influence those around him to forever ally themselves to his will.

At 1st level, the mind spider gains a number of new, special followers equal to his natural Intelligence bonus; for the purposes of this ability, increased Intelligence gained from magic items or temporary spell effects (such as *fox's cunning*) is not applied.

Each follower is either a 1st level warrior or a 1st level expert and is of the drow race. Each follower familiar has average statistics and maximum hit points. The mind spider's player can select the skills and feats of his follower familiars.

All follower familiars are completely loyal to the mind spider and will obey his commands without exception, up to and including throwing themselves into obviously suicidal situations at his behest. All follower familiars gain a +2 bonus to Will saves to resist mind-affecting spells and spell-like effects used by anyone other than the mind spider.

The mind spider's follower familiars can gain levels from experience as normal. Should a follower familiar ever gain a total number of levels greater than the mind spider's class levels, then his mind is automatically freed from the mind spider's control and he is free to leave or stay as he chooses. From that point on, however, he is never again considered a follower familiar and his mind can no longer be accessed by the mind spider's class abilities.

Should one or more of the mind spider's follower familiars die or pull away from his service, he may replace them at the rate of one a week from his existing pool of followers (gained from the Leadership feat).

Mind Web (Su): The mind spider is able to see through the eyes of his followers and listen through their ears as easily as he uses his own. Beginning at 2nd level, the mind spider can, as a free action, look and listen through the eyes and ears of one of his follower familiars. Range is not a consideration when using this ability; so long as the follower familiar is on the same plane as the mind spider, his senses are an open book. The mind spider can only use one follower familiar's senses at a time and while doing so, his own body is effectively blind and deaf.

In addition to his special followers, the mind spider can also see and hear through the senses of his cohort and while doing so, he is neither blinded nor deafened.

Mind Web is a supernatural ability that is always in effect.

Silent Speech (Su): The mind spider, his cohort and all his follower familiars are in constant mental contact, granting them a powerful form of telepathy. Beginning at 2nd level, the mind spider, his cohort and his follower familiars can telepathically communicate with one another at will, to a range of one mile per mind spider class level.

While communicating using Silent Speech, the mind spider and his minions can still communicate verbally and can still act as normal, casting spells or using other abilities without penalty.

Silent Speech is a supernatural ability which can be used as a free action.

Shared Purpose (Su): The mind spider, his cohort and his follower familiars are as one mind. The Mind Web they share strengthens their resolve and their loyalty to one another. While within one mile per class level



PRESTIGE CLASSES

of one another, the mind spider, his cohort and his follower familiars gain a +4 circumstance bonus to all Will saves.

In addition to this bonus, Shared Purpose heightens the cohort's and follower familiar's resolve to protect their leader and master. While within one mile per class level of the mind spider they gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attack and damage rolls when fighting in direct defence of their master.

Shared Purpose is a mind-affecting, supernatural ability.

Spell Shift (Su): When the mind spider reaches this level of ability, his ability to influence and alter the consciousness of his follower familiars is such that he can even channel his spell energy through their untrained minds. Beginning at 4th level, the mind spider can cast his favoured path spells through his follower familiars, almost as easily as he can cast them himself.

A mind spider can cast any favoured path spell he knows through one of his follower familiars and can burn a prepared spell to cast a spell in this fashion. Only spells with a casting time of one action or one full round can be cast in this fashion. While casting a spell for his master, the follower familiar can perform a single move action or any other action which would normally be allowed when spellcasting.

The mind spider can only use the Spell Shift ability if he is within

one mile per caster level of his follower familiar and may only cast a maximum of one spell through a follower familiar each round and to a maximum of 1/class level each day. When using the Spell Shift ability, the mind spider may not perform any other action.

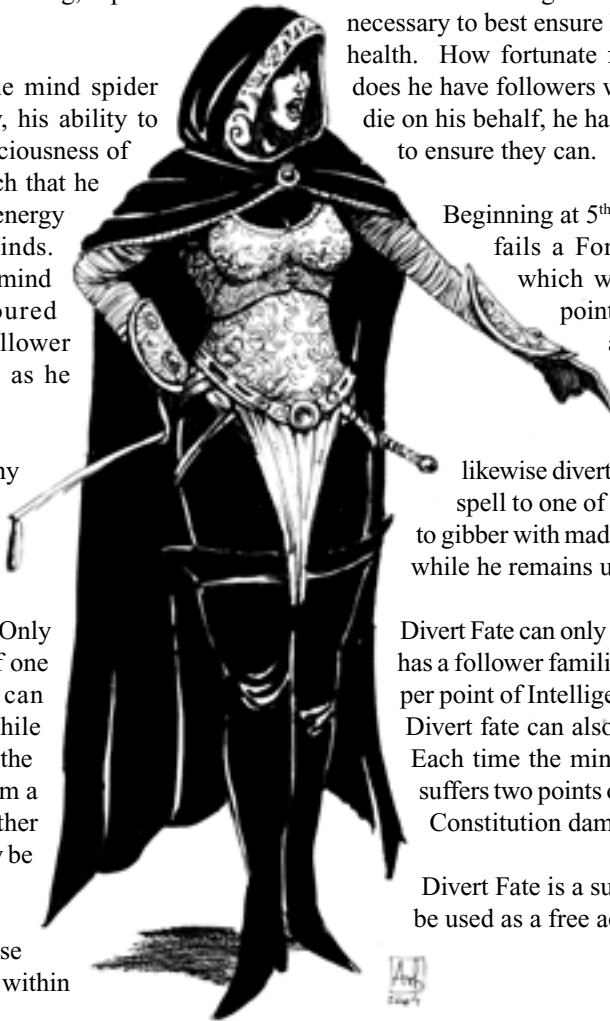
Spell Shift is a supernatural ability.

Divert Fate (Su): Ultimately, while the mind spider's follower familiars come to view him as a great person, worthy of worship, sacrifice and absolute loyalty, he sees them as nothing but useful tools, to be sacrificed as necessary to best ensure his prosperity and continued health. How fortunate for him, then, that not only does he have followers who are more than willing to die on his behalf, he has the power of the mind web to ensure they can.

Beginning at 5th level, when the mind spider fails a Fortitude save against a spell which would reduce him to -10 hit points or slay him outright, such as *disintegrate*, he can instead choose to divert the effects of the spell to one of his follower familiars. He can likewise divert any mind-affecting Will save spell to one of his followers, allowing them to gibber with madness, as per the *insanity* spell, while he remains unaffected.

Divert Fate can only be used when the mind spider has a follower familiar within a 100 foot + 10 foot per point of Intelligence bonus radius of himself. Divert fate can also only be used once a round. Each time the mind spider uses divert fate, he suffers two points of temporary Intelligence and Constitution damage.

Divert Fate is a supernatural ability which can be used as a free action.



The Mind Spider

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Follower Familiars	+1 spell level
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Mind Web, Silent Speech	+1 spell level
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Shared Purpose	-
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Spell Shift	+1 spell level
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Divert Fate	+1 spell level

DROW MAGIC FEATS

Over their millennia of isolation, drow arcanists have been denied the opportunity to meaningfully interact with mages of other cultures, ignorant of the tricks and specific forms of training which the surface races have developed and disseminated amongst themselves.

By the same token, however, their isolation has forced drow arcanists to become incredibly versatile in the use of both those feats they do possess, and in the development of their own unique feats. While drow will quite eagerly adapt any useful training technique they come across, they pride themselves on their ability to do more with less.

The following new feats are designed with the peculiarities and focuses of drow magic in mind. While they are intended for use by dark elf arcanists of all sorts, these feats can also be adapted for use by drow clerics and druids. This chapter also includes feats which are also intended for use with ceremony magic. As such these feats are well suited for adaptation to the ceremony masters of other races.

NEW FEATS

The new feats presented below can be taken by any drow arcane spellcaster who meets the prerequisites. With the Game Master's permission, they can also be selected for non-drow spellcasters.

Awakener

You are especially skilled at directing the energy of black ceremonies for summoning and dismissing effects.

Prerequisites: Charisma, Intelligence or Wisdom 15+.

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to all sub-checks and final DC checks made to complete ceremonies which generate summoning or dismissal effects.

Special: The bonus from Awaken stacks with that gained from the Master of Ceremonies feat.

Black Avatar of Vengeance

You are especially skilled at directing the energy of black ceremonies in destructive ways.

Prerequisites: Charisma, Intelligence or Wisdom 15+.

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to all sub-checks and final DC checks made to complete ceremonies which create destruction or death effects.

Special: The bonus from Black Avatar of Vengeance stacks with that gained from the Master of Ceremonies feat.

Bringer of Great Change

You are especially skilled at directing the energy of black ceremonies in ways which fundamentally transform the target.

Prerequisites: Charisma, Intelligence or Wisdom 15+.

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to all sub-checks and final DC checks made to complete ceremonies which create transformative effects.

Special: The bonus from Bringer of Great Change stacks with that gained from the Master of Ceremonies feat

Dark Allies

Your commitment to the Dark Mother of Spiders and to her holy work is clear to all and lesser beings flock to your service.

Prerequisites: Leadership.

Benefits: You gain a +2 profane bonus to your leadership score and attract a second cohort, who may be of a level equal to your first cohort's character levels -2. This new cohort will always be of your alignment and will be a fanatical worshiper of the Dark Mother.

Dark Mother's Favour

You have earned the Dark Mother of Spider's favour and she has gifted you with an understanding of her ways which other spellcasters cannot match.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast 5th level spells, ability to cast favoured path spells.

Benefits: You gain access to, and knowledge of, all the spells of a new favoured path. These spells can be prepared as normal, or can be cast spontaneously, as per the normal rules for spontaneous favoured path casting (see The Drow Dark Weaver, pg. 10). This feat does not give access to the path's special ability.

Death Collector

You can substitute organs and flesh for inexpensive spell components.





Executioner's Smile

You draw great strength and joy from the act of striking the killing blow in a black ceremony.

Prerequisites: Cha 13+, access to one or more favoured paths

Benefits: For a number of days equal to your Charisma modifier following the successful completion of a black ceremony which involved the ritual sacrifice of a living being, you cast all favoured path spells at +1 caster level. Should you ritually sacrifice a being in a black ceremony which fails for any reason, you do not gain the bonus. Should you perform another ceremony while enjoying the benefits of this feat, the caster level benefits do not stack but the durations do overlap, meaning the amount of time you will receive the caster level bonus is increased by your Charisma bonus.

Special: You can select this feat twice. The second time it is selected, the number of days you receive the caster level bonus is equal to the sum of your Charisma and Intelligence modifiers.

Prerequisites: Ability to cast arcane spells.

Benefits: You can substitute organs and flesh for spell components of less than 10 gold pieces in value. The flesh or organs must be at least equal in size to an average human heart and must be harvested from living beings, or from beings who have been dead less than one day, as the spiritual power inherent in the flesh is depleted after that point. Organs remain suitable for use for one full week. If you harvest organs from a being slain as part of a black ceremony, then the save DCs of your spells are increased by +1. A single humanoid body can be used to harvest material worth (50 gp x the HD of the creature).

Special: The spiritual energy which empowers the bits of flesh detritus you harvest is always consumed in the casting of a spell, meaning that the organ used is always rendered useless after a single casting, even when used to power spells which do not normally destroy components.

Improved Poison Focus

Your ability to focus the harmful effects of poison into absolute clarity of thought are approaching supernatural levels.

Prerequisites: Iron Will, Poison Focus.

Benefits: When you are injected with poison, you gain a bonus to your Intelligence equal to 2 + one half the ability score damage inflicted, to a maximum circumstance bonus equal to 2 + Int bonus. You also gain a flat +2 circumstance bonus to Intelligence when exposed to poison which does not inflict ability score damage. Finally, you are now immune to those poisons which cause ability score damage to Intelligence. As before, the bonuses last one day from the time of initial exposure and the bonuses can only be gained once per day.

Special: The bonus to Intelligence received as a result of poison inflicted damage ends immediately if the damage is healed by magical or non-magical healing of any sort.

Master of Ceremonies

You understand that versatility and diligence are the keys to successfully performing black ceremonies and are practised in the use of all your skills.

Prerequisites: Int 13+.

Benefits: You gain a +2 competence bonus to all skill checks when attempting a final skill check to complete a black ceremony or when attempting any ceremony sub-check. This bonus applies to any and all skills used in any black ceremony, but applies only during ceremonies.

Special: You can select this feat twice, with the second selection increasing the bonus to a total of +4.

Nurturer and Punisher

You are especially skilled at directing the energy of black ceremonies in ways that bolster or weaken beings, objects and concepts.

Prerequisites: Charisma, Intelligence or Wisdom 15+.

Benefits: You gain a +2 bonus to all sub-checks and final DC checks made to complete ceremonies which create bolstering or weakening effects.

Special: The bonus from Nurturer and Punisher stacks with that gained from the Master of Ceremonies feat.

Poison Focus

Poison is holy to the Dark Mother of Spiders and you have learned to harness its destructive abilities for your own ends, sharpening both your mind and your spellcasting skills.

Prerequisites: Iron Will, ability to cast arcane magic.

Benefits: By intentionally subjecting yourself to the effects of poison, you focus your will and gain a sharper clarity. You gain a circumstance bonus to your Intelligence score equal to one half the ability damage inflicted as a result of the poison, to a maximum equal to your unmodified Intelligence bonus. This feat's benefits do not take effect when you are affected by a poison which damages your Intelligence score, nor does it apply to poisons which do not inflict ability score damage. The increase to your Intelligence score lasts for one full day from the time of initial damage, with bonuses gained as a result of suffering permanent ability score damage still fading after one day. Poison focus applies only to the first poison damage received each day.

Special: The bonus to Intelligence received as a result of poison inflicted ability score damage ends immediately

if the character's ability score damage is healed by magical or non-magical healing of any sort.

Poison Mark

Your familiar bears the mark and favour of the Dark Mother of Spiders, allowing it to transmit poison with a melee attack.

Prerequisites: Must be bonded to a familiar, or have ability to attract a familiar as a class ability.

Benefits: Three times a day, your familiar can deliver a powerful poison with a success melee attack. The poison deals 1d4 points of initial Constitution damage, with another 1d4 points of secondary Constitution damage one minute later. A Fortitude save is allowed to resist the effect; the DC of the save is equal to 10 + one half your caster level. If your familiar already possesses a poison attack, then the save DC of the attack is increased by +4.

Power of Blood

The Dark Mother of Spiders thrives on violence and the shedding of blood and looks with favour upon those who wield spell and blade with equal skill.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, ability to cast arcane spells.

Benefits: You do not need to perform the somatic or verbal components of a spell in any round immediately following one in which you successfully struck and damaged a living creature in melee combat. Successful attacks against undead and constructs are not considered for the purposes of this feat, only attacks against living creatures.

Sharp Fangs

Your spells are like the sharpest of spider fangs, piercing through spiritual flesh with ease.

Prerequisites: Power of Blood.

Benefits: When casting a spell against an opponent you have successfully struck and damaged in melee combat in the previous round, you gain a +2 bonus to pierce their spell resistance. The benefits of this feat stack with those gained from the Spell Penetration feat and other, similar feats.

Special: This feat can be selected a second time. The second time it is selected, the ability to pierce spell resistance applies for two rounds after you have successfully struck the target in melee combat.



Swift and Terrible Fangs

The spider is merciless in its destruction of the weak. So are you.

Prerequisites: Power of Blood.

Benefits: When casting a spell against an opponent you have successfully struck and damaged in melee combat in the previous round, the save DC of the spell is increased by +2. The benefits of this feat stack with those gained from the Spell Focus feat and other, similar feats.

Special: This feat can be selected a second time. The second time it is selected, the increased save DC applies for two rounds after you have successfully struck the target in melee combat.

Unshakeable Devotion

You are so devoted to a particular god that you cannot be dissuaded from his service.

Prerequisite: Must have sworn devotion to a single god, or related family of gods (greater god and servitor assistants, for example).

Benefit: When working in direct service of your god, you receive a +2 sacred or profane bonus to all saves to resist spells, spell-

like abilities, supernatural powers or substances, such as certain drugs, which control your mind. Likewise, you gain a +2 sacred or profane bonus to all Sense Motive checks which involve one or more parties attempting to dissuade you from your chosen godly duties.

Womb of Night

Your spells are especially potent when cast at night and you are believed to enjoy the favour of the Dark Mother of Spiders.

Prerequisites: Access to one or more favoured paths, ability to cast 2nd level arcane spells.

Benefits: During the hours between sunset and sunrise, or when shrouded in complete, non-magical darkness, your favoured path spells are cast at +1 caster level. To receive the benefits of this feat, only you need be in darkness, meaning you do not lose the bonus if your intended victims are lit, or if they are carrying torches or lanterns.

Special: You can select this feat a second time. Should you choose to do so, then you cast all favoured path spells at +2 caster levels when shrouded in complete darkness. However, you cast all favoured paths spells at -1 caster level when not completely shrouded by darkness.



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Even before their disgrace and subsequent fall, the mages among those elves now called the drow were perhaps the foremost thinkers and inventors of their people, with a thirst for creation matched only by their hunger for sensation. Since being cast down, their thirst has not been slaked, though it has been turned to decidedly darker ends. In their glittering palaces and twilight manses, drow mages, clerics and dark weavers continually experiment and refine their crafts, creating new enchantments and twisting others to better suit their needs and tastes.

The following spells are intended to better reflect the diversity of magical cruelty drow spellcasters can bring to bear against their enemies. The majority of these spells are intended for arcane spellcasters only, though divine casters also use some.

Drow mages and dark weavers are obsessed with darkness, spiders, corruption and poisons of all sorts, and this obsession is reflected in the spells they create and utilise. The spells presented here reflect the focus of drow mages.

Without exception, these spells are intended for drow spellcasters only. Only with the Game Master's specific permission, and only after enduring many campaign hardships, should a non-drow character be allowed to learn any of them.

Dark Weaver Only Spells

The caster levels assigned to individual spells presume that the Game Master will be using dark weaver spellcasters in his campaign. Should the Game Master decide against using dark weavers, then it is recommended that all spells which are unique to dark weaver spell lists be added to the sorcerer and wizard spell list as well. In most cases, they should be assigned to either the same spell level, or to a spell list one level higher.

For example, in a campaign that does not include dark weavers, the spell *web bind* should be added to the sorcerer and wizard spell list, as either a 1st or 2nd level spell. In most cases, it should not be added to the cleric spell list – if it is, it should both replace an existing spell on the list and be increased by at least one spell level.

Animated Web

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: DW 3, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Webs in a 20 ft. radius spread

Duration: 1 min./level

Saving Throw: Reflex negates; see text

Spell Resistance: No

A more powerful and versatile version of the *web* spell, *animated web* creates a many layered mass of sticky filament that ensnares those unfortunate enough to come in contact with it. Similar to, but far larger than, a normal spider's web, these magical strands are as tough as steel and difficult to destroy.

Unlike a normal *web*, the mass of threads created by this spell need not be anchored to anything and, in fact, works best if it is not. The peculiar magic of the spell allows the strands of the web to hover in mid air.

Anyone in the effect's area when the spell is cast must make a Reflex save. If the save succeeds, the being is entangled, but not prevented from moving. If the save fails, the being is entangled and rendered unable to move – a creature unable to move can only attempt to break loose, requiring either a DC 20 Strength check or a DC 25 Escape Artist check. A being who succeeds in avoiding becoming completely ensnared, either by succeeding at his initial Reflex save or by succeeding at his Strength or Escape Artist check, remains entangled, but may move through the strands. Each round devoted to movement requires another Strength or Escape Artist check against a DC of 10, with the creature only able to move 5 feet for each full 5 points by which the check succeeds.

The versatility of the *animated web* spell comes from its ability to stretch and move, albeit slowly. Each round, the caster can cause the web to move up to 10 feet in any direction, allowing him to engulf the unwary. In addition, the caster can deform and twist the radius of the *web* as he sees fit, causing it to become a line or wall. If, during its movement, the web engulfs a target, that being must immediately attempt a Reflex save, as though he had been caught in the spell's initial radius. Any beings which are already entangled within the *web* are normally carried along when it moves, though their relative position within the *web* is not changed, unless its dimensions are radically changed. If the caster wishes, he can alter the *web* to release the trapped creature, or if the trapped being succeeds at a



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Strength or Escape Artist check against a DC of 25 (if fully entangled) or 10 (if only partially entangled, as above) he can hold his position successfully, causing the strands to tear around him and allowing him to move either 5 feet or 5 feet per full 5 points above the check DC, respectively.

As with a standard *web* spell, a creature with at least 5 feet of webbing between itself and an opponent is considered to be under cover. Likewise, a being protected by 20 feet of webbing gains total cover (see *Core Rulebook I*).

The strands of an *animated web* spell are flammable, meaning a *flaming sword* can part them as a hand parts cobwebs. Any fire, whether it be from a torch or from a *fireball*, sets the webbing alight and burns away a 5 foot section each round. Those caught within the burning area suffer 2d4 points of fire damage.

Unlike the strands of a normal *web*, an *animated web* cannot be made permanent, save by means of a spell comparable in power to a *miracle* or *wish*.

Material Component: A piece of spider web and a living spider.

Become Swarm

Transmutation

Level: DW 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 1 round/level

The caster assumes the form of a writhing mass of Tiny spiders, the better to swarm over his foes, effect a quick escape or pick your way through cracks and crevasses. The swarm occupies the same space as the caster, a 5 foot square if Medium, 10 foot if Large and so on.

The caster's body is composed of 100 Tiny spiders per caster level, to a maximum of 2,000 Tiny spiders at 20th level. They cannot reduce the size of their swarm body, though they can scurry through cracks or holes large enough for the component spiders. In swarm form, the caster can move through enemy occupied squares without impediment, though you suffer an attack of opportunity as normal when doing so.

While in swarm form, the caster cannot be grappled, cannot cast spells with verbal or material components and cannot wield equipment of any sort. They gain

damage reduction equal to your caster level, though it is bypassed by blunt magical attacks (so a 10th level caster gains damage reduction 10/magic and bludgeoning).

As a swarm, the caster cannot make standard melee attacks. Instead, they attack by moving into enemy occupied squares, provoking attacks of opportunity as normal when doing so. They deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of the caster's move, with no attack roll needed. Their attacks are not subject to miss chances for cover or concealment. The amount of damage the caster's swarm attack deals is dependent on their caster level, as outlined below:

Caster Level	Swarm Damage
1-5	1d6
6-10	2d6
11-15	3d6
16-20	4d6

As a swarm, the caster does not threaten those within his square, and cannot make attacks of opportunity with his swarm attack. However, he does distract any creature who occupies his square, so long as he is normally capable of damaging them (meaning they are not incorporeal or the like). Each round they remain within the swarm, they must attempt a Fortitude save against a DC equal to 10 + one half the caster's level + caster's Constitution modifier; if they fail, they are *nauseated* for the round. Spellcasters within the swarm body must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level) to successfully cast their spells. Likewise, skills which require patience and concentration require Concentration checks against DC 20 + spell level.

In swarm form, the caster does not have a discernible front or back and no discernible anatomy, so is not subject to either flanking or critical hits. The caster takes half damage from slashing and piercing weapons, but suffers a -4 save to all spells or effects which affect an area, such as splash weapons and many evocation spells.

As the caster suffers damage, his swarm body begins to thin, though it does not shrink in size. When the spell's duration ends, or when he is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, he reverts to his normal form. If the caster is slain in swarm form, however, he does not return to his normal body; instead, he is reduced to a heap of squashed spider husks.

Material Component: A sack of 100 spider's legs, which must be scattered across the ground at the time of casting.

Bite of the Seductress

Enchantment (Charm) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: DW 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One living being struck in melee combat

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The drow understand love and feel its sting as others do, but theirs is a harsher emotion, based as much, or more, on respect and yearning for the physical and emotional pain a partner can inflict as for the tenderness.

With the casting of this spell, the caster enchants a living being with a successful melee attack, so that they temporarily fall slavishly in love (as the drow see it), with him. In order for this spell to take effect, the caster must deal actual damage upon them with an unarmed attack, meaning creatures which cannot be damaged by unarmed attacks cannot be affected by this spell.

Those who fail their Will save to resist the *bite* become slavishly devoted to the caster, willingly obeying commands and flinging themselves into harm's way for the caster's benefit. This does not mean that they will obey his commands as though they were an automaton, but they will not hesitate to attack any foe which threatens their paramour, no matter how powerful.

Unlike a *charm person* spell, obviously threatening actions by the caster do not instantly break the spell, though lethal attacks grant them a new save to resist the *bite's* effect.

The caster must speak the victim's language in order to communicate commands.

Material Components: A small braided whip.

Black Rainbow

Transmutation

Level: DW 0

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One living being

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Casting this spell allows the recipient to see in full colour when using dark vision, with exactly the same degree of detail as if you were using normal sight in full daylight.

Material Component: A shred of brightly coloured fabric.

Black Wind of Mourning

Conjuration (Summoning) (Evil)

Level: DW 5

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: 10 ft. + 10 ft./level

Area of Effect: A spherical emanation with a radius equal to 10 ft. + 10 ft./level, centred on you

Duration: Instantaneous, see text

Saving Throw: Will partial, see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Though no drow who remembers the time before they were cast down lives, all still, deep in their hearts, mourn the loss of sunlight. This spell summons up the collective sorrow of the drow race, in the form of a cold, black wind which wails like a mourner's tears and turns it against their foes. The spell deals 1d6 points of sonic damage per caster level to all non-drow within the radius of effect (maximum 10d6), with a Will save allowed for half damage.

The wind and wailing remain after the initial damage effect is gone, hanging over the area of effect like a shroud. Non-drow who failed their initial save suffer a -4 morale penalty to all attack and damage rolls, skill and ability checks and all Will saves while they remain within the affected area. This penalty does not apply when the victim is not within the spell's radius, but returns immediately if the victim steps inside the affected area.

Beings who succeeded with their initial save instead suffer a -2 morale penalty to their attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks while they are within the spell's radius of effect.

In order to cast any spell with the good descriptor while within the *black wind of mourning's* radius of effect, the caster must succeed at a Concentration check, with a DC equal to the save *black wind's* saving throw DC + the level of the spell to be cast.



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Black wind of mourning has no effect on drow, nor does it effect plants, constructs, vermin or other mindless beings, such as non-intelligent undead. It does, however, affect undead with Intelligence scores. Non-drow elves suffer a -2 penalty to their initial Will save to resist the damage caused by this spell, and suffer the full -2 penalty from the secondary effect, even if they succeed at their initial save.

Black wind of mourning can only be cast at night, when underground or when beneath a sunless sky, such as when clouds completely obscure the morning light. Magical sunlight, such as that created by the *sunbeam* spell, or by properties of certain magical weapons and armour, dispels the secondary morale penalty effect of *black wind*, but only if it is cast within its radius of effect.

Material Components: A scrap of burial shroud and a vial of tears collected from drow. Both components are consumed at the moment of casting.

Corruption's Kiss

Transmutation

Level: Clr 3, DW 2

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One person touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The drow understand the seductive power of corruption all too well. Through the means of this spell, you impart the same understanding on another, forever marking them as impure.

A victim who fails to save radiates an aura of sickly sweet corruption which is palpable and so strong that even the most debauched and evil are put off. All Non-Player Character reaction checks involving creatures of average human Intelligence are considered to begin as hostile.

The effects of corruption's kiss can only be reversed by *break enchantment*, *remove curse*, *limited wish*, *miracle* or *wish*.

Material Components: A woodcarving of scandalous (even by drow standards) images prominently featuring the victim.

Dark Baubles

Evocation (Darkness)

Level: DW 0

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Object touched

Duration: 10 min./level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes an object to throw deep shadows in a 20 foot radius. The shadow is equivalent to that seen in a moonless night, and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to all Hide checks. The effect is immobile, but can be cast on a movable object. Shadow taken into an area of magical *light* will not function.

A *dark baubles* spell is sufficient to counter and dispel the effects of a *light* spell, or another spell with the *light* descriptor, of equal level.

Material Component: A small, black spider.

Devour the Shadow

Necromancy

Level: DW 9, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: See text

Range: Touch

Target: One target touched

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

The drow believe that one's shadow is the gateway to his soul and the only true anchor to the mortal world. By destroying the shadow, the drow believe they can destroy the victim's vitality and his will to live. With the casting of this spell, the caster can tear away the victim's shadow like tissue paper, absorbing his essence into themselves and liquidating his personality.

The moment this spell is cast, the victim must attempt a Will save. If the save succeeds, the victim suffers 1d4 points of temporary Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma damage. If the save is failed, the victim suffers 1d4 points of permanent Intelligence, Wisdom and Charisma drain, and his shadow is completely obliterated.

A being whose shadow has been obliterated immediately ages one age category, with his body ageing to the exact midpoint of the next category. He suffers penalties to

his physical and mental abilities as appropriate, but does not gain the commensurate benefits, if any. At the same moment, the caster is filled with a surge of energy and youthful vitality; the length of his current age category is extended by the number of years the victim aged. The caster can never more than quadruple the length of any age category by means of this spell, meaning that while the victim ages as normal, he will no longer benefit from the casting.

In order to cast this spell, the caster must first gather a score of objects which are considered important to the prospective victim. Appropriate objects might include a dagger which the victim always carries, a favourite piece of art or clothing or a love letter from an old paramour. Once these objects are gathered, they must be systematically destroyed, their essences burned away on a pyre of white hot flame. Afterwards, the ashes from the pyre must be gathered and mixed with precious oils, rare herbs and the fresh blood of a doppelganger or other being capable of natural shape shifting. This mixture costs 200 gold pieces per character level or Hit Dice of the victim, and must be stored in a cool environment for one full week, in order to 'ripen' into potency.

The actual casting of the spell, once the preparations are complete, is done in two stages. The first requires an hour of concentrated, undisturbed work, during which the caster must perform an elaborate series of chants and calculations. Once this first stage is complete, the spell is primed for final casting. From this point, the spell can be cast with a standard action, so long as the caster is within 100 feet + 10 feet per level of the intended target.

Devour shadow is one of, if not the, most feared spells the drow have developed. It is used frequently by dark weavers to crush the ambitions of those drow who hunger for power but lack the capability to use it wisely in the advancement of the race as a whole. *Devour shadow* is a more powerful, though less versatile version of one of the infamous drow black ceremonies.

Material Components: See text, plus a small, lit candle, which is snuffed at the moment of casting.

Embrace of the Dark Mother

Abjuration (Evil)

Level: DW 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Targets: One creature/level in a 10 ft. + 10 ft./level spread centred on you; see text

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

Casting this spell calls out to the Dark Mother of Spiders, who responds by gifting her children with a tiny mote of her malevolent essence, shielding them from harm and bolstering their power. This aura of black divinity provides several benefits, as outlined below.

First, each protected being gains a profane bonus to Armour Class and to all saving throws against attacks from good creatures equal to 1 + one half caster's Intelligence modifier.

Second, each warded being gains spell resistance equal to the caster's level + Intelligence modifier against all spells cast by good aligned beings.

Finally, anytime a good aligned being successfully strikes a warded being, he suffers 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage (Fortitude save negates, and immunity to magical poisons negates the need for a save).

Embrace of the Dark Mother can only affect drow, spiders of all sorts, evil creatures with spider characteristics (such as certain demons) or evil beings who are worshipers of the Dark Mother of Spiders. Other beings, even other evil beings, can receive no benefit from this spell.

While under the influence of this spell, affected beings radiate a black aura which is in the rough shape of a rearing spider.

Material Component: A scroll or book of the Dark Mother's holy scriptures, written on vellum using a mixture of spider's blood and gold leaf. The book is consumed at the moment of casting, in a sudden flare of dark, hissing energy.

Eyes of the Retriever

Transmutation

Level: DW 8, Sor/Wiz 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per level)

Effect: Ray

Duration: 1 round/four caster levels



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Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster tear out his eyes over the course of an agonising few seconds. In their place appear multifaceted, glittering black orbs; the eyes of the dread retriever.

Each round of the spell's duration, the caster may fire one of the following ray effects from the *retriever's eyes* as a free action:

Fire – 1d6/two caster levels damage to a single target (Reflex half)

Electricity – 1d6/two caster levels damage to a single target (Reflex half)

Cold – 1d6/two caster levels damage to a single target (Fortitude half)

Petrification – Single target must succeed at a Fortitude save or be petrified, as by the spell *flesh to stone*.

In addition to the above ability, for the duration of *eyes of the retriever* the caster is rendered immune to all spells or abilities which cause blindness, and gains a +2 profane bonus to all saves against sight based spells, spell-like effects and abilities. Further, they gain a +4 profane bonus to all Spot and Search checks for the duration of the spell. At the end of the spell's duration, the caster's eyes regrow themselves in their sockets.

Material Component: Two black diamonds of at least 1,000 gold pieces value. The diamonds are consumed in the casting.

Legs of the Spider

Transmutation

Level: DW 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 1 round per caster level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster sprouts four enormous spider's legs from his back, which move on command, allowing him to both scale walls and buffet foes with powerful attacks.

While under the effects of this spell, the caster can climb and travel across vertical and horizontal surfaces as though affected by a *spider climb* spell. His speed when moving in this fashion is equal to 30 feet per round and he is capable of performing the run action

while traversing vertical or horizontal surfaces (even when upside down).

The spider's legs have an effective Strength score of 20 for the purposes of attacking, lifting and grappling.

The four spider's legs can be used to attack, in one of two ways. As a free action, a single leg can attack at the caster's highest base attack bonus, inflicting 1d8 + 5 points of damage. Alternately, as a full round action, each leg can attack at your highest attack bonus, inflicting 1d8 + 5 points of damage for each successful hit. Leg attacks are considered to be piercing and they are considered to be magical weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

The spider's legs can also be used in grappling and add a +4 circumstance bonus to all Grapple checks, in addition to the bonus received from their high Strength.

Finally, the caster can also choose to defend with the legs, swatting arrows from the sky and turning aside sword strokes with equal ease. In lieu of making an attack for the round, you can assign one leg to defence, which grants you a +2 competence bonus to Armour Class. Alternatively, the caster can dedicate all four legs to defence, which grants a +5 competence bonus to Armour Class, but negates his ability to climb.

Material Component: A living spider of at least Small size. The spider is destroyed in the casting.

Night Bolt

Evocation

Level: DW 7

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 100 ft.

Area of Effect: 5 ft. wide line

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half, see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell causes a flood of pure, starless night to erupt from the caster's hand. Writhing and crackling like obsidian lightning, it pours over those unfortunate enough to be caught in its path, ripping the flesh from their bones and robbing them of their senses. The night bolt deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 15d6), with a Reflex save allowed for half damage.



In addition to the damage effect, all within the bolt's path must attempt a Fortitude save or be both blinded and deafened for 2d4 rounds. Those who were successful with their Reflex save gain a +2 circumstance bonus to their save to resist the loss of their senses, as they are able to shield themselves from the worst of the *night bolt's* energy.

A *night bolt* is most effective when cast in at night, or in areas of heavy shadow, such as in a narrow alleyway or the twisting tunnels of the under earth. When cast in such circumstances, the *night bolt* imposes a -1 circumstance penalty to all saves. Conversely, when cast during the daylight, or in areas well saturated with light, those in its path benefit from a +1 circumstance bonus to their saves to resist its effects.

Material Components: A sliver of obsidian wrapped in black satin.

Pestilence

Necromancy

Level: DW 7

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 40 ft.

Area of Effect: Cloud spreads in a 40 ft. radius, 40 ft. high, centred on you

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a cloud of deadly plague vapours which carries every form of virulent disease known to man. The diseases contained within the cloud are made stronger and even more contagious by the magic which transmits them, meaning even the hardest of victims will be hard pressed to resist infection.

When the spell is cast, a voluminous, noxious greenish grey cloud begins to billow forth from the caster's every pore, filling the spell's radius in the space of a single breath. The cloud remains in place for 1 round per 2 caster levels, then disperses. While the cloud remains, everyone within the area of effect (save the caster) is

1d12	Disease
1	Blinding Sickness
2	Cackle Fever
3	Demon Fever
4	Devil Chills
5	Filth Fever
6	Mindfire
7	Mummy Rot
8	Red Ache
9	Shakes
10	Slimy Doom
11	Roll twice on this chart, ignoring rolls of 11 or 12
12	Roll three times on this chart, ignoring rolls of 11 or 12



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immediately exposed to one or more virulent diseases each round. Roll 1d12 and consult the proceeding chart.

The exact effects and base save DCs of the above diseases can be found in the appendix of *Core Rulebook II*. The bolstering power of magic makes these diseases much more lethal; add the spell's level to the disease's base save to determine the actual save DC.

For the purposes of transmission, the diseases carried by *pestilence* are considered to be inhaled, meaning those who do not breathe or can successfully hold their breath for the spell's duration do not risk infection. Likewise, there is no incubation period for diseases transmitted via the spell, so all effects are instantaneous.

Beings which are immune to magical diseases are likewise immune to this spell, and *pestilence* has no effect on undead, constructs or on plant creatures.

Material Components: A vial of stagnant water.

Plague

Necromancy

Level: DW 9

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 50 ft.

Area of Effect: Cloud spreads in a 50 ft. radius, 50 ft. high, centred on you

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: Yes

A more virulent form of the *pestilence* spell, *plague* inflicts its victims with multiple, exquisitely deadly diseases. Each round any living being remains within the area of effect, he must roll twice on the following table.

The exact effects and base save DCs of the above diseases can be found in the appendix of *Core Rulebook II*. The bolstering power of magic makes these diseases much more lethal; add the spell's level to the disease's base save to determine the actual save DC.

The *plague* spell is far more insidious than *pestilence*. For the length of the spell's duration, and for 1d4 rounds after, any being who comes within 5 feet of a being who spent at least one round within the spell's radius must also save against disease, as though he himself had entered the spell's area of effect; saves are attempted against the disease's normal DC (meaning the spell's

1d12	Disease
1	Blinding Sickness
2	Cackle Fever
3	Demon Fever
4	Devil Chills
5	Filth Fever
6	Mindfire
7	Mummy Rot
8	Red Ache
9	Shakes
10	Slimy Doom
11	Roll twice on this chart, ignoring rolls of 11 or 12
12	Roll three times on this chart, ignoring rolls of 11 or 12

level is not added to the DC), and a failed save means the victim contracts the specific disease, or diseases, the carrier was exposed to.

For the purposes of transmission, the diseases carried by *plague* are considered to be inhaled, meaning those who do not breathe or can successfully hold their breath for the spell's duration do not risk infection. Likewise, there is no incubation period for diseases transmitted via the spell, so all effects are instantaneous.

Beings which are immune to magical diseases are likewise immune to this spell, and *pestilence* has no effect on undead, on constructs or on plant creatures.

Material Components: A piece of rotting flesh and a vial of pus.

Razor the Vein

Transmutation

Level: DW 2, Sor/Wiz 2

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Duration: 1 round per caster level

Saving Throw: See below

The caster's weapon is sharpened to a cruel edge by the means of this spell and the wounds it inflicts continue to bleed long after the injury is inflicted. Each time he successfully strikes with a piercing or slashing weapon, the wound continues to bleed at the rate of 1 hit point per round, until either the spell's duration ends, or the

victim succeeds at a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + one half the caster's level. Multiple strikes have a cumulative effect, with each requiring its own save to staunch.

The application of any form of *cure* spell, the quaffing of a *cure* potion or the successful application of a Heal check (DC 10 + one half caster level), will immediately staunch all bleeding.

Material Component: A strip of bloody flesh, which must be sliced in half at the time of casting.

Red Hourglass

Necromancy

Level: DW 4

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One target

Duration: Discharge

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By the casting of this spell, an unwitting victim is infused with a deadly poison that is transmitted by touch. On a failed save, the victim is suffused with a potentially deadly poison which is nearly undetectable, and which cannot harm them in any fashion. Upon command by the caster, the poison in their veins quickens and begins to ooze imperceptibly from their pores; the next person they touch is immediately affected by the poison.

The victim of the poison suffers 1d10 points of initial Constitution damage, and another 1d10 points of Constitution damage one minute later. Each instance of damage can be resisted with a successful Fortitude save against a DC equal to 10 + one half the caster's level + the caster's Intelligence bonus.

After the poison is delivered, a red hourglass, much like that on the thorax of a black widow, appears on the poison carrier's palm, announcing to all that he was the carrier. This hourglass stain is permanent, and can only be removed with a *remove curse*, *limited wish*, *miracle* or *wish* spell.

Once successfully cast upon a victim, the *red hourglass* spell remains dormant until the caster chooses to activate it with a silent mental command. This command takes effect regardless of considerations of distance, and can be given years or even centuries after the spell is cast,

making *red hourglass* an extremely effective method of subtle assassination and terror.

Material Component: A live black widow spider, which is slain in the casting.

Retch

Necromancy (Death)

Level: DW 0, Sor/Wiz 0

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One target

Duration: 1 round

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By pulping a piece of necrotic flesh between his teeth and spitting the juices, the caster sickens his target, forcing him to retch and heave for a few seconds. A target who fails his Fortitude save to resist the effects of this spell is rendered *nauseous* for one round. *Nauseated* characters cannot attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells or do anything else requiring attention. They may only take a move action during the round of effect.

Material Component: A piece of rotting flesh.

Secret Desires

Divination

Level: DW 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Targets: One being touched

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The drow are masters of manipulation and the dark weavers, masters among masters. With but a touch and a few moments concentration, this spell grants understanding of the victim's subconscious desires and fears. For the duration of the spell, the caster gains a +1 per caster level insight bonus to all Charisma based skill checks involving the victim. When the spell ends, the victim has no idea he has been manipulated in any fashion.

Material Component: A single page of a diary or journal. At the moment of casting, the page burns to ash.



DROW SPELLS

Shadow Fangs

Conjuration (Teleportation)

Level: Clr 5, DW 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels

Area of Effect: Sphere, centred on caster, with a radius of 10 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels

Duration: 1 round/two levels

Spell Resistance: Yes

For the duration of the spell, the caster's melee attacks issue forth from any shadow or area of darkness which is within the spell's radius; he quite literally reaches out of any shadow within the area of effect at will, to strike with impunity.

Each round, the caster can attack any target with the radius of effect as though he were within melee range. He makes all attack rolls as normal, deals damage as appropriate to his weapon (including magical effects, if applicable), and can use any applicable melee feats or special abilities. The caster can use disarm or trip manoeuvres when attacking as well; his opponent can attempt to disarm should the caster fail a disarm check, but he is not subject to retaliatory trip attempts. Likewise, you can strike with unarmed attacks should he so choose, but may not attempt to initiate a grapple.

Since the caster's attacks can literally come from anywhere, his opponents are considered to be flat-footed whenever he makes a melee attack with *shadow fangs*.



For the purposes of attacks of opportunity, the caster does not threaten areas within the spell's radius of effect, save those which he normally threatens.

Shriek of Abject Hatred

Evocation (Sonic)

Level: DW 4, Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area of Effect: 20 ft. radius burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

With a bloodcurdling shriek of absolute rage, the caster unleashes his hatred as an explosion of pure sonic energy, so powerful that it can liquefy flesh. The blast deals 1d6 points of sonic damage per caster level (10d6 maximum) to everyone within its radius of effect (Fortitude save for half).

The caster determines the location (distance and height) of the blast by sheer force of will. A small, compressed ball of sonic energy erupts from his throat and streaks to the target and, unless it impacts on a material body or solid barrier before reaching the desired target, detonates at that point. If the caster wishes to direct the ball through a narrow point, he must successfully thread the opening with a ranged touch attack.

In addition to dealing damage, the *shriek* renders all who fail to save *stunned* for one round, and renders them *deafened* for one hour, meaning they suffer a -4 penalty to Initiative checks, automatically fail Listen checks and have a 20% chance of spell failure when casting spells with a verbal component. Those who succeed at their save are affected as though *staggered* for one round.

Skittering Darkness

Illusion (Shadow)

Level: Clr 5, DW 5, Sor/Wiz 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 10 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels

Area of Effect: Sphere, centred on caster, with a radius of 10 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels

Duration: 1 round/two caster levels

Saving Throw: Will partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

Upon casting this spell, the caster causes shadow and darkness to writhe and crawl like a wave of spiders, striking at those who oppose him and gnawing at their flesh and sanity.

Those who are within the initial area of effect must immediately attempt a Will save; if they fail, they are subject to attack from any shadow or area of darkness they enter, whether it be of natural or magical origin. At the beginning of each round they remain in darkness, shadows coalesce and attack, with a base attack bonus equal to a fighter equal to the caster's level. On a successful strike, the claws inflict 1d6 + one half the caster's level in damage. This effect follows each victim for the duration of the spell, so that even characters who flee the initial area of effect are subject to attack from creatures of shadow and night.

In addition to suffering physical injury, victims of this spell are subject to terrifying psychological assault as well. The shadow shapes which appear to gnaw at their bodies are universally horrific in appearance, with lumpy, otherworldly bodies, spade-like claws and mouths full of jagged teeth. They resemble nothing so much as visions from a child's nightmares. For the duration of the spell effect, all those who were within the radius of effect of the spell when it was cast are *shaken*, suffering a -2 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks and ability checks.

Victims of this spell can avoid damage by ensuring that they remain entirely out of shadow. This can be difficult to do, as even the victim's own shadow will writhe forth to attack him. A character who is the focal point of a *light* spell, or other, similar enchantment will not himself cast a shadow, though the aura he radiates may well doom his less fortunate companions.

Material Component: A breath of air trapped in an obsidian box at the stroke of midnight.

Soul Poison

Necromancy

Level: Clr 4, DW 4, Sor/Wiz 5

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Living creature touched

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Calling upon the seething hatred which is the legacy of the drow's fall from grace, the caster infects his victim

with a psychic poison which erodes their very soul. In order to do this, the caster must touch his victim, as only the intimacy of skin to skin contact can truly allow him to express his exquisite loathing.

The victim of the spell suffers 1d10 points of initial temporary Charisma damage, with another 1d10 points of Charisma damage occurring one minute later. Each instance of damage can be negated with a successful Will save (DC 10 + one half caster level + Charisma modifier).

Speed Poison

Necromancy

Level: Clr/Drd 3; DW 2, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Area of Effect: 5 ft. radius/level

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

By means of this spell, the caster causes poisons to become more virulent and more immediately lethal. For the duration of the spell effect, all beings within the radius of effect when the spell is cast are weakened



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against the effects of poison. Whenever they come under the effects of a poison attack of any sort, they suffer both the initial and secondary damage effect from the poison immediately. The victim must attempt first his save against the initial effect, and then immediately roll to save against the secondary effect. Should the initial effect of the poison reduce the victim's applicable save, the reduction is applied before the save against the secondary effect is rolled.

A successful Fortitude save negates the effects of the spell, but of course has no effect on the victim's saves against poison attacks, should he later suffer one.

Material Component: A small vial of spider venom.

Spider Eyes

Transmutation

Level: DW 0

Components: V, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Personal

Target: Caster

Duration: 1 round

The spider's eyes are cold and merciless. The spider knows no pity and shows no mercy. With the casting of this spell, the caster revels in the cold, predatory nature of the spider. He gains a +2 competence bonus to Intimidate checks, provided he uses the skill in the round immediately following the casting of the spell.

Alternately, when dealing with drow or spider like beings, the caster can instead apply the +2 competence bonus to a Non-Player Character reaction check.

Material Components: Eight black pebbles.

Spider Gorge

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: DW 3, Sor/Wiz 3

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 25 ft.

Area of Effect: 5 ft. wide line

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: Reflex half; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

Distending the caster's jaw to an unnatural degree, he vomits forth a stream of tiny spiders which engulfs anyone unfortunate enough to be caught in its path, inflicting 1d4 points of damage per caster level

(maximum 10d4). Those who succeed at a Reflex save suffer only half damage.

Those who fail their initial save are *nauseated* for one round and must immediately succeed at a Fortitude save (at the same DC as their Reflex save) or suffer 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage, as hundreds of spider bites take their toll.

The spiders disappear as quickly as they appeared, fading away into sparkling motes of greasy light within moments of striking their victims.

Material Component: A handful of live spiders, which must be devoured immediately after speaking the incantation.

Spider Mother

Conjuration (Summoning)

Level: DW 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Area of Effect: 20 ft. radius burst

Target: Living beings

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

When cast, this spell laces the hapless victims' body with spider's eggs, which blossom to horrible life when the victim is reduced to an unconscious state. When an affected victim is reduced to 0 hit points or less, his body ruptures at the beginning of the caster's next action and a monstrous spider crawls forth, attacking his enemies as directed.

The size of the monstrous spider birthed varies, dependant on the power of the victim, as outlined below:

Victim's Level/ Hit Die	Monstrous Spider Size
1-2	Tiny
3-4	Small
5-6	Medium
7-9	Large
10-12	Huge
13-16	Gargantuan
17-20+	Colossal

The birthing of the spider instantly reduces the victim to -10 hit points.

Monstrous spiders created by this spell can be no larger than the size category of the victim when he died, regardless of the victim's level or Hit Die. However, should a victim's level or Hit Die indicate that a spider larger than his body can support be created, the magic of the spell instead creates multiple spiders of the largest attainable size, with each step of difference between the size categories of the victim and the spider to be created doubling the number of spiders. So, for example, a 20th level character's body would normally birth a spider of colossal size. If the victim were medium sized, however, the spell would instead create 16 Medium monstrous spiders.

This spell can only be cast upon living creatures, and only if they are above 0 hit points. The eggs implanted by the *spider mother* are destroyed by the application of any *cure* spell, *remove disease* or other, similar spells and spell-like effects.

Material Components: A spider's egg sac, which must be torn open and hurled towards the intended victims as the spell is cast.

Spider Totem

Transmutation

Level: Clr 5, DW 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Target: Being touched

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster, or the target chosen, take on some of the characteristics of the spider, becoming faster, stronger and more deadly in combat. In essence, you become the spider, a transcendent experience for any drow.

The recipient gains a +2 inherent bonus to Strength, a +6 inherent bonus to Dexterity and a +2 natural armour bonus. In addition, he becomes completely immune to non-magical poisons, gain a +4 inherent bonus to resist magical poisons, gain a +4 bonus to Initiative checks and the ability to climb along walls and horizontal surfaces as though under the effects of a *spider climb* spell. Clerics who cast this spell lose the use of most of their spells, but retain the use of their domain spells if they are priests of the Dark Mother. Dark weavers likewise lose the use of all but their favoured path spells.

For the duration of the spell, the recipient takes on the hideous appearance of a spider, with multiple eyes, chitinous skin which bristles with coarse hair and clawed fingers and toes. This appearance is so revolting that the recipient suffers a -6 penalty to all Non-Player Character reaction checks which do not involve drow or other spider worshipping, or spider-like beings.

Material Components: A live, Tiny spider, which is absorbed into the recipient's body at the time of casting.



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Stone Spears

Conjuration (Creation)
(Earth)

Level: DW 4

Components: S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Stalactites and stalagmites which fill an area up to 5 ft. square/level

Duration: 1 round per level

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes stone floors and ceilings to erupt with stalactites and stalagmites, which strike with the force of spears and then harden to impede movement. All within the area of effect when the spell is cast suffer 1d4 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d4), with a Reflex save allowed for half damage.

From that point until the end of the spell's duration, the area of effect is choked with stalactites and stalagmites, which reduce movement to almost nothing. Creatures can force their way through the hedge of rock in two fashions, either through brute force, or by attempting to thread the needle with dextrous movement.

Each 5 foot section of stalactite and stalagmite created by this spell is considered to have a hardness of 8 and



10 hit points. A section whose hit points have been reduced to 0 is considered destroyed and no longer impedes movement. Alternately, with a successful Strength check against DC 20, the creature can simply smash through a 5 foot section of rock; for every five points by which a creature succeeds at its skill check, an additional 5 foot section of wall is destroyed.

Like any other stone wall, stone spears can be *disintegrated* or warped by *stone shape* or *soften earth and stone*.

Each 5 foot section can also be bypassed with a successful Escape Artist or Dexterity check against DC 20. For every 5 points by which the check succeeds, another five-foot section may be traversed.

Beings separated by a five-foot section of *stone spears* are considered to have cover, while those separated by 15 feet or more are considered to have both cover and concealment.

Material Components: A stone spear tip or arrowhead.

Swarm Boil

Conjuration (summoning)

Level: Clr 4, DW 3

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action
Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One target

Duration: Instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

When cast, this loathsome spell, causes immense boils to bubble up from the victim's skin. These boils erupt nearly instantaneously,

spilling forth a swarm of tiny spiders which live only to serve the caster's whim.

The victim of the spell suffers 1d6/two caster levels damage (max 5d6) from the initial eruption of boils and the resultant flood of tiny spiders pouring from his flesh – a Fortitude save is permitted for half damage.

In the round following the eruption, the spiders form a swarm, exactly as with the spell *summon swarm*. The swarm has a number of Hit Dice equal to the victim's own and its size and the damage it deals are dependant upon its Hit Dice, as outlined in the swarm subtype description (*Core Rulebook III*). The swarm remains in existence for a number of rounds equal to one half your caster level, and can be directed as a free action. At the end of the spell's duration, the swarm disappears.

Material Components: A bag containing both a score or more of dead spiders and a small vial filled with liquid taken from lanced boils.

Symbol of Grief

Enchantment (Compulsion) (Mind-Affecting)

Level: DW 8

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 minutes

Range: 0 ft., see text

Effect: One symbol

Duration: See text

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell functions like *symbol of death*, save that all creatures who come within 60 feet of the *symbol of grief* instead become stricken with *grief*, suffering a -4 morale penalty to attack and damage rolls, to ability and skill checks and to saving throws, for a number of rounds equal to the caster's level.

Unlike the *symbol of death* spell, there is no limit to the number of Hit Dice which can be affected by the *grief* symbol; once triggered, it simply remains active for 10 minutes per caster level.

Note: Magic traps such as *symbol of grief* are hard to detect and disable. A rogue, and only a rogue, can use the Search skill to find a *symbol of grief* and the Disable Device skill to thwart it. The DC in each case is 25 + spell level, or 33 for a *symbol of grief*.

Material Components: Mercury and phosphorous, plus powered black diamond and ruby worth at least

5,000 gp in value. All components are consumed in the casting of the spell.

Virulence

Necromancy

Level: Clr/Drd 0, DW 0, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One target

Duration: 1 minute

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spells weakens the innate resistance of its target, making him or her more susceptible to the effects of poison and disease. A victim who fails to save suffers a -2 penalty to all saving throws versus poison and disease for the next minute. While suffering the effects of the spell, the victim is noticeably pallid, shivers as though stricken by cold chills, sweats as though feverish and suffers from minor stomach irritation, as though he were suffering from an extreme form of flu.

Material Component: A piece of flesh taken from a victim slain by poison or disease.

Void of the Wolf Spider

Transmutation

Level: DW 8, Sor/Wiz 8

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: One living being

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

A more powerful version of the *spider totem* spell, the *void of the wolf spider* fills the caster, or the being touched, with the killing mastery of the wolf spider, at the cost of your civilised intellect. This provides a number of benefits, as follows;

- † +6 inherent bonus to Strength, +2 inherent bonus to Constitution, +8 inherent bonus to Dexterity.
- † +6 dodge bonus to Armour Class.
- † Improved Uncanny Dodge ability, allowing the recipient to retain their Dexterity bonus even when flat-footed and rendering them unflankable.
- † Improved Unarmed Attack and Weapon Finesse feats.
- † 1d6 damage with a successful unarmed attack.



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- † Flurry of Blows as a monk of caster's level and may use unarmed attacks to inflict either bludgeoning or slashing damage. These attacks are considered to be both magical and evil for the purposes of defeating damage reduction.
- † Base movement is increased by 30 feet.
- † +2 inherent bonus to Jump checks and can move along walls and ceilings as though under the effects of a *spider climb* spell, the recipient may move at their full movement rate, however.
- † +4 inherent bonus to all saves to resist spells or spell-like abilities which restrict movement in any way, for example *hold person*, *web* or *flesh to stone*.

These powerful benefits are not gained without cost. The recipient loses all access to spellcasting, save those spells gained from a favoured path and suffers a -4 penalty to their Intelligence score for the duration of the spell.

Wall of Spiders

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: DW 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Effect: Wall of spiders whose area is up to one 5 ft. cube/level, see text

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No

The caster causes a writhing mass of tiny poisonous spiders to appear, which instantaneously coalesces into the shape of an impenetrable wall. This wall can be used to close a passage, to channel opponents or protect from the elements. The wall cannot, however, be conjured so that it occupies the same space as a creature or another object.

Unlike a wall of iron, a wall of spiders can be formed into almost any shape desired. It need not be vertical, nor must it rest upon a firm foundation, it can even be laid horizontally. A *wall of spiders* is pliant and moves at a touch, but is firm enough to walk upon, should someone desire to do so.

Any creature which touches the *wall* suffers 25 – their Armour Class points of damage. Dexterity and dodge bonuses to Armour Class do not count for this calculation. Creatures with an Armour Class of 25 or higher, without considering Dexterity or dodge bonuses, suffer no damage. In addition, the virulent

contact poison which covers the *wall* and fills the fangs of the spiders which compose it is deadly in the extreme; those who touch the wall must attempt a Fortitude save to avoid suffering 1d6 points of initial and secondary Constitution damage. Those who are immune to poison need not attempt to save.

Living beings can attempt to force themselves through a *wall of spiders*, but they suffer a -2 circumstance to their saves to resist the *wall's* poison when doing so. To push through the wall, the being must attempt a Strength check as a full round action. The DC of the check is 20 and a successful check allows the being to move 5 feet for every full 5 points by which the check succeeds, the being can move an additional 5 feet. A creature trapped in the *wall* can choose to remain absolutely still and does not suffer damage, and need not attempt to save versus poison, when doing so. It is not possible to simply breach a section of *wall* with a Strength check, as the *wall* is simply too pliable.

Like any other wall, a wall of spiders can be destroyed by means of a *disintegrate* spell or by attacking the wall with weapons. Each 5 foot section of wall has 50 hit points and a hardness of 5.

Though the *wall of spiders* is entirely composed of spiders, it cannot be destroyed or controlled by spells which affect vermin, nor is it subject to the effects of spells like *harm*. The spiders which make up the *wall* are entirely magical in nature and are not living in any real sense.

Material Components: A petrified spider's egg sack.

Web Bind

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: DW 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per level)

Target: One creature

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: Reflex partial

Spell Resistance: Yes

With a quick gesture and a few skittering, guttural words, the dark weaver causes a jet of webbing to erupt from his hand, wrapping an unlucky target in thick, rope-like strands of sticky silk. A victim who is enveloped is rendered immobile and may take no action other than attempting to struggle free of the binding – breaking loose requires a successful Strength check against a DC equal to the spell's save DC. The sticky

strands which bind the character also severely restrict his ability to breathe, and he must begin saving against suffocation (per the rules in *Core Rulebook II*) in the second round of the spell's duration.

The target of the spell is allowed a Reflex save; if successful he is not immobilised and need not save against suffocation, but is considered *entangled* for the duration of the spell. An *entangled* character moves at half speed, cannot run or charge and suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls and a -4 penalty to Dexterity. An *entangled* spellcaster must succeed at a Concentration check (DC 15 + the spell's level) or lose the spell. A successful Strength check (at the Reflex save DC -2), will free the victim from *entanglement*.

Material Component: A length of woven spiderweb.

Web Whip

Conjuration (Creation)

Level: DW 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Effect: Creates a whip from strands of webbing

Duration: 1 round/2 levels

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

When this spell is cast, a thick length of woven spider's webbing appears from the dark weaver's palm. This strand of webbing is thick, strong and flexible enough to function as a very effective whip. The caster wields this whip as though he possessed the Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip) feat. The whip deals normal damage and can be used normally against beings with an armour bonus of +1 or lower, or a natural armour bonus of +3 or lower, but is otherwise identical in function to a normal whip.

Should the caster wish, he can use the natural stickiness of the whip to ensnare objects, tearing them from his victim's grasp. The caster can attempt a disarm attack and does not provoke an attack of opportunity when doing so. For the purposes of the disarm check, the caster is considered to be wielding a two-handed weapon. If the check is failed, the caster can immediately end the spell, so as to avoid a retaliatory disarm attempt.

Material Component: A strand of spider's web woven into rope.

Wretched Excess

Necromancy

Level: DW 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./level)

Target: One or more creatures within a 20 ft. radius of each other

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: Fortitude negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

A *wretched excess* spell causes a magical queasiness to come upon a number of Hit Dice of creatures equal to the caster's level. Creatures with the fewest Hit Dice are affected first. Among those with equal Hit Dice, creatures closer to the spell's point of origin are affected first. Hit Dice which are not sufficient to affect a creature are wasted.

Those who succumb to the spell are *nauseated* for a single round and cannot attack, cast spells, concentrate on spells or do anything else requiring attention. They may only take a move action during the round of effect. For the remainder of the spell's duration, they are *sickened*, suffering a -2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks and ability checks.

For example, a *wretched excess* spell is cast at a Tiny monstrous spider (½ hit die), two drow warriors (1 Hit Die each) and an ogre (4 Hit Dice), by a 5th level dark weaver. The monstrous spider and the two drow warriors are affected (½ + 1 + 1 = 2 ½ Hit Dice) but the ogre is not, since its 4 Hit Die are more than what the spell can effect. The same spell cast at the same targets by a 7th level dark weaver would affect all the targets, since the total number of Hit Dice he may affect is higher than the combined Hit Die of the creatures.

A *remove paralysis* spell will cancel the effects of *wretched excess*, as will *delay poison* or any other spell or spell-like effect which removes poison. Beings which are immune to magical poisons are likewise immune to the effects of *wretched excess*, though their Hit Dice count against the spell's total as normal.

Wretched excess does not target unconscious creatures, plants, constructs or undead creatures.

Material Components: A gourd of alcoholic beverage, a hunk of rich food and a pinch of tobacco or other recreational drug.



BLACK CEREMONIES

Even before they were cast down for their heresies against the elven gods, the elves who would become the drow were infamous for their wild reveries, orgies of blood and lust dedicated to celebration and worship of the primal forces of nature. As centuries passed and the worship of the Dark Mother of Spiders became more open and widespread, these reveries took on a more overtly religious tone. Guided by priestesses, the participants ecstatically worshiped their patron goddess, their writhing dances, bloodletting and feasts quickening the pulse of the earth and awakening dark, divine energies. The priestesses and priest mages of the church of the Dark Mother quickly learned to tap these energies for their own uses, to direct them to both power their spells and to work great magics which even the most powerful arcane and divine spells could not accomplish. Eventually the reveries became nothing more than elaborately structured rituals; perfected and codified in the *Tome of Magnificent Ecstasies*, they were used to ensure the growth of crops, to punish the enemies of the drow and to power great engines of war and death in the War of Elven Tears. It was during the last waning years of that cataclysmic war that the rituals earned the name the black ceremonies.

The drow have not been lax during the long millennia of their entombment in the Dark Beneath, nor have they allowed knowledge of the *Tome of Magnificent Ecstasies* to slip into history. They have created new black ceremonies and refined the old, perfecting ceremonial magic to a degree which no other race can match. The performance of black ceremonies has become an integral part of day to day life and it is by their power alone that drow civilisation is able to keep its ravaging hordes of enemies from tearing it apart in an orgy of blood and fire.

CEREMONIAL MAGIC?

Ceremonial magic is a relatively new concept in d20 fantasy gaming, a method of spellcasting which is neither purely arcane nor divine, but rather a mixture of both. At its simplest, ceremonial magic is a method of commanding magic which is dependent on the successful execution of complex rituals designed to harness the raw power of reality itself.

Why Use Ceremonial Magic in Your Campaign?

Whenever a Games Master is given the chance to integrate a new rules system into his campaign, the first question he must invariably ask is 'Why should I?' the second inevitably 'What will it accomplish?'

To the first; the rules governing the use of ceremony magic presented here fill in a large gap in the existing fantasy gaming experience. The use of long rituals and elaborate ceremonies to create powerful magical effects is an idea that has gone relatively unexplored until now. Meaning that a Games Master who wished, for example, to close out an adventure with a confrontation with a group of drow attempting to chant down the sun was left to his own devices. While Games Master fiat is, of course, generally sufficient to resolve the issue, it can lead to dissatisfaction if the players come to resent what they see as 'arbitrary' decisions.

As to the second question; the rules for ceremonial magic are largely intended to remove some of the burden from the Games Master. By laying out actual concrete guidelines for creating and performing ceremonial magic, the Games Master need no longer make up rulings on the fly. In addition, these rules open up new vistas for adventuring, providing a more mythic feel to your game. Ritual magic has long been a part of legend, folklore and more modern fantasy tales and now it can be a part of your game.

Ceremonial magic is inspired loosely by ancient, real-world religious rites and more directly by fantasy fiction, where the idea that a group of like minded individuals can, with some effort and the proper materials, use their focused will to enact changes in the world around them. Unlike standard divine and arcane magic spells, which can only be wielded by a precious few, ceremonial magic can, in theory, be utilised by anyone, provided they can collect the proper materials and follow the proscribed steps. In practice, however, ceremonial magic works best when it is at least guided by someone with a solid understanding of magic – this is why most ceremonial magic is conducted by priests, witches covens, sorcerous cabals and the like.

Mechanically, ceremonial magic is a system intended to supplement the spellcasting rules presented in *Core Rulebook I*. While the rules presented in that book do a good job of presenting rules usable by

individual spellcasters, they contain no guidelines or rules for creating magical effects which either require multiple participants or which are not dependant on the expenditure of spell slots.

The rules presented here are expressly *not* needed for making or conducting those ceremonies which do not produce any sort of magical effect. Should the Games Master wish to present a scene which involves the performance of a ceremony which is important only for its traditional or symbolic value, such as a tea ceremony (though there is no reason that cannot be used as the basis of a magical ceremony, see below), then a series of checks against the appropriate skill will be more than sufficient to adjudicate the results.

CREATING A CEREMONY

While a number of drow specific ceremonies (known as black ceremonies) are presented here, invariably you will at some point wish to create your own ceremonies. With that in mind, we present the following guidelines. Note that these are not, for the most part, hard and fast rules – by necessity, ceremonial magic must be left open ended, as it will be used primarily to create magical effects which cannot be easily replicated with normal spells.

The Limits of Knowledge

Always keep in mind that the key conceit behind the rules for ceremony magic is the idea that it is neither wholly divine nor wholly arcane in nature, meaning it can be used by divine spellcasters and arcane spellcasters alike and, more importantly, by those who have no ability to use magic at all. To create a ceremony which specifically requires the use of arcane or divine magic in its conducting is to do nothing more than create an unwieldy spell and thus, to miss the point of ceremonial magic altogether.

Magic ceremonies are typically very complex and only the most learned and wise ever learn to master more than a handful of ceremonies. No mortal character may ever know more than one magical ceremony per point of his Intelligence and Wisdom modifiers combined.

With the Games Master's permission, a character who has reached his maximum number of ceremonies known but wishes to learn another can do so, so long as he is willing to purge his mind of one of his previous known ceremonies.

Creating a ceremony is not like crafting a magical item and the rules presented here are not intended to mimic exactly the steps the characters in your campaign will take. At no point, for example, will a wizard use his abacus to calculate skill check DCs, nor will your player's clerics write in their journals 'Today I presided over a ritual which required moderate materials, extensive effort, and included the restriction: season specific'. These guidelines are nothing more than a framework which will, hopefully, serve as invisible support for your adventures.

In order to better facilitate the integration of ceremonial magic into your campaigns and to make it simpler for players and Games Masters alike to create new ceremonies, ceremonies are presented in a format similar to that used to present spells in *Core Rulebook I*.

Effects

The single most important step in creating a new magical ceremony is creating its effect. Without an effect, without a goal to work towards, a ceremony is nothing but a song and dance number. The effects which can be produced through the use of a magical ceremony are effectively limitless, but there are certain things you should always keep in mind when deciding what your ceremony will do.

First of all, a ceremony should produce an effect which is not easily replicated through the casting of a spell. This means that ceremony magic should primarily be used to create abstract effects, or to bring about effects which are simply too powerful or specialised for even the most powerful of spells, *miracle* and *wish*. Note that this is not a hard and fast rule – several of the sample black ceremonies presented later can at least in part be replicated through the casting of several divine or, especially, arcane spells, though in each case they are altered in one or more fundamental ways. Rather, this is just a guideline to help you keep those ceremonies you create more interesting. If you do intend to create a ceremony which might be replicated by a spell, however, you should at least make sure it is made more interesting and abstract by the addition of unique elements – there should be no such thing as a *magic missile* ceremony unless, for example, the bolts can be fired across the span of the globe and are really the coagulated essence of the spirits of those murdered unjustly by the target.

The second thing to keep in mind, and this is perhaps just as important as the above consideration, you should never limit yourself to effects which have





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purely concrete mechanical bonuses and penalties. While those sorts of effects are unarguably easier to resolve in game and should not, by any means, be avoided, they are perhaps the less interesting of the effects which ceremonial magic can create. As has been said before, the guidelines for creating and resolving the use of ceremonial magic are generalised and open to interpretation. So while the actual steps required to create ceremonial magic are laid out in a rather specific step by step process, the list of possible effects is intentionally broad. In that respect, the effects which can be created with ceremony magic are rather like the powers of an artefact – mysterious and far reaching, but backed by a solid framework of rules. Perhaps the best effects for ceremonial magic are those which combine mechanical effects with more freeform effects – the *black dawn* ceremony, for example, imposes attribute and morale penalties on all surface dwelling beings, particularly elves, while simultaneously turning the sun the colour of dried blood for all eternity.

Effect Types

Since the final effect of a ceremony can be nearly anything, by necessity the following categories of effects must be kept intentionally broad. With that in mind, the following categories encompass the most commonly chosen ceremony effects. A ceremony can have more than one effect, though each additional effect adds considerable difficulty to the ritual.

Each of the following effects categories has an associated DC. This DC is the base DC of the ceremony, which will be modified by casting time, components and the like (as described below). The DC of the effect is not associated with a specific skill. The skill which will be associated with the ceremony is chosen by the Games Master, with assistance and suggestions from the player (if one is creating a ritual) highly encouraged.

While a clever Games Master or player can undoubtedly devise a ceremony for every single skill in *Core Rulebook I*, there are certain skills which are more appropriate for ceremonial magic than others. The skills most commonly associated with ceremony magic are Craft (any, but in particular armoursmith and weaponsmith), Knowledge (any, but most often arcana, architecture, history, nature or religion), Perform (any, but most often dance, chant, oration or song) and Profession (any, but most often farmer and other agriculture based professions). In general, only one skill will be associated with the base DC of the ceremony, though certain options presented below will

Base DCs and the Lowering and Raising Thereof

The base DC of a ceremonial effect represents the minimum difficulty which must be overcome to successfully perform the ritual. While there is no effective limit to how high the DC of a magic ceremony can be raised, there is a limit to how much it can be lowered; the DC of a magical ceremony can never be lowered below one half the starting base DC of the effect to be brought about. In the case of a magical ceremony with more than one effect, the DC can never be lowered below the sum total of one half the base of the highest DC effect and one quarter the base of each of the other effects.

require the association of a second or even third skill with the base DC.

Bolstering and Weakening (DC 30+)

Magical ceremonies which enhance or reduce the physical, mental or spiritual attributes of living things, objects or concepts are considered to be using bolstering or weakening effects. For example, the black ceremony *war*, which increases the savagery and combat prowess of an entire city-state's worth of drow warriors by leaching strength from their enemies, is both a bolstering and weakening effect. Likewise, a ceremony which weakens the concept of sunlight so that it is no longer harmful to drow is a weakening effect. The base DC of a bolstering or weakening effect varies, as outlined below:

Raise or Lower Attributes: DC 30 + 3x the total number of attribute points raised or lowered. +2 for each attribute raised after the first.

Hardness: DC 30 + 3x the total number of hardness points raised or lowered.

Crop Production: DC 45.

Concept bolstering or weakening: DC 30 – 60. This effect can be used to halve the destructive potential of fire, or to increase the darkness of midnight by twofold, for example.

The bolstering and weakening effect is perhaps the most open ended of all ceremonial magic effects. What constitutes the bolstering of a god in battle with another god and what exactly happens when the black ceremony *boundless sorrow* weakens the will of the surface elves is a matter of interpretation. When determining the results of such open to interpretation effects, the Games Master has final say, though he is of course encouraged to take the player's intentions into

consideration when making his decision as to what the ceremony can accomplish.

Unless modified by a target element (see below) a bolstering or weakening effect can only affect one target – under no circumstances can a single bolstering or weakening effect target more than a single concept. Games Masters, particularly those who have especially devious players in their group, are cautioned to be very careful when allowing the creation of rituals which bolster or weaken concepts and may wish to designate that option as for the Games Master only (or at the least, should directly create the ritual for the player).

Death, Destruction, Resurrection and Reconstruction (DC 50 – 110)

This effect category includes not only the obvious result of killing a living being or destroying a mountain, but the killing of vegetation and even the destruction of concepts like love, hate or passion. The more spectacular the death or destruction, the higher DC; the DC to kill a single elf hero, no matter his personal power, is 50, while the DC to destroy an entire mountain is 75 and the DC to annihilate the elven reverence for the forest is 110. The DC to resurrect or reconstitute beings, objects or concepts are the same as the DC required to destroy them.

Unless modified by a target element (see below) a death, destruction, resurrection or reconstruction effect can only affect one target – under no circumstances can a single death or destruction effect target more than a single concept. Games Masters, particularly those who have especially devious players in their group, are cautioned to be very careful when allowing the creation of rituals which destroy concepts and may wish to designate that option as for the Games Master only (or at the least, should directly create the ritual for the player).

Unless otherwise noted, destruction and death effects are permanent and irrevocable. A living being slain by a magical ceremony cannot be *raised* or *resurrected* by anything less than direct divine intervention or the use of a major artefact of legendary power.

Summoning and Dismissal (DC 30 – 120)

This effect category covers not only the summoning and dismissal of objects and living, and once living beings, but the summoning or banishment of events and concepts as well. So a summoning ceremony might be used to call up the spirits of the dead, or it might be used to draw in rain to end a crippling drought or even cause luck to appear where there is none. The base DC

of the check depends on the strength and abstractness of the being, object, concept or event to be summoned; the DC to summon a particular demon lord is 50, the DC to summon rain to relieve a short term drought is 30 (40 – 50 to relieve a century long drought) and the DC to directly summon a god's avatar is 120. A dismissed concept is not destroyed, merely removed from the affected being or area for the duration of the effect.

Unless modified by a target element (see below) a summoning or dismissal effect can only affect one target – under no circumstances can a single summoning or dismissal effect target more than a single concept. Games Masters, particularly those who have especially devious players in their group, are cautioned to be very careful when allowing the creation of rituals which summon or dismiss concepts and may wish to designate that option as for the Games Master only (or at the least, should directly create the ritual for the player).

Transformation (DC 40 – 100)

This effect category covers evolution, devolution, shape changing and transformations of all sorts, of the body, of the mind and intangible spirit. A transformation effect can change a desert into a tropical rainforest, utterly transform a drow warrior into a pit fiend or twist the concept of loyalty so completely as to make it unrecognisable. The more spectacular and involved the transformation, the higher the DC. For example, the base DC of the black ceremony *corruption*, which utterly transforms the mind, soul and body of a surface elf into that of a drow is 50, while the base DC to transform a desert into rainforest would be 75 and the DC to twist the concept of love to match the concept of hate would be 100. Unless modified by a target element (see below) a transformation effect can only affect one target. Under no circumstances can a single transformation effect target more than a single concept. Games Masters, particularly those who have especially devious players in their group, are cautioned to be very careful when allowing the creation of rituals which utterly transform concepts and may wish to designate that option as for the Games Master only (or at the least, should directly create the ritual for the player). Transformation effects are sometimes coupled with bolstering or weakening effects; while a drow transformed via a magical ceremony into a pit fiend automatically gains all the pit fiends powers and weaknesses, a bolstering effect can make him even more powerful.

Once the effect, or effects, of the magical ceremony are chosen and the base DCs assessed by the Games



True Names and Ceremonial Magic

Astute readers will note that there is some similarity of concept between the possible effects of ceremonial magic and the magic of true names (presented and fully detailed in Mongoose Publishing's *Quintessential Sorcerer*), particularly in the fact that both forms of magic can be used to seize control of, and transform, the very nature of universal concepts.

Those with access to both books will find that combining ceremonial magic and the magic of true names will create a more rewarding gaming experience, as it will add a more mythic, legendary and fantastical feel to your campaigns. Here are a few sample ways to integrate the two systems. Use one, all or none as you see fit.

True Names as a Required Component

In order to affect any changes with ceremonial magic, true names must be invoked. Thus, in order to slay a dragon (or all dragons) with ceremonial magic, the dragon's true name must be known (when attempting to slay all dragons, not only must the true name of every dragon be known, but the true name of *dragons* as an entity must be known as well). Or, when attempting to awaken righteous fury with the black ceremony of *war*, the dark weaver must know the true name of both betrayal and war. If the true name is not known, the ceremony can be performed, but it will have no effect. Treat the true name(s) as a required ingredient which does not alter the base DC of the ceremony.

Should you wish, you might instead rule that only certain types of effects require knowledge of a true name. So while, for example, the true name of blood is not required to perform the black ceremony *bloodletting*, the true name of love is required if you wish to pervert it with the black ceremony *desecration*.

True Names as a DC Reducer

It is not necessary to know a true name to perform any sort of ceremony, but knowledge of the appropriate true name will make it easier to do so. Knowing the appropriate true name(s) reduces the base DC of the ceremony by 20-50, though this reduction can never reduce the base DC below its minimum.

True Names as a Counter to Ceremonial Magic

Using this option, true names can be used to hinder, or even directly counter the effects of ceremonial magic, making them a weapon or shield of sorts. For example, while an especially sadistic and extraordinarily powerful dark weaver might successfully complete the black ceremony *black sunrise*, plunging the world into eternal night, heroic adventures with knowledge of the true names of both sunrise and hope might, with the aid of a *wish* or a god or two, reverse the effects of the ceremony. When using this option, be cautioned that providing too easy an access to true names will make it exceptionally difficult to successfully implement permanent changes through the use of ceremonial magic.

Master, you are ready to move on the next step, the choosing of elements which determine the range of the ceremony's effect, its duration and its requirements for successful completion. These elements will modify the base DC of the ceremony, either raising it or lowering it, as listed with each element.

Components

Like a spell, all magical ceremonies require components and if the determining of a magical ceremony's actual effect is the most vital step, then surely the selection of the material and preparations necessary to actually carry it out are the second most important. Unlike spell components, however, the components which make up a magical ceremony are not limited to a few words, a series of hand gestures and a pinch of grave dust

(though they may require all of those things). Instead, they include the conducting of elaborate cleansing rituals, the gathering together of dozens or hundreds of participants and the selection of specific locations for the conducting of the ceremony. The components which make up magic ceremonies are broken down into several sub categories, listed and detailed below.

Participants

All magical ceremonies require the presence of a minimum of five participants, though the baseline number of participants is considered to be 10. Only those beings which have at least above animal Intelligence can be counted as participants in a magical ceremony and beings of less than 5 Intelligence count only as ¼ a participant. The DC of the ritual is raised

or lowered by the minimum amount of participants required, as follows.

Participants	DC Modifier
5	+10
10	+/-0
20	-5
30	-10
50	-20
100	-30
Every 50 participants beyond 100	-5

Using more than the minimum number of participants lowers the final DC of the magical ceremony. For each category above the minimum number of participants you move up, the DC of the ceremony is lowered. So, for example, if 30 people participate in a ritual, which requires only 10, the DC of the check is lowered by 10. Conversely, a ritual which does not have the required number of participants will not work at all.

Materials

Once the number of participants required to perform the ritual has been decided, you must then determine what materials must be gathered for the ceremony. All magical ceremonies require materials, though exactly what is required varies from ceremony to ceremony. The rarity of the materials required and the difficulty in obtaining them strongly factor into the difficulty of correctly performing the ceremony; hard to gather, expensive materials reduce the difficulty and easily acquired materials raise it, as outlined below. Note that these are simply examples of the kind of materials which might need to be gathered and expended and that they neither represent an exhaustive list, nor a mandatory catalogue. Some ceremonies may require several different simple materials, for example, while another might require only one.

Simple Materials: Sacrifice of money or jewels or non-magical objects of a sum of less than 20,000 gold pieces. The ritual sacrifice of a calf, or multiple calves. DC +5.

Average Materials: Sacrifice of money or jewels, non-magical objects or magical objects of between 20,000 and 50,000. The ritual sacrifice of a magical animal, or an entire herd of cattle. DC +/-0.

Expensive Materials: Sacrifice of money or jewels, non-magical objects or magical objects of between 50,000 and 75,000 gp. The ritual sacrifice of a living, Intelligent being, or an entire group of magical animals. DC -10.

Complex Materials: Sacrifice of money or jewels, non-magical objects or magical objects of between 75,000 and 100,000 gp and the ritual sacrifice of a living, highly Intelligent being (Int 18+), or an entire group of magical animals. DC -20.

Extremely Complex Materials: Sacrifice of a magical object of at least minor artefact status or objects of great import (a castle or ancient art masterpiece). The ritual sacrifice of dozens of living, Intelligent beings or a powerful monster (an adult dragon). DC -30.

Legendary Materials: Sacrifice of a major artefact or several objects of great import (an entire city). The ritual sacrifice of hundreds of living, Intelligent beings, or an extraordinarily powerful monster (an avatar, an ancient red dragon). DC -50.

As with using more than the minimum number of participants, dedicating more than the required level of materials to the ceremony lowers the final DC. For each category above the minimum required material sacrifice you move up, you lower the DC of the ceremony by the difference between the categories.

Special Restrictions

A catchall category for all those preparations and materials which are not covered by the above categories. Miscellaneous preparations never raise the final DC of a ceremony, they only lower it. Some examples of special restrictions include:

Specific Location: The magical ceremony can only be conducted in a specific location, usually one which is of mystical import, such as an ancient circle of druid stones or the first sacrificial altar dedicated to the Dark Mother of Spiders. DC -10.

Seasonal Restriction: The magical ceremony can only be performed during one specific season (spring, summer, fall or winter). In the case of ceremonies which have a casting time measured in years (see below), the ceremony can continue to be cast during in other seasons, but can only be completed during the appropriate season. DC -15.

Race or Sex Specific: Only members of a particular race or sex (or both) can participate in the magical



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ceremony. Members of other races and sexes can, however, still be used as sacrifices. DC -5 for race or sex, DC -7 for both.

Sub-Checks: In addition to the final DC check which must be made to successfully carry out the ritual, at least one participant must succeed at another skill check each day for the duration of the casting (see below). A sub-check must be assigned to a specific skill and the Spellcraft skill cannot be substituted for that skill when attempting the check. The final DC of the magical ceremony is reduced by half the DC of the sub-check, so, for example, a sub-check requiring a Perform (dance) check against DC 20 would reduce the final DC of the magical ceremony by 10.

With the Games Master's permission, a second sub-check can be added, at the same DC as the first sub-check. This reduces the final DC of the magical ceremony by one quarter the DC of the second sub-check (a DC 20 check would reduce the final DC by 5, for example). The second sub-check cannot be based on the same category of the same skill as the first.

Completion Time

Once the required components have been gathered, the minimum time required to successfully perform the magical ceremony must be selected. Even the simplest of rituals requires more time and effort than all but the most complex spells and ceremonies with particularly powerful effects can take months or more of effort before they are complete. Choose a minimum completion time from the list below, modifying the final DC of the ceremony as appropriate.

Completion Time	DC Modifier
One Hour	+10
One Day	+/-0
One Week	-10
One Month	-20
One Season (Three Months)	-30
One Year	-50

In addition to selecting a minimum time required to complete the ritual, you must also select an associated level of commitment to the ceremony. This commitment determines how much effort each participant must dedicate the ceremony – keep in mind that, no matter how lax the level of commitment, a ceremony with a completion time of a day or more require eight hours of effort each day (or each day the ritual is performed) for the time spent to be counted against the total.

Completion Times of More than One Year

In all but the most unusual of campaigns, the practical limit to a ceremony which the players may wish to cast is one year of in game time and even that will be pushing it. Most players and Games Masters simply do not have the patience to follow a year long ritual through to completion and honestly who can blame them?

It is advised that should the Games Master wish to include ceremonies which requires decades or centuries to complete successfully, he use them only as background colour, or as the engine which drives the plot for an adventure or an entire campaign. It is further suggested that he introduce such ceremonies only as they rush to their completion, at least if he wishes the characters, and by extension the players, to feel any sort of pressure to stop or complete the ritual; after all, ten years from now is a long time and you will be hard pressed to make players care about long off events in an imaginary world. In other words, if it does not affect their characters almost immediately, players simply will not care.

With that in mind, when dealing with ceremonies with a casting time of decades or centuries, the Games Master should consider the DC bonus to be equal to whatever is necessary to guarantee the ritual's successful completion. Character's actions, not the roll of the dice, should be the only thing which dictates the outcome of such legendary endeavours.

Lax: Participants may come and go as they please and the ceremony can be started and stopped as often as is wished. New participants can take the place of old and only one final check need be made to successfully complete the ritual. DC +10.

Standard: Participants may come and go as they please, but the ritual must continue uninterrupted for the duration of the completion time. New participants can take the place of old, but only so long as the ceremony continues without pause for eight hours a day. Only one final check need be made to successfully complete the ritual. DC +/-0.

Exacting: Once the ceremony is begun, participants may not leave without spoiling the ritual and new participants may not join the ceremony once it is begun (except with the Games Master's permission). The ceremony must likewise continue unabated for the

entirety of the chosen completion time, with a minimum of eight hours of continuous effort required of each participant each day. In addition, those chosen to roll the final check and sub-checks required to successfully complete the ritual must roll once each day and a failed check ruins the ceremony. DC -15.

Range

Just like spells, each magical ceremony has a range, which represents the limits to which the ceremony effect can reach. A ceremony without a range component affects only those in the immediate area (and see Target, below), while a ceremony with the universal range can make its effects felt literally anywhere in existence. Choose a single range component from the list below and modify the final check DC as appropriate.

Range	DC Modifier
No range (only applies to the area which encompasses the ceremony)	-10
Close Range (within one mile of the ceremony)	+/-0
Short Range (within 10 miles of the ceremony)	+5
Medium Range (within 50 miles of the ceremony)	+10
Long Range (within 100 miles of the ceremony)	+15
Continent Spanning (within 1,000 miles of the ceremony)	+25
World Spanning (anywhere on the planet)	+35
Dimensional (anywhere on the ceremony's plane of reality)	+50
Universal (anywhere, in any dimension)	+75

Target

Once the range component has been chosen, the next step is to choose a target, or targets. By default, a ceremony affects only one target, though what is considered a target varies widely; for example, the murder of a single being through the use of the black ceremony *death* is considered a single target effect, but so too is the destruction of the concept of the elves' reverence for the wilderness. Choose a single target component from the list below.

Target	DC Modifier
1	+/-0
2	+2
3-5	+5
6-20	+10
21-50	+15
51-100	+20
All targets of one type within the selected range component	DC = (Range DC x2)

Duration

The final step in creating a new magical ceremony is to select a duration. By default, magical ceremonies with a destruction or death effect are considered to be permanent. With the Games Master's permission, the duration of a destruction effect can be shortened, allowing a ceremony to, for example, utterly destroy the concept of love for one hour. The increased final DC for the permanent duration of a destruction or death effect has already been folded into the effect's final cost, meaning this step adds nothing to the final DC cost. Select a single duration component from the list below:

Duration	DC Modifier
One Hour	-25
Sunrise to Sunset, or vice versa	-20
One Day	-15
One Week	-10
One Month	-5
One Season (Three Months)	+/-0
Two Seasons (Six Months)	+5
One Year	+10
One Decade	+20
One Century	+30
Permanent	+40

CONDUCTING A CEREMONY

After all the components of the magical ceremony have been selected, it is ready to be conducted. The methods required to actually conduct the ceremony are left to the imagination of the Games Master and the players and should be based off the effects of the ceremony



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and the skill associated with the final DC check. For example, a dwarven ceremony which strengthens the clan's armour before battle would be based off the skill Craft (armoursmith) and might involve dozens of participants smashing hammer against anvil and intoning ancient chants.

The black ceremony *black sunrise*, which turns the sun dark and cold as obsidian, is based off Knowledge (religion), requires the presence of hundreds of participants and mandates the sacrifice of an avatar of the Dark Mother of Spiders. Thus, the ceremony is an orgy of blood and ecstatic worship, which can only be conducted in areas of absolute darkness.

Once the format of the ceremony has been decided, all that remains is to calculate the final check DC of the ceremony and make the appropriate skill check. To calculate the final check DC, simply add up the DC cost of all the components (effect, materials, range, target, duration); the total is the DC of the check.

The Key Participant

Each ceremony must have a key participant, the character or Non-Player Character whose skill ranks will actually serve as the base for the final skill check. Typically, the key participant will be the ceremony participant with the highest rank in the appropriate skill (or the character with the highest ranks in Spellcraft). For the drow and their black ceremonies, the key participant is almost always a dark weaver (particularly if the dark weaver has taken levels in the ceremony master prestige class).

Though the key participant's skill ranks will be used as the base for rolling the final skill check to see if the ceremony is performed successfully, there will be many times when the DC is so prohibitively high that there is no way that one individual, no matter how skilled, can succeed at the check. To overcome this, the key participant can designate a number of assistants equal to his Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma modifier. With a successful skill check against a DC of 20, each assistant can add a circumstance bonus to the key participant's skill check equal to 5 + his relevant ability bonus (see Advanced Aid Another).

Sub-checks: While the key participant can perform any sub-checks which are associated with the magical ceremony, he need not do so. Nor must his assistants perform the checks. Instead, any participant involved

Advanced Aid Another

The aid another option presented in *Core Rulebook I* is very useful for allowing low level characters to assist one another in the successful use of their skills. It does, not however, provide enough of a bonus to make it useful at higher levels. Using this option, when a character makes a successful DC 20 skill check (for which he cannot take 20), he can add a total circumstance bonus equal to 5 + his relevant ability bonus to another character's check with the same skill.

in the ceremony can be called upon to use the relevant skill – it is for this reason that skilled dancers are called upon to participate in the black ceremony of *feasting*.

Successful Final Skill Check

If the final skill check is successful, the ceremony is carried through to completion without incident and its effects, whatever they may be, occur immediately.

Failed Final Skill

If the final skill check to complete the ceremony fails, then all the preparations and effort were for naught. The ceremony's effects do not occur and all materials involved in the conducting of the ceremony are lost. There may be other negative consequences associated with the failed execution of a magical ceremony, but these are left up to the Games Master's discretion.

SAMPLE BLACK CEREMONIES

The drow are the undisputed masters of ceremony magic, having perfected literally hundreds of ceremonies over the long ages of their imprisonment. Their ceremonies are uniformly bloody, sinister affairs, presided over by grim priestesses and dark weavers, who lead their followers in the performance of acts which devils would find repugnant.

The following black ceremonies are but a small sampling of many. Use them as a guideline in the creation of your own black ceremonies.

The following ceremonies are presented in a format similar to spells, first listing the effect component, then the material component, then range, target and duration. Each entry closes with a description of the ceremony's effects and rituals involved in its conducting.

Awaken the Dark Mother

Black ceremony

Effect: Summoning (DC 120)

Materials: 100 participants (DC -30), extremely complex materials (DC -30), female only (DC -5), DC 40 Knowledge (religion) sub-check (DC -20), DC 30 Perform (dance) sub-check (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 week (DC -10), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: Universal (DC +75)

Target: Single target (DC +/-0)

Duration: A single day (DC -15)

Final DC Check: 63

The black ceremony *awaken the Dark Mother* is perhaps the most holy of all black ceremonies, closely and jealously guarded by the priestess queens of the church of the Dark Mother of Spiders. The immense power of *awaken the Dark Mother* is the only way to shatter the veil between dimensions and reach into the depths of the Cocoon of Endless Hunger, where the Dark Mother herself waits, crouching in the centre of the black web which hangs, glittering, in the heart of the multi-verse.

The week long ceremony to summon the avatar of the Dark Mother is a feverish celebration of all it means to be a drow; murder, rape, betrayal and other, darker acts, all are offered up to the Dark Mother in the hopes of bringing her forth to rend and slay the enemies of the drow people. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a score of priestesses must tear their own throats open with their bare hands and then fling themselves onto an enormous bonfire. If the final ceremony check is successful, a void between worlds opens and an avatar of the Dark Mother heaves herself through the gap, to feast on the flesh and spirit of the surviving ceremony participants.

Kanathanx, Avatar of the Dark Mother of Spiders

Large Outsider (Lawful, Extraplanar, Evil)

Hit Dice: 12d8+96 (150 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+4 Improved Initiative, +3 Dexterity)

Speed: 60 ft. (12 squares), climb 60 ft.

Armour Class: 25 (-1 Size, +3 Dexterity, +13 Natural Armour), 12 touch, 22 flat-footed

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+21

Attack: Bite +16 melee (1d8+5 plus poison) or four claws +14 melee (1d6+2)

Full Attack: Primary scimitar +14/+9/+4 melee (1d8+5 plus optional poison) and 3 scimitars +10 melee (1d8+2 plus optional poison) and bite +14 melee (1d8+2 plus

poison) and web spitter +12 ranged (entanglement); or bite + 14 melee (1d8+5 plus poison) and 4 claws +14 melee (1d6+2) and web spitter +12 ranged (entanglement)

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Acid venom, command spiders, spell-like abilities, vengeful strike, webspitter

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 15/good, fast healing 1, spell resistance 22

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +9

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 13

Skills: Balance +10, Bluff +6, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +10, Hide +10, Jump +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +10, Search +12, Sense Motive +6, Spot +12

Feats: Improved Initiative, Leadership, Multiattack, Multiweapon Fighting

Environment: The Cocoon of Endless Hunger

Organisation: 12

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always Lawful Evil

Advancement: None

Level Adjustment: -

Believed to be formed from the flesh sacrificed in the Dark Mother's name, Kanathax appears as a terrible hybrid of a spider and something resembling a dire ape and a spider. Ebony skin drawn tight over powerful muscles and thick coarse hairs cover his broad shoulders and the backs of his four arms. Each arm ends in a fistful of vicious claws, which perpetually drip with gore, and more often than not wield four scimitars crafted from pure obsidian and handled with flayed elf skin. His head is comprised solely of a maw of fangs and an array of eight eyes, which reach up to the top of his forehead.

Combat

A powerful opponent, Kanathax, is keen to engage in slaughter in his master's name, charging into battle with his four obsidian scimitars weaving a web of death before him and many an elven warrior has fallen before realising they have been struck. He will often expectorate poison onto the blades of his weapons should the tide of battle turn against him.

Spell-like Abilities: At will – *magic fang, greater, jump, spider climb, speed poison, virulence*; 3/day – *become swarm, swarm boil, spider gorge, soul poison*.

Acid Venom (Ex): The venom of Kanathax is a highly potent acid. Any victim bitten by Kanathax must make an immediate Fortitude save (DC 18) or be completely



BLACK CEREMONIES

paralysed. Multiple bites increase the amount of venom in the victim's bloodstream to the point at which it begins to dissolve the creature from the inside out. For each subsequent bite after the first failed Fortitude save, the victim loses 1 point of

Constitution. This loss is permanent ability drain.

Command Spiders

(Su): Kanathax may rebuke or command spiders as an evil cleric of his level would rebuke undead.

Vengeful Strike (Ex): If Kanathax takes damage in combat, the next successful strike he deals against the opponent who successfully inflicted that damage deals maximum damage.

Summon Spiders (Sp): Once per day, Kanathax may summon up to 12 Hit Dice of monstrous spiders in any combination. Thus, he could summon two 6HD spiders, 12 1HD, or any combination thereof.

Web Spitter (Ex): Kanathax can spit a stream of spider webbing from his mouth. The stream hits anybody directly in front of him within 40 feet unless the target makes a successful Reflex save (DC 17). Anybody hit by Kanathax's webbing is immediately entangled, requiring three successful Strength rolls (DC 16) to break free. Each attempted Strength roll takes a move action.

Black Dawn

Black ceremony

Effect: Transformation (DC 100), weakening -8 to all attributes for non-drow (DC 64)

Materials: 300 participants (DC -50), legendary materials (DC -50), DC 50 Knowledge (the planes) sub-check (DC -25)

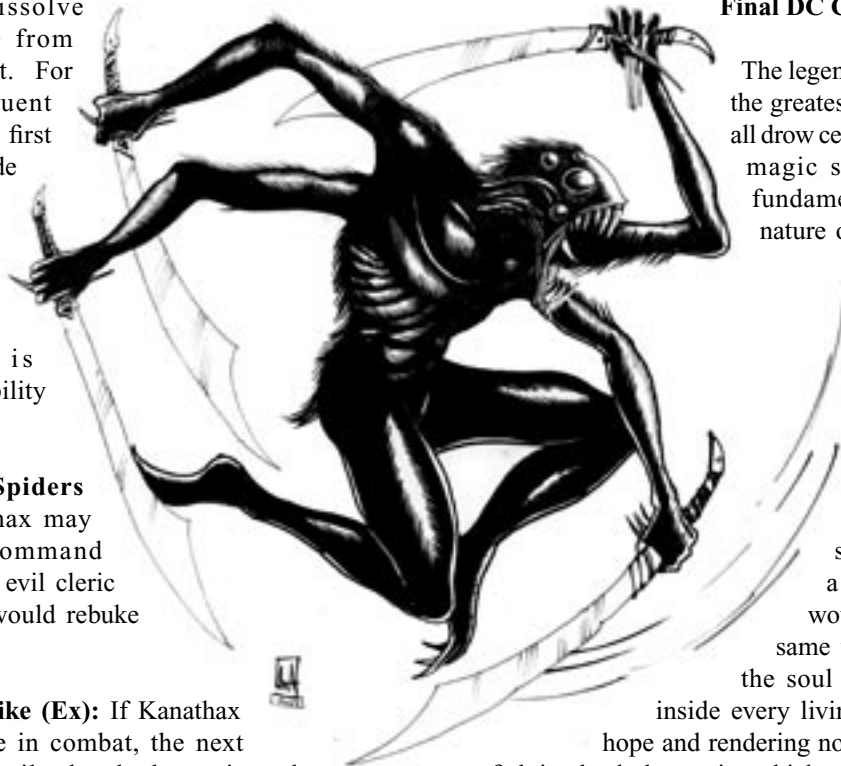
Completion Time: 1 year (DC -50), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: Dimensional (DC +50)

Target: All targets (DC +100)

Duration: Permanent (DC +40)

Final DC Check: 164



The legendary *black sunrise* is the greatest and most feared of all drow ceremonies, unleashing magic so powerful that it fundamentally changes the nature of an entire plane of existence. If the ceremony were ever to be successfully completed, it would transform all the stars in the heavens to cold, pitch black orbs and swath every world in a blanket of night that would never end. At the same time, it would snuff the soul candles that glitter inside every living thing, destroying hope and rendering non-drow incapable of fighting back the armies which would swarm up from the Dark Beneath in an endless black tide.

The ceremony of the *black sunrise* requires an entire year to complete, as well as the sacrifice of thousands of living beings, all of whom must die screaming, and uncounted millions of gold pieces worth of materials and magical artefacts. Should all this be done, the ritual is still not complete. At the last, the participants must bring low a solar celestial and tear his heart, still beating, from his chest. Only then is the ritual complete.

Fortunately, there are no living drow who know how to conduct the *black sunrise* ceremony, nor are there many who could take it through to completion if they did.

Corruption

Black ceremony

Effect: Transformation (DC 50)

Materials: 50 participants (DC -20), complex materials (DC -20), elf only (DC -5)

Completion Time: 1 week (DC -10), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: World Spanning (DC +35)

Target: Single Target (DC +/-0)

Duration: Permanent (+40)

Final DC Check: 55

The *corruption* ceremony utterly and permanently transforms a surface elf into that which he fears and loathes the most, a drow. The *corruption* ceremony is only performed when the drow wish to bring a mighty surface elf hero low or bring ruin and catastrophe to surface elf society. Dark weavers have, in the past, used this ceremony to spark wars between surface elf kingdoms, to end elven crusades which came too near their cities or, in one memorable instance, to lead a noble elven paladin-king to slaughter his entire family and all their servants and friends. Despite the *corruption* ceremonies power, drow are very judicious in its use; the good elven gods do not look kindly on the involuntary corruption of their followers and have on more than one occasion sent avatars to annihilate those dark weavers who perform this ceremony.

The *corruption* ceremony is long and involved, requiring the sacrifice of a drow who possesses personal power equivalent to that of the intended victim. The sacrificial victim need not volunteer for the duty and in fact, most dark weavers prefer to sacrifice their rivals whenever they can. During the *corruption* ceremony, all the participants, save the victim, must indulge themselves in all manner of vice; they must mate, despoil and desecrate objects sacred to the surface elves, all while shrieking the praises of the Dark Mother of Spiders.

Death Rite

Black ceremony

Effect: Dismissal (DC 40)

Materials: 10 participants (DC +/-0), Average materials (DC +/-0), DC 30 Knowledge (religion) sub-check (DC -15), specific location (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 day (DC +/-0), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: Short (within 5 miles) (DC +5)

Target: All within range (DC +10)

Duration: Permanent (DC +40)

Final DC Check: 55

The black ceremony *death rite* is used to ensure that the slain enemies of the drow cannot return to plague them again. The *death rite* is typically performed in the aftermath of a major battle or slaughter, the better to effect as many souls as possible. The *death rite* permanently banishes the spirits of the recently slain, relegating them to a place in whatever shadowy afterlife their deeds bound them to. Only a magical ceremony of equal or greater strength can release the souls from their prison and permit them to be *raised* or *resurrected* again as normal.

The *death rite* affects all recently dead within its range, even drow, so cautious and wealthy drow warriors make a practice of hiring retainers to remove their bodies a safe distance from the battlefield should they be slain, lest they be banished as well. Of course, not all retainers can be trusted to perform this duty, but that is simply an expected hazard of the warrior's profession.

The *death rite* involves the slow, methodical dismemberment of at least one recently slain corpse. Once the body has been fully butchered and dressed, it is fed by hand to a fiendish monstrous spider of at least Large size. The bloated spider is then burned on a pyre of greasy black flames, it's spirit set as an eternal guardian against the souls of the recently dead.

Though the *death rite* can be performed by anyone of sufficient skill, it is considered blasphemy, punishable by painful death, for anyone but the priestesses of the Dark Mother of Spiders or the dark weavers to perform it. Despite the thread of agonising death, many drow matrons perform the ceremony to ensure that those family enemies who fall prey to 'unfortunate' accidents never receive another chance at life.

Feasting

Black ceremony

Effect: Bolstering (DC 45), summoning (DC 40)

Materials: 50 participants (DC -20), expensive materials (DC -10), winter season only (DC -15), DC 20 Perform (dance) sub-check (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 day (DC +/-0), lax commitment (DC +10)

Range: Medium (within 50 miles) (DC +10)

Target: All plants and animals within range (DC +20)

Duration: 1 season (DC +/-0)

Final DC Check: 70

The drow use the black ceremony *feasting* to ensure that they can survive the harsh winter months in the Dark Beneath. Though many believe that this place knows no seasons, that it remains unchanged regardless of the turning of time and tide, this is not really true. In the late months of the year, when the gods of the harvest retire and the world is shrouded in white, the strange plants which fill the vast, hidden halls of the Dark Beneath fall dormant and the rodents and the great herd beasts which feast upon them hibernate. It is then that the drow perform the black ceremony of *feasting*.

The feasting awakens the vital energy of the Dark Beneath, it causes plants to grow anew and wakes



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the animals from their slumber. Without the *feasting* ceremony, it is likely that the great cities would starve.

During the ceremony, the participants fast and offer up silent prayers to the Dark Mother of Spiders, begging for her to send her blessing to her chosen people. At the end of the ceremony, the participants must offer up an entire herd of animals, who have gorged themselves on grain and oats, to the slaughter; the animal's bellies are slit and the grain allowed to mix freely with the flowing blood. The bloody grain must then be gathered up and baked into great loaves of crimson bread, which are served to the city's poorest citizens. When the last of the bread is gone, the animals wake and plants blossom.

Fertility

Black ceremony

Effect: Bolstering (DC 40)

Materials: 5 participants (DC +10), expensive materials (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 day (DC +/-0), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: No range (DC -10)

Target: All who participate (DC +10)

Duration: 1 decade (DC +20)

Final DC Check: 45

The strength of a drow family is wholly dependent on the strength and abundance of its children. The Dark Beneath is a deadly environment; the dangerous predators and natural hazards which abound in its depths claim countless drow each year and that is nothing compared to the slaughter that goes on within the walls of the great drow cities. Through the use of this *fertility* ceremony, drow matrons can ensure that their servant-relatives fulfil their duties of providing new strength to the family line.

The *fertility* ceremony is performed in the private family breeding chambers, where the young men and women are gathered together to slake their lusts in the hopes of producing strong offspring. The *fertility* ceremony is nothing more than a daylong orgy, albeit one dedicated to the Dark Mother of Spiders. Before the orgy begins, a number of aged drow equal to the number of participants must be sacrificed and their blood used to paint symbols upon those more virile participants.

Poison

Black ceremony

Effect: Weakening of a concept (DC 30)

Materials: 10 participants (DC +/-0), Expensive materials (DC -10), DC 20 Gather Information sub-check (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 week (DC -10), exacting commitment (DC -15)

Range: Long Range (DC +15)

Target: All within range (DC +30)

Duration: Permanent (DC +40)

Final DC Check: 70

The black ceremony *poison* weakens the loyalty between members of an extended drow family, leading to a cycle of betrayals, counter betrayals, jealousy and murder. It is used primarily by drow priestesses who wish to destabilise the strength of their rivals, or by dark weavers who wish to cull the weak from drow society.

The *poison* ceremony is generally conducted in a quiet, out of the way place and requires the slow ritual sacrifice of a member of the targeted family. During the sacrifice, the victim's flesh is flayed from his bones and the flesh tattooed with damning lies about the families' activities.

Those who use the *poison* ceremony with skill and daring are looked upon with great favour by the Dark Mother of Spiders.

Torment

Black ceremony

Effect: Transformation (DC 40)

Materials: 10 participants (DC +/-0), simple materials (DC +5), DC 20 Intimidation sub-check (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 hour (DC +10), standard commitment (DC +/-0)

Range: Short (within 1 mile) (DC +5)

Target: Single target (DC +/-0)

Duration: 1 day (DC -15)

Final DC Check: 35

The black ceremony *torment* literally causes the victim's blood to boil and his nerves to transform to tiny biting teeth. For the week the effect lasts, the victim is subject to such exquisite agony that he cannot act in any capacity and can do nothing more than shriek until its throat is torn to shreds. The power of the *torment* ceremony is sufficient to affect any being short of a divine avatar – the only defence is to halt the ceremony before it is completed.

The *torment* ceremony is among the simplest of black ceremonies, requiring only that the participants burn a small, venomous animal on an altar consecrated to the Dark Mother. When the animal gives its last death shriek, the participants must impale it with a small obsidian dagger. At that exact moment, the victim is stricken.

War

Black ceremony

Effect: Bolstering +4 to Strength and Constitution (DC 44). Weakening -4 to enemies Strength and Constitution (DC 44)

Materials: Minimum 100 participants (DC -30), Average Materials (DC +/-0), Drow only (DC -5), Intimidation sub-check DC 20 (DC -10)

Completion Time: 1 day (DC +/-0), standard commitment (DC +0)

Range: Medium (up to 50 miles) (DC +10).

Target: All drow and their designated enemies within 50 miles (DC +20)

Duration: 1 week (DC -10)

Final DC Check:

73

Through the use of this powerful ceremony, drow warriors can gorge themselves on the fighting spirit of their most hated enemies. This mystic energies created by this ceremony greatly increased both the killing fury and the fortitude of the drow, transforming them into a howling warband of unimaginable fury.

This ceremony is used only in the most dire of circumstances, when the survival of an entire drow city is at stake for example, as it is difficult to gather one hundred drow and get them to co-operate for any reason. The *war* ceremony is a sombre affair, at least by the standards of drow black ceremonies. Ceremony participants are required to dance until exhaustion takes them and they collapse, bloody froth at their lips. The magic ceremony culminates, accompanied by the thunder of war drums, with the summoning and ritual slaughter of a fiendish monstrous spider.



HELP FOR GAMES MASTERS

Drow magic is nasty, in every sense of the word. Drow spells tend to be more vicious than their *Core Rulebook I* counterparts. While they are not more powerful, their effects tend towards the corruptive and the crippling, ripping and tearing of flesh and spirit in ways that can seem quite disturbing. The first time your player's hear that their character's flesh is bubbling and ripping and erupting into gouts of tiny spiders, they are likely to react with shock, perhaps even a bit of revulsion.

In other words, they will react exactly as they should when confronted by the drow.

INTRODUCING DROW SPELLS

Introducing the new spells in this book should be relatively easy, since most campaigns do not feature drow opponents so regularly that players can feel confident that they have seen the full extent of their magical knowledge. The best way to introduce these spells is to simply unleash them in combat, which will help to play up the mysterious and truly alien nature of the drow which, until gamers were overexposed to them over the past few years, was always the key part of their mystique.

The first time you use any of the spells in this book, you should take great pains not to name it. The old saying goes that names are power, but for the purposes of inspiring unease in your players, that simply is not true. The moment you say 'the drow casts *swarm boil* at you', your players will immediately begin trying to guess at what is coming and what its mechanical effects will be, and when that happens you can throw any notions of disquieting them right out the

window. It is better to simply request that they roll the appropriate saving throw and then describe to them what occurs and better still if you give them the results in gritty, visceral detail.

In order to get the most use out of the spells in this book, it is suggested that you use them as replacements for some of the more common spells in *Core Rulebook I*, at least when making up spell lists for drow wizards and sorcerers. So, for example, a drow wizard should have *spider gorge*, rather than *lightning bolt*, in his repertoire and a sorcerer should use *shriek of abject hatred*, rather than *ice storm*, in combat.

Should you choose to eventually allow non-drow spellcasters access to the spells in the book, you should not simply allow them to pick and choose them each time they go up a level, or even buy or find scrolls containing the spells in local magic stores or random treasure hordes. Instead, they should earn them only by defeating drow spellcasters in combat, or by outwitting them, as the spells in this book work best when they remain rare and mysterious.

INTRODUCING THE DARK WEAVER

Introducing a new base class into your campaigns is never an easy thing, since it brings with it questions of appropriateness within your game and balance against the existing options. That said, introducing the dark weaver should be relatively painless, primarily because while it is balanced with the classes in *Core Rulebook I* in mind, it will most likely be used primarily to create unique Non-Player Characters for your player's characters to fight, a role it fulfils admirably.

As a base class, the dark weaver can at first seem a bit of an odd duck; with his decent combat abilities, his two good saves and, especially, his mixture of traditional arcane spell progression and domain-like favoured spell paths, he at first looks like nothing

so much as an unholy cross between a cleric and a wizard, with a bit of the bard's skill list thrown in for good measure. That said, the dark weaver's mix of abilities also makes him both a compelling opponent for adventurers and a distillation of the essential elements of the iconic drow; a stealthy killer who wields blade and spell with equal parts grace and savagery, all for the glory of the drow spider goddess.

The dark weaver is perhaps the best option when you wish to make a foil for adventurers, as both his spell list and his collection of class abilities are well suited to wreaking havoc and thwarting the best laid plans of heroes and mercenaries alike. Thanks to his skill with black ceremony magic, the dark weaver is also a good choice for an adventure or campaign closing villain, a mastermind style foe whose grand plans can and *will* succeed if the heroes are not at their best.

Tactically, the dark weaver should strike from the shadows and never, if he can help it, confront opponents on an equal footing. His spells are well suited for exploiting weakness and temporarily crippling opponents, while his medium base attack bonus allows him to finish them off or escape to fight another day. Remaining versatile is the key to success when using a dark weaver; like the other jack-of-all-trades base class, the bard, the dark weaver cannot match warriors blow for blow, or arcane casters spell for spell, but what he can do in countering swords with spells and spells with swords should prove all the advantage he needs.

INTRODUCING BLACK CEREMONIES

Perhaps the most difficult element of this book to introduce to your campaign will be ceremony magic, since it will represent somewhat of a paradigm shift for most campaigns.

It is easiest to introduce ceremony magic when you begin a new campaign, as you can simply add it to the background without much fuss or logic strain. Should you choose to do so, your players will be best served by you telling them about the new addition when the campaign starts, so that those who wish to take advantage of the rules can choose their character's skills appropriately (as a wide breadth of skills is important for ceremony participants).

Should you wish to introduce ceremony magic into your existing campaign, the easiest method for doing so is to 'reintroduce' ceremony magic to the world instead, by placing a lost tome describing ceremony magic in an ancient treasure hoard, by having a god introduce it to the world in some world changing event, or by allowing the characters to first encounter it in the form of the drow black ceremonies. This last option will perhaps prove the most satisfying; since it has been a conceit of fantasy gaming that the drow are an ancient race cursed to dwell in darkness for their evil and heresy, players should have no trouble swallowing the idea that the dark elves have preserved and still practice some ancient, blasphemous form of sacrificial magic.

Once the genie is out of the bottle, so to speak, and ceremonial magic has been introduced to your campaign, you should find no end of uses for it. The drow will forever be scheming to strike at one another and their surface dwelling enemies with their black ceremonies and it is likely that your players will at least want to experiment with the power and versatility of ceremony magic themselves. Ceremony magic is also an excellent way to introduce some mythic elements to your campaign; searching for the knowledge and materials necessary to create a ceremony capable of countering the black ceremony *black sunrise* is a quest worthy of an entire campaign and even a brief aside describing a village of farmers chanting and sacrificing pigs to ensure healthy crops for the new year will truly bring your campaign world to life.



DESIGNER'S NOTES

I like drow, I really do but I have grown a little sick of them after many years of gaming. Honestly, like a bad party guest who just will not leave, I have seen them once too often, and then ten times more after that. My characters have seen drow in the dungeon, drow in the caverns and drow in the open fields (at high noon, no less). There are dark elves in the Dark Beneath, there are far too many dark elves in 'Light Above' and, I suspect, there might just be one in my kitchen pantry, sneaking about at night, eating bread crumbs and leaving footprints in the sugar. Though that *may* actually be mice, I cannot say for sure.

The point is, I have seen a *lot* of the dark elves, so when they handed me this assignment, I was not really sure what new things there were to say about them. I stewed over it a bit and came to the conclusion that the best thing to do would be to go back and distill the drow down to their bare essence and build on their foundations as the sleek and sexy supermodels of villainy, rather than the tedious socialites that twenty years of overexposure has made them.

So, I thought, what *is* the bare essence of the drow, anyway? Is it sexy, brooding boy toys and dominatrix style leather fetishists with bosoms that put most porn stars to shame? Well, yes, I suppose it is a bit, actually.

But looking beyond the gothic, fantasy pinup aspect, the real heart of the drow mystique can be summed up in three words: corrupt, fanatical and mysterious.

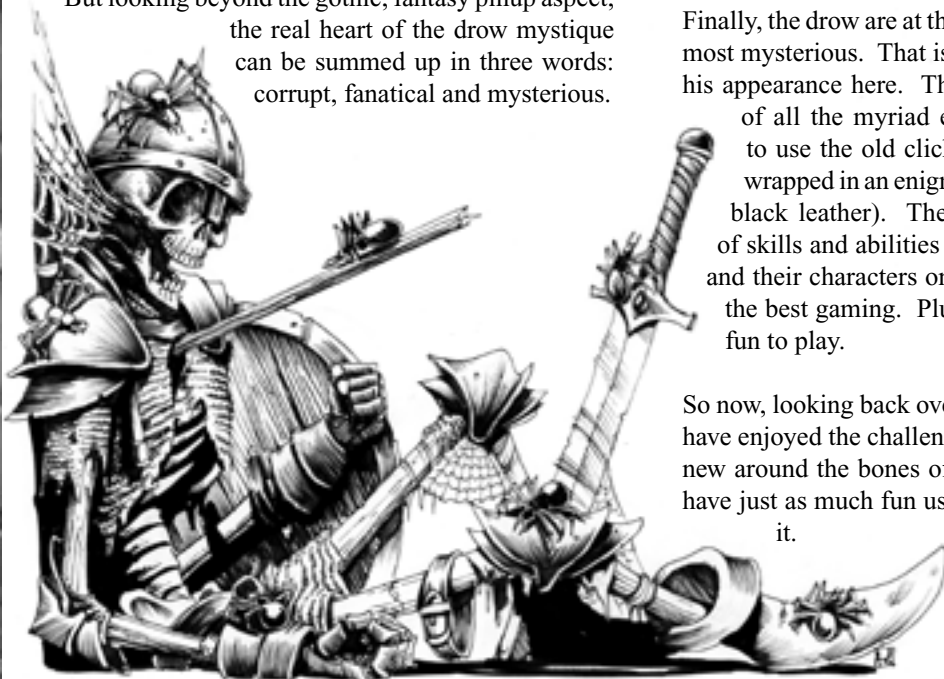
The drow are undoubtedly corrupt. If they were not, they would not spend so much time obsessing over the best ways to destroy the good elven gods and their followers, they certainly would not make so much of a hobby of knifing each other at the breakfast table. Also, if they were not corrupt, they would not be stuck in the Dark Beneath in the first place. I decided the best way to get across the idea of corruption in a book about drow magic was in the new spells I've introduced. That is why so many of the new enchantments are so, frankly, disgusting if you think about them. A wall of living spiders? A spell which causes virulent diseases to wash over victims like a greasy tide? Vomiting a stream of living spiders? Nasty stuff, at least to me. Of course, the idea of corruption goes beyond the disgusting. There are enchantments that bring out the darker sides of the victims and which convince them to think and act like the drow would. Fairly appropriate, I think.

From there we move into the concept of fanaticism and the drow are undoubtedly fanatical. They are fanatical about their love of power, they are fanatical about their hatred of the 'good' surface elves and they are, above all, fanatical about their love for their bloated spider goddess, for whom they make endless, genocidal war against all non-drow. To represent their fanatical love of their goddess, power and the idea of killing everything they see, I created the black ceremonies. Quasi-religious rituals, black ceremonies allow the drow to move beyond the concept of arcane and divine spells to a place where fanatical belief and unyielding effort is enough to blot out suns.

Finally, the drow are at their best when they are at their most mysterious. That is why the dark weaver makes his appearance here. The dark weaver is a blending of all the myriad elements of the drow; he is, to use the old cliché, intended to be a mystery wrapped in an enigma (and then wrapped in tight, black leather). The dark weaver's eclectic mix of skills and abilities are great for keeping players and their characters on their toes, which makes for the best gaming. Plus, the dark weaver is simply fun to play.

So now, looking back over this project, I can say that I have enjoyed the challenge of constructing something new around the bones of something old. I hope you have just as much fun using the book as I did writing it.

Patrick Younts



DARK WEAVER SPELL LIST

0th Level Dark Weaver Spells

Black Rainbow*
 Dark Baubles*
 Detect Magic
 Detect Poison
 Ghost Sound
 Guidance
 Know Direction
 Lullaby
 Mage Hand
 Message
 Read Magic
 Resistance
 Retch*
 Virulence*

1st level Dark Weaver Spells

Alarm
 Bane
 Cause Fear
 Command
 Darkness
 Deathwatch
 Detect Secret Doors
 Disguise Self
 Doom
 Jump
 Lesser Confusion
 Mage Armour
 Magic Weapon
 Ray of Enfeeblement
 Remove Fear
 Sleep
 Secret Desires*
 Speed Poison*
 Spider Climb
 Summon Monster I
 True Strike
 Web Bind*
 Web Whip*
 Wretched Excess*

2nd level Dark Weaver Spells

Bite of the Seductress*
 Blindness/Deafness
 Blur
 Cat's Grace
 Daze Monster
 Death Knell
 Detect Thoughts
 Enthral
 Fox's Cunning
 Hold Person
 Invisibility
 Razor the Vein*
 Rope Trick
 Scare
 See Invisibility

Silence
 Summon Monster II
 Summon Swarm
 Web

3rd level Dark Weaver Spells

Animated Web*
 Arcane Sight
 Blink
 Clairaudience/Clairvoyance
 Corruption's Kiss*
 Dispel Magic
 Displacement
 Fear
 Gaseous Form
 Glibness
 Halt Undead
 Haste
 Hold Person
 Invisibility Sphere
 Keen Edge
 Lightning Bolt
 Magic Circle (evil, chaos, law)
 Magic Weapon, Greater
 Nondetection
 Slow
 Spider Gorge*
 Stinking Cloud
 Summon Monster III
 Swarm Boil*
 Tongues
 Vampiric Touch

4th level Dark Weaver Spells

Arcane Eye
 Become Swarm*
 Bestow Curse
 Black Tentacles
 Charm Monster
 Confusion
 Contagion
 Detect Srying
 Dimension Door
 Enervation
 Globe of Invulnerability
 Greater Invisibility
 Illusory Wall
 Lesser Geas
 Locate Creature
 Phantasmal Killer
 Polymorph
 Red Hourglass*
 Srying
 Shadow Conjuration
 Shriek of Abject Hatred*
 Solid Fog
 Soul Poison*
 Spider Mother*

Stone Sculpt
 Stone Spears*
 Summon Monster IV
 Zone of Silence

5th Level Dark Weaver Spells

Baleful Polymorph
 Black Wind of Mourning*
 Cloudkill
 Dominate Person
 False Vision
 Feeblemind
 Hold Monster
 Lesser Planar Binding
 Mage's Faithful Hound
 Magic Jar
 Nightmare
 Permanency
 Prying Eyes
 Seeming
 Shadow Evocation
 Shadow Fangs*
 Skittering Darkness*
 Spider Totem*
 Summon Monster V
 Telekinesis
 Teleport
 Transmute Mud to Rock
 Transmute Rock to Mud
 Wall of Stone
 Waves of Fatigue

6th level Dark Weaver Spells

Acid Fog
 Antimagic Field
 Chain Lightning
 Circle of Death
 Contingency
 Disintegrate
 Find the Path
 Flesh to Stone
 Geas
 Greater Dispel Magic
 Globe of Invulnerability
 Legend Lore
 Legs of the Spider*
 Mislend
 Move Earth
 Planar Binding
 Repulsion
 Shadow Walk
 Stone to Flesh
 Summon Monster VI
 True Seeing
 Undeath to Death
 Wall of Spiders*
 Word of Recall
 * New Spells found in this book

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DROW MAGIC

SORCERY OF ENDLESS NIGHT

There are monsters in the deep, beasts whose flesh is perfect obsidian, whose eyes shine like midnight stars and who yearn to hunt again beneath the open sky. These beasts are the drow, and it is their doom to never again feel the light and warmth of the sun, until such time as the elven gods are thrown down and all their favoured children slain.

The cities of the drow spread like a cancer through the veins of the world, glittering jewels of decadence, soaked in blood and steeped in corruption. Ruled by great, matriarchal families and the will of the Dark Mother of Spiders' clergy, these cities are cosmopolitan nightmares, home to the worst depravities imaginable and swarming with untold legions of drow.

While all drow have earned a reputation for cruelty and deadly cunning, none deserve it more than those drow who command the primal, arcane forces. The *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Drow Magic* shows you why. In this, the latest in Mongoose Publishing's line of books designed to broaden the horizons of wizardry in fantasy gaming, you will find a host of new options specifically designed with the sinister needs of the drow in mind. You will find page after page of new spells; spells which create living webs, which infect enemies of the drow with deadly soul poisons or virulent diseases, which summon up gibbering mounds of shadow to bite and tear at both flesh and spirit.

Encyclopaedia Arcane: Drow Magic presents a new insight into the magic of one of fantasy gaming's staple races, the dark elves known as the drow. Designed to be slotted seamlessly into any fantasy-based d20 system, this sourcebook will enhance and expand all arcane spellcasting classes, while adding a whole new dimension to your campaigns. *Encyclopaedia Arcane: Drow Magic* is not just intended for the Games Master to enhance his campaign, however. Players will also find full details on the use of new magic systems with their characters, greatly increasing the wealth of options they are presented with.

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