

Avaricious Arachnid aka “Hungry Leg Spider”

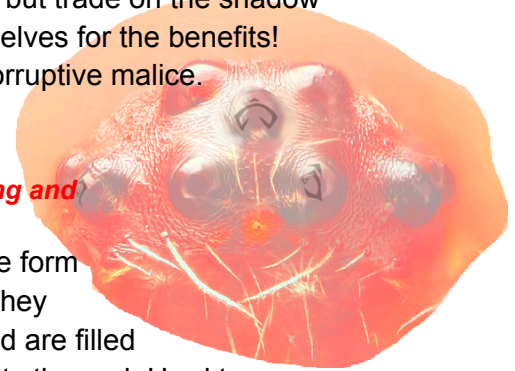
This semi-corporeal rune-cursed arachnid devours the magic of its prey during 3 life-phases: pod, nymph, and parasite(adult). Usually found in Thassilonian ruins, but trade on the shadow market has seen their spread—some deluded souls even infest themselves for the benefits! Rumored to be the result of phase spiders exposed to a runewell’s corruptive malice.

Pod “*As your foot smooshes through the translucent tendriled mass, you feel an itching sensation like thousands of teeth and claws climbing and drilling into your skin.*”

Egg pods are made from the distended stomachs of the adult parasite form and are roughly the size of a watermelon. Once they fall off the host they anchor themselves to nearby surfaces with wispy ethereal tendrils and are filled with thousands of spawn (see right) that flood over anything that bursts the pod. Hard to see, especially in dim light, and used by enterprising individuals as traps and ranged splash weapons.

The pod self-cannibalizes after 1d6+1 days, but lasts indefinitely in high-magic environments.

Pods can be harvested with 1 minute of work with DC 31 Disable Device/Survival check, failure by 5+ bursts the pod. *Ghost Touch* slashing weapons gives +10 to the check.



Trap form	Perception DC 31, 36 in low-light. <i>Detect Magic</i> auto-succeeds. Releases 1d2+1 swarms on trigger, triggering creature makes a DC 24 Reflex save to avoid effects of <u>Direct Hit</u>
Ranged Splash Weapon form	Treat as simple alchemical weapon with range increment of 10' that targets touch AC. Creatures <u>Directly Hit</u> are treated under the effect of <i>Antimagic Field</i> for 1d4 rounds and immediately save vs the swarm’s <u>Embed</u> ability. Swarms release on use.
Swarm	<p>As <i>Spider Swarm (Cr1)</i>, but with following adjustments: 4d8 hit dice, 20 hp, incorporeal, size fine. <u>Auto-dispels</u> up to its hit dice of spell levels of spells/spell-like-abilities with origin or target within the swarm's space (includes consumables). Swarms in the same space pool their hit dice for this effect. Vulnerable to fire, not immune to <i>Magic Missile</i>. Dies in 1d4 rounds or when all hit dice expended. Each turn it <u>auto-dispels</u> something, its life extends by 1 round. Replace Poison with <u>Embed</u>.</p> <p><u>Embed (ex)</u>: Whenever a creature enters or starts its turn in the swarm’s space it makes a DC 18 Fortitude save or becomes <u>Infested</u>. Spellcasters, characters with spell-like-abilities, characters with 4th level spell slots, and arcane spellcasters take a cumulative -2 penalty on this save for each qualifying category (Thus a lvl 7 kitsune wizard with the <i>Magical Tail</i> feat takes a -8 penalty). The swarm expends 1 hit dice—taking 5 hp dmg—every time this save is failed, as the spawn use their teeth and claws to embed themselves into the victim’s body and clothing.</p>

Nymph *“Why should Jeremy get the gold from that fight? He hardly helped, but you, you were grievously injured. You deserve it. You should have it. Take it. Stab him when he looks away and RiP iT frOM hls NeCk!”*

In this transitory phase, spawn who have embedded themselves into a victim’s body feed on the magic in and around said body. As they get stronger and bigger, they cannibalize their neighbors to reduce competition. Thus, an infested body might start off with hundreds of fingernail sized spawn, to dozens of golf-ball sized nymphs, to three fat grapefruit sized ones hanging off their torso. Nymphs use their vestigial mouths and incorporeal nature to bite into and slightly through their victim to anchor their body from drifting away, and consume magic by wrapping their 7 knobby legs around their meal and absorbing it directly. As they grow in size, most of their strength goes into growing these legs even longer, adding more and more joints until they become in appearance more like omni-articulating bony tentacles than legs.

Running a nymph encounter

As nymphs grow they become more efficient in digesting magic, granting them greater stealth, limited inherent magic, and a foul intellect. It takes a DC 40 Perception or DC 30 Heal check to notice a nymph infestation, and *Detect Magic* no longer auto-succeeds. Infested characters start with 4 nymph tokens, which increase and decrease as the nymph infestation grows or lowers in strength. Depending on the speed of your campaign, nymphs attempt to curse their host with the Curse of Greed each night/week of the first 3 nights/weeks. Once they reach 10 nymph tokens, a singular nymph has eaten all its siblings and grown enough to enter the Parasite phase. At 0 tokens, the nymphs die and/or flee their host. Nymphs feed and gain tokens by **A)** consuming the victim’s highest level spell slot when the victim gains spells (if victim is not a spellcaster, any spell-like abilities are consumed in a similar manner), **B)** by consuming the first/second spell cast on the host that day with an auto-dispel ability (includes consumables, multi target and area effect spells are only dispelled for the host, only applicable to spells whose spell level is equal or lower than current nymph tokens), and **C)** through the Curse of Greed. Each time the nymph gains tokens, it sends extra energy to its host and casts Extended Maximized *False Life* with a caster level equal to its tokens.

Players may make a DC 35 Knowledge (history) check to identify the infestation once it has been noticed.

Event	Frequency	1-6 nymph tokens	7-9 nymph tokens
Eats highest spell slot, said slot is 1-3 level	1/day	+1 token	+1 token
Eats highest spell slot, said slot is 4-6 level	1/day	+1	+2
Eats highest spell slot, said slot is 7-9 level	1/day	nothing	+3
Eats first spell cast on victim	1/day	+1	+1
Eats second spell cast on victim	1/day	n/a	+1
Victim succumbs to Curse of Greed	once	+1	+1
Victim compelled by Curse of Greed	any	+1	+1

Victim takes 15 points fire damage	any	-1 token	-1 token
Victim affected by dispel magic/damaging force effect	any	-1	-1
Victim affected by greater dispel magic/anti magic field	any	-2	-2

The Curse of Greed	DC 18 Will save, with the same penalties as the <u>Embed</u> ability. When a player fails against this save, the nymphs imbue their character with the sin of Greed, marking their body with said Thassilonian rune. Hand the player a note saying “You are cursed with Greed! I can compel your character to make a Greedy act 3 times. You may refuse this compulsion, but each time you do take a stacking permanent -2 penalty to everything. You are also <i>Shaken</i> anytime you are within 30 ft of flame, and <i>Frightened</i> by any source of flame that damages you”. This curse can only be removed with the death of the nymphs or later parasite.
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Parasite form *“Your hands ache as a strange hunger fills your very being. Bright searing colors surround you and make your head spin. What’s happening to you?!”*

By this stage, the Avaricious Arachnid is so glutted that its digestion cannot keep up and it emits a murky mix of waste magic energy, making it very obvious to see. Unfortunately, it’s not easy to remove, as its body has become fused with its host’s; *its legs are threaded through the host’s limbs granting them two 1d6 claw attacks with the Consume ability, and its jaws are engulfed around the host’s head granting them vision through its eyes as constant Arcane Sight and All Around Vision. It gains pod tokens through the nymph’s feeding abilities, but can now choose whether or not to use them and now grants its choice of Extended Maximized *Greater False Life*, Extended *Shield*, or Extended *Haste* to its host. It can spend 4 pod tokens to distend its stomach from its body to make a new pod that it can detach at will as free action. The pod bursts if the host is grappled/bull-rushed, grapples/bull-rushes an enemy, or if the parasite dies. If the parasite feels the host is not cooperating enough, *1/day it may cast Dominate Monster as a spell-like ability at CL 17, DC 23 Will with the same penalties as Embed.**

Consume	Whenever the host damages an enemy with their claws the enemy has its lowest level spell slot or spell-like ability consumed—adding 1 pod token to the parasite—and must make a DC 20 Will save or suffer the effect of an <i>Antimagic Field</i> for 1d4 rounds
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The Parasite shares a body with its host and can only die when its host does. It can be removed with a DC 40 Heal check, or with a DC 30 check if the host is bleeding out, on fire, or in an *Antimagic Field*. Any attached pods can be removed with a DC 20 Heal check, leading some unscrupulous groups to kidnap and drug wizards to make pod farms.

Adventure hooks: Bandit throws pod at player character, ruins exploration, authority figure under Curse of Greed, or run into pod farms.