

Steeder Breeder – An encounter for four to six characters of level 6

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Background: Inspired by the duergar from the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons module “The Gates of Firestorm Peak,” this encounter pits the party against the Duergar Spider Master and his charges – giant riding spiders called Steeders, along with some young Steeder Minions.

Setup: The party will most likely come upon this encounter when exploring an underground area populated by duergar. They could infiltrate this area in an effort to get to the laboratory beyond the steeder stables, to eliminate the steeders as a tool for the other duergar, or perhaps to steal and attempt to train some steeders for themselves (beyond the scope of this particular encounter). The party can either through either the doors on the right or on the bottom of the map.

The Duergar Spider Master begins in a pen with several Steeder Young; the door to the pen is unlocked but closed. The other pens are locked on the outside with simple pins (see Terrain). Place the adult Steeders in separate pens and the Steeder Young in groups of 3-4. Feel free to add additional monsters as you see fit for your group.

Enemies: 1 Duergar Spider Master, 2 Steeders, 10 Steeder Young

- Scaling for four PCs: Remove 3 Steeder Young
- Scaling for five PCs: No scaling necessary
- Scaling for six PCs: Add 1 Steeder

Terrain: The wooden pens are designed to hold the Steeders while they are under the control of the Duergar Spider Master. The pens are fifteen feet tall and are made of wooden slats with inch-wide gaps between them. The pens have slatted-wood roofs as well. The chamber ceiling is 25 feet high.

Pen doors are 10 feet tall and 10 feet wide. They latch with a simple pin that is attached to the closure mechanism by a leather cord. Removing (or replacing) a pin is a minor action, as is opening (or closing) a door once the pin has been removed. A character can use standard action to both remove a pin and open a door (or close a door and place a pin). Doors to empty pens begin open with the pins dangling.

Steel-bar doors lead out of the chamber to the right and bottom. Solid wood doors lead out of the chamber to the north to a laboratory area containing cages and slabs where experiments can be performed on prisoners. This is also the area where duergar scientists extract Steeder venom and and mix deadly and exotic concoctions.

Tactics: Unless the party is exceptionally stealthy, the Duergar Spider Master will likely notice them coming through the steel-bar doors and will act to release the other Steeders and Steeder Young from their pens as quickly as possible. The Spider Master can also use a standard action to direct a Steeder or Steeder Young that is adjacent to the outside of a pen door to remove the pin and open the door to release more monsters (PCs are free to interfere with this process, naturally).

The Spider Master aims to surround himself with his allies and to direct the monsters to surround the most threatening looking PC (likely a controller) in order to make use of Get Them, My Pretties as often as possible. The Spider Master prefers to have his beasts fight for him as much as possible, though he is not averse to using the Whip to pull PCs into flank with his minions (counting on his allies to save him with For the Master).

Treasure: As deemed appropriate for the party by the DM (such as level 6 treasure parcel, carried by the Duergar Spider Master). A party with PCs skilled in Nature may be able to harvest some Steeder venom for use in coating weapons. A PC trained in Heal may be able to use Steeder venom to concoct an antidote to Delirium Fever.

Disease: Delirium Fever

When a creature is bitten or spit upon by a Steeder or hit by the Blood Suck attack of a Steeder Young, they are exposure to Delirium Fever. Roll a saving throw at the end of the encounter to see if the exposed character contracts the disease or not.

- **Description:** The patient is afflicted with a high fever accompanied by profuse sweating and weakness. As the disease progresses, the patient may fall into unconsciousness with periodic bouts of delirious wakefulness, babbling incoherently. Left untreated, Delirium Fever can be fatal.
- **Level:** 6
- **Exposure:** Via the venom of giant spiders (either at range via spitting, in melee via a bite, or after a hit from a weapon with spider venom on it)
- **Progression:** Saving throw to avoid infection after initial exposure. Endurance DC16 to maintain, Endurance DC 21 to improve.
- **Initial state:** The patient is weakened, and their hit points cannot go above their bloodied value (temporary hit points can still be gained as normal). Improvement from this state represents the disease being cured.
- **Intermediate state:** The patient is weakened and slowed, and their hit points cannot go above their healing surge value.
- **Advanced state:** The patient is unconscious, with occasional bouts of waking delirium.
- **Final state:** The patient dies.

Monsters: Steeder Breeder encounter

Duergar Spider Master	Level 7 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (dwarf)	XP 300
HP 69; Bloodied 35	Initiative +6
AC 21; Fortitude 20; Reflex 17;	Perception +7
Will 20	Darkvision
Speed 6	
Resist 5 fire, 5 poison	
Traits	
For the Master • Aura 1	
Whenever an attack would hit the duergar spider master, an ally in the aura can, as an immediate interrupt, choose for the attack to hit itself instead.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ Whip • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Reach 2; +11 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d4 + 5 damage, and the target is pulled 1 square.	
⊕ Crossbow • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Range 15/30; +11 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 3 damage.	
↘ Get Them, My Pretties • Recharge ☒ ☒	
<i>Effect:</i> Range 10 (One creature within range); Each ally adjacent to the target may make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.	
Triggered Actions	
Sic 'Em • At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> The duergar spider master is hit by an attack.	
<i>Effect (Immediate Reaction):</i> An allied beast adjacent to the attacker can make a melee basic attack against the attacker as a free action. The duergar spider master then shifts 1 square.	
Str 13 (+4)	Dex 10 (+3)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 10 (+3)
	Wis 18 (+7)
	Cha 12 (+4)
Alignment evil Languages Deep Speech	
Equipment crossbow, whip, leather armor	

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Steeder	Level 6 Brute
Large natural beast (spider)	XP 250
HP 88; Bloodied 44	Initiative +3
AC 20; Fortitude 20; Reflex 15;	Perception +3
Will 13	Darkvision
Speed 8, climb 6 Spider Climb	
Immune poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ Bite • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> +11 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 4 damage and the Steeder makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Attack:</i> +9 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Effect:</i> Ongoing 5 poison damage and the target is weakened (save ends both). The target is exposed to Delirium Fever.	
↘ Spit • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Range 10; +9 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 1d6 + 4 damage and the Steeder makes a secondary attack.	
<i>Attack:</i> +9 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Effect:</i> Ongoing 5 poison damage and the target is weakened (save ends both). The target is exposed to Delirium Fever.	
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 11 (+3)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 4 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+3)
	Cha 6 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

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Steeder Young	Level 6 Minion Brute
Small natural beast (spider)	XP 63
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	Initiative +4
AC 19; Fortitude 19; Reflex 14;	Perception +3
Will 14	Darkvision
Speed 8, climb 0 Spider Climb	
Immune poison	
Standard Actions	
⊕ Bite • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> +10 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape ends). The Steeder Young is attached to the target and moves with the target as the target moves.	
↓ Blood Suck • At-Will	
<i>Requirements:</i> Target must be grabbed by the Steeder Young.	
<i>Attack:</i> +12 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Hit:</i> 6 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends) and exposed to Delirium Fever.	
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 11 (+3)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 4 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+3)
	Cha 6 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages —	

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