

A Doctor Spider Christmas

*A wacky, extradimensional one-shot for 3 level 3 humans.
3-4 hours*

Before You Begin

In order to facilitate speed and efficiency for a one-shot, characters possess all of their players' holiday and pop culture knowledge. Do not linger when a task is complete. Quickly advance players to the next room and keep things moving.

DM Note

One-shots are a constant balancing act. All stories must have a beginning, middle, and end, but in order to fit into the allowed time, you might have to make some drastic cuts along the way. A room might malfunction to speed things along or the menagerie might need skipping entirely. You could choose to ignore part of a room's challenge requirements to bypass a combat encounter. Monster health or damage can also be adjusted on the fly. It is important that one-shots are balanced, which can be difficult with unknown player characters. This adventure showcases a number of re-skins—monsters from the Monster Manual with appearance changes and minor augments to match the theme.

The Characters

Voice #1 - Doctor Spider

Head of the experiment, Doctor Spider is interested in test results. He is a Lawful Evil Arachnodica who enjoys decadence and speaks with eloquence. Doctor Spider enunciates with a deep voice and full cheeks.

Voice #2 - Professor Spider

A colleague and rival of Doctor Spider who enjoys violence over test results. Professor Spider speaks with a shrewd tongue and a shrill voice.

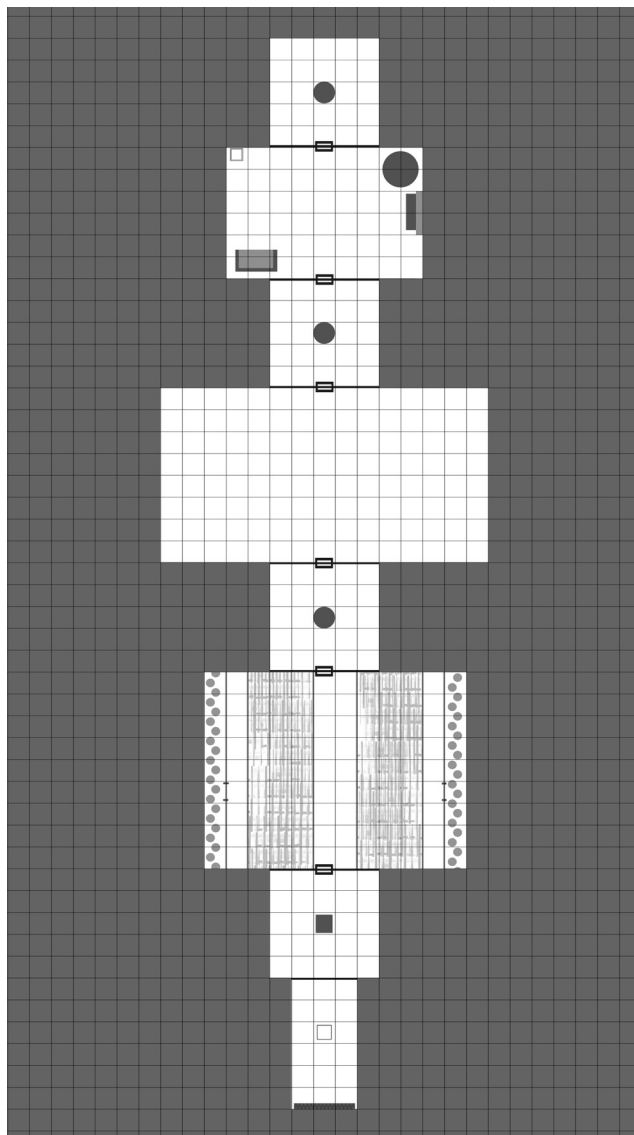
Players have been captured from their home plane. They awaken in Voting Room #1 with no knowledge of how they got there, only that they had fallen asleep as normal the night before.

Upon pressing one of the three buttons, the pedestal lowers into the floor and the door opens.

Voice #1: “Test. Test. Excellent. Ladies and Gentlemen. My fellow Arachnodica. Scientists. Doctors. Prestigious members of Spinners College. Today we test the effects of the holiday spirit on combat and stress. We have selected three humans from different walks of life for today’s experiments.

“First, a vote. Deliberate amongst yourselves and select a single option. What is your favorite Christmas Dessert?

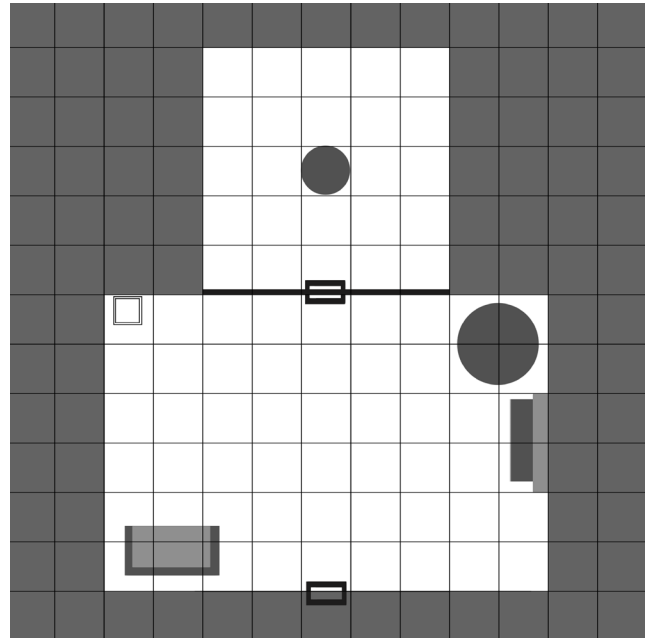
- “Make your selection and the door shall open to the first test.”



The voting mechanic decides the form of the punishments should the players fail their tasks. This first room is meant to be failed and the enemy quickly dispatched.

Room #1: Decorating Test

The room features the same metal walls and cement floor from the room before, though with some additional features. A door has been painted on the left side wall and a large rug painted in the center of the room. These are crude interpretations. A 10-foot-tall pine tree sits in a stand in the top right corner. Nearby is a fireplace with a mantel. The speaker and closed-circuit camera are also present.



The Setup

Voice #1: “We wish to see how humans decorate for the holidays. We shall supply you with authentic Christmas items from the material plane. When you have completed decorating, plug in the lights.”

A trap door opens from the floor in the top right of the room. A box decorated like a Christmas present rises up. Inside is a crude dumbwaiter system that brings up items one at a time. When all the items have been collected, the box descends and the trap door closes.

Item

1. String of lights
2. Small stuffed imp with holiday hat and jacket
3. Wreath covered in spiderwebs
4. Red pillow with snowman
5. Star with hole at the bottom
6. “Hope You Brought Wine” doormat
7. Rotten log

“Correct” Location

1. Around the tree
2. On the mantel
3. On the painted door
4. On the couch
5. Atop the tree
6. In front of the painted door
7. In the fireplace

Hidden Objectives

- Light the log in the fireplace
- Hang socks (from the characters’ own feet) above the fireplace
- Move the couch in front of the fireplace and tree

When the lights are plugged in, if the players completed all items (including the hidden objectives), the exit door opens and the players proceed to Voting Room #2. If not, Voice #1 lists off any missed items and releases the “Christmas dessert.” The trap door opens and lets loose the ochre jelly. Upon vanquishing the jelly, the exit opens.

No matter the outcome, Voice #2 rings out: “They cheated!”

Room #1: Decorating Test (cont)

Ochre Jelly

Large ooze, unaligned

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 45 (6d10 + 12)

Speed 10 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances Acid

Damage Immunities Lightning, Slashing

Condition Immunities Blinded, Charmed, Deafened, Exhaustion, Frightened, Prone

Senses Blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius),

Passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Amorphous. The jelly can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Spider Climb. The jelly can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Pseudopod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) acid damage.

REACTIONS

Split. When a jelly that is Medium or larger is subjected to lightning or slashing damage, it splits into two new jellies if it has at least 10 hit points. Each new jelly has hit points equal to half the original jelly's, rounded down. New jellies are one size smaller than the original jelly.

DM Note

All “Christmas desserts” spawn as ochre jelly but re-skinned with different theming to match the item voted for.

Figgy Pudding

- The jelly is filled with raisins and topped with brown sugar.

Fruit Cake

- The jelly is filled with fruits.

Jello Salad

- The jelly is dyed and segmented red, green, and white.

Voting Room #2

This room is identical to Voting Room #1. The metal door closes behind them as they exit Room #1: Decorating Test.

If the players passed the challenge in the previous room without combat, a large green present waits for them. Inside is a pair of snowshoes for each player which removes difficult terrain in the next room.

The Setup

Some deliberation and muffled argument can be heard over the speaker. Once again, Voice #1 returns:

“Now it is time to vote for your favorite holiday character. Is it:

- Frosty the Snowman
- Snow Miser
- The Bumble

“Make your selection to proceed to the next test.”

The pedestal lowers and the door opens following a press of one of the three buttons. As the door opens, a cold wind blasts the players and snow flurries through the door.

Voice #2 can be heard over the speaker: “I wanted the Little Drummer Boy.”

Voice #1: “No, we did that last year.”



Room #2: Snow Field

This is the largest room in the complex, featuring the metal walls and concrete floors of the rooms before. However, a foot of snow is piled across the entire floor. Players move as if on difficult terrain if without the snowshoes prize or other augmentation.

The Setup

The sound of loud fans can be heard and snow flurries about from an unseen ceiling. As the players enter the room, the door closes behind them and Voice #1 says, “Enjoy the weather! You have four minutes.”

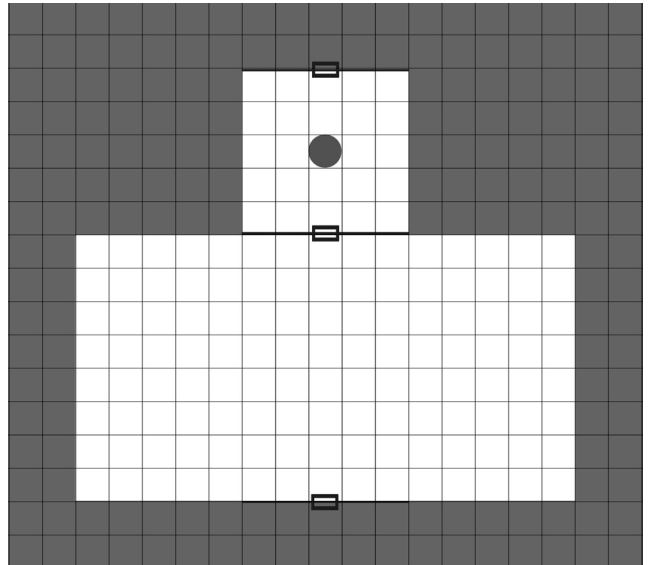
Begin a 4-minute timer. In this time, players must:

- Make a snow angel
- Have a snowball fight or toss snowballs
- Build a snowman
- Create a snow fort
- Write in the snow (by any means)

Voice #1 gives warnings at 1 minute and 10 seconds. If the list has not been completed, the voted creature is released from a hatch in the ceiling. All players must then make a DC 12 Constitution check or take 1d6 cold damage from the freezing conditions in the room unless otherwise immune to extreme conditions.

Much like the ochre jelly before, Frosty the Snowman, Snow Miser, and The Bumble all share the same stats and difficulty. Depending on the experience and tolerance for difficulty of your party, you may want to change Chilling Gaze to cause restrained instead of paralyzed. You can also augment the fight to increase the uniqueness of the combat encounter.

Upon completing the challenge or combat, the door opens to Voting Room #3.



Room #2: Snow Field (cont)

Yeti

Large monstrosity, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 51 (6d10 + 18)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +3

Damage Immunities Cold

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 13

Languages Yeti

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Fear of Fire. If the yeti takes fire damage, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the end of its next turn.

Keen Smell. The yeti has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Snow Camouflage. The yeti has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in snowy terrain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The yeti can use its Chilling Gaze and makes two claw attacks.

Claw. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Chilling Gaze. The yeti targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. If the target can see the yeti, the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw against this magic or take 10 (3d6) cold damage and then be paralyzed for 1 minute, unless it is immune to cold damage. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If the target's saving throw is successful, or if the effect ends on it, the target is immune to the Chilling Gaze of all yetis (but not abominable yetis) for 1 hour.

DM Note

Frosty the Snowman - A silk hat slowly floats down from the ceiling. Upon hitting the ground (or landing on a snowman created by the party), it springs to life. The hat can disengage as a free action, flying about as hat and creating a new snowman where it lands.

- **Nimble Escape.** Frosty can disengage or hide as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Snow Miser - A tall, skeletal figure with long, bony fingers ending in icicles lands stiffly from the ceiling. It wears a blue jacket and a pale wicker hat with a blue ribbon.

- **Snow Touch.** Any non-magical weapon made of metal that hits Snow Miser freezes over. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed, exploding into a flurry of snowflakes. Non-magical ammunition made of metal that hits Snow Miser is destroyed after dealing damage.

The Bumble - Hits the ground and immediately begins bouncing around the room. In place of claw attacks, The Bumble can bounce atop a target. This attack does not trigger opportunity attacks and can be used with multiattack. The killing blow on The Bumble causes all its teeth to explode from its mouth.

- **Bounce: Melee Weapon Attack:** +6 to hit, one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

Voting Room #3

This room is identical to Voting Room #2 but features two large scrolls on the left and right walls. One is labeled “Naughty,” the other “Nice.”

If the players passed the challenge in the previous room without combat, a large red present waits for them. Inside is a pair of sunglasses (or craft “Santa Seekers” if you are familiar with the children’s activity). These will protect from the blinding effects of Rudolf’s nose in the next room.

The Setup

The Naughty List and The Nice List:

- If the players have accomplished the tests in earnest, they will vote as normal.
- If the players have constantly complained (in character) about their predicament or suggest they hate the holidays in any way, they will be forced to fight The Grinch.
- If they have sabotaged the experiment or violently attempted to escape by damaging the rooms or camera equipment, they will be forced to fight Krampus.
- If only one player has disrupted the test, their name will be on the Naughty List and will be the only one targeted by the attacks of the upcoming monster if it is Santa Claus or Krampus. If it is the Grinch, only those on the Nice List will be targeted.
- If the players write their own names onto the Nice List (and they are not on the Naughty List), they will be able to freely walk past Santa or Krampus and escape Room #3 without combat. Similarly, if their names are on the Naughty List and they face the Grinch, they will be able to freely walk by.
- Names can not be removed from lists once placed. Damaging or removing the papers will result in Naughty Listing.

Some deliberation and muffled argument can be heard over the speaker. Once again Voice #1 returns: “And now we come to the final test. Due to your performance, you will face:

- Santa Claus
- The Grinch
- Krampus

“Make your selection to proceed to the final test.”

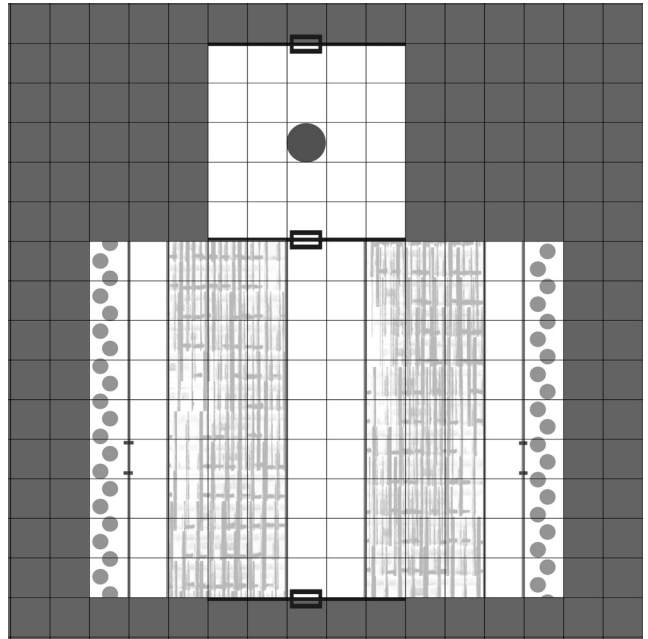
Voice #2: “You are too lenient, Doctor Spider! These morals make fools of us all!”

Sound cuts from the speaker.

Room #3: Up On the Rooftop

This room represents a snow covered rooftop. The metal walls are painted with the illusion of distant houses. This room features a 10-foot-wide walkway representing the top of a roof. It then slopes down at a 45-degree angle on each side, ending in 5-foot walkways representing the roof's ledges. Navigating the slope requires a DC 12 Dexterity save or it's a slide to a ledge. Beyond that, ice spikes stick up, increasing the fall damage of the makeshift roof to 2d6. Players can move between the spikes as difficult terrain to reach ladders on either side leading back up to the roof's ledges. Light snowfall descends from an unseen ceiling above.

After the players enter, a scraping of metal reveals a hatched opening in the ceiling area letting loose the first combatants.



Round 1 Deer

Medium beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 4 (1d8)
Speed 50 ft.

Senses Passive Perception 12
Languages --
Challenge 0 (10 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +2

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	2 (-4)	14 (+2)	5 (-3)

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) piercing damage.

DM Notes

The “reindeer” have a fly speed of 40 ft. and gore with their antlers rather than making bite attacks.

They fly about the upper areas in combat and land on the following turn to make their first attacks. They count as undead and should be described as such.

Grinch

- If selected, the deer are instead flying dogs and make bite attacks.

Krampus

- If selected, the deer are instead flying goats who gore with their horns.

Room #3: Up On the Rooftop (cont)

Round 2 Bronze Dragon Wyrmling

Medium dragon, lawful good

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)
Hit Points 32 (5d8 + 10)
Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft., swim 30 ft.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10 + 3) piercing damage.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5–6). The dragon uses one of the following breath weapons.

Saving Throws DEX +2, CON +4, WIS +2, CHA +4
Skills Perception +4, Stealth +2
Damage Immunities Lightning
Senses Blindsight 10 ft., Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14
Languages Draconic
Challenge 2 (450 XP)
Proficiency Bonus +2

Lightning Breath. The dragon exhales lightning in a 40-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Repulsion Breath. The dragon exhales repulsion energy in a 30-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is pushed 30 feet away from the dragon.

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

DM Notes

The boss deer is outfitted with two huge battery packs embedded in its side with wires and cables weaving in and out of its undead hide. The nose has been replaced with a bulb and reflector casing.

Instead of a breath attack, the boss deer makes a 10-foot-wide line attack, DC 12 Dexterity save or players suffer radiant damage. Those hit must also make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be blinded if not wearing “Santa Seekers.”

Santa Claus

- Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer

The Grinch

- Max the Dog

Krampus

- Knecht Ruprecht the Goat

Room #3: Up On the Rooftop (cont)

Round 3

Ogre

Large giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11 (Hide Armor)

Hit Points 59 (7d10 + 21)

Speed 40 ft.

ACTIONS

Greatclub. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	7 (-2)

Javelin. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 8

Languages Common, Giant

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

DM Notes

Santa Claus

- The ogre drops from the ceiling with a heavy thud and targets anyone on the Naughty List. The greatclub represents a slam with his toy sack. The javelin, a thrown lump of coal.

The Grinch

- The ogre is covered in glued-on green fur and targets anyone on the Nice List. The greatclub represents a Christmas tree, fully decorated, with a +2 chance to hit. At half health, the Grinch deals 3 extra damage—representing his heart growing 3 sizes.

Krampus

- The ogre form is replaced with that of a black goat man in a brown hood. A cornucopia hangs out his mouth and wreaths the figure in smoke. He attacks with claws equal to the greatclub and can throw lumps of coal.
- Smoke Wreath.** Any creature other than Krampus that starts its turn within 5 feet of Krampus must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn. On a successful saving throw, the creature is immune to the stench of Krampus for 1 hour.

If all player characters' names are on the Nice List for Santa Claus and Krampus or all names are on the Naughty List for the Grinch, the monster bows to the players and the doors open without the need for combat.

The Grinder

A room similar to Voting Room #1 and #2 but without the exit door. In the center, a 5x5 blue present sits with a large bow atop. The speaker and closed-circuit camera are also present.

The Setup

Voice #1: “Thank you for participating in today’s test. The results were excellent and we appreciated your compliance. Your prize awaits you. Have a happy holiday.”

Undoing the bow or lifting the box will cause the trap to trigger, spilling coal onto the floor and causing the floor to give way, releasing the players onto a slide leading directly into a massive grinder. Players with a DC 14 Perception check will note the seams leading from the corners of the room to the center box. A DC 16 Perception will reveal the hinges along the walls.

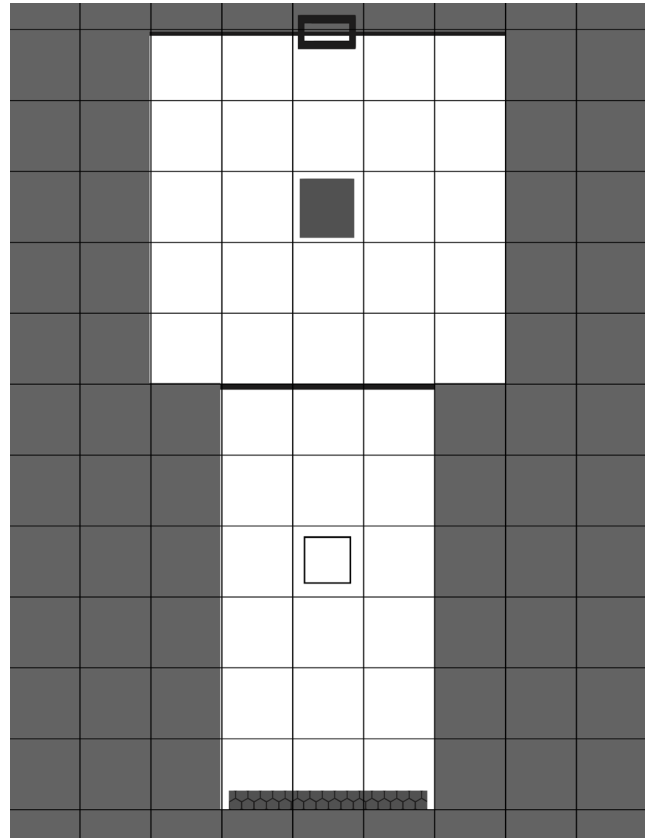
Players can make DC 12 Acrobatics or Athletics to stop themselves on the side, hang onto the floor of the trap door, hang from the closed-circuit camera, and so on.

Fifteen feet down the slide, there is a 5x5 air vent 10 feet above the slide. Players can use a number of means and class features to reach and open the grate. The players slide 15 feet per round. A player who hits the grinder dies. Provide ample opportunity for them to avoid this fate, but keep the game moving.

DM Note

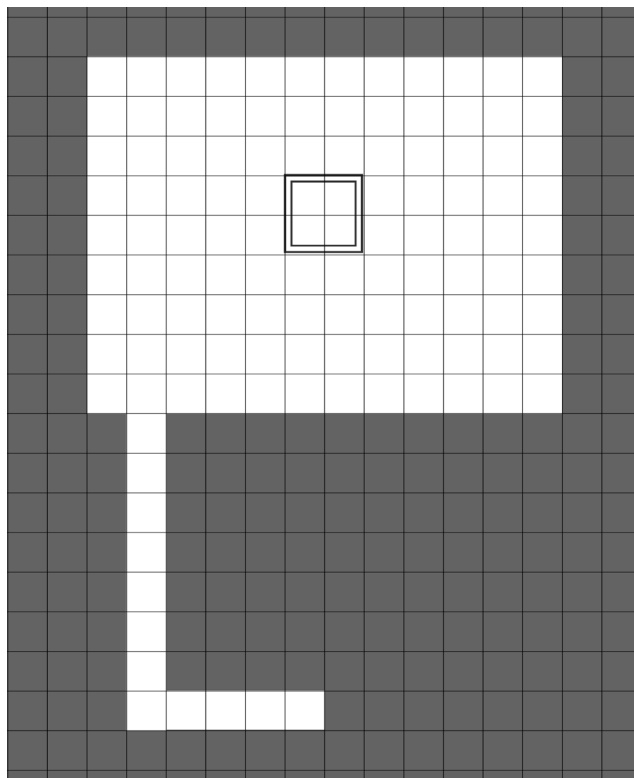
Escaping from the Present Room

The slide and grinder are dramatic set pieces but can be time consuming to navigate. If you are short on time, the players could discover the vent system behind a rusted metal wall with a DC 12 Perception check. Even better, research your players’ features and build a unique way for them to escape that works with their characters. Not all players will select rope and the like in character creation. If very short on time, proceed directly to the Teleporter Room.



The Grid

The vent slopes upward and climbs to a metal grid located above Room #3. This grid has 1-inch gaps between the beams and is safe to walk on. Ten Ice Mephits dart about, scratching their heads and rubbing their hands together to create the snowfall scene in Room #3. Upon seeing the player characters, they run and hide in various directions. The main feature in the center of the room is a 15x15 vacant lift with gear teeth that can be climbed using a DC 10 Athletics check. A hatch below the lift leads to the room below.



The Setup

Players leaving this area hear the following on a DC 14 Perception check:

Voice #2: "They're escaping! They're not allowed to do that."

Voice #1: "Calm yourself. We have the results. That is all we need."

Voice #2: "You are a disgrace, Doctor Spider! I will deal with them personally."



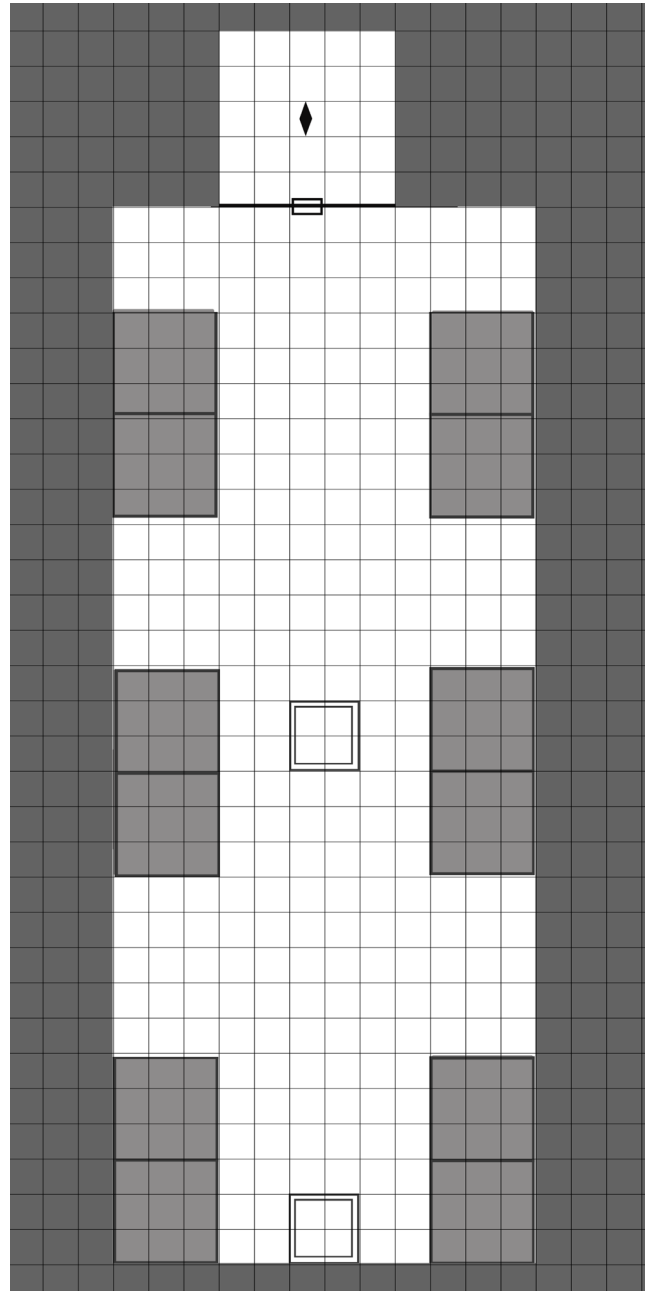
The Menagerie

After climbing the lift, the players find themselves in a long hallway filled on either side with metal and glass 15x15 cells. These hold the remaining unused monsters from the various rooms. A center 15x15 hole leads to the grid above Room #2.

The Setup

The Cells

- Fruit Cake - ochre jelly filled with fruits
- Figgy Pudding - ochre jelly filled with raisins and topped with brown sugar
- Jello Salad - ochre jelly dyed and segmented red, green, and white
- Frosty the Snowman - a silk had with red ribbon that bangs aggressively against the walls of its cell
- Snow Miser - a tall, skeletal figure with long, bony fingers ending in icicles wearing a blue jacket and a pale wicker hat with a blue ribbon
- The Bumble - a yeti
- Santa Clause - an ogre with toy sack, red jacket, and coat with a white beard attached hanging below the chin
- The Grinch - an ogre with a bag of green fur and can of rubber cement sitting nearby, used or unused based on events in Room #3
- Krampus - a black goat man in a brown hood with a corncob pipe hanging out of his mouth, wreathing the figure in smoke. He presses his hands against the glass and watches the players as they pass.



When the players are halfway down the corridor, Professor Spider kicks open the far door and attacks them.

On defeat, Professor Spider drops a set of keys that unlock the various cages and operate the lift contraption. She also drops a tablet with the code: 47829873. Players who can read infernal note that this is the code for where they come from on the material plane.

The Menagerie (cont)

Phase Spider

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 13 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Spider Climb. The spider can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Web Walker. The spider ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Skills Stealth +6

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 10

Languages --

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +2

Ethereal Jaunt. As a bonus action, the spider can magically shift from the Material Plane to the Ethereal Plane, or vice versa.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 7 (1d10 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

DM Notes

Professor Spider is a large humanoid spider person wearing a black graduation robe and an academic cap (or mortarboard). She wields a minigun that fires syringes filled with poison.

Use the statistics of bite but as a ranged weapon attack for Professor Spider's syringe gun.

The Teleporter Room

This metal room sits atop Voting Room #1. The players can see their starting point through a one-way mirror on the floor. A blue crystal hovers on a central platform with a keypad below. Entering the code 47829873 will cause blue mist to fill the room and put players to sleep. When they awaken, they are back in their home beds or wherever they were absconded from at the start of the Christmas special. This operates as the spell Dream of the Blue Veil as cast by a warlock.

Dream of the Blue Veil

LEVEL	CASTING TIME	RANGE/AREA	COMPONENTS
7th	10 minutes	20 ft	V, S, M *
DURATION	SCHOOL	ATTACK/SAVE	DAMAGE/EFFECT
6 Hours	Conjuration	None	Teleportation

You and up to eight willing creatures within range fall unconscious for the spell's duration and experience visions of another world on the Material Plane, such as Oerth, Toril, Krynn, or Eberron. If the spell reaches its full duration, the visions conclude with each of you encountering and pulling back a mysterious blue curtain. The spell then ends with you mentally and physically transported to the world that was in the visions.

To cast this spell, you must have a magic item that originated on the world you wish to reach, and you must be aware of the world's existence, even if you don't know the world's name. Your destination in the other world is a safe location within 1 mile of where the magic item was created. Alternatively, you can cast the spell if one of the affected creatures was born on the other world, which causes your destination to be a safe location within 1 mile of where that creature was born.

The spell ends early on a creature if that creature takes any damage, and the creature isn't transported. If you take any damage, the spell ends for you and all the other creatures, with none of you being transported.

* - *(a magic item or a willing creature from the destination world)*

Concluding the Adventure

"You awake in your homes wondering if it was all a dream. A spider? A Christmas special? Will they return for you? We may never know."