

# MONSTER STORY: GIANT SPIDER

*By Francisco Duarte*

The thing moved with a strange gait – awkward, yet intimidating.



Predatorial. Primeval. Unnatural. Swiveling its many legs as if each had a mind of its own. In the darkness, it stalked down the tunnel.

I melded into the shadows, my handcrafted spear in my hand, my heart thumping whilst the creature approached. A rasping sound heralded its presence, the collection of shields and armor and metal fettered to the bulbous body with viscid silk brushing against the raw rock. It seemed oblivious to my presence, bouncing as it moved, shadows dancing over and around it. My attention was drawn in to its rhythmical movements as it deviously lurched closer and then jaunted away, time and again.

Then, it leapt. Suddenly, it was right in front of me, its mouth wide open like an abyss about to engulf me, frantically moving the massive fangs on each side, eager to reach for my exhausted body. I shook out of my daze and collapsed onto my shoulder, barely rolling out of harm's way as the creature crashed into the wall.

Silence blanketed the dark tunnel once more. Only my wheezing and the tussling of the creature against the rock while it turned around could be heard. My spear cracked when I dodged the attack. I threw away the useless shaft. The tip was still sharp, though, and I held it like a small dagger. My instincts were kicking in, preparing for a fight I had little chance of winning. I braced myself, whereas the thing advanced, its eight legs swirling disturbingly.

Again, my attention was drawn to the unnatural movement, the horror overtaking me while the creature drew nearer, the gaping hole in its front still open to accommodate the fresh new meal. At the last possible moment, I dove. The fangs and the mouth swept past me as I crawled under the beast. Here, my broken spear favored the tight space, so I stabbed, finding the gaps amidst the metal, until I felt the foul entrails cascade over me.

I dragged myself from underneath the monster, while it stumbled spasmodically to the other side of the cavern. Even then it made no sound, barring the metal clinging against the encircling walls. The hunger tormenting me was too much – some of the foul-smelling creature would have to be my next meal. Even after the butchery was done, its presence remained – unnerving, drenching me with irrational dread. Moved by a sudden urgency, I continued down the cavern, always looking over my shoulder, ever fearful that the eight-legged monstrosity would return.