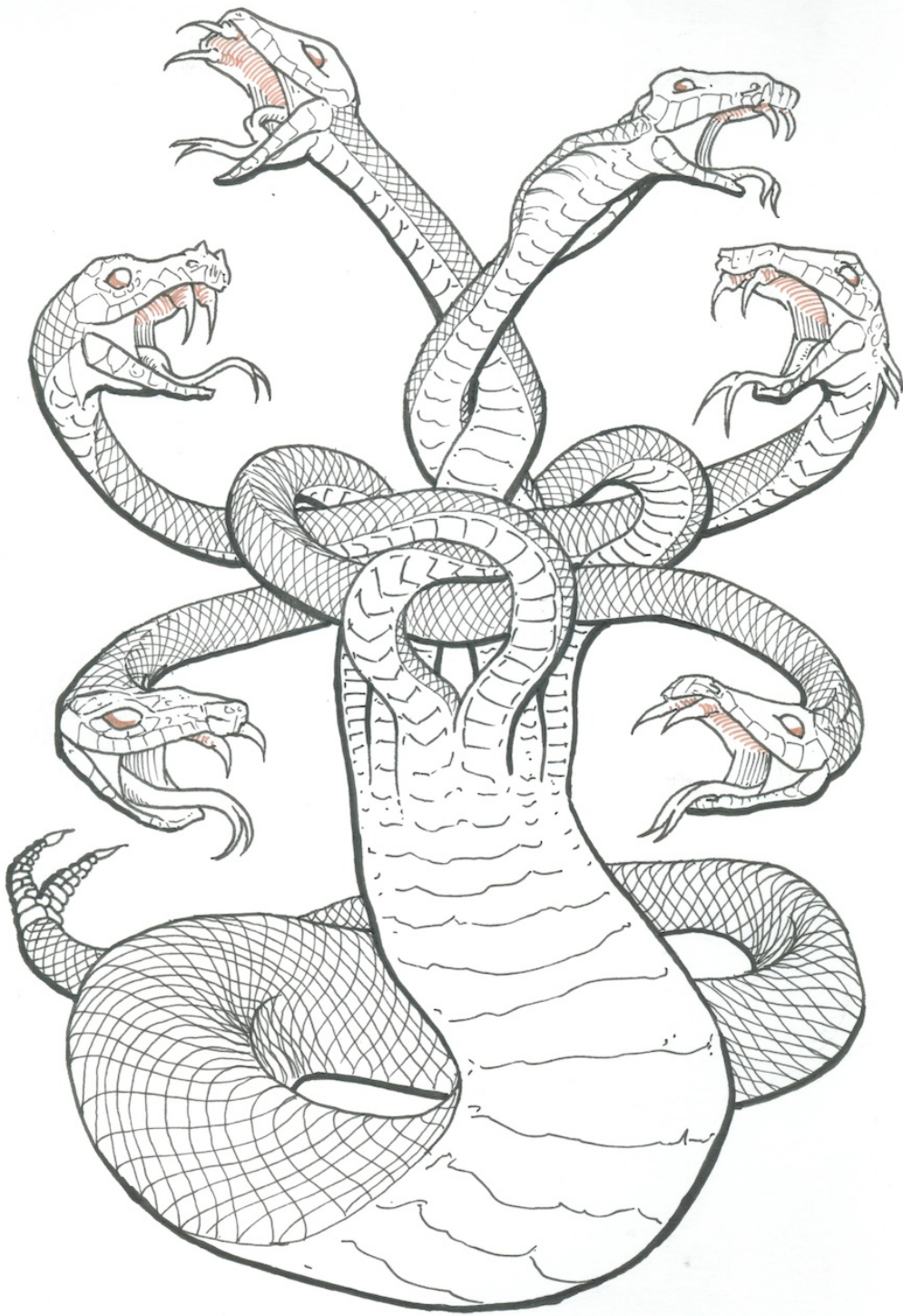




SOUL OF THE SERPENT KING

Written by Jürgen Mayer

Illustrated by Luka Rejec

SOUL OF THE SERPENT KING

A free, unofficial expansion for Edgar Johnson's **Blood for the Serpent King**.

You can also use this as a standalone scenario for about **6 to 8 2nd level DCC characters**.

Edgar Johnson's Blood for the Serpent King is available from Goodman Games in module DCC #82: Bride of the Black Manse. Check it out here:

<http://www.goodman-games.com/5083preview.html>

or the pdf here:

<http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/product/128791/Dungeon-Crawl-Classics-82-Bride-of-the-Black-Manse>

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Special thanks to Edgar Johnson for the original adventure this is based on.

Foreword

If you do not use this as an expansion for Blood of the Serpent King, just ignore anything concerning the Crown of Xiuhcoatl and make sure that your characters somehow come into possession of the two-headed snake skeleton (it is a key, see the chapter Ziggurat Door). Finding the two-headed snake skeleton, maybe alongside a map, could possibly be the hook for this adventure. On the way there, the adventurers might likely encounter some snakefolk that worship the serpent king and probably a couple of snakes, too.

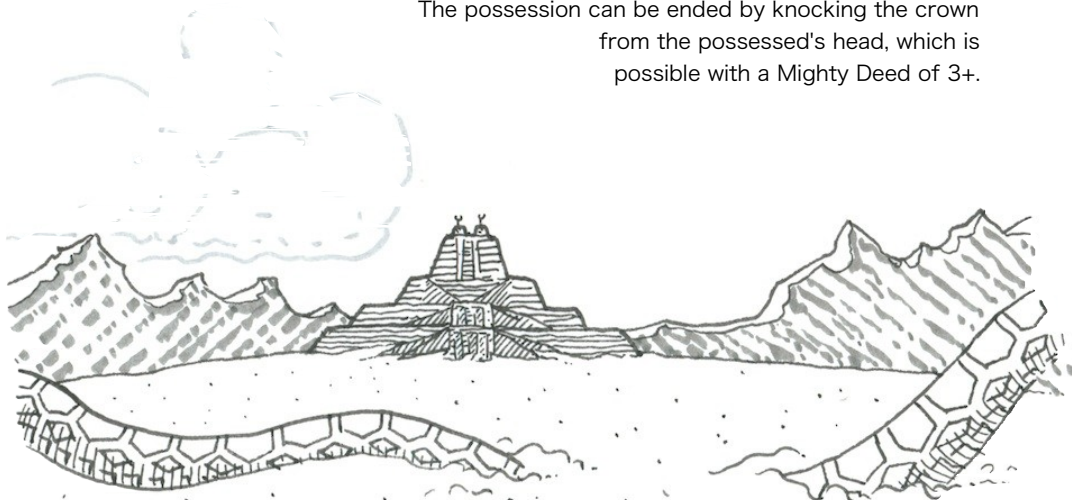
If you're using this with Blood for the Serpent King, note that I have exchanged the lake in area 3-2 with a desert, because my home group just played a certain Harley Stroh adventure that also has a pyramid in an underground lake in a cave, and I wanted some variety. You can just run that area like Edgar intended, or use my sandy adjustments as described in the chapter Striders on the Starless Sands. In addition, you can use the expanded rules for the Crown of Xiuhcoatl below and you should hand out the two-headed snake skeleton as loot when your party has bested the Emerald Cobra.

Crown of Xiuhcoatl

As long as the soul of the serpent king is not banished to another plane, any sentient creature wearing the crown has to make a will save or become possessed by the serpent king's soul. The save difficulty is depending on the distance from the serpent king's ziggurat:

Distance	Will save
Immediate vicinity (inside the temple)	DC 20
Vicinity (outside the temple)	DC 18
Greater vicinity (area the temple is located in)	DC 15
Far away (same continent)	DC 10
Very far away (same plane)	DC 5

The possession can be ended by knocking the crown from the possessed's head, which is possible with a Mighty Deed of 3+.



Striders on the Starless Sands

The **ziggurat** of the serpent king can be located in any kind of sand desert area. In the vicinity of the ziggurat, the **sand** is littered with the **bones of human sacrifices** to the serpent king (the sacrifices are devoured by the sand serpent guardian, and only the bones remain).

The ziggurat itself is a **four-sided step pyramid** with a **flat top** and **stairs running up on all sides**. It is **170' wide at the bottom** and **50' wide at the top**, with a **height of 70'**. There is a **big stone door** at the bottom in the middle of one side, but it is **half covered by sand**.

A big black cloud full of red lightning looms over the ziggurat. A smaller pyramid is floating about 30' above the flat top of the ziggurat. Above the tip of the floating pyramid is a green sphere. The floating pyramid is actually a vessel holding the soul of the serpent king. The magic to hold the soul there is coming from two spheres, the one above the floating pyramid and another one below in the ziggurat itself. The floating pyramid and sphere are protected by the red lightning, which deflects or destroys any projectiles or ropes or hits foolish adventurers that come near them (1d8+3 damage plus DC15 Will save or minor corruption). If one of the spheres is destroyed, the serpent king's soul would be banished from this plane. (If you're not using the Blood for the Serpent King adventure, you might also not use the cloud, floating pyramid and sphere, and have the soul contained in the sphere that is inside the ziggurat instead.)

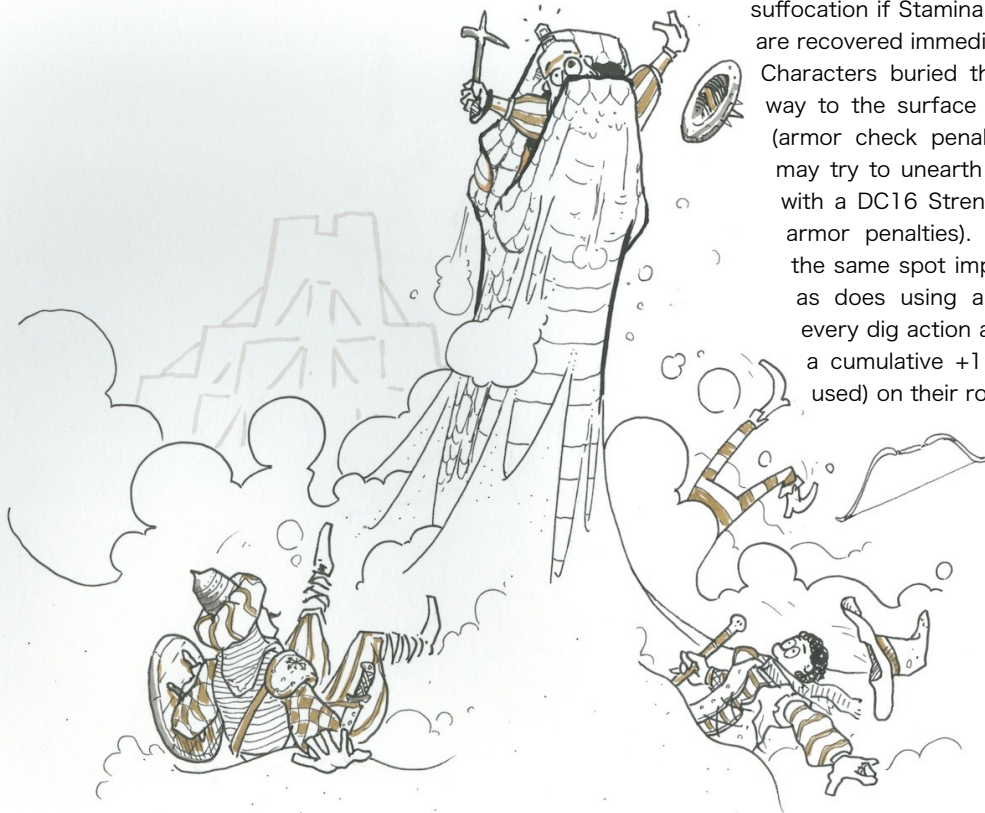
Sand Serpent

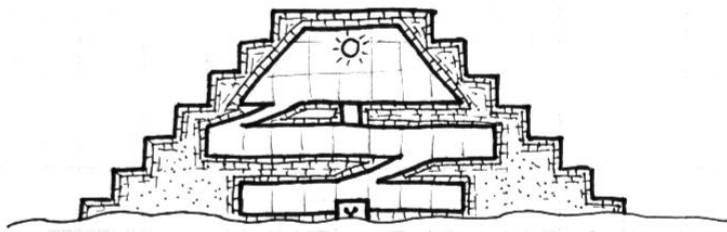
The ziggurat is guarded by a huge sand serpent that hides below the surface and **can swim in the sand like a fish in water** (think sandworms on a certain desert planet, but with a snake head). It will attack any non-serpent-people and will usually **surprise the characters from below** if they are not extremely observant.

SAND SERPENT: Init +4; Atk bite +9 melee (1d6 + DC 15 Ref save or get swallowed if bite result was higher than 20); AC 18; HD 8d8; hp 36; MV 40' in sand, otherwise 30'; Act 1d20; SP swallow 1d4 damage per round, swims in sand like a fish in water; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; AL N.

A swallowed character is digested for 1d4 damage per round, but is able to cut the serpent with a sharp weapon, doing a maximum of 1d4 damage due to space constraints. Cutting the character out from the outside takes one round and is possible after the sand serpent is dead, or instantly even during the fight on a successful Mighty Deed of 4 or higher (even from the inside). Surviving being swallowed alive by a sand serpent makes the cosmic overlord Kovax smile and grants a permanent increase of Luck by 1. If the body of a presumed dead, digested character is recovered, they lose a point of Personality instead of the normal physical attribute point.

On a crit, the Sand Serpent rolls a d14 on table M, but on sand ignores any result over 5 and instead pulls its victim into the sand, which causes 1d6 Stamina damage beginning with the next round. This causes death by suffocation if Stamina reaches 0, but the lost points are recovered immediately if rescued from the sand. Characters buried this way can try to claw their way to the surface with a DC16 Strength check (armor check penalty applies). Other characters may try to unearth buried characters by digging with a DC16 Strength check as their action (no armor penalties). Subsequent dig attempts at the same spot improve the die (d24, then d30), as does using a tool made for digging. For every dig action above, a buried character gets a cumulative +1 (or +2 if a shovel has been used) on their roll to crawl out.





All maps: 1 square = 10'x10'

0. Ziggurat Door

Stone door with impression shaped like a double headed snake in the middle. The door is half covered with sand and only the heads of the snake impression are visible. Removing enough sand to access all of the snake relief takes one turn. The door can be opened with the two-headed snake skeleton, or with a combination of Dispel Magic and Pick Lock DC 15. It slides into the ground and a lever swings out from the doorframe. Pushing the lever back into the doorframe makes the door close again. Behind the door, a gentle slope leads upwards.

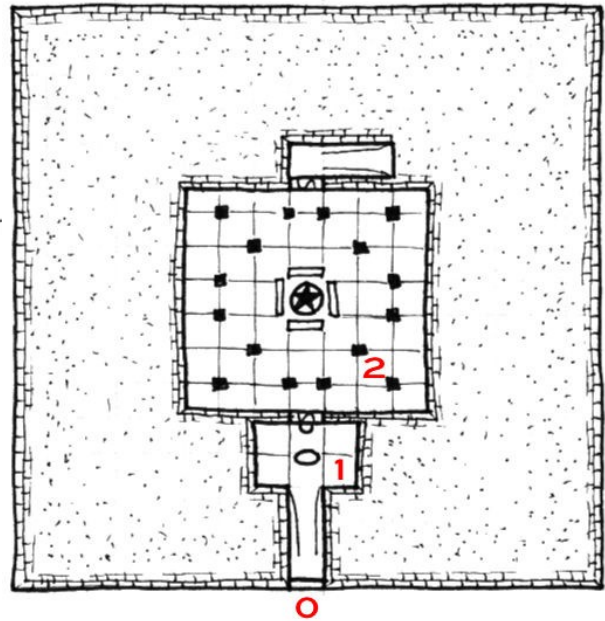
1. Flying Pool

Lots of snake murals on the walls. There is one big mural on the wall opposite of the entrance depicting a snake-man holding a snake in one hand and a snake skin in the other. In front of it is an iron sacrificial bowl. When a piece of snake skin or serpent-people skin is put into the bowl, it bursts into flame and vanishes. Only then a secret door slides into the ground and a lever swings out from the doorframe. Pushing the lever back into the doorframe makes the door close again.

In the middle of the room, there is something that looks like a combination of a stone altar and a bathtub filled with clear liquid. Any living creature that has a skin will shed the skin of any body parts submerged in the liquid of the pool. This is absolutely painless for snake-people, snakes and other reptiles. It is, however, really painful for everybody else. The liquid does nothing but taste stale outside of the pool.

Damage for inserted body parts:

Finger	1d3
Multiple fingers	1d4
Hand	1d5
Forearm	1d6
Arm or leg	1d8 each
Head	1d8 and blindness
Whole or majority of body	death for a non-reptile



2. Prayer Room

Statue of four-headed and four-armed serpent-man priest. Each head looks in a different cardinal direction. Its arms appear to prop up the ceiling.

There are 4 low stone blocks (10' by 1'), one on each side of the statue. They slide a bit into the ground if weighted with a kneeling person or similar mass. If all four are pressed down at the same time the secret door at the other end of the room will slide down and a lever swings out from the doorframe. Pushing the lever back into the doorframe makes the door close again.

The ceiling is supported by 16 columns.

Behind the door, around the corner is a slope leading upwards.



Grimli is wondering where the heck his adventuring companions went after he cut himself out of the sand serpent.

3. Egg Breeding Ground

The floor looks like dark, living flesh. There are about **three dozen eggs** of various hues and sizes between a human head and a troll head, embedded in the flesh. There are **pulsating veins** crossing the flesh from egg to egg. There are **6 columns** supporting the ceiling.

Disturbing an egg or a vein will cause 1d6 eggs to crack and give birth to snakes that will attack the intruders.

Crossing the breeding ground without disturbing the eggs requires a DC 10 Agility check (armor check penalties apply). Thieves can use their Sneak Silently ability modifier instead. A failed check result also determines where the character was when failing:

- 1-3** first 30' x 30' section
- 4-6** second 30' x 30' section
- 6-9** third 30' x 30' section

Any failed attacks in this room require another Agility check as above or more eggs will crack. A fumbled attack automatically cracks open more eggs.

Characters moving over half their maximum range per round in battle (e.g. when trying to get out of the breeding ground, or into it to help their friends) also have to make an additional Agility check.

For every failed Agility check, 1d6 snakes hatch, roll 1d4 per snake to determine it's kind:

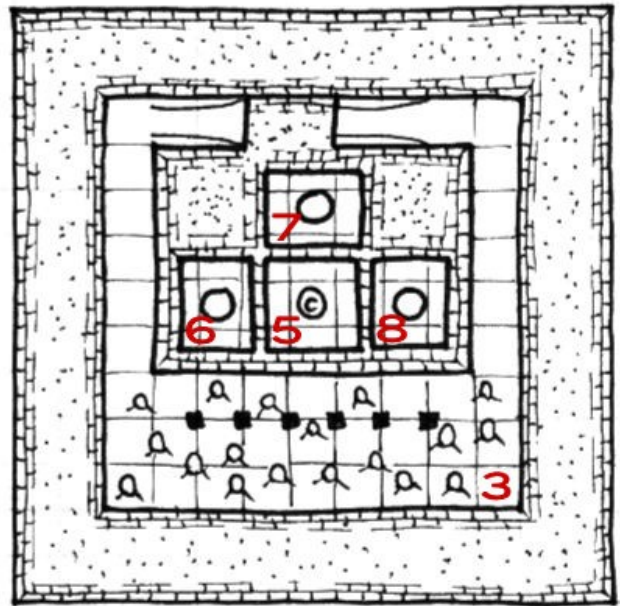
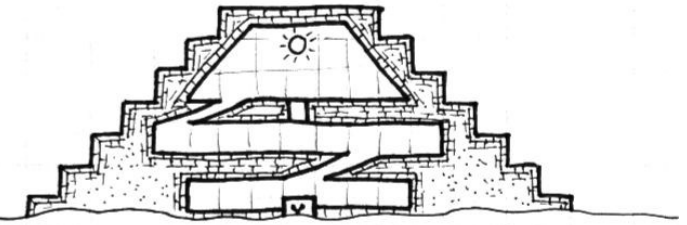
1. **BROWN GUARDIAN ASP:** Init +2; Atk bite +1 melee (1d6 + poison DC 14 Fort or 1d4 extra damage); AC 13; HD 1d6+1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

2. **YELLOW GUARDIAN VIPER:** Init +2; Atk bite +4 melee (1d6 + poison DC 12 Fort or -1d4 Stamina); AC 13; HD 2d6+1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

3. **GREEN GUARDIAN BOA:** Init +2; Atk bite +5 melee (1d6 + constrict); AC 13; HD 2d6+1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP constrict (automatic 1d4 damage in each following round); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL C.

4. **GREY GUARDIAN MEDUSA'S HAIR:** Init +2; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4 + poison DC 15 Fort or petrified for 1 round); AC 13; HD 1d6+1; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP medusa's gaze (once per day, victim makes DC 15 Will save or petrifies for 1d4 rounds); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +3; AL C.

Leaving with the Serpent King's favor will make the eggs stay closed when retreating from the ziggurat.

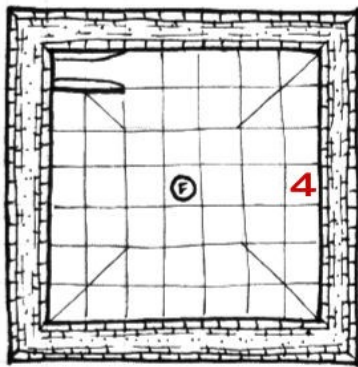


Use this to note type/hp of snakes you rolled up

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4. Snyggdra Room

A **slope** is leading upwards into this room, which is 25 feet high with **slanted walls** and contains a high floating green sphere that holds enchantments to keep the serpent king's soul on this plane of existence. There is a well **hidden door** in the middle of the room's floor (DC 15).



When entering the room, the **floating green sphere** seems to be **covered by 6 giant snakes** (looking like a ball formed out of giant snakes with green light radiating in the gaps). However, all the snake heads actually belong to one creature, the snyggdra, which will likely drop down later to attack the characters. The green sphere can be destroyed by inflicting a total of 60 damage. Doing so will banish the serpent king's soul.

When entering the room, the **serpent king speaks to the characters telepathically**. He will do anything to persuade the characters to leave without destroying the sphere. At first, he will try to scare them away using the snyggdra as leverage. If this does not work or the snyggdra is killed, he will offer to watch over the characters in the future and help them out when they call to him. If the characters accept this bargain, they can all Invoke Serpent's King Favor from now on (see appendix). As a last resort he might offer the treasures in the hidden tombs of the high-priests below. Of course, he can also just kill them all with the snyggdra.

SNYGGDRA: Init +3; Atk bite +4 melee (1d8 + poison); AC 14; HD 1d8 (5 hp) per head; MV 30'; Act 1d20 per head; SP 6 heads, instant regeneration of hp, regeneration of double heads after 3 rounds, poison DC 14 or 1d4 attribute loss (each head drains a different attribute, use Fort save for physical, Will save for mental attributes); SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; AL C.

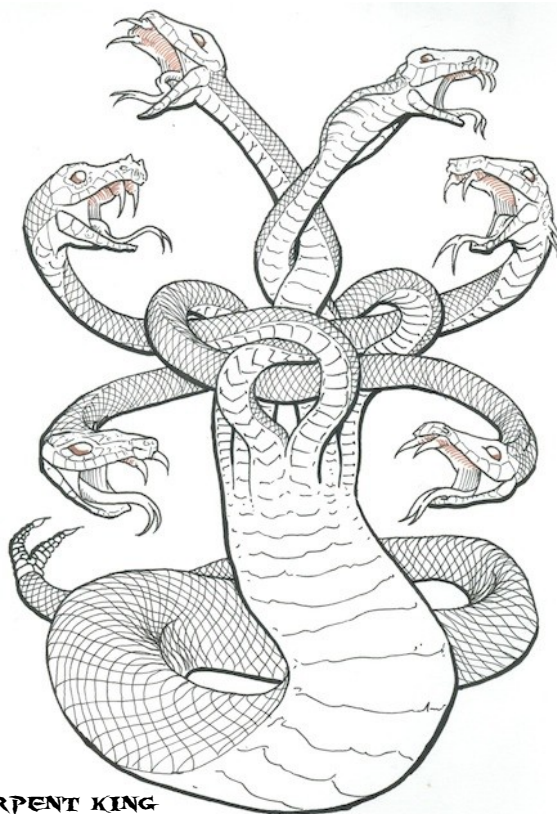
The snyggdra is a giant snake with 6 heads. Each head has 5 hp and can attack independently. 5 damage from a single attack is needed to sever a head, with excess damage being lost (exception: area damage can sever multiple heads, and a Mighty Deed of 4+ that does 10+ damage may cut off 2 heads). If the snyggdra receives less than 5 damage from a single attack, this damage heals immediately. A severed head is replaced by two new heads after 3 rounds. New heads cannot attack in the round they are regrowing. Regrowing of heads can be prevented by sealing the wound with fire or acid or using fire or acid based attacks in the first place.

Each head's poison causes temporary loss of 1d4 points of a different attribute (regenerate normally at 1 attribute point per day). This can be resisted with a DC 14 Fort save for Strength, Agility or Stamina loss or a DC 14 Will save for Intelligence, Personality or Luck loss. (If an attribute is reduced to 0 by the snyggdra, consult "Ability loss" on page 96 of the rulebook.) On a critical hit, roll 1d12 on the crit table below, but the poison additionally requires a DC 18 save or one attribute point is lost permanently.

Snyggdra crit table:

- 1 Piercing bite, +1d6 damage
- 2 Crushing head bite, character falls to bottom of initiative for remainder of battle
- 3 Leg bite, character falls prone
- 4 Weapon arm bite, character drops weapon
- 5 Shield arm bite, character drops shield or if without shield takes +1d6 damage
- 6 Neck bite, +1d8 damage
- 7 Chest pierced, +2d6 damage
- 8 Crippling arm bite, +1d6 damage and character cannot use arm until healed
- 9 Face bite, poison blinds character for 1d4 rounds
- 10 Speed of the cobra, snyggdra immediately makes a second attack
- 11 Throat bite, character cannot speak until healed and spends next action trying to breath again
- 12 Knee bite, character movement is halved until healed and +1d8 damage

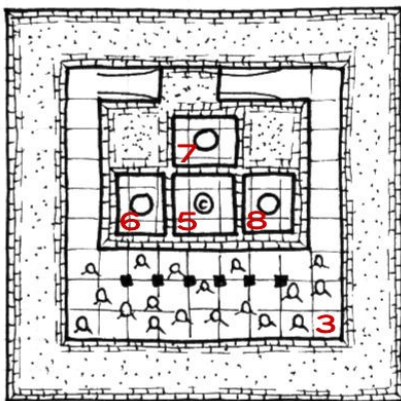
The 6 original heads contain **6 unpolished gems** inside their skulls that are worth 30gp to a regular merchant. They are infused with magic however, and each will give a permanent +1 on one of the 6 attributes if swallowed.



5. Secret Room

This is an **empty room**, surrounded by three **hidden high-priest tombs**. There are no secret doors, but the walls are not very thick and can be broken down with suitable equipment.

Optional: **Snake Portal** (see Appendix)



6. High-Priest Tomb 1

Each of the hidden tomb rooms contains a **huge circular basalt sarcophagus** adorned with elaborate **serpentine rune engravings**. Inside is a **skeleton of a serpent high-priest**, with a snake skull, the upper skeleton of a man and the lower skeleton of a snake, arranged in a spiral inside the sarcophagus. It also contains **two grave goods**:

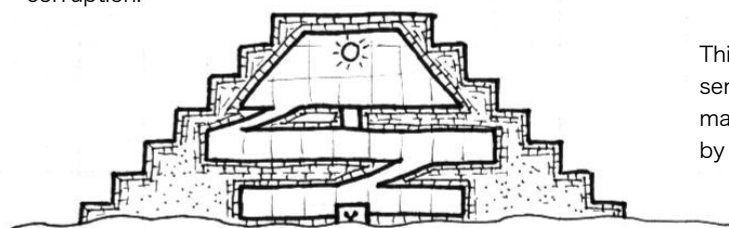
Snake Seeds

Small iron chest with 40 strange seeds.

These seeds immediately grow into snakes when thrown on any kind of soil, wood or stone, with their tails implanted in the ground (like a snake-plant), and they last for 6 turns. Afterwards, there is a 1 in 20 chance that a snake escapes its soil, otherwise it turns to brown goo that can be used as a poison (1 dose per snake). If successfully used on a suitable weapon or imbibed, the poisoned victim has to make a DC 16 Fort save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. If you need stats for the snakes, use those of the Arrow Asps below (see high-priest tomb 2). The snake-plants will attack every non-serpent creature that comes into their range.

Snake Head Amulet

Carved from bone, attached to a silver necklace. The wearer develops a new sense and can detect non-reptilian humanoids in a 30' radius. This works in absolute darkness, through walls, floors, etc. Roll for a minor corruption after wearing it for 6 turns, and if possible make the results suitably snake-themed. After three minor corruptions, switch to major corruption, after three more, to greater corruption.



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7. High-Priest Tomb 2

Polymorph Snake Potion

Small flask wrapped in viper skin. The imbiber's body turns into a giant viper for 1d6 turns (see rulebook p. 428).

Asp Arrows

These 6 arrows look like petrified snakes and can be shot with any regular bow. They come alive in mid-flight and bite their target on impact, doing 1d6 damage plus poison that paralyzes for 1d4 rounds if a DC 16 Fort save is not made. Shooting an asp arrow is limited to close or medium range.

For recovering an arrow after the fight, roll a d20:

- 1-5 Asp stayed alive but quickly left the battle ground.
- 6-10 Asp stayed alive but hid, most likely under the victim. Will attack if disturbed, for example when looting the body.
- 11-15 Asp arrow seems to be petrified again, but will come alive and attack if touched (attacking someone who touches it with +5 melee).
- 16-20 Asp arrow is petrified and can be used again.

ARROW ASP: Init +3; Atk bite +1 melee (1d6 + poison DC 16 Fort or paralyzed 1d4 rounds); AC 12; HD 1d8; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL N.

8. High-Priest Tomb 3

Viper Teeth Necklace

66 viper teeth on a leather string give +3 on all saves vs. poison. If worn by a non-reptilian, makes reptiles more likely to attack wearer.

Ith-Narmant's Shadowshield Glove

When not in use, it looks like a pitch-black glove that does not reflect any light. When activated by clenching one's empty hand, a disk of magic shadow forms instantly at the back of the hand, protecting the wearer like a normal shield.

The shadowshield provides an additional +2 AC against attacks with any fire or light-based weapons as well as a +2 bonus on saving throws versus any fire or light-based magic or effect. The saving throw bonus also applies while the glove is worn without the shield being active.

This glove is given as a reward for extraordinary services to priests and champions of Ith-Narmant, the master of shadows, chill and solanaceae. Prolonged use by others might result in the visit of Ith-Narmant's agents.

Appendix

Snake Portal (optional in room 5)

At the judge's discretion, there is a mummified snake arranged in almost a complete circle on the floor, about 6 feet in diameter and 20 feet long. If the tail of this snake is placed into its mouth, the snake circle becomes a portal to whatever adventurous place you want to send the player characters, maybe the long lost city of the serpent people? Decide beforehand if the portal is portable or if it only works inside the ziggurat.

Invoke Serpent King's Favor

Use like an Invoke Patron Spell. Can also be used by non-spellcasters (don't add a caster level in this case). Those in the favor of the Serpent King can try to invoke his help once a week. Every additional invoking on the same day by a different character in the party gets a cumulative -2 on the roll.

12-13

Charm 2HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
armor of living snakes crawls over invoker; it absorbs 50% of all damage for 1d6+CL rounds, up to 15hp total.

14-17

Charm 3HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
grow snake skin +2 AC for 1d4 turns.

18-19

Charm 4HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon snake swarm that arrives in 1d3 rounds and helps the invoker for 1d6 rounds:

Init +0; Atk bite +2 melee against all enemies in 20'x20' space (1d4); AC 9; HP 40; MV 10'; Act 1d20 (attack all enemies in space); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +0; AL C.

20-23

Charm 5HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon poisonous snake swarm that arrives in 1d3 rounds and helps the invoker for 1d6 rounds:

Init +2; Atk bite +2 melee against all enemies in 20'x20' space (1d6 + poison DC 16 Fort or -4 on the next action); AC 11; HP 60; MV 30'; Act 1d20 (attack all enemies in space); SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +0; AL C.

24-27

Charm 6HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon Giant Viper (see rulebook p. 428) that helps the invoker for 1 turn. If desired, the invoker can project their mind into the viper, use its senses and control its body.

28-29

Charm 7HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon Giant Boa Constrictor (see rule book p. 428) that helps the invoker for 1 turn. If desired, the invoker can project their mind into the boa, use its senses and control its body.

30-31

Charm 8HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon Snyggdra for 1 round (invoker can direct its 6 attacks on multiple enemies).

32+

Charm 9HD of snakes for 1 day if they fail a Will save vs. check result or
summon Snyggdra for 1d4+CL rounds (invoker can direct its 6 attacks on multiple enemies, but can do nothing else but move).



*99 things you shouldn't be doing in the dungeon,
room 1, lesson 1*

Check out my other old-school RPG stuff at my blog:
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Make a DC15 Intelligence check to understand the following (elven barristers get +3).

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