

TYMA1-3

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING*
FORGOTTEN REALMS ADVENTURE

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You are asked to investigate the theft of caravan goods in the village of Ruinspoke. Aside from the monetary value of the stolen items, the reputation and prestige of House Jalt are at stake. Sometimes an accident is just an accident, and sometimes it's a clue to something far more sinister. Adventuring isn't the only dangerous profession. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Tymander for characters levels 7 - 10.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster*

Manual. Attacks have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact**

with their environment. Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following every word on the page; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 7 - 10. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the first two levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the last two levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play riskier and play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group is in agreement to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group is in agreement to do so; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter will have a level and other values (such as XP or sometimes skill checks) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only

awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later on and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

CHARACTER DEATH

If a PC dies during the course of the adventure, the player of that character and the rest of the group have two options, provided that they have access to the Raise Dead ritual (either a PC has it and can use it or the characters return back to civilization), they have access to the body, and it is possible to return the dead PC to life.

- **Pay the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly amongst the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there's still more of the adventure remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return back to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Encounters that do not give out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another

action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lord Tuanek of House Jalt has hired the PCs to investigate the theft of some caravan goods from Ruinspoke. The investigation turns urgent when a gruesome fatal accident occurs, seemingly at random. Upon closer inspection, the “accident” was quite deliberate – a well-executed act of sabotage. As the PCs investigate both the sabotage and the missing goods, they discover a frightening connection. The accident victim is part of a group of cultists of Sseth – and someone seems to be setting them up to be discovered and wiped out by the authorities.

PLAYER’S INTRODUCTION

The adventure assumes that the PCs have already been contacted by Lord Tuanek of Ruinspoke, who has asked them to come to the village and investigate some recent thefts of caravan goods, and that they have decided to hear him out. It’s up to each player to decide why his or her character is willing to accept Tuanek’s invitation. The PCs are high enough level to have earned some small amount of fame (or notoriety), so each character gets an individually addressed letter from Tuanek. The details of the letter depend on whether or not that PC has played previous Tymanter regional adventures and earned the story objects therein.

In particular, characters who have earned both the *Recognition of House Jalt* (TYMA01) and the *Blue Dragon Charm of House Jalt* (TYMA03) story objects should be given **Player Handout 1**.

Characters who have one or the other, but not both, of the story objects should be given **Player Handout 2**.

Characters who do not have either story object should be given **Player Handout 3**.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Accepting an invitation to come and hear the words of Lord Tuanek of House Jalt, you have journeyed across the strange and barren countryside of Tymanter to the small border town of Ruinspoke. The elder dragonborn has earned a good reputation as a reliable employer of adventurers, which he uses to augment his own soldiers from the Platinum Cadre.

The sun has been shining brightly in the spring sky for about three hours when you arrive in the village.

If the player characters have been to Ruinspoke before, then they are recognized by some of the passing

villagers (primarily dragonborn, but with a smattering of other races; see **Appendix 1** for details about Ruinspoke). Basically, your job here is to make it seem to the players that their characters’ actions are recognized and remembered. This helps make the region feel more alive and gives past adventures a link to the present.

Those characters who have adventured here previously and helped the locals are warmly welcomed, with children running up to ask about their recent adventures. Perhaps they visit the Full Mugs, where the dwarven proprietor calls them by name and offers to stand them to a hearty breakfast, on the house. On the other hand, those who have failed on previous missions are shunned, with passersby crossing to the other side of the street and merchants staring at them icily.

All of the PCs have arrived at approximately the same time (to save space, it’s not included on the player handout, but Tuanek’s letter asked them to come to his office on a specific day at a specific time). This is a good opportunity to do character introductions and allow the PCs to roleplay a bit with the people of Ruinspoke. Eventually, the time for the characters’ meeting with Tuanek approaches, and they should gather together for the trip across town to his office.

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk across the village, the sounds of hammering begin making your conversations harder to follow. It seems that someone is taking advantage of the nice weather to make some improvements on a large two-story house at the very edge of town. You see several other humans who are hard at work repairing a wall. Beyond the edge of the village, the forest stands deep and silent.

Suddenly, a wooden ladder snaps, dropping a workman to the ground. The man falls downward and catches his neck at an awkward angle on one of the ladder’s rungs. There is a nasty crack and a wet tearing sound as the hapless laborer is nearly decapitated. His body collapses like a puppet whose strings have just been cut. You can’t see much more from this distance, but it seems unlikely that he could still be alive.

The work site falls silent as it takes everyone a moment to comprehend the terrible tragedy that has just occurred.

The PCs don’t know it, but this accident happened at exactly this place and in exactly this time for a reason. Someone wants the adventurers to investigate the “workers” and their house, instead of the recent series of thefts of caravan goods that Lord Tuanek had brought them here to investigate. At any rate, proceed to **Encounter 1** when everyone is ready to begin.

DM's INTRODUCTION

In this adventure, a thinly disguised act of sabotage leads the PCs to discover a secret cult of Sseth (the evil god of serpents, who is reviled by most dragonborn). The PCs will most likely hunt down and destroy the leader of the cult. The flow of the adventure should roughly proceed as follows:

Following the terrible accident, a crowd gathers, and Tuanek quickly arrives to control the situation (**Encounter 1**). He asks the PCs to investigate this matter because the house's occupants have recently had some of their caravan goods stolen and the circumstances of the "accident" are very suspicious.

The PCs investigate the accident site. The construction workers are actually Snaketongue cultists of Sseth. The cultists try to get the PCs to leave by trying to explain it all away as a tragic accident. The PCs find clues that not all is as it seems. When the PCs try to enter the house, the cultists will resist and this leads to combat (**Encounter 2**).

After the battle, the PCs will most likely search the house to figure out what it is that the "workers" did not want them to find. The house itself is unremarkable, but the PCs discover a secret door leading down to an underground passage. Following it, they discover a shrine to Sseth.

Exploring the shrine (**Encounters 3, 4, and 5**) the PCs will run across three different hazards: traps, Sseth fanatics, and serpents. This should be run as a sequence of quick, action-packed, fast-paced scenes, almost like a single extended encounter. The PCs should get a sense that the leaders of this cult are trying to make their escape from Ruinspoke, so they need to hurry.

In the final room of the shrine (**Encounter 7**), the PCs find a secret door leading back to the surface. They also find tracks indicating that several individuals recently escaped. Making their way through the secret tunnel, the PCs emerge outside of town. Following the tracks, the PCs are able to catch up with the leaders of the Snaketongue cult.

Finally, the PCs catch up with the leaders of the cult of Sseth, who fight to the death (**Encounter 8**). They claim that they were not doing anything to hurt anyone and the PCs are murderers for destroying their "church" and its faithful.

Returning to Ruinspoke, the PCs tell Lord Tuanek what they have uncovered. He is relieved at the destruction of the cult of Sseth. At the same time, the situation is confusing. The cultists were actually among those who had their caravan goods stolen, and there was nothing that indicated the cult was even there. If not for the accident, the PCs' investigation would have gone in

a completely different direction. It seems as though someone went to great lengths to ensure that the cult of Sseth would be exposed and destroyed, but who? For now, the question must remain open as to who sabotaged the ladder and stole the goods. That is a story for another day.

RESTING DURING THE ADVENTURE

The challenge in this adventure is not as much about any individual combat, but rather the fact that the PCs must defeat all the obstacles in a short period of time. In particular, the encounters in the shrine are designed to be run in quick succession. The setup for the final combat encounter is based upon how many rests the party takes during the earlier parts of the adventure:

- If the party takes an extended rest at any point, the cult's leaders get away (feel free to warn the players before this happens so that they don't feel like they were tricked into failing the adventure).
- If the party takes a short rest after each encounter, they will be surprised by the cult's leaders in the final combat.
- If the party skips exactly one short rest, then the two sides will begin on even terms in the final combat.
- If the party skips more than one short rest, they will be able to surprise the cultists in the final encounter.

TROUBLESHOOTING: HEY, WE'RE BEING SET UP!

The fact that the cult of Sseth is being set up to take the fall is not very difficult to figure out. At some point the players might decide that they would rather track down the "man behind the curtain" and figure out who engineered the fatal accident, rather than pursuing the cultists. That's not unreasonable, but it's beyond the scope of this adventure. Should the PCs contact Lord Tuanek at any point with this idea, he will ask them to pursue the immediate problem, which is the cult of Sseth. He wants the entire cult exterminated. There will be time later to figure out who manipulated events, but the cultists will escape unless the PCs pursue them right away. Sseth is an evil god, whose followers are unwelcome in civilized lands. In other words, it's not like the adventurers are being set up to slaughter innocents - they are still destroying an evil cult, even if it's an evil cult that wasn't actually causing any trouble at this particular point in time. They would surely have caused trouble in the future. House Jalt definitely would not have allowed them to settle in Ruinspoke if they had declared their allegiance to Sseth openly.

ENCOUNTER 1: DEATH BY LADDER

Important NPC: Kirak Delfel, human (Bluff +12)

You aren't the only ones to notice the grisly accident - screams and gasps come from other bystanders and foot traffic on the nearby street comes to a halt.

The shrill sound of a signal whistle breaks the silence. Soon you hear the heavy footsteps of dragonborn soldiers rushing to the scene.

At this point, the PCs can decide what to do. The soldiers won't allow anyone to examine the body until Lord Tuanek gets here.

If they approach the work scene, more soldiers are arriving at the scene with each passing minute - it looks like some are on the lookout for enemies while others are securing the perimeter of the work site. One of the soldiers, Ahtehk Jalt (a Lance Defender of House Jalt), waves the PCs back behind the makeshift perimeter and asks them to wait - Lord Tuanek is on his way.

If the PCs ignore this incident entirely and simply continue on to their meeting with Tuanek, upon their arrival at his office, a soldier on his way to the work site tells them that Tuanek has already left and wants them to meet him at the site of the accident.

You don't have to wait long. The leader of Ruinspoke, Lord Tuanek of House Jalt, arrives surrounded by well-armed soldiers. He stops at the perimeter and after a few words with the soldiers, he addresses the crowd. "Citizens and friends, please return to your places of business or residence. We have determined that there is no continued threat, and we need time and space to investigate what has happened here today."

The crowd quickly disperses, although a few rubberneckers have to be nudged along by the soldiers of the Platinum Cadre. Tuanek spots the PCs (particularly if any of them are favored of House Jalt thanks to their past adventures) and waves them over.

"Ah! I presume you received my letter. Thank you for coming so quickly, although I wish we were meeting under..." (he glances to the headless body) "...more fortunate circumstances. I originally asked you here to investigate some caravan goods that have recently gone missing. However, I would like to ask you to investigate this worker's death instead. Strangely enough, the stolen goods that I wanted you to investigate belonged to the people who own this house under construction. It seems

to me that it must be more than a coincidence, wouldn't you agree? I will have my soldiers keep order and secure the area so that you can speak with the remaining workers and investigate the site. What do you say?"

If the PCs don't agree to investigate, Tuanek looks disappointed and asks them to reconsider. If they still refuse, then he shrugs and says that he will have Ahtehk lead the investigation instead. This will quickly end the adventure.

Assuming the PCs agree to lead the investigation, Tuanek continues:

"Thank you. The first person you will want to speak with is the construction foreman. Work has been going on here for several months, but the crew has been plagued with problems, accidents, and thefts for the last several months. I believe there is more to the story, but the workers here are a close-knit and quiet group and have always said that they do not require the assistance of House Jalt in dealing with their issues. I respect the desire of a clan to keep its own counsel, but with this latest incident, I feel that we need to insist on learning more. This is the first fatality and I want it to be the last."

Tuanek's musings are interrupted by Ahtehk, who is accompanied by a small but burly human man. "Let me introduce Kirak Delfel. Kirak, these investigators have my full authority in this matter, and I would ask that you and your men answer their questions thoroughly and honestly. Otherwise I am certain I will hear of it. Do we understand one another?"

The human nods with obvious reluctance. Tuanek appears satisfied for the moment, and turns to leave, accompanied by most of his soldiers.

Kirak is a medium build human that is deeply tanned. He wears leather armor, and has a sheathed scimitar and a horn hanging from his belt.

The other workers are all burly human males. They are wearing leather armor, have greatswords strapped to their backs, and horns hanging from their belts. Be sure to mention the swords and horns, which are somewhat unusual accoutrements for construction workers.

As a general rule, Kirak is very secretive and prefers to answer questions using the smallest number of words possible. The group as a whole acts like a very close-knit community - they don't wear any holy symbols, but the general sense that the PCs might get from the group's behavior is that perhaps they are all part of the same

organization or sect, and it's not necessarily something that they want outsiders to know about.

If the PCs try to question individual workers, they redirect the question to Kirak, because he's the boss. The PCs should always get the benefit of their passive Insight scores, and they can also make opposed Insight checks (vs. Kirak's Bluff of +12) to notice specific moments when he is hiding information, being evasive, or just plain lying. After each of the sample answers there is a note to tell you if this is a truthful or untruthful statement.

Sample questions and answers follow. You can improvise additional dialogue for Kirak as needed.

Q: What's the name of the victim?

A: Tjen Drogen. (True)

Q: How long have you been here?

A: We've been working on this house for a few months. The property owner came to Ruinspoke about six months ago. (True)

Q: Who owns the house?

A: A human named Quiler Sarms. (True)

Q: Does anyone live here?

A: Not at the moment. Quiler is waiting to move in. They house was supposed to be done a few months ago but delays have set us back. (Insight - He is hiding something. The truth is that everyone here actually lives in the underground temple area.)

Q: Tuanek said you have had some thefts. What sort of goods were stolen?

A: Tools, fixtures, materials and furnishings for the house. (True)

Q: What was the value of the caravan goods?

A: About 200 gp. It wasn't too much but it was stuff that was needed to complete the house. (True)

Q: Can we search the work site?

A: Yes, but be sure you don't mess anything up. Quiler is already mad that he hasn't been able to move in. (Insight - He is obviously nervous about the PCs investigating the work site.)

Q: Can we search the house?

A: There's no reason for you to do that. The accident happened outside, and you can see the body and the broken ladder are right here. Everything you need is right here. (Insight - He does not want the PCs to go inside the house.)

If the PCs insist on entering the house or if Kirak feels that the PCs have figured out that there is more to the story, the workers attack. However, they wait to attack until well after Tuanek and his soldiers have left.

Q: Can we examine the body (or the ladder)?

A: Yes, but please be respectful of the dead. (Insight - He doesn't want the PCs to investigate the body, but can't think of a way to refuse such an obvious request.)

- **Investigating the body:** Heal (DC 10) - The head was sliced off very neatly. No ordinary "accident" could ever cause this kind of injury.
- **Examining the ladder:** Perception (DC 10) - The ladder has been tampered with. It's rigged to collapse, and one of the rungs is lined with razor wire, causing it to act like a guillotine. This was no accident. Kirak doesn't have a good answer when the PCs show him this evidence.
- **Examining the other tools:** Nothing else appears to be rigged.

Q: Do you have any enemies?

A: None that we know of! We have just been extremely unlucky on this job. (Insight - He is worried because the cultists are sure that these are not "accidents" or "coincidences," but the group doesn't want to draw attention, and it certainly doesn't want to have the authorities of Ruinspoke around.)

Q: Why do the workers have swords and armor?

A: Well, this site is on the edge of town, so monsters could come in from the forest. Plus, with everything that has gone on, we can't be too careful. We have the swords to defend ourselves and the horns to summon help from Ruinspoke if need be. (Insight - He is defensive and antagonistic concerning these questions.)

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

The encounter ends if and when the PCs insist on searching the main house. Kirak knows that seasoned adventurers will surely discover the secret door leading to the underground temple of Sseth, and he can't allow that to happen. Proceed to Encounter 2.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters do not receive any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 2: SNAKE BITE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 4 / 5 (850 / 950 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 1 wereserpent (W)**
- 8 snaketongue initiates (C)**

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 1 wereserpent (Level 8) (W)**
- 8 snaketongue initiates (C)**

When the PCs press the issue about investigating the “accident” and the cultists don’t believe that the PCs will leave, they attack.

When combat begins, read the following (based upon what has transpired, adjust this text as needed):

With their cover blown, the “workmen” move toward you, drawing their swords. The “foreman” stands his ground, and you see that his skin has begun to ripple and shift, as if he is about to transform into something more sinister.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area has a few important features.

Illumination: Bright illumination from the morning sun.

TACTICS

The wereserpent changes into his constrictor form on his first action. He is a true fanatic of Sseth and concentrates on divine-looking individuals (those carrying obvious holy symbols) over all others. If he is not having any luck with his serpent abilities, he will transform back into human form and start using his scimitar.

The snaketongue initiates will attempt to keep the PCs off the wereserpent. Several of the snaketongue initiates will blow horns during the first round to warn those in the hideout.

All of the cultists will fight to the death. If captured, the cultists will not answer any questions truthfully and will attempt to mislead and stall the PCs. They will not offer anything helpful.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

- Four PCs:** No changes necessary.
- Six PCs:** Add another wereserpent.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have defeated the cultists, they will probably want to search the area to find out what these people were so desperate to hide. The construction site is unremarkable. The building looks like it is intended to be multi-family housing. However, with a thorough search, the PCs discover a secret trap door heading down from the basement. A DC 20 Perception check suffices to locate the secret door. Assuming the PCs open the door, read the following:

Beneath the trap door, you see a set of stairs heading down to some kind of underground passageway. It appears that the construction work on the surface was nothing more than a cover for the real work that has been going on down here. There is a snake-like sigil carved on the underside of the trap door.

A DC 20 Religion check allows the PCs to recognize the sigil as being a holy symbol of the evil deity Sseth, god of serpents. There are no traps in the house or on the stairs. The stairs descend 20 feet and then end in a door.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs are ready to enter the secret door, continue to the next encounter. The PCs should realize that the cultists they just fought were almost certainly able to alert anyone inside the building by blowing on their horns. Thus, time could be of the essence if the PCs want to capture any remaining cultists before they escape.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 170 / 190 experience points each for defeating the wereserpent and snaketongue cultists.

TREASURE

The snaketongue cultists carry a total of 30 / 50 gp per PC. The wereserpent is wearing a suit of *meliorating armor* +2 (low-level version only).

ENCOUNTER 2: “SNAKE BITE” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Wereserpent	Level 6 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile, shapechange)	XP 250
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +9; low-light vision	
HP 60; Bloodied 30	
Regeneration 5 (If the wereserpent takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)	
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 18, Will 17	
Speed 6, climb 4 (in snake form), swim 4; see also <i>serpentine shift</i>	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 +13).	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened (save ends both).	
M Tail Grab (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. AC; the target is grabbed (until escape). A wereserpent can grab only one creature at a time.	
M Drag Foe (move; at-will)	
Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +10 vs. Fortitude; the wereserpent can move up to its speed and pull the grabbed target with it.	
M Constrict (standard; at-will)	
Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the wereserpent's next turn.	
Serpentine Shift (move; at-will)	
The wereserpent shifts 4 squares, and serpent allies within 10 squares of it can shift 2 squares as a free action.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereserpent can alter its physical form to appear as a crushgrip constrictor or a unique human (see Change Shape, MM 280). It cannot use its bite, constrict, or tail grab attacks in human form and cannot make scimitar attacks in snake form.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +12, Stealth +12	
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 17 (+6) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 18 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, scimitar	

Snaketongue Initiate	Level 7 Minion
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 75
Initiative +5 Senses Perception +4	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Speed 6	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+11 vs. AC, 5 damage, and the snaketongue initiate makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary</i>	
<i>Attack</i> : +9 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 2 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 14 (+5) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 12 (+4) Cha 14 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned greatsword	

ENCOUNTER 2: “SNAKE BITE” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Wereserpent (Level 8)	Level 8 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid (reptile, shapechange)	XP 350
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +10; low-light vision
HP 76; Bloodied 38	
Regeneration 5 (If the wereserpent takes damage from a silver weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn.)	
AC 22; Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 19	
Speed 6, climb 4 (in snake form), swim 4; see also <i>serpentine shift</i>	
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 +14).	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened (save ends both).	
M Tail Grab (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. AC; the target is grabbed (until escape). A wereserpent can grab only one creature at a time.	
M Drag Foe (move; at-will)	
Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +12 vs. Fortitude; the wereserpent can move up to its speed and pull the grabbed target with it.	
M Constrict (standard; at-will)	
Affects a target the wereserpent has grabbed; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the wereserpent's next turn.	
Serpentine Shift (move; at-will)	
The wereserpent shifts 4 squares, and serpent allies within 10 squares of it can shift 2 squares as a free action.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A wereserpent can alter its physical form to appear as a crushgrip constrictor or a unique human (see Change Shape, MM 280). It cannot use its bite, constrict, or tail grab attacks in human form and cannot make scimitar attacks in snake form.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +12, Stealth +12	
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 17 (+6) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 18 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, scimitar	

Snaketongue Initiate	Level 7 Minion
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 75
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Speed 6	
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon	
+11 vs. AC, 5 damage, and the snaketongue initiate makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +9 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 2 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 14 (+5) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 12 (+4) Cha 14 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned greatsword	

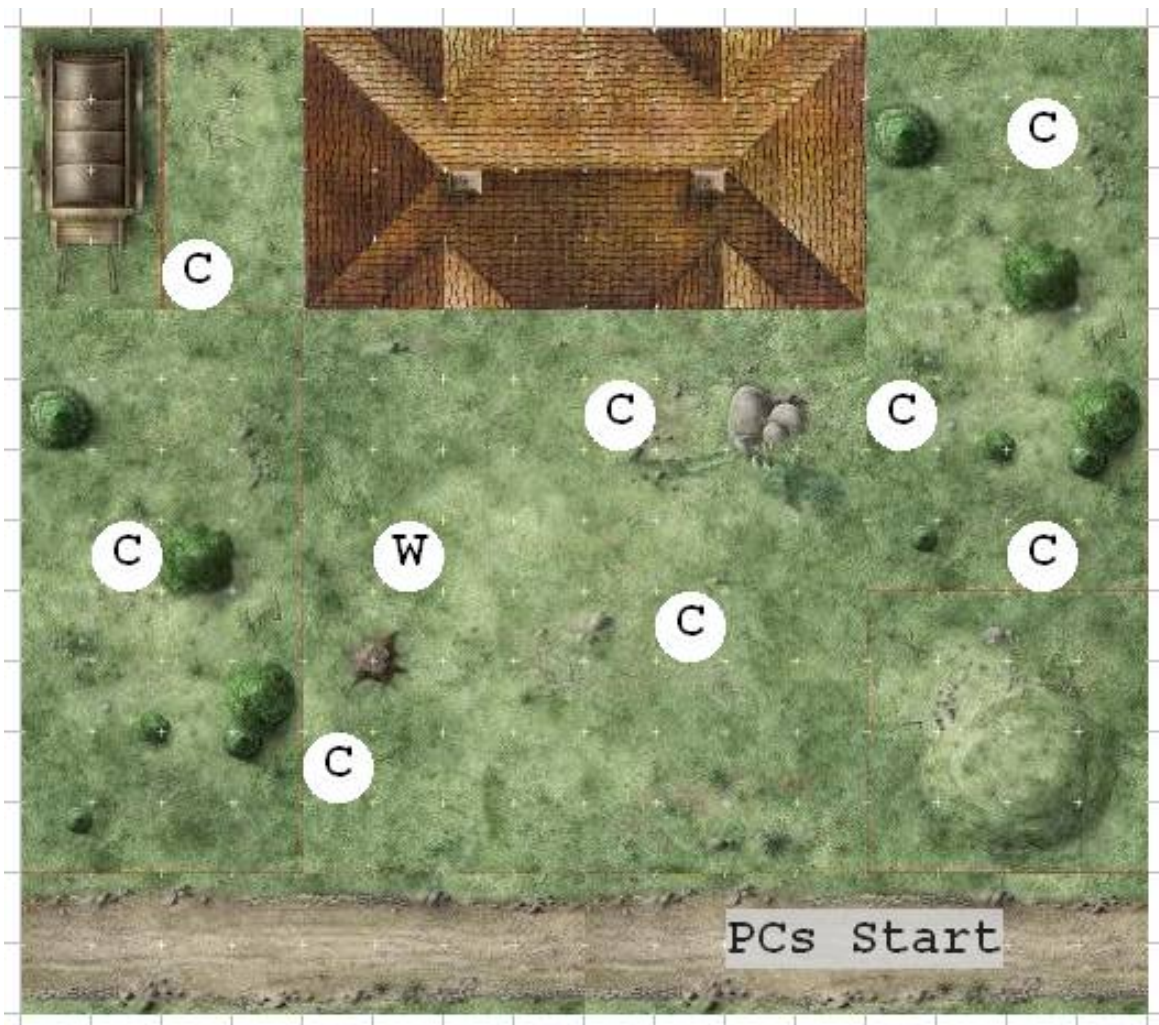
ENCOUNTER 2: “SNAKE BITE” MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Camp / Field	8x8	x1
Road / Crevasse	8x2	x2
Field / Skeleton	4x8	x2
Mound / Hobbit Hole	4x4	x1
Covered Wagon / Field w/Log	4x2	x1
Field / Rock Outcropping	4x2	x1

STREETS OF SHADOW

Large Building / More Sewer	4x8	x1
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ENCOUNTER 3: SNAKE CHARMER

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3 / 5 (750 / 1,050 XP)

SETUP

Encounters 3-5 are designed to be run more like a single extended combat than like three separate battles. This is why the first two encounters are relatively easy. The PCs can take a short rest after each fight if they want, but you should encourage them to press on by warning them about the risk that the remaining cultists might escape.

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

1 deathrattle viper (V)

1 iron cobra (I)

1 shadar-kai witch (W)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

1 deathrattle viper (Level 7) (V)

1 iron cobra (Level 8) (I)

1 shadar-kai witch (Level 9) (W)

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

After discovering the secret door and descending the stairs, you arrive at another door, carved with images of a variety of snakes preying on helpless humans.

A Religion check (DC 15) identifies the carvings as religious iconography of Sseth, the evil god of snakes. The door is closed, but not locked. Give the PCs a Perception check (DC 14 / 16) to hear the sound of music coming from beyond the door - it sounds like someone is playing a flute or other high-pitched instrument. Allow the PCs to make any preparations they wish. When the PCs are ready to open the door, continue with the following:

Beyond the door, you see a rather large room. Directly opposite this entrance is another set of double doors. In the middle of the room, an elaborate sigil has been carved into the floor. The sigil seems to represent a circular pattern of snakes, each one swallowing the tail of the snake in front of it. The entire ring thus forms an endless pattern.

Dancing rhythmically across the sigil, if such a word can be used to describe the slithering motions of serpents, you see two vipers. One of them is clearly

living, while the other appears to be some sort of construct made from iron. Standing at the back of the room is a tall, emaciated female with pale, white skin. She drops the flute she was carrying and hisses menacingly, words of arcane power replacing the music that filled the chamber moments earlier.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The area is brightly illuminated by lamps hanging around the room.

TACTICS

The shadar-kai witch will try to stay back out of combat. She will use *deep shadow* at the first opportunity and will use *beshadowed mind* soon afterwards.

The deathrattle viper slithers forward to attack the nearest foe.

The iron cobra will try to slide around the edges of the battle and use its *poison the mind* ability as often as possible. This entire room is considered to be its guarded area, which means the power is always available.

All of these creatures will fight to the death. If the PCs knock the shadar-kai unconscious instead of killing her, she will lie, stall, and not help the PCs in any manner. An Insight check (DC 14 / 16) suggests that perhaps she is trying to buy time for someone else deeper in the shrine to make their escape.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: No changes necessary.

Six PCs: Add a second iron cobra. Consider also adding a second deathrattle viper if the characters are all on the higher end of the level range for their tier.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the snake charmer and her minions, they can proceed to the next encounter. Ask the players if their characters want to take a short rest before proceeding, or if they want to stay in hot pursuit and head directly to the next encounter.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 150 / 210 experience points each for defeating the shadar-kai witch and her snakes.

TREASURE

The shadar-kai witch carries a *staff of acid and flame* +2.

ENCOUNTER 3: “SNAKE CHARMER” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Deathrattle Viper		Level 5 Brute
Medium natural beast (reptile)		XP 200
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +7; low-light vision	
Death Rattle (Fear) aura 2; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
HP 75; Bloodied 37		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 4, climb 4		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the deathrattle viper makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 2 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 19 (+6)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 2 (-2)	Cha 14 (+4)

Iron Cobra		Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 250
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 75; Bloodied 37		
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 7; see also <i>slithering shift</i>		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
r Poison the Mind (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 10; affects only creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +8 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both); see also <i>guard area</i> .		
Guard Area		
An iron cobra can use its <i>poison the mind</i> power against any creature in its guarded area, even if the power hasn't recharged and even if the target isn't taking ongoing poison damage.		
Slithering Shift (move; at-will)		
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 17 (+6)	Dex 15 (+5)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 19 (+7)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 12 (+4)

Shadar-kai Witch		Level 7 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 300
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
HP 77; Bloodied 38		
AC 21; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 19		
Speed 6; see also <i>shadow jaunt</i>		
m Blackfire Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
+11 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 fire and necrotic damage.		
r Beshadowed Mind (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).		
c Deep Shadow (standard; sustain minor; encounter)		
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround the shadar-kai witch. The witch and any other shadow creatures in the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. The shadar-kai witch can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses <i>shadow jaunt</i> or moves more than half her speed on her turn.		
Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
The shadar-kai witch teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +8, Arcana +12, Religion +12, Stealth +13		
Str 13 (+4)	Dex 16 (+6)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 19 (+7)	Cha 17 (+6)

ENCOUNTER 3: “SNAKE CHARMER” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Deathrattle Viper (Level 7)		Level 7 Brute
Medium natural beast (reptile)		XP 300
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision		
Death Rattle (Fear) aura 2; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
HP 95; Bloodied 47		
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 20, Will 18		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 4, climb 4		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the deathrattle viper makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 10 (+3)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 2 (-1)	Cha 14 (+5)

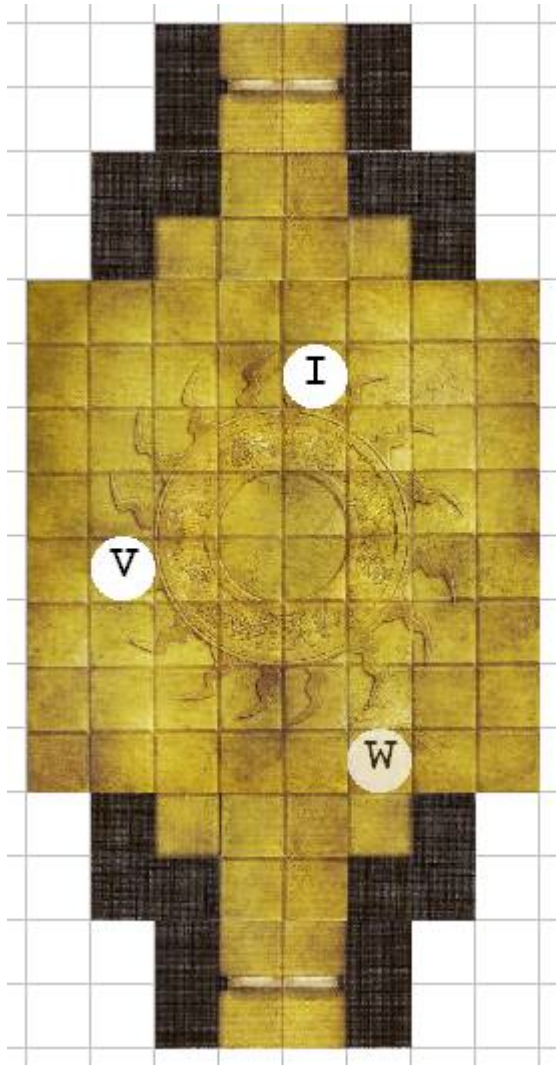
Iron Cobra (Level 8)		Level 8 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 350
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +10; darkvision		
HP 91; Bloodied 45		
AC 22; Fortitude 22, Reflex 20, Will 19		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 7; see also <i>slithering shift</i>		
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
r Poison the Mind (standard; recharge 3 4 5 6) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 10; affects only creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +10 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both); see also <i>guard area</i> .		
Guard Area		
An iron cobra can use its <i>poison the mind</i> power against any creature in its guarded area, even if the power hasn't recharged and even if the target isn't taking ongoing poison damage.		
Slithering Shift (move; at-will)		
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages -
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 17 (+7)	Dex 15 (+6)	Wis 13 (+5)
Con 19 (+8)	Int 5 (+1)	Cha 12 (+5)

Shadar-kai Witch (Level 9)		Level 9 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 400
Initiative +7 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision		
HP 93; Bloodied 46		
AC 23; Fortitude 20, Reflex 21, Will 21		
Speed 6; see also <i>shadow jaunt</i>		
m Blackfire Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
+13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage.		
r Beshadowed Mind (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target has no line of sight to anything more than 2 squares from it (save ends).		
c Deep Shadow (standard; sustain minor; encounter)		
Aura 2; thick, writhing shadows surround the shadar-kai witch. The witch and any other shadow creatures in the aura gain concealment. In addition, enemies that enter or start their turns in the aura take 5 necrotic damage, and enemies (including flying ones) also treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. The shadar-kai witch can sustain the aura as a minor action. However, the effect ends if she uses <i>shadow jaunt</i> or moves more than half her speed on her turn.		
Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
The shadar-kai witch teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of her next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Acrobatics +9, Arcana +13, Religion +13, Stealth +14		
Str 13 (+5)	Dex 16 (+7)	Wis 12 (+5)
Con 13 (+5)	Int 19 (+8)	Cha 17 (+7)

ENCOUNTER 3: “SNAKE CHARMER” MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Corner / Floor	2x2	x4
Doors in Hall / Hallway	4x2	x2
Throne Room / Sun Room	8x8	x1



ENCOUNTER 4: SQUEEZE ME

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3 / 5 (800 / 1,100 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following traps and creatures at the low tier:

1 whirling blades trap (W)

1 crushgrip constrictor (C)

1 rage drake (R)

This encounter includes the following traps and creatures at the high tier:

1 whirling blades trap (W)

1 crushgrip constrictor (Level 11) (C)

1 rage drake (Level 7) (R)

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Opening the door, you see another large room with a set of double doors in the far corner. Signs of recent construction are apparent, and although the chamber is mostly complete, the finer touches such as the snake-like symbol in the center of the floor have not been finished. As much as you'd like to admire the workmanship, your attention is drawn to the center of the room where a large snake and a fiery red drake appear to be waiting for you. Two open cages along the walls suggest that someone has just released these monsters, no doubt to slow your pursuit.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area has a few important features.

Illumination: The area is brightly illuminated by torches on the walls.

Runes: The runes on the floor are mostly decorative. However, there are a number of pressure plates (marked on the map) which activate the whirling blades trap. As soon as any creature steps on one of these plates, the trap attacks. The monsters are not intelligent enough to know about the pressure plates, but if a monster steps on one of the trigger squares and gets attacked, it will avoid that square in future rounds.

Cracked Floor: The area of cracked floor in the center of the room is still under construction. These squares are treated as difficult terrain.

Snake Sigils: The sigils in the two short hallways (outside the main room) are merely decorative.

TACTICS

The whirling blades attack anything that comes close.

The crushgrip constrictor will attempt to *bite* and then *constrict* anyone that comes close. It will hold on until it is killed or the PC goes unconscious.

The rage drake will begin with *raging charge* if possible against a lightly armored foe and will continue with its *bite* until it is killed.

Both monsters prefer to fight in the open; if the PCs all retreat into one of the hallways, the rage drake is willing to pursue them, but the constrictor will remain in this room (it will move away from the doors so that the PCs don't have line of sight to it).

The cages for the drake and the constrictor are not shown on the battle map; they are built into the walls. You can add a 2x2 square opening to each wall if it becomes important where the cages are located.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove the whirling blades trap.

Six PCs: Add another crushgrip constrictor.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the creatures, they can search the area, but they do not find anything of interest. Remind the PCs that someone must have come through here to release the monsters from their cages, so staying in hot pursuit might be preferable to taking a short rest, but it's always the players' decision what they want to do.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 160 / 220 experience points each for defeating the monsters.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 4: “SQUEEZE ME” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Whirling Blades	Level 5 Obstacle
Trap	XP 200
Trap: A whirling blades contraption emerges and spins like a top, moving its speed in a random direction and attacking each round.	
Perception	
♦ DC 17: The character notices the trigger plates around the chamber.	
♦ DC 22: The character notices the hidden control panel.	
Initiative +7	Speed 4
Trigger	
When a character moves into a trigger square, the whirling blades contraption emerges and attacks.	
Attack	
Standard Action	Close burst 1
Target: All creatures in burst.	
Attack: +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 3 damage	
Countermeasures	
♦ A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 17 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the whirling blades to begin acting twice per round (roll a second initiative for the trap).	
♦ A character can attack the whirling blades contraption (AC 16, all other defenses 13; hp 55; resist 5 all) or the control panel (AC 14, all other defenses 11; hp 35; resist 5 all). Destroying either disables the entire trap.	

Crushgrip Constrictor	Level 9 Soldier
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 400
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +12; low-light vision
HP 96; Bloodied 48	
AC 25; Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 22	
Speed 6, climb 6, swim 6	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape).	
M Constrict (standard; at-will)	
Affects a target the crushgrip constrictor has grabbed; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 12 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the crushgrip constrictor's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Skills Stealth +12	
Str 22 (+10)	Dex 16 (+7)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 2 (+0)
	Wis 17 (+7)
	Cha 10 (+4)

Rage Drake	Level 5 Brute
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)	XP 200
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +3
HP 77; Bloodied 38; see also <i>bloodied rage</i>	
AC 17; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 15	
Immune fear (while bloodied only)	
Speed 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
M Claw (standard; at-will)	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
M Raking Charge (standard; at-will)	
When the rage drake charges, it makes two claw attacks against a single target.	
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)	
The rage drake gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage per attack.	
Raging Mount (while bloodied and mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount	
The rage drake grants its rider a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with melee attacks.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages _
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 13 (+3)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2)
	Wis 13 (+3)
	Cha 12 (+3)

ENCOUNTER 4: “SQUEEZE ME” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Whirling Blades	Level 5 Obstacle
Trap	XP 200
Trap: A whirling blades contraption emerges and spins like a top, moving its speed in a random direction and attacking each round.	
Perception	
♦ DC 17: The character notices the trigger plates around the chamber.	
♦ DC 22: The character notices the hidden control panel.	
Initiative +7	Speed 4
Trigger	
When a character moves into a trigger square, the whirling blades contraption emerges and attacks.	
Attack	
Standard Action	Close burst 1
Target: All creatures in burst.	
Attack: +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 3 damage	
Countermeasures	
♦ A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 17 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the whirling blades to begin acting twice per round (roll a second initiative for the trap).	
♦ A character can attack the whirling blades contraption (AC 16, all other defenses 13; hp 55; resist 5 all) or the control panel (AC 14, all other defenses 11; hp 35; resist 5 all). Destroying either disables the entire trap.	

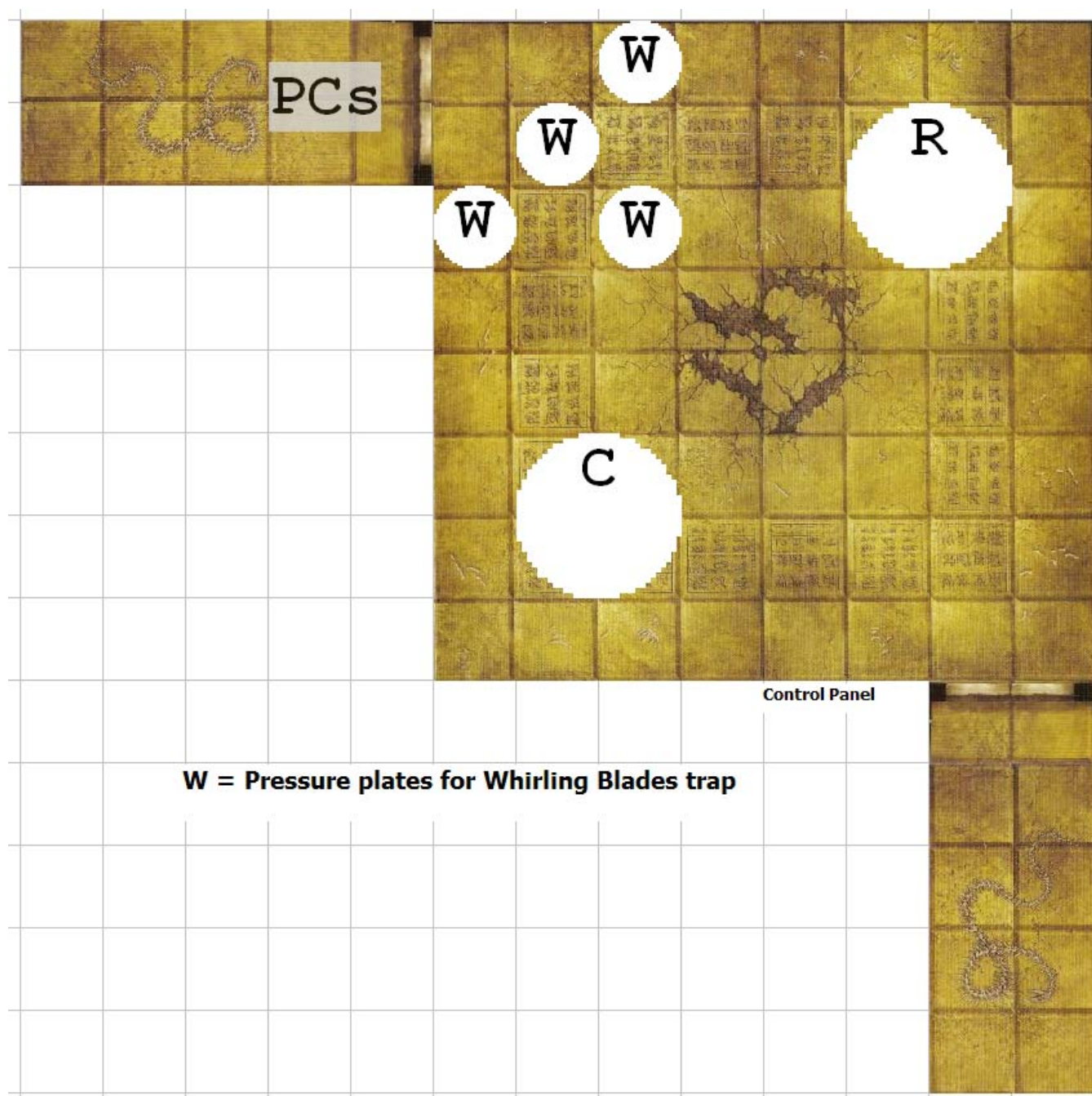
Rage Drake (Level 7)	Level 7 Brute
Large natural beast (mount, reptile)	XP 300
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +4
HP 97; Bloodied 48; see also <i>bloodied rage</i>	
AC 19; Fortitude 19, Reflex 17, Will 17	
Immune fear (while bloodied only)	
Speed 8	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
M Claw (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage; see also <i>bloodied rage</i> .	
M Raking Charge (standard; at-will)	
When the rage drake charges, it makes two claw attacks against a single target.	
Bloodied Rage (while bloodied)	
The rage drake gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 5 damage per attack.	
Raging Mount (while bloodied and mounted by a friendly rider of 5th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount	
The rage drake grants its rider a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls with melee attacks.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages _
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 13 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 3 (–1)
	Wis 13 (+4)
	Cha 12 (+4)

Crushgrip Constrictor (Level 11)	Level 11 Soldier
Large natural beast (reptile)	XP 600
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +13; low-light vision
HP 112; Bloodied 56	
AC 27; Fortitude 27, Reflex 24, Will 24	
Speed 6, climb 6, swim 6	
m Bite (standard; at-will)	
+17 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escapes).	
M Constrict (standard; at-will)	
Affects a target the crushgrip constrictor has grabbed; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 13 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the crushgrip constrictor's next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Skills Stealth +13	
Str 22 (+11)	Dex 16 (+8)
Con 16 (+8)	Int 2 (+1)
	Wis 17 (+8)
	Cha 10 (+5)

ENCOUNTER 4: “SQUEEZE ME” MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Stone Doors / Broken Urn	2x1	x2
Stairs / Hall	4x2	x2
Runes / Pool	8x8	x1



ENCOUNTER 5: SCORCHER

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 7 / 9 (1,650 / 2,150 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the low tier:

- 1 flame jet trap (F)
- 1 flame snake (S)
- 1 hell hound (H)
- 1 chain devil (C)

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps at the high tier:

- 1 flame jet trap (F)
- 1 flame snake (Level 11) (S)
- 1 hell hound (Level 11) (H)
- 1 chain devil (C)

The center of the room has a large emblem of the sun carved in the floor and snakes carved into the sun. Two large braziers flank a staircase, atop which rests a large, ornately carved stone sarcophagus. The carvings depict a humanoid figure composed entirely of writhing snakes. [A DC 15 Nature check allows a PC to recognize the carvings as being a representation of a yuan-ti anathema.]

When the PCs first enter the room, it appears to be empty. The monsters are summoned as part of the triggering of the flame jet trap. As soon as any character approaches within 3 squares of either of the braziers, the trap activates and begins attacking. Simultaneously, the monsters appear. Read the following:

A huge burst of flame erupts from each of the two braziers. At the same time, two creatures spring into existence from the center of the flames. One is a coiled serpent whose scales appear to be made of magma. The other is a red-furred hound whose breath scorches the air. In the very center of the sun emblem carved into the floor, there is a flash of light which heralds the arrival of a tall, thin devil whose body is covered with wicked-looking spiked chains.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The area is brightly lit by the two burning braziers.

Stairs: The stairs are treated as difficult terrain.

Sarcophagus: The sarcophagus is treated as blocking terrain. A character could climb on top with a DC 15 Athletics check, or use the sarcophagus as part of a combat stunt with a DC 15 Acrobatics check. Moving the sarcophagus requires at least two characters, each of whom must make a DC 20 Strength check per 5 feet of movement.

Braziers: In addition to serving as the origin points for the flame jet traps (which can treat any of the four squares of the brazier as the origin point for the trap's attacks), these bowls of flame also present a hazard. A creature entering one of the braziers suffers 10 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

TACTICS

The flame snake will attempt to stay in the blast radius of one of the flame jets and *spit fire*. It will not come out of the area unless it is forced to.

The hell hound will attempt to stay in the blast radius of one of the flame jets and use its *fiery breath*. It will not come out of the area unless it is forced to or if its *fiery breath* does not recharge.

The chain devil will stay near the hell hound and attempt to maneuver around it. He will attempt to use *hellish chains* when possible and hold PCs in the fire.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Reduce the chain devil's hit points by 16 and all its attacks and defenses by 2.

Six PCs: Add a second hell hound.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the creatures, they can search the room. The PCs are able to find a secret door at the back of one of the fire pits. The only item the PCs find of worth is the treasure. Proceed to the next encounter once the players are ready.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 330 / 430 experience points each for defeating the foes.

TREASURE

The sarcophagus is closed and locked (Thievery DC 19/21 to open, followed by Athletics or Strength DC 14/16 to lift the heavy lid). Rather than a body, there is a *skeleton key* inside the sarcophagus.

ENCOUNTER 5: “SCORCHER” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Flame Jet	Level 8 Blaster
Trap	XP 350
Trap: When the trap is triggered, two hidden nozzles in the walls attack each round on their initiative.	
Perception	
♦ DC 19: The character notices the nozzles.	
♦ DC 23: The character notices the control panel on the far side of the room.	
Initiative +3	
Trigger	
When a character enters the blast area of one of the flame jets, it makes its first attack as an immediate reaction. It then rolls initiative, attacking each round.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Reaction	Close blast 3
Targets: All creatures in blast	
Attack: +11 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 4 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage and no ongoing damage	
Countermeasures	
♦ An adjacent character can disable one flame jet with a DC 19 Thievery check.	
♦ A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 23 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the control panel to explode (close blast3, 3d8 + 4 damage to all creatures in blast) and the trap remains active.	

Flame Snake	Level 9 Artillery
Medium elemental beast (fire, reptile)	XP 400
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +12
HP 74; Bloodied 37	
AC 23; Fortitude 19, Reflex 22, Will 20	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 6	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 fire damage.	
r Spit Fire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 11 (+4)	Dex 20 (+9)
Con 14 (+6)	Int 2 (+0)
	Wis 16 (+7)
	Cha 10 (+4)

Hell Hound	Level 7 Brute
Medium elemental beast (fire)	XP 300
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +11
Fire Shield (Fire) aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d6 fire damage	
HP 96; Bloodied 48	
AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 18	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage plus 1d8 fire damage.	
C Fiery Breath (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Fire	
Close blast 3; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 2 (-1)
	Wis 17 (+6)
	Cha 10 (+3)

Chain Devil (Kyton)	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 600
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
HP 116; Bloodied 58	
AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 24, Will 19	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 7; see also <i>dance of battle</i>	
m Spiked Chain (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The chain devil makes two spiked chain attacks.	
M Chains of Vengeance (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The chain devil makes two spiked chain attacks.	
M Hellish Chains (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Reflex; the target is wrapped in chains and restrained (save ends). The chain devil can use its chain to restrain only one creature at a time.	
Dance of Battle (minor; at-will)	
The chain devil shifts 1 square.	
Dance of Defiance (immediate interrupt, when a melee attack is made against the chain devil; recharges after the chain devil uses <i>chains of vengeance</i>).	
The chain devil shifts 1 square.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal
Skills Intimidate +11	
Str 19 (+9)	Dex 24 (+12)
Con 20 (+10)	Int 14 (+7)
	Wis 15 (+7)
	Cha 13 (+6)

ENCOUNTER 5: “SCORCHER” STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Flame Jet	Level 8 Blaster
Trap	XP 350
Trap: When the trap is triggered, two hidden nozzles in the walls attack each round on their initiative.	
Perception	
♦ DC 19: The character notices the nozzles.	
♦ DC 23: The character notices the control panel on the far side of the room.	
Initiative +3	
Trigger	
When a character enters the blast area of one of the flame jets, it makes its first attack as an immediate reaction. It then rolls initiative, attacking each round.	
Attack	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Reaction	Close blast 3
Targets: All creatures in blast	
Attack: +11 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 4 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage and no ongoing damage	
Countermeasures	
♦ An adjacent character can disable one flame jet with a DC 19 Thievery check.	
♦ A character can engage in a skill challenge to deactivate the control panel. DC 23 Thievery. Complexity 1 (4 successes before 3 failures). Success disables the trap. Failure causes the control panel to explode (close blast3, 3d8 + 4 damage to all creatures in blast) and the trap remains active.	

Flame Snake (Level 11)	Level 11 Artillery
Medium elemental beast (fire, reptile)	XP 600
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +13
HP 86; Bloodied 43	
AC 25; Fortitude 21, Reflex 24, Will 22	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 6	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
+14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage plus 1d6 fire damage.	
r Spit Fire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Ranged 10; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 11 (+5)	Dex 20 (+10)
Con 14 (+7)	Int 2 (+1)
	Wis 16 (+8)
	Cha 10 (+5)

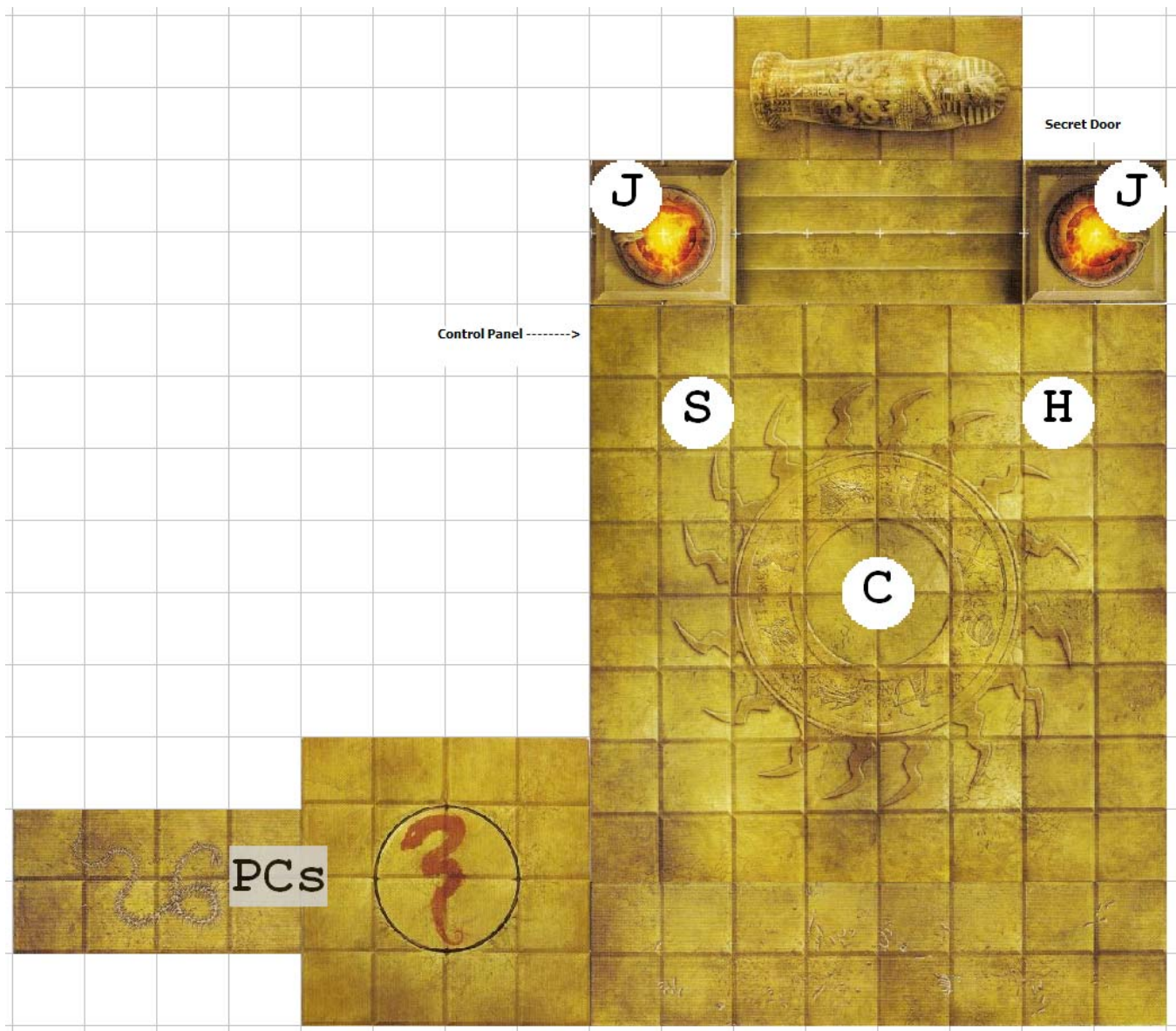
Hell Hound (Level 11)	Level 11 Brute
Medium elemental beast (fire)	XP 600
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +13
Fire Shield (Fire) aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d6 fire damage	
HP 136; Bloodied 68	
AC 24; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 22	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 7	
m Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage plus 1d8 fire damage.	
C Fiery Breath (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Fire	
Close blast 3; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 fire damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages -
Str 14 (+7)	Dex 14 (+7)
Con 16 (+8)	Int 2 (+1)
	Wis 17 (+8)
	Cha 10 (+5)

Chain Devil (Kyton)	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 600
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
HP 116; Bloodied 58	
AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 24, Will 19	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 7; see also <i>dance of battle</i>	
m Spiked Chain (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 2d4 + 7 damage.	
M Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
The chain devil makes two spiked chain attacks.	
M Chains of Vengeance (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
The chain devil makes two spiked chain attacks.	
M Hellish Chains (standard; at-will)	
+14 vs. Reflex; the target is wrapped in chains and restrained (save ends). The chain devil can use its chain to restrain only one creature at a time.	
Dance of Battle (minor; at-will)	
The chain devil shifts 1 square.	
Dance of Defiance (immediate interrupt, when a melee attack is made against the chain devil; recharges after the chain devil uses <i>chains of vengeance</i>).	
The chain devil shifts 1 square.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal
Skills Intimidate +11	
Str 19 (+9)	Dex 24 (+12)
Con 20 (+10)	Int 14 (+7)
	Wis 15 (+7)
	Cha 13 (+6)

ENCOUNTER 5: “SCORCHER” MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Sarcophagus / Misty Hall	4x2	x1
Stairs / Hall	4x2	x1
Stairs with Cauldrons / Webs in Hall	8x2	x1
Floor w/crevasse / Hall	8x2	x1
Snake Sigil / Intersection	4x4	x1
Throne Room / Sun Room	8x8	x1



Note: The monsters are not initially on the battle map. The flame snake and hell hound jump out of the flame jets when the trap activates, and the chain devil appears in the summoning circle as described in the encounter.

ENCOUNTER 6: SECRETS REVEALED

Once the PCs have discovered the secret door behind the brazier and are ready to proceed, read or paraphrase the following:

Opening the secret door, you see another large room, obviously under construction. Upon closer inspection, you notice that the columns supporting the ceiling resemble intertwined snakes, and the beginnings of a large mural depict a powerful snake god. It looks as if this area is an unfinished temple to Sseth.

Whoever was here, they seem to have left in a hurry. You can see a pile of books and scrolls discarded on the floor.

The only items to be found of value are the treasure and letters. One of the letters is addressed to the PCs, and was clearly written in a hurry. Distribute Player Handout 4 at this time.

There is another secret door at the back of the unfinished temple. It leads to a long tunnel, which exits above ground in the woods just outside Ruinspoke. The PCs can find this secret door with a DC 20 Perception check. If they don't think to search, then have the character with the highest passive Insight score realize that if there were more cultists in the area, they must have had another way out, or else the PCs would surely have encountered them on the way in. There is only a single path that leads through the temple.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters earn no XP in this encounter and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

Among the papers that the cultists had to leave behind while making their hurried exit is a ritual book containing Cure Disease, Detect Secret Doors, and Knock.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs are through searching, they can leave via the secret door to chase after the last remaining cultists. Proceed to the next encounter once the players are ready. Taking a short rest at this point is unavoidable (since the overland pursuit of the cultists lasts for several hours unless the PCs have some special form of extremely fast transportation). However, if the characters are thinking about taking an extended rest at this point, emphasize that time is of the essence, as some unknown member of additional cultists, probably including the leaders, are still at large. If the PCs waste too much time, the cultists will escape.

If time permits, you might want to run an improvised skill challenge to represent the PCs' tracking the fleeing cultists. Primary skills would include Nature and Perception to follow the tracks despite the cultists' efforts to disguise their trail, Athletics and Acrobatics to overcome various obstacles and hazards along the way, History to make an educated guess about where the cultists might be heading, and so forth. Each character should make two Endurance checks during the skill challenge; these don't count as successes or failures, but represent the exertion of the forced march as the PCs hurry to keep up with the fleeing cultists. Failure means the loss of a healing surge.

ENCOUNTER 7: SNAKE FOOD

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 8 / 11 (1,700 / 2,800 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures at the low tier:

- 2 **snaketongue warriors** (W)
- 1 **snaketongue assassin** (A)
- 1 **snaketongue celebrant** (C)

This encounter includes the following creatures at the high tier:

- 2 **snaketongue warriors** (Level 11) (W)
- 1 **snaketongue assassin** (Level 11) (A)
- 1 **snaketongue celebrant** (Level 14) (C)

After following the trail of the cultists, the PCs are able to catch up to them. As described in the DM's Introduction, the amount of time that the PCs spent in the shrine determines whether the PCs are surprised, the cultists are surprised, or whether it is straight initiative for this encounter.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

The fleeing cultists' tracks grow stronger and stronger; you are clearly gaining on them. After several hours of pursuit, the tracks have become very fresh. The trail leads through the trees, in the direction of a small collection of standing stones.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: During the daytime, bright illumination from the sun; at night, dim illumination as the cultists light their way with torches.

TACTICS

The snaketongue warriors move right up to the front lines and engage the PCs directly.

The assassin begins the encounter hiding (make a Stealth check for him) and will try to sneak around to the party's back rank. Once he is engaged in melee, however, he prefers to stay adjacent to at least one PC, so that he gains the benefit of *crowd shield*.

The celebrant will attempt to use *coils of despair* as often as possible. He will use *serpent's lash* when needed.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Reduce the snaketongue warriors' hit points by 20 each.

Six PCs: Add a second snaketongue assassin.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs defeat the cultists, they can search the bodies. In addition to the treasure, they discover the cult leader's diary. Distribute Player Handout 5 at this time.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The characters receive 340 / 560 experience points each for defeating the snaketongue cultists.

TREASURE

The snaketongue warriors carry a total of 40 / 50 gold pieces per PC. The snaketongue celebrant wears a *healer's sash*, and the snaketongue assassin wields a *poisoned weapon* +2.

ENCOUNTER 7: “SNAKE FOOD” STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Snaketongue Warrior		Level 8 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 350
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +5	
HP 106; Bloodied 53		
AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 17		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 6		
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage (1d10 + 5 damage while bloodied) and the snaketongue warrior makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +11 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Religion +10		
Str 16 (+7)	Dex 14 (+6)	Wis 12 (+5)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 12 (+5)	Cha 14 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned greatsword		

Snaketongue Assassin		Level 9 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human		XP 400
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +8	
HP 80; Bloodied 40		
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 21, Will 20; see also <i>crowd shield</i>		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+14 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
Crowd Shield		
The snaketongue assassin gains a +2 bonus to its AC and Reflex defense if it has one creature adjacent to it, or a +4 bonus if two or more creatures are adjacent to it.		
Serpent Form (move; at-will)♦ Polymorph		
The snaketongue assassin transforms into a crushgrip constrictor (MM p. 240). Any equipment the assassin is carrying merges with the new form. The assassin uses the crushgrip constrictor's statistics instead of its own, except for hit points. Reverting to its true form is a minor action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Religion +11, Stealth +14		
Str 16 (+7)	Dex 20 (+9)	Wis 18 (+8)
Con 20 (+9)	Int 14 (+6)	Cha 14 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned dagger		

Snaketongue Celebrant		Level 11 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human		XP 600
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +14	
HP 117; Bloodied 58		
AC 24; Fortitude 22, Reflex 20, Will 24		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+14 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 2d8 + 11), and the snaketongue celebrant makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +12 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
R Serpent's Lash (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 5; a whip of amber-colored energy lashes the target; +14 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage to all its enemies until the end of the celebrant's next turn.		
A Coils of Despair (standard; recharge 5 6)		
Area burst 5 within 10; targets enemies; +14 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends) by writhing coils of green energy.		
Serpent Form (move; at-will) ♦ Polymorph		
The snaketongue celebrant transforms into a crushgrip constrictor (MM p. 240). Any equipment the celebrant is carrying merges with the new form. The celebrant uses the crushgrip constrictor's statistics instead of its own, except for hit points. Reverting to its true form is a minor action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Diplomacy +15, Insight +14, Intimidate +15, Religion +13		
Str 17 (+8)	Dex 19 (+9)	Wis 19 (+9)
Con 21 (+10)	Int 16 (+8)	Cha 21 (+10)
Equipment hooded robe, poisoned scimitar		

ENCOUNTER 7: SNAKE FOOD STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Snaketongue Warrior (Level 11)		Level 11 Brute
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 600
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6	
HP 136; Bloodied 68		
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 20		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 6		
m Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+16 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage (1d10 + 6 damage while bloodied) and the snaketongue warrior makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +14 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Religion +11		
Str 16 (+8)	Dex 14 (+7)	Wis 12 (+6)
Con 16 (+8)	Int 12 (+6)	Cha 14 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned greatsword		

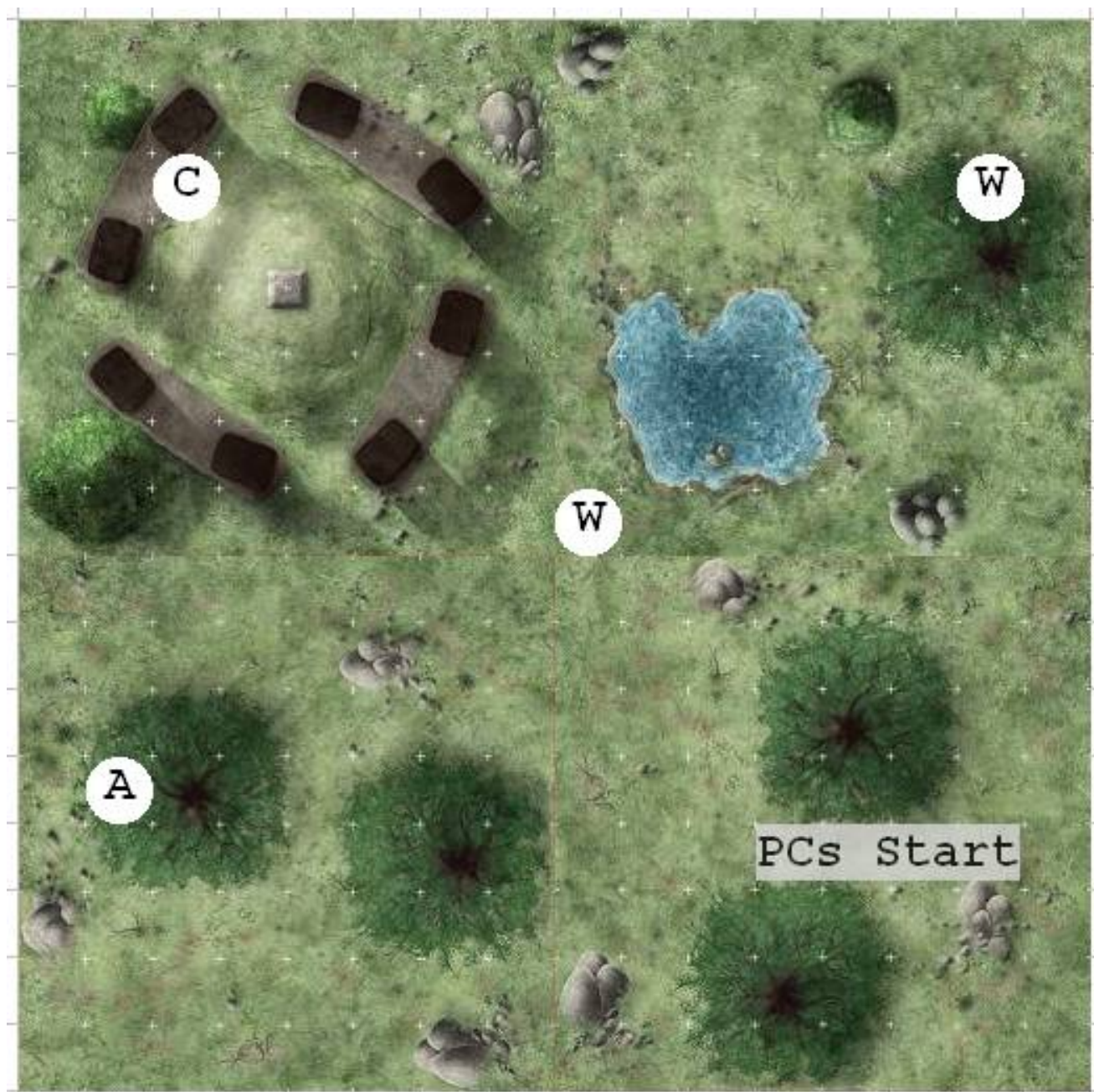
Snaketongue Assassin Level 11		Level 11 Lurker
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human		XP 600
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +9	
HP 92; Bloodied 46		
AC 25; Fortitude 23, Reflex 23, Will 22; see also crowd shield		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+16 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
Crowd Shield		
The snaketongue assassin gains a +2 bonus to its AC and Reflex defense if it has one creature adjacent to it, or a +4 bonus if two or more creatures are adjacent to it.		
Serpent Form (move; at-will)♦ Polymorph		
The snaketongue assassin transforms into a crushgrip constrictor (MM p. 240). Any equipment the assassin is carrying merges with the new form. The assassin uses the crushgrip constrictor's statistics instead of its own, except for hit points. Reverting to its true form is a minor action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Religion +12, Stealth +15		
Str 16 (+8)	Dex 20 (+10)	Wis 18 (+9)
Con 20 (+10)	Int 14 (+7)	Cha 14 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned dagger		

Snaketongue Celebrant (Level 14)		Level 14 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger), human		XP 1,000
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +16	
HP 141; Bloodied 70		
AC 27; Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 27		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 7		
m Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 2d8 + 13), and the snaketongue celebrant makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +15 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
R Serpent's Lash (standard; recharge 4 5 6) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 5; a whip of amber-colored energy lashes the target; +17 vs. Will; 1d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target grants combat advantage to all its enemies until the end of the celebrant's next turn.		
A Coils of Despair (standard; recharge 5 6)		
Area burst 5 within 10; targets enemies; +17 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends) by writhing coils of green energy.		
Serpent Form (move; at-will)♦ Polymorph		
The snaketongue celebrant transforms into a crushgrip constrictor (MM p. 240). Any equipment the celebrant is carrying merges with the new form. The celebrant uses the crushgrip constrictor's statistics instead of its own, except for hit points. Reverting to its true form is a minor action.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Diplomacy +17, Insight +16, Intimidate +17, Religion +15		
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 19 (+11)	Wis 19 (+11)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 16 (+10)	Cha 21 (+12)
Equipment hooded robe, poisoned scimitar		

ENCOUNTER 7: “SNAKE FOOD” MAP

RUINS OF THE WILD

Cabin / Field w/Trees	8x8	x2
Stonehenge / Field w/Pond	8x8	x2



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have defeated the leaders of the Cult of Sseth, they should return to Tuanek's office to report. The text for this encounter assumes that the PCs were successful in tracking down the cult's leaders; if that isn't the case, see the Failure section below.

When you arrive back at Lord Tuanek's office, the guards recognize you and allow you to pass. Servants bring you refreshments, making the few minutes of waiting pass quickly. Tuanek enters the room and smiles at each of you before taking a seat behind his desk. "I am pleased at your safe return. What news do you have for me?"

Tuanek expects the PCs to make a full, factual report. He asks for clarifications or additional detail if he feels the PCs' report is incomplete or unclear. He is especially interested in their ideas on 1) why the cultists set up base here and 2) who might be behind the "accident."

Once the PCs have made their report and answered Tuanek's questions, he nods. It's clear that he is not satisfied, although his dissatisfaction isn't with the PCs - it's with the fact that he knows someone else arranged for this situation to transpire as it did. He's also annoyed that the cult of Sseth was able to gain as much of a foothold as it did without the Platinum Cadre becoming aware of the evil growing within Ruinspoke. There also remains the unresolved matter of the stolen caravan goods, which will still need to be resolved. Nevertheless, the PCs have done everything that they can, at least for now.

"I thank you for investigating the murder and thereby uncovering the cult of Sseth. House Jalt appreciates your bravery and diligence. I am not at all convinced that we fully understand what has transpired here today. I think that someone else wanted the cult of Sseth to be discovered. It was also quite convenient that today's distractions prevented you from investigating the original matter for which I had asked you to come here. We cannot dwell on the possibilities overlong, however; I am certain that all shall be revealed in time. The important thing for now is that you have done a great service to the people of Ruinspoke by eradicating this evil cult that was growing within our midst. Surely it was just a matter of time before these cultists would have perpetrated some great evil against our village."

He taps three times on a small wooden block. A dragonborn servant appears, bearing several small bags that jingle with the promise of coin, as well as a black

velvet pouch. She hands all these items to Tuanek, inclines her head slightly to each of you, and leaves.

Tuanek hands each of you a small bag containing your payment and continues. "In addition to your payment, I would like to extend to you a personal token of thanks from House Jalt." He reaches into the black velvet pouch and hands each of you a finely worked bronze charm in the shape of a dragonborn claw.

[For those characters who already have two or more other favors of House Jalt, he continues: "My, you are amassing quite a collection of these trinkets, aren't you? I shall have to see about getting you an introduction to the Platinum Cadre, or perhaps one of the other organizations headquartered in Djerad Thymar."]

The dragonborn also pulls a number of fist-sized, glowing stones out of the velvet pouch. "I recently received these from the Temple of Bahamut," he says. "Perhaps you might find them useful in your future adventures. I am told that they can create a burst of light that undead creatures find rather unpleasant."

[High tier only: Tuanek takes an amulet made of cold iron from around his own neck. "I have the honor of protecting this outpost," he says. "I failed to notice the evil that was building beneath my very scales. But, you have rooted that evil out. I offer you this talisman in thanks. May it strengthen your resolve to always do what is right."]

Tuanek smiles, then returns to his desk, tapping the wooden block three times. The servant returns and shows you out.

TREASURE

The PCs receive 80 / 100 gp each and an amulet of mental resolve +2 (high-level only). Each character also receives the Bronze Claw of House Jalt and Thanks of an Unknown Entity story objects.

FAILURE

The only ways for the PCs to fail at their mission are if they are defeated in one of the combat encounters or if they take an extended rest (which allows the cult leaders to escape). If this happens, then any surviving PCs are excoriated by Tuanek when they deliver their report. He cuts their payment in half, to 40 / 50 gp each, and they do not receive the Bronze Claw of House Jalt story object or the glowstones (or the magical amulet at high tier). They still receive the Thanks of an Unknown Entity story object as long as they at least discovered the fact that there was in fact a cult of Sseth in Ruinspoke.

If the cult leaders escaped, be sure you note this in your answers to the Adventure Questions.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

It is critical that you enter the PC rewards accurately on the tracking form, and ensure that the information is reported and entered online in a timely manner. While players will be able to track their character's information on paper, the online information serves as an important backup and verification of play. Ask the players for their RPGA numbers and character numbers (usually a single digit) when you begin to fill out the tracking form.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 2: Snake Bite

170 / 190 XP

Encounter 3: Snake Charmer

150 / 210 XP

Encounter 4: Squeeze Me

160 / 220 XP

Encounter 5: Scorcher

330 / 430 XP

Encounter 7: Snake Food

340 / 560 XP

Total Possible Experience

1,120 / 1,600 XP

Note: The XP totals from the individual encounters add up to slightly more than the maximum XP available for a levels 7-10 adventure. (Specifically, the totals add up to 1,150 / 1,610 XP). Regardless, the characters cannot earn more than the listed maximum XP.

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or some other item of value. Each player makes one selection for their character; players may choose the

same treasure bundle. Mark the one-letter bundle ID on the tracking form next to any character that selects a bundle; note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that to the gold all characters receive, and ensure you enter the total amount of gold gained (minus any expenditures) online. You can have a negative number and enter that negative online. PCs receive 20% of a magic item's purchase price for any item they sell.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist's weapon +1* is listed as a choice in a bundle, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist's dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC's adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

An asterisk next to a magic item means that it is an item that appears in the **New Rules** section.

Gold per PC

150 / 200 gp

(Encounter 2: 30 / 50 gp; Encounter 8: 40 / 50 gp; Encounter 9: 40-80 / 50-100 gp)

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

Bundle A: *meliorating armor +2** (low-level version only, AV, 8th level)

Found in Encounter 2

Bundle B: *staff of acid and flame +2** (AV, 10th level)

Found in Encounter 3

Bundle C: *healer's sash** (AV, 11th level)

Found in Encounter 7

Bundle D: *skeleton key** (AV, 10th level)

Found in Encounter 5

Bundle E: ritual book containing Cure Disease, Detect Secret Doors, and Knock

Found in Encounter 6

Bundle F: *poisoned weapon +2** (AV, 12th level)

Found in Encounter 7

Bundle G: *amulet of mental resolve +3** (high-level version only, AV, 12th level)
Awarded in the Conclusion

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add a *glowstone* (See the New Rules section) plus 150 / 300 gp to their total gold. The player should write the consumable item gained on their adventure log. (The *glowstone* does not take up one of the character's permanent magic item slots.)

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 350 / 500 gp to their total gold.

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure. Pass out certificates to the players for their story awards. Make sure to mark the story award codes next to each character that earned them on the tracking form.

TYMA05 Bronze Claw of House Jalt

You have gained favor with Tuanek of House Jalt for your efforts on behalf of Ruinspoke. As a token of his appreciation, the dragonborn lord has given you a finely worked bronze charm, resembling a dragonborn claw, engraved with "Jalt" on its outer surface. This charm can be worn on a necklace or a bracelet if you so choose.

This favor grants you some small measure of notoriety in Ruinspoke and the surrounding area. Dragonborn of House Jalt who see the necklace will regard you in a more positive light. If you garner additional Recognitions of House Jalt, then the amount of influence you receive will increase. You might even receive an introduction to the Lance Defenders or the Platinum Cadre.

TYMA06 Thanks of an Unknown Entity

For your service, however unintentional it might have been, you have earned the gratitude of an unknown entity in the village of Ruinspoke. You do not currently know why this entity wanted to arrange matters the way it did. One certainly has to wonder about the motives and methods of such a person. This story object may mean something at some unspecified point in the future (or perhaps not). The entity might return the favor and aid you at some point (or it might just try to set you up to do some more of its dirty work). If nothing else, you have been manipulated, and even if the outcome was

beneficial, uncovering the truth about these matters represents another mystery for you to solve.

This story object is the beginning of a Major Quest that will be continued in future Tymanther regional adventures.

ADVENTURE QUESTIONS

Mark the answers to the following adventure questions on the tracking form.

1. Did the PCs take an extended rest (and thereby allow the cult leaders to escape)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

2. How many short rests did the PCs take?

- a. 0
- b. 1
- c. 2
- d. 3
- e. 4

3. What did the PCs do with the leaders of the cult?

- a. Never made it this far.
- b. The PCs let them get away.
- c. The PCs captured them.
- d. The PCs killed them.

4. Whom, if anyone, do the PCs suspect as the ones that set the cultists up?

- a. The PCs have no particular suspect in mind.
- b. Someone within House Jalt.
- c. Dirnth.
- d. Someone else.
- e. The PCs didn't figure out that it was a setup.

5. How do you and your players rate this adventure?

- a. Five stars (best possible rating).
- b. Four stars (very good).
- c. Three stars (average).
- d. Two stars (below average).
- e. One star (really awful; worst possible rating).

NEW RULES

Amulet of Mental Resolve +3

Level 12

Your mind is guarded when wearing this cold iron talisman.

Lvl 12 +3 (13,000 gp)

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: Gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws against effects with the charm, illusion, or sleep keyword.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 148

Glowstone

Level 10

This fist-sized stone glows faintly and can be used to create a bright burst of radiant light that harms undead creatures.

Other Consumable (200 gp)

Property: A glowstone radiates dim light in a 2-square radius.

Power (Consumable + Radiant, Zone): Standard Action.

Use the glowstone to create a zone of bright illumination in an area burst 2 within 5 squares of you. Any undead creature that is vulnerable to radiant damage that enters or starts its turn within the zone is affected as if it had taken radiant damage. For example, a skeleton that has vulnerable 5 radiant takes 5 radiant damage if it enters or starts its turn in the zone. The zone remains until the end of the encounter or for 5 minutes, whichever comes first. Using this power turns the glowstone to dust.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 191

Healer's Sash

Level 11

With this white homespun wrap, you can keep your allies going long after they have exhausted their healing resources.

Lvl 11 (9,000 gp)

Item Slot: Waist

Property: This sash can have no more than 5 charges at one time and resets to 1 charge after an extended rest.

Power (At-Will): Standard Action. You or an adjacent ally expends a healing surge but does not regain hit points as normal. Instead, add 1 charge to this sash.

Power (Encounter + Healing): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when an ally within 5 squares of you takes damage. Expend 1 charge from the belt. The ally regains hit points as though he or she had spent a healing surge, and regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 166

Meliorating Armor +2

Level 8

This dull steel armor looks extremely well-made, but also quite simple.

The more you get hit, the harder the armor gets.

Lvl 8 +2 (3,400 gp)

Armor: Chain, Scale, Plate

Enhancement: AC

Property: Each time you reach a milestone in a day, the enhancement bonus of this armor increases by 1. This bonus resets to the armor's normal enhancement bonus after an extended rest.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 47

Poisoned Weapon +2

Level 10

This weapon leaves a debilitating poison that saps an enemy's vitality and strength.

Lvl 10 +2 (5,000 gp)

Weapon: Bow, Crossbow, Light Blade, Pick, Spear

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 poison damage per plus

Power (Daily + Poison): Free Action. Use this power when you hit with the weapon. The target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is weakened (save ends both).

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 75

Skeleton Key

Level 10

This ornate ivory key opens locks with ease.

Wondrous Item 5,000 gp

Power (Daily): Standard Action. When you touch the key to a locked door, chest, gate, or other object, make a Thievery check with a +20 bonus against the DC required to open the lock.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 177

Staff of Acid and Flame +2

Level 10

This metal staff looks scorched and acid-scored, and it grants the wielder the power to sear enemies with acid and flame.

Lvl 10 +2 (5,000 gp)

Implement (Staff)

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 acid and fire damage per plus

Power (At-Will + Acid): Free Action. All fire damage dealt using this staff as an implement is acid damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Power (At-Will + Fire): Free Action. All acid damage dealt using this staff as an implement is fire damage. Another free action returns the damage to normal.

Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 105

APPENDIX 1: RUINSPOKE

Ruinspoke is a frontier village located near the border of Tymanther and Mulhorand. Ruinspoke was settled by House Jalt a few years after the dragonborn came to Faerûn. The House decided to charter a settlement here to serve as a border outpost for dragonborn travelers, allowing them to rest and resupply before heading out of Tymanther. The village has grown ever since then.

Population: 758; Dragonborn make up roughly 60% of the population. Tieflings are few and far between; the rest is pretty evenly divided among dwarves, humans, halflings, eladrins, elves, and half-elves.

Government: *House Jalt* is in charge of Ruinspoke and *Lord Tuanek* is in charge of House Jalt so in turn Lord Tuanek is in charge of Ruinspoke. Tuanek is an older dragonborn. He came here to “retire” and help train the young ones. He is kind but firm. He doesn’t especially like mercenaries (he worries about their changing loyalties) but does understand that they are needed especially out here on the frontier.

Defense: The town boasts a small number of defenses but they are formidable. House Jalt has a small garrison stationed here and they serve as the city guard. The town has two Lance Defenders assigned to it and a few Platinum Cadre members. (See the Tymanther entry in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide* for more information about these military organizations.)

Inns: Several inns cater to travelers.

Hammerfell - the proprietor of this clean, but barebones, inn is Olket, a no-nonsense, male dragonborn.

Home Cookin’ - the proprietor is Imiere, a gregarious female half-elf. She is very talkative, loves a good story and treats customers more like family. The furniture has seen better days, but the food is the best in Ruinspoke.

Taverns: The best tavern in Ruinspoke is the *Full Mugs*. Its proprietor is Temget, a male dwarf whose pride in his homebrewed beer is justifiable. Bring your own mug and the first one’s free. Just don’t cause any trouble.

Supplies: There are a number of places where supplies and essential items can be purchased.

General Store - Hikath’s General Provisions. The proprietor is Almer Hikath, a male human and the second generation of Hikaths to operate this family business. Heavier weapons and armor, as well as foodstuffs and building supplies, are the focus of this store. Almer is professional and helpful, but does not haggle.

Traveling Gear - Spoke in ‘Spoke. The shop is owned and operated by a quiet elderly halfling couple, Jiran and Kelsa Wheelfixer. They used to be wilderness guides, but a bad wagon accident left this couple sidelined a few years back. They loved helping people travel and decided to open a store. Traveling supplies, light weapons, and armor are their specialties. Their son, Wielfan, operates the adjoining stables.

Stables - Trusty’s Stables. The proprietor, Wielfan Wheelfixer, has only been in business a few years. Originally named Trusty’s Rest, after his beloved dappled pony, he changed the name after too many visitors entered the stable and asked for a drink and a bed.

Temples: The *Temple of Bahamut* is the most prominent, of course. The High Priest is Dauret, a male dragonborn. He has a reputation of being firm yet helpful. There is also a small *temple to Ilmater*. The High Priestess is Tihaket, an elderly human woman, whose family moved to Tymanther from Mulhorand. She is a skilled midwife and an excellent healer.

Outlying Areas: Most of the outlying areas are not heavily patrolled. The people that live out in the outlying areas tend to be farmers, ranchers, woodsmen, hunters, or trappers. Adventurers often go out to explore the many ruins that dot the area. About as many of them return as don’t.

PLAYER HANDOUT 1

A great deal of thought and care clearly went into this letter. The parchment is of the finest quality, and the ink is flecked with tiny bits of gold. The calligraphy is impeccable, with a formal style and precision that almost certainly indicates that it was penned by someone with a great respect for tradition.

Honorable One,

You have my gratitude for your previous services on behalf of the people of Ruinspoke. Several times now we have requested your assistance, and each time you have responded with valor. I write to you now in hope that you will consent to aid us once more. It would please me greatly if you return to Ruinspoke and hear what I have to say. Although I hope that we have begun to move past such trifling matters, you will be compensated for your time. I'm sure the good people of the village would be most happy to see you again.

In Service, I remain,

Tuanek of House Jalt, Lord of Ruinspoke

PLAYER HANDOUT 2

This letter is written on sturdy parchment, with fine ink. The handwriting of the letter itself does not match the signature, but the penmanship is excellent. Someone clearly valued your time and attention enough to pay for the services of a professional calligrapher.

Salutations,

In recognition of your previous service to Ruinspoke, I write to you now in hope that you are willing to aid us a second time. I ask that you return to our village and hear what I have to say. Naturally, you will be compensated for your time, and I'm sure the people will be pleased by your return.

In Service, I remain,

Tuanek of House Jalt, Lord of Ruinspoke

PLAYER HANDOUT 3

This letter is written on clean but otherwise unremarkable parchment. The penmanship is blocky, but highly readable, in the style of a clerk or other functionary who probably fills out a great deal of paperwork.

Adventurer:

Lord Tuanek of House Jalt is seeking individuals to assist him with a matter of importance to the people of Ruinspoke. In making some enquiries your name has come to my attention. Lord Tuanek requests that you travel to Ruinspoke with all haste. Should you be deemed suitable for service, compensation will be provided.

Eshuna Jalt, Quartermaster, Platinum Cadre of House Jalt

PLAYER HANDOUT 4

Dear Adventurers,

As you will have noticed by now, we are worshippers of Sseth. We have left the region and will not be returning. Follow us at your own risk. However, I believe you should be tracking down the individuals who have manipulating you into doing their dirty work.

You should ask yourselves, why would anyone steal and commit murder instead of just coming forward and letting House Jalt know that we were here?

This should be your true mission and not chasing after us.

High Priest Quiler Sarms

PLAYER HANDOUT 5

Quiler's Diary

Alturiak 11 - First day in this stinking outpost. People seem nice enough. I suppose there's no help for that.

Tarsakh 23 - Construction was proceeding on schedule but a fire has destroyed part of the building. Strange that it started in an area where we were not storing anything flammable

Mirtul 1 - Someone knows we're here and is trying to send us a message. In the last two weeks, we have had a few more mishaps. We have been quick enough to cover them up before we were found out but we will need to find out who is doing this before we are exposed. We are far from ready for a confrontation with the authorities of Ruinspoke.

Flamerule 14 - Another setback! A shipment of our supplies was stolen from the Spoke in 'Spoke. We were lucky that this shipment did not contain any of our holy items or we would surely have been discovered.

Eleasis 28 - Who could be responsible for these crimes, and why do they continue to torment us? We have looked at Dirnth, the temples of Bahamut and Ilmater, those fools who run House Jalt, and several of the other locals and are still not sure who it is. It must be someone who is bent to the darker side, because that old idiot Tuanek has not been notified. I grow tired of this snake-and-mouse game. I am beginning to wonder if we should simply leave, but my superiors were clear in their instructions. Sseth wants us to be here, so here we shall stay.