**Fane of the Night Serpent**

**Level 8**

Yuan-ti slang

Orok - “pureblood”

Oroknay - “the people/yuan-ti, malisons or higher”

Baraknay - “outsiders/non yuan-ti”

Sensua - “Harem/pleasure chambers”

Shin Thai Dendar - “Hail to Night Serpent Dendar, a professional greeting”

**Session 64**

After saving the surviving grung from the yuan-ti attack and returning their lost prince, the grung welcome you into the temple and hold a feast in your honor, which includes piles of large crawling bugs, snakes, and other reptiles. Orvex helps translate the speeches that the grung chieftan croaks about, declaring that these great warrirors were sent by Nangnang himself in their time of need. The rescued son, Imbok, has a large gathering of grung around him as he regales stories of the incredible feats he’s witnessed, including the battle with the tentacled swamp monster and the dreaded King of Feathers, which causes all the grung to stare at you wide-eyed.

PCs can role-play however they wish. The grung won’t attack unless provoked. Good RP can earn Inspiration.

As the day turns to night you hear an alarming croaking outside. A small group of grung run into the temple carrying what looks like an injured, tiny dragon. They begin arguing and one of them looks like its about to pop it into its mouth, when your mind is assaulted by feelings of fear and terror, and images of explosions, a blonde woman with dragon scales screaming in silence as she’s surrounded by menacing forms.

Summerwise has fled from the attack. It will attempt to communicate, through images, Xandala’s capture by the yuan-ti.

At the end, PCs can Long Rest, level up to 8, and set out toward the palace.

**Omu Area 20)**

Meeting with Ishmakahl

Ishamakahl - Non-binary Doppleganger. Role-play like Double Trouble.

Hedonistic, easy-going, charming, socialite.

Ostensibly works for the Red Wizards

From a distance the 15-foot wall seems to completely encircle the palace area, but it’s crumbling in several places wide enough for you to enter. Inside you see empty plazas, vine-choked statues, and buildings overgrown with banyan roots. Streets are either flooded or covered with rubble.

You spot an attractive male humanoid with golden eyes casually leaning against a building, smoking. They acknowledge your presence with a respectful head nod.

“Hello darlings. You look bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, hope you’re ready for what comes next. Old Zaggy filled me in on the details. You might’ve stopped the snakes earlier but they still have one of the cubes, and I’m pretty sure it’s in the clutches of big bad Ras Nsi himself.”

You see the figure’s form ripple and blur into a large half man-half snake creature, a deep scowl on a bald face, upper torso covered in ancient tattoos, lower half a menacing snake tail, yet still clearly two legs. The conflicting imagery makes your head hurt. The face suddenly contorts and giggles as the figure attempts to strut around on the tail. “Alas, I can’t go full snake. Now the Ras here has a secret. A rumor that’s been going around the temple. He’s sick, maybe even dying. He never visits his harem - that’s where I hang out by the way.”

The form ripples back into the original beautiful male pureblood with snake eyes. “The yuan-ti don’t tolerate weakness, darlings, and a weakened leader is no leader at all. The head priest, Fenthaza, has taken to running things in the temple.”

Once again the form ripples and blurs into a statuesque female with curly black hair, large hooped earrings, and bright yellow robes. The same not quite snake-lower half makes your head hurt. “She’s a real peach but you may be able to meet with her. Oh but we’re getting ahead of ourselves darlings.”

The form ripples back to the male pureblood. “There’s the little issue of getting inside. Now security is tight but purebloods often come and go to scout the city, and occasionally return with prisoners.” The figure grins wickedly as they produce several manacles and tosses them on the ground. “Some of you could pass with a bit of make-up. You easily,” they gesture at Mannix, “and you with a bit of work,” nods at Khaless.

*“I did manage to swipe a potion that can change your form,” a small vial effortlessly bounced between their hands and fingers. “But it only works for an hour, if you want to use it.*” The rest of you will need to be our prisoners, unless you have some fancy magic or something. I can help get us inside but I’ll need to get back to my post soon to avoid suspicion.”

Artus will speak up that he agrees with this plan, but will remain outside so the ring doesn’t fall into the wrong hands. Orvex and Dragonbait will want to remain behind as well. They are willing to hold on to any items and weapons the PCs don’t want confiscated.

Summerwise is small enough to hide on one of the non-prisoners.

You may want to leave any valuables with your friends. Unless you’re very clever, the prisoners will be stripped of their belongings.”

**Can we trust you?**

Oh adventurers with trust issues, that’s a new one! [laughs]. Well if you can’t trust a shapechanger who can you trust, right? This whole soulmonger death curse business is bad for all of us, so it’s in my best interest that my employer and you succeed, is that fair?

**Xandala prisoner?**

As I mentioned, prisoners are brought in all the time, you wouldn’t believe all the fools that wander into Omu, present company excluded of course, and the snakes love their slave labor. I’m afraid I couldn’t tell you any specifics, however.

**How do we get out?**

Well that is a bit trickier, isn’t it? The prisoners don’t spend all their time locked up, that would be a waste. They’re given plenty of chances to perform menial tasks and clean up around the temple. Occasionally a prisoner who proves themselves is even transformed into a yuan-ti, quite the sight if you’re into blood. A clever bunch like you should figure something out.

*I will mention that there is an escape route of sorts. A backway somewhere in the water, but it’s also home to a monstrous beast. The yuan-ti feed dead prisoners to it so, you know, try not to die.*

**Fenthaza?**

She’s shrewd, ambitious, and completely joyless. A real zealot, darlings, and that makes her dangerous. She’s practically running the place now.

**Ras Nsi?**

There’s a secret door somewhere in the throne room that leads to his private chambers. I’d be my cushy life the cube is in there. You’d best watch out for Sekelok though, a mountain of a pureblood, scales hard as steel. Loyal bodyguard to the boss. Except...he’s grown fond of one of the concubines in the harem. A secret affair, so delicious. He often visits her in the evenings.

Ras Nsi also has several teleporters scattered around the temple that he uses to zip around, or at least used to. Presumably they would lead back to his chambers, if you can figure them out.

**Teleporters?**

They’re scattered around. The throne room, the fane, the harem, and the prisoner pits.

**Area 1. Main Gate**

Ishmakahl leads you through the twisting streets and crumbling buildings into the inner palace. You note several snakes that appear to be watching you intently. A wide passage inside the palace slopes down to a set of bronze doors. Coiled serpents decorate the metal, with a sliding hatch at head height. Four-inch-wide holes pierce the base of each door.

Ishamkahl motions for you to stay quiet, then calls out in a mixture of Common and an unknown language. “Shin thai Dendar, orok Ishmakahl, orok Teoshi, orok Siva, (orok Etzli, orok Manua), bring prisoners.”

You see a snake crawl through one of the openings on the bottom of the door, then transform into a yuan-ti humanoid with a snake head. The creature looks you all over, surprise dawning on its face. “The baraknay that defeated Saskull? Oroks capture them?”

Ishmakahl grins, struts forward and runs a finger along the monstrous snake head. “Brute force isn’t always the answer, Nahth. Some tasks require a...lighter touch.”

Nahth scowls and swats the hand away. He barks out some orders and the doors begin sliding open. Then he grins and holds out his meaty hand. “Orok pay.”

Ishamakahl sighs, digs around in their pouches and flips a few gold coins to the yuan-ti, muttering some curse. As they do so they very subtly gesture for you (who look like purebloods) to do the same.

Beyond the gate you see a foursome of monstrous snake-humanoids who appear much more snake than human holding large chains, having just slid the doors open. The ground on the other side of the doors reveal 10-fit pits covered in grates, beyond which you can see piles of writhing snakes.

Ahead looms a large room with four pillars and a statue of a snake nearly 20-feet high.

A fat male pureblood waddles over to you, snacking on a bag of what looks like eggs. He looks at you all with a puzzled expression. “What are you doing outside the sensua, Ishmakahl?”

“Special assignment, Soakosh. And I’d say it was quite effective, sa sa?”

Soakosh shrugs and motions for nearby broodguards to come over, and they begin searching the prisoners.

Ishamakahl takes the lead and turns the corner down a side hallway. A pair of guards with snakes for arms stand at attention outside a door to your north. Ishamakahl whispers “Fenthaza’s chambers. Up ahead is the sacrificial chamber, hopefully you won’t end up here. Beyond that are the pits where your friends will need to be dropped off. Play it cool and you won’t be there long. Maybe you’ll find your friend.”

**Area 2 Hall of War**

Four pillars carved with serpent reliefs support the 20-foot-high ceiling of this large room, in the middle of which is an 18-foot-high statue of a coiled cobra, facing north. Torches with green flames flicker on the walls, and the air reeks of dung. Two wagons are parked in one corner, and a triceratops is confined to a metal pen in another. To the west a pair of large lizards with glowing blue eyes are chained to alcoves, and to the south is a wide, pillared hall.

**Area 3 Hall of Serpents**

The walls of this pillared hall bear reliefs of a giant serpent swallowing the world and its yuan-ti worshipers terrorizing Chultans.

**Area 4 Armory**

Gleaming scimitars, serpent helms, and suits of scale armor cram the racks of this vault. Large bones and horned skulls litter the floor, and a shield made from the shell of a tortoise hangs on the far wall.

A large skeletal serpent slithers out from behind the racks, raises its head, and says in Common, "They will tell us the passphrase! So Ukurlahmu has spoken."

Treasure: a bunch of mundane swords, longbows, and arrows. But also a quiver of 12 pre-poisoned arrows (add 2d6 poison damage). 5 Vials of Serpent Venom (DC 11 CON saving throw, 3d6 poison damage, apply to slashing/piercing). Lasts until damage is dealt.

The bone naga will summon the minotaur skeletons whenever combat begins.

## Session 66

A pair of bestial broodguards enter the hallway looking irritated and attentive. Their eyes lock with yours and rasp out as they approach. “We found a dead oroknay in the store room. The seshna is gone. Have you seen anything?”

Combat in this area will alert Sokosh’s crew, but the broodguards can be fooled. A missed CHA check will make them suspicious, a second will result in their attacking.

After the fight Xandala will speak up to chat with Mannix:

“Mr. Mannix, can we speak...privately. Tell me, has Artus ever used the ring of winter since you met him?”

I’ll be honest with you, it’s not the man I’m after. It’s the ring. He’s a fool and a coward to hoard such a powerful artifact. Think of all the hardship and pain that could have been avoided if he used it to help you. You wouldn’t need to go through all of this nonsense, simply blasted down the doors of this temple and reduced every godsdamned snake in here to an icy grave.

Artus is afraid of the power of the ring. But I am not. I have the blood of dragons flowing through me. With the ring in my possession, I can ensure its power is fully utilized.

What about Artus?

He’s not my father. I come from a prominent family in Waterdeep, and we trace our lineage back to a gold dragon. (House Estelmer) Without the ring I’d imagine the years would catch up to him, and he’d simply perish. I don’t suspect he’d give it up willingly, but if I can get the chance to rest, I can use a spell to force him.

Payment?

I admit that I initially hired you to simply find the man, and leave the rest up to me. But clearly I’m in a bit over my head in this damn jungle, and I’ve seen what you and your team are capable of. I’m willing to pay you handsomely if you help me acquire the ring, and you’ll have gained a powerful family alliance in Waterdeep.

What will you do with the ring?

First I plan on studying it and unlocking all its potential power, and destroying any who would come after me. I won’t live in paranoid fear and isolation like that old fool. I’ll be the one who is feared. I can use its power to get out of this damn jungle, or maybe destroy it once and for all.

The party can short rest in here unimpeded, and fast-forward to the ritual. (or explore a bit more before the ritual if they want)

**Area 5 Fenthaza’s Quarters**

First meeting with pureblood disguised PCs:

A haze of incense lingers inside the chamber. Faded murals decorate the walls, and rugs and cushions lie scattered on the floor. An engraved chest rests in one corner next to a stone urn covered with snake carvings. A creature with the head and upper body of a fierce woman and the lower body of a serpent coils in the middle of the room.

Ishmakahl makes a dramatic bow and says, “shin thai Dendar, High priestess.” And gives you a look.

The half-snake woman’s gaze bores into you before she finally speaks. “Shin thai Dendar. You orok have succeeded where others have failed. Defeated the baraknay, even captured some alive. I could use such ambitious orok. The rewards would be...substantial.

“Pity you only found some of them. Tell me do any of these troublesome baraknay yet live? What about their shrine cubes?”

[Any answers the PCs make should be a DC 15 Deception check]

Success/goes well:

“You may have noticed that Ras Nsi is not himself. Our great leader, once a divine protector of Chult, cast low. He came to me and I saw great power within him, saw that he would restore the oroknay to a new age of glory. He submitted to the rituals, and came out stronger, more beautiful. Now he is but a withering shadow, and we suffer for it.”

Ishmakahl: “The orok serve at your will, high priestess.”

Fenthaza: “And I will need loyal servants if we are to purge ourselves of this weakness. The captive baraknay can be a useful tool, if they are pointed in the right direction. Issar is loyal to the Ras, but if you can...incite an uprising, it will force many of his loyalists to respond. That is when we can strike.”

Fenthaza wants to set up a coup early in the morning the next day, when the yuan-ti are most lethargic. If the PCs pull it off in Area 19, She will lead her broodguards and priests into area 11.

Failure: She scowls at you. “I should have known. Baraknay filth! Yet, if you’ve made it this far you continue to demonstrate a certain...cunning. I have a use for you, that may benefit us both (Fenthaza knows they’re after the cubes). First you must prove your loyalty after this deception. Join your allies for a day of labor in the caves, or submit one of your own to the ritual of the night serpent.

Fenthaza (Female yuan-ti nightmare speaker). Cold, ruthless, serious, spiritual leader of the yuan-ti. Transformed Ras Nsi into yuan-ti as she foresaw greatness, but the death curse has been killing him, and he is weak.

**Rebellion?**

We use the baraknay to carve out new rooms out of the caves in the south. Issar is in charge of the slaves. Loyal to Ras Nsi but a vain fool. With the proper motivation, and your help, the slaves could mount an uprising. I have no doubts many would be killed, but it would draw much of the yuan-ti away from the throne room.

**Ritual?**

The strongest baraknay are selected for the ritual. Where they will bathe in blood and shed their skin, revealing their true form. Those who survive become orok and all the gifts and powers that come with.

**Ras Nsi?**

I made him, and now I must unmake him.

**Assassinate Ras Nsi?**

A compelling thought, and one that would prove his weakness. It cannot be traced back to me, however. You must act alone, though I may be able to help.

Ras Nsi spends his days on the throne, and at night retires to his chambers. A secret door lies to the left of the throne. The arcane teleporters could also take you there, but it would require a high level of arcane aptitude, and only work one at a time.

The guards will enter with the PCs. If they start a fight, they have to fight all three (and probably Ishmakahl as well!), and she can let loose her air elemental if she survives. After the first round, the boardguards and other priests will swarm into the room, and Soakosh will run to start the alarm, and alert the entire facility.

If Fenthaza dies and the PCs are at war, they will not be TPK’d but will be stripped of everything and thrown in the pits, and eventually brought before Ras Nsi himself.

**Area 6 Sacrificial Chamber**

A bloodstained altar stands in the middle of this room. It has shackles bolted to its top and niches carved into its sides. Housed in each niche is a human skull. Grooves run down the altar to gutters on the floor, allowing spilled blood to drain into the walls. Clay urns overflow with wet bones and gore. Several more of the bestial broodguards stand at attention, though they all begin hissing in agitation the moment they spot the prisoners.

Ishmakahl carefully guides you toward the eastern portcullis, then gestures at the nearest broodguard. It creeps over and raises a lever in the southern wall, which causes the portcullis to raise in a matter of seconds.

**Area 7 Evil Oracle**

Steam rises from a stone basin filled with viscous black and purple liquid. Three serpentine creatures surround the pool. Each has the head and upper body of a dark-skinned woman and the lower body of a snake. You feel a sense of unease from the bubbling pool.

**Area 8 Prisoner Pits**

Muffled sobs and moans rise from four pits with circular iron grates covering them. A chain hooked to each grate stretches over a pulley bolted to the ceiling and coils around an iron winch set into a nearby wall. Iron manacles dangle from hooks on the south wall. To the north, a faintly glowing stone disk covers the floor of an otherwise empty alcove, and carved into the top of the disk is a serpentine symbol.

You glance back and see the broodguards in the other room looking at you all intently, their tails lashing. Ishmakahl nods at you all and whispers “aright darlings, put on a convincing show. The broodguards are stupid but they won’t hestitate to attack if something’s wrong. And don’t worry, you won’t be stuck here long. The oroknay-yuan-ti never waste quality meat.”

**Prisoners:**

Xandala (f half-elf sorcerer) - missing most spell points and suffering from 2 levels of exhaustion. She was captured two days ago and brought here. The yuan-ti are intrigued by her scales.Her mouth has been gagged so she can’t cast spells.

Gorvex (m Firenewt Warrior) - captured when an expedition from the valley went east and ran into yuan-ti. The yuan-ti are studying their neighboring foes.

Sev (m yuan-ti pureblood) suffering from long-term madness from mad-monkey fever, constantly babbling about snakes.

Each cell is big enough to hold two people, or up to four people uncomfortably (10x10). Three of the cells are occupied. Each prisoner has no equipment and is suffering from two levels of exhaustion. Sev is also suffering from temporary madness, and is babbling uncontrollably.

Xandala: “Things were bad in Omu. I underestimated how dangerous it was. Bloody gargoyles on the cliffs, giant bugs, monstrous gorillas, and apparently a whole gods damn colony of yuan-ti. This whole damn jungle can go straight to the abyss. Damn yuan-ti finally found me when I was hiding out, trying to make contact with you.”

**Area 9 The Fane**

An underground cathedral opens before you. AT one end, a sculptured balcony perches atop five rearing stone serpents. Blood dribbling from the serpents’ jaws falls into a semicircular basin, and form there flows along a sloped trough into a wide stone bowl set into the floor. South of the bowl is a mezzanine, promintel situated atop which is a cauldron of steaming broth that exudes fleshy odors.

A huge gong carved with snake patterns stands on a second balcony.

**The Ritual:**

The ringing sound of a gong echoes throughout the hallway.

Ishmakahl: That is the summons for the ritual. [to Mannix] Hope you’re ready for this, darling.

I should mention, since you are all so keen on getting to Ras Nsi, that much of the temple turns out for the ritual ceremonies. May be a good chance to sneak around while your friend here is, ah, enjoying himself.

When the gong sounds and the ritual is beginning, the following yuan-ti will move to Area 9:

Area 2: Soakosh and all the broodguards linger near the gong on the balcony.

Area 5: Fenthaza and her two guards. Fen is on the balcony, guards by the pool

Area 7: two priestess, near the blood pool

Area 8: firenewt prisoner is sacrificed in area 6.

Area 10: At least half a dozen purebloods from the harem watch and dance.

Area 11: Ras Nsi teleports in after Fenthaza. 2 malison and Sekelok open the doors and watch

Area 16: Everyone in this room goes to the fane, slaves are taken to the pool.

Area 18: Most of this room should be emptied with the ritual (can hide some tokens instead of moving).

The once quiet cathedral is now booming with activity as numerous yuan-ti make their way inside from different corners of the temple. Instead of reverence there’s excitement and murmuring throughout the crowd, like the anticipation before a concert or sporting match.

From the southern hallway a handful of Chultans dressed in nothing but loincloths are dutifully marched toward the blood-filled pool in the central chamber. They look apprehensive but their heads are held high.

[Mannix is directed to the blood pool by either Ishmakahl or Fenthaza. Ish can whisper to him, while Fen will nod at him when she teleports in].

It’s not until you step inside the blood pool that you notice at least a dozen snakes swimming in there.

A crackling energy buzzes from the balcony as high priestess fenthaza materializes from an arcane circle, spread her hands out as the swelling crowd cheers.

Another figure materazlies from the circle, an imposing man with the lower half of a large snake. His bald head and gray skin are covered in bloody bandages, but you can see a clear blue triangle tattoo on his forehead. Though he carries himself with authority, you notice his hands occasionally shake.

The crowd cheers again, though a bit less exuberantly, and you hear some whisperings and murmurs ripple through the masses.

Fenthaza calls out in a commanding voice: “Shin Thai, Dendar!” The crowd shouts back in reprisal. “Dendar has blessed us with strong baraknay stock! They enter the pool of their own will, wanting to accept their true form, and become oroknay!” [crowd cheers].

“If any of you would prefer a swift death instead, we will grant you this wish.”

The slaves are stand in the pool, steely-eyed.

“Very well.” She barks out a few words behind her. [Ready the blood sacrifice!]

You hear the sounds of a struggle, which you recognize as firenewt, then it gets cut off and you see a new river of blood come gushing out of the serpent mouths and the blood in the pool begins to rise to the top.

At the same time the priestess’ by the pool move to the cauldron and dip clay bowls into the steaming broth, and begin handing them out to you in the pool. One by one the other slaves grimace and begin to eat. [If investigated, the broth looks like cut up snake parts mixed with venom].

Fenthaza raises her hands and says more words in an ancient tongue [Dendar, Great Night Serpent, Devourer of the World, we offer you the strongest stock to join your ranks. By your will.]. A steaming, sweet incense pours of the snake heads’ mouths, filling the room in a haze.

[Everyone in the room] Make a DC 15 WIS saving throw (or can choose to fail): Failure: The room begins to spin as many of the yuan-ti dance and chant. You hear pounding music in your head and the uncontrollable need to dance along, cheering those in the pool. [Gain 1 level of exhaustion].

**[PLAY SONG]**

Success = You notice it happening to everyone else, but you are unswayed by the effects. [no exhaustion]

**For Mannix:** [Note: if the other PCs are doing anything other than watching, spread these out in between them doing whatever they want to do. This process should last several hours].

[Mannix still makes the WIS saving throw as above]

[Upon imbibing the broth mixture], DC 15 CON saving throw.

Failure = You feel your insides begin to roil, you’ve never felt more nauseated in your life, like that feeling before you vomit, but you still can’t bring yourself to do it. [Success = but you maintain your composure, no exhaustion]. Gain 1 level of exhaustion.

The high priestess continues to chant in an unknown language, and the words begin assaulting your mind as you hear whispers at hisses all around you. Everyone in the pool begins clutching their heads or howling in agony, drowned out by the chants and drugged-induced music. [DC 15 INT Saving throw, Gain 1 level of exhaustion] Success = the words tell you that the time has come to shed your old skin.

As the music and chanting and dancing come to a crescendo you feel the snakes, many more snakes than you saw before, begin to wrap themselves around you and everyone around you. Panicked gasps and cries are cut short as they are dragged under the bloody pool [DC 15 STR saving throw, gain 1 level of exhaustion]. Success = you feel the tug but maintain your balance, and the cheering grows wilder.

You’re not sure if seconds pass or hours but finally you emerge from the water (or feel the pull of the snakes finally recede). The music slowly fades and the smoke has begun dissipating. The crowd is laughing, stumbling, some of them in various states of clothing and/or sexual congress.

The only other surviving figure in the pool gives off a guttural scream and begins tearing into their own skin. Instead of bloody muscle mass or bone a bestial snake form emerges, which you recognize as a broodguard.

Mannix your own body begins to peel, but only the outer layer, like a paper cut that runs across your whole body. You pick and peel but still see a human body underneath. However you feel a sharp prick in your mouth and spit out a wad of blood. You reach up and feel two small fang-like teeth. You rub your water eye which beings to bleed, while your fake eye is pushed out of your socket, both organically replaced by glittery golden snake eyes.

Fenthaza’s chanting finally subsides and she gazes into the pool, a pleased expression on her face. “Dendar has blessed us with two new oroknay!” [Crowd cheers] “Rest well, for tomorrow beginss your first day in your true form!”

Ras Nsi has no expression throughout the entire event, and slithers off into the arcane circle. As the crowd begins to disperse, she beckons you [Mannix forward]. The guards nod at you.

She keeps her voice low. “You survived, that is fortunate. It is not an easy process, but nothing worth doing ever is. Now that you are one of us, you have free reign in the temple. I imagine you’ll want to sleep the rest of the night. You will probably want to sleep for days, but I’d advise acting sooner rather than later. As an orok you can seek an audience with Ras Nsi, you could work to assassinate him, or you could incite a distraction, as I suggested. As long as you deal with him, I will aid you.”

## **Session 67**

[When combat with the hydra ends] [Ritual has died down and Ras Nsi has left] Fenthaza motions you Mannix and makes a subtle gesture at Khaless. "As your first order of business, how about you assist the guards in disposing of the unfortunate ones who didn't survive the metamorphosis. You will find our methods most efficient. \*She leans in close and whispers\* and it will get you to the throne room and closer to Ras Nsi\*

**Area 10 Harem**

A fountain of cool water bubbles on the floor ahead. The scent of lilies fills the air, and silken drapes drift lazily in the heat. Archways open into shaded booths heaped with cushions and trays of sugared sweets. Lounging about are a dozen scantily clad humanoids with eyes like snakes and scaly patches on arms, legs, necks, and backs. A pair of broodguards watches over them.

**Area 11 Throne Room**

Four pillars support the vaulted ceiling, and steps ascent to an iron throne carved in the likeness of a hydra. Painted in the wall behind it is a large blue triangle. To the south, an engraved stone disk is set into the floor of an alcove.

A ten-foot-wide opening in the east wall leads to a flooded cave.

A woman with sharp eyes and dark hair snaps her head up and looks at you. You both instantly recognize each other - Salida, the guide from Port Nyanzaru you saved from Orolunga.

## **Session 68**

Surprise round, but Sekelok is not surprised.

The broad-shouldered man sports a wide grin when he sees all of you, effortlessly pulling a large greatsword from his back. "Baraknay have made it this far, perhaps even defeated the great Ras Nsi's pet monster? This is good, Sekelok does not fight those who are unworthy. You should rejoice, for now you die by the blade of Ras Nsi's greatest champion!"

**Area 12 Ras Nsi’s Lair**

Shadows dance over this opulent bedchamber. Cushions lie in one corner, and decorative shields line the walls. Treasures are heaped around the room: gold and silver coins; a gilded harp; a jeweled wine flask; pillows of silk; and fine clothes draped over wooden mannequins. To the east, an engraved stoned disk is set into the floor of an alcone.

Lying on the cushions is a yuan-ti malison with the lower half of a snake. The upper half is covered in bandages, the little skin that shows appears terribly sickly and pock-marked, including a faded blue triangle upon his forehead. Ras Nsi stares at you calmly but attentively, his breath rattling with each word.

"So, it was all a ruse then? A double agent. I applaud just how deeply undercover you were willing to go. Not everyone survives the ritual. If you've all made it this far it means you've defeated my champion. [coughs] You've earned your audience. Ask of me what you will."

**Puzzle cube!**

Yes, I have it. I am in no position to stop you now. But I would have you hear my story.

He indicates to a nearby treasure pile, and you see the cube resting in an open box.

**What's your deal?**

When the Yuan-ti first arrived in Omu 50 years ago, the archlich had already destroyed the Omuans and constructed his tomb underneath. I came to them as a fallen champion of Ubtao himself, a once immortal defender of Mezro. It was here I was accepted. And the oroknay could rebuild their empire.

Then Acererak came to me, and tasked my people with guarding the tomb, and keeping Omu hidden until he was finished with his work. In exchange, he would provide us with the Black Opal Crown, a powerful artifact that will release the Night Serpent from his prison.

But it has been years and still nothing! And now, I have been stricken by some terrible wasting disease. A weakness among the oroknay. I know how the others plan, and I will not go down so easily.

**Mezro?**

Yes, I still feel the connection to the city, or at least I did. Mezro has many safeguards, and in the event of a true cataclysm, the entire city can shift onto another plane of existence. I felt it happen several months ago. Not long after, this strange malady took hold.

**Soulmonger!**

[Coughing fit] [string of curses] I should have known! Whatever he's doing down there is killing me, and causing all these problems. All I want is the crown! Pledge yourselves to me! Enter the tomb, Destroy this soulmonger, retrieve the crown, and bring it to me. I shall forgive these little transgressions, grant you safe passage, and you will be handsomely rewarded. [ Cast Geas on Mannix! ]

Treasure:

Ras Nsi has Bracers of Defense and a Flametongue sword (sword can be any kind of sword). Will not give them up willingly.

Room treasure:

Sembian wine flask (50gp)

Bejweled Amnian doublet with money pouch (75gp)

Cormyrean cloak (100 gp)

Gilded Moonshae harp (250gp)

Three large cushions covered in Turami silk (25 gp each)

Ras Nsi's leather-bound spellbook (ToA 230)

Money hoard: 150 platinum, 350 gold, 900 silver

Frogehmoth statuette with amethyst gemstones for eyes (300 gp total)

Magic items:

Keohtom's Ointment (4 doses), Use an action to apply a dose of ointment, regain d28+2 hit points, cures poison and disease.

Urn of Elemental Air: Use an action to open the lid, releasing an Air Elemental as per the Conjure Elemental spell. Obeys the one who released it, lasts for 1 hour. Must maintain Concentration, however, or you lose control of it. **Appears as a small clay pot with arcane writing all over it.**

Armor of Necrotic Resistance: **Black leather armor with warding runes stitched into it.** Grants resistance to Necrotic damage.

**Area 13 Storeroom**

Azi Mas enjoys chatting with anyone who wanders in, whether they’re yuan-ti or not.

Treasure: Yuan-ti Temple Incense (ToA 122), 5 healer’s kits.

Area 14 Venom Distillery

**Area 15 Snake Pit**

50 feet deep, spawns continuous swarms of poisonous snakes.

Area 16 Blood Baths

Area 17 Sauna

**Area 18 Yuan-ti Nests**

These dank catacombs have been converted into sleeping quarters. The walls are lined with alcoves that now serve as nests for yuan-ti.

The sleeping quarters are empty save for a pair of lovers currently getting it on while the rest are at the ritual. They are oblivious unless directly spoken to, at which point they'll freak out and run west.

Area 19 Slave Grotto

**Area 20 River**

Broodguards will fight the intruders. When the battle goes poorly for them, one could attempt to bang on the southern door for assistance (only the zombies remain inside however, and the door is locked). No assistance will come...but the PCs don't know that.

An underground river opens before you. Stalactites hang low over its surface, and dripping water echoes in the dark. A pair of rowboats are fastened to the embankment.

The river isn't difficult to swim in, DC 10 Athletics check for every round of swimming. But failure results in exhaustion without a swim speed.

**Area 21 Hydra Lair**

A pebble-strewn bank rises to a door recessed in the cavern wall. In the middle of the lake, bones cling like a tide mark to a rocky pillar. A foul stench wafts its way from the north.

[Hydra attack] As you head north into a deeper part of the river the water suddenly churns violently around you, threatening to knock you off your little row boats as a massive bestial form emerges from the depths, several snake-like heads with dagger-size teeth angling at you menacingly. It looks hungry.

Everyone in a boat make a DC 15 DEX save to avoid being thrown overboard. Water is difficult terrain (w/o swim speed) and imposes disadvantage on attacks unless w/ dagger, javelin, shortsword, spear, or trident. Ranged weapons have disadvantage unless crossbow, net or thrown weapon.

**Area 22 Fungi Cavern**

The passage widens into a cavern filled with mushrooms. Toadstools, puffballs, and other tuberous growths cover the walls and floor.

[Disembark] At the end of the cave you see a man dressed in a medieval lab coat inspecting a patch of mushrooms. Nearby a trio of what look like zombies are dutifully picking up mushrooms and putting them in a basket. The zombies have crude, dirty outfits which say LAB ASSISTANT on the back.

Xopal: "By Dendar's dripping venom, who are you!?"

Xopal: "My name is ZoPAL, I'm the resident poison expert and the only oroknay in this entire facility who cares about SCIENCE! Specifically the science of brewing poisons. We are creatures of venom, you see, but that poses a bit of a problem to other creatures who are immune, like these fellows here. I've been trying to concoct a more powerful poison that can get through their immunity. Then - THEN they'll respect me and my work!

If the party is belligerent or aggressive, Xopal will order his zombies to attack. The zombies will crush the mushrooms around them, setting off the Zabou Mushroom effectg (see below). He will fight but will surrender once reduced to half or fewer hit points.

If the party wants to assist him, they can spend time harvesting mushrooms. DC 13 Sleight of Hand check or DEX check for anyone helping, lest they set off a Zabou Mushroom, which sets off a 30-ft cloud, DC 10 CON save or become POISONED for 1 minute.

Xopal knows about the hydra, and doesn't travel north of this cavern.

Xopal will reward helpers with the following per helper: 2 doses of serpent venom, 2 bottls of essense of ether, and 1 dose of Torpor.

If the party defeats and loots him, he will have the following: 6 serpent venom, 4 bottles of ether, 2 doses of torpor.

What Koti knows:

[Door by the river]: The door leads to Mr Xopal's [zo-PAHL] laboratory. We're not allowed in there.

["Mr. Xopal?"]: I think he's a doctor or wizard or something? Real smart, but I never met him. Stays in the lab, mostly.

[The river]: It's where all our water comes from! I think it runs along the whole temple, all the way up the throne room! A giant monster lives in there though, Isser's always threatening to feed us to it.