

The Serpent's Coil

A Fate's Edge Adventure

Adventure Overview

Sessions: 3

Theme: Sword & sorcery horror with rising legendary status

Core Innovation: Heroes become increasingly formidable as they confront cosmic horror

1 Session 1: The Job

Opening Hook

The stench of cheap ale and unwashed bodies assaults your nostrils as you push through the sagging door of *The Black Goat* tavern. Smoke from a dozen pipes creates a choking fog, while the acrid smell of fear hangs thick in the air. In the flickering light of oil lamps, you see him: an ancient Ykrul chieftain, his weathered face creased with desperate worry, clutching a purse heavy with gold coins that clink like a death knell. *"They took her,"* he whispers. *"My Yara. Said she'd become the cornerstone of some... serpent age."*

Key Encounters

The Black Goat Investigation (Insight + Deception, DV 3)

Success reveals that guards have been acting strangely, moving with too much purpose, and several people have "disappeared" after being taken to the High City. The whispers mention "serpents" and you catch sight of strange, scaly patches on one patron's neck.

Temple of Open Sky Visions (Spirit + Lore, DV 4)

The temple should be peaceful, but the air tastes wrong—like copper and ozone. Success provides prophetic warnings: you see serpents coiling around the city's heart, hear whispers of transformation, but taste the bitter aftertaste of corruption.

City Approach Challenges (Various Skills, DV 2–4)

Midh Ahkaz looms before you like a predator. The city gates are reinforced with iron that gleams like fangs. A curfew has been imposed, and the streets beyond are empty. Emergency passage papers feel sticky with some substance that might be blood.

Discovery

The city doesn't just feel wrong—it is wrong. The very stones seem to pulse with a heartbeat that's not quite human, and you can taste the corruption in the air like iron filings on your tongue.

Clocks

- City Corruption [4]: 1 segment
- Cult Ascendancy [6]: 1 segment

2 Session 2: The Rescue Mission

Escalation

The Governor's Palace should inspire awe and unease. Its stone walls are carved with serpent motifs that seem to writhe, and the iron reinforcements gleam with an otherworldly sheen. Inside, the architecture defies logic—hallways bend impossibly, and rooms feel larger on the inside.

Player Choice

Three approaches, each with different sensory experiences:

- **Direct Assault:** The clash of steel, spray of blood, thunder of war cries
- **Stealth Infiltration:** Whisper of leather on stone, satisfaction of outwitting superior numbers
- **Social Engineering:** Honeyed words, intoxicating manipulation, heady confidence

Key Encounters

Palace Penetration (Melee + Stealth, DV 4)

The guards move wrong—too fluid, too coordinated. Their armor gleams with an oily sheen, and you can smell the corruption on them. Their weapons hiss and spit sparks, and their shields seem to drink in light.

Serpent Spawn Ambush (Melee + Athletics, DV 5)

These are nightmares made flesh—grotesque fusions of human and serpent. Their eyes are completely black, and their mouths drip venom that sizzles on stone. They move with impossible speed, climbing walls like spiders.

Yara's Revelation (Presence + Insight, DV 3)

She's beautiful but twisted—patches of iridescent scales, vertical pupils, fluid grace that's inhuman. The other initiates have begun to change: one girl has no eyes but sees better than anyone else, another has arms that end in serpentine tails.

Asset Building

Each recovered artifact should feel like legendary equipment:

- **Serpent's Fang** dagger: Unnaturally cold to the touch

- **Serpent's Coil** rope: Moves like a living thing
- Both whisper promises of power that taste both sweet and bitter

Clocks

- City Corruption [4]: +2 segments
- Cult Ascendancy [6]: +1 segment

3 Session 3: The Cosmic Coil

Climax Setup

The Chamber of Transformation assaults every sense. The ceiling is lost in shadow, and the walls pulse with a heartbeat that's definitely not human. The air is thick with ozone, copper, and something obscene. Hundreds of cultists fill the tiered seating, their bodies showing signs of transformation. At the center, an altar carved from crystallized ichor gleams, surrounded by bubbling ichor pools.

Multiple Paths

- **Greater Good Victory:** Embrace cosmic role, gain divine knowledge
- **Heroic Stand:** Destroy ritual through pure heroism
- **Tactical Retreat:** Evacuate civilians, destroy key components
- **Power Bargain:** Negotiate beneficial use of transformation energy
- **Sacrifice Play:** Self-sacrifice to save others

Key Encounters

Chamber of Transformation (All Attributes, DV 5)

The chamber itself fights you—floor tiles shift, walls sprout tentacles, and the air becomes a weapon. The cultists fight with desperate fury, and their blood tastes of corrupted dreams.

Isoka's Manifestation (Spirit + Resolve, DV 6)

She is beautiful and terrible—a vast serpent with the face of every person you've ever loved and hated. Her voice carries cosmic truth and seductive lies. The power she offers tastes like victory and corruption mixed.

Final Choice (Presence + Insight, DV 4–6)

This moment assaults every sense with cosmic consequence. The air crackles with power, the chanting reaches a crescendo, and you can taste the future on your tongue.

Resolution

The aftermath should taste of copper and finality, whether you've saved the world or damned it.

Clocks

- Resolve based on filled segments
- Each filled segment = 1 SB for ongoing campaign threads

Key NPCs

Protagonist-Adjacent

Captain Marcus "The Disgraced" Dravik – Former Black Banners Captain

Motivation: Redemption through heroic act

Hook: "I've heard those screams before, in the Mistlands. Whatever's happening here, it's worse than anything we faced in the war."

Korvash the Iron-Blooded – Viliari Warrior

Motivation: Honor and protection of the innocent

Hook: "My axe has tasted the blood of tyrants and monsters. These serpent-spawn are just the latest in a long line of evils that must be cut down."

Szik the Swift – Ykrul Rogue

Motivation: The challenge and the pay

Hook: "They think they can hold me in their fancy palace? Please. I've picked locks in the Mistlands that would make your serpent-spawn cry."

Antagonist

Isoka, the Serpent Ascendant – Angel of Transformation (Cap 6 Epic Threat)

Motivation: Advance mysterious cosmic agenda

Weakness: May not fully understand her own agenda, dependent on willing subjects

Hook: "Mortal limitations are chains you forge for yourselves. I offer not corruption, but completion."

Supporting Cast

- **Mira the Bartender** – Information Broker
- **Whisperwind** – Ykrul Shaman
- **Groak the Steadfast** – Ykrul Chieftain (Yara's father)

Locations

1. The Black Goat Tavern

Feature: Dim lighting, scarred tables, patrons who watch newcomers carefully

Hazards: Tavern brawl, information trap, cult surveillance, sudden raid

2. Temple of the Open Sky

Feature: Open-air design, carved totems, sacred fire that burns with blue flames

Hazards: Vision overload, spiritual corruption, cult interference, cosmic awareness

3. Governor's Palace

Feature: Stone walls with serpent motifs, iron reinforcements, impossible architecture

Hazards: Architectural anomalies, enhanced guards, serpent magic, psychological pressure

4. Chamber of Transformation

Feature: Massive circular chamber, tiered seating, central altar, ichor pools

Hazards: Mass combat, ritual interference, cosmic horror, temptation

Resource Management

Asset Building Opportunities

- **Cult Artifacts:** Serpent's Fang dagger, Serpent's Coil rope
- **Civilian Support:** Rescued captives provide information and resources
- **Tactical Intelligence:** Information about cult operations and ritual weaknesses
- **Reputation:** Growing fame opens doors but makes heroes targets

Cult Artifacts

Serpent's Fang: Dagger carved from black stone that whispers promises

Effect: +1 die to Stealth and Intimidation, deals +1 Harm to living targets

Corruption: Generates 1 SB on kills

Serpent's Coil: Rope that moves like a snake and obeys mental commands

Effect: Can bind enemies, climb impossible surfaces, constrict targets

Enhancement: When wielder is in Controlled Position, can animate independently

Cult Bestiary

Common Cultists

Isokai Cultist: Wood elves transformed by dark rituals

Cap: 2–3

Special Abilities: Scaled Skin (+1 Armor), Serpent Senses (30 ft detection), Poison Bite (2 Harm + 1 SB on grapple)

Weaknesses: Vulnerable to cold iron, afraid of fire

Elite Cultists

Fang Bearer: Elite cult warriors with partial transformation

Cap: 4

Special Abilities: Regeneration (1 Harm/scene), Immune to fear, Enhanced reflexes (+1 die defense)

Weaknesses: Vulnerable to holy magic, afraid of bright light

Elite Entities

The Coil Master - Thaliss: Former high elf with partial transformation

Cap: 5

Special Abilities: Arcane spells, Immune to mind effects, Command Spawn, Divine Presence

Weaknesses: Vulnerable to bright light, susceptible to holy magic

Resolution Paths

Path	Requirements	Outcome	XP Rewards
Greater Good Victory	Embrace cosmic role	Fundamental worldview change	15–18 XP
Heroic Stand	Destroy ritual through heroism	Local legendary status	18–20 XP
Tactical Retreat	Evacuate civilians, destroy components	Temporary victory, cult regroup	12–15 XP
Power Bargain	Negotiate beneficial use	Partial solution with safeguards	14–17 XP

GM Toolkit

Session Preparation

- Prepare cultist stat blocks with transformation abilities
- City corruption progression table with escalating security measures
- Atmospheric detail cards for key locations
- NPC personality sheets with key quotes

Complication Generator

- **Mild (1 SB):** Enhanced guard gains +1 die, architectural advantage to enemies
- **Moderate (2 SB):** Fang Bearer regenerates, hallway shifts to block retreat
- **Serious (3 SB):** Elite cultist reveals tactical ability, Glory reduced due to setback
- **Major (4+ SB):** Isoka partially manifests, mass transformation begins

Player Agency Reminders

- When players seek power: Let them gain it but show costs
- When players choose sacrifice: Make it truly meaningful
- When players try diplomacy: Some cultists can be reasoned with
- When players investigate: Provide information with responsibility

Character Integration

Background Connections

- Former Black Banners: Tactical expertise, drive to prove themselves
- Vilikari Warrior: Honor culture, family tragedy, protective instincts
- Ykrul Outlander: Street smarts, survival instincts, mercenary background
- City Veterans: Political landscape knowledge, social navigation
- Cosmic Sensitives: Perception of cult influence, understanding of stakes

Skill/Talent Synergies

- Melee: Essential for direct combat with cultists
- Stealth: Key for infiltration and avoiding security
- Command: Critical for leading allies and inspiring others
- Arcana: For understanding and countering serpent magic
- Insight: Key for detecting cult influence
- Presence: Essential for inspiring allies and resisting temptation

Scaling & Variation

For Experienced Players

- Increased cosmic stakes with other Angel-Sisters
- Complex political intrigue with multiple factions
- Irreversible consequences with ongoing campaign threads

For New Players

- Simplified choice consequences
- Clearer moral choices
- More NPC assistance
- Streamlined combat
- Explicit guidance

Campaign Integration

Sequel Hooks

- Other Angel-Sisters take action based on heroes' choices
- Forces beyond mortal comprehension stirred by cosmic disturbance
- PCs exposed to cult influence may find lingering effects

World-Changing Consequences

- City's political structure permanently altered
- Cult's partial success affects other locations
- Heroes' choices influence how other cosmic entities view mortals

Quick Reference

Clock Interactions

- City Corruption fills → Generate 1 SB per segment
- Cult fills → City Corruption +2 segments
- Boon spend → Reduce Cult by 1 segment

Cultist Abilities

- Enhancement: +1 die when in Controlled Position
- Scaled Skin: +1 Armor against physical attacks
- Serpent Senses: 30 ft detection
- Poison Bite: 2 Harm + 1 SB on grapple

Isoka's Powers

- Power Bestowal: +2 dice for 1 scene, but Spirit + Resolve DV 4 or corruption
- Reality Enhancement: +1 physical, but 1 SB per character
- Mind Empowerment: DV 3, +1 success, describe power feel
- Spawn Creation: 1 NPC/scene, new spawn +1 die
- Divine Presence: Generate 2 SB for each ally

Design Philosophy Compliance

Must Include

- Meaningful Player Choice: Every major decision has clear, lasting consequences
- Mechanical-Theme Integration: Every element serves the sword and sorcery theme
- Gradual Complexity: Introduce cosmic stakes slowly across sessions
- Multiple Valid Approaches: Combat, social, and skill-based solutions are all viable
- Character Spotlights: Each session provides opportunities for different character types

Should Avoid

- Railroading: Players can choose any path with real consequences
- Information Dumps: Lore emerges through ghosts, murals, whispers, and discoveries
- Mechanical Bloat: New systems enhance rather than complicate
- Unwinnable States: Even failure leads to interesting continuation
- Generic Elements: Every element serves the specific dark fantasy theme

Conclusion

“The Serpent’s Coil” is ready for play. The taste of copper and destiny hangs heavy in the air of Midh Ahkaz, where ancient powers stir and heroes must rise to meet them. Will you embrace the blood-soaked path to legendary status, or will you stand against cosmic forces that would transform the world itself?

Whether you emerge as saviors of the city or dark lords of your own domain, your actions will echo through the ages. The serpent’s coil tightens around the world, but heroes can become strong enough to break any chain—or perhaps become something even greater in the process.

Remember: In true sword and sorcery fashion, this adventure rewards bold action, clever tactics, and heroic sacrifice. Make every victory feel hard-won and every defeat a setup for an even greater comeback. By Crom’s beard and by the gods of glory, let the blood flow and the legends begin!