

# The Serpent's Coil

A Sword & Sorcery Adventure for Fate's Edge

Featuring Isoka Cultists, Midh Ahkaz, and Epic Power Fantasy

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# 1 Adventure Overview

## 1.1 Premise

In the frontier city of Midh Ahkaz, where war once raged and treaties now bind uneasy peace, a sinister infiltration has begun. The Isokai—a serpent-worshipping sect who serve the ancient entity Isoka—have infiltrated the city’s highest levels. Their goal: to corrupt the ruling council and transform the city into the cornerstone of a new serpent-themed civilization under Isoka’s control.

A disgraced Black Banners captain, his massive Vilikari friend, and a young Ykrul rogue must penetrate the city’s defenses to rescue a chieftain’s child, but they will discover that all is not as it seems. The serpents slither in unexpected ways, and what begins as a simple rescue mission escalates into an epic battle against cosmic forces.

## 1.2 Themes

- **Sword and Sorcery Adventure:** Fast-paced action with escalating stakes
- **Cosmic Power Fantasy:** Characters grow in power as the adventure progresses
- **Political Intrigue:** Enemies wear friendly faces in positions of power
- **Epic Transformation:** Physical and spiritual evolution through conflict
- **Moral Clarity with Complex Methods:** Heroes may need to become monsters to fight monsters

## 1.3 Power Fantasy Elements

This adventure uses a Momentum Clock system instead of Sanity mechanics:

### **Momentum Clock (4 segments):**

- **Segment 1:** +1 Success to all rolls
- **Segment 2:** Remove 1 Banked CP
- **Segment 3:** +2 Successes to each roll
- **Segment 4:** Clear all CP, +1 die to all rolls until end of scene

When the clock fills, heroes gain temporary epic power. When it empties (through failures/backlash), they suffer temporary weakness:

- **Segment 3:** -1 Success to all rolls
- **Segment 2:** Generate 2 CP on next roll
- **Segment 1:** -1 die to all rolls
- **Segment 0:** +2 DV to all checks, generate 4 CP

## 2 Key NPCs

### 2.1 Captain Marcus "The Disgraced" Dravik

A former condotta captain whose unit was disbanded after a mission went catastrophically wrong. His reputation in tatters, he now takes on desperate jobs to survive. Dravik is haunted by the screams he heard in the Mistlands and drinks to forget—but the memories only grow stronger.

**Attributes:** Body 4, Wits 3, Spirit 2, Presence 3

**Skills:** Melee 4, Command 3, Survival 2, Insight 2

**Background:** Former Black Banners Captain

**Motivation:** Redemption through one last heroic act

**Secret:** He witnessed something in the Mistlands that should not exist

### 2.2 Korvash the Iron-Blooded

A massive Vilikari warrior whose family was destroyed in the Ykrul Wars. He fights not for coin, but for the satisfaction of battle and the protection of the innocent. Korvash carries the ancestral war-axe of his house, a weapon that remembers every life it has taken.

**Attributes:** Body 5, Wits 2, Spirit 4, Presence 2

**Skills:** Melee 5, Athletics 4, Endurance 3, Lore 1

**Background:** Vilikari Warrior

**Motivation:** Honor and protection of the weak

**Weakness:** Prone to berserker rage when allies are threatened

### 2.3 Szik the Swift

A young Ykrul who left the steppes seeking fortune in the cities. Quick-witted and quicker with a blade, Szik has survived by his wits and agility. He has a particular talent for picking locks and pockets, and an even greater talent for talking his way out of trouble.

**Attributes:** Body 3, Wits 4, Spirit 2, Presence 3

**Skills:** Stealth 4, Skullduggery 3, Athletics 3, Deception 3

**Background:** Ykrul Outlander

**Motivation:** Wealth and adventure

**Quirk:** Speaks to his daggers as if they were old friends

## 3 The City of Midh Ahkaz

### 3.1 Geography and History

Midh Ahkaz sits at the crossroads of three great powers: the Utaran successor states to the west, the Ykrul steppes to the north, and the mountain kingdoms to the east. Once a frontier camp during the Second Ykrul War, it grew into a proper city when the Treaty of Flintpike made it a neutral trading post.

The city is built in three tiers:

1. **The Low City:** Merchant quarters, workshops, and the docks
2. **The Middle City:** Administrative buildings, temples, and the homes of minor nobles

3. **The High City:** The Council Hall, the Governor's Palace, and the homes of the wealthy

### 3.2 Political Structure

The city is governed by a Council of Twelve, drawn from the merchant families, the military, and the clergy. Recently, three new council members have joined—each with mysterious backgrounds and unsettling mannerisms.

When approaching Midh Ahkaz, draw cards using the regional generator:

- **Spade:** The city gates (tall stone walls with iron reinforcements)
- **Heart:** The Gate Captain (suspicious military officer)
- **Club:** Curfew has been imposed due to "security concerns"
- **Diamond:** Emergency passage papers (good for one entry)

Clock Size: 6 segments (standard journey complications)

## 4 The Isoka Cult

### 4.1 Origins and Beliefs

The Isokai are a variety of wood elves who serve Isoka, the Serpent Ascendant. Centuries ago, they awoke in the lands "to the west", where they performed dark rituals that transformed them into serpent-like beings. Their bodies became scaled, their eyes took on a reptilian gleam, and they gained the ability to shed their skin and regenerate from grievous wounds.

They believe that by transforming major population centers, they can create the foundation for Isoka's new serpent empire that will span the world.

### 4.2 Organization

The cult operates in cells of 3-7 members, each led by a Serpent Speaker who can commune directly with Isoka. The hierarchy includes:

- **The Coil Master:** The overall leader of the cult in Midh Ahkaz
- **Serpent Speakers:** High priests who can channel the god's will
- **Fang Bearers:** Warrior-priests who serve as the cult's muscle
- **Scale Singers:** Infiltrators who maintain cover identities
- **Egg Tenders:** Cultists who care for the serpent spawn

## 5 The Adventure

### 5.1 Opening Scene: The Job

The PCs are approached in a dim tavern in the Low City by an elderly Ykrul chieftain named Grok the Steadfast. His daughter, Yara, has been kidnapped by city guards under mysterious circumstances. He offers them a substantial reward to rescue her before she is "transformed into the cornerstone of the new serpent age."

**Grok the Steadfast:** An aging Ykrul chieftain whose people have trading rights with Midh Ahkaz. He is desperate and willing to pay well for his daughter's return.

**Attributes:** Body 3, Wits 3, Spirit 4, Presence 3

**Skills:** Command 3, Survival 3, Insight 2, Diplomacy 2

**Motivation:** Rescue his daughter at any cost

**Secret:** He suspects the city is under supernatural influence

### 5.2 Investigation Phase

Before the rescue, the PCs should have opportunities to investigate the city and gather information. Key locations include:

#### 5.2.1 *The Black Goat Tavern*

A rough establishment in the Low City where mercenaries and soldiers gather. The bartender, an aging human woman named Mira, has noticed strange things happening in the city.

**Mira the Bartender:** Sharp-eyed and sharp-tongued, Mira has ears everywhere and knows most of the city's secrets.

**Attributes:** Body 2, Wits 4, Spirit 3, Presence 4

**Skills:** Insight 4, Deception 3, Diplomacy 3, Lore 2

**Information:** Guards have been acting strangely; several people have "disappeared" after being taken to the High City

#### 5.2.2 *The Temple of the Open Sky*

A Ykrul shrine where travelers can seek guidance. The priest, an elderly shaman named Whisperwind, has been having disturbing visions.

**Whisperwind:** A Ykrul shaman who has served the temple for thirty years. Recently, his visions have become increasingly disturbing.

**Attributes:** Body 2, Wits 3, Spirit 5, Presence 3

**Skills:** Faith 4, Insight 4, Lore 3, Healing 2

**Vision:** He has seen serpents coiling around the city's heart, and heard whispers of transformation and power

### 5.3 The Rescue Mission

The PCs learn that Yara is being held in the Governor's Palace in the High City. Getting there will require navigating the city's defenses and avoiding the enhanced security measures.

### 5.3.1 Approach Options

1. **Direct Assault:** Storm the gates and fight their way through the guards
2. **Stealth Infiltration:** Use Szik's skills to sneak in through service passages
3. **Social Engineering:** Convince the guards they belong through deception

### 5.3.2 The Governor's Palace

The palace has been subtly altered. Hallways seem to stretch longer than they should, and the air carries a faint, energizing scent that makes people feel more confident. The architecture incorporates serpentine motifs—coiling banisters, snake-headed spouts, and murals depicting glorious transformations.

As the PCs explore the palace, they should notice:

- Shadows that move with purpose and strength
- Whispers of power and transformation in an unknown language
- Rooms that seem to enhance their abilities
- A growing sense that they are becoming more than they were

Each of these observations should advance the Momentum Clock by 1 segment.

## 5.4 The Revelation

When the PCs finally reach Yara, they discover that she is not a prisoner—she is a willing participant in the cult's plans. The "kidnapping" was actually her chosen path to power, where she would be transformed into something greater than human.

**Yara Grokdaughter:** A headstrong young Ykrul woman who has been convinced that joining the Isokai will give her power beyond her wildest dreams.

**Attributes:** Body 2, Wits 3, Spirit 2, Presence 4

**Skills:** Deception 3, Diplomacy 3, Performance 2, Insight 1

**Condition:** Beginning transformation into serpent form

**Motivation:** Power and transcendence

**Weakness:** Vulnerable to appeals to her love for her father

## 5.5 The True Power

The PCs then discover that Yara is just one of many young people who have been "initiated" into the cult. In the palace's basement, they find a vast chamber where hundreds of enhanced cultists are being trained in the arts of serpent magic. At the center of the chamber sits the Coil Master, preparing the ritual to transform Midh Ahkaz into the first cornerstone of Isoka's empire.

**The Coil Master - Serpent Speaker Thaliss:** A former high elf who has achieved partial transformation into something between elf and serpent.

**Attributes:** Body 3, Wits 5, Spirit 4, Presence 4

**Skills:** Arcana 5, Deception 4, Command 3, Insight 3

**Abilities:** Can cast Umbramancy and Geomancy spells, immune to mind-affecting effects, can regenerate from severe injuries

**Motivation:** To serve Isoka and bring about the transformation of the world

**Weakness:** Vulnerable to bright light and holy magic



## 6 Combat Encounters

### 6.1 Palace Guards

Standard city guards who have been enhanced by the cult's presence.

**Attributes:** Body 3, Wits 2, Spirit 2, Presence 2

**Skills:** Melee 3, Athletics 2, Perception 2, Command 1

**Equipment:** Longsword, shield, chainmail

**Special:** 25% chance each round to gain +1 die from serpent enhancement

### 6.2 Fang Bearers

Elite cult warriors who have begun their transformation into serpent beings.

**Attributes:** Body 4, Wits 3, Spirit 3, Presence 2

**Skills:** Melee 4, Athletics 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

**Equipment:** Serpent-bladed spear, leather armor reinforced with scales

**Special:** Can regenerate 1 Harm per scene, immune to fear effects, bite attack deals poison damage

### 6.3 Serpent Spawn

Enhanced creatures that are part snake, part human, created through the cult's rituals.

**Attributes:** Body 2, Wits 1, Spirit 1, Presence 1

**Skills:** Melee 2, Athletics 2

**Special:** Move through enhanced speed, can climb walls, regenerate when near ichor pools

## 7 Magic and Supernatural Elements

### 7.1 Serpent Magic

The Isokai have developed unique magical practices based on their communion with Isoka:

**Umbramancy - Serpent's Coil (DV 3):** Effect: The caster can enhance a willing target's physical abilities over the course of combat. The target gains temporary serpent characteristics and combat prowess.

Backlash:

- 1-2 CP: Caster gains minor serpent features (fangs, scaled patches)
- 3-4 CP: Caster becomes partially transformed (gain 1 Attribute, lose 1 social die)
- 5+ CP: Caster becomes a powerful serpent spawn under GM control

**Geomancy - Earth's Embrace (DV 2):** Effect: The caster can sense and manipulate underground spaces, creating tactical advantages and detecting movement beneath the earth.

Backlash:

- 1-2 CP: Caster becomes temporarily deafened
- 3-4 CP: Ground becomes unstable in a 10-foot radius
- 5+ CP: Ancient entity beneath the city stirs and begins to offer power

## 8 Momentum System and Power Fantasy

### 8.1 Momentum Clock Advancement Triggers

Throughout the adventure, the GM should advance the Momentum Clock for the following events:

- First victory over enhanced cultists: +1 segment
- Discovering the scope of the transformation ritual: +1 segment
- Hearing the empowering whispers of Isoka: +1 segment
- Seeing allies begin enhancement: +1 segment
- Direct contact with Isoka's power: +2 segments
- Realizing the potential for personal transformation: +1 segment
- Overcoming significant tactical challenges: +1 segment

### 8.2 Power Fantasy Effects by Momentum Level

**Segment 1 - Rising Heroes:** Characters feel confident, +1 die to social rolls involving intimidation, minor combat enhancements

**Segment 2 - Gathering Strength:** +1 die to all rolls when fighting for a cause, start to notice enhanced physical capabilities

**Segment 3 - Epic Power:** +2 dice to rolls involving combat or overcoming obstacles, temporary attribute boosts

**Segment 4 - Legendary Moment:** Clear all CP, +1 die to all rolls until end of scene, one automatic success per scene

### 8.3 Momentum Loss Effects

When heroes suffer major defeats or setbacks:

- Major tactical failure: -1 segment
- Seeing allies fall to corruption: -1 segment
- Being overwhelmed by superior forces: -2 segments
- Personal moral compromise: -1 segment
- Failure to protect innocents: -1 segment

**Segment 3 - Minor Setback:** -1 die to rolls involving confidence, temporary weakness

**Segment 2 - Significant Defeat:** Generate 2 CP on next roll, tactical disadvantages

**Segment 1 - Crushing Blow:** -1 die to all rolls, major tactical disadvantages

**Segment 0 - Catastrophic Failure:** +2 DV to all checks, generate 4 CP, temporary removal from combat

## 9 Resolution Paths

### 9.1 The Transformation Victory

The PCs embrace the power of Isoka and become the new leaders of the serpent empire, transforming Midh Ahkaz into the first of many transformed cities.

**Reward:** 15-18 XP, but fundamentally change character nature and alignment

### 9.2 The Heroic Stand

The PCs destroy the ritual and drive back the Isokai, but at great cost. They gain legendary status as heroes who saved the city.

**Reward:** 18-20 XP, gain Prestige Abilities, become local legends

### 9.3 The Tactical Retreat

The PCs evacuate civilians and destroy key components of the ritual, preventing the full transformation but allowing the cult to regroup elsewhere.

**Reward:** 12-15 XP, create ongoing campaign thread, gain resources

### 9.4 The Power Bargain

The PCs negotiate with the cult, finding a way to harness the transformation energy for beneficial purposes while preventing the complete takeover.

**Reward:** 14-17 XP, gain unique magical abilities, create new faction relationships

### 9.5 The Sacrifice Play

The PCs use themselves as bait or components in a counter-ritual, gaining temporary godlike power to destroy the cult at personal cost.

**Reward:** 16-19 XP, temporary epic abilities, permanent scars or changes

## 10 Bestiary

### 10.1 Isokai Cultist

Wood elves transformed by dark rituals into enhanced serpent-like beings.

**Attributes:** Body 3, Wits 3, Spirit 3, Presence 2

**Skills:** Stealth 3, Melee 3, Survival 2, Arcana 2

**Special Abilities:**

- Enhancement: Gain +1 die when Momentum Clock is at 2+ segments
- Scaled Skin: +1 Armor against physical attacks
- Serpent Senses: Can detect enemies in 30 feet
- Poison Bite: Deals 2 Harm and +1 CP generation on successful grapple

**Weaknesses:** Vulnerable to cold iron, afraid of fire

## 10.2 Isoka, the Serpent Ascendant

Ancient entity of transformation and power, currently partially manifest.

**Attributes:** Body 6, Wits 5, Spirit 6, Presence 5

**Skills:** Command 6, Arcana 6, Insight 5, Presence 5

**Special Abilities:**

- Power Bestowal: Can grant temporary epic abilities to followers
- Reality Enhancement: Can improve local physics within 100 feet
- Mind Empowerment: Can enhance willing individuals' capabilities
- Spawn Creation: Can create new enhanced followers from willing subjects
- Divine Presence: Automatically advances Momentum Clock for allies

**Manifestation:** Appears as a massive serpent with divine features, speaks in empowering whispers that boost abilities

## 10.3 Serpent Spawn (Adult)

Fully formed enhanced creatures that were once human.

**Attributes:** Body 4, Wits 2, Spirit 2, Presence 1

**Skills:** Melee 4, Athletics 3, Stealth 3

**Special Abilities:**

- Constrict: Grapple automatically deals 1 Harm per round, +1 Momentum
- Poison Immunity: Unaffected by toxins
- Wall Crawl: Can move on walls and ceilings at full speed
- Fear Aura: Enemies within 10 feet gain +1 Momentum (for enemies) or must make Spirit + Resolve (DV 3)

# 11 Treasure and Magic Items

## 11.1 Cult Artifacts

**Serpent's Fang:** A dagger carved from a single piece of black stone that whispers promises of power.

**Effect:** +1 die to Stealth and Intimidation rolls, deals +1 Harm to living targets, generates 1 CP on kills

**Empowerment:** When Momentum Clock is at 3+ segments, gains +2 dice to all rolls

**Serpent's Coil:** A length of rope that moves like a snake and obeys the wielder's mental commands.

**Effect:** Can be used to bind enemies, climb impossible surfaces, or constrict targets at range

**Enhancement:** When Momentum is high, can animate independently to assist in combat

## 11.2 Heroic Items

**Blade of the Fallen Empire:** An ancient sword that grows stronger as its wielder faces greater challenges.

**Effect:** Base +1 Harm, +1 Harm for each segment on Momentum Clock (allies)

**Special:** When wielder's Momentum drops, sword becomes heavier and more difficult to use

**Shield of the Unbroken Wall:** A massive shield that can protect multiple allies.

**Effect:** Provides +2 Armor to wielder and adjacent allies, can be used as cover

**Empowerment:** When Momentum is high, becomes nearly indestructible

## 12 Campaign Hooks and Extensions

### 12.1 Ongoing Epic Threats

If the PCs don't completely destroy the cult, surviving members may regroup and attempt even greater transformations, creating escalating threats throughout the campaign.

### 12.2 The Greater Empire

The Isokai in Midh Ahkaz may be just one cell of a larger network working to transform multiple cities. Investigating their connections could lead to continent-spanning adventures.

### 12.3 Personal Evolution

PCs who were exposed to the cult's influence may find they're not entirely free of its effects, but can channel the power for heroic purposes, creating personal epic storylines.

### 12.4 The Isoka Wars

The events in Midh Ahkaz may be the opening salvo in a larger conflict between traditional powers and the serpent empire, leading to epic campaign-scale warfare.

## 13 GM Tips and Advice

### 13.1 Building Epic Tension

- Use the Momentum Clock as a visual representation of rising and falling power
- Let victories feel truly epic and defeats genuinely crushing
- Describe how characters become more impressive as power grows
- Make the stakes clear: not just survival, but the fate of civilization

### 13.2 Managing Power Fantasy Elements

- Power should feel earned through heroic actions and clever play
- Let players feel increasingly awesome as the adventure progresses

- Provide opportunities to showcase enhanced abilities
- Balance empowerment with meaningful challenges that can still threaten heroes

### 13.3 Narrative Techniques

- The known should become legendary through the characters' actions
- Revelations should be both satisfying and empowering
- Partial knowledge can drive heroic ambition
- Let destiny be part of the power fantasy

### 13.4 Combat Pacing

- Early encounters should establish the threat level
- Mid-adventure combats should showcase growing heroism
- Climactic battles should feel truly epic with high Momentum
- Allow for dramatic reversals that test heroic resolve

## 14 Adventure Conclusion

The adventure should end with a climactic confrontation where the PCs must choose between several epic options, each with significant consequences. The true power fantasy lies not just in defeating monsters, but in the heroic choices that define legends.

Whether they save the city through pure heroism, embrace transformation for greater power, or sacrifice everything for the greater good, their actions should echo through the rest of the campaign, making this not just an adventure, but a defining moment that establishes their legendary status.

Remember that in Fate's Edge, power comes with responsibility. Every epic victory should plant seeds for future challenges, and every choice should shape the world in meaningful ways. Let the serpents offer power, but let the heroes choose their own destiny.

**Final Note:** In true sword and sorcery fashion, this adventure rewards bold action, clever tactics, and heroic sacrifice. The Momentum Clock represents the ebb and flow of epic combat and adventure - heroes rise to legendary heights, face crushing setbacks, and rise again even greater than before. Make every victory feel hard-won and every defeat a setup for an even greater comeback. This is not just a test of skill, but a proving ground for legends.

The serpent's coil tightens around the world, but heroes can become strong enough to break any coil - or perhaps become something even greater in the process.