

THE ABYSS OF THE SNAKEFOLK

Do you like history? Because these guys are zealots for the past. The snakefolk are ready to give their lives for their cause. Be careful out there...

Constable Cliffweather

SETUP

THE WORLD IS home to cultures, peoples, and different societies. Just by looking at them, analyzing the data, and making some calculations, many things can be said and predicted about the future of these civilizations. For historians though, knowing the future is not important and some experts of the past even consider it boring. *"Why bother with the affairs of the future and things we will not experience, nor see? When we can relive hundreds, even thousands of years by studying the past"*, the fanatics of history would say. However, the gods and time bury things for a reason. And in a world of monsters and magic, some things should never come to light again.

THE SNAKEFOLK CIVILIZATION

IT WAS CENTURIES ago when the powerful snakefolk ruled over most of the Eastern Territories of the continent. Their cities, towns, and walled ziggurats displayed might, wealth, and prosperity. Their religious beliefs and traditions had them wear gold and silver in the shape of rings, bracelets, and long chains circling their bodies. The construction of ornamented warrior and priest, snakefolk statues was a popular trend. It was almost an innate goal burning within each snakefolk individual; to build an idol to honor their race and their people.

CENTURIES OF DEDICATION

THE SNAKEFOLK PEOPLE of this time followed extreme views of life and heretic beliefs about their race and purpose in the universe. Their society grew around these currents of thought. Time only made them stronger. Ultimately, when humankind arrived, the snakefolk differed from other cultures so much that their clash ended up in war and chaos. Decades of violence followed...

Humans are determined, and pragmatic, and due to their short lifespans, they are some of the most reckless, savage, and cruel combatants. The end justified the means; they did not have second thoughts about removing the snakefolk from these lands to fulfill their expansionist dreams. Centuries of snakefolk lore and history were destroyed in half a century. But the scaled descendants of some of them live today. And they remember...

THE SNAKEFOLK OF YORE

SNAKEFOLK ARE AWARE of their long history and how their kind populated most of the Eastern Territories millennia ago. Alas, few of them are direct descendants of the royal bloodline that lost everything back then. Since history is written by winners, countless atrocities and crimes of humankind were hidden, buried, and forgotten. But the royal bloodline descendants remember.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A CULT COMPOSED of purely snakefolk people obeys the orders of Otis Gyl'shak, a descendant of the snakefolk rulers. Not so long ago, they moved from their former lair in the desert and found a spot in the mountains near Harrinton, a thriving human town. The snakefolk that follow Otis are fanatics. Their minds live in the past, driven by their strong hatred of humankind.

For about two months, the snakefolk cult has attacked the good people of Harrinton. Some of them have been kidnapped for their foul rituals or medieval practices. Constable Cliffweather offers 2,500 sp to brave heroes for eradicating the threat and save any survivors.

RANDOM EVENTS

Once per Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) while in the caverns of the snakefolk lair, roll 1d6 in this table.

- Two **swarms of poisonous snakes** attack! The reptiles have a 4-in-10 chance of taking the intruders by surprise. They flee when reduced to half their Hit Points.
- The characters stumble upon a group of three **snakefolk warriors** and one **snakefolk shaman**. They are on patrol.
- A character fails to notice a pressure-sensitive plate hidden by mud (**Search** check). Poisoned darts are shot! **Fortitude** save or the characters are poisoned for 1 hour.
- The spot where the characters are standing is magically turned into quicksand. The characters sink 1 foot and are unable to move for a few minutes (**Fortitude** roll).
- A **snakefolk shaman** attempts to control a character from afar with the *dominate* spell (**Will** roll).
- The snakefolk leader, Otis, uses magic to be heard within his lair and says: *"The era of serpents has come..."*

FEATURES OF THE SNAKEFOLK LAIR

Tier 2 Adventure

Light. The entire lair is in complete darkness since snakefolk have an incredible vision in the darkness.

Smells and Sounds. A pungent smell of humidity, combined with sulfur, and blood prevails in the entire dungeon. The screams of innocents often echo through the caverns and tunnel network, like a plea from nowhere.

1. ENTRANCE CHASM

The characters must make a small journey to the mountains from Harrinton. The GM is free to decide whether the characters have an uneventful or a dangerous trip. Either way, two **snakefolk warriors** and one **snakefolk scout** are outside the chasm entrance when they arrive.

If the battle turns against them, one of the snakefolk attempts to disengage to alert everyone inside the lair. Ancient magic allows snakefolk to descend and land slowly and safely through the 40-foot-deep, dark chasm.

2. UNDERGROUND LANDING

If an enemy from area 1 fled and warned his allies, a **snakefolk champion**, two **snakefolk warriors**, and a **snakefolk priest** are ready to hold intruders off. Otherwise, the champion is the only one patrolling the area.

A **Detect Magic** check reveals the statues' magic aura; it causes the selective hovering spell in the chasm.

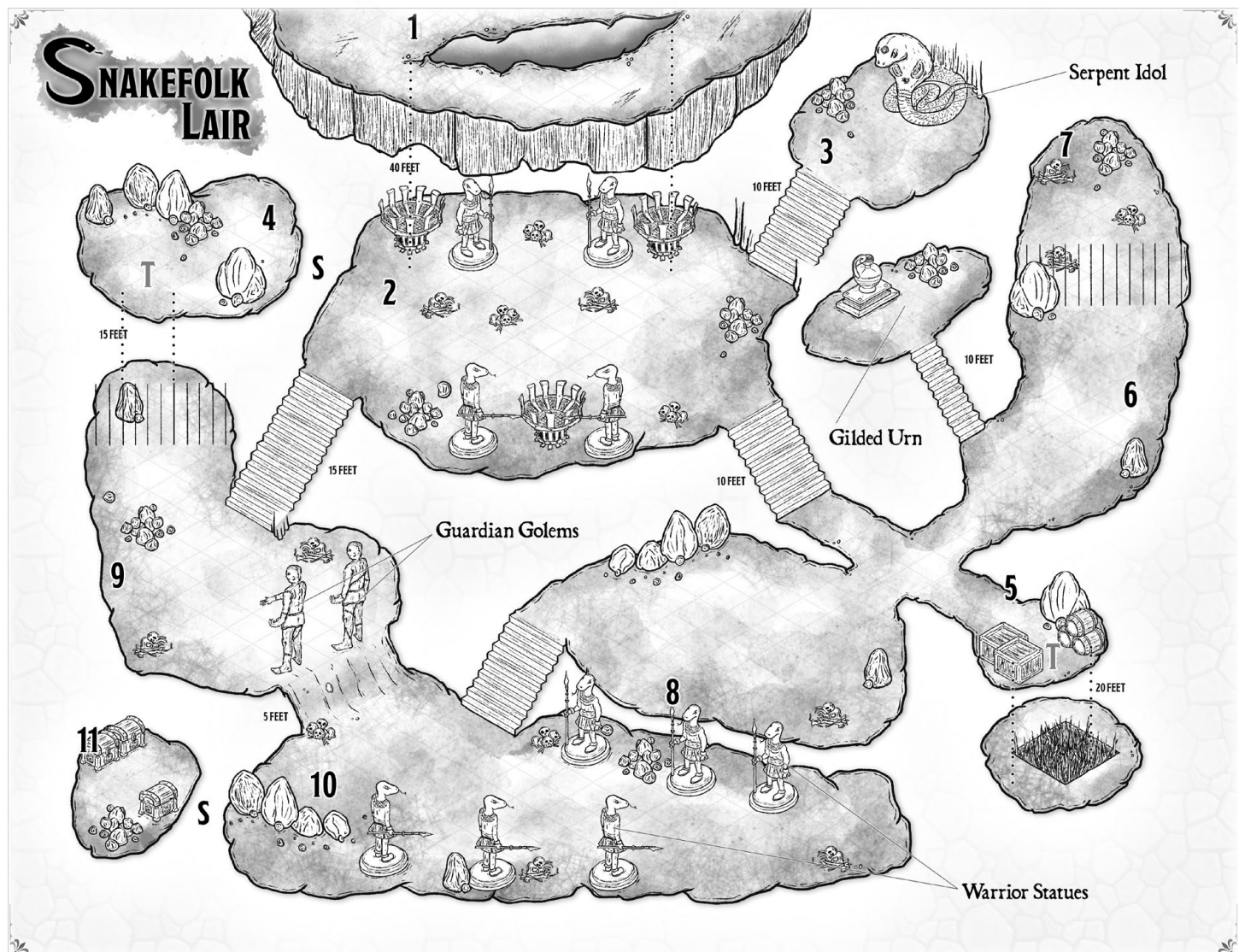
3. MEDITATION CHAMBER

A large stone idol in the shape of a snake rests at the end of this chamber. The snakefolk meditate and pray before it to be blessed by their scaled god (**Divine Lore** check).

4. HIDDEN CAVERN

It takes 1 Dungeon Turn (10 minutes) to remove the rocks and debris blocking the way to this area. Two **swarms of poisonous snakes** slither from cracks in the rocky walls and attack non-snakefolk creatures.

Trap. If the characters fail to notice the weak spot on the ground (**Search** check), they fall 15 feet into area 9.



5. DEADLY TRAP

Crates and barrels lean against the walls of this cave. They contain dried food, meat, and spices. An ingenious character may retrieve things of value (**Scavenge** check). A box of spices and flasks of salt can be sold for 550 sp.

Creatures that walk into the marked area (**Search** check) fall 20 feet and become impaled in the pit. Victim lose 1/2 their Hit Points (**Reflexes** roll / half damage).

6. SNAKEFOLK GUARDIANS

Three **snakefolk warriors** and two **snakefolk scouts** risk their lives to keep intruders away from the prisoners. A 10-foot stairway leads to a gilded, blood-filled urn with a magic aura (**Detect Magic** check, 250 sp).

7. IMMORTAL PRISONERS

Nine people are held behind an iron barred cell. The gilded urn's magic (see above) makes the prisoners immortal. They don't need to breathe, eat, or drink. Their minds remain awake. They still feel fear, uncertainty, or pain.

Urn. The urn works for people inside the cell. Once outside they are immune to it. The gilded urn can be destroyed with weapons or a *dispel magic* spell. Perhaps, the characters wish to keep it (see **Conclusion**).

8. LOWER LEVEL

A squad of two **snakefolk warriors**, a **snakefolk priest**, and a **giant boa constrictor** attempts to stop the characters. This is one of Otis's boas. It flees back to its master and sister if reduced to half its Hit Points.

9. ANTECHAMBER

The urn described in area 7 affects the six people imprisoned in this cell. Two **flesh golems** block the way east and attempt to stop the characters. They fight until slain.

10. LOWEST LEVEL

Otis Gyl'shak and the rest of his goons wait here. They did not expect the intruders to overcome all their defenses. If allowed, Otis, the snakefolk leader (**mage**) speaks. With a strong snakefolk accent, he says in Common:

"So you've come to write history again, haven't you? Destroy, kill, conquer... Not this time! Humans obliterated my people centuries ago, now it shall be you who leave these lands! Kill them or seize them!"

That last sentence is directed to his allies. Two **snakefolk champions**, a **giant boa constrictor**, a **snakefolk priest**, and three **snakefolk scouts** air their leader. The fanatics fight to the death. Otis asks for no mercy and also gives his life for the cause. He is a true believer.

11. SECRET VAULT

Large rocks and boulders cover the entrance to this area (**Search** check). Here lies the snakefolk's valuable treasure hoard. There are 2,784 sp in assorted coinage and small pieces of silverware. A set of fancy silks from the snakefolk country (5,000 sp), two golden vases with precious stones (350 gp), and a magical *spear of poison*. The artifact has the extraordinary property. It can turn into a venomous serpent once a day.

CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

The characters defeat Otis and save the prisoners. The survivors are famished, hurt, and traumatized. Even the journey back home is a nightmare for these poor people. Constable Cliffweather is happy to pay the agreed-upon reward when he sees the characters return. The survivors' families bathe them in flowers, bread, and other gifts as tokens of their unending appreciation.

The Urn. The characters may keep the gilded urn. It is an artifact of evil, but its power could be of interest to a powerful school of magic or a scientist. Or perhaps, within their possession, the characters are tempted to do evil. The GM may spin up new quests from this finding. Those are, however, adventures for another day...

