

# DANCE OF THE MEDUSA

*An OSRIC Adventure*



*By Joseph A. Mohr*

# THE DANCE OF THE MEDUSA

*An OSRIC Adventure For Characters of 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Level*

By Joseph A. Mohr

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Joseph A. Mohr

## CREDITS

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## **BACKGROUND** **INFORMATION**

Along the southern coast of Zanzia lies a great deal of swampland. These southern swamps of Zanzia are not frequented by normal citizens. Foul creatures live in these swamps and those who venture into the swamps rarely come back alive. Recently in the coastal town of Freeport there have been reports of a growing cult of snakes. Those cults worship a snake Goddess named Shilha. Little is known about this Shilha. This cult is a new one in a country that has been known to have many strange religious cults. It is said that Shilha is the Goddess of snakes and that she has a great temple in the swamps along the southern coast of Zanzia west of Freeport.

This cult has been growing all over southern Zanzia and particularly in Freeport. Baron Gruba, a noble who lives in Freeport, has become very concerned about this cult and their growing power. Several powerful Zanzian officials have recently died in mysterious circumstances. At least some of these are believed to have been poisoned by snake venom. The Baron is concerned about his own life and the lives of his family members. If such a cult is responsible for these killings then he and his family are in great danger.

The adventurers are summoned to the keep of Baron Gruba to discuss this growing threat. The Baron is a heavy set man with fiery red hair and a long scraggly beard. When the adventurers arrive they find him in a state of near panic. He offers the adventurers two thousand gold Zanzians to seek out this temple in the swamps and put an end to this menace. Any loot that the

players might find along the way is theirs to keep. He suggests that the players go to the blood river bridge just near the village of Dagger Rock and then head due south. Caravans of these cultists have been reported traveling this path with great frequency. It would seem logical that the temple should not be far from this path.

Freeport is a town filled with smugglers and pirates and is a fairly sizeable town. It is on the south eastern coast of Zanzia. Pirates and other raiders from the sea often raid the southern coast of Zanzia and may be encountered at any time there. The town of Dagger Rock is a small farming village along the blood river. The blood river was so named during a civil war over a hundred years ago resulting in a catastrophic battle along the river. It is said that the killing was so intense that the river turned red from the blood of the many fallen.

## **GAME MASTER** **INFORMATION**

Shilha is not a Goddess at all. She is a powerful Medusa and her temple is her lair. She has built up this cult and is attempting to have Zanzian leaders assassinated. She is an ally of the evil Lich Malcon the Firebringer and is one of his many willing minions spreading chaos all over Zanzia in anticipation of his eventual rise to power. Malcon was the instigator of that civil war a hundred years ago. He attempted to seize power from the rightful King of Zanzia and was defeated ultimately in a massive battle at the blood river. He was eventually sealed up in his volcanic lair for a hundred years before being accidentally released again by foolish gnomish archeologists who excavated near the volcano that held Malcon in prison.

Shilha's Temple is made from peculiar slimy looking stone in the swamps just south of Dagger Rock. The cultists can be seen coming and going from this temple. Adventurers approaching the temple will likely be ignored until they actually reach the site of the temple itself. At this point they will be recognized as a threat unless they have taken up disguise as members of the cult. The cultists will mount a spirited defense of their temple to prevent outsiders from invading.

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN SOUTHERN ZANZIA

1 IN 8

1. Snake Cultists
2. Zanzian Army Patrol
3. Griffins
4. Zanzian Army Patrol
5. Snake Cultists
6. Sea Raiders
7. Pirates
8. Snake Cultists

### RANDOM ENCOUNTERS IN THE SWAMPS

1 IN 8

1. Snake Cultists
2. Catoblepas
3. Lizard Men
4. Snakes
5. Basilisk
6. Snake Cultists
7. Snake Cultists
8. Snake Cultists

**Basilisk (1):** MV 6"; AC 4; HD 6+1; HP 25; # At 1; Dmg 1-10; SA gaze turns to stone; AL N. This creature lives in the swamp and

is scavenging for food.

**Catoblepas (1):** MV 6"; AC 7; HD 6+3; HP 28; # At 1; Dmg 1-6+ stun; SA gaze causes death; AL N. This creature lives near the temple and hunts for food near it.

**Griffins (2):** MV 12"/30"; AC 3; HD 7; HP 30 each; # At 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/2-16; AL N. These griffins fly all over southern Zanzia but often find meals near the swamp lands of the south. These creatures lair is much farther north but they are a mated pair and are seeking food to bring back for their nest and eggs.

**Pirates:** Pirates raid southern Zanzia and ships along the coast. Many pirates live in communities along the coast as well and quite a few live in Freeport. This group is seeking to recover some of their hidden booty which was left concealed in these swamp lands. The group consists of:

**Lieutenant:** F4, AC 3, HP 26, AL CE, **Short Sword +2, Chain Mail +1, Shield.**

**Ten Pirates:** F0; AC 7; HP 3 each, AL CE, Leather Armor, Shield, Spear.

**Sea Raiders:** These raiders are often found sacking villages along the coast. They raid in from ships on the sea and are believed to be from the barbarian lands far to the north. These men are berserkers and attack twice in one round with no penalty. A typical band will consist of:

**Raiding Party Leader:** F4/C3, AC 7, HP 32, AL N, **Long Sword+1, Mace +1**, no armor.

**Ten Berserkers:** F0; AC 7; HD 2-7 hp, HP 5 each, long swords and battle axes, AL N, no armor.

**Snakes:** Snakes of many kinds may be found in the swamps of southern Zanzia. A typical encounter would consist of:

**Snakes, Poisonous (1):** MV 15"; AC 5; HD 4+2; HP 17; # At 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison bite kills unless saving throw is made and causes 3-18 damage if save is made; AL N.

**Snake Cultists:** The cult of the Snake Goddess is a growing entity in this part of Zanzia. These cultists can be seen streaming into the swamp and out of the swamp and heading from there to many cities and towns. These cultists wear green robes with a pattern of scales etched into them giving the wearer the appearance of a snake from a distance. A typical band of these worshipers would consist of:

**Priestess::** C4, AC 2, **Mace +1/+2 versus creatures that fly**; Plate Mail, Shield, AL LE, Spells known: **command, cure light wounds, cause fear, snake charm, hold person.**

**Ten Acolytes:** F0, AC 4, Spears and Maces, Chain Mail, Shield, AL LE.

Anyone wearing the robes of these cultists might be able to sneak into the temple without being noticed.

**Zanzian Army Patrol:** Zanzian army patrols can be encountered all over Zanzia. Zanzia has many enemies from within and without. The king's men patrol the lands in search of raiders, invaders and enemies of all kinds. These men are stout warriors and in many cases are the only enforcers of the law for many miles. A typical patrol will consist of:

**Lieutenant:** P4, AC 2, HP 30, AL LG, Long

Sword, Lance, Medium War Horse, Plate Mail, Shield.

**Seargent:** F2, AC 2, HP 17, AL NG, Long Sword, Light War Horse, Plate Mail, Shield.

**Ten Men At Arms:** F0, AC 4, HP 3 each, AL NG, Long Sword, Chain Mail, Shield, Light War Horse.

## THE TEMPLE OF THE SNAKE GODDESS

The adventurers arrive eventually at a clearing in the swamp. A large stone building rises up from the swamp. It has two large torches burning and lighting up an entry way with a set of stairs leading up into the temple. The temple appears to be made from some kind of slimy looking stone. The walls appear to be as if they were made from the skin of snakes. It even appears to have the color patterns of snakes which are indigenous to this land.

No guards appear to be waiting by the entrance. Strange chanting can be heard from within the building. Anyone approaching the stairs may notice that there are trails of blood leading into the temple. The blood appears to be fresh.

Anyone spending more than one round outside the temple will likely get a random encounter before long. People and creatures are coming and going out of this entrance into the temple at frequent intervals.

**RANDOM ENCOUNTERS WITHIN  
THE TEMPLE OF THE SNAKE  
GODDESS**

Roll Every Four Hours  
1 IN 6

1. Snake Cultist Patrol
2. Spirit Naga
3. Ochre Jelly
4. Snake Cultist Patrol
5. Snake Priestess
6. Snake Cultist Patrol
7. Snake Priestess
8. Snake Cultist Patrol

**Naga (1):** This naga Yurirji patrols the halls of the temple seeking out the unbelievers that might attempt to invade. She is a **Spirit Naga**: MV 12"; AC 4; HD 9; HP 38; # At 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison bite; SA permanent charm gaze; SA spell use; AL CE; Spells Known: **sleep, magic missile, message, shield, mirror image, web, hold person, lightning bolt**. Around her neck hangs a **necklace of prayer beads (with the following special beads: 2 x curing, 1 x blessing, 1 x wind walking, 1 x karma)**.

**Ochre Jelly (1):** MV 3"; AC 8; HD 6; HP 26; # At 1; Dmg 3-12; SA dissolve flesh; SD lightning splits it into multiple creatures

with half damage; AL N. The cultists are aware of this creature patrolling the temple and they allow it to exist because it serves their purposes by eliminating strangers.

**Snake Cultist Patrol:** The Snake Cultists are aware that sooner or later the Zanzian authorities may attempt to send someone into the temple. They are vigilant and patrol the temple for intruders at all hours of the day and night. Anyone who looks suspicious will be stopped and questioned or attacked. Patrols will consist of:

**Priestess:** C5, AC 2, HP 28, AL LE, Plate Mail, Shield, **Flail +2/+3 versus fire using or breathing creatures**, Spells memorized: **curse, command, cure light wounds, silence 15' radius, chant, hold person, prayer**. She wears a medallion shaped like a snake head and made of solid gold worth 250 gold pieces. She wears the green robe of a cultist.

**Five Fighters:** F3, AC 3, HP 20 each, Splint



Mail, Shield, Long Swords, AL LE. Each wears a medallion shaped like a face of a snake and made of gold worth 100 gold pieces. They wear the green robes of the cultists.

**Snake Priestess:** This priestess wanders the halls of the temple contemplating the meaning of the words of the Goddess herself. Velorina Rex became a priestess of the Snake Goddess because she was enthralled by the message of hate against the leadership and royalty. The Goddess preaches that such hatred can be channeled into a new future for the people of Zanzia without royals and nobles. It is a vision of true anarchy. And of course, it is a lie. The Snake Goddess is aligned with the Lich Malcon and has different ideas on how Zanzia should be ruled than those ideas that she uses to manipulate her followers.

Velorina Rex is one of the inner circle of priestesses of the temple. Only a select few may have an audience with the Goddess herself. And all of those priestesses have been physically and permanently blinded. They are told that none can behold the Goddess because her beauty would cause them to be permanently driven insane with jealousy. The truth, however, is that anyone who sees her is petrified as all who see a Medusa are. As a blind person she would normally have penalties to hit or case spells but the goggles she wears keeps this from being so. If anyone removes her goggles after death they will see that her eyes have been put out by sharp instruments and her eye sockets are bloody. Lower priestesses do not undergo this until they become one of the inner circle.

**Velorina Rex:** C7; Plate Mail, Shield, Mace, AL LE, Spells known: **Command, curse, sanctuary, silence 15' radius, hold person, spiritual hammer, feign death,**

**dispel magic, cause serious wounds.** She wears a strange pair of goggles over her face which are the **eyes of the snake goddess.** She wears a medallion with a face of a snake made of solid gold and with emerald eyes and is worth 750 gold pieces.

## THE KEY TO THE TEMPLE OF THE SNAKE GODDESS

All of the upper level rooms in the temple are made of the same snake like stone material used to create the outside of the temple. The material occasionally even seems to breathe like a living creature. It is unnaturally warm inside the temple and damp.

The lower level of the temple is made from natural limestone caverns.

None of the areas within the temple are lit unless otherwise specified. All doors within the temple are made of wood except for secret doors which are made from the same snake like stone material so as to blend easily with the walls.

### GROUND LEVEL OF TEMPLE

#### 1. Entrance/Stairs

The entrance into the temple is a set of stairs that lead up from the ground level to about five feet above the surface. The stairs are made of stone and appear to be wet. Two large torches illuminate the entrance and serve as a beacon to approaching cultists arriving at the temple to be indoctrinated into the cult or weeded out as infidels by the inquisitor. There is a double chance of random encounter at the stairs.

## 2. The Inquisitor

This room is well lit by torches in sconces in the walls every five feet along the walls. A doorway here leads to the west and a passage leads north from the room. Sitting at a table here waits a woman in a red robe. She has beside her a long withered looking wooden staff. Standing at her side are four young men in green robes with snake scale patterns on them. She stands and points her staff in the direction of the adventurers when they arrive.



“Who are ye that seek shelter in this temple?” she asks.

“And are thou worthy?” she will ask once anyone answers her first question.

She will inquire about where one has traveled from, who has sent them to the temple, and what they wish from the cult. If anyone states an interest in joining the cult she will point her staff at them and cast detect lie from it to determine if they are telling the truth or are infidels.

The **Inquisitor** is named **Belinda Argent** and she is a C8: AC 1, HP , **Staff of Truth ( C ) (25 charges)**, Plate Mail, **Shield +1**, AL LE, Spells Known: **curse, sanctuary, protection from good, hold person, silence 15' radius, resist fire, dispel magic, animate dead, cure serious wounds, protection from good 10' radius**. Although she is a high level priest her she is not blinded. She knows what the Goddess of the Temple is and still follows her. Her role is to weed out the infidels from the true disciples of the Snake Goddess. She never leaves this floor of the temple. She wears a medallion with a face of a snake made of solid gold and with emerald eyes and is worth 750 gold pieces.

Her bodyguards are fighters and wear green robes. They are F5: AC 2, HP 35 each, Long Swords, Plate Mail, Shield, AL LE. Each wears a medallion shaped like the head of a snake and made of gold worth 100 gold pieces. She carries a silver key that opens area 3. The key is worth 10 gold pieces.

## 3. The Inquisitor's Quarters

The door to this room is locked. Anyone listening at the door to this room will hear no sounds at all.

This room is finely appointed. It has a bed, a chair, a desk, a dresser and a divan. On the walls here are fine oil paintings. One of the paintings depicts the siege of the city of Onm. In this painting the Demon Lich

Malcon is depicted before he became a Lich. He is shown here as a young man with visions of conquest. Another painting seems to be a portrait of Malcon as an older man after losing the great battle at the Blood River. And a third depicts the great wizard after he turned to a Lich. Each of these paintings is worth 500 gold pieces each to a collector of fine art.

A hook on the wall holds a red priests robe and a black robe. Close inspection of the robes will reveal that one of the robes radiates magical aura. The black robe is a **robe of warmth**.



On the desk is a candle in a pewter dish and a piece of parchment. A feather quill sits in an inkwell nearby. Anyone inspecting the parchment will notice that it has writing on it. See Player Handout A. The candle in the dish on this desk is a **candle of invocation (C) (Lawful Evil)**.

The desk has a drawer to it which is locked and trapped. Should anyone attempt to open the drawer without first unlocking it or removing the trap (or disarming it by pulling the handle and turning it three times clockwise) will be pricked by a poison needle. The person stuck by the needle will need to save versus poison or be paralyzed for ten rounds. Meanwhile a magic mouth

will appear on the wall and begin screaming loudly for guards. In the drawer itself is a golden ceremonial dagger studded with rubies and emeralds and worth 1500 gold pieces.

The dresser has several pieces of normal clothing for a priest of this order. Multiple robes and other garments are folded up neatly within the dresser. One of the drawers of the dresser, however, has a false bottom to it. Hidden beneath this false bottom is a wooden scroll tube with a scroll inside with clerical spells: **cure serious wounds, neutralize poison, feign death, remove curse, raise dead**.

Close inspection of the divan will reveal that there are 3 gold coins that have fallen under the cushions and a Topaz gem worth 500 gold pieces.

Close inspection of the bed may reveal that the headboard is hollow. Each of the bedposts are hollow as well. Hidden within the head board is a **scroll of protection versus petrification**.

Hidden within one of the hollow bed posts is a **wand of petrification (M)** with 11 charges on it.

Hidden inside of the mattress of the bed is a compartment which has been cut out of the middle to allow a hiding hole inside. Inside this hiding hole is a small bag with 2 emeralds worth 1000 gold pieces each, three pearls worth 500 gold pieces each and 25 gold pieces.

#### 4. **Initiates Room**

The door to this room is unlocked. Anyone listening at the door to this room may hear: snoring, talking, card playing or the sounds

of day to day living in a barracks environment.

This room is filled with bunk beds being used by initiates of the temple. Many of the beds will be occupied at any time. All initiates use these beds and none can claim a bed as their personal bed. At any given time at least half of the beds will be occupied although the person in it might not be asleep.

There are several tables and chairs in the room as well. At various times initiates might be eating or playing cards or studying the works of their religion.

At any time this room is entered there will be 6 to 12 initiates here in the room. At least half will be in bed at any time and there is a 75% chance that they will be asleep if they are in bed.

**Initiates of the Snake Goddess:** These will be wearing the green robes of the temple. Half of these initiates will be first level clerics: C1, AC 4, HP 4 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Mace or Hammer, Spells Known: **Cure light wounds or Command**. The other half will be fighters: F1, AC 4, HP 5 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Battle Axe or Long Sword.

Should any alarm be set off in the temple or any loud noises occur nearby these initiates will answer the call and repel invaders if possible.

Along the north wall of this room is a weapons rack with the following items in it: 4 maces, 3 flails, one two handed sword, two battle axes, three long swords and a javelin. Close inspection will reveal that the javelin radiates magical aura. The javelin is a **javelin of lightning**.

There is a secret door in the north wall allowing quick access to the main chapel should an emergency arise.

## 5. Dining Hall

The door to this room is unlocked. Anyone listening at the door to this room may hear the sounds of eating and conversation. Anyone asking about smells outside the door might notice the smell of cooking and food.

A large circular table dominates this room. Above the table is an elegant glass chandelier that provides light for the room. Around the table are initiates of the temple eating meals at most hours of the day in shifts. Initiates and Snake Cultist Patrols are busy within the temple at all hours of the day and frequently eat at odd hours.

At primary meal times there will generally be 2-12 initiates eating here. At other times of the day there is a 25% chance that a Snake Cultist Patrol will be eating here.

Should any alarms go off in the temple they are likely to respond if they hear the commotion.

Food served at the temple is high quality. Fine wines and ales are provided to the temple initiates and guardians. Initiates themselves take turns with cooking duties and serving duties. One or two initiates will be bringing trays of food and drink here from the cooking areas in room 7.

**Initiates of the Snake Goddess:** These will be wearing the green robes of the temple. Half of these initiates will be first level clerics: C1, AC 4, HP 4 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Mace or Hammer, Spells Known: **Cure light wounds or Command**. The other half will be fighters: F1, AC 4, HP

5 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Battle Axe or Long Sword

**Snake Cultist Patrol:** The Snake Cultists are aware that sooner or later the Zanzian authorities may attempt to send someone into the temple. They are vigilant and patrol the temple for intruders at all hours of the day and night. Anyone who looks suspicious will be stopped and questioned or attacked. Patrols will consist of:

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**Five Fighters:** F3, AC 3, HP 20 each, Splint Mail, Shield, Long Swords, AL LE. Each wears a medallion shaped like a face of a snake and made of gold worth 100 gold pieces. They wear the green robes of the cultists.

## 6. Main Hallway

This is the primary hallway of the temple. It tends to be quite heavily trafficked. At any time the party enters this hallway there is a 1 in 4 chance of an encounter.

## 7. Kitchen/Pantry

The door to this room is not locked. Anyone listening at the door will hear the sounds of cooking and cleaning being performed inside. Anyone smelling at the door may notice the smells of food cooking within.

This area is a large kitchen and storage area

for food. There are kettles being tended to here by initiates as well as other initiates cutting and dicing food and preparing meals for the temple. There is only a 10% chance that any of these initiates will notice anyone arriving or entering the room unless combat ensues.

The north side of the room is strictly for storage. There are many barrels of ale and wine stored there. There are kegs of beer and casks of meat as well. There are also bags of flour and grains and many other casks of salted meats.

At any given time there will be 2-8 initiates here cooking or cleaning pots and pans. There is fresh running water here which comes into a basin on the east wall of the room. This area is being used for washing dishes.

**Initiates of the Snake Goddess:** These will be wearing the green robes of the temple. Half of these initiates will be first level clerics: C1, AC 4, HP 4 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Mace or Hammer, Spells Known: **Cure light wounds or Command.** The other half will be fighters: F1, AC 4, HP 5 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Battle Axe or Long Sword

Close inspection of the food barrels will disturb a nest of rats that have made their home in them. These rats will not intervene in any fight with the initiates but if their food barrels are disturbed they will attack.

**Giant Rats (7):** MV 12"/6"; AC 7; HD 1-4 hp; HP 2 each; # At 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; AL NE.

Hidden within one of these barrels in the storage area is a **rope of entanglement.**

## 8. High Priestess's Quarters

The door to this room is locked. Anyone listening at the door to this room will hear no sounds from within. Should the door to this room be picked a magic mouth will appear in the hallway and begin screaming for help. This trap, however, can be detected and removed. There is a trigger in the lock mechanism for the door which will be deactivated by use of the gold key which is on the person of the high priestess in area 9. Should that key not be used the alarm will go off unless the trap is removed.

This room is finely decorated. There is a bed, a desk, several fine oil paintings, a divan, a dresser and a wardrobe. A candle is lit and sits in a silver dish on top of the desk.



The desk has a fine quill dipped in an ink bottle. Close inspection of the quill will reveal that it radiates magical energy as does the ink bottle it rests in. The quill is a **feather of skilled writing (M)**. Several pieces of parchment rest upon the top of the table. Close inspection will reveal that all of the sheets are empty except for one which seems to have some writing on it which is nearly invisible. It would appear that some sort of juice was used to write something on the parchment.

Should the paper be held over the candle for a few moments the writing will become visible. It is a scroll with magic user spells: **tongues, haste, slow, confusion, monster summoning II**.

The desk has a drawer which is locked and trapped. Anyone who picks the lock of the drawer without first removing the trap or resetting the mechanism of the trap will set it off. To reset the mechanism one needs to pull the drawer without using the handle while turning the lock. Anyone pulling on the handle will release gas into the room from the desk drawer as it opens. There is a bladder at the front of the drawer which holds the compressed gas. The gas is a sleeping gas and all those within 5 of the desk will need to save versus poison or sleep for 10 rounds. Inside of the desk are two rubies worth 2500 gold pieces each and a ceremonial headband of the temple with pieces of jade circling it worth 1750 gold pieces. There is also a small sack in the desk drawer with 25 gold pieces. The silver dish in which the candle sits is worth 25 gold pieces. The candle is worthless.

The paintings depict a beautiful woman with a radiate glow about her wearing the snake robe of the temple. There are three different portraits of this woman in various poses around the room. Presumably these paintings are of the Snake Goddess Shilha. Each of these fine paintings would be worth 500 gold pieces to collectors of fine artwork. Hidden behind one of these paintings, however, is a scroll of magic user spells: **stone to flesh**.

The divan has fine red cushions and looks quite comfortable. Anyone inspecting it closely will notice that something shiny has slipped beneath the cushions and pillows. It is a **ring of climbing (T, MO, A)**.

The dresser is filled with red high priestess robes and other garments of priestesses of the order. None of the clothes are remarkable in any way. However, a hidden panel in the rear of the top drawer will reveal that a jewelry box has been hidden inside. The jewelry box itself is made of silver and gold and has several small diamonds inlaid. It alone is worth 1500 gold pieces. The box is locked. The platinum key held by the high priestess opens this box. If that key is not used the box will explode if opened destroying itself and the contents of the box and doing 3-18 damage to anyone within 5" of it when opened. This trap can be disarmed by a skilled rogue. The explosive charge is in the lid of the jewelry box. Within the box itself is a golden necklace with a blue sapphire centerpiece worth 2750 gold pieces. There is also a diamond ring with a platinum band worth 1250 gold pieces. There is also a **phylactery of faithfulness ( C )** inside the jewelry box.

The wardrobe contains several normal robes

of the priestess. Each is red with yellow trim and has the snake pattern of the green robes worn by the initiates. None of the robes is remarkable in any way. But hidden in the pockets of one of these robes is a **ring of free action**.

The bed appears to be a comfortable and fine bed made from the finest materials. Thick fur blankets cover the bed but otherwise it appears normal. The furs, of course, are real and are quite valuable themselves. The furs making up the bed cover are mink and the blanket is worth 2000 gold pieces.

## 9. The Chapel of the Snake Goddess

The door to this chamber is unlocked.



Anyone listening at the door to this chamber may hear the sounds of chanting at all times of the day or night.

This area is the main chapel for temple of the snake goddess. A large stone altar stands along the north wall of the chamber. A large fountain with statues of snakes facing each other sides in the center of the room. On the west side of the room is a large stone idol of

the Snake Goddess Shilha. A priestess in a red robe trimmed with yellow fringe stands before the altar performing a ritual with a ceremonial dagger and a bowl of blood. In front of her are six initiates of the temple facing her and chanting.

**High Priestess of the Temple Dementia**

**Mortem:** C10/M9, AC 4, HP 34, AL LE, wears **bracers of defense AC 4**, she carries a **staff of the serpent ( C )** (Adder version), Cleric Spells Known: **command, curse, bless, remove fear, chant, hold person, silence 15' radius, know alignment, dispel magic, feign death, prayer, detect lie, protection from good 10' radius, flame strike, cause critical wounds.** Magic User spells memorized: **magic missile, sleep, charm person, shocking grasp, mirror image, scare, shatter, haste, slow, lightning bolt, fear, ice storm, conjure elemental, passwall.** If things go badly during a fight she may cast **passwall** and escape into her private room in area 8. She might also transform into a snake using her special robe. Her robe is a **robe of the snake goddess (M, C)**. She wears two keys around her neck. One is a gold key and the other is made of platinum. The gold key is worth 50 gold pieces. The platinum key is worth 250 gold pieces. Her ceremonial dagger is made of gold with a silver blade and studded with emeralds and rubies. It is worth 1250 gold pieces.

**Initiates of the Snake Goddess (6):** These will be wearing the green robes of the temple. Half of these initiates will be first level clerics: C1, AC 4, HP 4 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Mace or Hammer, Spells Known: **Cure light wounds or Command.** The other half will be fighters: F1, AC 4, HP 5 each, AL LE, Chain Mail, Shield, Battle Axe or Long Sword

The large stone Altar radiates both magic

and evil. Anyone who touches the altar without invoking the name of Shilha must make a saving throw versus death magic or be stricken with paralysis for one turn. Anyone who does invoke Shilha's name shall be granted a bless spell for one turn if they are of evil alignment. If they are not of an evil alignment they will be ignored by the altar. If the altar is searched carefully one might find a hidden panel in the rear of it. This hidden panel contains: one potion of extra healing, **one potion of restoration, one potion of protection against petrification.**



The Idol represents the Snake Goddess Shilha. The idol does not radiate either magic or evil. The idol is a carved image of a beautiful woman from the torso up with the lower body of a snake. Close inspection of the altar may reveal that it may be easily moved as it is on a metal track. The idol can easily be pushed by anyone with a strength of 12 or more or it could be pushed by two people. When the idol is moved a set of spiral stairs can be seen leading downward.

The fountain has two large snake statues facing each other and spitting water into the basin. The large basin holds a great deal of water. Shiny coins fill the bottom of the basin. It would appear that members of the temple feel that offering coins to the snake goddess is good luck. The fountain does not radiate magic or evil. The coins are: 23 platinum pieces, 47 gold pieces, 34 silver pieces, 17 electrum pieces and 75 copper pieces. Waiting in ambush within the fountain, however is a **water weird**. It will only attack if someone begins grabbing coins out of the fountain.

**Water Weird (1):** MV 12"; AC 4; HD 3+3; HP 15; # At 0; Dmg none; SA drowning; SD sharp weapons do only 1 hp of damage; SA strikes as a 6HD monster and drags victim into water; SD damage equal to its hit points disrupts it for two rounds and then it reforms; SD fire spells do half or no damage; SD purify water kills it; SD cold spells slow it; AL N.

### LOWER LEVEL OF TEMPLE

This level appears much different than the previous one. This level seems to be limestone caverns carved naturally. None of the rooms on this floor are lit unless otherwise specified. Random encounters on



this level are the same as on the previous one. The chambers vary in height from ten feet at the lowest point to twenty feet at other points.

#### 1. Stairs/Entry

The long spiral staircase leads downward twenty five feet into an unlit chamber. The chamber is a natural cavern made of limestone. The chamber is dark and cold and a bit damp. As the adventurers descend the stairs they may sense movement below. If they have not met the Naga Yurirji earlier as a random encounter then they shall meet her here.

**Yurirji, Spirit Naga (1):** MV 12"; AC 4; HD 9; HP 38; # At 1; Dmg 1-3; SA poison bite; SA permanent charm gaze; SA spell use; AL CE; Spells Known: **sleep, magic missile, message, shield, mirror image,**

**web, hold person, lightning bolt.** Around her neck hangs a **necklace of prayer beads (with the following special beads: 2 x curing, 1 x blessing, 1 x wind walking, 1 x karma).**

A passage leads northeast from here.

## 2. Cage Trap

This chamber has a higher roof than the previous one. At the highest point in this room the ceiling is twenty feet above the floor. At the center point of this chamber an invisible metal cage waits to drop on unsuspecting victims who step on a trigger stone beneath it.

Passages lead southwest (where the players came from) south west (to area 3) and west (to area 4) from here. At the junction with the passage west stands a statue facing west. The statue appears to be that of a human warrior in plate mail. The statue is quite lifelike but does not radiate magic. The statue, in fact, is not a statue at all. It is a petrified warrior who came to slay the snake goddess with a party of adventurers and was turned to stone by the medusa.

Anyone who steps on the trigger stone will cause the invisible cage to drop on the players below. The dropping of the cage will break the spell of invisibility and reveal that the cage is made of iron bars and is quite heavy. Despite this it could be lifted by two or more players with a combined strength of 30. This process would take at least three rounds to complete. To avoid being caught by this trap one would need to make a saving throw versus their dexterity to avoid being within the cage when it lands. The audible click of the trigger stone will give the adventurers a bit of warning that something is amiss and they could jump to

the side to avoid the trap should they choose. The saving throw is 4D6 versus dexterity. A score of equal or lower than the dexterity score means that they have avoided being trapped by the cage. A score of higher means that they are within the cage when it falls. All players within 5' of the person stepping on the stone must roll this saving throw. Optionally a game master might allow those on either end of a marching order a bonus to their saving throws to indicate that they were further from the center point. A winch is located in area 3 that will lift the cage. The sound of the cage falling will bring the hydra in area 3 to investigate the noise and potential source of food.

## 3. Hydra

This damp room is dark and cool. Movement will be sensed by the adventurers before they actually see the hideous horror waiting for them in this room.

A Lernean Hydra awaits the players here and he is quite hungry. The snake cultists keep this creature here and keep it hungry to discourage unwelcome visitors here. The creature will regrow heads that are cut off unless fire is applied to it. This makes the creature quite dangerous.

**Lernean Hydra (1):** MV 9"; AC 5; HD 5; HP 40; # At 5; Dmg 1-6/1-8 or 1-10 (depending upon size, right now it is 1-6); SA each head has 8 hit points, when all heads die the body dies; SD each head of lernean hydra will grow back two heads in 1-4 rounds unless fire is applied to the stump; SD this hydra is 5HD but could grow to 12HD if the players do not apply fire during combat to each destroyed head; SA creature strikes as a creature of the same HD it now possess. It has the number of HD that it now has heads; AL N.



Deep in the corner of this cave is a pile of bones. The bones of several adventurers who wandered into the temple seeking riches and glory but who met this hydra are located here. Standing upright in the pile of bones is a broad sword. The sword radiates magical energy. It is a **broadsword +2,+3 versus reptiles**. There also appears to be a fine suit of leather armor on one of the skeletons in the pile on the floor here. This suit is **leather armor +2**.

#### 4. Idol of Simaru/Greater Medusa/Statues

This wide chamber has a high ceiling. Unlike the previous chambers this one has sconces in the walls and torches are lit every five feet. The ceiling here is nearly twenty feet tall. A large red statue of the Demi-God Simaru stands here facing east towards those who are entering the chamber from the temple on the surface. The god smiles his evil grin and declares his evil presence with his ivory teeth and emerald eyes.

Why this idol is present here is a mystery. The other idols and the priestesses seemed to be evil but lawful. The Demi-God Simaru is a well known cult of evil and chaos across Zanzia. This particular demonic statue is represented in the Temple of Chaos Adventure as well as on the cover of a

handbook of the most popular fantasy role playing game. The idol stands nearly twenty feet tall. It radiates powerful magic and evil.

Scattered around this room are four statues. Each of these statues seems quite lifelike. Each seems to represent an adventurer. One appears to be that of a paladin, another a ranger, a third is clearly a wizard and the fourth would appear to be a cleric. All seem to be carved in combat poses and seem quite extraordinarily done. The artist must be a great master of sculpture and art.





Hiding behind the statue of Simaru is the Snake Goddess herself. Shilha is actually just a **medusa** and not a goddess. She is a **Greater Medusa** and is a bit more powerful than a normal one.



**Shilha Greater Medusa (1):** MV 9"; AC 4; HD 8; HP 37; # At 1; Dmg 1-3; SA gaze turns to stone; SA poison bites (save versus poison at -1 or die); SD even her body is poisonous and anyone who touches it even after death will need to make saving throws versus poison; AL LE. She wears an **amulet of life protection** around her neck and a **ring of fire resistance** on her left hand and a ring with a ruby centerpiece worth 2250 gold pieces on her right hand.

The Idol of Simaru has gems for eyes that are real emeralds and quite big. Each is worth 5000 gold pieces. The gems are trapped. The idol has ivory teeth made of real ivory and there are twenty such teeth. Each is worth 50 gold pieces. The idol holds a large bowl in front of it which is filled with hot burning oil. If either gem is removed from the statue the bowl will tip forward spilling hot burning oil across the room. All those within 10' of the idol when this happens will need to make a saving throw versus dragons breath. Each person in that radius will take 3-18 points of damage from the oil or one half damage if they make the saving throw. Anyone pulling one of the teeth from the statue will cause the mouth of the statue to snap shut and put the bite on the offending thief. The thief must make a saving throw of 4D6 versus their dexterity to avoid this trap. If they fail this saving throw they will take 2-12 points of damage and be pinned by the statue. A magic mouth will appear on the wall and begin screaming for help when this occurs. Of course, both of these traps could be detected and removed by normal thief skills.

Passages lead east, west and south from this room. The passages west are blocked by the big red idol but can easily be found by looking around the room.

## 5. Steam Trap

Two hidden vents in the walls here on each side of the passage will release steam and scald anyone who steps on the trigger stone here and anyone within 5' of that person unless they make a saving throw versus dexterity of 4D6 to avoid part of the damage. Damage will be 3-18 points unless saving throw for one half damage is made. The trap may be detected by normal thief skills and removed.



## 6. Lair of the Snake Goddess

This room seems to be well lit. By what source is not readily apparent. A continual light spell has been cast here which keeps the room well lit.

This room has a fine bed, an upright wardrobe, a desk, a chest and a table with chairs. Fine paintings on the walls here depict the Lich Malcon and various scenes from the great Zanzian Civil war of over one hundred years ago. The Lich Malcon is generally considered the cause of that civil war. It is well known across Zanzia that he has recently been released from his volcanic prison and is now on the loose again in Zanzia.

The paintings are worth 500 gold pieces each and there are three of these fine oil paintings.

The desk is a finely made wooden structure. There are two black candles in golden candle dishes that light up the area around the desk. The dishes are worth 50 gold pieces each. There are writings on the desk. See Player Handout B.

The bed is normal and there is nothing remarkable about it other than it has fine silk sheets and seems quite comfortable.

Hiding in the wardrobe is Shilha's mate Driscam. Driscam is a Maedar (male medusa). He has heard the sounds of fighting and is waiting here in ambush. If anyone opens the wardrobe he will spring out and surprise on a 1-3 out of 6.

**Driscam, Maedar (1):** MV 9"; AC 5; HD 6; HP 27; # At 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; SA petrification touch once every three turns; SA they do not have petrification gaze like a medusa; SA can pass through stone at normal movement rate; SD if struck with a phase door spell while passing through stone the creature will be slain; SD immune to petrification; SD immune to paralyzation and poisonous bites of a medusa; AL LE.

For those unfamiliar with this creature it is listed in the 2E MM.

Also inside of this wardrobe is a **cloak of poisonousness** and a **cloak of protection +1**.

On the table are plates and serving vessels made from fine silver. Combined they are worth 250 gold pieces in value.



The chest is a large treasure chest and it is locked. It is also trapped. Should anyone open the chest without disarming the trap three darts will fire from the lid towards the person opening the chest as a 9HD creature and doing 1-3 damage each. These darts are coated with Type A Insinuating poison and will do 15 hit points of damage to the victim within 2-5 rounds unless a saving throw versus poison is made. Inside the chest are: 755 gold pieces, 1232 silver pieces and 754 copper pieces. There are also five amethyst gems worth 100 gold pieces each, two

aquamarine gems worth 500 gold pieces each and two pieces of fine coral worth 100 gold pieces each. There is also a jeweled goblet with pieces of jade and peridot decorating it worth 1200 gold pieces. There is also a golden tiara with pearls and amber gems surrounding it worth 1750 gold pieces. Also present are **six arrows +2** and a bag of 10 rocks which are actually **bullets +2**.

#### 7. Magic Circle

Anyone entering this dark chamber will notice that there is a circle drawn upon the ground here in fresh blood. The blood appears human in nature. After a few seconds the circle will burst into flames and the image of Malcon the Firebringer will appear within the circle. The Lich himself is not actually present but an image of him is.



“Who are ye who are present in the Temple of Shilha? Why are you appearing before me and not she?” he demands.

“So I have new enemies it seems..... ha haha haha.....it is so nice to meet you young adventurers..... I look forward to meeting you in person some day.....until then.... stay safe... I would not want anything to cause you harm before I do.....”

The image will then disappear and the fiery circle will disappear. It would seem that Shilha was expected to make contact with the Demon Lich but will not be making her appointment.

#### 8. Rock Pool/Constrictor

This large chamber is dominated by a large rock pool. This chamber is not lit and there are no torches in the walls here. That this chamber is not visited often. There is strange green mold growing on the walls and along the pool.



The mold is actually not harmful. It is just normal algae growing near the source of water. The pool, however, is dangerous. For within the pool hides a large constrictor snake. The water of the pool is cool but murky and dark. Anyone looking into the pool might notice movement (5%) but it is unlikely that anyone will see anything until the creature within strikes. While most constrictors prefer to drop on enemies this one is water borne and prefer to hide in the water.

**Giant Constrictor Snake (1):** MV 9"; AC 5; HD 6+1; HP 32; # At 1; Dmg 1-4/2-8; SA strong creatures of over 16 STR can uncoil the snake in 2-5 rounds if working together to free someone; AL N.

**This is the end of the adventure**

## **GAME MASTER NOTES**

The players could return to Baron Gruba with the news about Shilha being a medusa, about the Lich Malcon and the Demi-God Simaru somehow being involved with her along with the two player handouts. This should be sufficient to get any rewards offered by the Baron.

The Demi-God Simaru has been a popular cult throughout Zanzia history. Even some of the former kings and nobles of Zanzia are believed to have once worshiped this fiend. Simaru is often depicted as a demon rather than a god. Technically he is a Demi-God. The true gods of Zanzia look down upon him as a pretender. But his worshipers revere him and commit many atrocities in

his name. He is known in Zanzia as the God of Chaos. Many worship him. All are evil but some of his worshipers vary in degree of evilness. Some are lawful and some are neutral but all are evil.

Malcon the Fire Bringer is a frequent evil villain in my adventures. He is often behind the scenes in virtually every evil plan in Zanzia and the surrounding areas. He was once the Grand Vizier of the King of Zanzia but he attempted to seize power from the rightful king. This caused a major civil war and many great battles. The capital city of Onm was sacked and destroyed during a long siege. The king and queen at that time were slain after that siege. But the rightful heirs continued on and ultimately a great Paladin and former friend of Malcon lead the Zanzian army to the battle of the blood river where the army of Malcon was ultimately defeated. The blood river is so named because it is said that so much blood ran off of the battlefield that the river turned red. Malcon was driven back into his volcanic lair where he was permanently sealed. Or so it was believed. Recently foolish gnomish archeologists accidentally broke the seals by digging near the Mountain of Fire and thus releasing the Demon Lich into Zanzia once more. But that is for another tale.....

## NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

**Eyes of the Snake Goddess** - These vile and repulsive goggles allow the wearer to see without eyes for the purposes of casting spells and combat. Although the wearer of these goggles is usually blind they are able to see with these goggles. The eyesight is not normal but is sufficient for the purposes of the snake cult. Anyone looking through these goggles who is in the presence of the snake goddess herself will see her as a beautiful woman with a radiant glow and not as a medusa. These goggles radiate powerful evil. Anyone who wears them for long will need to make a saving throw versus magic. Each time that the person wearing them fails a saving throw this person will turn a step towards lawful evil alignment. Wearing them for long can be defined as for more than one turn. These goggles might be useful to someone attempting to fight the medusa since they will not be turned to stone while looking at her.

**Feather of Skilled Writing (M)** - A magic user using this quill pen does so as if he had cast a **Write spell**.

**Potion of Protection versus Petrification** - Anyone who drinks this potion may save against petrification at +5 for one turn.

**Ring of Climbing (T, MO, A)** - This special ring was created for those classes that excel at the art of climbing. This plain looking ring appears to have a spike on the underside which might aid in grabbing hold of something during an ascent. The ring is usable only by thieves, assassins and monks.

Any other class that attempts to put this ring to use will discern no magical abilities. But to one of the proper class the rings uses become immediately apparent. The ring adds +10% to the climbing skills of the person wearing it.

**Robe of the Snake Goddess (M, C):** The wearer of this robe may once per day shape change into a large Constrictor Snake with equivalent hit points and abilities. This transformation lasts for one turn or until the wearer of the robe chooses to transform back to human form again.

**Robe of Warmth** - This black robe may be worn by anyone (but not in addition to armor) and seems quite cozy and warm. The wearer of this robe, however, is resistant to cold as if they were wearing a **ring of warmth**.

**Staff of Truth ( C )** - This withered old looking staff is made of wood. It looks as if it is just a worthless branch from some dead tree. But when carried by a Cleric this staff is a powerful weapon of truth. The wielder of this staff may cast the following spells from this staff at a cost of charges: **Detect Lies** at a cost of one charge, **Atonement** at a cost of two charges and **exorcize** at a cost of three charges. This staff has limited charges.

**Wand of Petrification (M)** - This wand appears to be made of stone. Anyone using this wand can cast a **flesh to stone** spell or the reverse (**stone to flesh**) at the cost of one charge. This wand can only be used by magic users and has limited charges.

## **PLAYER HANDOUT A**

“Shilha has demanded yet another set of cultists to be initiated. She has placed her faith the Fiery One. I agree that he is a great planner but I do not fully trust him to keep his bargains. Once he has gotten what he needs from us who knows if he will keep his word. The mistress trusts him but I.....”

## **PLAYER HANDOUT B**

“My dearest Malcon,

Our plans are quickly coming to fruition. My worshipers have recently assassinated the mayor of Grombar and Baron Smoul. They failed to get Baron Gruba but will make another attempt soon. Chaos is reigning all over southern Zanzia right now. We will open up a new temple soon in the north. When the time is right this land is yours for the taking.

Sincerely yours,

Shilha.”

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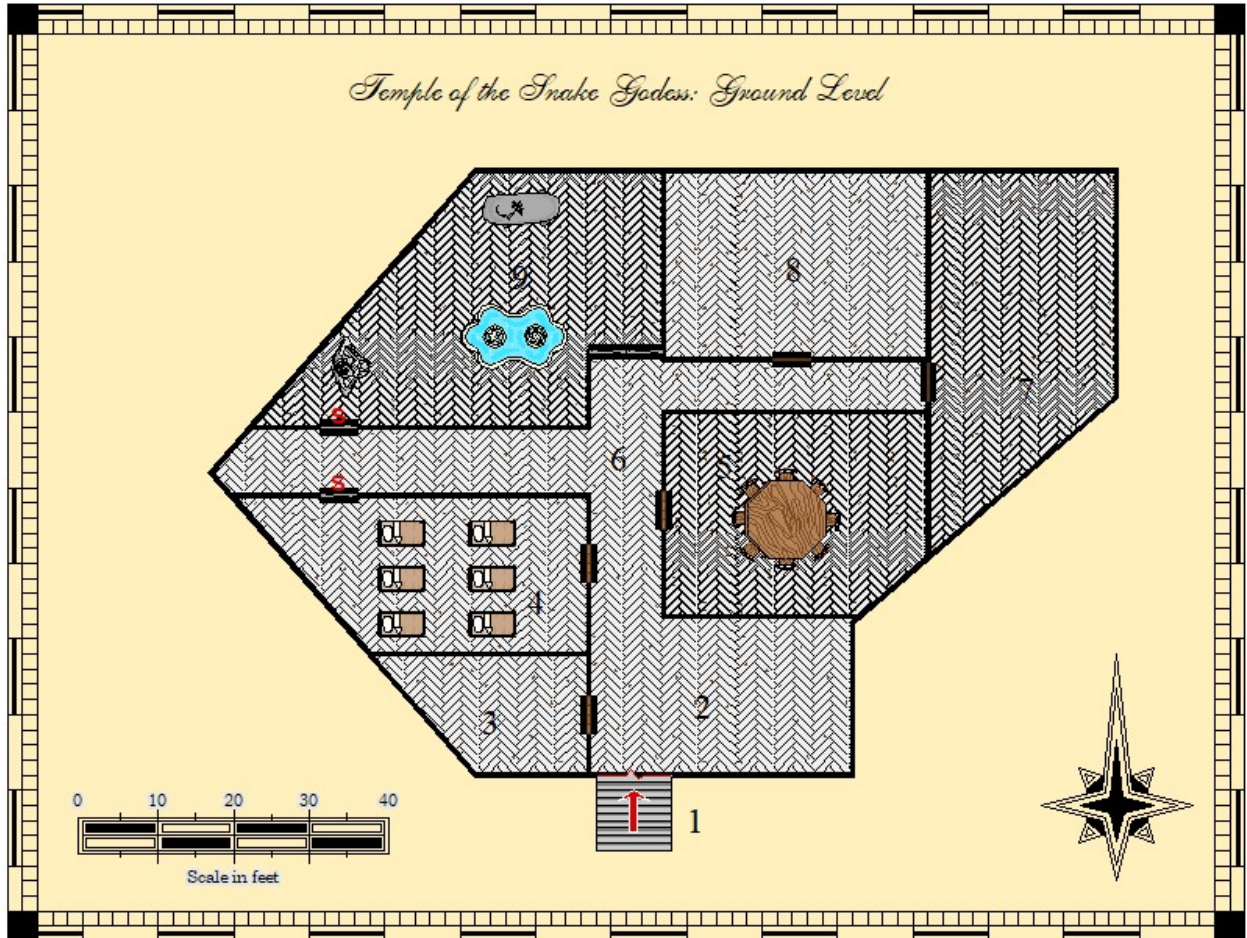
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*Temple of the Snake Goddess: Ground Level*



*Temple of the Snake Goddess: Lower Level*

