

SERPENT ISLE

PART 4: OSS'ITHEK

JVC PARRY



OSS'ITHEK

A SLUMBERING SERPENT

Hidden in the thick rainforest of Serpent Isle is a crumbled yuan-ti citadel. These foul snakefolk have been dormant for decades, but have been awoken in order to fill out some foul prophecy. Delving deep into their most sacred temple; Oss'Ithek, is the only way to uncover the dark secret which they hold so dear. Do you have the nerve to face the serpent?

A 4-6 hour Dungeons & Dragons 5e adventure for 5th-10th level characters

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NOTES

This adventure is sourced from the 'Serpent Isle Campaign'. It can be run either as the 4th part of that campaign, or as a standalone adventure. Lore from the campaign is included in this print, as you may wish to find out more about the 'Serpent Isle Campaign', but feel free to ignore it. Also included are potential adventure hooks that will help you introduce this standalone adventure to you party.

Sample file

PART 4: OSS'ITHEK

This section of the adventure details characters journey to Oss'Ithek, as well as the city itself, and the events that unfold there relating to the Blackheart. The characters should start this section after having realized that the Blackheart has been taken by the yuan-ti from Viper's Pit (see part 3). They will track their way to Oss'Ithek and attempt to reclaim the Blackheart before the yuan-ti can use it to reawaken their sleeping God; Merrshaulk.

Characters should start part 3 at 5th-level.

TRAVELLING TO OSS'ITHEK

The journey from Viper's Pit to Oss'Ithek should take a minimum of four days. During this time, the characters should follow the travel rules detailed in "Blacksand Cove" (see part 1 of this adventure). This involves making Wisdom (Survival) checks to track through the islands jungle interior, as well possible random encounters. They should have left Viper's Pit at almost 5nd-level, and by the time they near Oss'Ithek, they should have reached 5th-level.

DUNGEON BACKGROUND

When the yuan-ti of Serpent Isle were at their peak, they occupied the entire island, filling it with temples, shrines and sanctuaries devoted to Merrshaulk; Master of the Pit. For centuries, the yuan-ti ruled supreme, thwarting the attempts of conquerors and invaders from foreign lands. Unfortunately for the snakefolk, Merrshaulk was fighting wars of his own in the domain of the Gods. In a catastrophic battle, Merrshaulk was bound into slumber by another deity, causing his followers on the material plane to fall into a state of hibernation; a slumber that lasted a hundred years. Now the chosen of Merrshaulk have awoken, and are attempting to rouse their serpentine God once more.

Oss'Ithek has always been the mightiest of the yuan-ti citadels. Constructed deep in the jungle of the northeast, this towering temple housed Merrshaulk's favoured priests, known as Vrael Olo. These devout worshippers were said to be the first yuan-ti created, thus bearing the closest likeness to their God. At Oss'Ithek, sacrifices and atrocities were committed in Merrshaulk's name, which pleased him greatly. Any who dared step foot on the island were tortured and slaughtered here, their lifeless bodies fed to snakes. Captives who showed potential were spared, but transformed into broodguards or wretchlings; lesser yuan-ti who now willingly slither beneath their divine masters.

Oss'Ithek is ruled by The Three. They were the first to awaken from slumber and repopulate the fallen yuan-ti empire. Under their rule, temples such as Oss'Ithek were rebuilt from the ruins. The Three are yuan-ti abominations, each of whom embodies a different aspect of the serpent; Arak'Gliss embodies muscularity and strength, Sal'Ethass exemplifies their cold, reptilian cunning, and Nyssia is venom personified. These three abominations are equals, but it is yuan-ti nature to capitalize on weakness if it is ever displayed.

Now that Oss'Ithek has been somewhat restored to its former glory, 'The Three' seek ways to further the presence of the snakefolk on the isle. Whilst pouring through ancient tomes of yuan-ti lore, they learnt of the existence of an artefact known as the Blackheart. This item is said to be the heart of Merrshaulk, and without it he will remain in eternal slumber. With this in mind, 'The Three' have sent their agents out into Serpent Isle, to scour the ancient ruins searching for this item. Through their agents, they learnt that it was in the hands of devil worshippers. After narrowing down their search, they discovered the Blackheart in the Viper's Pit, stole it from that place, and have now brought it back to Oss'Ithek, its rightful home. Here they plan to conduct a dark ritual, the climax of which will result in the awakening of Merrshaulk, elevating the remaining yuan-ti to a godlike state and allowing them to rule supreme.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

If you have purchased this adventure as a one shot, rather than as part of the Serpent Isle Campaign, then you may wish to use different adventure hooks, not related to the Blackheart.

Hook 1: A Devastating Ritual

Word has spread throughout the kingdoms that the yuan-ti; an evil serpentine race, plan to conduct a dark ritual which will bring their demonic deity, Merrshaulk, out of an eons long slumber. To do this, they have acquired an ancient artefact (one central to your campaign) and intend to manipulate its powers to summon their abyssal god. To prevent this devastating event, the adventurers must travel to their ancient citadel, Oss'Ithek, and prevent the ceremony from taking place.

Hook 2: The Dark Temple.

Whilst travelling through foreign lands, the characters find themselves in the shadow of an ancient temple. This towering structure is somewhat ruined, but it is clearly still inhabited. Strange serpentine figures slither throughout the structure. As they watch, a trail of humans, enslaved by these snakefolk, are marched toward the temple. The characters get the feeling that the lives of the prisoners may soon be cut short.

Hook 3: VIP (Very Important Prisoner).

The characters are searching for an important NPC, who holds the key to the next campaign arc. Their investigation into this character reveals that they went away on a trip to some far off land (for an appropriate reason, perhaps fleeing the BBEG), and has not yet returned. They have been gone far longer than expected, and their companions are willing to reward anyone who can investigate the matter. The follow up of this is that this NPC has been enslaved by the yuan-ti after trespassing into their ancient lands. They are due to be sacrificed in a sanguine ritual aiming to reawaken the demonic deity of the snakefolk. The characters should attempt to save the NPC, and possibly disrupt the ritual.

DUNGEON

The following passages describe the layout and feel of the dungeon, including the encounters that take place within. Descriptive text to be read aloud to the players is contained in the grey boxes.

OPENING

After days of trekking through the island, the characters eventually arrive in the shadow of Oss'Ithek, the ancient yuan-ti citadel. Though much of it lies in ruins, the central temple remains replete, as if protected by some otherworldly force. As the characters watch, they can see the snakefolk moving throughout the ruins, clearly alert. A small trail of enslaved humans appears on the far side of the ruins, guarded by a cohort of burly humans with serpent heads. They are escorted into the temple, where they fade from sight.

The temple itself is a bizarre piece of architecture. The main body of the structure is 25 feet tall, with a smaller top area 15 feet in height. Leading up to the top is a 25 feet long and tall ramp, lined on each side by stone serpents. Beside each of these ramps is a stone doorway, carved into which are huge serpent heads. The temple tapers upward, somewhat like a pyramid or ziggurat.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check accompanied by an hour of careful scouting reveals that the only entrance to the ground floor of the temple is by the sides of the great ramp, which leads to the temple's smaller apex. A group of four **yuan-ti malison (type 2)** guard these stone doors and ramp.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- The main ceremony to reawaken Merrshaulk will occur in area 24, 1 hour (600 rounds) after the party enter Oss'Ithek. This can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation) check against any yuan-ti malison. This ritual will summon **Merrshaulk** (Appendix A). It can be disrupted though; see below.
- In order for the ceremony to occur, several events must take place.
- The prisoners from area 38A must be taken up to area 24 for sacrifice. This happens 15 minutes (150 rounds) into the dungeon. Arak'Gliss will retrieve them along with the guards from area 38 and bring them to area 24. The guards will then return. Prior to this Arak'Gliss can be found in area 38.
- The appropriate texts must be retrieved for use from area 14 as they must be read during the ritual. This happens 30 minutes (300 rounds) into the dungeon. Sal'Ethass will retrieve them and bring them to area 24. Prior to this Sal'Ethass can be found in area 12.
- The Blackheart must be retrieved from area 28. This happens 45 minutes (450 rounds) into the dungeon. Nyssia will retrieve it and bring it to area 24. Prior to this Nyssia can be found in area 25.

- Because of the time keeping, it is recommended that this entire dungeon be ran in initiative order, for ease of tracking rounds (each round is 6s). Reroll initiative for each combat. If you feel this method of time tracking is too taxing, feel free to add the events when it fits the narrative. If any of the tasks do not occur due to the players actions, the ritual is delayed 15 minutes (150 rounds) as another member of 'The Three' attempts to carry it out instead.

Volo's Guide to Monsters. If you are lucky enough to own this book, feel free to use the yuan-ti presented there as alternatives. For example, you can replace two of my homebrew broodguards for one from Volo's Guide, one serpent speaker for a nightmare speaker, and one striker for a pit master. Be careful to rebalance the Challenge Rating of creatures involved.

GENERAL FEATURES

Oss'Ithek is an ancient temple owned by the yuan-ti and dedicated to their demonic god, Merrshaulk; Master of the Pit. The rooms within have the following features in common.

Lighting. The rooms within Oss'Ithek are lit by nonmagical torches in sconces on the walls. These brackets are 10 feet up, and cast long shadows throughout the temple.

Secret Doors. There are numerous secret doors scattered throughout the temple. The DC for spotting these doors with Wisdom (Perception) checks is 15. The DC for opening these doors with Intelligence (Investigation) checks is also 15. If characters cannot work out how to open the doors, a successful DC 17 Strength check is enough to barge it down. Failure on this check results in 1d4 bludgeoning damage, as the character hurls themselves at a stone wall.

Ceilings. The ceilings throughout the ground floor are 25 feet high. On the first floor ceilings are 15 feet high. In the caverns beneath the temple are 10 feet tall on average.

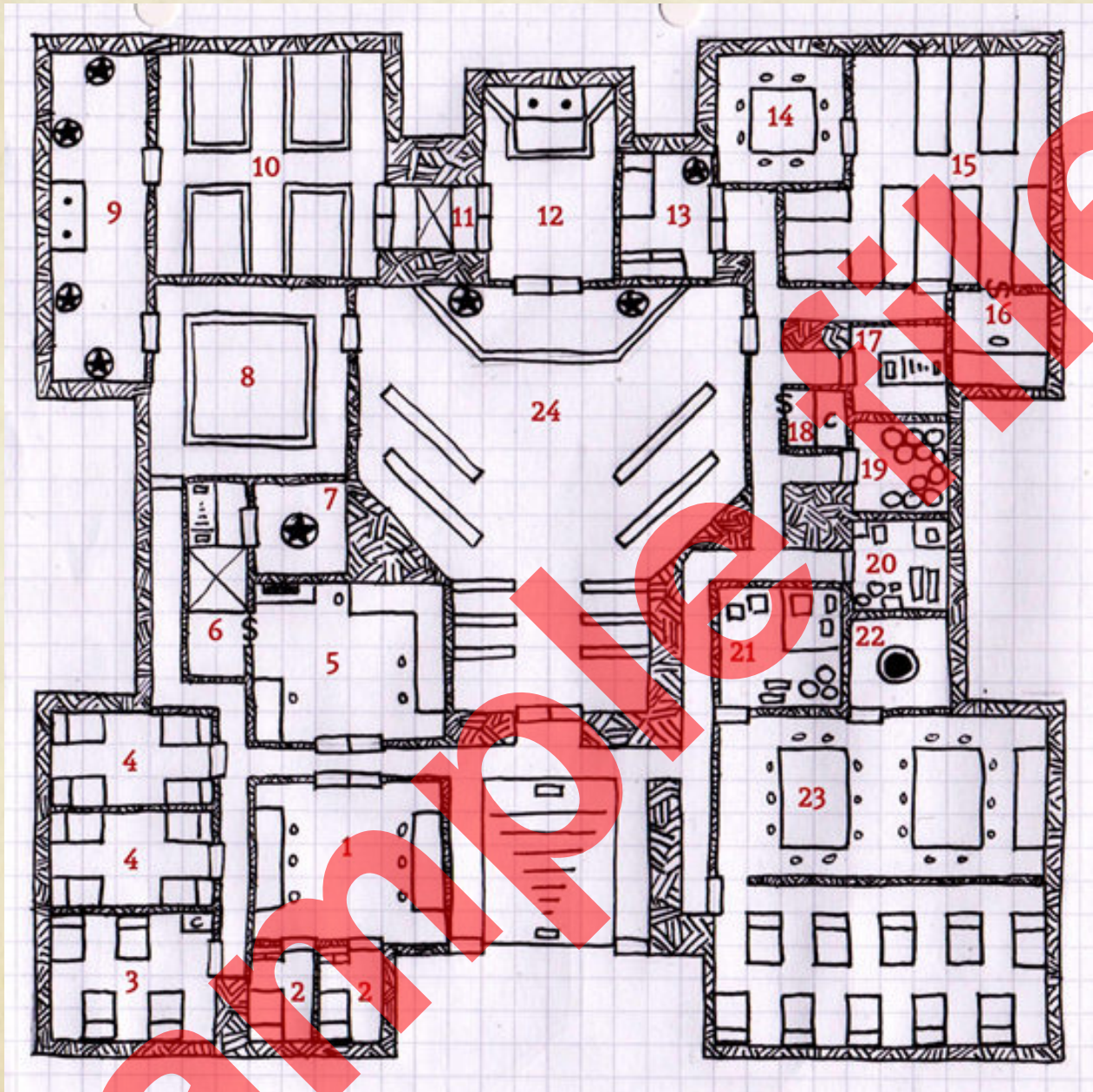
Resting. Whenever characters attempt to rest in Oss'Ithek, roll 1d6. On a roll of 4-6 a group of 1d6+1 yuan-ti purebloods discover their location and either attack or alert their superiors and prepare an ambush. DM discretion should be used here.

Treasure. Yuan-ti purebloods carry 1d6+10gp, malison carry 1d10+10gp, broodguards and wretchlings carry nothing.

Stairways. Yuan-ti struggle with stairs. Each staircase in Oss'Ithek is instead a ramp of similar gradient. This allows the snakefolk to easily ascend and descend the levels. These ramps still count as difficult terrain.

MAP - OSS'ITHEK GROUND FLOOR

1 square = 5 feet.



1. GUARDROOM

This room is used by yuan-ti malison who are not currently guarding the entrance to Oss'Ithek.

Two stone tables line the sides of this room, atop which are hunks of raw meat and stale bread. There are two stone doors in the southern wall.

Inside this room are two **yuan-ti malison (type 1)** who are resting from guard duty. They attack any intruders on sight. If combat breaks out here, it alerts the **yuan-ti malison (type 3)** in each area 2. They join combat in the second round.

2. GUARD BEDROOMS

These rooms are used by the guards to rest between watches.

This room is simply furnished. There is a stone bed with a thin, straw mattress atop it, as well as a wooden cabinet at the foot.

There is one **yuan-ti malison (type 3)** sleeping in each of these rooms unless they have been alerted by combat in area 1.

Treasure. Each cabinet contains assorted clothes of no value, as well as 1d4 scimitars (25gp each) and a small wooden box containing 3d10+5gp.

3. ACOLYTE DORMITORY

This room is for resting by Merrshaulk's most devout worshippers.

You emerge into an empty dormitory. There are four simple beds spread throughout and a large wooden chest in the northeast corner.

The chest in this room is locked. The key can be found on one of the **yuan-ti malison** in area 24. It can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

Treasure. Within the wooden chest are 3d10+15gp, two jades (100gp each) and an adamantite dagger (150gp).

4. CULTIST DORMITORIES

These rooms are used by the yuan-ti malison who live in the temple.

This bed filled room is clearly a dormitory. Several yuan-ti reside within.

In each room are two **yuan-ti malison (random types)** or one **yuan-ti striker** (Appendix A). They will attack intruders on sight. Under each stone bed is a footlocker filled with worthless items such as clothes and books.

5. WORKSHOP

This room is used for the forging of weapons and armour, as well as the creation of mundane items.

Heat blasts you as you enter the room from a red hot furnace on the far wall. Three human faces turn your way, gaunt and sweaty. Behind them loom two yuan-ti.

This room contains three **commoners** who are enslaved by the yuan-ti. They are guarded by two **yuan-ti malison**.

The enslaved humans will not attack, but cower away from combat under the workbenches. A successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check is enough to incite them against their snakefolk oppressors. They will pick up tools which are classed as clubs.

The commoners are all tribesfolk Kolo (female), Mantu (male) and Hallaman (male). They will welcome any chance at freedom, but do not speak common. A successful DC 10 Intelligence check is enough to communicate basic ideas with them. They will not continue to fight under any circumstance, but will flee from Oss'Ithek as soon as possible.

There is a secret door in this room. See the "General Features" sidebar.

Treasure. There are ten gold bars weighing 1lb. each on the workbenches (50gp each). There are also a set of smith's tools (20gp) and jeweler's tools (25gp).

6. SECRET HALLWAY

This secret hallway connects area 5 and 7, as well as housing a ramp down to area 27 on the basement floor.

This dark hallway is unlit, but a dim orange glow from below illuminates a ramp in the northwest corner.

This room is empty and dark. In the centre of the room is a 10-foot wide and long spike trap. If uneven pressure is placed upon these four five-by-five-foot tiles, such as footfall, daggers spring up from thin slits in the floor. These thin slits can be noticed with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Blocking these holes prevents the trap from operating, as does wedging the floor panels to prevent them from compressing.

If the trap is triggered, any character within the ten-by-ten-foot square must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking (4) 1d6 piercing damage and suffering a movement reduction of five feet until their next short or long rest, on a failed save. This effect is triggered every time the characters move onto adjacent trapped squares.



7. SECRET SHRINE

This shrine is reserved for only the higher caste of yuan-ti; it is dedicated to Merrshaulk.

A towering stone statue of a winged serpent nearly fills this room. At the base are handfuls of gold coins, gemstones and bones.

Any creature that steals from the shrine must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or gain a vulnerability to poison damage until their next long rest.

Treasure. At the base of the statue are 269gp, three small emeralds (500gp each) and two jade stones (100gp each).

8. SNAKE PIT

This room is used to house the favoured pets of the yuan-ti.

A handful of scaled, sinewy humanoids occupy this room. They are gathered around a 10-foot deep pit, and as you enter, they slowly turn and glare at you with their serpentine eyes.

There are six **yuan-ti wretchlings** (Appendix A) in this room, and four **giant constrictor snakes** in the pit. These pathetic creatures will not attack unless they or the snakes they tend to are threatened. If combat does break out in this room, the wretchlings begin by using their poisonous bites, and then attempt to throw characters into the pit with the snakes. The snakes do not emerge from the pit unless attacked from above.

9. CHAPEL OF DENDAR

This room is a sanctuary for worshippers of Dendar, the Night Serpent. This minor cult of yuan-ti is tolerated by the yuan-ti for the insights they can offer into their enemies.

The room before you is filled with statues of coiled purple snakes and purple smoke from numerous censers suspended from the ceiling. Dancing among these is a female yuan-ti priestess of some sort; she appears enraptured.

Although the **yuan-ti serpent speaker** (Appendix A) in this room is currently engaged in worship, she notices the characters if they move any further into the room. If they turn back, she does not notice them.

If combat does break out in this room, it alerts the **yuan-ti broodguards** (Appendix A) in area 10, who join combat in the second round.

Treasure. Atop the altar are six candles (1cp each) in silver candlesticks (25gp each) as well as a black iron chalice (25gp) filled with *yuan-ti venom* (Appendix B).

10. BROOD CHAMBER

This room has four, five-foot deep pits in which yuan-ti young are born and raised by broodguards.

Narrow stone walkways mark a path between four large pits, filled with what appear to be tiny half-human half-serpent creatures.

There are eight **yuan-ti broodguard** (Appendix A) in this room, unless they have been disturbed by the sounds of combat in area 9. They immediately attack any intruders. They try to cut off characters on the walkways, preventing them from escaping or attacking he pits.

In each pit are swarms of baby yuan-ti. Use the statistics of a **swarm of poisonous snakes** to represent each pits inhabitants. The hatchlings are too young to escape the pits, but any characters who enters the pit will be savaged by these ravenous reptiles.

11. CHAPEL PASSAGEWAY

This passage connects the brood chamber and the chapel. It is made of plain, featureless stone.

A successful DC 15 **passive** or active **Wisdom** (Perception) check reveals that there are small cracks in the central stone floor tiles. A successful DC 15 **Intelligence** (Investigation) check reveals that these floor tiles are false, made convincingly from plaster, which crumbles if too much weight is placed upon them. **Weight** spread evenly across the tiles, such as by the snake-like hindquarters of yuan-ti, does not trigger the trap. Any creature that walks atop these false tiles falls down into a twenty-foot deep pit, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. The pit is filled with young yuan-ti, who use the stats of a **swarm of poisonous snakes**. Climbing out of the pit requires a successful DC 15 **Strength** (Athletics) check.

12. APSE

This area is used by The Three as a private chapel and to prepare for ceremonies in the main chapel (area 24).

A smaller room, filled with a green marble altar atop a raised stone plinth, holds a terrifying yuan-ti.

This room contains **Sal'Ethass** (Appendix A) unless she has already been to collect the tome from area 14.

Underneath the altar is a locked wooden box. It can be unlocked with a successful DC 13 **Dexterity** check with thieves' tools or smashed with a successful DC 17 **Strength** check.

Treasure. The altar box contains 1,100cp, 250sp, 35gp, four chrysoprase stones (50gp each), a pouch of *dust of disappearance* and *potion of poison*.



13. BEDCHAMBER

This room is used by The Three to rest in between duties. Only one of The Three ever rest here at a time.

The decadent bedchamber before you is adorned with tapestries and drapes, and a green marble statue of a great winged serpent stands in the corner.

Although used by The Three when necessary, this room is empty when the adventurers enter, as 'The Three' are busy preparing for the ritual.

The bed is little more than a stone block, but it is adorned with velvet drapes. The ornate wooden wardrobe opposite holds a sleeping **flying snake** which awakens when the doors of the wardrobe are opened. It attacks once then flies out of the room if possible. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Perception) check reveals a moveable panel within the wardrobe.

Treasure. Behind the hidden panel in the wardrobe are *two potions of greater healing*. The party could also salvage the drapes (25gp) and the three small tapestries (75gp each) in the room.

14. READING ROOM

The door to this room is locked with an iron padlock. A successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools will open the lock. Otherwise, Sal'Ethass has the key.

The centre of this room is filled with a great stone table. On this are numerous ancient tomes, written in an ancient script.

The books on the table are all written in draconic. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check is enough to identify that these books are holy texts of Merrshaulk and the other yuan-ti deities. If the tome required for the ritual has not yet been taken (see "Important Notes") it is still here, lying open on the table. Removing it will prevent the ritual going ahead.

If the tome is in the process of being collected, Sal'Ethass (Appendix A) can be found in this room.

15. LIBRARY

This room is stocked with books about all manner of subjects, from 'holy' texts to descriptions of the island, recipes for poisons and potions, and spellbooks.

Row upon row of floor to ceiling bookshelves stacked high with books create a maze within this room. From within you can just about hear the mumbled conversation of two yuan-ti.

There are two **yuan-ti malison (any type)** and one **yuan-ti striker** (Appendix A) in this room. They attack any intruders.

There are three spell books in this room which can be found with a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or (Arcana) check and 15 minutes of searching.

The first spell book contains the spells poison spray and fear. The second spell book contains the spells flesh to stone, remove curse and invisibility. The third spell book contains the banishment spell.

16. DIVINATION ROOM

This room is used to cast the scrying spell on enemies of the yuan-ti, or to help them locate artefacts they desire.

A crystal ball rests in a brass stand on a stone desk on the far wall of this room. Dim light from a few lit candles fills the room with flickering shadows.

This room is dimly lit by the candles.

Any character who attempts to steal the crystal ball must first succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw as their mind is filled with visions of writhing serpents and they feel as if venom is coursing through their veins. On a failed save the character is frightened on the room and takes 10 (3d6) psychic damage. On a success the character is not frightened and takes half the damage.

Treasure. On the stone desk is a *crystal ball*.

17. RAMP

This ramp descends down to area 33 on the basement floor.

18. SECRET STOR

This room is used by The Three to house items of importance that are not powerful enough to be placed in the vault (area 28).

A massive locked wooden chest, trimmed with gold, sits in an alcove at the back of this cramped room.

The chest is both locked and trapped.

A successful DC 18 Dexterity check with thieves' tools is enough to crack the lock.

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals a glyph of warding upon the chest. It is triggered when the chest is opened. Each creature within a 20-foot radius must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one.

Treasure. Within the chest are 1,300cp, 650sp, 450gp, two vials of acid, an ornate hand mirror (25gp), a gold ring (25gp), a *driftglobe* and four *potions of healing*.

19. BARRELROOM

This room is filled with barrels of weak wine.

Barrels are stacked high against the walls of this storeroom.

There is one **yuan-ti pureblood** filling silver ewers in this room. She will attack any intruders.

There is enough wine in this room to fill hundreds of waterskins.

Treasure. The pureblood in this room was filling five silver ewers (20gp each).

20. MISCELLANEOUS STORE

This room is used to store excess food and wine, as well as assorted goods

Barrels, crates and boxes appear to have been strewn untidily throughout this room.

There is nothing of value in this room, but a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check and ten minutes of searching will yield 1d10+6 rations and enough wine to fill 6 waterskins.

21. MAIN STORE

This room is used to store food.

Huge containers filled with food such as salted meat and roasted grains occupy this room.

There is enough food in here for over one hundred rations.

22. UPPER WELL

Fresh water can be retrieved using the bucket and pulley system at this well

The sound of pumps and dripping can be heard from down this well. A bucket on a pulley can be used to access to water below.

This room contains the upper portion of a well which descends through area 34A of the basement floor down to an aquifer below. It can be used to fill unlimited waterskins. Characters can attempt to descend the well with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. If they fail this check, they get two attempts to succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to brace themselves against the walls or to roll out into area 34A. If they fail both of these saves, they fall 100 feet down into the well. If they cannot be saved, they will eventually drown.

23. MAIN DORMITORY

This room is used by the lower castes of yuan-ti as a bedroom come dining hall.

A dozen yuan-ti fill this room, some sat around the great mahogany tables, others resting on ramshackle bunks.

This room contains six yuan-ti purebloods, four yuan-ti broodguards and two yuan-ti wretchlings. The purebloods command the lower castes to attack, whilst using their first turn to grab their bows. They then climb to the top bunks and fire at the characters whilst they are engaged in melee.

The room contains two large dining tables, a side table stocked with food and weak wine, and ten bunkbeds. Each of these bunks have trunks underneath, which contain the treasure of the yuan-ti in the room (see "General Features").

24. CHAPEL

This room is the central shrine at which the yuan-ti conduct their rituals, and praise their main deity; Merrshaulk. Depending on how long the party have spent in Oss'ithek so far, this room will have different contents.

You emerge into a towering shrine. Pews line the rear of the room, leading up to a raised stone plinth. Atop this are two statues of Merrshaulk who glare in your direction. A thin mist of pungent smoke fills the place, and any noise echoes and reverberates, creating an ominous ambience.

Any of The Three (**Arak'Gliss**, **Sal'Ethass** and **Nyssia**, Appendix A) who have already fulfilled their tasks will be found here. After 1 hour all of The Three will be found here. At any other time there are four yuan-ti malison (any type) preparing this room for the ritual. There are also four yuan-ti pureblood who can fire into the room from area 25 if they have not been dispatched already.

If the ritual is already occurring in this room, the following occurs. Any of 'The Three' that remain they can conduct the ritual, but only if all three of the tasks (see "Important Notes") have been fulfilled. Turn one, the prisoners are sacrificed by 'The Three'. Turn two, the tome is read aloud in draconic. Turn three the Blackheart is placed in a bowl of blood from the prisoners. Turn four, arcane energy is channelled into the Blackheart, expending all the spell slots of whichever creature does so.

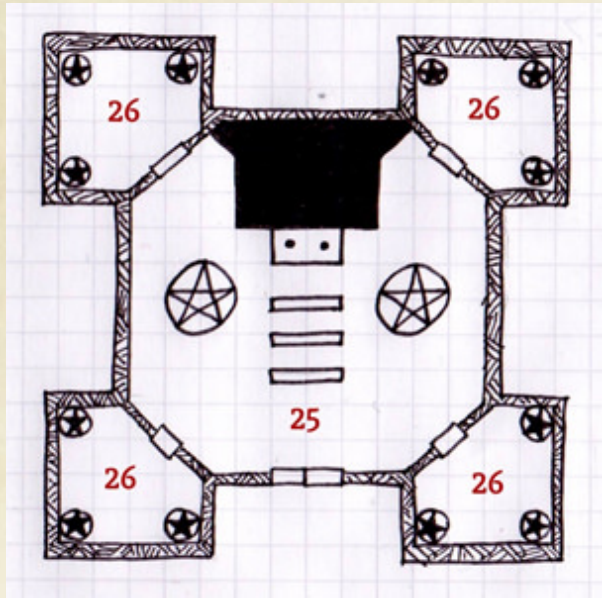
Any and all of these stages can be disrupted, doing so required the stage to be redone. If they cannot be redone, the ritual fails. Turn one can be stopped by preventing the sacrifice of the prisoners in any way. Turn two can be stopped by removing or destroying the tome, or causing over fifty points of damage to its reader. Turn three can be stopped by capturing the Blackheart. Turn four can be disrupted with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

If the characters fail to disrupt the ritual, **Merrshaulk** (Appendix A) is summoned. See "Outcomes" at the end of this part adventure if this occurs.



MAP - OSS'ITHEK FIRST FLOOR

1 square = 5 feet.



25. GALLERY

This room overlooks the chapel (area 24).

Travelling up the great exterior ramp of the temple, you emerge into a gallery which looks down upon a great chapel below. Several lines of pews allow worshippers to sit and listen to ceremonies, they do so under the watch of two gigantic stone serpents.

There are four **yuan-ti purebloods** in this room. Also, **Nyssia** (Appendix A) is in this room before she fulfils her task.

26. TEMPLE TOP SHRINES

Each of these shrines can be visited by yuan-ti in the temple at any time.

These shrines each hold three statues, one of a winged green serpent, one of a purple serpent with a nightmarish mouth filled with fangs, and another black statue of a snake with its wings folded tight to its body.

These rooms are all empty save the statues and petty, worthless offerings such as bones, wood carvings, wooden cups of wine and the like.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check reveals the statues to be of Merrshaulk, Dendar and Sseth respectively.

27. HALL OF GUARDIANS

This great subterranean hallway gives access to the vault (area 28) and the private sanctum (area 29).

The torches in this room flicker as you walk around. Four huge alcoves contain ten-foot tall stone statues of serpent headed warriors, each holding a bladed staff in one hand and a shield in the other. At the southern end of the room, an intricately designed golden door seems to twist and rotate of its own accord.

The four statues are actually **stone golems** (without the slow ability) which will **animate** if the vault is cracked without saying the password 'Master of the Pit'. This password can only be gained by interrogating one of 'The Three' with a successful DC 20 Charisma (Intimidation) check or conversing with Hishess in area 30D.

A successful DC 15 arcana check reveals that the statues are golems.

The ramp in this room ascends to area 6.

28. VAULT

This room holds the *Blackheart*. It is locked in a number of ways. Firstly, there is an intricate golden door with hundreds of tiny arms and sockets which must be connected for it to open. This can be done by uttering the password; 'Master of the Pit' or with a successful DC 20 Intelligence check and ten minutes of work.

Once past this first door, there are three more doors which must be unlocked before getting into the vault proper.

The west door is a simple stone door. It can only be unlocked by force. A successful DC 20 Strength check is required.

The north door is locked with an arcane lock spell. It can only be unlocked by dispelling with dispel magic, knock or the like.

The east door can only be opened with poison. Characters can discover this with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Any poison poured onto the door will unlock it.

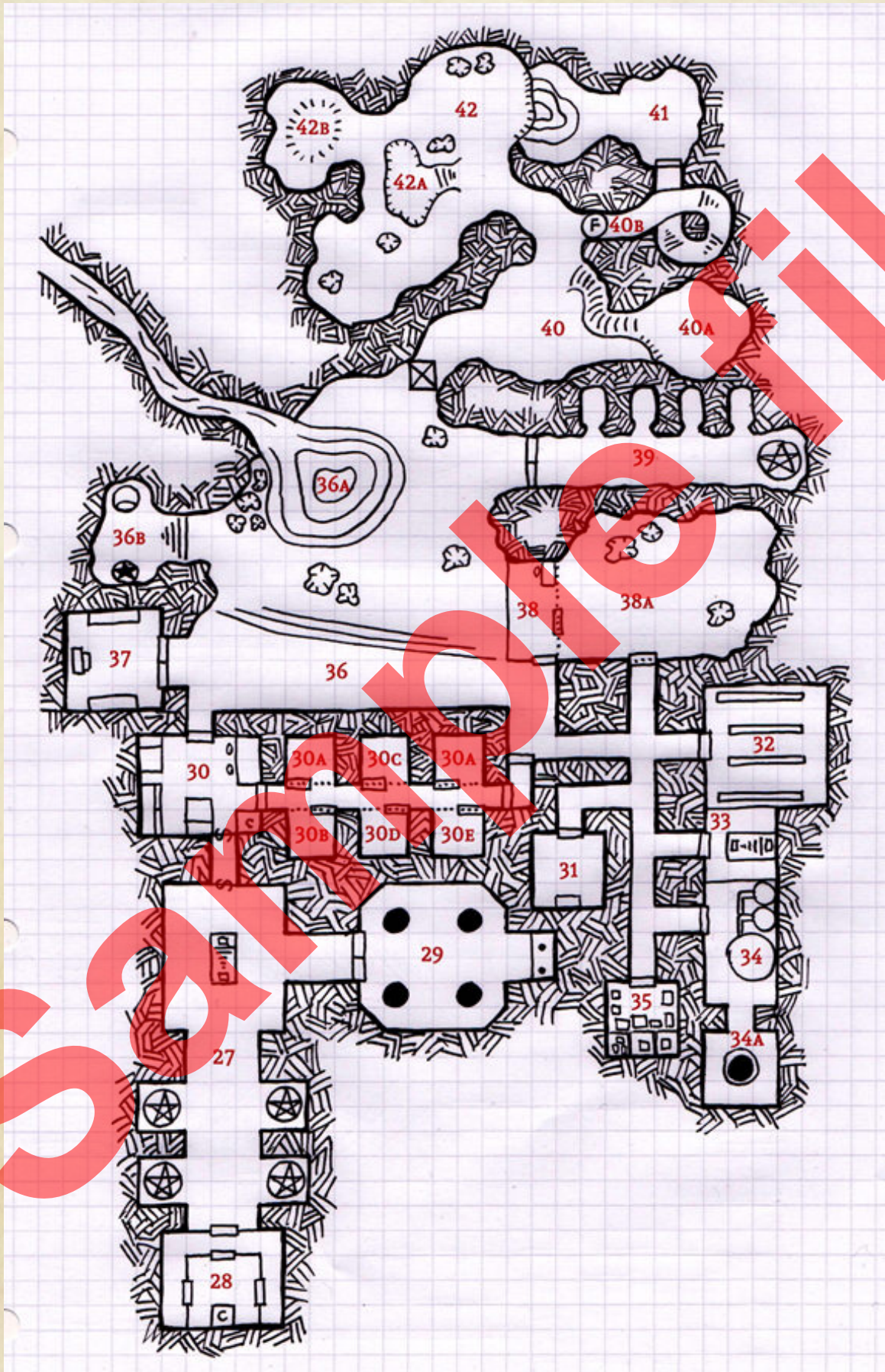
Once all three doors have been unlocked, the lead wall in which they are embedded rises up, revealing a thick, iron chest.

This chest is locked with an arcane lock spell as well as a padlock. This can be opened with a DC 25 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. The chest is also protected by a glyph of warding, noticeable with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Each creature within a 20-foot radius when the chest is opened must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a successful one. The chest is also under the alarm spell, which alerts 'The Three' if opened. They arrive in this area five rounds after it is opened.

Treasure. Within the chest is the *Blackheart* (Appendix B).

MAP - OSS'ITHEK DUNGEON FLOOR

1 square = 5 feet.



29. PRIVATE SANCTUM

This shrine is used by The Three when they need to contact Merrshaulk.

Thick stone pillars hold up this small chapels ceiling. Dim light flickers from the candles set atop an altar set back into the eastern wall.

If the characters walk into or past the centre of this room, two **shadow snakes** (Appendix A) emerge from the darkness and attack.

Treasure. Atop the shrine are four candles (1cp each) in silver candlesticks (25gp each).

30. PRISON

This room is connected to a corridor of cells in which important prisoners are kept.

A few pieces of furniture label this room as a bedchamber of sorts, but the weapons and restraints kept neatly on the table indicates some further use.

Two **yuan-ti malison** (type 1) guard the cells from this room with the assistance of their **giant poisonous snake**.

There is a chest in this room which is unlocked.

A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the sounds of wailing from the eastern door, which is locked and requires a key (found in the chest) or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to open.

Treasure. There are two scimitars (25gp each) on the table in this room, as well as five pairs of manacles (2gp each). The chest contains a handful of prisoner's belongings which amount to six rations, 12gp and 1d4 trinkets. It also contains a ring of keys including the key to the eastern door and the cells beyond.

30A. EMPTY CELL

This cell and others can be opened with the keys from area 30 or a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools.

These cells are empty save a straw bed and wooden bucket.

If you are playing this adventure due to Hook 3, place the 'VIP' in one of these empty cells.

30B. DRUID'S CELL

Within this cell is a male **tribal shaman** (Appendix A) called Ushka. He speaks a spattering of common and will ally with the characters if they can set him free.

30C. CULT LEADER'S CELL

Locked inside this cell is a female **cult fanatic** named Kerris Bathel. Her **abyssal** shrine was raided by the yuan-ti as they searched for the Blackheart. She will volunteer this information in return for food. She will also ally with the characters if they offer her freedom. She will warn the characters not to free the inhabitant of area 30E.

30D. DISSENTER'S CELL

Trapped in this cell is Hishess, a **yuan-ti malison** (type 3) who worships Sseth fervently. This is considered intolerable by other yuan-ti. He believes that Sseth has devoured Merrshaulk, and that the Blackheart will be wasted if 'The Three' use it to summon Merrshaulk. He will tell the party this if they succeed on a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation) check. They may make this check with advantage if they offer Hishess some food. He will also ally with the characters if offered freedom but will betray them if the tide turns, hoping to redeem himself in the eyes of the other snakefolk. They can tell that his loyalty is not permanent at any time with a DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check.

30E. DEVIL'S CELL

Trapped behind the black iron and adamantine bars is **barbed devil** who was captured by the yuan-ti at the same shrine as Kerris (see area 30C). The devil smarts under the lock and chain of the snakefolk, constantly hissing and spitting. He commands the characters to set him free or he will devour their souls. If set free, he instantly attacks anyone in sight in a fit of unquenchable rage.

31. TRAPPED STORE

This store is a dummy, used to eliminate intruders or overambitious yuan-ti of lower caste. The door to this room is 'dummy' locked. Call for a Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Any roll succeeds.

You easily crack the lock and swing open the stone door. Gold pieces spill out of a chest resting against the far wall. A magnificent greatsword lies in front of this.

A trap can be detected with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This reveals grooves in the floor and ceiling along which something could slide. It also indicates to the character that the gold is somehow not real.

If the characters enter the room, the door magically and silently locks behind them. It requires a DC 20 Strength check to smash out, or a spell such as dispel magic or knock. Alternatively, characters can fight their way out. The door has AC 17 and 27 (5d10) hit points.

Once the door locks, the walls begin to slide inward, one foot a turn. This gives characters seven rounds before they are crushed and killed. The walls can be stopped by bracing them open with an appropriate item such as a crowbar. A DC 20 Strength check halts the walls until the character stops holding them.

The chest is a **mimic** which attacks if touched. The sword is a **flying sword** which attacks if touched.



32. ARMOURY

This room is used as a weapon and armour store by the yuan-ti.

Racks of weapons and armour line this room.

There are two **yuan-ti malison (any type)** in this room maintaining the weapons and armour.

Treasure. There are twenty scimitars (25gp each) and ten yuan-ti fitted pieces of armour (50gp each) in this room. The armour is unusable by any non-yuan-ti.

33. RAMP

This ramp ascends to area 17.

34. BREWERY

This room is used to brew the weak wine that sustains the yuan-ti.

The smell of fermenting fruit fills your nostrils as you enter this room. So pungent is the smell that it makes you gag. The smells emanates from three huge vats.

Creatures entering this room for the first time must make DC 10 Constitution saving throws, becoming poisoned for 1 minute of a failure, or immune to the smell for 24 hours on a success.

There are four **yuan-ti wretchlings** (Appendix A) in this room fermenting the wine. They attack intruders, using their poisonous bite and then tampering with the vats to cause them to overflow. This takes an action per vat, but causes it to start spewing boiling alcohol in a ten-foot radius around itself. Any creature in the 'splash zone' once the vats are triggered, or who starts their turn there, must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3 (1d6) fire damage on a failure or half as much of a success as they are scolded by boiling wine.

34A. LOWER WELL

This well is used to gather water for area 34.

This large stone well must provide water for the brewery. Sounds of dampened conversation can be heard from above.

A drunk **yuan-ti wretchling** slumbers in the southeast corner of this room.

This room contains the lower portion of a well which descends to an aquifer below, above is the well from area 22. It can be used to fill unlimited waterskins. Characters can attempt to ascend the well with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. If they fail this check, they get two attempts to succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw to brace themselves against the walls or to roll out into area 34A. If they fail both of these saves, they fall 100 feet down into the well. If they cannot be saved, they will eventually drown.

35. BREWERY STORE

This room is used to store supplies for brewing.

This store is filled with crates, glassware and assorted apparatus.

This room is filled with crates, boxes and the like.

Treasure. Searching through this room for five minutes yields five sets of brewer's supplies (20gp each) as well as ten fine bottles of wine (10gp each).

36. MAIN CAVERN.

This natural chamber coincides with the basement of the temple of Oss'Ithek. The yuan-ti do not stray far into this area.

A gigantic chamber opens up before you. Torches on the southern wall cast light some way into the cavern, illuminating a pool ahead, as well as fang-like stalactites and stalagmites. Flowing water can be heard throughout, filling the cave with echoing sound.

This room is dimly lit by the torches on the southern wall.

This room contains six **piercers** spread throughout (as you wish) and one roper disguised as the stalagmite between area 36A and the tunnel to area 40. A **swarm of bats** are sleeping on the caverns ceiling, but will not attack unless large area of effect spells such as fireball are set off.

36A. POOL

A pool of water forms here where a small subterranean stream flows into it. Water drains down through the porous rock here into the aquifer below.

This dark pool of water reflects your faces back at you. Shallow ripples flow across its surface from the stream that feeds it. A glint of gold catches your eye at the bottom of the pool.

If a character touches the water in any way, a **water weird** erupts from the pool. This strange serpentine elemental tries to drown creatures in the surprisingly deep (twelve feet) pool.

If characters go to the wells in area 34A or 22 or the fountain in area 36B after invoking the water weird it attacks them again unless it was killed.

The pool appears far shallower than it is through an illusion maintained by the water weird. If it is killed it no longer looks so shallow.

Treasure. There is a *ring of water walking* in the sediment at the bottom of the pool.

36B. FOUNTAIN

This small shrine marks the end of the yuan-ti's territory. It is in darkness.

Water rhythmically bubbles in the mouth of the serpent head fountain, which looks rather out of place in this small natural cavern. Mirroring it on the other side of the cave is a five-foot-tall statue of a yuan-ti, swords crossed before it.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals this as a marker for the end of the yuan-ti's territory here.

The statue's base conceals a small trap door. This can be noticed with a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check.

Treasure. Underneath the statue and trap door is a small hollow, within which is a *potion of superior healing*.

37. TORTURE CHAMBER

This room is used by the only other yuan-ti abomination to torture captives. The door to this room is locked, the abomination within has the key. It can be opened with a successful DC 15 Dexterity check with thieves' tools or a DC 17 Strength check.

Characters that come up to the door and succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check can just about make out screams from within.

Your eyes behold a gory scene. A human writhes around in a chair slick with blood to which he is tied, as a swarm of snakes devour his insides, which have been exposed by a vicious wound in the centre of his ribcage. Hissing in delight to one side of the poor soul is a terrifying yuan-ti.

This room contains a **yuan-ti abomination** who attacks on sight. The **swarm of poisonous snakes** within the man's chest emerge after one round and attack as an ally of the abomination.

A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) check allows a character to realise that the man in the chair is a tribesfolk of RedCrag Camp. Unless spared within one round they die instantly. They cannot speak common even if spared, but will obviously be grateful.

38. JAILHOUSE

This room is used to keep an eye on the prisoners in area 38A.

You enter into a small room, the walls of which are made of lead. From here you can see into a lead lined natural cavern through iron bars.

There are always **two yuan-ti malison (any type)** in this room. **Arak'Gliss** (Appendix A) is also in this room unless he has collected the prisoners from area 38A.

If the characters outnumber the malison guards and succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Intimidation) check they can scare them enough to back up, and give the characters the keys to area 38A. They believe guarding prisoners is below them, and their loyalty to The Three has been pushed.

38A. JAIL

The iron barred doors to this room are locked, but can be picked with a DC 12 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. Alternatively, the guards in area 38 have the keys. If the guards see the characters in this area they open fire through the bars. The characters have half cover.

This natural cavern is lined with lead and contains ten **commoners** unless they have already been taken to area 24 for sacrifice. They are all willing to ally with characters if offered freedom. They are a mix of tribesfolk and abyssal cultists.

If you are playing because of Hook 2, these are the captured slaves that were taken into the temple. Freeing them should be the parties number one priority.

39. CRYPT

This crypt houses the bodies of ancient yuan-ti who ruled over Oss'Ithek and the surrounding lands during the age of the yuan-ti.

Pushing open the double doors you are confronted by a statue of a frowning yuan-ti, who holds a sceptre topped with a skull in one hand, and an hourglass in the other. Several alcoves line the northern wall. Within each of these are piles of bones.

If the characters walk more than ten feet into the room, they begin to hear a hiss. If they do not leave within one round, a **bone naga** (ex-spirit naga) erupts from the ground and attack the characters until they leave this area. It does not pursue them beyond the doors.

This bone naga reforms in three rounds once killed unless the hourglass in the hands of the statue is destroyed. Players who examine the statue will notice the grains of sand flowing down to count the time.

Treasure. In with each pile of bones are assorted jewellery (250gp total) as well as an adamantite scimitar (500gp each).

40. SECONDARY CAVERN

This cavern leads off from area 36. There is a pitfall trap in the tunnel between the two. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check discerns an absence of footprints over the section of floor that forms the pits cover, instead noticing scratches on the walls. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check is necessary to confirm that the trapped section of floor is actually the cover of a pit.



When a creature steps on the cover, it swings open like a trapdoor, causing the intruder to spill into the twenty-foot-deep pit, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. It must succeed on a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to get out.

Once the pit trap is detected, an iron spike or something similar can be wedged into the cover to stop it from collapsing, making it safe to cross. The cover can also be held shut magically by spells such as arcane lock.

You emerge into a natural cavern. Small rocks litter the floor, and a natural stairway leads up to a shadowed ledge.

This cavern is dark. There is a patch of green slime on the underside of the raised ledge.

40A. RAISED LEDGE

Hidden on this ledge is a **quaggoth**. It is part of the community from area 42. If it hears the pit trap, or if it sees the characters arrive into area 40, it will pull a chain which is rigged up the trapdoor in area 40B.

A raised ledge is covered with shadow. A natural stairway leads up to it.

Characters can spot this quaggoth with a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check reveals that it means no direct harm, but it will growl as if warning them away. Characters that succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check can bring the beast onto good terms. The check can be made with advantage if food is offered. The quaggoth will then cooperate with the characters, warning them with gestures of area 40B and accompanying them to area 42.

40B. TRAPDOOR

Unless the party managed to avoid the pitfall trap and the quaggoth's gaze in area 40A, then this trap has been opened by said beast.

A trapdoor has been built into the floor of the tunnel here. It is not in good condition, but still appears to work. Beyond the trapdoor is a winding corridor which appears to descend further down.

Sliming out of this previously covered hole is a **gelatinous cube**, it has been captured by the quaggoth and used to dispose of intruders. The trapdoor, when open, blocks the corridor to area 41, forcing it the other way. Sensing nearby food, it will move toward the adventurers in area 40.

41. FUNGAL GARDEN

This area is used by the quaggoth community to grow edible fungi, which they use to supplement their diet of stray yuan-ti.

This chamber is made of two parts, the east section is filled with waist high fungi, the west is taken up mostly by a pool of water. Above this pool is a ledge, with a small gap, perhaps two-feet tall, above it.

This cavern is dark.

Although most of the fungi in this cavern is edible, discernible by a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check, there is also a **shrieker** in amongst them (noticeable with the same check). Characters who take more than a few steps into the eastern area of the cavern set off this fungus, alerting the quaggoth community in area 42. If this happens, the quaggoth in area 42 throw flaming torches through the gap into the fungal garden. This ignites the fungi. Any creature that starts its turn within the flaming fungi takes 10 (3d6) fire damage.

The pool in the western section of the cave is freshwater, and can be used to fill infinite waterskins.

Treasure. Harvesting the fungi takes five minutes but yields 2d6+2 rations.

42. QUAGGOTH COMMUNITY

This large cavern has been adopted as a home by a community of quaggoth who become trapped down here by accident (see area 42A).

This large cavern is filled with muscular pale ape-like creatures. A small mesa occupies the centre of the cavern, atop which sit a few of these apes, armed with spears.

This cavern is dark.

There are eight **quaggoth** in this chamber. If the characters are not accompanied by the quaggoth from area 40A, they growl menacingly in unison. A successful DC 10 Wisdom (nature) check reveals they are trying to warn away the adventurers. If they do not take the hint, the quaggoth attack.

If the characters are accompanied by quaggoth from area 40A, they are allowed to enter the chamber with him. Several of these ape-like creatures will come up to examine the characters as they are taken to area 42B.

42A. MESA

This natural stone formation serves as a guard post.

Two quaggoth armed with spears sit atop this rock formation armed with spears.

There are two **quaggoth** atop this structure. They are armed with spears (simple change the slashing damage of claws to piercing damage) and have a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 13. They follow the behaviours of the other quaggoth in area 42.

42B. THONOT'S THRONE

This smaller cavern is home to Quaffa, head of the quaggoth community.

Sat cross-legged atop a raised pile of earth and stone is a quaggoth. This beast is clearly not like the others, it wears a golden crown bearing snake motifs, and has a toothy grin spread across its face.

This **quaggoth thonot** is called Quaffa. He is capable of speaking Common, and can communicate telepathically with the rest of the community.

If the quaggoth in area 42 attack, Quaffa arrives a round later.

If the characters are accompanied by the quaggoth from area 40A, Quaffa smiles broadly toward them, and introduces himself.

“Hello fleshy friends. It is a long time since I have seen skin without fur or scales.” The quaggoth declares as he rolls a serpentine skull your direction. “Have you come to help us overthrow our serpentine overlords?”

Quaffa is more than eager to engage in warfare with the yuan-ti. He is aware that something is going on in the temple above, claiming he can sense it in his mind. If the characters accept his help, he telepathically rouses the other quaggoth from area 42, who form wobbly ranks by the entrance to this area. They will fight to the death against the yuan-ti.

They have not yet managed to destroy him and his community thanks to their traps and his psionic power, although he fears it will not be much longer. They survive down here off yuan-ti which they capture and eat, as well as the fungus and water from area 41.

Treasure. Quaffa bestows upon the characters some magical items he has stolen from the snakefolk over the years or made from fungal components. Two *potions of poison resistance*, two *potions of greater healing*, ten *+1 arrows*, one *bead of force* and *robe of useful items*.



OUTCOMES

Hopefully the characters managed to recover the Blackheart, stopping the ritual that would summon Merrshaulk, and possibly slayed as many yuan-ti as they could during their attack on Oss'Ithek.

If you played this adventure as a stand-alone based on one of the adventure hooks, the outcomes are as follows.

Hook 1. As with the main adventure, hopefully the characters managed to stop Merrshaulk being summoned. If they did not, keep reading for the devastation that follows. If they did stop the ritual, they hopefully also recovered the artefact pertinent to your campaign and they should be rewarded for doing so.

Hook 2. Characters lured in by this hook will have, with any luck, managed to free the prisoners that were captive in Oss'Ithek, and disrupt the ritual to awaken Merrshaulk by doing so. They should be rewarded by the freed prisoners either with important campaign information or treasure once the prisoners have reached their home.

Hook 3. If the characters are trying to save an important prisoner from the yuan-ti, they should have managed to bust them out of the prison area. Perhaps they also took the time to stop the summoning ritual which would otherwise awaken a demonic deity.

Merrshaulk Awakened! If your players did not manage to stop the summoning of Merrshaulk; Master of the Pit, then he is awakened. Erupting from the ground 300-feet away from Oss'Ithek, this god finds himself on the material plane. He makes his way toward Oss'Ithek, to congratulate his chosen people, and eradicate any non-yuan-ti left alive on the island. Merrshaulk's statistics can be found in Appendix A. As a walking demonic god, he will most probably kill the party swiftly. If you do not want this to happen, feel free to deus ex machina a way out. Perhaps have the quaggoth community offer to create a distraction whilst the characters flee, or simply allow them to outrun this abyssal nightmare, being so large he might overlook a few fleeing adventurers. You can thus use Merrshaulk as a big bad evil guy for the rest of your campaign, which focuses on trying to destroy this evil force and the yuan-ti who follow him.

Success! Gods willing, your party have managed to destroy the yuan-ti of Oss'Ithek, and managed to prevent the summoning of Merrshaulk. If this is the case, they have some options. If all goes to plan, they will return to RedCrag Camp and Chieftain Kumba-Ha, here they will trade the Blackheart for the lives of the crew. However, they may decide that the Blackheart is too powerful for the tribesfolk, or perhaps they have been corrupted by its dark power. From here, the campaign is yours to develop. Keep your eyes open for further expansions!

REWARDS

All experience should be given as per the Monster Manual. Assuming that the party kill only the yuan-ti and their allies within Oss'Ithek they should gain around 10,000 XP each. Also award characters 500 XP each for disrupting the ritual if they manage to do so. As characters started this part at 5th-level they should reach 6th if not 7th level. Encourage levelling up during the dungeon.

CREDITS

A big thankyou to Ken Carcas for editing all of my work.

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APPENDIX A

This appendix presents new monsters encountered in this adventure.

SHADOW SNAKE

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 60 (8d12 + 8)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3
Damage Resistances poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 14
Languages -
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Shadow Stealth. While in dim light or darkness, the snake can take the Hide action as a bonus action.

Actions

Multiattack. The snake makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Shadowstrike (Recharge 4-6). The snake magically teleports up to 40 feet to an unoccupied space it can see. Before or after teleporting, the snake can make one bite attack.

Invisibility (1/Day). The snake magically turns invisible until it attacks, or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell).

YUAN-TI BROODGUARD

Medium monstrosity (yuan-ti), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11
Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	6 (-2)	10 (+0)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +2
Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned
Senses passive Perception 12
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Reckless. At the start of its turn, the broodguard can gain advantage on all melee attack rolls it makes during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Multiattack. The broodguard makes two claw attacks.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

YUAN-TI WRETCHLING

Medium monstrosity (yuan-ti), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 16 (3d8 + 3)
Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses passive Perception 10
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) slashing damage.

Poisonous Bite (1/Day). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 11 (3d6) poison damage.



YUAN-TI STRIKER

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger, yuan-ti), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Shapechanger. The yuan-ti can use its action to polymorph into a Medium snake, or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It doesn't change form if it dies.

Innate Spellcasting (Yuan-Ti Form Only). The yuan-ti's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The yuan-ti can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.
At will: *animal friendship* (snakes only)
3/day: *suggestion*

Magic Resistance. The yuan-ti has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Multiattack. The yuan-ti makes two bite attacks.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

Paralysing Strike (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or become paralysed for 1 minute. The target can make the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

THE THREE

Each of The Three uses the statistics of a **yuan-ti abomination**, but has changes which befits its nature. These changes increase the Challenge Rating of the monsters to 8 (3,900 XP)

Arak'Gliss. The embodiment of serpentine muscularity and strength. His Strength is 20 (+5) giving him a +8 to hit on melee attacks and a +5 to corresponding damage rolls. His Constrict DC becomes 15.

Arak'Gliss can also make a Crush attack as a reaction at the end of another creature's turn. This attack has a +8 to hit and deals 8 (1d6+5) bludgeoning damage.

Sal'Ethass. Cold, cunning and intelligent, Sal'Ethass has an Intelligence of 20 (+5) and proficiency in Intelligence saving throws. Her spellcasting ability becomes Intelligence, making her spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks. She also gains the following spell options;

At will: *eldritch blast*, *poison spray*, *minor illusion*
1/day each: *fear*, *hold person*, *witch bolt*

Nyssia. With hyper-potent venom and stealth to match, Nyssia is dangerous even to all. The poison damage on her bite attack becomes 14 (4d6). She also gains the following attack option:

Venom Spray (Recharge 6). Nyssia spits venom in a 15-foot cone. Creatures in the area must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

In addition, Nyssia can Hide as a bonus action on her turns.



YUAN-TI SERPENT SPEAKER

Medium monstrosity (shapechanger, yuan-ti), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 14 (natural armour)

Hit Points 71 (13d8 + 13)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Deception +5, Nature +3, Stealth +4

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Shapechanger. The yuan-ti can use its action to polymorph into a Medium snake, or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It doesn't change form if it dies.

Poison Fangs (2/Day). The first time the yuan-ti hits with a melee attack on its turn, it can deal an extra 16 (3d10) poison damage to the target.

Innate Spellcasting (Yuan-Ti Form Only). The yuan-ti's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13). The yuan-ti can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.
At will: *animal friendship* (snakes only)
3/day: *suggestion*

Magic Resistance. The yuan-ti has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Spellcasting (Yuan-ti Form Only). The yuan-ti is a 6th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It has the following druid spells prepared.

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *poison spray*, *thorn whip*
1st level (4 slots): *entangle*, *fog cloud*, *longstrider*, *speak with animals*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger*, *beast sense*, *hold person*, *spike growth*

3rd level (3 slots): *conjure animals* (snakes only)

Actions

Multiattack (Yuan-ti Form Only). The yuan-ti makes one constrict and one scimitar attack.

Team Foot. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (1d6 + 2)

Constrict. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit*: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the yuan-ti can't constrict another target.

Scimitar (Yuan-ti Form Only). Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit*: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Speak In Tongues (Recharge 5-6). The yuan-ti whispers in a foul, ancient language to a creature which can hear it and is within 30 feet of the yuan-ti. This language is terrifying and painful to behold. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and is frightened of the yuan-ti until the end of its next turn.



Inside the palace of the serpents.

MERRSHAULK

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armour)

Hit Points 496 (34d12 + 272)

Speed 50ft., swim 50ft., fly 50ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	16 (+3)	26 (+8)	26 (+8)	16 (+3)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +16, Wis +10

Skills Intimidation +10, Perception +14

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120ft., passive Perception 24

Languages all, telepathy 120ft.

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. Merrshaulk's spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). Merrshaulk can innately cast the following spells requiring no material components:

At will: *animal friendship* (snakes only), *detect magic*, *suggestion*

3/day each: *dispel magic*, *dominate beast*, *fear*, *invisibility*

1/day each: *teleport*

Actions

Multiattack. Merrshaulk makes three melee attacks: one bite, one constrict and one tail.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6 + 7) piercing damage plus 11 (3d6) poison damage.

Constrict. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5ft., one target. *Hit* 5 (1d6 + 2)

Tilt-a-whirl Eye Takedown. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 17). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained. Merrshaulk can grapple three targets at a time.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 15ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (4d8 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Spit Poison (Recharge 5-6). Merrshaulk spits searing venom in a 15-foot-cone. Each creature in the area must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 22 (5d10) poison damage and is poisoned on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

Legendary Actions

Merrshaulk can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Merrshaulk regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Tail. Merrshaulk makes one tail attack.

Venom Spray. Merrshaulk casts *poison spray* (17th level).

Swarming Serpents. (Costs 2 Actions). Merrshaulk chooses a point on the ground that he can see within 100 feet of him. Swarming snakes erupt in a 10-foot-radius from that point, turning the ground into difficult terrain. A creature in the area must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the snakes. A creature restrained in this way can use an action to make a DC 23 Strength check. On a success, it frees itself. This effect lasts up to one minute, and requires concentration.



APPENDIX B

This appendix presents new magic items found in this adventure.

THE BLACKHEART

Wondrous item, artefact (requires attunement)

This ancient and potent item's history has been lost to the ravages of time. The tribesfolk of Serpent Isle claim it to be the heart of the World Serpent, their deity, cut out by a fabled hero of eons past. The yuan-ti believe that it is the heart of Merrshaulk; Master of the Pit.

Irrelevant of which story is true, the Blackheart itself is a horrendous item to behold. It is an anatomically correct heart, made of black jet stone and veined with quartz. Ethereal green blood pours from the open vessels, only to disappear before hitting the floor. Those who watch the heart swear that it beats in time with their own.

Serpents in the presence of this artefact are hyper-aggressive. It causes them to writhe and strike out at random, spit venom and flare their hoods at any who approach.

A creature attuned to The Blackheart must spend 80 hours worshipping and studying it to reap its benefits. The creature may then, if they wish, undergo a vile ritual in which the Blackheart is transplanted in place of their own heart. This fills the creature's veins with serpentine blood, causing them to take on many aspects of the serpent.

Whenever a non-evil creature attunes to The Blackheart it must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature's alignment changes to neutral evil.

Random Properties. The Blackheart has the following random properties:

- 3 minor beneficial properties
- 1 major beneficial property
- 3 minor detrimental properties
- 2 minor detrimental properties

Adjusted Ability Scores. After you spend the requisite amount of time worshipping the item, one ability score of your choice increases by 2, to a maximum of 24. Another ability score of your choice decreases by 2, to a minimum of 3. The item can't adjust your ability scores again.

Aspect of the Serpent. After spending the requisite amount of time studying the item, you acquire certain serpentine characteristics that mark you out as being touched by this demonic entity. Your eyes may become snake-like, scales may cover your skin or a thin, writhing tail might emerge from the small of your back or fangs may appear in your mouth. This gives you advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks made to interact with evil creatures and Charisma (Intimidation) checks made to interact with non-evil creatures.

Ophidian Command. While attuned to The Blackheart and holding it, you can use an action to cast dominate beast spell on a snake (save DC 18). You can use this property 3 times in 24 hours. You can also cast the spell conjure animals at 5th level to summon serpents.

Parseltongue. While attuned to this item, you can read, write, speak and understand Draconic, as well as communicate with snakes.

Potent Venom. While attuned to this item, you can use an action to spray venom from your mouth. Each creature within a 15-foot cone of you must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 3d6 poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

YUAN-TI VENOM

This poison can be harvested from living yuan-ti. They often use it themselves in rituals to create broodguards.

Injury. A creature subjected to this poison must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 10 (3d6) poison damage.

Ingested. If a humanoid ingests this poison it must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failure it undergoes a horrifying transformation, becoming a yuan-ti broodguard (Appendix A). This transformation is permanent and can only be undone with a wish spell. On a success it takes 16 (3d10) poison damage.