

F1.5

Bonus Module



DEADLANDS HELL ON EARTH MINI-MODULE F1.5
 SNAKE EYES AT CHALLENGER'S BLOCK

Snake Eyes at Challenger's Block
 By Scott Taylor

THE FOLIO
 Mini-Module



Synopsis

Looking for fuel and supply, our heroes find themselves entering the ramshackle barricade gates of Challenger's Block. Inside, they soon discover that one of their own has gone missing. The victim has been seized by a sect of serpent worshipers seeking an appropriate sacrifice to what they believe to be the earthly avatar of the snake man god of the old southwest—the divine serpent. Once confronted with the abduction, the heroes must uncover the mystery of the sect, retrieve the sacrificial target, and likely kill the divine serpent before it breaks free of its bonds and eats half the town.

Gamemaster Notes

Challenger's Block is the final southern stop on the infamous Co-Kan Run. Located in the Texas panhandle, it rests at the end-point of old route 207 and has become a watering hole, fuel station, and gambling hub for many crossroads travelers in the desert region. Known for its drag racing and gladiator pits, betting is something of a lifeblood for the makeshift town. If the heroes have entered Challenger's Block as a greater part of the Folio #7 adventure, or if they are visiting after another adventure, this mission will

run much the same. Just remember to keep the fringe/lawless feeling of the city at the forefront of the adventure, and also be sure to let folks know that 'anything can be had for a price'.

1. *The primary purpose of this mini-adventure is to continue the story of Folio #7, giving the heroes yet another chance to protect their precious cargo.*

2. *Challenger's Block is a community that works great as a base of operations for the heroes once they've completed the Co-Kan Run. Therefore, fleshing out the city, meeting some cool NPCs, and getting some street cred will help the players feel more attached to the place for later use in your campaign.*

3. *Story Pieces: There are three parts to this adventure, the first two being more a mystery than a combat. At the beginning of each part I'll detail what needs to happen and give some specifics of how to get there, otherwise how the game runs and the story moves along will fall on your shoulders.*

Running Combat

Finding a good balance is always a key to any adventure, but remember that Savage Worlds is a system that reflects cinema. Try to imagine yourself as a cinematographer and not a Gamemaster. When running combat, find the perfect scene and

Snake Men Sect Cultists

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d6, Throwing d10, Driving d8, Survival d6, Stealth d6

Charisma: -2; Pace: 6; Parry: 5; Toughness: 5

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty

Edges: Brave

Gear: Hunting Knives (Str + d6).

then run with it, making it more like an action movie than a tabletop. That is the key to making things work here.

Loot

I've specifically kept 'loot' out of this adventure as players might find a few melee weapons, but otherwise the adventures purpose is just to locate the captive. Doing so is the true reward.

Random Encounters:

There can be a plethora of random encounters in Challenger's Block, but realistically this mini-adventure is set up to run through a specific set of scenes. If you want to expand the adventure, feel free, but you'll have to use some of the great resources provided in the Hell on Earth core book as well as other supplements to add flare.

Part One: Entering 'The Block'

When play begins, be sure to make it at night, with the hard road behind the party and everyone tired, hungry, and on edge. This will help set the stage for folks to look in the places you need them to look for the adventure to progress. Your goal here is to entice the party to split up, perhaps when finding a place to sleep the night and get food (offer different rates to separate the cheapskates), or when blowing off some steam (speak to their individual vices). If successful, you'll have the opportunity to abduct either a player or someone important to the players (the 'cargo' from Folio #7). Once this happens, you'll be able to move on to Part Two: Down the Snake Hole.

1. Entry into the Gates:

A large makeshift barricade slowly pulls back as twin strobe lights shine down on you. Shadows of men with rifles move around towers on either side of the road and a gravelly voice calls for you to move forward from a loudspeaker.

This is the main northern gate of Challenger's Block, and it is heavily defended. Still, most travelers are allowed entry after a cursory line

of questioning, the real purpose of the gate defense being a large scale threat from Denver. However, any hero actively looking at the multitude of figures around the gate will notice several dark, hungry eyes more interested in the vehicles and equipment than the party.

2. The Cyclone Tower:

A buzzing orange neon sign hangs twelve feet up a half-constructed office building. Rusted steel beams stretch up like skeletal fingers from the building's southernmost half, and tarps cover windows and other openings giving the building a kind of Mediterranean market feel.

Abduction Notes

Certainly getting rooms here can be a great way to break up the party, and if anyone is rooming alone or someone uses a common bathroom (think office building bathrooms, one per floor), it can be a good time to get grabbed. Perhaps a fight is needed to get things in the correct position for abduction, involving either a hero or someone the hero might know. With money and trade goods shifting hands, screaming, pushing, and the like during a fight, this is another fine time to get things moving on the story arc.

If you don't have a place to stay other than your vehicle, a friend's squat, or the streets, the Cyclone Tower offers the best rooms in Challenger's Block. Owned by Gus Nester, a former bouncer in Las Vegas before the bombs dropped, the place has a reputation for safety among its clients. Rooms run at a rate of \$25 a night, but barter is always accepted.



3. Armadillo House:

Signage indicates this was once a convenience store and garage, but now it looks more like a warzone triage depot. Three blackened and dented fuel stations still rest beneath a half-collapsed roof in front of a long building with boarded windows. Music, laughter, and the smell of food drift from the large building, a single door rests half-open, spilling light into the yard between the fuel and the fun.

Armadillo House is a local legend around these parts and serves spook juice to those drivers in need and other human-friendly spirits and food for locals with barter to trade. One can typically find a singer in house on any particular night, and wagers are taken on upcoming drag races and anyone foolish enough to enter the octagon located just to the south of the house.

4. The Octagon:

Built inside the remains of an old taco shot, this steel cage has been home to more than a thousand fights since its inception five years ago. Makeshift seats and benches wrap around the blood-stained floor and rusted fencing, only a single entrance with a heavy bolt allowing access to the concrete floor of the cage.

Part Two: Down the Snake Hole

Once the abduction has taken place, the heroes will be faced with a ticking clock to get their friend or cargo back. It should be made abundantly clear that ‘those who go missing in the Block aren’t known to be seen again’. Now is the time to start a full-scale investigation, and the places that follow should lead in the right direction. This section of the adventure will lean heavily on the heroes’ Streetwise, Persuasion, and even Intimidation skills, so keep that in mind. You will find a target number for clues, and any player achieving the number indicated can gain the information for it, and all the targets below that number.

5. Shipping Houses:

Those with enough wealth, strength, or intelligence to stay out of the various squatter zones in ‘North Block’ call this collection of old shipping containers and 18-wheeler trailers home.

There are more than thirty permanent residents of the shipping houses and each has a story to tell of hardship, triumph, and xenophobia. Working these block houses will be an issue for players, but those with a Charisma bonus, or good dice in

Persuasion or Streetwise, can possibly get a few details out of the inhabitants.

6. Gate Patrol HQ:

Two armed men stand outside this reinforced building where windows are boarded and sand bags are placed around the walls.

This is the HQ for the northern gate patrol, and unless a player has some inside with law enforcement, there is likely nothing to be had in the way of info here.

7. Teller’s Supply:

A veritable menagerie of scavenged goods decorates the outside of this old home. A single door with a tattered ‘open’ sign hangs in its window.

Janis Teller has seen a few things, the bulk of them before the bombs fell. Now, this old woman tends a shop with a mass of supplies from around the region. Most tend toward food and survival gear, but there may be a few ‘gems’ in there if heroes are looking for something particular [15% chance].

8. House of 9 Pleasures:

Crimson-stained sheets hang from the porch of this old two-story home and several old couches lay among them with sultry ladies in

little to no clothing. A warm light burns from within the house's front door, and a small sign with pricing hangs just above the verge.

The most upscale brothel in the Block, this house has 8 'working women' and 1 male gigolo, and maintains a single bath that can be had for the right price.

9. Pandora's:

A small shack has been erected on the foundation of a larger destroyed structure. It has been painted with bright colors and four lanterns burn around the door.

Pandora is a local fortune teller, but in reality she is a simple charlatan. She does, however, know a great deal about the comings and goings of the community.

10.-11.-12. Tent Communities & The Old Civic Building:

Life among the downtrodden in the Weird West isn't easy, but there are those who refuse to die, clinging to life along the fringes, eking out what they can. Such are the bulk of tent communities like this where strangers are met with hollow-eyed stares and whispers.

There are three such communities at the north gate of the Block. #11 and #12 will have limited knowledge of the happenings of the snake men (use the lower successes for clues there), but if pressed, there are those who speak on what they know.

Clue Notes 5:

4 Success: There are 'watchers' in the town that are seen at night.

6 Success: Some people whisper of hearing 'hissing' from the sewer grates.

8 Success: Two nights ago, a gate officer was bitten by something unholy before his body swelled up and burst open.

10 Success: Larry Crab, who lives up in the highest container, is known to watch the streets with binoculars most of the day and night.

12 Success: (From Larry Crab) He saw a figure being carried away from wherever the abduction happened toward the tent camp south of the Cyclone.

Clue Notes 6:

8 Success: At least half a dozen people have been reported missing in the last fortnight.

10 Success: Bob Vance questioned a man with a large snake tattoo about a recent abduction, but later that night he was bitten by a venomous animal and died halfway through his report.

12 Success: The report indicated that several locals thought the source of the 'snake men' was from the tent camp south of the Cyclone.

Clue Notes 7:

6 Success: A local woman comes in every few days to trade snakeskin for goods.

8 Success: She has one vial of

powerful anti-venom that can be had for the right price.

10 Success: She once sold a book to a stranger she found in the old Civic Building on 'legends of the old West'.

Clue Notes 8:

6 Success: Two weeks ago one of the working girls, Elisa, went missing after going to check on her son in one of the tent camps.

8 Success: Elisa said her son loved the lion sculptures on the wall of his home, but he also said that he heard them growling at night. (This is the Civic Building's front wall and two lions can be seen on the roof.)

Clue Notes 9:

4 Success: People in the tents near the Civic Building are running scared because of 'snake men' that now call the building home.

6 Success: There is supposed to be a large basement in the Civic Building.

8 Success: The leader of the snake men was once a member of the city guard and recruited heavily from their numbers in the south of the city.

Clue Notes 10-11-12:

4 Success: Those who speak about snakes don't wake in the morning.

6 Success: There are men in cloaks that come at night, trading scales for favors from some women.

8 Success: There are those that say the snake men come from the 'house of lions'.

10 Success: The snake men all carry blades and some folks insist they are poisoned.

12 Success: Old Joe has counted nine separate men who have come and gone from the old Civic Building.

Part Three: The Serpent's Den

While the previous two sections are a mystery tour, this one is going to be fairly straight forward fighting, clearing room to room before the boss battle. There are nine members of the snake men plus the divine serpent within the Civic Building on this particular evening, including three prisoners that are being prepared for sacrifice to the serpent before it makes its 'coming out party'. Use standard statistics for all snake men save the Cult Leader and the divine serpent who enjoy Wild Card status.

1. Entry:

The door gives way to a dilapidated rectangular room with old wood panel walls, dusty pictures of administrators, and a poster of the U.S. Constitution with spray paint over it. Three desks have been converted into a makeshift defensive position, although currently three men are on the wrong side of it playing a drinking game with cups and a ping pong ball.

Enemy: 3 Snake Men Cultists

2. Initiation Room:

This room holds half a dozen folding chairs and a hastily constructed platform made of old shipping pallets. A large mural has been painted behind the platform and decorated with strips of reddish scales.

Two men, likely alerted to an enemy presence if there was gunplay in room 1, will have taken up positions on either side of the door, ready to strike anyone entering.

Enemy: 2 Snake Men Cultists

3. Weapon Closet:

A combination lock has been attached to the handle of this door.

The lock can be dislodged with a successful blunt blow of 8 or better.

Inside, a dozen improvised spears lean against the wall, and a collection of heavy knives and Molotov cocktails occupy shelves on the wall.

4. Stairs:

A set of stairs leads into relative darkness below, only a single light haphazardly twinkling off and on somewhere in a hall below.

The lack of light below (and odd in and out flashing) will cause a -2 penalty to all distance attack rolls. Melee is unhindered.

5. Cult Leader Room:

A man dressed in a robe of snakeskin screams a hissing curse as you enter, a long blade in each hand dripping with some unknown liquid.

6. Sacrifice Cell:

Four sets of heavy ropes are attached to handcuffs, three of which hold frightened women (modify this description to fit the abductee the party is after).

*A trap has been set here, the door to this room locked and needing busted down (success 6 blunt weapon). Three cultists are waiting in room 7 for the sound of the door being opened and will slip out to try to attack the heroes from behind.

Enemy: 3 Snake Man Cultists*

Credits:

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7. Sacrifice

Preparation Room:

A canvas bath rests near the back wall, and a table with several old bottles of half-used perfume stands near it. Several towels, brushes, and sealed bottles of paint are arranged on the floor.

Enemy: 3 Snake Man Cultists*

8. Hissing Hall:

The hall is filled with a low hissing that echoes eerily through the long chamber.

9. Collapsed Room:

The door opens and rubble falls at your feet, the inside of this chamber having collapsed some time ago.

10. Divine Serpent Room:

Upon entry into the room a massive red-scaled serpent uncoils from the back of the chamber, its yellow eyes flashing in the gloom and white fangs glittering off your light.

Cult Leader (Wild Card)

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6, Fighting d10, Throwing d8, Shooting d6, Driving d8

Charisma: -6; Pace: 6; Parry: 7;

Toughness: 7 (4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Mean

Edges: Two-Fisted, Berserk

Gear: Twin Hunting

Knives (Damage Str + d6),

Poison (Venomous)*

*Apply poison hazard if there is a raise on damage

Divine Serpent (Wild Card)

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d6, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Pace: 12; Parry: 8; Toughness: 14 (4)

Special Abilities:

Armor +4: The divine serpent has incredibly hardened scales.

Bite: Str + d12, Reach 2

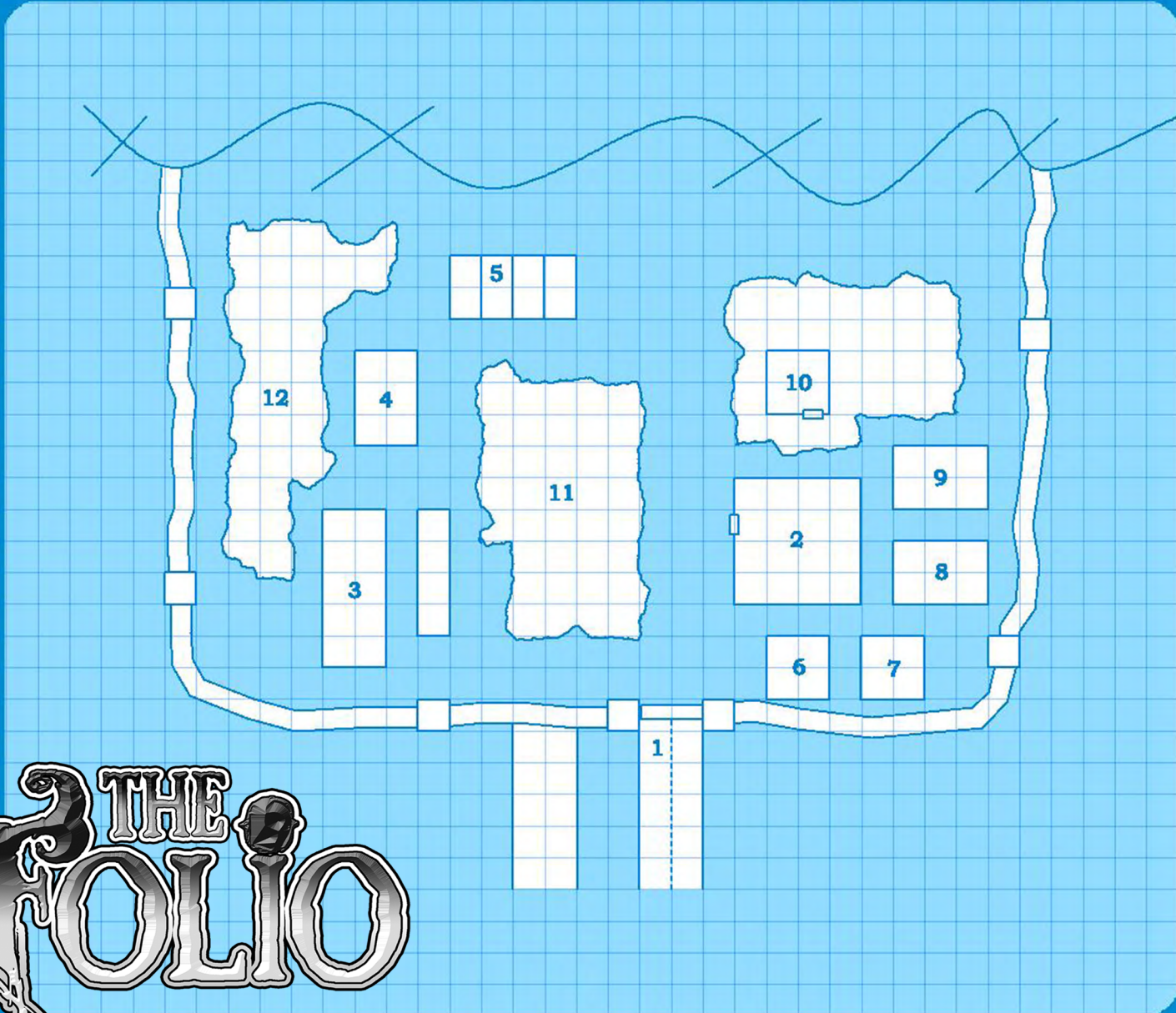
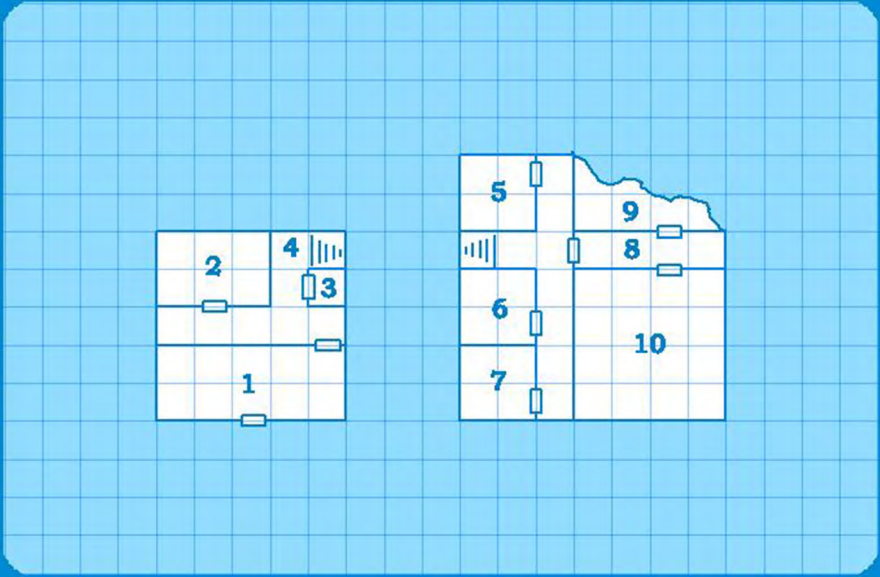
Fear -4: The unnatural power of the divine serpent causes Fear checks at -4.

Improved Frenzy: The divine serpent can make an extra attack with its bite at no penalty.

Poison: Lethal (apply on a successful raise)

Size +2: The divine serpent is currently the size of a small car.

□ Door
 ||| Stairs



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