Corvid's Emporium

SNAKE QUEENS' LAIR

FACE OFF AGAINST THE MARILITH AR'AL IN A DESECRATED CHURCH AND SEND HER BACK TO THE ABYSS.

Adventure Primer

CREDITS

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RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

To run this adventure, you need the Fifth Edition core rulebooks.

> Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under a specific circumstance, as described in the text.

The core 5th Edition monster book contains stat blocks for most of the creatures found in this adventure. Monster stat blocks created specifically for this adventure will be included at the end. When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block in the core monster book. If the monster is not included in the core monster book, it will be included in the appendices of the adventure.

Adjusting Encounters

This adventure contains advice for adjusting encounters based on the number of characters in the party. You are empowered to modify the number of enemies in an encounter and their hit point totals as you see fit. If you need to adjust the difficulty of an encounter during combat, you can alter hit point totals without the player characters ever knowing and have enemies retreat or reinforcements arrive as needed.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used throughout this adventure:

hp	hit points
AC	Armor Class
DC	Difficulty Class
XP	experience points
pp	platinum piece(s)
gp	gold piece(s)
ep	electrum piece(s)
sp	silver piece(s)
cp	copper piece(s)
NPC	nonplayer character
LG	Lawful good
CG	Chaotic good
NG	Neutral good
LN	Lawful neutral
N	Neutral
CN	Chaotic neutral
LE	Lawful evil
CE	Chaotic evil
NE	Neutral evil

Snake Queen's Lair

The Snake Queen's Lair is a Fifth Edition encounter for four characters of 4th, 10th, or 16th level. This encounter is setting and adventure independent. It can easily be inserted into any story that you like, or even run as a one-shot.

FIGHTING IN WAVES

The encounters presented here can be run either as a single encounter with each marilith, or a multi-wave encounter with the marilith as the boss. Waves represent single encounters with one or more creatures. After the characters defeat one wave, the next wave appears in 1d4 rounds.

LEGENDARY CREATURE

To run the marilith as a legendary creature, use the following legendary actions, lair actions, and regional effects.

Legendary Actions

The marilith can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. She can take only one legendary action at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The marilith regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Move. The marilith moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

Tail Attack. The marilith makes a tail attack.

Sweeping Attack (Costs 2 Actions). The marilith makes a sweeping attack with her tail. Each creature within 10 feet of the marilith that is not being grappled by the marilith must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw or take 15 (2d10 + 4) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. If the marilith is grappling a creature with her

tail, the grappled creature takes 7 (1d6 + 4) damage for each creature that failed the saving throw.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the marilith can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. She can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A writhing mass of snakes appears at a point the marilith can see within 120 feet of it. Each creature within 20 feet of that point must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 5 (2d4) piercing damage and become poisoned until the end of its next turn.

- Grasping weeds and vines sprout from the ground in a 40-foot radius centered on a point that the marilith can see. That area becomes difficult terrain, and each creature there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be restrained by the roots and vines. A creature can be freed if it or another creature takes an action to make a DC 15 Strength check and succeeds. The roots and vines wilt away when the marilith uses this lair action again or when the marilith dies.

- Magical darkness spreads from a point the marilith chooses within 60 feet of it, filling a 15-foot-radius sphere until the marilith dismisses it as an action, uses this lair action again, or dies. The darkness spreads around corners. A creature with darkvision can't see through this darkness, and nonmagical light can't illuminate it. If any of the effect's area overlaps with an area of light created by a spell of 2nd level or lower, the spell that created the light is dispelled.

Regional Effects

The Snake Queen's Lair is set in the heart of a corrupted church. Regardless of level, it has the following features:

Desecrated. While the marilith is alive, the spells *protection from evil and good*, *banishment*, and *dispel evil and good* cannot be successfully cast inside the lair.

Portal to the Abyss. A permanent portal to the abyss dominates the lair. Once per day a number of demons up to a total CR of 8 can enter the material plane through the portal, appearing anywhere within 1 mile of the lair.

Snakes. Snakes within 1 mile of the lair serve as the marilith's eyes and ears, alerting her to the presence of intruders and making it all but impossible to surprise the marilith.

If the marilith dies, these effects fade immediately.

GET THE HIGH-RESOLUTION MAP OF THE ELDRITCH CHURCH
ON CZE AND PEKU'S PATREON

TETHERED MARILITH (4TH-LEVEL)

An encounter with a marilith would normally be far beyond the capabilities of a party of 4th-level characters, however the marilith has just crossed from the abyss into the material plane and is weakened from crossing the threshold. Note that the marilith herself will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. A party of four 3rd-level characters might be able to take on the marilith fully-rested, but the probability of casualties is much higher. Inversely, a higher level party will see a *slowed*, reduced-HP marilith as only a hard encounter, and if they are fully rested, they will have no trouble at all battling the creature.

If you wish to use the *slowed*, half-HP marilith as the final encounter for a 4th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves. At the end of each wave, roll 1d4. This is the number of rounds the characters have to prepare for the next wave.

First Wave: Cultists and Dretches

Eight **dretches** and two **cultists** meet the characters first. Use the dretches as cannon fodder. The cultists wait for the dretches to use their Fetid Cloud feature before striking. Remember that cultists have advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Second Wave: Cultists and Snakes

After the cultists and dretches, four **constrictor snakes**, two **cultists**, and one **cult fanatic** arrive. Rely on the snakes to restrain the characters so that the cultists can hit them with advantage. The cult fanatics should hang back, using *command* or *hold person* to make characters vulnerable and *spiritual weapon* to get more attacks in.

Third Wave: Medusa

The penultimate wave consists of a **lamia** and two **flying snakes**. Ideally, the characters have been softened up by the previous waves, because it's unlikely that the lamia will have the time required to take advantage of *geas*. Have the lamia enter the encounter with *mirror image* activated. The flying snakes should harry the characters while she uses her Intoxicating Touch to prime targets for *charm person* or *suggestion*.

The Boss: Tethered Marilith

The tethered marilith is a **marilith** with the following changes:

- Its hp is reduced by half
- It is under the effects of *slow*
- It does not have legendary actions or the benefits of a lair

The tethered marilith has just crossed from the abyss into the material plane and is suffering from the transition. It should bait the party into spreading out and then use teleportation to close on the weakest characters when they're isolated. If she finds herself cornered, she may also use her teleportation to put distance between herself and the characters to reorient herself.

MARILITH (10TH-LEVEL)

An encounter with a marilith is considered a deadly encounter for a party of four 10th-level or 11th-level characters. Note that the marilith will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. Characters with an average party level (APL) of 9 or less might have difficulty fighting a marilith unless they are fully rested. Parties with APLs of 12 or higher should have no problem fighting a marilith.

If you wish to use the marilith as the final encounter for a 10th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves.

First Wave: Mage, Veteran, and Dretches

Start the encounter with four **dretches**, one **veteran**, and one **mage**. The dretches draw the party's attention while the veteran protects the mage as they soften they snipe at the party from afar.

Second Wave: Cackling Night Hag Riding a Vrock

Next up, one **night hag** flies in astride a **vrock**. The night hag pops the characters with *magic missile* and uses *ray of enfeeblement* to weaken the vrock's targets. For the purposes of this encounter, the hag is immune to the vrock's Spores and Stunning Screech features. If the hag is knocked off of the vrock she may use *plane shift* to go to her lair in the abyss and *plane shift* back atop a **giant vulture**.

Third Wave: Medusa and Her Pets

Just before the big fight comes one **medusa** and four **giant constrictor snakes**. The medusa stays 30 feet or less away and uses her longbow. The characters will be averting their gaze to avoid the medusa's gaze, giving the snakes advantage on their constrict attacks to restrain the characters.

The Boss: Marilith

The **marilith** can use her teleportation to kite the characters, forcing them to spread out, and then zero in on one character at a time. If she can successfully restrain a character with her Tail attack, she can then make six longsword attacks against that creature with advantage. Remember that the marilith can use her Parry reaction every turn of the combat.

ANCIENT MARILITH (16TH-LEVEL)

An encounter with an ancient marilith is considered a deadly encounter for a party of four 16th-level or 17th-level characters. Note that the marilith will only pose a moderate threat to the party if it is fully rested. Characters with an average party level (APL) of 15 or less might have difficulty fighting a marilith unless they are fully rested. Parties with APLs of 18 or higher should have no problem fighting a marilith.

If you wish to use the marilith as the final encounter for a 16th-level multi-wave battle, use the following creatures for the first three waves.

First Wave: Nightmare-Mounted Gladiators

Greeting the characters are three **gladiators**, each riding a **nightmare**. While mounted, the nightmares extend resistance to fire damage to the gladiators. Together, the nightmares and gladiators can move in and out of the ethereal plane to avoid damage while they're repositioning.

Second Wave: Archmage Riding a Vrock

Next up, there is one **archmage** wearing a *ring feather falling* riding a **vrock**. The archmage has *mage armor*, *stoneskin*, and *mind blank* cast on itself before combat. The archmage may cast *mirror image* as an opening defensive choice while they're maintaining concentration on important spells. Astride the vrock, the archmage relies on *fire bolt* and *cone of cold* or *lightning bolt* for the bulk of its damage. In a pinch the archmage may cast *time stop* followed by *globe of invulnerability*, *teleport*, and *invisibility* or *wall of force* to

allow it and the vrock to reposition anywhere on the field.

Third Wave: Hydra and Hezrous

The final wave consists of one **hydra** and two **hezrous**. The hydra is immune to the hezrous' stench, allowing all three of these creatures to brawl head-to-head against the characters. These brawlers are aggressive, charging straight into melee.

The Boss: Ancient Marilith

The ancient marilith is a **marilith** with the following changes:

- It has 378 (36d10 + 180) hit points

Before the characters have a chance to recover, the **ancient marilith** appears on the field. Like the lower-difficulty mariliths, she uses teleportation to kite the characters and spread them thin before honing in on a weak target to crush them.

Treasure

Once the dust settles and the characters defeat the blackdragon, they can claim the dragon's hoard as their own. Use the treasure tables found in Chapter 7 of the *DMG* to determine what the characters find. The young 4th-level marilith has a 0-4 Treasure Hoard, the 10th-level marilith has a 5-10 Treasure Hoard, and the 16th-level marilith keeps an 11-16 Treasure Hoard. For multi-wave combats, double the value of each treasure hoard.

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