

Snakes on a Plane

ABSTRACT

Qantas Airlines Flight 7 from Dallas, Fort Worth to Sydney is hijacked by serpent men and redirected toward Antarctica.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

The player characters are all travelers aboard a flight making a transatlantic or transpacific crossing, most likely a large jet aircraft such as a Boeing 747 or Airbus A380. Unfortunately, three of their fellow passengers have other plans.

Nothing out of the ordinary happens until the plane is well over the Pacific Ocean, far from any landmass. The first sign that something is wrong comes when all communication equipment aboard the plane mysteriously fails (thanks to a jammer carried by one of the hijackers). The hijackers' first move after this will be to disarm or disable anyone carrying weapons (roll alertness before to see if they have spotted players who are packing). They can do this through violence or by hypnotizing them with magic (opposed POW*5 test). The hijackers will use hypnotized people as crowd control to manage the rest of the passengers and crew. Hypnotized thralls do as the hijackers bid, but especially heinous commands or other shocks potentially allow them a chance to escape domination with another opposed POW*5 test. The hijackers can sense weak-willed individuals and will single them out for domination.

After they have neutralized any armed threats to their control of the plane, the hijackers will announce their plans: they are merely diverting this transport until they have reached their destination. Do not interfere and you will not be harmed. They will either hypnotize the pilots or remove them from the cockpit and make their own modifications to the plane's controls. They turn the aircraft due South.

After the example of 9/11 many of the passengers will assume that cooperating means death. At some point a group of them will attempt to retake control of the plane, rushing the hijackers or trying to outwit and ambush them. Unless the players intervene in some way this will fail with massive casualties. The hijackers are smart, have numerous tricks up their sleeves, and are totally unafraid to kill anyone who resists them, along with anyone else in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Alternatively, the hijackers can carry out their plan a secret, subverting pilots and crew as well as a few passengers seated within view of the cockpit (such as within the top floor of a 747). Players might notice people acting strangely, odd messages over the plane's PA system, or unexplained "course corrections," and much of the adventure could be spent figuring out what is amiss. The hijackers may attempt to use sorcery to disguise the view outside the airplane windows, but this illusion will not fool anyone clever or sufficiently skilled at navigation, who will be able to track the plane's movements and intuit where it's headed. Maintaining such a large illusion over so many people is demanding, and the hijackers will require fresh blood to keep their reserves of magic power full (see section HIJACKERS below).

The hijackers are expert scientists, engineers and technicians. They are able to "upgrade" the aircraft while it is in flight, as well as repair damage inflicted by uncooperative passengers or crew. Passengers who know anything about aviation or physics will notice that something is very odd about the way the aircraft performs as a result of these changes. Anyone familiar with navigation will eventually recognize the plane is headed for Antarctica. The aircraft's new pilots will have solutions for things like sector whiteout and other problems flying near the South Pole.

Anything which punctures the cabin (such as bullets, though hollow points reduce the risk) will depressurize it at a rate proportional to the size of the opening. Any human inside a cabin that lost significant pressure must either wear oxygen mask, hold their breath, or asphyxiate. The hijackers are mysteriously unaffected - they came prepared for high altitudes and scarce oxygen at their final destination.

ENDINGS

Killing or incapacitating the hijackers breaks the spell blocking communications. The plane will most likely have enough fuel to reach an airport somewhere, likely not the one it was originally destined for. If the pilots are dead or incapacitated, things look bleaker.

Crashing the aircraft into the ocean kills everyone on board except the hijackers, who may survive through some charm or incantation. If so they will rig up a raft of some kind and contrive some way to send a distress signal to the nearest ship, passing themselves off as sole survivors of an unfortunate aviation disaster.

If not stopped, the hijackers take the plane over Antarctica, across an enormous range of mountains not found on any map, to a vast and terrible ruined city on the plateau beyond, 20,000 feet above sea level. They land on the plateau, most likely wrecking the plane's landing gear. Then they will use the human cargo they have brought with them for some dark scientific purpose or sinister ritual to further their schemes. Killing them at this point and regaining control of the plane is not likely to be of tremendous help. Taking off again is probably impossible and strange interference prevents most communication devices from working in the dread city.

HIJACKERS

Serpent people in human disguise. They consumed their victims and assumed their identities and appearances using sorcery. It is up to the Handler to decide under what circumstances these glamours will disappear and reveal their true appearance.

All have:

Alertness 70%, Archaeology 60%, Athletics 50%, Craft (All) 80%, Disguise 70%, Dodge 40%, Firearms 50%, Medicine 40%, Melee Weapons 50%, Occult 90%, Science (All) 80%, Stealth 60%, Search 70%, Unarmed 60%

Harlan Maurice Waits

29 year old software engineer from Burlington, Vermont, USA

SERPENT MAN

11 STR, 13 CON, 11 DEX, 20 INT, 19 POW, 8 CHA

12 HP

Scaly Hide (1 Armor)

Bite for D6 Damage plus venom

Jessica Alan Watts

31 year old financial analyst from Perth, Western Australia, AUS

SERPENT WOMAN

12 STR, 10 CON, 13 DEX, 19 INT, 16 POW, 9 CHA

11 HP

Scaly Hide (1 Armor)
Bite for D6 Damage plus venom

Toyotomi Hinamura

45 year old archaeologist from Matsumoto, Nagano, JPN

SERPENT MAN

13 STR, 9 CON, 12 DEX, 18 INT, 17 POW, 8 CHA

12 HP

Scaly Hide (1 Armor)

Bite for D6+1 Damage plus venom

Serpent venom has 10% lethality with an onset time of D10 minutes.

The serpents can replenish both HP and WP by sucking blood from passengers. Don't bother tracking WP for each one, just have them "top off" after they cast a lot of spells. It's unpleasant to watch, more so to actually be bitten.

The serpent disguised as Harlan is the most powerful sorcerer of the three, and the most senior by thousands or millions of years. He tolerates the others because he cannot accomplish what he has planned all by himself. However, all are skilled with magic.

Each serpent has a protective ward which will stop one bullet before dissipating. It can be recast, but is a lengthy spell which cannot be performed while in combat.

The snake disguised as Harlan knows a spell to swap bodies with other people. He keeps this knowledge secret from the others out of fear that they will use it on him. If he is about to perish and given any opportunity to do so he will prepare and cast this spell, making an opposed POW*5 test against a target within line of sight. The target will realize what is happening and should have at least a round to break LoS or otherwise stop the process. He will attempt to do so without being noticed, such that the target is shunted into his own body and immediately killed before anyone is the wiser.

The serpents are expert artificers and have crafted many magical devices to aid them, such as:

- A ballpoint pen which focuses the serpent's bioelectrical energy, inflicting D8 electrical damage as a melee attack and stunning the target (CON*5 test or be immobilized).
- A necklace that causes temporary blindness in any human who looks at it while active.
- A pocket watch that emits a strange gas, capable of causing sickness, lethargy or vivid hallucinations.
- An earring that makes the wearer invisible when active.
- A hand mirror that projects a deadly cone of heat (kill radius with 10% lethality).

Their checked baggage in the hold could contain stranger things yet, such as strange books or innocuous seeming devices essential to their schemes ahead.

Should they reach the elder thing city, the serpents' plan is up to the keeper. Maybe...

...they need a large number of human sacrifices to fuel a ritual.

...they want to trade them to the elder things for installation in the construct.

...they are planning to open a portal using leftover elder technology, bringing the passengers through to another epoch as a first generation of slave-subjects.

ALTERNATIVES

Change the destination to somewhere else, such as a portal to the Dreamlands which the serpents open once the aircraft is flying at a particular latitude, longitude, altitude and speed.

Replace the snakes with Shan, have them modify the plane to leave earth's atmosphere so they can finally escape this wretched planet.

There's just one juvenile serpent on the plane, but she's not doing anything sinister at the moment, just trying to catch a ride from one continent to another like everyone else. Her cover is blown when a child unwittingly makes the Voorish sign.

The plane is a prison transport ferrying dangerous convicts. One is a killer who insists that the "worms inside" made him do it. He breaks free and havoc ensues.