

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns



# Family of Serpents

Nate Heiss  
*Building on a Budget*  
 Friday, December 17, 2004



PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

First, a puzzle. Once upon a time I wrote a puzzle along with each of my articles. I ran a lot of popular puzzles back then, but the best part about them was when there was an answer that I had not accounted for. For today's questions, there is at least one other way to accomplish puzzle #1, but there is only one true answer for #2. (The answers are at the bottom of the article.)

## Trivia Puzzler #Retro

**Question 1:** This is a rules conundrum, but it can happen!

How can I cast **Searing Wind** with my **Isochron Scepter**?

**Question 2:** Ok, this is less of a rules conundrum, but when you see where the question came from I'm sure you'll smile the way I did:

"Can my opponent do something that doesn't make sense, such as casting both **Holy Strength** and **Unholy Strength** on his **Air Elemental**?"

## A Family of Serpents

*Champions of Kamigawa* has provided me with the opportunity to talk about a particularly cool tribe. As you all know, I am a sucker for tribal decks, so how could I pass up the opportunity to write about a Snake deck. Now, I don't completely understand how the Snake men of Kamigawa got to look so different than your regular ol' **Tangle Asp**, but I am sure that being from an entirely different plane has something to do with it.

Back in the day, Snakes were about **poison**. 10 Poison counters and that's the game. These days they have all sorts of cool functions, none of which are poison related. (I guess some of the Orochi guys have a kind of slow venom that keeps things tapped for an extra turn, but that's a whole different ballgame.)

The one thing that these Snakes have is family. I had no idea that they were so family oriented, but there are legends that deal with the dad, sister, and brother. (What happened to the mother?) At any rate, this slithery family really knows how to put the bite on your opponent.

There are a few different options when building Snakes – I went for a Snake/Shaman blend so I could best utilize Sachi. The large amount of mana that she can generate when paired with other Shamans lets you cast whatever you want.

**Time of Need** is another great card to use in this deck, since it allows you to fetch up more copies of any of your legendary creatures after they get killed. It also has the nice effect of letting you cut back on a few rares, like Seshiro. Speaking of Seshiro, he is quite the beating! +2/+2 is a gigantic bonus, plus his ability is simply devastating. Once you get a few members of this Snake family on the table things get ugly quickly.

I decided to include **Orochi Eggwatchers** and a couple of **Konda's Banners** in order to make lots of fodder snakes that will get pumped to large sizes. Your little 0/1 baby Snake could easily become a 4/5 with a little footwork (tailwork?).

The last touch was to add a few **Fireballs** to act as a mana outlet for Sachi and her merry band of Shamans.

Let's take a look at the decklist.

Final Wrap-up  
[Top 8 Video Archives](#)





Family of Serpents		
Main Deck 60 cards		
18 Forest	4 Viridian Shaman	3 Fireball
5 Mountain	4 Tangle Asp	2 Konda's Banner
23 lands	4 Orochi Eggwatcher	4 Time of Need
	4 Orochi Ranger	9 other spells
	4 Sachi, Daughter of Seshiro	
	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	
	2 Seshiro the Anointed	
	2 Sosuke, Son of Seshiro	
	28 creatures	

This deck plays out by casting Snake after Snake starting on the second turn. Eventually you will cast one of your legends and things will go more easily. You will often have a choice of Tribe Elder, **Time of Need**, or **Tangle Asp** on the second turn. I would recommend using the Tribe Elder, then the **Time of Need**. It is best to save the asp for later when there is a dangerous creature that needs to be blocked.

Sometimes you will be in a position where you are unable to swing in with your Snake legends because they will trade with something on the other side of the table. Often it is best in such situations to just let the Eggwatcher start making little dudes that have gained some bonus from those legends. After a few turns, attacking will look a lot more favorable. If you have Seshiro out, it is fine to attack and trade some guys as long as one or two make it through and net you cards. This will allow you to continually replenish your ranks while keeping up the pressure on your opponent, even in the face of a large blocker.

#### Tips on Playing the Deck

- Use your **Fireballs** wisely. I really wanted to fit some more burn into the deck, and if you can't afford Banners, that is what I would recommend adding. It can be really annoying to be without removal.
- Remember that the **Orochi Ranger** is also a Warrior, so it will gain the extra ability from Sosuke!
- Keep in mind that you have several Shamans to use with Sachi, including **Viridian Shaman**, **Sakura-Tribe Elder**, and **Orochi Eggwatcher**.
- Try to be really aggressive – if you sit around for too long you will fall prey to more powerful cards. While Snakes are cool, they are no Goblins or Elves.

#### Adding Money to the Deck

You could easily go with a full compliment of Seshiro. He is particularly amazing. Aside from that, you might want **Viridian Zealot**, since it has the



Warrior trait for Sosuke. They would probably just replace [Viridian Shamans](#) though, so it is really up to which ability you think is more relevant. I would strongly recommend adding an [Okina](#), [Temple to the Grandfathers](#) since there are no drawbacks and it will let your legends attack more often without fear of dying.

Until next time, "[take zero](#)".

- Nate Heiss  
BuildingOnABudget and NateHeiss on [Magic Online](#)

---

## Trivia Puzzler #Retro

**Answer 1:** Cringe.

First, you must start with a [Mirror Golem](#), an [Isochron Scepter](#), and a [March of the Machines](#) in play, with a [Searing Wind](#) in your graveyard. Cast a [Vesuvan Doppelganger](#), copying the [Mirror Golem](#), Imprinting the [Searing Wind](#) on the Doppelganger. Then on your next upkeep, switch the Doppelganger to the animated [Isochron Scepter](#), and you will be able to cast the [Searing Wind](#) from it!

**Answer 2:** Straight from the Alpha Rulebook, baby! And the answer?

"Yes, these effects are magical, after all."



[Discuss](#) on the message boards



[Respond](#) via email



[Nate Heiss](#) archive

---

[About Us](#) | [Jobs](#) | [New to the Game?](#) | [Inside Wizards](#) | [Find a Store](#) | [Press](#) | [Help](#) | [Sitemap](#)

---

© 1995-2007 Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.  
[Terms of Use](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)

