

DÍA DE LOS DINOSAURIOS MUERTOS

A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR 4-5 PCS OF 14TH LEVEL



THE CITY OF NEW AZTLÁN IS IN THE MIDST OF the most important religious celebration of the year. Unfortunately for the residents of New Aztlán, something evil stirs beneath the city. Unbeknownst to them, the ancient ruins New Aztlán was built atop were in fact from a civilization of feathered serpents—dinosaurs!

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GM INTRODUCTION

The city of New Aztlán is in the midst of the most important religious celebration of the year, the Day of the Dead. Dedicated to the goddess Mictecacihuatl (*meeK-TEKA-kee-wadl*), the day marks a date when the barriers between the realm of the dead and the living are thin. Willing spirits of the dead are summoned into skeletal vessels, called *calacas*, and for the day they can meet their living descendants and spend the day celebrating. The *calacas* are artfully decorated skeleton sculptures usually made of plaster, wire, and clay, and decorated with the belongings of the deceased. Clerics work minor magic to ask the deceased to briefly return during *el día de los muertos*.

Unfortunately for the residents of New Aztlán, something evil stirs beneath the city. Unbeknownst to them, the ancient ruins New Aztlán was built atop were in fact from a civilization of feathered serpents—dinosaurs!

When the first Day of the Dead celebrations began, the slumbering dead of the ancient dinosaur civilization awoke, only to find their beloved city overrun by filthy, hairless apes. The raptors have awakened in secret on each Day of the Dead since, and have been plotting to rise and reclaim what is theirs.

Soon New Aztlán will bow to their undead, feathery overlords!

Pronunciation of Names & Terms (and English alternatives)

As this adventure is rooted in Central American mythology, it uses names and terms in either Nahuatl (the language of the Aztec Triple Alliance) or in Mexican Spanish that may be unfamiliar to English-speaking GMs and players. Below are pronunciations

and English translations of names and terms used in this adventure. The Nahuatl and Spanish terms are used throughout this document, but English translations can be used if the Nahuatl names prove unwieldy or confusing in play.

Name	Pronunciation	Meaning	English Equivalent
(New) Aztlán	(New) <i>ahz-LAN</i>	Name of the city in which the adventure takes place.	(New) Heron City
Mictecacihuatl	<i>meeK-teh-cuh-WAHDL</i>	Goddess of the Dead [NG].	Lady Death
Miquiztlicoaatl	<i>mee-KIS-tli-ko-AHDL</i>	Villain of the adventure; evil velociraptor priest	Death Serpent
Coaxoch	<i>co-AX-otch</i>	High priestess of Miquiztlicoaatl.	Serpent Flower
Zócalo	<i>SO-cah-lo</i>	Center of town, town square.	Town Square, City Center, Grand Plaza
<i>Calaca</i>	<i>KA-laka</i>	Plaster-and-paper reanimated skeleton figure, containing the soul of an honored ancestor.	Blessed Dead
Tlaloc	<i>tla-LOK</i>	God of storms [LN], husband of Chalchiuhtlicue.	Storm Lord
Chalchiuhtlicue	<i>cha-CHIW-tli-que</i>	Goddess of rivers and lakes [LN], wife of Tlaloc.	She of the Jade Skirt
Quetzalcoatl	<i>ketzal-ko-AHDL</i>	God of wind and knowledge [CG].	Feathered Serpent
Huitzilopochtli	<i>huitsilo-POCHTLI</i>	God of war, sun, fire, conquest, and rulership [LE]. Brother of Itzpapalotl.	The Southern Hummingbird
Itzpapalotl	<i>eetspaa-pa-LAHDL</i>	Demon goddess of stars, patron of pregnant women and woman warriors [CE]. Sister of Huitzilopochtli.	The Obsidian Butterfly

BACKGROUND

Miquiztlicoaatl, a **velociraptor mummy lord**, is the true power behind the risen raptors. When Miquiztlicoaatl lived, he was a priest-king and usurper of the feathered throne. When he rose to power, the raptor and his supporters broke from the old gods, the twin Feathered Lords, and established a selfish new religion that sought immortality through undeath.

It was not to last. For Miquiztlicoaatl's hubris, Quetzalcoatl and the Feathered Lords called down a flood to sink the Feathered Capital and cursed Miquiztlicoaatl and any who had followed him to never find rest in the afterlife. Miquiztlicoaatl vowed he would return, reclaim his kingdom, and take his place as a living god.

Many centuries later, humans founded New Aztlán upon the ruins of the Feathered Capital. Three hundred and sixty years ago, the people of New Aztlán celebrated the first Day of the Dead. Little did they know that the necrotic energies involved in raising calacas for the Day of the Dead also revived the ancient dead of the Feathered Kingdom. For the past three hundred and sixty years, the raptors have awoken only on the Day of the Dead. From their perspective, less than a year has passed since the Feathered Capital sank. In that year, Miquiztlicoaatl quietly had his servants kidnap celebrants and sacrifice them to the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*, an artifact altar made from a slab of polished obsidian.

This is the 361st day of the fragmented year that Miquiztlicoaatl has been returned to this world, the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* has been infused with enough necrotic energy to keep the gateway to the land of the dead open permanently. At the dawn of the next day, the calacas will not fall back into slumber, and Miquiztlicoaatl's undead armies will reclaim New Aztlán—unless the souls trapped within the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* are released.

OVERVIEW

Día de los Dinosaurios Muertos is divided into three parts: first, an exploration of the Day of the Dead festival in New Atzlan followed by an undead assault on the city, and finally a dungeon delve into the ruined undercity of New Atzlan and the final confrontation with Miquiztlicoaatl.

The adventure begins with the adventurers at the Day of the Dead festival in the Zócalo of New Aztlán. The festival is attacked at sundown by undead velociraptors, most of whom rise up from the canals that cross the city, pulling themselves out of the silt and muck. Observant characters can notice this, and then track the greater undead to four entrances around the Zócalo. If the PCs fail to track the raptor commanders to these entrances, they can ask citizens about where such an attack might come from.

The characters must then navigate the Undercity of the Feathered Ones to learn what has caused its ancient people to return to life. In their investigations, they learn that the source of evil in New Aztlán is Miquiztlicoaatl the Death Serpent and the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* (see Monster Index, Miquiztlicoaatl), and he must be destroyed.

CHARACTER HOOKS

- ▶ A character who wishes to commune with a deceased loved one has heard that in New Aztlán, it is possible to spend a single day with those who have gone before.
- ▶ A character hears that New Aztlán is built on the ruins of a much older city, one that, due to local superstition, has never been explored. It must be full of treasure!
- ▶ A character is watching the stars or talking to their god, and hears whispers of something dark stirring beneath the earth. They receive a vision of day of joyous reuniting unmade by feathers and bone. The vision points them towards New Aztlán.
- ▶ The characters have heard tales of the Day of the Dead festival and travel to New Aztlán as tourists.

PART I: THE DAY OF THE DEAD

This part of the adventure takes place in the Zócalo of New Aztlán.

The streets of New Aztlán are filled with celebrants and with merchants hawking paper flowers, sugar skulls, masks, and candy. All are dressed in their finest clothes: men in elaborately embroidered *charro* suits, wide sombreros, and long pointed shoes; women in white blouses, intricately-woven shawls, and colorful skirts. Many are accompanied by ornately decorated skeletal figures who walk unaided and chat loudly with anyone who will listen.

Occasionally, priests and priestesses pass unimpeded through the crowd, dressed in traditional ceremonial clothing, with elaborate headdresses made from feathers, jaguar claws, crocodile teeth, jade, and gold, each different depending on the god they serve. One priestess stands beside a family of three in a small shrine, chanting an incantation over a prostrate skeleton—and when she completes her spell, the skeleton sits bolt upright and thanks her profusely before departing with the family. A grand parade fills the main thoroughfare, with tumblers and flame jugglers in wild feathered clothing.

New Aztlán is a thriving metropolis, and the Day of the Dead is a day when many merchants come to town. Characters can buy a multitude of unusual items if they have the money, including uncommon and rare magic items. Discerning buyers can notice that there are con artists trying to pass off worthless trinkets as magic items. When buying a magic item, there is an 80% chance that the item is a fake. The buyer must make a Wisdom (Insight) check contested against the merchant's Charisma (Deception) check to determine if the item is counterfeit.

A character can hire a cleric to build a *calaca* (see sidebar) and animate it for them for 200 gp. They need to have something belonging to the deceased in order to successfully animate the *calaca*. If the characters already have a *calaca* built and ready,

Calacas

The *calacas* in this adventure are based on the real-life Day of the Dead practice of making whimsical skeleton figures to celebrate the deceased. In New Aztlán, they are constructs that contain the willingly returned souls of the dead. This magic only works on the Day of the Dead. Turn Undead and other similar powers do not affect *calacas*, as they are constructs, not undead. They are otherwise identical to **skeletons**, and an animate *calaca* is the person they were in life with the **skeleton template*** applied, though they have the construct type, not undead.

Calacas can consume (but do not require) food and drink, and much of the preparation of the festival involves obtaining alcohol and food that the deceased enjoyed in life for them to savor before returning to the land of the dead. Generally, *calacas* spend time with their families and friends, catching up on news (like holiday letters, but to the dead) and telling young ones stories.

A *calaca* is made by creating a skeleton out of *papier-mâché*, wire, and paint, as well as an object treasured by the deceased. Any spirit may inhabit a given *calaca* so long as an object specific to them is included in the ritual, but the spirits of the dead prefer skeletons similar to the form they had in life. On the Day of the Dead, anyone capable of casting *raise dead* or *animate dead* may enact a 10-minute ritual, provided they know it, to bind the deceased's soul to the *calaca*. At sunrise, all *calacas* become inert. A *calaca* may be reused from year to year, so long as it's well-maintained. *Calacas* are passed down within families from generation to generation, and often stored in a place of honor for the rest of the year.

* Cedar Collins, *Template of Horrors*, EN World EN5ider, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/template-of-3538942>

the ritual costs 50 gp. Finally, local clerics are happy to teach characters with the ability to cast *raise dead* or *animate dead* how to enact the ritual.

THE CITY OF NEW AZTLÁN

New Aztlán sits in the middle of a lake. On the lake are floating gardens that provide most of the food for the city. Four bridges connect the city to the mainland. In addition to roads, the city is crisscrossed by canals. This adventure largely takes place in the Zócalo, New Aztlán's central district. Directly beneath the Zócalo lies the ruined center of the City of the Feathered Ones.

SITES OF INTEREST

The following locations in New Aztlán are usable in Part I of this adventure while the characters explore the city and interact with its people, but can also be used as locations of mayhem and panic in Part II

- 1. The Sacred Precinct.** East of the Zócalo is the religious center of the city, home of the Temple of the Sixth Sun (a newer god; a human who sacrificed himself to become the new sun and thus end the necessity for human sacrifice), the Temple of Mictecacihuatl, the Tower of Winds (temple of Quetzalcoatl), and the Temple of Huitzilopochtli.
- 2. The National Palace.** To north of the Zócalo is the primary seat of government, the National Palace, where the Revered Speaker (equivalent to a prime minister) of the city-state of New Aztlán leads the Parliament.
- 3. Plaza Gabriel.** A large plaza at the center of the Merchant's Quarter (to the south of the Zócalo), this place is known for the mariachi bands and other musicians that perform open air concerts every day and for the excellent open-air restaurants that ring the place.
- 4. Cheerful Chihuahuas.** Catrina, the owner, sells more than just chihuahuas—she also carries flying snakes, frogs, mastiffs, cats, lizards, rats, and parrots—but the tiny dogs are what she's most well known for. Any

animals purchased from Catrina come pre-trained with two actions.*

- 5. University of New Aztlán.** The people of New Aztlán have always valued public education, and their national university is completely free to the public. The University strongly supports the study of arcane magic, and welcomes wizards and other arcanists who wish to further their studies. Any wizard spell of up to 4th level can be copied into a spellbook here, but the process takes five times as long.
- 6. Grand Zoological Park and Gardens.** Once the home of the emperor's palace and zoo, it was converted into a public park when New Aztlán became a parliamentary democracy. A **flumph** stays at the zoo voluntarily in exchange for conversation with tourists.
- 7. The Butterfly and Cricket.** A famous restaurant south of the Zócalo, this place has the very best insect-based food in the city, including their famous cricket tacos (insects are a staple of cuisine in New Aztlán).
- 8. Four Hundred Rabbits.** Part bar, part distillery, part brewery, and all temple, this watering hole in the Sacred Precinct is dedicated to the Centzon Totochtin (*sen-TSON to-to-CHTIN*), four hundred rabbit gods of drunken revelry. The priests here both create and serve various beers (mostly corn beer), pulque (fermented agave sap), tequilas, and mezcals. The priests brewed most of the drinks sold on the Day of the Dead.
- 9. Hotel Quetzal.** A posh, expensive hotel (5 gp per night) north of the Zócalo with an exceptional bar on the first floor.
- 10. Jose's Flophouse.** A rather seedy flophouse (2 sp per night) south of the Zócalo.

* Jensen Toperzer, Pets for Players, EN World EN5ider, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/1882495>

ZÓCALO AND THE SACRED PRECINCT

Most of the festivities take place in the Zócalo, a spacious communal area dominated by the temple to Tlaloc and a sports arena for playing *ollamaliztli* (*olla-ma-LIZ-tli*), a game similar to basketball and handball. The area is also marked by grassy green lawns, flower gardens, and trees. Today, merchants hawk wares from tents set up on the grassy areas, and each of the major temples besides the Tower of Waters have a small tent set up for various services, such as information and music.

ENTRANCES TO THE UNDERCITY

As New Aztlán was built atop the City of the Feathered Ones, many of its waterways lead to the city below.

The Zócalo Communal Well is 200 feet deep and enchanted with a permanent *purify water* spell. Halfway down is a hole in the wall that leads to the Undercity East Gate (see Part III, Area 4). There is a ladder on the well wall. Under the North Canal Bridge is a hidden sewer grate that leads to Undercity North Gate (see Part III, Area 1). Stairs lead down to the water's surface from the canal edge.

East of the Zócalo is the Tower of Waters, a temple to Tlaloc and Chalchiuhtlicue. Inside is a 50-foot deep circular stepwell. Halfway down, near the surface of the water, is a hole in a wall that leads to the Undercity West Gate (see Part III, Area 2).

LOCAL RUMORS

Roll once on this table when the player characters ask residents about the city, and use other information from this table to clarify as needed

LOCAL RUMOR TABLE

d8 Rumor

- 1 New Aztlán is built on the ruins of a much older city. In fact, the Temple of the Sixth Sun was built over an ancient temple to Quetzalcoatl, which was sealed.
- 2 No one goes into the ruins under the city. Some claim this is because it's infested with disease, I heard it's because the city was cursed by the gods for an unknown crime.
- 3 The people of the old city defied Quetzalcoatl and were drowned for their hubris.
- 4 Papa says that the feathered serpent carvings along the canals aren't of Quetzalcoatl at all, but of evil serpents who lived before us.
- 5 Every year, people go missing on the Day of the Dead and are never found. We always search for them, but no one is willing to enter the abandoned city under the Zócalo.
- 6 I heard noises from the neighborhood well (see "Zócalo Communal Well," above) this morning. Creepy.
- 7 Once, a friend of mine said she found dragon bones in the sewers. But dragons don't live anywhere near here—right? (Partially false: no dragons, just dinosaurs.)
- 8 Anyone who has gone missing during the Day of the Dead in previous years cannot be summoned as a *calaca*. That means they're still alive, I know it!



NORTH CANAL

TO THE NORTH:
GOVERNMENT CENTER
& POLITICAL DISTRICT

INFORMATION
TENT

BALL COURT

TOWER OF WATERS:
TEMPLE TO TLALOC
& CHALCHIUHTLICUE

COMMUNAL
WELL

MUSIC
TENT



PRIESTS OF
QUETZALCOATL



PRIESTS OF
THE SIXTH SUN



PRIESTS OF
MICLANCHUATL
1 SQUARE = 10 FT.



PRIESTS OF
HUITZILOPOCHTLI



TO THE SOUTH:
MERCHANT'S QUARTER

SOUTH CANAL

PART II: RAPTOR ATTACK!

AFTER THE CHARACTERS HAVE HAD SOME TIME TO explore the festival and get comfortable, the raptors attack. From this point on, roll on the RAPTOR ATTACK and CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT tables every 30 seconds the characters spend in the Zócalo, even if another encounter is currently in progress. They may be able to stand against the tide of undead for a time but must eventually seek either refuge or the source.

The zombie and skeleton dinosaurs pull themselves up out of the mud in the canals. They are covered in mud and silt, with still-flopping fish caught in their decaying bodies. Their appearance contrasts starkly with the priest and mummy dinosaurs, who are pristine and resplendent. All dinosaurs speak Draconic. If the characters cannot save civilians with information about the invaders, they can still track the higher-tier undead back to the Undercity by making a DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check.

RAPTOR ATTACK TABLE

d20 Raptors

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-10 | 3d4 velociraptor skeletons |
| 11-14 | 1d6 velociraptor zombies , led by a raptor priest |
| 15-16 | 1d4 velociraptor skeletons riding allosaurus skeletons |
| 17-18 | 1d4 velociraptor zombies riding ankylosaurus zombies |
| 19 | 2 raptor priests each riding zombie triceratops |
| 20 | 2 raptor mummy nobles, accompanied by another group (roll again, rerolling 20s). These raptors are a couple. They will not initiate combat; instead they simply watch the work of their minions. They comment loudly and obnoxiously on the battle, and mention that their lord Miquiztlicatl will be pleased. If attacked, they will first try to inflict their Curse of Itzapalotl, then use their Dread Gaze and attempt to flee back to the closest entrance to the Undercity. |

CIVILIAN INVOLVEMENT TABLE

d20 Civilian Event

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 1-10 | 2d12 frightened commoners and <i>calacas</i> (as skeletons with AC 10, hp 4, and no weapons) of mixed ages. 1 in 6 chance of having seen raptors emerge from the sewer grates by the North Canal (see “Entrances to the Undercity,” above). |
| 11-13 | 2d6 angry merchants (as nobles) around an upended tent, fighting off raptors with improvised clubs. Each has a random trinket. |
| 14-16 | 2d6 city guards wearing jaguar skin cloaks and jaguar skull helmets. |
| 18-19 | 1d6 priests of a random god: roll 1d6.
1 Mictlancihuatl (Death, Life)
2 Tlaloc (Storm, Nature)
3 Chalchiuhtlicue (Nature, Life)
4 The Sixth Sun (Life, Sun)
5 Huitzilopochtli (War, Sun)
6 Quetzalcoatl (Storm, Knowledge)
Clerics of Tlaloc and Chalchiuhtlicue report that raptors have been coming out of the Tower of Waters (see “Entrances to the Undercity,” above). Clerics of Quetzalcoatl and the Sixth Sun will report sensing a terrible darkness deep beneath the Temple of the Sixth Sun, likely in the ruins the temple was built over top of. Clerics of Mictlancihuatl and Huitzilopochtli are coordinating evacuation efforts along the main roads out of the city and advising civilians to avoid the canals. |
| 20 | 1d6 <i>calacas</i> (as knights with the skeleton template) from a military memorial service. |

REWARDS

Citizens all ask to be rescued from the undead dinosaurs, and they will try to reward the characters if saved. Most civilians can't do much, but **priests** can cast spells, and merchants have a 25% chance of having a random potion.

If the characters choose to assist with the city evacuation before entering the Undercity, various priests of the gods provide their blessings as rewards:

- ▶ **Tlaloc and Chalchiuhtlicue:** For the next week, beasts and water elementals that you can see are charmed and friendly towards you.
- ▶ **Quetzalcoatl:** You gain advantage on the

next three Intelligence (History, Religion, Arcana, and Nature) checks you make within the next 24 hours.

- ▶ **Mictecacihuatli:** During the next 24 hours, you may make up to 3 death saving throws with advantage.
- ▶ **Huitzilopochtli:** Once in the next 24 hours, you may gain a +10 bonus on a single attack roll or ability check.

PART III: THE FEATHERED CAPITAL

GENERAL DUNGEON FEATURES

- ▶ **Doors.** All doors are made of porous stone and are stuck due to water expansion.
- ▶ **Light.** Unless otherwise noted, dim light is shed throughout by bioluminescent algae, mosses, mold, fungi, and harmless freshwater jellyfish.
- ▶ **Sewage.** Unless otherwise noted, all exterior, ground-level areas are covered in 1 foot of stagnant sewer water. Stalagmites and broken rubble litter the floor, making exterior areas difficult terrain. The undead here are never hindered by the water. Water is infested with sewer plague (as in the GM's core rulebook). Any time a character is completely submerged in water, they must make a DC 11 Constitution save or become infected.
- ▶ **Ceilings.** The ceiling of the main cavern is 250 feet. Interior rooms are 20 feet high, unless otherwise stated.

1. UNDERCITY NORTH GATE

This large stone arch is decorated with frescoes of velociraptors at market, and has a gold coin symbol inscribed atop the arch.

Interacting with the Raptors

All intelligent raptors speak Draconic. Most of the undead raptor civilians left in the city believe they are living out their old lives, that they are still alive, the sun is shining, and the city was never destroyed. They see the characters as strange foreigners and are not initially hostile. If asked about the situation, they blithely explain that Miquiztlicatl's soldiers are bringing back sacrifices so they may all be made immortal and overthrow the gods themselves. They happily explain their religion (which boils down to blind worship of Miquiztlicatl and extravagant self-centeredness) and suggest the characters convert. If confronted with irrefutable proof that they are undead and they are being deluded by Miquiztlicatl, the raptors break down, scream, and immediately become hostile; in turn, other raptors within hearing of the breakdown investigate the disturbance.

Characters may attempt a DC 28 Charisma (Persuasion) check as an action to calm a berserk raptor and convince that they should join the characters against Miquiztlicatl. This DC drops by 2 for each raptor allied with the party, but cannot be lower than 20. All raptor priests and mummies are perfectly aware of the true situation, but are reluctant to attack characters when normal undead raptors are present unless the characters are proven interlopers or actively hostile, as this would reveal their deception. If they see that the characters have raptor followers, they pretend to be convinced and guide them to the Gladiator Stone, where they command the **tyrannosaurus rex zombie** to kill the characters.

2. UNDERCITY WEST GATE

This large stone arch is decorated with frescoes of velociraptors playing ball and conducting ritual sacrifices, and has the symbol of a ring from the ball court inscribed atop the arch.

3. RUINED SOUTH GATE

This gate is caved-in. If excavated (an arduous, 12-hour process of manual labor), it leads to a grate in a corner of the Grand Zoological Park and Gardens (see Part I, Area 8).

4. UNDERCITY EAST GATE

This large stone arch is decorated with a fresco of an imperious velociraptor in a grand feathered headdress, and has the symbol of a butterfly inscribed atop the arch.

5. BALL COURT

This ball court is an I-shaped arena with two circular hoops at either corner of the middle rectangle. There are stadium seats around the court, plus a box for the nobility. The walls are covered in frescos depicting velociraptors engaged in sport.

Two teams of five **velociraptor skeletons** are playing a ball game. The objective is to get a heavy rubber ball through a hoop on either side of the court. Five more **velociraptor skeletons** watch on the sidelines. In the elevated private box sit two **raptor mummies**, a **raptor priest**, and a **velociraptor skeleton** playing a drum.

When one team loses, they are brought before the nobles and play-act being “executed,” with the priest miming cutting out hearts from their nonexistent flesh with a ceremonial knife. Each “heart” is placed on an altar. All assembled will bow their heads and recite a prayer to Miquiztlicatl. The priest will then return the hearts to the players, who “awaken,” and the whole game begins again. If the characters speak to any of the spectators, they talk incessantly about the game, commenting as though it were a perfectly normal sporting match.

If attacked, the raptors will retaliate, but aim to knock out intruders, not to kill. When the characters regain consciousness, they are dressed in appropriate sporting gear and forced to play the game against the opposing team. If there are fewer than five characters, a velociraptor skeleton joins them to even the teams; if there are more than five characters, they will face an equal number of skeletal raptors on the opposing team. The playing field is clean and dry.

Treat the game as a combat round where instead of attacks, each player on the characters’ team makes either a Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check opposed to similar checks on the raptor team. If more than half the players on a team succeed on the opposed check, that team makes a basket and scores one point. The game ends after five rounds and the team with the most points wins. If a character is caught cheating (their Dexterity [Sleight of Hand] vs. the **raptor priest** referee’s Wisdom [Perception]), the priest penalizes their team 1 point.

If the characters win, the opposing team is “executed.” The priest compliments the victors and allows them to leave. If the characters lose, they are executed for real as sacrifices to Miquiztlicatl. If the characters at any point refuse to play the game or try to escape, they’ll have to fight their way out; this time, the ball players will join in, and all fight to the death.

6. EMPEROR’S FEAST HALL

You enter a magnificent feast hall, its tables piled high with food and treasure: gold jewelry, jade masks, steaming cups of spiced hot chocolate, roasted salamanders, crayfish, tacos made with roasted grasshoppers and mealworms, and sweet cactus liquor. A dozen raptors sit around a table, and their conversation pauses as you enter. One raptor mummy stands and rasps, “Ah, our honored guests have arrived! Please, sit. Feast with us!”

The **raptor mummy** who greets the characters is Coaxoch, high priestess of Miquiztlicatl.



Around her neck is an obsidian key that unlocks the door to Area 10. A group of minor nobles regularly gathers in Miquiztlicoaatl's banquet hall to celebrate undeath. This group of 6 **velociraptor skeletons**, 4 **velociraptor priests**, and 2 **velociraptor mummies** is occasionally joined by **Miquiztlicoaatl the Death Serpent**. If the characters enter the feast hall on the Day of the Dead, Miquiztlicoaatl is in Area 10, enacting the ritual of the Inverted Sun. If they arrive here after the Day of the Dead has ended, Miquiztlicoaatl has a 50% chance of being here and a 50% chance of basking in the glow of the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* in Area 10.

The food here seems sumptuous and completely edible: The food is real, though it was magically conjured. The table is decorated with golden ornaments, holy symbols, jade masks, and intricate stone carvings worth a total of 1,200 gp.

If characters eat the food, they must make a DC 12 constitution save within the hour or be afflicted by the Curse of Itzpapalotl (see Monster Index, raptor mummy), unless the character is a *calaca*, construct, undead, a dinosaur, or a dragonborn. For those latter cases, the characters are affected as though they had consumed a *heroes' feast*. If characters susceptible to the curse sit, eat, and don't cause trouble, Coaxoch and her guests laugh politely, thank them for their time, and send them on their way after the feast. If any of the characters are able to benefit from the *heroes' feast* instead, the gathered raptors grow increasingly worried as the feast continues, then explode in rage and immediately attack the characters in question.

If the characters refuse to eat, Coaxoch slams her cup of chocolate on the table and roars, "How dare you refuse our hospitality! Minions, destroy the interlopers!" All revelers attack.

7. MERCHANT'S DISTRICT

This public square is set a few feet into the ground, increasing the water depth to 3 feet. The seven pyramid shaped buildings around the square, however, are on platforms, and are relatively dry

inside. Sixteen tents and stalls are set up in the water in the square. Each has one a **velociraptor skeleton** selling wares. The market seems oddly empty, with only 2d6 **velociraptor zombies** browsing the wares.

If attacked, merchants and patrons will call the guards; 1d6 **velociraptor skeletons** mounted on **ankylosaurus zombies** arrive 1d4 rounds later.

If questioned about why the market seems empty, its patrons will shrug and simply say that many people have gone off to fight a glorious war in the name of the Feathered Lords. They will no doubt return in time for the festival. Asked about anything else, and they will simply make small talk about the market. Each stall location additionally sells three trinkets for 5 gp each.

7A. APOTHECARY

There are potions sold here that cure the Curse of Itzpapalotl (200 gp each), but there is a 50% chance a given potion has spoiled over the centuries and acts as torpor poison (see GM's core rulebook).

7B. STORAGE ROOM

Most of the objects here are rotted through, but there are dozens of silver baubles and holy icons worth a total of 310 gp.

7C. BUNKHOUSE

A two-level bunkhouse for merchant travelers. Characters can buy a room here for 1 sp a day, but must take the upper floors, as the lower floors are covered with sewage.

7D. TAVERN.

2d6 patrons (**velociraptor skeletons**) are on the first floor, laughing, drinking, and eating, though the skeletal patrons' food falls right through their ribcages and onto the floor. Examination reveals that the "food" is mostly clay models that resemble food, while the "drinks" are either just sewer water or else vile concoctions that deal 1d6 poison damage to any living being consuming them.

7E. BUNKHOUSE

A two-level bunkhouse for wealthy travelers. Rooms here cost 2 gp per day, but the rooms on the second floor have actual beds stuffed with feathers. The rooms have heavy stone doors that can be locked and barricaded.

7F. TREASURY

A treasury house, guarded by 3 **raptor mummies** who alert the guard if threatened. Treat the contents as a challenge 5–10 treasure hoard.

7G. BOOKSTORE

Most of the books here are rotten or useless except for a text telling the history of the Feathered Capital, mostly about Miquiztlicatl's assassination of the emperor, his rise to power, and the establishment of his cult. Though obviously biased to portray Miquiztlicatl in a positive light, most characters will find the acts of brutality described to be abhorrent. Tucked between its pages is chance a random 5th-level *spell scroll*.

8. SKULL RACK

Before you stands a massive row of cubbyholes, each containing skulls. Most contain velociraptor skulls, but some contain goblin, orc, kobold, and dwarf skulls. Towards one end are far newer skulls; most of them once belonged to humans, elves, or dwarves.

The skulls all chatter mindlessly in their native languages, but occasionally they spout bits of truth. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check allows a character to hear the story of Miquiztlicatl, the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*, and his ultimate goal.

9. GLADIATOR STONE

Chained to this ancient obelisk is a resplendently-feathered **tyrannosaurus rex zombie**. Though undead, she is in excellent condition. She is more intelligent than average tyrannosaurus (Intelligence 3), but is still a mere beast

compared to her velociraptor masters. She is capable of mimicking speech like a parrot and speaking very rudimentary Draconic, though her understanding and reasoning is profoundly alien. She understands simple mathematical and spatial reasoning, but emotional concepts are well beyond her. She hums, chirps, and sings to herself to pass the time, but mostly she wants food or fun. Right now, she is bored, and the characters look delicious and entertaining.

Her body is a mass of treasure: she is a reanimated skeleton wrapped in a thick hide of tanned leather made from raptor sacrifices, and her feathers are taken from parrots, quetzal birds, and hummingbirds. Her eyes are two shining jade orbs, while her teeth and claws are obsidian. She wears golden chain and disc jewelry. Disassembled, the tyrannosaurus's body is worth 14,000 gp.

If approached peacefully and offered food (either real meat or clay "food" from the market), she may be enticed to assist the party instead of attacking them; this requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check. She will follow them around and attack anyone she is directed to attack.

10. TEMPLE OF THE FEATHERED LORDS

If the characters approach the outside of this building, read:

The massive pyramid before you sports painted friezes of feathered dinosaurs and snakes. Though the paint is as bright and fresh as the day the temple was built, it is clear that many of the carvings have been defaced. The repeated figures of the Feathered Lords have their faces chiseled out, while the images of Quetzalcoatl and his serpentine attendants are all eyeless and fangless. The stone doors at its zenith are shut, and the images carved into them glow with eerie black light.

Atop the stone stairs, the doors of the pyramid are locked with a key held by high priestess Coaxoch (Area 6). As an action, a character may

attempt a DC 28 Strength (Athletics) check to force the door. Regardless of the check's success or failure, the evil magic that holds the door shut deals 2d6 necrotic damage every time a creature attempts to open it without the key. Casting knock opens the door, but the noise alerts Miquiztlicoaatl inside, attracts the ball players in Area 5 and the **tyrannosaurus rex zombie** from Area 9, and the door's evil magic deals the caster 8d6 necrotic damage.

As the characters approach the heart of the pyramid, read:

The passage inside the pyramid spirals downward and is lined with carvings and murals. There are numerous places where images of the Feathered Lords are replaced with a newer carving of a male raptor in a huge headdress—the text beneath the image reads “Miquiztlicoaatl the Death Serpent.” Rows of murals depict Miquiztlicoaatl killing the former emperor, his raptor armies slaughtering unflatteringly depicted humanoids, and finally showing the Death Serpent holding standing atop an obsidian altar while his raptor armies march upon the heavens, set to kill the gods themselves. At the end of the hallway, you see the entrance to the heart of the pyramid.

The heart of the pyramid used to be the Temple of the Feathered Lords, but is now Miquiztlicoaatl's

tomb and throne room. The room is a 40-foot cube and is dimly-lit by the black glow of the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*, which sits on a raised plinth in the center of the room. If the characters arrive on the Day of the Dead, Miquiztlicoaatl stands at the center, intoning an incantation over the Stone, accompanied by 2 **raptor mummies**. If they arrive here after the Day of the Dead has ended, Miquiztlicoaatl has a 50% chance of being here and a 50% chance of celebrating his glorious victory with his court of nobles in Area 6, though his mummy guards remain here.

The *Stone of the Inverted Sun* can be destroyed by dealing 50 points of bludgeoning or sonic damage to it. Once destroyed, it releases 360 trapped souls, one from each year of Miquiztlicoaatl's rule. If Miquiztlicoaatl is still alive, these souls prevent him from using his legendary actions or casting spells. When Miquiztlicoaatl is defeated, they also lead the characters to his heart's resting place; an obsidian box in a secret alcove beneath the plinth holding the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*.

If the stone is broken after the dawn of the day after the adventure begins, Miquiztlicoaatl and all the other undead dinosaurs become immediately inert. Miquiztlicoaatl can then be simply destroyed then and there. The souls direct characters to his heart, so he may be permanently destroyed.

AFTERMATH

If the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* is destroyed before sunrise the next day, they simply stop and return to the mud below. If it is later, they collapse where they stand, lifeless and inert. In either case, once the characters return to the city, they have the gratitude of everyone in New Atzlán. If Miquiztlicoaatl was destroyed before the end of the Day of the Dead, the celebration cautiously

resumes. If the sun has risen on a new day, then the festival is joyfully rekindled, albeit without the *calacas'* company.

From here, the authorities of New Atzlan may have investigations to conduct in other areas of the Undercity, and who better to help than the heroes who slew Miquiztlicoaatl? Adventure awaits!

MONSTER INDEX

UNDEAD DINOSAURS

Skeleton and zombie versions of certain dinosaurs appear throughout this adventure. Skeleton and zombie versions of these dinosaurs can be created by applying the **skeleton template** or **zombie template*** to the base creature, with one exception: skeletons and *calacas* animated by the magic of the Day of the Dead do not suffer a penalty to Charisma and may speak all languages they knew in life, and *calacas* are constructs instead of undead.

Velociraptors, raptor priests, raptor mummies, and Miquiztlicoaatl himself can be found in this section.

Velociraptors are small, about the size of a mid-sized dog. While they can be up to 7 feet long including their long tails, they are only about 2 feet tall. They are pack hunters and extremely quick for their size. Velociraptors of the lost Feathered Kingdom kept their feathers well preened, and often wove the bright feathers of other animals, such as parrots or quetzals, into their own.

Velociraptors are the only intelligent dinosaurs in the Feathered Kingdom. Other dinosaurs, like ankylosaurs, triceratops, and tyrannosaurs possess bestial intelligence, and are treated as pets, steeds, or beasts of burden. To create a normal velociraptor for your own game, simply change its Intelligence score to 2.

* Cedar Collins, *Template of Horrors*, EN World EN5ider, <https://www.patreon.com/posts/template-of-3538942>

Intelligent Velociraptor

XP 600

CR 2

Neutral Small beast (awakened)

Initiative: +3

DEFENSE

AC: 15 (natural armor)

hp: 26 (4d8 + 8)

OFFENSE

Speed: 40 ft.

Pounce: If the velociraptor moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the velociraptor can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Melee Attack—Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Melee Attack—Claw: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage

STATISTICS

Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Con** 15 (+2)

Int 11 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+0)

Skills: Athletics +3, Acrobatics +5

Languages: Draconic

Senses: passive Perception 11

ECOLOGY

Environment: Warm Forests

Organization: Solitary, Pair, or Pack (3–6)

These ancient velociraptors were as intelligent as average humans. They can be found sometimes with armor, weapons, and class levels. They call themselves alternately Swift Hunters or Feather People in Draconic.

Raptor Priest

As a *velociraptor zombie*, except:

AC: 13 (chain shirt)

Skills: Medicine +5, Persuasion +3, Religion +2

Ability Scores: Wis 16 (+3), Cha 13 (+1)

Languages: Draconic, Infernal

Senses: Passive Perception 13

Traits: Divine Eminence and Spellcasting, as a **priest** NPC.

Raptor Mummy

XP 700

CR 3

As an *intelligent velociraptor*, except as above and:

Lawful Evil Small undead

AC: 11 (natural armor)

hp: 44 (9d8 + 18)

Saving Throws: Wis +2

Vulnerabilities: fire

Resistances: bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Immunities: necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities: charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Melee Attack—Multiattack: The mummy can use its Dreadful Glare and makes one attack with either its claws or bite. Melee attacks add 10 (3d6) necrotic damage.

Ability Scores: Str 16 (+1) Cha 12 (+1)

Senses: darkvision 60 ft.

TRAITS

Curse of Itzpapalotl: Targets struck by either the mummy's claws or bite take an extra 10 (3d6) necrotic damage and must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or suffer the Curse of Itzpapalotl. The cursed target's blood is filled with tiny obsidian larvae that prevent it from regaining hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse.

If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies. 1d4 rounds later, its body explodes into a swarm of obsidian butterflies (as **insect swarm**) that completely eviscerate the corpse. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare: As mummy.

Miquiztlicoaatl the Death Serpent

XP 15,000

CR 16

Lawful Evil Small undead

Initiative: +2

DEFENSE

AC: 17 (natural armor)

hp: 97 (13d8 + 39)

Saving Throws: Con +8, Int +5, Wis +9, Cha +8

Skills: History +5, Religion +5

Vulnerabilities: fire

Immunities: necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities: charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poison

OFFENSE

Speed: 40 ft.

Pounce: If Miquiztlicoaatl moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, Miquiztlicoaatl can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

Melee Attack—Multiattack: Miquiztlicoaatl uses his Dreadful Glare and makes one claw or bite attack.

Melee Attack—Bite: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and Curse of Itzpapalotl.

Melee Attack—Claw: *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and Curse of Itzpapalotl.

STATISTICS

Str 18 (+4) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Con** 17 (+3)

Int 11 (+0) **Wis** 18 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+3)

Languages: Draconic, Primordial, Infernal, Sylvan

Senses: darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

TRAITS

Magic Resistance: As mummy lord.

Rejuvenation: As mummy lord. Miquiztlicoaatl's heart is in a trapped secret chamber in the plinth that holds the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*.

Spellcasting: Miquiztlicoaatl is a 10th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *sacred flame, thaumaturgy*

1st Level (4 slots): *command, ray of sickness, shield of faith*

2nd Level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person, silence*

3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead, dispel magic*

4th level (3 slots): *divination, guardian of faith*

5th level (2 slots): *contagion, insect plague*

6th level (1 slot): *harm*

Curse of Itzpapalotl: Targets struck by either Miquiztlicoaatl's claws or bite take an extra 21 (6d6) necrotic damage (already included in his attacks) and must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or suffer the Curse of Itzpapalotl. The cursed target's blood is filled with tiny obsidian larvae that prevent it from regaining hit points, and its hit point maximum decreases by 10 (3d6) for every 24 hours that elapse.

If the curse reduces the target's hit point maximum to 0, the target dies. 1d4 rounds later, its body explodes into a swarm of obsidian butterflies (as **insect swarm**) that completely eviscerate the corpse. The curse lasts until removed by the *remove curse* spell or other magic.

Dreadful Glare: As mummy lord.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

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

Attack: Miquiztlicoaatl makes one bite or claw attack, or uses his Dreadful Glare.

Cloud of Butterflies: A blinding cloud of colorful butterflies surrounds Miquiztlicoaatl. Each creature within 5 feet of him must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be blinded until the end of their next turn.

Defiling Roar (Costs 2 actions): Miquiztlicoaatl unleashes a blood-curdling screech. Each living creature within 10 feet of Miquiztlicoaatl that can hear him must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution save or be stunned until the end of Miquiztlicoaatl's next turn.

Summon Undead (costs 2 actions): Miquiztlicoaatl invokes the power of the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* and summons an undead creature as if he had spent his action to do so (see *Stone of the Inverted Sun* sidebar on the next page).

Hummingbird Swarm (Costs 2 actions): Miquiztlicoaatl transforms into a swarm of brightly colored hummingbirds, moves up to 60 feet, and reverts to his normal form. While in this form, he is immune to all damage, and he cannot be grappled, petrified, knocked prone, restrained, or stunned. Equipment worn or carried by Miquiztlicoaatl remains in his possession.

ECOLOGY

Environment: Swamp

Organization: Solitary

Although technically Miquiztlicoaatl is in his lair, he does not take lair actions, and his regional effects are replaced by the effects of the *Stone of the Inverted Sun*. See the sidebar on the next page.

Stone of the Inverted Sun

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement by a creature of evil alignment)

The *Stone of the Inverted Sun* is a 4 foot wide, 7 foot long, 2 foot tall slab of polished black obsidian. It is extremely heavy and difficult to move, but is also fragile and made of volcanic glass. The surface is carved with images of undead velociraptors worshipping a black sun.

Once per year, if a sapient being is killed and their still-beating heart placed on the sun carving in the center of the altar, their blood is pumped into the grooves and their soul is trapped inside. As an action, the attuned creature may destroy a soul trapped in the altar to create undead. Created undead appear within 50 feet (500 feet if 360 souls are trapped within) and are incapacitated until the beginning of their next turn. What undead are created depends on the Hit Dice of the creature whose soul is used:

- ♦ 1–4 HD: one skeleton or zombie per soul (as *animate dead*)
- ♦ 4–5 HD: three to five skeletons or zombies per soul (as *animate dead*)

- ♦ 6 HD: one ghoul (as *create undead*)
- ♦ 7 HD: one ghast (as *create undead*)
- ♦ 8 HD: one wight (as *create undead*)
- ♦ 9 HD: one mummy (as *create undead*)

At the beginning of this adventure, the *Stone of the Inverted Sun* contains the souls of 300 creatures with 1–4 Hit Dice, 55 of creatures with 4–5 Hit Dice, two with 6 HD, one with 7 HD, one with 8 HD, and one with 9 HD.

Once the Stone contains 360 souls, it projects an aura of necrotic energy over a 500 square foot radius centered on itself. This energy has the following effects:

- ♦ Spells of the Necromancy school are Extended, as the sorcerer metamagic ability.
- ♦ *Calacas* and undead within the zone are permanent, sapient, retain their ability to speak, and do not become inanimate after the Day of the Dead is over.
- ♦ Undead with sunlight vulnerability lose their vulnerability.

