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UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCADE

CHOOSE YOUR DESTINY

DEATH QUEEN & THE LIFE STONE



Rising Phoenix Games



THE FIGMENT FACTORY

by
Rodney Sloan
and *Bob Storrar*



DEATH QUEEN & THE LIFE STONE

To play this adventure, you will need a copy of the **Dungeons & Dragons System Reference Document 5 or later**.

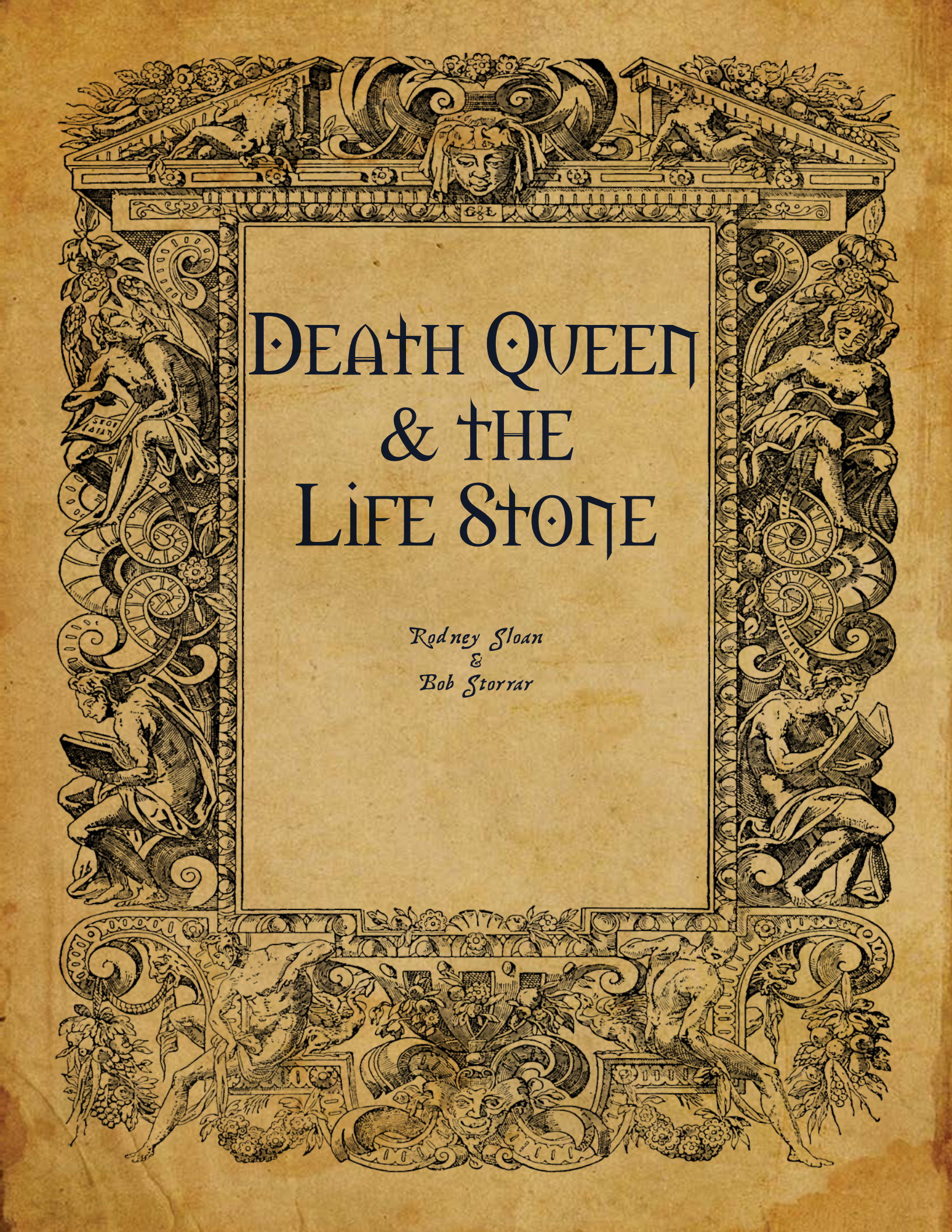
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The book cover features a highly detailed Art Nouveau border. At the top, a triangular pediment contains a central female face with flowing hair, flanked by two winged figures. The sides of the border are decorated with vertical panels: the left shows a winged figure reading a book, and the right shows a seated figure reading. The bottom section features two winged figures flanking a central face, with various floral and scrollwork elements interspersed throughout.

DEATH QUEEN
& THE
LIFE STONE

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How to play

This adventure is designed for a 1st level fighter or cleric.



You are about to embark on an epic adventure, guided by the choices you make. With determination and a little bit of luck, you may win through – but be assured – failure, even death, is never far off.

Begin reading as you would any other book, but when you reach a sentence like the one below, turn to the section number given in **bold**, such as in this example: **go to 0**.

Sometimes you will have a few options to choose from. Make your choice, head to that section, and continue reading. But be prepared to live by the consequences, for there is no turning back.

Sometimes you'll be asked to make a skill check, in which case roll a d20 as you would in a normal DUNGEONS & DRAGONS fifth edition game, then follow the instructions for success or failure.

Often you'll have to fight. Each monster has a set of tactics which tells you how they act in combat. Roll a Dexterity check for each creature to determine the initiative order, then play out the combat using the listed tactics and the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules. If you win, follow the instructions given in the section. If you die, well, death is an ever present risk. Perhaps you'll have better luck next time.

After combat, or before making a choice in a section with no combat or traps, you may use healing magic or

drink potions to regain lost hit points. When you do so, you gain the maximum number of hit points that spell or potion allows.

This adventure can also be played as a 1-on-1 game, with the game master (GM) paraphrasing the

read-aloud

text and running the monsters and NPCs. If you are a GM, feel free to embellish the adventure with extra details, puzzles, and encounters.

Remember, death lurks behind every corner. If it should find you, head back to the start and try again. The **More Adventure!** chapter provides additional options to keep each journey through this adventure fresh and unique. Whatever you do, don't give in. Survival brings great reward, and more adventures await. The world is counting on YOU!

To begin your adventure, **go to 1**.



More Adventure!



he adventure you are about to embark on can be played as is, or you can use the following rules to extend the game, making each playthrough fresh and unique. You can also use these rules in other

solo games in this series and elsewhere for the same reason. Because these rules increase the complexity of the game, they are optional, and not recommended for your first play.

THE STONE OF ASHIRAI

The Stone of Ashirai is a powerful artifact with the ability to influence the world with its corrupt magical energy. While the stone plays a central part in the adventure detailed in this book, it has the potential to influence events to a much larger degree. You can use the Stone of Ashirai in other solitaire adventures as a major quest item, with its powers chosen at random by rolling a d4 for each play session, or you can pick and choose from the following list of effects.

1. UNDYING

Creatures and NPCs that die during the course of the adventure have a chance of coming back to life.

Roll a d20 after a creature is killed. On a roll of 18 or more, the creature comes back to life. It has half its usual starting hit points. If the creature dies again, roll again, each time halving its starting hit points. The creature is worth half the usual XP, but this XP is not halved again if the creature rises more than once.

Creatures that rise again are undead creatures, and are susceptible to Turn Undead and similar spells and abilities.

Creatures can be prevented from rising again by sprinkling their corpse with holy water. One vial of holy water holds enough to sprinkle 3 corpses.

2. DARKNESS

Unnatural darkness shrouds the land about you. You suffer a -2 penalty on ranged attacks and Wisdom (Perception) checks based on sight. Darkvision and normal light sources do not negate this penalty, but a *daylight* spell or other magical forms of light do.

3. THE HAND OF FATE

Your enemies are blessed with unnatural luck.

Set aside a d20, with the '20' facing up. Each time an enemy creature makes a roll, they must use the value showing on the set aside dice instead if that result would be higher. If they do, reduce the number on the set aside dice by 1.

Whenever a creature dies, raise the number on the dice by 1. The value on the dice can never be more than 20.

4. BLOODLUST

Creatures you encounter are consumed with a frenzied bloodlust.

Enemies that would normally flee if they dropped below a certain number of hit points or if their allies died instead fight on. These creatures also gain a +2 bonus on Wisdom saves against fear effects.

MONSTER OPTIONS

If you'd like to ramp up the difficulty slightly, you can have a tribe of **goblins** allied to the **bandits** mentioned in this adventure.

The duskin goblins are a horrible subspecies of goblin. With flaky white, almost dusty skin, and sunken eye sockets, the duskin appear more like miniature mummified corpses than living creatures.

Duskin Goblin

Small humanoid (goblinoid), neutral evil

Armor Class 15

Hit Points 6 (2d6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)

Skills Stealth +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Common, Goblin

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Cannibalistic. A duskin goblin can spend a round feasting on the flesh of a recently killed corpse. If it does so, it regains 1d4 hit points.


Nimble Escape. The goblin can take the Disengage or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Tactics. Duskin goblins favor their shortbows, using every opportunity to evade close combat.



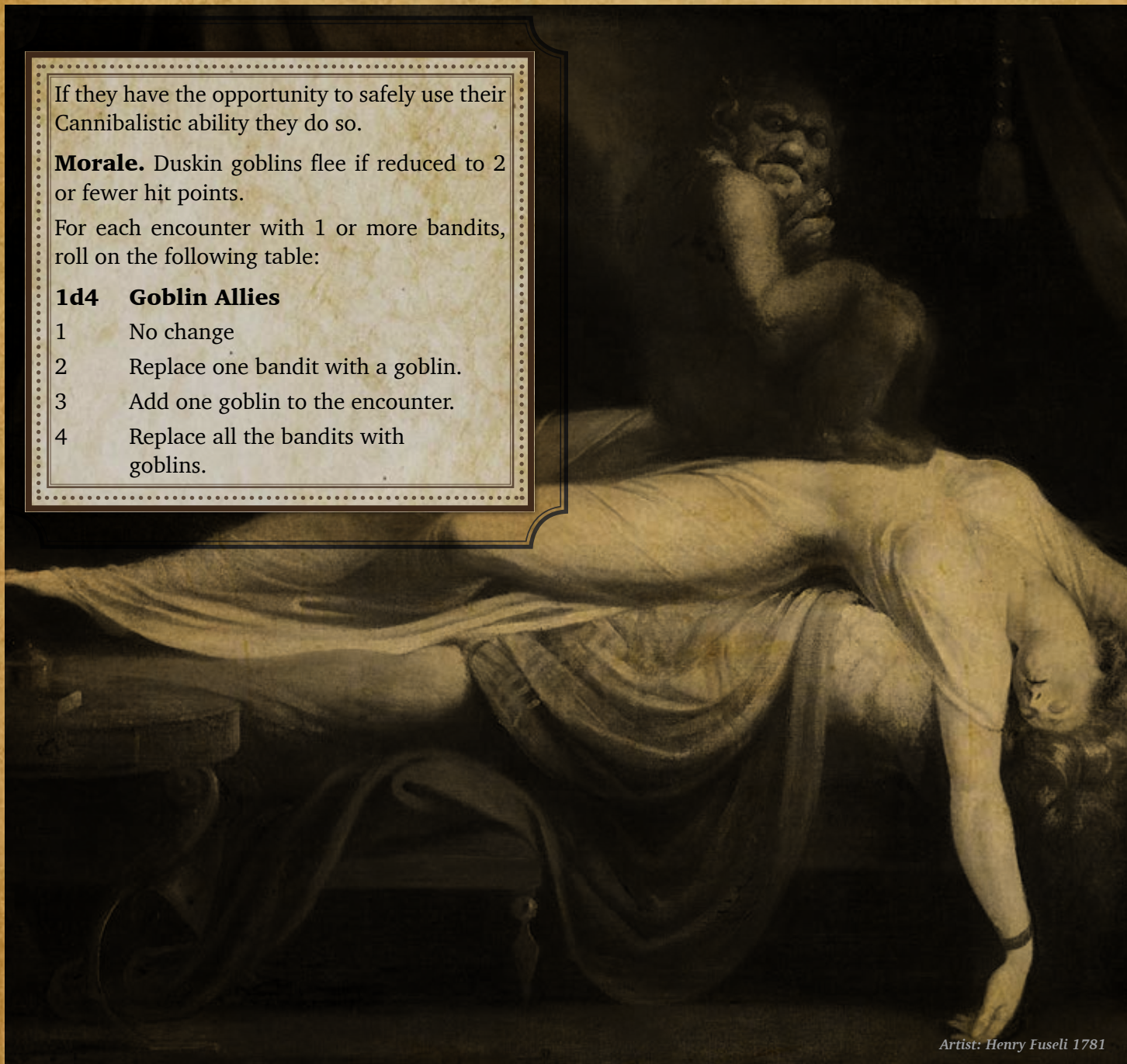
If they have the opportunity to safely use their Cannibalistic ability they do so.

Morale. Duskin goblins flee if reduced to 2 or fewer hit points.

For each encounter with 1 or more bandits, roll on the following table:

1d4 Goblin Allies

- 1 No change
- 2 Replace one bandit with a goblin.
- 3 Add one goblin to the encounter.
- 4 Replace all the bandits with goblins.



Artist: Henry Fuseli 1781



1

Following an ancient map and a fair share of rumor, you've crossed the burning desert sands to the last known location of the Stone of Ashirai, an artifact said to contain great power, possibly power over life itself.

Before you now stands a dark, ancient stone temple-fortress. Wind-weathered doors hang off their hinges, clattering loudly in the wind. Beyond the door you hear voices speaking in the local tongue, barely audible over the building sandstorm. You ready your weapon and prepare to step inside.

Will you charge in? **Go to 33.**

Or will you creep through the doorway? **Go to 44.**

2

Your weapons begin to glow with a dim white light.

For the remainder of this adventure you have advantage on attacks against undead creatures, but disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks while you have a melee weapon drawn.

If you wish to open the sarcophagus, **go to 11.**

If you have not already done so, you can investigate the damaged sarcophagus, **go to 15.**

If you wish to continue up the steps and into the darkness beyond, **go to 22.**

3

Make a Strength check. If you roll a natural 1 on your check then you take 1 damage from straining against the heavy stone door.

If you get 20 or more, **go to 31.**

Otherwise, you may try again, up to 3 times.

If you wish to give up, you may continue down the passage, **go to 37.**

4

The stone door is covered with ancient, ominous hieroglyphs that depict scenes of death and necromancy.

You may make an Intelligence (Arcana, History, Investigation, or Religion) roll to discover more about the door. If you get 16 or more on any one of these rolls, **go to 17.**

Otherwise, if you have not already done so, you may inspect the door's construction. **Go to 49.**

You may also push **on to 37**, or try to open the door, **go to 3.**

5

Slowly you reach for your knife with your free hand, readying it to flick off the poisonous creature.

Make a Dexterity check. If you get 8 or more, you manage to flick the scorpion away. Continue on into the courtyard. **Go to 42.**

Otherwise, the scorpion's tail lances into your flesh, **go to 13.**



6

You stiffen as you feel the scorpion's tiny arachnoid legs cross the exposed skin of your neck.

At last, you let out a sigh of relief as it scuttles off. Not far from your face now, you watch as its legs propel it across the sand.

With no time waste, you push on further into the courtyard. **Go to 42.**

7

If you have Iron Falcon, **turn to 8.** Otherwise, **turn to 16.**

8

You place the Iron Falcon above the golden perch. Suddenly sharp talons of magical energy reach out from the sword's pommel and grasp the perch. Behind the perch, with a grinding of stone on stone, a secret compartment is revealed, containing a large object wrapped in decaying leather. You grab the bundle before the hole has time to close and step back with your sword in hand. The golden perch falls from the altar to smash on the floor.

"Congratulations adventurer." Gwydion's disembodied voice says. "Now, flee. This way!"

A portal of swirling blue energy appears before you. If you step through it, **go to 50.**

If you would rather keep the stone for yourself, **go to 14.**

9

You climb down on the other side of the stone block and see an intricate carving on the floor. The deep grooves of the pattern likely hide another trap, and you can see another heavy stone block suspended from the ceiling above. Your best bet is to jump.

You must make a standing long jump to clear the 5 feet of patterned floor. Your jump length is half your Strength score.

If you succeed, you launch yourself over the deadly pattern safely, **go to 36.**

If you fail, **go to 47.**

10

You run through the crumbling archway and into a dark tunnel. It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust, but with shouts filling the air behind you – as more bandits rush into the courtyard – you push on into the darkness.

The air grows cooler and suddenly you hit a T-junction.

If you decide to turn left and head north, **go to 39.**

If you turn right instead and head south, towards a dim light, **go to 21.**



11 Despite its apparent weight, the stone lid of the sarcophagus moves easily enough, sliding open to reveal a decaying skeleton and a small hoard of gold coins. As you reach in to pick up one of the coins you notice a slithering shape moving between the cracked bones of the skeleton. It's a **poisonous snake**.

Poisonous Snake

Tiny beast, unaligned

Armor Class 13

Hit Points 2 (1d4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (-4)	16 (+3)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	3 (-4)

Senses blindsight 10 ft., passive Perception 10

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 piercing damage, and the target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw, taking 5 (2d4) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

You must defeat the snake to take the 70 coins in the sarcophagus. Alternatively, you can slam the lid shut, leaving the snake and its gold behind.

If you have not already done so, you can investigate the damaged sarcophagus, **go to 15**.

If you wish to continue up the steps and into the darkness beyond, **go to 22**.

12 The stone door has no hinges, but is carved from the stone of the wall – a false door built to frustrate would-be thieves.

You decide to continue down the corridor.

Go to 37.

13 Slowly, painfully, the burning sensation works its way up your arm. Gritting your teeth, you try to fight back a scream, as excruciating torment flows through your body. With every fiber of your being you strive to endure, but eventually the torture is just too much.

As pain lances your brain, you scream.

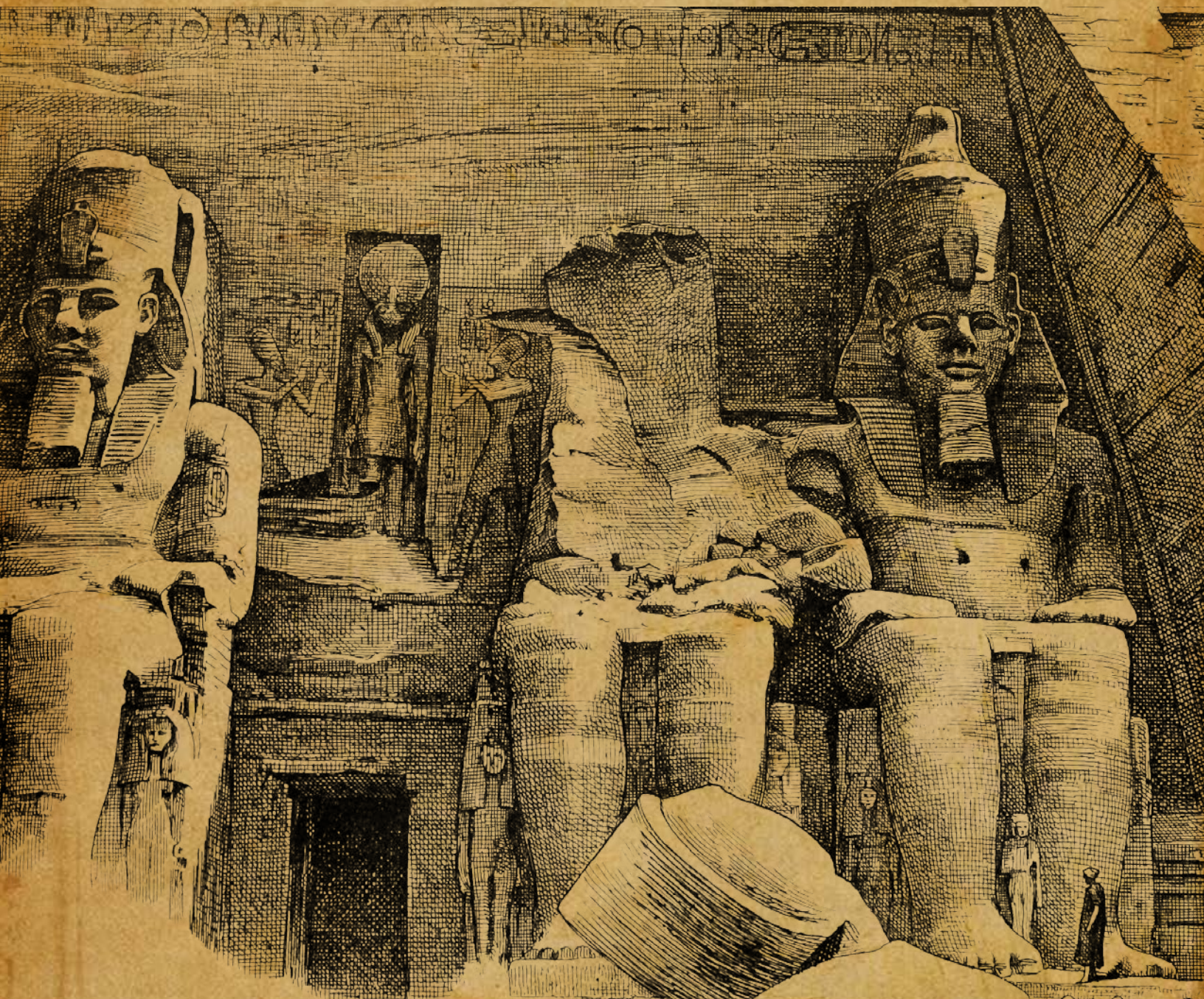
The next thing you know men surround you, pointing their crossbows at your face. They bring more pain. And death.

Your adventure ends here.

14 You make your way out through the crawl space and back into the temple sanctuary with your prize before the corpse queen Ashirai can reanimate once more.

You eventually manage to sell the stone, profiting well from the deal. The money doesn't last long though, along with your luck. Soon you find yourself begging any hedge wizard or witch you come across for charms and wards, anything to change your fortunes. Meanwhile, your dreams are haunted and shadows play at the edge of your vision, while the lands around you turn to famine and war. Perhaps the old Archmage was right, but you'll never know for sure.

Your adventure ends here.



Materials and documents of architecture and sculpture (1915)



15

As you near the broken sarcophagus a hunched figure wrapped in bandages steps out from behind the nearest pillar, its moan reverberating off the walls.

Mummy

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 8

Hit Points 22 (3d8 + 9)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13(+1)	6(-2)	16(+3)	3(-4)	6(-2)	5(-3)

Saving Throws Wis +0

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 8

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Undead Fortitude. If damage reduces the mummy to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the mummy drops to 1 hit point instead.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d3 + 1) bludgeoning damage.

If you defeat the mummy, you find that it and its sarcophagus have already been looted of most of its valuables, but you do manage to find a golden ring worth 5 gp amongst its bandages.

If you have not already done so, you can investigate the first sarcophagus, **go to 46.**

If you wish to continue up the steps and into the darkness beyond, **go to 22.**





16

You examine the golden perch and find it to be of solid gold. Deciding that it would be a fine prize, you grab it, unwittingly triggering a trap hidden under its base. Your world goes dark.

When you awaken you find yourself bound in bandages within the cold depths of a sarcophagus. Stone grinds on stone as the lid is shut, and your world goes dark forever.

Your adventure ends here.

17

Although the language is ancient and mostly forgotten, the symbols undoubtedly refer to Ashirai, a beautiful woman wearing the skull-scarab symbol often associated with her. The hieroglyphs talk of her battle with the anubian guardians over the power of life and death, and their eventual subjugation at her hands. In the final panels Ashirai is seen carrying a stone which radiates magic by which she raises an army of the dead to conquer the nations.

If you've not already done so, you may make a Wisdom (Perception) check to learn more about the stone door. **Go to 49.**

Otherwise you may continue down the corridor. **Go to 37.**

18

The dead cultist carries very little besides his scimitar and a golden pendant – the skull cobra symbol of Ashirai – worth 12 gp.

Turn to 45.

19

Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check as you crawl through the narrow gap. If you get a result of 10 or more, you are able to surprise anyone in the room beyond.

Go to 34.

20

It feels like an eternity, then, to your relief, the men continue their conversation, seemingly unaware of your presence.

You're about to resume moving when you notice a fat black scorpion walking across your hand.

If you wait for it to leave, **go to 32.**

Or, if you try to shake it off, **go to 5.**

21

The short corridor turns east, then exits through a crumbling hole in the wall into a large temple sanctuary. A series of wide steps lead down past thick stone pillars decorated with a haunting skull motif into the center of the sanctuary. Here, blazing funerary braziers – recently lit – cast eerie shadows over two stone sarcophagi, the second of which seems badly damaged. More steps lead up again into the darkness beyond.

If you wish to investigate the first sarcophagus **go to 46.**

If you wish to investigate the damaged sarcophagus **go to 15.**

If you wish to continue on into the darkness beyond the temple sanctuary, **go to 22.**



22

The steps at the back of the temple sanctuary climb steeply up until they reach a mural painted in fading blacks and reds. It

is a horrible scene of death and corruption: the many fell deeds of Ashirai, the goddess of murder.

As you study the mural for a clue, the colors begin to lighten and swirl, and suddenly you find an old man in wizard's robes seated before you as if you were peering into his study.

"Greetings, adventurer. No, wait, do not reply, my spell is limited to one directional communication over this great distance. Perhaps my means of reaching you appears odd, but I have been watching you and now I wish to offer you advice. My name is Gwydion Ambrosius, Archchancellor at the University of Scarthey. Near where you now stand lies hidden a powerful stone artifact. You may know something of its origin, created by the necromancer Ashirai, but very few know of the stone's true power. It was created to corrupt the natural order of life. You must not handle the stone, but bring it to me.

This is imperative..."

Without another word the spell fades and you see once again the murderous tableau. To your right, unseen before, you now notice a tunnel dug below the wall – a crawl space into a hidden chamber beyond.

Go to 19.

23

The green light fades for a moment, replaced by a wholesome white light as Archchancellor Gwydion reappears.

"Well done. The Stone of Ashirai is in this room. Some magic is preventing me from seeing it from this distance, but perhaps you have the ability to discover it for yourself. Hurry, for Ashirai, though less powerful, will rise again with the stone's power."

Looking about the room you see a number of vile artifacts littering the altar, an ornate golden perch, possibly made for a pet eagle, falcon, or phoenix, and a life sized statue of Ashirai. The walls of this room are studded with skulls, possibly the vanquished enemies of Ashirai.

If you want to search the statue of Ashirai for some clue, **go to 41.**

If you wish to search the altar for clues, **go to 24.**

If you inspect the golden perch, **go to 7.**

If you inspect the skull studded walls, **go to 48.**

Or, if you search the cultist's body, **go to 18.**

24

The altar of Ashirai is tainted with powerful magic, and you can feel your life force drain away as you draw close to it.

Take 1d6 (3) necrotic damage.

If you survive, **turn to 45.**

25

You manage to pry open one of the crates, but find it empty. Just then, a bolt, fired from an unseen bandit, streaks through the air.

Roll the attack for the bandit. He has a +3 to hit and his crossbow does 1d8 + 1 (5) piercing damage.

If you survive, make your escape through the crumbling archway, **go to 10**.

26

You emerge into a room lit by floating balls of ghostly light. The lights float freely about the room, casting haunting shadows on a collection of ancient statues and funerary offerings.

Of all the wealth in this room, a sword catches your attention – the only thing of real value that you can easily take with you. It is oddly shaped, with its blade hooked at the tip and its guard shaped like the outstretched wings of a falcon.

The sword is a flying sword, and will fight alongside you in the coming battles.

Iron Falcon

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 18 (5d6)

Speed 0ft., flying 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	5 (-3)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws Dex +4

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 7

Languages —

Antimagic Susceptibility. The sword is incapacitated while in the area of an antimagic field. If targeted by dispel magic, the sword must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the sword remains motionless and isn't flying, it is indistinguishable from a normal sword.

Actions

Longsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. **Hit:** 5 (1d8 +1) slashing damage.

Tactics. Iron Falcon fights as you direct it.

Morale. Iron Falcon fights to the death unless directed otherwise.

For finding the blade, you gain 50 XP

With nothing else left to do here, you continue back down the tunnel, past the traps, and back to the junction, turning south this time.

Go to 21.

27

As you creep closer – with the men’s voices growing louder – a rock falls, clattering to the ground. The men stop talking and you freeze, not daring to breathe.

Go to 20.

28

You continue on slowly, with your weapon out in front of you. Suddenly there is a loud grinding sound, and a blast of air throws grit and sand in your face. You throw yourself backwards.

Make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check, with disadvantage, to save yourself from the falling stone block. If you get a 10 or more, you successfully escape with your life. Otherwise, the falling stone block deals 1d10 (5) bludgeoning damage to you.

If you survive, go to 9.

29

“Raaagh!” you shout as you jump through the doorway. The two grave robbing bandits turn, shocked by your sudden appearance. They drop their shovels and scramble for their weapons, but you’re too fast for them.

Fight the two bandits. They are surprised and can’t take an action or move on their first round. In their second round they pick up their scimitars and attack.

Bandits

Medium human, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Tactics. If they are adjacent to an enemy, the bandits attack with their scimitars.

If they are out of melee range, they seek out cover and use their light crossbows to attack.

Otherwise, they flee.

Moral. If one of the bandits falls below 0 hit points, the other bandit flees.

If you are defeated, go to 30.

If you are victorious, go to 38.

30

You fall to the ground as the world goes dark around you. It isn't long before the bandits have you tied up and are lowering you into an ancient crypt – a dark hole where you'll be left to rot.

Your adventure ends here.

31

The door shudders as it tips forward, and suddenly you realise that it has no hinges and isn't a door at all, but a carved slab of stone. Heaving your shoulder against it you manage to stop the block from tumbling and prop it back in place.

Breathing a sigh of relief from the near miss, you continue on your way down the passage.

Go to 37.

32

Like a statue among the fallen rubble, you lie, motionless. The scorpion, too, waits, its stinger tipped tail hovering above your wrist, at any second ready to plunge hot venom into your veins. The drum-like pounding of your heart beats in your ears, growing like a tribal chant.

Then it moves, scuttling along your arm and up your shoulder. Sweat pours down your face as you feel the thing crawl over your back.

You wait. **Go to 6.**

33

“Raaagh!” you shout as you jump through the doorway. The two grave robbing bandits turn, shocked by your sudden

appearance. They drop their shovels and scramble for their weapons, but you're too fast for them.

Fight the two bandits. They are surprised and can't take an action or move on their first round. In their second round they pick up their scimitars and attack.

Bandits

Medium human, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Tactics. If they are adjacent to an enemy, the bandits attack with their scimitars.

If they are out of melee range, they seek out cover and use their light crossbows to attack.

Otherwise, they flee.

Moral. If one of the bandits falls below 0 hit points, the other bandit flees.

If you are defeated, **go to 30.**

If you are victorious, **go to 38.**

34

Noxious green light bathes the skull studded walls of this room. On a dais before an ominous stone altar a man in sickly green robes stands locked in a ritual that animates a female corpse wearing a cobra-hooded iron mask.

“Tell me the secret, great Ashirai,” the man says, as his fingers weave the magical energies of his spell. But there is no answer.

Your only option is to fight the pair, first the cultist and then his goddess.

Cultist of Ashirai

Medium human, lawful evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 8 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Tactics. If the cultist is adjacent to an enemy, he attacks with his scimitar.

If the cultist is out of melee range, he moves to close the distance and charges back into combat.

Morale. Willing to give his life for his goddess, the cultist fights to the death.

Ashirai

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (ceremonial armor scraps)

Hit Points 12 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned


Sense darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common and Infernal, but can't speak.

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit,



reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Empower Unlife. Ashirai draws on her necromantic power to regain 1d4 hit points. She may regain hit points up to a maximum of 10 times her current hit die (20).

Tactics. If Ashirai is adjacent to an enemy, she attacks with her claws.

If Ashirai is out of melee range, she uses her Empower Unlife ability.

Morale. With full faith that the Stone of Ashirai will bring her back once more, Ashirai fights to the death.

If you defeat both the cultist and Ashirai, go to 23.



35

You stand over the sarcophagus and offer a short prayer to your deity.

If your deity is good aligned, **go to 2**, otherwise your prayer has no immediately obvious effect.

If you wish to open the sarcophagus, **go to 11**.

If you have not already done so, you can investigate the damaged sarcophagus, **go to 15**.

If you wish to continue up the steps and into the darkness beyond, **go to 22**.

36

Not much further down the tunnel you come to a stone door in the wall to your right.

If you wish to stop and examine it, **go to 4**.

If you wish to continue on, **go to 37**.

37

The passage continues east for a way, growing steadily cooler as you go.

Ahead of you hear the chittering of small creatures – hundreds of bats clinging to the dark recesses of the ceiling. They suddenly drop from their perch and swarm over you.

Fight the swarm of bats for 3 rounds, after which time they move off.

Swarm of Bats

Medium swarm of Tiny beasts, unaligned

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 18 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
5(-3)	15(+2)	10(+0)	2(-4)	12(+1)	4(-3)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Echolocation. The swarm can't use its blindsight while deafened.

Keen Hearing. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny bat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Bites. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 0ft. One creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 5 (2d4) piercing damage, or 2 (1d4) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.



Artist: Goya 1810



Bandits

Medium human, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 8 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Infernal

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Light Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80 ft./320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8+1) piercing damage.

Tactics. The bats attack for 3 rounds before moving off.

Morale. The swarm fights until destroyed or until it moves off.

If you survive the bats, continue down the passage, **go to 26.**

38

The sound of fighting has drawn out more **bandits**. You jump behind the crates just as a volley of crossbow bolts wizz over your head.

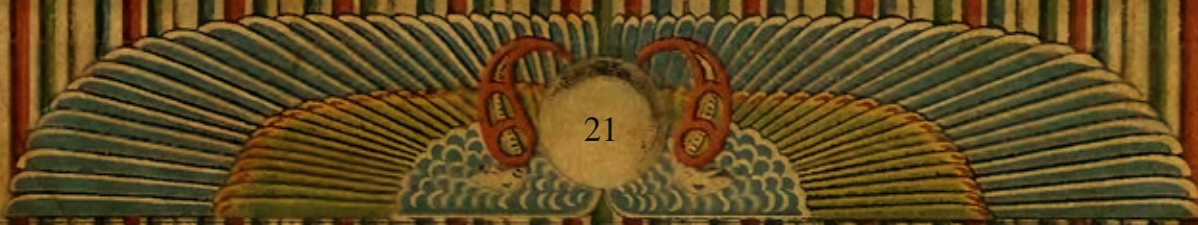
Using one of the light crossbows taken from the bandits you've already defeated, or another ranged weapon or spells, you can return fire, shooting at the 2 bandits that are standing on the wall surrounding the courtyard. The light crossbow does 1d8 damage plus your Dex modifier. It has 10 crossbow bolts.


The bandits return fire, but the crates give you three-quarters cover, and so you gain a +5 bonus to AC against their shots.

At any time you can make a run for it, launching yourself from behind the crates as the bandits are reloading, or dashing out when they've been defeated.

Your best option is through a crumbling archway, **turn to 10.**

Or you can risk a peek inside the crates, **turn to 25.**





39 Very soon you come to a right bend, heading east. The temperature continues to drop as you plunge into complete darkness.

Did you bring a torch or some other form of light, or do you have darkvision?

If so, **turn to 43**.

Otherwise, **turn to 28**.

40 It's obvious to you that the men are talking about the "goddess" Ashirai, an ancient queen infamous for her dealings in necromancy. She became so powerful during her reign that she challenged the gods themselves, and corrupted many beings, forcing them to become her undead servants.

"The setting sun" he mentioned could have a literal or figurative meaning, in which case it would likely relate to any number of sun deities popular with the local tribes.

As to Ashirai going "forth from her dwelling", it would be an easy guess that someone with so much power over life and death might be resurrected once more, and that would likely require the stone which you seek.

The "falcon" and the "golden perch" mean nothing to you, but perhaps you'll find some other clues within the temple complex.

You may cast any spells without a verbal component, drink a potion, or ready a weapon before charging at the men.

Go to 29.

41 The statue of Ashirai is made of ebony and dark copper. It represents the necromancer at her peak – both beautiful and terrible. Unlike her corpse, the statue shows her face as it once was – uncorrupted by death magic.

Go to 45.

42 Two men stand around a shallow pit in the courtyard, shovels in their hands. Behind them stand several crates, with their weapons leaning against them.

You creep into the shadows behind a stone pillar, trying to listen to what the men are saying. Your knowledge of the local language isn't very good, but you're surprised when one man holds up a tablet and, although it seems to be written in ancient hieroglyphs, he translates it fluently directly into Common.

"By the setting of the sun, the goddess Ashirai will go forth from her dwelling when the falcon sits once again on its golden perch."

Make an Intelligence (History) or Intelligence (Religion) check.

If you succeed, **go to 40**.

If you fail, you're not sure what he means, but his tone is ominous and, if it has anything to do with Ashirai, then this means big trouble. You'd better act fast. Draw your weapon and **go to 29**.

43

A few feet down the tunnel you pass a section of loose stone – probably a trap of some sort – which you skirt around easily. Soon you come to a dead end and a gooey substance coating the floor. At first glance it seems to have sprayed out from the wall, but then you realise that the wall isn't a wall at all, but a large block of stone – a deadly trap triggered by some unfortunate explorer.

Above the block is a tight crawl space, so you climb through and continue on your way.

Go to 9.

44

Crouched low, you sneak forward, using the fallen masonry scattered about to mask your approach.

Will you succeed? Or fail and be spotted? Only consummate skill and a dash of luck will see you through.

Make a Dexterity (Stealth) check, with advantage because of the fallen masonry shielding you.

If you get 12 or more, **go to 42.**

If you get less than 12, **go to 27.**

45

While you have your back turned, the corpse of Ashirai reanimates and attacks again.

Ashirai

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 13 (ceremonial armor scraps)

Hit Points 12 (2d8 + 4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Sense darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages understands Common and Infernal, but can't speak.

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

Tactics. If Ashirai is adjacent to an enemy, she attacks with her claws.

If Ashirai is out of melee range, she closes the distance or charges into combat.

Morale. Ashirai fights to the death.

If you defeat her, you may, if you have not already done so;

search the statue of Ashirai for some clue.

Turn to 41.

Search the altar for clues. **Turn to 24.**

Inspect the golden perch. **Turn to 7.**

Search the walls for a clue. **Turn to 48.**

Search the cultist for a clue. **Turn to 18.**

46

The stone sarcophagus is beautifully carved in the form of a woman with snakelike features. Her most disturbing feature is her eyes, which have been picked out in jade with onyx for her vertically slit pupils.

If you wish to open the sarcophagus, **go to 11**.
 If you follow a deity and wish to say a short prayer over the sarcophagus, **go to 35**.
 If you have not already done so, you can investigate the damaged sarcophagus, **go to 15**.
 If you wish to continue up the steps and into the darkness beyond, **go to 22**.

47

You jump with all your might and land. With a sickening feeling you realise you've failed to clear the pattern. In desperation, you launch yourself forward.

Make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as you attempt to dodge the falling block of stone.
 If you get 12 or more, **go to 36**.
 Otherwise, the block of falling stone slams down on top of you.

Your adventure ends here.

48

As you tap along the walls with your weapon you hear the tell-tale hollow reverberations of a hidden compartment behind the golden perch. There is no obvious way to open it and the wall seems too sturdy to break through.

As you contemplate this conundrum you hear a low moan. **Turn to 45**.

49

You inspect the construction of the door itself. Make a Wisdom (Perception) skill check.

If you get 10 or more, **go to 12**.

If you get less than 10, you learn nothing new, **return to 4**.

50

CONCLUSION

Eldritch energy swirls around you as, in an instant, you are transported into the Archchancellor's study.

"Well done. You've uncovered the Stone of Ashirai, and, in so doing, done the world a great service. I will lock the stone away in the Undervaults of the university, where it will be safe from those who would seek to use its powers." Gwydion says, as he carefully takes the wrapped stone from you and places it in an iron chest inscribed with arcane runes.

"You know, we could use someone of your talents. Our agents, the Rectors, are hard pressed to secure similar evil artifacts and defeat the forces that would seek to destroy the peace of our land. Won't you join us?"

Congratulations. You've successfully completed this adventure. More adventures await, with your first assignment as a Rector beginning in *Forest of Secrets* by David N. Ross.

RECTOR BOON

For completing this adventure, you may add the following boon to your character sheet. Rector Boons are limited to one use per adventure, and may be lost under certain conditions.

FAME OF THE RECTORS

The fame and good standing of the Rectors precedes you. Once per adventure, when you make a Charisma (Persuasion) check, you gain a +2 bonus on that check. If you fail the check by 5 or more, cross this boon off your character sheet.

RECTOR FEATS

The Rectors are a University of Scarthey sanctioned society of field agents, tome collectors, and peacekeepers. Filled not only with current and former students of Scarthey, the Rectors also recruit members from outside the university – individuals selected for their unique skills and expertise.

Detailed below are a number of feats to help you build one of three common types of Rector agents. This list is by no means exhaustive, as Rector agents are a diverse lot. Future publications will include additional Rector Feats.

TOMB HUNTER

Tomb hunters search for magical artifacts on behalf of the University of Scarthey, often in competition with rival tomb robbers out seeking a profit. While many of the artifacts retrieved by the Rectors land up in the university's Undervaults, some artifacts are set aside for the use of promising agents.

You're adept at searching dark, dangerous tombs for hidden treasures. You gain the following benefits:





You have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks made to detect the presence of traps.

You have advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks for the purposes of climbing and jumping.

You have advantage on Intelligence checks made to estimate the value of a precious item.

Dim light doesn't impose disadvantage on your Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight.

You can always tell if an item is magical or not. This ability gives no additional information about the item, nor does it work on sentient creatures.

SCROLL HUNTER

Scroll hunters are tasked with the retrieval of ancient and arcane texts at the behest of the Library of Scarthey. Often these texts contain clues to larger caches of hidden knowledge, and it is the Rector's duty to secure and quickly decipher these texts before they fall into less respectful hands.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13 or higher

You have learned how to discover hidden lore from scrolls and tomes, gaining the following benefits:

You have advantage on Intelligence (Investigation) checks made to determine the location of a hidden object, to gain information from ancient texts, and to discern if a text is a forgery or not.

You have advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks for the purposes of deciphering texts and eldritch symbols.

You know two additional languages, chosen from Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Gnomish, Infernal, Primordial, Sylvan, or Undercommon.

You can take a minute to scan a text to gain a basic idea of its subject matter. For each additional minute spent scanning the text you gain an additional insight into the text's content.

PRODIGY SCOUT

Archchancellor Gwydion Ambrosius would be the first to tell you that mere books and artifacts are not Scarthey's greatest asset, but the minds of the bright young students which fill the university's lecture halls. Many of these students come to Scarthey of their own volition, already aware of their magical ability. Others are not so lucky, as their magical abilities lie hidden, even from themselves. For these, the prodigy scout is their only hope. Adept at discerning the magical abilities of others, the prodigy scout is both a wise patron and a cunning foe.

Prerequisite: Charisma 13 or higher

You are able to discern the magical abilities of friend and foe, gaining the following benefits.

You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks to determine if a creature is lying or attempting to disguise some aspect about themselves.

By spending a minute observing a creature, you can detect if that creature is able to cast spells or not. By observing the creature for a full 10 minutes you can determine the highest level of spell that creature can cast.

Once per day you can cast detect magic.

When observing the casting of a spell, you can make an Intelligence (Arcana) check to discern the level of the spell and the associated school of the spell. The DC for this check is equal to 8 + the caster's spellcasting ability modifier + their proficiency bonus. If you succeed on this check by 5 or more you also determine the duration, if any, of the spell's effect.





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Scarthey

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