



BATTLE AND LOOT

TOMB OF THE SEERESS

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Centuries ago, a powerful king relied on the foresight and wisdom of a famed and supposedly immortal sphinx to guide his decisions and keep his kingdom rich and victorious. The sphinx revealed her prophecies only to those who could solve her riddles. Solve a riddle, get a glimpse at your future.

One day, on the eve of a battle with a neighboring land, the king sought the sphinx's advice, but the riddle she gave him could not be solved—not in time, at least. The king went to battle without her counsel... and suffered a terrible defeat. Furious and humiliated, he dispatched heroes of the time to slay her. This they did—they thought.

Wracked with both remorse and anger, the king had the sphinx installed in a tomb hidden in the wilds. "If she should live again," tales say he proclaimed, "let only the bravest and most foolhardy gain the treasures with which she has been buried. May they be more brave and less foolish than I was."

The proclamation passed into legend. The location of the tomb passed into myth.

Until now.

USING THIS KIT

This *Battle & Loot* kit is neither a complete adventure nor a single encounter. Instead, what you have here are components with which you, a Game Master playing with the Adventure Game Engine (also known as the AGE System), can build anything from a single encounter to a collection of scenes totaling a whole adventure. Remix the game stats, themes, and motifs in this kit to suit your home campaign, wherever it might be set.

ADVERSARIES

Some *Battle & Loot* kits stretch the idea of "battle" a bit and provide adversaries suitable for roleplaying or exploration scenes in addition to fight scenes. You, as the GM, get to decide the right way to present these challenges to your players and they, through their characters, ultimately get to decide how to approach those challenges. Do they attempt to parley with hideous, bloodthirsty ghouls or trick one foe into battling another? Go where play takes you.

Depending on how things happen during play, you might end up with recurring antagonists or an ongoing storyline emerging from these pages. Your Player Characters may defeat these adversaries, strike a bargain with them, or even become allies. That's great! Let the adventure unfold.

TREASURES

The core format here assumes a situation in which players defeat their adversaries and then loot them or their surroundings for treasure. This is a straightforward way to present challenges and associated rewards,

well established in RPGs of all sorts. Randomized rewards allow for suitable but unpredictable results, taking some onus off the GM who would otherwise choose or bequeath rewards, and giving players a reason to try their hand at additional battles, to earn a chance at better loot. Sometimes the thrill of the random reward is just the fun you want.

It's not the only way to use this kit, of course.

Battle & Loot kits present treasure tables to allow for surprising yet suitable treasure discoveries during play, yet the GM is always free to select and award these or other treasures directly, perhaps to save time, to better delight players, to put specific treasures into play, or to keep particular treasures out of play (or out of play for now).

Player Characters might actually find treasures on the corpses of slain monsters or they might discover them in crates and urns, locked chests, and hidden caches in the monster's territory. If an outcome seems unfitting given the circumstances in your actual instance of play, depict the found treasure in a way that's more fitting to your scene, adventure, or campaign. Perhaps that monster's treasure turns up in the *next* chamber, set where the monster lairs, even if it's *earned* in the current chamber, for example.

Treasures can be awarded to Player Characters for more than the defeat of a monster in bloody battle, too. Use the treasure table to determine a treasure that might be found in a hidden chest, discovered by a sly or perceptive rogue who has sneaked around the enemy, for example. Some adversaries might even reward players with treasure for freeing them from captivity, sparing their lives, or otherwise aiding them.

You're not required to roll at the end of an encounter. Use your judgment. Activate the treasure table when you want it to make a decision in your place. You might roll at the beginning of an encounter, for example, and incorporate the treasure in your description of the adversary ("It has some kind of golden amulet around its neck..."), for example, or you might roll at the moment when the monster tries to bargain ("I, I have... a dozen glass beads I can trade you!"). The treasure tables work for you, remember, not the other way around.

Guidelines for staging treasures come with each adversary.

LORE AND THEME

This *Battle & Loot* kit is light on lore so you can import as much or as little of your campaign's lore into the background or foreground as you like. You might also tap Egyptian, Greek, and other myths for details and legends that enrich your adventure. In a fantasy realm, you're free to combine disparate lore into a single fantastical amalgam for your own entertainment, so have it!

A few thematic elements are built right into this kit, as written, though you're free to change them, of course. Our version of the



Seeress is a sphinx called Ametshen, whose pride and arrogance caused her to panic when she found that her visions of the future were not always trustworthy. She hid her fear behind an impenetrable riddle to protect her king because she did not trust him to understand her fear. She let down the kingdom she had once protected. Many warriors died.

The bounds of power and trust are minor themes here, which you might draw out and magnify by having your heroines and heroes adventure on behalf of a trusted leader. Does that leader desire the sphinx's power? How will she react if the sphinx is freed rather than contained or recruited?

Ametshen, as written here, is unwilling to become the court seer of any new kingdom. She knows better than to try and dwell in the future again. She'd say, "I've failed at that task before and I do not intend to lead more to their destruction. I did not foresee my own failure, after all, so how can I trust my visions? How can you?"

Another theme, of course, is the desire for knowledge and foresight. With that comes hubris, so often. Can the players and their characters gain a semblance of this foresight, even for a time? If they do... can they trust it?

REASONS TO ADVENTURE

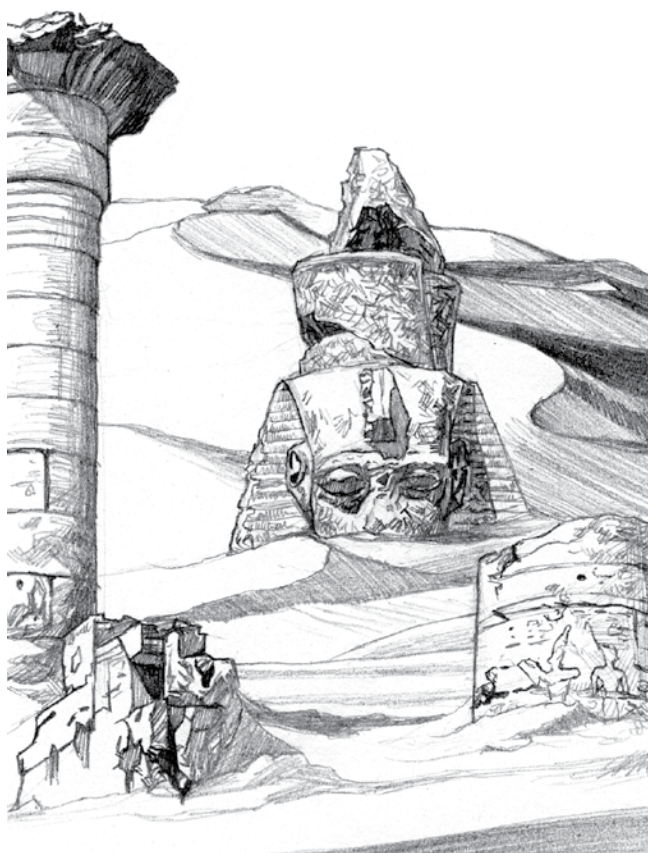
What does it take to get your Player Characters to venture into danger? Here are a few examples of what might lure them within striking distance of these monsters:

- ♦ **Coin.** The tombs of the ancients were loaded with funereal goods and ceremonial treasures. If no one has yet found the sphinx's tomb, it's sure to be stocked with treasure.
- ♦ **The lure of the future.** Perhaps the PCs, or someone they work for, wish to have the foresight of the ancient king. Does some residue of that power exist in the tomb? Go find out.
- ♦ **Dispelling myth, finding truth.** Are the PCs interested in truth above profit and prophecy? Do they want to know the truth behind the legends—truth for its own sake?
- ♦ **A race against evil.** Perhaps the characters must race across the desert to stop a rival (evil or not) from finding the tomb first and getting the glory and fame for it.
- ♦ **Because a map to the site exists and they're adventurers.**

ADAPTATIONS

As presented here, the tomb of the Seeress lies in an ancient desert kingdom. In your campaign, that may not be the case. Perhaps your ancient kingdom resides in some rainforest or tundra, the tomb hidden by jungle or protected by furry scorpion-people. You might place the tomb atop a jagged mountain or behind a waterfall deep in enemy territory. Find a blank spot on your map and adapt these details to suit.

Likewise, "ancient" may mean different things for different campaigns. Perhaps the sphinx has been buried for barely a century



in your campaign. What really matters is that it all happened long enough ago that no one can know for sure what the truth is. In some lands, that takes a few decades. In others, millennia.

If your adventuring party isn't terribly combat focused, pit them against more reasonable guardians or more venal guardians. Let them sneak or talk their way into the tomb. Maybe the trouble that other treasure-hunters have had is that they've tried to fight against beasts that could have been bypassed with honor or guile?

DENIZENS OF THE TOMB

These creatures can be assembled into any of a variety of combinations to create your own tomb of the Seeress. Place the scorpion guards in the surrounding desert and the Soul Eaters in a subterranean canal within the tomb, or seal them all in with the sphinx herself, if you like. Perhaps They Who Eat Souls guard obelisks that lead, one to the next, into the blistering desert toward the tomb's forgotten vale.

THE SCORPION GUARD

Crafted from ancient spells and the mummified remains of soldiers slain in the king's ill-fated battle without the sphinx's advice, these creatures are deathless and fearless protectors of the tomb of the Seeress. They attack in squads (the exact size of which depends on the size of your play group) and take no prisoners or treasures. They cannot be interrogated; they know

HARVESTING SCORPION GUARD POISON

Harvesting scorpion guard poison requires a successful **TN 15 Cunning (Poison Lore) test** and about 30 minutes per stinger to be harvested. A successful test harvests a number of doses based on the Dragon Die: 1–3 yields one dose, 4–6 yields two doses. A failed test wastes time and materials, spilling or contaminating the poison that could be harvested.

SCORPION GUARD VENOM

Poison	Damage	Additional Effects	Degree	Cost
Scorpion Guard Poison	1d6	Delayed initiative	Journeyman	50 sp / 300 sp

SCORPION GUARDS

HALF-HUMAN, HALF-SCORPION GUARDIANS TASKED WITH
PROTECTING THE TOMB.

Abilities (Focuses)	
0	Communication
3	Constitution (Stamina)
1	Cunning (Historical Lore, Religious Lore)
3	Dexterity (Sting)
0	Magic
3	Perception (Hearing, Seeing, Smelling)
3	Strength (Claws, Intimidation, Light Blades, Might)
3	Willpower (Morale, Self-Discipline)

COMBAT RATINGS	
15 SPEED	30 HEALTH
13 DEFENSE (14 WITH SHIELD)	5 ARMOR RATING

Attacks		
Weapon	Attack Roll	Damage
Claws	+5	1D6+5
Sting	+5	1D6+3 + Poison
Short sword	+5	1D6+5

POWERS

FAVORED STUNTS: *Envenom* (1 SP), *Skirmish*, and *Pierce Armor*.

GRASP: With a successful claw attack, a scorpion guard can choose to grasp its target in both claws, limiting the target's ability to move and defend. A grasped target suffers a -2 penalty to his Defense and cannot move unless he succeeds on an **opposed Strength (Might)** test against the grasping scorpion guard; the test to escape is a minor action for the escapee. A scorpion guard cannot make claw attacks or grasp another target while it has a target grasped but it can attack with its sword or stinger.

POISON: Scorpion guards do not need to prepare or activate their poisonous stingers—they're always ready. Further, they can perform the envenom stunt for 1 SP instead of the usual 2 SP, immediately delivering 1d6 penetrating poison damage in addition to stinger damage and pushing the target to the end of the initiative order. Scorpion guards are immune to this poison.

ARACHNID CARAPACE: *The armored hide of the scorpion guard gives it an Armor Rating of 5.*

TALENTS: *Quick Reflexes (Master)*

WEAPON GROUPS: *Brawling, Heavy Blades, and Light Blades.*

EQUIPMENT: *Light shield and short sword.*

only vigilance and battle. When slain, they dry into desiccated husks, gripping their swords in dead hands, votive statuettes of the ancient sphinx in their throats.

TREASURE

The tomb's scorpion guardians carry relics and trophies from previous victims due to some echoing instinct of pride in their mummified minds. The guardians do not sleep or lair, but they may pile or display the bodies of previously slain trespassers somewhere the Player Characters can reach. That's another source of treasures associated with these creatures.

Additionally, the precious artifacts that gave them some semblance of life may be worth good money to modern mages and scholars of magic. Such artifacts are found within the dead husk of a defeated scorpion guard, presuming the artifacts survive the passage of time and the battle intact—many don't. Those artifacts may be made of precious metals or simply scraps of ancient spells etched into clay tablets; not every artifact is an obvious treasure.

SCORPION GUARDIAN TREASURES

2D6 ROLL	TREASURE
2–3	Decorative amulet (13 silver)
4–5	Golden bracers (24 silver)
6–9	Damaged votive statuette (30 silver to the right mage)
10–11	Votive statuette
12	Visionary short sword

THEY WHO EAT SOULS

They Who Eat Souls are beasts, no doubt, but they are not earthly animals. They do not age or die without the intervention of violence. They do not eat except for their own amusement and power. They care little for the affairs of mortals. Those Soul Eaters who have been trapped in the tomb of the Seeress for all these centuries are those who were caught and wrangled by ancient trappers and installed here to keep watch on the sphinx and to swallow up trespassers.

Each Soul Eater resembles a cross between a hippopotamus and a crocodile, powerfully built and ferocious as hell. They dwell and hunt in water, when they can, but they are adept at surprisingly quick leaps into the air and onto the land to grab those who tread too near.

If these beasts exist in the current era outside of this tomb, they dwell in deep wilds or are perhaps hidden away in other ancient

TREASURE

A detailed black and white illustration of a grotesque, reptilian creature. The creature has a wide, open mouth showing sharp teeth and a large, flat, horn-like structure on its head. Its body is covered in scales, and it appears to be standing in a pool of water, with splashes visible around its lower body. The artist's signature 'MACB' and the year '04' are visible in the bottom right corner.

2D6 ROLL	TREASURE
2–3	Rusted baubles and coins (12 silver)
4–5	Broken ceremonial goods (36 silver)
6	1d6 perfect Soul Eater teeth (200 silver each)
7–8	Ancient ritual adornments (575 silver)
9	Holy amulet of Ametshen
10–11	Etched slab with ancient “spell” (700 silver)
12	Visionary long sword

0	COMMUNICATION
4	CONSTITUTION (STAMINA, SWIMMING)
1	CUNNING
4	DEXTERITY (BITE)
1	MAGIC
3	PERCEPTION (HEARING, SMELLING)
5	STRENGTH (INTIMIDATION, JUMPING, MIGHT)
3	WILLPOWER (COURAGE, MORALE)

WEAPON	ATTACK ROLL	DAMAGE
BITE	+6	1D6+7
CLAW	+5	1D6+5

TOMB OF THE SEERESS

BATTling THE SPHINX

Ametshten cannot be slain permanently. If her body is destroyed—a task too abominable for her killers in ancient days—her spirit will reform in a new chimeric body in a few short years. When she reforms, she retains all her memories... and grudges. Will she think of her killers as unwitting rescuers from that tomb or as enemies to be punished?

TREASURE

The Seeress is difficult to best in combat and cannot be permanently slain. She'll simply take on a new form on some future day. Still, if defeated, her lair can be looted. You might award one roll for the whole party or as many as one roll per PC, depending on the amount of treasure you want to introduce into your campaign.

It may be more likely that the Seeress shares treasure with PCs who free her. She can bestow whatever adds the level of power and complexity into your campaign that most interests you (or is compelling to your players). One item—the periapt of the seeress—can only be bestowed by her directly as a gift and does not appear on the treasure table. There is only such item in exist-

tence and, since it is invisible when worn, it is likely to be missed by looters, anyway.

The sphinx's other treasures are presented on this treasure table, just in case.

Treasures may be scattered about her “lair” as funeral goods left at the time of her burial in the tomb. Even after all this time, they are quite valuable. Some things have rotted away to nothing but others have grown rare over the ages and appreciated in value. The very room may be a resource granting a +2 bonus for those making **Cunning (Research)** tests on the ancient days or attempting Cunning tests to uncover information under Arcane Lore, Cultural Lore, or Historical Lore.

SEERESS SPHINX TREASURES	
2D6 ROLL	TREASURE
2	Half-ruined funereal goods (900 silver total)
3–5	A perfect sphinx feather (1,000 silver to the right mage)
6–9	Visionary blade
10–11	Fleeting foresight
12	A vision of the future



TOMB OF THE SEERESS

TREASURES OF THE TOMB

These are the treasures and rewards that go beyond simple monetary worth.

FLEETING FORESIGHT

This gift of the Seeress, Ametshen, bestows vivid but elusive dreams on the target for 1d6+1 nights. For the duration of the effect, the character is favored by fate and may raise or lower their Dragon Die by one value if doing so would result in doubles where there were not doubles before. This can be done once per day while the dreams persist. This represents the character acting on the visions they remember just in time, giving them an edge in battle, spell-casting, or whatever else they choose to spend the stunt points to do.

HOLY AMULET OF AMETSHEN

This gift of Ametshen indicates that the wearer is destined for great things. It is a talisman warding off evil fates. "Alas," Ametshen might say, "it is imperfect, for fate attacks on many fronts." It has several effects:

- ♦ First, if the wearer's Health reaches 0, she goes on living for 4 + Constitution rounds instead of the usual 2+ rounds, as fate conspires to keep her alive.
- ♦ Second, the wearer gains a +1 bonus to **Dexterity (Initiative)** rolls and may perform the Seize the Initiative stunt for 3 SP while wearing the amulet.



The amulet may also affect the way knowing NPCs treat the wearer, imposing as much as a +/−2 modifier to rolls depending on whether the NPC is inclined to revere someone who dares to wear an amulet devoted to an infamous visionary sphinx.

PERIAPT OF THE SEERESS

This periapt is a magnificent gift... or trophy. Seemingly crafted from some impervious glass and holding a fine slender diamond, this mystical bit of jewelry fits on the head and becomes invisible when worn. The wearer gains +1 Perception while the periapt is worn, representing a heightened sense of awareness (and perhaps paranoia) stemming from occasional flashes of insight from just seconds into the future. Further, the wearer gains a +2 bonus to **Dexterity (Initiative)** rolls and can perform the Seize the Initiative stunt for 3 SP while the periapt is worn.

To a jeweler, the periapt is a great prize, worth 1,200 silver or more. To a mage or antiquarian it is more valuable still, worth at least 1,750 silver due to its trace magical qualities and historical value.

VISIONARY BLADE

Any of a variety of aged weapons, usually short swords or long swords, once blessed with foresight by the Seeress when her power was greater, in the ancient days. A visionary blade sometimes guides the hand of its wielder in subtle ways, pulling the hand to better fulfill a future strike or turn away a future wound. Trust the blade.

(A **TN 11 Cunning (Cultural Lore)** test reveals that visionary blades were said to sometimes ring with the sounds of future battles or reflect images of the future as the blade shall one day see them. This may be superstition or this may be real—it's up to the GM to decide and, perhaps, use this potential power to spark future adventures.)

In game terms, a visionary blade grants a +1 bonus on attack rolls and damage and grants one free degree in the Single Weapon Style, regardless of the wielder's class or Perception—the blade provides the Perception.

VOTIVE STATUETTE

These simple statuettes once bound mummified servitor guardians—the scorpion guards—to the centuries-long task of defending the tomb of the Seeress. Each is worth 2d6 x 100 silver to the right collector or mage with an interest in their history or traces of Creation-school power. What's more, each intact votive statuette grants a +1 bonus (up to a maximum of +3) to **Communication** tests to persuade or impress the Seeress herself. "One statuette says you were perhaps fortunate in your battles against the scorpion guard," she might say, "but it is hard to deny that anyone possessing more of these has gone to great effort to slay my unfortunate jailors. So, then, have you come to free me... or try to your hand at taking or destroying my power?"

VISION OF THE FUTURE

This flexible but difficult reward puts the onus on the GM to foreshadow some future story twist, development, or adventure in a way that doesn't force the Player Character(s) receiving the vision into a certain course of action. PCs still have free will, after all, and can do things beyond just fulfilling visions and destinies. Yet, still, the mysterious insight that comes with a prophetic vision can be terrific and fascinating fun.

If you, as the GM, decide the Seeress bestows a vision of the future to the PCs, you can handle that vision in a few distinct ways. First, describe a fantastical and disjointed series of images that hint at things you know to be true in the campaign but that might not have been revealed already. If, for example, the friendly duke is actually a traitorous killer, give the PC a vision of the duke with blood on his hands. If a rival knight is secretly in love with the PC, show the knight offering his hand in some romantic environment like a dance or even at a wedding. These revelations of current facts as things that might yet occur help the tale to develop on its own as either the PC takes action based on the vision or the NPCs take action regardless of it.

Secondly, you can foreshadow future adventure locales and monsters by offering glimpses of a dragon's wings beating in a starry sky or showing a terrible sandstorm blowing across the desert. Don't show the outcome of these images. Just knowing that a dragon or a sandstorm lurks not just in the landscape but in the future (how far ahead and with how much certainty *should* be open to speculation) is ominous enough.

Finally, you might represent the vision wholly mechanically. The vision—too potent and ephemeral to process and put into words—isn't actually visual at all but a *feeling*, like pre-déjà vu, that the character senses as it comes to fruition, rather than being able to predict or understand it literally. In this mode, the PC is allowed to substitute a roll of 15 (5 on each die) for any one roll in the future—one roll in the lifespan of the character—and thereby earn 5 SP to use. The player must declare their use of the portentous substitute "roll" before rolling on the action. The *character* is presumed to be acting to fulfill or defy fate as they come to recognize and understand the portentous

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"vision" just in time to act on it. Thus the "vision" is something that you and the player work together to define in that moment, retroactively describing the portentous experience based on how its benefit was employed. "I realize the vision showed me where I'd land a Mighty Blow on the beast," the player might say, or, "Suddenly realizing that the duke is the Terror of Alabeck, represented in my vision as a smoky form, I skirmish him into the pit of fire."

To play up the theme of destiny and role of foresight in your campaign, award a vision of the future to every PC, giving each of them an opportunity to make a dramatic and certain impact on the unfolding adventures. This assures no one feels left out and provides a bit of high-fantasy mysticism without falling into the trap of prescribing actions on the heroes and heroines through arbitrary or heavy-handed prophecies.