

# Thomepreus' Curse

An 5E adventure for 4th level characters



By Christian Toft Madsen



# THOMEPREUS' CURSE

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## A 5E ADVENTURE FOR 4TH LEVEL CHARACTERS

Thomepreus' curse is a classic crawl with elements of exploration, mystery and time travel. A curse has befallen the heroes and the source of their predicament is located in a buried temple. Here a forgotten cult has used a magical sand clock to curse their enemies. The temple seems empty but the arrival of the heroes appears predetermined and soon the heroes are propelled through time to arrive in the past. Here clues and objects are required to solve the mystery and to break the curse. However, they must hurry before cult members complete the preordained curse on the heroes.

**This adventure is best played with a group of 3-4 characters of level 3-5.**

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# INTRODUCTION

## SYNOPSIS

This 5E adventure delves into aspects of time-travel, which plays out entirely within a closed generic environment suitable for any setting. The main purpose of the story is for the heroes to avoid the fulfillment of a curse set upon them. The heroes will need to locate the root cause of the curse in a temple dedicated to the ancient spirit of Ammit. They stumble upon an exiled priest of Ammit, Thomepreus, who has been cursed and restrained for decades. Thomepreus directs the heroes towards a solution for reversing the curse. The heroes will need to activate a magical sand clock. Strong magic permeates the temple and transports the heroes back and forth through time. The heroes will need to collect information and objects necessary to bypass time-puzzles. Finally, they confront the priests of Ammit in the process of completing the curse against them.

## BACKGROUND

Although forgotten the elder spirit of Ammit was once worshipped in the land. Even strong-minded men faltered and became slaves to the will of Ammit and the cult grew to domination. Priests of Ammit raised a temple to praise the primordial life force. Cryptic experiments and unnatural rituals were used to bolster the ranks of the cult and to curse its enemies. These experiments were linked to an ancient artifact, a sand clock, in the cult's possession. Enemies of the cult were cursed with 'the mark of the crocodile', a bite-like feature displayed on the face. Soon thereafter, the curse manifested in full and the unlucky recipients became Ghouls under the cults command.

An obstinate and grief struck priest with the name of Thomepreus realized that the cult had to be stopped. With haste, he set out to warn people and to reveal the location of the temple. However, he never reached safety and the priests' revenge was particular cruel. He was constrained in the catacombs below the temple and cursed with immortality. Thomepreus became stuck in a time loop while for everybody else time flowed forward. Each day creatures of the catacombs feasted on his succulent flesh. His agonizing screams echoed through the underground crypts for decades to come.

Eventually the sultan of the land recognized the threat fomenting in the desert and dispatched his trusted soldiers to kill anyone found in the temple. The soldiers left believing they had completed the task, and the cult of Ammit vanished into oblivion. At least for a while.

These days the location of the temple is unknown and the current sultan unaware of his predecessor's troubles. Enduring magic in the temple disrupts the flow of time and causes the temple to sink down into the sand dunes. The past intermingles with the present in an ever-turning carousel, and the priests of old are active again. The people of the land are once again victims of 'the mark of the crocodile'.



## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure starts with the characters being present in a sprawling urban desert city. They have come here because they have gradually developed an exterior disfiguration; a bite like feature on the face. Rumors link the 'disease' to the desert of which the city borders. To their discomfort they quickly learn that several people display the 'mark of the crocodile', which the locals describe as a curse. The advanced state of the curse entails an irreversible transformation to the un-living. As GM you can use the following hooks in any combination.

- The local sultan has summoned heroes to end the curse on his people. The sultan have consulted with



wise men and magicians but no effective remedy has been found. He has summarized enough information to link the curse to an ancient temple in the desert and he provides directions and a reward if the heroes will investigate.

- The heroes themselves seek to understand their status. They gather information in the city, Intelligence (History or Religion) DC 12, revealing that an ancient cult worshipping Ammit used the 'mark of the crocodile' on their enemies. Ancient ruins dot the sandy dunes out west, and some of these are supposed to belong to the cult.
- The heroes locate an old letter which simply states; "Dear Dhoah. I know you blame me for the death of our son. Since that cursed day, I have done everything to change. Unfortunately, I have made another mistake and got myself mixed up with the cult of Ammit. They have found something of great evil in the sand and use it to mark their enemies with a grim bite feature. I want to get out of here. All I think about is you and if you can forgive me. I have made so many mistakes, but I do not want to make one more. /Thomepreus".



You can easily change the setting parameters such as city location, desert to swamp, sultan to baron or similar substitutions to make it fit better with your story. The adventure starts in earnest when the heroes arrive at the temple. To absolve the curse the heroes will first need to locate an ivory figure resembling the priest or themselves. Secondly, they will need to obtain a set of combination numbers for unlocking the sand-clock. A manifested curse is absolved when the figurines run through the unlocked sand-clock. See details below.

## CULT OF AMMIT

The priests of Ammit build their temple on top of sprawling catacombs. One particular use of the sand clock artifact is to create Ghouls against the cult's enemies, and one reason why catacombs exist beneath the temple. Another manifestation of the sand clocks power was preferred on traitors to their cause, cursing turncoats to relive every day restrained in the catacombs. The priest build elaborate traps and guardians, such as **Corcodrillons**, to protect their secrets in the catacombs. Below are the statistics relevant for the cult; **Priests of Ammit**, **Corcodrillons** and the **Curse of Endless regret**.

### PRIEST OF AMMIT

*Medium human, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (chain shirt)

**Hit Points** 27 (5d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

**Skills** Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

**Senses** passive perception 13

**Languages** Common, one more of choice

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Divine eminence.** As a bonus action, the priest can expend one spell slot to cause its melee weapon attack to deal 10 (3d6) necrotic damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of its next turn. If the priest spends a 2<sup>nd</sup> level spell slot or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Time slip (1/day).** As a bonus action, the priest can briefly stop time for everyone but himself. Time ceases to exist for other creatures while the priest can take a full extra turn, during which he can take actions and move as normal. During the time slip the priest cannot harm other creatures either by magic or otherwise.

**Devotion.** The priest has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

**Spellcasting.** The priest is a 5<sup>th</sup> level spell caster. His/Her ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks).

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

1<sup>st</sup> lvl (4 slots): *inflict wounds, guiding bolt, shield of faith*

2<sup>nd</sup> lvl (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

3<sup>rd</sup> lvl (2 slots): *dispel magic, bestow curse*

### ACTIONS

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



## THE CURSE OF ENDLESS REGRET

**Casting time:** 6 rounds

**Range:** 500 miles

**Components:** M (the sand clock and a figurine resembling the target)

**Duration:** Until dispelled

A powerful curse is imposed on the targets of this magical sand clock. It requires a small figure made from ivory with clear resemblance to the target as material component. Once the figure is made the target bears 'the mark of the crocodile' but is not yet fully cursed. A small hatch in the bulb of the sand clock allows placement of figures which will trickle through the neck in exactly 6 rounds. During this process the target becomes affected each round as described below. The target can attempt to resist the progression towards completion with a Wisdom saving throw at the indicated DC. However, after the figure has run through the neck, the target must succeed on a DC 18 save each round to prevent progression towards the inevitable end. Targets cannot be cured with *remove curse*, and only reversing the movement of the original figure through the sand clock dispel all effects. It requires a DC 12 Strength check to turn the sand clock upside down, after which the effects run backwards in a round based manner. The clock has AC 13, hp 27, hardness 5 and resistance to non-magical damage. The sand clock emanates necromancy and transmutation magic. The effect of the curse is determined by the operator and can be of two types.

**TYPE 1:** The target is instantly transformed to a **Ghoul** under the clock-operators control similar to the *create undead* spell, whereupon the effects from round 1-5 disappears. The duration of command is until dispelled.

**TYPE 2:** The target is instantly affected as by a reverse *time stop*. Instead of time stopping for everybody else than the target, the opposite takes place, in essence stopping time for the target while for everybody else time flows forward normally. The effects from round 1-5 remain. Practically, the *reverse time stop* function as a time loop with a one day reset.

Round	DC	Effect
1	13	Disadvantage ability checks
2	14	Speed halved
3	15	Disadvantage attack roles and saves
4	16	Hit points halved
5	17	Speed 0
6	18	Cursed <b>TYPE1</b> or <b>TYPE2</b>

## CORCODRILLON

*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 60 (8d8 + 24)

**Speed** 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	7 (-2)

**Damage immunities** poison, psychic

**Condition immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 12

**Languages** understands common, but can't speak

**Challenge** 4 (1100 XP)

**False Appearance.** While the Corcodrillon remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a statue.

**Immutable form.** The Corcodrillon is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Hypnotic gaze.** When a creature that can see the Corcodrillon eyes starts its turn within 30 ft. of the Corcodrillon, the Corcodrillon can force it to make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. A creature that fails its saving throw becomes paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid effect at the start of its turn. If a creature does so, it cannot see the Corcodrillon until the start of its next turn.

**Blood frenzy.** The Corcodrillon has advantage on melee attack roles against any creature that does not have maximum hit points

**Narcissism.** The Corcodrillon is obsessed with its own image reflected in any polished surface such as a mirror. Seeing its own reflection causes it to become paralyzed for 1 minute. The Corcodrillon is thereafter immune to this effect for 1 day.

**Sunlight sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the Corcodrillon has disadvantage on attack roles, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

## ACTIONS

**Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target, *Hit:* 14 (3d6+3) piercing damage.





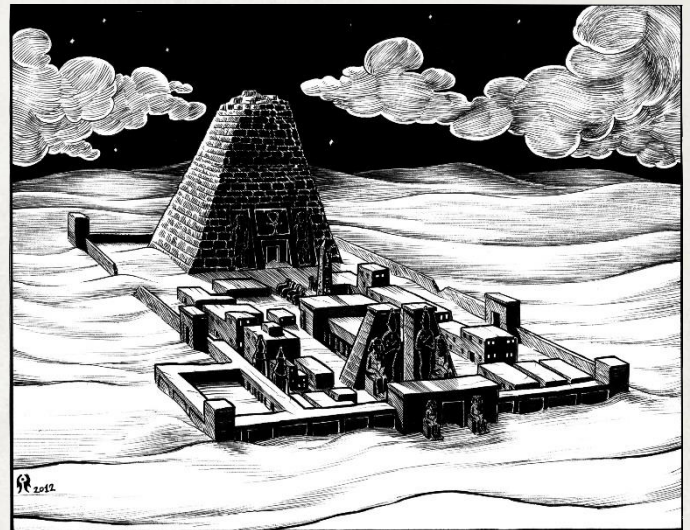
# TIME TRAVEL

Time travel can break the principle of causality and the linearity of time. Time travel is most effective in storytelling when it is loosely codified, “messy” and upset our subjective experience of time. Do not strictly enforce that things need to be done in a linear manner with a predefined solution. Make the perception of time messy by including several trips back and forth in order to break the curse. Note the things the characters do in the past and incorporate it into the story and environment going forward. Remember; keep calm and have fun. You can use the following guidelines for time travel:

- The characters always time travel as a group. The infused magic transport the party as a whole back and forth. Causality flows forward in both the past and the present. Secondary visits to the past happen sequentially after a first visit. Likewise returning to the present happens chronologically after previous events. See map.
- The time jump to the past (or back again) happens when the GM deems it appropriate for maximum effect on story pacing. If no clear opportunity presents itself, the time jump happens in connection with a rest (short or long). The characters always reap the benefits of the rest. Time jumps are followed by a rumbling sensation throughout the temple.
- When the heroes jump in time, they can only bring material objects with them and no living creatures (including Thomepreus). Priests from the past can be propelled forward in time and their arrival deduced by a rumbling sound.
- Time travel exclusively takes place in the temple and catacomb environment. If the party leaves, they are transported into their own present.
- A separate past-section will describe any difference to the present environment (if any). If a time-puzzle is in place, one potential solution will be offered. The obstacles disentangled by time-travel can also be solved using more painstaking alternative solutions.

- For an immersive experience try to highlight the difference between the past and the present. In the present, Ammit’s temple is abandoned, pale and its interior decorated with frescoes depicting past events. In the past, however, the temple is in full splendor with saturated colors. The catacombs are full of cursed entities, traps and eternal guardians that loom over the treasures stored away. They are functional from past to present.
- For a much more complex adventure (beware!) you can incorporate multiple points of time arrivals in the past (see map). The party could jump to the past before or after Thomepreus was cursed or be allowed to split in time.

## TEMPLE OF AMMIT



### Temple characteristics

**Ceilings.** Ceilings are 40 ft. high.

**Doors.** Outer doors are made of bronze whereas inner doors are made of wood.

**Light.** Daylight comes through cracks in the ceiling. Forecourt and Inner chamber are dark although the artefact emanates a cold blue background light.

**Cardinal directions.** Abbreviated North (N), East (E), South (S), West (W).



## O. TEMPLE SURROUNDINGS

### Present:

Windswept sand dunes caress broken columns and obelisks on top of a bushy hill. Small insects scuttle around in the shades of the bushes. As you move around to investigate, it becomes clear that you are walking on a large and flat area covered in sand. A large square hole is found to one side and just below a half-transparent and fist sized crystal is held in place by an iron frame. The crystal glows as it captures the sunlight to send a focused blue light beam down in a huge chamber underneath your feet.

The party can use rope and do spelunking. A DC 12 Strength (Athletics) gains access into the buried temple. A failed climb attempt will give 1d6 in falling damage, as sandbanks below will dampen the impact. The crystal is only of limited value, and if removed will prevent opening the door at **11C**.

### Past:

The temple is on top of a little hill and has not yet sunk into the sand. Around it are obelisks, columns and statues mainly depicting a crocodile-like entity.

## 1. GREAT COURT

### Present:

A somber silence hangs in the air. Eight massive pillars adorned with hieroglyphs support the ceiling where rays of light find their way through cracks. Sand trickles down from above to form powdery banks around the pillars. The hole in the ceiling is a panel moved aside. The crystal generated light beam is focused towards a small round hole in the ground where it disappears. Huge bronze doors towards W appear blocked by sand. Two wooden doors and square columns leads to the eastern part of the temple. Along the south wall is a well with ceramic shards around it.

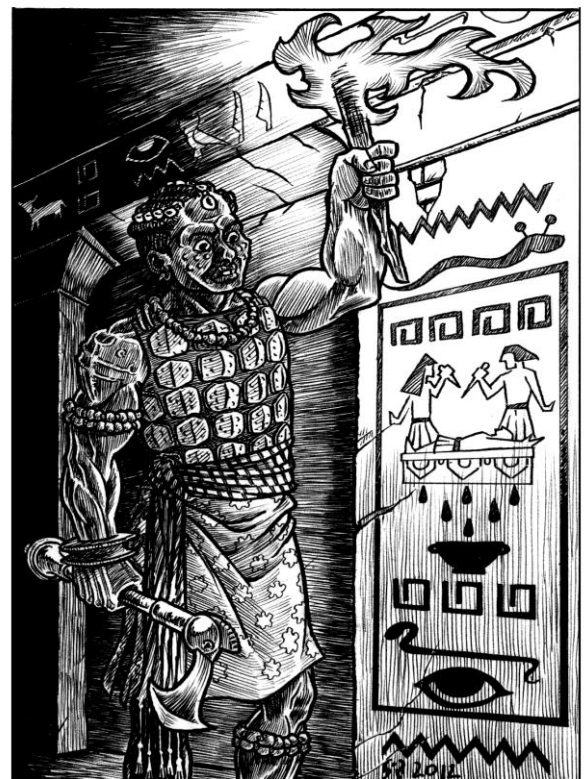
The door SW is stuck (Strength DC 15). The two doors NE and SE leads to chambers appearing as former living quarters. The well along the south wall can be climbed to reach **5** by a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

### Past:

The stone floor is swept clean of sand and a broom is leaning up against one column. The top of the columns is in splendid green colors giving the impression that they are large palm trees. A panel blocks the hole in the ceiling but the crystal is there. Buckets and vases containing cold fresh water are placed around the well.

### Time puzzle:

A trigger is hidden within a mural in the column close to the light hole in the ground, which can be located with a DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Activating the trigger releases the panel and light can be canalized from the crystal to the light hole and to its destination **8**. An alternative in the past is to climb the walls of the temple and break the panel from outside with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.





## 2. FORECOURT

### Present:

A large hexagonal chamber stands transfixed in time. The floor consists of scattered and broken tiles in faded colors. Menacing and identical statues with gaping maws line the walls. The 15 ft. tall statues are made of black stone and look like ominous upright crocodiles with cheetah hind legs. Painted frescoes are seen between the statues, their blue pigment only vaguely discernable. One fresco shows an assembly of priests all pointing towards a single priest excluded from their circle. The second fresco depicts priests digging up a large hourglass in sand dunes. The third fresco depicts heroes in a great battle with four priests. One of the priests has decapitated his opponent and holds out the head in his outstretched arms. The heroes in the fresco look exactly like your group with uncanny resemblance. Two square columns mark the entrance to the innermost chamber from where blue light emanates. A chilling sensation accompanies the blue light. Above that entrance is an engraved text "For all men who enter impure, I shall cast the fear of myself into him".

### Past:

The floor is made of mosaic green tiles in intricate patterns. The floor pattern is indiscernible when close by but when viewed from a distance the mosaic pattern fashions a crocodile creature. The shining copper blue murals on the wall make a startling contrast to the black statues. There is only one recognizable fresco as seen in the present; the one containing the hour glass extracted from the dunes. The other murals depicts ritual burial and religious incarnations. However, among the statues are empty spaces not yet painted, and vases containing blue paint and brushes are prepared to adorn the walls.

## 3. INNER CHAMBER

### Present:

A dusty set of stone steps leads down into a chilly inner chamber bathed in an eerie bluish hue. You can see your own breath as you enter this lower chamber lined with thin columns along the walls. The chamber has a concave wall to the E and holds a huge sand clock emanating blue light. The 15 ft. tall hourglass is held above ground by an iron frame. A set of stairs allows one to climb and access the top of the clock, where a big turning wheel is present. In the floor leading up to the clock is a slide holding a 10 ft long, 2 inches thick rod made of black metal. Five complicated locks appearing as scarab shells block the rod's passage towards the clock. On the back of each scarab shell is a set of four cogwheels that all display the number 0.

The five scarab shells are combination locks. The four cogwheels pr. shell can be turned incrementally to display the numbers between 0 and 9. The right combination sequence [1,0,8,2], [5,5,7,0], [8,9,1,1], [5,1,8,6], [8,7,9,3] unlocks the scarab shells allowing the metal rod to pass through. When the rod has free passage through all scarab-locks, it is possible to turn the wheel (Strength DC 12) and the sand clock upside down. A rogue proficient with thieves' tools can attempt to bypass one combination sequence at a time (Dexterity check DC 20). This unlocks one scarab-shell but does not display the correct numbers. The locks are interconnected so to bypass the system one must succeed five times in a row. However, one failed attempt resets all locks. It is impossible to lift the rod from the slide, nor move it in any other way than through the slide. Upon closer inspection of the clock, there is a small hatch on the top and bottom outer glass accessible using the stairs. This hatch allows one to insert figures into the bulb. See the **Curse of Endless Regret** for details.



## Past:

Four solemn looking priests are in the chamber humming and chanting. They wear green robes, pleated kilts, collars made of crocodile skin and crowns. In their hands, they have smoking censors pulsating with sweet green incense. In front of the sand-clock is a set of small but detailed ivory figurines resembling people. Beside the stair to the right is a crystal mounted on a four-legged holster.

The **Priests of Ammit** are motivated to eradicate unwanted infidels from the holy temple, with little patience for idle talk. Beside the stair is a crystal-holster (See **8**, **11C** and below **time puzzle**). If the party dispose of this detachment of priests, a new batch reinforce the temple upon a second visit to the past. They will be more talkative and yell of revenge (see section of adventure resolution).

## Time puzzle:

One of the priests in the past carries a key that opens the vault (**14**). The crystal-holster in the past can be used with success at **11C** in the present. The correct number combination is displayed on the scarab shells in the past and also stored in the vault (**14**).



# CATACOMBS

**Ceilings & walls.** Ceilings are 8 ft. high. Walls are made of sand-colored limestone.

**Doors.** Fake doors are made of oak reinforced with iron bands (AC 15, hp 18). Stone doors at **11C** and **14** are extremely sturdy (AC 17, hp 27, with resistance to all damage types except acid, bludgeoning, force, lightning, thunder. They can be unlocked using thieves' tools vs DC 20 with disadvantage.

**Light.** Light comes down the well in **5** and the hole in **8** but fades rapidly. Everywhere else is pitch dark.

**Traps.** The same DC is used to spot it (Perception), deducing the mechanism (Investigation), disarming (Dexterity check) or as saving throw.

**Wandering monsters.** The catacombs are filled with undeads. They primarily reside in **9A**, but also wander freely around beneath the temple. Any combination of **Wights** (CR3), **Ghasts** (CR2), **Ghouls** (CR1), and **Zombies** (CR1/4) can be used to create medium to hard encounters adjusted for multiple monsters. An appropriate encounter in the catacombs could be **2xGhasts** and **3xGhouls**.

## 4A. STAIR-SHAFT

### Present:

A door from the temple leads to counter-clockwise stone stairs spiralling downwards into the dark. As you descend you hear your own footsteps echo between the walls. For every half-circle completed small openings face inwards into a hollow shaft. Halfway down the stairs a small corridor extends W. Another half-circle rotation reveals the first corridor leading E. The lowest part of the stairs is completely flooded with foul smelling brown water.



**Past:**

The top of the stair-shaft is freestanding and has a wooden crane for lowering bodies into the catacombs. The lower part is free of water (15).

## 4B. STAIR-STORAGE

**Present:**

A fist-sized semitransparent crystal in a four-legged metal holster is here. It can be used to guide light from 8 towards 11B or 13.

**Past:**

The storage is empty.

## 5. ROTUNDA

**Present:**

Leading into this circular chamber are ominous statues depicting crocodile creatures with gaping jaws. Their heads are of crocodile origin and painted with golden stripes whereas their torsos are humanoid and utter black in color. The Rotunda contains a dominant central feature; a well extends from the ceiling and further down, protected by a 3-foot high circular wall and supporting pillars. A dripping sound can be heard from the well and soothing light comes down from above. There is access to the well between the pillars where cold mist rises. Corridors extend to the N and E, and there are three solid oak doors in the periphery towards NE, SE and SW.

Climbing the well requires a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to reach 1. The oak doors are fake doors to trick intruders. See catacomb section.

**Past:**

Green lusty vine plants grows inside the interior of the well. The climbing DC is reduced to 10.

## 6. ANTECHAMBER

**Present:**

As you step into this dark rectangular room you immediately smell a pungent stench from water filled stairs descending to the sides. Narrow and claustrophobic corridors lead N and S and a room continues to E flanked by two square pillars adorned with hieroglyphs.

An DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check or *comprehend languages* reveal the symbols to represent warnings and advice about the afterlife. A creature called Ammit is repeatedly mentioned in these scriptures.

**Past:**

The stairs are free of water.

## 7. INNER BURIAL CHAMBER

**Present:**

Three smaller niches with low ceilings are seen in each cardinal direction. Inside each niche is a dusty stone sarcophagus encaged in cobwebs. Leaf-like stone murals depicts burial ceremonies with a crocodile creature looming over the procession. The tombs position and ornamentation would seem to indicate persons of high status were buried here.

The stone lids can be removed (Strength DC 13) to reveal webbed skeletons bearing green robes and collars of crocodile skin. In their bony hands are sickles and the skulls bear red crowns. Mixed objects of art, jewels and gems of total 50 gp/sarcophagus accompanies the deceased in the afterlife. However, inside each coffin is **1d4+1 Spiders**.

**Past:**

The niches are devoid of web and no spiders are present.



## 8. HYPOGEUM

### Present:

As you enter this dusty chamber N of the Rotunda you feel the hair on your arms stand up. Something in this chamber feels old beyond reckoning. Carved into the walls are frescos; the most notable depicts a large snake lifting the sun. A second mural shows crocodiles in a river gorging on horrified humans. Four massive columns in pastel stone are holding up the ceiling. Alongside the E and W wall are stone benches. In the ceiling, close to the N wall, a focused blue colored light beam shines down. The light hits a fist-sized semitransparent crystal on top of a four-legged metal holster, which turns the light 90 degrees hitting a hole in the E wall where it disappears.

An DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the metal holster is placed precisely in four small symmetrical holes in the floor. It can be rotated 180 degrees to direct the light on the W wall (light to **13**). The light needs a crystal to be focused properly and cannot be directed by a mirror.



### Past:

In the past, the Hypogeum chamber is bereft of the crystal-holster. These are placed in **14**. On the stone benches are two dead people wrapped in thin green textiles being prepared for the curse and final rest in **9A**. If examined closely they bear the 'mark of the crocodile' and in their hands they hold small ivory figures with characteristics to the deceased.

## 9A. CATACOMBS

### Present:

The smell of decay and death hits your nostrils as you enter the catacombs. A weak moaning sound can be heard emanating from E. The outer walls in the catacombs are stacked with square holes, two atop of each other and large enough to hold bodies. Some appear empty but the majority have stone covers concealing the dead. In front of each recess is an ivory figurine portraying the deceased. As you walk along this corridor you suddenly see a set of figures with your exact physical characteristics are placed side by side. The small figures are greatly detailed and even have minor details undeniably correct.

If the party disturbs a grave by breaking the seal, they immediately attract the attention of its **Ghoul** dweller and additional **2xGhasts** and **2xGhouls** from nearby niches. If they break their 'own' seal, the Ghoul emerging from its resting place looks unnervingly like the party member. The affiliated hero must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer disadvantage on all attack roles against his/her undead counterpart. At any point during exploration of the underground wandering undeads can be used to increase tension. The moaning noises appear human and grow stronger as the party progress to the E.

### Past:

There are no figures of the heroes in the past in the catacombs. **Priests of Ammit** have them at **(3)** but only during a second encounter. See adventure resolution section.

### Time puzzle:

To remove the 'mark of the crocodile' on themselves, the heroes need simply to destroy their own figures. To abolish an completed curse see **Curse of Endless Regret**.



## 9B. THE FUNNEL

This north-south corridor is only 5 feet wide with a corridor leading E towards Thomepreus in **10**. This area can be a dangerous choke point.

## 9C. ANGEL WINGS

### Present:

As you enter the chamber to SW an odd smell fills the room. A patch of brown-orange mold about 6 ft. long covers a lump on the floor. Upon closer inspection a skeleton holding a corroded metal holster is beneath a thick powdery layer of old mold. Weird color patches are seen on the wall and ceiling.

The crystal is destroyed and the metal holster is non-functional. The **9C** chamber to SE is barren.

### Past:

As you enter this square room a lush scenery is on display. Mushrooms, fungus and puffballs in many colors cover all surfaces. Water drips from the ceiling. In the middle, a man lies encased in yellow mold holding a crystal-holster. He wears green robes and a pleated kilt but is otherwise in a state of decomposition.

**Yellow mold** covers the priest and the crystal-holster. The mold can be identified with a DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. The mold is metabolic inactive in the present, but if the dead priest, the crystal holster, or the mold is touched in the past it releases its cloud of spores.

## 9D. BLADE HISS

### Present/Past:

Mechanical trap DC 15: A mirror at the turn creates the illusion that the hallway continues to the N. A barely perceptible crevice in the E wall conceals a round scything blade that covers the entire width of the corridor. Upon stepping on a pressure plate the blade

springs forth and attacks all standing 10 feet in front of the mirror (Dexterity save to avoid). The blade deals 1d10 slashing damage. The blade slides back and the spring mechanism resets after 4 rounds. Sections or broken piece of the mirror might be used at **13**, but unsuccessful at **8**, **11B**, **11C**. See details at these locations.

## 10. THOMEPREUS' REFORMATORY

### Present:

As you move into a narrow corridor, you discover the source of the moaning. A middle-aged man is chained by his feet to the wall in the N niche. He has long white hair that stretches down over his green robes. A gruesome bite mark can be seen on his face. In his hands, he clings to a sharp stone in a feeble attempt to fend off three rotting undeads that slowly approach him.

The **Curse of Endless Regret** (Type 2) confines Thomepreus here. **3xZombies** approach him to feast. He begs the heroes to help him. He has no priestly powers, no movement and the stats of a Commoner with 13 hp. If he is killed by undeads he will repeat his day and 'rise' anew after the party has a long rest. The manacles holding Thomepreus in place can be broken with a DC 20 Strength check or the lock picked with thieves tools and a successful DC 15 Dexterity check. Background and advice for roleplaying Thomepreus are given in the box.





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## Thomepreus:

**Traits.** I go to extremes in all endeavours. There is no middle road.

**Ideal.** If everybody behaved according to the same rules, there would be no conflict.

**Bond.** My wife Dhoah was the only one that could make me change my mind.

**Flaw.** I cannot help but impose my worldview on those around me.

### **Background.**

Thomepreus was a stern man whose principles of discipline and punishment led his son Staku to suicide. His wife Dhoah left him without looking back and without forgiveness. In search of betterment, he sought council from the wrong people and soon found himself wearing the priest-robe of Ammit. Thomepreus' goal is to be relieved of his punishment and to receive forgiveness from his wife in the afterlife.

### **Information.**

Thomepreus knows the bite-mark can be removed by destroying the ivory figure, but to end his curse the sand-clock must be used. The clock requires a combination sequence to be unlocked and a figure resembling the target must run opposite through the neck to end the curse. If that happens, time will finally catch up with him. Thomepreus was only briefly initiated into the cult of Ammit, so he is unaware of all the priests' secrets. He knows a vault allegedly exists in the tunnel leading N of the catacombs (11B), where the priests hide their secrets. He is unaware of the traps placed around in the complex, but knows that 9C to SW contain some sort of fungus – very dangerous to the touch.

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### **Past:**

Thomepreus is not to be found anywhere in the complex in the past. He has not yet been initiated into the cult when the party jumps back.

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## 11A. THE WRONG TURN

### **Present/Past:**

Mechanical trap DC 15: A fake door is present in the E wall and in front of it is a pressure plate in the floor. Tiny holes camouflaged within intricate murals are present in the N and S wall lining the corridor. If the pressure plate is activated four darts (+5 ranged attack) are released against anyone in the corridor. Upon a hit each dart delivers 1d4 piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution save or take additional 2d4 poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. In the wall are metal springs holding the darts in place, so the trap can only be reset manually by laborious insertion of darts into each hole.

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## 11B. NORTHERN CORRIDOR

### **Present:**

A bright line shines from a small hole about 3 feet up in the W wall and hits the E wall. The blue light is benign and stems from the crystal-holster in 8. In the floor are 4 symmetrical holes able to hold another crystal-holster, although none is present. If anyone has interrupted the continuous light beam from 1 or 8, either by blocking the light or moving the crystal holster, no light is visible here. See 11C.

### **Past:**

No light shines through the hole as the panel blocks it at 1 and furthermore there is no crystal-holster in 8 to lead it on.

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## 11C. OPEN SESAME

### **Present/Past:**

The corridor makes a left turn towards W. At the turn, there are four symmetrical holes in the floor and a bulky stone door blocks further progress. Right in the middle of the door is a light-inlet; a small hole 3 feet up. This door opens with a grinding sound once crystal-derived light has been directed into the inlet. It can be closed/opened from the inside with a lever independent of light.

### **Time puzzle:**

In the present time, light is being directed from 1 to 8 and stops at 11B. A crystal-holster is positioned at 4B and can be moved here to direct the light from 11B to



**11C** where it stops. The third crystal-holster required to direct from **11C** to the door, can be obtained from the **3, 9C** in the past or **15** in the present. Completing the same conundrum in the past is significantly more difficult as the last remaining crystal-holster is in the vault (**14**). An alternative is to apply brute force to the door. Light directed through a mirror or similar polished surface will not work, as the crystal focusses and changes the wavelength to blue light.

## 12. THE SCORPION PIT

### Present:

A rectangular room with warm stuffy air. Through the gloom, you vaguely see that the floor ends abruptly and a pit extends into the darkness. At the bottom of the pit you see loose sand with a distinct blue color. Suspended just below the ceiling is what looks like a bridge held by massive chains in each corner position. If lowered the bridge appears to fit to the platform allowing one to cross the gap into the unknown. To the right on the platform is a set of four cogwheels all displaying the number 0 and a lever in 'up' position.

The sand in the pit is **Quicksand** but with a 1 round delay. Although one sinks slightly down in the sand in the first round, nothing feels out of the ordinary. For every subsequent round creatures in the sand sink 1d4+1 feet and becomes restrained. One can escape the **Quicksand** using a Strength check DC 10 + number of feet the creature has sunk down. Half-submerged creatures can be pulled out (using rope as example) by defeating a Strength DC 5 + number of feet's the creature has sunk. Creatures begins to suffocate if fully submerged. Movement by restrained characters triggers a **Giant sand scorpion** to emerge from the sand. This creature is a variant of the Giant scorpion but additionally has tremorsense to 30 feet and is unaffected by the **Quicksand**.

### Past:

The bridge is lowered and can be crossed safely. The numbers displayed on the cogwheel are [9, 8, 1, 5] and the lever is in the 'down' position. A **Swarm of tiny green scorpions** lives in the sand. They have the same

abilities as a Swarm of insects but with the variant centipede poison ability.

### Time puzzle:

The numbers indicated in the past can be used in the present to lower the bridge when pulling the lever. Without turning the cogwheels to the correct numbers, the lever is non-functional. A rogue proficient with thieves' tools can attempt to bypass the combination sequence. This does not reveal the correct sequence but the bridge is lowered with a successful DC 20 Dexterity check. Because of the delicate mechanics controlling the cogwheel-lock, the lever and the bridge, any disruption by pilfering makes the bridge unstable. The bridge makes an abrupt up and down movement when crossed and any creature on the bridge must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the soft sand (taking 1d6 in falling damage).

## 13. HALLWAY OF THE CORCODRILLONS

### Present/Past:

A long broad corridor swings S into the darkness. At the intersection are two levers, both in 'up' position, marked with numerals I and II. Further down the corridor are two niches holding black statues depicting crocodile like creatures. Your footsteps echo down the corridor and your impression is that the corridor extends well beyond the statues.

If a crystal-holster has been orientated so that light shines W in **8**, a bright focused light beam shines across this corridor 30 feet down, otherwise a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that a hole and opposing light inlet exists. Only if crystal-derived light hits the inlet will the levers at the intersection be functional. The two 'statues' are **Corcodrillons**, eternal guardians of the vault. They remain motionless until someone comes close to fall victim of their hypnotic gaze. The priests build an elaborate bypass mechanism. The creature's weaknesses are sunlight and a whiff of narcissism. A light beam across the corridor discourage the creatures to venture N. Light-activated lever I controls the portcullis and light-activated lever II controls a rotating mirror. By turning the mirror (lever II to 'down' position), the guardians will move out of their niches



towards the mirror. Thereafter the portcullis can be released (Lever I to 'down' position) to temporarily trap the creatures. After completion of the visit in the vault, the sequence is reversed to reboot the guardians. A mirror (perhaps from **9D**) can be used to immobilize the creatures, but only for a limited time.

## 14. THE VAULT

### Present:

A locked door blocks passage to the vault. If no key is available (from **3**), it can be broken down or unlocked using thieves' tools versus a DC 20 Dexterity check with disadvantage. Inside is a wooden crate with a neatly sorted collection of figurines carved out from ivory. Among these lifelike figures is one representing Thomepreus required for ending his curse. In a second wooden box, is a set of four times five small cogwheels (miniature versions of the scarab-locks in **(3)**), all preset with the number combination; [1,0,8,2], [5,5,7,0], [8,9,1,1], [5,1,8,6], [8,7,9,3]. This is the combination that will allow the sand clock to be activated, and together with the figurine, the curse can be removed (see **Curse of Endless Regret**). There is also one additional combination [9,8,1,5] on a separate cogwheel required for lowering the bridge in **12**. The vault has largely been emptied and only a 2nd level spell scroll: *Suggestion* and a 3rd level spell scroll: *Beacon of hope* is left behind.

### Past:

The number of figurines in the crate is far less and Thomepreus figure is not present. The box containing the cogwheel combination is also there in the past. There are two crystal-holsters stored away in the vault in the past. The vault is booming with valuables as follows: *Potion of mind reading*, *Potion of gaseous form*, 4th level spell scroll: *Freedom of movement*, 3rd level spell scroll: *Beacon of hope*, 2nd level spell scroll: *Suggestion*, +1 weapon of the GMs choice, and *Cloak of elvenkind*. Additionally there are 4 gold vestments valued each 25 gp and 12 amethyst gems each valued at 100 gp.

### Time puzzle:

A priest in the past (**3**) carries a key that unlocks the door to the vault.

## 15. THE LOWER HALLWAY

### Present:

A lower hallway leads from the stair-shaft to the Antechamber (**6**). The hallway is completely flooded with stale water and contains a **Swarm of Quippers**. In the middle of the submerged corridor lies a functional crystal-holster.

### Past:

The lower hallway is free of water and can be navigated, but is otherwise empty.

## ADVENTURE END

When the heroes obtain the combination code as well as the figurine they are ready to absolve Thomepreus' curse, see **3** and **Curse of Endless Regret** for details. Reversing the curse is initiated when running the figures through the sand clock again. For a dramatic finish, the party encounters a second group of **Priests of Ammit**. One possibility is that the heroes are transferred to the past, where the temple has been reinforced.

Alternatively, time distortions causes a group of priests from the past to travel to the present with the intent of cursing the party. In either case, the party interrupts four priests in the process of cursing the heroes just as they arrive in the Inner Chamber (**3**). If the heroes fail to prevent this, a set of chains are ready in the catacombs, waiting for new occupants.

**Tactics.** The priests use figurines resembling the party, and at round one these are inserted into the sand clock's bulb. A race for controlling the sand clock becomes paramount. The priests will protect the sand clock until the curse takes effect, and the party will need to stop their figurines running through the neck. If the players manage to turn the clock again, any ongoing effects will disappear in a round based manner as the figures now run in the opposite direction through the neck. The priests can use their *time slip* feature and *hold person* spell to great effect.

I hope you have enjoyed this adventure! Any feedback is greatly appreciated. If you want to know more take a look at my vimeo channel, and keep an eye out for my next adventure; '*The Secrets of the Twisting Colossus*'.



# TEMPLE & CATACOMBS

