

DEATH IN THE SKYFIRE WASTES

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] ADVENTURE

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A race to discover the secrets of an ancient ruin in the Calim Desert turns into a fight for survival. Can you recover a lost relic before it falls into the wrong hands? A 4th Edition adventure and a preview for the *Living Forgotten Realms* campaign. 3rd-level characters are provided.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules Items** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in bold italics provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA Session Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your Senior GM directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. A lower-case letter (used only in some melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule when you DM for a group:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure when possible.

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. RPGA adventures are designed to be played within 3.5

- 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, being the DM for an RPGA adventure isn't about following every word on the page; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. A great deal of good information on being a DM for a D&D game can be found in Chapters 1-2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

THE CHARACTERS

At the beginning of the adventure, before reading the Player's Introduction, let the players choose their characters. If you have 5 players at the table, do not use the halfling warlock. If you have 4 players at the table, do not use the dwarf swordmage.

Make sure to answer any questions you can about the characters. Give the players ample time to review, but not more than a half an hour. Once they're ready to begin, read the Player's Introduction.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Haarak and Tyran are tiefling brothers, agents of the efreet lord Memnon who specialize in tracking down and recovering lost artifacts and other magical objects. In the chaos and upheaval caused by the Spellplague, many records and volumes of lore disappeared. Haarak and Tyran unearth such secrets and deliver the fruit of their research to Memnon's followers. Utterly mercenary in their outlook, they care nothing for the

devastation and evil that such recovered items might spark.

The characters are agents of Almraiven, the last city of Calimshan free of the yoke of the djinns and efreet. They have tracked the duo to the Skyfire Wastes. Buried beneath the sands of this blasted wasteland are a network of tombs and burial chambers, each connected by a network of portals. Adventurers have tried, without much success thus far, to map out the connections between the tombs. The portals that connect them allow travel to different destinations depending on a variety of factors, from the date, the time of year, and even the time of day. Sometimes, travel through one gate is only possible after passing through a series of gates before it.

As luck would have, today three tombs are connected by a confluence of the portals. The Tomb of the Crawling One and the Tomb of Telemus are in alignment, allowing travel to the long-forgotten Crypt of Twelve Lords, where lies the *Eye of Timor*, a powerful artifact capable of destroying Almraiven's arcane defenses.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The sun beats down upon the land like a hammer striking an anvil. Normally, only a fool would walk the Skyfire Wastes during the day, but desperate times call for perhaps foolish measures. You have tracked a pair of villainous tiefling treasure hunters named Haarak and Tyran to this heat blasted region. If your informants are right, they are about to recover a powerful magical artifact called the Eye of Timor for the evil efreet Memnon. With the eye in his possession, nothing would stand between the tyrannical Memnon and your home city, the last bastion of freedom in Calimshan, Almraiven.

Beneath the sands of the Skyfire Waste lie a number of tombs, many of them sealed from the surface world when their ancient builders collapsed their entrances. However, a network of portals originating from the tombs that still have access to the surface allow explorers to reach even tombs buried beneath hundreds of feet of sand.

The portals are by no means reliable. Some of the portals function only at certain times of the year or on specific dates. In other cases, explorers must pass through a specific series of portals to gain access to their final destination.

Uncovering the proper sequence of portals, or the date and time of a portal's activation, can lead to tombs that have remained untouched for centuries.

According to your contacts, Harrak and Tyran have uncovered just such a lost sequence. Luckily, you have learned their path and must follow them to prevent the Eye of Timor from falling into Memnon's hands. The tieflings have begun their journey at the Tomb of the Crawling One, and luckily your contact intercepted a dispatch Haarak made to a being named Kon-Tarath. In the letter, the tieflings mention utilizing the portal found there, and that they bring a suitable offering to him for use of the portal.

Thus, you find yourself standing just outside the entrance to the Tomb of the Crawling One, the crypt of a long dead priest of Ghaunadaur. While you know that strange creatures lurk within the crypt before you, if you fail Almraiven will fall, and with its defeat thousands of innocents shall fall into slavery at the hands of the efreet lord.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

Death in the Skyfire Wastes is a simple adventure that traces the characters' pursuit of two tiefling agents of Memnon. The PCs must activate the portals in two far-flung tombs, using them to travel to the long undisturbed Crypt of Twelve Lords. Within the crypt, they must battle the tieflings and ensure that the Eye of Timor is forever sealed beneath the earth.

ENCOUNTER 1: TOMB OF THE CRAWLING ONE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 3

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures:

2 fire beetles (B)

3 stormclaw scorpions (S)

1 stirge (G)

Kon-Tarath (K)

Kon-Tarath is an undead spellcaster and initiate of Ghaunadaur. His emaciated body is full of burrow holes and tears from the swarms of insects that crawl in and around his withered form. He has gathered about him a number of vermin that serve as his guards and minions. The tieflings struck an alliance with him, promising him great wealth and sacrifices in return for passage through his tomb.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Before you, a set of broken, stone stairs descend into the ground. Sand dunes piled about the entrance of this tomb suggest that, in time, this place shall be claimed by the desert. A faint, acrid odor wafts up the stairs.

The encounter covers the entirety of Kon-Tarath's tomb. He guards the portal and seeks to slay the PCs. His minions lurk in the shadows, using a series of cracks in the walls and floor to attack the PCs from all sides.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Travelers avoid Kon-Tarath's tomb, as the undead servant of Ghaunadaur guards little treasure and reacts violently to any disturbance.

The walls of this place are covered with disturbing murals of crawling, insect creatures that burst from the ground to devour fleeing humans, elves, and other humanoids. Here and there, shards of chitin and broken, humanoid bones litter the floor. A DC 18 Nature check reveals that the thick, acrid smell is characteristic of large insects.

Illumination: This place is dark, though the stairs are light by the sun and the dungeon tile depicting the crack in the floor has dim illumination. The characters must bring their own light source.

Cracks: The vermin that Kon-Tarath has gathered to him have burrowed a network of tunnels beneath his

tomb. As a move action, the fire beetles and the scorpions can move from any square adjacent to the cracks in the floor to any other square adjacent to the cracks in the floor. Note that there is a large crack in the hall leading into the tomb and a smaller crack in the chamber of the well.

The Well: The well is 10 feet deep. Climbing its side is a DC 15 Athletics check. The area around its edge is damp, with small pools of water. Saves made to avoid falling into the well suffer a -2 penalty.

The Portcullis: This barrier is crafted from bronze. It has 20 hit points, AC, Reflex, and Fortitude defenses of 5. It is locked, but a DC 15 Thievery check opens it. The fire beetles and scorpions can move between the bars by spend 1 extra square of movement.

The portcullis does not block line of sight, but it does provide cover.

Doors: These thick, stone doors have 40 hit points and a 5 for all defenses. They are wedged shut by an iron spike, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to open.

The Portal: The portal is scribed in the location as marked on the map. It is a ring of iron embedded in the wall. Activating the portal requires 5 minutes of work. A DC 20 Arcana check reveals that the portal has been damaged (most likely recently by the tieflings as they fled). A DC 25 Arcana check reveals that it will drop a traveler several miles north of its intended destination, which from the looks of the portal's runes, is a place called the Tomb of Telemus.

TACTICS

Kon-Tarath and his minions attempt to lure the PCs into the tomb and then use the burrows in the floor to attack.

Stormclaw Scorpions: These creatures lead the attack. Once the PCs reach the portcullis or if they attempt to open the door, they rush through the cracks in the floor to attack the PCs from all sides. They try to hold the PCs in place, allowing Kon-Tarath and the fire beetles to use their area and ranged attacks without the threat of a counter attack.

Cruel Trick: If a scorpion starts its turn adjacent to a crack in the floor, it uses the burrows to escape a counter-attack if its attack misses. It only does this if it is adjacent to someone other than a fighter.

Fire Beetles: The fire beetles lurk near the portcullis, ready to unleash blasts of fire to any PC who draws near. They keep back, avoiding melee attacks while blasting away.

Cruel Trick: The beetles are in no rush to engage in melee. If both the door and portcullis are still closed, they avoid fighting and wait to recharge their fire attack.

Stirge: The stirge waits a round or two before flying from the well to attack. Once the PCs are engaged, it then swoops out and seeks a poorly armored PC who is isolated from the rest of the group.

Cruel Trick: Once the stirge attacks a PC, the scorpions fight to prevent the rest of the party from coming to the victim's aid.

Kon-Tarath: The undead spellcaster fights alongside the beetles, raining attacks through the portcullis. If the PCs breach both entries to the tomb, he withdraws to allow the scorpions to move through the cracks in the floor and form a defensive line in front of him.

Cruel Trick: Kon-Tarath uses *voracious swarm* as early in the encounter as possible to create a barrier for the PCs' progress. He waits until the PCs are in the swarm before using *swarm of locusts*, gladly destroying the swarm in order to recharge it and use it in a more advantageous location. The fire beetles can also use their area attacks in this manner.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one stormclaw scorpion.

Six PCs: Add an additional stirge.

TREASURE

Kon-Tarath has two *potions of healing* in his possession, what he was promised as the first of many rewards that the tieflings would be gifting him for use of the portal. The PCs can claim these items and use them for their own in later encounters. *Potions of healing* take a minor action to consume, and the user spends a healing surge and heals 10 hit points instead of their surge value.

His sarcophagus also contains 800 gp worth of fine ancient golden pottery and jewelry. Most of it is in surprisingly good condition.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have defeated the monsters, they are free to activate the portal and travel through it.

ENCOUNTER 1 STATISTICS

Kon-Tarath		Level 4 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +11; darkvision		
HP 62; Bloodied 31		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 18		
Speed 6		
m Ceremonial Dagger (standard; at-will) • Poison, Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d4+2 damage and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
r Poison Orb (standard; at-will) • Poison		
Range 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8+2 damage and slow (save ends).		
A Swarm of Locusts (standard; encounter) • Poison		
Burst 2 within 10; enemies only, +7 vs. Fortitude; 3d6+4 poison damage and the target grants combat advantage to all attackers (save ends).		
C Voracious Swarm (standard; recharge special) • Zone, poison		
Blast 3; enemies only, +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 poison damage and blinded until the end of Kon-Tarath's next turn. This attack's area is a zone that lasts until Kon-Tarath is slain or until it is destroyed. Enemies that begin their turns in the area suffer 5 poison damage. Any portion of the zone included in an area or close attack that inflicts damage is destroyed. When the entire zone is destroyed, Kon-Tarath recharges this power.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common
Skills Arcana +10, Perception +11, Religion +10		
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 13 (+3)	Wis 18 (+6)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 16 (+5)	Cha 11 (+2)
Equipment 2 potions of healing		

Stormclaw Scorpion		Level 1 Soldier
Medium natural beast		XP 100
Initiative +3		Senses Perception +0; tremorsense 5
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 11		
Resist 10 lightning		
Speed 6		
⚔ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is grabbed (until escape). A grabbed target takes 5 lightning damage at the start of the stormclaw scorpion's turn.		
↓ Sting (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+6 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is immobilized (save ends both). The stormclaw scorpion can use this attack against a target it has grabbed.		
⚡ Reactive Sting (immediate reaction, when an enemy grabbed by the scorpion escapes; at-will)		
The stormclaw scorpion makes a sting attack against the enemy.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+3)	Dex 12 (+1)	Wis 11 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 10 (+0)

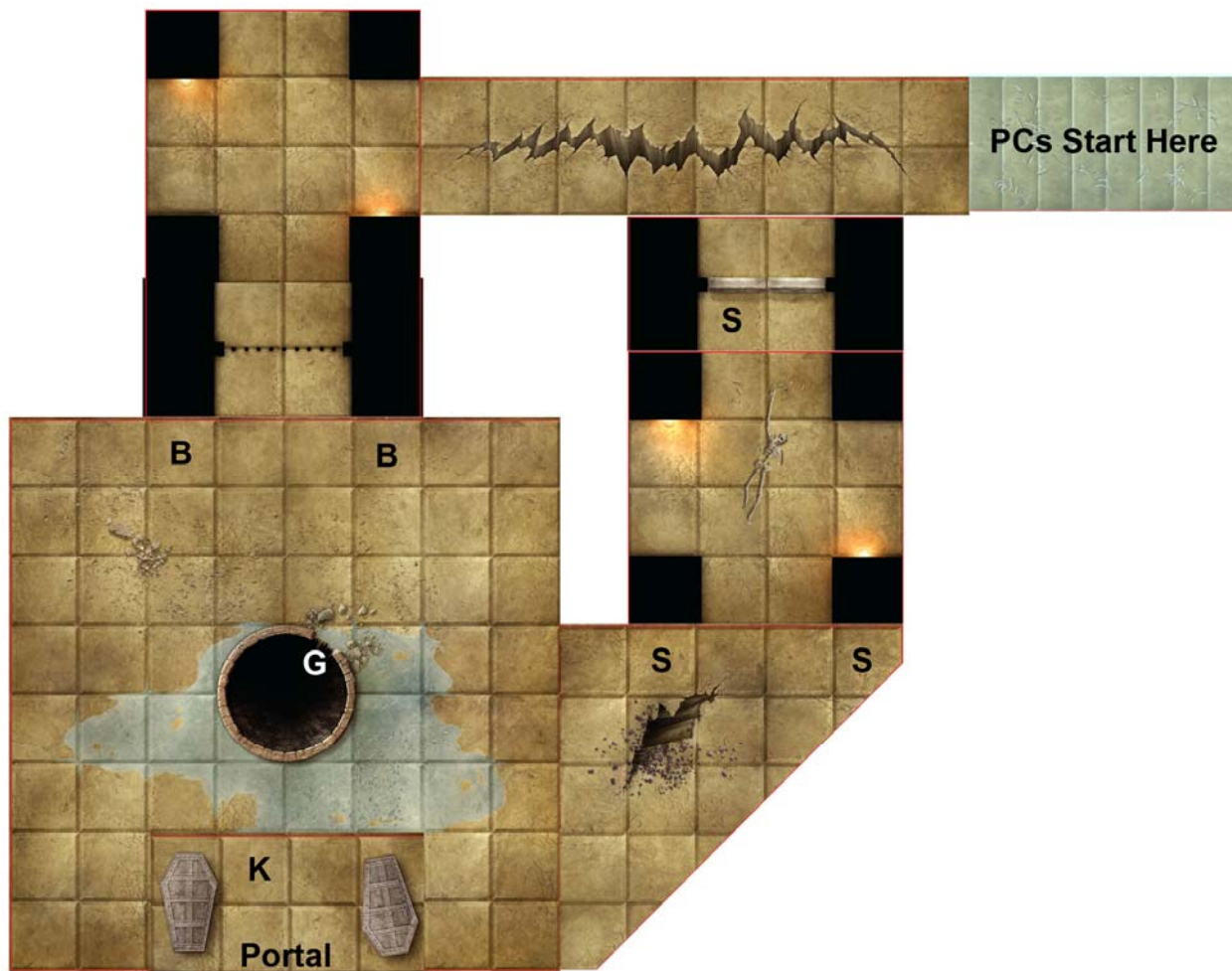
Fire Beetle		Level 1 Brute
Small natural beast		XP 100
Initiative +1		Senses Perception +0
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 11		
Resist 10 fire		
Speed 6		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. AC; 2d4 + 2 damage.		
⚡ Fire Spray (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ Fire		
Close blast 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 12 (+1)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 8 (-1)

Stirge		Level 1 Lurker
Small natural beast		XP 100
Initiative +7		Senses Perception +0; darkvision
HP 22; Bloodied 11		
AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 13, Will 10; see also bite		
Speed 2, fly 6 (hover)		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage, and the target is grabbed (until escape) and takes ongoing 5 damage until it escapes. An attached stirge doesn't make attack rolls while grabbing a target and gains a +5 bonus to its AC and Reflex defenses.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +8		
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 10 (+0)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 4 (-3)

ENCOUNTER 1 MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Well	8x8	x1
Intersection	4x4	X2
Cracked Floor	5x5 (Diagonal)	X1
Door	2x4	x1
Portcullis	2x4	x1
Crevasse	2x8	X1
Stairs	2x4	X1



ENCOUNTER 2: ACROSS THE SKYFIRE WASTE

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 3

SETUP

Number of Successes: Special (see below)

Number of Failures: Special (lose 1 healing surge per hour traveled; see below)

Primary Skill: Endurance

When the characters step through the portal in the Tomb of the Crawling One, they see a flash of bright light and find themselves standing in the middle of the desert at mid-day. The portal, damaged by the tieflings before they used it, has deposited the characters near, rather than in, their destination. They must march for four hours to reach the Tomb of Telemus.

As you step through the portal, you experience a disturbing sense of vertigo. Suddenly, you are bathed in blinding light and intense heat. You stand in the midst of the desert at high noon. Only a fool would travel at this time of day, yet time is tight. You have no choice but to press on.

Consulting your maps, you determine that it is about a four hour march to the closest known portal, found within the Tomb of Telemus.

SKILL CHALLENGE

Unlike a standard skill challenge, the characters all must make Endurance checks to determine how well they fare in walking across the searing desert. Each check represents an hour of walking. In addition, the characters can use secondary skills to ease the rigors of their journey.

Endurance (DC 18): Each member of the group must make this check for each hour of travel. The travel time is 4 hours, so each character will make this check 4 times. Conduct this check one round at a time, letting all players make Endurance checks for hour 1, then hour 2, and so forth. A character can take a -2 to their check to give another character a +2, but the penalty must be taken before the roll and the bonus applies only to the current hour of travel.

If the check succeeds, the character travels without issue. If it fails, the character loses a healing surge. A character could lose anywhere between 0-4 healing

surges during the course of the travel depending on how successful they are on their Endurance checks.

Secondary Skills: In addition, the characters can use the following secondary skills to aid their travel. Ask the players if their characters would like to use any other skills to aid them on their trek. Allow each character to make a check, or aid another character's check, before the next round of Endurance checks. The group can only use each skill listed below once before the first Endurance check and between each Endurance check.

Heal (DC 19): A character can use the Heal skill to treat the group for heat exposure and dehydration. A successful check gives everyone in the group a +2 bonus on their Endurance checks.

Nature (DC 21): The Nature skill allows the group to plot an easier course through the desert. If a character succeeds at this check on consecutive hours, they need only make three group Endurance checks to reach the tomb.

Perception (DC 18): The Perception skill allows a member of the group to spot deep sand dunes, dust storms, and other hazards before they become a problem. The character making the check gains a +2 bonus on its next skill check other than Endurance.

Other Skills: As usual, a skill challenge should represent the chance for the players to try inventive ideas. If the PCs come up with a good use for a skill, assume the check is DC 18 for a smart skill usage, DC 22 for something that is more difficult. Here are some benefits you can grant the PCs:

- A successful check allows the character to negate their next healing surge loss in the skill challenge.
- A successful check allows the character to protect another character from their next healing surge loss in the skill challenge. The character being protected must be assigned when this benefit is gained.
- A successful check allows the character to gain a re-roll of their next failed Endurance check, but at a -2 penalty.

SETTING THE STAGE

When running this skill challenge, be sure to impress upon the PCs the stifling heat and the sun's relentless, searing drumbeat upon them. To help you out, here are some events that you can use to spice up descriptions between each check:

Sandstorm: A sandstorm springs up and washes over the party, reducing visibility to a few feet at best. The characters spot fleeting, humanoid like figures that seem to laugh and caper around them as the storm howls. As suddenly as the storm appeared, it is gone.

Battlefield: The characters stumble across the scene of a recent battle. Four dead ogres, blasted by fire and seared by acid, are sprawled across a shallow depression in the sand. The ogres are clad in torn leather armor, and their clubs are charred and worthless.

Distant Thunder: In the distance, the characters see flashes of lighting and distant explosions of fire. Creatures swoop through the air, exchanging blasts of energy. A Perception check (DC 20) reveals them to be a blue dragon fighting a pair of djinns riding a chariot forged from clouds. After a few moments, the dragon blasts the djinns from the air and soars away to the north.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once all characters in the group have made four Endurance checks (or three, if they made Nature checks), they arrive at the Tomb of Telemus.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE TOMB OF TELEMUS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 4

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps:

2 deathjump spiders (S)

Acid-spitting trap (A)

Mesmeric runes trap (M)

2 grasping floor traps (F)

The Tomb of Telemus has been ransacked many times over the years. It was discovered decades ago and looted. Since then, it has served as a lair for desert bandits, evil cultists, and other outcasts. Currently, a pair of deathjump spiders makes their lair here. By night, the spiders stalk the dunes in search of prey.

Once again, you find yourself standing outside a dark passage leading beneath the desert sands. The sun continues to beat down on you, driving you forward into the darkness with its relentless heat.

The entrance to this tomb is littered with debris. A few broken links of chainmail, a splintered mace, and a frayed and burnt length of rope provide mute testimony of the dozens of adventurers, bandits, and other wanderers who have visited this place.

As the Tomb of Telemus is a well-known ruin within the waste, characters can use the History skill to see what they know of it.

DC 15: There are many traps in the tomb, including a pillar that sprays acid on those who come near it.

DC 20: Wandering creatures, particularly predatory beasts, make this place a lair if it goes undisturbed for too long. Some of the tombs' traps affect only intelligent humanoids, allowing predators to dwell here in peace.

DC 25: Beware the runes carved in the floor of the tomb. They mesmerize intruders, forcing them to blunder into a second trap.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This tomb is mostly bare, save for the traps found here.

Illumination: This place is lit by dim, yellow glow that seems to radiate from the walls.

Columns: The four columns in the chamber of the spider webs are covered with carvings of writhing snakes. Many of these snakes have their mouths wide open, fangs bared. The column with the acid trap has acid-spewing nozzles mounted in the snakes' mouths.

Mesmeric Runes: This square formation of runes flickers with red light. Characters who see the runes risk being drawn closer to them by their magic.

Grasping Floor Traps: These two traps cause the floor at their locations to gain the consistency of quicksand when a PC steps into them. One of them, the one in the entry hall, features an illusion of a pile of coins. A Perception check (DC 22) allows a character to determine that the coins are an illusion. A PC who tries to touch the coins suffers an attack from the trap.

Webbing: The webs are difficult terrain that blocks line of sight. The spiders can move through them without penalty.

There are several humans cocooned in the web. All but one of them is long dead. One victim is the tieflings' guide, an unwitting dupe who was thrown to the spiders as an easy meal while the tieflings activated the portal. A DC 20 Perception check allows the PCs to notice that one of the cocooned forms seems to struggle slightly.

The guide is named Sarris. If freed, he gladly provides the PCs with what information he has. He overheard the tieflings talking about the Tomb of Twelve Lords. They each carried a crown that prevents the tombs' ghosts from attacking them. The tieflings were happy to have these items, as the ghosts are said to be indestructible, though they attack only those who disturb the tomb.

Fountain: The small fountain bubbles with fresh water, a powerful lure for bandits and creatures that wish to use this place as a lair.

Portal: The portal is part of the small fountain. By making an Arcana check (DC 15), a character can cause the water from the fountain to form a swirling vortex. Anyone who steps into the vortex is transported to the next encounter.

TACTICS

The traps act as described in their stat blocks. The only creatures found here are the two deathjump spiders. They use their ability to maneuver in combination with the traps to slowly wear down the PCs. The spiders focus on characters trapped in the grasping floor traps, and they never end their movement in the space where they started, even if they must suffer attacks of opportunity to do so.

As such, the spiders try to avoid becoming bogged down with fighters and paladins. If marked, they attack

such opponents before trying to escape to fight easier prey.

Cruel Trick: Since the traps ignore the spiders, they try to lure the PCs into them. In particular, they retreat back to the acid-spewing trap's range to lure PCs into suffering its attacks. They also seek to force fighters and paladins into the grasping floor traps, leaving them caught in place while the spiders attack the rest of the party.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one deathjump spider.

Six PCs: Add one deathjump spider.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the characters have overcome the spiders and either disabled or avoided the traps, they can perform the ritual needed to activate the portal at their leisure.

ENCOUNTER 3 STATISTICS

Acid Spitting Trap Trap	Level 4 Blaster XP 175
The columns in this tomb are covered with carvings of writhing snakes. The mouths of these sneaks project jets of searing acid.	
Perception	
• DC 17: The character notices that the snakes' mouths hide small, metal nozzles.	
Trigger Initiative +5	
The trap rolls initiative as soon as a character enters the web chamber or the rune chamber.	
Attack	
Standard Action Ranged 3	
Target: The character closest to the column and within range of this attack.	
Attack: +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d4+2 acid damage and -4 AC (save ends).	
Countermeasures	
• Thievery DC 17: An adjacent character can disrupt the trap. It is stunned (save ends).	
• Thievery DC 22: An adjacent character can destroy the trap.	
• A character can damage the trap, eventually destroying it. It has 20 hit points. When the trap is destroyed, acid sprays from it. This is a close burst 3 attack from the column that delivers the trap's attack as above.	

Mesmeric Runes Trap	Level 3 Warder XP 150
A pattern of runes in the floor of this tomb bewitches the senses, leaving intruders helpless.	
Arcana	
• DC 22: The character recognizes that the runes relate to sleep and helplessness, and that they have a residual magical aura.	
Trigger	
The trap affects all characters that have line of sight to it and are within 10 squares. It triggers if a PC ends her turn within range and with line of sight to the trap.	
Attack	
Free Action Ranged 10	
Attack: +6 vs. Will	
Hit: Pull 3 toward the center of the runes.	
Countermeasures	
• Arcana DC 22: An adjacent character can destroy the trap by marring the runes.	

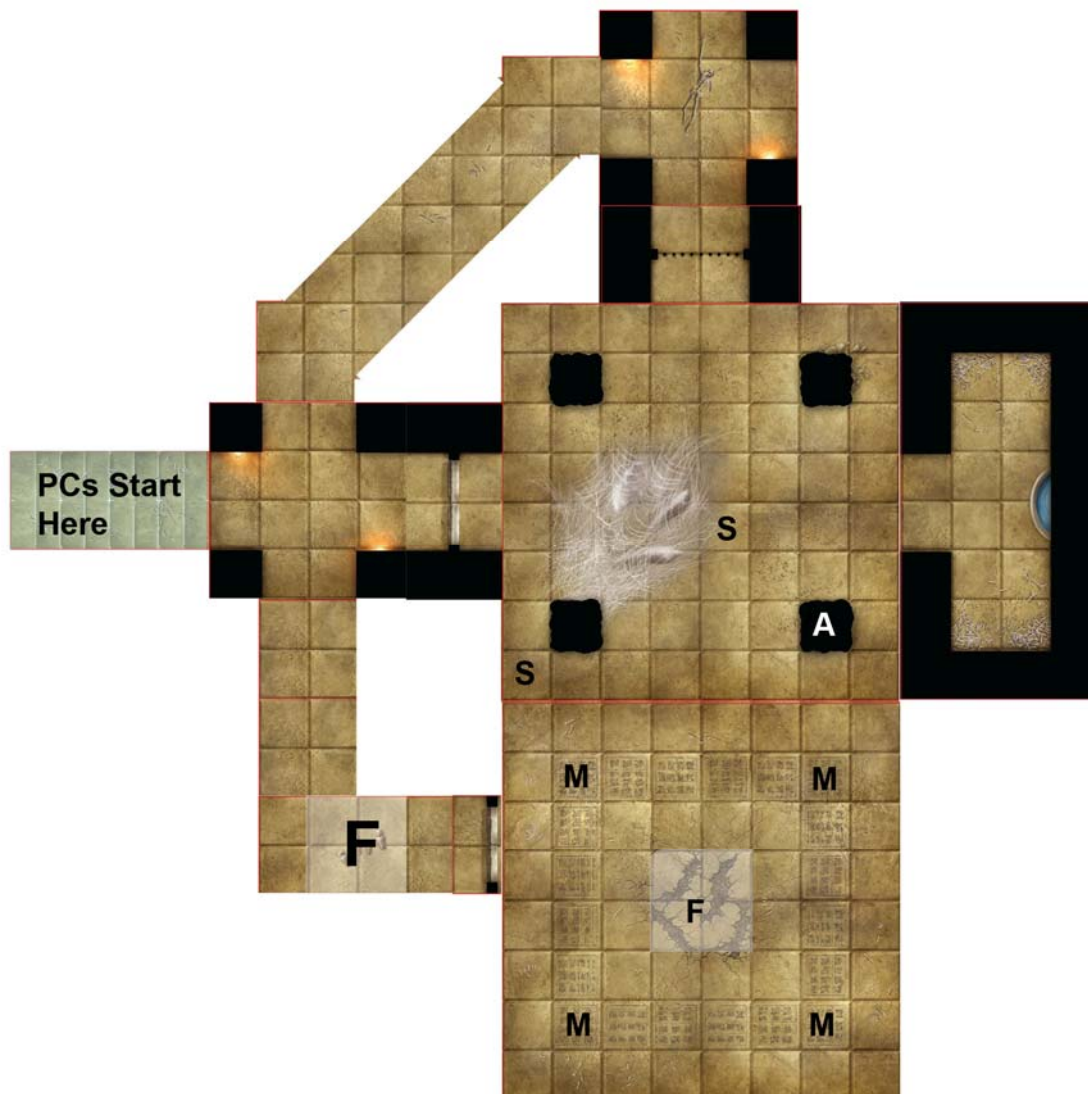
Grasping Floor Trap	Level 2 Obstacle XP 125
The floor here has been infused with elemental energy that allows it to grasp and trap characters.	
Arcana	
• DC 22: The character recognizes that the runes relate to imprisonment, and that they have a residual magical aura.	
Trigger	
The trap affects all characters that enter the trap's area.	
Attack	
Free Action Melee 1	
Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: Immobilized. A character can break free by using the escape action (DC 17).	
Countermeasures	
• Arcana DC 22: An adjacent character can destroy the trap by marring the runes.	

Deathjump Spider Medium natural beast (spider)	Level 4 Skirmisher XP 175
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +9; tremorsense 5	
HP 55; Bloodied 27	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Resist 5 poison	
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb); see also <i>prodigious leap</i>	
Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will) Ⓢ Poison	
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
† Death from Above (standard; at-will) Ⓢ Poison	
The deathjump spider leaps at its prey, shifting 6 squares and making a bite attack. On a hit, it deals an extra 1d6 damage and also knocks the target prone.	
Prodigious Leap (move; encounter)	
The deathjump spider shifts 10 squares.	
Soft Fall	
The deathjump spider ignores the first 30 feet when determining damage from a fall.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Athletics +10 (+20 when jumping), Stealth +11	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 1 (-3) Cha 8 (+1)

ENCOUNTER 3 MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Webbing	8x8	x1
Square of Runes	8x8	X1
Intersection	4x4	X2
Long Diagonal Hall	Special	X1
Door	2x4	x1
Portcullis	2x4	x1
Door	1x2	X1
Hall	2x2	X2
Coin Pile	2x4	X2
Water Room	4x8	X1
Diagonal Hall	Special	X1



ENCOUNTER 4: THE BARGAIN

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 3, COMPLEXITY 1

SETUP

Number of Successes: 4

Number of Failures: 2

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, History, Religion

Important NPCs: Par-Tholos, high priest of the Twelve Lords.

When the PCs enter the Crypt of Twelve Lords, they are confronted by the ghost of Par-Tholos, high priest charged even in death to watch over the Tomb of Twelve Lords. In ages past, before the sands claimed the land, a small kingdom of humans flourished in this area. The tomb is all that is left of that realm, and Par-Tholos watches and waits, a lone sentinel standing guard over this place.

Once again, you feel the sudden sense of vertigo. You now stand in a small, stone chamber. A sudden gust of wind washes over you. The wind swirls like a small dust devil, kicking up dirt in a funnel-like shape. The dust slowly coalesces into a humanoid form, a bald human male clad in robes. He bows before you and speaks.

"Who seeks entrance to the Tomb of Twelve Lords?"

Par-Tholos is a wizened old man. He has slumbered here for centuries. He saw the tieflings enter this place, recognized their evil intent, and sealed them in here. He is worried that other treasure hunters may come where to despoil the tomb and wants to make a pact with the PCs. If they slay the tieflings, he will give them a grand treasure and seal the portal behind them. He knows of the power contained within the *Eye of Timor*, and would rather keep it from mortal hands.

Par-Tholos is thousands of years old. He remembers nothing of his mortal life aside from a few details here and there. If pressed for details, he tells the PCs that he has simply forgotten.

SKILL CHALLENGE

This is a social skill challenge. The PCs can attempt to interact with Par-Tholos using a variety of different skills and roleplaying. Feel free to assign a bonus to a player's skill check if they do a good job attempting to convince Par-Tholos. If there's a skill not listed below, and you

think the player is being inventive in its use, assign it a DC 20.

Diplomacy (DC 16): The characters can attempt to bargain with Par-Tholos. If they win his trust, he agrees to help them.

History (DC 19): A character with a thorough understanding of history impresses Par-Tholos. He tells the PCs that if they know their history, they realize that great power can only corrupt men and women. The *Eye of Timor* had such an effect on the kings of his ancient land. The land fell into civil war over it, eventually leading to the kingdom's downfall.

Religion (DC 16): If the PCs demonstrate knowledge of divine matters, he develops a trust of them.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

After the characters conclude their conversation, Par-Tholos tells them the following, based on their success or failure.

Success: *"Seek only the devil-kin, the interlopers. The others are mere mindless guardians. The intruders wear crowns of my people that hide them from the guardians' sight. Kill the intruders. Do not waste your attacks on the other creatures."*

Failure: *"If the gods will you to defeat the interlopers, so be it. I can offer you no aid. Chance and your own cunning are your only hopes."*

ENCOUNTER 5: CRYPT OF TWELVE LORDS

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 6

SETUP

This encounter includes the following creatures and traps.

Haarak (H)

Tyran (T)

Tomb-Bound Avenger (A)

8 kruthik hatchlings (K)

The Angry Dead (zone in the entire tomb)

The tiefling agents are currently trapped in the Crypt of Twelve Lords. They entered the place, evaded the monsters that guard it, and grabbed the Eye of Timor. Unfortunately for them, and luckily for the PCs, the entry door to the tomb sealed shut behind them, leaving them trapped. Since the tieflings wear copper crowns that make them invisible to the monsters in the tomb, they are so far safe, but the door has proven impossible for them to breach. The crypt was trapped to trap thieves who used the crowns in this manner.

The PCs must fight the tomb's protectors, return the eye of Timor to its resting place, and escape the tomb.

It is important to remember that the monsters here, other than the tieflings, cannot be defeated through combat. The kruthiks replace their losses, while the tomb-bound avenger continues to regenerate each round.

As the adventurers enter the area, read:

Your parlay with Par-Tholon over, he fades away into nothingness. You can now see a passage ahead. It slants to the right, and ends in an iron door.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

There are a variety of terrain effects present in the Crypt of Twelve Lords.

Illumination: This chamber is dark. The characters must bring their own illumination.

Iron Door: The entry door to the tomb is currently locked. The characters can open it, but once they pass through it closes and locks behind them. Until the Eye of Timor is returned to the throne, it remains locked.

It is possible to pick the lock (Thievery DC 25) or batter it down (AC 6, Reflex and Fortitude 5, 200 hit points, regeneration 10).

Fire Bowls: When living creatures enter the tomb, the two stone bowls before the thrones erupt with flames. A creature that begins its turn adjacent to one of the bowls suffers 5 fire damage, while a creature that enters a bowl or begins its turn in them suffers 10 fire damage. A creature that moves into a bowl due to forced movement is allowed a save to catch itself. On a successful save, the creature falls prone in the last square it occupied before entering the bowl. Its movement then ends.

The Thrones: These two stone thrones are occupied by a pair of skeletons clad in rotting finery. The skeleton on the left wears a leather eye patch that is perfectly preserved. The eye patch has a hole in it where the Eye of Timor can be mounted. When this happens, the door leading out of the tomb opens.

Stairs: The stairs leading to the throne are difficult terrain.

Rift: The rift across the room is difficult terrain. In addition, a character who moves into the rift on the ground without shifting or because of forced movement suffers a +6 attack against Reflex. On a hit, the character falls prone and his movement ends.

The Portcullis: This barrier is crafted from bronze. It has 20 hit points, AC, Reflex, and Fortitude defenses of 5. It is locked, but a DC 15 Thievery check opens it. The portcullis does not block line of sight, but it does provide cover.

Doors: These thick, stone doors have 40 hit points and a 5 for all defenses. They are wedged shut by an iron spike, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to open.

The Well: The well is 10 feet deep. Climbing its side is a DC 15 Athletics check.

TACTICS

Haarak and Tyran attempt to avoid the PCs, while the guardians of the crypt, enraged at the invasion of this place, lash out at the PCs.

Haarak: Haraak hides in the throne room (Perception DC 25 to spot him). He uses *balefire* and *serpent curse* to harass the PCs, saving *cloak of escape* for when the PCs engage him in melee.

Cruel Trick: Since Haraak is invisible to the monsters in this area, he weaves between them to use them as an unwitting barrier against the PCs.

Tyran: Tyran carries the Eye of Timor, which allows him to read the PCs mind as per his stat block. Like Haarak, he hides in the throne room (Perception DC 25) and attacks the PCs when they enter the room. Haarak attacks first, luring the PCs into the room for Tyran to leap out and attack.

Cruel Trick: Like Haarak, Tyran uses his invisibility to the monsters in this area to employ them as bodyguards and defenders.

Kruthiks: The kruthiks, driven by hunger, simply rush the nearest PC. The kruthiks always keep apart from each other and only attack a PC who is already engaged by a kruthik if no other targets are available.

If the PCs slay a kruthik, a replacement crawls from the rift as a move action the next time the kruthiks take their turn. There is no limit to the number of replacement kruthiks, but there are never more than eight present in the tomb at one time.

Cruel Trick: Whenever possible, position the kruthiks so that a character must either provoke an opportunity by moving or end his turn next to one.

Tomb-Bound Avenger: This mummified creature begins the encounter in the large sarcophagus found here. Once the PCs reach the rift, it arises from its tomb as a minor action and moves to attack. It tries to use its push effect to send PCs tumbling into the well near its sarcophagus.

If the avenger is reduced to 0 hit points or less, it falls prone and is not destroyed. If it starts its turn with 0 hit points or less, roll 1d20. On a 10+, it heals back to full hit points and can take its turn; on a 9 or lower, it remains prone and loses the remainder of its turn.

Cruel Trick: Use the guardian's tail slap to knock over characters that are adjacent to kruthiks, forcing them to either stand and move away or suffer damage from the kruthik's aura.

The Angry Dead: Once the characters step in the tomb, his trap simply attacks the PCs repeatedly.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove the tomb-bound avenger.

Six PCs: Add a second avenger.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PCs have slain the tieflings, the monsters in this area stop attacking them. As long as the PCs replace the *Eye of Timor*, the door leading from the tomb opens and the characters can travel back through the portal to the Tomb of Telemus. From there, they can travel back to civilization.

CONCLUSION

With the *Eye* returned to its resting place, the characters have succeeded in foiling Memnon's plans. Par-Tholon grants them each a level 4 magic item appropriate to

their class. Once they pass through the portal, he seals it behind them, guaranteeing that Memnon will never gain access to the *Eye of Timor*.

ENCOUNTER 5 STATISTICS

The Angry Dead Trap	Level 5 Blaster XP 200
<i>The spirits of the disturbed dead seek vengeance against all intruders.</i>	
Religion	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DC 12: Legends tell of spirits that linger in tombs. Soothing their rage is the only way to appease them. Weapons and spells are worthless against them. DC 22: Someone has violated this tomb. Defeat them and restore the tomb's sanctity to return them to their slumber. 	
Trigger Initiative +7	
The trap activates as soon as the characters enter the tomb. It randomly attacks one PC on its turn. The trap is a zone that spans the entire area of the tomb. The trap can only make one attack on its turn against one target.	
Attack	
Standard Action	
Attack: +8 vs. Will	
Hit: The character is dominated until the end of their next turn. The ghosts command the character to attack his nearest ally using a basic melee or basic ranged attack.	
Countermeasures	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The spirits do not attack any character that attacked the tieflings on their last turn, whether the attack hit or missed. Diplomacy DC 17: The spirits do not attack on their next turn. Once the characters have bloodied the two tieflings, the trap stops attacking them. 	

Tomb-Bound Avenger Large natural humanoid (undead)	Level 6 Brute XP 250
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 86; Bloodied 43	
AC 18; Fortitude 19, Reflex 16, Will 14	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 8	
m Greatclub (standard; at-will) • Weapon	
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d10+6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.	
M Tail Slap (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. Reflex; 1d8+6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Draconic	
Skills Athletics +14	
Str 22 (+9)	Dex 16 (+6) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 5 (+0) Cha 6 (+1)
Equipment greatclub	

Kruthik Hatchling Small natural beast (reptile)	Level 2 Minion XP 31
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +0; low-light vision, tremorsense 10	
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn in the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8	
④ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Str 13 (+1)	Dex 16 (+3) Wis 10 (+0)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 4 (-3) Cha 6 (-2)

Haarak Medium natural humanoid	Level 6 Artillery XP 250
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
HP 60; Bloodied 30	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 18	
Resist 11 fire	
Speed 6	
m Dagger (standard; at-will) • Weapon	
+10 vs. AC (+11 against a bloodied target); 1d4+2 damage.	
r Balefire (standard; at-will) • Fire	
Range 10; +9 vs. Reflex (+10 against a bloodied target); 1d8+5 fire damage plus ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
R Serpent Curse (standard; encounter) • Illusion, Psychic	
Range 10; illusory snakes appear and attack the target; +9 vs. Will (+10 against a bloodied target); 1d6+5 psychic damage plus ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).	
Cloak of Escape (immediate reaction, when Haarak is hit by a melee attack; at-will) • Teleportation	
Haarak can teleport up to 5 squares.	
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)	
Haarak gains a +1 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit him since Haarak's last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, Haarak deals an extra 5 damage.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, Supernal	
Skills Bluff +15, Insight +11, Stealth +15	
Str 15 (+5)	Dex 20 (+8) Wis 16 (+6)
Con 19 (+7)	Int 13 (+4) Cha 20 (+8)
Equipment dagger	

Tyran Medium natural humanoid	Level 7 Lurker XP 300
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 64; Bloodied 32	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 17	
Resist 12 fire	
Speed 6	
m Poisoned Short Sword (standard; at-will) • Poison, Weapon	
+12 vs. AC (+13 against a bloodied target); 1d6+5 damage, and Tyran makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +10 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
R Eye of Timor (standard; recharge 5 6) • Arcane, Charm	
Range 10; +10 vs. Will (+11 against a bloodied target); target dominated until the end of Tyran's next turn.	
Cloak of Lurking (move; recharge 6) • Teleportation	
Tyran teleports up to 5 squares and becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.	
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)	
Tyran gains a +1 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit him since Tyran's last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, Tyran deals an extra 3 damage.	
Alignment Any Languages Common, Supernal	
Skills Bluff +13, Stealth +15	
Str 13 (+4)	Dex 20 (+8) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 13 (+4) Cha 16 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, poisoned short sword, <i>Eye of Timor</i>	

ENCOUNTER 5 MAP

DIRE TOMBS

Throne Room	8x8	x1
Well	8x8	X1
Scattered Skeletons	8x8	X1
Intersection	4x4	X2
Long Diagonal Hall	Special	X1
Door	2x4	x1
Portcullis	2x4	x1
Door	1x2	X1
Hall	2x2	X2
Hall of Pillars	4x8	X1
Niches	2x8	X2
Stairs and Fire Pots	4x8	X1
Crevasse	2x8	X1
Big Coffin	2x4	X1
Mummies	2x4	X1

