

The Tidus Tomb

Encounters Series - 002

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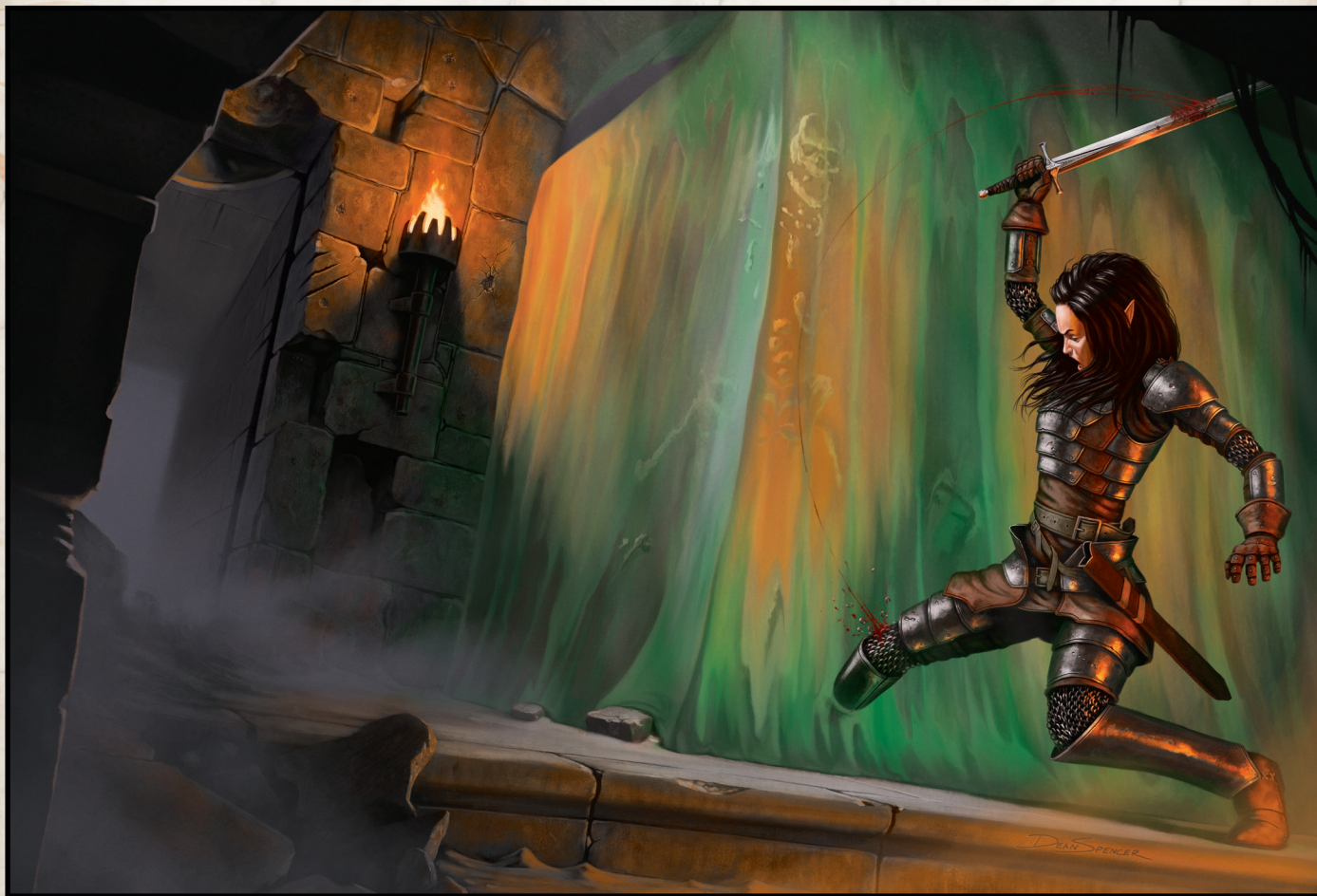
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Dungeon Specifications

Level - 4-5 (party of 4)

Best Terrain - Any

Best Climate - Any

Lair Composition - Stone

Room Height - Corridors 10 feet, Rooms 15 feet (30 feet for Area 9)

Doors - Highly polished bronze, unlocked (AC 10, Hardness 8, HP 30, Break DC 25)

Illumination - Bright (*everburning* torches all areas)

Backstory

Depending on where the GM chooses to situate it, the tomb might be that of a king of a lost civilization (wilderness, ruins) or it might be that of a late historical monarch of a current kingdom (city, civilization).

In either case, the monarch's name is long lost, and

the name of the tomb is essentially a creation of the original tale of the tomb. The monarch's name is actually Khazdoran, and in life he was a germaphobe, obsessed with hygiene and cleanliness. He used to bathe ten times a day, and forced his attendants and supplicants to do the same. The halls of his palace were spotless, not a speck of dirt or dust to be found upon pain of death. Eventually he was assassinated (in an act that claimed several servants and courtiers - now buried with him), much to the secret relief of the people. His son and successor commissioned a fine tomb for him. In recognition of the late king, the new monarch ordered it sealed to preserve its immaculate condition. The citizens of the kingdom joked it would be the "tidiest tomb in history", and this soon passed into folklore and the name stuck. Over the generations of retelling, the name has become somewhat twisted and the story lost.

Unfortunately, Khazdoran's obsession with cleanliness

kept his soul from eternal rest, and he rose as a ghost determined to maintain a spotless abode even in his afterlife. While at first he possessed living creatures to clean his tomb, he found them to be inherently dirty, and has slowly accumulated undead and creature servitors that better suit his needs.

Khazdoran would be perfectly content to maintain his pristine eternity, but filthy explorers, historians and tomb robbers continue to defile his home with their mucky boot prints and hard to remove bloodstains. It's enough to drive a patient ghost insane...

Hook

1. A university scholar has gone missing. He had set off on a research expedition to the Tidus Tomb to catalogue ancient royal lines, but has not returned. The faculty found some notes and a marked travel map in his study, and has now hired adventurers to track him down to retrieve him, his research and/or their grant money.
2. Something strange is occurring in the town/district closest to the tomb. Citizens wake up each morning to find random acts of cleanliness, tidying and repair around the public spaces. At first this was startling but welcome, until one morning when they found the corpse of a drunk 'tidied' in the middle of the night - killed, cleaned, pressed and placed neatly in a coffin for burial outside the mayor's office. Adventurers have been brought in to discover the cause of this before anyone else gets killed.
3. A local painter - Matthias Grimble - has gone missing. Famed for his wall murals, the artist disappeared from his home a few weeks ago with no warning. A local trapper claims he saw the painter loitering near the Tidus Tomb.

The Tidus Tomb

1) Main Doors

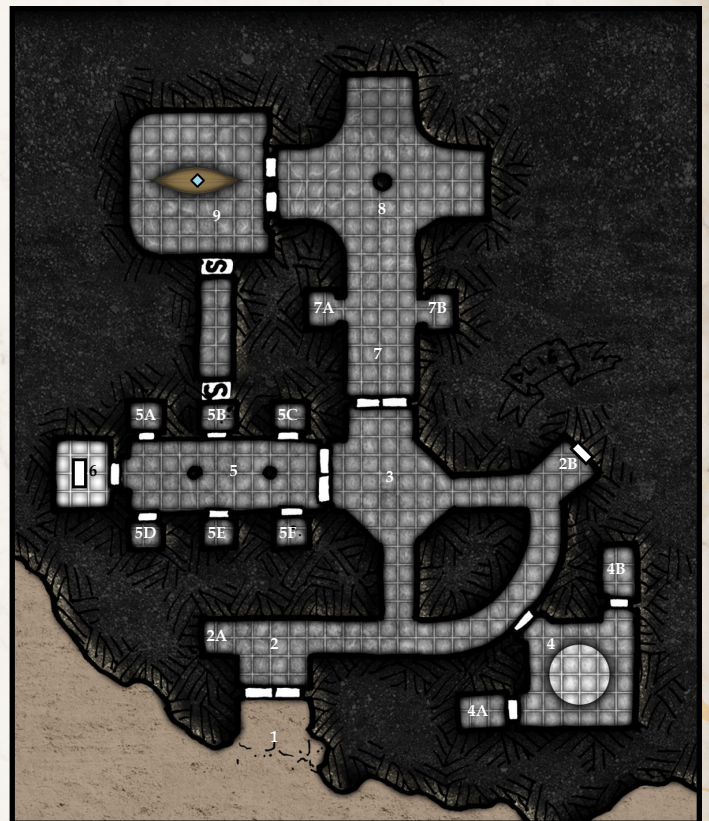
A pair of massive bronze doors sit deep within a recess in the rock here. The doors are timeworn, but are pristinely clean and polished to an almost mirror sheen. Ancient symbols or pictures were once etched into the doors, now almost faded beyond any recognition, appearing as slight depressions or variations in the shiny surface.

To your right in a small alcove is a neat stack of bones, stark white and carefully arranged. They almost look as if they have been polished too...

The doors used to have the emblems of the kingdom and royal line etched deeply into them, but centuries of polishing have all but erased these. At the GM's discretion (if it is pertinent to the campaign or setting) a Perception DC 20 check will reveal these etchings for what they are.

The doors are heavy, weighing almost a tonne each, but are perfectly balanced and swing easily and silently on well-oiled hinges.

The stack of bones comes from the last few intruders (before the scholar), and they have been stripped (using the gelatinous cubes), polished, stacked and will be disposed of once the pile reaches a certain height. Sorting through it, the PCs can determine the bones are 4 full skeletons (2 human males, a halfling female and a dwarf male).



2) The Walk

The inside of the tomb is surprisingly well lit, with silent, smokeless torches set into polished brass sconces at every intersection, or at regular intervals down the walls. The stone floors are smooth and oddly dust free.

In the dim illumination you can see the walls are covered in long murals depicting a progressing panorama of a kingdom, with farms and fields giving way to towns and cities, then on to an extensive, sprawling castle that disappears around a bend in the corridor.

In an alcove to the left a large painting seems to depict a king or emperor. In the flickering light it appears to be edged in shining gold.

The torches are enchanted to be *everburning*. They give off light, but no heat or smoke and are not consumed. They are linked to the tomb. While they can be removed from the wall sconces and used in the tomb (though there is ample illumination without removing them in most areas), once taken outside they automatically extinguish.

The murals are newly repainted, but if examined closely an observer can see that they are a faithful restoration of the original faded mural underneath. This is the work of the artist Matthias, who can be found in Area 4.

2A) The painting in the alcove immediately to the left of the doors is indeed edged in gold leaf, and with time this can be scraped away to accumulate around 50gp worth. The painting depicts Khazdoran, wearing a golden crown and immaculate white clothing. Unfortunately this is the first of Khazdoran's measures to deal with dirty tomb invaders. The entire alcove is taken up by a gelatinous cube (Perception DC 15 check to spot), which will seek to take trespassers by surprise and envelop them. Khazdoran regularly has his skeleton servants remove any contents to ensure nothing is left to give away the cube's presence.

Gelatinous Cube - HP 50

2B) This alcove has a fake door painted on the far wall, cunningly wrought to look real. Similar to 2A, this entire space is taken up by a gelatinous cube, and designed to fool the unwary into stepping toward or into it. The fake door can be spotted with a Perception DC 15 check before PCs encounter the cube.

Gelatinous Cube - HP 50

3) Main Chamber

This chamber is lit by a dozen of the smokeless torches in brass sconces. The floor is smooth, clean and buffed to a reflective sheen.

Two sets of highly polished bronze doors sit to the north and west of this chamber. Like the entrance doors their surfaces have been worn clean of all but the faintest of markings that indicate they once sported intricate etchings. Kneeling at the foot of the north door is an animate skeleton, rag in hand, polishing the already gleaming surface.

On the three walls clean but faded frescos depict a powerful emperor-like figure casting down monsters, undead or diseased peasants into hell with radiant beams of light from his hands and from the heavens above.

The skeleton here is harmless, continuing its endless cleaning task unless attacked (in which case it defends itself). Aside from its cleaning rag, it is not only completely possession free, but it is also itself clean and polished.

The doors, like those in Area 1, swing easily and silently open on oiled hinges.

Skeleton - HP 4

4) Steed Tomb

This bronze door is not as worn as the others, and is etched with a depiction of an elephant flanked by horses.

This chamber is dominated centrally by a raised stone stage, some 15 feet across. Resting on the stage are an ornate palanquin and chariot, crafted from fine black wood bound in brass. Two animate skeletons, their white bones stark in the torchlight, slowly polish and oil the vehicles.

There appear to be two bronze doors on opposite sides of the room, and the walls are covered in murals of a majestic man riding above crowds in the palanquin on the back of an elephant, or in the chariot pulled to two black steeds. In both cases the crowds are depicted as filthy and ragged, and the modes of transport highlight his separation from them.

At the very back of the room, a nervous looking man shakily tries to restore the fading murals with a cart full of paints.

The skeletons - themselves highly polished - ignore the PCs unless attacked or the vehicles are disturbed, continuing to oil and polish endlessly. The vehicles are in immaculate condition, though it is immediately obvious neither will fit through the door - and would have to be disassembled to extract them from the tomb.

The man is the local artist and painter - Matthias Grimble. He knows where he is (he's a local and has been studying the murals), but doesn't remember how he got here, or how long he's been at it. He does remember being here suddenly, face to face with the ghost of Khazdorán, who supplied the paints and instructed him to restore the murals, or be absorbed by a cube. He is deathly afraid of the ghost. He's been at it for days without food or water, and is on the verge of collapse. Matthias has been in Areas 1-4, but not beyond, and can tell the PCs about any of those areas. He can also describe Khazdorán (see **Encountering Khazdorán** for description), and knows the ghost is crazy, dangerous and obsessed with cleanliness.

Skeleton (2) - HP 4

4A) This door is of the same highly polished bronze as the others, and depicts an elephant. Within the chamber is a beautifully preserved freestanding elephant, maintained through taxidermy and a little protection magic. The elephant takes up most of the room, with just a few feet on any side for PCs to squeeze past if they wish.

The elephant wears an ebony and silver bridle set with cut garnets. The bridle, if removed, is worth 400gp, but is coated with a rather nasty poison to prevent theft.

Thieves' Bane. Type poison (contact); **Save** Fort DC 15; **Frequency** 1/minute for 6 minutes; **Effect** 1d3 Str and 1d3 Con damage; **Cure** 1 save.

4B) This bronze door has a depiction of a horse, and inside are two magnificent black steeds standing shoulder to shoulder, their coats brushed to a sheen. They are preserved similarly to the elephant, and have lapis lazuli inlaid polished leather bridles (each worth 200gp) which are also coated in poison (as above).

5) Main Funerary Gallery

This hallway is brightly lit by torches, and the illumination reflecting off numerous bronze doors. Down each side are three small chambers, each with its door etched to depict a faded human outline. The figures all appear to be bowing toward the door at the far end, which has a crown deeply etched into its shimmering surface.

This gallery holds all the tombs for Khazdorán and his faithful servants slain on the night of his assassination. In death they continue to serve him. None of the doors are locked, and open easily on oiled hinges.

5a) This chamber was for the king's vizier, main advisor and teacher. She was always at his side, including the night of his death. It has a plain stone bier, above which is a faded mural of a tall woman in black robes carrying a gnarled staff. The vizier can now be found in Area 7.

5b) This chamber was for the king's primate, and spiritual adviser. On the night of the assassination he was in conference with Khazdorán. It has a mural of a man in ornate white robes adorned with gold thread on the back wall. The plain stone bier is covered in a faded crimson altar cloth (GM may add appropriate holy symbol, or make it too faded to make out), and a set of robes (matching the mural) hang on a peg on the wall. These robes appear to be magical *robes of protection +1*, but are actually cursed *robes of immolation* (as the cloak). The primate can now be found in Area 9.

The secret door here is accessed via the mural, pressing a stud hidden in the robes of the primate. The secret door is difficult to find - a Perception DC 20 check is required - and characters would need to stand on the bier to access it. The corridor beyond is lightless (but still meticulously clean) and leads to Area 9.

5c) This chamber was for the king's body slave, who assisted with cleaning, dressing and food tasting. Above the empty stone bier is a faded mural of a young man in a plain smock. He is the skeleton cleaning in Area 3.

5d) This chamber was for the king's chamber servant, who cleaned his personal chambers constantly. Above the empty stone bier is a depiction of an elderly man in plain clothing. He is one of the skeletons in Area 4

5e) This chamber was for the king's groom, who tended the animals. On the night of the assassination he was

waiting to see the monarch. Above this empty stone bier is a mural of a handsome middle aged man with an oiled moustache. He is one of the skeletons in Area 4.

5f) This chamber was for the king's page. The mural here depicts a girl of around 10 years, immaculately dressed in livery with a serious expression. *This room is not empty.* A child's skeleton sits here on the bier, legs crossed and idly playing with a pair of bone dice. If this chamber is opened the skeleton looks up almost expectantly. If the PCs don't destroy it, the skeleton quietly follows them wherever they go, occasionally stopping to examine something, or skips or plays hopscotch. The skeleton is not particularly perceptive, nor does it obey commands or fight, but will attach itself to the group like a creepy undead mascot unless somehow stopped.

Skeleton – HP 4

6) Khazdoran's Tomb

This door is locked, with a heavy bronze lock set into the door and requires a successful Disable Device DC 20 to open, or the door can be broken (see Dungeon Specifications, page 2).

The inside of this room is covered in stark white gloss tiles that adhere unbroken to every inch of wall, floor and ceiling surface. A raised bier, similarly tiled, in the centre of the floor supports a clear crystal coffin.

Inside the coffin is the body of a man dressed in gold trimmed white robes, with pale skin and a precisely trimmed goatee. A golden crown rests on his brow. The man is perfectly preserved, and could as easily be sleeping as dead.

The body is that of Khazdoran, perfectly preserved in a hermetically sealed glass coffin (with a minor preservation enchantment). His appearance is identical to the king in all the murals, and matches description given by Matthias, and the appearance of the ghost.

The coffin is not locked, but if opened the flesh of the body decays rapidly into a fetid sludge, before the PCs eyes, effectively destroying the white robe. The crown (though now unpleasantly coated in ancient monarch goo) remains intact and is worth 300gp.

Moments after the body decays the ghost of Khazdoran appears (even if previously 'slain', unless the Prism in

Area 8 is destroyed as well), wailing a horrified lament at the state of his corpse, then mercilessly and relentlessly tries to slay the PCs, starting with the one who opened the coffin.

The Ghost of Khazdoran – HP 60 (see statistics page 8)

7) Rise to Power

This long hallway branches out into a larger chamber at the far end. The everburning torches illuminate faded murals down both walls that seem to follow he emperor from childhood through adolescence.

About halfway down the hall, two alcoves sit in darkness. Something silvery glints in the flickering light, just out of sight in both recesses.

The murals, if examined are faded and worn with time. They show various scenes of Khazdoran's childhood, his depiction starting as a toddler near Area 3, and gets older closer to Area 8.

7A) & 7B) In each of these recesses stand a single, mirror polished suit of ornate full plate, each standing at attention with a halberd. They are free standing, but delicately balanced, and collapse into pieces at the slightest touch (or if someone tries to remove the weapons). These are actually animated objects - animated armor. However they have been instructed not to move on intruders until they enter Area 8. At that point they animate (after magically regathering themselves if scattered) and try to force intruders into the gelatinous cubes. They will grapple or strike with their gauntlets, but not use the halberds.

Animated Object - Animated Armour (2) – HP 36

Animated Armour

This suit of ornate full armour appears to move of its own volition, striding forward menacingly.

Animated Object, Medium (Armour) **CR 3**

XP 800

N Medium construct

Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)

Hp 36 (3d10+20)
Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4
Defensive abilities hardness 10; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d6+3)

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con -**, **Int -**, **Wis** 1, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

SQ construction points - metal

Languages None

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Metal (Hardness 10, natural AC +6)

The armour is what remains of the two guards that were on duty the night the king was assassinated. For failing to protect him, they were executed and their armour animated to act in their stead. They are not undead, though a vestige of their spirits remains with their armour. They are not fully cognisant of their condition, but have a deep desire to protect the king's ghost and keep the tomb clean. They are unable to wield the halberds (which are as ceremonial as they are) due to an odd supernatural quirk. As they did not use them that night to protect their charge, they are forever unable to wield them.

The armour, once the animating force is no more, is wearable (after some repairs), but retains this strange aversion to wielding weapons. Anyone wearing one of these suits suffers a -2 to hit with all wielded weapons (other than the gauntlets belonging to the armour). This is not a curse, and the armour can be removed once donned, but the quirk cannot be removed from the armour itself.

8) Chamber of Glory

This large chamber branches into four cardinal directions, creating independent 'wings', each with its own set of faded murals. In left wing a humanoid skeleton appears to float mid air. The centre of the room is dominated by a column that has dozens of torch sconces up its full height, creating the effect of a blazing pillar of flame. A black robed and hooded figure stands between you and the pillar, a gnarled wooden staff clutched in its hand. It turns at your entry and raises its staff high.

The figure in the robe is the animated skeleton of Khazdoran's vizier. She is commanded to raise her staff

and menace intruders, hopefully drawing their most powerful attacks. There are two gelatinous cubes in the room also, one at the rear, and one off to the left. The 'floating' skeleton is actually the remains of the scholar. Khazdoran has been distracted (see Area 9) and hasn't got around to commanding the skeleton servants to fish it out.

Combat in this area draws Khazdoran's attention if the PCs haven't encountered him yet, and draws the two animated armors from behind.

The murals depict various scenes from Khazdoran's rule, including his coronation, founding hospitals and public baths, and constructing aqueducts, street drainage and sewers for his cities.

Inside the cube that houses the scholar's bones there is also 23cp, 14sp and 3 gp in loose coinage, a belt buckle, a couple of smaller metal clasps, a silvered dagger, a plain silver ring (5gp) and the brass head of a walking stick, shaped like a hawk with ruby eyes (50gp).

Gelatinous Cube (2) - HP 50

Skeleton - HP 4

9) Afterlife Barge

This chamber rises to a domed ceiling some 30 feet at its apex, and is the only room in the complex to do so. The dome is covered with a faded mural of the heavens at night with the stars connected as constellations.

The centre of the room is dominated by a massive wooden barge resting on a carved stone plinth. Inside the barge appears to be a number of objects, including a glass prism on a wrought iron stand that projects rainbow patterns in the flickering torchlight.

A skeletal figure is hunched on the floor near the northern wall, slowly manipulating a small object on the floor.

If the PCs have yet to encounter Khazdoran, he is here in his spectral glory, looking over the skeleton's shoulder as they enter (See **Encountering Khazdoran** below).

The skeleton is the king's primate, and tends over his spiritual matters in the afterlife as he did in life. Mostly it means keeping the barge and chamber clean. Currently it is turning the pages of a manuscript, as it

was ordered to do by Khazdoran. This is the scholar's research notes. When the scholar was absorbed by one of the cubes, the ghost monarch saved the research notes as a matter of curiosity, and is now studying them. They are comprehensive and insightful, and anyone obtaining them gains a +5 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (history) checks concerning that kingdom at that time period.

The room itself functions as a major part in the civilization's ancient death rituals. This is where the service was held to send the king's spirit onto the afterlife. In the barge is the 'soul prism' a ceremonial vessel that is supposed to hold the spirit for cleansing before the transition to the afterlife. While this is purely ceremonial, Khazdoran's ghost has identified intensely with the ritual, choosing to remain on the material plane until such time as he and his legacy are sufficiently 'cleansed' to pass over (which will be never, because he is never satisfied with his purity). If the Prism is threatened he will defend it fanatically, shrieking that "his work is not yet complete and he is not pure". If the prism is taken, his ghost will follow it, plaguing any and all in proximity, and constantly seeking a return to his tomb. If the prism is shattered his ghost instantly dissipate, and move on to find eternal rest. The prism is made of thin crystal sheets and is extremely fragile, and worth 50gp.

Inside the barge is also some items taken from intruders and tomb robbers that survived the cubes and that Khazdoran took an interest in for one reason or another. All items he deemed worthless were taken out by the skeletons and dumped in the wilderness. In the barge are the following items;

- 5 metal holy symbols (any Deity and metal of the GMs choosing, but no duplicates).
- *An everflowing aspergillum* (it is dangerous due to the damaging nature of holy water, but Khazdoran keeps it due to its 'cleansing' association. He periodically 'tests' himself by touching it, assuming that once he is sufficiently pure he will be able to contact it without damage).
- *A decanter of endless water* (it couldn't be used in tomb cleaning since there is no drainage, but Khazdoran approves of such a hygienic vessel).
- A silver scroll tube containing a scroll of three spells (*unseen servant*, *gentle repose* and *fireball* - all at 5th level, or GM's choice of what best fits the party)
- A +1 *hand axe* made from bronze (handle) and obsidian (blade).

Encountering Khazdoran

Khazdoran appears as a translucent man of middle years, with short black hair and an immaculately trimmed moustache and goatee. He appears to be wearing a set of fine white robes and a crown. However, if angered his appearance changes dramatically to be a twisted and menacing spectre of black, with glowing bones of blue.

Initially Khazdoran is engrossed in the scholar's accurate (if stuffy) account of his reign, and is not necessarily immediately aware of the PCs presence. If the PCs are quiet, non-destructive and above all clean, they may get through the entire dungeon to the Afterlife Barge (Area 9) before he notices them.

The PCs can avoid or destroy the gelatinous cubes without disturbing him. They might even quietly get away with destroying some of the skeletons. Any combat in Area 8 brings him out, as do any unnecessarily loud noises in other areas (GMs discretion). He is very attuned to his tomb though, and if the PCs damage or deface the doors, murals or contents (chariot, palanquin, stuffed animals), make a mess or have the temerity to bleed anywhere he comes forth on a fit of anger to 'chastise' (kill) them. If his corpse is disturbed in Area 6 he attacks immediately, reforming if previously destroyed.

Tactically Khazdoran will try to possess the PCs one by one using his malevolence ability, running them into the nearest gelatinous cube, then departing to find another intruder to possess. He will do this as often as he can, until he has possessed each intruder at least once, or the cubes are all destroyed. After that he will use his touch to try to slay them.

Khazdoran

This translucent skeleton with iridescent blue bones is shrouded in a shadowy cloak that seems to move in an unseen breeze.

Khazdoran, male human ghost aristocrat 8 CR 8
XP 4,800
CN Medium undead (human, incorporeal)
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14
DEFENSE
AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 deflection, +1 dodge)
Hp 60 (8d8+24)
Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Defensive abilities +4 channel resistance; **Immune** undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed Fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee corrupting touch +6 (8d6; Fort DC 17)

Special Attacks corrupting touch, malevolence (Will DC 17)

STATISTICS

Str -, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative

Skills Diplomacy +8, Fly +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Knowledge (Engineering) +8, Perception +14, Sense Motive +8, Stealth +11. **Racial** +8 Perception and +8 Stealth

Languages Common

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of his incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Khazdoran inflicts 8d6 damage. This damage manifests in the form of supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise it bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save halves the damage.

Malevolence (Su) Once per round Khazdoran can merge his body with a creature on the material plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability Khazdoran must be adjacent to his target. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 17). A creature that successfully saves is immune to his malevolence for 24 hours.

Rejuvenation (Su) Khazdoran cannot be permanently destroyed until the soul prism in Area 9 is destroyed. If 'slain' in combat he will return in 2d4 days, or instantly if his body is disturbed.



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The Tidus Tomb, Encounters Series, 2017, Pyromaniac Press; Micah Watt.

This tomb is oddly clean... far too clean!

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