Mummy

the Curse



Mummy the Curse

A Storytelling Game of Immortal Souls

By David Brookshaw, Michael Goodwin, George Holochwost, Khaldoun Khelil, Ari Marmell, Malcolm Sheppard, Greg Stolze, and C.A. Suleiman

The Seven-Times-Hallowed Mask

Walter could almost forget, sometimes. For days on end, when his life was going right. But out on the ice, it was impossible, unthinkable, and especially when he was close to the path. He was taking the long way home, as he was bound, and he told himself he would pass by the path and look, and it would be as white as a blank sheet of paper. He would drive home to supper and...

He saw tracks. Walter slammed on the brakes, making his pickup slew to the left, then to a stop as he expertly steered into the skid. (To Walter, driving on snow was simply "driving.")

The way to the Dwelling We Do Not Speak Of was not supposed to be in use tonight. It should have been as unmarked as a blameless conscience, but there were clear and obvious tracks—the lines and tread of a snowmobile, by the look of them. The path was not meant to be driven upon—*ever*. That was why he'd stomped the brake pedal instead of just pulling over.

He parked where they always parked, in a windbreak created by a jagged rise of stones a respectful distance from the Dwelling. He strapped on his snowshoes, and after a momentary hesitation, he pulled down his rifle, as well.

Walter wished he could run, but he only trudged into the rough tumble of upthrust stones, a peculiar range of debris in the otherwise unmarred ice sheet. He stared at the marks of the machine's skids, looking for other tracks, footprints... but no, they weren't there, and he'd see *it* before he saw any signs of its passage, wouldn't he?

Under the layers of Gore-Tex and down and fleece and wool and cotton and his own skin and fat, his blood ran cold. With no real choice in the matter, he pressed on, and soon, he came to the end of the stones. There was a blank stretch leading to the hill, and he followed the snowmobile path straight to its base. The tracks were dismally clear. Someone had parked at the base of the hill, walked up the stone trail to the Dwelling, walked back down, then remounted and driven off.

The second set of tracks had only come down and were not aimed at the road. They went straight toward the stones, and to the snowfield beyond, and Walter was sure they made a spear-straight line toward his home town of Qaarsut.

He swore in both his languages. How far could *it* have gotten? Did he dare confirm his bleakest fears? Could he face the others if he didn't?

Still cursing, he tore off his snowshoes and ran up the steps, his rifle held before him. It wasn't that he thought it would do any good, but he didn't want to leave it behind in the snow.

The Dwelling We Do Not Speak Of started as a crack in the flinty hillside. Slipping within, all was dark and frigid. Ancient lamps loomed in a long niche by the entry, made from walrus pelvic-bones. In the ceremonies, they burned whale oil, but it was forbidden to store fuel in the Dwelling, so Walter made do with a tiny LED keychain.

Even in the dim, flat light, the walls gleamed. Generations of Walter's people had left totems of carved bone, images of gods and authorities unnamed to any anthropologist. In normal times, it all centered on a pillar of ice. Atop that column sat the golden Seven-Times-Hallowed Mask and, within it, the shadowy black figure of a dead man.

But the mask was missing, the ice was shattered, and the footprints of the dead man went straight from the frozen wreckage toward the entryway.

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Once he was outside, Walter wished he could talk to Priestess Nujalik, but it was hopeless. The closest cell phone was in town, its service was spotty, and Walter had never bothered to buy a handset. The ground around the Hill We Do Not Name was commercially worthless, so he'd have needed an expensive sat-phone to contact anyone. There was the CB in his truck, but it would only work if anyone was listening.

He retrieved his snowshoes, took a deep breath, whimpered

without realizing it, and set off toward the upright rocks. He made it all the way through and to the other side before he saw it.

Night had fallen but the moon was high, and the dead thing was a blotch of blackness disturbing the featureless white of the plain. Behind, its trail was a scrawl of lesser darkness, for the snow here had blown deep. At points, the thing was forcing its way through chest-high drifts, and at no point was it less than knee deep.

"Neem me niet kwalijk?" Walter said, in a voice no man could have heard over the wind. The creature did not pause, and Walter took a dozen reluctant steps closer.

"Utoqqatsissutigaa!" he called, now speaking Kalaallisut, which they called the New Language. The thing continued, and he wondered if it was ignoring him or if it was simply mindless in its pursuit.

"Sefet Qam!" Walter charged forward, numb lips stumbling over the alien syllables that aligned roughly to "Strength of the Crocodile's Skin."

"I name you and claim your loyalty," he said in the Old Language, rote phrases he'd been taught intermittently all his life. *"By the temple and the Mask we serve, I..."*

Walter's thin voice faltered. It had stopped, and it had turned.

Freed of the ice, its eye-sockets were brown pits. Its mouth was a pursed circle, drawn tight by dried flesh. It was naked in the snow, all tissue desiccated into leathery lumps, collarbones and elbows and the pelvic ridge prominent in its silhouette.

"What name do you claim, you who would stay me in my course?" The voice was dry as a tomb, but it spoke perfect English. "If you a temple servant be, our mutual pledge exceeds my loyalty to you or yours to me."

"I... speak only Dutch and Kalaallisut." Walter clutched his rifle like a child with a stuffed animal.

"De Heilige Masker," Sefet Qam replied, in the same tongue. *"It is taken, and I am arisen. Know you the one who violated the temple?"*

Walter shook his head. *"But I can help you search,"* he said. *"I have... a vehicle. And clothes."*

It was hard to read expression on the rotted face before him, but after a pause, it nodded and began trudging toward him.

Walter willed himself to turn his back on the temple defender, but his eyes would not look away. Eventually, they walked side by side—he atop the snow and the dead thing pushing through it.

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"Your horseless carriage is loud," the temple guardian said as they moved down the road.

"I apologize."

"Are you sure we cannot simply go to the Mask and seize it?"

Walter risked a glance at his passenger and shuddered. *"Please, it would be better if you were... concealed."*

"Less distress for you, you mean." Sefet Qam somehow managed to look shrewd, even with a frozen, leathery grimace for a face. Yet now there was a gleam in the back of his eye-pits, as if something was thawing there.

"We can make pictures very quickly. It would not do for people to come looking if an image of you traveled very far."

"Po-laroid," the dead man said. *"I know of these images."*

"They have improved since your last awakening."

"How many years since... the year of the English, 1963?"

"It is now the year 2012." Walter risked another glimpse. *"But you were last awake in 1983. Do you not recall it?"*

"I... do not. Not yet."

An awkward silence descended until they reached Walter's home on the outskirts of town. *"We'll bundle you up so you can pass,"* Walter said. *"No one is in my house, so we'll be safe."*

"If no one is there, who opened the gateway?" Sefet Qam asked, pointing to the garage door.

"It's an electric device," Walter said.

"Like the flameless lamp." Sefet Qam shook his head in what Walter could only assume was amazement.

Soon, the animate corpse was zipped into Carhartt overalls, galoshes, and a pair of thick woolen mittens. A scarf, stocking cap and pair of sunglasses completed his disguise. Walter was surprised at the relief he felt, having that shriveled and unnatural nudity covered, even in such a rudimentary costume.

"You can sense the Mask?"

"I can... yes, but we must hurry."

As Walter pulled out into the snowy night, he became more and more uneasy. He had tried, from his home phone, to call Nujalik, but had gotten only a busy signal. It was becoming clearer that the mute gestures of his ally were directing him toward her home.

"Do you remember Nujalik?" Walter asked.

"No."

"But... she is the High Priestess," Walter said, wondering how the creature could have forgotten 1983, a night that would live on in Walter's memory—when they summoned the guardian from its icy tomb to choose between Nujalik and Walter as new leader of the faith; when Walter had failed and screamed at its approach, leaving Nujalik as High Priestess of the Faithful by default.

"The relic is within," the dead man said, climbing out as the truck came to a halt. Walter tried his key and frowned, and he was going to try again when Sefet Qam gently pushed him to the side. With what seemed equal gentleness, the walking corpse pulled the knob out of the door with a crack and squeal of yielding wood.

Walter gaped. The door had been deadbolted and, he could now see, padlocked on a freshly installed hasp.

"Something's wrong," he said, but Sefet Qam didn't acknowledge it; just strode in and up the steps while Walter struggled to put the door back in something like a closed position. He left that task hurriedly at the sound of raised voices above.

He heard a fleshy impact and then a loud thump that shook the light fixtures above. He started to run and didn't stop until he saw the Seven-Times-Hallowed Mask, resting heavily on Walter's borrowed mittens as the corpse contemplated it.

Lying on the floor, bare-chested, was another man, bleeding heavily from his nose and mouth. With a little hiss, Walter got closer and realized the man's head was no longer a simple dome, but dented under the torn scalp and bloodied hair.

"What have you done?" Walter gasped.

"Recovered my charge. Yet now I wonder... is my task complete?"

"You've killed him!"

"Yes. I suppose I was meant to. Yet when I produced the relic from where it hid beneath the bed, the man gaped in astonishment. It was only when he attempted to struggle that I struck him."

"Okay," Walter mumbled, unable to stop staring at the motionless figure on the floor. *"Okay, the police chief is one of us... this man, he's foreign..."*

"Portuguese, I suspect," Sefet Qam added, turning the golden mask over in his hands.

Walter looked up sharply. *"That's right, he's a... was a scientist. He said he was taking ice core samples, but everyone knew he was really looking for rubies..."*

"Or gold?" Sefet Qam asked, setting the mask on a table, heavily. He knew now the relic was false—an attempt to conceal the theft of the true Mask (if only briefly, to win precious time)—but said nothing.

"He's been here for almost a year. If he knew where the Mask was, why would he wait so long before stealing it?"

"Perhaps it took him that long to seduce the priestess." Sefet Qam was studying Walter now.

"No! He was an... an outsider. She wouldn't!"

Delicately, the tomb guardian raised the heavy layers of quilt and blanket to look at the sheets

beneath. "*Unless women and men have changed greatly in recent years, she did.*"

"*And then fled in shame?*" Walter couldn't help but despise the tone of eagerness in his voice. Nujalik had always sneered at him, ever since he'd disgraced himself, back when he was just 18.

The guardian did not answer, only stared at the gleaming mask.

"*To where would she flee?*" he asked.

"Qeqertarsuaq, *perhaps. If she borrowed a boat from someone, or just took it. Maybe as far as* Sisimiut, *if she wanted somewhere big enough that people wouldn't know her. But why would she flee?*"

"*Why, indeed. We know that she is not here. Let us check her* automobile," Sefet Qam said, using the English word. In moments, they were in her empty garage, the dead man holding the relic in front of him like an old woman with a grocery sack.

"*All right... we can call the police chief to handle things quietly. I'll drive you back to the Dwelling, where you can restore the treasure to its place and... resume your rest.*"

"*Is that so? And how will you find the betrayer priestess?*"

Walter hung his head. "*I have no idea. Is that... really necessary? I think it would be better for the Faithful if they never found out about...*" Then his voice was stilled with a sudden, painful jerk as Sefet Qam seized Walter by the throat and lifted him bodily off the floor.

"*She defiled my place of rest,*" the corpse's voice grated. "*High Priestess or no, she has stolen the Mask, and she has made me her implement of murder. I will not be used so by a mortal.*"

Sefet Qam opened his hand, and Walter dropped to the floor, gasping and clutching his neck.

"*Summon your Faithful,*" Sefet Qam intoned. "*We shall have them all for the search. The traitor is to be found and sent before the Judges of Duat, there to receive Their eternal judgment.*"

"*But...* *cough*... *but what if people find out? What if more outsiders come to* Qaarsut*? What if they find the Dwelling?*"

"*Then we will fight them or we will hide,*" the implacable voice replied. "*I am not here to protect you, or your people, or your way of life. You, like me, serve the Mask and the Judge who placed it in our care. The difference is my obedience is direct and yours is a matter of custom. We are all but tools of Fate, yet in this matter you shall be subordinate to me.*"

Sefet Qam raised a hand and pulled down his scarf. To Walter's amazement, the skin had filled in and re-colored itself, turning from leathery brown to a dry but recognizably human black. The creature swept the spectacles from its face, revealing brown eyes, bloodshot but obviously alive.

"So soon?" Sefet Qam muttered, in distracted English. "*We have little time, Walter. Call them.*"

As Walter scrambled to his feet and stumbled toward the house, the mummy Sefet Qam spoke under its deathless breath.

"*And now my scattered thoughts knit once more, Walter of Qaarsut. I recall your cowardice of that day, though 'tis hazy. We shall see if young Nujalik proves herself your better once again.*"

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Michael would like to dedicate his work on **Mummy** to his mother.

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Introduction
Mummy, Arisen

Memory is the basis of every journey.
— Stephen King, *Dreamcatcher*

In this day and age, the first instinct of a certain type of player might be to question the viability of a roleplaying game about mummies. Say the word "mummy" to this sort of player and watch his face contort as he struggles to accept even the *possibility* of the premise, let alone the premise itself. (We can all see him picturing Brendan Fraser swinging awkwardly away at the CGI.) To be perfectly clear and frank, we understand this instinct, to a point.

But that point, then, represents part of why we went and made such a game, anyway. If that sort of player thinks it's a monumental challenge to create a rich and exciting roleplaying experience centered around mummies, then it's a challenge we not only accept in good faith, but one we actively relish. One of the things almost all game designers (and writers in general) tend to appreciate is a true and fair opportunity to effect nothing less than the utter transmogrification of disbelief into delight. For some of us, that's essentially what gets us up in the morning.

What you're reading now represents the culmination of a lot of genuine effort and creativity, on the part of an equally genuine team of writers and artists, to provide just such a transformative moment. We've done our best to take every apprehension-inducing image, every shambling stereotype, and turn them on their heads for your enjoyment and, with any luck, your betterment. All we can assure you is that this game is a product of sincere vision, direction, and hard work. But don't take our word for it. Give the game just as sincere a chance, and decide for yourself.

Welcome to **Mummy: The Curse**.

If you're on board for this kind of ride, the first thing you should know is that it's going to be a bumpy one. The denizens of this iteration of the World of Darkness live either short and interesting lives or long and interesting ones—and in the case of mummies, the very longest. The streets of this place are either hot and stinking or bone-chilling in their macabre void of warmth, and in either case, always dark with something more than night. Inhuman immortals—some called the "Arisen," others "Shuankhsen"—walk these crowded streets, as they have since before Rome ever paved her own. They are the last remnants of a bygone age and empire, refusing to let slip their grip upon a world that has long since moved on. They are at once ancient and terrible, innocent and proud, isolated, tragic, and obscene. And at their very core, they are *relentless*.

They are mummies. Yes, mummies. But not quite like in the movies.

Theme

Nothing is more important to storytelling (and thus. to Storytelling) than theme. It's what coheres narrative, expresses tone, and drives home meaning. In **Mummy**, the central conceits are such that a wide variety of themes and motifs can be invoked through its setting and characters, but at its core, this is a game about mummies—and at *their* core, mummies are all about memory. Without memory, a mummy is but an empty slave to purpose. Memory is not only that which sustains the soul as an independent entity, but that which defines the story of one's existence. And when one's existence drags on, through and beyond the lifetimes of those closest—save only other true immortals—the importance of memory does not wither, but *grow*. Memory is so fundamental to not only a mummy's existence, but to what this game is all about, that it merits its own game trait.

A host of other powerful themes cascade like a fan of cards from this central theme of memory. Chief among these is its thematic and structural twin, self-discovery. Even creatures that live for but a moment, as compared to a mummy, often struggle with what it means to simply identify themselves: their true character (or soul, if one prefers), as well as the purposes that drive them to action. If knowing one's self and one's place in the roll of history—or, in more esoteric terms, the role that Fate has in store—is important to a human being, imagine how important it must be to one who once *was* human, but whose soul now persists eternally. The more a soul discovers or rediscovers of itself, the greater its memory and sense of its own place in the scope of time. These and other derived themes are discussed at length herein (Storytellers, see Chapter Seven).

Mood

As with the game's themes, the setting and central conceits of **Mummy** allow for a surprisingly broad range of atmospheric backdrops. The default presentation assumes a roleplaying experience focused primarily on occult horror, but even adhering to this vision allows for scenes of comic relief and the introduction of occasional tonal elements from a variety of other sources, including and especially dark pulp fantasy. Howard Carter's famous discovery and the equally famous *Treasures of Tutankhamun* exhibit still resonate with people, and with the classic films begat by the King Tut craze, associations between mummies and the 1920s are alive and well.

Mention of the pulp era segues nicely to another aspect of the potential for dynamism in the mood of **Mummy**, which is that scenes (or entire stories) can be set literally anywhere, any time. So, setting a chronicle during the 1920s is not only possible, but encouraged enthusiastically. Scenes can even be set anywhere, any time, in *mid-chronicle*—by way of flashback sequences. Beyond this, scenes can even take place in Twilight (what mummies call Neter-Khertet), since the characters spend some of their time dead. Few roleplaying games can boast as impressive an array of possible sets and locales, and Storytellers are encouraged to take advantage of this when establishing mood, should it look to be of benefit to their game and to their story's overall theme. The default atmosphere might be one of ancient, creeping dread, but that's just the foundation.

The New Digs

Those familiar with previous World of Darkness games (**Vampire: The Requiem**, et al.) might have noticed a slight change in format. This is because starting with **Mummy**, we'll be releasing the content of our core games in a manner best suited to the material and to the needs of the fans, rather than purely to the needs of print. New realities of publishing are coming to life, and we'll be embracing them as we head on down the road. And it starts with **Mummy** for a good reason.

Some World of Darkness games would keep no secrets from their players. They might present narrative as rumor or offer a trio of options instead of the one that would confirm its own truth. **Mummy: The Curse** is not one of those games. Discovering (or rediscovering) things about a character's own life and world is one of the key expressions of the game's core theme and thrust, and as such, it wouldn't make much sense to provide nothing to be discovered or rediscovered. Yet that same material isn't what we'd provide the *player*, at her expense, before she's even sat down to play. It's what we provide the Storyteller, so that he can provide it to her *during* play.

As a result, the division of the core material in our first presentation of this new game will fall along those lines: The sections that players will require in order to play the game are all in the first half of the core book, called Book One: Player's Guide to the Arisen; and everything else the Storyteller needs to *run* the game are located in Book Two: Mummy Storyteller's Handbook. Players who don't wish to pay for Storyteller-only content can just pick up Book One, by itself.

The Scroll of Ages

All Storytelling games are about inspiration to one degree or another, but this is especially true of **Mummy**. The driving force behind a Storyteller's decision to run this game, as opposed to any other, is most often the desire to tell a particular story or explore a given idea through roleplaying. And that starts with inspiration.

It's common in Storytelling games to include a list of references that are good for either inspiration or continuing education on the broader topic of the game. Given the wide variety of possible influences on a game this narratively dynamic (not to mention the fact that research *references*, if not the materials themselves, should be made free to the public whenever possible), we've decided to put our list of inspirational sources for **Mummy: The Curse** and its associated topics *online*.

Welcome to the Scroll of Ages—our first interactive reference library. Here, you can come peruse not only our inspirational references, but those of other players, and if in your researching you stumble across something cool and appropriate, come on back and introduce it for future researchers. That's what the Scroll is all about. Site hosting is subject to change, but you can always come back to the game blog if you need a place to start: whitewolfblogs.com/mummy.

LEXICON

The following is a sample of the core terms used in the world of **Mummy**.

ab: In the five-fold soul, the heart.

Affinity: A mystical imbuement that grants a mummy the quiet power to prevail at his purpose.

Apotheosis: A fabled state of being whereby mummies might either end or otherwise transform the cycle of death-and-rebirth to which they have chained themselves for eternity.

Arisen: A mummy or mummies created in lost *Irem* by the sorcerer-priests of the great guilds.

ba: In the five-fold soul, the spirit.

cult: Customary term for any group of mortals that has forged a bond with a mummy.

Deathless: All mummies who are not *Lifeless*.

Deceived: Mummies of the "lost guild," they are of a different breed than the Arisen.

decree: One of five defining pronouncements an Arisen might make before the *Judges of Duat*; one's decree determines which aspect of the five-fold soul guides a mummy throughout unlife.

Descent, the: An activity period, or life cycle, for a mummy; it could last a night, or it might last a year.

Devourer, the: In the mytho-religious worldview of the Arisen, the oblivion goddess Ammut, who devoured the souls of those whom the *Judges of Duat* had judged and found wanting.

guild: One of six mighty organizations in lost *Irem*, each led by a cabal of seven sorcerer-priests (q.v., *Shan'iatu*); the five modern guilds reflect the Arisen's reconstructed visions thereof.

henet: The spiritual "repose" into which mummies fall when they must take their rest.

Irem: The Arisen nickname for the many-pillared city that was the seat of *the Nameless Empire*.

Judges of Duat: The 42 godlike beings who sit in judgment over departed souls; each Arisen pledges himself to the service of his people and his purpose before one of these 42 beings.

ka: In the five-fold soul, the essence.

Lifeless: Umbrella category of warped, less perfected visions of undeath than the *Arisen*.

Maa-Kep: The Arisen iteration of an ancient guild of laborers and spies led by seven sorcerer-priests who specialized in the creation of mystically imbued amulets.

meret: Customary term for an alliance among two to seven Arisen; denotes the group as a unit.

Mesen-Nebu: The Arisen iteration of an ancient guild of craftsmen and smiths led by seven sorcerer-priests who specialized in the occult transmutations of alchemy.

Nameless Empire, the: The lost, predynastic Egyptian civilization that gave birth to all true mummies.

Pillar: One of five aspects of the ancient soul—heart, spirit, essence, name, and shadow.

relic: A vessel containing distilled or refined *Sekhem* (or in rarer cases, substantial levels of unrefined Sekhem) and thus bearing both discernable mystical properties and an attached curse; found in one of five general forms (amulets, effigies, regia, texts, and uter).

ren: In the five-fold soul, the name.

Rite of Return: The single greatest feat of magic ever performed on Earth, it is the sorcery that created the Arisen and that binds its *Sekhem* to their souls so they can walk among the living.

Sekhem: The pure "life force" that gives both the Arisen and their occult traditions power.

Sesha-Hebsu: The Arisen iteration of an ancient guild of magistrates and scribes led by seven sorcerer-priests who specialized in the creation of the occult word.

Shan'iatu: The cabal of sorcerer-priests who ran the ancient guilds and created all mummies.

Shuankhsen: The deadliest of the Lifeless, they are mummies who have been lost to shadow.

sheut: In the five-fold soul, the shadow.

Sickness, the: Informal term for the occult miasma that settles over living mortals unaccustomed to the ancient power and dread presence of a mummy (q.v., *Sybaris*).

Sothic Turn: An interval of time coinciding with the end of the previous canicular period (about 1,460 years), during which all the Deathless arise unsummoned and seek out new purpose.

Su-Menent: The Arisen iteration of an ancient guild of funerary priests and ritualists led by seven sorcerer-priests who specialized in the creation of vessels of the shell.

Sybaris: Customary term for the Sickness, experienced in one of two ways: terror or unease.

Tef-Aabhi: The Arisen iteration of an ancient guild of architects and engineers led by seven sorcerer-priests who specialized in the creation of magical effigies.

Utterance: A powerful spell invoked by a mummy through the power of his Sekhem.

vessel: An object that has either naturally accumulated or been artificially imbued with Sekhem.

vestige: A vessel containing only pure/unrefined Sekhem and bearing no mystical properties, but holding a great deal of emotional or spiritual value to one or more earth-bound souls.

BOOK ONE

PLAYER'S GUIDE TO THE ARISEN





"What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Aadesh Nidal, owner of Nidal Construction, tensed as he lifted his head from the table. Around him, the rest of his team kept their eyes on the blueprints, afraid or otherwise unwilling to look up.

"Mr. Saunders, if you'll permit me to—"

Saunders had no intention of permitting anything. *"I'll have your licenses revoked,"* he interrupted. *"All of you. Hell, I may have you up on charges! We'd agreed—"*

"Do not blame Mr. Nidal, please." It emerged from the shadowed corner at the back of the room, that voice; soft, tinged with an accent Saunders couldn't quite place. *"It was I who made the changes to the plans on which you'd settled. If you've any objections, take them up with me."*

"And who," Saunders asked, trying to peer through the gloom, *"is this supposed to be?"*

"Mr. Ouonsou," Nidal answered with uncharacteristic hesitation. *"He's a... special consultant my family brings in for certain important jobs."*

"And what gives Mr. Ouonsou the right to just waltz in here and fuck up plans that we signed off on months ago?"

An off-white grin split the shadows, providing only the faintest suggestion of dark-skinned features surrounding it. *"I merely adjusted for a more favorable grace of fortune, Mr. Saunders. Your angles were obstructing the flow of Sekhem. I've corrected for it."*

"The flow of...?"

"Really, you ought to be thanking me. The Nidal family will be acquiring one of your new offices for its own, and I did this for their benefit. That your remaining tenants will also benefit is only to your advantage."

"You're insane. You are all—"

"And I've a gift for you, as well. In tribute. For the lobby, perhaps."

The figure shifted within the darkness, pushing forth a metal cart. Atop it sat a small clay bust of Saunders, himself.

The landlord scowled. *"And is that somehow supposed to influence my decision, Mr. Ouonsou?"*

"Oh, Mr. Saunders." Without any apparent change in the lighting, that gleaming grin somehow grew brighter still. *"You have absolutely no idea..."*





Chapter One
The Arisen World

You would know the secret of death, but how shall you find it unless you seek it in the heart of life?
— Khalil Gibran, *The Prophet*

They ruled under the sign of the scorpion, emblazoned on the pillars you built.

Your hands sowed the secret seeds of Western civilization. Later Egyptian dynasties, and the Greeks and Romans who learned their ways, arose from stones you laid so precisely a razor could not pass between them, and idols sculpted with such life and art they seemed to move in firelight. You toiled in a lost age where crafts and sorcery melded into a single operation. You invented alchemy. You gave the gods shapes of looming basalt, granite, and alabaster. Across millennia, religion, art, architecture, and more all echo your primal labors.

Our modern world of masters and servants is an echo, as well—the ancients were not much different. You were a worker, not a king, and that's why your labor remains undone. Your masters gifted you with death, but refused you its peace. Their dread and powerful magic forced you to serve long after your nation crumbled to dust and heretical history. Your corpse rises. Made ruthless by time and ritual, your soul pushes it to obey ancient commands.

Now Arisen, will you toil as your instincts demand, or will you embark on a greater work to reclaim your memory, your past, and perhaps even yourself?

An End to Death

In **Mummy: The Curse**, you play one of the Arisen—a being much like the mummies of cinematic and literary horror.

Over 6,000 years ago, your character was a citizen of a great empire that preceded the known dynasties of ancient Egypt's Old Kingdom. This lost nation was ruled by a sect of sorcerers called the Shan'iatu, each one a self-declared Priest of Duat (Egypt's Underworld). Your character served these magicians, and in return, they cast the mighty Rite of Return on her. The spell's physical preparations resembled those used to preserve later Egyptian mummies… and required her death. Her soul journeyed to Duat to face terrible trials before its divine Judges. The experience denied her a peaceful repose in the afterlife, and also forced her to define her spiritual nature forever after.

Under the auspices of her Judge, the new Arisen's soul and fleshly remains were augmented through the Rite with the occult energy of Sekhem ("life force"). Sekhem envelops her spirit, maintains her body, and creates mystic channels through which her magical will flows. It is the power of eternity, of that which endures, either in objects of power or in the cycles of life itself. Sekhem jolts her into brief flares of simulated life, during which she feels compelled to recover vessels—objects infused with Sekhem (and, occasionally, supernatural power). The divine Judges demand these offerings, and it is the Arisen's duty to provide. Unfortunately, her personal Sekhem declines over time, and once it vanishes, she returns to death until certain circumstances compel her to rise again. She inevitably rises with purpose but much confusion, unable to remember earlier incarnations with clarity.

Beyond the ability to rise from death, the Arisen possess supernatural strength, enhanced resistance to injury, and magical powers derived from the mighty sorcery of the Shan'iatu. Driven to fulfill your creator's wishes, your character must decide if she wishes to unlock the true meaning of her existence, her memories of the past, and perhaps, the will that could liberate her entirely.

Myth, Pop Culture, and Fact

History, cinema, fiction, and games all have stories to tell about mummies, but the Arisen represent a particular vision. To set **Mummy: The Curse's** protagonists apart from other interpretations, let's see where ideas you may already have about mummies apply to the Arisen.

Mummies hail from ancient Egypt. True, but the Arisen were not made during recorded Egyptian history. Before the known pharaohs, sorcerer-priests ruled under the sign of the scorpion, building an empire from their capital Irem, said to originate in the Nile Valley. Their dominion stretched from Ethiopia to the edge of Mesopotamia. Physically, the vast majority of Arisen resemble the peoples of North Africa, Central Africa, and the Middle East.

Mummies are kings, nobles, and priests. False, for the Arisen. Elite members of the later dynasties did preserve their bodies with ancient science and religious rites, but these were distorted shadows of the true, occult Rite of Return. The sorcerers of Irem performed it upon their retainers to

prepare them for service across many lives. The Priests of Duat never became mummies themselves, but left the living world to attend their patron god in the afterlife.

Mummies rise from the dead under the influence of an ancient curse. True. Sort of. The Rite of Return was never intended to give its recipients a second chance to redeem themselves or to right wrongs per se. It fixes their minds upon vessels to return to Duat and upon other holy duties—each Judge may be pleased by certain actions, and obedience staves off the decline of Sekhem. In those respects, it is a curse, though mummies may struggle to escape its bonds.

Mummies exist in many cultures, each with a distinctive form of magic that brings it to life. False, as far as the Arisen know. Only the sorcerer-priests of Irem knew the Rite of Return, and only they cast it upon their subjects. Even if other cultures could somehow use effective sorcery to raise their blessed dead, such magics are pale reflections of the eldritch Rite of Return.

Mummies draw power from the gods of ancient Egypt. Unknown. The masters of Irem made the Arisen using methods beyond their servants' comprehension. Mummies remember gods similar to those of ancient Egypt, with Azar (closest analog is Osiris) being the divine patron of the Nameless Empire, but they occupy a secondary position in the Arisen mind compared to the Judges.

Mummies master ancient sorcery. True, but it is not exactly "mastery." An Arisen's greatest magical asset is the magic that animates her. She may augment her abilities with the Pillars of her spiritual being. In addition, the Rite of Return infuses the Arisen's soul with the Sekhem and the instincts to work a few simple effects by rote. Mummies may expand their rote knowledge, but few become truly creative occultists. Magical skill is a pattern programmed into the Sekhem, not the mix of will, enlightenment, and study that legendary magicians are said to cultivate.

Mummy as a Storytelling Game

Mummy: The Curse upends some of the conventions of other World of Darkness games and adds new elements previously unseen. If you've never played a World of Darkness game before, treat these as guides to help you play your character. If you've played games such as **Vampire: The Requiem**, **Werewolf: The Forsaken**, or **Mage: The**

I cannot even begin to express my displeasure at the state of my cult upon my arising. In the mere century I had been in repose, the nature of both its members and the world in which they serve has become unimaginably hard and sickeningly soft at the same time. These people are urgent in their needs and lackadaisical in their urgency, now responding with casual grunts and inconclusive nods when I address them. A world of terrifying speed is the one to which I have awakened, yet we Arisen are steady and powerful in our purpose. The flimsy things of this rushed and mindless place can pose no true threat to my goals during this time.

All the more, then, is the reason I need my functionaries to fall in line. Every age has its obstacles, and all obstacles have a solution. I will establish orders within my temple, and each will serve me as an organ to reconcile this new world with the one I know. I am told that computers are a powerful information and analysis tool that have replaced humans as servants among the mightiest kingdoms of this new world. I have learned there are those among my flock who are masters of these lifeless new servants. My thanks will be to initiate them to new levels of responsibility. For those not possessed of such skills and who lack the capacity to develop them, I should have need, as well. For what we seek is no easy prize.

Despite the frenzied pace of this new day, I am certain my descent shall be as it has always been—for no hand can stay long when set against Fate itself—and that those who seek to defy both Fate and Judge can only die screaming my name.

— From the Letters of Ankh-Nephris,
Hand of Wisdom

Awakening, pay close attention, as the following tells you how the Arisen differ from those others games' protagonists.

Arisen With Power

Mummies return to life in a flare of power. Sekhem is the core Trait that lifts the Arisen from death. It begins at 10 dots and lowers over time.

Between their initial Sekhem, the extreme difficulty required to destroy them, and the resources (human, material, and magical) they might claim upon leaving the tomb, mummies begin a chronicle with many of the attributes other Storytelling games only grant after long, challenging story arcs. While the Arisen can learn additional abilities over time, these are overshadowed by their core advantages. Thus, the focus of play shifts from accumulating power to achieving the goals defined by their Judges and personal aspirations—and doing it all before time runs out.

As Sekhem decreases over time, these missions develop a particular urgency. An inactive or off-purpose mummy sheds power uselessly, when she could be channeling it into recovering a mystic vessel or cultivating Memory. When Sekhem dims, desperation rises, and a mummy might violate her moral code for the sake of expediency, even as her time in the world forces her to rediscover morality itself.

In Search of Memory

In place of Morality (see **The World of Darkness**, pp. 91-94) mummies possess Memory—but they don't start with much of it. Arisen begin with just three dots; their memories of not only the past, but of themselves within its twisting course, are vague, fleeting, and dreamlike. Their holds on their true personalities, motivations, and values are just as tenuous. The Arisen raise Memory by reclaiming their once-human worldview. Moral choices demonstrate free will and a stronger sense of self, as a person—one that might reveal the truth lying beneath the shroud of time. According to a lone, wandering heretic, the most enlightened Arisen can reach a state called Apotheosis, beyond duty, beyond time's spiritual ravages. Then again, Apotheosis might be a damnable lie.

As a distinctive element of **Mummy: The Curse**, Memory modifies some of the conventions used to define your character. You might be used to creating a detailed background for your character, but this time, it isn't necessary. Instead, you'll discover more about who she is by building her Memory. In a conventional Mummy game, you won't use the prelude option (see **The World of Darkness**, p. 34) to play your character before she experienced the Rite of Return. Instead, she awakens brimming with Sekhem, starting play as one of the undying Arisen.

Ancient Relics

The Shan'iatu made all mummies with definite goals in mind. The Arisen have little knowledge of their masters' objectives, but understand that they must pursue Sekhem-infused objects, or vessels. The Sekhem within some vessels is so concentrated or refined that it produces wondrous effects. These vessels are called relics. If they aren't direct remnants of the Nameless Empire, most relics were made with Irem's secrets, passed on (and distorted) from one generation of occultists to the next. The Arisen commonly feel they're these relics' natural caretakers, for in their system of belief, a relic has no true owner but the Judges and the gods of lost Irem.

Seemingly fated to deal with vessels, mummies encounter them through cult maneuvers, investigations, and sheer happenstance. Fortunately, the Arisen possess a magical sense that attunes them to the presence of these sacred objects. A mummy is especially harmonized to relics connected to his guild's magical specialty, but he might be called to seek out others. Thus, Arisen of different guilds might band together to take advantage of each other's key aptitudes.

Decrees, Guilds, and Cults

During the Rite of Return, its subject truly died. She endured a gauntlet of knives, teeth, talons, and venom until she met the dread Judges of Duat. Against the accusations and tortures of the final Judge, she pronounced a defiant summation of her being: a decree that favors one aspect of her five-fold soul. The mummy's decree determines her general character and the part of her soul—the Pillar (see below)—to which she is most deeply and inherently attuned.

Beyond these innate differences, mummies organize into guilds: circles that teach Arisen magic and cultivate the old ways. Mummies begin with instinctual, fundamental knowledge, but they require training to attain real skill. Along with the lore of a particular method, the five guilds also impart certain philosophies and secrets.

As they endure their death and resurrection through the ages, most Arisen initiate mortals into mystery religions that guard their bodies and possessions. These cults provide a third way Arisen differ among one another, as they might be benevolent secret societies, packs of murderous zealots, or anything in between.

Pillars, Affinities, and Utterances

While a mummy pronounces the permanence of her soul at the moment of the decree, Sekhem endows it with unnatural strength across its five manifestations: the Pillars of ab (heart), ba (spirit), ka (essence), ren (name), and sheut (shadow). In the game, each possesses a reserve

of points that may be spent on a number of game effects, including supernatural powers and relics. All Arisen can channel their Pillars into unnatural strength and toughness, but other gifts depend on the mummy's decree, guild, and personal experience.

Among these powers, the simplest are Affinities—simple (and typically subtle) abilities that enhance a mummy's existing powers and senses, or provide a single, set benefit. More complex or overt powers are the province of Utterances—magic spells wrested from the age of Irem. These powers can bind ghosts and wither flesh, and although they can approach the power of the sorcerer-priests' own magic, their masters doubtless kept certain secrets for themselves.

Ancient, Personal Secrets

The Arisen know the basics of their existence—their origins in predynastic Egypt, their positions as servants of the ruling elite of the Nameless Empire, and their instincts to rise, serve their cults, and reclaim items of power. But they don't know the full story of their creation.

The Storyteller knows.

In some ways, this convention returns to the roots of roleplaying games, where critical knowledge stays behind the screen until players uncover it, but it also recalls contemporary games where part of the fun lies beyond the immediate challenges of a scenario, in uncovering the deep and variegated mythology that created it.

Mummy: The Curse separates information into the player and Storyteller "compartments," defined by each book in the core game. If you plan to play one of the Arisen, you have two choices: You can choose not to read the Mummy Storyteller's Handbook, or you can indulge in the spoilers, using the separation to guide your behavior and roleplaying.



Origins

They remember the ancient days like fading dreams. The Arisen know the general course of their history, but specifics (and even larger swaths, depending on the soul and Memory rating in question) slip away save for a few vivid scenes that leap to mind at a familiar sight, sound, scent, or feeling. These triggers occur more often in the modern world than you might think, for so much of it is but flesh on the bones of their own civilization, lost though it may be.

When a mummy's Sekhem burns bright, it overwhelms the human bonds of Memory. The Arisen feels cold instinct and understands certain images, words, and ideas, but complex recollection is much more difficult to grasp. One glimpse of a hieroglyph might unfold into a dream of her time in Irem, but she lacks the emotions to sift through its

images and build a comprehensible story. When Memory wanes, a mummy understands the lost days the way an animal might, as a mass of shapes and sensory triggers with little significance except where they touch upon the business of raw survival.

Nevertheless, an outline remains—a story of the dynasty before dynasties, powered by their labor and the sorcery that sent them from the shadow of Irem's columns to demons, to judgment, and into the future.

The Coming of the Shan'iatu

The Arisen remember old stories, sung before hearths and clay idols; a grandfather's tales about beginnings lit darkly. In this time before time, the ancestors eat raw flesh and hard seeds because fire is an accident, rarely a craft. When the people die, elders weigh their bodies with rocks, but sometimes the dead rise to stalk the living. Or a gray breath crawls from a corpse's mouth, and the living quiver with a dead man's rage. They live in the Black Land—Kemet, the "heart of the world"—with the River (to us, the Nile, but to them it has no other name, as by comparison, nothing else is truly a river) as its aorta. They do not dare the white, deep desert, nor the strange and ageless scorpions that guard its depths.

Instead, the scorpions come to them.

They crawl on the red sleeves of strangers—ghost-tamers, men who speak in pictures, women who make fire. They put beast and man alike to the yoke. They uncover corpses and command them to pile the stones that once held them into walls. They bind the mad ghost-winds to their fetish amulets and staves.

The necromancers teach every soul lesser crafts but reserve sorcery for the most gifted sons and daughters of Kemet. The old stories split into hundreds of folk tales and ritual songs, but in them all, the sorcerers called the Shan'iatu pass on a secret: When a few are given real power, the few can command many to common purpose. From the tribes of the Black Land, the necromancers fashion a nation. Above elders, they crown themselves princes. They say that spirits and ghosts have lords as well—the 42 Judges of the Underworld and their own divine patron, the god Azar. They produce for Irem a king and high priest of Azar, called Pharaoh. The Shan'iatu declare themselves a senate of sanctified necromancers, Priests of Duat, who serve that dark realm's god and its assessors of the soul of man—that dread assembly that is the Judges of Duat.

Although they never claim to be gods, the Shan'iatu never call themselves mortal, either.

The City of Pillars

Cast in stone and gold, the desert scorpion becomes a scepter's head and battle standard. It represents the power of the Shan'iatu; sorcery that can hold back venom or unleash it sevenfold. The necromancers turn hunters into soldiers, and they yoke the living as they did the dead. Eventually, they bring Kemet to heel and split its peoples into artisans, acolytes, laborers, and ever more warriors. Split into castes, the people are no longer self-sufficient tribes. They must be commanded as one, from a capital.

Arisen know of legends that say the Shan'iatu created the city in a single night, coaxing its stone from the earth, but few of them believe it. Kings command, but workers build. Nevertheless, the capital obeys an arcane design: its temples, granaries, and audience chambers sit in the shadow of grand pillars, built and placed according to the principles of sacred occult architecture.

It's said the sorcerer-priests never named the city, for no one has ever found or recalled its name, but later legends call it Irem (a term for a false paradise in a tongue long dead). It becomes known throughout the Nameless Empire as the City of Pillars. The necromancers build the heart of their state here, its chief temples, stables, and marching grounds. Their subjects still struggle with new technologies, and the tribal order isn't prepared for specialized labor, so the Shan'iatu divide command of the artisans and laborers, building craft-houses to train and equip workers from each industry. They augment the artisans' work with sorcery, always with sorcery.

Anointed in blood, obsidian blades grow as strong as iron. Blessed with corpse-ash, figurines lurch across temple floors. After the Empire's fall, these divisions

The Religion of the Pillars

The Arisen revered the Shan'iatu as something between teachers, lords, and demigods. The sorcerer-priests gave their ancestors civilization, and made their works the magical spearhead of an empire. In the City of Pillars, only the Shan'iatu could fully worship the gods, but they accepted the petitions of commoners on their behalf. Gods from Egypt's historical dynasties stir something in the Arisen, but they can only identify a few of these (those featured most commonly in Irem's religious epics) from the most ancient days.

Above all other gods, the Shan'iatu worshiped Azar, believed to be the predynastic form of he whom the Greeks named Osiris. Azar sent his divine *bau*-presence into Irem's Pharaoh. The city itself was a monument to the god: Each of its pillars was a djed—a representation of the spine of Azar, the unifier of life and death. As the senate of sorcerer-priests ruled Irem under the Pharaoh's ceremonial rod, the 42 Judges ruled Duat under Azar.

develop into the mystic guilds of the Arisen, many of whom recall their craft-house more vividly than other parts of their past lives.

New aqueducts, wells, and houses support the swelling population, but Irem's artisans devote as much labor to arms as civic construction. They inscribe holy scorpions on maces and sword hilts. Magical rites accompany every step of a new weapon's design. Some crafts do not appear to be weapons at all, but forces within them offer death to an enemy through spontaneous rot or flame, or by a dread keening that drives their minds to ruin. Irem's artisans first witness these powers during testing, where slaves and prisoners demonstrate their effectiveness viscerally.

The craft-houses build barracks for Irem's soldiers. The Priests of Duat replace tribal warrior societies with legions, appropriating the traditional initiations to reinforce military brotherhood. They learn their trade by suppressing internal revolts. It isn't difficult, but that doesn't restrain them. Renegade villages burn, their leaders often disappearing overnight, whereupon the seven Shan'iatu guildmasters of the guild of scribes erase them from every graven record.

In Irem's one hundredth year, its conquest of the known world begins.

A Nameless Empire

Each legion of warriors obeys two Shan'iatu co-generals. Irem's troops march the open desert without hesitation and follow the River south, past the city's farthest outposts. At first, the clans they encounter cannot even imagine organized violence on the scale of these basalt- and bronze-clad legions. If these tribes have something to offer the Shan'iatu, they are led in chains to build satellite cities. Otherwise, soldiers exterminate them; a detachment of corpse-bearers carry the bodies back to Irem and to the necromancers' yawning vaults.

It takes only a year to conquer the lands that will one day be called Libya and Nubia, but resistance is strong in Canaan. Tent-dwelling nomads scatter before Irem's army, but warn those to whom they had long paid tribute. These *Ki-En-Gir* command the only professional soldiers the Iremites have seen besides themselves. The foreign warlords keep seers by their side, and although their troops are no match for the legions in open battle, they arrive at a stalemate: the oracles' foresight counters Irem's superior weaponry. Only the corpse-bearers declare victory, sending heavy caravans back to the City of Pillars.

A general from every legion in the east meets their *Ki-En-Gir* counterparts in Ubar—a cursed citadel where the curtain between worlds is threadbare. When they return, Ubar no longer exists. The sands have swallowed even its stones. From then on, tribute flows steadily from the east: gold, exotic horses, and slaves (and especially the seers who once opposed them). Those mystics enter the necromancers' precincts, never to be seen again. Irem sends its vassals eldritch weapons with which to defend the eastern reaches.

After the Pact of Ubar, Irem bleeds the outer territories for resources with which to glorify itself in temples, statuary, and ever more grand and solemn pillars. The Shan'iatu plan the city with precision and expand the craft-houses, inducting immigrants and captives from far-flung lands.

It is the golden age of an empire that needs no name, for no others exist, and of the Arisen's first lives. They labor with stone, copper, and fire for their lords… until the day of the Rite.

Ethnicity and the Arisen

All Arisen once lived in the city they call Irem, thought to be in the Nile Delta, but they came from every part of the Nameless Empire. This doesn't mean mummies belong to every conceivable ethnicity, however. No Arisen comes by blue eyes or blond hair naturally. The largest segment of Arisen resemble modern Egyptians, Libyans, and other North African populations, minus the influence of later European arrivals. A significant number possess Central African ancestry and the same overall appearance as modern Sudanese. A few hail from the Levant or Asia Minor, as these were tributary states governed by the Pharaoh's early Akkadian and Sumerian vassals.

As far as the Arisen can recall, the Priests of Duat appeared to be of the same ancestry as their subjects, though this might have been due to sorcery, not birth.

The Arisen just don't *think* about race the way modern people do. European colonialism, the slave trade, and the rise of "scientific" racism occurred *long* after a mummy's living years. They rarely empathize with the thinking engendered by this history, and don't classify people according to the races Westerners see. The Arisen recognize differences between the people of the Nile Delta, Nubians, Libyans, and the people of Asia Minor that might go unnoticed by Westerners. Unlike later dynasties, they do not attach any stigma or merit to these groups based on ancestry. As a rule, the Shan'iatu did not discriminate in their craft-houses; only skill and obedience mattered. To the Arisen, there were only two "demographic" groups: servants of the Empire and unconquered outsiders.

THE RITE OF RETURN

There is no work that day. The inner servants call him to chambers below the palace. They wash and perfume him in a fire-lit antechamber. They burn his clothes and then give him a linen robe. It is covered with strange hieroglyphs. Before proceeding to the great hall, they command him to drink a bitter, thick liquid from a black stone cup.

As he enters his lord's vault, he discovers that Irem's pillars transfix the earth; one of them passes through the hall. He finds he cannot feel his extremities. His solemn pace degrades into a crude shuffle. Sounds grow loud and strange, as if they're passing through water. One of them is a chant that begins once they lay him on the stained slab.

He is surprised the chant comes from the mouth of one of the Shan'iatu. The hoarse growl seems out of place on his ageless face. His master looms above with a long, copper spike, and he feels so very thirsty.

Then the artisan's vision fades into a terrible, white pain—the first of many.

INTO THE UNDERWORLD

Now he dies, for a time.

It's a long journey into Duat. Time slithers like a dream. No matter the terrain, he feels as if he's descending. He walks west, away from a weak, red sun that never moves. Later dynasties give a traveler spells and weapons for the journey. Re even provides a barge between the earth and outer sky. He has none of these—just an instinct to walk and the names of places, demons, and incantations he managed to remember through the torture of ritual murder. Lesser demons called Slaughterers stalk him with stone knives. He flees swarms of beetles and tears snakes from his heels.

Sometimes he buries himself in the cold earth against waves of flame. They stir in the wind, droplets blown from a sea of fire that begins to brighten his journey. Sometimes he simply burns and walks. Every one of the Arisen develops his own tactic to fight the fire. One covers himself in clay, and the fire hardens it into armor. Another cuts long wounds in his limbs so his blood will quench the flames.

Beyond the sea of fire lies a black metal gate as massive as those his caste built for Irem. Duat's guardians await him there, with names such as He Who Dances in Blood and the Dweller in Snakes. Passage requires a mixture of guile and determination. Each trial poses a unique challenge. There are riddles, shapeshifted lovers, and tortures no living human could endure, seemingly designed to question the traveler's very right to exist.

While the previous gates are surrounded by flame and barren earth, the seventh stands amidst trees of lapis lazuli and sands of glittering, ground gems. Half-carved artifacts take the place of stones. Its guard is Shezmu, the Executioner—a lion-headed man with blood ever-flowing from his mane and fangs. The traveler knows him as the



patron of Irem's armies, knows that he crushes the weak into blood-wine for the blue-skinned Lord of Duat.

The traveler doesn't know what happens to failures. He succeeds. Instead of attacking blindly or begging for an end to his pain, he answers with the highest magic. The words vary from one to the next, but they possess a common meaning: "This is who I am, and no matter what you do, my soul is unyielding."

The Executioner steps aside.

Shezmu knows the petitioner, but it is up to the Judges to determine the exact parameters of his fate. Each of the 42 Judges demands to know more of his soul's true nature. They test him with torture, trials, and visions of terrible scenarios. When one Judge touches the part of his soul that cannot break, it passes him to the next—and the next, until he stands face to face with the last Judge, who identifies that lone, immovable Pillar of spirit. The wanderer declares his nature before it. He knows this is his last chance to turn back—to accept dishonor and ouster from paradise rather than fulfill his role—but having won through to this very moment, he instead steps forward and pronounces his decree. In that moment, the final Judge knows the soul as one of the blessed dead, and that Judge becomes his patron for an eternity of service, whispering the secrets of his Pillar and of the magic within.

The traveler closes his eyes. When he reopens them, he is Arisen.

An Immortal Calling

The Nameless Empire is gone, but the world is built of its shadows. An Arisen sees them in every carved falcon and column, in customs and phrases he remembers as novelties—he was present when they were born. Although the world seems strange in many respects, it still descends from his handiwork and from the forgotten reign of his masters.

No mummy arose during the time of Irem, not even the very first of those subjected to the Rite. They lay as withered corpses through the Nameless Empire's end. Although many returned in Egypt, Nubia, and other former territories, others report a first awakening in other nations' treasure houses, temples, or private complexes. Instincts drive them from their sarcophagi to defend their treasures, engage their cults, and seek vessels of power. Newly Arisen mummies more readily kill without remorse and resort to ruthless, direct methods to satisfy their Judges' wills. By the time they regain full consciousness, they could well see the imprint of their own bloody hands on foreign stone.

Still, other ages are not as disorienting as one might assume. The Arisen see civilization's common patterns everywhere. They don't take them for granted because, no matter how damaged their memories, they know on some level that they *created* them. The world is theirs, in a sense. Its ignorant inhabitants have only forgotten.

Three events drive a mummy from death to the illusion of life they call the Descent. In death, a state mummies call *henet* ("the repose"), the Arisen feels nothing directly—no sense of time, no dreams as mortals know them, no sensations. When the time comes to arise, Arisen feel as if they've been thrown ahead in time, but lack a clear past to tell them just how far they've come.

Disturbance

When an intruder moves or touches either a mummy's remains or the central relic of his tomb, the Arisen's ka ("essence") shakes his soul into activity. Blazing with Sekhem but little Memory, the Arisen often brutally dispatches the interloper. Afterward, he returns to the sarcophagus or seeks out a hidden place to rest again, but he might remain active for a short time thereafter, especially if his tomb has been tampered with or if he senses an unfamiliar vessel nearby.

Summons

A mummy's cult may also summon him to Descend. Members might do this when some evil threatens the sect, but its traditions often encode practical "standing orders": signs that vessels are nearby, or omens that indicate increased supernatural activity. A powerful cult may summon its master somewhat more often and easily, but this is not always an advantage for the Arisen. Sometimes, the "dead god's" mythos is more compelling than his living presence. Furthermore, newly Arisen act like beasts or automata, killing anyone they believe threatens their tombs and precious vessels. A poorly instructed cult just might lose its priests to their own rampaging master.

See "The Descent," page 153, for more information.

The Sothic Wheel

Astrological laws govern the ebb and flow of Sekhem through a mummy's remains. This process is called the Sothic Wheel, named for the 1,461-year movement of the star Sothis (Sirius). At each turn of the wheel, the star appears at the first dawn of the ancient Egyptian year. The historical dynasties associated Sirius with the goddess Isis, the mother of magic and wife to Ra. The Shan'iatu incorporated these celestial energies into the Rite of Return, though these dynamics are tied to the day of the Arisen's first death, rather than to Sirius, itself. Nevertheless, the sorcerer-priests appear to have created most of the Arisen on or within a century or so of Sirius' natural cycle.

A mummy arises automatically due to the arrival of his personal Sothic Turn**.** Arisen crawl from their tombs, gather their cults (or seek out new ones), and stalk the world in search of their own hidden destinies. These periods of strange mass exodus are the most dynamic in Arisen history.

The Roll of History

The Sothic Wheel awakens mummies during the periods below. To correspond with the Arisen's personal cycles, each era has been detailed for the decades surrounding the greater Sothic Turn. The Storyteller might use these periods for flashbacks, story hooks, or even historical chronicles. If players are allowed to flesh out their characters' histories (not a sure thing in a **Mummy: The Curse** chronicle) they might detail their characters' actions during these eras.

The First Turn: 2371 BCE

The Pharaoh Unas is a far cry from the absolute rulers who preceded him. Courtiers divide his mandate among themselves, and many are buried in temples that approach his own in magnificence. This may be due to Arisen who have seized power under these guises. Unas is the last king of the Fifth Dynasty and appears to be revered for his religious role, rather than significant worldly influence.

During the Sixth Dynasty that follows his reign, local lords (the Greeks call them nomarchs and their fiefs nomes) seize effective command over much of Egypt, and challenge central authority with wars and assassination plots. The last pharaoh, Pepi II, rules for 64 years; his heirs are too old and bereft of influence to succeed him. Decades after his death, the Nile barely floods—it's one aspect of a drought that affects the entire world. The Old Kingdom shatters under war and famine.

The Second Turn: 910 BCE

Egypt is weak; the mighty line of Ramses has been lost for centuries. Osorkon I inherits his father Shoshenq's conquest of Judah. Treasures from the Temple of Jerusalem decorate his chambers, but these victories do little to cure the rot that has taken hold of Egypt. Most of the pharaohs of this period rule only Upper or Lower Egypt, contending with regional kings, priests, and petty lords who challenge their reign. At one point, Pedubast I and Takelot II both claim the title of pharaoh. Pedubast prevails long enough to leave a successor, but this Shoshenq VI quickly topples from the throne. Nubian kings stand poised to assert authority over Egypt, and although they renew the kingdom for a time, they will never give it the strength to resist invasions by Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans.

The Third Turn: 551 CE

Newly fallen from a nation of mystics and philosophers, Roman Ægypt is a Christian country by decree. From Byzantium, Theodosius I imposes his faith on the empire and orders the destruction of pagan works. This includes razing the Serapeum, the final remnant of the Library of Alexandria. Lost works include accounts of Irem and its sorcery. The Arisen enter a world a century too late to save any evidence that their civilization ever existed.

Neoplatonists, Manicheans, and polytheists avoid the death penalty by practicing in secret. Arisen drift into this pagan underground, building their cults—and raging over lost vessels and defiled ruins. Even in decline, Roman influence eases travel to distant places. Some Arisen leave their broken homeland behind in search of distant artifacts and places they might rule as lords or demigods, far from imperial sanction.

To the Arisen, Christianity tells a familiar story but gets the names wrong. A tortured king who becomes a god and guides followers to resurrection is familiar enough. So is judgment and damnation. Azar was their wounded king; the Judges identified sin and meted out punishment. Egypt enjoys prosperity until its conquest by the Sassanid Persians. Eventually Umar, the second Rightly Guided Caliph, brings Islam to Egypt.

The Fourth Turn: 2012 CE

Arisen who first hear the call of Sirius awaken to find their possessions scattered by the British Empire. Some crawl from sarcophagi in museums or mansions, their vessels and cultic artifacts under glass. They learn that their forgetful descendants have ground sacred cats into fertilizer; even that 100 years before, mortals used ground, mummified flesh as snuff. The Arisen see treasures wrested from the best-guarded tombs on display for the world to see and learn that modern explorers have invaded Egypt's most secret—and sacred—places.

Cults learn modern security techniques and ways to invest money for the ages. The increasing pace of technological advancement proves a challenge for the Arisen, who must absorb new skills to blend in; posing as country aristocrats just won't cut it. Fortunately, they are builders and makers with a knack for understanding the logic behind innovations. In the end, things are not all *that* different. Iremite and dynastic Egyptian symbolism penetrate every layer of culture, and as ever and before, it remains a world of masters, workers, and slaves.

Unlife Among the Living

The bulk of the Arisen are linked to one another by a commonality of experience. They trace their origins to the same ancient culture, their supernatural nature to the same spell, their purposes and needs to the same set of drives and motivations. Most of them also share the same sense of cultural and historical alienation, constantly awakened into a world they neither know nor understand, then returned to fitful slumber just as they begin to get a grasp on their new environment.

These shared experiences are central to understanding—and roleplaying—the Arisen. At the same time, this similarity of events does not mean that each and every mummy feels or reacts to those events in precisely the same way. What follows is a general overview of Arisen "life," freed from the tonal biases and understandings of prior sections. Most of this is likely true of your character, but perhaps not *all*; and even then, how your character has adapted to such an existence is entirely up to you and your Storyteller.

Awakening

The cause of a mummy's awakening, and the first few moments of a new life cycle, have an enormous impact on the shape of that mummy's existence to come. In some respects, an Arisen awakening is a disorienting experience. A human waking up in utter confusion from the deepest, most dream-intensive slumber still possesses far more clarity of thought than a mummy in his first moments. Not only does he have no memory of his time in Duat (if that's even where his soul resides while in henet; no Arisen knows), but he lacks any real notion of self. Who he is, what he wants, what he used to be—all of these are foreign concepts, at least initially.

This is not to say that a newly awakened mummy knows *nothing*. On the contrary, certain pieces of knowledge are indelibly burned into his mind, occupying almost the entirety of conscious thought.

First and foremost, he knows *why* he has awakened. He may not know the specific details—if his cult has awakened him, for instance, he doesn't yet know what they want of him—but in a more general sense, he's fully aware. He knows if he has, indeed, been summoned by his cult (or by someone else with access to the same magics). He knows if he has been called back by the turning of the Sothic Wheel. Finally, and perhaps most dangerously, he knows if he has awakened because his remains have been in any way moved or defiled.

Oh, yes—and he knows *precisely* what he's capable of and how to access the entirety of his necromancies, powers, innate abilities, and relics. This, then, is the primary *difference* between a freshly awakened Arisen and a waking mortal: The Arisen might be confused and bleary in terms of memory, but he's absolutely clear-thinking in terms of action and decision-making. More than one would-be tomb-robber has died at the hands of a newly awakened mummy who has proved fully capable of acting, despite the fact that he has yet to recall *his own name*.

In fact, thanks to the near-overload of Sekhem upon first arising, a newly awakened mummy is far more likely to resort to violence—regardless of his normal personality—than at almost any other time in his waking life. The urge to burn off some of that power, coming as it does during the period of activity in which the Arisen feels the least connection or kinship to mortal beings, makes the spending of Sekhem (whether on physical augmentation or sorcery) almost instinctive. It's not precisely the equivalent of a murderous rage in a human being—the Arisen isn't truly out of control and is more than capable of restraining those urges (especially if only his cultists or other non-enemies are present)—but it can certainly manifest in similar ways.

Death Warmed Over

It is perhaps unfortunate that immediately upon awakening, during that period of time in which an Arisen is most likely to respond to any sort of hostility or confusion with violence, he's also most likely to cause hostility and confusion in others. An occult malady called Sybaris ("the Sickness") can cause disorientation, fear, or panic in mortals at even the best of times, but it is at its strongest and most disturbing when a mummy's Sekhem rating stands at 9 or 10. Furthermore, during this period the Arisen resembles what he truly is—a walking, shambling, mummified corpse. It's nigh impossible, unless he has access to modern clothing that conceals every last inch of flesh, for him to pass among humans; and even if he does, the spiritual taint of the Sickness means people are likely to react pretty poorly to his presence. Members of a mummy's cult are taught to prepare for such a reaction. Other people, quite obviously, are not.

Thus, the time when an Arisen is most likely to *act* like a bloodthirsty, rampaging monster is also the time when other people are most likely to *perceive* him as such. This unfortunate convergence means that, unless cultists make up the entirety of the human population with whom a mummy must deal for quite some time—hours or even days—after he awakens, a newly arisen mummy is almost certain to cause death and destruction that he otherwise might have avoided.

It's also during this time that tales and rumors of a mummy's existence—or at least the existence of *some* sort of horrid thing—are most likely to spread among the credible, drawing the attention of other Arisen, the Lifeless (see p. 29), and various mortal occultists and monster hunters.

Purpose

Nothing is more important to Arisen existence than sense of purpose. Not personality; not history; nothing. It is the driving force in the lives of creatures who shouldn't be living at all. Perhaps worst of all is the fact that, when the Arisen were called to "serve" so many thousands of years ago, the sorcerer-priests *meant* it. A mummy has no actual say in what his first purpose *is*.

In most instances, the manner and cause of a mummy's awakening is itself a determining factor in the Arisen's first purpose. If it's the violation of a tomb, the mummy's purpose is to prevent further desecration, to repair what's been done, and (most importantly) to seek brutal vengeance upon the perpetrators. If he's awakened by his cult to perform a specific task, he has no real choice in the matter; that task *is* his first purpose. A mummy can choose not to act on his purpose, but doing so comes with its own substantial downsides.

Only when the Arisen awaken due to the turn of the Sothic Wheel do they find themselves living without an overriding objective shaping everything they do, think, and feel. This, along with the fact that Sekhem can deplete itself more slowly for Arisen awakened by a Sothic Turn, makes these excruciatingly rare periods the only "lifetimes" in which the Arisen can easily pursue their *own* goals—whether that be the rediscovery of self, a greater understanding of Arisen nature, or just spending a bit of time listening to music, traveling the world, and knocking back mimosas.

Even during these periods, however, an Arisen feels *some* drive to pursue goals related to his nature, his Judge, and often, to the needs of his cult. It's not as dominating as it otherwise would be, but the urge to track down vessels, or to protect the mortal "tribe" over whom he watches, remains intact. In the presence of immediate need—such as actually bearing witness to violence committed against one of his cultists or the discovery that a relic with which he has a long history has been stolen—a purpose may temporarily assert itself as strongly as it does during more focused lifetimes, with all the associated requirements and loss of Sekhem.

The Shepherd and the Flock

Far and away, it's the call of his cult that draws a mummy back from death most often. Only cultists possess the means to do so without either drawing the creature's wrath down upon them or sacrificing an important relic in the process (or both). Only they have the occult knowledge and the relevant vessels (assuming the Arisen hasn't consumed them all). It's not easy, and it's often a procedure known only to a particularly wise few in the community, but it's certainly a useful ability to have. Some cults raise their Arisen patrons only once every several generations, for the most vital of tasks. Others are a bit freer, resources permitting, summoning their mummies more often and with lesser provocation, but in either case, the Arisen have little say in whether to accept. Fortunately, most of them rarely object to doing as they are requested.

Most of the time, when a cult summons its Arisen patron, a priest or other cult leader is present (or will be shortly) to explain to the mummy what it is the cult requires. On rare occasions, however, an Arisen might rise at the call of the cult, only to discover that he has no idea what it wants of him. Perhaps he was summoned in the midst of an emergency that has since forced the cultists to scatter or that has slain all those who knew why he was being called. Whatever the case, his ignorance of the cult's intentions does *not* free him of the obligation. He still loses Sekhem at an accelerated rate if he's not actively pursuing that goal.

Such an Arisen isn't *completely* adrift. Just as the Arisen can vaguely sense the presence of other mummies or of relics attuned to their guild, so too can a mummy ignorant of his cult's intended purpose sense, in very general terms, when he's on the right track. This knowledge comes with no fine detail; it's purely a question of "This direction feels wrong" or "Hunting down and killing the leader of this particular rival cult feels like the right thing to do." (This is less a strict game mechanic and more a Storyteller's tool for running "What did they call me back for?" mysteries without leaving the characters *completely* adrift.)

So long as he's *actively* trying to figure out his first purpose, he's considered to be following that purpose where Sekhem is concerned. Should his efforts wane, however, he's once again gone off course and pays the cost accordingly.

Final Purpose

Many of the Arisen come to realize only gradually that they possess a "final purpose," a goal that transcends even the causes for which they are raised. This final purpose pertains to the objectives and portfolios of the Judge a given mummy serves. If a mummy who has discovered this final purpose veers from his *summoned* purpose in order to pursue it, he doesn't suffer the Descent at nearly the same rate as one who abandons his arising's first purpose for more frivolous reasons. (For more, see "Judges of Duat" at the end of this chapter.)

Stewardship

It's possible, having read thus far, to have gotten the impression that the average cult sees the Arisen purely as a servant. While a very few depraved (and likely short-lived) groups *do* feel that way, the majority of them are well aware that they have been graced with a supernatural protector and patron, one touched by the magic of the gods themselves. The Arisen isn't some menial laborer to be brought out of storage at a whim, but a near demigod unto itself whom the cultists must venerate. Its obedience is to the magic and to its own nature, not to them specifically, and they're smart enough to remember

that. Truth be told, most cultists would be happier if they went their whole lives without ever *needing* to interact with the Arisen.

As such, one of the most common reasons for calling up the Arisen is to serve as the cult's protector. When the cult or its community (or sometimes others only tangentially connected to it) are endangered, it does what so many of us only wish we could—calls on some terrible supernatural avenging angel to smite the enemy!

This sort of danger can manifest in all manner of ways. It's frequently something as straightforward as "Someone is trying to kill us!" Another Arisen or other supernatural entity is the most obvious sort of attacker to require a mummy's defense, but not the only sort. It could be a rival cult, monster or treasure hunters, or an outside military, criminal, or insurgent force that wants the cultists dead for reasons totally unrelated to their cult status. Someone may be trying to steal the cult's land or property, either via violence or political clout. Alternatively, the Arisen may be protecting the cult's *interests* rather than its members or property; if, for instance, a rival has somehow managed to wrest away control of a particular corporate entity or political office. *Anything* that endangers the cult, directly or indirectly, physically or otherwise, is at least a potential reason to awaken the undead patron.

For some cults, the roles of patron and protector also become one of leadership. Clearly, the mummy cannot command the cult on a day-to-day basis, but he *can* lay down a series of laws or procedures that he expects his cult to follow. Some cults, either because they were so ordered or of their own accord, summon the Arisen to make certain decisions of particular religious or traditional importance, or to pass judgment on their own internal conflicts. (The awakening of a mummy to effectively choose a cult's next high priest, as referenced in the prologue to this book, is a perfect example.)

Some cultists believe that the Arisen have access to divine knowledge and wisdom (even if they sometimes have trouble remembering it), and as such, they often prefer to consult their patron on matters of significance, even if the cult doesn't consider the Arisen to be its leader per se. Even something as simple as "Help us decide who our next high priest should be," however, can become a mummy's driving purpose, requiring he do everything in his power to not only make the decision, but to make it well.

Servitude

While the Arisen may not be servants of their cults, they do *serve* their cults. It's a subtle distinction, but one that most priests and cult leaders are wise enough to make. What the cult requires, the mummy provides—but woe indeed to the cultists who abuse this sacred responsibility.

The tasks for which a cult might raise its mummy are potentially limitless, but they most frequently fall into a narrower array of options.

Performing Rituals: It might seem a bit odd to call the Arisen—in itself a difficult and costly mystical endeavor—only to beseech their aid in performing another rite. Remember, however, that the Arisen are creatures not only of great magical power, but also religious significance. As such, for cult rituals of particular spiritual or arcane import, the presence of the Arisen is often considered to be beneficial, if not downright essential. While this obviously isn't the most blatantly plot-intensive reason to raise a mummy, it does occur, and it certainly *can* lead into a story, if run accordingly. (One could, in fact, run an entire story based on performing such a ritual, if the preparations also required the Arisen to assemble certain important vessels or individuals, as described in the follow sections.)

Acquiring Vessels: Relics and vestiges are almost as important to the various cults as they are to mummies themselves. Above and beyond any mystical power they might possess—though that's certainly nothing to scoff at—the historical and religious significance of vessels is immeasurable. If cultists should discover the location of a vessel particularly important to their cult, learn that someone else is misusing it, or (gods help the perpetrators!) discover that one has been stolen from them, calling on the Arisen is the only obvious choice. This might result in a full-on clash with another cult or other organization, an Indiana Jones-style expedition, or even the raiding of another mummy's tomb! (This latter is never attempted lightly—both out of respect for the Arisen's status and because a mummy who's been awake any length of time is almost certainly less potent than one who's just been disturbed—but it does happen.) If there's one single task that the Arisen spend more time performing for their cults than any other, it's this.

Hunting Down Enemies: Many Arisen cults have foes, or at least rivals. Other cults want what they have or seek retribution for past slights (some of which may be centuries old). The Lifeless and other creatures who oppose the Arisen know that their cults are a weak spot at which they may strike. Occultists and monster hunters seek the cults out, often with grim intentions. Like any other organization or faith, some also have enemies within the mundane human population: political, business, or criminal interests with whom, for whatever reason, they find themselves at odds. When these entities attack a, Arisen cult, it may summon a mummy for protection, as described previously. Not all cults wait to play defense, however.

Call them soldiers, call them thugs, call them assassins; the Arisen serve as all these and more. When a high priest points a mummy at someone and says "Him," few powers

on this Earth are potent enough to save the man. This is a last resort, at least for more reasonable or sane cult leaders, as murder and violence almost inevitably attract attention that *nobody* wants—but sometimes, it all comes down to who has the tougher muscle. They don't come much tougher than the undead.

The lines can become pretty blurred between a mummy raised to defend and one raised to attack; indeed, one such purpose often segues into the other.

Bodyguard or Escort: While guarding a particular person or object might seem to fall under a more defensive purpose, the situation changes when travel is involved. Accompanying a high priest to another country or ensuring the safe delivery of a relic, for instance, requires a different mindset and a different focus than the more broad-based "defend the cult from those who would destroy it," and it often encompasses aspects of quite a few of the previously described objectives.

Pieces of the Past

The bond between the Arisen, mystical relics, and emotionally resonant vestiges comes from the core of the mummies' very nature. It is, in many ways, the heart and soul—so to speak—of many a **Mummy** chronicle. Beyond any mortal biological attachment, vessels and the Arisen are, on a metaphysical level, *already* a part of one another. They are both conduits of Sekhem, living history, or both, channeled through and accumulated in bodies not normally equipped to handle them. This is not only why the Arisen can replenish themselves by feeding off vessels, or sense their proximity, but also why the Arisen often feel compelled to seek and accumulate such things even when there's no obvious purpose to doing so.

That last bit is worth expounding on. While the entire purpose for awakening a mummy may revolve around the retrieval of vessels, the Arisen are drawn to such things *at all times*. In part, this is simply a matter of conviction. Due to the nature of the magics involved, the Arisen firmly believe that *all* relics—even those created by other, younger cultures—are inherently the property of the Judges of Duat and the ancient gods of lost Irem. The greater part of this connection, however, is innate. If the Deathless sense the presence of a vessel in their vicinity, their initial, instinctive urge is to acquire it. If they have no use for a vessel—they don't require the Sekhem, it has no particular magical power or symbolic significance that interests them—they *still* feel the need to collect it. The Arisen are compelled to deliver vessels to Duat, though most will ensconce at least one relic and a few vestiges within their tombs, and the drive to claim them is ubiquitous. It's innate and instinctive, an aspect of the shared life essence between them.

That's not to say that the Arisen are slaves to these urges. They are, for the most part, *desires* rather than *needs*. A mummy isn't likely to abandon an ongoing effort to chase after a relic he happened to hear about. He isn't likely to start a battle over a vessel he doesn't actually need and on which he has no prior claim (though some more impulsive or simply stupid Arisen might). It's not an overwhelming need—again, unless this is the purpose for which he was summoned—but it is a constant one. A mummy without anything else going on, either because he's completed his purpose but has not yet returned to death or because he's awakened due to the Sothic Turn, is as likely to begin searching out vessels, just for the heck of it, as he is to do anything else.

Righteous Vengeance

Few themes are more common in tales of mummies than vengeance. Almost everyone's heard some variant, such the (possibly apocryphal) "Death shall come on swift wings to those who disturb the rest of the Pharaoh" on the tomb of Tutankhamen. For the Arisen, while this curse may not be spelled out, the impetus is very real. Any desecration

Frivolous Awakenings

It's not common, but on occasion, a cult *does* fall into the unfortunate habit of calling upon its Arisen patron for purposes that don't really warrant his attention. It might be that it's simply calling on him too often, getting into trouble that it could easily avoid because its members assume he'll be there to help. It might be that the cult's actually come to rely on him for tasks the cultists should be able to perform themselves. Sometimes, a mummy somehow finds the will to actually object to the purpose he's been given; again, it's an extremely rare occurrence, but it does happen.

Under these circumstances, the Arisen has a few choices open to him. He *can* simply refuse to abide by his purpose. Doing so not only results in a quick depletion of Sekhem, but it's frankly uncomfortable. It feels unclean, unhealthy, on both a physical and spiritual level. Most mummies take this step only under extreme circumstances.

More often, the Arisen carries out the task for which he was summoned—but makes his displeasure unmistakably clear to his cultists, possibly even hanging around after his objective is completed to do so. In the case of cultists who have simply fallen into bad habits, a simple admonishment may suffice. At other times, when the problems (or corruption) run deeper, well, the cultists don't actually have many ways to protect *themselves* from their own Arisen. Maybe the next high priest will be more competent.



of the mummy's physical remains or destruction of his tomb or theft of its central relic can result in his awakening. Consider that a newly arisen mummy is at his most powerful and his least deliberate, reacting almost exclusively on instinct and emotion rather than thought or memory. Combine that with the inherent drive to destroy any who violate his sacred tomb, and it's understandable why very few mortals unfortunate enough to stumble into an Arisen tomb have time to regret their actions.

All Work and No Play

Avoiding or ignoring the purpose for which he was raised comes with a cost–increased depletion of Sekhem, general feelings of shame, and possibly even the enmity of other Arisen, depending on circumstances–but that doesn't mean that a mummy never chooses to do so. Sometimes, an Arisen is just too driven by his own personal goals to abide by his given objectives. Other mummies don't *ignore* their purposes, but refuse to devote the *entirety* of their efforts on them, insisting on taking some "personal time" to pursue other goals–even if that means potentially fading away or otherwise failing before their primary task is completed.

The sorts of personal goals that might drive a mummy to neglect or completely ignore his driving purpose vary widely, but they tend to fall into certain broad categories.

Personal Growth: After so many cycles of life and death, some mummies become obsessed with figuring out who they are, *what* they are, and what their true purpose may be. Sometimes, these needs outweigh even the purposes for which an Arisen was awakened. Some study occult lore, seeking to learn hidden truths about the Judges of Duat, the Rite of Return, or Irem itself. Some literally seek to discover themselves, focusing on the reclamation of Memory and thus knowledge of who they used to be. A rare few seek Apotheosis, hoping to escape the eternal cycle and truly live once more. While other Arisen may feel that these mummies are behaving irresponsibly or selfishly, they can usually sympathize with their goals.

Appetites of the Living: The Arisen, as a whole, are far less forgiving when it comes to the second category of personal motivation. Whether it's because a mummy has grown jaded and lost faith with his existence, or has become enraptured by some element of the living world–power, wealth, even love–a rare few Arisen abandon their purposes utterly, solely for their own satisfaction. These Arisen are viewed as utterly selfish and wasteful, and they often find themselves at odds with their fellow mummies.

We are caught in a cycle of birth and ruin linked to a purpose formed in the minds of dark and unknowable beings. We are like beasts in a labyrinth, animals driven beyond all else to ask, to question, to seek, to attain, and to become. In stark contrast, we are forbidden the truest fruits of self-knowledge and are constrained by the mysterious whims of the creatures that wrote the spell of our condition. This elder rite, drawn from a pre-human age beyond even Arisen reckoning, connects us to a dissonant dimension from which the Word and the Will can violate the laws of reality as easily as a soldier ravages a slave girl. Given unto the Shan'iatu—those most-high Priests of Duat—we become beings of the cycle, doomed to either repeat or refine, but never to escape.

What is the thing that wills it so? This is a dangerous question. For in the City of Pillars, words were spoken of dark and ancient things that set all the pillars in place, guided by the agendas of the craft guilds but as primeval in nature as the stones they moved. One can only question the nature of the hand that breathed shadow and magic into those false beings, just as one cannot help but wonder if the laborious plight of those titans' toil is the fate of all Arisen souls.

— From the private letters of Anru-Herap,
Prince of Glass

Some few, however, do indeed manage to escape the Arisen's initial wrath. They may enter the tomb, cause some quick damage or steal a single vessel, then flee before the mummy has the chance to awaken. A few—through powerful magics, intricate preparations, or sheer dumb luck—might even succeed in escaping from the mummy *after* he's arisen. These poor deluded fools might even believe they're safe.

They're not. The drive to seek retribution for this sort of violation is infused throughout the Arisen spirit. It becomes his purpose, one just as binding as any issued by a cult. Most such Arisen focus everything at their disposal—magic, knowledge, allies, resources—into finding those who defiled their rest. Most also try to retrieve whatever was taken or to repair what was destroyed, but it's the vengeance itself that remains the primary goal.

A mummy's vengeance is not limited to his remains or his tomb, however. Any sufficiently egregious wrong committed against an Arisen (or, in some cases, his allies or cult) can develop into a Sekhem-fueled vendetta. This doesn't mean that anyone who ever gets in a mummy's way becomes a target. Only particularly vile or personal attacks—deliberately exterminating an entire cult bloodline or causing a mummy to utterly fail at the purpose for which he was raised—might result in this burning need for vengeance. (In other words, it's at the Storyteller's discretion.) If this does happen, though, then revenge against the individual becomes a second driving purpose, one that the Arisen is compelled to follow once he's discharged (or failed at) the first.

This need for vengeance survives even death. If a mummy seeks vengeance on someone, returns to death before culminating his efforts, and is then awakened again for any reason while the target of that vengeance still lives, the quest for revenge reasserts itself. (It remains a secondary purpose, however; that is, the first purpose for which the Arisen was raised takes precedence.)

The Hourglass Turns

The Arisen have a peculiar relationship with time, even when compared to *other* potentially immortal beings. They are eternal, but not continual, hopscotching through history without ever having the opportunity to really get to know the world—or worlds—in which they awaken. As such, certain elements of the Arisen experience are shared across the entire breed and utterly unknown to anyone else.

Memory and Self

Memory, both as an in-character term and as a game statistic, is more than just a question of whether a given mummy can recall the name of the vendor who sold dates next door back in the days of Irem. It's a measure of how much identity the Arisen has at all, how much of himself he actually knows—and it's a measure of how *human* he is, in terms of personality, drives, thoughts, and emotions.

Consider that we're speaking about beings who were born thousands of years ago, who know they cannot truly die, who spend most of their existence in an Underworld they can never consciously remember, who have seen all of history fly by in a series of stuttering images, who are all but incapable of forming meaningful bonds with living people. It's all but impossible for a human being to even comprehend those experiences or to imagine what they would be like—and in turn, those who experience them do not remain entirely human. The ability to empathize or understand people, or even to see them as meaningful individuals, begins to fade. It becomes harder and harder even to recall the emotions, wants, and needs that drive such unimportant, short-lived creatures. When one cannot be permanently destroyed, and when whatever changes one makes to the world don't matter because it'll be a whole *different* world when one awakens again, it eats away at the very capacity to *care*. Not just about others, but about *anything*.

The only defense the Arisen have against this slow deterioration of empathy and self is memory. The more they can cling to (or rediscover) who they *were*, the more control they have over who they *are*. A mummy with low Memory is, in many ways, a machine. He lacks any real sense of self and exists for literally no other reason than to fulfill whatever his current purpose may be. He cares little, if at all, for the consequences of his actions and often lacks all but the faintest trace of a moral compass. Those with higher Memory scores, who remember who they were and what being human felt like, are far more likely to retain their own personalities and to care whether they've just accidentally destroyed a school bus full of disabled orphans. (Unless they were real assholes in *life*, too, of course.)

It's a vicious cycle, in that an Arisen with little Memory also has little reason to care about regaining it. Once a mummy reaches this point, there's little hope that he'll ever again be more than an instrument of other people's (or his Judge's) will.

Little, but not *none*. Occasionally, something sparks what little trace of humanity such an Arisen retains. It might be a relic from his old life, the commission of a truly dreadful act, or what have you. In such cases, even the lowest-Memory Arisen may be inspired to begin trying to rediscover and recreate who he was. Of course, the higher a mummy's Memory, the more of a person he actually is, and thus—in most cases—the more Memory he *wants* to recover. This is particularly true if his higher Memory allows him to form stronger relationships, perhaps even true friendships, with some of the mortals around him.

The Harder They Fall

All Arisen feel the ticking clock of Sekhem and the Descent. Some embrace it, accepting it as a part of who and what they are, actually preferring to spend most of the time dead. Others fight kicking and screaming, taking whatever steps they must to eke out just a few more days of life. Most mummies fall somewhere in between. In every case, though, it's a driving factor that none of the Arisen can ignore.

To an extent, a mummy's feelings toward the Descent influence almost every aspect of his behavior. Arisen who want to stretch out their "lifetime" as long as possible are positively stingy, spending Sekhem only when all other options have failed—sometimes twice. They tend to walk a fine line when it comes to pursuing their agendas. They want to remain "on purpose," so that their Descent comes more slowly, but they also know that they'll lose Sekhem far faster once their purpose is concluded. Thus, it pays for them to take their time as much as possible, while never *completely* abandoning their objectives.

Other mummies, those who are more purpose driven from the get-go, are far more willing to spend Sekhem in the pursuit of their goals. Live long or die swiftly, experience the world or let it sweep by, all this is secondary

Who the Dead Fear

For all their power, all their immortality, even the Arisen are not immune to fear. They have enemies in the World of Darkness, entities capable of thwarting their aims at the very least—and, in some cases, of actually corrupting their eternal existence.

Other mummies are, of course, the most common of the Arisen's supernatural opponents. While any wise Arisen respects the capabilities and powers of his fellows, however, other recipients of the Rite of Return aren't normally sufficient to give a mummy nightmares.

Or rather, *most* of them aren't. The Lost Guild, however, are a different story. These mummies—who may or may not be legend—are the survivors of an ancient sixth guild, practitioners of occult *nomenclature*: the magic of true names. Betrayed by the other guilds and believed exterminated before the fall of Irem, these few apocryphal survivors are utterly mad, if they exist at all, driven solely by the desire for revenge against the Arisen of the five guilds.

Even these, however, pale before the veritable bogeymen of the ancient dead. Called the Lifeless, these creatures are neither Arisen nor mortal, but foul corruptions representing the most fearsome and depraved depths of necromancy. The worst by far are the Shuankhsen, twisted reflections of the mummies themselves and some of the few beings said to be able to truly destroy an Arisen—or, even worse, corrupt one into becoming Shuankhsen himself!

The Storyteller, of course, has more information on all of these, much as you may wish otherwise.

to the completion of the mission. These Arisen go through Sekhem like candy, if using their powers brings them a step closer to success. If these mummies find themselves running low before their purpose is obtained, however, they often do a complete about-face, becoming more miserly than their leisurely fellows.

It is far, *far* from a universal thing, but *on average*, Arisen with lower Memory scores are more likely to be of the latter attitude toward Sekhem, while those with higher Memory—and therefore more of a personality capable of appreciating life and the world around them—tend toward the former.

The Heretic

They call him the Heretic. The renegade. The one. Believers say he remembers Irem clearly; that he no longer Descends; that neither time nor the Judges may interfere with his endless life. They say he is a sage, a sorcerer, like the Shan'iatu of old; tell how he traveled to celestial A'aru in the flesh but returned to save the Arisen. Some of these statements must be lies–fanatics always lie, because nothing true is as beautiful as their beliefs–but those who follow the Heretic's footsteps will say that one thing is only an allegory, or the other's an occult riddle: The keys to a rumoured mystical state called Apotheosis. Believers say their stories describe a program of ethical works and quests for buried secrets. Some invoke an ancient principle of cosmic order called Ma'at.

The Deathless know of Apotheosis–and distrust it. Similar philosophies marked the first major divergence from Irem's true religion into the degenerate faiths of historical Egypt. Mummies have heard priests appeal to Ma'at through the ages to conceal their own failings and seen civil wars erupt where each side claims to fight for ultimate truth. Mummies may not recall every Iremite precept, but they know that the heart of the ancient faith is personal revelation before one's Judge. They've *done* it. No higher morality is necessary and, indeed, is usually nothing more than a gateway to hypocrisy. After all, look at the modern world, full of preachers who say they know the mind of One God and the holy laws He would impose on humanity. Has Aten or Jehovah, Ma'at or the Ten Commandments produced better people? Do they teach and execute sorceries that can compare with the might of Irem? Can they produce true immortals? No.

The Heretic is a dangerous creature, and Apotheosis, a questionable undertaking. Mummies who seek him out, believing he walks the Earth, tend to Descend quickly. They waste time defying their Judges in search of the truth behind the myths. Furthermore, the Arisen's enemies have heard of the Apotheosis myth and use it to hunt them. On too many occasions, an audience with "the one" has turned out to be an ambush by rival cults, petty necromancers, or the Lifeless.

A few of the Heretic's followers claim to have met him, but the story always turns out to be a lie. Undaunted, believers say that they spread rumors to not only promote Apotheosis, but to conceal the renegade's true location in a tangle of misdirection. His would-be servants lack the artificial demeanor common to those under supernatural compulsion, so their fervor appears genuine. Still, they're all infamous liars and not to be trusted, especially when they assail Arisen ears with stories about what Irem was *really* like. Adherents seem to come by vessels more easily. Some of these appear to be made of modern materials such as plastic and steel, indicating a more recent construction. Orthodox Arisen believe Apotheosis might be a strategy promulgated by mortal sorcerers who know the secret craft of relics, as the Shan'iatu did. Captured writings refer to a cult called the "Ladder of Set." Perhaps its members capture foolish mummies to power their artifacts, bribing the Apotheosis cultists with a few so that they will continue to act as stalking horses.

Despite all the evangelism and talk of some Arisen "savior," its few disciples encourage Arisen to discover Apotheosis for themselves instead of waiting for the Heretic's grace. One of his poems reads, "There is a voice within your Name that whispers what is right and wrong. Listen!" Devotees seek out tombs and vessels that contain writings from the most ancient days. These represent the twin principles of the Heretic's philosophy. First, the seeker must discover a moral code outside of the Judges' service by listening to some inner urge and determining its principles. Second, the philosophy tells the Arisen to seek out remnants and traces of the Nameless Empire not out of fidelity to the Judges, but for purposeless curiosity.

If any Arisen have gained anything from the Heretic's advice beyond overbearing pride and the delusion of true memory, they've never shared it. Believers frequently abandon other mummies, even those they've long called friends. They've either been tricked into their own capture or else they fear the wrath of the Judges, who might set faithful Arisen upon them for their transgressions.

(For more information about Apotheosis beyond the typical Arisen perspective, Storytellers [only] should consult the Mummy Storyteller's Handbook.)

Maa-Kep

"Bearers of the Engraved"



[The Tradition of the Amulet]

In the forge, the smith wields the hammer, but he is not alone. Someone has to work the bellows. On the battlefield, the general issues commands, but neither is he alone. Beside him stands an aide who brings him reports and carries his banner. The mason chisels the pillar, but someone must carry it away. The architect lays the lines, but someone else must fit the stones together.

Irem had its geniuses, and it had its army of slaves, and in between them was that layer of free workers who were not the masters of their craft, but who knew enough to handle the majority of the work. Those mid-level laborers were known as the Maa-Kep, "Bearers of the Engraved."

The engravers made themselves so useful that they earned the nickname "second hands," which conveyed something of the sense that working without them was like acting with one hand tied behind one's back. The Maa-Kep succeeded so well at becoming essential and ever-present that the guildmasters soon approached some of the most trusted with a new mission: *Ensure Irem's ideological purity*.

It started as a natural outgrowth of their tendency to bring the stick down on the back of an idler and reward those who did more with less time, but very quickly, a segment of the Maa-Kep had been quietly transformed into Irem's (and the world's) very first secret police—under the direction of their seven Shan'iatu guildmasters. After all, the laborers could go everywhere, were trusted with the details of every undertaking, and were often ignored as they stood around quietly listening while they waited to work the bellows, take the order, or work the quarry.

Overview

Initially, the guild grew out of the stone dressers and slave drivers who worked under the direction of the Tef-Aabhi (see p. 51 to shape the stones of Irem's mighty tombs and temples. But as the Nameless Empire expanded, the guild's responsibilities grew. Soon the Maa-Kep were in charge of not only the labor that built boats and laid roads, but of transporting food for the army. They made themselves useful to the alchemists by tending to the tedious details of acquiring reagents, and they ingratiated themselves with the effigy builders by ensuring reliable access to quality materials. The only group with whom they had serious conflict was the scribes, who saw the builders as a crowd of unctuous and graceless louts with ambitions above their station, trying to usurp the scribes' rightful position as the most trusted advisors of the collected guildmasters. But in time, they reached an uneasy accord, with the literate guilds advising on matters of policy, philosophy, and religion. The Maa-Kep were left with the unglamorous and practical issues of deciding what's needed where, how to transport it with the minimum spillage and loss, and so on.

Today, the Maa-Kep retain that pragmatic focus. They are happiest with a clear task, the information they need to accomplish it, and perhaps the promise of a hot drink

when they're writing up their reports afterward. They often keep tabs on other guilds' members as a matter of course, not because they have a superior priest to report to, anymore, but because the world is uncertain, and it's necessary to know who can be trusted. Most Arisen have their confidence until they do something to break it. Even those who violate a treasure or fail to pursue the Judges' will with sufficient zeal rarely get an open rebuke. They're just watched a little more and get a little less cooperation from the ever-present, ever-necessary Maa-Kep.

Despite the occult energies surging through them, the Maa-Kep prefer to focus on getting the work done rather than agonizing over what it's all about. In their experience, there are commanders who focus on philosophies and grand intentions, and there are sergeants and aides-de-camp who make sure there are enough boots to go around. Those underlings can get by quite comfortably, pursuing their own modest agendas without incurring undue suffering. A leader with no sensible followers? People like that never change events for the better. They either disappear in a sad little cloud of impotent self-importance… or they leave scars on history.

Members

During Irem's glory days, this guild attracted those who craved comfort over glory and the prosperity of the Empire over any abstract and narrow ideology. Obedience was prized to a point, but the most revered and influential of the Maa-Kep were always those who attached themselves to leaders in whom they had faith… but whom they were willing to question or challenge. The engravers knew the deeds of their masters were to be recorded in stone and saw it as their mission to ensure that those deeds were worthy. They found it easier, once they were trusted, to prevent excesses than to cover them up afterward. The best service the best advisors could offer was, sometimes, honest dissent. Anyone afraid to speak truth to power was, at best, a lackey.

Then again, the Maa-Kep had their share of yes-men. If the best of the Second Hands could speak to the best in the leaders they advised, the worst of them simply went along with leaders whose plans and impulses were less pure. The great virtue of the engravers is their subtlety, but their greatest weakness can be indecision or simple cowardice.

The modern world can seem, from one perspective, as if it has grown around the Maa-Kep ideal while discarding other elements of Iremite governance (noble houses, god-kings, the conqueror's right of enslavement, and so forth). Compassion has replaced glory as the justifying reason for government intervention. Bureaucracy is far more common than theocracy, and basing supreme executive power on heredity is generally considered quaint, at best. With their amulets providing them the knowledge they need to fit in and navigate the complexities of modern life, Maa-Kep can be smug and complacent… and, yes, even a little lazy.

Not a few within the guild now feel that perhaps the good ideas of the engravers have been taken a little too far. Is there no longer a place for the greatness of blood? For the absolute rule of a deity's word? For stark brilliance and acts of indomitable will, unshackled by written law and obedient only to a higher purpose?

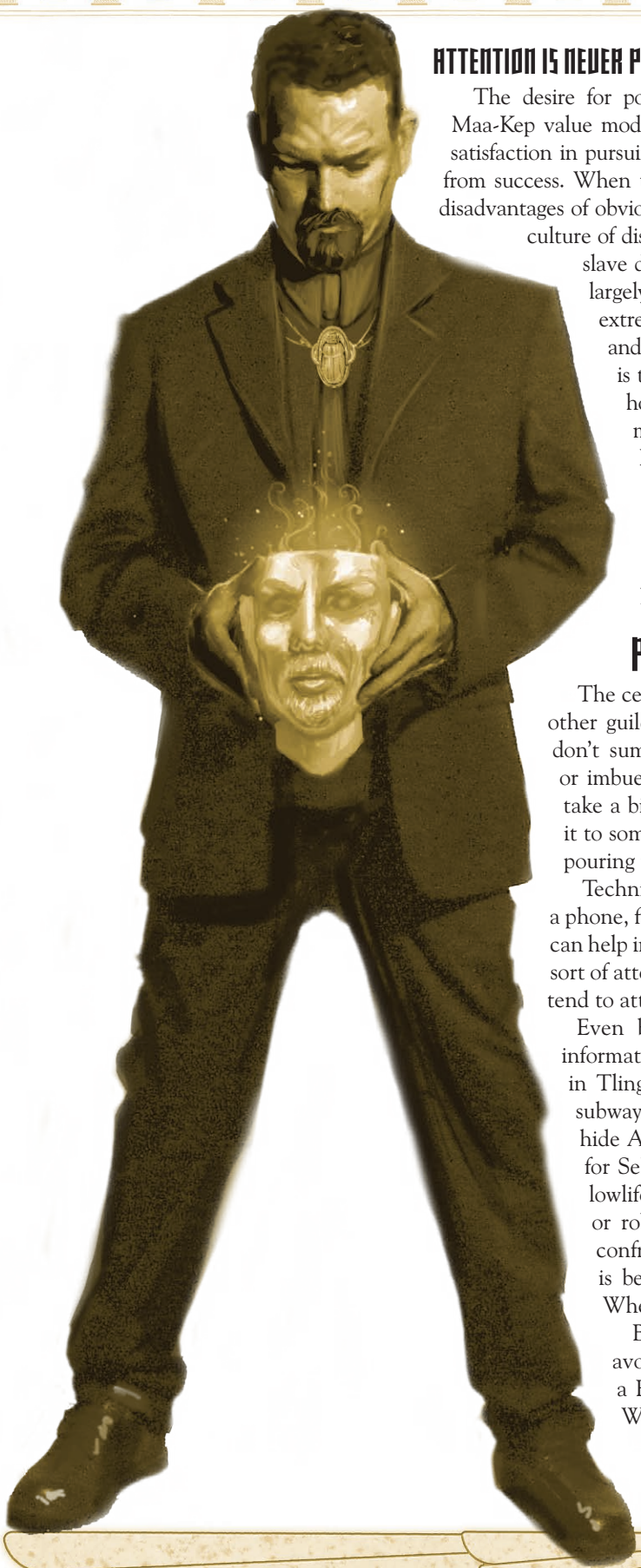
In fact, about half of the Maa-Kep still feel that way. The rest have, put simply, gone native.

Purpose

The Maa-Kep guild lies tensioned between two urges, and while that's not a comfortable position, one can shoot an arrow a lot farther with a taut string than with a slack one. The conflict is between the Second Hands' open desire to organize, aid, and empower other Arisen as they always have, and their more covert command (as it was back during the days of the Empire's height) to monitor and evaluate their fellows—both above and below—to ensure the greater security of the Iremite powers. A Maa-Kep who finds someone who's just as dedicated as himself can relieve this pressure, give trust, and serve with all his heart. Another might abandon the shades of Duat altogether to chase the promise of the mortal world and escape the bind that way, though it's rare. Most of them just muddle along, trying to keep their companions on the up and up with gentle guidance and chiding, while working reluctantly against those who stray too far.

Contribute or Be Discarded

Many of the engravers' tasks in the ancient world were cooperative. A lonely brilliant alchemist could pursue her holy experiments in solitude, but no one builds a road or a fortress all by himself. The Maa-Kep attracted cooperators and reinforced that tendency aggressively. A Maa-Kep puts the task at hand above any personal nonsense. He does what needs to be done, and if he can't do it, he helps the ones who can. For engravers, perhaps the worst flaw is vanity, which not only mocks those who pursue it but makes them useless to their colleagues. Someone who isn't actively contributing is an impediment and needs to be corrected, either gently or harshly. Someone who stands in the way of progress, who's not just passive but regressive, needs to be clued in or else forcibly moved aside. Usually, the allies of the Maa-Kep have had plenty of warning before they get excised like a tumor, though given the laborers' preference for subtlety, those former allies may not have known to heed their admonitions in time.



Attention Is Never Positive

The desire for positive recognition is strong in all humankind, but the Maa-Kep value modesty in all things. When they're helping, they take quiet satisfaction in pursuing the job, not the rewards or accolades that might arise from success. When they're monitoring someone for disloyalty, well, then the disadvantages of obviousness are even more pronounced. It's easy to regard this culture of discretion as mere shyness. Easy, but wrong. As perfectionist slave drivers and ideological purists, the Maa-Kep regard people largely as tools for the glory of their lost Empire. At their most extreme, they see themselves as tools no less than anyone else, and they admire even as they manipulate. If the greatest good is the preservation of Irem's cosmological ideals, the greatest honor is due to those who cultivate same, even if they're misled, self-interested, or operating under duress. The Maa-Kep exist to ensure that everyone around them can achieve for the glory of Irem's way, while they themselves go unnoticed. Accolades are a form of failure, because they mean the Maa-Kep had to step in and take over another's actions directly instead of helping that worker accomplish his task, or instead of compelling someone else to achieve it.

Practices

The central tool of the guild is the amulet, and compared to the other guilds' tools, amulets seem like a humble implement. They don't summon firebolts or kindle love in the unforgiving breast or imbue a man with the strength of a legion. Usually, they just take a bit of knowledge or ability from someone and redistribute it to someone else. They can't create information, any more than pouring from pot to cup creates tea.

Technical information is good, obviously. Knowing how to hack a phone, fly a plane, or field strip an AK-47…these are all skills that can help in the right situation, especially if you're trying to avoid the sort of attention that firebolts, unnatural love, or inhuman strength tend to attract.

Even better (for staying on the down low) is background information. What's on telly? How do you say, "Mild sauce, please" in Tlingit? Just what do all those numbers and letters on the subway schematic mean? This softer, wider knowledge may not hide Arisen from the few with mystic senses and rapine hunger for Sekhem, but it can hide them from the far more common lowlifes who are always looking for a rube or tourist to scam or rob. Most mummies are more than a match for a direct confrontation, but dealing with innumerable petty grifters is beneath their dignity, and more critically, it wastes time. When you're staring down the Descent, you don't want delays.

Best of all is social information. How does one dress to avoid attention in Rio's favelas? How close do you stand to a Finn for your conversation to feel comfortably personal? What's the password to get onto that military base?

Amulets can give access to all that and allow an engraver to pass through the world without ripples. The Maa-Kep

infiltrate, insinuate, and at their best, consummate their purpose unseen. That's how they operate.

Every Soul Has Friends

It's far easier to rob a house if its owner trusts you, invites you in, and unlocks the door. So, to achieve one's goals, one finds out who is standing in the way and befriends her. It may turn out better than one hoped; one may find someone soft and uncertain who can be rescued into the light of the Judges' benevolent rule. But more likely, the Arisen finds someone with prejudices that can be played to, expectations that can be met, and problems. Always pay attention to the problems. This principle plays, again, into the Maa-Kep cultural obsession with secrecy. Other guilds long for showy victories, final showdowns, and apocalyptic climaxes. But to the Maa-Kep, anything that stands out, even if it's *good*, is… inelegant, at best. Preferable to a disaster, of course, but any time one draws attention to one's self, he makes it harder to watch and harder to help others excel. So one works through friends and then heaps praise on those who crave it. Often, allies get stronger when they're watched, but for the Maa-Kep, personal regard always weakens them.

To Move an Elephant, Scare It with a Mouse

The powers of this guild are subtle and lend themselves far better to disguise and gaining false confidences than to straight-up mayhem and destruction. Yet when faced with something that just must not be permitted to exist, the Maa-Kep rarely meet force with force. They find a weak point and exploit it, or they find someone for whom the problem in question *is* a weak point. The mummy gets an ally and tries to help, but rarely looks to be the tip of the spear.

As with the guild's apparent shyness, its apparent cowardice is a facile explanation for a far more nuanced reality. The Maa-Kep are as willing to risk death and suffering as any of the Arisen. They're just less inclined to do it in a big, showy, and usually pointless display. Maa-Kep martyrs are the silent sacrifices who simply disappear with no explanation while scouting the edges of a situation that hadn't yet become a full-blown catastrophe. During Irem's rise, many Maa-Kep died battling traitors within the hierarchy of empire, and many of *those* died to cover up betrayals that would otherwise have shaken the faith of the other guilds. No one else has as full an appreciation of the number of times the entire Iremite enterprise came close to being devoured from within, but despite seeing how even the greatest and wisest can turn away from the gods and Judges, the Maa-Kep keep a firm grip on their faith in the rightness of their cause.

On Apotheosis

By and large, the engravers consider Apotheosis an unattainable mirage that distracts the Arisen from the good, true duties for which they were snatched from death's jaws. The Songhai people have a saying: "The floating log never becomes a crocodile." It works the other direction, too. Arisen have already escaped death once. Asking to escape from the escape is hardly a reasonable request.

Favored Vessels: *Amulets*. If you want to try to make a big impression fast, you write a love song with a catchy beat. If you want something to last? Carve it into stone. The petty amulets are usually carved wooden accessories, while the better class are cut stone and/or precious gems. Some of the most potent amulets are adornments of place, not person. At the Empire's height, the engravers crafted a huge marble seal that was capable of raining Sekhem on multiple Arisen all the way out to the horizon. When it was taken, the Amkhat army feasted for days.

Since that time, the Maa-Kep have kept their vessels more modest, but seals of carved stone are still common. On the plus side, they're imposing, potent, and bloody heavy. No one is going to slip a four-foot diameter chunk of granite in his pocket and traipse out of a tomb with it. But that cuts both ways: Someone who steals such a heavy item invariably comes in hard and well-prepared, so stealing it back is going to take more than a bit of luck (and often a convincing local dialect).

Guild Affinity: Mummies of the Maa-Kep begin play with Affable Aid as a bonus Affinity.

Affable Aid

Prerequisite: Guild Status (Maa-Kep) •+

Effect: The modern saying describes a favor "with strings attached." For the laborers, that's a string of Sekhem that floats out, gentle as a spider web, whenever they are engaging others.

- The mummy adds +2 to the following actions: perception, seduction, and shadowing stealthily (see **The World of Darkness**, p. 39). If a Willpower point is spent, the bonus equals the rating of the mummy's defining Pillar, instead, but only for one roll.
- Once the Maa-Kep has done something that *might* evoke gratitude—regardless of the target's experienced emotions—all subsequent Persuasion and Socialize rolls with that person benefit from the 9 again rule. This benefit lasts for the rest of the current Descent.
- The Maa-Kep can amplify this feeling by act of will, regardless of relationship to the subject. Doing so costs a Willpower point, and for the rest of the scene, all Empathy, Stealth, and Subterfuge rolls made for him pertaining to a single target will benefit from the 8 again rule. This benefit ends if the Maa-Kep attacks or otherwise indisputably betrays that target.

Stereotypes

Mesen-Nebu: The lovely thing about them is that what they want is usually obvious. Just ask them how you can help and they tell you all you need to know to get whatever is necessary.
Sesha-Hebsu: As close to us as brothers. Cain and Abel were brothers, too.
Su-Menent: As the others help us by being above and raining down orders, these, our fellows, help by being below and taking them. Keep on their good side.
Tef-Aabhi: They see themselves as puppeteers, and certainly they have plenty of strings to pull, but the real puppet master is the one whose guidance is unseen.

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The Deceived: Some things you just can't relate to. Others cry out for understanding but will never, ever find it… and probably never should.
The Shuankhsen: Stay away until you're acting in concert with allies. There's no shame in asking for help with a task beyond one's abilities. There's shame in arrogance and failure.

Mesen-Nebu

"Born of Gold"



[The Tradition of Alchemy]

Wealth. Beauty. Desire. The alchemists' Mystery flows between its three aspects, and the Mesen-Nebu command its flow. Before the Rite of Return, those Born of Gold learned how metal, stone, and the panoply of other substances obeyed will and intelligence. In an age dominated by soft copper and brittle obsidian, they mastered the secret of bronze. They followed omens of wealth into the earth and commanded mining slaves to bring it forth. The guild enjoyed its essential role; the others soon learned they could not proceed without its materials. Alchemy is magic's foundation, deeper than sacred shapes and sigils. They all require sacred substances born of the great art.

It would be pointless to explain the entire Mystery to an outsider, but alchemists pass on simplified doctrines to their cults. Fools believe alchemy transforms base substances to valuable ones; lead into gold, and all that. In fact, alchemists recognize that power takes many forms, and that the wise shift it from one thing to another or concentrate it from the many to the one. The alchemist's furnace never *makes* wealth, but *collects* it from things lesser eyes cannot properly appraise.

Therefore, the only difference between wealth, beauty, and desire is how an alchemist chooses to manifest the essence of a thing. A properly instructed servant could impose these transmutations on anything at hand—indeed, this is the basis for all commerce. In their own, small ways, laborers perform the simple alchemy of turning work into bread. Banks concentrate clients' wealth and transmute it into the power to build factories and bring nations to heel. The Mystery is broad enough for even the ignorant to employ, but only those Born of Gold understand it fully. To turn an investment in slaves into gold through their mining is a clumsy, simple transmutation; to convert a slave's flesh directly into gold may be more difficult, but it demonstrates the unveiled Art.

Modern alchemists are sensualists, power brokers, and business magnates. A Mesen-Nebu might prefer one aspect of the three but never thinks of privilege as a collection of separate elements. No matter their wealth, they never forget that alchemy is a craft requiring sweat, muscle, and practical knowledge. Power is all around; effort commands it to one's advantage. If one refuses to claim that power, or to learn how it might be harvested, one has no one to blame but oneself.

Overview

Without the Mesen-Nebu, the Nameless Empire would have been a petty village, housed in reeds and protecting itself with fragile, simple weapons. The people of the Nile worked in copper and stone, polishing a shiny object here and there to adorn chieftains or decorate rough altars. The Shan'iatu taught primitive craftsmen the secret properties of matter: how heat, tools, and incantations could summon forth materials with incredible attributes or merge their

strengths in entirely new substances. They tore chasms in the rock and sent slaves to mine the valuables within. The other guilds shaped these pure ingots and polished gems in their own creations.

The lords of Irem made one house out of its smiths, jewelers, and mine overseers. The Shan'iatu revealed that they all unlocked the alchemical essence: *Dedwen*, or "prosperity." Modern philosophers might call Dedwen "utility" because it symbolizes an occult principle of value that transcends particular applications. The alchemists knew that all material creation harvested Dedwen and urged it toward a particular manifestation.

The invention of bronze was a logical, inevitable consequence. The Mesen-Nebu studied how Dedwen manifested in tin and copper and combined them in a new metal. Clad in the toughest armor, Irem's warriors slashed through enemy resistance with the strongest blades in the world.

Alchemists gave the Empire more than military might, however. Sophisticated materials led to better tools and more beautiful monuments, as well as the wealth to buy off any neighbor that might be difficult to crush by force of arms. Irem possessed more gold and finished jewels than any other civilization of the time—more, in fact, than even slave labor alone could generate. When mining did not provide suitable base materials, the Mesen-Nebu employed higher alchemy to transmute more esoteric forms of Dedwen into riches. Their potions turned a slave's flesh into gold and bones to lapis lazuli. Life, like gold, was just another manifestation of prosperity, and the Mystery converted it into more useful forms.

Mesen-Nebu crafts and potions gave the Nameless Empire its industrial base at the cost of the people's resentment. Other guilds hated bartering for essential materials. Low-caste workers resisted being treated as mere resources to convert and spend at need. The alchemists never couched their actions in the language of patriotism or self-sacrifice. Those Born of Gold believed then, as most do now, that the Judges of Duat decide what people must accomplish to earn the afterlife but not the circumstances of living itself. If a slave studied the art of alchemy, she would be a slave no longer; the guild would gladly employ her. Conversely, sons and daughters did not inherit their parents' positions unless the demonstrated skill in the art—more often, they went to the mines. This, at least, earned the Mesen-Nebu grudging respect from the populace.

MEMBERS

Alchemists bound intelligence, talent, and hard work into a minimum degree of ability before their house accepted them. The distinction between effort and natural ability was irrelevant, so long as the apprentice avoided foolish missteps and kept the guild's secrets. The alchemists could be accused of hypocrisy in that they claimed to recruit by merit alone but only discussed the art openly with fellow members and close relatives. Mesen-Nebu parents cast out children who failed to meet the guild's standards, but they also made every effort to ensure that their offspring would be in the best prepared to earn a position.

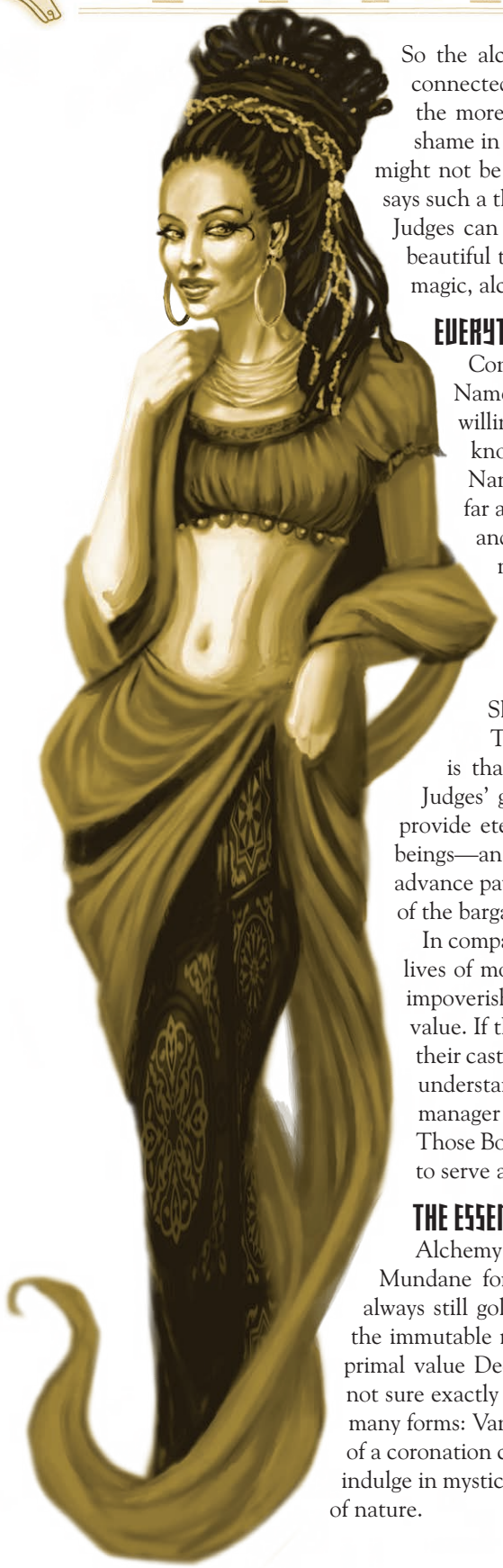
The Arisen cannot bear children, so their alchemists are more egalitarian than they were as mortals. What Mesen-Nebu lack in humility they recover in recognizing accomplishment. A true alchemist recruits impoverished mechanics as readily as bankers—though admittedly, a mechanic needs to explain why he isn't rich. Alchemists treat inherited wealth with a mix of disdain and curiosity. The heir earned nothing, but his talented ancestry might indicate buried potential.

The alchemists suffer from a weakness for beauty, for it is the most enigmatic form of Dedwen. Material strength, wealth, and political prestige have straightforward uses. Esthetic properties are powerful for reasons that lie at the edge of the alchemists' understanding. This is why they have called themselves those Born of Gold. Gold is beautiful and rare, but it had no practical ancient use beyond those properties. Most vessels are not just functional objects, but works of art. Aside from renegades such as Akhenaton, rulers prefer to be depicted with visual appeal trumping realism. One Born of Gold also appreciates the beauty of skillful actions. An archer striking her mark creates Dedwen in excellence. It is said that high alchemy manipulates esthetic value along with material properties—that in sacrifice, a beautiful servant or great swordsman makes a blade sharper.

PURPOSE

In lost Irem, the Mesen-Nebu craft-houses never darkened. The Empire's endless appetite for bronze and gold kept the smelting fires alive. So it is today, though a modern tomb might be lit by butane torches and computer monitors as the alchemist commands material and economic transmutations. To coax a vessel into Sekhem and deliver it to the Judges is the holiest of holies, but it's also an act many alchemists secretly regret. Those Born of Gold would love to slow the process, reverse it, and spend decades examining every step of the operation.

Mesen-Nebu believe they hunt vessels to acquire Dedwen for the Judges. If they are ever allowed to return to Duat, how can they expect palaces to be waiting for them unless they finance and furnish them? The world of the living contains finite prosperity, bound to those who can exploit it. The world of the dead should be no different.



So the alchemists feel no shame about becoming as wealthy and politically connected as possible. The more Dedwen they command upon the sunlit earth, the more they might channel into their final destinies. Besides, there is no shame in taking one's reward, so long as it does not hasten the Descent. They might not be able to send the taste of fine wine down to Duat, but the Mystery says such a thing is *possible*, so it should be attempted. Some of them believe their Judges can siphon Dedwen from the world if they ritually entomb or destroy beautiful things and people. There's no evidence that they do this, but like all magic, alchemy relies on faith.

Everything to the Deserving, Nothing without Effort

Conquered with alchemists' bronze and glorified by their gold, Irem's Nameless Empire demonstrated that, above all, victory falls to the people willing to pay for it. The Shan'iatu paid for the guild by imparting mystic knowledge, and the Mesen-Nebu repaid that debt with labor. The Nameless Empire arose out of this wise transaction and similar (though as far as the guild is concerned, less essential) exchanges with other artisans and warriors. Most alchemists believe the sorcerer-priests of Irem were mortals like themselves, but if anything, this increases their prestige. A god is an aspect of nature, and his power reflects that of the universe itself. Men and women enter the world with nothing more than frail flesh and spirit to carry them. To become something more they must study, strive, and contend with the forces that oppose them. The Shan'iatu did it all and triumphed, pointing the way for others.

The only reason the Mesen-Nebu cannot become their masters' equals is that none have yet cultivated the imagination and will to learn the Judges' greatest secrets. The Shan'iatu were courteous enough to not only provide eternal life to the Arisen, but an eternal connection with these holy beings—an endless opportunity to attain greatness. This was not a gift, but an advance payment for services. The alchemists intend to not only fulfill their end of the bargain, but render further payment for a final reward in Duat.

In comparison to these lofty ambitions, the petty complaints and half-finished lives of most mortals can only rouse contempt. The powerful few oppress the impoverished masses because the downtrodden cannot perceive their own value. If they did, they'd create an efficient power bloc with fellow members of their caste and bargain for a better deal. But they never do—only their masters understand their servants' power, so only they exploit it efficiently. No king or manager rules perfectly, however. Exceptional people fall through the cracks. Those Born of Gold search these gaps and recruit the talented people they find to serve as cultists and Sadikh.

The Essence Attains Greatest Power at Its Most Mysterious

Alchemy is the study of nature as it exists beyond the riot of form and history. Mundane forces beat gold into endless shapes, melt it, and smash it, but it's always still gold. The Mesen-Nebu's art delves deeper still, and might transmute the immutable metal. When it does, what remains? Those Born of Gold name this primal value Dedwen and wax philosophical about its manifestations, but they are not sure exactly what it *is*. They understand that human beings intuitively prize it in many forms: Van Gogh's *The Starry Night*, a bundle of hundred dollar bills, the pomp of a coronation ceremony. Wise men and women change its manifestations. Sorcerers indulge in mystic transmutations, while normal folks make do with better known laws of nature.

Alchemists have already made the leap from ordinary labor to magic, but what lies beyond *that?* Do the gods control Dedwen's flow on some more basic level? Do the Judges? Did the Shan'iatu learn it from them? These questions stir an alchemist's heart. She knows that power flows to those who understand it best, so she constantly questions the surface appearance of things. She looks for conspiracies, inside information, and scientific oddities: secret eddies in the river of existence. Without common sense, these studies become obsessions, stealing precious time until an alchemist's Sekhem perishes, tasks undone. But if she succeeds, she discovers new ways to gather Dedwen and spends the proceeds on herself. The Mesen-Nebu build strong cults this way, leveraging the secrets of commerce, politics, and occult subcultures.

Practices

Those Born of Gold walk a world of malleable, finite things. Like currency, alchemy can represent nearly anything valuable, but is not so subjective that a dollar (or the alchemical equivalent in Dedwen) buys a diamond. Although they love wealth and its symbols, Mesen-Nebu are extraordinarily budget conscious when it comes to achieving their aims. It's immensely satisfying to turn lead into gold with magic, but it's usually more practical to use credit on a lead interest to invest in gold futures.

Learn the Values of the Age

The worst thing an alchemist can do is ignore the way a new age defines wealth. Every culture recognizes a fragment of Dedwen, a new source of leverage for the educated Arisen. It's tempting to act immediately, at Sekhem's peak. Yet Sekhem strengthens direct action above all else, and personal intervention risks an alchemist's most important asset: herself. It's better to descend a little, investigate the world, and find a more efficient way, along with new avenues to enrich the cult.

Spend as Much as Necessary

After studying power in all its forms, alchemists love its precise, effective use. Indecision is a sign that, on some level, a Mesen-Nebu doesn't believe she deserves the resources at her command. Those are the doubts of a natural slave, not a master of gold and bronze! If anything gets in the way, a Mesen-Nebu either doubles down or changes course—usually the former. An alchemist tends to be willing to risk resources to demonstrate her superiority, but never essentials such as her current incarnation or her tomb of vessels. Within these bounds, those Born of Gold would rather crush opposition than avoid it.

On Apotheosis

How much is it worth? Any one of the Arisen can live forever, master sorcery unattainable by mortals, and command a cult that dances in the dust of the civilizations it outlasts. Apotheosis promises… what, an end to the Descent? Then what? The cycle of Return might be painful, but it's a known quantity. Can a mummy's shell repair itself after millennia of uninterrupted existence? Can the "enlightened" recover lost Sekhem? Apotheosis is a series of vague promises linked to a moral code that treads on the alchemist's desires and might outrage the Judges—and it is they, and not some mad, Arisen hermit, who hold the keys to Duat's final gate.

Favored Vessels: *Regia*. These alchemical creations transmit the power in a basic form and substance—a vast category that includes potions, weapons, and even the raw materials for other wonders. Other vessels rely on magical sculpture and inscriptions, but regia only require enough shape to hold their functions. Blades need edges, not hieroglyphs. Even then, a shape is only a moment in time; blades bend, potions flow like water, and in the end, they all dissolve into Sekhem. An alchemist knows when to beat swords into plowshares… and into swords again.

Guild Affinity: Mummies of the Mesen-Nebu begin play with Divine Flesh as a bonus Affinity.

Divine Flesh

Prerequisite: Guild Status (Mesen-Nebu) •+

Effect: The Arisen's supernatural flesh transmutates its physical properties at her command.

- The mummy gains +2 to the following actions: carousing, interrogation, and oratory. In addition, her player gains the benefit of the 9 again rule when rolling Composure + Medicine for the mummy to accurately imitate the blush of life, and can make such rolls unskilled without penalty.
- As a reflexive action, the mummy can gain +1 armor for a number of turns/minutes equal to the rating of her defining Pillar. There is no cost or visible manifestation to this effect.
- As a reflexive action, the Arisen can gain +2 armor for a number of turns/minutes equal to the rating of her defining Pillar. This effect costs a Willpower point, and using it causes the mummy's skin to acquire a visible metallic sheen. The Arisen chooses its color. (According to tradition, apprentices choose tin, journeymen choose bronze, and masters, gold.) Her skin resembles the metal, but it changes back to flesh if it is separated from her body. It's not only supernaturally tough, but electrically conductive, too: While the effect is active, she takes no damage from electricity or electricity-cloning powers, provided

some part of her body is in contact with something else at the time (e.g., the ground, an enemy's throat, etc.). Even if struck midair, the empowered skin still reduces all such damage by half in any turn when it's active. Calling on this effect immediately invokes Terror Sybaris (see p. 148). The effects of this power do not "stack."

Stereotypes

Maa-Kep: They are correct to believe excellence can be stored and exchanged. They are wrong to believe it is a thing separate from the trinkets in which they put it, or even the act of making them.
Sesha-Hebsu: Every other guild once relied on the materials we made for them. Not the inscribers of texts. I don't know whether that makes us allies or rivals.
Su-Menent: I appreciate physicality as much as the next woman, but to paraphrase, if you like it then you should put a ring on it. A gold one, with certain properties.
Tef-Aabhi: Masters of form, not essence—but the form is exquisite.

The Deceived: They didn't sell themselves. They bought something they didn't understand—something hungry. Never forget your liabilities.
The Shuankhsen: Beggars and thieves. Beat and amputate them accordingly.

Sesha-Hebsu

"Closed Books"



[The Tradition of the Scribe]

The kingdom that ruled the ancient world from the City of Pillars was the first great empire of man, and few mummies are as proud of that fact as the scribes of the Sesha-Hebsu. The Nameless Empire gave the world a number of material and civic innovations, none greater than the establishment of the position of the "official." No human culture had ever used bureaucrats (nor had the literacy required to do so) until Irem birthed the *scribe*. Those who apprenticed themselves to this guild served as broad functionaries of the predynastic Egyptian state: archivists, notaries, tax assessors, and other civil servants. During a time when few mortals could count to 10, let alone read and write, the Sesha-Hebsu were the privileged few—equal in means to all but the wealthiest Iremite nobles, and second only to the Shan'iatu themselves in social status.

From its inception, the Sesha-Hebsu guild was a breed apart—an equal member of the hexad of Irem's guilds, but ever separate from the rest. The Shan'iatu were powerful, but they were also proud and often egotistic individuals. And to their credit, they recognized early on the need for a body they could trust to administrate the ebbs and flows of the Empire and, when necessary, to mediate between the sorcerer-priests themselves. They knew the problem that had (and still has) always befallen mankind; the fact that without a mitigating "third-party" structure, the infighting between Priests of Duat, or even between guilds entire, would eventually spell the Empire's end. This role fell naturally to the most learned and impartial among them, and so it was that those seven priestly scribes were called upon by their brethren to keep the sacred books and scrolls that allowed a large and fast-growing bureaucracy to not only bear its own weight, but to flourish.

Modern scribes are mediators, investigators, researchers, and subject matter experts. They are accustomed to the respect of their colleagues but recognize that such respect is earned; accustomed to a certain level of wealth and privilege but, unlike their allies among the Mesen-Nebu, are rarely as concerned with power for its own sake as they are with appearing just and wise.

Overview

Almost every action the Sesha-Hebsu undertake stems from their belief in a cosmological principle they call the Scroll of Ages. Just as the Sesha-Hebsu were a core part of their society but ever separate from it, so too does the Scroll both represent Irem's religious structure while standing fully apart and distinct from it. There is some difference of opinion among the scribes as to what form the Scroll takes, but all are in agreement as to the fundamental role it serves. Some personify the Scroll as the eternal work of a deity who, despite his divine nature, embodies his role as Scribe of the Gods more completely than he embodies the idea of being a god himself. Others view the Scroll in the abstract, as a cosmic construct that, in effect, inscribes

itself over time. However it's modeled, the Scroll of Ages is, in simplest terms, *the* cosmic record—source and host of any and all individual akashic records inscribed therein. The Scroll empowers the scribes' work, and it is what gave them the authority required to sit in judgment of others in Irem.

The Empire's highest law was, of course, its divine "senate": the Priests of Duat. When a crime was considered of grave importance, including all crimes against the Pharaoh, they alone convened to review evidence and issue pronouncements of guilt or innocence (usually guilt). As with the passage of new laws, the Pharaoh typically announced the final verdicts of all such trials before the masses, often with great accompanying ritual pomp and almost always pursuant to at least one public execution. Yet every system needs its functionaries, and if the Shan'iatu could be likened to the state's "chief justices," then its local and district justices were the scribes of the Sesha-Hebsu, who heard and pronounced judgment over the vast majority of criminal and civil cases and disputes. And when those disputes arose among Shan'iatu themselves, it was the seven guildmasters of scribes who mediated.

To this end, Irem's code called for the convening of tribunals of three to seven scribes to hear cases. If the matter revolved around a single or simple legal issue, the scribes were all assembled from the same house (headed by the same guildmaster); if the topic touched on multiple issues, then the tribunal's scribes would be drawn from a corresponding number of Sesha-Hebsu houses. (Toward the end of the Empire's reign, these judicial bodies often included the addition of a priest of the Su-Menent, too, but only when occult or religious expertise was an essential component of the matter at hand.) Together, these men heard testimony, interviewed witnesses, reviewed evidence, and occasionally coaxed information from recalcitrant commoners, sometimes with the assistance of an experienced interrogator of the Mesen-Nebu. They meticulously inscribed the keynotes of all proceedings (making them early court reporters, as well as judges), and at trial's end, recorded the verdict in massive, mystically protected rolls of leather called "statue books." These records served double purpose, as the scribes often incorporated their occult work into them, allowing an inscriber to later scry on the guilty from afar or, if come face-to-face with the citizen, to know if he was lying about a crime committed subsequent to his hearing. If a petitioner or accused had sufficient cause and means, he might appeal his verdict to the Pharaoh or even to the guildmaster himself, but most of the time, a tribunal's word was final and binding.

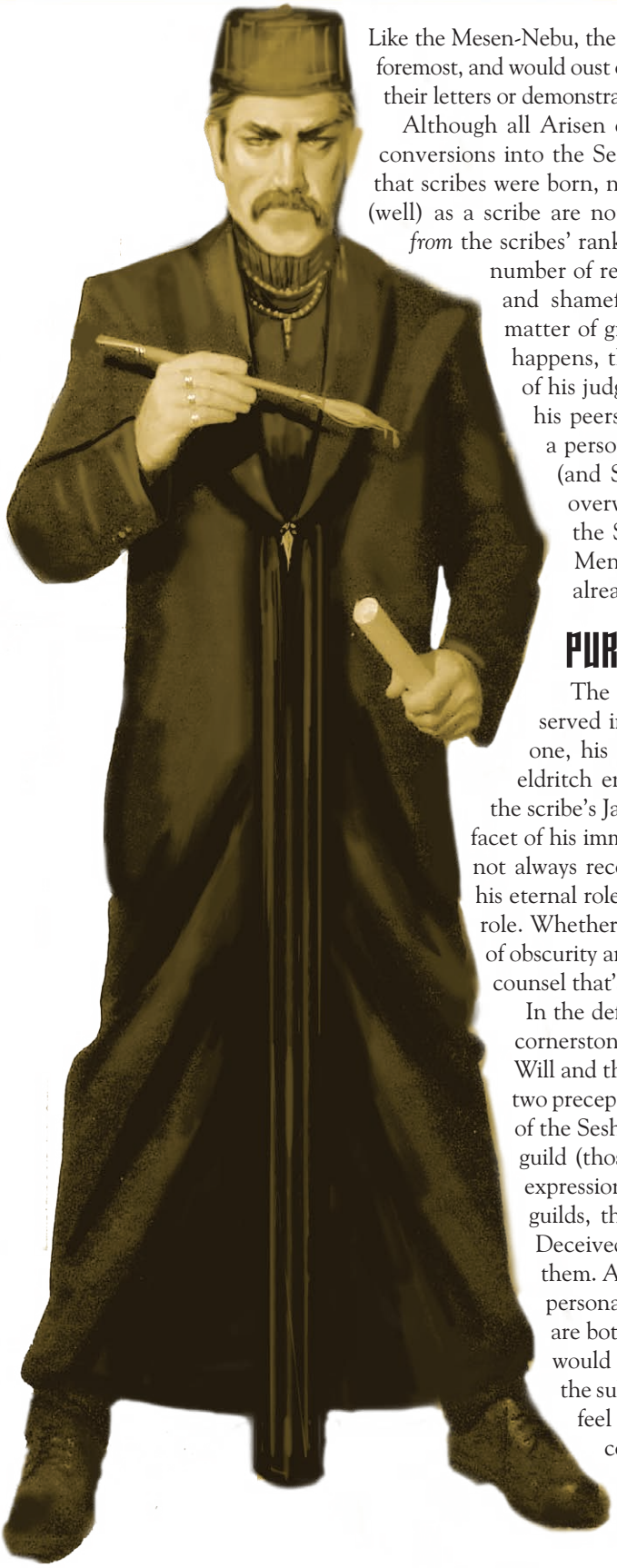
MEMBERS

Attention to detail and an unflinching discrimination of mind in the face of adversity are the most overt hallmarks of the Sesha-Hebsu. During the Empire's reign, the principle requirement for apprenticeship was, of course, comprehensive literacy—a rarity in Irem's time, not just among the citizenry, but even among the guilds themselves. The degree to which a knowledge of letters mattered in the other guilds varied with the guild, with the tendency rising as one advanced through the ranks; those of highest status, nearest to the guildmasters themselves, were almost always at least functionally literate, while apprentices of the other guilds rarely were (though the work of the Tef-Aabhi in particular did require a *form* of literacy, at least as it pertained to one's working grasp of geometry). The second principle prerequisite for scribehood was sound judgment, irrespective of one's level of education.

The Law of Irem

Like the Egyptian dynasties that followed, Irem's view of justice was that it lay with the gods and the Judges, and was thus immanent and retributive in nature. The legal code drew a distinction between the administration of civil and criminal matters. For the former, citizens had to petition the courts on their own behalf (slaves couldn't even do this, of course, but could be represented by a freeman). Criminal matters were prosecuted by the state, often initiated by the guild's ranking members and usually at the behest of the Watch or other lower officials.

After murder and theft, the greatest crime was the evasion of taxes or corvée work (forced labor). These were duties to the state and thus to the gods and Judges. Punishment was often Draconian: fines, beatings, forced labor, mutilation, or death. Even minor offenses were met with a combination of measures; usually fines reinforced with physical pain/torture (often lashes and open wounds). Mutilation took the form of removal of body parts–most commonly noses, ears, and toes or whole feet–and execution was typically conducted through public ritual impalement, though the courts used other methods, too. Unlike other early cultures, the Iremites didn't implement justice through trial-by-ordeal, but in certain rare cases, the Shan'iatu would impose such a sentence from on high (often for sheer entertainment value, for the benefit of a bored or restless populace). Clemency was all but unheard of, not merely in Irem but throughout the Empire.



Like the Mesen-Nebu, the ranking members of the Sesha-Hebsu prized talent first and foremost, and would oust or deny even their own children if they couldn't keep up with their letters or demonstrate wisdom beyond their years.

Although all Arisen can voluntarily leave their guild to join a different one, conversions into the Sesha-Hebsu are notoriously rare. In lost Irem, it was said that scribes were born, not made, and the combination of traits required to serve (well) as a scribe are not common among the Arisen. By contrast, withdrawals *from* the scribes' ranks are much more commonplace. They may happen for a number of reasons, but the most common is when a scribe is publicly and shamefully revealed to have acted without impartiality in a matter of grave importance to the Arisen or the Judges. When this happens, the expected thing is that the scribe will defrock himself of his judge's robe, if not forever, then for a period he (and usually his peers) could deem significant. While others can't force such a personal decision, a disgraced scribe can expect to lose status (and Status) in his guild if he refuses to do so in the face of overwhelming evidence. Typically, a would-be penitent leaves the Sesha-Hebsu to apprentice himself as a priest of the Su-Menent, though one may leave to join the Mesen-Nebu if he already has a sponsoring patron among the alchemists.

PURPOSE

The Sesha-Hebsu are driven to serve the same purposes they served in life, back in lost Irem. The scribe's calling is an eternal one, his work critically important to both his fellows and to the eldritch entities at whose bidding they all arise. The twin faces of the scribe's Janus mask—the arbiter and the scrivener—permeate every facet of his immortal existence. While members of the other guilds might not always recognize a scribe's authority over them, they all appreciate his eternal role, and most will endeavor to facilitate his ability to fill that role. Whether it's looking to him to settle a dispute or to pierce the veil of obscurity around a given mystery, they know the scribe is there to give counsel that's wise not only in his eyes, but in the gods' and Judges', too.

In the default cosmological worldview of the Sesha-Hebsu, the two cornerstones of creation—and thus of all magic and deed—are the Will and the Word. The Sesha-Hebsu believe that, in lost Irem, these two precepts were embodied in the traditions of two guilds: the scribes of the Sesha-Hebsu, who keep the Word; and the disciples of the lost guild (those so-called "Deceived"), who bore the Will through their expression of the *ren-hekau* ("name magic"). Alone among the five guilds, the Sesha-Hebsu are most certain of the existence of the Deceived because, once in a while, they think they can *remember* them. And even for those rare few scribes who've never had such a personal recollection, they still "know" that the Word and the Will are both intertwined, so it stands to reason that a sixth, lost guild would revolve around the Will. Despite this uniformity of belief, the subject remains oddly polarizing among guild members: Some feel this makes them best suited to learn about, and if necessary, combat the Deceived, while others feel their shared history should only drive home the broader purpose they all serve.

Know the Scale

The entire concept of the arbitrator, of jurisprudence itself, is contingent on the would-be assessor's understanding of context. Failing to grasp the issues at work in a complex situation or negotiation is a recipe for unsound judgment—and that's the one thing a scribe must not have. And the Sesha-Hebsu recognize that part of sound judgment is knowing not merely *how* circumstances alter cases, but *why*. Situational variables that might weigh heavier on one "side" in a certain place and time could very easily weigh heavier on the opposite side in another. For this reason, the Sesha-Hebsu can be among the most adaptable to changes in the living world, for their minds are strong and conditioned enough to seek out understanding first, before judgment. Scribes who give counsel or pass judgment without "doing their homework" have, in a very real way, dishonored not only themselves and their guild, but their duty to the gods and the Judges. This idea eventually manifests across all spectra, from changes in social mores and perspectives to the ongoing development of mortal law and commerce. Naturally, scribes tend to specialize, but even then, they view unfamiliar situations or dynamics as challenges, rather than obstacles.

The Weight of Words

Ask any scribe, and he'll tell you that he bears a heavy burden. It's not that members of the other guilds aren't important, or that they don't fulfill their role in the grand scheme. It's that the Sesha-Hebsu are the keepers of what is most *fundamental*—not just in one area, but across the board. Mystically, they are alone in upholding what they feel is the cornerstone of all magic (the Word), since there's no longer an organized tradition of true name magic (if there ever was). Socially, the Sesha-Hebsu bear the responsibility that all bureaucrats and officials carry: to maintain neutrality, and to serve the collective interest in addition to their own personal interests. And individually, each is pledged to the diligent and studious accumulation and organization of the historical record—a commitment to the power and value of words that spans millennia and dizzies the mind. To the Sesha-Hebsu, although words themselves may be plentiful, it is fallacy to conclude that they only have meaning in bulk, or over time. When the words one speaks can break hearts or condemn the innocent or move mountains (literally, in the case of the Arisen), each word—each *syllable*—must be chosen with full cognizance of and respect for its weight.

Practices

The Sesha-Hebsu are not as resistant to change as are the Su-Menent, for their role requires of them a resiliency of thought not considered essential for the priests' work, but neither are they as intuitive, nor as given to bold, inductive leaps, as are the Father of Idols. The scribes often play the role of advisors, and occasionally of referees (especially between alchemists and, well, everyone else), but they best enjoy being the bearers of those documents to which all are bound. They get by on exceptionally sound judgment, uncompromised perspective, and often as not, a notoriously painstaking adherence to exactness, and doing so has served them well for a very long time.

Mark the Scroll

As his title suggests, the primary function of the scribe is to inscribe. Whether he's expounding complicated legal opinions or engaging in little more than glorified bean counting, the immortal scribe perpetually engages his role as both notary and keeper of record. This practice manifests across a broad spectrum of incarnations, and indeed, there are just as many ways to "mark the scroll" as there are Sesha-Hebsu—each serves as his capability, conscience, and Judge dictate. Some focus on the historical, seeing it as their duty to chronicle the passage of time in ways that mortals never could. Others focus on the metaphysical, interpreting their guild's affinities and teachings chiefly through the lens of Iremite cosmology. For some of these, the practice is itself a devotional, a sacred orison that brings them closer to the divine and to the truths it represents. Others feel the commandment calls on them to "make their mark" in the allegorical, by creating or doing something worthy. For many Arisen, simply chronicling their life cycles—from the purposes they arose to fulfill to the words of power they secure for return to Duat—is enough.

Seek the Imbalance

The Sesha-Hebsu take their duties of old quite seriously. The very concept of the authoritative "official" is their legacy, and its rights and responsibilities are their eternal inheritance. For 5,000 years, they've been the ones who balance the scales, especially among their own kind. The scribes do this not out of some undefined commitment to mankind, but because it is their nature and because they've seen what happens to systems when the observance of process is discarded. For millennia, they've seen what befalls men who forget or refuse to learn the lessons of history. They've seen what happens when the Arisen fall to infighting, purposelessness, and avarice. They've *seen*—and it is their solemn duty to do whatever they have to do not to look away. Whether mediating disputes among Arisen or sniffing out forged art, all scribes seek the unjust. They don't always treat fairly with all involved, but their role drives them to direct the process.

On Apotheosis

The search for cosmic truth is a walk on the tightrope, requiring a careful balance of several different (often conflicting) needs. It isn't the scribe's role to intuit unsubstantiated questions, but he is driven to seek out answers all the same. Given the fact that their area of specialty is lore, most Sesha-Hebsu are content to "grow" to the precise extent that their labors allow them to: through the recovery of recorded history, whether magical or otherwise. If Fate has a plan for them, they will make their mark as they are meant to, in whatever manner and time they must. Those who differ with this thesis (or just find it insufficient), however few in number they may be, make for some of the most tireless seekers of Apotheosis-related lore in this or any world.

Favored Vessels: *Texts*. The written word reflects the scribe's way, and the Sesha-Hebsu believe that, together with the lost art of the ren-hekau, it remains magic's principle fundament. All the reagents in the world wouldn't mean anything to the alchemists of the Mesen-Nebu were it not for the vocabulary those materials represent. All the sacred geometry in the world wouldn't benefit the Teb-Aabhi if they couldn't *inscribe* it. The Word and the Will—together, as always.

Due in part to their especial aptitude for knowing relics (see Eyes of Justice, below), and to the broader applications of their work on the Scroll of Ages, the Sesha-Hebsu tend to become veritable repositories of lore on the subject of their objects of expertise. They often recall and recite the stories of texts past in the way that mortals might think and speak of former lovers. Some daydream during their meditations, imagining what might have become of a given tome. Indeed, many have been known to retain more about texts than they do about their own lives.

Guild Affinity: Arisen of the Sesha-Hebsu begin play with Eyes of Justice as a bonus Affinity.

Eyes of Justice

Prerequisite: Guild Status (Sesha-Hebsu) •+

Effect: The eternal scribe sees the world through the eyes of justice.

- The mummy adds +2 to the following actions: cutting a deal, seeing through forgery or disguise, and examining a crime scene (see **The World of Darkness**, p. 38). If a Willpower point is spent, the bonus equals the rating of his defining Pillar, instead, for one roll.
- The Sesha-Hebsu can sense the relative might and peril of a relic, as all Arisen can, but can do so *on sight* (registering it as a corona of burnished gold). If it's a text, specifically, that he's looking at, he can get a sense of its story, power, and curse with a successful Intelligence + [Academics or Occult] roll.
- As a reflexive action, the scribe can spend a Willpower point to enter a state of enhanced awareness that lasts the scene and grants his soul the ability to see two things: First, his player benefits from the 8 again rule on rolls made for the scribe to sense the Lifeless, and if successful, he can *see* them (as moving silver coronas). In addition, anyone who has taken a life (personally killed a mortal, or sent one of the Deathless into a death cycle) since the sun last set is identified by a curious corona of white that gets brighter around the person's hands. If the subject is actively trying to conceal her guilt, her player's entitled to a contested Wits + Subterfuge roll, but the roll for the mummy counts as trying to see through a disguise. Even if she loses, the Arisen has no way of proving his findings, since only he saw them.

Stereotypes

Maa-Kep: Valuable allies, when not conveniently forgetting who it is they serve.
Mesen-Nebu: Deserving of the station they so cherish… until they are not.
Su-Menent: Their role defines them, and they remain its greatest casualties.
Tef-Aabhi: Their ingenuity is almost as valuable as their arrogance is astounding.

The Deceived: Some transgressions were built to last.
The Shuankhsen: The ageless vacuity they represent is all the proof a reasoning mind needs of the just rightness of our way.

Su-Menent

"Shepherds of the Chamber"



[The Tradition of the Shell]

The importance of funerary tradition in ancient Egypt is well known to even the most casual scholar of the age. The artifacts recovered from the period reveal this at every turn, as one notices the fine eye for ritual detail and the prevalent intention of preserving as much worldly wealth and reputation as possible in hopes that the dead would enjoy what they had acquired in life. Although these early cultures built vast tomb structures and spent obscene amounts of gold, stone, and labor to insure such transferences of wealth, the preparation and intent with which they did so paled in comparison to the utterly zealous methods used in the Nameless Empire.

Although it was the Shan'iatu who crafted the Rite of Return from the darkness of time before time, it was the lesser priests of the Su-Menent who poured over the tablets, gathered the regents, and prepared the bodies for the ruling elite's sacred work. Unflinching and removed from the menial levels of politics, these death priests clung to the laws of their masters and developed a prodigal grasp of Irem's darkest magics. They selected would-be members not only for the power of their minds and faith, but also for their ability to stomach the bizarre and gory vicissitudes of the sorcerer-priest's often cruel experiments, and the guild of shells manifested alongside the mystical operations that would one day make the Su-Menent eternal.

It would be soothing to the sanity of most minds if the art of the shell was restricted purely to those timeless rites of the funeral whereby the passing of the soul into the Underworld is guided by the soft murmur of chants in a dusty, lamp-lit chamber. This is not so. For the art of shells is the very act of binding the elusive threads of life and soul within a vessel fashioned from preserved forms of the dead. Once this power is secured, it is yoked to the purposes of the Su-Menent and the Judges, from whom all blessings flow.

Overview

Vanished though it now may be, the City of Pillars was a civilization fixated on permanence and sustainability. From the lowest laborer to the most exalted Pharaoh, all harbored a wish that what they had worked so hard in life to acquire could be taken with them whole into the lands of the dead. Humble rites of ancestor worship and prayers uttered over the bodies of lost loved ones as they were lowered into earthen holes sufficed, at first, but as the holy men of that day took notice of the direct correlations between the soul and the preparation of its husk, the Shan'iatu moved quickly to hide the full brunt of this mystery from the masses and formed those who had witnessed these truths into a guild of obedient priests who would one day learn the power of death over life.

From within the many temples of Irem, the yoking of spiritual energy was steadily mastered. With flesh, bone, and relics crafted of hair and teeth, adorned with the

symbols to which the currents of magic bow, the priests reverently learned to trap the life-giving powers of the gods themselves within the shell. Although true life could not be bestowed or returned, the warped and powerful forces that could be contained provided power unheard of, a power that could endure beyond the veil of death. The Shan'iatu were pleased with the progress of the lesser priests and guided them toward increasingly refined and rarified mysteries, but all were not pleased with the aberrations birthed within those hidden basalt chambers, and it was not long before the meddling of lesser souls would stir the Su-Menent to harsher methods.

Although the security maintained by the Maa-Kep was as efficient and vigilant as one could ask for, the need for slaves and laborers made certain secrets hard to keep. A slave from the north, a former holy man himself, was the first to violate the sanctity of the Shepherds' vaults, when he heard but a few words spoken by the Shan'iatu to their disciples. The phrase was the preliminary formula of harnessing the divine in a prepared vessel of flesh—the very essence of the priest's way—a transgression, he thought, beyond the imagining of all things natural and ordered. His tongue removed in the fashion of all the slaves who served the priests, the oversight of the slave being literate allowed him to transmit the horror to other slaves, and a corrupted expression of the true formula was passed in crude form through many uninitiated hands and became a lesser magical system in its own right—an inferior aping of the high rites, stolen by fools. Outraged, the priests took great pains to contain the spread of this sacrilege, slaying the transgressors en masse as symbols of what it meant to defy the keepers of death. Although the lesser form was vanquished quickly within Irem's walls, the new methods took root far to the north and survived into the modern day as the occult teachings of the *qliphoth* (the mystery of the shells that failed to contain the right will of God).

Between the advancement of this new magic and the never-ending need for the rites of burial and preservation, the power of the priests grew, limited only by the nature of their service. All the peoples of Irem feared death, and it was the Su-Menent who shepherded the entire process. The priests slipped a dark noose around the fears of the Nameless Empire and in this way became great and terrible, if at a price. Because the priest caste could not allow its dogma to be corrupted through politics and lineages of the untested, oaths of celibacy were taken for both occult and security purposes. Henceforth undistracted by the obligation of families, and unmoved by attempts at seduction, the priests served the Judges of Duat with total focus, bound only by the laws and dogmas of their masters.

MEMBERS

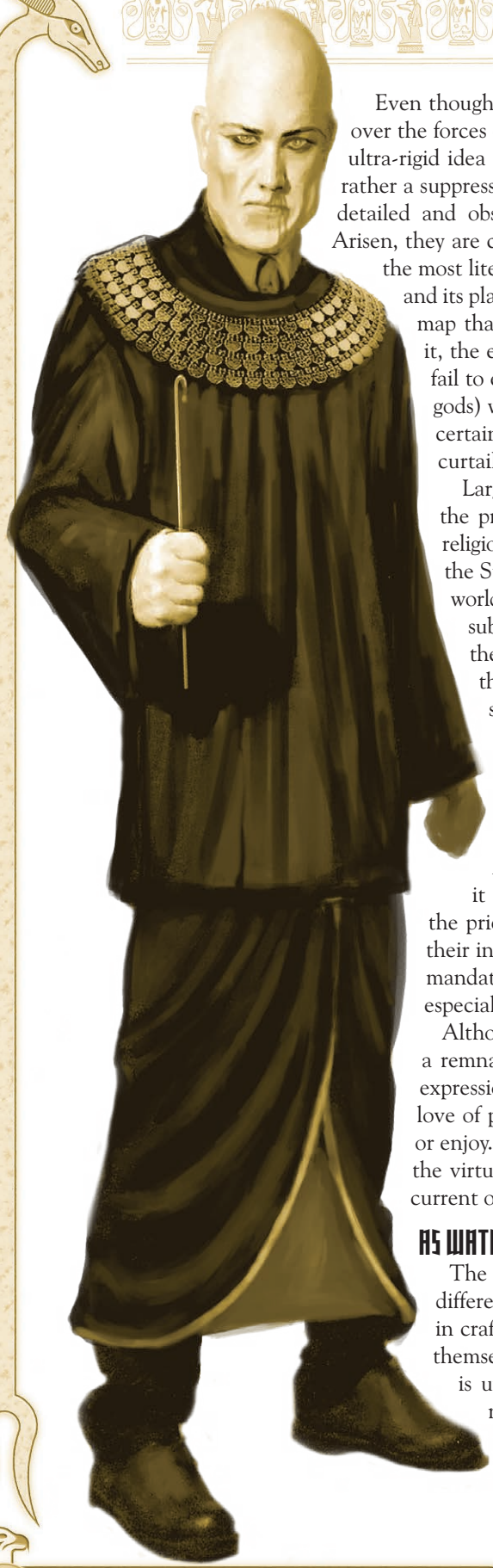
All priests in ancient Irem were subjected to lengthy and baroque initiation from early childhood. Academics, meditation techniques, and magical cosmology were made available to those selected to serve. None were so tested, though, as the aspiring priests of the Su-Menent. Although tests concerning herbal preparations, sacred geometry, and medicine were required, the primary tests were those concerning blatant occult talent and the measure of one's ability to protect secrets. Truth and wisdom were the essential virtues of the priest's guild. The methods used in the construction of vessels of the shell were dangerous in and of themselves, with even the slightest preparation holding enough power to spread disease or stop the heart even if just barely misapplied.

As a new Sothic Turn reaches its zenith, the death priests have come to occupy strange niches in the modern world. Physicians, morticians, grave robbers, murderers, taxidermists, and occultists by necessity, the Su-Menent must keep the morbid nature of their craft well hidden from today's mortals, as the wisdom of shells is one of the most subtle crafts—one requiring a focused mind and an allegiance rooted in faith to the laws of the Underworld and the dogma of the Judges.

Perhaps the most abstract and little spoken of quality sought in candidates is conformity. Although the priests desired elegance of design and ingenuity by way of efficiency, they would cast all else aside in the face of an overly passionate disciple. For if such an egocentric being were to take up the powers involved in the manufacture of shells and the internment of the spirits of the dead with personal gain, advancement, or even expression as his goals, the great chaos that could—and, in the minds of the priests, *would*—unfold would surely equal those forces that took the Nameless Empire from the pages of history. After all, a shell cannot be filled unless it is empty.

PURPOSE

The Su-Menent are, at their very core, the bearers of the darkest flame. With the exception of the most routine vestige, the vessels of the shell are based on the unpredictable manifestations of flesh and bone. To truly interrogate the inert form of a deceased cobra, to access destructive power from the delicate skull of a falcon, or to command the animated armored corpse of a house guard requires not only faith, but a tolerance to the frequency of Sekhem that actualizes such deeply unnatural works. Although closeness to this death force can take its toll on the mind and body of the Arisen, the life-death vacillation that occurs when these sorts of vessels are used have a proportionally vivifying effect, as through the gifts of the Shan'iatu (or other productive sorcerers) the priest becomes a momentary god.



Even though the Su-Menent have in many ways established themselves as sovereign over the forces of death and the Underworld itself, they are constrained entirely by their ultra-rigid idea of "the will of the Judges." It is not so much a desire for simplicity, but rather a suppression of self-expression in the interest of keeping a pure view of extremely detailed and obscure ritual demands with potentially catastrophic consequences. As Arisen, they are confined by their spirituality, seeing little room for interpretation beyond the most literal. A likeness of Anubis is not a decoration or an optional votive image, and its placement within the tomb is not a matter of opinion—there is an unspoken map that demands the presence of the god in the central passage, and without it, the entirety of the metaphysical lattice that is the tomb—its "Lifeweb"—will fail to establish the right spiritual routes, and the Judges of Duat (and thus, the gods) will abandon the tomb because the plan was not followed. This adherence certainly keeps the Su-Menent from the most grievous failures, but it also curtails some of the most profound innovations and insights.

Largely denied their traditional role within the culture of the Nameless Empire, the priests have had to adapt more drastically than the other guilds. As the religion of lost Irem is no longer substantiated by a vast and powerful culture, the Su-Menent have secluded themselves within a remote corner of the Arisen world. Latching their cults to fringe religions, doomsday fanaticism, or any other subculture that can be easily commanded by a dichotomy of fear and obedience, the priests conduct themselves as a smaller but no less fanatical version of their former station. Yet even as they cling to ancient traditions, their grasp slips more and more as a direct result of their refusal to compromise, bound by the letter and word of edicts even older than themselves.

All for the Judges, Nothing for the Self

It is the firm belief of most Su-Menent that the betrayal not of the Deceived, but *by* the Deceived was the greatest betrayal of ancient Irem. Although the Shuankhsen are more terrifying in their horrible methods, it is the nature of the Deceived's transgression that so burns the souls of the priests. It was the need of those of the "lost guild" to express the flaws of their individual selves that called forth their doom and their refusal to obey the mandates of the gods that cursed them for eternity. As such, the Shepherds are especially wary of the Deceived, whom they *know* exist.

Although the Su-Menent prefer to be viewed as aloof and wise, it is often a remnant of wrath and personal hatred that is stirred in them by unchecked expression. Like bitter and powerful eunuchs envying the simple unobtainable love of peasants, these Arisen tend to blatantly hate what they can never have or enjoy. And so it is in this gesture of spiritual retraction that the priests espouse the virtues of the deprived self, reducing passion and emotion to a homogenous current of energy reflected in the husks and vessels they seek.

As Water Flowing from Shell to Shell

The body is fixed and specific; the animating force is a continuum without differentiation. Although this certainly pertains to the gross specifics involved in crafting *uter* (vessels of the shell), it also informs the behavior of the priests themselves. There have been and always will be funerary priests. Their role is unchanging, as is the nature of death itself. Whereas other guilds must modernize and deal with the perils of technology, the rituals of death are as eternal as the condition they address. As such, the voices and hands involved are meaningless—it is only the purpose they collectively serve that matters. While the specific talents are appreciated in their time,

the eternal priest is an *idea*, a tenet that is embodied in the Su-Menent as a guild. If the guild endures, the individual manifestations of it ultimately mean little.

Practices

Obedience to the Judges of Duat and perseverance in the face of eternity define the Shepherds of the Chamber. They are as they have always been and always will be. To toil endlessly with only a deep faith that they *must* is the nature of their path. Although a mortal might find this way to be a hell in its own right, for the Arisen of the Su-Menent it is a source of solace that protects them from their dread fear of change. As a result of this ethic and a lack of attachment to self-expression, there is comparatively little intrigue among guild members. (Comparatively.) It is stability for the sake of stability that coheres the guild, whether politically or financially.

Attain the Mantle

Being a priest of the Su-Menent, and thus of the Arisen entire, is a responsibility to be taken seriously, and nowhere is that any more true than in the priest's relationships with those around him. The greater his status within and commitment to his guild, the more he takes on the traditional manner and appearance of the priest, with all guildmasters going bald and wearing kohl powder. The cults of the Su-Menent are lesser reflections of the priesthood itself. After years of droning indoctrination, cultists are often entrusted with vital responsibilities such as grave robbing, the cleaning of bodies, hunting for materials, the brewing of preservatives, and chanting vigil. But no matter how much a cultist proves herself to the Su-Menent, it is likely that she will never achieve more than these tasks, since the priests, for good reason, do not trust easily. In their minds, the uninitiated exist on another plane entirely, incapable of the right performance of essential rites. But what is equally essential is that, through it all, the priest must be his cultists' priest, *too*. Even cults that aren't expressly religious in scope must understand the divine nature of the Su-Menent.

Grasp the Shell

The nature of the shell is impermanence. Although spiritual energies are shaped by them, vessels of all kinds can rot and fail, especially when prepared by uninitiated or careless hands. Although the stuff of uter is yielding, the preparation of such vessels requires a firm mastery of preservation. Mummification is a broad art and does not always provide the precise technique necessary for a particular creation. The conditions under which the shell met its end, the precise position of the sun or moon when it occurred, the hand that cut the throat, and the prayers that were uttered when the entrails were being harvested… are all of the utmost importance and must be studied and treated with dutiful solemnity. Beyond the exacting nature of his craft, the Su-Menent must be able to hold the shell at that precise state and moment with deftly applied natron, resin, or bone dust thus blessed to freeze the form in place, ever unchanging from the moment it is ripped from the natural world and inverted with the Judge's or sorcerer's intent. Once the form is secured and prepared, its potential is limited only by the need of the priest who inherits it.

On Apotheosis

What the Su-Menent lack insofar as an obsessive desire for a sustained Descent, they balance with a deep desire for ritual refinement and the apprehension of the Judges' will. Although none but the most foul and rebellious would attempt to decipher the sacrosanct secrets of the Rite of Return, it stands as a central mystery by which all other works are modeled and compared. So it is with each uter that a piece of the greater plan is revealed and that homage is paid to the source of their being. Beyond this, few Su-Menent priests see the value in chasing dangerous fantasies.

Favored Vessels: *Uter*. To force the immutable energies of life into ritually prepared remains is the nature of the priest's work. Uter are not bodies, but channels to which Sekhem is most naturally bound. What is more potent a vessel than a body once imbued by the gods themselves? If bone, sinew, teeth, and flesh can be reshaped in accordance with the wisdom of the Judges, what is the limit of this craft? The flesh is a riddle that Sekhem must solve.

Despite their inability to craft such horrors themselves, the versatility of the guild's vessels is literally endless, with living insects drowned in amber, bone-shod thrones, and boats of skin being examples of their possibilities. As Sekhem and flesh are a marriage accepted by the most brutal forces of the natural world, the atrocities and aberrations that can be concealed by the forgotten masters of the shell are truly horrifying. Carapace shells that sing with the voices of deceased children, the preserved eye of an infamous executioner still capable of filling the heart with a fear of death, and gruesome bone weapons that drip not with physical poison, but spiritual venom have all graced the sealed vaults of the Su-Menent's reliquaries.

Guild Affinity: Mummies of the Su-Menent begin play with Fated Soul as a bonus Affinity.

Fated Soul

Prerequisite: Guild Status (Su-Menent) • +

Effect: The Arisen has a strong affinity for the soul itself and for the path it winds through Fate.

- The mummy adds +2 to the following actions: healing/diagnosing wounds, meditation (not Memory rolls), and memorizing and remembering (see **The World of Darkness**, pp. 38-39). If a Willpower point is spent, the bonus equals the rating of his defining Pillar, instead, for one roll.
- All Arisen are fearless, but the Su-Menent are especially so. Any attempt to scare away or otherwise strike fear into a Shepherd is treated as if the attacker's player's roll resulted in a failure (or in extraordinary success, if the power calls for the Arisen's player to roll to resist).
- The Shepherd adds +1 to the effective rating of his Supernatural Advantage Trait (Sekhem; maximum 10) when resisting the magics and machinations of others (only). There is no cost to this effect. When resisting mental or emotional compulsion, specifically, the Su-Menent's player can spend a Willpower point (as a reflexive action) to use the mummy's defining Pillar rating in lieu of his Supernatural Advantage Trait (Sekhem) to resist. If he does, he can continue to use his Pillar in lieu of his Sekhem to resist all further attempts to influence or control him for the rest of the scene, without additional cost. If the Arisen can't apply his Sekhem rating to resist a given assault, this effect offers no benefit.

Stereotypes

Maa-Kep: What seem to us irrelevancies, they would craft into terrible weapons.
Mesen-Nebu: When one looks deeply into the heart of change, one learns that nothing truly changes.
Sesha-Hebsu: The word is the purest form of power… and the easiest to misuse.
Tef-Aabhi: They give water to the lifeless. We give life to the deathless.

The Deceived: Those who mock our obedience need only witness the plight of the betrayers.
The Shuankhsen: The difference between our understanding and the deepest darkness is told in the monstrosity of these devourers.

TEF-AABHI

"FATHER OF IDOLS"



[The Tradition of the Effigy]

Two great secrets, above and beyond all others, dominate the laws of magic and power that flow through the many layers of the world—unchanging, immutable, and as binding to gods as to mortals. The first is that, like water, air, or sand, the flow and accumulation of energy can be shaped. The proper angles, the right materials, even certain symbols can call it forth, magnify it, or alternatively, repel even the greatest concentrations of power. Shape, location, substance, direction; on such details do the most potent and most ancient of magics rest. Remnants of these practices still stand in the most peculiar passages and chambers of the great pyramids.

Second, and perhaps of even greater importance, is the law of sympathy: A part of a being, an image of a being, does more than *represent* that being. To those with the proper understanding of magic, of the world, of the gods, it *is* that being. Nowhere is this belief more prevalent than in the funerary practices of ancient Egypt, where effigies of the dead were provided not merely to honor those who had passed, but to give the returning soul a body to occupy should the corpse itself be damaged or stolen.

So yes, both these laws of magic were understood by many, from Irem and Egypt to the many nations and peoples beyond. Understanding, however, is one thing; true mastery, quite another. And perhaps only the Tef-Aabhi can truly claim total mastery, a full comprehension, of both.

To the Father of Idols (see "Purpose," below, for the philosophical reasons for the singular title), how something is accomplished is equally as vital as *what* is accomplished; the form is as important as the function because—albeit often in ways that mortal eyes cannot observe and mortal minds cannot grasp—form *changes* function. The Tef-Aabhi are, paradoxically, among the most practical and the most artistic of the Arisen. They are also, even more strangely, among the most humble *and* the most arrogant: humble in their knowledge that they require outside materials to work their greatest magics and that even they are vulnerable to any who possess their likenesses; arrogant in their belief that the magic of the world, though *shaped* by what lies without, comes entirely from *within*.

In the modern day, the Tef-Aabhi are most drawn toward positions and circumstances that require substantial preplanning and design. Architecture and sculpture are the most obvious, and indeed the most common, but possibilities range from manufacturing to urban planning to—for those mummies capable of sufficient adaptation—mechanical repair and even computer programming. So long as it engages them on a mental, aesthetic, and metaphysical level, they are at least potentially content.

OVERVIEW

Considering that the Deathless, as a whole, are creatures of antiquity, taking great pride in their lineage and comfort in tradition, it often strikes other mummies (as well as mortal cultists) as peculiar that the Tef-Aabhi constantly

maintain that they are the *youngest* of the guilds. Not only do they claim it, in fact, they take pride in it and are more than ready to argue with anyone who disputes that honor. (Not that most other mummies ever would.)

The other houses of Irem had existed for generations, they claim, before the Father of Idols appeared. The Mesen-Nebu had already mastered the secrets of their metals and materials; the scribes, their words of power; and so forth. Irem had grown from a single village to a community verging on becoming the world's first true nation. But at least so far as the Tef-Aabhi believe, that was where Irem would have remained, were it not for them.

The first generation of the guild was purportedly assembled by the Shan'iatu from among the greatest the other guilds had to offer, brought together for the express purpose of finding new ways to advance Irem's understanding of civilization, technology, and magic. The Father of Idols, then, is the distillation of the best of all that came before. They were the most advanced, the most forward thinking, using the work of the others as a foundation on which to build wonders the likes of which had never before been imagined. The Maa-Kep may have learned to infuse objects with power, but not to construct entire edifices or even neighborhoods to do so, not to know how an image could hold power over what it represented. The Sesha-Hebsu mastered the written word, but it was the Tef-Aabhi who took that idea forward into the concept of written plans and higher mathematics. The Su-Menent may have laid the occult foundations, but it was the youngest guild that came to understand the precepts of sacred geometries and angles of power.

It might have been the others to originate all these things, the Tef-Aabhi maintain, but it was *they* who took the best portions of them and extended them to their greatest conclusions. (These are, perhaps unsurprisingly, claims—both in terms of "best portion" and "greatest conclusions"—that the other guilds dispute regularly.)

What nobody can dispute is that the Father of Idols took Irem in directions it otherwise could never have gone. Great structures and nigh impregnable defenses; temples and tombs of palpable mystic power; wagons and chariots of great speed and resilience; and of course, magnificent statuary and similar works of art—all were the result of the Tef-Aabhi's discoveries and practices. It's safe to say that everything the modern world thinks of as ancient Egypt would never have developed without them.

Members

More so than any other guild, the Tef-Aabhi made every effort to recruit from Irem's population based *solely* on merit and ability, without the slightest attention paid to bloodline or social caste. As the newest guild, and one often viewed with suspicion by the other houses (and even, at times, the sorcerer-priests), this was more than a matter of pride, but perhaps one of survival. It would be foolish to suggest that politics and nepotism *never* factored into the guild's choice of apprentices, but for the most part, the Tef-Aabhi succeeded in abiding by their own rules.

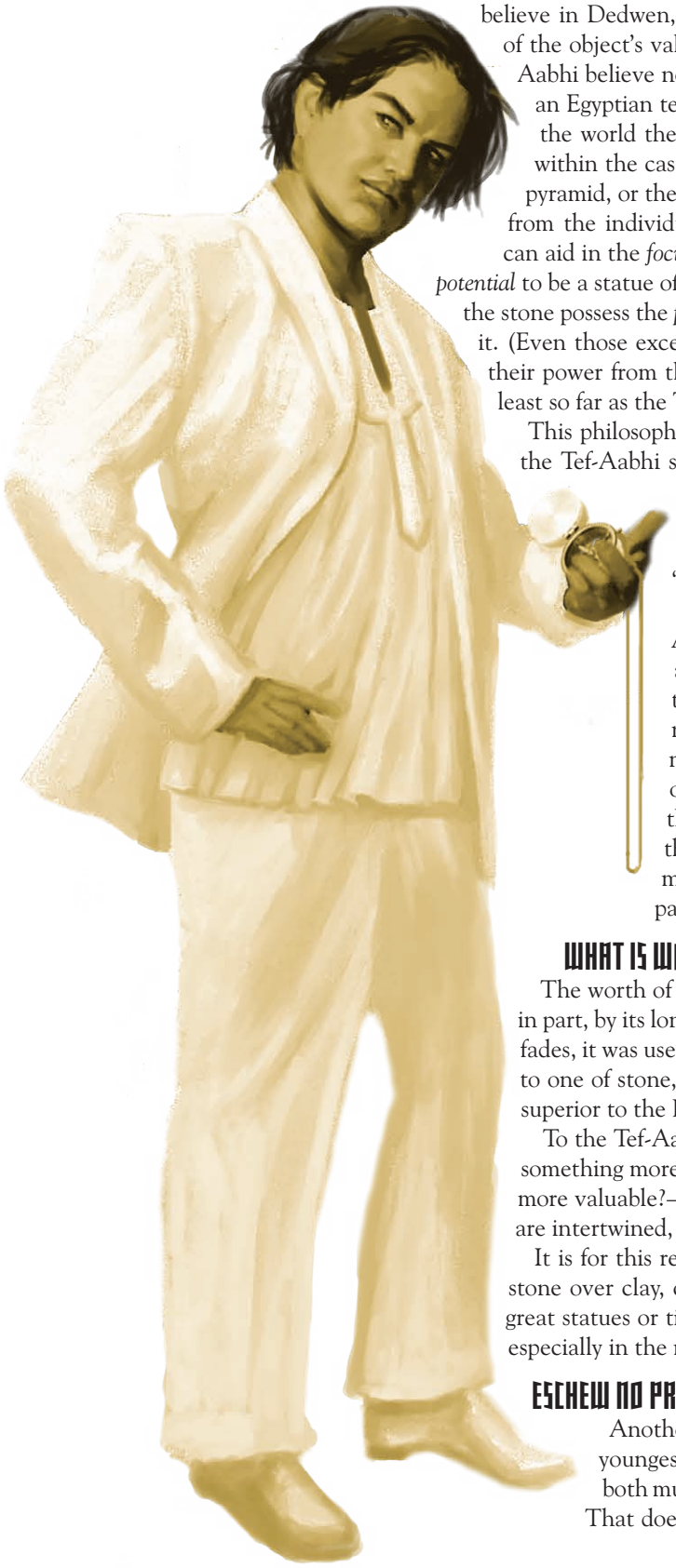
It helped—and still does today, on those extraordinarily rare occasions that a mummy comes new to the guild—that the required aptitudes and skills for joining the Father of Idols were relatively broad. The Tef-Aabhi seek both practicality and the ability to appreciate form and function as two sides of the same coin. Planners, builders, mathematicians, and more are all welcome. The unifying requirement is their intelligence—that is, their ability to grasp the precepts on which the Tef-Aabhi operate—and their willingness to plan ahead. On the other hand, in the days of Irem, anyone who attempted to join and then failed to display the proper attitude and aptitude was immediately dismissed; the guild offered no second chances. While the Deathless connection to the guilds is more metaphysical and thus doesn't require the permission of other members to join, the Tef-Aabhi do tend to look askance at those who came late to the party. They are particularly turned off by especially rigid or conservative thinking; while they rely on plans and schematics, they've no interest in people who are bound so tightly to tradition that they are unwilling to adapt or to learn.

The Father of Idols were responsible for the creation of ancient tombs, including many still used by mummies today. This is yet another achievement the Tef-Aabhi like to cite when claiming superiority, or at least more refinement and advancement, over the magics of the other guilds. It also leads to their own tombs being more important to the Tef-Aabhi than they are even to most other Deathless. Unless there's an *extremely* pressing reason to do otherwise, all mummies of this guild possess the Tomb Merit (see p. 81) at a rating higher than one dot.

Purpose

In lost Irem, the Tef-Aabhi strove to accomplish two separate but related purposes: to build up their nation through architecture and monuments—and the magics thereof—and to increase the society's control over magic (and, indirectly, the rest of the world around them in general). It was these goals that spawned the towering statues of men and gods, and that birthed the sacred geometries and eldritch angles of temple and tomb.

It is also in the practices of the Father of Idols that one begins to detect their guiding philosophy of magic, a belief that separates them from other guilds. The Mesen-Nebu



believe in Dedwen, an essence that exists in all material objects that grants much of the object's value and from which alchemy derives much of its power. The Tef-Aabhi believe nothing of the sort. So far as they are concerned, nearly all *heka*—an Egyptian term that, to members of this guild, refers to the peculiar forces of the world they manipulate through what we call "magic"—comes more from within the caster than from without. The magic of a mummy's tomb or sacred pyramid, or the Sekhem within a relic, springs not from that place or object, but from the individuals who built and/or used it. Angles, geometries, runes; these can aid in the *focus* of heka, but they do not create it. Just as a great stone has the *potential* to be a statue of Ra but is not one until a sculptor gives it that shape, so too does the stone possess the *potential* for magic but has none of its own until a sorcerer imbues it. (Even those exceedingly rare relics that develop "organically," as it were, absorb their power from the people who have surrounded them over the years—again, at least so far as the Tef-Aabhi believe.)

This philosophy is also responsible for the peculiar name of the guild itself. As the Tef-Aabhi see it, their works—statuary, architecture, and magic alike—are the "offspring" of themselves and the stone (or other materials), and as it is they who contribute the heka and the craft to shape the stone's potential. As such, the guild is the metaphorical "father," singular, of the world's greatest works.

To this day, their ultimate purpose has not changed. The Tef-Aabhi seek to create great works that have both unmistakable aesthetic and practical purposes, but that also contribute to society's (or their own, or their cult's) broader ability to manipulate and manage the flow of heka, and in so doing, for mankind to align itself to the will of the divine. Just as there is but one Father, there is but one Lifeweb, and the duty and privilege of the Tef-Aabhi to see it as a whole. As such, the inability to create their own relics drives them near mad with frustration, and some members of the guild spend a great deal of time seeking mystical pathways to overcome this limitation.

What is Worthy, Lasts

The worth of something—an object, a tradition, a belief, a ritual—is reflected, in part, by its longevity. If a tradition is useless, it should fade; and, conversely, if it fades, it was useless. A structure of wood, no matter how well designed, is inferior to one of stone, for it will not and *cannot* survive as long. And yes, the gods are superior to the Deathless, and the Deathless to mortals, by the same logic.

To the Tef-Aabhi, the question of which is the cause and which the effect—is something more valuable because it lasts longer, or does it last longer because it's more valuable?—is meaningless. There is no "one, therefore the other." The two are intertwined, inseparable.

It is for this reason that the mummies of the Father of Idols prefer to work in stone over clay, clay over parchment. It is why, too, the bulk of effigies, be they great statues or tiny figurines, are of stone or metal, when it is so much simpler—especially in the modern world—to capture images on canvas, paper, or film.

Eschew No Proven Tool, Rely on No Unproven One

Another doctrine that stems from the Tef-Aabhi's identity as the youngest and most progressive of the guilds holds that the guild's arts—both mundane and mystical—are based, in part, on the work of the others. That doesn't in any way mean that the Tef-Aabhi are as skilled occultists

as the Su-Menent, as knowledgeable as the Sesha-Hebsu, and so forth. They are not and do not claim to be the masters of all arts. Rather, it means that they do not shy away from basing their own endeavors and discoveries on *aspects* of what the other guilds have developed.

At the same time, however, the Tef-Aabhi are encouraged to adopt new techniques and technologies only after careful consideration. Jumping on the next big thing is for fools, until the next big thing has been around long enough to be proven effective.

In short, "be adaptable, but don't be reckless." (Easier said than done, of course, but they do try.)

In following this tradition, the Father of Idols finds itself among the guilds most readily able to assimilate to the modern world. Many of its members find concepts such as computers or advanced mechanics to be fascinating rather than frightening (though they can still be a touch overwhelming, as well). By the same token, however, they often eschew much of modern society as utterly purposeless; form without function, empty of meaning. They are likely to adapt swiftly to the technology of the era; far less so to the behavior and popular culture.

Practices

The magic of effigies, the art of statuary, the strength and shelter of great edifices, the defensive solitude of tombs—none of these could exist without the proper preparation and design. The mummies of the Father of Idols are deep thinkers and inveterate planners. Far more important to consider things through in advance, to get things right and to develop contingencies, than to act without forethought. Check and double-check; design and revise. A Tef-Aabhi who's had the time to plan is nearly unstoppable. One caught by surprise, in a situation for which he has truly never prepared, is often vulnerable, if however briefly.

As a (somewhat) logical offshoot of this, many of the Tef-Aabhi tend toward perfectionism. An effigy is more effective the more it truly resembles the person or thing it's modeling; a building is more structurally sound, and possibly more mystically attuned, when the angles are just right; and so forth. Between this and their constant search for understanding and mastery, the Deathless of the Father of Idols tend to view the entire world as little more than a series of problems to be solved, obstacles to be overcome, or distractions to be ignored.

Plan to Purpose, Build to Plan

Initially, this appears to be nothing more than an iteration of the guild's principles and techniques as previously discussed. It is, however, more than a mandate to plan for everything; it's also a warning about getting lost in the theoretical exercise of planning. It's not enough for the Tef-Aabhi to learn or design for its own sake. They should always be working toward a particular purpose—if not the one for which they were raised, then one of their own choosing. Work, planning, even art should have purpose behind it, where the Father of Idols is concerned; they're not necessarily *useless* without it, but they're far more valuable, and more worthwhile, with it.

Nothing Is Beyond Understanding

Even the greatest mysteries of the world—the gods, life, and death—are not beyond comprehension. With the proper study and meticulous application of thought and experimentation, *anything* can be understood. It would be foolish, of course, to suggest that any one individual could know everything; but the notion of failing to pursue understanding and mastery because "there are some things mortals weren't meant to know" is utterly anathema to the Father of Idols. (This, too, is why they tend to function better in the modern world than many other mummies: They take the mysteries of modern technology as a challenge, not an obstacle.)

On Apotheosis

The mummies of the Father of Idols, on the rare occasions they contemplate Apotheosis at all, tend to be of two minds on the concept. Given the intense effort—and, by definition, planning and meticulous procedure—that must go into the obtaining of Apotheosis, the Tef-Aabhi see it as perhaps the ultimate embodiment of their beliefs and practices. On the other hand, so little is actually known about Apotheosis—most of it having drifted through the ages as echoes of rumors of legend—that the Tef-Aabhi consider themselves insufficiently knowledgeable about it. Attempting to obtain a mythical state without understanding either the process or the end result is a leap of faith that few of the Father of Idols are prepared to risk.

Favored Vessels: *Effigies*. Figures of stone, metal, clay, or wood require skill, planning, and patience to perfect, representing the epitome of what the Father of Idols revere. They are most potent when used in conjunction with the precepts of sympathetic magic, thus hearkening back to the beliefs and practices of the Tef-Aabhi in the days of Irem, itself. Finally, assuming they were properly made with resilient materials, effigies—mystical or otherwise—are far more likely to survive the ages than nearly any other sort of vessel.

Of course, effigies have their practical limits, as well. Because they do function on the precepts of sympathetic magic, to an extent if not entirely, they are often weaker (if not entirely ineffective) when used against any target other than that for which they were designed. While a human figure doesn't need to look exactly like a specific person

to effect that person, it's likely to have less of an effect the greater the differences—and it's not likely to be much use at all against, say, an animal or a vehicle. Most Tef-Aabhi keep a figurine that vaguely resembles themselves at hand at all times, as they believe it empowers any magics they use on themselves.

Guild Affinity: Mummies of the Tef-Aabhi begin play with Model Lifeweb as a bonus Affinity.

Model Lifeweb

Prerequisite: Guild Status (Tef-Aabhi) •+

Effect: The Tef-Aabhi is especially sensitive to the sacred interplay of Sekhem all around him.

- The mummy adds +2 to the following actions: create art, repair item, and solving enigmas (see **The World of Darkness**, pp. 38-39). If a Willpower point is spent, the bonus equals the rating of his defining Pillar, instead, for one roll.
- As an instant action, the mummy can study an object by laying his hands upon it, much as all Arisen may study vessels (see "The Name's the Thing," p. 147). As long as he is free to concentrate on it during those several moments (being attacked or moved about constitutes distraction, certainly), he can discern the object's true purpose, whatever it is. Understanding it in technical terms is reliant on his own expertise, but his player's entitled to a Skill roll. If the object is a vessel, add +2 to an Intelligence + [Academics or Occult] roll for the Tef-Aabhi to get a sense of its rating, power, and/or curse. If successful—and if it's an effigy—he also gets an image of the relic's last bearer, as though successfully tracking its kepher (see p. 147). If he gets an exceptional success, he might get an image of the effigy's *creator* instead (Storyteller discretion), if it has one, though he might not know it at the time.
- As a reflexive action, a Willpower point may be spent for the mummy to enhance his sensitivity to the patterns of Sekhem. His ability to discern the purpose of things expands beyond his hands and into his immediate environment. For the rest of the scene, any time the mummy gets close to (same room or locally defined area) an object or representation that's true purpose is deliberately concealed or misrepresented outwardly, the Storyteller must allow the player a roll for the Arisen to discern it. The roll is Wits + [Skill, variable by situation: Craft, Investigation, or Survival]. The difficulty depends on the subtlety or depth of concealment or misrepresentation: e.g., a panel that hides a secret door would be straightforward (1); a secret door hidden by a panel with a real bookcase in front of it, less so (2). Success might not instantly reveal what the true purpose *is*, but it confirms that one exists. (At Storyteller discretion, a failed roll can be retried later in the scene if it's appropriate.)

Stereotypes

Maa-Kep: Probably our nearest brethren; our own methods and discoveries might never have existed without them, and for that, we are grateful. They remain shortsighted and tradition bound, however.

Mesen-Nebu: Pompous "nobles" who fetishize and depersonalize our shared occult ways to a distressing degree. If they hadn't accomplished so much, they'd be worthy of complete disdain.

Sesha-Hebsu: The acquisition, archiving, and dissemination of wisdom is commendable. It is not, however, of sufficient purpose unto itself, is it?

Su-Menent: They know many secrets, master much power, but they rely on "tools" that cannot help but fail eventually. Even for the Arisen, the flesh is weak.

The Deceived: I'd give much to know what they knew. Still, they cannot be allowed to interfere with our goals or to destroy what we've built.

The Shuankhsen: Rage, violence, instinct, and destruction. Our opposites and nemeses in every way. Evade them, first and foremost, but pass up no true opportunity to erase them utterly.

Judges of Duat

A mummy's first act *as* a mummy is to pronounce his decree before the last Judge he meets in Duat and, in so doing, to bind himself to the Rite of Return. Each Judge bestows both a particular decree—by virtue of its *defining Pillar*—and an attached set of favored Affinities that the player of any Arisen pledged to it can acquire at a discount, whether at character creation or during the story. The Affinity associated with the bestowed decree (listed first, except in the case of Arem-Abfu and Usekh-Nemtet) is granted automatically during character creation. Players generally get to choose their own Judge, but any approach is fine, provided it's acceptable to all involved.

Akhi

Called the Roar, this entity was said to be the Judge of those who give voice to unfettered rage. Its pledges claim it comes to them as a massive lion with distended jaws and a mane of bones.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Voice of Conscience; Beast Companion, Beast Soul Fury, Guardian Wrath, Words Summoned Forth.

Am-Khaibit

Called the Eater of Shadows, this being is Judge and waking nightmare for those who perpetuate crimes against humanity (such as murder on a large scale). Its visitors are confronted by a three-headed hound of ill-omen that stands taller than any man and snorts tendrils of black smoke.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Night Creature; Eternal Legend, Glorious Mien, Nihilist Awakening, Shrouding Aura.

An-Afkh

Called the Bringer of His Arm, this Judge is the embodiment of the soul's response to the destruction of purity. It appears as a muscular humanoid with alabaster for skin who stands draped in a headdress of golden feathers spattered with fresh blood.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Auspicious Mastery; Blessed Panoply, Deathsight, Miraculous Benefactor, Radiant Lifeforce.

An-Hotep

Called the Bringer of Sacrifice, it is Judge to those who would commit violence in the cause of oppression or slavery. The Arisen say it appears to them as an ordinary sacrificial bull with eyes that betray a deep and palpable sadness.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Enduring Flesh; Charmed Lives, Healing Counsel, Night Creature, Running Like Flight.

Arem-Abfu

Called the Final Judge, this force is said to be second only to the Devourer in its capacity for mercy. It is Judge to those who bear the greatest true evil and commit the grandest of its acts—crimes against the cosmos itself. It appears only in a pledge's mind, as none can bear its sight.

Defining Pillar: None. (The player rolls for decree randomly [one die, dividing results by two]).

Bestowed Affinities: Ancient Horror Unveiling, Guardian Wrath, Living in Now, Soulsight, Words Summoned Forth.

Artem-Khet

Called the Crocodile's Tears, this entity is Judge to those who use deception or lies to commit blasphemy (such as defrauding holy temples or misusing religion purely to corrupt individuals). It appears not in flesh, but as a jackal-headed statue that seems to weep slowly from stone eyes.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Voice of Temptation; Auspicious Mastery, Blessed Soul, Gift of Truth, Retributive Curse.

Bastu

Called the Stare, this Judge can sense buried secrets with but a look and uses its gift to judge those who have "eaten their own hearts" (i.e., tried to cheat justice). It appears as an androgynous robed figure with a thin mouth and nose, but blank skin where its eyes should be. Instead of hair, its head bears a multi-colored mop of snake bodies that end not in heads, but in unblinking eyes.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Enlightened Senses; Anointed Prowess, By Steps Unseen, Sight Beyond Eyes, Soulsight.

Fentu

Called the Snout, this being judges those who steal from others, especially those who try to cover their tracks. It appears as a stocky humanoid with a stark white bull's head and a ring through its nose that's said to vibrate unnervingly as the Judge sniffs out the guilt of those in its presence.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Anointed Prowess; Beast Companion, Beast Soul Fury, Enlightened Senses, Epic Heart.

HEPET-KHET

Called Embraced of Flame, this Judge is bane to those who would revel in violence committed in the process of theft or other nonviolent crime. It appears as a 10-foot tall, bare-chested warrior with the head of a male lion. Both its fists and its mane are wreathed in crackling flame.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Glorious Mien; Dominating Might, Familiar Face, Grip of Death, Running Like Flight.

HER-URU

Called the Face of Dread, this Judge presides over those who like to terrorize others, especially their own kind. It appears as a manifestation of one of the observer's most harrowing visions, but as soon as a viewer starts to grow accustomed to its face, it shifts to form a different vision.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Fearsome Soul; Auspicious Mastery, Divine Countenance, Familiar Face, Shrouding Aura.

HERAF-HET

The one called Whose Face Is Behind It has a reputation for being one of the highest of Judges, as it adjudicates transgressions of fine distinction or that require wisdom to assess properly. It looks like a linen-wrapped humanoid with a pair of darkly feathered wings and a featureless oval for a face. When looked upon, its face reveals the faces of loved ones the observer has lost.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Nihilist Awakening; Ancient Horror Unveiling, Enduring Flesh, Familiar Face, Voice of Conscience.

HETCH-ABHU

Although called Shining Teeth, the name references the Judge's traditional role, which is to judge those who "bear shining teeth" (i.e., attack) against the sacred. In this case, sacred tends to mean either other human beings or certain rare or wild animals (as non-domesticated animals were said to belong to the gods and not to Man). It appears as a tall humanoid with black skin and bull horns, draped in the trappings of nobility and carrying the customary flail and crook.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Paragon Shames the Weak; Falcon Soul Aloft, Godsight, Pharaoh Reigns Anew, Rouse the Khaibit.

KENEMTI

Called the Penitent, this Judge has authority over transgressions of blasphemy and desecration. Not all that's religious is truly holy, but that which *is* can be profaned or despoiled. The Penitent appears as a hooded figure draped in a white robe with lapis lazuli inlay; looking under the hood reveals a hairless, blue-skinned face and a pair of yellow eyes with irises like those of a serpent.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Gift of Truth; Retributive Curse, Soul Infusion, Soulsight, Voice of Temptation.

KHEM-INHU

Called the Overthrower, Khem-Inhu is a higher Judge charged with assessing those who use or abuse the law to harm others. It appears as a pale-skinned Egyptian noble clad in the customary royal *shendyt* (linen waist tunic), its face and neck covered by a ritual death mask that takes the shape of an elaborately framed snake head. In one hand it grips a scepter, in the other, a scale.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Radiant Lifeforce; Auspicious Mastery, Deathsight, Guardian Wrath, Voice of Conscience.

MAA-NANTUUF

Called the Seer of What is Brought Forth, Maa-Nantuuf has dominion over those who pollute or despoil themselves, body or soul. As Judge, it can see the taint in any substance, living or not. It appears as the archetypal hieroglyphic Egyptian male, except that it stands naked but for a burnished gold *gorgerine* (neck collar) and ceremonial mask, with two white bull horns.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Living Monolith; Enlightened Senses, Glorious Mien, Sight Beyond Eyes, Voice of Temptation.

NEB-ABITU

Called the Lord of Horns, Neb-Abitu is one of the highest Judges of spirit. Its purview is those who conjure and spread idle gossip or meaningless chatter that obscures matters of genuine import. It has the body of a large brown owl and the head of a hairless Egyptian man whose piercing

yellow eyes have no pupils and whose lips have been sewn together with flax.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Sight Beyond Eyes; Night Creature, Shrouding Aura, Voice of Conscience, Words Summoned Forth.

NEB-HERU

Called the Lord Above, this Judge oversees those who act decisively but in extreme haste, especially those who sit in judgment in such a manner. (It's rumored that Neb-Heru even keeps watch over his fellow Judges for the same reason.) Its seeming evokes the iconic sphinx of old, with the body of an African lion and the head of an Egyptian man wearing a golden headdress.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Epic Heart; Charmed Lives, Fearsome Soul, Living Monolith, Wisdom of the Ancients.

NEB-IMKHU

Called the Lord Imkhu, the Arisen consider this Judge to be brother to the Lord of Horns. It passes judgment over those who make a habit of eavesdropping, especially those who act on what they hear. Its seeming is the archetypal, anthropomorphic Egyptian figure; in this case, a man garbed in white linen, bearing the head of a hooded cobra whose hood is always fully open.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Familiar Face; By Steps Unseen, Epic Heart, Living in Now, Shrouding Aura.

NEBHA

Called the Flame, Nebha is the bane of all those who trade routinely in deception and lies. Perhaps the least (most foundational) Judge of shadow, its chosen form is that of a free-floating ball of impossibly white fire whose light burns away falsehood and reveals the truth in all things.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Rouse the Khaibit; Blessed Soul, Dauntless Explorer, Falcon Soul Aloft, Gift of Truth.

NEFER-TEM

Called the Eternal Lotus, Nefer-Tem is perhaps the highest of Judges, second only to Usekh-Nemtet. Its wisdom and jurisprudence are as eternal as its emblematic flower, and it thus assesses only the most discrete offenses, in this case those involving morally gray wrongdoings. Its form is that of a falcon-headed mummy holding a scepter in one hand and a lotus in the other.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Soul Infusion; Anointed Prowess, Deathsight, Eternal Legend, Soulsight.

NEHA-HATU

Called the Stinking Body, its judgment is reserved for those who violate the most basic needs of another. Typically, this starts with the taking of life, since that's *the* most basic need, but it also applies to denial of food, shelter, and so on. Neha-Hatu appears as an Egyptian "minotaur"—humanoid, but with a bull's head and cloven hooves, wearing a gorgerine and carrying an axe.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Retributive Curse; Blessed Panoply, Glorious Mien, Grip of Death, Running Like Flight.

NEHEB-KA

Called the One Who Unifies, this Judge knows the value of humility, having purview over those who reek of arrogance or who seek out undue acclaim. It appears as a horrid sphinx-like being with the head of a leopard, a forked tongue, the torso and forelegs of a lion, and the hind quarters of a long and coiling serpent with reddish brown scales.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Divine Countenance; Beast Soul Fury, Dominating Might, Enlightened Senses, Nihilist Awakening.

NEHEB-NEFERT

Called the Beautiful One, Neheb-Nefert is among the highest arbiters of the mortal soul. It is Judge to those who disrupt the natural order of the community, whether by flouting all the mores, stirring up dissent where none is necessary, or otherwise working against the common good. It comes as a radiant feminine silhouette whose face is ever obscured by light and whose skin, glimpsed infrequently through the glare, seems draped in a quilt of black and white feathers.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Living in Now; Ancient Horror Unveiling, Anointed Prowess, Divine Countenance, Familiar Face.

NEKHENHU

Called the Innocent, this dark entity surveys a soul's willingness to disregard or turn deaf ear toward the truth, however ugly it may be, and condemns in harsh measure

such craven souls. It appears as a grim vision—six jackal pups nursing at the teats of their dead and bloated mother. Although her corpse never moves, any and all communication seems to come from her alone.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Deathsight; Enduring Flesh, Godsight, Healing Counsel, Soul Infusion.

QERRTI

Called the Double-Nile Source, this Judge plays moral authority to those who indulge in impure sex (adultery and homosexuality aren't seen as impure, but bestiality and necrophilia could be). Qerrti appears as a half-man/half-lion—its top half is that of a bald and tanned warrior, with the lion's "forelegs" being the man's arms, while its back half hosts the lion's two hind legs and tail.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Miraculous Benefactor; Anointed Prowess, Radiant Lifeforce, Soul Infusion, Voice of Temptation.

RURUTI

Called the Double-Lion Judge, it reserves its judgment for those who defile or destroy sacred or sanctified places. It appears as a large, extremely feral-looking lion with two heads, side by side. One head looks as though it was once set on fire. The other is normal, but slavers like a rabid beast.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Blessed Soul; Beast Soul Fury, Blessed Panoply, Guardian Wrath, Running Like Flight.

SEKHIRU

Called the Balanced Scale, this Judge espies those who pry into matters not of their concern and levels judgment on those whose meddling results in real harm or injury. It appears as a grim vision—six baby Egyptian asps crawling in and out of their dead and bloated mother. All the Judge's communication seems to come from the serpent young, who speak in perfect unison.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Blessed Panoply; Living in Now, Night Creature, Retributive Curse, Soulsight.

SER-KHERU

Called the Disposer of Speech, it is Judge to all those who stir up strife among their own kind. Ser-Kheru appears as a giant Egyptian vulture with a gleam in its eye and a severed tongue dangling from its blood-caked beak.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Running Like Flight; Charmed Lives, Dauntless Explorer, Grip of Death, Voice of Conscience.

SER-TIHU

Called the Disposer of Wrath, Ser-Tihu is perhaps the highest arbiter of the mortal heart, second only to Usekh-Nemtet in its wisdom. It is Judge to those who embrace anger without cause and those who rant or foment unrest without reason. It appears as a very pregnant African lioness.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Healing Counsel; Deathsight, Radiant Lifeforce, Retributive Curse, Sight Beyond Eyes.

SET-QESU

Called the Crusher of Bones, its purview is those who steal from or harm others out of need or necessity. What constitutes necessity is the rub, and a potential source of confusion among those pledged to this Judge. (Given its nickname, the Crusher's views on need are likely Draconian in nature.) It comes as a moving, snorting automaton carved from limestone in the shape of a bull.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Dominating Might; Charmed Lives, Glorious Mien, Grip of Death, Nihilist Awakening.

SHET-KHERU

Called the Orderer of Speech, the Arisen speak of it as brother to Nefer-Tem, and thus among the highest of Judges. Its purview is those who allow their failings of spirit (vanities, insecurities, jealousies, and the like) to overwhelm their virtue or good judgment. It appears as the iconic hieracosphinx, bearing the head of a great falcon-with-headdress and the body of a white lion.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Wisdom of the Ancients; Godsight, Guardian Wrath, Pharaoh Reigns Anew, Voice of Temptation.

TA-RETINHU

Called the Fiery Foot, Ta-Retinhu holds a special dark place in the annals of Arisen legendry. It holds sway over those who commit violence either for information (torture) or for the sheer pleasure it gives them. It appears as a bronze bull set atop a small pyre, the flames rising to obscure all but the top half of its body. A faint, echoing wail can be heard coming from within.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Guardian Wrath; Divine Countenance, Fearsome Soul, Running Like Flight, Words Summoned Forth.

TCHESER-TEP

Called the Exalted Hand, this Judge's province is the protection of the dead from the living. This applies broadly, covering the physical (grave robbing, etc.), the conceptual (the deceased's good name, etc.), and the mystical (preventing the subjugation or oblivion of a spirit by the living). It appears as a jackal-headed nobleman carrying a black staff in one hand and an ankh in the other.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: By Steps Unseen; Godsight, Guardian Wrath, Nihilist Awakening, Voice of Conscience.

TEM-SEPU

Called the Source of Command, it is Judge to those who would, in the language of the Egyptians, "curse the king." In practical terms, this applies to anyone who would "cheat" (use magic, for example) to subvert the power of a rightful authority. Its seeming is that of a pale and hairless pharaoh, dressed in royal finery, but in place of a head, there's a nest of writhing viper tails emerging from a central fleshy hub, giving the illusion of seven snakes digging competitively.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Charmed Lives; Auspicious Mastery, Dominating Might, Fearsome Soul, Pharaoh Reigns Anew.

TENEMHU

Called the Retreater, this Judge cannot abide a false witness, especially when the lie or slander leads to true harm. It appears as a shivering cur, its pelt half-eaten by mange, whose twitching tail is tucked between its legs.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Beast Soul Fury; Enlightened Senses, Running Like Flight, Shrouding Aura, Soulsight.

TUTUUTEF

Called the Giver of Wickedness, Tutuutef is Judge to those who indulge their appetites reactively, especially with sex and especially in anger (using sex as a tool for revenge, etc.). It appears as an obsidian funerary statue carved smooth in the shape of a seated and bejeweled cat.

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart).

Bestowed Affinities: Pharaoh Reigns Anew; Anointed Prowess, Beast Companion, Charmed Lives, Voice of Temptation.

UAMENTI

Called the Seed Entwined, Uamenti is Judge to those who debauch others, especially through rape. It appears as an ithyphallic anthropomorph with the head of a black bull, arms that end not in hands but in snake heads, and the black-skinned, muscular body of a tall and ardent man.

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence).

Bestowed Affinities: Shrouding Aura; Epic Heart, Familiar Face, Grip of Death, Soul Infusion.

UATCH-REKHET

Called the Rectifier, this Judge presides over those who curse the divine or work ill against the very cosmos (whether metaphorically, by actively inviting ruin or oblivion, or literally, as in the case of dark magic). Such transgressions show what happens when blasphemy becomes reality. It appears as a limestone statue of a hooded figure holding a scroll open with two scaly hands.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Godsight; Ancient Horror Unveiling, Divine Countenance, Nihilist Awakening, Retributive Curse.

UNEM-BESEK

Called the Eater of Entrails, it is Judge to those who steal, by cunning or by force, land or territory that rightfully belongs to another. It appears as a reptilian horror comprised of a fleshy hub (which surface looks like the back of a hooded cobra) with giant examples of seven different breeds of Egyptian snake (sand viper, spitting cobra, etc.) growing out from its center of mass.

Defining Pillar: Ren (name).

Bestowed Affinities: Eternal Legend; Beast Companion, Beast Soul Fury, Dominating Might, Glorious Mien.

UNEM-SEF

Called the Eater of Blood, this Judge is whispered to be feared even among its own kind. It assesses those blessedly rare souls who live for the corruption of others, especially through carefully constructed lies or half-truths. It appears as a massive, ratty jackal that looks more spider than mammal, its neck and head swung low to the ground, hind legs up, crimson tongue lolling.

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow).

Bestowed Affinities: Grip of Death; Enduring Flesh, Gift of Truth, Running Like Flight, Soulsight.

JUDGES OF DUAT

USEKH-NEMTET

Called the First Judge, he who is "long of strides" is Judge and instructor on the very *concept* of immorality or sin. Often seen as the judge of judges, his understanding of the divine order is unparalleled. His pledges say he comes to them in the guise of their own fathers or father figures.

Defining Pillar: All. (The player chooses his decree.)

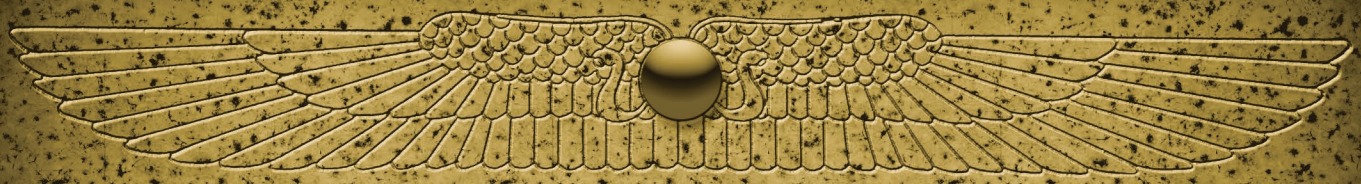
Bestowed Affinities: Dauntless Explorer, Deathsight, Godsight, Sight Beyond Eyes, Soulsight.

UTU-NESERT

Called Vigorous of Fire, Utu-Nesert oversees those who invoke curses or misfortune on others, be it via actual curses (spells, vessels, etc.) or metaphorical ones involving social manipulation. This Judge appears as a beautiful hawk in mid-flight, wings spread, its body awash in red flames. As a pledge looks on, the occasional burning feather falls to the ground like a fire's dying ember.

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit).

Bestowed Affinities: Falcon Soul Aloft; Blessed Soul, Dauntless Explorer, Radiant Lifeforce, Rouse the Khaibit.



Heathrow is a large airport, and it humbles me. There's a patina settled upon my mind—an understanding of the ins and outs, the security, how the crisps bags get to the overpriced kiosks, the cunning with which the luggage finds its owners. In 2011, 58 million people passed through this terminal. That's four times as many people as were alive when I was born. Heathrow, in a year, is busier than was my world.

For under that thin layer of superficial knowledge, which lets me readily pose as confident traveler, there is still a man, primitive and flawed. Oh, a godly mystic, to be certain, and the servant of mighty forces that those same millions ignore. Yet I look at Heathrow, and the planes... so huge, and they swoop to the air like birds. And I, just a fleck upon the bird's wing, so small a thing. Yet small things matter.

As I leave the high-security area, I see a woman speaking into one of those devices, small and black like onyx. She was on my flight, and I remember smiling at her. I'm almost as certain that she smiled back. Her hair... by Duat, it is like the sun! In all my living days, I never saw eyes like hers, so colored like the sea. I pause as she looks up.

"I felt like I was dead," I tell her. "Like seeing you restored me to life."

I know she speaks English, which is another dab of paint on the ancient wall of my mind, so I know she understands, and then I turn and leave hastily, blushing. It's important to say it and then go, so that she knows it was sincere, and that I meant only to speak the words and that I was not trying to get anything from her.

A mortal woman, frail and small. Yet small things matter.





Chapter Two
The Modeler

O my heart of ages! Do not stand up as a witness against me;
do not be opposed to me in the tribunal;
do not be hostile to me in the presence of the keeper of the balance,
for you are my Ka which was in my body, the protector who made my limbs strong.
Go forth to the happy place whereto we speed.
Do not tell lies about me in the presence of the god.
— The Book of the Dead

This chapter introduces the characters of a **Mummy** chronicle and the game traits that describe them. The character creation process is detailed first, then the new Advantages of Sekhem, Pillars, and the special Morality of mummies called Memory. New Merits are offered, the decrees are described, and the different sorts of mummy sorcery are detailed as Affinities and Utterances.

Character Creation

You're creating a character for a Storytelling game of memory and self-discovery, not a simple game piece. Mummies begin play with hazy memories, withdrawn into their duty to the Judges and to their lost civilization, but with effort, they can unlock the secrets of the past and slowly reclaim themselves. Having a strong concept of your character's personality and quirks is more important than deciding the traits in which to specialize, and it gives you and your Storyteller a solid foundation on which to build as the story progresses.

Most World of Darkness games advise players to use an optional "prelude" scene or limited story revolving around a character's background. That isn't appropriate for most **Mummy** chronicles, especially those using the game's theme of recovering memory, so you should concentrate here on creating the character as she exists *now*, in the modern day. Don't worry about how she came to be the way she is, and focus on the things that make her *her*; the scraps of humanity that cling to her despite the weight of millennia spent in the service of her masters. Your allocation of traits should illustrate this vision.

Step One: Character Concept

The concept is the starting point on your character's journey in the chronicle and the ending of her shrouded history. No matter how she develops in the course of play or what the Storyteller reveals about her background, the

Character Creation Process

Use the character creation rules from the **World of Darkness** corebook, and add the following mummy template during Step Five.

Choose a Judge and assign its bestowed decree (see p. 56), or choose a decree and leave the final choice of Judge up to the Storyteller. The choice of decree adds one dot to an Attribute favored by that decree.

Choose a guild (see p.31).

Allocate nine dots of Pillars. No Pillar can be higher than the defining Pillar, as determined by the character's decree; only one Pillar can be left without any dots by the end of character creation; the fifth dot in a Pillar can only be bought if there is at least one dot in each of the other four Pillars; and the fifth dot of a Pillar uses two of the nine dots.

The choice of guild grants a free starting Guild Affinity (see p. 98). Choose one of the Soul Affinities available to the character's decree (see p. 99) and one other Affinity for which the character meets the prerequisites.

Choose one starting Utterance (see p. 111). Add a second starting Utterance if the character has dots in all five Pillars by this step of character creation.

Special mummy-only Merits are available (see p. 79).

Morality is called Memory in **Mummy** (see p. 76).

Spend 20 experience building up the completed character (or more, at the Storyteller's discretion). A playable **Mummy** character should possess at least one dot in each of the Cult, Guild Status, and Tomb Merits.

concept is the core of her. However she develops over the chronicle, she started with this concept. Whatever happens in flashback scenes or is revealed about her past actions, her path led to that destination. The traumas of the Rite of Return and the pressure of millennia spent suffering the Descent have stripped almost everything away from her, but she is not an automaton. Not yet.

Concepts are simple descriptions, usually an adjective and a noun: "wandering craftsman," "stern assessor," "weary guardian," and so on. They can be more detailed, if you choose, or may include ideas about her life in Irem, historical events at which she was present, or habits she has in the modern day. An example of a complex concept could be "my character was a goldsmith in the City of Pillars and is fascinated by modern science, but she thinks 21st-century materialism debases what she sees as art and expresses it by taking from the undeserving." If you have a particular vision for which guild and decree she is most suitable, that should guide you, but if none leap out, it's fine to wait until Step Five before deciding.

Step Two: Select Attributes

No one is equally talented in all areas, not even a 6,000-year-old Arisen. The next step in character creation is to prioritize and allocate your character's Attributes—her natural aptitudes, talents, and weaknesses. Attributes are divided into Mental, Social, and Physical categories and represent the parts of your character that all humans share to one extent or another. They are difficult and time-consuming to improve through training.

Begin by prioritizing the three Attribute categories of Mental, Social, and Physical. Choose one to be primary, one to be secondary, and one to be tertiary. Your concept should guide you. Does the character have a cerebral concept, or is she a born (and reborn) orator? Is she naturally charismatic or an excellent athlete?

Every character begins with one dot in every Attribute. Next, you have five dots to allocate to the primary Attributes, four for the secondary category, and three for the tertiary. The fifth dot in any Attribute costs two dots to purchase at this stage; it's difficult to specialize so much that you reach the peak of human achievement.

Two dots in an Attribute is the human average. Not assigning any dots to an Attribute, leaving it with only the one automatic dot, notes it as being an area of particular deficiency or weakness. Three or four dots are the areas other people will think of as being noteworthy about your character; a man with three dots of Strength would be described as "strong," one with four dots of Resolve might justifiably be called "constant," while if a man had only one dot of Wits, others might refer to him as "slow."

Remember that all mummies are capable of superhuman physical feats when newly arisen and filled with Sekhem's power. The allocation of dots here should describe what your character is like when *not* spending Pillars to enhance her capabilities.

Step Three: Select Skills

If your character's Attributes are her natural talents and deficiencies, her Skills are the things she has learned and retained from life and countless rebirths. Like Attributes, they are divided into Mental, Social, and Physical categories that you must prioritize as primary, secondary, and tertiary. Unlike Attributes, not every Skill is possessed by every character. Skills are learned through training, study, or gradual improvement.

Once you've decided on which categories to take at which priority, allocate eleven dots to the primary category, seven dots to the secondary category, and four dots to the tertiary. Skills don't start at one dot as Attributes do—your character may still attempt actions that require a Skill in which she possesses no dots, but the dice pool will be penalized by one die for Social and Physical Skills and three dice for Mental ones. Also, remember that routine or casual tasks will have dice bonuses applied, so don't worry about picking up one dot in everything. Focus on the Skills the character can perform under pressure or when there's a risk to failure.

Some Skills indicate that a character has been active in recent history. Computer and Firearms might not be appropriate for characters who haven't arisen since before they were developed. Other Skills are used for actions an ancient being might be more used to. The following table gives examples of skills an Arisen might have learned, along with which Skill governs their use in the Storytelling system.

Archery	Athletics
Astronomy	Academics
Muscle-Powered Watercraft	Athletics
Riding	Athletics
Wind-Powered Watercraft	Survival

If you can't figure out how your character would have learned a Skill, or which Skill would be used for something your concept includes, talk it over with your Storyteller. At this stage, your character doesn't need to know how and when she learned to do something, only that she did.

Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

Skills are broad divisions of ability; a character with two dots in Crafts, for example, is equally proficient with all

aspects of the Skill. Skill Specialties represent greater focus or aptitude with a narrow aspect of a Skill, granting an extra die in rolls using the Skill where they are applicable. Your character might only have two dots of Crafts, but if she also had a Specialty in Carpentry, she would count as having three dots when working with wood.

You have three Skill Specialties to assign. Specialties do not need to be on different Skills, but they do need to be assigned to Skills in which your character has at least one dot. Use them for areas of special expertise or where your concept indicates your character should have more dots than you were able to assign, extending the Skill within the tighter focus of its Specialty.

Step Five: Add Mummy Template

Mummies were human once, living and breathing citizens of a forgotten empire in the ancient world, but they lost that mortality to their masters and to the Rite of Return. They are driven to seek out vessels that resonate with the energies empowering their Arisen bodies and may learn to harness those energies to power occult abilities.

Supernatural templates don't "stack"—no mummy will ever Awaken as a mage or suddenly become a werewolf. If a vampire attempts to convert a mummy into one of his own kind, the mummy simply dies and arises again (angry) when conditions permit.

As a supernatural being, a mummy cannot select human-only Merits, but she can access a few new Merits only mummies may possess.

Decree

The decree is the definition of a mummy's sense of self, the part of the complex Egyptian soul she centered herself around during her first death. The decree influences a mummy's personality and means of recovering her spiritual energies, and it is determined by which Judge heard the pronouncement of the decree. You may either choose a Judge and gain that Judge's associated decree automatically or choose a decree and leave the choice of which Judge witnessed your character's decree to your Storyteller.

The decrees are described on page 85. The list of Judges is found on page 56.

The Lion-Headed Decree of Heart (Ab)

Passionate, spiteful, and instinctive, the oft-styled "Sphinxes" declared before their Judges that their passions are what defined them as people. The most outwardly human of the Arisen, their fellow mummies often see them as too emotional or unreasoning.

The Falcon-Headed Decree of Spirit (Ba)

Impulsive, adventurous, and proud, the "Charioteers" declared for action before their Judges. Six millennia later, they are still moving, still striving, and still usually in the vanguard.

The Bull-Headed Decree of Essence (Ka)

Reliable, obstinate, and obsessive, the "Millstones" decided in their first deaths that something *mattered* and continue to carry the same certainty that everything—including themselves—has an essential and ultimately fateful inner nature.

The Serpent-Headed Decree of the Name (Ren)

Studious, prying, and disciplined, the "Whisperers" focus primarily on identity—the idea that there's a truth to and within everything, and that this truth makes of each thing itself. Driven to understand themselves and their world, they are implacable in their questing.

The Jackal-Headed Decree of Shadow (Sheut)

Contemplative, morbid, and mystical, the Ferrymen devoted themselves to the mysteries of death and time. Millennia of guiding the Arisen through the secrets of life and death cycles have left them seeing everything as layered with ancient and occult meaning.

Guild

The Shan'iatu organized according to occult divisions of specialty, overseeing the craft-houses in which the mortal populations of Irem labored. Each guild mastered a particular form of magic, developed by a circle of sorcerer-priests. Each Shan'iatu then performed the Rite of Return on numerous servants in his house, creating mummies. Long after Irem's fall, the Arisen still divide themselves into guilds, teaching one another the traditions of magic preserved from their masters' Nameless Empire.

Your character's guild, therefore, is a combination profession and allegiance. Two mummies separated by hundreds of miles may be of the same guild and, potentially, the same creator and/or Judge.

Each guild grants a bonus Affinity and has a favored category of vessel to which mummies pledged to that guild are drawn.

The guilds are described in full on pages 31-55. Choose one for your character:

Maa-Kep, the Engravers of Amulets

Mummies of the laborers guild are shrewd and capable. Subtle adepts of human nature and organization, they can do more with a timely word than with an army. The Maa-Kep favor amulets, adornments that allow the transfer of power from one person to another.

Mesen-Nebu, the First Alchemists

Mummies in the guild of alchemy were once smiths, craftsmen, and mine overseers in the service of the wealthiest nobles. Students of a principle they call Dedwen

("prosperity"), they learn power over both mundane and mystical transactions. The Mesen-Nebu favor regia, relics marked by and often bearing material transmutations.

Sesha-Hebsu, the Inscribers of Texts

Mummies of the guild of scribes served as scholars, bureaucrats, and magistrates in lost Irem. They value knowledge and order, and the passing of millennia has done little to assuage their urge to see the same among the Arisen. The Sesha-Hebsu specialize in texts, vessels where Sekhem's power resides within the printed or inscribed word.

Su-Menent, the Shepherds of the Shell

Mummies in the guild of the shell were acolytes, funerary priests, and morticians in Irem. Trained in magics of the flesh, they were taught that no matter what changes come with time, death—and, thus, their art—remains the same. The Su-Menent favor uter, vessels that lock Sekhem within the remains of once-living tissue and bone.

Tef-Aabhi, the Builders of Effigies

Mummies of the masons guild were architects and engineers in Irem, masters of sacred geometry and the designers and overseers of Irem's many infamous pillars and statues, as well as temples and tombs. The Tef-Aabhi favor effigies, occult representations of form.

Favored Attributes

As the undead, mummies have had millennia to improve certain innate aptitudes, despite having little recollection of their time in living world and none of their time in Duat. And as beings of spirit-made-flesh, the core component of their souls is what enjoys the acute benefit of this improvement over time. Once a player has chosen her character's Judge and decree, she chooses one Attribute from the decree's associated pair and adds one dot to it.

Decree	Favored Attributes
Heart	Presence and Strength
Spirit	Resolve and Wits
Essence	Resolve and Stamina
Name	Intelligence and Manipulation
Shadow	Composure and Stamina

Pillars

When a mummy arises, his body and soul are reconstructed by the Rite of Return, bound together by the power of Sekhem. The Arisen can use the spiritual energy bound into their fivefold souls to fuel powers, gain superhuman physical prowess, and activate relics.

A mummy character calls these soul-parts "pillars," with each being named after a component of the soul: **Ab** (heart), **Ba** (spirit), **Ka** (essence), **Ren** (name), and **Sheut** (shadow). These components are represented by a trait system called Pillars, which is divided along the same lines.

You have nine dots to allocate to your character's five Pillars, with the following conditions:

- No Pillar may be bought higher than the primary Pillar of the mummy's decree, which shares its name.
- No more than one Pillar may be left with no dots at all.
- The fifth dot in a Pillar costs two dots and may only be allocated if all four of the other Pillars have at least one dot.

If nine dots aren't sufficient, you can give up Merit dots (from Step Six) for additional starting Pillars—three Merit dots buy one Pillar dot. A character starting with eleven Pillar dots will only receive one Merit dot in the next step.

Affinities and Utterances

Affinities and Utterances are the magical powers of the Arisen. Affinities are subtle magical abilities, often granted by virtue of decree or guild, while Utterances are more complex "spells" cast through the necromantic energies of the Rite of Return.

Tongues of Ages Past

The Language Merit assumes that a character speaks and reads at least one language common to her surroundings from an early age and must make an effort to learn more. Not buying the Merit is only a disadvantage when not on one's home turf.

Mummies, though, are never on their home turf. Even in what modern archaeologists refer to as "Ancient Egypt," they were a full Sothic Turn beyond their mortal days. The City of Pillars did not use the exact language that would later be carved into the great temples of the Nile or those spoken in their vassal states. The necromancers spoke their own tongue, and their servants were raised in its use.

The language of Irem is spoken only by the Arisen and cult members who have been taught it to better communicate with their mummies. Its influence, though, is wide-ranging, with words, phrases, and grammar from the City of Pillars being found throughout the ancient world and even as far as modern Arabic.

This means that, without the Languages Merit or an Affinity or Utterance that helps her adapt, a character has one more wall between herself and the lives of the modern human beings around her. Unable to speak to anyone but cultists, the mummy is cut off from the rest of humanity.

Each mummy starts with one Soul Affinity bestowed by her Judge and decree; the bonus Guild Affinity granted to all members of her guild; and one other Affinity for which she meets all the prerequisites.

Each mummy also starts with one Utterance for which she meets at least one prerequisite. If the player assigned or bought at least one dot in every Pillar during Pillar allocation, the character also receives a second bonus Utterance at the end of this step.

Step Six: Select Merits

A beginning character has seven dots of Merits, which you should choose to fit the concept. A reclusive architect is unlikely to have Fighting Styles, for example.

Some Merits are available only to mortal characters or other supernatural beings; a **Mummy** character can't choose these. Additionally, mummies are unable to buy the Eidetic Memory Merit.

Seven new Merits are presented in **Mummy: The Curse** — Cult, Enigma, Guild Status, Relic, Tomb, Vestige, and Witness. These new Merits are detailed on pages 78-80. Several existing Merits are also modified for use by mummies.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Rules for Advantages can be found on pages 90-105 of **World of Darkness**. Defense, Health, Initiative, Size, Speed, Willpower, Virtue and Vice remain for the most part unchanged. Morality is replaced by Memory. In addition to these, Arisen characters possess an Advantage named Sekhem.

Willpower

Determine Willpower for Arisen characters as normal, by adding Composure to Resolve. In addition to the uses listed for Willpower on page 95 of **World of Darkness**, mummies may use it to activate certain Affinities and Utterances.

Mummies may sacrifice a dot of Sekhem during play to immediately replenish their Willpower points, as described on page 74.

In addition, mummies spend Willpower to heal wounds and to activate certain relics.

Sekhem

Sekhem is the "power trait" of **Mummy**, the measure of an Arisen's life-force, marking the limit of the abilities she can use and the protection she enjoys from the powers of supernatural creatures.

You don't need to assign any dots to Sekhem. Every time your character returns to life, for whatever reason, she does so with ten dots of Sekhem, but only if she last died peacefully (by running out of Sekhem); if she was killed before completing her most recent Descent, she usually returns with one dot less than she had when she died. The rating then slowly decreases over time, until the character must again return to death.

Full rules for Sekhem can be found on page 73.

Memory

In place of human Morality, the Arisen possess Memory, marking how much of their living personality remains after repeated Descents. Unlike the Morality traits in other World of Darkness games, Memory for a beginning character always starts at three dots and must be raised with experience during play. These three dots represent centuries of slow but inevitable progress in restoring Memory; mummies who never arose following the Rite of Return, and are somehow brought back, would begin with only a single dot. Each time a mummy returns from Duat, she does so at Memory 3, though her Memory rises to its full normal rating after a short period (a scene or an hour, generally).

Step Eight: Age and Experience

Since every Arisen has been around for a long time (some 6,000 years), each has had opportunities to arise, to live new experiences, and to gain new understandings. To reflect this, the player of each mummy concludes the character creation process by spending twenty experience points for the character. The Storyteller must certify that each expenditure is suitable for the story. If the character does not already have at least one dot of Guild Status, one dot of Tomb, and one dot of Cult, those minimum Merits should be bought with a portion of this experience award.

Storytellers might also grant additional experience to represent characters who have been called back to life repeatedly by their cults and/or who have more fully retained the benefits of their life experiences.

Starting Character	20 experience points
Acclimatized Arisen	40 experience points
Descent Veteran	75 experience points
Legendary Immortal	125+ experience points

Step Nine: Return to Life

Your character is now complete in terms of traits and dots, but those game mechanics are just the skeleton, ready to be fleshed out as a person. With your concept in mind, run through the traits you've assigned and think about what they *mean* for your character. Does she have a high Wits? Then she's naturally sharp and quick thinking, able

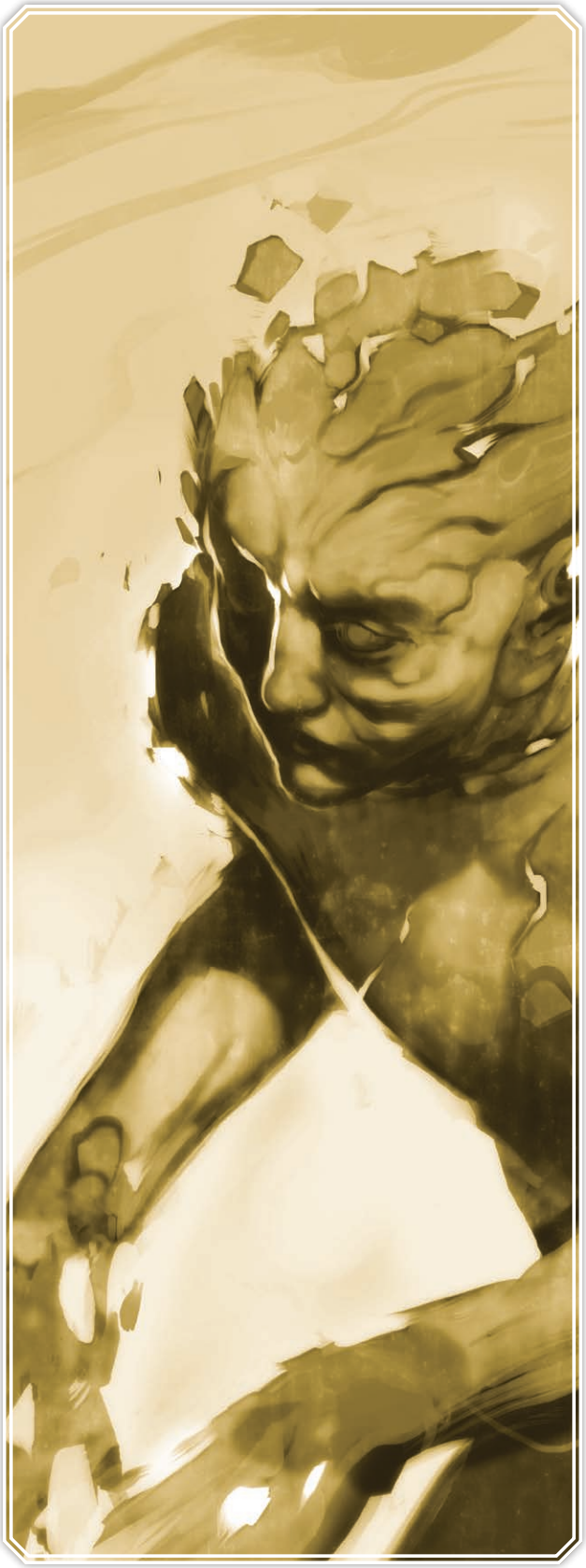
to adapt to whatever strange future she finds herself in. Is her Strength or Stamina low? Then when not spending Pillars, she's frail, and the Descent quickly forces her to find nonviolent solutions. Are any of her Skills especially high? Then you should think about why she retains that knowledge despite the grinding weight of millennia; perhaps they are linked to the service of her guild or were learned in previous attempts to reclaim herself.

Your character's physical presence is also important. In life, the Arisen hailed from North and Central Africa, Asia Minor, the Arabian Peninsula, and even Mesopotamia. The Rite of Return reconstitutes a mummy's body whenever she is called back to life, but the new khat ("body") is as her soul remembers herself, not necessarily how she actually was—features change slightly with successive periods of activity, creating a body that is as much self-image as a reliable recreation of Irem's people. How does this manifest for your character? Would a modern person believe her to be Egyptian? Persian? Nigerian? Is she missing scars that her oldest, fragmented memories indicate she once had? Has she grown taller over the millennia? Stronger? Physicality is not limited to appearance. How does your character move, rest, or fight? Is she graceful, or does she take the most direct route through any action?

Personality is deadened by Sekhem and sheer age, but there's still a person under all that duty to the Judges. What quirks does your character possess? Does she react to things that confuse her with dry sarcasm, by ignoring them, or by grasping what she can use for her mission and rejecting the rest as irrelevant? Look to her Merits: how does she interact with her cult? As a stern taskmistress, an equal, a servant? What is her tomb like, and how does it reflect her likes, her dislikes, or her attitude to the Descent?

Your character also needs a name. Your local library and the Internet hold a few sources of appropriate ancient Egyptian names, but many Arisen also or alternatively use titles or aliases (sometimes without remembering what those titles denote).

A new **Mummy** character possesses only a few dots of Memory, but she hasn't forgotten *everything* about herself. (There is always room to fall.) If you have any ideas about what your character may have done in the past, either when alive in the Nameless Empire or during previous Descents, you should discuss them with your Storyteller with an eye to including them in whatever background is revealed in play. You can be as detailed or as vague as you like, filling in some sections (such as past Sothic Turns, for instance) with a good idea of what your character was doing then, while leaving others as static images. The details you decide on here can have as many holes as you like; perhaps your mummy has memories of fleeing Egypt during the second Sothic Turn, moving her cult out into Europe, but



Mummy Template Quick Reference

For the beginning steps of character creation, see **World of Darkness**, pp. 34-45. The template summarizes the changes made to an Arisen character.

Prelude

In a typical **Mummy** chronicle, there is no prelude in step nine of character creation.

Judge and Decree

Choose or have the Storyteller select a Judge and assign its decree. The decree determines which Pillar is defining and provides methods of regaining spent Pillars.

The Decree of Heart (Ab)

Passionate and emotional mummies, the "Lion-Headed" know that, without feeling, life means nothing. Easily distracted, extreme in both love and hate, the Sphinxes are usually the best at dealing with mortals, but easily the most prone to taking setbacks personally.

The Decree of Spirit (Ba)

Dynamic and brave mummies, the "Falcon-Headed" know that life is action. Never delegating when they can do something themselves, the Charioteers are untiring in pursuit of their duties and often just as reckless in their improvisation.

The Decree of Essence (Ka)

Focused and steadfast mummies, the "Bull-Headed" declare that all things, even mummies, have an essential inner nature. Calm, unyielding certainty makes them the Millstones grinding at the Judges' tasks. A near inability to change their minds makes them implacable enemies.

The Decree of the Name (Ren)

Inquisitive and studious mummies, the "Serpent-Headed" seek the truth and identity of themselves and of the living world. A questioning and probing nature makes them the Whisperers of secret lore and seekers of secrets long (and often best) forgotten. The same need to seek hidden truths makes them the most likely to go mad and/or betray their duty.

The Decree of Shadow (Sheut)

Mystical and morbid mummies, the "Jackal-Headed" see all things as containing hidden layers of meaning. Contemplative and resigned where others are fearful, the Ferrymen help themselves and others through the spiritual difficulties of the Rite and its Descent.

Guild

Choose a guild, the Shan'iatu-led organization to which the character's master belonged. The guild determines the mummy's favored vessel type and grants a bonus Affinity.

Maa-Kep, the Engravers of Amulets

Managers and organizers used to interpreting orders and achieving their ends through subtle means. Favored vessels are amulets.

Mesen-Nebu, the First Alchemists

Power brokers and sensualists used to transforming both mundane and mystic resources. Favored vessels are regia.

Sesha-Hebsu, the Inscribers of Texts

Scholars and scribes accustomed to keeping records and maintaining order. Favored vessels are texts.

Su-Menent, the Shepherds of the Shell

Funerary priests and ritualists who know how flesh and spirit intersect, they work to suit the needs of a wrathful cosmos. Favored vessels are uter.

Tef-Aabhi, the Builders of Effigies

Masons and engineers entrusted with Irem's sacred geometry, they envision, they model, and they build. Favored vessels are effigies.

Pillars

Allocate nine dots of Pillars. No Pillar may be higher than the Pillar associated with the character's decree. The fifth dot in any Pillar may only be bought if all Pillars have at least one dot assigned, and it costs two dots.

Additional Pillar dots may be bought with Merit dots—three Merit dots per Pillar dot.

Affinities and Utterances

Record the Affinity granted by guild. Record the Soul Affinity linked to the character's decree and Judge. Choose one other Affinity. All prerequisites must be met before selecting Affinities or bought with starting experience so that they are met before play.

Choose one Utterance. Characters with at least one dot in all five Pillars by the end of character creation receive a second bonus Utterance. All prerequisites must be met before selecting Utterances or bought with starting experience so that they are met before play.

Merits

Mummies may not buy the Eidetic Memory Merit or Merits specific to other supernatural beings or mortals. They may purchase the following special Merits: Cult (special), Enigma (• to •••••), Guild Status (• to •••••), Tomb (• to •••••), Relic (•+), and Vestige (•+).

Sekhem

A character's Sekhem, the measure of his life force under the Rite's power, is set whenever he arises and falls according to the rules for the Descent. Characters rising from a peaceful death begin with 10 dots of Sekhem, while those returning to an incomplete mission after being killed return with one dot less than the level they left.

Memory ⟨Morality Trait⟩

Memory starts at three dots for a beginning character and must be raised with experience points.

Starting Experience

Spend 20 experience points (or more if the Storyteller grants a higher starting amount). Most mummies (in standard chronicles) have at least one dot in the Cult, Guild Status, and Tomb Merits; if these have not already been selected, they should be bought now.

Experience Point Costs

Trait	Experience Cost
Attribute	New dots x4
Skill	New dots x3
Skill Specialty	3
Defining Pillar	New dots x2
Other Pillar	New dots x3
Affinity Favored by decree, guild, or Judge	15
Other Affinity	17
Fated Affinity Favored by decree, guild, or Judge*	13
Fated Other Affinity*	15
Utterance	15
Merit	New dots x2
Memory	New dots x3

Certain acts and powers can burn out whole dots of an Arisen's Willpower. Restoring Willpower to its prior rating of Composure + Resolve costs 8 experience per lost dot.

* The character may leave the choice of which Affinity to buy up to Fate. In these cases, the Storyteller, and not the player, determines which Affinity the character manifests.

not of what she was fleeing *from*. Another memory could be of being in a burning building during some kind of war, focusing on the fear and anger she felt rather than the details of when or how this took place. Those are up to your Storyteller.

Last, think about how your character interacts with the rest of her meret. Your Storyteller should be able to tell you what framework he's using for the chronicle, and if he wants the characters to be allies, rivals, recent strangers, or enemies. If the players have all been creating characters together, take a while to talk about one another's characters and consider how they'd interact.

Example of Character Creation

Damian is setting up a **Mummy** chronicle and has invited Agena to play. He explains that the chronicle will be set in Washington, D.C. and feature rival Arisen-sponsored cults all attracted to the city as the capital of a great empire—the same instinct that led mummies to infiltrate Thebes, Rome, Byzantium, and London have brought the Arisen across the Atlantic. Damian asks that the players don't detail how their characters decided to travel to the U.S., though, as he intends to use flashbacks to explore that in play.

Damian gives Agena a blank character sheet, and she spends some time looking over the Skills and Attributes while thinking about what sort of character she wants to play.

Step One: Character Concept

Agena decides that she wants a character who adapts well to travel and different cultures—she's played a fish-out-of-water in several chronicles and wants this new character to be the person who can fit in smoothly no matter where she is. Talking about it with the rest of the troupe, she decides that her character is the one chosen to retrieve vessels that require travel or to recruit new allies when the meret finds itself in unfamiliar places. Agena consults a list of ancient Egyptian names and picks Tadinanefer ("she who was given beauty").

Step Two: Select Attributes

Agena decides on Tadinanefer's Attribute priorities. The concept has a clear social focus, so Agena picks Social as primary, but the order of the other two categories is not as clear. Agena intends her character to be used to travel, which would indicate at least some physical ability, but also to be good at thinking on her feet. She decides that the latter is more important and picks Mental as secondary and Physical as tertiary.

Next, Agena assigns Attribute dots. Tadinanefer is shaping up in her mind as being more calm and friendly than underhanded, so she puts two of the five primary dots into Presence and Composure each and the last dot into Manipulation, leaving her with Presence •••, Manipulation •• and Composure •••. Four dots in secondary Attributes allows her to show Tadinanefer's quick-wittedness by buying Wits ••• and leaving Intelligence and Resolve at •• each. Last, she puts a single dot into each of the Physical Attributes to finish this Step with Strength, Dexterity and Stamina ••.

Step Three: Select Skills

Agena now decides on Skill priorities. She's unsure which categories to put where, so looks at which skills she knows she wants the character to have, reasoning that it will make prioritization easier. She puts marks next to the Skills on the character sheet to note that Tadinanefer should possess at least a dot in them; working down the sheet, she marks Academics, Investigation, Politics, Athletics, Survival, Weaponry, Animal Ken, Empathy, Persuasion, Socialize, Streetwise and Subterfuge. Looking at those, Social Skills are clearly primary, Mental secondary and Physical tertiary. She begins by allocating one dot to each, and then looks to see how many she has left to spend.

With six dots already assigned, Agena has five left for the primary category of social Skills. She allocates her remaining dots to end with Animal Ken •, Empathy •••, Persuasion •••, Socialize ••, Streetwise • and Subterfuge •. She spends her remaining secondary dots to arrive at Academics ••, Investigation ••, Politics •• and decides to add to her list by spending the last point on Occult •. Finally, she allocates her tertiary dots to buy Athletics ••, Survival • and Weaponry •.

Step Four: Select Skill Specialties

Agena looks over the Skill dots she's allocated and thinks about which of them seem to be too low, or would benefit from specialization. Her concept of Tadinanefer is evolving as she assigns dots; she's the pathfinder of her meret, the one who would travel to new cities first. She also wants to make sure she's not neglecting the character's social focus, and only had room for two dots of Socialize.

Agena decides to spend her three Skill Specialties on Socialize (Finding Allies), Athletics (Ride), and Survival (Travel).

Step Five: Add Mummy Template

Agena reads the Judges' descriptions again and can't seem to decide which is best for her concept. She knows the best fitting decree for Tadinanefer, though—the decree of spirit (ba)—and opts to leave the choice of to which exact Judge Tadinanefer is pledged to Damian (now that she has narrowed the possible choices down from 42 to 10). He decides that Nefer-Tem, the Eternal Lotus, is an appropriate choice.

Agena decides that the best guild for the character is the Maa-Kep and notes the favored vessel of amulets.

Assigning Pillars, Agena chooses to put three dots in Ba (since that's her defining Pillar). She decides she doesn't want her soul to be truly deficient in any way, so she spends the next four dots on making sure every Pillar is represented. Finally, she throws another dot each into Ka and Ren, bringing the rating of both to ••.

Choosing Affinities, Agena records the Maa-Kep Guild Affinity (Affable Aid). She then looks up the Ba-aspected Affinity granted by her Judge (Soul Infusion) and records that, too. Finally, she looks for an Affinity that will be useful to the character, but wants one that isn't immediately obvious for her Judge or decree, and settles on Gift of Truth.

Agena notes that as Tadinanefer has dots in all five Pillars, she may choose two Utterances (if one of the Pillars had no dots assigned, she would only get to choose one during this step). She decides on Command the Beasts and Doom Affliction.

Step Six: Select Merits

Agena reads the Merits in the **World of Darkness** corebook and consults the rules for Cult, Enigma, Guild Status, Relic, Tomb, and Vestige. She decides that Tadinanefer wouldn't have an elaborate tomb, having moved many times over multiple arisings, so she only spends one dot on it. She spends three dots on Cult, though, to emphasize her character's skill at recruiting servants. Her remaining three dots go to Language • and a two-dot Relic.

Step Seven: Determine Advantages

Agena records Tadinanefer's starting Memory of •••. With Size 5 and Stamina ••, the character has seven dots of Health. With Dexterity •• and Wits •••, her Defense is 2. Adding Resolve and Composure together results in Willpower •••••.

Reading the descriptions of Virtues and Vices, Agena decides on Hope and Envy.

Step Eight: Age and Experience

Damian tells Agena that her character should have the 20 experience typical for starting mummies. She already has the minimum ratings in the Cult and Tomb Merits, so she decides to buy Guild Status (Maa-Kep) now, since Guild Status is a requirement. A dot of Status costs two experience points, leaving 18. Agena decides to spend 12 on raising Manipulation to •••, and finishes off by buying her Streetwise Skill up to •• with the remaining 6 points.

Step Nine: Return to Life

With what she's already settled on over the course of character creation, Agena only has a few things left on which to decide.

Agena can now picture Tadinanefer in Irem—a Nubian by descent, servant of a guildmaster of the Maa-Kep. In the modern day, once Sekhem has faded to the point she appears human, Tadinanefer can move smoothly among any crowd. She may not understand fine cultural details or histories, but she understands human nature, and human nature never changes. As a Maa-Kep, she's used to achieving her meret's goals with a word in the right ear, and she's very good at intuiting which ear that is.

Agena is ready to play, and Tadinanefer is ready to be called back to life.

New Advantage: Sekhem

Wherever life exists—or even the potential for life—mystical energy bubbles up from the cosmic firmament like water into an oasis. This flowing life force is called Sekhem, the source and substance of all magic. On its own, this energy is a passive force of emotional connectivity, revealing itself through remembered passions (often in the form of vestiges). For those with sufficient mystical knowledge and willpower, Sekhem can empower miracles and wonders beyond imagining, even rebuking death itself.

As creatures of necromantic power rather than truly living beings, the Arisen do not create Sekhem. Yet they alone concentrate and radiate this energy through the Rite of Return empowering their existence. This is Sekhem's greatest irony, that it sees purest expression in the most impure of vessels. Such greatness comes at an equally great price. Mortal lives shine like candles, burning dimly but steadily over a long period. By contrast, the Arisen live like fireworks, shining briefly and brightly across each Descent.

Effects

- **Attribute/Skill/Power Maximum:** Because each Descent begins at Sekhem 10, mummies can raise Attributes and Skills as high as 10 dots, whether temporarily or permanently. However, their Sekhem rating caps the effective rating of these traits at a given time, so a Sekhem 5 Arisen treats all Attributes and Skills rated 6+ as if rated 5. Unusable dots become usable whenever Sekhem again allows. The Sekhem cap also limits what Utterance effects a Deathless soul can access, as well as the maximum temporary rating a mummy can possess in Attributes bolstered with Pillars (see below).
- **Descent Rolls:** The Arisen's player rolls Sekhem as a dice pool during Descent Rolls.
- **Effortless Power:** Unlike most supernatural creatures, the Arisen do not begin their existence as mystical weaklings, nor must they labor to grow into their full power with experience and time. Instead, mummies rise with Sekhem 10 at the start of each Descent,

imbued with the blessings and curses of utmost glory. Time gradually erodes this rating, inexorably counting down toward Sekhem 0 and a return to death. Mummies accelerate this mystical decay whenever they exercise free will against their purpose. Subsequent risings in the same Descent do not reset Sekhem to 10. (The most selfish of Arisen can reverse the decline and buy more time among the living by ritually consuming relics and forever diminishing the world [see p. 156]). Because Sekhem's height and fall is an intrinsic function of the Rite of Return, players will never pay experience points for the advantage.

- **Lifesense:** Whenever the Arisen seek out a particular source of Sekhem, their own Sekhem flares in response. This sensation, which the Arisen call *kepher*, provides an instant if incomplete recognition of the source. (See p. 145 for more on kepher.)
- **Possession Immunity:** The Rite fuses itself with a mummy's remains completely, leaving no room for ghosts or other spirits to enter or gain control of the undead flesh. Any such attempt automatically fails, wasting any cost paid for the attempt.
- **Refreshing the Will:** In desperate times, mummies can call upon their power reserves to bolster their flagging will. By sacrificing a dot/level of Sekhem, all spent Willpower points will return. The Arisen can do this once per turn, as a reflexive action.
- **Repairing the Sahu:** The corporal form of the Arisen, called a *sahu*, is a Sekhem-fueled reconstitution of the soul's remembrance of the self. When the need to maintain the outward integrity of the sahu is urgent, a mummy can expend some of its precious Sekhem to repair damage to it, at the rate of one dot of Sekhem per aggravated wound. The Arisen can do this once per turn, as a reflexive action.
- **Unclean Remains:** Natural animals can subconsciously sense the traces of undeath within a mummy's corpse and will never disturb or eat such material, even if starving. Even if a creature was forced to consume a mummy's remains, the material would not digest and would be vomited up or otherwise expelled in short order.
- **Undeath:** The Arisen are both living and undead. Any supernatural sense capable of determining either state reveals this in the affirmative, if invoked successfully. The life that resides in mummies is fundamentally ephemeral; their biological metabolism only functions to the extent they choose for it to, yet they live within their resurrected corpse bodies. They are a paradox, and a de facto abomination against the natural order.

New Advantage: Pillars

Although the Judges may bar them from Duat, the Arisen themselves demonstrate the spiritual fortitude to bring the Rite of Return to its finale as they break through to the living world. Sekhem provides the base mystical form of the mummy's manifestation, like a "diving suit" that allows a dead soul to survive the conditions of the living world. Pillars represent the power of the soul itself: a power in the "suit" of Sekhem, limited by its integrity.

Iremite necromancers discovered that the soul was not a vague, unitary life spark, but a complex mixture of elements with distinct characteristics. Above all, they recognized the five Pillars of Ab (Heart), Ba (Spirit), Ka (Essence), Ren (Name) and Sheut (Shadow). During the initial judgment in Duat, the mummy defined himself by his decree's defining Pillar. (See p. 85 for information about the decrees and their corresponding Pillars.)

Sekhem	Attr & Skill Max	Pillars/Turn	Utterance Level	Sta,Str/Dex
10	10	5/1	5	4/3
9	9	4/1	5	4/2
8	8	3/1	5	3/2
7	7	3/1	5	3/2
6	6	2/1	5	3/2
5	5	2/1	5	2/1
4	5	2/1	4	2/1
3	5	2/1	3	2/1
2	5	1/1	2	1/1
1	5	1/1	1	1/0

Starting Pillars

In **Mummy: The Curse**, each Pillar possesses a permanent rating (dots on the character sheet) and a temporary rating (points, filled out in boxes). A Pillar's dots determine the maximum number of points available, and as no Pillar can rise above five dots, none may accumulate more than five points. Starting Arisen begin with zero dots in each Pillar, but nine dots to distribute across all five, subject to the following rules:

- No Pillar can be higher than the decree's defining Pillar, and only it may be raised to five dots during character creation.
- Only one Pillar may stay at zero dots; at least one dot must be devoted to each of the other four (including the decree Pillar).
- To attain five dots in the defining Pillar, an Arisen may not have any Pillars with zero dots.
- To attain five dots in the defining Pillar at character creation, the Arisen must devote two of his nine starting dots to the fifth dot.
- A player may sacrifice three Merit dots to gain an extra Pillar dot at character creation.

Spending experience allows a player to have her character attain five dots in Pillars other than the decree's defining Pillar, but the mummy must still possess a dot or more in the other four. In any event, no Pillar may be raised to a higher dot rating than the decree Pillar. Thus, a Falcon-Headed Arisen with a Ba of four dots cannot raise any other Pillar higher than four dots.

Using Pillars

To use a Pillar, the player spends points from its temporary rating. Spending Pillar points is a reflexive action; the maximum number of points a player may spend per turn depends on the mummy's Sekhem rating (as listed in the table on p. 74). The Arisen may spend points from any combination of Pillars, so long as the total between them all does not exceed the Sekhem-based maximum. Mummies channel Pillars into the following actions:

Attribute Bonuses: Unlike later cultures, the Shan'iatu and their students did not believe in soul/body duality. The material, intellectual, and emotional worlds intermingled so that each was an aspect of the others. Thus, Pillar points may be spent for a mummy to enhance certain Attributes.

When a Pillar point is devoted to a Physical Attribute for an Arisen, that raises the Attribute by a number of dots as listed for her Sekhem rating, up to the maximum rating currently allowed. When a mummy's player spends Pillar points on Strength or Stamina, use the number to the left of the slash on the Sekhem table above. (Players can mix-and-match Attribute points gained from spending a Pillar to boost Strength and/or Stamina.) If she spends points to increase Dexterity, use the number to the right of the slash. If the maximum increase is listed as 0, the mummy may not use Pillars to raise Dexterity at all. Any Pillar-earned raises that would push an Attribute beyond its current trait maximum are lost.

In addition, the mummy's nature allows for an additional, non-Physical Attribute to be enhanced. In this case, Pillar points always raise the Attribute on a one-for-one basis, up to the maximum permitted for the Arisen's current Sekhem. The Arisen may only increase one non-Physical Attribute (associated with his decree), and only with points from his decree's defining Pillar, as follows:

Ab (Heart): Presence
Ba (Spirit): Wits
Ka (Essence): Resolve
Ren (Name): Manipulation
Sheut (Shadow): Composure

All Pillar-based Attribute enhancements last for the scene. A player may spend multiple Pillar points in any combination of permitted Attributes, up to the Pillar and Attribute limits listed for the mummy's current Sekhem level.

Seal the Flesh: A mummy uses Pillars to maintain her reconstituted physical form. This is normally a subtle, gradual process that requires no game systems. Minor cuts and scratches—below the threshold of anything measured in Health points—vanish within an hour after they're inflicted (assuming the mummy wants them gone; she can leave them etched into her sahu, if she likes). Bashing and lethal damage "naturally" heals faster than it would for a mortal. (See "Being Arisen," p. 142, for more information.) The mummy's body never ages, though it might wither into a corpse-like form in certain circumstances.

If the mummy needs to heal wounds more quickly, her player may spend Pillars to repair them. If the player spends one point from any Pillar, the mummy's body continuously knits itself back together for a number of turns equal to the permanent rating of the Pillar used. During this period, the mummy heals three points of bashing damage and one point of lethal damage per turn. Furthermore, the Arisen can't be "killed" (that is, damaged to the point of inactivity and forced to resurrect) while her flesh is sealing unless her heart has been destroyed. If the Arisen suffers enough damage to kill her, she dies as soon as the sealing the flesh period ends—not before. This is true even if the Arisen cannot heal fatal wounds. If the Arisen immediately switches Pillars to keep sealing the flesh, she can remain active, even if she is technically "dead" from aggravated wounds.

A mummy may only seal the flesh once per Pillar per scene. If a player spends a point of Ab to seal the flesh, for example, she can't spend another point of Ab on healing during that scene, but could switch to Sheut if any Sheut points are available.

Arisen cannot seal the flesh against aggravated wounds, but may delay their effects by sealing the flesh. To truly heal aggravated damage the Arisen must repair her body over time, through magic, or must both sacrifice Sekhem and Willpower to the cause (as noted in "Repairing the Sahu").

Use Relics: The Arisen may spend Pillar points to activate a relic's power. The vessel's nature determines the amount and type of Pillar required. A rare few relics possess abilities that may be used by normal human beings. Mummies may activate these as well, without using Pillar points.

Use Utterances: Arisen Pillars also power their Utterances. Spending the required number and type of Pillar points unleashes these occult abilities. The more potent the power, the more likely it is to require specific Pillars.

Recovering Pillars

A mummy regains Pillar points by using the following methods.

Affirming the Decree: The Arisen's decree provides two signature ways to replenish her Pillars. See the decree listings on pages 85-99 for the details of each.

Draining Vestiges: The Arisen may siphon a vestige's spiritual power by converting one vestige dot into one point in any Pillar. (Storytellers: see "Destroying Vestiges," p. 217.)

Meditation: Once per 24-hour period, a mummy may spend a scene (or an hour) in meditation to recover Pillar points. She strengthens her soul by taking refuge in her memories and sense of self. Roll the Arisen's Memory rating as a dice pool; each success regenerates one Pillar point of the mummy's choice. (Willpower can't be spent for extra dice.) If the mummy meditates in her tomb, add its Geometry rating (see the Tomb Merit, p. 81) to the dice pool.

Modified Advantage: Memory

(Morality)

Duat's trials drove the Arisen to the edge of psychic destruction. They were tried, tested, and denied even the relief of oblivion. By pronouncing a decree, all mummies made a final stand against forces that threatened to strip their very souls of identity, but even though they prevailed, the Arisen returned with much of their personalities suppressed, the energy required to recover them diverted into the act of defying death. The Rite of Return also imposed its directives, driving mummies to seek out relics and vestiges before concerning themselves with questions of the self—but without self-identity, how can an Arisen become a moral being?

These influences manifest in a modification of the Morality trait outlined in pages 91–94 of **World of Darkness** core rules. A mummy's Morality is called Memory, and it governs not only mental stability, but her sense of identity and ability to recall the past. At the start of the Descent, most Arisen climb to a Memory of 3 after spending one scene (or about an hour) at 0. An Arisen at the first moments of Descent is an unthinking creature of Duat; her soul has not fully roused from death and does not remember her actions.

Fortunately, her stirring spirit might be able to hold the instincts of Sekhem at bay. The player may roll the dice provided by her full Memory to ward off degeneration (three dice at Memory 3) to prevent the Arisen from performing any act that would cause degeneration if the Arisen had been operating at her full spiritual capacity. Fortunately, no action committed during that first hour of chaos can actually cause degeneration, though a mummy with a sufficiently high Memory may eventually remember past, monstrous acts.

After her spirit fully returns, the Arisen regains the power to reason and the moral faculties she preserved through prior Descents.

Arisen who have devoted time to moral development (and whose players have spent experience points on Memory) may recover a value higher than 3, but the stress of reincarnation destroys one level of Memory. Degenerate Arisen may only possess Memory scores of 1 or 2.

Overall, Memory does *not* fluctuate based on how well an Arisen obeys the Judges of Duat. In fact, acts that encourage Memory can often oppose the Judges' will. Such is unlife among the Deathless.

Systems

Like standard Morality, Memory possesses a hierarchy of sins and uses the standard rules for degeneration and derangements found in the core rules. Sins against Memory include those listed for ordinary Morality, as well as those listed on the following table.

Increasing Memory and Sebayt Experience

To claim an identity beyond the Judges' mandate, the Arisen must recognize that other people are more than a means to their ends. Old tools, vessels, writings, and more also echo through the hidden recesses of memory, drawing them to the surface.

Compassionate, just acts and evidence of an Arisen's past incarnations unlock her Memory in events called *Sebayt,* named for ancient texts on just living. During the course of play, a mummy who rights a grievous wrong, performs a compassionate act, or discovers a secret from a prior incarnation earns the right to spend experience on Memory. On each occasion, the Storyteller further awards the Arisen one to three extra experience points—called

Memory	Threshold Sin*	Dice Rolled
10	Concealing one's identity.	(Roll five dice.)
9	Failing to meditate upon one's Pillars daily.	(Roll five dice.)
8	Pursuing one's Judge's purpose to preserve one's Sekhem.	(Roll five dice.)
7	Destroying any remnant of the Nameless Empire.	(Roll four dice.)
6	Losing possession of a vessel created by one's guild.	(Roll four dice.)
5	Destroying a vessel created by one's guild.	(Roll three dice.)
4	Allowing one of one's vestiges to be destroyed.	(Roll three dice.)
3	Allowing anyone stealing from one's tomb to go unpunished.	(Roll three dice.)
2	Committing "suicide" by intentionally burning out one's Sekhem or destroying one's body.	(Roll two dice.)
1	Destroying evidence of one's mortal life.	(Roll two dice.)

* In addition to the sins listed on page 91 of **World of Darkness**.

Sebayt experience—in addition to any standard experience award: one point for most occasions, two for an exceptional and moral gesture of discovery, and three in the event of a truly profound realization. The Arisen also receive Sebayt experience for patient reconstitution of their souls, as represented by Pillars. Every time an Arisen reaches a new minimum rating in all Pillars—e.g., once she has at least •• in all Pillars—the Storyteller should award an amount of Sebayt experience equal to the new minimum rating. Thus, one can receive up to 14 Sebayt experience in this way (2 + 3 + 4 + 5), and if it works out that way, it could even be awarded during character creation.

Sebayt experience may only be spent on Memory, and each expenditure to increase Memory must use at least one point of Sebayt experience. The Arisen's player may also spend standard experience on Memory in addition to experience gained through Sebayt.

Effects of Memory

The higher an Arisen's Memory, the stronger her sense of identity and the more she remembers about past Descents and her life as a worker in the Nameless Empire. As her self-knowledge increases, she finds it easier to replenish her Pillars through meditation.

At Memory 3, the Arisen begin their Descent with enough Memory to understand that they have awoken into a new time and that the Judges have charged them with certain duties. The better they attend to them, the slower their Descent. The Arisen understand their purpose on an instinctual level. Rising Memory allows them to better articulate it, but even at Memory 1, the Arisen feel the urge to do as they have been charged, even if they don't understand why.

The following entries describe a mummy's overall outlook at each rank of Memory.

Memory 10: The mummy remembers nearly everything about her life in Irem and her prior Descents. Only the secrets of Duat remain closed to her. She not only understands herself, but the occult patterns of which she is a part, and earns an Unseen Sense Merit (see **World of Darkness**, pp. 109-110) in relation to the Judges of Duat: what they might hate or desire in Arisen actions. For example, if another mummy staves off Descent by appealing to his Judge, the Arisen detects it through visions and omens. If the mummy's Memory drops below 9, she loses this Unseen Sense.

Memory 9: An Arisen with this degree of Memory remembers life in Irem and all prior Descents in remarkable detail. Furthermore, she has honed her ability to recall experiences to the point where she gains the Eidetic Memory Merit (see **World of Darkness**, pp. 108-109). This benefit does not apply to memories acquired while the Arisen possesses a Memory of 8 or lower.

Memory 8: This is the lowest rank where the Arisen remembers her mortal life with any accuracy or reliability. Furthermore (and possibly to her horror), a mummy of this Memory and higher remembers any Memory 0 experiences.

Memory 7: Once a mummy's Memory has increased to this rank, she remembers every Descent well, except for past thoughts inspired by an even higher Memory. She might remember knowing her original life, but not what that knowledge actually consisted of.

Memory 6: The Arisen accurately recalls two prior Descents: the one prior to the current one, and one

Descent that holds special emotional significance. The mummy cannot remember any information that requires a higher Memory rank to recall. She also remembers fragments of other Descents. Although other parts of her Iremite life are as sketchy as ever, she can now remember every craft or object she made with her own hands.

Memory 5: The Arisen remembers the previous Descent in great detail and possesses rough knowledge of other arisings, as well. She has learned little of Irem in the journey of Memory, but this is the lowest rank in which she remembers going westward clearly—her soul's journey, trial, and pronouncement of decree before the unmasked Judges.

Memory 4: At this rank, a mummy remembers the previous Descent in detail. She also remembers parts of her life in Irem related to friends, family, and work, and glimpses of the day of her Rite. She recalls suffering in Duat and standing before the Judges, but in a more surreal fashion, one that freely injects people and places from past arisings.

Memory 3: The Arisen remembers her name, guild, and decree. She knows a little about Irem, but cannot easily distinguish between personal experience and what she learned throughout various arisings. She remembers the Descent previous to the current arising in rough detail, though there are gaps in areas where she operated at Memory 6 or higher.

Memory 2: The Arisen remembers her name, guild and decree, and that she was born in or brought into the Nameless Empire in her mortal life, but she does not remember actually living in Irem or anything about subsequent periods of activity except for unintelligible fragments (e.g., sentences from conversations, familiar vessels). She may even invent a delusional history for herself.

Memory 1: The Arisen cannot remember her true name or anything about Irem, but can comprehend written and spoken Iremite Egyptian and (as it is a related language) a great deal of ancient Egyptian. She may confuse various periods of activity, and might even, if it makes for good story, believe she was born in historical Egypt or even in later periods.

Memory 0: Without Memory, the mummy becomes an undead automaton. She returns to her tomb as quickly as possible, restricted by an inability to ride animals and operate vehicles. If a vessel is closer than the tomb, she seizes it by force and *then* goes back to her tomb. She cannot speak sense nor use complex tools, though she may use Pillar points to enhance Physical Attributes and seal her flesh against wounds. Meditation becomes impossible, and thus, Pillar recovery revolves much more intensely around her tomb. While resting there, she enters a state of deep repose, interrupting it only to kill intruders. She remains at 0 Memory until she is killed and resurrected, or Descends completely and returns. In either situation, her Memory resets at 1. The Arisen do not remember anything they have done at Memory 0 unless they possess Memory ratings of 8 or higher.

Merits

The Arisen may generally purchase any Merits that aren't specifically restricted to mortals or other supernatural beings. They can't have Eidetic Memory, since their capacity to remember information is based on other facts. They cannot have (and do not need): Iron Stomach, Natural Immunity, Quick Healer, Strong Lungs, or Toxin Resistance (all from **World of Darkness**), as their innate physical capabilities encompass or surpass the effects of these traits. In some cases, mummies find new uses for old capabilities, like an ancient charioteer with Stunt Driver (see **World of Darkness**, p. 113) taking the wheel of a racecar.

Mummies can purchase Merits with Attribute prerequisites higher than their normal traits allow, but such Merits remain inert and do nothing while the requirement isn't met. Temporary bonuses can activate these Merits for their duration. For example, an Arisen with Dexterity 2 can reinforce her Dexterity with Pillars to access Stunt Driver for as long as she has Dexterity 3 or higher.

Social Atrophy

Extended time spent dead tends to erode social standing, if for no other reason than the inevitable tendency of friends and colleagues to grow old and die. This can lower or completely remove dots from Allies, Contacts, Fame, Mentor, Resources, Retainer, and most forms of Status (all from **World of Darkness**), plus any other similar Merits determined by the Storyteller. Cult (see p. 157) specifically does not atrophy, as preserving the mummy's worship across the ages is one of the main perks and points of that Merit.

Common sense should guide how quickly neglected Merits atrophy. Friends and mentors may welcome a mummy back after death forced a sudden and lengthy disappearance, provided she offers some sort of explanation and/or apology. By contrast, few employees will wait so much as a day for a boss who isn't around to pay them. The Arisen can and often do take steps to minimize Merit loss, such as saving Resources in the form of precious metals, jewels, art, or other timeless treasures hidden in their tombs.

Mummies who rise in the modern era seldom possess Social Merits subject to atrophy, since any dots reflect carefully preserved resources from the distant past or new ties they have established since beginning their Descent. Storytellers should carefully scrutinize such purchases during character creation to ensure appropriateness.

The following modified and new Merits are designed for the Arisen in particular, encompassing advantages ordinary mortals can scarcely imagine or hope to possess.

Modified Merit: Encyclopedic Knowledge (•••)

Effect: This Merit mostly functions normally for the Deathless (see **World of Darkness**, p. 109), but newly arisen mummies have no exposure to modern factoids and only know details available in the distant or even ancient past. This narrower scope reduces the Merit's cost by two dots. Mummy players can purchase the fourth and fifth dot whenever the Storyteller determines their characters have encountered enough modern information to broaden their mastery of trivia.

Modified Merit: Language (•)

Effect: All Arisen may speak and write Iremite Egyptian from their breathing days. Additionally, the Rite of Return bestows preternatural linguistic skill to all mummies, allowing them to quickly adapt to any time or culture. During character creation, each Merit point spent on this Merit confers two purchases (i.e., two languages). Additional purchases cost one experience point each and may put the character into experience debt, if needed. The Arisen require one hour of study to master a language, but may spend this time analyzing written text and/or listening to conversation.

Cult (Special)

Effect: Although the character and composition of a mummy's cult can vary greatly, depending on the mummy and mortals in question, it's a truism that almost every mummy has one. Indeed, although it's represented by a Merit (and sub-Merits) on the character sheet, the cult system is an entire sub-design of its own in **Mummy**, befitting its importance to the game and to its main characters. The cult system is presented in detail in Chapter Three.

Enigma (• to •••••)

Prerequisites: No Fame (see **World of Darkness**, p. 115)

Effect: All the Arisen are mysterious, occult figures who exist at the periphery of the supernatural world. That mummies exist at all is barely known to creatures who consider themselves well-kept secrets. Yet there are secrets within secrets, immortals shrouded from notice and attention. Books about them are lost or perish in mysterious fires. An endless string of improbable coincidences lead investigators through wild good chases or frustrating dead ends.

Whenever a character takes an action intended to learn about the mummy, track her, or locate her, he suffers a penalty equal to the Enigma rating. This penalty does not inhibit basic perception checks to notice the mummy or contest attempts at stealth unless the mummy's attempting to hide in a crowd. Enigma does not make one invisible, just unremarkable. Members of the mummy's cult reverse the Enigma rating, applying it as a bonus whenever it should apply. In this way, followers may find their hidden demigod without exposing her to enemies and outsiders. Of course, nothing stops enemies from forcing an Arisen's cultists to serve as "native guides" to plunder her tomb, or worse.

Guild Status (• to •••••)

Effect: As servants of a higher power, the Arisen aren't as preoccupied with status as some, but the very nature of their existence and efforts predisposes them to heeding its course. Since they are all impossibly ancient beings, it isn't age the Arisen respect, but their own social structures—the five guilds—and they do so instinctively. The great pyramid that was, the great pyramid that remains. Bereft of the direct leadership of the Shan'iatu, the craft-houses of old still soldier on in their name and fashion. Each Arisen is a member of one of the five guilds, and thus has at least Guild Status • in her guild. Each guild subdivides its membership into three categories, represented by titles: apprentices (Guild Status •), journeymen (Guild Status •• through ••••), and guildmasters (Guild Status •••••).

Traditionally, the Arisen congregate in regions of territory they call nomes. In lost Irem, the area around the capitol (the City of Pillars) was its own nome, with the broader Nameless Empire divided into numerous additional nomes, each with its own imperial governor. The character of an Arisen nome is determined by the size of the region in question. If it's a major urban center that's drawn many Arisen like moths to the flame—cities such as Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, and London—there can be two guildmasters for each guild in the nome. If the nome represents a smaller population, there can only be seven guildmasters *total*, across all five guilds; usually one for each guild, plus an additional one for each of the two most populous guilds. If a guild within a given nome has reached its maximum of guildmasters, any guild members of sufficient Status (•••••) who wish to remain in the congested nome will retain their Status but receive neither title nor associated privileges for having it. Strange borderline exceptions to this structure do exist (the Arisen of **Mummy**'s signature setting, Washington, D.C., for example, are limited to seven total guildmasters, despite the contention that the nome's population merits the deeper power structure), but such nomes are as rare as they are mercurial in nature.

Being one of the guildmasters has its privileges, of course. It is they alone who control the flow of information and

The Lifeweb

The mystic energies arranging themselves inside and all around a mummy's tomb would appear, if it were possible to view them directly, like nothing so much as hyper-dynamic, three-dimensional schema–ever-shifting energy patterns forming shapes inside other energy patterns, or breaking off and coursing their way into jagged new diagrams. The Arisen call this occult construct the "Lifeweb" (old form: "Web of Life"), and within it, the sacred geometry of a mummy's tomb calls out for a centralizing source of Sekhem. Relics serve this holy purpose to a tee.

While it is the will of the Judges that all vessels ultimately return to their domain, there are three exceptions to the rule that relics and vestiges must descend through the tomb with a mummy in repose. The first is that Arisen are permitted one relic to serve as this "centering source" for their tombs' sacred geometry. The second is that the Arisen are permitted to keep and carry one relic *from lost Irem*–one created *by* the Shan'iatu. Moreover, Arisen find they can keep any vessels that were *their* personal property (or otherwise held emotional value to them) during their own mortal lives. If they do find and choose to keep such vessels, they secure them within their tombs, where the objects will align themselves with the centering relic of the tomb's Lifeweb. While Arisen may use other relics temporarily (while "en route" to their tombs), those relics must soon end up in Duat.

Since a mummy's mortal life took place six millennia ago, however, and since the average mummy can't create vessels (only sniff them out and drain them), even this personal exception amounts to very little. Few vessels of any type exist in the modern world, and far fewer that are truly *of her*. The odds are singularly poor.

And that's why there's an exception to the exception. If an Arisen comes across a vestige whose Sekhem is aligned perfectly with her own (Storytellers: see "Vestiges," p. 235), she can fetter that vestige to her tomb's Lifeweb, despite the fact that it carries no connection to her life or to lost Irem. The more vestiges a relic has fettered to it, the more powerful their ability to amplify the essence of the mummy's tomb. An Arisen can only fetter a number of vestiges equal to the centering relic's rating (one to five) + her Memory rating or Guild Status rating (whichever is higher). To get a general gauge of intensity, add up the combined ratings of all fettered vestiges (possible range: 0 to 75), but keep in mind that other factors go into determining the overall effect on an area. The Arisen can keep additional vessels in her tomb, if they bear a connection to Irem, but all other vestiges must be fettered to the centering relic in order to remain within.



resources of their local guild, and thus, they who choose to grant access to the most sacred (i.e., powerful) rites of their tradition. When an apprentice wishes to learn a new guild Utterance, the final call as to the disposition of this request falls to his local guildmaster(s), and so on. In larger nomes, where each guild can have two guildmasters, it is they who often choose one from among their number to represent them and the rest of the guild in relations with their nome's other guilds. This individual is usually called a nomarch. In such populous nomes, these five nomarchs often act as a sort of advisory council. In certain (arrogant) domains, the Arisen have adopted the royal address of their creators—priest of Duat—to denote a guildmaster who has not assumed the more political nomarch role, but who is recognized for his occult or sage wisdom. Guildmasters can't approve or deny increases in the Guild Status of their guildmates, but they *can* initiate proceedings to strip a less influential guildmate of a dot of Guild Status. Since doing so usually requires the mediation of at least one member of the Sesha-Hebsu, however (which turns a private affair into public knowledge), they don't do this often.

A player can add her mummy's dots in Guild Status to dice pools for social interactions with members of the Arisen's own guild. As with other uses of Status, these dots are not added to dice pools predicated on supernatural powers such as Affinities and Utterances. A mummy can't ever have more than one form of Guild Status; e.g., if she has any dots in Guild Status (Maa-Kep), she can't also have dots in Guild Status (Su-Menent). When a mummy leaves her guild, she loses all Guild Status dots in that guild and gains Guild Status • in a different guild. When she does, she loses access to her former Guild Affinity and gains use of his new guild's Affinity; this happens automatically, without experience expenditure.

Relic (• to •••••)

Effect: While the Arisen are charged with returning most relics they encounter to Duat, there are some notable exceptions. (See "The Lifeweb," p 80.) The mummy has a relic at the start of play. If she only has one, she probably uses it as the centering relic of her tomb's energies (though it can be removed and even activated in dire circumstances). Starting relics acquired through this Merit must be of the appropriate type for the mummy's guild. The Storyteller will provide the name and properties of each relic, and if the mummy bears more than one relic, at least one of them must be an object created in lost Irem.

- • The mummy is the bearer of a single one-dot relic.
- •• The mummy is the bearer of a single two-dot relic.
- ••• The mummy is the bearer of a single three-dot relic.
- •••• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a single four-dot relic, or the bearer of a one-dot relic and a three-dot relic.
- ••••• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a four-dot relic and a one-dot relic, or the bearer of a three-dot relic and a two-dot relic.

Tomb (Special)

Effect: A mummy's tomb is not her home. It's where she's buried. It's where her corpse is interred when she isn't using it, but it's also so, so much more. The tomb is infected with her nature and reinforces it, for better or for worse. It is the strong shield the Judges gave her against the fears of ignorant mortals and the ravages of aeons, but it is also the mightiest shackle they placed upon her will. It protects even as it enslaves.

A mummy without a tomb is a mummy whose bones rest in a hole or—far, far worse—are gawped at in a museum by thousands of snotty-nosed tourist children. If a mummy doesn't have a tomb, there was likely a mighty battle in the past, and her cult lost. (Unless, of course, she destroyed it herself, but what possible perversion of the Judges' purpose could have led her to take such an action?)

If one has a tomb of any type, it offers some advantages. First off, if one locks oneself inside and re-align oneself with the cardinal directions in an attempt to restore spent Pillars, the roll is made without penalty (depending on the vagaries of Memory, of course). Second, it strengthens a mummy's cult—not through any mystic way, but by being a symbol of the mummy's greatness. Finally, it's a mummy's address. If her cult can't find her, it can leave a message at the tomb (though, to be sure, enemies might leave the occasional calling card, as well).

Mummies who lack a tomb get none of those advantages. They replenish their Pillars wherever and whenever they can, and they wander.

Mechanically, players can put up to 10 Merit dots into Tomb, spread between the Geometry, Peril, and Endowments aspects. If one wants to stretch one's point investment a little (or just likes helping the Storyteller heap grief on one's own head), one can reduce its cost by taking Drawbacks. If a player takes five points of Drawbacks, she could get five dots in each Tomb Merit aspect and have a potent tomb, indeed.

Geometry (• to •••••)

The effects of sacred Egyptian geometry are so great that even the ignorant masses have heard of "pyramid power" keeping fruit fresh or making razor blades sharpen. The geometry of a mummy's tomb is incalculably more sophisticated. It drains magic out of the sky, the soil, even the gazes of those who unknowingly gawp at it, and keeps that

energy ready for its resident. Of course, as with most engines, the more you want out of it, the bigger it has to be. A one-dot Tomb is tiny, little bigger than a closet, though still elegantly proportioned and richly decorated with carved stones. A five-dot Tomb is substantially larger and therefore more potent.

- Perhaps two meters square with a sarcophagus. The interior is lined with worn carvings etched into the walls. Adds one die to attempts to recharge Pillars.
- •• The size of a small office, completely covered with carvings that look fresh and sharp. Adds two dice to attempts to recharge Pillars.
- ••• Underground, the burial hold lies beyond an antechamber filled with plunder and guarded by elegant statues and racks of prized possessions. Here and there, a highlight is picked out in gold or precious stones. Above the ground (at the time of the tomb's construction) a statue or obelisk jutted, though by now its inscriptions are worn and difficult to decipher. Adds three dice to attempts to recharge Pillars.
- •••• The aboveground element is an imposing statue, eerily untouched by the storms and vagaries of ages. Buried beneath (if the statue itself is not interred) is a suite of five or six imposing chambers, clad in breathtaking carvings whose details gleam with gold or coral. Adds four dice to attempts to recharge Pillars.
- ••••• A breathtaking monument—perhaps a sphinx about the size of a school bus—stands atop this tomb (unless the intervening centuries have buried it under the shifting sands). A staircase and passage lead to a maze of at least a dozen rooms cluttered with weapons, masks, stelae, and ritual tools, all preserved as if they were used yesterday. Guardian statues glare from corners, while the gleam of gold and lapis lazuli strike richly from every surface, even in the dimmest torchlight. Adds five dice to attempts to recharge Pillars.

Peril (• to •••••)

Transgressing a mummy's crypt is dangerous, to say the least. The foremost danger is that its inhabitant is going to wake up, but some are perilous in their own right, even without an undead guardian lurching forth in rage.

This peril can take two forms: Material traps, or an immaterial curse.

Material traps range from standard architectural hazards (pits with spikes, a plummeting stone block) to more elaborate devices (spring-loaded darts, a room that seals itself and fills with sand, or a breeding pit for scorpions). Either way, they're presumably cleaned and reset by the inhabitant, or her agents. Material traps are triggered in a small area and do a point of lethal damage and a point of bashing damage for every dot allocated to this Merit aspect. The mummy can have one big trap or several small ones, as desired, but no matter how one handles it, players of interlopers get a Wits + Composure roll for their characters to notice a trap before it springs. Should they succeed, the trap has discharged without harming them, though it may have temporarily blocked their passage forward or backward.

The curse, on the other hand, takes the form of a sinking unease, a profound yet sourceless distress that begins 100 feet from the tomb for every point invested. People who take the hint and stay back suffer no ill effects. Roll a pool of dice equal to their Willpower for those who push on and violate the tomb. If it succeeds, they can overcome the terror without further ado. Should it fail, they have to pay Willpower points to enter. The Willpower required is equal to the dots spent on Tomb (Peril). Note that this works on any entity with a Willpower rating, except the rightful inhabitant and those she has invited inside.

Drawbacks

These are problems associated with the tomb. Players can only take each one once.

Famous (minus ••): Your character's sanctum sanctorum is a tourist trap. There are frequently people around it, coming and going—at worst, the whole thing's a museum site and there are archaeologists probing at it. It's assumed that at the start of play, they haven't penetrated the chambers within, but every time you want your character to enter or leave, you have to make a successful Dexterity + Stealth roll for her to escape unseen. If it fails, she may have to fall back on Subterfuge or Intimidation. Killing a nosy guard can work in the short term, but it is likely to make that next entry or exit far more difficult.

Haunted (minus •••): A ghost thinks it's his tomb, not your character's. While not as old as her, this ghost is potent, possibly unhinged, and won't be cool with sharing unless she goes through a lot of effort to persuade (or abjure) it. Your Storyteller gets to divide 10 points between its Finesse, Resistance, and Power, and give it three Numina with which to make your mummy's unlife uneasy. (Storytellers: see the end of Chapter Five for some new ghost powers.)

Ravaged (minus •): Tomb robbers (or someone) defaced something or otherwise unbalanced the place's geometry. Pick one Pillar: Your character cannot restore it while resting in her tomb. Period.

Stained History (minus •): A player can only take this Drawback for her character if the mummy has at least one point in the Cult Merit. Normally, a mummy's cabal of followers gets a bonus (described on p. 159) when operating close to his tomb. Your mummy's doesn't, because her tomb fills them with fear, shame, or remorse.

Under Surveillance (minus ••): A group of mortals is very interested in your character's refuge. Rules-wise, they're a cult (and they're going to mess with your cult, if you have one) that has five points to divide between Reach and Grasp (see p. 159). It's up to the Storyteller to allocate those points, and while you can certainly suggest possibilities for who's spying on your character, it's ultimately up to her to decide what happens after she, or her minions, rumble with the losers on the ground.

Endowments

These are side bonuses the tomb provides. Each Endowment can only be taken once.

Curio (•••): Your character's crypt contains something that someone has been seeking for a long, long time. This object has no mystical properties and isn't the missing piece of anyone's occult theory, nor is it objectively precious, but at some point, you can pick a character in your story (NPC only) who has an interest in Egyptian history or mysticism and say, "That person wants my mummy's curio." If the character is a researcher, the curio proves he was right all along and gets him tenure. If the character is a mage, it's a vital clue to one of those things wizards get all uptight about. If the character is a vampire, the curio reveals something damaging about a rival (or a rival bloodline, or a rival group, or something of that sort). The exact nature of the desire is in the Storyteller's hands, as are the lengths to which the character would go to acquire it. But make no mistake: It is desperately desired.

Obscure (•): Mortals have a blind spot for your character's tomb. A successful Wits + Occult roll has to be made for them to even notice it. (The Unseen Sense merit negates this.) If the roll fails, they cannot perceive it, nor can another roll be made for them to find it for 24 hours. A mortal can perceive it if he's shown the tomb by someone who knows it's there, but quickly loses it again outside the guide's presence—unless shown by its rightful inhabitant, in which case he can find it normally.

If your character's Obscure Tomb is also Famous, it means that the exterior is renowned, but that people have no idea there's a hidden mummy inside.

Piece of Life (••): Your character's tomb incorporates something from her mortal life—not just signs of her service to the Judges, not just tools to aid her in implementing their will, but something intimately connected to her. Perhaps it's the mummy of a favored pet, servant, or spouse. Perhaps it's an image depicting a famous deed she performed, now long lost to history. Or perhaps it's an enigma, like "Rosebud" in *Citizen Kane*, and makes sense only to her. Whatever it is, you describe it, and your Storyteller incorporates it into your mummy's forgotten history.

This functions just like a one-dot Vestige (see below), except that it cannot be removed from the tomb without losing its occult energies.

Prime Location (•): Your character's tomb has been relocated (probably by her cult) to somewhere eminently desirable. It could be on a museum campus or on a street like Cleopatra's Needle in London (if it's also Famous); it could be deep under Washington, D.C., or it could be ensconced on the top of a Hong Kong skyscraper.

Radiant (••••): Pick one Pillar. If you successfully roll for your character to restore any Pillar while in her tomb, she receives a point in the chosen Pillar as well. For example, if you picked Ka, your mummy could meditate in her tomb, and so long as the roll was successful (i.e., restored at least one Pillar point), she'd also get a bonus point of Ka from her tomb.

Vestige (• to •••••)

Effect: Your mummy starts play with one or more vestiges—objects filled with unrefined Sekhem. Mummies use these items to refresh memory, empower their tombs, and in dire circumstances, refuel their Pillars ("dire" because once cannibalized, vestiges remain at their new, lower ratings). Starting vestiges acquired through this Merit are assumed to align perfectly with their bearer's fetters. The Storyteller provides the description of each vestige, but players are encouraged to suggest concepts or ideas.

- • The mummy is the bearer of a single one-dot vestige.
- •• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a single two-dot vestige, or the bearer or two one-dot vestiges.
- ••• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a single three-dot vestige, or the bearer of a one-dot vestige and a two-dot vestige.
- •••• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a single four-dot vestige, or the bearer of a one-dot vestige and a three-dot vestige.
- ••••• Select one: The mummy is the bearer of a single five-dot vestige; or the bearer of a two-dot vestige and a three-dot vestige.

Witness (•••)

Prerequisite: Non-mummy

Effect: Some mortals see past the awe and horror of Sybaris, witnessing the Arisen like fellow immortals. It is

unknown what makes a companion spontaneously arise, though mummies have offered many theories over the millennia. Some believe Witnesses were beloved spouses or concubines whose souls were bound with necromancy to reincarnate and rejoin their loves in future Descents. Others believe they bear souls fit for the Rite of Return. Some Utterances and Affinities can transform mortals into Witnesses outright, either temporarily or permanently. Regardless of origin, Witnesses have always stood by the Arisen as servants, friends, and even occasional nemeses.

If mortal, the character gains total immunity to Sybaris (supernatural companions are already immune). Additionally, he also feels an obsessive fascination with the Arisen. Whenever presented with an opportunity to accompany or learn more about mummies, he must do so unless his player makes a successful Wits + Composure roll. Success allows the Witness to act as desired for the rest of the day. Apply a cumulative –1 to the check per month since he last indulged his fascination (maximum –5). Such indulgence must dominate most waking activity for at least a week to reset the penalty to zero. Note that Witnesses aren't compelled to seek out the Arisen constantly. The obsession only flares up in the presence of a mummy or clues that would lead to the Arisen (or genuine information about them). Finally, the mortal gains a limited sixth sense, intuitively recognizing Arisen or the Lifeless as such upon perceiving them directly, in person. He may not know what this instinct means the first time it activates, but he will learn.

Witness Mentor (• to •••••)

Prerequisite: Mummy

Effect: While mummies often turn to one another for guidance or simply make their own way, some find wisdom among mortals. A Mentor (see **World of Darkness**, p. 115) with the Witness Merit costs the same as one without. The advantages of a teacher immune to Sybaris are offset by the obsessive and often domineering attention such mentors pay to their immortal pupils.

Witness Retainer (+•)

Effect: Many mummies have servants and agents acquired via the Retainer Merit (see **World of Darkness**, p. 116), often priests or leaders within their cults. By default, such followers do not possess the Witness Merit. Servants capable of bearing witness to Utterances without panic are rarer and more precious, adding one dot to their value as Retainers. Theoretically, non-mummies can purchase Witness retainers, though few outside the Arisen even know that Witnesses exist or have reason to value them.



Love and hate; faith and doubt; courage and cowardice; sorrow and joy. It is these—not knowledge, not strength, but *feeling*—that make people, people. And, so far as the Lion-Headed are concerned, it is these that make the Deathless what they are as well; for without them, they are not Deathless, but merely dead, whether they slumber beneath the stones or walk beneath the sun. For others, immortality wears down humanity, until little remains but tattered memory and artificial purpose. Not so for the Lion-Headed. Theirs is the loyalty and the ever-burning ember of self that spans centuries, that defeats death itself, if only for a time. They retain a spark of life, the feelings and passions that many Arisen lack—and in so doing, they just may aid the Deathless as a whole in carrying on.

This isn't to suggest that those who pronounce the decree of heart are flighty sensualists, though a few might be. The Lion-Headed are driven by their passions in almost all things. They react on instinct, living in the moment. Their loves burn; their hatreds freeze. One will never find a friend or servitor more loyal than a Deathless of the decree of the heart—and one will never find an enemy more spiteful or implacable. The Lion-Headed see an enormous variety in their number, perhaps more than any other decree, for men and women of nearly every stripe, every profession, every persuasion are at least potentially driven by their emotions above all else. Any assumption that the Sphinxes were nothing but the musicians, artisans, and poets of Irem would be grossly inaccurate. They counted these among their number, certainly; but so too were they sportsmen and soldiers, healers and criminals, leaders and priests. And if they have a reputation for rash choices and hopeless causes, for too easily making friends and enemies, for being quick to offend and swift to impress… well, they would argue that it's because they, more than other mummies, remember what it is to feel human. To their minds, losing that to the Rite of Return—becoming nothing but occult machines (as the Jackal-Headed would have it) or seekers of knowledge (as are the Serpent-Headed)—is more than a betrayal of self, but a betrayal of the Judges, the Priests of Duat, of lost Irem, itself. After all, out of so very many, they were the ones chosen to serve. How, then, can changing who they are inside be anything less than an insult to those who chose them?

Nicknames: The Lion-Headed (also the Hands of Sekhmet or Sphinxes)

Appearance: Driven as they are, the Hands of Sekhmet often appear far and away the most lively of the Deathless. Their eyes are bright, their gestures emphatic, their faces expressive. Beyond this, however, few physical commonalities link the Lion-Headed to any great extent. Their appearance, though almost universally striking in *some* manner, varies wildly.

Adaptation: Despite their common background and circumstances, the Lion-Headed and other mummies occasionally have difficulty relating to one another. Even those other Deathless who retain as much humanity and emotion as the average Sphinx aren't *driven* by it in the same way. They see the Lion-Headed as impulsive, impetuous, sometimes even foolish; the Hands of Sekhmet, in turn, see other Arisen as cold, half-dead things that have forgotten what it means to live. They cooperate well enough, but they only infrequently actually understand one another.

The other half of this equation, however, is that the Deathless of heart tend to do very well when interacting with mortals. Combine the fact that they simply behave more humanly than many other mummies with the fact that most have a strong measure of personal charisma or magnetism, and the result are beings of substantial appeal to a great many living people. While their general attitude grants the Lion-Headed no particular advantage in learning to deal with the technologies and practices of the modern world, neither does it cause them additional difficulties, as they're fairly capable of rolling with whatever comes along.

Contributing to their reputation for being impassioned is the fact that the Lion-Headed are among the mummies most likely to abandon—or at least delay—the purpose for which they were raised. It's not that they don't care (loyalty, once again), simply that they may well find something they care about more—or, at least, that briefly fascinates them into pursuing it. Deathless of heart are also among the mummies most likely to attempt to linger and continue to live after their purpose is fulfilled.

Only the dead feel nothing, and we spend enough time amongst the dead as it is. If you've only moments at a stretch to live, then by Duat,* live *them.

Rite of Return: The Rite is central to who the Lion-Headed are, but it's hardly the only aspect. Most Sphinxes submitted themselves to the Rite out of a sense of loyalty and patriotism to Irem, or out of religious devotion to the Shan'iatu. (The others, for the most part, accepted out of spite, either to outlive their rivals or to prove to the Judges that they could.) Some retain that devotion still; others have come to resent their eternal servitude, burning with frustration at their situation. Most feel a combination of the two, but all feel strongly about the Rite one way or another. It colors their reactions to almost everything else, tingeing even the greatest joy with regret, bolstering even the greatest fear with a touch of confidence.

Cult: The gatherings that develop around the Hands of Sekhmet tend to be cults of personality. The Deathless at the center attracts those who are drawn to personal charisma, and they, in turn, draw others who feel the same. These cults are built on personal loyalty (passed down through the generations) as much as occult or religious adherence, and they often raise their Deathless patrons for reasons that the cults of other decrees might consider insufficiently important. Cults of the heart can range in size from small families to sects of hundreds, depending on the individuals in question.

Vessels: The Lion-Headed zealously pursue vessels that are of particular personal importance to themselves or their cults, and they seek out *all* vessels when necessary to either pursue, or temporarily stave off, the completion of the purpose for which they were raised. Otherwise, however, the Sphinxes interest in such things is markedly less than that of most other decrees (though it's never utterly absent, of course, mummies still being mummies).

Character Creation: The burning flame of a Sphinx's passions cannot help but draw others to it. The overwhelming majority are focused on Social Skills first and foremost; for many, the Physical come in a close second. While most are sensitive to the feelings of others, the articulation of their own passions—via Expression, Intimidation, Persuasion, and Socialize—is primary. Presence and Strength are the Favored Attributes of the Lion-Headed, but they value Resolve highly as well.

Favored Attributes: Presence and Strength

Defining Pillar: Ab (heart)

Restoring Pillars: The Hands of Sekhmet restore their confidence, and their Pillars, through the validation of their instincts and feelings. At the end of a scene in which the Lion-Headed successfully navigates a challenge by improvisation where others thought it wiser to work out a detailed plan; gains the assistance of another via emotional appeal; or proves his superiority over an enemy or rival (not just victory, but *superiority*), he regains one point of any Pillar.

Few things invigorate a Sphinx like a *new* emotional experience. This might seem impossible for beings so old, but in this one instance, the questionable memory of the Deathless is actually an advantage. If one of the Lion-Headed seeks out and *successfully* experiences an intense emotional experience he's never had (or cannot remember), his Ab Pillar is fully restored. He may do this no more than once per chapter (game session).

Judges: Akhi, Hepet-Khet, Neb-Heru, Neheb-Ka, Qerrti, Ruruti, Ser-Tihu, Tutuutef, and Usekh-Nemtet.

Stereotypes

The Falcon-Headed: Too busy searching for what's ahead, or otherwise examining what's behind, to simply see what *is*.

The Bull-Headed: They almost understand. At least they're wise enough to actually live in the world while they live at all.

The Serpent-Headed: How do we come from the same magics? They're everything we strive desperately to avoid.

The Jackal-Headed: Lifeless, and not Deathless, in all but name.



Rule from the chariot, not the throne. The high seat displays power, but it doesn't *use* it. If you don't exercise your might, someone else does it for you. Your priests, scribes, viziers, cousins, board members... they're all ready to take your command through the pretense of "advice" and "delegation." A throne-bound king wallows in delusion and pretension, shouting commands he can't enforce. He declares victory even while enemies tear down his palace. Eventually, he swallows his own propaganda. When assassins' knives edit his superfluous life out of the state, nobody's more surprised than he is.

True strength is action—the thunder of a chariot, bow, and mace. It emanates from the ba. When a mummy utters the decree of spirit, he ascends that chariot and promises to lead from the front. Even in defeat, his dedication is above reproach, and he cannot be dethroned except by his own hand. Ba is the inner voice that says, "I will do it." So the decree cultivates taciturn humility and martial bravery, and perhaps a little impulsiveness. Followers don't scorn contemplation, but rather believe it has no significance unless it translates into worldly action.

The so-called Falcon-Headed roar out of their tombs, issuing orders as soon as Sekhem solidifies into a throat and tongue to speak them. Of all the decrees, they might feel the most desperate in the face of Descent. It limits what they can do with a given incarnation. He who hesitates loses 1,000 years. Thus, the Charioteers lead cults on the hunt before the plan is set, preferring to improvise instead of prepare, micromanage instead of delegate.

The ba's soldiers know this approach possesses weaknesses. They respect the counsel of decrees that harvest wisdom from patience. Besides, their allies have been kind enough to cast themselves into a secondary role, even if they don't really understand that debate and analysis are a decisive leader's tools—not true power. Do the Judges care what the Arisen just *thought* of doing? No; the endless mission is a material one centered on tangible mystic vessels, not untouchable ideas.

The Falcon-Headed prefer command but don't demand on it. They recognize superior leadership when it gets results and attach their loyalty to it without hesitation. In generals and grunts alike, the ba drives hard work in the service of a worthy cause and unhesitating sacrifice. Fear is the sweet spice of bravery, not the poison of hesitation. The Falcon-Headed scorn emotions that might give them pause. Stillness is death, the chasm between cycles when the brave accomplish nothing. Follow a fast current along the river of Descent and you'll drift past every pain or useless pleasure, until only your accomplishments remain. In Duat, you'll place them before your Judge and be glorified.

Many members of the decree remember scenes from military lives and tools covered in blood as often as forge-ash. Others dream about incarnations as explorers, building in unmapped places. Historical colonization provided plenty of opportunities to do both, but inspired atrocities the Falcon-Headed typically refuse to admit they remember. Adventurous wanderlust persists in modern Arisen, who range far from their tombs to follow vessels and the Judges' urgings. A strong ba encourages direct action, so the Falcon-Headed only delegate duties when they must, and always with a bit of shame. They pull their own weight and expect their companions to do the same. The Talons neither abandon nor scold those who fall behind. Given time, they'll learn to be ashamed of their mistakes, to correct them, and then take their place by the Falcon-Headed's side.

Members of the decree forgive others for failure, but hate it in themselves. Undefeated foes and lost vessels nettle the ba-decreed conscience. The Charioteers throw themselves at the problem again and again, using new tactics and more power to strike at it until it breaks. Does it lead to stupid behavior? Rarely. The Falcon-Headed learn with every maneuver, applying its lessons to the next, but likewise believe that the lords of the ba suffer a private pain with each defeat.

They were beaten once, by knife-bearing demons. This must not be allowed to happen again.

They were stopped once, at the gates of Duat, by gods. Only gods should stop them again.

Nicknames: The Falcon-Headed (also Charioteers or Talons)

The sun disk frames the ba's unbearable brilliance, but the falcon's weapons are its talons.

Appearance: Talons are usually muscular and scarred from fire and blade; signs of a warrior-artisan's profession. As Shan'iatu generals recruited talented craft masters from defeated tribes, the Falcon-Headed hail from all of the Nameless Empire's ethnic groups, from Libya and Nubia to the edge of Canaan. Falcon-Headed from the southern and western reaches of the Empire may possess elaborate initiation scars from early warrior societies that were incorporated into the Iremite army. Men of the ba may wear closely cropped beards, though never in the braided style of royalty—they exist to catch sparks from the forge and to hide battle scars. Both genders typically wear short hair, as it's the most practical style.

Function usually conquers form in matters of dress and style, though most Talons indulge themselves in one or two places; an amulet, perhaps, or a shirt in one vibrant color. They wear rugged clothes with plenty of pockets, and fill them with easily reached weapons and tools as soon as they put them on. The Falcon-Headed dislike fragile modern electronics, but soon grow to appreciate their usefulness, opting for milspec, rugged phones, and laptops, once acclimated to the same.

Adaptation: In all times and places, members of this decree prefer cultures that get blood and calluses on their hands. They rub shoulders with blacksmiths, cops, local "big men," and non-commissioned officers—people below the stratum of ceremonial rule, but above the rank and file. In every age and nation, they discover common, comforting traits. Working warriors protect their own, even against the politicians who supposedly command them. They place merit over breeding and actions over speech.

As far as the Charioteers are concerned, modern democracies are anarchies contained by force of arms. Politicians are second-rate scribes with peculiar delusions, who believe that mere words are the equivalent of actions. The pen is not mightier than the sword, because a man with a sword can order a scribe to write anything. In Irem, sorcery was more than speech and inscription; the Shan'iatu were fire-bearing leaders, not decadent "intellectuals." This is why modern rulers fail to meet their peoples' needs, and why the mob challenges their anemic grasp on power. Falcon-Headed from more scholarly guilds prefer application to theory. Ba-focused Sesha-Hebsu treat every verse as part of a magical program, not a poem. Falcon-Headed alchemists love material things because of what they can do to hearts and minds.

Rite of Return: Cast before the Judges of Duat, the so-called Talons made no excuses. They did not deny a litany of sins. They might have said little more than, "You know what I've done, and what I might do." And clearly, that was enough.

Cult: The Falcon-Headed want loyal, tough, competent people on their side. Their cults promote self-sufficiency, honestly, and loyalty—and a bit of contempt for outsiders who haven't been through their society's initiations. A Charioteer may command initiates to survive in the wild for a week alone, and mark success with scars and tattoos. Reach and Grasp are equally important; one represents aspiration, the other, competence. The ba-centered philosophy tends to be short on doctrine, however, and many Talons have trouble keeping followers in line when they fail to uncover the elaborate mythologies, taboos, and rites they thought they'd find.

Vessels: Get it. Use it to get another. Repeat. It's gratifying to grab the occasional trophy vessel, and keeping them in the tomb has practical benefits, but the Falcon-Headed prefer artifacts they can use in the field. Even if they can't find an immediate use for a vessel, they might take it along anyway, hoping it will come in handy as part of an improvised tactic. Risky though it can be, they'll often hold off on sending one to the Judges until the last possible moment, when it no longer seems useful. Members of this decree find it particularly difficult to strike a balance between using vessels and harvesting them for Duat. Talons prefer tough-looking vessels that act as ordinary tools and weapons. No matter its supernatural power, a mace can always break bones.

Character Creation: Social Attributes usually stand dead last in the Falcon-Headed personal development agenda. Artisans and vanguards need to be smart; soldiers need to be tough. Anyone can impart information through intelligent speech, so why do words need to be beautiful, too? Strength, Stamina, Wits, and Resolve tend to be the Charioteers' highest Attributes. The essence of ba is thought that flows directly into action—spontaneity, not study. To be decisive, one must have the determination to carry any necessary action out and the physical power to survive the aftermath of one's actions. Physical training and an artisan's eye leads to skill in Crafts, Athletics, Weaponry, and Survival. Falcon-Headed who adapt to the modern world often train in applied Science to become self-taught engineers, chemists, and the like.

Favored Attributes: Resolve and Wits

Defining Pillar: Ba (spirit)

Restoring Pillars: A Talon of the Ba regenerates Pillars by triumphing over adversity. Solving a mystery is intellectually gratifying, but doing it after being shot, stabbed, and forced to march across 50 miles of rough, wild terrain is *glorious*.

A Falcon-Headed mummy recovers one point in any Pillar whenever he devotes at least an hour to meaningful mental or physical challenges. He doesn't have to succeed, but he must *choose* to strive. Self-defense doesn't cut it, but challenging a stranger to fight on a weak pretense fits the

bill. Meaningful challenges contain at least some chance of failure. The traits opposing the mummy should be no more than a couple dots less than what he brings to bear. The mummy may challenge himself in this fashion once every 24 hours.

To inspire its full recovery, the ba demands heroic effort. If one of the Falcon-Headed triumphs over mental or physical adversity he freely chooses to tackle, *and* for which he will suffer serious consequences for failure (such as aggravated wounds or immediate Sekhem loss), he recovers all Ba points. He may take up this challenge in addition to his daily challenge. The Arisen may refresh his Ba this way once per chapter (game session).

Judges: An-Afkh, Heraf-Het, Neb-Abitu, Nefer-Tem, Neheb-Nefert, Ser-Kheru, Shet-Kheru, Usekh-Nemtet, and Utu-Nesert.

Stereotypes

The Lion-Headed: I don't care what you feel. I care what you *do*. Nevertheless, there is no action without motivation, and that lies in the heart.

The Bull-Headed: Caution and refinement are overrated. Slow and steady loses the race. The hare may rest as much as he likes after flipping the tortoise over.

The Serpent-Headed: Fill your scrolls with your secret names, but remember that glorious deeds are greater than any word. Strong minds carve an image in the world that no successor can erase.

The Jackal-Headed: The gods gave us shadows to protect us from the desert sun, but sometimes we must tread through the sand and sweat. Still, there is something to be said for lying in wait and letting challenges enter the darkness that is yours to command.



The words "pride" and "humility" have little meaning to those who dedicate themselves to the decree of essence, though outsiders may accuse them of (or admire them for) either. These "essentialists" focus, intently, on what they are. Everything has an essence. To remove that core is to destroy the thing, whether it's a person, a painting, or an empire. To change it is to make a new thing in the place of the old. The details may shift, the shape and the composition, but to those of this decree, anything you can alter can't have been the center, the *truth*, of anything real. If it was, you couldn't have changed it.

Hence the pride. When faced with the ultimate challenge to defend and define themselves in Duat, they answered, "I am this!" And that was enough for eternity.

Hence the humility. One of the Bull-Headed knows himself, and while he may have ambitions, he recognizes that whether they succeed or fail, it doesn't ultimately matter to what he *is*. There are aspects of himself that he can never escape and must accept.

Followers of this decree set a polestar and navigate their lives by it, patiently, without complaint, and they do so forever. Some call them "Millstones" because they grind away at their problems, a speck at a time, until nothing remains but dust. Patient strength and determination can lead to one of these essentialists being called "the Judge's Ox."

Their loyalty can be passionate, at times, and can give them great contentment. Often, the greatest happiness is to work hard for something in which you believe. Yet that same relentless pursuit can look like obsession when it's unflinching and implacable (meaning, when someone or something is in its way). From within the decree, however, questions of gladness or grimness don't matter. You follow your path. The rest is ephemera.

Most Millstones come from well-trained, even prosperous backgrounds. (In lost Irem, poverty and superlative expertise rarely overlapped.) When you don't know when your next meal is coming, it can lead to a versatile and adaptive attitude. Conversely, many who think about big, ephemeral, cosmic truths are those whose material needs are met.

The decree has a few noble-blooded scholars and dedicated philosopher-acolytes from the higher rungs of Irem's social ladder, but most were the heirs of craft masters, old-family artisans, and the sorts of true-believing middle managers that every empire needs to balance the competing demands of client nations. Here and there, you get someone who pulled himself up by his bootstraps—a physician, say, whose love of medicine led the rulers to recognize his great skill, or a soldier whose single-minded pursuit of warfare led to similar distinction—but while the Judges' Oxen weren't Irem's *most* favored children, they were favored enough. Most repay such bounty with an intense loyalty.

Millstones tend to put principle first. Responsibilities to other Arisen or common sense or ethical decency are considered later, if at all. Now and then, though, the decree produces an anomaly. There are some who, when forced to pledge a Pillar, choose essence from egotism. Their central loyalty is to themselves, and instead of a good fetching-dog for the Judges, you get someone who views their masters, their fellow Arisen, and the whole sunlit world, as a means to their *personal* ends. (Few mummies pursue Memory with the dedication of a truly self-centered Millstone.)

But by and large, the Bull-Headed are would-be visionaries. They see themselves as sculptors. The world is their stone, to shape into a reflection of the Judges' will. Carving stone demands sharp chisels. The fragments chipped off are swept away and forgotten.

This dedication makes them reliable and stalwart, *if* you're on the same side. If you're not, their preoccupation with notions of the greater good makes them intransigent obstacles, at best. At their worst, they leverage their reputation for honesty and devotion to deceive and betray with disciplined imagination and destructive thoroughness. After all, to a Millstone, the ends usually justify the means. Your disappointment may be their means. You may be but a chipped fragment, yourself, deserving only history's broom.

Nicknames: The Bull-Headed (also Millstones or the Judges' Oxen)

Appearance: Most of the Judges' Oxen have the dark-mocha complexion and linear features of Irem's native families. Their cosseted upbringing is reflected in unmarked skin, the luster of health, and sometimes

Human truth is written in flame and breath, and it vanishes. My truth is etched in stone.

slight pudginess—a sign of rich living when farming was primitive and the elevator had yet to be invented. An attractive Millstone is unlikely to have popping muscles and interesting scars, but rather an air of confidence and command, expressed through decisive gestures and impeccable posture. An unattractive Bull-Headed often acts spoiled, looks weak, and whines when he speaks.

Members of this decree are often completely at ease with the idea of the status symbol. They appreciate craft, care about beauty on a deep level, and can tell the difference between quality and crap, so they consider it proper to display their taste and importance. Ask them about their fabulous wardrobe and they wonder why you'd wear a shirt that was created to be profitably inexpensive, rather than one that's made to be the best garment possible.

Adaptation: The Bull-Headed tend to ignore much of modern culture and politics as "distracting clutter." What does it matter that the law says there are no slaves? There are people poor enough that they can be used as implements. Notions of democracy and universal human rights *seem* revolutionary, to those who lack discernment. In practice, these freedoms are sedating illusions that most people will never test.

There's nothing new under the sun. A man distracted by the curve of a breast can be controlled by his lusts, and bribing a woman with stock options is the same as bribing her with a sack of rubies. Tedious organizing can be delegated to specialist underlings, as it was in Irem, only now such servants call themselves "managers" and employ cell phones instead of quills and papyrus. The conflicts are larger, but not different. The pieces have different shapes, but the game remains the same.

Rite of Return: During the Rite, a character of this decree decided something *mattered*. It was central enough to devote *the rest of time* to its pursuit. The essence sought varies, but there is something front and center, so beautifully right and real that all else pales in comparison. What is it for you?

Cult: Millstones tend to invest *heavily* in cults, especially Reach. (A little Grasp may be needed, but Millstones believe that they're doing the right thing and that society should respect their insights and dedication.) The most conservative rely on a religious foundation, of course (and often bask in its adoration by giving it traits such as Obedient or Ritualistic), but many cults have evolved into elaborate enterprises over generations.

Vessels: With their focus on essence, the Judges' Oxen tend to fixate on the safe storage and preservation of relics as much as those of any decree. They don't like emergency measures: Mummies who get stuck having to ruin sacred articles just to cannibalize Sekhem are regarded as failures who should have planned better. Millstones acknowledge a double standard for relics with vile natures, though—they need to be destroyed, though trying to use their questionable energies for personal empowerment is *also* suspect.

Yet while they are hesitant to destroy relics for their own gain, they are far more comfortable using objects' supernatural powers, or even permitting trusted mortals to do so. The nature of a torch is to burn. To leave it stored on a shelf is to defy its purpose.

Character Creation: Millstones often consider themselves the smartest or most capable, when in fact they're simply so prominent that others just won't directly contradict them. Physical Attributes are usually tertiary, with Social being primary, though a few really *are* as brilliant as they think. Strong Politics, Intimidation, Socialize, and Persuasion Skills are prized, and decent Subterfuge is common. Craft is essential, of course.

Favored Attributes: Resolve and Stamina

Defining Pillar: Ka (essence)

Restoring Pillars: The Bull-Headed thrive on the accuracy of their insights, so they can regain a single Pillar in any scene where they meaningfully clarify a misunderstanding. Seeing through an unimportant social faux pas isn't sufficient, but correcting a real miscarriage of justice is ideal. Note that the bonus can be lost if the Millstone learns that the *correction* was, itself, incorrect.

More important is creating a lasting monument or to having one recognized. When this happens, the Millstone gets his Ka *completely* restored to its maximum. This could mean finishing a masterwork statue, or it could arise from seeing one's own work displayed in a museum as "a stunning example of predynastic art." (Ironically, finding it misidentified wouldn't provide the same thrill.) Yet this isn't solely limited to physical arts. To learn that one's insights have become essential to a philosophy or that one's work is revered, even among a small group of scholars, can be just as fulfilling. The mummy may do this no more than once per chapter (game session).

Judges: An-Hotep, Fentu, Hetch-Abhu, Maa-Natuuf, Neha-Hatu, Set-Qesu, Ta-Retinhu, Uamenti, and Usekh-Nemtet.

Stereotypes

The Lion-Headed: Cautiously guided, passion is a powerful force, but passion's nature is to resist guidance... and caution.

The Falcon-Headed: Spirit arises from essence, as smoke from fire. Should smoke descend, contrary to its nature, it smothers the fire and then the smoke ceases, too.

The Serpent-Headed: When a thing's name is true to its nature, then all is in harmony and fate cannot be denied. This, in turn, means that to tamper with names can only lead to weakness or disaster.

The Jackal-Headed: To know the shape of a thing, without its weight, is to be empty. Empty things are only as useful as what you can put in them.



Everything in this world—indeed, in *all* worlds—harbors an unshakable, unchangeable truth at its core. It is what the gods created it to be; it cannot, and never will, be anything else. No matter how it is seen, no matter what others believe, no matter what is done to it, in the end it is still, above all else, *itself*. Truth is truth, regardless of the perceptions or wishes of others. To know someone or something—to *truly* know it, down to its immutable nature, unblended by the veils of perception, belief, or even the feeble reality of the physical world—is to hold power over that person or object. Many cultures have developed religions and even magics around this notion of innate selfness, but few understood it so well as the wise of lost Irem. They, like so many others, referred to this concept as the *true name*—or *ren*, in Irem—but "name" barely scratches the surface. "Identity;" "nature;" modern language has no true equivalent for the concept. It is an irony not lost on the Serpent-Headed, scholars and observers of the Deathless, that the ultimate meaning of a being's identity—its "true name"—is a concept that cannot, itself, be readily named in any surviving tongue.

Those Deathless who pronounce the decree of the name are (or at least were) historians, teachers, archivists, researchers, even sorcerers. They are driven to *know*, to understand the nature, identity, and essence—the true name, the true *purpose*—of the world around them. Some seek knowledge for its own sake, some out of religious obligation, some for the power it grants them, but all are willing students of reality. This often manifests as a paradoxical combination of constant questioning and rigid certainty. When she seeks to learn something new, to unearth forgotten knowledge or uncover a deception, a Serpent-Headed mummy takes little at face value. She questions. She digs. She may even challenge the purpose assigned by her cult or her very Judge—not to the point of disobedience, usually, but she certainly demands a greater understanding of "why" than most Arisen. Once she *does* feel that she has a complete understanding of something, however, she can become rigid and closed-minded on that particular topic. After all, she already *knows* the truth; why entertain any contrary notions? This may manifest as arrogance on such topics, an arrogance made even more irritating by the fact that the Serpent-Headed is usually correct. On those rare occasions, however, when a mummy of this decree is proved wrong in something she truly believed was true, it can cause a nearly crippling crisis of confidence.

On some level, the Serpent-Headed bear similarities to the Deathless of the decree of shadow. Mummies of both decrees tend toward scholarly pursuits, but where the Jackal-Headed seek occult understanding, the Deathless of the ren are more interested in the what and why of the world itself. While the Serpent-Headed favor knowledge over all, and thus the head over the heart, they aren't the emotionless cynics that the Jackal-Headed aspire to be. The Deathless of the ren take joy in learning, satisfaction in knowledge, and inspiration from their constant curiosity.

Nicknames: The Serpent-Headed (also Kings of Senet or Whisperers)

Appearance: The Kings of Senet are knowledge seekers, but that doesn't make them all studious in appearance. Few are especially imposing on a purely physical level, due to their focus on understanding over more athletic pursuits, but some exceptions exist. They often appear rapt to the point of obsession when studying something that's gotten their attention, whereas they might seem easily distracted at other times, though in fact they're simply attempting to take in everything around them.

Adaptation: The Serpent-Headed relish the opportunity to interact with other mummies, as it gives them a greater understanding of not only the other decrees, but Deathless nature in general. Unfortunately, such opportunities are rare, and other mummies are rarely as pleased to see them. Few of the Arisen have not heard the rumor that the Deathless of the ren share a spiritual link with the Lost Guild (see p. 29), the semi-mythical masters of true name magic. As such, even though they recognize the value of the Serpent-Headed's knowledge, few other mummies are entirely comfortable trusting them. That said, when the need for their knowledge or mastery of method overwhelms the distrust, other mummies do occasionally allow the Serpent-Headed to associate with them, usually in the

Stone erodes. Hearts still.
Shadows fade. But what is... is.

form of an advisor (or, back in the ancient world, a vizier).

Focused as they are on understanding what's around them, the Deathless of the ren tend to do fairly well when interacting with the modern world—*if* they've had at least a brief opportunity to learn and adapt. If they haven't, they tend to remain quiet, hoping to pass unnoticed until they've gotten a grasp on their surroundings. The Serpent-Headed believe that all challenges can be met by the proper application of knowledge and try to break down any problems facing them into manageable, solvable chunks. They feel a bit of contempt for others who act on emotion or instinct, and feel shame when they themselves do so—something that happens more often than they'd like.

The Kings of Senet are among the most driven of the decrees when fulfilling their purpose during the Descent, *if* they feel they truly understand the reason for their objective, or feel that following its course is likely to lead to greater understanding (of themselves, history, the nature of the Sothic Wheel, or what have you). If they *don't* feel satisfied with their understanding, or see such opportunities, they become much more distractible. Few Serpent-Headed ever abandon or rebel against their purpose, but they may not devote their full attentions to it, choosing to spend at least some time pursuing other avenues of discovery.

Rite of Return: The need to understand the nature of their existence and the true purpose behind the Rite that created them continues to drive many of the Kings of Senet. They do not begrudge their service (save when they feel under-informed), instead seeing the path of the Descent as opportunity to further comprehend existence (all of it in general, their own in particular). Some, in fact, find comfort in knowing what their purpose is, why they were brought back, and rarely question further. Those rare Serpent-Headed who *do* rebel against the particular purpose for which they were raised, or against their Judge or Deathless nature in general, most likely do so for one of two reasons. Either the mummy has focused obsessively on making some discovery that she cannot accomplish while pursuing her more overt goal, or she's already discovered some forbidden knowledge that turns her against her cult, her Judge, or Deathless existence. Their need to understand and to delve further into ancient stores of knowledge than others mean that the Deathless of the ren are among the most likely of the Arisen to truly lose themselves to madness.

Cult: Cults of the Serpent-Headed tend toward the moderate in size—larger than some, smaller than many. For the most part, those who seek knowledge and understanding are commonly drawn to mummies who seek the same. Thus, these cults often tend toward the most scholastic, or consist of those who believe the Deathless at their core to be a font of otherworldly wisdom. Those who come to the Arisen through exploration or archaeology are more likely to be drawn to the Whisperers than to other decrees.

Vessels: The Serpent-Headed are zealous seekers of vessels as much for their historical significance or the opportunity to study them as for the power they hold. They're far freer than many others in allowing their mortal cultists to examine such items, as well. For obvious reasons, then, the Deathless of the ren can become among the most violent toward mummies who drain or destroy such vessels for what the Whisperers feel are insufficiently valid reasons.

Character Creation: It should come as no surprise at all that nearly all Serpent-Headed rely on mental skills above all others, particularly in various combinations of Academics, Investigation, Occult, and Science. As their social interactions tend to revolve around the understanding—and through understanding, control—of others, their focus in those areas often settles on Empathy, Intimidation, and Persuasion. While their Favored Attributes are Intelligence and Manipulation, Wits—that is, an eye for surrounding detail—and Resolve are almost as highly regarded.

Favored Attributes: Intelligence and Manipulation

Defining Pillar: Ren (name)

Restoring Pillars: Those who declare the decree of Ren restore their Pillars through ever-growing understanding (and control) of the world around them and by solving problems via the application of knowledge. Learning the true nature of a person or thing, uncovering an unknown historical truth, or proving the superiority of the mind over the heart and the body (and of planning over instinct or improvisation) restores these Deathless. A Whisperer may regain one point of any Pillar at the end of a scene in which she accomplishes any of these.

If a King of Senet deliberately goes out of her way to learn extra information relevant to her current purpose, her Ren Pillar is restored in full. Note that this is *extra* information; it can neither be knowledge that she came across organically in her efforts, nor can it be any knowledge that she *must* have in order to complete said purpose. She may do this no more than once per chapter (game session).

Judges: Bastu, Kenemti, Khem-Inhu, Neb-Imkhu, Sekhiru, Tem-Sepu, Uatch-Rekhet, Unem-Besek, and Usekh-Nemtet.

Stereotypes

The Lion-Headed: Certainly the most forthright and direct among us; a shame they're so foolish in their choices.

The Falcon-Headed: For them to see so clearly, yet do so little with what they learn, frustrates us beyond measure.

The Bull-Headed: To know your own essence is an admirable goal, but it's hardly sufficient in and of itself.

The Jackal-Headed: Students of the worlds, as are we, but far too focused on their questions, not enough on the answers.



The religion and method of the Arisen is well recorded across the pages of thousands of tablets, codices, and the dust-caked walls of long forgotten tombs. The esoteric and magical practices of the Deathless are by necessity formulaic and thorough, permitting a lineage of rebirths to recover the techniques necessary for them to conduct their brief periods of life in such a way that they embody the needs of both the soul and the cryptic agendas of the Judges to whom they are bound. However, the historical record makes little mention of the subtle philosophies—the truly secret and forbidden thoughts and metaphysical transgressions of the ancient dead—as the dark reality of the Arisen condition would sit too heavily on the shoulders of even the most perseverant of mortal readers. The deeply nihilistic truths of the mummy's fate are damnation in and of themselves. It is for this reason that the Jackal-Headed alone hold the torch that guides the Deathless through the blackest and longest portion of the eternal cycle.

Although warped by eons of conscious exploration of the spaces between Descents, those who pronounce the decree of shadow are, at their core, both mystics and philosophers, moved to illuminate the way for themselves and for their brothers. As a result, their view tends to be one of profound and total resignation to the spiritual course provided by the blueprint inherent in the Rite of Return's magic. It is no surprise that the children of this decree are often conservative, with a rather resigned sense of doom attached to their fervent adherence to their Judge's will. For this reason, they are often placid when their companions are the most fearful and have sure footing in territory where most would not.

Nonetheless, their dark spiritual sensibilities and well-mannered insubordination of the most human agendas lead the Jackal-Headed into a place of emotional isolation created by their self-proclaimed mastery of movement between the worlds. Even when their stringent notions of their unspeakably ancient mystical code are not at the forefront, they tend to find themselves in opposition to companions who seem motivated by ego or notions of heroism. To the Arisen of the sheut ("shadow"), the emotional needs of the soul are of little value and naught but fleeting ripples of distraction upon the great, silent sea of death, all of which eventually fade as the wills of the Judges are served and order is restored. Certainly the brunt of this abrasive agenda could be overcome by gentle lies and hiding the stark truths of the unliving condition, markedly improving the grim reputation of the Jackal-Headed among their kind. Unfortunately, they (and the Judges they serve) condemn anything bearing even a remote resemblance to true deception, preferring that their words sing with unblemished and painful truths rather than allow the asps of convolution to feed upon pure wisdom. Needless to say, this attitude of zero compromise when it comes to their spiritual tasks make them difficult to tolerate in times of stress and crisis, as they refuse to curtail their doomsaying for the sake of weak stomachs or delicate sensibilities. If one cannot accept the truths of the shadow while among the living, what integrity will endure when the great tides of the 1,000-year death fall in upon such a weak soul?

Nicknames: The Jackal-Headed (also Anpu's Torch or Ferrymen)

Appearance: Although Ferrymen have a contemplative nature, the manner by which it is carried varies significantly. The marks of the sheut are those of a deep and lasting weariness. Those who have carried their burden with less severity may only bear worry lines and blink slowly as they move from task to task. In the case of more severe adherents, the marks of severe insomnia and sleep deprivation often manifest, especially while derangements are active, with shaking, black circles around the eyes, and a rattled disposition being the telltales of this decree.

Adaptation: Although avoided by many of their own kind, the Jackal-Headed grasp of mummy existence is firm and well informed. Having spent the vast majority of their mental efforts on the apprehension of the Judges and their design, they do well when surrounded by their cultists and fellow mummies. This is generally not so when they're forced out into the world at large. Lacking much attachment to the conventions of the living, the Ferrymen do what they can by reducing everything to a philosophical puzzle or occult metaphor. When the Jackal-Headed elaborate on a mystical correspondence, it is not so much an informed interpretation of the world around them, but rather a conjured symbol that takes the place of compassion and attachment, serving as an ill-constructed raft while briefly among the living.

Of all the decrees, those who carry Anpu's torch are the least prone to distraction when fulfilling their purpose during

Do not embrace the tumult of the storm within.
Think only of the stillness of the tomb and your place upon the anvil of time.

the Descent. Unlike adherents of the more bloody-minded and passionate decrees, they fulfill their purpose because all else is folly in the face of the Judges' will. The rediscovery of the living world is a consequence of purpose, and so, the precious seconds of the Descent are ideally dedicated to the fulfillment of purpose in hopes that the next journey through death will be more serene than the last. Nonetheless, the Jackal-Headed are far from infallible and often justify flights of morbid fascination as mystical realizations instead of the suppressed expressions of their own desires for discovery and revelation.

Rite of Return: Ferrymen are primarily *defined* by their service to the Rite that made them. Without such devotion, the needle of the compass spins wildly, and what was once a focused progression through time soon becomes a nihilistic journey of meaninglessness and rage. Although rebellion is rare among this decree, when it does happen, they say the Devourer's mouth twists into a bloody grin. The inherent death obsession of the Jackal-Headed is frightening enough in its most docile expression, but without such tenets and philosophy to bind it, the mummy becomes an agent of the darkest forces, unbound by its intellect and committed to termination and death in their purest forms.

Cult: The cults of the shadow are typically small. This is primarily a result of their agendas having little to do with the interests of mortals. Because of their strange hybrid philosophy of nihilism and restraint, there are few among humankind who find service to the Jackal-Headed appealing. However, there are always those rare few—doomsday enthusiasts, nihilists, death cultists, and violent criminals with spiritual modi operandi—that embrace doom at their own expense. There lie the chosen and faithful of those mummies who treasure their time between Descents. Thus, only the foolhardy call the Ferrymen forth for any less than the direst of needs.

Vessels: As the receptacles of Sekhem, vessels are not as zealously pursued by this decree as they are by others, save when they prove an arising's purpose. There is no denying, however, that the Ferrymen treasure these ancient items insofar as they inform their understanding of the Descent. As such, the Jackal-Headed are reluctant to allow such items to be too closely studied by their human agents.

Character Creation: While the capacity for mysticism and a deep grasp of the most abstract aspects of philosophy are key to the actualization of the way of shadow, the dark territory navigated by Anpu's Torch requires the ability to persevere unflinchingly. Therefore, those who abide the decree of shadow are primarily defined by the resilience-oriented abilities. Although Composure and Stamina are the most important, Resolve is valued almost as highly. Almost all Ferrymen have some training in Academics and the Occult, but they often pursue Medicine as well. The ability to successfully proselytize to their brothers usually takes the form of developed Expression. It is mostly the rebellious members who heavily pursue combat training and the art of killing with focused violence.

Favored Attributes: Composure and Stamina

Defining Pillar: Sheut (shadow)

Restoring Pillars: The adherents of this decree restore their Pillars by exemplifying the way of sheut. The revelation of hidden truths, confronting the fear of another mummy with clarifying wisdom, and showing no fear in the face of possible destruction; all will revivify such mummies. Thus, by acting with directness and fearlessness, the Jackal-Headed may regain one point of any Pillar at the end of the scene in which he does so.

If one of Anpu's Torch manages to seek out and reveal a serious instance of deception or a profound lie on behalf of the Judge he serves, the core of his being saturates the sahu of his form. If an agent of the sheut decree unravels such an untruth, his Sheut Pillar is restored in full. He may do this no more than once per chapter (game session).

Judges: Am-Khaibit, Artem-Khet, Her-Uru, Nebha, Nekhenhu, Tcheser-Tep, Tenemhu, Unem-Sef, and Usekh-Nemtet.

Stereotypes

The Lion-Headed: The masters of the heart are the most human of us all.

The Falcon-Headed: Their questing penetrates a veil set before endless veils, but it is a failure of their question—not their answer—that damns them.

The Bull-Headed: They cling to an essence that is but a flash upon the deep, yet they'd have us believe their integrity is beyond question.

The Serpent-Headed: If their endless prying serves the Judges, leave them to it. We hide no truth from those who would seek it.

Affinities

The radiant Sekhem within mummies anoints them with improbable good fortune and preternatural competence. This is no accident. The Arisen believe the capacity to manifest these so-called Affinities to have been built directly into the Rite of Return, empowering them with the tools needed to fulfill their intended purpose.

Manifesting

Unlike most forms of supernatural power, Affinities do not require training or a teacher and aren't really learned in a conventional sense. Instead, they manifest as a reflexive action (i.e., get added to a character sheet) at the moment of purchase, whether during character creation or by paying experience. The Arisen do not know they have new Affinities until the magic first creates an effect or could do so, at which time they instantly intuit their new capabilities. Many mummies are just as surprised by the Affinities they manifest as the rest of the world.

Prerequisites

Almost all Affinities require trait minimums listed in their description. Although the Arisen can technically manifest Affinities without meeting their prerequisites, such magic remains dormant and cannot be accessed. Only by meeting the requirements can a mummy call upon the miracles within her. If a relevant rating then drops below the minimum, dormancy resumes.

The specific trait used for an Affinity prerequisite determines its overall type:

- **Soul Affinities** express a specific Pillar and rarely require more than Pillar 3. The higher the minimum, the more powerful the effect. Soul Affinities are favored by members of the decree associated with their Pillar and never have overtly supernatural effects. Their magic is powerful, but only out of sight of witnesses or in ways that can be mistaken for extraordinary skill and/or luck. A mummy can never have more Soul Affinities of a given Pillar than he has dots in that Pillar (e.g., a mummy with Ren 3 could have up to three Affinities with a Ren prerequisite). If an Arisen has the maximum number of Soul Affinities of a given Pillar when he loses a dot in that Pillar, he also loses access to a relevant Soul Affinity. If this happens, the player can either liquidate the experience spent on that Soul Affinity (see "Liquidation," below) or simply hold the Affinity in reserve until the relevant Pillar returns to its prior level. (If he chooses to drop his Judge's starting Affinity, he doesn't have the option to liquidate it for experience.)
- **Guild Affinities** draw upon the metaphysical connection between mummies and their guilds through their Guild Status rating (see p. 79). Each guild has a basic Guild Affinity that all members manifest in common upon joining the guild and gaining their first dot of Guild Status. Certain rare and secret powers of the guilds require higher ratings, limiting them to mummies willing to play games of politics with their fellow immortals. Guild Affinities are favored by members of their listed guild and may have overtly supernatural effects, but only in accordance with that guild's ritual practices. An Arisen can manifest a maximum number of Guild Affinities equal to his Guild Status + 1 (though rumors abound that certain guildmasters know of ways to cheat this limitation). If he loses status in the guild to which his Guild Affinities are linked, and has the maximum number of Guild Affinities permitted, he also loses access to a Guild Affinity of his choice. If this happens, the player can either liquidate the experience spent on the Affinity or simply hold the Affinity in reserve until his Guild Status returns to its prior level. (If he chooses to drop the bonus Guild Affinity, he doesn't have the option to liquidate it for experience.)
- **Bane Affinities** are accursed powers that can infect and wound a mummy's soul. The Shuankhsen wield these powers "naturally" (if anything can be said to do so), but the Arisen can also manifest them after interacting with one. Bane Affinities are easily the most powerful type, balancing their power with horrible curses afflicting the wielder. This corrupt magic is almost always obvious and universally awful, exacerbating the monstrous nature of the undead. (Storytellers: see p. 197 for examples.) Arisen can have a maximum number of Bane Affinities equal to (10 - Memory). An Arisen who loses access to a Bane Affinity because he raised his Memory after reaching his maximum number of Bane Affinities cannot hold the newly lost Bane Affinity in reserve and does not get any experience back for liquidating it.
- **Miscellaneous Affinities** do not fit into any of the main categories. These powers may not require a prerequisite at all or may express an unusual trait minimum, like a mummy's Cult rating. Regardless, miscellaneous Affinities can't be favored, and the overtness of their magic varies widely. See individual descriptions for details. When an Arisen manifests a Miscellaneous Affinity, he does so in place of one of his Guild or Soul Affinity slots, not in addition to them.

Gaining Affinities

The Arisen start play with the basic Affinity of their guild, the Soul Affinity bestowed by their Judge's decree, and one more chosen by their players. Acquiring additional Affinities in play costs 17 experience points each (or 15, if favored by a mummy's decree, guild, or Judge). Mummy players can drop the cost to 15 (or 13, if favored) by not choosing a specific Affinity and instead leaving the selection to Fate. The resulting choice often provides clues on what the mummy is supposed to be doing with the rest of her Descent, if not entire unlife. Storytellers should not assign Bane Affinities via Fate unless confident that the mummy's player will appreciate the unexpected curse (and even then, only if the Arisen has met the prerequisite).

Liquidation: As befits the transitory and often mysterious nature of Affinities, a player has the option of "liquidating" experience when transitioning out of one Affinity and into another—not adding an additional power to her repertoire, but replacing an existing Affinity with a new one. When this happens by player choice, the player loses the old Affinity and its liquidation nets 8 experience points that she can put toward the new Affinity.

Dictates of Fate

Various Affinities and Utterances mention that Fate dictates a particular outcome for an effect. This means that the Storyteller selects the result with an eye toward the plot of the current story and the story's intended future. The mysterious powers and forces that tug upon a mummy's soul ensure no shortage of drama and adventure, but they are never random. Storytellers should play Fate's decrees as an opportunity to move the story along through plot devices requested by the players. In games that rely heavily upon improvisation rather than prepared plot, "Fate" becomes a narrative force guiding characters toward interesting and exciting scenes, generally pushing mummies into challenges and situations that give them a chance to shine. Although Fate can and often does place the Arisen in danger, it manifests within their own powers as a blessing, not a curse. Mummies are like unto gods incarnate. It is only fitting that the universe anoints them with interesting lives.

Using Affinities

For the most part, Affinities just work by providing their benefits in every situation specified in their description. The Arisen don't have to do anything to receive these benefits, but neither may they refuse Affinity effects that apply. Should a mummy's own Affinities come into conflict, Fate dictates which effect takes precedence. As a matter of balance, Affinities with narrower utility are more powerful than those with broad utility.

Some Affinities list effects that can be activated by spending Willpower. Any number of Willpower may reflexively be paid for the Arisen this way per turn; such expenditure does not count against the usual one Willpower per turn that may be spent for other purposes.

Ancient Horror Unveiling

Prerequisites: Sheut 3

Effect: The Arisen turns her wrathful attention to a single target who can perceive her as an instant action. She need say nothing at all, though some like to accentuate the experience with an indelible message, since the victim perfectly remembers that phrase for the rest of his life. For that turn only, the target is afflicted with Sybaris and sees the mummy for what she is, though the Affinity does not reveal her to others. Even targets immune to Sybaris find the experience spiritually traumatic.

The mummy's player spends one Willpower and rolls (Presence + Intimidation). The target resists with (Resolve + Composure + Sekhem), adding one to the roll's target number unless his Virtue is Fortitude. If successful, the target develops a phobia derangement toward the mummy (**World of Darkness**, p. 97). Victims who already have this specific phobia instead upgrade it to hysteria (**World of Darkness**, p. 97). Those afflicted with that hysteria feel the fear spreading into other parts of their life and gain the avoidance derangement (**World of Darkness**, p. 100) focused on the Arisen. It takes a week for avoidance to fade, another week for hysteria to downgrade into a phobia and a month for the phobia to pass (meaning victims terrorized all the way to aversion need six weeks to fully recover). Each successful activation resets the victim's recovery time from that point.

Anointed Prowess

Prerequisite: Ka 1

Effect: The mummy's body is a temple to himself, hallowing his athletic endeavors. This Affinity duplicates the Blessed Soul Affinity (see below), but applies to the use of Physical Attributes/Skills rather than Social ones.

Auspicious Mastery

Prerequisite: Ba 1

Effect: Fate grants uncanny wisdom and draws the mind's eye to important thoughts. This Affinity duplicates Blessed Soul (below), but applies to the Arisen's use of Mental Attributes/Skills rather than Social ones.

Beast Companion

Prerequisites: Ba 1

Effect: The mummy's relationship with a favored animal has become an indelible part of her story, repeating anew as each incarnation succumbs to injury or time. The Arisen chooses a companion by touching an animal and reflexively marking it with her soul. That animal remains chosen until its death, at which time the mummy may choose a replacement. Although the Affinity can choose any animal, it is most powerful when enchanting creatures worshipped in ancient Egypt.

The chosen animal receives the following powers:

- All its rolled actions reduce their target number by two.
- It is immune to Sybaris.
- The mummy can reflexively borrow the senses of her companion, replacing her own senses until she drops the effect. She sees what it sees, hears what it hears, etc.
- The Arisen can telepathically communicate instructions to her pet across any distance. The companion obeys commands like an Intelligence 1 person, but cannot otherwise reason intelligently on its own.
- Both the mummy and the companion can feel the unique pull of each other's spirits, allowing them to sense the direction toward each other like an internal compass.
- The mummy can touch her familiar to transfer any temporary derangements afflicting her to the animal. The companion expresses the transferred derangement through the lens of its usual behavior range, so a cat with obsessive compulsive disorder may become an extremely finicky eater or grow wildly agitated if its routine is disturbed. The animal only suffers the transferred derangement for one week, after which it recovers.
- If the animal was considered sacred in ancient Egypt (e.g., canines, cats, crocodiles, falcons, snakes, etc.), it suffers damage and heals as one of the Arisen.

Beast Soul Fury

Prerequisites: Sheut 1

Effect: Mummies are monsters. All people are. Like most monsters, the Arisen vainly pretend to be more, deluding themselves with elaborate constructs of imagination and reason. Underneath it all, primal savagery lurks. Beast Soul Fury rips the veil of lies away, leaving only the snarling Sheut in total dominion of the mummy's body.

Reflexively activating Beast Soul Fury costs one Willpower and lasts for one scene. The resulting feral state confers the following powers and limitations:

- The Arisen drops to Intelligence 1 and can only take actions a primitive hominid could imagine, as determined by the Storyteller. Most complex or cognitive endeavors are outright impossible for her. This includes any language use beyond the simplest and crudest phrases. Her Memory remains, allowing her to act kindly toward friends and bystanders, but she is predisposed to anger and reacts violently to any perceived threat with maximum force.
- Her primitive rage-fueled mind rejects all foreign influence, completely nullifying all forms of mind control, illusions, emotion control or similar powers acting upon her. All temporary derangements fall off her mind in the clarity of her fury, possibly leaving her far saner when she calms down. She remains an invalid target for such effects for the duration of the Affinity. Powers that read her mind or probe her memory perceive only a red haze.
- She is considered to have Sekhem 10 for the sole purpose of reinforcing her Strength and/or Stamina with Pillars.

Blessed Panoply

Prerequisites: Ren 2

Effect: Mummies are immortal. Few of their possessions are so durable. This Affinity provides the following benefits:

- The Arisen's possessions do not rust, rot or otherwise suffer any negative effects from the passage of time. Food will not spoil, even centuries later. Erosion does not afflict her tomb. They suffer no wear and tear from normal use, except parts intended to be used up. For example, a blade never needs sharpening. In addition, any roll to inflict damage to such objects adds one to its target number. This protection extends to all owned possessions (including possessions shared with up to four other people) and operates across any distance. Unattended possessions remain shielded until claimed by someone else and left in their control for a full year. After that, the protection ebbs and time begins inflicting usual harm
- The mummy may take an instant action to clean himself (including worn possessions) or any touched object he owns, regardless of size. This effect doesn't work in the presence of mortal observers, though companions and the mummy's own cultists do not inhibit the magic. A subtle golden shimmer burns and boils away all dirt, dust, blood and the like, leaving behind an uncannily pristine exterior.
- The Arisen can visualize any of his possessions to sense the invisible bonds of ownership tying them to him. So long as nothing has disturbed this bond, he can sense the object's direction like a specialized internal compass. He cannot estimate the distance to the target without following the trail back to its source or triangulating its position on a map.
- The mummy can touch an object he doesn't own as an instant action and metaphysically claim it by verbal decree. If the object has no owner, success is automatic. If it has

an owner, roll the Arisen's (Resolve + Sekhem), resisted by the current owner's (Resolve + Sekhem). The current owner adds +1 per decade he has owned the item, to a maximum bonus of +5. If the mummy succeeds, her player spends one Willpower to transfer ownership.

Blessed Soul

Prerequisite: Ab 1

Effect: Fate bows before the grandeur of the Arisen. Whenever the mummy takes a rolled action using a Social Attribute and/or Social Skill and has an applicable Specialty, his player may pay one Willpower point to reduce the roll's target number by one. He then applies the effects of this Affinity to all valid Specialty use during the scene. The target number reduction from Blessed Soul doesn't stack with the effects of Auspicious Mastery or Anointed Prowess in circumstances where more than one of them applies.

Target Numbers and Fate

The target number of a roll is the minimum number that counts as a success on a rolled die. No roll can have an "X-again" rule for a value of X lower than the target number, so "8-again" becomes "9-again" if target number is 9, and so on. Virtually all rolls in the World of Darkness system are target number 8, with chance rolls at target number 10. The curses of the Arisen can increase a roll's target number as high as 10, while their blessings can lower it to a minimum of 6 (after all modifiers).

By Steps Unseen

Prerequisite: Sheut 3

Effect: The Arisen can take an instant action to hide herself. Her player rolls Stealth with a bonus of the mummy's Sheut rating, resisted by the opponent's Wits + Composure. The effect succeeds if her player beats the successes of all potential witnesses or her player gets an exceptional success, allowing her to take advantage of a distraction or to move while an opponent blinks. Either way, success permits reflexive teleportation to a destination within (Sheut x 10) yards. She vanishes and reappears in a burst of shadows she alone notices. The mummy must be able to perceive the destination or have been there previously and can't teleport to a location another sapient being is currently viewing without an exceptional success for a window of opportunity. The first use of this Affinity each scene is free. Subsequent activations in the same scene cost one Willpower each.

Arisen often use By Steps Unseen to set themselves up for an attack, appearing behind an unsuspecting opponent or jumping to a higher sniping perch. So long as a relocated mummy remains undetected, his enemies cannot apply their Defense against his attacks.

Charmed Lives

Prerequisites: Ren 2

Effect: The mummy lives an extraordinarily blessed existence, free from most of the day-to-day irritations they vex most inhabitants of the World of Darkness. This bounteous abundance of good fortune provides the following:

- She does not experience minor inconveniences. When she hails a taxi, one is available. She rarely (if ever) hits a red light while driving. Pigeons defecate on every other car but hers. And that's just her commute. The rest of her life is similarly free of small anxieties. This luck doesn't extend to anything worse than an annoyance, let alone any big problems. Fortunately, mummies rarely have trouble finding big trouble to keep their Descents interesting.
- Her player can pay one Willpower to dictate the results of a card draw, dice roll or other random event with a fixed number of possibilities. The result must be a possible result, so a deck cannot show two aces of spades if it contains only one copy of that card. The Storyteller should adjudicate all uses, balancing improbability against impossibility. If two characters pit their Charm Lives against one another (or a similar power), the magic cancels out and the event resolves normally.
- Her player can pay one Willpower to reflexively shield all her actions against target number increases imposed by Affinities or Utterances for one scene.

Dauntless Explorer

Prerequisites: Ka 2

Effect: The mummy's fearless strength gives her the grit to endure the toughest situations, rallying friends and allies to match her determination. This Affinity provides the following:

- She adds her Ka rating to any dice pool rolled to resist fear or despair, unless her Ka rating is already part of that dice pool.
- She permanently gains the Strong Back Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 113) for free.
- She permanently gains the Inspiring Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 115) for free. Whenever she uses that Merit to give a character a Willpower point, that character gains relief from all derangements afflicting him for the rest of the scene. He may act as though fully sane in this brief bout of lucidity, after which all his derangements return. Additionally, gaining

Willpower this way also gives him the Strong Back Merit for one day (if he doesn't have it already).

- While she is in unfamiliar terrain, her player may reflexively spend one Willpower whenever she succeeds on a Survival roll to convert the result into an exceptional success.

Deathsight

Prerequisite: Sheut 1

Effect: The Arisen's intimate awareness of death grants the following capabilities:

- He can perceive ghosts in Twilight with all his senses and sees ghosts possessing living/dead bodies as translucent outlines of their true form superimposed over their hosts.
- He gains a limited form of soulsight, capable only of reading a target's Vice, Morality, and Sheut rating. The dice pool is Wits + Investigation + Sheut, resisted by the target's Resolve + Composure. Sekhem is *not* added to resist. Failure means the mummy learns nothing and his player must pay one Willpower per subsequent attempt to scrutinize the same target with Deathsight again during the scene. Scanning a possessed being evaluates the possessing entity, not the host.
- His player reduces the target number by one for all rolls made for the character to notice undead beings (ghosts, vampires, the walking dead, the Lifeless, other mummies, and so on). The Arisen recognizes all noticed undead as such, though he cannot differentiate them beyond mummies and non-mummies.
- His player can spend one Willpower to shield the Arisen from the undead for a scene. While so protected, apply a penalty of his Sheut rating to all attacks aimed at him by any undead that is not also a mummy or a Sadikh.

Divine Countenance

Prerequisite: Ab 1

Effect: The mummy can reinforce her Social Attributes by spending Pillars, using the same overall rules as improving Dexterity. However, she may still spend one Pillar to boost a Social Attribute by one dot while at Sekhem 1. The Arisen must spend each Pillar point targeting a single Attribute and cannot split the bonus dots among different traits. Boosting Composure adds Willpower dots as normal (maximum Willpower 10), but doesn't grant additional Willpower points.

Dominating Might

Prerequisite: Ka 3

Effect: The Arisen's uncanny strength can do some truly terrible things.

- He adds +2 to his Strength rating for the purposes of lifting/moving objects.
- Subtract his Ka rating from the initiative count of all opponents in combat with the mummy (minimum 0), provided they have ever seen him demonstrate great strength or combat skill. Seeing him brings back traumatic memories of his prowess, inducing panic and hesitation.
- Whenever he inflicts one or more points of damage to an opponent with a close combat attack, the Arisen may also choose for his blow to knock the enemy prone.
- He suffers no damage from striking inanimate objects with his unarmed attacks.
- His player can pay one Willpower to add the mummy's Ka as an armor piercing rating to all close combat attacks targeting inanimate objects for the rest of the scene.

Enduring Flesh

Prerequisite: Ka 1

Effect: The mummy's body resists some harm better than those of her fellow Arisen. This confers the following advantages:

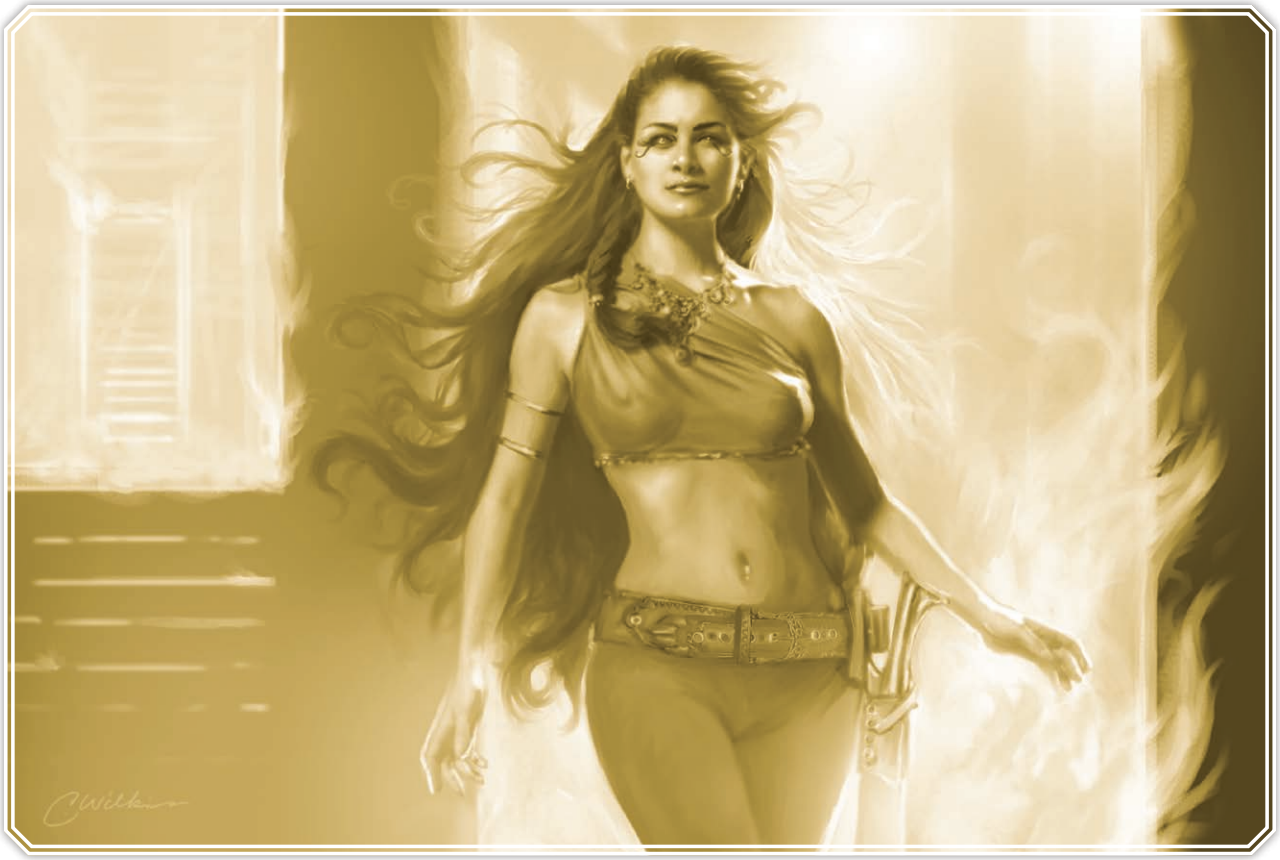
- No natural environmental condition (besides direct immolation) can penalize the mummy's dice pools, damage her, or otherwise cause her harm. She may, for instance, swim near a boiling sea vent without worrying about pressure or heat. This immunity to penalty doesn't extend to basic perception, searching an area for clues, tracking, and other primarily sensory actions.
- The first (Ka rating) total points of aggravated damage applied to her by fire per scene are recorded as lethal instead. Within her tomb, this value doubles.

Enlightened Senses

Prerequisite: Ren 2

Effect: The Arisen's perception expands, revealing truth and beauty unknown to mere mortals. These enhanced senses provides numerous benefits:

- He can perceive spirits in Twilight with all his senses and sees spirits possessing living/dead bodies as translucent outlines of their true forms superimposed over their hosts.
- His player adds +2 to the following actions for the mummy: perception rolls, Craft rolls to create art, and Investigation rolls to solve enigmas. This bonus increases to the Arisen's Ren rating when Fate draws his attention to particular details or guides his hand. Even if the action fails, he intuits that the action was somehow important.
- His uncanny aesthetics constantly review and synthesize meaning from known facts, giving him the Common Sense Merit (see **World of Darkness**, p. 108) and the Meditative Mind Merit (see **World**



of Darkness, p. 109). Both Merits are granted for free, refunding appropriate experience for either the character already has.

- His steady hand and steadier eyes subtract his Ren rating from the range penalty to fire weapons at medium or long range.

Entombed Glory

Prerequisite: None

Effect: The Arisen's player can spend one Willpower per scene to add a bonus of + (defining Pillar) to the mummy's effective Sekhem rating while in her tomb. These bonus dots cannot raise effective Sekhem higher than 10 and cannot fuel a surge of will, nor do they prevent death when actual Sekhem reaches 0.

Epic Heart

Prerequisite: Ab 2

Effect: The Arisen draws inner strength from her noblest aspects.

- The mummy may recover one Willpower per scene by acting in accordance with his Virtue (as if it were a Vice) in addition to the usual full recovery once per episode. His Virtue can't provide Willpower during scenes in which he earned Willpower from his Vice.
- The mummy's player adds the character's Ab rating as bonus dice to meditation rolls, and the Arisen can accomplish the equivalent of a half hour of meditation with five minutes of concentration (see **World of Darkness**, p. 51). (This Affinity has no affect on Memory rolls made to restore spent Pillars.)
- He doesn't suffer penalties to use Social Skills untrained.

Eternal Legend

Prerequisite: Ren 5

Effect: The Arisen's name has become a prayer, a mystical secret inscribed upon the heavens. She may use her legend in two ways:

- Whether active or in the death sleep, the mummy's power reaches out through the followers who call upon her. Any mortal anywhere can verbally invoke the mummy's name to enhance a rolled action, provided he pronounces her name correctly and actually intends to invoke her blessing. (This means two mummies with the same name only receive invocations intended for them.) A properly aimed invocation channels the Arisen's power into the action. If success would serve the Arisen's interests or help her in some way (however indirect), the roll's target number decreases by one. Otherwise, the roll automatically results in dramatic failure.

- While her soul is in Duat, the mummy's fate ensures that her name and worship shall not vanish from the earth. She gains one free dot of the Cult Merit (see p. 157) each decade, up a maximum of the highest Cult rating she possessed previously. In other words, if catastrophic events kill the mummy and decimate her cult, her followers will steadily recruit until they have rebuilt their former glory. Raising Cult to new heights cannot be done passively, however; the mummy must rise and expand her circle personally.
- The mummy may channel the power of her name to bless fellow Arisen. To do this, she chooses any number of target Arisen she can perceive as an instant action, and her player spends one Willpower. All beneficiaries regain one spent Willpower, plus one spent Pillar associated with their decree. Once a character receives this award, he cannot receive another infusion from any instance of Eternal Legend until a day has passed.

Falcon Soul Aloft

Prerequisite: Ba 1

Effect: Although a mummy with this Affinity cannot fly, his prodigious leaps and astounding grace hint otherwise. This Affinity provides the following:

- The Arisen can automatically gauge the distance and chance of succeeding at a jump without any need for a successful dice roll.
- His player adds the mummy's Ba rating to his jumping dice pool (**World of Darkness**, p. 66) and any roll made for the character to maintain his balance.
- Lower the target number by one whenever the player rolls for the Arisen to jump or maintain his balance.
- The mummy suffers no penalties from challenging environmental conditions when jumping.
- He suffers one point of damage per (Ba + 3) yards he falls instead of one point per three yards. Any person or thing he holds onto also calculates falling damage this way, if it would reduce damage.

Familiar Face

Prerequisite: Ren 1

Effect: People encounter strangers all the time, many thousands of faces adding up over a lifetime of trivial encounters and idle small talk, to say nothing of actual associates mostly forgotten. Mummies with this Affinity exploit the panic and embarrassment experienced upon encountering a familiar but unknown face. Aided by the Affinity's magic, targets construct hazy false memories that make the mummy seem friendly and familiar, the sort of person they really should have done better remembering. If the mummy and the target really do have a positive history, the target experiences vivid flashbacks of those memories as a sudden daydream.

To use Familiar Face, the mummy takes an instant action to mystically intuit a target's name. This is not his true name, but rather the name he goes by in the current situation. By calling out this name to draw the target's attention, the magic briefly connects his soul to the mummy's Sekhem.

The Arisen's player rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge in a contested roll against the target's Wits + Empathy + Sekhem. The mummy's player can substitute Presence + Socialize if she and the target really do have good history together to reference. If the roll for the Arisen wins, the target believes the mummy to be an old friend, classmate, colleague, or some other role that establishes innocuous positive association. As a result, the Arisen's player adds the mummy's Ren rating as a bonus to all social actions targeting that character for the rest of the scene.

If the target wins, he becomes immune to all uses of Familiar Face by that mummy for one day. However, he has no idea that magic almost snared him (absent mystical senses), and the mummy still learns one of his names. The bonus from Familiar Face doesn't apply against targets who can perceive the magic directly and recognize the feelings as fake, though magic backed by real memories still works.

Fearsome Soul

Prerequisite: Sheut 3

Effect: The Arisen's potential for wickedness becomes a source of strength. By owning the most terrible parts of his soul, he prevents that evil from owning him. This grants the following abilities:

- Once per episode, the mummy can take an action that substantially advances his Vice, comparable in effort to fulfilling his Virtue. Doing so restores all spent Willpower in an act of cathartic malice. He cannot indulge his Vice this way if he regained all Willpower from his Virtue this episode, nor can he regain all Willpower from his Virtue for the rest of the episode after using this Affinity (i.e., both full replenishment options are mutually exclusive for the same time period).
- The Arisen needs increments of five minutes rather than one hour to interrogate subjects. Each successful interrogation roll also drains one Willpower point from the target. If this drain reduces a target to zero Willpower or she has nothing to drain, she cracks as though from a dramatic failure and tells the mummy what he wants to know.

Gift of Truth

Prerequisites: Ren 1 (see below)

Effect: Mortal minds cannot bear the true glory of the Arisen on their own. They must be helped. To use this Affinity, the Arisen chooses a non-mummy character she

can perceive as an instant action and her player spends one Willpower. The target temporarily gains the Witness Merit (p. 83), though he doesn't necessarily know the source of this spiritual experience. After each day, the mortal's player can pay one Willpower to renew the blessing for another day or permanently internalize the magic by spending the requisite experience. If his player does neither, the blessing fades and the mortal remembers her brief glimpse of higher truth like a fading dream.

If the mummy has Ren 3 or higher, she may also choose to bestow one Language Merit for a language he knows (in addition to the usual effects). Ren 5 adds the final option of the Common Sense Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 108). The mummy may grant any or all of these Merits in a single temporary blessing, allowing beneficiaries to renew the entire package for one Willpower point per day. Beneficiaries can pay the usual experience to permanently keep any of the bestowed Merits. Bestowed knowledge and wisdom feels like divine insight or an impossibly mind-blowing eureka moment.

Glorious Mien

Prerequisite: Ab 2

Effect: The Arisen wears her great heart upon her flesh, transfiguring her into a creature of superhuman grandeur.

- She gains the four-dot version of the Striking Looks Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 117) for free, refunding the appropriate experience if she had the Merit already.
- The mummy's player may spend one Willpower to shield the Arisen within a mantle of regal authority for a scene. While in this state, she automatically fails Stealth checks to hide in crowds, but her aura stirs the hearts of her enemies. Even wicked monsters feel a strange shame for trying to attack or intimidate her (even unsuccessfully), draining one Willpower point per attempt. Characters can't lose more than two Willpower per scene from all instances of Glorious Mien.

God-King's Scepter

Prerequisite: Cult 3

Effect: The metaphysical bonds between mummies and their worshippers establish a special relationship through Fate. Lower the target number by one whenever the mummy takes an Attribute and/or Skill-based action solely targeting members of his cult. This can be any sort of action: an attack, persuasion, interrogation, medical treatment, etc.

Godsight

Prerequisite: Ren 3

Effect: The mummy can attune her senses to the cosmic mysteries scattered throughout the World of Darkness. This usually results in more questions than answers, but wisdom must begin somewhere. This Affinity provides the following powers:

- Whenever the mummy's Sekhem flares in response to another Arisen within sensory range, her player also learns the Sekhem rating of the detected mummy. The character experiences this information more abstractly, measuring the strength or weakness relative to her own power.
- The Arisen's player can pay one Willpower to boost the mummy's awareness for the rest of the scene. In this state, occult events and entities conflate her senses in distinctive patterns of synesthesia, showing her how observed magic works. These hallucinations grant reflexive perception checks using Wits + Occult to notice supernatural beings and phenomena. This includes the use of powers as well as ongoing effects enchanting a target. Apply a penalty of –1 for simple or common effects, –3 for most effects, and –5 for rare or complex effects. If successful, her player learns a basic synopsis of what she just witnessed. For example, upon encountering a vampire, a mummy might smell the strong scent of blood, hear distant screams and intuit that her quarry is a bloodthirsty undead monster. If the vampire later used a power to exert superhuman strength, the mummy would get a chance to spot the power use (and her player would learn the basic mechanics of what the power does). Godsight can detect ongoing effects of supernatural powers as well.

Grip of Death

Prerequisite: Sheut 2

Effect: The mummy's grasp is like death itself, pitiless and inescapable. He gains the following powers:

- Add +2 to all rolls made for the Arisen to grapple opponents. This increases to a bonus of the mummy's Sheut rating while in darkness or a location closely associated with death (such as a cemetery, morgue, or the mummy's own tomb). Whenever a grapple is used to inflict bashing damage to a victim with zero Willpower points, the mummy realizes this fact, allowing the infliction of lethal damage instead.
- Victims the Arisen seizes with a grapple are mystically silenced, preventing all vocalization that could draw attention to the attack. Onlookers further suffer a penalty of the mummy's (Sheut rating) on all rolls made for them to notice the mummy and/or his victim while the Arisen grapples another character. This includes non-violent grapples, lending additional privacy to amorous embraces.
- Death's grip helps him to his feet, allowing him to reflexively rise from prone like a crumpled marionette whose strings were suddenly lifted into position.

- The mummy's uncanny grasp can seize projectiles aimed at him, even bullets (**World of Darkness**, p. 68). If successful, he suffers no injury.

Guardian Wrath

Prerequisite: Ka 2

Effect: The mummy can tear her foes apart with her bare hands. Mortals are so very fragile, after all.

- Add +2 to her unarmed close combat attacks. While in her tomb and/or directly protecting members of her cult from immediate deadly harm, the bonus becomes equal to her Ka rating, instead.
- She suffers no damage for striking inanimate objects with her unarmed attacks.
- While she has Strength 5 or greater (even temporarily), she inflicts lethal damage with any close combat attacks that normally inflict bashing. Choosing to inflict bashing actually penalizes such attacks by –1 from the concentration required to pull her blows.

Healing Counsel

Prerequisite: Ab 3

Effect: The Arisen's words plant the seeds of health and balance in others, helping them work through past traumas and seal their physical wounds. The mummy's player spends one Willpower and rolls Presence + Memory. This roll receives a +3 bonus if the Arisen spends a full scene ritually administering this magic. If the target resists, her player rolls Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Advantage.

For each success remaining, the target temporarily gains one dot of Morality (maximum Morality 10). Dots bestowed on a target afflicted with temporary derangements unrelated to Morality loss first go toward healing her madness. Each dot converts a severe derangement to its mild form or removes a mild derangement. Only after all such derangements have been dealt with do remaining dots add to Morality. Supernatural targets gain dots of the appropriate trait instead (e.g., Humanity, Memory, etc.), and the mummy can target himself. However, Arisen targets can only benefit from derangement quieting and can't increase their Memory rating. Affected characters generally behave according to their new Morality rating, but they may deliberately sin if willing to risk degeneration.

Raising Morality provides the usual benefit of suppressing derangements, but a higher rating also raises the bar for behavior that risks degeneration. Moreover, if the target does degenerate, she loses actual Morality dots rather than her bonus. For example, a Morality 4 character boosted to Morality 7 drops to Morality 3 (boosted to Morality 6). The one exception is that sins committed to directly preserve the target's life remove bonus dots via degeneration instead of her own dots. For example, vampires need to feed to survive, so feeding-related sins burn off her temporary Morality and weaken the enchantment. Characters reduced to permanent Morality 0 lose all benefits of this Affinity and suffer the usual final degradation.

The target's player can pay experience to permanently retain conferred Morality dots, even going into debt if needed. However, that player must pay all earned experience toward any such debt until fully paid off. Unless the target internalizes the bonus with experience, conferred dots fade at the rate of one per day. Lastly, if the target of this power is hurt, she heals a number of bashing and/or lethal wounds equal to the number of successes rolled by the mummy's player. Multiple applications of this power on the same target do not stack, but will of course heal additional wounds not healed by a first usage.

Living in Now

Prerequisite: Ba 2

Effect: The mummy focuses her eternal mind, blocking out memories of the ancient past and worries of the future. New ideas do not fluster her; she readily adapts to present circumstances.

- The Arisen does not suffer unskilled penalties for Mental Skills.
- Her focus and thoughts can literally pierce the dark, letting her see like she had a flashlight shining from each eye (**World of Darkness**, p. 140). This light of reason exists only in her mind and can't be seen by others.
- The mummy's player may spend one Willpower point to enhance an action using a Social or Mental Skill, canceling all penalties for one roll.
- Her player may spend one Willpower point to enhance an action using a Physical Skill, canceling all penalties from internal states (confusion, intoxication, pain, fear, etc.) or environmental conditions (fog, hurricane winds, strobe lights, etc.) for one roll.

Living Monolith

Prerequisite: Ka 2

Effect: The mummy's immortal body transcends mortal endurance. This provides the following benefits:

- He ignores wound penalties.
- His player does not suffer unskilled penalties for rolls for made for the mummy to employ Physical Skills.
- The Arisen gains (Ka rating) additional health levels.
- His player can pay one Willpower to boost the mummy's lifting capacity for the rest of the scene, letting him carry the maximum weight he can lift as a one-time action (**World of Darkness**, pp. 47-48) without strain or penalty. Additional weight beyond this value penalizes him normally.

Miraculous Benefactor

Prerequisite: Ab 2

Effect: The Arisen twists Fate to aid her allies and ease the travails of her most trusted servants. One ally or retainer known to the mummy has the target number of one roll (chosen by the Arisen) reduced by one. Using this Affinity costs one Willpower point, and its power can't reduce the target number of a roll below 6.

Night Creature

Prerequisite: Sheut 2

Effect: The mummy draws strength from his darkest qualities, acquiring the following advantages:

- His player reduces the target number by one for Stealth rolls made for the Arisen to remain unnoticed. In actual darkness or within the mummy's tomb, the reduction becomes –2.
- His player can pay one Willpower to acclimate the mummy to darkness for the rest of the scene. In this state, he can see in the dark without penalty and can't be fooled by the brief lie of mortal beauty (i.e., only unaging characters gain a bonus from Striking Looks against him). His augmented sight also recognizes the "unclean" by the flickering aura of shadows around them. Unclean are defined as characters for whom one or more of these statements are true: Morality 3 or lower, no Morality trait, regained Willpower indulging Vice during this scene, or acted in a manner prompting a degeneration check this scene (regardless of outcome). The aura surrounding the unclean adds a bonus equal to the Arisen's Sheut rating to dice pools to notice them with perception, alerting the mummy to their general proximity even in case of a failure.
- His player may spend one Willpower to empower the Arisen as an enemy of the unclean. This blessing lasts for the rest of the scene, reducing the target number of all his actions specifically intended to frighten or injure the unclean (such as attacks) by one. The mummy can't anticipate or notice when this blessing applies without acclimating his sight to darkness (see above).

Nihilist Awakening

Prerequisite: Ba 3

Effect: The Arisen comments upon the fragile, temporary and/or futile nature of life as an instant action, silently basking in the superiority of her immortality. Witnesses present to hear her comments feel existential despair weighing upon their hearts unless they are unaging (e.g., ghosts, other mummies, vampires, etc.). Her player spends one Willpower and rolls Presence + Expression. Listeners resist with a Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Advantage roll, adding one to the roll's target number unless their Virtue is Faith or Hope.

If the mummy gets more successes than a valid target, that listener gains the Depression derangement (**World of Darkness**, p. 97). Victims already afflicted with Depression upgrade that derangement to Melancholia. It takes one week before Melancholia reverts to Depression and a month for Depression to run its course, meaning a character brought to Melancholia from nothing needs five weeks to fully recover.

Paragon Shames the Weak

Prerequisite: Ka 3

Effect: The Arisen's invincible supernatural potency shines out from his deeds, breaking the spirits of his competitors. The Affinity can be used reflexively whenever the mummy's player rolls an exceptional success on an action that the character's enemies/rivals witnessed. The Deathless may also use it as an instant action by striking a pose or truthfully bragging about his great accomplishments. Nothing about his actions appears supernatural, absent some means of perceiving the magic directly.

However the Affinity activates, the mummy's player spends one Willpower and rolls Presence + Expression + Sekhem. The bonus from the Striking Looks Merit applies to this roll. All witnesses hostile to the mummy or currently competing with him in some way are potential victims, as determined by the Storyteller; their players roll Resolve + Composure + Sekhem to resist. All potential victims with fewer successes than the Arisen develop the Inferiority Complex derangement for a month (**World of Darkness**, p. 98), while those who already possess that madness upgrade it to Anxiety for a week (see **World of Darkness**, p. 98). Those with Anxiety develop Irrationality (**World of Darkness**, p. 99) for a day. These afflictions must be healed in reverse order of application, requiring a day to calm down from Anxiety and then another five weeks before the Inferiority Complex fully ebbs. Each successful activation resets the victim's recovery time from that point.

Pharaoh Reigns Anew

Prerequisite: Ab 3

Effect: The epic sagas of the Arisen may change cast, but the plot stays the same. This Affinity provides the following powers:

- Whenever the Arisen's player wishes for her to gain a new Social Merit or increase an existing rating, Fate assists the endeavor. An uncanny combination of unlikely circumstances and serendipitous encounters provide the mummy with ample opportunities to cultivate the desired relationships. Winning a lottery may provide Resources, for example, while talkative new friends make excellent Contacts. The character need only take advantage of her persistent good fortune to justify purchasing the desired Merit. The

intercession of providence does not help the character gain Merits she is incapable of possessing.

- Whenever a mummy with this Affinity loses dots from a Social Merit for any reason, it doesn't cost her player experience to restore that Merit to its previous maximum rating. This remains true even if the context is entirely new, such as replacing one Retainer with another.

Radiant Lifeforce

Prerequisite: Ren 1

Effect: The Arisen's name is a secret beacon of lifeforce, sharing some small measure of its immortality with those around him. This provides the following benefits:

- He may voluntarily suffer one point of aggravated damage to remove one temporary derangement from his mind. This damage leaves no mark on him, manifesting as painful lethargy. However, the spiritual exhaustion can still kill him in conjunction with other injuries.
- All living beings within (Ren x 100) yards capable of purchasing Quick Healer temporarily gain that Merit. Their players may keep the blessing permanently by spending experience, provided their characters have sufficient Stamina. In such cases, exposure to Sekhem unexpectedly transforms and uplifts their lives. Characters who already have Quick Healer don't heal any faster within the mummy's radiance.
- The Arisen's player can pay one Willpower point while the mummy is touching an Incapacitated character, stabilizing that character's condition as an instant action. She will not worsen unless she suffers additional injuries.

Retributive Curse

Prerequisite: Ka 2

Effect: Ill fortune punishes those who dare strike down the Arisen. The magic of this Affinity lashes out at those who slay her and those who attempt to steal or desecrate her remains. This magic does the following:

- Whenever the mummy dies, the character(s) responsible for the death suffer a curse of bad luck. At some future scene decided by Fate, when failure carries a reasonable chance of serious injury or death, all of a cursed character's rolled actions add one to their target number. Worse, any failure on such a roll is treated as a dramatic failure.
- While the Arisen is meditating, unconscious, or dead, all characters add one to the target number whenever their rolled actions are part of an attempt to steal or harm the mummy's body. Fate also intervenes at a narrative level, interrupting such attempts with unlikely coincidences. A sudden cave-in within a mummy's tomb might block access to her remains. The cops show up, forcing enemies to flee and avoid capture. Allies or cultists arrive in the nick of time. In short, if the Storyteller can conceive of a plot device to thwart the attempt, Fate does so. The unlikely events are never immediately fatal, but can be extremely unpleasant and/or inconvenient. Fate cannot contrive more than one plot device per scene, however, meaning that attackers who overcome or fight through the obstacle may still succeed.

Rouse the Khaibit

Prerequisite: Sheut 2

Effect: In a true crisis, a mummy with this Affinity may reflexively surrender full control of his mind and body to his basest nature. The internal transformation is at once cathartic and horrific, a fugue state in which morality ebbs and the Arisen may do what he must to protect himself. The magic confers the following effects:

- His Memory rating temporarily drops to 1, making it nearly impossible to degenerate. He does not risk degeneration later for actions committed by his worst aspects. This also has the side effect of manifesting all Bane Affinities he knows.
- He temporarily loses his Virtue and can't regain Willpower by any means except indulging his Vice.
- Whenever he would regain one or more Willpower by indulging his Vice, the total award increases by one.
- Whenever he has an opportunity to indulge his Vice without immediate risk of physical harm (as determined by the Storyteller), he must indulge the urge unless his player reflexively pays one Willpower point in exchange for an hour of self-control.
- This Affinity does not end on its own. Instead, the mummy's player can attempt to reflexively break the character free at any time by spending one Willpower and rolling her permanent Memory, applying a cumulative bonus of +1 per full day the Affinity has remained active and a penalty of her Sheut rating. If the attempt fails, the player can try again without any successive attempt penalties, provided the Arisen has the Willpower to spend.

Running Like Flight

Prerequisite: Ba 2

Effect: The Arisen's pace quickens, sometimes preternaturally so. This Affinity confers the following:

- The Arisen permanently gains one dot of the Fleet of Foot Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 112). This increases to two dots with Ba 3 and three dots with Ba 4.
- While unobserved by any other sentient being, the mummy can double her Speed (after adding the bonus

above). Ghosts and spirits do not count as witnesses for this purpose. If any witnesses could potentially spoil the magic, the mummy requires successful Stealth checks to remain unnoticed.

Shrouding Aura

Prerequisite: Ka 3

Effect: Subtle and mysterious forces intervene to save the Arisen from harm and discovery. The Affinity grants the following benefits:

- All rolls made to discover the location of the mummy's body add one to the target number unless the seeker is a mortal who belongs to his cult. This aura doesn't stack with other curses that increase target number and can't be suppressed to help allies find the Arisen. However, the magic functions equally in death and during a Descent. Examples of affected actions include researching historical archives to deduce the mummy's current resting place, physically searching the mummy's tomb to find his hidden burial chamber, etc. Perception checks to passively notice the Arisen aren't impeded. The Storyteller remains final arbiter of what qualifies.
- The mummy's player can pay one Willpower (only) to shield the Arisen from any rolled action intended to cause him physical harm (whether aware of the attacker or not). Fate turns aside the danger without seeming effort on the mummy's part, raising the attacking action's target number by one.

Sight Beyond Eyes

Prerequisite: Ba 3

Effect: The mummy's perceptions are no longer confined to her body, offering perspectives outside mortal awareness. While experiencing a vision, her senses displace to another location in space and/or time as though present. Time passes at the usual rate within the vision, so a minute-long segment of the past, for instance, takes one minute to view. Her player can make perception rolls for the mummy and/or use Investigation to have the character search the vision scene normally, using any powers that improve her senses. Although the Arisen can perceive her actual environment and perform simple tasks in this trance state, the distraction of extending her Ba imposes a –3 penalty to all actions using her actual body (unless said actions require no conscious effort). Invoking a vision requires the mummy's player to pay one Willpower and select one of the following:

- The Deathless surrenders her awareness to providence, perceiving whatever point in space and time Fate chooses to show her to fulfill her destiny. The vision lasts until reflexively terminated or it runs its course. Glimpses of the future are generally confusing and cryptic, clues rather than a script of what is yet to be.
- The mummy chooses a location within (Ba x 20) yards, or anywhere in her tomb (regardless of distance), aiming via intent rather than physics (e.g. "behind that door" rather than "three yards ahead"). She must generally know the place she wants to view and cannot scan for unknown locations that meet search criteria like "the villain's lair." Her vision of the present lasts until reflexively terminated and conveys where the vantage point is relative to her body. She can rotate her perspective, but cannot relocate it without reactivating this Affinity.
- The character gains insight into an impending ambush. This brief glimpse of future danger adds the mummy's Ba rating to her player's Wits + Composure roll for her to notice the trap, but the vision ends fast enough that she can defend without distraction.

Soul Infusion

Prerequisite: Ba 3

Effect: The Arisen can briefly entwine his Ba with another's soul, allowing him to gift or drain mental energy with a touch. This requires a touch attack or initiating a grapple against an unwilling target. In either use, each turn of contact allows the mummy to reflexively drain one Willpower point from the donor. If the donor is willing, the recipient gains one Willpower point for every two drained (rounded down), to a maximum gain of 10 points per day from all instances of Ba transference. Otherwise, the points are wasted. Draining a character's last Willpower point with this Affinity or attempting to drain her while she has no Willpower points renders her unconscious for (mummy's Ba rating) hours. Only magic specifically intended to wake sleeping patients can rouse characters from this coma. Modern medicine is equally helpless to diagnose the slumber, as the drain leaves no wounds or other marks.

Alternately, mummies can use this Affinity to learn languages by kissing a target on the mouth with a successful grapple. Each Willpower point drained from the target reveals what languages she knows and counts as an hour listening to her speak one of them (see the modified Language Merit, p. 78).

Soulsight

Prerequisite: Ab 3

Effect: The mummy can secretly weigh the hearts of others as surely as Thoth's scales. Once per turn, the Arisen may reflexively choose a target she can perceive with one or more of her senses. Her player rolls Wits + Empathy + Ab, resisted by the target's Composure + Subterfuge. Sekhem is *not* added to resist, for even the mighty must face judgment. Failure means the mummy learns nothing



and her player must pay one Willpower per subsequent attempt to scrutinize the same target with Soulsight again during the scene. Scanning a possessed being evaluates the possessing entity, not the host.

Each success reveals one piece of information about the target from the following list: emotional state, Virtue, Vice, any specific Pillar rating, Morality type/rating (and what behaviors risk degeneration for that rating), or whether the target is possessed. Mummies can differentiate supernatural beings by their proprietary Morality traits if they know what they are scrutinizing. For example, a mummy who senses a vampire's Humanity knows it isn't human, but can't correlate Humanity with vampires until she learns the target's vampiric nature by other means (such as an Occult roll to recall how the withered souls of vampires work). Discerning a target's emotional state provides the same information as exceptional success on a basic Empathy roll (**World of Darkness**, pp. 79-80).

Voice of Conscience

Prerequisite: Ab 2

Effect: The mummy uses false platitudes and a saccharine appeal to the victim's vanity to compel her to follow her cardinal Virtue, whatever the cost to her relationships and personal standing. Depending on the details, the entreaty can be issued as an instant action or require several minutes for an inspiring monologue. Even if the target doesn't understand the mummy's language, she intuits the gist of the directive through his inflection and body language. Targets lacking a Morality rating (or equivalent) or a Virtue are not immune to this magic, as their alien and withered hearts are not the target of this power. The Arisen plays on the victim's sense of self, casting her as a hero in a world gone astray. Those lacking a Virtue are treated as having the Virtue of Justice.

The mummy's player rolls Presence + Persuasion, adding a +3 bonus if the Arisen's words specifically encourage behavior appropriate to the target's Virtue (such as asking someone with Charity to give to the needy). This costs nothing the first time the Arisen targets a particular character per scene, but all subsequent attempts targeting that character cost one Willpower each. The target's player resists by rolling Composure + Morality, with a +1 bonus if the mummy instills a Virtue different than the target's own.

If the Arisen succeeds, his words take root as a lingering compulsion. The target feels an urge to act on one of the Virtues (her own Virtue, unless otherwise specified at the time of activation). Whenever the target next encounters a clear opportunity to act on this Virtue, as determined by

the Storyteller, she must do so. If this opportunity allows her to act in an appropriately virtuous fashion without personal risk or sacrifice, she may do so. However, most opportunities involve serious inconvenience and may result in injury, damaged or dissolved relationships, lost possessions, etc. This compulsion can't force a victim to take knowingly suicidal risks, but she may put herself in the way of more harm then she was initially aware. Multiple uses of this Affinity on a subject have no additional effects.

Voice of Temptation

Prerequisite: Sheut 2

Effect: The Arisen knows how to bring out the worst in others. This Affinity largely duplicates Voice of Conscience (see above), but with the goal of compelling Vice instead of Virtue. The Arisen's player rolls Manipulation + Intimidation to bully a target outright or Manipulation + Persuasion for a more seductive approach, adding +3 if advocating a Vice that matches the target's own. Targets may be compelled to act in shameful or even harmful ways to indulge their Vice, but they can't be forced to take knowingly suicidal risks.

Wisdom of the Ancients

Prerequisite: Ba 1

Effect: The mummy's inspired consciousness can achieve inhuman profundity and genius. This Affinity duplicates Divine Countenance (see p. 102), but applies to Mental Attributes rather than Social, and the Willpower increase derives from Resolve.

Words Summoned Forth

Prerequisite: Ren 3

Effect: The mummy's name reaches out in a silent murmur, a secret word of power answered by secret words. The Affinity can target any character within (Ren x 10) yards that the mummy can perceive. Only characters capable of perceiving magic know that the Arisen has used any sort of power, regardless of the result.

The mummy's player spends one Willpower and rolls Manipulation + Occult. The target resists with Resolve + Composure + Sekhem, adding one to the roll's target number unless his Virtue is Prudence. Success instills the Vocalization derangement (**World of Darkness**, pp. 98-99). Those who possess that derangement develop Narcissism (**World of Darkness**, p. 97), while narcissists add full Megalomania (**World of Darkness**, p. 97). It takes a week for Megalomania to subside to Narcissism, then a week for Narcissism to fade, and a third week for Vocalization to subside (so three weeks for a victim forced into Megalomania to fully recover). Each successful activation resets the victim's recovery time from that point.

Utterances

Where Affinities naturally radiate from a mummy's soul, the spectacular miracles of Utterances are anything but natural. These cosmic mysteries must be learned, either wrested from ancient tomes or the arcane tutelage of others. It's said that the power of Utterances flows from sources older than mankind, reaching back to the beginning of the universe and perhaps beyond. And yet they are also deeply personal expressions of Arisen Sekhem, a focused channeling of the powerful energies instilled by the Rite of Return.

Some Arisen scholars aver that mummies were never *meant* to wield Utterances. Their creators, they say, simply did not foresee the greatness of their own servants, nor the untold means to which they would turn their undead-yet-living power. Each unleashed Utterance is both act of rebellion and trap, since the heights of this magic depend on an eternal cycle of Descents to provide sufficient Sekhem. When Sekhem drops, the greatest of one's Utterance effects simply fade from reach, like a light swallowed by a thick fog.

While not intrinsically malevolent, Utterances almost always convey a "great and terrible" aesthetic. Their magic can only be called miracles, acts of God, or terms far more profane. Even at their weakest, Utterances accomplish the impossible or reveal secrets that could not otherwise be gleaned. Where they help others, they do so gloriously and often with some ugly price attached. Fate is beautiful, but not kind.

Structure and Cost

Each Utterance comprises three tiers of power, each of which is effectively a separate spell. Each tier has a minimum Pillar requirement attached to it, all of which come from a different pillar. For example, an Utterance may use Ba for the first tier, Ka for the second, and Sheut for the third. Pillar requirements always follow two patterns—either (1, 2, 4) or (1, 3, 5), with the latter comprising more potent magic to balance the greater investment. If a mummy doesn't meet a tier's Pillar minimum, he cannot use that tier. This provides an incentive for players to only purchase Utterances their characters can fully use, chiefly by diversifying their mastery of Pillars instead of focusing exclusively on one or two.

Unleashing a tier is the act of casting that spell. In most cases, unleashing is an instant action that may or may not require a dice roll. Some tiers may be unleashed reflexively, while others may only be unleashed in specific conditions, as noted in their descriptions.

Mummies must spend one Pillar of any type to unleash a first tier effect. The second and third tier costs the same,

plus one Pillar of the specific type for that tier (so a point of Ren for a tier based on Ren, etc.). The Arisen may unleash any number of tiers from the same Utterance as a single instant action, provided their Sekhem rating is high enough to spend that many Pillars in a single turn. Mummies can also unleash reflexive tiers from any Utterance at any time, again subject to per-turn limits on Pillar expenditure.

Noticing Utterances

Unleashing an Utterance imposes Sybaris during that turn. (If the effect is aggressive or spectacular, the Terror Sybaris descends; unleashing fully internal or subtle effects causes the Unease Sybaris.) The resulting surge of supernatural awe ebbs after that, even if the tier's effects last longer. Rare tiers marked as Subtle beside their Pillar requirement *only* impose Sybaris on other supernatural beings (including Witnesses). Of course, even if a mortal doesn't recognize the mummy's true nature in the moment of unleashing, she is still bound to react poorly to an obviously supernatural effect.

Some tiers—marked as Epic beside their Pillar requirement—are even more obvious, emanating Sekhem throughout a vast area from the moment their magic begins until the end of the unleashing (including any ritual casting time). The magic is its own herald, proclaiming its glory unto all supernatural beings and those wise enough to take heed. All such beings can sense Epic tiers with a Wits + Occult + Sekhem roll, penalized by the number of miles away the unleashing Arisen is. No chance roll is allowed. Success reveals a rough synopsis of the magic. Other mummies, the Lifeless, and Witnesses do better, with success also revealing the direction to the unleashing mummy (and thus his approximate location). Characters who fail to sense Epic magic get a new chance every hour, and any time they enter an area where the distance penalty drops.

Learning Utterances

Mummies start with one or two Utterances during character creation and acquire more through experience points. To learn an Utterance, an Arisen must meet the Pillar prerequisites for at least one tier of that Utterance, though this is automatic unless he has forsaken the Pillar associated with the first tier. Additional Utterances cost 15 experience points apiece and require a full week of study to master (approximately 40 hours of effort).

The Arisen must have a teacher to learn most Utterances—usually another mummy, but occasionally sorcerers or even relics—but are divided as to how and why they can even give voice to such magics in the first place. That mystery is left to Storytellers to decide, should a mummy attempt to uncover an Utterance that has never been known to the world. (Storytellers should strongly consider ruling that a "new" Utterance has always existed and ensure the plot makes it available rather than making the learning process an epic quest unto itself.)

Special Rules

The following guidelines lay out the terms under which Utterances come into in play.

Access: A mummy's ability to unleash the most powerful effects of his Utterances is limited by his overall potency level: his Sekhem rating. As listed on the Sekhem table (see p. 74), the maximum Utterance level (as represented by an effect's Pillar requirement) is subject to the mummy's drop in Sekhem. Thus, when a mummy falls to Sekhem 4, he can no longer call upon the third tier of any Utterances with a Pillar ••••• prerequisite.

Early Termination: Any single unleashing of an Utterance can be terminated by the reflexively expenditure of one Willpower point. Otherwise, the magic endures

Supernatural Conflict

Mummies aren't alone in the World of Darkness. Whenever an Arisen's Affinities or Utterances allow for a dice pool to resist, targets usually add Sekhem as a bonus to their Resistance Attribute (e.g., Stamina for physical effects, Composure for emotional powers, and Resolve for mental magic). Other supernatural beings may substitute an appropriate Supernatural Advantage trait for this bonus (such as a vampire's Blood Potency).

Utterance tiers marked with "Potency #" beside their Pillar requirement subtract directly from any benefits conferred by Supernatural Advantage. For example, a tier with Potency 3 used against a vampire with Blood Potency 4 would only let the vampire add one Blood Potency dot to resist that unleashing. Supernatural Advantage cannot be reduced below 0 in this way. Other mummies are equally affected by Utterance Potency modifiers.

Arisen may use their Sekhem in place of any Supernatural Advantage to resist other kinds of powers (like vampire Disciplines normally resisted with Blood Potency alone). Since Sekhem is "free," unlike most Supernatural Advantage traits, and begins at 10 dots when mummies arise, mummies are highly resistant to most supernatural powers for the first part of each Descent. Vampires who disturb mummy tombs may find themselves faced with an implacable foe who shrugs off their powers as effortlessly as their bullets.

for its full stated duration. Individual tiers may specify alternate conditions needed to terminate the magic; such conditions take priority over this basic rule.

Words Beyond Sound: Mummies can unleash their Utterances regardless of environmental conditions or circumstances that would seem to preclude speech, such as being underwater or in the vacuum of outer space, or having their tongues ripped out. Their souls speak what the body cannot, and the cosmos answers their call.

Death Curses: Whenever a mummy dies as a direct result of another's action, he may curse his killer with his last breath. This means he may choose any one tier marked as a "Curse" beside its Pillar requirement. He may unleash that tier on the turn after he dies as though he were still alive and touching his killer. The unleashing costs no Pillars, but he must otherwise follow all the tier's requirements. (A curse that can only target children can't strike down an adult who slays him, and so on.) If multiple individuals hold joint responsibility for the mummy's death (like a firing squad), he may target each killer with a separate curse. However, he can only unleash separate curses that target individuals rather than an area. If his death unleashes a curse that affects an area (like burning everything with a meteor shower), he can't unleash separate curses.

Experience Debt: Some Utterance effects allow characters to purchase trait increases or new traits immediately, whether or not their players can currently afford the associated experience cost. In such cases, players may be permitted to go into experience debt. Players in debt must pay all future earned experience toward their outstanding debts, from oldest to newest, until paid in full.

Guild Variation: When a mummy unleashes an Utterance, he does so through the lens of his guild's mystical traditions and ritual elements. Where possible, players and Storytellers should work together to incorporate appropriate guild imagery into the specific manifestation of each unleashing.

Tone is Pharaoh

The sample Utterances offered in this chapter represent but a cross section of those suitable for use in a game of **Mummy** (and indeed, future supplements are sure to include new sample Utterances). Although steps have been taken to insure game balance in these elements, it's important to remember that tone is the first and most important determinant when it comes to the inclusion of a given game element in a Storytelling game.

For example, some sample Utterances allow the Arisen to create shambling zombies. If the Storyteller decides that the tale of this particular chronicle is going to have a grittier, less overt menace to its narrative voice, he might decide to exclude those kinds of Utterances (and should do so at the start of play). The world that is **Mummy** provides a deep and rich loam for stories, but stories themselves are tightly focused and thematically coherent. Players are free to flip through the sample Utterances and mark those that catch their eye, but since learning new Utterances requires instruction, the final selection of Utterances available in that particular iteration of the game world is up to the Storyteller.

Awaken the Dead

Tier 1: Ba •; **Tier 2:** Sheut •••; **Tier 3:** Ren •••••

Tier 1: Mummies defy death as corpses infused with life. With this tier, an Arisen may extend a spark of his own animation to a corpse, summoning echoes of the person that body used to be. He must touch the target gently, bathing it in the nimbus of his Sekhem. His player rolls Manipulation + Occult. If the corpse's skull is not mostly intact, a -5 penalty applies to this roll. For each success, the Arisen may ask the corpse one question and extract a truthful reply.

Any information the deceased knew in life is fair game, but the body can only answer with yes or no (and always replies in the same language as the questions, even if it didn't know that tongue in life). If the answer cannot be distilled down to yes or no, the cadaver remains silent, and that question is wasted. If the body is intact enough to have a mouth, it animates enough to speak its answer in a dusty whisper. Otherwise, the words mysteriously emanate from the general vicinity of the remains. Repeated unleashing of this Utterance can extract any number of answers from a body.

Tier 2: With this tier, the Arisen no longer asks. He commands. By his word and touch and a flare of undying power, he causes a mostly intact human corpse to rise and serve him as a Lifeless monstrosity (see sidebar). The creature has no real mind of its own and little to no recollection of its former self. It exists only to drag others into death, hunting down and killing all people and animals it encounters unless preempted by its creator's orders. These it obeys to the best of its limited cognition.

Tier 3: The mummy can briefly resurrect the dead, working a miracle that defies and subverts the natural order (considered a sin against Memory for mummies with Memory 8+). Unleashing the tier requires him to touch human

Awakened Corpse Thrall

Corpses animated by the second tier of Awaken the Dead have the following statistics and powers:

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 1, Resolve 2, Strength 1–7 (see below), Dexterity 2, Stamina 5, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3

Willpower: 1

Initiative: 4

Defense: 1

Speed: 11 (species factor 4)

Size: (defined by corpse)

Health: 6-10 (based on Size)

Decay: Corpse thralls can't heal and suffer one automatic point of bashing damage every day that they exist from steady rot. This damage eventually destroys them, assuming they don't meet a violent end first. The corpses appear dead while suffering any damage, but can pass for the living until then. All decay is suspended while in their creator's tomb, but it catches up the moment a cadaver leaves that area (possibly rotting it instantly into dust).

Hunger: The creatures hunger for the flesh of the living, with a lethal bite that inflicts +1 damage. Absent other orders, they will hunt down the living and gorge themselves on flesh, but they cannot swallow, and so they leave behind the chewed remnants of their grisly feats. The hunger is entirely spiritual and can't be sated.

Languages: Corpse thralls do not recall any languages, by default, but understand their creator regardless of the language he speaks (to the limits of their meager intelligence). If the Storyteller prefers, they can speak a rough (monosyllabic) form of their native tongue.

Lifesense: The zombies have a pool of six dice to notice living beings (or overcome their Stealth). Child zombies balance their reduced toughness with improved awareness, with 12 dice being rolled to notice the living. Adult zombies only use this increased pool to notice their own children, siblings or parents. All of the creatures remain limited by their Attributes to noticing other things.

No Mind: The creatures have no volition and can't be reasoned with, mind controlled, or otherwise dissuaded from their assigned tasks. These horrors are monstrous killing machines, not people. They only do as bidden, relentless and pitiless.

Strength of the Grave: The manifestation modifier chart (see **World of Darkness**, p. 210) applies as bonus dots or reduced dots to the Strength of these zombies, starting from a base value of 4. That means the creatures possess Strength 7 in a graveyard or a tomb, falling to Strength 3 if they chase prey into an adjoining parking lot.

Unnatural Toughness: These zombies do not sleep, never become fatigued from exertion, and only suffer bashing damage from bullets. Lacking functional biology, they can't become sick or poisoned, can't suffocate, and otherwise ignore the burdens of life. The creatures are also immune to wound penalties and don't fall unconscious when their health fills with bashing, even staying active when their health is full of lethal damage. Only aggravated damage can drop them (which they automatically suffer from fire). The zombies tear apart from the final five points of aggravated suffered, losing one limb per level until at last they lose their heads and their pulped torsos unravel into gore.

remains or the space occupied by a manifesting ghost. Should the target exist as both, then whichever half is not present vanishes from its current location and fuses into the touched half. Absent a ghost, a cadaver summons its departed essence from the great beyond. A simultaneous effort to resurrect a ghost and its flesh gives priority to the cadaver. The magic has no effect if the remains are already animated by supernatural power (like a vampire's body). Neither may this tier affect a mummy, even while she is deceased.

The fused remains transmute to living flesh, rapidly regenerating back to perfect health in mere moments. The revived mortal's memories include her entire life, plus any experiences as a ghost. She begins her new life with her traits at the time of death, plus full health and Willpower points. If the mummy desires, the departed returns wrapped in ancient Egyptian funereal linens conjured from raw magic; otherwise, she resurrects wearing whatever clothes adorn her remains.

Such a miracle cannot last. After (the mummy's Memory + Sekhem) hours pass, the resurrected mortal's body suddenly crumbles to dust and unravels into the great beyond, leaving no trace that can ever again be recalled by this Utterance or any other magic.

Blessed Is the God-King

Tier 1: Ren • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ab ••• (Subtle); **Tier 3:** (Defining) ••••• (Epic)

Tier 1: The Arisen invokes his obedience to Fate and mastery over it, a paradox of power from which he may summon good luck when he needs it most. He may not unleash this tier more than once per scene. Doing so enchants him with a "hanging" blessing that lasts indefinitely, waiting until his player reflexively spends the blessing to reduce the target number of a roll using the mummy's Attributes and/or Skills by -2. Only one such blessing can enchant him at a time. Unlike most powers mummies possess to reduce target numbers, his player may wait to use this blessing until after he rolls and sees how many additional dice would be counted as successes at the lower target number.

Tier 2: The mummy may unleash this tier upon himself or any person he has directly touched previously in the scene. Doing so imbues the target with good fortune for the next hour. While blessed by this magic, beneficiaries receive an added benefit whenever their players spend Willpower to enhance a roll—namely, a failed roll allows them to reroll their dice pool once and use the second result instead (whether better or even worse). The target number and dice pool remains the same, including the extra dice from Willpower expenditure. Stacking this tier on the same target resets the duration of the blessing.

Tier 3: The Arisen unleashes his inner divinity along with this tier, transforming himself into an avatar of holy grandeur for the rest of the scene. This transformation confers the following effects:

- His head transfigures into the animal associated with his decree, making his outward form reflect the essential truth of his soul. His senses heighten, allowing him to smell or listen for enemies and to see clearly in the dark. No one can possibly mistake him for human, and he constantly imposes Sybaris on all witnesses as though he possessed Sekhem 10.
- He grows in stature, increasing his Size by two. All worn and carried possessions grow in proportion with him, though this does not improve their statistics except by increasing their own Size (if applicable).
- He can reinforce his Attributes with Pillars as though he possessed Sekhem 10.



- All his actions using Attributes and/or Skills reduce their target number by -1.
- If he has Ba •••••, he can attack multiple targets each turn using a single weapon or two different attacks, duplicating the effects of the Fluid Attack Merit (see **World of Darkness**, p. 112).
- If he has Ka •••••, attacks targeting him add +1 to their target number.
- If he has Ren •••••, he may purchase Affinities at the reduced cost of 8 experience points each. These Affinities remain dormant unless he is currently unleashing this tier. His player may later pay the difference in experience to make these Affinities available at all times. He still can't manifest Bane Affinities without prior contact with a Shuankhsen.
- If he has Sheut •••••, he can reflexively summon an accursed melee weapon forged of light and shadow to his grasp. It vanishes when he drops it (voluntarily or not), though he can simply conjure a replacement as needed. The specific weapon type must be one he is closely familiar with, such as an Egyptian khopesh rather than a generic sword. Whenever the weapon would inflict more than one point of damage, its owner may pull his blow and defer all wounds past the first point. Flesh-devouring rot then erupts outward from the cut or bruise, inflicting one point of automatic aggravated damage each successive turn until all deferred damage points are applied. Multiple deferred strikes on the same victim stack damage each turn, hastening the dissolution of flesh. Diseased victims die screaming and rot into stinking masses of putrid flesh in less than a minute.
- If this tier is unleashed for the climactic scene (one specific scene per story), no negative effects follow. Calling upon the divine form outside of these Fate-approved moments carries a karmic penalty. This bad luck increases the target number of all the character's rolled actions using Attributes and/or Skills by +1 for a day after reverting back to the Arisen's normal form. Moreover, he can't unleash this tier again while the negative karma endures. Fortunately, the unleashing is only Epic while active, not in its penalized aftermath. Enemies can't hone in on the mummy in his time of weakness.

Chthonic Dominion

Tier 1: Ba •; **Tier 2:** Sheut ••; **Tier 3:** Ren ••••

Tier 1: The mummy conjures a pale orb of blue-tinted light the size of a child's heart. The light appears somewhere within (Ba + Sekhem) yards and lasts until dismissed. Its creator can telepathically command it to follow her or to move to a new location within range like a faithful pet, zipping from point to point at whatever speed she imagines.

The orb illuminates a three-yard radius with a glow as bright as the full moon. More importantly, the light reveals all ghosts within its radiance as if they were visibly manifested and further endows the dead with the power to freely communicate as though successfully using the Ghost Speech Numen (**World of Darkness**, p. 211) for every sentence. Ghosts possessing other beings or objects appear as a translucent overlay leaking through the forms of their hosts, but may otherwise be seen and heard normally. This unveiling is not optional, but it requires no effort from affected ghosts. The restless dead vanish from sight and hearing when they move beyond the light.

Tier 2: Unleashing this tier allows the Arisen to issue one command to a ghost or revenant she can perceive. This command can be any length or complexity, but it must be a single concept (e.g. "Defend this tomb from all redheads unless they speak my name" or "Tell me how you died"). The task can be open ended with no way to complete it (e.g. "Stay here forever"), but it must be possible (e.g. no "Become a vampire"). Alternately, the mummy may target a person or object she suspects is possessed, though only to order any possessing ghosts to depart. The magic of the Utterance ensures the ghost understands the command regardless of language barriers.

Roll the Arisen's Presence + (Persuasion or Intimidation, as appropriate), subtracting the ghost's Resistance or Composure. This roll reduces its target number by –1 if the target ghost is illuminated by this Utterance's first tier. If successful, the ghost must obey to the best of its abilities and must act in good faith to serve the spirit as well as the letter of its orders. Use of this tier overrides previous uses of this tier, so a ghost can only slave under one such compulsion at a time. Ghosts still risk degeneration for actions they are compelled to take, but receive a +1 bonus to resist.

Tier 3: The Arisen reshapes a lost soul. The mummy targets a ghost or revenant she can perceive or a known ghost, though the latter requires her to touch one of the ghost's anchors at the time of unleashing. Targeting a ghost who is not present summons it into proximity with its anchor, as though it spent Willpower to do so. The spirit's arrival is dramatic, heralded by a scream that precedes the screamer, audible to all witnesses.

Roll the Arisen's Manipulation + Occult, subtracting a penalty of the ghost's Resistance or Resolve. Each rolled success allows the mummy to impose one of the following transformations: change its Vice or Virtue, reassign new Morality rating (maximum of the ghost's Morality at the time of death; raising Morality removes derangements normally), remove all metaphysical connection to one anchor (tearing away the final anchor obliterates the ghost

utterly, annihilating all traces of its existence), assign a new anchor (which must be present), remove any number of memories (either specified experiences or spans of time such as "childhood"), or restore any forgotten memories (including supernaturally deleted ones). Unleashed upon on a ghost with the Impassioned Soul, the tier cannot give it Virtue, Vice, Morality, or anchors, but it can reassign or instill a Passion (maximum of three).

Command the Beasts

Tier 1: Sheut •; **Tier 2:** Ren ••(•); **Tier 3:** Sheut ••••(•) (Curse, Epic, Potency 2)

Tier 1: The mummy walks unmolested by the wild things of the world. Unleashing this tier provides perfect stealth against all non-sapient animals for one day. They will not interact with him or notice him under any circumstances unless he initiates physical contact with them, in which case they notice him for a single turn before losing interest again. All supernatural animals, cetaceans, and great apes are immune to this tier, as are any other particularly intelligent animals determined by the Storyteller.

Tier 2: Upon unleashing this tier, the mummy crowns himself a god of beasts for the next day. All Animal Ken rolls made for him reduce their target number by –1 (or by –2, if the Arisen meets the Ren ••• requirement). Moreover, on all rolls for him to train or command non-magical animals automatically succeed, unless his orders directly contradict another form of magical control or the animal's essential nature (as adjudicated by the Storyteller). Finally, animals he commands can carry out complex instructions like a person with Intelligence 1 who shares a language with him, though commanded beasts are not any more intelligent on their own.

Tier 3: The Arisen may curse a single target or an area, turning all beasts against the object of his wrath. In either case, the center of the curse must be within (Sheut + Sekhem) yards at the time of unleashing, and the magic lasts for an equal number of days. The mummy may also add a delay of up to one day before the curse actually takes hold.

To curse a target, the mummy's player rolls Presence + Animal Ken in an opposed roll against the target's Composure + Sekhem. Characters with the Virtue Prudence are immune; their higher dedication to measured reason sets them above the dominion of savage fury. Inanimate objects and structures are automatically affected. If successful, the curse attaches itself. For its duration, all non-magical animals who perceive the target react with maximum hostility, from the lowliest insects to the mightiest predators. Affected creatures attack the target with intent to destroy it utterly. Victims are not simply mauled, but torn to gobbets. All other forms of control magic trump this impulse, allowing the preceding tier to stop a particular assault.



Cursing a location radiates a mile in all directions from the designated center, making the magic Epic (individual curses don't quite merit that label). All non-magical animals within the affected area attack any sapient being they can perceive in the manner described above (sparing mortals with Prudence as their Virtue). If cast upon the Arisen's tomb, the curse only extends through that structure, but the magic lasts until revoked. The Arisen may also add filters, excluding potential victims who possess certain characteristics (e.g. women, those with shaved heads, people actively praying to the mummy, etc.). Filters can also limit the wrath to specific animal types such as "birds" or "scorpions" or "everything except cats."

Doom Affliction

Tier 1: Ab • (Curse, Potency 1, Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ka •• (Curse, Potency 2, Subtle); **Tier 3:** Ba •••• (Curse, Potency 3, Subtle)

Tier 1: The mummy is a creature of Fate, both slave and master. Her will brings ruin to her enemies, tangling them in the darkest threads of destiny's weave. To unleash this tier, she gestures toward a target victim within 100 yards, invoking the rituals of her guild to curse her foe with misfortune. Her player rolls Intelligence + Occult, resisted by the target's Composure + Sekhem. If successful, the Utterance curses one of the target's Skills for a day. Whenever the subject rolls a dice pool using one or more cursed Skills, the target number increases by +1. Repeated curses on the same Skill reset their duration.

Tier 2: From misfortune to murderous harm, the curse of this tier uses the same rules to resolve success. The resulting curse targets the enemy rather than his Skills, reducing the target number by -1 for all rolled attacks and hostile actions solely targeting the foe. This effect endures for one hour. Repeated application resets the duration.

Tier 3: The mummy unleashes this tier reflexively to mar another's observed efforts, her swift incantations adding +1 to the target number of any single roll involving an Attribute and/or Skill. The curse also causes any failure to be treated as a dramatic failure in terms of resulting consequence.

Dreams of Dead Gods

Tier 1: Ba • (Potency 1); **Tier 2:** Ka •• (Curse, Potency 1); **Tier 3:** Ab •••• (Curse, Potency 1)

Tier 1: By unleashing this reflexive tier, the Arisen scatters mad dreams across the cosmos like stars upon the void. Fate guides who discovers these dreams, keeping their wisdom chiefly among the mind's eyes of allies and enemies.

The Arisen may defer the cost of the unleashing this tier to the future, but he must pay it as soon as he physically can do so beginning the turn after the unleashing. This peculiar achronal aspect of the magic is important because mummies may unleash the tier even while their souls rest in Duat—then pay the cost upon rising. The enchantment of the tier lasts one day, or the entirety of a death cycle if unleashed within death.

During the period of enchantment, the scattered dreams "attack" individuals chosen by Fate whenever they sleep (but no more than once per night). The tier's power reaches across all distance, potentially intruding upon the minds of people living on the opposite side of the planet. Enemies who plan injurious harm to the mummy or members of his cult experience vivid nightmares of the Arisen's unholy wrath. Those who are allies (or could likely become such) dream clues to help them find the mummy and summon him again. Cultists dream of miracles affirming their faith, absent specific information more useful to their master. Barring a few random prophets and madmen, only those with a serious connection to the Arisen (positive or negative) experience these dream assaults. Peculiarly, Fate does show a predilection for blood inheritance: the children of those drawn toward a mummy's story almost always feel the same pull if they ever develop the qualities that drew fate's attention to their parents.

When the tier is unleashed, the mummy's player rolls Manipulation + Occult + Ba. The successes of this roll are compared as needed against the statistics of dreamers to prevent rolling separately for each vision. Dreamers with (lower of Resolve and Composure) + Sekhem less than the rolled successes temporarily gain one flux derangement for one week. Add a +1 modifier to a victim's Resolve and Composure if she went to sleep under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants and +1 if she gained Willpower from either Virtue or Vice in the past day. Additional successful dream attacks from the same mummy reset the duration of this curse. Dreamers may be so unfortunate as to suffer dream attacks from multiple mummies.

Per its name, a flux derangement changes in accordance with the necessities of Fate and may take mild or severe forms for mortal victims (including Witnesses). Supernatural beings only suffer mild forms. Hunters on the mummy's trail, for instance, may be instilled with Avoidance or Inferiority Complex to deter their pursuit, or instilled with Narcissism to find their quarry and then melt down in total Hysteria. An eminent archeologist whose skills could help recover the mummy's remains may find herself developing a Fixation for her work or Paranoia driving her to launch an expedition before imagined rivals can beat her to the dig. A cultist's Schizophrenia grants revelatory visions of what her Arisen god most needs her to do. (See **World of Darkness**, pp. 96-100, for information on these derangements and their effects.)

Victims afflicted with a flux derangement can escape it by ceasing to be important supporting characters in the mummy's story. This really only works for victims Fate is trying to drive out, such as hunters giving up their chase. Those whom Fate would draw into the Arisen's tale have no such recourse, as they cannot flee the role appointed them. However, a victim's players can reflexively spend one Willpower at any time for her character to fight the curse. This allows her to ignore the derangement for one day, starting the next scene (so she can actually be surprised by sudden worsening of the derangement). Spending three cumulative points this way in the same story inoculates the victim against further dream attacks by that mummy for the rest of the story. With seven cumulative points spent, the resistance broadens to all mummies using this tier.

Tier 2: To unleash this tier, a mummy chooses a sapient being he has perceived in the past day, either via his own senses or through some clairvoyant magic. His player rolls Manipulation + Occult + Ka, resisted by the target's Composure + Sekhem. If the two characters interacted casually, like saying hello as they passed one another on the street, the mummy reduces the target number of his roll by –1. If they had an intense encounter like a sexual liaison or getting in a fight (as allies or enemies), the target number reduction is –2.

A successful roll curses the target to dream of the mummy when next she sleeps or meditates, beginning five minutes after she falls asleep or enters a meditative state. The imparted vision is either seductive or frightening. The effects depend on the type of dreams as explained below.

An alluring dream allows the mummy to take reflexive seduction actions using his full dice pool as though he were present. His player's rolls lower their target number by –1 if the victim's Vice is Lust. When he places the curse, the Arisen designates the setting of the seduction and may use that to ensure a maximum equipment bonus. He only brings Striking Looks into the vision if he possesses such beauty in reality. The dream lasts only for the span of the seduction process itself and the erotic visions that follow if the mummy prevails. Victims whose sexual orientation would not normally find the mummy's gender sexually attractive experience a more platonic seduction, admiring the Arisen as a captivating new friend. In either case, the dream occurs in real time, so the seduction may be interrupted if the dreamer is awakened.

A victim seduced by a mummy's dream wakes with one additional Willpower point recovered from sleep. This benefit doesn't stack with multiple dreams. However, the dreamer remains more vulnerable to the Arisen's power after she awakens. All rolls made for him to affect her with Utterances (using any dice pool) or socially affect her with Attribute and/or Skills reduce their target number by –1 for a week. More importantly, if her attraction is sexual and she encounters the Arisen again in any situation where seduction wouldn't place her in immediate danger, she feels the irresistible urge to throw herself at the god who ravished her dreams. She must take seduction actions aimed at the mummy, who is free to surrender and accept her overtures. If he resists, her charms may still overpower him. However, if he resists successfully, his rejection crushes her soul, and she loses two Willpower points (or three if her Vice is Lust).

Victims of terrifying dreams find themselves in whatever setting the Arisen inflicts, though imagery tends toward apocalyptic devastation and ancient dungeons. Within this dreamscape, the mummy's likeness reflexively interrogates the victim to learn the specific information the curse was programmed to extract. The Arisen's avatar applies whatever modifiers it wants to its own or the victim's rolls from the examples listed on page 82 of **World of Darkness**, like torturing her or depicting her loved ones suffering. The victim can't resist what the dream "physically" does to her, but cracks or not as appropriate to the interrogation rolls. As with seduction, the dream occurs in real time and may be escaped by awakening. If the victim cracks, the mummy who placed the curse experiences a compressed replay of the dream when next he meditates. This psychedelic torrent conveys the entirety of the interrogation in an instant, allowing the Arisen to savor the breaking of his enemy as a prelude to the answers he seeks.

Tier 3: The mummy targets himself or a character he can perceive within (Sekhem + Memory) yards and invokes ruin, love, or grandeur upon that target's aura. The Arisen's player rolls Manipulation + Occult + Ab. The curse may be resisted with a Composure + Sekhem roll. If successful, the effects depend on the type of marking. A given character may only suffer one curse via this tier; adding another replaces the first.

Ruin envelops the victim in an aura of distrust for a week. No one believes her unless it is harmful to her that they do so. In any situation where she speaks the truth, others perceive her to be scheming, dissembling, or outright lying. No one gives her the benefit of the doubt on anything. Fundamentally, everyone knows she's just a terrible person and reacts accordingly within the limits of acceptable decency. As a result, all Social rolls made for the victim suffer a -5 penalty while she's cursed. Characters willing to look past their strong gut-level aversion can resist with via a successful Wits + Empathy roll made by their players. If the number of successes is equal or greater than the number of successes rolled to unleash the tier, that character realizes the victim isn't as bad as she thought and reacts normally (i.e., no penalty to interact with her for the duration of the curse). Mummies may shroud themselves

in ruin as a self-imposed flaw, hoping to grow from or seek penance in unrelenting scorn.

A love curse lasts (Ab rating) days and makes the victim sexually attractive to whatever set of people the Arisen names, as broadly or narrowly as desired. She may draw the attention of bad boys (Morality 4 or less), young adults, mages, or anything else the mummy's player can articulate, though the mummy must be familiar with the category. This lust overrides normal orientation preference. All sapient beings meeting the criteria who encounter the curse victim feels sexual attraction toward her, but it can be resisted with a Composure + Sekhem roll. If the attracted character's successes equal or exceed the unleashing activation roll, he may act as he pleases; otherwise, he is compelled to make a seduction attempt targeting the accursed as soon as the situation permits. She may acquiesce or resist, but she can expect to face many suitors, not all of whom may take no for an answer. Should her resistance fail, the natural consequences follow.

Grandeur anoints the accursed with an aura of mystical authority for one day. If the mummy targets himself within his own tomb, the enchantment lasts until he leaves his home. This aura provides a +3 bonus to all Social interactions with mortals (not including Witnesses). It also makes the accursed extremely noticeable and memorable, adding a +5 bonus to anyone's attempts to spot her, overcome her Stealth or remember her later.

Should the Arisen unleash grandeur upon himself, he may later take an instant action to rally all mortals who can hear him within a half mile. Taking this action uses up the enchantment and terminates the unleashing. The mummy's player rolls Manipulation + Persuasion + Ab, applying manifestation location modifiers (**World of Darkness**, p. 210). All potential targets with a Resolve equal to or less than the rolled successes fall under the spell and begin slowly chanting his name in unison. Witnesses are immune. Chanting characters act as though they succumbed to a Fugue derangement (**World of Darkness**, p. 100) for the rest of the scene, leaving them with a confusing gap in memory when they regain their senses. If the mummy stays through the scene and basks in the forced adulation, he regains one Willpower point. Such is the vice of gods.

Dust Beneath Feet

Tier 1: Ba •; **Tier 2:** Ka ••(•) (Curse); **Tier 3:** Sheut ••••(•) (Curse, Epic)

Tier 1: The mummy is ultimately a creature of dust given form and life by the Rite of Return, infinitely more permanent than the matter that clothes her soul. Nonetheless, that dust is hers, and by this Utterance, so all else may be. As this tier unleashes, the mummy's Sekhem bonds with the surrounding earth for an hour. She can extend the duration to indefinite within her tomb, but using this benefit makes the unleashing terminate as soon as she leaves her tomb. This earthen attunement grants the following powers and benefits:

- Whenever she suffers falling damage from landing on an earthen surface (glass, sand, dust, mud, clay, dirt, stone, gravel, concrete, asphalt, metal, etc.), she can spend the next turn doing nothing but regenerating. She heals all damage from the fall, plus all bashing and lethal damage suffered on the turn spent healing. Even aggravated or fatal damage from falling regenerates, causing her crushed body to physically reassemble in the span of heartbeats.
- She can choose to swim through any inanimate objects made of earthen materials as though they were water, aided greatly by not needing to breathe. She can swim in soil beneath foes or down into the walls of a concrete bunker. Her carried and worn possessions come with her, though she cannot take animate passengers. The material closes behind her as it was before, leaving no trace of her passage. This power also lets her do things such as jump through a metal bank vault door like splashing through a light waterfall or swan dive through a parking deck's concrete floor to land on the level below. While displacing matter, she can see through that material as though it were well illuminated and transparent out to (Ka + Sekhem) yards.
- She can take an instant action commanding loose earthen material within (Sekhem rating) yards to transform and exalt itself into robes, tunics, mummification bandages or other simple garments associated with Irem and ancient Egypt. The clothes endure as appropriate to their material and are in no way magical, just wondrous in origin. The power can dress a willing subject in the finest raiment from the dirt beneath his feet. He need only stretch out his limbs to receive the gift. The Arisen may let Fate guide the design of its gifts, rather than impose a particular pattern. Unsurprisingly, gowns and robes provided by Fate are often described as timeless, classical, and perfectly suited to the occasion.
- If caught in a landslide, earthquake (like that conjured by the third tier), or other earth-based natural disaster, she instinctively swims through earth and regenerates from falls in such a manner that she finds her way safely to the surface without any injuries. She can manage this feat automatically, even while unconscious.
- While enchanted by this tier, she may then cast its blessing upon any willing beneficiary she is touching by using a separate unleashing to do so.

Tier 2: Life makes dust into something more, but this tier doesn't quite manage that. Instead, earth adds to life, gathering loose earthen material from the surrounding environment and telekinetically assembling it around the mummy's body to form a giant statue of herself. If such material is not available, the unleashing fails. This monolithic exoskeleton provides the following benefits for the same duration as the preceding tier (including tomb extension).

- Her Size increases by (her Ka rating), increasing her weight by roughly 500 pounds per dot of Size increase. At most, she is like an elephant rearing up on its hind legs, an unholy colossus. Her Dexterity is penalized by half that amount (minimum Dexterity 1). No one can possibly mistake her for human, and she constantly imposes Sybaris on all witnesses as though she possessed Sekhem 10.
- The shell of compressed earth provides armor with rating 3/4, Strength requirement of (Ka rating), Defense penalty (none: represented by Dexterity penalty), and Speed penalty of (Ka rating).
- She adds her Ka rating to her Strength to damage, lift or otherwise manipulate earthen materials. Strength-based dice pools enhanced this way also benefit from the 8-again rule, such as to attack a stone amulet worn by an enemy. The bonuses also apply to Intimidation against roughly human-sized targets, unless Strength is already part of the dice pool.
- She can use the preceding tier to swim out of the armor rather than wearing it, leaving behind a massive statue of herself with appropriate Size, Durability equal to her Ka rating, and whatever Structure this results in. Such statues are widely revered as holy icons by Arisen cults. Unleashing this tier as a death curse encases the mummy's body within such a sarcophagus statue as a deterrent to desecration or corpse theft, especially as it fully protects her from all fire not hot enough to burn through the heavy stone.

Tier 3: The mummy unleashes her wrath through the earth beneath her, stirring the land like a thrashing dragon buried beneath it. Unleashing this Utterance requires ritual incantations lasting three days straight. Any physical distraction is enough to force her to start over. When the rite ends, the mummy's player rolls Strength + Occult and must gain exceptional success to begin the devastation. The Arisen may add a delay of up to one day, giving herself time to leave the area before the shaking begins.

The unleashed earthquake centers on its creator and is roughly magnitude 6.0 on the Richter scale, unleashing serious destruction within approximately 10 miles. This won't topple most modern buildings designed to withstand tremors, save perhaps those directly at the epicenter. Sporadic building collapse and lesser damage extends as far as 50 miles away, but the quake can be felt by people 300 miles away. Storytellers should consult descriptions of historical earthquakes and consider the attention paid to earthquake resistance in local building codes when determining the exact effects (e.g., a tremor in Manhattan will wreak havoc it could not in Los Angeles). Actual damage to people may be nigh-infinite for those Fate casts beneath falling skyscrapers, while others escape with mere bruises and scrapes. The Arisen cannot know how anyone will fare, only that the area will suffer terribly.

Mummies feeling merciful can spend the last day of their ritual pacing the perimeter of a narrower space while dancing, singing, playing a musical instrument, or otherwise engaging in mindful practice in endless loops around their quarry. When the day ends and the earthquake strikes, it does so immediately, emerging from the center of the defined loop with no delay. However, the disaster ends completely at the edge of the perimeter, leaving the mummy standing just outside the quivering ruins. Only Arisen at Sekhem 8 or higher may unleash this tier as a death curse, but they may do so without any ritual as though they had paced any desired perimeter within the possible area.

The earthquake wrought by this tier is not the only calamity. The earth disturbs the dead, giving all ghosts within 10 miles the entirety of that main quake-damaged zone as a single anchor. Affected spirits gain free rein to haunt there as they please, a privilege in which many revel, celebrating their newfound freedom with violent haunting directed at construction workers and others attempting to lessen the ghost's range via repairs. Worse, the manifestation location modifier for the shared anchor swells to +5, lessening by +1 per sunrise until it drops to its normal level for each specific location in that area.

Gift of the Golden Ankh

Tier 1: Ka •; **Tier 2:** Ba ••(•); **Tier 3:** Ab ••••(•)

Tier 1: The Arisen sometimes wake from a dream in which they remember only a vast ankh shining like a sun against the infinite blackness of the cosmos. From this shared vision, they speak this dream into form, summoning a blazing icon of this primal symbol in front of their hands, a glyph of luminous miracles through which life pours.

By focusing the ankh's shining power upon a mortal (including a Witness) within (Memory + Sekhem) yards, the Sekhem spent for the unleashing reinforces the beneficiary's Strength or Stamina as though she were a Sekhem 1 mummy reinforcing herself. As the rays spread out, bathing the recipient in a golden corona, the ankh collapses, and the unleashing ends. The bestowed reinforcement endures as normal for the rest of the scene. Beneficiaries with the Vice of Pride retain the blessing for an hour, if longer than the scene.

The unleashing Arisen applies the 9 again rule to all Intimidation and Persuasion rolls solely targeting mortals reinforced by this tier. Their blessing is his blessing, for his gift lends fearful credibility to his words.

Tier 2: The mummy may shine the ankh's empowering nimbus as per the preceding tier to grant one selection of temporary Merits from the list below to a single beneficiary capable of possessing the traits in question. Invalid targets waste the unleashing. The Arisen may even shine the light upon himself. Bestowed Merits last for 12 hours before fading away (or one day for mortals with the Vice of Envy, including Witnesses). A character may receive multiple Merit selections through separate unleashings, but applying the same package twice only resets the duration of that blessing. (See **World of Darkness**, pp. 110-113, for information on these Merits and their effects.)

Bestowed Merit Options: Ambidextrous (•••); Fleet of Foot (•••); Iron Stamina (•••); Iron Stomach and Strong Back (•• and •); Natural Immunity and Toxin Resistance (• and ••); Strong Lungs (•••).

Should a beneficiary intentionally attack the mummy who granted her Merits, the blessing immediately terminates and converts to a reflexive curse. Roll the mummy's Sekhem, applying a penalty of the target's Composure. Success removes two Willpower points from the ungrateful wretch who squandered the blessings of a god for a futile betrayal.

Tier 3: This tier follows the same process as those before it. The summoned ankh grants life itself, healing any animate being its golden light illumines. Even Lifeless things such as zombies may be mystically regenerated toward pristine corpses and ghosts may be granted Corpus. The mummy's player rolls Sekhem, reducing the target number by -2. Each success downgrades one point of lethal damage to bashing damage. If successes remain after downgrading all lethal damage, remaining successes heal bashing damage outright on a one-for-one basis. The tier may only gift the same target with healing once per scene, unless attempting resurrection (see below).

If the Arisen attempts the impossible by trying to heal a mortal's corpse, he may find himself faced with an unthinkable choice. The body must be extremely fresh, having died no longer ago than the mummy's Memory rating in minutes. Additionally, the body must be predominantly intact, with a bare minimum of most of its head and torso. Decapitated, hacked-apart, exploded, and cremated bodies are beyond repair (among other unpleasant fates). If all these conditions are met, the mummy can sacrifice a dot of Sekhem to resurrect the deceased. She returns forever changed, permanently transformed into a Witness by purchasing the Witness Merit immediately (even if doing so puts her into experience debt).

The patient returns to life with one point of bashing damage per success on the mummy's Sekhem roll, with the remainder of her health filled with aggravated damage. For example, three successes mean the beneficiary resurrects with bashing damage in her last three levels instead of the aggravated filling everything else. Needless to say, the dead brought back to life this way often require additional healing magic or severe and immediate medical attention just to avoid dying again.

Kiss of Apep

Tier 1: Ren • (Curse, Potency 1); **Tier 2:** Ka •••; **Tier 3:** Sheut ••••• (Curse, Potency 3)

Tier 1: The mummy's touch is ruin, for she is death and life beyond imagining, the crushing hand of eternity. She may unleash this tier reflexively whenever she successfully touches an opponent's skin (**World of Darkness**, p. 157). Unholy power sparks and hisses with eerie foxfire hues. The spectral energy soaks into the point of contact and spreads through the victim's veins, shining softly through the skin as it permeates his entire body. Only then does the light fade, as the true horror begins.

As the unleashing takes hold, roll the mummy's Ren + Sekhem, resisted by the target's Stamina + Sekhem. Victims with Fortitude as their Virtue add +2 dice. If the mummy wins, the victim contracts a supernatural disease that can infect any animate being, living or dead. Even ghosts can be infected by touching the space their Corpus incorporeally occupies. The malady immediately inflicts one automatic point of bashing damage and prevents healing by any means for an hour (natural or supernatural). The constant wracking pain of the sickness also imposes a –2 wound penalty, cumulative with any penalties from actual injury. After an hour, the opposed roll repeats.

Modern medicine cannot halt the curse of the mummy's grasp, but it can slow it. A drug treatment devised with an exceptional success on an Intelligence + Medicine roll that takes one hour to complete can arrest the progression to one point of damage per day instead of per hour. This requires medicines worth a Resources 3 purchase each day. Developing a cure uses the same action, but the healer's Medicine rating is capped by the highest Occult rating of advisers consulting with her (which may be her own Occult). Additionally, the roll suffers a –2 penalty unless the supernatural consultant has an Occult specialty pertaining to ancient Egyptian magic. The medicine and herbs necessary to formulate a cure cost Resources 3 (or 4 outside of the Middle East or a large modern city, assuming the supplies are available at all).

If at any point the victim wins the contested roll, the disease halts its ravages, and he may begin to heal. Otherwise, the plague steadily consumes his flesh,

withering it away through accelerated aging until the flesh dries up and withers to dust. Eventually, even his bones decay as their matter scatters forward through the ages, dissipated across all of time as a bloodstain marking the forward march of eternity. Only Deathless targets resist this fate, throwing off the disease as soon as they age to death so that they may return again.

Tier 2: To unleash this tier, the Arisen holds an object owned by her cult or her personally and ritually speaks incantations into it from sunset to the next sunrise, bathing it in her projected Sekhem. In the final moment of the rite, no power remains to animate her body, and she begins to plummet into Duat as the first rays of morning crawl across the sky. This brief taste of death arrests itself before her body crumples, but allows her to hurl a death curse (see p. 113) into the intended object and anoint it as a sacred vessel of her wrath. If she feels merciful, she may then speak an increment of time to add a grace period to her magic.

Should anyone damage the item or steal it from its proper home without authorization, the suspended death curse takes hold as if the thief carrying it away had slain the mummy. The grace period, if any, gives the thief time to realize his error and return the treasure before the dread magic takes hold. Past that, Fate alone provides a delaying reprieve, and then only to ensure the curse strikes with maximum dramatic impact as a punishment and warning to other would-be thieves. Such delays are most assuredly not mercy. The enchantment waits in potential for its creator's Ka rating in millennia. Thankfully, each item can only hold one such curse, and the curse strikes only once before it dissipates. Applying a second curse replaces the first. Mummies looking to circumvent this limitation may individually curse pages of parchment and stitch them together into a book, or otherwise invest comparably meticulous effort to craft an overkill punishment.

Tier 3: As the Arisen unleashes this tier, black clouds of palpable darkness spread out from her body, filling a space (Sheut x 20) yards in radius. The darkness remains fixed in place where summoned, retreating by one yard of radius per minute until fully dissipated. Direct sunlight doubles this rate of decay. The clouds block out all non-magical light sources, though flames that burn invisibly are no less hot. Effects that permit characters to see in the dark penetrate the obscuring murk normally, though everyone else caught in the tangible shadow is blinded. The creator can also see through it, even if normally unable to see in such conditions. Were the cloud simply darkness, however enduring, it would be horrific enough. Its curse also imposes the following horrors:

- Once per turn, the darkness attacks one character within it who is hostile to its creator. Fate guides its choice of targets, but generally chooses those who present a greater immediate threat to the unleashing Arisen over those who simply feel disagreeable toward her. The attack uses a dice pool of the mummy's Presence + Sheut + Sekhem, applying manifestation modifiers to this roll appropriate to the location (**World of Darkness**, p. 210). Victims resist via an opposed roll of Resolve + Composure + Sekhem, adding +3 if their Virtue is Hope. If the darkness wins, the enemy and all his worn possessions are dragged into a state of Twilight by inky tendrils, meaning he is left incorporeal in the same manner as ghosts and can physically interact with the restless dead as they do. Victims resume their correct state upon leaving the darkness, but remain trapped outside of substance and form until then.
- Being dragged into Twilight causes mortals to develop a derangement chosen by Fate, as they experience eons of solitude amidst the darkness of the cosmic firmament in their transition of form to formlessness. This is often a fear or avoidance of darkness, but it can be almost anything. Severe derangements imposed this way last one week, while mild derangements fade in a month. After that, the mind denies what it cannot cope with and heals around its mental scar, willfully forgetting its brief and yet eternal damnation in the dark.
- The darkness is a maze of ever-shifting corridors to ghosts and other beings in Twilight, folded endlessly in non-Euclidean spirals. Finding a way out requires a Wits + Composure roll with a penalty of the mummy's Sheut rating, with all failures treated as dramatic failures that draw the lost deeper into the center rather than toward freedom. Those lost must wander five minutes in the gloom before receiving a new chance to escape. Ghosts acting on any magical commands from the unleashing Arisen aren't affected, allowing them to attack their master's enemies with impunity.
- If created within the mummy's tomb, she may shape the darkness into a smaller configuration, such as to ward a particular tunnel or room with a gauntlet of horror. Such sculpted darkness lasts indefinitely, until revoked.

Obedient Clay

Tier 1: Ba • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ren ••; **Tier 3:** Ab ••••

Tier 1: As he scrutinizes an object or sample of a substance, the mummy's senses warp, providing him with intuitive understanding of the thing's physical and even metaphysical properties. Unleashing this tier requires that the subject he perceives be within (Ba + Sekhem) yards.

The Arisen's player rolls Wits + Ba. Success reveals what the target is made of and any important reactive properties. For example, knowing that an object is flammable (or explosively flammable) is pertinent information in a

situation where fire might appear. Similarly, an item's poisonous, biohazardous, and radioactive properties are generally good information to have in any circumstance. Mummies interpret revealed data through their Skill ratings. A character lacking decent Medicine will only be able to interpret the Ebola virus as a fast-acting bleeding sickness, while Arisen lacking Science can't differentiate plutonium from invisible poison fire rocks. Exceptional success reveals any supernatural properties, with a level of detail and specificity based on the Arisen's Occult rating.

Tier 2: Matter alters in accordance with the mummy's desire, temporarily shifting its phase by one: solid to liquid, liquid to gas, or the reverse of these two processes. Temperature doesn't change. Consequently, liquid steel doesn't burn objects like molten slag, but remains most unwise to drink. The transmogrified matter reverts back to its original state after one day, but retains its shape at that time. This can result in solid objects that seem impossible in nature, such as a congealed puddle of wood.

To unleash this tier, the Arisen targets an inanimate non-relic object he can perceive (or piece thereof) with Size no greater than his Ren + Sekhem. A cluster of related objects may be targeted, such as all the clothes and/or armor someone is wearing. The maximum size he can affect decreases by one for every five yards away the target is and doubles if he is actually touching his target. The exact effects depend on the target's current phase, with multiple phase shifts requiring repeated unleashing.

Solid objects can be liquefied, causing them to suffer one automatic point of aggravated damage per turn as they soften and ultimately collapse inward like melted wax. Meanwhile, a mass of liquid can be instantly solidified into a substance with Durability 3. Alternatively, liquids may be vaporized into the surrounding atmosphere, later precipitating as widely scattered droplets. Many materials are toxic to breathe as they billow upward in an expanding cloud. Conversely, an appropriate volume of gas can be instantly liquefied. This causes it to splash down to the ground and scatter across the area as appropriate to the specific circumstances.

Tier 3: The Arisen gains near total mastery over matter. He may unleash this tier while touching any non-magical inanimate object with Size no greater than Ab + Sekhem. Mystical power visibly flows over and through the target, transmuting it into another inanimate object of equal or lesser Size. Base matter can be refined into precious alloys or gems, meaning the character has ample justification to purchase up to Resources •••••. The character must be familiar with what she wants the new material to become, however, either through study or personal experience. The Storyteller may call for a reflexive Intelligence + Skill check at a -1 to -5 penalty in order for a character to recall sufficient information. While this Skill is usually Crafts, it can be anything appropriate to the item's function (e.g., Firearms for a gun, Medicine for surgical tools or drugs, Science for chemicals, etc.). Objects transformed by this tier do not change back on their own.

Palace Knows Its Pharaoh

Tier 1: Ba • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ka •••; **Tier 3:** Ba •••••

Tier 1: The Arisen concentrates on an artificial structure she currently occupies, attuning her senses and consciousness to the surrounding geometries. Their principles suffuse her being, allowing her to perceive the flow of bounded space and all barriers within. A structure is usually a single building of any size, regardless of how it is partitioned (i.e., both halves of a duplex, all dorms in a university residence hall, every floor of a skyscraper, etc.). Tunnels, sky bridges, and other such links do not make two buildings one. The Storyteller remains the final arbiter of boundary limits.

The mummy's player rolls Wits + Craft for the Arisen to make sense of this information, applying manifestation modifiers to this roll appropriate to the location (**World of Darkness**, p. 210). Success forfeits sight and hearing, but allows her to detach and augment her sense of touch as an invisible nimbus of pure awareness. The projected touch flies along at twice the Arisen's own Speed and passes through all barriers, giving her unfettered access to explore the structure for one hour. Her touch cannot leave the confines of the structure itself, remaining wholly bounded by that space. She continues to experience scent and taste based on her current location, but mystically knows if her body is in imminent danger so she can revoke the unleashing and deal with the threat. Otherwise, the magic grants one hour in which her thoughts may literally wander through and admire the structure and all within.

While the mummy's senses are displaced and transmogrified, she does not actually see or hear, but her tactile acuity allows her to navigate and act as if she has sight and to feel the original vibrations before sound could ever reach her ear. Her clairvoyant visions have no color or other strictly visual qualities, imposing a –2 penalty on rolls made by the player for the Arisen to recognize unfamiliar people and objects. However, darkness, fog, and other strictly visual problems also do not hinder her.

Several special unleashing circumstances apply to this tier. Unleashing it within a mummy's own tomb doesn't cost a Pillar. That place is hers to admire, and hers to bear witness to the punishments that await unwanted guests. She may anchor her displaced senses to herself, solely to extend her touch as a counter to darkness or fog (at least so long as she stays in the structure).

An exceptional success on the activation roll instantly transports the mummy's senses to wherever in the

structure Fate wants her to perceive. This is usually the most important event occurring in the structure at the time, particularly among those events unknown to her. For example, she may see where special forces have secretly broken in, revealing their raid before it becomes a danger to her. She may then leave that vantage point to explore the structure normally.

Should the mummy seek to explore an area warded against scrying, her vision strikes a wall as impassable as the exterior of the structure. The warded space is completely dark and numbingly opaque to her projected touch.

Tier 2: From simply sensing the structure she presently inhabits, the Arisen gains the power to exert her force of will upon the building and its inanimate contents. The primary effects of unleashing this tier largely duplicate the Telekinesis Numen (**World of Darkness**, p. 212), but the mummy's effective Strength equal his Sekhem, and she can't strike people directly. Specifically, she can only exert force upon the structure itself, furniture within it, or decorations adorning it. All things brought in temporarily from outside remain untouchable (such as visitors and their personal belongings). The Arisen may take an instant action to exert force anywhere within five yards of her vantage point that she can see, whether using her eyes or the "sight" bestowed by the previous tier. Popular uses of this tier include closing and opening doors, assaulting enemies with heavy furniture, and sliding out chairs to hospitably impress guests.

The structural telekinesis can also control the flow of utilities, cutting or dimming electrical power, adjusting the pressure of running water, deactivating security systems, turning on fire alarms and sprinklers, and other such feats. The mummy must focus telekinesis on an appropriate vessel for the utility, such as a wall socket to manipulate electricity. The Storyteller remains the final arbiter of what is possible this way. Finally, locks may be locked with effortless ease, but unlocking them requires a usual lockpicking action substituting the mummy's Wits for Dexterity.

Unleashing this tier within the mummy's own tomb is free. She need not exhaust her Pillars to command her own sanctum. Such indignity would be unthinkable.

Tier 3: To unleash this tier, the Arisen touches a door, doorway, or similar opening inside a structure. She may touch the target personally or use the preceding tier to do so (possibly focused through tier one). Then, she envisions another similarly sized door or other entrance within the same structure, meaning that buildings with many interchangeable doors afford far more options. The mummy must have seen that door previously, either with her own eyes or by unleashing the first tier.

The glorious magic of the third unleashing connects the two locations. As a result, the touched doorway now leads to the other location through imposed adjacency for one minute. Anyone who can fit through the entrance can travel in either direction through the shortcut portal or see through the opening to glimpse the new room it leads into. Used within the mummy's tomb, the portal connection lasts until the unleashing is revoked. With care, particularly horrifying mazes of impossible Escher-like architecture can be constructed to deter intruders.

Mummies with Sekhem 8 or higher can open a door to an unknown destination, leaving the other end for Fate to decide. The door may connect to a particularly interesting doorway elsewhere in the structure, and very often does. But it may also connect to a doorway in another structure on another continent, for reasons unknown. Rare doors have even opened to hidden caverns deep in the earth and into the void of deep space from time to time, making the unleashing Epic.

Power of Re

Tier 1: Ab •; **Tier 2:** Sheut ••; **Tier 3:** Ab •••• (Curse, Epic)

Tier 1: The Arisen chooses a target within (Sekhem + Ab) yards. This target cannot have a Size rating higher than his Ab rating, though it can be an entire object or a smaller piece that fits within the Size constraints (i.e., just his fists or only the top branches of a small tree). His player rolls Wits + Occult as a ranged attack against that target. A successful hit sets the target spontaneously aflame with a mystical fire that does not consume the targeted object. The size of the object determines the relative size of the flame (i.e., torch, bonfire, inferno), but the fire only burns with the intensity of a candle.

Because the conjured flame does not actually require fuel, it burns in conditions that normally preclude fire, such as a vacuum or underwater. It may only be extinguished by beating it into the ground, such as by dropping and rolling. Without such measures, the pale golden fire lasts for (Sekhem + Ab) minutes before flickering and going out. The magic flame can set other fires normally, but these secondary blazes are normal fires and may be extinguished as such. As a final perk, the Arisen may speak through any magic flame he created, causing his voice to emerge from the blaze as though via perfect ventriloquism. Mummies can only have one mystic fire burning at a time; creating a new one instantly extinguishes the old.

Tier 2: This tier suppresses a section of fire no larger in any dimension than (Sekhem + Sheut) yards. At least part of this fire must be within five yards. Unholy darkness swallows the blaze in a writhing miasma, consuming the flame's power and extinguishing light and dark in an implosion of mutual annihilation. This tier has a special effect when unleashed in the presence of a mystical



flame created by the first tier, visibly diverting some of the quenched fire into the magic blaze (unless the magic flame is itself annihilated). Sparking contrails arc toward the blaze from the consumed fire, stoking the magic to greater heat by one category per unleashing fed to it (i.e., candle, torch, Bunsen burner, chemical fire). The added heat endures for the duration of the blaze.

Tier 3: To unleash this tier, the mummy screams with a volume and tone no man can imagine, echoing the roar of an exploding star. The cry sets him momentarily alight with a blaze more brilliant than the noonday sun, a flash of power that sears all undead in his presence. Through him, onlookers witness Re and are seen by him. His sight is not kind.

The mummy's player rolls Sekhem, with each success inflicting one point of aggravated damage to all ghosts and Lifeless (and vampires) within a radius of (Sekhem x 5) yards. Only total cover provides protection against this burst. Anyone who sees the flash (out to a mile) is also blinded unless their players make a successful Wits + Composure roll with a –3 penalty for their characters to look away in time. Blinding lasts (10 - victim's Stamina) hours. Characters who have their eyes definitively closed at the time of the flash aren't blinded. Non-Lifeless mummies blinded by the light also suffer damage like the undead, but the damage is lethal instead of aggravated.

Mortals blinded by the light who are within (Sekhem x 5) yards also suffer damage like undead unless they have Faith as their Virtue or their Morality is greater than the unleashing mummy's Memory. Even after the gruesome burns radiating out from their eyes heal, the scars remain, pale, as though drained of all color. Accordingly, any points of damage actually applied also burns out the Striking Looks Merit, refunding the appropriate experience in the form of a humbling revelation that beauty is meaningless. Mortals who wisely avert their gaze suffer no harm at all.

The terrible scarring that afflicts burnt mortals does not steal beauty from seared undead. However, all beings slain by the light transmute into salt and ash, leaving pillars of smoking bones with grinning jaws still agape in wonder. Even ghosts leave these memorials of their annihilation.

Rebuke the Vizier

Tier 1: Ka • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ba ••• (Curse); **Tier 3:** Ren •••••

Tier 1: The Rite of Return trumps all other magic. Accordingly, a mummy may unleash this tier as a ward against supernatural powers. Doing so encases the Arisen within an invisible shell of exuded Sekhem for one hour,

though Witnesses and supernatural beings can see the barrier as a shimmering second skin. Whenever any hostile magic targets the shielded mummy or the space she occupies, make an opposed roll of the aggressor's Sekhem against the higher of the defender's Sekhem or Ka rating. If the defender wins, the magic fails to harm or otherwise affect her. Otherwise, the magic functions normally, though she can still resist by whatever means the power allows.

Tier 2: This tier may be unleashed reflexively as a defense against any supernatural power against which the previous tier can defend. Doing so is automatically successful, snuffing out the inbound magic without a roll. However, the defense lapses in the moment it flares into existence and does not offer any lingering protection.

Tier 3: Unleashing this tier upon a target within (Sekhem + Ren) yards reveals all magic that temporarily enchants it to the mummy's intuition. Indefinite enchantments generally count as temporary for this purpose, provided they could theoretically be terminated in some way. Having beheld the target's magic, the Arisen scours one such effect from it that isn't natural to its existence. For example, a mage cannot be stripped of the power to cast spells, nor can a vampire have its animating curse torn away. However, the specific spells hanging on a mage can be sundered, while a vampire's activated Disciplines may be turned off (forcing him to reactivate them). Similarly, a vessel can have active powers suppressed, but it cannot have its powers taken from it. Victims of curses may have their suffering abated. The Storyteller remains sole arbiter of what magic this tier can annul or not.

Revelations of Smoke and Flame

Tier 1: Sheut •; **Tier 2:** Ab ••• (Epic); **Tier 3:** Ba ••••• (Epic)

Tier 1: The Arisen bids the air to thicken and darken with his majesty, and so it does. The unleashing conjures spiraling whirls of incense-sweet smoke or sandstorm grit, forging the whirlwind into a biting, choking miasma extending a maximum radius of (Sheut + Sekhem + Memory) yards. The cloud moves with its creator, staying centered upon him until he deliberately leaves it behind and abandons it. Regardless of location, it contracts by one yard of radius per turn until it dissipates and the magic ends.

Within this roiling cloud, visibility drops such that everyone is substantially concealed, though all Arisen and Lifeless can mystically see through its murk. The lacerating grit or choking wisps inflict one automatic point of bashing damage per 30 seconds of exposure, though smoke can't hurt characters while they hold their breath (or if they don't require air, like the Arisen).

The unleashing mummy can also wield a particle-based cloud as a weapon. While inside the swirling sandstorm, he can mystically bombard enemies with lacerating waves of grit like shotgun pellets or precision gusts like rifle bullets, but the attacks use Occult rather than Firearms. Each blast also requires him to sacrifice one reinforced dot from a Physical Attribute for metaphysical ammunition. Spent bonus dots may be replenished by further reinforcing those Attributes. These attacks can't be launched while enchanted by the third tier of this Utterance.

Unleashing this tier while enchanted by the Utterance's second tier produces greater results. The cloud's radius increases by factor of 10, and it doesn't begin contracting while anchored to its creator. The swirling fog only begins collapsing when it's left behind or the second tier ends. Used together this way, the two tiers obscure the Arisen's flight from curious onlookers behind a peculiar drifting cloud. All sand shots burn the sand to molten glass flung as violently wept tears from the eyes of the mummy's wings.

Tier 2: The Arisen summons wings of smoke and fire from his body, unfurling many tongues of flame like peacock feathers adorned with constellations of stars and eyes. His smoldering, alien grandeur is manifest and holy, conferring the following powers for (Sekhem rating) hours:

- He is revealed as a creature of breathtaking beauty, temporarily gaining the two-dot version of the Striking Looks Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 117). No one can mistake his presence for human, and he afflicts all witnesses with Sybaris as though he had Sekhem 10.
- He can fly at twice his ground speed, even hovering in the air with untold multitudes of flaps and flutters. In midair, his beauty soars with his body, increasing his Striking Looks to the four-dot version.
- He may speak in a normal tone and have his voice carry out to any desired range up to 500 yards without screaming or exerting any effort. A projected whisper sounds above a hurricane as though murmured into every listener's ear.
- His constantly beating wings provide him with partial concealment. Their eyes expand his sight, allowing him to see out to (Sekhem rating) miles as though peering from an inch away. He sees in all directions and cannot be surprised without supernatural stealth.
- If he is simultaneously enchanted by the third tier of this Utterance, all who hear his voice directly understand him across all language barriers. His words grant their own fluency for the duration of the message, though this divine tongue does not help him understand others. Additionally, all mortals who hear his voice with Resolve + Composure lower than his Ab + Sekhem immediately gain a phobia toward him (**World of Darkness**, p. 97). Mortals with the Witness Merit are immune to this fear, as is anyone the Arisen commands not to fear him—at least, until he revokes that command.

Tier 3: Not all the proud pillars of Irem were carved of stone. By unleashing this tier, the mummy chars his body to ash and does not die. Instead, his power and self blaze forth, filling a pillar around him with a diameter of three yards and a height three times that. The conflagration burns as an inferno within this area, but its heat is only that of a torch. This increases to Bunsen burner heat if his Virtue is Justice or his Vice is Wrath, or stokes to chemical fire heat if he possesses both Traits. The blaze is not optional and can't be lessened, nor can any non-magical intervention extinguish it (though secondary fires are wholly non-magical and may be contained normally).

The Arisen and all his worn/carried possessions exist in an incorporeal and invisible state within the fire like a ghost, unable to physically interact with the world except by charring it. In this state, he can move normally, with the area of fire centered on him. After (Sekhem rating) hours pass, the flames go out, and the mummy's body regenerates back to its normal state like rapid cremation in reverse. Being subsumed into flames also provides the following powers:

- Onlookers regard the flames enfolding him as they would a Sekhem 10 mummy for the purpose of Sybaris.
- When this tier unleashes, the Arisen may suspend the benefits of any other Utterances currently enchanting him. Their effects abate until the mummy revokes this tier, causing them to reflexively reassert their power and continue their durations right where they left off. Thus, a power lasting for a scene would reassert and continue until the end of the current scene. This allows him to travel with prepared magic so that he is immediately ready for action upon arrival.
- While the mummy is simultaneously enchanted by the second and third tier of this Utterance, the flames around him grow. The area actually set ablaze stays anchored on him, but a twisting extension of the pillar descends vertically down to the ground from wherever the Arisen flies. A similar extension extends indeterminately skyward above, a twinkle in the skies of distant planets yet unforged. The beam can be seen for 50 miles in most atmospheric conditions. Although hot enough to slay insects and other small vermin, the luminous extensions merely feel uncomfortable to larger creatures and don't actually inflict damage. Only the part of the pillar shrouding its creator still burns destructively, so she can fly higher to spare the ground from her all-consuming judgment.

All beings who deliberately follow after this towering pillar add +2 to Stamina for the purposes of calculating Speed and resisting all hardships associated with the journey itself (resisting heat stroke and thirst, etc.). The blessing abates when witnesses can no longer see the light of the column or choose to stop traveling.

Rite of the Sacred Scarab

Tier 1: Ka •; **Tier 2:** Ren •••; **Tier 3:** Ka •••••

Tier 1: The mummy distends her mouth, opening it impossibly wide to vomit up an unusually large scarab beetle. The Lifeless mockery of an insect is surprisingly beautiful, more like a jewelry sculpture than a natural creature, with a gleaming carapace appearing to incorporate gold accents and precious stones. The scarab scuttles a yard away, then freezes in place, folding its legs and antennae against its body as it enters a state of suspended animation.

As a talisman, the scarab protects whoever wears it (such as by stringing it on a necklace), subtracting one die from rolls that could result in physical harm (two dice if said harm is the direct result of any Lifeless). As an object, the amulet has Durability 3, Size 0, Structure 3; any damage sufficient enough to impair functioning ends its power and leaves it inert. The talisman loses its power after a month, becoming a strange yet non-magical sculpture. Multiple scarab shields don't stack, but one generally combines with most other defenses.

Tier 2: This tier duplicates its predecessor, save that the scarab bites off a tiny piece of its creator's flesh before it scuttles away. This taste of Sekhem suffuses its body, giving it lasting existence (see the sidebar for its statistics and powers). The Lifeless creature exists thereafter to find its way back to a place where the mummy's cult can use it as a proxy body while its master is dead. It has no other purpose but to serve as a backup vessel of life, an insurance plan against the unthinkable.

Tier 3: Unlike with previous tiers, unleashing the final Rite of the Sacred Scarab disgorges a ravening swarm of beetles into the air around the mummy. Individually, these enchanted insects have the same capabilities as those created by the second tier, but they are less than half the size and lack the power Resurrection Talisman. Instead, the swarm of thousands acts as a weapon for the rest of the scene (or until the death of its master), at which point all the insect monsters crumble to iridescent black dust. The cloud of Lifeless insects has the same overall statistics as an individual and acts as a single entity, adding the following powers:

Beneficent Ward Swarm: Unleashing this tier alongside the first changes the overall intent of the swarm. A successful "attack" just affixes one of the bugs to all allies (as known and chosen by Fate). The attached scarabs immediately enter stasis and become protective talismans like those created by the first tier. These amulets are weaker, however, only lasting one hour. Those who have Pride as a Vice or Prudence as a Virtue must wait a minute for their talismans to enter stasis and activate.

Cloud Body: The swarm can cover a volume 200 yards across or compress to a denser mass a tenth that

Scarab Minion

Scarabs birthed by the second tier of Rite of the Sacred Scarab have the following statistics and powers:

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 5, Resolve 5, Strength 1, Dexterity 5, Stamina 5, Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 1

Skills: Athletics 5, Brawl 5, Stealth 5

Willpower: 10

Initiative: 6

Defense: 5

Speed: 10 (species factor 4)

Size: 0

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	1(B)	7

Health: 10

Auspicious Carapace: The scarab has intrinsic Armor 3 without any Strength requirement or penalties. It gains an additional five health levels from the durability of its design. The combination of enchanted shell plating and erratic, Fate-ordained movements increase the target number of all rolls to notice, track, harm, or attack it by +2.

Enduring Flight: The beetle adds +5 to its base Speed while flying. It never tires or needs sleep, able to apply peak exertion constantly without effort.

Good Luck: All rolls using Attributes and/or Skills and Initiative rolls made for the scarab reduce their target number by −2. The creature is immune to magic that would raise the target number of any roll made for it.

Hungry Pincers: The creature cannot inflict more than a point of damage per bite.

Resurrection Talismans: The beetle is a holy Lifeless vessel of Sekhem, courtesy of the Arisen flesh it consumed from its creator. This borrowed power lets it suffer damage and heal like an Arisen. Fate also grants it a perfect instinct to find the shortest, safest route it can take to reach the mummy's nearest tomb (or nearest cultist, if she lacks an established tomb). The creature hides, flees, and even fights if it must, but it does what is wisest to reach its destination safely. The Arisen's cult may attempt to summon the mummy back from death, substituting the scarab for its master's corpse.

Unnatural Toughness: See page 114, but the tiny armored horrors only tear apart when they lose their last health point.



size. It only suffers meaningful damage from area-wide damage such as fire, but otherwise, the deaths of a few or even dozens of bugs can't meaningfully diminish the swarm's overall numbers. The cloud is thick enough that it obfuscates vision like thick fog and imposes an additional –1 to all non-reflexive actions performed within it due to frightening distraction and the hellish buzzing of endless wings.

Final Swarm: As a death curse, the swarm that tears its way from the mummy's body fills twice the tier's usual radius and needs no direction to chase its creator's killers until the scarabs shred their unhallowed flesh from bone.

Hiding the Heart: Unleashing this tier alongside the second provides ample cover for the scarab that bears its creator's flesh. The camouflage of similar beetles imposes a –5 penalty to notice the larger, more important variation.

Mercies of Lesser Plagues: As a kindness, the Arisen may disgorge a swarm of Lifeless bejeweled locusts instead of scarabs. Victims caught in the cloud only suffer damage if they have no wounds at all, but a single point of injury reveals the mistake to the swarm and precludes further attacks. Meanwhile, the swarm devours all foliage and edible plant matter within it in the span of a turn, utterly devastating crops and heralding brutal famines to come.

A greater kindness can substitute flies for locusts. These bite like scarabs, but only until they successfully draw blood. The first point of damage also inflicts a –2 penalty from itching, stinging welts on the first day (fading to –1 on the second). New fly bites reset the penalty to maximum rather than stacking.

Obedient Slaves: The insects have a limited hive consciousness. What one perceives, they all perceive. The swarm is immune to all mind control targeting one individual at a time. Its creator can telepathically steer the cloud's movement and shape it with reflexive actions, or can command the group to stop or start eating. Mental commands function across all distances, provided the insects' master can perceive them to visualize the intended effect. The swarm can't do much else; it is a simple and elegant weapon of mass destruction.

Ravening Might: The swarm reflexively applies a bite attack roll with a +5 bonus for the high volume of bites against all living beings and edible organic matter within it (including the bodies of Lifeless, vampires, etc.). The swarm doesn't inflict more than a single point of damage to any victim each turn. Mortals with Justice as their Virtue or Gluttony as their Vice suffer only one damage per minute, as they are fools to be pitied or delicacies to be savored, respectively. Only the Arisen themselves are fully spared. The swarm attack ignores Defense and similar protection, as there is nowhere to jump or evade that isn't filled with grasping mandibles or buzzing, jeweled wings.

Selective Hunger: When unleashed, the scarabs can be directed to only eat particular organs, such as eyes or tongues, using specified target rules. The insects then only inflict a maximum of however many damage points the Storyteller rules are needed to destroy the organs in question (minimum of one point), at which time they are further devoured. Victims suffer the usual effects of such maiming, which may confer lasting Flaws.

Weaknesses: As fire can destroy them, its presence can keep the insects at bay (two yards from a candle or lighter, three yards away from a torch, five for a bonfire, and six for larger blazes). While fire is the surest way for mortals to survive the hungry bugs, temperatures much colder than freezing make the Lifeless monsters lethargic and unwilling to attack for the first five minutes of exposure, then paralyze the scarabs after that.

Secrets Ripped From Skies

Tier 1: Ba • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Sheut ••• (Curse); **Tier 3:** Ren •••••

Tier 1: The mummy unleashes this Utterance while gazing up at the sky. Doing so reveals his location relative to all known geographical referents, using whatever system of measure comes most naturally to him. The accuracy of this intuition roughly matches the information provided by global positioning satellites. For example, he may realize he is 20 miles southwest of Mount Sinai or two blocks north of the Chinese restaurant he had lunch at yesterday. Use of this Utterance automatically allows a mummy to retrace his steps through a maze back to known entrances.

Tier 2: The mummy speaks a word of power that reverberates back across space and time to the beginning of the universe, reshaping its genesis. The passing eons ensure that matter is spun and coalesces in accordance with auspicious wrath, culminating in a blazing meteorite falling upon an intended target. The mummy can only choose a known target he can perceive within one mile, and that target must be exposed to the open sky (i.e., objects inside buildings can't be targeted, though the building itself is fair game).

Roll the Arisen's Sheut + Occult + Sekhem as a ranged attack; successes inflict lethal damage (aggravated to inanimate objects and structures). Range penalties do not apply; targets are either within range or not. Cover is calculated from above, rather than the barriers separating the mummy and target. The meteor also creates a bonfire with Bunsen burner intensity inside a two-yard radius around the impact crater, though the flame only persists for the turn the meteor lands unless it sets combustible materials ablaze (e.g., wood, people, etc.). Characters who might be within the initial blast of fire and who are capable of applying their Defense can sometimes escape the worst

of the blaze by leaping away; their players roll Dexterity + Athletics and subtract successes from the levels of damage applied. Victims hit by the meteor itself cannot jump away from the resulting flames.

Tier 3: The Arisen gazes upon the night sky and listens to the murmurs of the firmament, scrutinizing the cosmic mysteries inscribed upon the patterns of constellations. Roll Memory + Ren, applying a –5 penalty if the sky is more than half covered by clouds and/or too much light pollution drowns out the stars (as in most major cities and suburbs). Success allows the mummy to glean one important truth from Fate, a clue that directly helps solve his most pressing dilemma in the current story. The clue is shrouded in metaphor and cryptic symbolism, but not so much that it isn't actually useful.

If a mummy unleashes the second tier in the same scene he attempted to read the future in the stars (successfully or not), he calls down an Epic meteor shower rather than a single meteorite. The shower ravages everything within a mile of the mummy for a number of turns equal to his Sekhem rating. The Arisen must choose whether to rain destruction in accordance with chance or Fate. In the former case, every possible target in range has a 10% chance of being targeted by a meteor each turn that the skies burn (i.e., roughly 10% of the land is utterly devastated before taking into account the secondary destruction wrought by fires). If Fate guides the shower, meteors fall upon as many or as few targets as it decrees. The meteor strikes use their normal full dice pool, though these reflexive attacks do not require further effort on the mummy's part. The mummy who unleashed the shower is never within its radius, though allies have no protection beyond trying to huddle in close to him.

Seeds of Life

Tier 1: Ka •; **Tier 2:** Ren ••; **Tier 3:** Ab •••• (Curse, Potency 3)

Tier 1: Upon unleashing this tier, the mummy becomes highly resistant to harm from plants and plant products such as wood and paper for (higher of Sekhem or Memory) hours. During this time, she completely ignores all injury from pertinent environmental factors, such as falling onto a dense canopy or pile of leaves, or standing in the path of splintered shrapnel propelled by hurricane-force winds. Rolled actions attempting to cause her harm with plant matter (such as stabbing her with a stake or shooting her with an arrow) add +2 to their target number, making success highly unlikely.

Additionally, an Arisen blessed by this tier may take an instant action to draw poison out of a living person's body through skin-to-skin touch. The mummy's player rolls Intelligence + Medicine, but the effective Medicine rating is capped by (highest of the Arisen's Occult or Survival). Apply a –3 penalty for a serious toxins or –5 for life-threatening

Staff Serpent

Serpents created by the first tier of Seeds of Life have the following statistics and power:

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 3, Resolve 5, Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3, Presence 4, Manipulation 2, Composure 5

Skills: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Stealth 5

Merits: Fighting Finesse (Bite)

Willpower: 10

Initiative: 9

Defense: 3

Speed: 9 (slithering only; species factor 3)

Size: 3

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	1 (L)*	8

* If the serpent's bite would inflict any damage, it injects Toxicity 5 venom instead.

Health: 6

Temptation's Guide: The serpent's mystical presence intuitively guides characters who can perceive the creature. Affected individuals realize all opportunities that are present to indulge their Vice (assisted by the Storyteller if necessary) and regain two Willpower points for doing so rather than one. This effect doesn't stack with multiple serpents.

ones. Success causes the patient to automatically suffer one point of aggravated damage as he forcefully vomits up all the offending matter as a syrupy froth of emerald sap. From this sludge grows a living bouquet of brilliant wildflowers in a span of heartbeats, each blossom unlike any flower that has been or shall ever be again. The blooms live for a day and then shrivel away, leaving only memories. Fate may sometimes compel their virgin budding. Indeed, such magic may once have seeded the early gardens of man with some of their most cherished treasures.

Finally, whenever a mummy wielding this tier throws an entirely wooden stick or similarly elongated object, her player may spend one Willpower point. Upon striking a solid or liquid surface, the enchanted projectile transforms into a living serpent in the prime of its life. This transformation lasts until the snake dies or its creator touches it again; otherwise, the serpent lives on and acts according to its instincts. Fate designs the creature, sharing its species with no serpent before or yet to be. (See sidebar for sample statistics.)

Tier 2: The Arisen may unleash this tier in any natural terrain, whether atop the waves of the deepest sea or upon the most barren desert or in the most verdant jungle. Whatever the location, Fate chooses what grows from those edible plants that can survive there, assuming unlimited irrigation is available (kelp gardens at sea, date and fig trees in a desert oasis, etc.). The mummy can incorporate a specific type of tree in addition to Fate's offerings by striking the ground with a staff carved from the appropriate type of wood, causing the stick to root itself in the land and become a whole tree. The created plants spring into existence within a radius of (Sekhem + Ren) yards, growing from shoots to fully mature plants in the span of a minute. The resulting garden can produce enough food to sustain (Memory x 5) meals for an adult human before its bounty has been plucked clean.

The created food is not solely benevolent, however. All Social actions rolled for the mummy that target characters who have eaten the plants in the past day reduce their target number by -1. To sample an Arisen's delicacies is to fall under her spell.

Unleashing this tier together with the preceding tier grows a garden of sacred panaceas. Anyone who eats a meal of this fruit while afflicted with disease or poison receives a reflexive cure attempt from the Arisen's magic. Such a meal also qualifies as a valid reason to buy any Mental or Social Attribute from a rating of • to ••, to purchase a Language Merit chosen by Fate to best help the feaster, or to buy the Encyclopedic Knowledge Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 109). The last reflects an inculcated mélange of hallucinatory gibberish interspersed with useful trivia. Fate's factoids include occult truths both useless and horrifying, like the certainty that otherworldly Things claw frantically at the walls between each tick and tock, feeding on scraps of forgotten moments. Players may go into experience debt to make such purchases. Only the garden's initial bounty has healing properties; all future harvests are regrettably mundane.

Tier 3: The mummy chooses any living adult she can perceive as part of unleashing this tier. Her player makes an Ab + Sekhem roll, resisted by the target's Resolve + Sekhem. If the Arisen succeeds, the tier's magic infuses that target with unnatural fertility as an atypical curse. A cursed target's next mating with an adult partner of the opposite sex results in automatic conception. Such an enchanted pregnancy carries to term without any medical complications (congenital or environmental), but the child is born a Witness and never part of twins or larger sets unless Fate ordains that it be so.

Unleashing this tier can make octogenarian conceive just as readily as a counterpart a quarter her age, ignoring such petty limitations as menopause and even regenerating amputated organs if needed (like reversing a hysterectomy, tubal ligation, or vasectomy). Both the father and mother of the child receive this healing in the moment of their attempt at sexual union and retain this healing after they are done, remaining fertile like young adults for the rest of their lives.

Torn Veil of Forgetting

Tier 1: Sheut •; **Tier 2:** Ab ••• (Curse, Subtle); **Tier 3:** Ba ••••• (Curse)

Tier 1: The mummy cloaks himself in an aura of anonymity, blurring the memories of mortals who encounter him. The shroud lasts for (Memory + Sekhem) hours, during which it affects all mortals who perceive the Arisen in the moment they cease to do so (such as when he walks out of sight, etc.).

The players of potential victims roll Intelligence + Composure with a penalty of the Mummy's Sheut rating. Failure means the characters forget and/or misremember the entire experience, substituting some boring and uneventful account rather than accept their encounter with something unnatural. For instance, they may remember taking their dog out for a walk and not recall their conversation with the Arisen on said walk, or may remember the conversation taking place with someone else entirely, some other random (and likely fabricated) stranger. Ultimately, Fate controls how the memories distort, but the changes always seek to hide the mummy. Supernatural beings and Witnesses aren't affected.

Tier 2: The Arisen makes a touch attack against another person as part of unleashing this tier (**World of Darkness**, p. 157). Skin-to-skin contact is not required. If

contact is achieved, the target experiences a compressed vision of whatever memories the mummy chooses to share from those he remembers. At fastest, the vision can show one hour of memory per second experiencing it, though targets subjectively relive the memories at normal speed. Sharing a painful or traumatic memory in this accelerated fashion is extremely unpleasant, inflicting dice of bashing damage equal to the mummy's Memory + Ab. Animals find all transferred memories traumatic.

Tier 3: The mummy touches a target as per the previous tier, but a successful touch does not copy designated memories into the target's mind. Instead, roll the Arisen's Manipulation + Ba in an opposed roll against the target's Composure + Sekhem. If the mummy wins, he can pose any one question of the target's memories. Such a question may be tightly focused, such as "Where did you take my canopic jars?", or extremely broad, such as "Did anyone ever love you?" All of the target's memories that would provide an answer to the question fade from the target's mind and become part of the mummy's remembrance. Memories excised this way do not return on their own, though the second tier of this Utterance may return copies of them if the Arisen feels generous. Removing knowledge of training can lower or even remove a Skill rating, but such a loss refunds the appropriate experience. A Skill obtained this way doesn't add dots to the Arisen until his player actually purchases the increase with experience.

Unleashing this tier to take particularly cherished memories or hollow out large chunks of the victim's past (as determined by the Storyteller) is a sin against Memory for Arisen with Memory 7 or higher. Careful and judicious extraction of narrowly specific information remains permitted at all Memory ratings.

Water of Life and Death

Tier 1: Ren •; **Tier 2:** Sheut •• (Curse); **Tier 3:** Ba ••••

Tier 1: The mummy strikes the solid ground as she unleashes this Utterance, cracking open a fissure as wide as her hand. Traditionally, the tier targets natural surfaces of stone, sand, or dirt. However, the Arisen can tear open artificial floors with the durability of stone or weaker, provided they are no thicker than a foot atop a natural surface. A spring of pure and fresh water bubbles up from the depths of the earth, pouring out in pulsating gushes like an arterial spray for the first hour before settling into a well. The tier does not create water from nothing, reaching back through time to sculpt the formation of the Earth so that a spring forces its way out at the appointed time and location. A spring created by this Utterance supplies enough water to support a moderate-sized oasis, easily enough to satiate the thirst of a large crowd patient enough to take turns. The spring usually lasts for (Ren + Sekhem) years before drying up, though a spring created in a mummy's tomb lasts until revoked.

Tier 2: The Arisen curses all water in her vicinity. As it gives life, so must it be life. The tier's might affects all standing and flowing water within a radius of two miles, transforming it into human blood. Only liquid is affected (not ice, steam, etc.). The transformation persists for (Sheut + Sekhem) hours, during which any new water brought into the area also changes. If the mummy unleashes this curse upon her tomb, she designates which areas are affected and may choose a duration up to indefinite. Water contained within a creature's body or mixed into other substances is not transformed. Blood created by this tier nourishes living creatures that subsist on such, but a river or lake turned to blood will obviously kill all the fish and other aquatic life. Vampires may drink transmuted water for vitae, but vomit up twice the points consumed an hour later as their bodies reject the cursed gore.

Tier 3: The mummy gestures toward a large body of liquid such as a lake or river. By the power of this tier, the unleashing parts a corridor with dimensions no greater than ([Ba or Sekhem] x 30) yards deep, ([Ba or Sekhem] x 10) yards wide and up to a mile long. If the trench cannot reach the bottom of the liquid, the unleashing fails. The trench moves with its creator, advancing when she reaches the halfway point and closing the sea behind her at the same pace. Those who do not follow close enough risk being crushed and drowned beneath untold tons of water. Death comes immediately to anyone who cannot resist such cataclysmic forces. The corridor lasts until the mummy traverses the water or a full day passes.

Word of the Amanuensis

Tier 1: Ren •; **Tier 2:** Ab •••; **Tier 3:** Ren ••••• (Curse)

Tier 1: Invoking the language behind language, the mummy commands a text written in any of the lesser, debased languages used by mortals to translate itself. Whether the words are written in ink, carved in stone, or recorded in electronic bits, the letters physically rearrange themselves, forming a translated text. Any text can be translated in this way, but ciphers, metaphors, riddles, or other obscured data are not normally clarified, though Fate may sometimes replace ambiguities with straightforward, comprehensible language. Intrinsically supernatural languages are also normally untranslatable, but Fate may allow some fraction of the text's meaning to shine through. The text is translated into any language the mummy knows or the text's original language.

Tier 2: The mummy fills his mind with the tongue of the Iremite sorcerers. This language is more ancient than the oldest parts of the human collective unconscious and

filled with a dark and terrible power. For the rest of the scene, all those who hear the mummy's words comprehend his meaning without recognizing the words, an unsettling experience even for those immune to Sybaris. Those who do fall prey to Sybaris recall the mummy's words with terrible clarity, even if they remember nothing else of the encounter. The ability to be understood does not carry with it any extra ability to understand. In addition to making his speech understood, this Utterance puts the weight of untold centuries behind his commands, reducing the target number of all Intimidation rolls made for the mummy by –1. Mortals in the grip of Sybaris can resist their madness in order to obey these commands, and the mummy enjoys an additional –1 target number to commands targeting such individuals.

While using this effect, the mummy may unleash the first tier of this Utterance to enchant a written text. When someone attempts to read the enchanted text, it rearranges itself into the reader's native language just long enough for her to read it, then it shifts back. If a character with a different native language attempts to read the text while it is already translated, nothing happens; he must wait until the text reverts to its natural state before it will transform into a new language. The mummy may choose any duration for this enchantment, from five minutes to eternity, and may end the enchantment at any time by touching the text.

Tier 3: Unleashing a terrible word of anti-language, the Arisen strips away the ability of those around him to use and understand language. The mummy's player rolls Ren + Academics + Sekhem, and all characters within the sound of the mummy's voice whose Resolve + Sekhem is lower than the successes garnered are cursed. For the rest of the scene, cursed characters cannot form comprehensible words, nor can they understand any form of speech or writing. Simple gestures can convey crude impressions, but actual sign language or complex pantomime is just as incomprehensible as spoken language. The second tier of this Utterance will make the mummy understood even by victims of this curse. Those who leave the affected area remain cursed until the end of the scene, and those with sufficiently low Resolve + Sekhem who enter the area during the scene become affected. The area travels with the mummy.

Alternately, the mummy may unleash this curse against a single target for a more lasting curse. His player rolls Ren + Academics + Sekhem, opposed by the target's Resolve + Sekhem. Every success rolled in excess of the target's successes permanently strips the knowledge of one language (chosen by the target's player) from the target's mind. The character is refunded the experience cost of the corresponding Language Merit. Languages lost in this way must be relearned through normal study and experience expenditure. If the mummy's player achieves exceptional success on his roll and removes all of the target's Language Merits, he strips away even her native language, leaving her utterly unable to speak, write, or understand words. After each day of this curse, the victim attempts to remember her native language, her player rolling Intelligence + Composure with a penalty equal to the mummy's Ren. Every day this roll fails, she accumulates a +1 bonus on future attempts. Until the victim recovers her native language, she cannot learn or develop any other languages.

Words of Dead Fury

Tier 1: Sheut •; **Tier 2:** Ka •••; **Tier 3:** Ba ••••• (Epic)

Effect: The Arisen summons a ghost by creating a new anchor for it, tying it to the current location, a held object, or the mummy herself. She cannot control what ghost will arrive, but may apply any of the following filters: rough age (newly dead, established ghost, ancient spectre), rough temperament (hostile, neutral, friendly), and potential danger it poses to the Arisen (none, minimal, serious, life-threatening). Danger often comes from power, and power typically comes with age, so these filters provide important finesse over the result. However, it is Fate that chooses what ghost to take and from where. More summoned shades come from nearby than some distant corner of the world, but Fate may reach all places in accordance with its design.

If the mummy is an anchor or is touching an anchor of a known ghost while unleashing this tier, she may designate that ghost to arrive rather than invoking Fate's choice. In either case, the ghost appears as a congealing nebula of dust clouds crushed into Corpus and given form, automatically manifesting it for the scene. The Arisen has no particular control over the ghost after it arrives, though mummies willing to summon dangerous apparitions will likely wield other Utterances to dominate the dead. Imposed anchors endure as normal, often a permanent and meaningful addition to the ghost's existence. If the ghost is again summoned by this tier, however, it loses its connection to the previous imposition and transfers its feelings to the new anchor. A ghost's Vice automatically changes to Wrath when he appears. He can reverse this change by indulging the Vice once or through the payment of three Willpower points.

Tier 2: The mummy consecrates a location to herself no larger than (Sheut + Ka) miles in diameter for one week. Repeated unleashing of this tier upon the same area resets the duration. At least half of that enchanted area must already have a location manifestation modifier of +1 or higher (**World of Darkness**, p. 210), often restricting the unleashing to specific structures, streets, neighborhoods, and immediately adjoining areas rather than the tier's

maximum coverage. The minimum manifestation modifier for all parts of the enchanted area further rises by +1 per night, to a maximum of +5.

While in the affected area, ghosts temporarily gain the following Numina: Ghost Speech (**World of Darkness**, p. 211), Maddening (see p. 209), and Terrify (**World of Darkness**, p. 212). They also gain two Essence points whenever they use Maddening to drive a mortal insane.

Tier 3: The Arisen summons a horror that is neither wholly ghost, nor entirely demon—an unholy Lifeless chthonic entity ripped from eons past and unleashed upon the present (see sidebar). It may be that such creatures no

Chthonic Beast

These inchoate entities undulate endlessly in arrhythmic, non-Euclidian coils of liquid Corpus, endlessly evolving eyes and mouths of varying complexity and apparent species along the entirety of their mass. A susurrus of alien murmurs and polyphonic bellows rise from their choirs of mouths, but the inhuman language resists all attempts at translation. The creatures have no compassion or pity, only their hunger for the living and dead alike.

Attributes: Power 10, Finesse 5, Resistance 10
Willpower: 20
Morality: 0
Virtue: Faith
Vice: Gluttony
Initiative: 15
Defense: 0 or 10
Speed: 25 (oozing only, species factor 10)
Size: 10-20 (see below)
Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bites	0 (L)	15

Corpus: 20-30 (see below)
Anchors: Location of summoning.
Numina: Dead Eyes (see p. 208), Maddening, Magnetic Disruption (functions constantly, even while not manifested), Materialize (see below), Old Soul (Age 10; 20 Essence points; see p. 209), Phantasm, Phantom Arsenal (see p. 210), Regeneration (see p. 210), Siphon (see p. 211), Spectral Toughness (see p. 211), Spirit Prowess (see p. 209), Terrifying, Untethered (see p. 210), Wall Walking (see p. 210), Will from Power (see p. 210). Numina with no listed page number can be found in **World of Darkness** pages 210-212.

Demi-Ghost: This horror is not a ghost per se, but it uses ghost rules. It can be targeted as such by all magic that doesn't attempt to control it, outright destroy it, or banish it to the great beyond. The creature suffers twice the damage ghosts suffer from holy weapons and aggravated damage from fire. The creature recoils from fire, even in a state of Twilight where the fire cannot harm it. It never voluntarily approaches or attacks into a radius of three yards around a torch or larger flame (or one yard surrounding a candle). Ringing it in fire or trapping it in a burning building can effectively cage the beast.

Devour the Dead: By default, the creature is Size 10, and its myriad, ever-hungry maws inflict lethal damage. Whenever it destroys a ghost with an unarmed attack, its Corpus gains one dot of Size (maximum Size 20) and regains five Essence points. However, the monster must spend Essence points equal to half its Size (rounded down) each sunrise or waste away, losing one dot of Size. If this reduces it to Size 0, it ceases to exist in this reality.

Materialize: As per the Numen. Unlike true ghosts, the creature can't deliberately de-manifest, use its Defense or while materialized. It must wait until the scene ends to return to formlessness. The horror remains physically in Twilight even while materialized, making it solid to ephemera and matter alike.

Soul-Rending: Whenever the creature kills a mortal, the victim's soul is torn free and lingers as a ghost. The new ghost gains the site of its death as an anchor and automatically manifests for the rest of the scene, appearing even before the tatters of its flesh fall away like so many scraps of wrapping paper. Forced manifesting ensures that onlookers can watch the chthonic beast tear the ghost apart a second time.

longer roam the earth because they were all summoned into the future. The tier only functions in areas with a manifestation modifier of +5 or greater, so powerful magic (such as the preceding tier) must prepare the way. When the creature emerges from the spiraling rift, it initially focuses all effort on devouring available ghosts to grow itself. It ignores other victims until it is at full strength. The mummy must wait (successes on a roll of 10 dice) weeks before the stars align such that she can unleash this tier again.

The mummy's control over the entity is tenuous at best. While within 100 yards of the monster, she can take an instant action to address it with mystic formulae and gibbering incantations, pitting her Presence + Occult + Ba + Sekhem against the creature's Resistance + Age of 20 dice. The creature suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to resist commands per ghost it devoured that scene (see below). If the roll for the mummy succeeds, she may give the creature one order or standing taboo that it must obey for the rest of its existence. New instructions cannot override previous orders entirely, but can limit or amend them ("kill everyone" can become "kill the firstborn").

If there is any way to misconstrue an order, the malign intelligence of the horrors finds that way. It isn't so much that the entity delights in loopholes as it is its nature to bring ruin upon all things, prey and master alike. Accordingly, the first such command is a prohibition against harming the mummy who summoned it. Through the power of Fate, the monster can observe taboos based on information it has no way to know (such as recognizing firstborn). The creature exists until slain, at which point its vast Corpus rapidly dissolves until only nightmares and repressed memories remain.

The Nenitu

These Lifeless creatures have no Social or Mental Attributes, Skills, Merits, Willpower, Morality, Virtue, Vice, or capacity to heal. They are not people, but shambling simulacra of life. They exist only as combatants and can't conceive of any action besides wandering aimlessly as a group in search of prey, advancing toward prey, or attacking until their prey stops moving. Their problem solving is limited to climbing stairs and ladders and not randomly walking off tall ledges. They have no other mode of interaction.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3
Initiative: 1
Defense: None
Speed: 6 (species factor 3)
Size: 4-5
Attack:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	1 (L)*	4
Grapple	0 (B)	5
Strike	0 (B)	3

* Zombie Plague

Health: 7 or 8
Hunger: See page 114.
Limited Senses: The *nenitu* have a pool of five dice to notice animate beings (or overcome their Stealth) and two dice to notice anything else. They automatically recognize their creator and members of their own pack and do not attack them.
No Mind: See page 114.
Unnatural Toughness: See page 114.
Vulnerability: Called shots to the creature's head with lethal attacks suffer a –1 penalty, but inflict aggravated damage.
Zombie Plague: Any mortal who suffers damage from the *nenitu*'s bite becomes infected and suffers one automatic point of bashing damage each turn until dead. If the infected wound is cauterized with fire or a bitten limb is amputated on the first five turns, the disease stops (this involves at least one point of aggravated damage and possibly a permanent flaw). After that, the plague spreads until it ravages every organ. Victims die writhing and vomiting blood while clawing deep gouges in their skin (unless restrained). Their corpses reanimate as *nenitu* a turn later, up to the pack's limit.

Words of Dead Glory

Tier 1: Sheut •; **Tier 2:** Ba ••; **Tier 3:** Ka ••••

Tier 1: The Arisen touches the earth with his hand, and his player rolls Intelligence + Occult, applying location manifestation modifiers (**World of Darkness**, p. 210). With a success, the nearest mostly intact inanimate corpse with Size (Sheut + Sekhem) or less within 50 yards stirs and claws its way up to its feet to answer the mummy's call, temporarily imbued with Strength 10 until it digs out of any interment.

The Arisen call this Lifeless monster a *nenitu*. A *nenitu* isn't especially potent (see sidebar), but its bite carries a deadly infection that rapidly transforms those who die into more of its kind until the pack numbers (successes rolled) *nenitu*. Should the pack suffer casualties, all of their bites become contagious again until they replenish their ranks. The magic of the beasts sustains the group rather than any member, losing one success per hour as the weakest and/or most damaged members cease all animation and drop dead where they stand. Destroying all members also terminates the unleashing.

The mummy who unleashed this tier can take an instant action to make any individuals he can perceive invisible to his *nenitu*. The walking dead leave invisible targets alone, so excluding allies can leave the monsters shambling toward the Arisen's enemies instead. Unleashing this tier also terminates any previous unleashing still extant.

By unleashing this tier along with the Utterance's second or third tier, the resulting revenant or intruder gains the Zombie Plague power. The creature's bite creates more *nenitu* until the total pack has been created, at which time the creature's bite loses its magic. This blessing endures until the first infection begins, which starts the countdown duration for the pack's animating magic.

Tier 2: The mummy prepares a corpse in a ritual lasting from sunset to midnight. His player rolls Intelligence + Occult + Ba with a –4 penalty. If successful, the unleashing prepares the corpse to become a revenant. The body's ghost has until sunrise to "touch" its flesh and successfully manifest, completing the rite. If it does so, it gains the Revenant Numen (see p. 209) and transitions from a ghost to one of the walking dead.

If the new revenant chooses to gain Impassioned Soul as most do, the Arisen inwardly feels the choice and may influence the formation of its Passions. The mummy can define two of the goals, leaving the third to the revenant's own predilection. Alternatively, he can leave all three to Fate's decree, in which case the overall set of goals reflect whatever would most help the Arisen currently, given his objectives and the events of the current story. For example, a revenant may feel a need to travel to a particular city, guiding the mummy to answers he might not otherwise have known to look for.

The Arisen cannot unleash this tier again while a revenant created by it exists. He must wait for the ghost to burn itself out or encourage it along, if necessary. In this, he is aided by Fate. All his actions and his player's Utterance rolls solely targeting the revenant subtract –1 from their target number.

Tier 3: The Arisen targets a manifesting ghost and a reasonably intact human corpse he can see, both within about 20 yards. His player rolls Manipulation + Occult + Ka, resisted by the ghost's Power + Resistance or Resolve + Composure. If the mummy wins, the unleashing transforms and dissolves all of the target's lingering humanity to make way for terrible power.

The ghost gains the Numina Intruder (see p. 210) and Lucid Dead (see p. 209), refining itself into a more nuanced malice as it seizes possession of the offered corpse. One of the intruder's Passions expresses a destructive or corruptive goal left to its own mad psyche. Another Passion is chosen by Fate as per the previous tier of this Utterance, but the selection attends to longer-term utility for the mummy's story than with standard revenants. The mummy ordains the creature's third Passion, binding it to some aspect of his undying will. An intruder created this way can take an instant action to join with another body if its current one is destroyed, but it can only return to flesh (the Arisen's Ka rating) times. After that, it requires another unleashing of this tier to join its Corpus to flesh and refresh the number of corpses it can claim.

Unleashing this tier again withdraws the blessing from the previous intruder. If its current body suffers destruction, the ghost must find its own way back to flesh. The power of reanimation transfers to the newly created intruder.

Words of Dead Hunger

Tier 1: Ren • (Subtle); **Tier 2:** Ba ••; **Tier 3:** Sheut ••••

Tier 1: The mummy unleashes a second sight upon her eyes, showing her the secrets of the dead for one hour. The enchantment grants her the following powers:

- She can see ghosts as if they were manifested solely to her. She adds her Ren as a bonus to spot ghosts and revenants.
- She intuitively recognizes anchors upon seeing them and adds her Ren as a bonus to locate such objects with perception or dedicated searching. By touching an anchor, she can take an instant action to receive a clairvoyant glimpse of the ghost attached to it, just clear enough to know if she recognizes the owner or not.
- She can strike ghosts with her unarmed attacks as if they were corporeal. However, the dead can also

touch her on the turn she attacks or the following one. Maintaining a clinch leaves her vulnerable to physical contact from ghosts until the turn after grappling ceases.

- Whenever she chooses to inflict damage while grappling a ghost, she can do so by draining the ghost's vital energy. A nimbus of light swirls out of the held apparition and enters the mummy's eyes and mouth. Damage inflicted may also take the ghost's Essence points and convert them into Pillar points for the mummy's own pools. The number of Essence points required to replenish one Pillar point is the current number of points the mummy has in that Pillar (minimum one). So, if she has Ab 4 and two Ab points left, gaining a third point requires her to take two Essence points.
- If she drains a ghost's energy by clinching until that ghost is destroyed, she absorbs knowledge of one of the ghost's Numen as chosen by Fate. Repeated kills always collect different Numina. This collection matters for later tiers of this Utterance.

Tier 2: The Arisen is as generous as she is terrible. She may bestow a gift of accursed power to any ghost or revenant visible to her within (Ba + Sekhem) yards. Her player rolls Presence + Occult, resisted by the ghost's Resilience if it isn't willing. If the mummy succeeds, she bestows one Numen chosen by Fate to best empower the ghost to serve the mummy's current needs. Alternately, she can grant one of the Numina she has absorbed with the first tier of this Utterance. Finally, she can always select Siphon (see p. 210) or Untethered (see p. 210) for her gift. Whichever Numen she chooses, the blessing lasts for (her Ba + Memory) days. A ghost may receive any number of separate enchantments from this tier, but every two Numina currently imbued this way gives it one derangement chosen by Fate. Human souls are fragile things.

In addition to the temporary Numina, a ghost cursed with power permanently gains the Old Soul Numen (see p. 209), which does not contribute toward the imposed derangement total. Lucid Dead characters must pay experience for this gift, even if they go into experience debt. If the ghost is too recently deceased to feel the Numen's effects, its magic lies in wait for the centuries to reveal it.

Tier 3: The mummy opens her mouth impossibly wide, revealing a vortex of twisted rainbows distorted by infinite gravitation. For so long as the unleashing period lasts, her hallowed might lies revealed to the world and afflicts witnesses with Sybaris as though she were Sekhem 10. All ghosts (but not revenants) within (the mummy's Resolve + Composure + Sekhem) yards in a 180-degree-wide arc in front of her feel a burning pull toward her mouth. They suffer one automatic point of aggravated damage per turn that the force pulls them until they surrender or suffer destruction. They cannot move without automatically surrendering to the pull. Most ghosts ultimately do give in when faced with the certainty of annihilation. The mummy may sustain the vortex each turn without a new unleashing so long as she spends an instant action each turn doing so. If she stops or suffers any points of damage, the unleashing ends.

The dead who surrender to the magic stretch and dissolve as they forcibly manifest, turning into luminous contrails that fall like nebulae into the spinning vortex. The ghosts leave the universe when they enter the Arisen's mouth, but they don't cease to be. Instead, an endless lake of fire awaits them in which they burn and are not destroyed. Their existence is agony, but they do exist. So they remain forever, unless pardoned by their banisher by unleashing this tier for that purpose.

When pardoned, the ghost emerges from the briefly opened vortex maw and instantly manifests. Under most circumstances, any time spent in the lake of fire is sufficient to give it one derangement chosen by Fate for a year. Repeated exposure stacks additional derangements, layering theoretically endless horror within the ghost's consciousness.

The first time a ghost emerges after spending a week or longer in the lake, it does not gain a derangement. Instead, it returns with burning eyes, imbued with the following Numina: Flight of Shadows (see p. 208), Hallowed Passion (see p. 208), Impassioned Soul (see p. 208; Passions: Burn what is beautiful, Serve the mummy who devoured it, [Any specific assigned destructive task]), Pyrokinesis (see p. 210), Untethered (see p. 210), and Will From Power (see p.210). In many respects, the soul becomes more of a spectral fire demon than ghost, a force of destruction upon the wind.

If the empowered ghost resolves its specific assigned Passion, it sheds its Hallowed Passion and exchanges it for Lucid Dead. The ghost may then choose to shed (Flight of Shadows, Impassioned Soul, and Pyrokinesis) to gain (Siphon, Spirit Prowess, and Stolen Pillars). After these choices, the blessings calcify and become permanent enhancements. Lucid dead player-controlled characters must pay for them with experience (going into debt as necessary).

Wrathful Desert Power

Tier 1: Ab • (Curse); **Tier 2:** Ba •••; **Tier 3:** Ka •••••

Tier 1: After paying the Pillar cost, the mummy can launch blasts of scouring sand from his hands or mouth for the rest of the scene. These attacks use a roll of Dexterity + Athletics + Ab, deal lethal damage, and are Armor Piercing 3. They have a range of 20/40/80 and suffer double range penalties, as the stream of sand loses strength

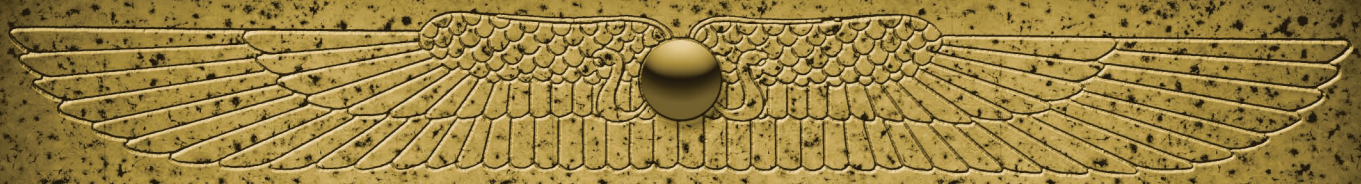
and cohesion at longer distances. The blast can cover as narrow or wide an arc as the mummy desires; his sand blasts effectively have the autofire capability. When used as a death curse, the mummy may unleash a single blast at his killer, ignoring wound penalties.

Tier 2: The desert sands open and swallow a target character within (Ba x 20) yards. Potential targets must be standing on sand deep enough to entomb them. The mummy initiates a grapple (**World of Darkness,** p. 157), using his Ba + Survival in place of his Strength + Brawl. The target resists as normal, though she may substitute her Athletics for her Brawl if desired. The mummy may reflexively maintain the grapple until his victim escapes, but he may not choose to damage his victim with the grapple. Victims who fail to escape for long periods risk suffocation.

Alternately, the mummy may target himself, disappearing into the sands and emerging somewhere else within (Ba x 20) yards. Both his point of origin and his destination must have sand deep enough to contain his body. This version of the Utterance may be unleashed reflexively, and the sudden movement increases his effective Defense by 2 until the end of the turn, but it is not so sudden that he can teleport out of the path of an attack.

Tier 3: With a sky-rending howl, the Arisen calls up a massive sandstorm, stretching [Ka x 100 yards] distance in every direction and lasting an hour. If there is not sufficient sand in the environment, the mummy breathes forth a quantity of sand sufficient to lacerate the wind. Darkness and obscurement limit visibility to 15 yards and impose a –3 penalty to perception rolls and ranged attacks within that area. Characters suffer a penalty equal to the Arisen's Ka to all non-reflexive actions attempted within the sandstorm as they are buffeted by the howling, lacerating winds. Characters who are immune to magical fear suffer only half this penalty (rounded up), as it is partially a result of disorientation, panic, and a dreadful, creeping certainty that they will never see the light again. After every 10 minutes of exposure, characters suffer one level of bashing damage if they are up and active. If they go prone or take shelter in the lee of a large object or structure, they are quickly buried in accumulating sand and begin suffocating. Characters who take bashing damage from gunfire, such as mummies and vampires, only take damage once every 20 minutes.

The mummy's visibility is just as limited as anyone else's, but he is immune to all the other deleterious effects of the sandstorm. The storm will follow him, though it can only move as fast as a normal storm (assume approximately 50 miles per hour), so if he moves fast enough, he may outpace it. While within the sandstorm, the mummy may disperse his body into the swirling sand and reform elsewhere, using the storm to meet the sand requirement for the second tier of this Utterance. Moreover, he need not spend any Pillars to use the travel function of the power.



"Our offering, Holy One."

"Do not call me that," says Merew-Tjaw. "Holiness is self-evident, like gold, royalty, and beautiful boys." She leans from the throne to take a necklace from the pile of jewelry before her. She gazes at it for three seconds. Cultists hold their breaths.

The silence annoys her.

"Then again, maybe you need help identifying holy things. Half of the links on this piece of garbage are plated copper."

"Holy . . . I mean, Priestess. Forgive me." Leonidas (Paul Leonidas—this time, she remembers) bends knee and fearfully inspects Merew-Tjaw's right sandal.

"Did I not design mysteries that you might learn the secrets of metal? When last I came to the high seat, did I not tell your family to take up the new sciences, to apprentice yourselves to smiths and to chemists?"

"And financiers, Priestess. Bankers and economists. Only one of my ancestors could carry out your commands. The rest died in the Great War. My great grandfather devoted himself to the work he believed would best enrich you. I regret my ignorance, Priestess, but if you look in that black book—the portfolio there—you'll see we've invested wisely. We could purchase what you desire a thousand times over."

"No. You would not even know what to look for. Besides, your efforts tell me that I've taught you nothing." She looks over his shoulder. "Is that your son, Paul?"

"Yes, Priestess."

"I think I prefer 'Holy One' now. That boy is most handsome. Bring him to me."

Later, as Paul Leonidas' son screamed, she taught her cult that beauty was transitive, that it could be taken from one thing to another, and Merew-Tjaw's offerings shone brighter than ever before.





Chapter Three
The Inhuman Condition

They cannot speak the spell which is on the end of the scroll.
They cannot speak for fear of him whose name is concealed,
who is within my body.
— The Book of Two Ways

Like the Nile, their power floods and dwindles. At least this is familiar to the Arisen, who remember the River even after forgetting almost everything else. Remade by the Priests of Duat, their Sekhem follows a reliable, desperate rhythm. They awaken to a season of power when they might accomplish anything, but not everything. The season ends; every vessel strewn beyond Duat's embrace marks a task left undone. So they die… until the flood comes again.

Sekhem is life force, not life. The Arisen know this whenever they reach inside themselves for memories and moral direction. True life is a condition of the soul. No matter the season of his Sekhem, the Arisen's spirit lingers close to death, its identity and purpose as shallow as an obsessed ghost's. The living sense a dissonance between a mummy's soul and Sekhem: life perverted to serve the dead. Cults worship it and occultists desire it for themselves, but ordinary men and women loathe it, though they might not understand why. In search of Memory, some Arisen deepen their souls with moral codes, but most find it easier to play at humanity instead of being human. The living fear death, but worship what they fear, and in the absence of love or justice, mummies can still command awe.

Being Arisen

The Shan'iatu made mummies to preserve the dream of Irem and to harvest the fruits of sorcery for the glory of Duat. Whatever compromises the sorcerer-priests made to weave their mission into eternity, they didn't omit those most essential powers: occult might, toughness, and the ability to sense the Sekhem of supernatural vessels.

The Arisen's body radiates half-materialized magical power, but its natural shape is that of a mutilated corpse. No matter his Memory, Duat leaves its mark on an Arisen's Sekhem and fivefold soul. To mortals, this is the very essence of mortal terror, covering the mummy like a fetid rain or perspiration. When the Arisen reveals himself, mortals tremble. His presence infects people with a sense of their own impermanence, and offers delusions of power to ward it off.

The Fleshly Shell

The Arisen wear a simulation of living flesh. Their bodies can barely be called animated corpses, as Sekhem replaces tissue lost to injury (including the inevitable erosion of the ages) with a simulacrum the Arisen call the sahu. A sahu is solidified Sekhem, modeled on the Arisen's original body—that is, the body that underwent embalming and a few necromantic rites in lost Irem. At the start of a new Descent, the mummy's Sekhem recreates this template perfectly; for all his power, he appears to be a withered, dead *thing* driven by unnatural vitality. Fortunately, as the Descent progresses, the mummy's Sekhem loosens its grasp on his sahu. The mummy's soul reflexively reshapes it into an idealized duplicate of his original, living form. He can then pass for a normal human until he is forced to call upon his eldritch magic.

Based as it is on a ritually altered "khat" (body), the sahu is an anatomical oddity. Iremite embalmers removed every internal organ except for the heart, and scraped the brain out of its skull. The empty body cavities were filled with perfumed herbs. As a result, the Arisen possess a distinctive sweet and bitter scent. At high Sekhem, the mummy's flesh turns to its true gray-blue tone and withers due to his body's ancient exposure to natron salts.

The mummy's sahu doesn't rely on these lost organs (largely because that is how the Arisen knows and recalls life), but the Rite of Return allows him to simulate their functions. The mask of life includes its pleasures… and to a certain extent, its pains. Mummies can eat, drink, and bleed, just like the living. Digested matter dissolves upon contact with a mummy's empty abdomen. The Deathless can make love (and those who can recall the act occasionally feel urged to do so again, with the frequency of the urges dependent on the personality of the soul in question), but they are universally infertile, and can thus neither bear nor sire children, mortal or otherwise. While the Arisen are truly undead—and thus immune to hazards such as drowning, hypothermia, and disease—some injuries that logically should not afflict them do. The simulation of life demands bruises and cuts that bleed, but the sahu's true nature quickly asserts itself and overcomes these injuries.

Revealing the Sahu

All Arisen, as well as other creatures attuned to sorcery from the age of Irem, can recognize a mummy of any Sekhem rating. They still see what the Arisen presents to the world, but eventually, the sahu's true corpse-form will flicker hazily, just in and out of view. Furthermore, when an Arisen expends personal Pillar points for any reason except to simulate life signs (see below), his true form reveals itself. If he seals the flesh, he retains this shape for as long as it fuels his regeneration. Otherwise, the corpse-form lasts for a turn.

Although mummies with a low enough Sekhem simulate the external signs of life, trained medical personnel can see through the façade. A hands-on examination by anyone with at least one dot of Medicine automatically reveals that something is seriously wrong with the Arisen. The examiner cannot feel organs through palpitation, and other life signs prove to be absent or oddly superficial. A mummy's heart beats, but maintains the same rhythm no matter the exertion. His undead pupils fail to contract in bright light. The mummy's sahu simulates the elements of physical existence that he was most aware of in life—and fails to demonstrate those he never really paid attention to. Thus, specific "tells" that reveal the mummy's inhumanity will vary from one individual to the next.

The Half-Remembered Face

If the sahu is largely a magical reconstruction of a warped self-image, where must the Arisen lie on the continuum from "shambling corpse" to "perfected immortal?" There's no clear, simple answer. It depends on the relationship between Memory and Sekhem.

When a mummy bursts forth at the apex of its Sekhem, it is clearly not human. At Sekhem 9-10, it looks like a mummy you'd see in a museum—sunken holes instead of eyes, brown and hardened wrappings worn through to show leathery skin, which in turn lies tight on the knobs of bone. The teeth, the only part of the skeleton common to everyday sight, draw the eye. The outline of such Arisen in movement is barely human; too thin, gradual in its unnatural power, moving like sand falling off a dune rather than tissues swelling and relaxing to walk and reach and grasp.

As Sekhem drops, the preserved form regains its previous appearance. At Sekhem 6-8, the mummy appears (physically) as he did in the last 10 years of life. Though he may be wizened with age or in the prime of health (depending on the timeliness of death), there remains an aura of austerity and distance. Even at a full run, he looks unhurried. Should he fall, it's not awkward or in any way comedic. It's like watching a skyscraper collapse.

Sekhem 3-5 shapes a mummy's body from the bloom of adulthood. He looks more fresh, even a bit younger. That's his seeming age as his Descent proceeds, though at Sekhem 2 he likely looks wan, tired, or ill; by Sekhem 1, he looks starved, desperate, and wasted.

But those are mere physical details. More important is the mummy's demeanor. It's easy to underestimate the impact of posture and gesture and countenance until you meet someone who stands too close or doesn't react to your expression. The countless tiny ways we communicate, all beneath the layer of conscious thought, are determined almost entirely by Memory.

The recollections of a mummy aren't like those of a mortal. Normal people have experiences coded into brain cells, a map or record that consults itself. A mummy's brain died centuries ago. The memories that remain aren't the minutia of "where I left my keys" or "what's Myra's birthday." They're elements important enough to be incorporated into a spiritual identity. Arisen memory is not what they knew or experienced; it's events—sometimes seemingly inconsequential things—that passed through the record of the brain and imprinted on the undying, ephemeral soul.

Thus, a mummy at Memory 8-10 is, by gesture and 'vibe,' indistinguishable from a living human (so long as he isn't also at Sekhem 9 or 10). At Memory 5-7, he still scans as being within broad social norms. He probably seems a little awkward and out of it, like someone who's distracted or who isn't a native speaker of the language, but hardly inhuman. At Memory 3-4, however, there's more than a little of the archetypal automaton in his behavior. He seems stiff, abstracted, and even when he's paying attention to you, it's an unnerving scrutiny. Memory 2 Arisen seem harsh, monotone, brusque, and/or emotionally dead. Even getting beaten up by one seems impersonal, like he's just ticking a box off a list and doesn't care about your pain because he can't. Memory 1 Arisen may look perfectly human, but talking with one is like having a conversation with a (potentially angry) mannequin. At Memory 0, they're worse, like an auto-dialed political quiz that won't take 'no' for an answer.



Beyond close examination, witnesses may notice these subtle deficiencies on sight, with a successful Wits + Medicine roll. A standard success reveals something "off" about the mummy that might be explained by anything from illness to genetics to even make-up. An exceptional success tells the witness that the Arisen should almost certainly be *dead*.

Mummies with medical knowledge may provide convincing signs of life to better conceal themselves. The player spends a point from any Pillar and rolls the Arisen's Composure + Medicine. Simple success allows the Arisen to fool visual inspection. An exceptional success defeats all forms of mundane examination. The effects last for a scene.

Certain supernatural powers, including Utterances and Affinities, can also conceal the sahu's true form for a time. These powers override the rules for revealing the sahu. Consult their systems for more details.

Healing

The Arisen's magical flesh repairs itself at a rapid pace, healing injuries at the following rate:

- One point of bashing damage per turn.
- One point of lethal damage every half hour.
- One point of aggravated damage every three days.

In addition, the Arisen may heal one point of aggravated damage in a single turn, as a reflexive action, by spending one point of Willpower and dropping a dot/rank of Sekhem. (Obviously, this benefit is unavailable to Sekhem 1 mummies.)

Arisen may heal themselves even faster by sealing the flesh. Once sealing the flesh is activated, the mummy regenerates two additional points of bashing damage (three total) and one point of lethal damage per turn. The mummy cannot be incapacitated or killed by injury while sealing the flesh. See the description of the Pillars advantage on page 74 for full rules.

If a mummy's last aggravated wound box fills, and he is not in the process of sealing the flesh with Pillars, he dies—for a time. His sahu reverts to its true form. At this point, he is subject to resurrection or return and Descent, depending on his resources and Sekhem.

Sources of Damage

Being immortal undead with corporeal forms composed mainly of magic, mummies have little to fear from mundane forms of physical punishment or misfortune. They don't bleed to death and can't be knocked unconscious from a blow. And unless they're firing explosive rounds, all guns inflict only bashing damage against a mummy's sahu. Further, enemies gain no benefit from targeting certain areas of a mummy's body over others, as he no longer has vital organs to pierce nor living sensory organs

to debilitate. Mummies can suffer aggravated damage, as others do, through grave injury and certain magical hazards. In particular, their dried-out sahu is vulnerable to flame, so fire inflicts aggravated wounds. In addition, relics can inflict aggravated damage to them when used as weapons, but only if they would have been capable of injuring a mortal. (The touch of an amulet would have no effect, but a dagger dipped in a magical solution might deliver aggravated wounds if an attacker cut or stabbed the Arisen.) Almost all other serious physical attacks—be they from tooth, claw, or forklift—inflict lethal damage, instead.

Deader Than Dead

When a mummy suffers damage in excess of the last aggravated wound box in his track but stays active due to sealing the flesh, such damage is reckoned as "Dead" points of damage. These do not heal with time and cannot be repaired with Pillars, though they can be repaired by powers (but not time-based healing or conventional medicine) that heal aggravated wounds.

Ironically, Dead points are actually a bit easier to repair than aggravated wounds, as a mummy reduced to this state no longer relies on anything resembling true life. He's an object driven by unnatural animation. It's just a matter of putting the parts back together with wrappings, pressure bandages, staples... anything that puts flesh and bone roughly where they should be. Three turns of work and a successful Dexterity + Crafts roll is sufficient to "heal" a Dead point. An exceptional success heals two points. Once these have been repaired, the mummy heals as usual. If the Arisen cannot reassemble his body before he runs out of the power to keep sealing the flesh, he dies.

The Kepher's Path

In the craft-houses of Irem, the ancient guilds practiced mystic rites alongside material skills. The Priests of Duat gave magical vessels their powers, but not until they were ready to receive necromantic spells. Artisans inscribed sigils; read omens in stars, water, and bloody entrails; and performed the appropriate sacrifices. They learned to sense when a vessel was ready for the master's sorcery.

Through the Rite of Return, the Shan'iatu strengthened these senses. The Arisen sense these familiar forces to a greater degree than they ever did in life, even if they've forgotten their guilds' inner mysteries. An Arisen senses vessels that belong to his guild's signature domain even if they lay hidden on the other side of the world. Mummies can even sense the occult sympathies vessels build over the ages. An alchemist "smells" a regium on the hands of a woman who held it.

Each mummy experiences the life-tug of vessels differently: vivid daydreams, strange music, and sudden bursts of heat or cold are common. No matter the sensation, the Arisen call the power to track vessels *kepher*—a word meaning "transformation" or "manifestation" that evokes the sun-scarab's path.

Following the Scarab

All Arisen are capable of sensing vestiges, of any form, especially on sight. To sense a magical relic's kepher, however, the mummy must belong to the guild that was once responsible for making relics of that type. Mummies can utilize kepher to find relics that weren't made by the

Dice Penalty	Relationship
–2	*Entombed or Nearby:* The vessel was once housed in the mummy's tomb, or lies within five yards per level of Sekhem of the mummy. Even if the vessel was spirited far away from his tomb, the Arisen still benefits from this close connection. Occultists also possess this connection to vessels they have kept in ritual sanctums. Ordinary proxies do not possess this degree of connection.
–4	*Held or Seen:* The mummy or proxy once held this vessel or saw it with his own eyes. Again, the mummy may still benefit from this connection long after it has been lost.
–6	*Described:* The Arisen or his proxy has read or heard a detailed description of the vessel. This description provides enough information to distinguish it from similar artifacts.
–8	*Catalogued:* The mummy or his proxy read or heard a rough description of the vessel, such as a one-line description from an inventory or the vague recollections of someone who saw it but didn't pay much attention to it (or can't recall same). In all cases, this listing must have been intended to refer to a specific vessel.
–10	*Rumored or Unknown:* The Arisen has heard rumors that could refer to many different objects, or is using kepher to "fish" for a vessel he knows nothing about. If the Arisen achieves the latter, the power connects him to a vessel of the Storyteller's choice.

Nameless Empire, but they must still fit the guild's type, as follows:

- **Amulets:** The Maa-Kep
- **Effigies:** The Tef-Aabhi
- **Regia:** The Mesen-Nebu
- **Texts:** The Sesha-Hebsu
- **Uter:** The Su-Menent

Kepher is both an active and passive ability. An Arisen's player and the Storyteller may both invoke the power. The Storyteller may activate an Arisen's kepher whenever she pleases, but the player may only do so in the following situations:

- Once per chapter (game session)
- Once after each Descent Roll (no matter the result)
- Once after each contact with a proxy (see below)

To activate kepher, one rolls the mummy's Sekhem rating as a dice pool. If the mummy is actively using his ability (and the player rolls), his player may spend a Willpower point to add three dice to the roll. The starting penalty to the roll depends on the mummy's relationship with the vessel, as follows:

Roll Results

Dramatic Failure: Confused by the threads of power encircling the world, the Arisen cannot distinguish those of his target vessel from the others. If the Arisen was actively using kepher, the *Storyteller* rolls his Sekhem again; failure indicates a false connection that *will* lead the Arisen to an object of Sekhem, but not one he expects to find. Most of these false trails lead to weird, dangerous situations.

Failure: The Arisen can't detect a significant Sekhem trail.

Success: Through visions, omens, and intuition, the Arisen learns the vessel's current city, county, or other broad region. He also experiences a vision of one individual with a relationship two steps superior (move up the difficulty table) to his own. If the mummy's seeking a

The Five Noble Crafts

In the days of Irem, six guilds effectively ran both civilization and empire, each possessed of the occult wisdom to craft a particular type of relic. After the betrayal of the Deceived, these traditions became the five guilds.

Amulets: Talismans and protective bangles remain a common theme in many magical traditions, but the craftsmen of the Maa-Kep understood the power of the amulet best. Within these unassuming baubles and placards was the quiet magic to preserve and transfer power, and thus, the power to persevere. In many-pillared Irem, these relics were often carried as a badge of office (especially amongst the Priests of Duat) or as a symbol of loyalty. The amulet was borne by those who served or actively warded their masters from harm.

Effigies: For want of the pillars, would mighty Irem have been great? The statuary and public works that adorned the lost city followed forgotten principles of magical sympathy and design. From simple statuettes to great spans of stone carved with the likenesses of their builders, these relics were the ornaments that glorified and accented the City of Pillars. This group of relics is likely the most varied in size and function, some being too large to move by hand, but they often evoke the most powerful remembrances of the Nameless Empire.

Regia: In glorious Irem, the great work of alchemy stoked the forges and foundries that fed her appetite for never-ending war. The bronze that armed and armored Irem's soldiers, and the perfume that graced her nobles, sprang from the secretive genius of the city's alchemists. As a guild, they grew rich and powerful, and their relics often reflect the high station they enjoyed as Irem ground down the known world with their issue. Alchemical relics, known as *regia* (singular *regium*), are often richly appointed or composed of unidentifiable materials, but in fact, they can take almost any seeming.

Texts: Texts are arguably the rarest of relics because of their great value to historians, sorcerers, and thieves. Few survived Irem's fall, the words of its scribes, magistrates, and bureaucrats for the most part lost. Even more so than with the other reliquary crafts, the vast majority of text relics come from successor cultures. Texts usually take the form of stone tablets with faint markings, great dust-choked tomes, or papyrus scrolls. While a treatise on the occult would be a rare treasure, even an antediluvian paymaster's scrip could hold some secret power within.

Uter: Tombs existed beneath the pillars of Irem, and those who tended to the craft of the shell found their work within those dark places. These morbid relics take many forms, but are always composed of things once living (or yet unliving). A magical beetle entombed within amber and the dusty remains of a much praised saint are good examples of relics of the shell. These artifacts are usually the most obviously occult of the five crafts, often bearing a foreboding aura or carved necromantic runes depicting the art of entombment or sacrifice.

proxy, he discovers her appearance and region, as well as the name and exact location of a person, place, or thing important to her.

Exceptional Success: The Arisen has a vision of the vessel, its immediate surroundings (out to about the size of a city block), and a hazy image of the individual who currently possesses the closest relationship to the vessel besides himself. The mummy constantly knows the vessel's relative direction "as the crow flies." If the mummy is seeking a proxy, he learns the same information about her surroundings and direction, as well as the identity of the person she feels the strongest emotional connection to—either love or hate.

Using Proxies

The Arisen can easily find stolen property from their tombs or vessels that were snatched from their hands, but new vessels are more challenging. Fortunately, kepher detects magical sympathies around vessels, so mummies may exploit them to track their treasures through those who have held, seen, or even just heard of them. The Arisen don't give these people any particular name, but these systems refer to them as *proxies*.

To detect a proxy, roll the Arisen's Sekhem rating for kepher, but use the proxy's relationship with the vessel, not the Arisen's. Apply a –1 penalty to the roll for every step closer the proxy is to the vessel compared to the Arisen, to a maximum of four steps superior, and then add one die to the final total.

Example: *Asar-Ab reads about a "knife of water" in an old scroll. His relationship is only Catalogued, and at 7 Sekhem, he has no desire to seek it directly—and his player knows this would command a –8 dice penalty. Instead, he opens his Sekhem to less direct currents of power, perhaps leading to someone who once saw or held the object. This reduces his dice penalty to –5 (–4 for the proxy's Held or Seen connection, –2 for two degrees of superiority, and +1 to the final total). Asar-Ab concentrates, and his player spends a Willpower point. He rolls five dice, one of which comes up 8+. Asar-Ab's vision glides hazily over the grounds of an estate in Maryland, past an authentic, weather-beaten Doric column, to the desk of a man named John Kalkin. His mind's eye speeds to a Baltimore tenement, and callused hands counting wrinkled 20-dollar bills. They belong to one Harlan West. The place and face slip into the Arisen's consciousness.*

Sybaris

The Arisen's unnatural nature bleeds into the world around her. Although no Arisen truly knows what the Shan'iatu had in mind when they created the Rite of Return, its necromancy carries a powerful sense of purpose wedded to invocations to the Judges of Duat. Prolonged contact with a mummy exposes others to this magical imprint. For all of their flaws, the Arisen were at least made for their purposes, and their souls have survived direct exposure to the dark climate and powers of Duat. Ordinary mortals lack the spiritual conditioning to avoid a state mummies call *Sybaris* ("the Sickness").

Under the influence of Sybaris, ordinary people feel the weight of mortality upon them. Everything they do feels pointless—time will erase it all. The mummy and *her* works feel longer-lived, but this provides cold comfort to sufferers. The Arisen's aura of immortality mocks them with its durability and a sinister intuition that her actions lack the vital sense of motivation that drives human lives. In fact, the Arisen defies the world's general entropy so strongly that she becomes a surreal, half-hallucinated figure of doom.

Mummies occasionally turn this to their advantage. They often find it easier to recruit the Sybaris-struck into their cults, for example. By joining, cultists attach their

The Name's the Thing

On a fundamental level, the Arisen are attuned to relics associated with their guild because those are the only ones they truly *know*. Their occult sympathy is deepest and most finely tuned with those vessels, and their connection to other kinds of vessels, while strong, isn't nearly as discrete.

It is, however, strong enough to reveal a relic's immediate presence, regardless of that relic's craft. Unless its kepher is magically concealed, a relic will reveal itself to a mummy if he stays in its vicinity long enough. This revelation is hastened if the relic corresponds to his guild's specialty; in most cases, a mummy knows such a relic simply by laying eyes on it.

In order to determine the *strength* of a relic, however, a mummy must actively handle it (unless his Guild Affinity says otherwise). Doing so exposes him to whatever curse the object carries, but most relics don't level their curses except in response to activation or other provocations, and if the relic is of his guild, he can expect a certain degree of immunity. A successful Intelligence + (Academics or Occult) roll provides a disjointed visual sense of a guild-aligned relic's rating (in dots), power, and curse. For all other relics, the roll simply provides the relic's rating. Even if failed, the roll confirms whether the relic is or is not of his guild's tradition, and the roll can be retried every time that relic's power or curse comes into play (or could do so; the Storyteller will know) thereafter.

brief lives to something eternal. In most cases, Sybaris's emotional effects stir beneath the surface, so the average sufferer doesn't know why he feels frightened, confused, and defeated. He usually ascribes it to ordinary stress, chemical imbalance, or mental illness.

Sybaris manifests in two strengths: Terror and Unease. The stronger a mummy's Sekhem, the worse the Sickness becomes. Other supernatural beings do not suffer the full effects of Sybaris, but they definitely feel a shadow of it—enough to make the mummy unpleasant company, but not enough to suborn free will or make the Arisen instantly identifiable as a supernatural being, herself.

Terror Sybaris

Terror Sybaris appears when a mummy's Sekhem flares. Shadows move of their own accord. Whispers promise death in half understood languages. An aura of mortal fear envelops the mummy. This combines with her supernatural resonance to produce a *Sybaris form*: a hallucinatory visage mortals see to varying degrees, mixed with their own anxieties. When the mummy's soul manifests itself as a golden cobra, one mortal sees a woman with golden scales and a mouth dripping with bloody foam, while another sees golden snakes striking at his heels and hundreds more twisting around the mummy's body. Whatever the specifics, the point is that it's terrifying to the mortal mind.

Terror Sybaris occurs when:

- The Arisen returns to the Descent.
- The Arisen undergoes resurrection.
- The Arisen *spends* a level of Sekhem (i.e., doesn't just lose it to the Descent).
- The Arisen's true, corpse-like form reveals itself to a witness for the first time.

When any of these situations take place, roll Resolve + Composure for each mortal in the mummy's line of sight and consult the following table:

Successes	Result
Dramatic Failure	The mortal flees in blind terror or enters a catatonic state for the scene. He acquires a derangement, and his memory of the event includes contradictions and confabulations.
Failure	The mortal flees as fast as he can without taking undue risk. Within an hour of leaving the Arisen's presence, he begins to rationalize away what he experienced and eventually accepts his invention as the truth of what occurred. If dice rolls are required, numbing fear imposes a –3 penalty to dice pools.
1	The mortal prostrates himself, begging the mummy for mercy. If she doesn't respond, he flees and eventually invents a mundane explanation for what happened as per the results of failing the roll.
2	The mortal launches a terrified assault using nearest weapon at hand (or his fists, if none are available) until he is unable to act, suffers a lethal or aggravated wound, or the mummy either departs or is incapacitated. He suffers a –3 penalty to attack rolls and other actions due to the effects of fear. He remembers the experience but fears of punishment if he tells anyone; it requires significant pressure to force him to tell his story.
3	The mortal chooses the best option between fighting, fleeing, and begging for mercy. He suffers a –3 penalty to standard dice pools in the mummy's presence. Once the scene ends, he is wracked by a fear of retribution if he speaks of what he as seen, as per the 2 success result.
4	The mortal acts and thinks more or less rationally, but suffers a –3 penalty to standard dice pools if he remains in the Arisen's presence.
5+	The mortal resists the effects of the Sybaris and may act as he pleases.

Unease Sybaris

In addition to terror, Sybaris affects mortals gradually as they absorb mystic emanations from the Arisen's Sekhem. If the mummy tempers her Sekhem's power with human Memory, her supernatural aura's effects are less severe, but they seldom vanish completely. Whatever the specifics, the point is the crawling spread of mortal anxiety.

Unease Sybaris manifests in the following circumstances:

- Direct contact with a mummy.
- Entering a mummy's tomb.
- Touching a vessel that was once used by a mummy.
- Face-to-face interaction with a mummy's Sadikh (see p.188).
- Spending over 24 consecutive hours within one mile of the mummy or his tomb per level of the Arisen's Sekhem.

Unease lasts for as long as the situation that caused it persists or for one week per level of Sekhem the mummy possessed when it was triggered.

To calculate the degree of unease, subtract the mummy's Sekhem from her Memory. In the case of indirect contact, apply the traits belonging to the Arisen with the strongest influence over the trigger. Note the result (including a negative result) and consult the entries below.

–8 or Less—Flood of Duat: The energies of death and time enthrall mortals so completely that the Underworld invades their dreams. Arisen memories of Duat and Irem (even those the mummy cannot completely recall) collide with local faiths and personal symbols. They see angels crushed underfoot by Shezmu and local priests worshipping the Judges. These visions send some victims sleepwalking, or they invade their waking hours. The Storyteller decides which mortals are especially vulnerable. Victims may act on their delusions, scrawling Iremite in alleys, killing "demons" they see inside their friends, performing bloody rites in their basements, and so on. Once they return to sanity, they remember nothing. Some of them even instinctively hide their somnolent activities.

Unease –7 to –5—Despair: Mortals shamble through lives drained of meaning by an obsession with mortality. They stop planning beyond immediate needs, abandoning long-term goals such as advancing professionally, completing their educations, or developing intimate relationships. This manifests as a –2 penalty to Resolve-based dice pools. Only symbols, institutions, and individuals that might withstand the press of ages have any meaning. Mortals find solace in religions that promise eternal life, in stable governments, and in traditional cultures. The Arisen and their vessels emanate this aura of eternity. Mummies and beings using vessels as religious or political symbols enjoy +2 dice on Social dice pools when they interact with mortals stricken by this degree of unease.

Unease –4 to –3—Cults Against Death: Old secret societies flourish; new cults evolve to ease victims' Sybaris-driven dread. They worship leaders who don't feel the same level of unease. Every cult promulgates a belief in life after death, and the idea that the doors of immortality will close for those who reveal its secrets. Code words and hidden gestures pepper everyday interactions. Victims unconsciously replicate the occult patterns left by the Arisen by incorporating Iremite symbols and theology into their societies. Mummies might recognize their ciphers and strange handshakes. As with Despair, the Arisen and individuals who use vessels as symbols of power benefit from a +2 bonus to Social dice pools.

Unease –2 to –1—Superstitious Materialism: Mortals believe the world is cursed; bad luck, personal failures, and death itself spring from supernatural causes. They invent rituals to ward them off based on everything from nursery rhymes ("step on a crack, break your mother's back") to serious occult study. The affected rarely stumble upon effective magical rituals but, over time, accumulate ever more elaborate taboos to repair their "cursed" lives. A materialistic focus dominates their superstitions. Meditation isn't enough; they need charms, fetishes, chants, and ritual chambers. The afflicted fritter away money on telephone psychics and lucky bracelets. Like ancient lords and pharaohs, the wealthy commission monuments with strange specifications, driven by whatever they believe to be holy or magical.

Unease –1 to 0—Fearful and Closed: The afflicted experience timidity and paranoia. They don't take unnecessary risks to help strangers and might tell visitors to leave town by sundown. The privileged conspire against members of an "out" group, and everybody else develops a fortress mentality, devoted to protecting those near and dear at the expense of everyone else. Communities infected with this type of unease stock up on weapons and emergency supplies, and experience an increase in "self-defense" killings.

Unease 1 to 2—Aversive: Despite disturbing emotions linked subconsciously to the mummy and her direct associates, the afflicted retain control of their rational faculties.

Unease 3 or Higher—None: Mortals suffer no unease.

Modify the degree of unease in steps up (worse) or down (better) based on the following cumulative circumstances. Use the total modifier from each applicable situation, below:

- Has experienced the Terror Sybaris (from any mummy): one step up.
- Unseen Sense Merit linked to ghosts, magic, or the undead: one step up.
- Has not come into direct contact with that mummy before: one step down.
- Has not come into contact with that mummy's cult, tomb, or vessels: one step down.

The Oracles of Fear

Sybaris brings fear and hopelessness to those who experience it, but it can also spark insight. Along with fear, the human mind might perceive supernatural patterns in the power of Duat, shifting through past, present, and future. The Underworld lies beyond past, present, and future—it rules time itself, destroying every moment to bring the next one forward. The Arisen cannot read omens from their own Sekhem—they were not designed by the Shan'iatu to do so—but might interrogate mortals who have ripped insights from their fearful visions. The victim sees telling patterns in hallucinations and dreams. Fate arrays itself to send messages in bird flights and wound patterns.

SYBARITIC OMENS

Dice Pool: Composure + Occult. Each previous attempt imposes a –2 penalty to future attempts, as a mortal can wring only so many insights from the Sickness.

Action: The dice roll represents roughly six hours of meditation, ritual, or lucid dreaming.

Roll Results:

Dramatic Failure: The mortal has nightmares about Duat, inspired by tortures the Arisen suffered during the Rite of Return. Check for a derangement as if the character failed a Morality check (**World of Darkness**, p. 94).

None: No useful insights.

Success: Out of dreams and omens, the seeker wins a cryptic hint about a significant situation that would otherwise be unknown to him: a future event, a secret from the past, or a hidden, current circumstance, such as the actions of a local cult. The Storyteller should express this as a riddle or allegory. Clever players or other dice rolls may decipher the hint.

Exceptional Success: The mortal interprets his Sybaris experience into a definite message about a heretofore unknown or misunderstood situation.

RESURRECTION

To rise again from the grave is religion's promise and superstition's threat. Holy tomes say those favored by Heaven return in flawless perfection, no matter the indignities of age and injury. Yet the darker tales told around campfires speak of rot that moves, of ghosts returned for vengeance, or of cold corpses stalking forth to replenish faded lives with warm red blood.

The ascension from Duat is hazy, cold, and numb. The Arisen's soul (or identity, if you want a less-charged term) starts from nil and reconstitutes itself, becoming sharper and more aware as it rises from its rest at the bottom of the Underworld, up toward activity in the sunlit human world. Carrying it up is the rigid frame of the Rite of Return. As the veil parts and the mummy moves, that sense of purpose remains, like crutches holding up not only the body, but the mind.

At first, it's a relief to have that impelling structure—the mission, the Judges' command, the enchanted obedience—holding the mummy together. Make no mistake: When fresh-awakened, there is no pain, no weariness, no discomfort… only purpose. Even vision and hearing seem unnaturally clear and perfect, modulated through ancient magic instead of tender tissue. Yet the Rite restores the body, burning Sekhem as it does and inevitably reducing the compulsion. By the time the mummy can be seen in public without revealing his corpse form and inducing Sybaris, the sensations are almost human.

The actual process of coming back from the dead doesn't take long. Once it's initiated by a successful Call (see p. 214), a turn of the Sothic Wheel, or by the violation of a tomb, it can take anywhere from a few minutes to a couple of hours, depending on how high the Arisen's Memory is. If it's initiated by an attempt to destroy the Arisen's remains, it occurs instantaneously (regardless of the near-impossibility of such an attempt actually being successful), but it only lasts as long as it takes for the mummy to exact his revenge.

Memory	Average Resurrection Time
0-3	Instant
4-7	3 to 30 minutes
8+	2 to 3 hours

This phenomenon is a curious one, and Arisen adapted to the modern world suggest it's like booting up a computer. If one's computer has nothing but a clean OS, it comes right online. If it's got a lot of programs to run in order to be itself, it takes longer. (Some mummies simply say that memories weigh one down, and that's why one's slower to rise.)

That's how resurrection works in the normal course of things, as much as "normal" ever applies to animate corpses that age in reverse and roam the world at the behest of Underworld god-kings.

CROSSING THE LINE OF DUTY

Once called back for a job, the Arisen can get slain and return until the duty is discharged. They are harder to get rid of than a clingy ex, and twice as dangerous.

When a mummy's wound track gets filled with truly grievous damage, and there's no more flesh to seal, the Arisen falls. His soul crashes through the floor of the world into the pulling, icy darkness of the afterlife… but he can't rest, yet. No matter how weary, he must keep going; must go back; must return.

The time it takes him to recover from being killed depends on three things: how his soul performed during its death cycle (see p. 171), how much Memory is weighing him down, and how much Sekhem is buoying him up. For the latter two, simply subtract one from the other, and the result is a measure of how long it takes him to spring back from being a body full of mortal wounds.



Sekhem – Memory	Time Until Restoration
10	As long as it takes for the killer to let down her guard, or 10 minutes (whichever is shorter).
9-6	Around 30 minutes
5-1	Hours equal to Memory
0	Days equal to Memory
Any negative number	11-20 days

Note: This form of resurrection does not restart the Descent. Rebuilding the body costs Sekhem, so if a mummy's incompetent enough to get himself killed, he comes back with his Sekhem rating decreased by one dot—and that's assuming his death cycle went well.

Moreover, the body's recovery is imperfect. Upon restoration, the body's lethal damage is healed completely, but half of all the aggravated damage remains (rounded up).

So far, on the plus side, Arisen can come back from being slaughtered like November turkeys. On the minus side, it may take a while, and they come back weaker and battered. Two of these factors can be mitigated, but it's not anything the mummy can do. It all depends on his cult or on friends rushing to pave a path back to the earthly realm for him.

First off, there's the issue of returning faster. To hasten the return, the body must be returned to the tomb and (if necessary) reconstructed. That is, any broken bones must be roughly realigned and the skin stitched (or stapled, etc.) back into some semblance of its original position. That done, the body is wrapped in linen (as per the ancient tradition) and put in a tomb's sarcophagus. When this is done, the mummy returns after half an hour, regardless of its Sekhem and Memory scores.

Coming back unbruised is another matter. The mummy has to be rewrapped and entombed (just as if bringing him back faster), but in addition, the tomb has to contain at least one vessel. If those circumstances are in place, someone can attempt to realign the body energies with the Sekhem as it returns, requiring an Intelligence + Occult roll. Every vessel present adds +1 to the roll (maximum 10). If there isn't an occult scholar available, one can roll a cult's combined Reach + Grasp, adding +1 if it's Ritualistic in addition to the +1 for each vessel in the tomb (maximum 10). Each success removes a point of damage.

Note that in no instance is the return accomplished without the Sekhem drop, nor can the restoration of remaining aggravated damage be hurried (except through other magic).

The Four Jars

The mummification process preserves the frame—bones, skin, and flesh—within the familiar linen wrap, but the stomach, lungs, liver, and intestines were each separately removed during mummification and carefully stored in individual canopic jars. Traditionally, the four jars were stored with the mummy in the tomb, but so much tomb pillage has happened that it's almost equally traditional for the jars to wind up in a museum or private collection, either together or parceled out. This is far less common for Arisen, who can arise to crush interlopers, but it still happens that Irem's defenders wind up with some of their internal organs scattered widely. Sometimes they even do it on purpose.

Mummies can be called in the presence of *any* part of their carcass, so some cunning Arisen use their canopic jars like off-site backup storage. If an Arisen's tomb in Nuweiba gets compromised and his body is imprisoned beyond hope of escape, a prepared mummy might kill himself so that he can resurrect at the site of one of his four internal organs. His sahu reforms, complete, around the mummified organ, though this process takes one additional unit of time (minute, hour, or day, depending on his Memory). Like his body, his mummified organs are immune to conventional destruction and can't be inhabited by spirits and the like.

Of course, spreading oneself out like that has drawbacks, as scattered remnants are more open to capture. If a mummy doesn't already know where a given organ is, he can track it as though by kepher or simply choose to resurrect around it after death (though he might be surprised at his surrounds, if he hasn't first tracked the organ's kepher). A mummy whose body *and* organs are destroyed utterly or inconveniently trapped has no other recourse but to try resurrecting within a stranger's remains (see "The Twice Arisen" below).

The default assumption is that an Arisen is in control of all four organs.

The Twice Arisen

At some point, a mummy may find himself in the unenviable position of having no material remains to which he can return. It takes more than a few bullets or a sideswipe from a Saab to put the Arisen down, but sometimes the bad guys know what they're doing and have managed to trap all his remains in environs that would be untenable in which to return; other times, such as when an Arisen gets the bad end of an encounter with a Shuankhsen, all of his remains are destroyed, truly and utterly. So what happens when one of the Arisen won't or can't return to his own remains? Is he stuck in Duat?

Not necessarily.

His cultists can try to summon him again, but at a cost: They have to find him a new body to claim. If the cult is fabulously loyal, someone might volunteer. Or, if it's sufficiently grasping, someone may volunteer to kidnap somebody expendable. If the cultists can't or won't kill someone for the cause, they can use any recently deceased body that still has all four internal organs, but in this case, the difficulty of the roll rises from 1 to 2.

However it happens, the cult conducts a ceremony (usually at the tomb) to flush out the body's unwanted soul. If it works properly, the Arisen's soul then takes up residency.

To accomplish this task, roll one die for each point of the cult's Reach + Grasp (or, if an occultist is performing the rite, roll her player's Intelligence + Occult). The Arisen's player can spend Willpower to aid the roll. If the cult has the Ritualistic trait, it gets a +1 equipment bonus. (Yes, all those dusty old headdresses and scepters are good for something.)

If the roll fails, the Arisen becomes one of the despised Shuankhsen—so very sorry (as are, one presumes, the grieving families of everyone who was present for the ritual)—and his player is done playing that character, though he can presumably draw up a new one.

If the roll succeeds, however, the Arisen returns! Not only that, he comes back in a new body, so the player gets to generate a new mortal (**World of Darkness**, pp. 34-35). When picking Attributes, Skills, and Merits, the player can carry over some from his old character or base them on what the new guy was like. If the player invested a lot of experience into Skills and learned Merits, he may not get them all back: Having one's component molecules erased can have a deleterious effect on one's habits and memory.

Getting transplanted into a new body has some terrible side effects. For one thing, the Arisen's old Memory gets sheared in half (rounded up), as the Iremite experiences get blended with the modern life of a 21st-century mortal. Second, the Arisen permanently loses two dots of Pillars. Also, if the Storyteller permits Apotheosis, and if there's a roll to achieve it, the Arisen's player suffers a –3 penalty on that roll, tacked on after everything else has been calculated. Whatever Apotheosis is, it would seem that scraping someone else's soul out of his body so that one can wear it like a thrift-store sweater interferes with it.

If there's any upside to this process (other than "it beats being dead forever, or one of the Shuankhsen!") it's this:

The Arisen will have some modern instincts. Human rights, *Simpsons* references, and transatlantic flight could all seem as natural to him now as tyranny, slavery, and sorcery are to other Iremite mummies.

THE DESCENT

When discussing his Dark Tower books, Stephen King said, "All fantasy fiction is about power. In good fantasy, it's won and lost. In bad fantasy, it's merely used." And in some ways, **Mummy: The Curse** is part dark fantasy.

But mostly, it's an occult horror game, and horror is always about powerlessness.

The core of **Mummy** is the Descent—a state of being the Arisen call "Semektet"—and it is the measure of the Arisen's changing power. When first summoned, mummies are at their mightiest; inhuman, brimming with occult life force, hideous and unstoppable. But the world fights back. The effort of forcing the Judges' will onto a world and age that says they vanished millennia ago takes that searing torch of Sekhem and damps it down to a guttering flame. To be Arisen is to constantly feel the sand draining from the soul's hourglass, time dripping away like blood leaking from a slow belly wound. Delay is the enemy, and it is constantly growing stronger.

Yet at the same time, even as her sheer might drops, the mummy's freedom increases. It's indirect, but there's a tension between Sekhem (necessary for existing as an immortal avenger) and Memory (the personal, human goals that even the sorcerers of Irem could not erase from their servants' souls). As Sekhem drops, the body operates as flesh and blood again, and with a human appearance come the complications of dealing with people *as* a person. These complications are often welcome, even when they interfere with the will of the gods.

The longer the mummy is awake, then, the more latitude she has in her actions. This is fortunate, because if her resurrection is due to more than an incautious urchin sneaking into her tomb, she's going to need to adapt and improvise to navigate a strange and dangerous realm. Yet the central conflict of mummy existence is that the more she can do, the less time she has.

SEKHEM DROPS

As described earlier, the Arisen's Sekhem level drops constantly. When it's high, she's mighty. When it's low, she's somewhat less so. When it's out, she's back in storage. Sometimes, an action immediately drops a mummy's Sekhem by a level, but this is rare. Returning to the world after dying from a surfeit of aggravated damage reduces Sekhem by a dot. Certain other external forces can force these rapid decreases, as well.

Perhaps the most common form of Sekhem drop is self inflicted. When an Arisen fulfills his first purpose, he loses one dot of Sekhem immediately and automatically fails all subsequent scheduled Descent Rolls until he dies, during which time the only way he can reliably slow his accelerated Descent is by draining relics.

Mummies can, if they wish, pillage their own Sekhem. Dropping one dot/level of Sekhem restores an Arisen's Willpower points to their maximum. It means converting the inhuman, impersonal might of the Rite's energy into selfish, personal motivation. It's more common in Arisen with high

How Does it Feel?

Sekhem levels are a game contrivance, so the Arisen themselves don't speak of "levels" any more than normal people speak of "having dots in the Iron Stomach Merit." Yet mummies can feel the Sekhem flowing through them. At levels 9 and 10, they can't feel much else: Before the restoration of the sahu's nerve tissue, everything they sense is mediated through their wrappings of occult energy. They know when it's strong, they know when it's weak, and they know when it changes.

Different mummies feel the force differently, depending on who they were and who their Judge is. A common description likens it to a smooth, warm encasement that seeps down into their flesh and even extends outward during Utterances and the use of Pillars. As it fades, they feel colder, stiffer, and clumsier. With high Sekhem, colors seem sharper and sounds are crisply separate. As it drops, the world looks more gray, and conversations are still clear but less… musical. The sense of touch is an abstract thing at high Sekhem, but a sensual treat at levels 6 to 8, slowly numbing to a mundane and unexciting impression at Sekhem 3 to 5. At Sekhem 1 or 2, mummies aren't numb, they just don't take much pleasure from touching most things.

A Sekhem drop is a shock, like having a hunk of hair suddenly ripped out. A Descent Roll is like having it pulled out slowly, one hair at a time. If the roll fails, that chill, plucking loss recedes. If the roll succeeds, the loss crescendos in an icy convulsion, leaving the mummy just a bit more dead.

A reset, on the other hand, is usually accompanied by a brief, warm relaxation. It's not as intense as a drop or even a Descent Roll, but it *is* physically perceptible. Thus, every mummy knows when she is on the right path… or the wrong one.

Memory, but anyone with a Sekhem rating can do it.

As with so many Descent decisions, this one involves a bit of a Catch-22. If one has many Sekhem levels, burning one for Willpower probably won't be necessary. When the Arisen is worn down and needs any advantage she can beg, borrow, or steal, that's when a sudden burst of Willpower can be the difference between success and humiliating failure—but that's also when Sekhem is a lot more scarce and valuable.

Horror is helplessness, after all.

Descent Rolls

More common than the hard and fast drop is the uncertainty of the Descent Roll. This is the one roll a mummy's player *wants* to fail.

When the time comes (as determined by one's Sekhem level, shown on the chart below), the player rolls a pool of dice equal to the Arisen's current Sekhem rating. If she succeeds, the Arisen *loses* a dot of Sekhem. So, for example, if one is at Sekhem 10, one rolls 10 dice for the Descent Roll. If even one die comes up 8+, the Arisen descends to Sekhem 9. With 10 dice, the odds of successfully failing aren't great, but when one's clinging on at the lower levels of Sekhem 1 or 2, one can often delay the inevitable for quite a while.

Descent Rolls are a big deal, so they're resolved at the end of the scene. (Arisen don't suddenly drop in mid-fight.) If a mummy does something that warrants the roll, though, some Storytellers stop everything and have the player make it right then, to emphasize the centrality of the deed and the immediacy of the response. Others prefer to have the roll made at scene's end, to keep the narrative flowing. Neither's right nor wrong; they both work fine. Individual Storytellers should do whichever feels appropriate at the time. Either way, the *results* of the roll will resolve at scene's end.

Players can't spend Willpower on a Descent Roll or give it an equipment bonus. Some relics might improve the odds a little (ironically, by penalizing the pool), but they're rare and coveted, if the Storyteller decides they exist at all.

The Descent Agenda

So far, it's pretty clear, one hopes. The mummy starts at Sekhem 10. If she does certain terrible things (or has other terrible things done to her), she might lose a dot/level immediately; but by and large, players are going to make Descent Rolls to see if their Arisen are going away or sticking around. So, when do players make Descent Rolls?

It depends on the Arisen's current Sekhem level, how long she's lingered there, and whether or not she's acting within the parameters of her inhuman mission. That can be a lot of factors to manage, so let's take them one by one.

First, then, is Sekhem level. High Sekhem is hard to maintain and burns out fast. Everything else being equal, a mummy with Sekhem 8 is going to risk Descent far more often than one at Sekhem 4, simply because the high-Sekhem mummy has more to lose.

The Descent agenda is based on two scales. One's very concrete: Days and hours and weeks. One's very loose, subject to heavy Storyteller interpretation and oriented toward scenes, stories, and chronicles (**World of Darkness**, pp. 120-121). The Storyteller has the freedom to switch back and forth freely between those scales; not in order to capriciously torment players, but in order to maintain the sense of urgency. The unexpected Descent Rolls (see below) are the ones that arise from *player choices*, like the decision to tell a Judge to go get stuffed, or the decision to raise one's Memory rating.

The base schedule for Descent Rolls is as follows:

Sekhem	When You Make a Descent Roll	Failing the Roll Adds
10	After a scene (12 hours)	One scene (12 hours)
9	After two scenes (One day)	One scene (12 hours)
8	After three scenes (Two days)	Two scenes (One day)
7	After a chapter (Five days)	Two scenes (One day)
6	After a chapter (10 days)	Three scenes (Two days)
5	After two chapters (20 days)	Three scenes (Three days)
4	After three chapters (40 days)	One chapter (Five days)
3	After a story (60 days)	One chapter (10 days)
2	After two stories (100 days)	Two chapters (20 days)
1	After a chronicle (160 days)	One story (40 days)

Once one drops to Sekhem 5, an Arisen's got 20 days (or roughly two game sessions) to enjoy access to Level Five Utterance effects before they're imperiled by a Descent Roll. But when that time's up, the player has to roll her five dice. If she gets a success, her Arisen drops to Sekhem 4. If she *fails* the roll, her mummy remains at Sekhem 5 for three more scenes (or possibly three days). Then she has to roll the bones again.

That's the base schedule, then. A mummy who remains at Sekhem 5 for most of the story (which is unlikely, but unlikelier things have happened than someone failing multiple rolls with a pool of five dice) is no weaker than a mummy who's only been at Sekhem 5 for a chapter and a half. Both face another Descent Roll when the current chapter ends, and it's the same dice pool for both.

Ways exist, however, to alter the schedule. The Rite of Return is a complex framework, custom-tailored to an agenda. Arisen who get and stay with the program hemorrhage less Sekhem than those who resist and strain against their purpose. Acting with slavish devotion may allow a mummy's Sekhem to stabilize, resetting that relentless countdown. Resisting the magic's imperatives can force an immediate Descent Roll. Successfully failing a *provoked* Descent Roll means the roll had no impact on your Descent or Sekhem rating.

A few things simply run counter to the power and purpose of the Rite of Return. If your character does one of the following, you face a Descent Roll right away:

- Blasphemes the gods of Irem, or lets someone else do so in her presence uncorrected.*
- Creates a lasting account of her deeds that gives glory to herself alone.
- Destroys a relic in order to cannibalize its Sekhem.
- Dramatically fails any non-kepher action that uses the mummy's Sekhem rating as a dice pool.*
- Increases Memory rating by a dot.
- Interacts with the Shuankhsen with anything but obvious enmity.*
- Mocks or decries her Judge by name.
- Profanes the tomb of a fellow Arisen who serves her Judge.
- Sends into death a fellow mummy who is immune to her Iremite magic.
- Verbally professes her highest love to a mortal, using the language of Irem and her own name.

* A player can spend a Willpower point to *subtract* three dice from the pool for this Descent Roll.

That's it! Other than avoiding certain occult atrocities and paying lip service to the culture that owns her obedience anyway, the only thing that puts an Arisen at risk is being a person. One can be a pretty evil sonofabitch without imperiling one's status in Duat. Murder, rape, arson? Go nuts with that; just don't try to take credit for anything positive.

On the other end of the scale, advancing the Judges' agenda just might slow the Sekhem loss. If an Arisen takes a concrete, undeniable step that helps their program, her countdown can reset. It won't take her back to Sekhem 10, though—if the Rite could do that, Arisen would have conquered the world long ago. For example, assume an Arisen's at Sekhem 3 and has lingered there for 30 days out of the 60 she is allotted (or two stories, but in this case, it's easier to see how it works if we just use days). In the course of her duties, she comes across a greater Amkhat and (being a reasonable entity) mangles it. As a reward, her countdown at Sekhem 3 resets. Instead of facing a roll in 30 days, it's delayed back out to 60. If a mummy can just find enough greater Amkhata to slay, she just might stay alive indefinitely. (The dirty trick there, of course, is that a reset buys a lot more time at the lower levels, which is when an Arisen's at her weakest and therefore least able to earn a reset.)

Falling Up

As forgiving as the Descent Roll can be to those who succeed in failing it, it nonetheless represents a discrete amount of total Sekhem, and can thus only be so forgiving for so long. When you fail your first Descent Roll at a given Sekhem rating, it's as though the gods and the Judges just nod and send you on your merry way. You've earned your continuance. When you attempt your next scheduled Descent Roll (at the end of your bonus time), you'll find the target number goes down by –1 (from 8 to 7), thus making it more likely the roll succeeds. If you succeed in failing the roll again, your next scheduled Descent Roll will be made against 6s, and so on, until you finally succeed and fall forward into your new, lower Sekhem rating, at which point all penalties disappear and the target number returns to 8. There's only so much gas in the tank, no matter how well kept the vehicle.

Note that these cumulative penalties do not apply to Descent Rolls caused by the player or Storyteller, only those scheduled as per the Descent table. Likewise, resets have no impact on these penalties one way or the other.

Note that individual Judges also have personal agendas. The Arisen who serve them might find renewal through certain other, narrower imperatives. For example, if an Arisen follows Artem-Khet, she might get a reset for unveiling the machinations of a fraudulent cult leader. Or Ser-Kheru might reset a follower's countdown for helping mediate some group's internal tensions.

Beyond the immediate concerns of specific Judges, the following actions are those for which the Arisen could potentially receive a reset (at Storyteller discretion):

- Creates a monument to the glory of Irem (not herself) that has the potential to last 1,000 years.
- Destroys a greater Amkhat, or one of the Shuankhsen. (Note that only the mummy who deals the death blow, or contributes the most to a mortal's doing same, wins the reset.)
- Exacts a horrifying revenge on someone who has violated her tomb. (Not applicable during temporary arisings that begin with such a violation.)
- Kills an enemy in front of scores of witnesses and dedicates the deed to her Judge by name. (For example, "So die all who transgress the laws of Shet-Kheru!")
- Saves the unlife of a fellow mummy who serves the same Judge.

The Turn of the Wheel

Periodically, mummies arise en masse. Presumably, the authorities in Duat know why this happens, but whether it's a necessary side effect to the Rite of Return or a deliberate element whose function didn't work as expected, none among the Arisen can say confidently. Maybe it's doing exactly what it's supposed to do, and the Arisen just don't have the perspective to see it.

Whatever it is, it's called a Sothic Turn, and it happens every 1,461 years (give or take a decade or three) after the mummy's mortal life concluded. When the time comes around, mummies arise unsummoned and leave their tombs without the strict objectives usually required.

Sothic resurrection does not alter the circumstances that provoke Descent Rolls, nor does it alter the tasks that merit resets of the Descent. The only change to the structure (other than the obviously huge factor that *there's no first purpose*) is that, when a mummy hits Sekhem 1, she's off the clock. She can stay at that low and uncomfortable level indefinitely, so long as she doesn't provoke herself into a bad Descent Roll or get herself killed.

The list of commendable behaviors is a little bit shorter than those for which one will be punished, but the Judges tend to prefer driving with the lash to leading with a promise. There's not a lot there that precludes living a selfish life, or even a wicked one. Indeed, only one of the meritorious deeds (save a mummy who's pledged to the same Judge) has anything resembling the modern idea of "compassion" and it's circumscribed by political convenience. That's the Judges for you. As immortal godlings, they don't have to bother appealing to "values voters."

Draining Relics

Even the undying Judges of Duat cannot raise a mummy's Sekhem level once it drops; but there is something that can.

Relics are crucial to the Judges. They invest a substantial percentage of their power into them—more than into the Arisen, all told. Relics are the pieces they manipulate, trying to win their inscrutable games. Their board is the world, and their territories are the human cultures that pay homage, knowingly or not, to the history of conquest and hierarchy pioneered in Irem.

In most games, there are times when one sacrifices a lesser piece to protect the greater. Sometimes, then, a mummy decides her continuance is more important than that of a particular mystic object, however important it may be to her Judge. If a mummy chooses, she can strip the power out of a relic to replenish her Sekhem. This is a profound violation of the mummy's intended purpose, but that doesn't stop desperate Arisen from doing it.

Mechanically, here's how it works. If a mummy has a relic in her hands and is willing, she can rob it of its vital essence. She can pull out one dot of its life force as an instant action. Once it's completely drained, it crumbles to dust, and she gains one dot/level of Sekhem for each dot she pulled out of it. If the relic gets taken away before she's finished, she might get a reset for her efforts, but the relic loses much if not all of its function. After violating the sacred in this fashion, the mummy's player must immediately make one Descent Roll for each dot/level gained. (This counts as one roll for the purposes of kepher.)

It may seem like a terrible deal to regain a Sekhem level only to risk it within moments, but even if the player succeeds at the Descent Roll, her character is better off than when she started cannibalizing. Think of it like this: If the Arisen wrecks that relic and her player succeeds at the Descent Roll(s)—and remember, failing a Descent Roll is the good outcome—the mummy is at the same Sekhem level as before, but she's just dropped into it. If her player gets the best side of the Descent Roll(s), the character's at the beginning of a higher Sekhem stage.

***Example**: Hem-Tep was at Sekhem 3 and failed forward into another chapter. It's drawing to an end on a cliffhanger.*



A suspiciously well-informed Russian billionaire has been chasing him, his friends, and a one-dot relic called the Ruby Ibis of Neheb-Nefert. Hem-Tep kind of resents Neheb-Nefert anyway, and would rather destroy the Ibis than let the Russian take it from him. So, when he's cornered at the session's end, he cannibalizes the Ibis to steal its Sekhem. He immediately rises to Sekhem 4, and his player rolls four dice. If he gets no successes, the mummy's at Sekhem 4 for the rest of the story. Even if the roll gets a success and Hem-Tep drops back to Sekhem 3, he stays there for the rest of the next story.

Sekhem changes take effect only at the start or end of a scene.

It's tempting to drink the life force out of an object that is (as far as the Arisen is concerned) just going to vanish into the Underworld anyhow, but once a relic is gone, it's not coming back, and the Judges possess *long* memories for transgressions such as that.

CULTS

A mummy is a relic of a bygone epoch. At his most basic, he staggers out into a world he never made and doesn't understand. In some cases, he doesn't know how to speak the language, navigate a city, recognize a weapon, or comprehend a culture that isn't based, say, on slavery. He's strong, but he's a lone bag of bones contending against a planet of over seven billion—and that's just the ordinary people.

Enter his cult.

The cult can awaken him periodically; teach him new dialects, demonstrate the use of the harquebus, explain democracy, give him a smartphone, and so on. It's members can work on the scale of years and decades to aid a creature that operates across centuries. At the most basic, they're translators, chauffeurs, and secretaries. But they can be far more than that.

Unpacking the Cult Merit

At character generation, you can spend up to 10 dots on the Cult Merit. The dots you spend are used to purchase Reach and Grasp for your followers, or to tack on fringe benefits. Each benefit costs one dot. Each point of Reach or Grasp costs two dots. You can improve Reach and Grasp during the course of play with experience.

The Core of a Cult

"Cult" isn't a terribly flattering word, calling to mind hordes of gaumless followers doing the bidding of rapacious, self-interested masters. Sadly, it's uncommon for these organizations to be entirely free from both stereotypes—agents who can't quite get the ball over the goal line, or masters whose morality was forged in a crucible of cruelty and conquest thousands of years out of date.

Yet "cult" very aptly conveys the sense that there's one top dog and, symbolically mounted, the pyramid of bitches below him. It is a complicated implement of the mummy's will (while the Arisen himself is a complicated implement of his Judge's will). The undying supernatural monster at the center is the heart, and everything else is an appendage, but those appendages are, themselves, complex and fascinating.

As with any group of people pulling together in common cause, there are essential questions. Why do people join? What does the cabal accomplish? Why do its members remain? How does it seek its goals? What are the cultists willing to give, and what do they expect in return?

The answers vary, critically, depending on the nature of the organization. But while cults are incredibly versatile (and vary greatly in composition and behavior), they engage in two very broad categories of activity.

Cults can make things happen. They can take open, legal actions the way any government, corporation, Super-PAC, or Boy Scout troop can. When cults pursue goals that are largely aboveboard and socially accepted (which is not to say "right" or "good"), that's handled by a quality called **Reach**.

The other thing these cliques are good for is keeping things from happening. Usually bad things (for the mummy); most often consequences of the sorts of pursuits beyond lawful Reach. Illegal, illicit, and ill-considered deeds are covered by a cult's other axis, **Grasp**. Where Reach is how one seizes events and tames them to one's will, Grasp is how one holds things down and keeps them from getting out of hand.

Both Reach and Grasp are described in detail, but for now, all one needs to understand that one type of activity is broad, obvious, and acceptable, while the other is hidden, reactive, and risky.

(A player can also use the Cult Merit to substitute for some other Merits, or just hit it up for cannon fodder, but mostly it comes down to Reach and Grasp.)

Foundation

The Reach and Grasp ratings of a cult determine what it does for its linen-shrouded secret master. Its foundation describes how it's organized, how it sees itself, and why it operates. There are three basic templates for cults, and (of course) they influence not only Reach and Grasp, but how that type of cult responds when things go wrong.

Tribal

"It's not going to be like the other ceremonies," Brett said, slipping a sweaty palm into Janice's hand. She frowned—she was beyond being annoyed, she was just tired. Tired of Brett's wild talk, of the repetitive rituals, the nonsense, the silly nylon robes…

"My children… I am renewed." Her gaze snapped from Brett's weak, eager face to the sarcophagus around which she'd dutifully chanted and processed for months. It was open, and something was coming out, bones and rags moving like a living thing. But it was the voice that held her motionless, skin tingling, eyes wide. All her life, Jan had been looking for something more real than her eyes could see, evidence of life beyond life.

Now that proof was standing up and speaking to her.

By far the oldest cult model is tribal. The mummy sets forth a pattern for behavior, explains how his strictures provide for a better life, and doles out rewards and punishments. (Or, for the vast majority of the time, sets forth principles for honor and shame to be enacted while he sleeps away the years in the repose of henet.)

Tribal cults are often religious, but they don't have to be. What they are, inevitably, is authoritarian. People join because they want someone who knows what's going on to be in charge, because they want to be part of something greater and better, and because they crave like-minded company. A mummy with Sekhem can certainly present himself as a gatekeeper to higher and secret knowledge.

Tribal cults are the most obedient, and they can offer a nice balance of Reach and Grasp, but they are needy. Tribal cultists are in it for identity, for answers about right and wrong, and if they don't like the answers, it's not easy to walk away and say, "Hey, no big deal."

If your character's cult has a Tribal foundation, it gets a free dot in both Reach and Grasp, but it tends to be more draining and demanding. After all, little is more intimate than faith.

Conspiracy

Ian's oxblood-colored briefcase contained $2,000 in unmarked 20s along with a forged Saudi passport and a flash drive giving the details of a cover story for "Basel Jamous." He took a seat on the crowded El next to a man whose oxblood-colored briefcase contained an encrypted report on the illegal antiquities trade in Bandar-e Abbas, a New York Times *with code words fitted into the unfinished crossword puzzle, and a human ear completely encased in a cube of Lucite.*

When Ian got off the El with the other briefcase, he cleaned a pay phone with a Clorox wipe and made a call. "The Jack of Spades is trump," he said, listened for a moment, then smiled.

"Yes, he thinks he's working for the CIA." He bleached the receiver and keypad again before walking away.

The conspiracy's keyword is "deniability." Passwords, false names, dead drops, and deception are the nuts and bolts, so if one element gets compromised, the leaders can cleanly sever it without putting other parts at risk. Conspiracies are built to hide when they can and defend themselves when they must. This necessarily makes them a bit cumbersome and slow, but it's the preferred course for those whose goals or methods are illegal—or simply despised.

Unlike a tribe, people don't join a conspiracy for *meaning* (except for perverts with a power fetish). They want an advantage, preferably unfair, and so long as the conspiracy helps them with their selfish goals, they're content to pay it back in cash, chores, or protective camouflage. Lower-level dupes in a conspiracy can't be certain whether they're working for an Egyptian immortal, a drug cartel, al-Qaeda, or the Wandering Jew. They may think they know, but some don't and others just don't care.

Conspiracies are hard to manage over vast distances or with large membership rolls, so they get no bonus Reach, but they do start with +2 Grasp. Be warned, though: While their passive protection is strong, when they break, they can shatter completely.

Enterprise

"Hey, Glenda, what brings you up to Transport?"

"You guys have the best coffee! Down in Financials, it's just nasty."

"Did Charles get his expense account issue dealt with?"

"Yeah, the ninny misplaced a whole decimal point. I mean, I know that guy from Indonesia had expensive tastes, but $4,000 for sushi is beyond the pale, am I right?"

"You should see the red carpet they're rolling out for the next big investor. She's coming from Denmark, and it's all five-star this with a limo and lunch with the mayor."

"Yeah, I saw some of those requisitions. What kind of a name is 'Tefa Hetetsat Ra,' anyhow?"

"I don't know, but I hear she's about five years older than dirt."

The other end of the spectrum from the criminal conspiracy is the legal enterprise. It's open to newcomers, it pays taxes, it has accountants on staff, and it uses letterhead with a logo. It may be an actual profit-generating corporation (though probably not publicly traded), or an NGO, or even just a social group with a charter and some tax documents. It's set up within the rules of modern government and is playing nicely.

The Shadow of the Tomb

All cults get a +1 bonus to both Reach and Grasp when operating close to their master's tomb. If you want a hard and fast rule, call it about 10 miles, or within a 20-minute drive (if traffic isn't bad).

People join enterprises for a paycheck or because they believe in its cause—not in the intimate sense of tribal identity, but in a way that's simultaneously more abstracted and more concrete. You join a church to save your soul. You support Doctors Without Borders to save the lives of others. So long as the enterprise is giving followers what they want, they support it.

At higher levels, enterprises often come to resemble conspiracies a bit more, when people learn that they're not just "preserving Egyptian artifacts," but pursuing the goals of undead creatures from the depths of ages. But several mummy cults have done quite well creating a believable synchrony between their master's goals ("recover the Sacred Flail of the Scorpion Avenger!") and a more… tepid mission ("protect culture from profiteers").

This foundation operates more easily in a global environment (getting +2 Reach), but it tends to be more squeamish about breaking laws (or bones) than either criminal conspiracies or sectarian fanatics. It receives no bonus to Grasp. Moreover, it doesn't tend to attract the kind of rough and desperate customers drawn to other organizations. When things are going well, the enterprise functions splendidly. When faced with the unexpected and the ugly, the enterprise may seize up or founder.

Reach

Reach is a rough measure of how widespread and efficient a mummy's followers are. It's used to do legal things that ease a mummy's passage through the world. A point of Reach costs two Merit dots, though remember that proximity to the mummy's tomb improves Reach. With a certain minimum Reach, tasks may be accomplished without a roll.

Reach	Unrolled Tasks
2	Minor research (such as finding things available openly from the Internet or a library); the services of a chauffeur, translator, secretary, or guide.

3	Plane ticket upgraded to first class; comped hotel room; access to cultural events.
4	Expedited travel (meaning a private boat or plane that gets scant customs attention); use of a luxury apartment for a couple weeks; police protection; access to influential people such as mayors, state governors, millionaires, and national news hosts.
5	Face-time with tyrants and phone numbers for billionaires.

If you want your character to get a listed benefit rated above his cult's Reach, roll a number of dice equal to its Reach. Just be aware of overreaching (see "When Cults Roll," below).

Grasp

How ruthless and deceptive are a mummy's followers? Answering "very" indicates a powerful Grasp. It's not good for getting access or perks or the rewards of civilized society. In fact, Grasp often isn't "good." But sometimes, what an Arisen really needs is unavailable within the rules. So he takes a firm hold of the rules, and he breaks them.

Getting tasks done is identical to Reach: Get it for free if the cult's Grasp is high enough. If not, roll dice equal to Grasp, and consult "When Cults Roll."

Grasp	Unrolled Task
2	Get out of parking tickets; get a warning for speeding; have misdemeanors dismissed without going to court.
3	Hide the body of a dead drifter; cover up moderate carnage (say, an apartment with all the furniture smashed but not a lot of blood); acquire a so-so fake ID.
4	Get *good* false papers; cover up the death of an average citizen or a lowlife with supernatural traits; arrange for assault or armed robbery charges to get dropped or dismissed.
5	Frame somebody for a dead Senator, millionaire, or moderately connected supernatural being; quash the investigation of major newsworthy events such as a museum burning down.

"Are we an... evil cult?"

As a general rule, if a mummy asks his cultists to do something that would force a Morality check of 6+, it's fine; they chalk it up to a higher cause. For tasks that would require a 3-5 check, they resist… somewhat. If the Arisen gives them a good explanation (or falls back on cozening or bullying), they'll do it. Ask for something requiring a check at Morality 2 or lower and he's going to have to recruit some very special cultists.

Blocked!

Cults come into conflict all the time. Commanding one's cult to block the actions of another cult isn't complicated, if one knows what it's doing in the first place. When the rival cult is using Grasp, one opposes them with Reach, as pet politicians, or moneyed power brokers, or media voice-pipes throw a spotlight on the rival cult's creepy, shadowy deeds. If the rival group is using Reach, one opposes it with Grasp, by having shady figures make blackmail threats, or by bribing a witness to recant, or by hiring black-hat hackers to bring its mainframe down.

The cult's Reach or Grasp becomes a penalty to the dice pool of the rival cult. If it hits 0 or 1, the rival's at risk of a disastrous failure for even trying, which is always fun.

When Cults Roll

Cult efforts generally take time, either to set up or to clean up afterward. Any time a player uses Reach or Grasp, his mummy's cult becomes unavailable for a number of days equal to the number of dice rolled. If the cult blocks the actions of another faction, it's the same: one day for every die knocked out of the opposition's pool.

When rolling a cult's Reach or Grasp, it's going to land on the continuum from exceptional success down to dramatic failure. It's pretty simple, except for that last one, which depends on the cult's foundation.

Exceptional Success: Not only did the mummy achieve whatever goal he was pursuing, his cult temporarily gains a benefit relevant to the task, decided by the Storyteller. The benefit fades after one significant use, or about a month (at the Storyteller's discretion).

Success: "Done, boss!"

Failure: "Sorry… it didn't work."

Dramatic Failure

If a cult garners a dramatic failure, it has wounded itself. The damage inflicted depends on its foundation and on what it was trying to achieve. Often this is a loss of Reach

or Grasp. These losses are immediate and permanent, though they can be restored by buying the Merit back up.

Tribe fails at Reach: Leadership upheaval and widespread crisis of faith among the members. Not only does the leader with whom the mummy's used to dealing vanish (Murdered? Suicide? Arrested? "Confined for her own protection?"), but the Deathless can't use the cult for anything substantive for a month, possibly even two.

Tribe fails at Grasp: A few cultists (relative to the Tribe's overall size) commit suicide in shame or otherwise die in associated events, and the cult loses a point of Reach.

Conspiracy fails at Reach: Two to six conspirators get arrested and others are forced to go to ground. Lose a point of Reach.

Conspiracy fails at Grasp: The lower levels are losing their confidence and are either learning too much or getting cut off. The Arisen master has to either immediately engage in one or two ethically dubious acts to regain control (call them Morality 3-5 deeds) or lose a point of Grasp this month, a point of Reach next month, and spawn a dangerously misinformed anti-cult dedicated to fighting its parent.

Enterprise fails at Reach: There's a challenge to the legal structure—a lawsuit, stock run, hostile takeover, management shuffle, or the like. The cult loses a point of Reach.

Enterprise fails at Grasp: There's an ongoing and mildly publicized investigation. The cabal loses a point of Grasp.

Merit Substitution

In addition to its general functions, a player can substitute his character's Cult Merit for Allies, Contacts, or Resources. The level of substitution is equal to the organization's Reach or Grasp (whichever is higher) minus one. If a cult have Reach 1 and Grasp 4, for example, the mummy can functionally manifest Resources, Allies, or Contacts at 3.

Doing so costs one, however. The Arisen has to do something to make the substitution happen, and the nature of that quid pro quo depends on what he's after:

To get Allies, the Deathless has to perform something morally dubious, some action that would give a mortal a Morality check at a rating of 4 or 5. The exception is if the mummy's cult is a tribe, which can give him Allies without cost.

To get Contacts, the Arisen needs to attend some awkward social engagement (and roleplay through the whole thing). The exception is for mummies ruling conspiracies, who get access to Contacts without the hassle.

To get Resources, the mummy has to perform some visible magical miracle for his organization—unless he's running an enterprise, which can substitute in Resources with no sacrifice.

It's up to the Storyteller to decide exactly what that amoral task, uncomfortable soirée, or mystic deed is, but the mummy has to go through with it before his player can make the substitution.

Battle Fodder

There remains a final common (if not wise) use for a cult: Its master can call on its followers to pick up weapons and fight by his side. The trappings of this vary by foundation. Enterprises hire bodyguards or security personnel. Conspiracies just pick up their smuggled shotguns. And tribes? Well, the mummy just shouts, "Slay them, my minions!" and then they chant "BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD!" in flawless Iremite Egyptian. All of a piece.

Cultist Combatants

Initiative: 4
Defense: 2
Attack: 8(L) from a large handgun, or 9(L) with the 9 again rule from a shotgun
Health: 7

They're not elite, but they're keen. Their numbers depend on how long the mummy takes to muster his forces.

When calling them up to fight on *short* notice, roll dice equal to the Arisen's Reach + Grasp. For each success, an armed follower shows up at the master's side within the half hour.

With 24 hours, the Deathless gets a number of minions equal to the higher of Reach or Grasp.

If they have 48 hours to get strapped, the mummy gets one armed bully for each point of Reach *and* Grasp.

There's a drawback to this, though. Any time the mummy calls the cult to war and more than one minion dies in a one-week period, the whole organization loses a point of Reach or Grasp (whichever is higher). Merely getting wounded is glorious and can cement their reputation (and loyalty), but death? That tends to shake people who aren't Deathless.

Benefits

Cults may be customized with any of the following benefits. Each one costs a Merit dot, and each one can only be bought once. Benefits may only be added during character generation.

Blasé: The cult's acclimatized itself to seeing high Sekhem mummies shambling around, obviously dead and equally obviously animate. The burden's on the player to explain why, but the cultists never succumb to Sybaris—not even newer and younger members.

Compartmentalized (Enterprise-only)**:** The doers of dirty deeds are organizationally isolated from the ordinary people, so they can be broken off and disposed of with minimum fuss. A compartmentalized conspiracy can't have Reach greater than 3, but neither does it hemorrhage Reach or Grasp when its members are slain in combat.

Glamorous: Something about the group draws the ostentatiously sexy. The mummy gets the Barfly Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 114) so long as he has an entourage of frolicsome cultists.

Inbred (Tribal-only)**:** The tribe is one big, suspicious, and insular family. It can't have Reach beyond 2, but dramatic Reach failures are handled as if they were merely simple failures.

Intellectual: If the mummy has associates from his cult helping him organize or research, his player get 9-again on Academics rolls.

Obedient: Cultists perform tasks of Morality 4-5 without batting an eye, if so ordered.

Paranoid (Conspiracy-only)**:** If the mummy's player rolls a dramatic Reach failure, it's treated as if it was a simple failure. However, any time the Arisen tries to do anything with the cult that would require a roll, his player first has to succeed at an Intelligence + Politics roll for the mummy to navigate its layers of (in)security and doublespeak.

Ritualistic: If the mummy meditates to regain Sekhem in a retreat or temple where cultists are performing rites, his player gets a +1 bonus to the roll to do so.

Storied: Good news, the cult's a laughingstock! Anyone who narcs on it receives as much sober respect as a mouth-breather in a tinfoil hat claiming the president has alien DNA. Add a bonus die to any pool rolled to discredit the cult's enemies or make them sound schizophrenic.

Wrathful: When the Arisen uses his cultists as combatants, add +1 to their attack rolls.

Falling In

To be Arisen is glorious. Your flesh is immortal. Your spirit seethes with magical power. You have seen the roots of civilization and whisper in their secret language. When your eyes open, they belong to a divine patron, a lord, a priest. You've seen the gates of Duat and know for immutable fact that death is not the end.

To be Arisen is terrifying. Your body is a falsehood—a simulated corpse made out of congealed necromancy. You attended the deaths of civilizations, and you can't remember if you held back the barbarians or put a knife in the emperor's back. Your eyes are hollow, dry pits; your life signs are a lie you can only tell the world while your true power trickles away. You have seen the demon princes of Duat and know for a fact that death is not the end.

Majesty and fear are counterweights in the mummy's curse. She walks a Descent between opposing forces, ever unsure of her position. The plentiful contradictions of her existence can easily take a toll on her sanity… if she lets them.

Mind and Body

The mummy's sahu is a magical construct based on her corpse and self-image. When derangements challenge that sense of self, the Arisen might suffer physical disfigurements. When she believes she's a god, streaks of gold flash across her skin. When she sees demons in the world, their wounds dig bloody trails across her flesh. Upon the activation of a severe or extreme derangement, have the mummy's player roll Resolve + Composure. Subtract successes from the mummy's Sekhem. The result determines the number of turns these deformities manifest. A result of 0 or less indicates that the Arisen commands her body to ignore her mind and suffers no deformities.

If both the player and the Storyteller agree, repeated manifestations may develop into permanent disfigurements. Thus, the Arisen may develop any Physical Flaw or the Deformity Social Flaw (**World of Darkness**, p. 219) over the course of play, even if it would be impossible for mortals to acquire over time. Interpret the list of Flaws creatively. A "dwarf" might actually be so withered that her effective Size is 4. A mummy may be "one-eyed" because the other has surreptitiously turned to turquoise.

Characters with Memory scores of 6 or higher transcend these Flaws, discarding them permanently at the rate of one per Memory rank above 5. The mummy's true self emerges out of spiritual confusion. Yet if a mummy falls below Memory 6 and goes mad repeatedly, these stigmas may return or be replaced with new defects to fit recent stresses.

When an Arisen evokes Sybaris, her derangements manifest as combined supernatural marks. The false goddess wears divine regalia. She stands in the silhouette of a sun disk. Hands bearing blades lunge out of a demon-haunted mummy's shadow. Psychologists and occultists might learn much of an Arisen's character, provided they stay sane after witnessing her spirit-form.

The Desperate Descent

Descent imposes the most immediate stress on a mummy's spirit. The Arisen senses her Sekhem waning as rising lassitude, or as pains that spread and grow. In some ways, it resembles accelerated aging. The Arisen begins in the prime of false life. She gradually loses control of her faculties, but remembers her old powers. Withering ability is especially traumatic for Arisen who cultivate transhuman traits or master Utterances. A mummy who falls from an Intelligence of 7, or who loses the power to shake the earth with her might,

often experiences this the way a mortal might feel an internal wound or the frightening confusion of creeping dementia.

Two Legs at Noon, Three at Dusk

Arisen who behave as mortals do in the face of age's depredations might find comfort in denial, insist that they're as strong as they ever were, and immerse themselves in symbols and demonstrations of power. A mummy who terrorizes her cult with casual cruelty is often afraid of her own weakness, crushing underlings to overcompensate. Others divert fear into pragmatic tactics. They expand their cults and seek out vessels capable of augmenting their waning power. This tactic backfires when they chase magical resources while ignoring the opportunities their Judges give them to stave off Descent.

In extreme situations, a mummy's "midlife crisis" blossoms into full-blown madness. Appropriate derangements include Depression, Megalomania, Narcissism, and a new mummy-only derangement, Divine Mask.

Divine Mask (severe): The mummy believes that, like a pharaoh, he is the *bau*—the manifest power—of a god. The Arisen rejects his mortal heritage and assigns the Judges a secondary role, preferring to believe that he has become an aspect of Re, Esit, Sutek, Ptah, or another deity. He's aware that he's supposed to *behave* like he serves the Judges, and in most cases, he is able to keep the "revelation" of his divinity to himself and rationalize his continued service. But if his player ever fails a Composure-based dice roll (besides Initiative), or if a power overcomes the mummy's Composure as a resisted Attribute, he loses the ability to moderate his delusion and behaves as if he is the god's bau. Some cults expect this derangement because they already believe the Deathless is a living god, making it especially difficult for their Arisen master to throw off the delusion of his own will.

Half as Long, Twice as Bright

If a mummy abandons her fear of the Descent, she may actually grow to relish it, seeing her life's clock as an engine driving her to accomplish great things. Arisen following this creed leap into danger, guiding themselves with split-second decisions. Ironically, mad bravery may actually extend the Descent so long as a mummy pleases the Judges with her accomplishments. Early success lures the Arisen into confusing recklessness and balance. Victories come more easily to those willing to do anything, but a mummy can only exhaust every Willpower point and every Pillar to win so many times until she miscalculates. After giving it all, the *next* challenge appears, and she lacks the strength to meet it. Death doesn't care if it reaps warriors or cowards. It charges the same Sekhem toll to all. Reckless mummies die, die, and die again, weakening each time.

Mad fearlessness manifests in the following derangements: Fixation, Fugue, Irrationality, Narcissism, and a new derangement called Demon Haunted.

Demon Haunted (severe; extreme): When the mummy suffers a setback, she feels the knives of Duat at her back. After a significant delay in achieving an objective, roll her Resolve + Composure. If the roll fails, the Arisen sees the Underworld's Slaughterers in the shadows, or believes they inhabit the bodies of people she sees. If the former, she stays away from the shadows where she believes Slaughterers hide, insisting on strong lighting everywhere she goes. If she thinks demons dwell in the people around her, she interprets whatever they say as threats urging her to complete her mission or suffer torment in the Underworld. The Arisen might attack her task with extra vigor, flee, or attack the "Slaughterers" around her. The full effects of this derangement last for a scene, but the mummy never stops believing that demons hide all around, even if she can't see them in a given moment.

Memory Versus Sekhem

Memory inspires the Arisen to recover their human natures. By contemplating the past and choosing an ethical path, they uncover their true selves. But Sekhem's mystic force obeys the Rite of Return and, through it, the will of the ancient Shan'iatu. Their magic programs an instinct to obey the Judges of Duat and return earthly relics to them. Memory develops through moral will; Sekhem lingers when a mummy obeys his instincts. Eventually, they clash. As the most valuable objects in the world, vessels attract owners willing to die to keep them—and Arisen who'd kill to get them. Most Arisen remember little of the Iremite faith except that the Judges require supreme devotion, over and above all moral scruples. Sacrifice from murder is as holy as that provided by charity. They punish sin, but typically don't reward virtue. And virtue is the cornerstone of Memory.

Every mummy's path eventually reaches a fork leading to the Judges on one side and Memory on the other. The vessel she seeks keeps an innocent man alive. Her Judge loves vengeance, but her sense of self requires mercy. As an instinctual drive linked to the mummy's survival, Sekhem is difficult to deny. When the Arisen's Judge favors a course of action, it feels as urgent as hunger, as alluring as sex. Memory's the harder path, but it isn't without reward. If a mummy takes the hard, moral path, she wins an independent will and an identity upon which to hang her sanity.

Direct Conflict

Together, Memory and Sekhem introduce numerous subtle conflicts into an Arisen's existence. Most of these require no further explication—it's just a vibe running through the

game. But the player or the Storyteller might decide that a Descent or Memory degeneration check evokes a significant conflict; a break point where the Arisen chooses between self and Judge. In these cases, use the following systems:

Descent Checks: If the Arisen's Memory ranks higher than her current Sekhem and she displeased her Judge through an action that avoided moral degeneration, the mummy's player may spend a point of Sebayt experience (see "Memory," p. 76) to reduce the Sekhem-based Decent pool by three dice. If no dice remain, the player rolls a chance die. Remember that it's an advantage to fail a Descent roll. If she succeeds, the Arisen's self-belief wrests control of her Sekhem to slow the Descent.

Degeneration Checks: If the mummy's Sekhem exceeds her Memory in a situation where she must risk losing Memory to please her Judge, the player may choose to add two dice to the degeneration check. The Arisen puts her full faith in the Judges' righteousness, but at a price; the lords of Duat are no exemplars of *human* morality. If the roll fails, the mummy automatically acquires a new derangement.

If a mummy can maintain her Sekhem without risking Memory, or defend her Memory without losing the opportunity to prevent Descent, neither systems applies.

Derangements of Memory

Any derangement can strike a mummy who loses Memory. Arisen acquire such derangements using the same game systems as mortals, by failing a second check after losing a Memory through moral degeneration. Depression, Fugue, Irrationality, Melancholia, Multiple Personality, Paranoia, and Suspicion are especially appropriate. The mummy loses the ability to feel joy, develops fears born of shallow coping mechanisms, and her personality erodes. She often regresses into an undead automaton, motivated by little more than the drives imprinted on her Sekhem. The following derangements are also appropriate:

Anachrony (severe; extreme): The mummy's ability to separate past and present cracks. He fills the gaps with the delusion of walking through a previous Descent –though not necessarily one he actually experienced. When he can control his delusions, he believes a veil of illusion conceals the "true" age. The Roman Empire (or Old Kingdom, or Irem itself) never ended—it's the occult nucleus of a degenerate, false era. To the afflicted, the Washington Monument is a newly erected obelisk praising Ramses II. The mummy actually lives in Egypt, and the "New World" is a sham. When the mummy suffers stress or failure because he has trouble adapting to the modern age, roll his Resolve + Composure. If the roll fails, the Arisen completely retreats into the fantasy of another time, translating anything he experiences into what would make perfect sense in his remembered (or at least, imagined) world. This lasts for the scene.

False Incarnation (severe): To stave off loneliness, the mummy convinces herself that a mortal is the reincarnation of an important figure of a past Descent: lover, ruler, friend, or hated rival. The target of this delusion often resembles his "incarnation" in appearance, voice, or demeanor. The Arisen takes that as definitive evidence and hallucinates a little more to back it up. When the mummy suffers a social setback, roll her Resolve + Composure. On a failure, the Arisen acts on her delusion, seeking out her fixation with the grace and caution of a dedicated stalker. The behavior lasts for a scene. If the "incarnation" dies or finds a way to persistently sever contact, the mummy transfers the incarnation's identity to another person or finds a new "returned one."

Stranger Than Fiction

Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're not watching you. It doesn't mean that Fate or the gods hasn't *really* sent punishing demons, or that the love of a millennium wasn't reborn in an Anacostia, D.C. ghetto. Remember that, for the Arisen, strange scenarios are not necessarily signs of teetering sanity. When a mummy questions her sanity, it isn't to drive off thoughts of the bizarre, but to separate self-deception from the real, dangerous strangeness all around her.

Remember, too, that the Arisen are born of death and sorcery. Both powers twist the world around them. Don't be surprised if the Storyteller plays up the similarities between madness and occult fate, and ultimately decides that your mummy's madness is a distorted sign of a very real supernatural event….



BOOK TWO

THE MUMMY

STORYTELLER'S HANDBOOK









CHAPTER FOUR
THE SCROLL OF AGES

Some of the greatest thinkers among the Greeks regarded Egypt as not only the home of knowledge and the source of civilization and of the arts, but also as the fountain head of what has been called "white magic" and the "black art."
— E.A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic*

Mr. Woodehouse,

Before we go any further, I feel compelled to say that this is far and away the strangest after-action report I've ever filed (or probably will file). I've seen some shit in my day, as you know, but this... well, I leave it to you to decide what to do with it all. I only know what I've observed.

On the subject of knowing what I know: Beyond my account of the events in which I took direct part, I obviously can't attest to either the truth or the falsehood of the data I'm sending along. Even if interrogation was my area of expertise, rather than surveillance and acquisition, I still don't imagine that I'd have much success in coercing information from this particular subject. It's plain to me—if not to your man, Collins—that this woman (if it's fair to call her that) could suffer the greatest indignities your man could devise without giving up so much as a pained look. My assessment is that any answers she provides, she provides willingly; whether or not this calls her initial capture into question, as well, is a matter to which I suggest you give serious thought.

Pursuant to your instructions, my team and I shadowed the woman for the better part of a week. While our initial reconnaissance painted a picture of someone of independent means, able to live just about anywhere she desired, within 12 hours of our picking up her trail, she was moving her operation into the Sonagachi district, about 500 yards off the bazaar, beneath a brothel. (My numbers man says the building saw a marked increase in traffic almost immediately and that the increase continued right up until we acquired her there the following Sunday.)

Insertion was just about as messy as I'd anticipated it would be. We followed your every directive, took your every precaution, of course. The measures simply weren't enough to insure clean victory, though I consider that a separate matter from whether they succeeded in delivering the subject into our midst; that, they certainly did. The lieutenant you told us to track down—the one you called "Sadiq" and who turned out to be the means by which we caught up with her—died during insertion. We prepared our bolts and blades as instructed, and they proved effective.

Then the woman appeared. When she saw that she was compromised—that her defenses were breached, her Sadiq, fallen—in that the moment, it seemed to us as if all power fled the room. The already low lighting in the boudoir flickered out entirely, and even the gun-mounted lights of my team dimmed. She used the opportunity not to escape, but to ask what we wanted. When I informed her that we needed her to come with us and to answer a few questions truthfully, she just held her arms out, one wrist crossed over the other, and said, "I am yours to command." Although she seems at first an attractive Arab woman, there is a noticeable... change in her appearance the closer we get, and my man who stepped forward to handcuff her says he saw something, well, moving behind her face, under her skin, maybe. She clearly makes him nervous.

We blindfolded and gagged her for transport to our facility, as per your instructions, but from the first moment, she's given us no trouble. She asked to be called "Menat," and so far, I've complied. Although I expected her cooperation might dry up once we got into the topic that concerns you most, that was, in fact, when she finally opened up for real. I don't know who this woman is, but she certainly seems to know a lot about mummies.

Please advise.

-A.

A.,

We want her account of Egypt and the Gulf circa 4,000 B.C. If she's not deceiving you re: her familiarity, she'll know exactly what we're looking for.

Respond soonest.

Mr. Wodehouse,

Menat says that the region (the known world, in fact, at that time) was the center of an "empire with no name." This empire ruled under the sign of a scorpion from a great capitol city in the Nile Delta; a sort of proto-Cairo, by the sound of it. She says mummies call it "Irem," but that it's a convenient placeholder for the true original. The city once had a name, but she says that it was "erased" from history, along with every graven record of the empire to which it played host. She kept using that word: "erased."

This empire was the dream of a cult of wealthy men who called themselves the Priests of Duat. In her own words, she sees them as "necromancers." These men are known to mummies as the Shan'iatu; I asked her if she knows what meaning the term holds, but she said she doesn't. What she does know is that every mummy in existence traces its origins back to one of these men.

The civilization and culture of Irem was profoundly death obsessed and monolithic, she says. To effect the perfect presentation of their monolith, these Shan'iatu installed a pharaoh and ruled over their growing mass of subjects through his proclamations and decrees; anything that came directly from them or from the pharaoh came expressed as divine will. As their temporal power grew, so too did their magic—a realization that begat a bloody expansion.

The Shan'iatu spent the better part of a century perfecting their art through the tradecraft of war, taking in spoils from across the face of the Earth and converting them into ever more weapons, legions, and imperial governors. During this time, the highest among them began to see that, though their lives might be unnaturally long, even they must eventually cross over into Duat. This realization prompted them to conceive of a way to gain power over even death, as was the way of their religion (which taught that mortal souls can ultimately possess the power of gods). They would enter Duat, as was their duty and birthright, but they would do so as death's masters, not its victims.

Their final solution to the minor problem of death was a feat of "necromancy" the likes of which the world had never seen. Mummies (she calls them "Arisen") call this elder spell the "rite of return," and its power is what gives them the ability to cheat death, to return from whatever hell hosts their cursed souls to animate their own mortal remains. In life, each mummy was a worker pledged to the house and service of one of these necromancers (and given that servants of nobles were often interred with their masters, they probably didn't mind the unnaturally long lives of their overlords), and when the time came to be chosen for the spell—to be a mummy—each viewed it as a great honor, though it cost them all not only their mortal lives, but their immortal souls.

Menat seems tired and distressed (for the first time), so we've taken a break to rest and report.

– A.

The subject has satisfied our skepticism, but not our interests. Do NOT allow her to meditate. Get back in there, and ask her about the catalyst and the price. These are the things we need to know. Do NOT address her as "Menat." Do not address her at all. She speaks, you notate.

Respond soonest.

Mr. Wodehouse,

As instructed, we resumed our debrief of the subject. She seems weaker, now, less confident, as though she were being deprived of food and water (she is not) or suffering some internal malady. I offered her the services of my medic, but she has thus far refused (and with a gracious smile). The subject responds to your queries regarding catalysts and prices with the following account:

By the pinnacle of empire's ascent, the necromancers' art had plateaued. The six great guilds, each formed of seven influential guildhouses, had grown into the envy of the inhabited world. But all the gold in the empire couldn't fill the void gaping in the necromancers' dark hearts; all the wondrous relics they could create wouldn't be enough to push their art to the like of the gods. And that's why they searched for a game changer. That's when they sought a catalyst.

The accounts differ as to the form and character of this catalyst, this magical skeleton key she says they needed; the necromancers themselves were cagey with information, of course, but she says that they went hunting for something deep in the western Sahara and that whatever they found was important enough to leave a garrison there and return for more Priests and supplies. She says she heard one version that spoke of their quarry as a seamless block of black stone, and another account that says it was the body of a dead god, but she believes it was a place of power.

"Like an oasis?" I asked.

"Like a mouth," she said, "a mouth dug deep in the sand, its lips open to the sky, with a gullet of sweet Sekhem and the holiest of stomachs in wait below."

Her words.

Whatever it was they found buried in the deep desert, they used its power to fuel the two greatest spells the mortal world had ever seen. The first was their precious "rite of return," now a reality. Each guildmaster-priest called on his newly advanced desert magic to perform the rite on every servant he thought suitable to the task, resulting in the creation of hundreds of mummies loyal to each guild, and within their numbers, each member forcibly loyal to his or her individual creator. The second spell was also, as it turns out, part of the "price" you were talking about. She says:

The gods of this scorpion empire were mighty largely because they had no true names over which others could gain power; e.g., they called the Nameless Lion "Re" in sacred texts, but that is only the name that the Great Lion wants them to call It. The name is what is granted at a thing's birth, and what is ultimately taken away when a thing is put to rest. To be nameless is to be eternal, so to be on equal footing with their gods, the Priests of Duat had to possess the same power. But the price of these two great will-workings—to cheat death and to be nameless—was an offering of comparable sacrifice and an offering of comparable betrayal. The Shan'iatu sacrificed thousands during the rite that swallowed Irem and delivered it whole unto Duat.

Sir, you need to know that at this point, she is visibly in distress. Pale-faced, with clammy hands and a sickly look to her. If I didn't know better, I would say she's aged since we first brought her in—by as much as 10 years. And the fact that she's been divulging copious amounts of information about these "Arisen" to us effectively reveals her to be antagonistic to them. If you'll forgive my ignorance, doesn't all of that suggest that she might make a potential ally? Sir?

-A.

No, squad leader, it does not. It makes her our competition. We hope that's clear. As such, her discomfort is of little consequence to us and, therefore, of none to you. Get back in there, and ask her how much these "Arisen" know of their own origins and condition. How deep does the rite's patterning overwrite their own memories and instincts? Also, what of this "betrayal?"

Respond soonest.

Mr. Wodehouse,

Menat said that the Arisen are largely ignorant of the deeper truths of their condition and that this is due to a combination of the rite's magic, their willing surrender of their true names to their masters/creators, and of course, to the simple passing of centuries. (She said we'd be surprised at the sorts of things the human mind might forget after 6,000 years. I told her I wouldn't.) The Arisen toil at their purposes simply because their creators require the Sekhem they harvest by fulfilling them, restoring the empire's glory, and by delivering the power of relics to their hands. Then she said something about an exception; one Arisen who'd figured it all out, or something. She said he could make things pretty dangerous for us if his message were to spread and take root.

As to the offering of great betrayal, Menat said that's a reference to what the other Shan'iatu did to some of their own. The sixth guild was the host of Irem's greatest artists and most inspiring orators and poets, and it is they who spoke out against either the usage of the desert artifact in the grand plan, or against the grand plan itself, to erase the empire and cross en masse into Duat. The masters of the sixth guild probably assumed they would arrive in Duat with the rest. Instead, they got truly erased, though Menat said that those whose wills were strongest "survived" the betrayal.

Speaking of betrayal, you might've noticed that I went back to calling your captive subject by her name. I assure you this is not insubordination, sir, because she is no longer in my custody. When I returned to my interrogation, I started by asking her why she was telling us all this.

"Because I would like to die now." That's what she said. Ten minutes later, she asked if she might have a moment alone with your specialist, Collins. Two minutes after that, I heard a man scream like his soul was on fire, so I keyed back into the room. Collins was dead on the floor, his face a frozen rictus of horror, right next to the subject's body... or what was left of it, anyway.

It had decomposed entirely.

I must say, I'm at a loss as to what just happened here. If she just wanted to die anyway, why go through the trouble of killing Collins first? Or sit through what was obviously a painful process? Whatever the case was, I'm sure you'll tell me whatever you feel I'm cleared to know out here. Sending along her remains, as per standing orders. Will be out of contact for a while thereafter. Sorry.

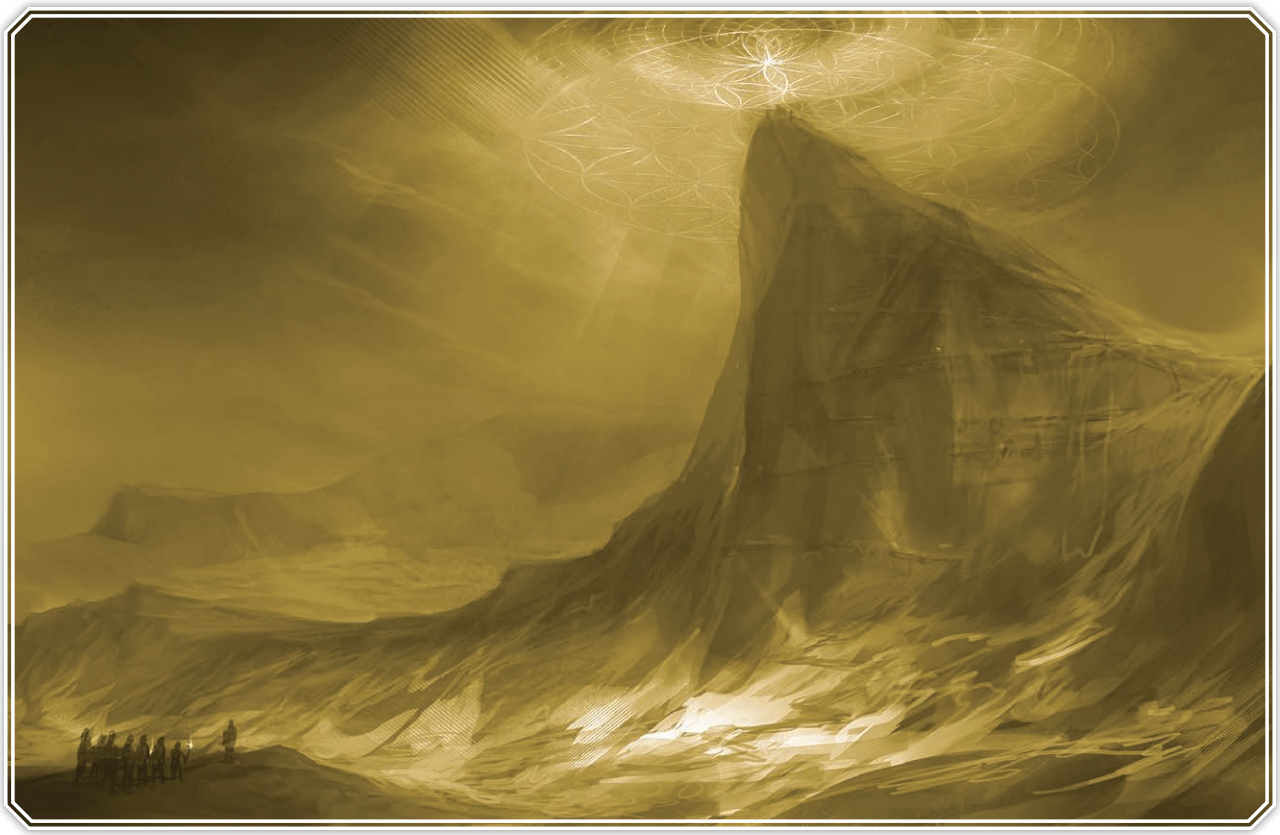
-A.

The Wall

Some attention was paid to the bifurcated nature of **Mummy** back in the game's introduction, and here, at the start of the Storyteller's Handbook, that topic needs especial revisiting. Unlike some Storytelling games, this one has a backstory/history that remains true regardless of what individual mummies think. This principle difference—this secret history—means that it becomes by default the Storyteller's prerogative and responsibility to safeguard that truth in his game.

In the game world, this barrier between the reality and Arisen awareness thereof manifests in their inability to know and/or remember anything that's ever happened to them in Duat (beyond their initial appearance before the Judges). While cradled in the death-sleep, all they know or recall is the dusky repose of henet. During development, we likened this phenomenon to the existence of a "Chinese wall" in the game, separating the realities of the characters' pasts from the lives they get to live in the present. Given exposure to contrary evidence, individual mummies can learn to find the cracks and, in time, break down the wall themselves, but their default state of not only mind, but of *being* is not to question. The power of the Shan'iatu's hold over them, through both the claiming of their servants' true names and the might of the spiritual programming of their Rite, is such that only Apotheosis offers hope of total reclamation of one's name and soul.

On a practical level, what all this means is that unless you are a Storyteller, and really do intend to run **Mummy** at some point, the following remains true for you: *You're reading the wrong chapter.*



ANPU

The mythopoeic religious epics of the Nameless Empire were as grim and primitive as one might imagine such early human myths could be, but for all their blood and fear, were not *crude* for it. Their dread-laced passages possessed form, with a stark beauty to their sacred cadences and imagery. The principle figure of the Iremite canon was, of course, Azar—the divine prodigal son who rose from the dead (thanks to magic) to become the King in Duat, Lord of the Underworld.

The tales have much to say on the subject of Re, the Nameless Lion, and his consort, Esit, the Nameless Falcon, who was said to be the fountainhead of all magic and will-working on Earth. And of course, one particular saga goes on at length about Sutek, the Nameless Serpent, whose ancient feuding is what ultimately led to his brother's death and resurrection. Far less is said of Anpu, the Nameless Jackal, despite his importance to everything else. Or perhaps because of it.

Before Azar ascended to the Basalt Throne of Duat, another ruled there in his place: Anpu. After the Beautiful One was restored to life, the other gods bid Anpu step aside and make way for him, now that Azar "knew death and rebirth" greater than any of their number. Without accepting this claim, but also without fraternal contention, Anpu abdicated his authority over the land of the dead and withdrew to the darkness between the worlds—a border realm that the Iremites referred to as Neter-Khertet—there to serve as Opener of the Way and as king of that dread interzone.

Despite the Arisen's connections to Azar and to the other gods of lost Irem, these ties are but pale shadows of the bond between mummies and Anpu, for he is the one and only "god" they have ever seen or will ever see *face-to-face*. When the Arisen fall from the living world into Neter-Khertet, it is not the face of the Beautiful One that greets them, nor even the dread visages of their precious Judges. No, the only divine force with whom they actually interact (beyond their mortal trials before the Judges) is the Opener of the Way.

The presence of Anpu serves narrative and thematic ends. The enigmatic jackal-headed entity amply fills the role of the voice of the Storyteller, as she can use it to impart story developments, to cultivate character depth, and to strike tonal notes that drive home the horror or mystery. Anpu appears most often when a mummy is killed by his enemies and must return to finish the job, but technically, he can appear to them any time they're physically inside or manifested in Twilight. Anpu should never appear to the Arisen in the living world, except through dreams or relics.

DEATH CYCLES

The states of Arisen existence aren't represented by a simple polarity—alive or dead. When a mummy dies in mid-Descent, he enters a third state of being called a death cycle. While engaged in the furtherance of his purpose, the occult

energies of the Rite of Return serve to anchor his spirit to the living world, like a set of mystical nails driven into the stuff of his being. This creates a potent but volatile conduit between the Earth and the Underworld, a swirling vortex—part mystery, part magic, and part memory—that wends its way, tunnel-like, through the shadowscape of Neter-Khertet.

All the mummy has to do is follow this "path" back to his body, and he is again arisen.

This journey is, of course, the heart of the matter… the rub and the problem. Dying is a harrowing experience for any creature, and doubly harrowing for an Arisen whose soul is torn prematurely from its sahu before its purpose can be fulfilled. Not even grim experience and painful repetition will offer hope of alleviating this distress and disorientation, as each death cycle is different—not merely from one Arisen to another, but from one death to another.

That said, two chief components remain consistent throughout a mummy's various death cycles. The first of these is the presence of Anpu, who yet fills his eternal role as ferryman for the Arisen soul even during these strange periods of turmoil and doubt. The second component is the mummy's own past, which literally comes back to haunt him as he makes his way back to life. Whatever form a given death cycle takes, these two elements will always figure in somehow.

For Storytellers, the adjudication of a death cycle is largely a narrative matter. Outside of plots and events related to the Arisen's summoned purpose, much of **Mummy** revolves around the twin themes of memory and self-discovery, and the death cycle is both encapsulation and manifestation of that idea. It's an opportunity to challenge both player and character, and as often as not, to unearth some important or revealing aspect of the mummy's past or present.

System: Structurally, the death cycle is an interlude—a scene the Storyteller runs for the player of the deceased. Depending on the needs of the group and the story, this interlude could last two or even three scenes, but since most merets don't die in unison (short of those rare occasions when they're all caught standing at ground zero for the detonation of a pretty brutal explosion), the interlude is likely to leave one or more players out of the action for as long as it lasts. What's most important is that the narrated sequence accomplishes its intended purpose for the deceased. Sometimes, this can be achieved by having the other players roleplay their characters as figments of themselves within the confines of the deceased's dreamscape, but only if and when their appearance within his death cycle would make narrative and thematic sense at the time.

Whatever the player composition, the typical interlude breaks down into two parts (which needn't be equal in length or scope): First, the disembodied soul must ground himself within the tumult, to get his bearings enough to follow the beacon (or sound, or star, or other signatory) that leads to Anpu, who awaits him further on. Once they're face to face, Anpu shows the supplicant the way back to himself, occasionally with an added element of mystery or revelation along the way (though it's recommended that Anpu never speak aloud); the passing of a torch is common. Part two is where the scene is tailored more specifically to the character and story of the deceased. He might find himself back in a tomb he abandoned long ago, or in the domicile of a former lover or ally… or even in Irem itself. The point is for him to face something about himself or his past that he'd forgotten, dismissed, or buried intentionally so he could move on.

During (or at the end of) the first part, the Storyteller will call for a single Memory roll. She notes the result of this roll, but it has no other bearing on the scene or the soul's progress. At the end of the second part, the player rolls Memory again, but this time, he modifies the roll according to the previous roll's result: If he achieved an exceptional success, he adds two dice to the roll. If the first roll was a success, he adds one die. If he failed the first roll, he subtracts one die.

If the second Memory roll is a success, the mummy takes what he learned from the sequence and returns to his body (or organ), where he loses a dot of Sekhem in the process of resurrecting his remains. If his player garnered exceptional success on the second roll, the Arisen returns as per a success, but gets a chance to avoid losing the Sekhem to resurrection: His player makes a Descent Roll, and only if *that* roll succeeds does the mummy lose the dot of Sekhem. (His player can't spend Willpower to subtract dice, however.) If the player fails the second Memory roll, the Risen loses the dot of Sekhem *and* his player must make a Descent Roll (potentially losing the character two dots of Sekhem to resurrection). If the second Memory roll fails *dramatically*, the mummy loses two dots of Sekhem automatically, with no chance for a Descent Roll. The Storyteller is encouraged to describe the feeling of losing two dots of Sekhem in narrative terms, as the shades of Neter-Khertet and his own crumbling awareness conspire to strip him of his vital life force; he arises weary and battered, as though barely "surviving" his death cycle.

Apotheosis

The other sentient denizens of the World of Darkness—human beings and the restless dead—both have belief systems centered around "moving on" from their current lot in life (or death). In mortals, this takes the shape of a myriad of cultures' perspectives on "enlightenment," whether one is graduating from supplicant to priest or attaining the sacred rank of bodhisattva. Among the disembodied, of course, this takes the form of one passing on to Heaven, reaching Nirvana, etc. For the Arisen, who are in effect the link between the living and the dead, things are no different.

Although the mummy equivalent of this belief, called Apotheosis, still remains unpopular among the Arisen, it has nonetheless penetrated the bubble of their community after six long millennia. The official position of not one, but every guild on the subject is generally unfavorable, and that's certainly reflective of the baseline opinion among the Deathless. Yet, that comes as little surprise, considering how much is working against them when it comes to simply entertaining the idea, let alone committing to it enough to alter their purpose just to be in accordance with it.

The Arisen soul enters immortality steeped in the religious cosmology of lost Irem, and having looked upon the faces of the Judges themselves, it finds little reason to doubt the official dogma. Beyond this, each mummy committed himself willfully to enduring the trials of eternity; his soul had the chance to submit itself to shameful oblivion, but *chose* to accept its burden. Further still, the Rite itself takes a toll, its programmed malice working to drown out all independent thought. And yet, despite all of it, there remains an inmost tug deep within each and every Deathless soul, one that goads and urges it to just *stop*; to close eyes and to cease breath… and ascend.

The Ladder of Set

The term "apotheosis" is a relatively recent convention among the Arisen, adapted more for scholarly use and pursuit (and with a certain, added metagame value among players). Indeed, the guilds adopted it largely *because* its origins are Greek, rather than ancient or predynastic Egyptian, and therefore of a comfortable intellectual distance to the default posture of the Arisen mind. The original term for this allegedly idle pursuit, and the word that those who are truly interested in it tend to use with one another, is the *Mentaar* (the "Ascent").

Amulet of the Two Fingers

While the Arisen pursuit of the Ladder of Set may be metaphorical and metaphysical in nature (as no one honestly believes there's an actual ladder poking out of a mountaintop somewhere), the same isn't true of the myth's most infamous byproduct: the Amulet of the Two Fingers.

So named because it represents the two fingers—index and medius—used by Sutek to hoist Azar up into heaven, the Amulet of the Two Fingers has become equal parts urban legend and holy grail amongst a sizable segment of the Arisen, composed largely of amulet enthusiasts and all those interested in the history and/or metaphysics of Apotheosis. What began as a quiet but persistent rumor among the antiquarians of the Maa-Kep developed over time into a full-on underground debate among those concerned.

And why? Because some believe that not only is the amulet real, it is also the oldest relic on Earth. Some among the priests maintain that the "amulet" is two of Sutek's *actual* fingers and therefore no amulet at all, but a vessel of the shell. Those looking into Apotheosis believe that the amulet exists, in a true relic form, but that its importance lies not in its age, but in the fact that, just as Sutek's two fingers were the key to Azar's ascent, so too is the amulet the key to Apotheosis.

One of the seminal gospels of the Iremite religious epic revolved around the tale of how Azar, Lord of Duat and patron god of the Nameless Empire, found his way to the Sky Above the Sky:

When the time came for Azar to make at last the Ascent, he journeyed to the top of the tallest mountain, that he might gain admission to the heavens. Yet, the distance between the earth and the floor of the Light Land just outstretched his reach, and Azar fell to despair. Then sun broke through the clouds, and beyond that rift, he caught a twinkle in the eye of Ptah, the Nameless Bull, who, on a shaft of golden light, sent down a ladder of the finest craft. Descending to earth with the ladder came the god Re, the Nameless Lion, and on the ladder's other side, the goddess Esit, the Nameless Falcon. The two held the ladder sturdy upon the earth, that Azar could make his ascent. Their task complete, the Three returned to the Light Land and bade Sutek, the Nameless Serpent and Lord of Dust and Storm, descend to earth and become the eternal guardian of the perfect ladder of Ptah.

This, people of the Black Land, is why we place the effigy of the ladder in the tomb, why we remind the gods of their duty to shepherd us to the blessed afterlife. This is why we learn the words in life that we must speak to the ladder in death.

I pay homage to thee, O divine ladder! Homage to thee, O ladder of Sutek!

Stand thou upright, O divine ladder, whereby Azar came forth to the Light Land.

For I am thy son, I am Azar of old, and thou shall give to me the ladder of Sutek.

I need plow no earth, nor collect any offering, for that which I see and hear shall feed me and nourish me when I appear in the Light Land by the ladder of Sutek.

I have gathered together my bones, I have collected my flesh, and I shall go quickly to the Light Land by the two fingers of great Sutek, god of the ladder!

This tale is an important part of the Iremite cosmological view, illustrating the origin and general methodology of the model the Arisen tend to follow as it pertains to the Mentaar. Anglicization has had its effect here, too, with the concept being known contemporarily as the Ladder of Set and the other key figures presumed to be pre-dynastic incarnations of Osiris, Ptah, Ra, and Isis. Certain guilds in certain regions even encourage the Ennead model (for a variety of reasons), some going so far as to adopt the Greek names even among themselves and their cults. Whatever the Arisen call it, the Ladder of Set is the spiritual construct that, in effect, comprises the Ascent.

Mountains in the Sky

When a person dies and the soul leaves the land of the living, the departed doesn't just instantly appear in Duat. The soul must first Go Westward. The ancient Egyptians believed that two massive mountains bookended the Earthly realm to the east and west: Bakhu, the Eastern Gate; and Manu, the Western Gate. Upon arriving at either mountain, one finds one's self standing before a wonder the Iremites called an akhet (meaning "sky gate")—a soul portal. Only by stepping through one of these akhet might a soul cross from one realm to another.

When one of the Arisen dies because he has served his purpose and is ready to retire once more to the repose of henet, he remembers nothing beyond laying himself back in his sarcophagus and closing his eyes. When a mummy dies mid-Descent, however, his purpose yet unfulfilled, he opens his eyes to find himself in Neter-Khertet—a bleak shadowscape that acts as the byway between life and death, between the Earth and Duat. Only by finding his way back through the akhet will his soul return to inhabit his remains in the real world. This process is known as a death cycle (see next page).

When a mummy finds himself stuck within Neter-Khertet without having first died, it's because he found or temporarily created an akhet in the living world… and stepped through it. What the Arisen call the Neter-Khertet is known to many of its spectral inhabitants as "living in Twilight." When the mummy looks around in this Twilight, he sees a shade-filled overlay of the living world 'above' it; everything that exists there is here as well, plus a few things that aren't. No matter his real-world environs, when he's outside in Neter-Khertet, he always espies the dim outlines—each backlit by a glow of burnished gold—of two mountains in the sky, together marking his eastern and western horizons. Barring a cruel intervention of Fate, a mummy who travels far enough in either direction will eventually come upon an akhet that will let him step back into the living world.

THE HERETIC

Once there was a worker in the house of Duat—born, acculturated, indoctrinated, and finally killed, like all the rest. This worker slept away the years in the dusky repose of henet, arising now and then to serve the will of his master and, presumably, the gods—just like all the rest. And like the others, he sailed the river of time on a barge made out of loyalty and buoyed by dark magic. Then something happened. The worker awoke. And everything changed.

As one of the shadow-decreed, this worker had long maintained an academic interest in Apotheosis, but only insofar as it held appeal on its metaphysical or philosophical grounds. Then something occurred to ignite a spark, to drive some faith into the philosopher's purpose, and he set out to not only understand Apotheosis, but to *know* it. And depending on whom one asks and what they want to be true, at some point within the last century, his soul accomplished that goal. One of the Arisen—a former resident of Irem of the Pillars—has effectively finished his Ascent, becoming the first and only mummy to complete the process of Apotheosis.

Needless to say, the guilds at large respond to any open discussion of this "enlightened" mummy with a combination of blithe dismissals, stern rebukes, and in certain regions, veiled threats. Nobody knows this person's name (as he effectively "reclaimed" it during Apotheosis), but several Arisen have either confessed to or are said to be receiving unsolicited communications from an individual who speaks as though he is ascended. Faced with mounting evidence of this being's existence, the guildmasters at large acknowledge the same chiefly by referring to him in all matters as the "Heretic."

SYSTEMS

So, Apotheosis is not, in fact, the millennial pipe dream most Arisen would claim (or even like) it to be. Yet, if it isn't all just a dangling carrot, forever barely out of reach, then how does it *work?* The process can be likened to the way certain mortal ascetics break through the barriers of the fleshy and the material in order to touch the divine, whether it's by fasting or sweating out the spiritual toxins imposed upon the pure-form soul by a quintessentially rotten or debased world. For the Arisen, the process is just as arduous and occasionally confusing as it is for the living, and it takes a lot longer to accomplish (for now, anyway; it's perfectly rational to assume that the more mummies find Apotheosis, the more will try, and the faster they'll be able to achieve it).

Memory: One of the central tenets of Apotheosis, even in its most intellectualized form, is the reclamation of the self. A soul can't hope to know ascendance, or even truth on some level, until the soul knows *itself* (at a bare minimum). Two core game mechanics revolve around this notion, and one of them is the Morality trait—in this case, Memory.

As to rating, it's sensible to assume that a soul needn't hit Memory 10 before being willing and capable of entering Apotheosis; most human beings don't have Morality 10 souls (and many would have even lower Memory ratings, if it was a mortal trait), so assume that getting "back" to at least Memory 7 is a good minimum.

Pillars: The second game element pertaining to the central tenet of Apotheosis is the Pillars system, which is a literal reflection of a soul's progress along the path of reclaiming itself fully. In that regard, it makes little sense for a mummy to be Ascent-ready if his Pillars are still low. Thematically, a character should have all Pillars at 5 before Apotheosis can truly be a reality, but if you, as Storyteller, are looking to tell a story that ramps the characters up to Apotheosis more quickly—one that wouldn't benefit from starting out with the characters already ascended—then consider the optional rule that the Arisen only need to have their Defining Pillar at 5 and their Ren at 5 to "qualify" (or, in the case of the Serpent-Headed, their Ren and their Ba or Sheut at 5).

Sekhem: In many ways, Sekhem is the bane of a mummy's existence. The principle reason for this, of course, is that his existence is *defined* by Sekhem. The Rite of Return empowers his soul to cross the veil and reclaim its former vessel, and it generates the "soul-suit" that is his sahu. It's also what drives his purpose, and therefore drives his mind away from thoughts of the Mentaar. Thus, the only way to even begin the climb is to shed almost all Sekhem: The Rite itself is what the mummy must "sweat out" in order to successfully wrest control over it for himself. Once the mummy's soul is reconstituted fully (with the relevant ratings in both Memory and Pillars), he must make one final Descent and stay alive long enough to see it drag him down to Sekhem 1. Only in his darkest hour, just at the cusp of being carried once more to Duat, can he ascend.

Benefits: The Mentaar is nothing less than a soul's complete reclamation of itself. It remains infused with the power of the Rite, but now that power is much more firmly at the soul's command. No longer is the soul tethered by heavy chains to the throne of its master in Duat. The link is broken, the soul takes flight. The Rite's entire paradigm is inverted, and as a result, the soul's new default state of being is… life. Aside from the incalculable benefit of returned self-determination, three game elements immediately come into play upon completion of Apotheosis. The first is that the Arisen soul can finally move Sekhem from one vessel to another (as opposed to just locating and/or consuming it). In short, ascended Arisen can create relics, given time. The second chief benefit of Apotheosis is that the soul effectively reclaims its True Name and all associated elements of identity. In short, the ascended are functionally invisible to the mystical world. The final and perhaps greatest benefit is that the "Chinese wall" imposed upon the soul by the Rite is brought crashing down, flooding it with long-buried memories of its unlife in Duat.

Drawbacks: Seeing as how Sekhem is a measurement of a mummy's overall potency, spending all of one's time at Sekhem 1 is bound to take the top off the buzz a little. Once a soul has completed Apotheosis, it can no longer access any Utterances or relic powers that require a Sekhem rating higher than 1. However, it can still access Affinities and first-tier Utterances (and will have plenty of Pillars with which to fuel same) and can still take part in unison castings (explored in an upcoming supplement). The difference is, now the mummy uses his Morality Trait (Memory) in place of his actual Sekhem rating for most game purposes. So, the Arisen can still fuel his Attributes with Pillars, and can still join a chorus, but he will now use his Memory rating to determine the efficiency of his efforts (or resistance to others' efforts). And now, if his Memory ever drops, so too does his potency.

Having no Sekhem to devote to it, an ascended mummy cannot sacrifice Sekhem to heal grievous wounds to his sahu, but he can still do so with Willpower and Pillars, as much as he likes within a scene, until one or both run out. Lastly, the mummy no longer gets the "free pass" of having his Rite-assisted soul funneled to the living world so easily. Every time the soul dies or enters the henet, it must endure a death cycle, and with each passing death, the likelihood that his soul simply will not return the next time grows. In addition, maintaining a high Memory rating remains a priority even after the Ascent, clearly, and losing a dot of Memory stands a chance of sending the ascended soul into an *immediate* death cycle. No one said enlightenment was easy.



Chapter Five
Faces of Undeath

Let my enemies devour each other.
— Salvador Dali

Perhaps the biggest problem with immortality is the fact that the bulk of the bastards one has grown to hate are *also* immortal.

Mummies are powerful, absolutely—potentially among the most potent of beings to walk the World of Darkness, at least when they've just recently arisen. If they were dealing only with mortals, that *might* be enough. Too bad for them that they're not. From other mummies to ghosts, from massive organizations to necromantic horrors far worse than any Arisen, the foes of the Deathless are enough to make even an immortal fear for her life.

The Deathless

The Shuankhsen and the other Lifeless may seem to be the most iconic of adversaries that the Arisen must face—may even claim a place of honor as most hated, or function almost as bogeymen to these most ancient and most potent of beings—but such perceptions don't always line up with reality. A few mummies have never, in any incarnation, encountered one of the Lifeless.

But other Deathless? That's a whole different story altogether.

For it is, indeed, the Deathless themselves who are truly their own worst enemies. Potentially as puissant as any of the Lifeless, mummies are also more common than such horrors and are far more likely to cross paths with one another, due to their shared pursuits and objectives. From conflicting agendas in modern times to grudges that date back to before the rise of dynastic Egypt, the Deathless have plenty of reason and plenty of opportunity to oppose one another.

And when neither side of a feud can ever truly die, can the conflict ever really end?

Undying Rivalries

While it's certainly easy to imagine such ancient hatreds, oaths of eternal vengeance, and all that, the truth is that the majority of conflicts between two (or more) Deathless have nothing to do with hatred. Many times, they aren't even personal. Mummies are, above and beyond all else, driven by purpose—and that means that anyone or anything who interferes with that purpose, including other mummies, must either be circumvented or removed. It is, as a slightly more modern underground society might say, "just business."

Staking a Claim

The most obvious cause of these cross-purposes is when two or more mummies seek the same prize. It's *so* obvious, in fact, that it almost wouldn't be worth addressing—surely it's the first idea the overwhelming majority of Storytellers would consider—if it weren't for the fact that it's also far and away the most *common* cause of such conflicts in the World of Darkness.

Relics and particularly potent vestiges are at the root of many of these rivalries. In fact, it's actually surprising that it doesn't happen even more often than it does. If a magic item is so powerful or so important that it's worth raising a mummy to recover, then the odds are pretty good that more than one faction is after said item. While this doesn't *necessarily* mean two Deathless cults, it's these cults who are constantly on the lookout for such things, and tapped into the worlds of archeological and religious discoveries. It's they who are most likely to know the true histories of such objects, and thus have a greater understanding of their importance. Whether for cult-related reasons or their own personal agendas, when two Deathless seek the same relic—or when one mummy or cult steals a relic from another—a clash between them becomes absolutely inevitable, even in the complete absence of any personal enmity.

Relics and vestiges are not, of course, the only prizes over which the Deathless might compete. Treasures need not qualify as vestiges to be of sufficient cultural, religious, or personal significance to be worth fighting for. The "object" at the center of the conflict might even be a person, someone of particular importance due to knowledge, experience, or bloodline.

And sometimes, the Deathless find themselves competing over what would seem to be the most trivial of objectives. Remember that, as they all hail from the same original culture, many Deathless (particularly those with higher Memory) are likely to share certain tastes in common. Two mummies might simply covet the same property and seek to obtain ownership for their cults to hold in escrow until their next rising. They may fancy the same painting or sculpture, or even—if they're human enough—the same lover.

Would the Arisen actually compete with their fellow immortals, wielding their powers and possibly their cult influ-



ence, spending Sekhem and shortening their time on Earth, for such minor prizes? Absolutely. In part, it goes back once again to their purpose-driven nature. Even if it's not the specific purpose for which they were summoned, mummies do almost nothing by half measures. It's just not in them.

Also, mummies don't typically *have* many other means of competing with one another. Most of them don't have a lot of authority or influence over the mortal world, and they're not going to be around long enough for subtle machinations. (This is, perhaps, the greatest paradox of Deathless existence—that these immortal beings really have so very little time to accomplish anything.)

And finally, why not? When you know that you're going to die soon no matter what and come back eventually no matter what—and the same holds true of your rival—what's the impetus to hold back? What have you got to lose? Thus, when two mummies compete for almost any goal, the important factor is that they *are* two mummies; much less important is the significance of what they're actually competing over.

One-Upmanship

Even for entities whose entire immortal existence revolves around cycles of life and death, not everything in their experience is—well, a matter of life or death. Those Deathless with sufficient memory and humanity are capable of forming bonds with other mummies. Some are relationships of mutual respect, perhaps arising from alliances between these mummies during past incarnations. In a few cases, such bonds might even qualify as genuine friendships or familial links dating back to Irem, itself.

But even allies and friends compete with one another. Some Deathless—those rare few who (at least as compared to other mummies) take themselves a bit less seriously—work either to subvert their friends' efforts, or at least to outshine them, purely as a matter of one-upmanship. They might actually keep score, determining who among them has had the most successful incarnations, or boasts the most relics, or the wealthiest cult. These mummies won't oppose each other on matters of *major* import—the survival of a cult, the retrieval of a vital relic, that sort of thing—but anything less is fair game.

Deathless Hatred

Impersonal conflict and friendly competition is all well and good, but alas, it represents only one portion of the rivalry between Deathless. The rest is hatred; sheer, seething enmity that takes multiple lifetimes even to *comprehend*, let alone to develop. These mummies might clash over the same prizes and goals listed previously—relics, influence, and the like—but their motivations run far deeper than the competition of the moment. These Deathless would gladly spend an eternity finding new means of making their enemies suffer. A few would even delight in seeing their rival mummies permanently destroyed, for all that such a concept is normally anathema to the stagnant population of the Deathless.

Competing Cults

The sorts of rivalries and conflicts discussed here needn't be between the mummies themselves. Deathless cults are just as likely–perhaps even *more* likely–to compete with one another even if they're not truly enemies and hold no genuine animosity. In addition to competing for all the same prizes that the Deathless themselves do (relics, vestiges, ancient lore, etc.), cults also have the long-term factors of the modern world with which to deal. As such, cults might compete for property–either due to mystical or religious significance, or for more banal financial purposes–or for positions of authority. Consider the value to such a cult of having one of its members highly placed in US customs or serving as the chief curator of a major museum, and the reasons for such rivalries become perfectly clear.

And of course, if it's important enough for the cults to compete over, it's likely important enough to involve their Deathless patrons, even if the mummies themselves really couldn't care less.

Immoral Immortality

The Deathless take what they do, and what they are, seriously indeed. Remember that subjecting oneself to the Rite of Return was a matter of both ultimate loyalty and ultimate faith; a permanent devotion of the self to masters both secular and semi-divine.

And as with all religions, the beliefs of the Deathless inspire some to greater fanaticism than others. Most mummies have strong beliefs about appropriate behavior and legitimate uses of the temporary lives they receive from time to time—and look down upon those who treat those lives abusively or immorally. Some Deathless take this further, however, and declare what amounts to holy war on those mummies who are dishonoring their sacred immortality.

Since not all Deathless agree on what constitutes "proper" behavior, however, this leads to conflict, violence, and sometimes genuine hatred between mummies. The most common points of contention include:

- **Treatment of cultists:** Some of the more arrogant or power-hungry Deathless see their cults as servitors, rather than allies or wards to be protected. These mummies might seek to rule their cults overtly whenever they're awake, relying on brute force or religious intimidation; others are more subtle, seeking to manipulate the behaviors and beliefs of their cultists through trickery and deception, particularly regarding ancient lore or religious responsibilities. In either case, some Arisen consider this behavior to be an abuse of authority or even a violation of the natural (well, supernatural) order, and may respond accordingly.
- **Excessive Acquisition:** All Deathless seek out relics and vestiges. It's an innate part of who and what they are. They need to protect those that have particular significance to their cults or culture, and to empower themselves through the absorption of those that do not. Some Deathless, however, believe hoarding more relics than one absolutely needs to be an immoral act—one that deprives the world, and other mummies, of wonders and magics more rightfully theirs. But what is "excess"? How many relics does a mummy really "need" lying about her tomb to allow her to regenerate her powers for her next incarnation? What

Resting in Peace

There are few rules or strictures of behavior that are considered more or less universal among the Deathless. Their drives, their attitudes toward their cults–these are all moderated, at least in part, by the mummies' innate nature. Beyond that, however, the Deathless are individuals. Some are honorable, some conniving; some respectful, some disdainful.

One particular custom, however, is widespread enough that it *almost* qualifies as a universal rule: For one of the Deathless, the tomb of another mummy is largely sacrosanct.

In part, this is purely common sense. Mummies are at their most potent within their tombs, especially if they've just been awakened by an intruder. It's also, however, a matter of reverence that borders on the religious. The tomb symbolizes everything about Deathless existence and the reason they submitted themselves to the Rite of Return in the first place. It's a representation of death; it's the doorway back to life; it's the heart of a mummy's worship; it's the repository of relics and vestiges. It is, so far as anything can be to these immortals, *sacred*.

Which is not, of course, to say that this is true for *all* mummies, all the time. Some circumstances are pressing enough for even the most tradition-bound of Deathless to violate this code–such as, for instance, the retrieval of a specific relic stolen and hidden away in a rival's tomb. (Not that *any* relic would justify this, but if it's one of particular significance, it might be worth the violation.) And of course, some mummies–particularly those of the Lost Guild (see p. 181)–are simply mad enough not to give a damn one way or the other.

circumstances justify the consumption of multiple relics for a mummy to gain the power to complete her goals? These things cannot truly be quantified, but are matters of opinion and belief—which means that they are matters over which the Deathless become enemies with unfortunate frequency.

- **The Cycle of Greed:** A few particularly amoral or monstrous Deathless have no qualms about attacking or even destroying (however temporarily) their brethren in order to take what their victims have. From relics to cultural treasures, powerful cultists to ancient lore, sometimes the best place to obtain those wonders that so many Deathless seek is from other mummies. As if this weren't bad enough, however, a great many of the more spiritually minded Deathless consider such behavior to be a gross abuse of power and immortality. As such, these "scavengers" are not merely the instigators of conflict between mummies, but also the recipients of it—and in some cases, even if one of the Deathless had *legitimate* cause to take from another mummy, these fanatics might well target her anyway. Zealotry leaves little room for nuance or extenuating circumstances, after all.
- **Dogmatic Differences:** The Arisen come from a spiritual culture and are themselves the products of a religious rite. It's no surprise, then, that most mummies incorporate all manner of religious beliefs into their worldview. Many of these beliefs evolve (or even change wholesale) over the course of time. To one of the Deathless, the names of the Judges of Duat may take on a sacred aspect, so that it's inappropriate to speak them aloud save for ritual purposes. To another, all mummies who serve cults of a particular religion or ethnicity might be apostates. A few of the most extreme might even object to Arisen of a certain gender, or who serve a particular Judge, or who fail to treat a certain type of relic or vessel with the proper veneration. The most minute religious differences have been the cause of all manner of conflict among mortals, and in this, some of the Arisen are no different than anyone else.

Lingerers

One particular brand of malefactor on which almost all mummies agree is the so-called "lingerer." Lingerers are Arisen who make a concerted effort to hang around and continue to live long after they've completed whatever purpose brought them back. (Or, in some cases, who put off completing a purpose that drives them so that they might remain longer.) Not only is this a selfish misuse of the powers granted by the Rite of Return, but it requires that these mummies constantly consume relics, so that they might retain enough Sekhem to remain. It's wasteful, it's destructive, it's sacrilegious, and most mummies are more than happy to "assist" lingerers in their return to the cycle.

Eternal Vengeance

Few things are more important to the Deathless—indeed, more emblematic of what they are—than the need for retribution. They believe they serve the judges of the afterlife. Defile a mummy's tomb, and repairing the damage, even retrieving any stolen relics, is secondary in importance to the need to hunt down and punish the perpetrator. When you add that to the normal human tendency to hold grudges, and combine them in a being capable of returning from the dead over and over throughout the span of history, you have the makings of some truly epic feuds.

Not all mummies who seek revenge on others of their own kind do so to right ancient wrongs. Most, in fact, have far more modern motives. A mummy who has destroyed or imperiled another mummy's cult, defiled another mummy's tomb, stolen or destroyed vessels important to another mummy—or, essentially, opposed another of the Arisen for any of the myriad reasons discussed previously—has a pretty good chance of earning that other mummy's ire. Such hatreds are not limited to the lifetime in which the transgressions occurred, but can flare up as often as the Deathless themselves arise.

Other such grudges, however, do indeed date back centuries, or even millennia. Some, in fact, predate the Deathless's first arising as mummies at all. Although rare, some of these cycles of retribution date back to Irem itself. Of course, the Arisen involved in these longstanding conflicts almost certainly don't remember what the ancient instigating insult might have been; they recall only enough to hate.

And *that*—the unreliable memory of the Arisen—makes this cyclical hostility even more dangerous. It's entirely possible for two (or more) mummies to clash, lifetime after lifetime, long after they've both utterly forgotten what they're fighting over. They know only that they hate one another, and each feels that she is due bloody vengeance for past slights.

Even worse, however, is when one of the Arisen has lost sufficient memory that she doesn't recall her enemy at all. Such a mummy—most likely a player's character, because how much fun would it be otherwise?—may find herself under constant, brutal attack by another of the Arisen who clearly despises her, and have *absolutely no idea why*. Recovering sufficient memory to recall the reasons for such a feud can constitute an entire story goal in its own right.

Madness

Not every mortal mind—even among those strong enough to accept the Rite of Return initially—is capable of bearing up under the weight of ages. Some Deathless simply go insane. Oddly, it's actually mummies with the

highest Memory—that is, the most human—who are most frequently subject to this insanity, as low-memory Deathless tend to be far less thoughtful and far more mechanical in their behavior. (It's also possible for a mummy who's utterly insane in one life to wake up entirely stable in her next, if she's happened to forget just the right portions of her past.)

Thicker Than Water

Many of the supernatural powers of the Deathless fail to function when wielded against another mummy who was created by the same sorcerer-priest of the Shan'iatu. Most mummies misunderstand this limitation, believing that it applies to those who serve the same Judge of Duat. In either case, however, the fact that they cannot use their greatest magics against one another doesn't mean that they do not, or cannot, oppose one another in other ways.

In the majority of such cases, the conflict becomes a game of pawns, with each of the Deathless using her cultists in an attempt to thwart, or possibly even exterminate, the allies of the other. This ranges from the pulling of political and financial strings to gang battles in the streets, depending on circumstances. Such conflicts can even come down to petty destruction of resources, as one mummy steals a vestige, the other destroys cult property, and so forth. (Although, as mentioned previously, the destruction of a rival's tomb is frowned upon.)

Eventually, however, mummies who hate or oppose each other may find that working at angles doesn't suit them. It's certainly not impossible for two mummies with the same creator to harm one another directly. Their own magics may not work, but the magic of relics, brute strength, and modern firepower remain viable options.

Of course, one might wonder *why* two mummies who serve (or believe they serve) the same Judge might oppose one another. In addition to the fact that the Deathless still have personal goals and personal enmities, consider also that they may not have a choice. A mummy is bound to the purpose for which it was raised, after all, even if that purpose works against the goals of a "brother." Then, of course, there's the fact that many Deathless believe their Judge wouldn't send them back, even at a cultist's call, unless the Judge approved of said purpose; either they assume that the Judges are deliberately pitting the mummies against each other (the old "mysterious ways" defense), or else they believe that it's their rivals who've gone off the reservation. Either way, first purpose comes first.

For however long it lasts, however, few things are more terrifying than the madness of the Deathless. An insane mummy often embraces the most violent, enraged aspects of her nature, potentially reverting to a far more savage epoch. She may well target other mummies in her frenzy, but even if she does not, it's often only other Deathless who can put her down. Note that an insane mummy is not immune to the strictures of the Descent—but she *may* be far gone enough to utterly ignore her summoned purpose, and while that means she'll burn out faster, she can cause a *lot* of harm in the interim. (For more on madness in the Arisen, see "Falling In" on p. 162.)

THE DECEIVED

The Arisen do not fear much. Immortal and nigh-indestructible engines of divine purpose and supernatural vengeance really don't have a lot of bogeymen, and most of those that *do* exist are numbered among the Lifeless. That said, no discussion of antagonists—of things that give even mummies pause—would be complete without mention of the Deceived.

Legends and the sporadic, tattered memories of the Arisen suggest that *six* priestly guilds held sway during the days of Irem; *six* guilds served, and were claimed by, the Judges of Duat. That only five are found amongst the Arisen today is no accident, but the result of a vile and unprecedented betrayal.

It was near the end of Irem's reign that the five guilds united against the sixth, exercising forgotten magics and dark betrayals not merely to kill its adherents, but to utterly destroy them, preventing them from rising again. The reasons for such a terrible act are as varied as are the legends themselves, but every mummy active today *knows* that it was justified. Some claim that the guild had grown too strong, too dangerous; that its members' mastery of the True Name, above and beyond all other forms of magic, granted them too much power over the living, the dead, and the world around them.

And had that been the end of it, they would likely have been forgotten by now—just another relic of Irem forgotten beneath the sands. But of course, it was not.

Rumor and whispers, the Arisen equivalent of campfire tales, suggest that a small portion of the Lost Guild survived. Made up entirely of Serpent-Headed—who, due to their affinity for true name magics, were among the most potent of the guilds—these "Deceived" linger to this day. Perhaps they have found some means of sustaining themselves indefinitely; perhaps they possess mortal cults of their own, capable of calling them back to the lands of the living. Whatever the case, they wander the world still, with a single-minded, all-consuming purpose that has taken them well beyond the bounds of sanity itself.

They exist for revenge—solely and entirely—against the Arisen of the five guilds. *All* Arisen. And if even half the legends of their maddened, True Name-driven magics are true, it's a goal that they may well be potent enough to achieve.

THE LIFELESS

The primary antagonists of the Arisen, the Lifeless are divided into three subcategories: the Amkhata—misbegotten mockeries of necromantic happenstance; the Sadikh—a mummy's closest companion, mummified to serve for eternity; and the Shuankhsen—the Arisen's greatest nemeses, and perhaps the enemy of all life on Earth, they are mummies who serve the Devourer. All these beings have in common with one another is that they are truly Lifeless, one and all.

THE AMKHATA

We know how animals came to be shaped as they are. To the scientific, their shapes are adaptations to their environments, honed over generations of competition for reproductive advantage. To the religious, they received their forms at the behest of a supernatural creator, to fit them for a purpose in the mortal realm. (Some optimists even believe these two views can be reconciled.)

What is one to make of defiances of nature's forms, then? To a scientist, it's a fascinating thought experiment but, at best, a tragic case of crossed categories. A creature that's neither fish nor fowl can't thrive in either sea or sky. In fact, if one's detachment is less than total, the idea is either laughable... or disturbing. Unnatural. Viscerally wrong, in the way that only something outside the natural order can be.

From a religious perspective, it's far clearer. To toy with these shapes is to mock the spiritual world. Any such creature is an abomination, wrongfully unaborted, and the only righteous course is its destruction.

Indeed, in myths worldwide, one finds recombined creatures wreaking havoc, from the ancient Greek fusion of goat, serpent and lion that gave the Western world the name "chimera," to the tongue-footed lizard of the Inakul islands, through the stories of Mothman and the Florida skunk ape. Usually destructive, often singular, it's typically beyond the power of mortal men to slay them. Such tasks fall to those chosen by the gods—meaning, in the modern world, the monstrosities are a nasty surprise for believers in rational thought.

The Arisen have been battling these monsters since the days of Irem, since the first mistake with a relic gave birth to an asp with a tiny bull's head. Sadly, not all who beheld the misbegotten were repulsed. There is always some warped soul who won't look away from the grotesque, but who instead takes delight in its deviance. In the early days, a few twisted beasts were built by jaded priests. But their power soon caught the attention of spiritual misfits who saw in the by-blows of broken vessels a weapon they could raise against the Judges and, perhaps, a new and better way to blaspheme. In their hubris, these degenerate clerics sought to steal the spark of life and the right of shaping from the gods themselves.

Sadly, they succeeded.

TAXONOMY

There are two classes of Amkhat (plural: "Amkhata"), and the distinction between them is quite straightforward. There are lesser, and there are greater. Both are composed of mismatched animal components.

One primary difference between them is scale: Lesser Amkhata have a size appropriate to the smallest of their elements, while for the greater it's based on the largest. Thus, a lesser falcon-headed bull would have a head the size of a typical bird and a comically tiny bovine torso. A greater example of the same would be the size of a Holstein and would have a beak capable of snapping through a bodybuilder's thigh. But Amkhata of either class tend to imperil mortals' spirits more than their bodies in any event. (See "Demoralized Mortals," below.)

Greater and lesser Amkhata are also alike in spending much of their time immaterial, invisible, frustrated, and hungry. They are impotent observers, like the intangible ghosts described on page 209 of **The World of Darkness**. Unlike ghosts, however, Amkhata can become terribly, terribly real. Mostly, they're *amxaibit*—"in shadow." But if exposed to the right sorts of occult energies, they become *amxuti*—"in between the two horizons." Scientists studying the phenomenon use the English words "tangible" and "intangible" in casual discussion, or "dephased" and "hard-expressing" when they want to sound fancy. (Yes, there are scientists studying Amkhata. They work for Last Dynasty International and are described on p. 204.)

DEMORALIZED MORTALS

The problem with a perversion of nature—one problem, anyway—is that people are ill-equipped to cope with it. Scientists say it defies reason, while the faithful define it as a Thing That Should Not Be. Whoever's right, merely looking at an Amkhat can erode a mortal's sanity.

All tangible/amxuti Amkhata are abhorrent. The instinctive human response is like vomiting, only emotional instead of physical. There is no reasoning with this kind of revulsion.

Seeing a lesser Amkhat forces a Willpower roll for ordinary mortals, with failure costing a Willpower point. Greater Amkhata combine that instinctive revulsion with an entirely rational terror of being gored, trampled, and/or devoured; just seeing one costs a mortal a Willpower point, with no roll permitted or required.

Having one nearby and intangible can be bad as well. Amkhata radiate hunger and unease. A lesser Amkhat can be sensed through a successful Intelligence + Empathy roll, though anyone with the Unseen Sense Merit can feel its lust to exist without a roll. This isn't an advantage: The player of any mortal who feels the lurking *thing* has to make a successful Resolve + Composure roll or else his character suffers a –1 penalty to all actions for the remainder of the scene. Greater Amkhata can be sensed the same way, but a mortal who succeeds in detecting one is *automatically* shaken and alarmed, and takes that –1 penalty. Sometimes, ignorance is better.

An Amkhat in amxaibit can't clearly perceive normal matter, but it can sense the emanations of relics and vestiges—feel them like warmth, for a mile out for every dot invested in the vessel. Being dephased, they can easily get near the objects of their desire, but they often can't do anything other than haunt them and freak out the living. Indeed, the presence of Amkhata near relics and vestiges can do as much to contribute to their accursed reputation as their actual curses. Which, of course, only encourages mortals to destroy the 'evil object.'

That's exactly what an Amkhat wants.

Feeding into Activity

At this point, the pertinent question is, "What makes these things shift between amxaibit and amxuti?" The answer is occult energy. Few Arisen are mad or perverse enough to give Sekhem to an Amkhat, though for every level donated the monster remains docile and obedient for about a week. (Each level donated also forces a Descent Roll.) The problem is, a donated level of Sekhem keeps it tangible for a *month*. That's total time, too, so if the Amkhat is trapped or fleeing, it can go intangible and stop the clock, returning to concrete reality at a more propitious time. (Amkhata aren't as smart as humans, but they're cunning and know how to hide.) Donating Sekhem makes the creature tangible immediately.

If a relic of any description breaks near an existing Amkhat—say, within the same room—the Amkhat absorbs any Sekhem contained in it, becoming tangible and staying that way for at least an hour. Each point of relic Sekhem keeps it going for a week. This isn't as quick a process as feeding one, however. The Amkhat slinks out of the shadows at least an hour after the vessel is accidentally wrecked.

Vestiges, weaker and more common, can feed Amkhata as well, but they're thin meals. Amkhata can lap up the Sekhem they need from destroying vestiges, just like relics, but each dot drained off only keeps them hard-expressed for a day, and these energies can't be taken back to master.

Materialized Amkhata almost always attack any identified vessel, often passing into shadow-form to gain access to it. When an Amkhat destroys a relic or vestige directly, the object loses one dot per turn, with the Amkhat gaining the potential to be tangible for a week (if it's a relic) or a day (vestige) per point.

Humans who die in the presence of a dephased Amkhat also permit it to become tangible. A dead human gives an Amkhat an hour of tangibility, regardless of whether the creature killed it or not. So a museum guard who gets killed defending an artifact from looters can feed the Amkhat into reality. If the Amkhat then spends its hour chasing and murdering the thieves, it can gain additional time from them. Again, this isn't an instant materialization. It takes about an hour before the entity becomes tangible.

When they *are* tangible, both greater and lesser Amkhata can attempt to feed directly from the Arisen. To do this, the thing has to establish a grapple (**World of Darkness**, p. 157). On its next turn, make contested rolls for the Amkhat and its victim, both using a dice pool equal to the *victim's* Sekhem. (Clearly, a freshly disinterred mummy is at most risk from either type of Amkhat.) It's like a Descent Roll, except the mummy can use Composure for defense. Lesser Amkhata drain a point from a Pillar for each success garnered above the victim's tally. The victim decides which Pillar takes the hit, or hits. Greater Amkhata siphon off one dot/level of Sekhem(!) if they win the contested roll. If the Amkhat maintains the grapple, it may do the same thing the following turn.

Each Pillar stolen keeps a lesser Amkhat tangible for a day, and again, it can store this up to shift in and out of 'phase.' A greater Amkhat can either spend a stolen Sekhem level to stay tangible for a *week*, or the creature can carry the Sekhem away and deliver it to its master (if it has one).

Generation

Where do Amkhata come from? (Fortunately, it's not, "Well son, when a jackal and a lion love one another very much…") The lesser breed arises when Sekhem is wasted. Any time a relic with Sekhem is destroyed (not used up through use or drained for some other purpose, but physically ruined without first being emptied of Sekhem), there's a chance of a lesser Amkhat generating spontaneously. Largely, this is a matter for Storyteller fiat, though if a set of guidelines is desirable, the Storyteller can roll one die for each point of Sekhem that was in a relic. Any success generates a monster.

Greater Amkhata are another matter entirely. Nothing that vile comes about by honest accident. Using a blasphemous rite passed down through ages, a mortal gifted with even the rudiments of necromancy can build a monster that would make Dr. Frankenstein throw up his hands and say, "I didn't know this was a competition, but you just won."

The first step is to build a pit shaped like an inverted pyramid, at least 20 feet deep and proportioned like the pyramid of Giza. Its interior must be lined with limestone, and its top lip must be perfectly level. Assembling it properly requires an extended Intelligence + Occult roll netting 50 total successes, but the necromancer can take as long as desired to build the thing. It does have to be open to the sky, however. Also, for every Intelligence + Occult roll attempted by the player, his character must spend an hour painting sinister hieroglyphics on the pit in human blood (about one pint of it per roll).

Once he has his bloody hole in the ground, it's time for the second step, acquiring the exterior components, the head and body and limbs. These need to be as fresh as possible, and some experts believe that using limbs from rare or endangered animals increases the chances of success. (The player of a necromancer who opts to sacrifice a Galapagos hawk instead of a common red-tailed hawk, for example, may get a one-die bonus on his final roll, but that could be chalked up to increased confidence.)

With the pieces in hand, the monster builder must excavate as much of the rotting flesh as he can stand and stitch the pieces together in the preferred configuration. The tricky part is, he can't use metal. No surgical steel interior

armatures, no screws or wires to hold the bones together, not even metal knives to take the corpses apart. This process requires a Craft (Taxidermy) roll, with no possibility for bonus dice from using tools. If it fails, the enchanter can still bring the thing to life. It just won't obey him.

Conducting the final resurrection ritual requires a full day and night, specifically one of the yearly equinoxes, and it has to be performed over the stitched pieces, at the bottom of the inverted pyramid. The sorcerer inserts the False Ka (see below) and invests at least one level of Sekhem into the spell. That permits another Intelligence + Occult roll, which requires only a single success.

But to back up a bit, acquiring Sekhem is probably the hard part. A captive mummy is ideal, if the maker can keep one held down while disassembling him and putting certain relevant organs inside the Amkhat. Easiest, however, is to have a relic on hand and to drain that instead.

If all has gone well, the creature comes to life, obeys the orders of its master (much in the way of an exquisitely trained dog), and stays animate for a week per point of Sekhem stolen for it.

The advantages of having a horribly dangerous monster that obeys one's will were fairly obvious in the ancient world. Since an Amkhat is impervious to normal weapons, it was the Irem era's briefcase nuke, except it was reusable and didn't make anyone's hair fall out. In the modern world, Amkhata are still useful for people with enemies, since they're dangerous and nigh-indestructible by normal means. At least one experimenter has derived an aphrodisiac from his animate atrocity's sticky effulgences. In terms of effectiveness, it's what Viagra wants to be when it grows up, and he's made a shocking profit off it. But the people with the absolute greatest motivation for having an Amkhat are those with reason to hate and fear the Arisen. Amkhata can harass cults with near impunity, trash vessels and bring back their Sekhem (which the sorcerer can use to make *more Amkhata*), or go head-to-head with Arisen because the creatures' Sekhem-draining attacks are *stronger* against tougher mummies.

Construction

Whether an Amkhat forms from magical detritus or it's cultivated from rotting meat and bad intentions, it consists of a torso (or Frame), a Head, a False Ka to animate it, and possibly some other limbs. They're universally composed of chunks of the Arisen's holy animals (which just adds insult to the injury of their existence). Mathematically, there are 264 different types of Amkhata, if one differentiates between lesser and greater.

Moreover, all constructed Amkhata are male, even if built from female parts. There is much disturbed speculation about what would happen if a viable breeding mother Amkhat got made.

Each possible component has an Egyptian translation in parentheses. Amkhat names are often just strings of description—*Peh Tetasu* literally means "Lion's Head, Serpent's Body." Others have more evocative names like *Teser Sa Perfent* ("Red Son, Coming Forth From the Worm"), but further examples are beyond the purview of this document.

The Frame

The body of the beast determines its Size, Strength, Stamina, and Dexterity (and therefore its Health). It dictates Speed (with separate species factors). It may also offer other advantages or disadvantages.

Bull-bodied (Ahasu): A lesser Amkhat with a bull's body has Size 4, Strength 3, Dexterity 1, Stamina 3, Speed 7 (species factor 3), and Health 7. A greater ahasu has Size 7, Strength 6, Dexterity 1, Stamina 6, Speed 10 (species factor 3), and Health 13. These are the burly bruisers of the Amkhata.

Falcon-bodied (Herasu): Small and quick, not all falcon-bodied Amkhat can free-fly. They need functioning wings

This is Important

Amkhata, lesser and greater, are distortions of reality. The rules of physics and logic fray in their presence. This is most blatantly obvious when it comes to harming them.

If you battle these patchworks, what you bring to the fight matters much, much less than what you are. One of the Arisen inflicts lethal damage when attacking an Amkhat (unless he applies an Utterance or Vessel that would do aggravated damage), no matter if she's using her fists, a khopesh, or an AK-47.

For other supernatural entities, any occult-infused attack does lethal damage, unless the whole purpose of it is to do aggravated. But if a vampire or werewolf shoots an Amkhat or hits it with a commonplace Louisville Slugger, the damage is managed as if the attack came from a mortal.

Mortals do a point of bashing damage with every attack that hits. Choice of weapon doesn't matter. Hit it with a cinderblock? One bashing. Artillery strike on its location? That's a lot of work for one point of bashing damage.

There are only two exceptions to the rule that "mortals do 1 bashing to Amkhata." One, which is incredibly unlikely, is that the mortal has access to a nuclear weapon. They're qualitatively different from ordinary munitions, and any Amkhat at ground zero of a nuke loses all its stored occult energy and is forced into amxaibit.

The other exception is if the mortal has a relic that can be used as a weapon, in which case it does lethal damage (or as designated in its description). That's even less likely. After all, current estimates put the number of nukes in the world somewhere around 20,000. You think that many Iremite magic weapons survived into the current era?

for that, as described below under "Limbs." But even those who can't soar can make darting, wing-aided leaps of 10-20 feet. The lesser possess Size 1, Strength 1, Dexterity 7, Stamina 2, Speed 15 (species factor 7), and Health 3. The greater range from Size 3 (for jackal- or serpent-heads) to Size 5 (for lion- or bull-heads) with Strength 3, Dexterity 7, Stamina 3, Speed 17 (species factor 7), and Health 6-8.

Jackal-bodied (Sabasu): The lesser sabasu can pass for a small dog in low light, while the greater might pass for a big dog in very thick fog. They're fast and skittish, but endlessly patient with vicious harassment. Lesser jackal-bodied have Size 2, Strength 2, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Speed 14 (species factor 7), and Health 5. The greater range from Size 4 (if serpent- or falcon-headed) up to Size 5 (for the bigger craniums). Greater sabasu get Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4, Speed 16 (species factor 8), and Health 8-9.

Lion-bodied (Maasu): A good blend of swiftness and power, the lesser maasu has Size 3, Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Speed 16 (species factor 8), and Health 5. The greater lion-bodied Amkhat has Size 6, Strength 6, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3, Speed 21 (species factor 10), and Health 9.

Serpent-bodied (Tetasu): Not as quick as the lion- or falcon-bodied, the tetasu advantage is that its entire body is a gripping surface. It can attack twice per turn, once by striking with the head and once by grappling like a constrictor. If it grapples to inflict damage, the tetasu does lethal instead of bashing. Lesser specimens have Size 2, Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Speed 6 (species factor 2), and Health 4. The greater have Size 5, Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Speed 11 (species factor 4), and Health 8.

The Head

This component determines behavior, to some extent, and also what set of jaws is trying to clamp on you. This aspect of the Amkhat determines its Initiative, Stealth, and Brawl ratings, along with the damage it inflicts. (All Amkhata bite, except for the Xex type, which gore with their horns.)

Bull-headed (Xex): A lesser bull-head's horn-span and damage depend on body size. They all have Initiative 4, Stealth 0, and Brawl 3, but those with smaller bodies do 1(L), while those with the bigger bodies do 2(L). Greater Amkhata keep the same Initiative and Brawl, doing 3(L) damage.

Falcon-headed (Amax): Both types of amax have Brawl 3, Stealth 2, and Initiative 8. The chomp of a raptor's beak stings even when it's falcon sized, but when it's scaled up, it becomes far, far worse. That's why the lesser amax has 2 (B) for its damage, while the greater has 3 (L). Moreover, falcon-headed Amkhata can automatically see through supernatural forms of invisibility and disguise, and can even see intangible creatures such as ghosts and Amkhata in amxaibit. Their eyes are that keen.

Jackal-headed (Sabxent): Greater and lesser jackal-heads share Brawl 4, Stealth 3, and Initiative 6. The lesser's bite does 1 (L), and the greater's does 2 (L). When trying to track or pursue a creature, a sabxent gets a +5 equipment bonus, thanks to its keen nose. Moreover, it can track vessels this way.

Those Other Numbers

For all their terrifying appearance, Amkhata are animalistic in their thoughts and outlook. Assume they have Intelligence 1, Wits 4, and Resolve 3. For social stuff, Presence 3, Manipulation 0, and Composure 2. Skills? Other than Brawl and Stealth, they make do with Athletics 3 and Survival 2. Give them Willpower 1, and you're ready to go.

Lion-headed (Peh): Quick and aggressive, both lesser and greater peh Amkhata have Brawl 5, Stealth 2, and Initiative 6. The bite of the lesser lion jaw is still a respectable 2(L), while the greater lion bite is 4(L). All greater peh have the Lion's Maw limb as described below. It's a package deal with the face.

Serpent-headed (Tetxent): Both classes of snake-headed Amkhat have Brawl 4, Stealth 3, and Initiative 7. The lesser's bite does 1 (L), while the greater's does 2 (L). Not all tetxent Amkhat have the benefit of the Serpent's Tooth limb (see below). There's really no way to tell except to survive a bite and seeing if the wound starts to blacken from venom.

The Limbs

Some Amkhata are the basic model—a head, a body, something horrible under the skin, al0l ready to madden and mutilate. Yet others are even more jumbled-together. They have replacement limbs. Bad news, that: Being bitten by a lion's mouth is bad enough, but a lion's mouth full of cobra venom?

So, a given Amkhat doesn't need any of the below, but could have one, or several. Their effects are the same for both lesser and greater types.

Any given Amkhat can only have *one* of the following three limbs: Bird Feet, Jackal's Paw, or Lion's Claws.

Bird Feet (Sa): The creature's running Speed is decreased by 2.

Functioning Wings (Tenh): It flies properly—gaining altitude, circling, landing easily, changing directions, etc. Its species factor for flight is +10.

Jackal's Paw (Sabkep): Its feet leave no tracks. Not in fine sand or sticky mud or powder snow. One might be able to follow it easily by its foul aroma, or by twigs that bent and broke as it charged by, but paw prints are a lost cause.

Lion's Claws (Maaukep): It can make an additional attack every turn. The claws do 2(L).

Lion's Maw (Maabeh): This is a big mouth full of fangs that does 4(L) damage on bites. On a lesser Amkhat with a tiny body, this takes the form of a grotesquely disproportionate set of jaws.

Serpent's Tooth (Tetabeh): When it bites its target, venom is injected into the wound. It's not classy cobra venom that kills one with a clean brain-strike either, it's closer to the agonizing, blood-rotting hemotoxin common to the false horned vipers of the Sinai Peninsula. The poison adds 2(L) damage to bites.

The False Ka

The blood is the life, so it's only sensible that creatures made by irresponsibly matching body forms have some ghastly mockery running under their skins. Instead of life, every Amkhat is animated by the actions of crawling, scurrying vermin.

The only sensible thing to do with an Amkhat is destroy it (if you're one of the Arisen, anyway: The sensible thing for mortals is to run). The horrid thing about these false souls is that, once the skin ruptures, they pour out to pester and attack. The nature of that attack varies, but at least they're consistent between greater and lesser types.

Bee Heart (Batab): One can hear them buzzing in there, and a few drones are constantly coming out the thing's mouth or ears. But once the Amkhat is struck, the hive at its heart swarms. When the bees attack (and they can attack even if the Amkhat hasn't been hurt yet), they automatically do a point of bashing damage, unless the target possesses supernatural armor or beekeeping gear. (Typical body armor is built to stop bullets and knives, not tiny crawling venom-sacs.) The bees can attack people up to 50 feet away from the main body, too. But the good news is that bees die when they sting, so after inflicting 10 points of bashing damage, they're only a nuisance. Moreover, they can't attack if someone's producing a lot of smoke—the dedicated apiary device, a couple cigars, or a heartily-waved torch can do in a pinch. (Whatever happens, DO NOT EAT THE HONEY!)

Centipede Heart (Sepaab): When centipedes attack, they're like the scorpions (see below), except they only do 1(B) damage. But the sepaab have a rather nasty sneak attack unavailable to other Amkhata. A sepaab Amkhat can release a couple dozen silent centipedes from its mouth, which scuttle off (roll a 10d pool for them to remain silent). If a person's awake, he probably notices as soon as the first one gets near him, so they're only really dangerous to sleeping people. But if that muddle of centipedes can all get close at the same time and strike at once, the player of the person attacked has to roll the character's Stamina + Resolve against that same 10-die pool. Every success for the centipedes means a full day spent in a coma. Fortunately for the Arisen, this attack only works on living humans.

Fungal Heart (Pehab): Awesome, something that doesn't sting when it's cut! The Amkhata stuffed full of foul-smelling fungi just release clouds of spores when attacked instead. Roll five dice for the spore cloud, while the players of anyone standing next to it roll their characters' Stamina + Resolve, reflexively contesting an infection. If the cloud succeeds, a rash and itching infection develop over the course of the next week. Warm, living entities recover after a week with some over-the-counter ointment. But the undead develop a mycoid odor the first week and, after that, some black-gray patches on their skin. This gives a three-die penalty to face-to-face social interactions where looking like one's decaying is a drawback. However, the infection can be expelled at the cost of any two Pillars.

Scorpion Heart (Serqab): Hitting a serqab causes it to bleed scorpions. If the attacker has any armor rating on her feet, they can't strike. Even if the player specified that her character was wearing heavy work boots with her jeans tucked in, she's probably okay. Otherwise, they automatically sting once per turn if one's standing next to the Amkhat, doing 1(L) damage with their poison.

BEHAVIOR

Lesser Amkhata are uncomplicated. They seek vessels and try to smash them to access the vital Sekhem inside, but except for jackal-heads, they're pretty aimless about it unless one's obviously close by. As they dry out and get closer to intangibility, they start attacking people to stay manifested, and hide intangibly when there are more humans around than they can kill in one attempt. They even attack mummies if they think they can get away with it, but they are unlikely to charge if there are multiple Arisen present. There are rumors about rites that let mortal sorcerers take control of lesser Amkhata, but in all honesty, someone bloodthirsty enough could probably train one by keeping it active purely through human sacrifice.

Greater Amkhata are obedient to their makers, and some have been legacies to generations of same. But once their last master dies, they go rogue and pretty much live like their lesser brethren, except they're a bit cockier about how many humans they can kill in a go, and if they're hungry enough, they might try to get the drop on a pair of Arisen or even a trio.

EXAMPLES

Lesser Amkhata are actually less common than their greater brethren. More's the pity. But while most Amkhata are of the greater variety, bound in service to their masters, there are some rogues of both types running around wild.

Herasu Sabxent

Sharona Bersten was a busy, happy Seattle-area tattoo artist with fewer neuroses than most of her friends before she saw that goddamn papyrus. She caught sight of an ancient scroll at the museum and sketched some of its symbols, especially a big, badass scorpion. Then she went back and sketched it again. Then she hid in the bathroom after closing and smashed its glass case before running away with it.

The scroll is, of course, a vessel, a vestige that inspires feelings of profundity and introspection (as its effect) but also tends to make people paranoid and covetous (as its curse). Sharona has been keeping it in her messenger bag since the theft and carefully monitoring the papers for news, but she's starting to hope she's gotten away clean.

She hasn't, though it's not the cops who are closest. It's a lesser Amkhat, and it's making everyone around her twitchy and uncomfortable as it sniffs around the corners of reality, looking for a way in. It may get its wish when the museum's private detectives get a latent print off the broken case and can demonstrate that it was definitely taken from the *inside* of the glass. (The museum director was not immune to the vestige's effects and is sparing no expense to recover it.)

Maybe she tries to destroy the evidence when the cops show up. Maybe one of her biker clients, edgy from the



curse and the Amkhat, snaps when she jabs the needle in, or maybe he makes a dumb move with a gun when the police pull up to talk to *her*. But whether she dies, or a cop, or if it's just the scroll that burns, everyone in that shop is in for a nasty shock when Herasu Sabxent materializes.

In addition to a jackal head and a falcon body, her Amkhat has a centipede heart and functioning wings.

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3; Strength 1, Dexterity 7, Stamina 2; Presence 3, Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 4, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Willpower: 1

Initiative: 6

Defense: 7

Speed: 18

Size: 1

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	1(L)	6
Centipedes!	1(B)	Automatic to anyone standing beside the Amkhat with unprotected feet, if it's injured.

Health: 3

Serqab Tetasu

Iraq wasn't a great place to be in the last couple decades, but Ali Temiz did what he could to get by. He mouthed Ba'athist platitudes when Saddam was in power, made the sign of the cross to the invading American troops, and forged both Sunni- and Shia-sounding identity cards to help him pass without comment. But his real loyalty is to Ali Temiz.

Ali's ancestors were evil sorcerers, and in addition to a profound contempt for all major religions, they left him a greater Amkhat.

Being around Serqab Tetasu his whole life has left Ali a bit jumpy, but that's hardly a flaw in a region notorious for IEDs. Indeed, Ali has a ghoulish reputation as a bomb spectator, frequently seen arriving in haste at the site of the latest disaster. This, of course, is how he keeps Serqab Tetasu ready to protect him: He tries to arrive while the hubbub's still going on, finds a secluded location, commands the lion-snake to emerge from the shadows, and has it come back and fade from sight after murdering enough people to maintain a few more hours of vicious life.

Unfortunately, Ali recently got sick, collapsed a few blocks from the Green Zone, and when hospitalized, was found to be in possession of several forged ID cards. That aroused suspicions, drawing a foreign contractor with CIA contacts to check him over. Ali was recognized from photos at three separate bomb sites and renditioned to a former French Foreign Legion base in the Republic of Djibouti, over 1,500 miles from home. He's still delirious, but when his fever breaks, his first words will be for his Amkhat.

The creature has a lion's head and a massive serpent's body, and it bleeds scorpions. It also has the Serpent's Tooth limb.

Attributes: Intelligence 1, Wits 4, Resolve 3; Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 3, Manipulation 0, Composure 2

Skills: Athletics 3, Brawl 5, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Willpower: 1

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 11

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	6(L)	15
Body Crush	0(L)	9 (may attack with this and bite every turn)
Scorpions!	1(L)	Automatic to anyone standing beside the Amkhat with unprotected feet, if it's injured.

Health: 8

THE SADIKH

The Sadikh are half-alive servants created by the Arisen and sometimes interred with them at death. Chained to the same cycle of death and rebirth as their masters, the Sadikh often sleep while the mummy serves the Judges of Duat in death. When his master returns to the living world, a Sadikh awakens, as well—sometimes unaware that his life has been interrupted.

COMPANIONS IN DEATH

Called companion, his is a sleep filled with an unlived life that makes him unaware that his brief periods of slavish service are all the waking life that will ever be afforded to him. His dream life occupies his periods of death with the mundane life of a mortal. While this dream gives comfort to the companion and masks his transitions between life and death, it also contains the germ of his eventual undoing as the inconsistencies of his dream begin to crumble under the weight of his never-ending sacrifice and service.

To create a Sadikh, an Arisen must have a willing retainer, who subjects himself to a dark ritual called the Rite of the Engraved Heart and accepts the mummy as his eternal master. The nature and proceedings of this ritual differ according to the Arisen's guild, but all require the subject to freely impart his true name to his new master, who in turn mystically inscribes his own eternal name on the companion's heart. Arisen of the Sesha-Hebsu guild sometimes incorporate stylized contracts or exchanged scraps of papyrus (to be swallowed after being marked by the exchanged true names), while the Maa-Kep often give their Sadikh a symbol of office as a gift, such as a signet ring or a rod. Most companions understand that they will become immortal slaves, but few realize that, as the Arisen rests in death, their own bodies will wither and their minds will dream of a false life until the mummy's return. *The ritual to create the Sadikh costs the Arisen a Willpower dot, and an Arisen can never have more than one active companion at a time.*

DREAMS OF SERVICE

Although the Rite of the Engraved Heart can only be performed with a truly willing subject, it still condemns the companion to eternal servitude and a false life shorn of real friends or kin. *The act of creating a companion is itself a sin against Memory, and any Arisen with a Memory rating of 6 or higher must make a degeneration check at that rating upon completing the ritual.* This potential loss of Memory is somewhat mitigated by the fact that, in the future, the Arisen will have a faithful undead servant (who gains the Witness Merit, see p. 83) willing to do her dirty work.

Unlike lesser retainers, a companion is a natural extension of an Arisen's will. He responds to his master's commands with an easy deference and usually only challenge her assumptions when her frail memory impedes her sound judgment. This loyalty is not something imposed upon the companion by the Rite of the Engraved Heart. It is the love and devotion that was freely given by the Sadikh at the moment of his acquiescence to eternal service. Passions magically inscribed on the companion's soul hold powerful sway over his fears and reservations; eternally preserved, much like his flesh and bone. Although disagreements about methods may occur, a companion will only actively defy his master if he believes she is risking herself needlessly or that her Memory has finally been ground down by the passing of the ages. *As a last resort, an Arisen may force her will on her companion by spending a Willpower point. For the rest of the scene, her Sadikh cannot countermand her, and any Mental or Social Skill rolls made for her to convince him of a specific course of action are treated as if each of the dice in the dice pool rolled a success.*

The dream that sustains a companion's mind as he awaits his master's return is known as the "false life." It is a mystically constructed reality of simple pleasures and everyday stresses that exists only in the companion's heart and mind, built on the foundation of his most recent experiences in the real world. Through the false life, the Sadikh soothes the psychic wounds he has likely experienced in the Arisen's service and keeps his general knowledge of the living world relatively fresh. This dream is not a life fully lived. In the false life, the companion is simply marking time: days and years pass barely noticed, as he is ever eager to serve his master again. Years lived in ages too far past to have been in the companion's lifetime are remembered as stories told by a father or a knowing cultist. Family and friends in the false life are pastiches of people from the Sadikh's memory, lost loves and kind uncles blended into anodyne caricatures that are quickly put aside when he feels the exhilarating call of his undead master. It is only when his Arisen lord is near that he feels truly alive. While it is unlikely that an Arisen master would enlighten her companion concerning his plight, it would be an even rarer Sadikh that would believe her. He would likely dismiss such talk as the ramblings of an ancient and confused mind that has not yet found enough purchase in this life to speak with clarity. Since the companion takes pride in his role as a guide and councilor in the early days after a mummy has newly risen, when her thoughts and memories are scattered and unclear, he is accustomed

to ominous and disconnected pronouncements of this kind. But such willful denial cannot last forever. The seeds of doubt eventually grow into choking weeds that even the false life is unable to prune or conceal. As the world changes with greater and greater speed around him, the discrepancies between his false life and the real world have a tendency to compound themselves. After all, no dream can last forever.

Unliving Vestiges

Sadikh are touchstones of the Arisen's long existence—walking reminders of their greatest triumphs and tribulations. Like a vestige, each is an embodiment of the past, specifically the memories of the mummy's time in service to the Judges of Duat. Companions remember their true lives well, and their memories do not suffer quite the same degenerative effects as their masters'. While their false lives are remembered with some haziness, this is because it is only when they are with their masters that companions truly feel alive and valued. Only their time *together* is of real importance, and that easily justifies the haziness of the work-a-day life they dream when their beloved masters are entombed in death. This makes companions more mutable and adaptable than their masters, but also less mentally resilient. As the ages pass, companions will quickly and subconsciously change their clothing and speech to fit the trends of the day, but as the years roll on, the horrors they have witnessed and the contradictions of their dream lives will likewise catch up with them eventually. Sadikh are only reflections of their eternal masters' unnatural power and cannot indefinitely endure the rigors of immortality, as they seem to do. Whether in a decade, a century, or a millennium, a companion must eventually succumb to the tide of time.

The Black Caul

Most of the time, a cult will position itself so that performing the Call (the rite that summons an Arisen) is no more involved or costly than using one of the mummy's own vessels as focus: Doing so summons the mummy with ease, ready to fulfill her purpose, and without the vessel being permanently drained. When no vessels are at hand, however, only two options remain for the average cult: Disturb the mummy's remains, or call upon her connection to her companion. As we know, doing the former only summons the mummy for a short time, and even then, she arises conscious of precious little beyond her need for bloody vengeance. It's risky, and generally only good for some small measure of information exchange before the mummy once again returns (irritable) to death.

The Sadikh, however, provides a more reliable way to summon an Arisen soul. Since companions are essentially unliving vestiges, tied to their Arisen masters, they can perform a special version of the summoning rite—some call this act "lifting the black caul"—that replaces the Sekhem usually offered by the vessel with that bound in a living soul. The offering needn't be voluntary, but if it isn't, performing the rite is murder and will thus prompt a degeneration check for the companion. As a last, desperate alternative, the Sadikh can make himself the offering—the Arisen rises to find her companion dead on the floor in front of her.

Descents begun through a lifting of the black caul tend to be nasty affairs, as a rule; some say it's as though a shadow loomed over the entire life cycle from its first dire moments. Confusion and doubt abound, degeneration checks come with an alarming frequency, and the Arisen finds it hard to take any joy in her purpose.

Borrowed Power

A Sadikh gains several advantages from his new form. He no longer ages, and even death cannot hold him for long if his master wishes to be reunited with him. Furthermore, a Sadikh gains the three-dot Iron Stamina Merit; he takes bashing damage from all non-magical attacks; and his hardy form continues to take actions normally up until the point that all of his wound boxes are filled with aggravated damage. Any Sadikh who takes enough aggravated damage to fill all of his wounds dies. At this point, the years he has so falsely cheated catch up with him all at once, marking his corpse with the ravages of time over a matter of minutes.

Once his body dies, a portion of a companion's soul lives on in his master, and for a year and a day thereafter, the Arisen can call her faithful servant back from the dead. A mummy who has lost a companion can return him to the living world by touching a portion of the Sadikh's remains and breathing a portion of her own life force back into them. *The resurrection of a Sadikh costs the Arisen a Willpower dot, and his body reforms almost instantly, healing a number of aggravated wounds equal to the mummy's current Sekhem rating.* If his master is unwilling or unable to reconstitute him, a fragment of his soul remains within the mummy, a shadow of a memory that dims but never flickers out. When a companion dies and the last of his essence resides within the master, she can call upon her lost follower's name to sharpen her remembrance of their time together and steel herself against the compromises she must often make in service to the Judges. *Once per story, the Arisen gains a +2 die bonus to a single Memory degeneration check if she calls upon the name of one of her deceased Sadikh.*

Entwined Fates

Sadikh are treated as having a Sekhem rating equal to half of their master's current total (round up), but only for the purposes of resisting supernatural powers. This magical resistance is always rendered inert against the Arisen who created the companion. Thus, a companion becomes more susceptible to the mystical powers of others as his master weakens,

and the Sekhem that drives the Arisen drains from her. Companions are immune to the effects of the Sickness, of course, and can innately sense the Sekhem of their master. As the master's power ebbs, the call of a companion's false life strengthens. After seeing to his master's proper entombment, a Sadikh will continue to be active for a handful of days, possibly seeing to the last arrangements of his Arisen's security. Within a week's time, a fugue state will overcome the companion, and he will seek out a secure place to slip back into his deathlike trance, usually a prearranged shelter at some distance from the master's tomb that was prepared before or during the Rite of the Engraved Heart. These places of rest will likely contain practical possessions such as clothing, money, weaponry, and possibly even a rugged vehicle capable of withstanding a few years of dereliction. While some companions rest within their masters' tombs, most have an unassuming shelter, an abandoned building, or a shallow grave that they go to unthinkingly, as the reflected life force of their Arisen masters cease to sustain them. Their bodies shrivel and desiccate until they look like poorly preserved mummies themselves. When a companion's master returns to this world, he awakens immediately and unerringly seeks her out. Unlike his return to the dream of the false life, a companion's awakening is sudden, and his body's rejuvenation is nearly instantaneous.

Some Arisen task their most trusted Sadikh to act as active agents while they yet slumber. Before returning to her rest, a mummy commands the Sadikh to complete up to three tasks (spending a Willpower point in the process). Only once all three tasks are completed will the dream of the false life rise to claim the companion's consciousness. These tasks might be open-ended, so that the Sadikh will remain active throughout his master's rest. Such prolonged periods of activity without his master's guidance can harm a Sadikh's grip on reality, however, as he will have more time for introspection and the respite of the false life will be denied him. *Sadikh who remain active for longer than a week or two while their masters sleep suffer a –1 penalty to all degeneration checks; if they remain active for longer than a year, the penalty increases to –2.*

Beyond his own abilities, a companion can also call on his master's powers. While an Arisen master is aware when her Sadikh draws on her magic, she is unaware of which specific power is being called on until it's used. An Arisen may forbid her Sadikh from drawing on any of her powers, but she cannot delineate which powers he may draw upon and which powers he cannot. *Once per scene, a companion can use one of his master's Affinities or Utterances.* He may access any Affinity his master possesses and any Utterance his master has ever used in his presence. If she allows her servant to draw upon her power thusly, any Pillar or Willpower costs are paid by the Arisen, not the Sadikh. Any rolls required by the power are based on the Sadikh's statistics, however; Sadikh are assumed to have Pillar ratings equal to their masters' for the purpose of these rolls.

Five Pillars Strong

A Sadikh can be further empowered by his master's Pillars if his Arisen has achieved a high level of insight in one or more of them. The following additional abilities are granted to a companion when one or more of his master's Pillars reach a rating of 5. A Sadikh may benefit from all of these powers if his master has devoted herself so fully to her five Pillars.

Devoted Heart (Ab 5): The companion's resolve is empowered by his master's boundless heart. The Sadikh gains +2 dice when his player spends a Willpower point for extra dice on a roll, for a total of +5 dice. This ability does not stack with similar powers that augment the number of dice a spent Willpower point provides. Additionally, attempts to empathize with, intimidate, or persuade the companion incur a –2 penalty. Lastly, once per scene, the Sadikh may give his master any Willpower he recovers from fulfilling his Virtue or Vice, instead of gaining the benefit, himself.

Loyal Soul (Ba 5): The Sadikh can sense his surroundings and any impending danger with his imbued spirit. He can see well in the dark, ignoring up to –2 in penalties incurred from darkness. Also, the Sadikh gains the Danger Sense Merit and now grants a non-cumulative +2 bonus to his master's initiative rolls whenever they are together.

Perfected Body (Ka 5): The Sadikh gains the Quick Healer Merit, as his living essence draws power from his master. In addition, once per turn, when they are together (defined as line of sight or a number of yards equal to the master's Sekhem rating x5, whichever's farther), a Sadikh's master may transfer 2 bashing wounds or 1 lethal wound to him as a reflexive action. The Sadikh cannot accept new wounds from his master if he currently has any aggravated wounds.

Reverent Name (Ren 5): The companion may speak his master's name and converse with her over any distance. While the companion's portion of the conversation can be overheard, his master's response cannot be so intruded upon, even by supernatural powers. If his Arisen master wishes, she may speak through the Sadikh and briefly share his senses. When they are together, the Arisen may borrow a Skill known to her companion for one scene. The Sadikh cannot use this Skill while his master makes use of it, and while the skill cannot be used to activate a power, it can be used in conjunction with a power that modifies the Skill's outcome. Thus, a power that enhances a mummy's Strength could be used with a companion's borrowed Weaponry Skill, but a power that required a Wits + Weaponry + Ren roll to activate could not be.

Shadowed Hand (Sheut 5): The Sadikh gains a permanent +2 bonus to all Stealth and Larceny rolls made for him, and he can magically disguise his face once per scene through the expenditure of a Willpower point. This power cannot be used to mimic someone else, as the Sadikh has no way to control what face others see. And finally, once per scene, when the companion is with his master, the Arisen may switch places with him by stepping into a shad-

ow as a reflexive action. Just before the Arisen emerges, the Sadikh seems to lean or sink into a nearby shadow, as though drawn by a vacuum.

Nidal Alhindi

Quotes: *"As my ancestors served you, so do I. My father's memories guide me, but I sometimes forget where his mind begins and my mind ends. As always mistress, your presence centers me on my purpose. I shall doubt no more."*

"The fighting draws nearer. We must get you to safety."

Background: Nidal grew up in London at the end of the 19th century. His was father was a diplomat, and Nidal's interest in academia eventually led him to study at Oxford. It was as a researcher that Nidal first came to Egypt and discovered the cult that would become the center of his life and his path to immortality. The Arisen Uhm Bennu took Nidal as her companion after he orchestrated her escape into Libya in 1926 and later reconstituted her cult in Benghazi. Since then, Nidal has been at Uhm Bennu's side the four times she has risen. A particularly harrowing encounter with a Shuankhsen and its minions has haunted Nidal since the 1960s, and his mind obsessively turns back to the night he almost lost his beloved mistress. It was the turning over in his mind of what he could have done differently that eventually led him to begin to doubt his false life. Nidal attempts to push his doubts aside as Uhm Bennu has awoken and has a great need for him. The remnants of her cult called upon her soon after the 2011 uprising in Libya turned into a civil war. Unfortunately, she was unable to protect them from the criminals that set upon them as they prepared her vessels for transport. Uhm Bennu's cult destroyed and many of her vessels stolen, Nidal urges her to let him guide her to Italy or Chad, where they can summon any surviving cultists and begin the hard work of recovering her stolen artifacts while she still has the power to do so.

Description: Nidal's large hands and wide shoulders telegraph his physicality. At nearly six feet tall, he can be an imposing presence when his master is absent. His green irises and swarthy skin give him a Turkish look to Western eyes, but most Libyans assume he is a Berber from the Western parts of their country, as his Libyan accent and idiom is flawless.



Storytelling Hints: Nidal is a quiet man. He has come to believe that he is from a long line of servants who have served Uhm Bennu and that his mismatched memories may be inherited from his father or some unknown uncle. He takes great pride in this delusion and tries to act the part of the honorable and dignified companion. When his doubts overtake him, his features take on a brooding cast, and he nervously asks circuitous questions of his mistress.

Concept: Unraveling Companion

Master: Uhm Bennu

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 2; Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 1, Manipulation 2, Composure 3

Skills: Academics 2 (Egyptology), Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Crafts (Repair) 3, Drive 2, Larceny 2, Politics 1, Stealth 3 (Shadows), Streetwise 3 (Black Market), Survival 2, Weaponry 2

Merits: Fighting Style: Boxing 4, Iron Stamina 3 (B), Language 3 (Arabic), Resources 2

Pillar Abilities: Perfected Body, The Master's Hand

Sekhem: 4, only for resisting the supernatural

Willpower: 5

Morality: 3

Virtue: Faith (Nidal believes that Uhm Bennu is a champion of the greater good and that, even if he must commit violence in her name, the world will be healed by her great work in the end. Nidal has a limited understanding of the Judges and, thus, a similarly limited knowledge of what purpose all of his toil serves, but he trusts his master's faith in the Judges is not misplaced.)

Vice: Pride (Nidal is incomparably proud of his place by Uhm Bennu's side. When her cult was still extant, he lorded over her followers and allowed some of his more arrogant impulses to hold sway over him. Nidal may have been partly responsible for the cult's inability to gather a larger following, a lack of numbers that may prove fatal to the cult, as so many members were slain in the early days of the Libyan uprising.)

Initiative: 6

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Knife	1(L)	5
Pistol	2(L)	2
Punch	3(B)	6

Armor: 0

Health: 8

Notes: Equipment—Knife, pistol, black track suit, sneakers, old jeep, bundles of cash.

THE SHUANKHSEN

The Priests of Duat taught their subjects everything but the foundations of sorcery. Others might learn by rote, but only the Shan'iatu could formulate original spells. But this was not the only reason to conceal the Art, for the sorcerer-priests could never reveal the two principles embedded in its core.

Nothing can be achieved without pain. No being may deny that price.

To create 42 gods? Such a feat demands a high price, indeed. The Shan'iatu paid in slaves, prisoners, and outcasts—all given to Ammut for the sacred rite of Atumra ("Closing the Mouth"). This was not their first choice (they weren't sadists), but no matter how devoutly they desecrated corpses or tortured ghosts, their experiments on the dead did not satisfy the Devourer. In the sunset days of the Nameless Empire, the Shan'iatu devised the Rite of Return so that servants would obey them in the living world long after they won the thrones of Duat. They devised a variant to pay Ammut's due—a spell for killing grounds, not individual sarcophagi. Instead of the intricately programmed, cyclic Sekhem endowed by the Rite of Return, it gave the sacrifices simple shrouds of power to merely keep murdered souls from escaping. This meant, however, that the Devourer could do as she pleased with such castoffs, for they were, in everything but name, offerings to *her*.

So the Shuankhsen were born, and Ammut feasted on their pain. The Shan'iatu believed the sacrifice was nothing more than the cost of doing business, but by specifying the method of payment, the Devourer turned it into an *investment*. The Shuankhsen could return to the living world, die again... and be fed upon again. And as Ammut inspected the memories of the tortured dead, she developed an affection for warmth and the wholeness of life. It, too, would be devoured. Her slaves would open the way.

SLAVES IN EVERY WORLD

Every Shuankhsen was once a member of one of Irem's underclass: a slave, prisoner, leper, or foreigner who refused to worship Irem's gods and Judges. When the Arisen remember their first deaths, temples and solemn chants often enter their minds' eyes. The Shuankhsen died without such overt ceremony, though they might have heard the inhuman screams of Shan'iatu sorcery from a distance... before the massacre. They were bound, thrown into pits, and buried alive. They were cut to pieces by soldiers and crushed beneath collapsing temples.

The Shuankhsen descended to Duat in mobs, wearing the wounds that killed them. Without the instincts and occult initiations given to the Arisen by the sorcerer-priests, most did not fully understand that they were even dead. Slaughterers came to them like herdsmen, driving the panicked mass into deep canyons lit by standing flames. They ran until the walls grew so tall the sky become impossible to see, and dark as the flames grew distant and cold. Demons cut the stragglers to pieces, leaving a fraction to enter the black heart of the Devourer.

Each of the Shuankhsen remembers the Devourer in a different scenario—a woman in the skin of a lioness, a great beast in the desert, or on the throne of a sorcerer-priest—but each memory ends the same way. She tears the sacrifice's heart from his chest, dragging the rest of the soul out with it. Then she *eats*. Bite by bite, parts of the soul die forever until a sliver of heart-flesh remains, anchoring the last surviving portion within.

This, too, is Ammut's. The Shuankhsen know that they are hers utterly, and when they rise, they *remember*. They remember it all.

In the Shadow of Greatness

As the Arisen rise, so do the Shuankhsen. Their Sekhem responds to the Sothic Wheel, driving them into new incarnations. Some weave cults around themselves, or build tombs for safety and power. They create these less easily than the Arisen, however, as they awaken with less Sekhem and fewer magical powers. The Shan'iatu never intended them to return to the living world, and with reduced Sekhem and no training, Utterances did not come naturally. But across history, the Shuankhsen learned their cousins' strategies. Some developed them independently. Most won them from the Arisen themselves, hunters adapting to a prey rich in Sekhem, Pillars, and occult knowledge.

Yet even if the Shuankhsen could find vessels and occult tutelage to sustain them, they would still pursue the Arisen. The Shan'iatu's favorites may not remember that they wielded brand, whip, and blade for their lords, but the Shuankhsen do. Every Shuankhsen knows that mummies were not the elite they often imagine themselves to be, but a fellow caste of workers who *could* have made common cause with Irem's underclass but chose not to. It is only appropriate that the ones who gave so little in life should redress the balance after death—after as many deaths as it takes, in fact. As ages pass and Arisen develop their cults, the Shuankhsen's rage grows. Instead of resisting the old masters, they took up the whip for them again.

They are Ammut's slaves now, but if they hate the Devourer, they rarely waste time saying so, much less trying to throw off her yoke. Some worship her outright, but more simply mouth the words given them by her zealots. She gave them the means to avenge themselves and binds them to a common cause. Perhaps that justifies the humiliation of service, but it doesn't relieve the burdens. Like the Arisen, the Shuankhsen feel certain passions woven into their Sekhem, but these dread desires come from the Devourer, not the Judges.

Ammut is hungry.

The Devourer enjoys Sekhem but doesn't *need* it the way the Judges do. She may not need souls, either, but to the Lifeless, her desire feels as powerful as starvation. Around the living, Shuankhsen feel a peculiar combination of lust and hunger—the edges of demonic desire, translated into forms they can understand. The powerful souls of Arisen drive them into near-frenzy. Authentic occultists, spiritually aware individuals, and a few other souls with strange destinies also attract the Devourer's desire.

Shuankhsen Creation

Shuankhsen resemble the Arisen in that they possess a sheath of Sekhem that takes the form of the sahu. They possess soul Pillars and may utilize them to enhance Attributes, seal the flesh, activate Utterances, and use relics. Storytellers may use the Arisen template as a basis, but make the following adjustments.

Morality, Not Memory

Shuankhsen do not possess a Memory trait, but the same Morality as mortals. Importantly, this means their memory *is not impaired* as it is for Arisen. They know exactly who they were and as much about Irem's fate and the Shan'iatu as their lives allowed. Due to the trauma of their creation and near-destruction by the Devourer, Shuankhsen possess a base Morality of 6 and one derangement. Many Shuankhsen possess less Morality and more derangements, but even the most mad and callous of them never suffers the Arisen's peculiar forgetfulness.

Once they eat the flesh of enemies and their allies' souls, their moral center erodes, so few Shuankhsen maintain their initial Morality scores.

The Silence

When Ammut repurposed the Shuankhsen to serve her, she knew they might resist being enslaved anew. To prevent meddling from sorcerers and Arisen, she imposed a curse the Lifeless call the Silence. If a Shuankhsen says or even implies that it serves Ammut or was created by the Shan'iatu (albeit indirectly), that mummy instantly loses a dot of Sekhem. This applies to each occasion. The Silence cannot be averted through clever rationalizations, as it is based on the intention of any communication, not its content. One reason why the Arisen have not learned more of their pasts through the Shuankhsen is that anything the latter could tell the Arisen about themselves would destroy their Sekhem, and they've no desire to talk to the Arisen to begin with.

The Silence manifests not merely in the minds of the Shuankhsen, but in their Sekhem, as well. When a Shuankhsen would provoke a Terror Sybaris response, the mortal mind is incapable of reacting with calm recollection thereafter: Unless the mortal's player gets an exceptional success on her Resolve + Composure roll (see Sybaris, p. 147), the mortal *will* rationalize/invent the experience away. When it comes to unease, the Silence manifests in a more advantageous way: When the mummy provokes Unease Sybaris, he can *choose* how it will affect mortals. Pick one of the following effects: Despair, Cults Against Death, Superstitious Materialism, or Fearful and Closed (Shuankhsen never provoke the Flood of Duat effect). Alternately, the Shuankhsen can forcibly contain their Sybaris, provoking no unease (only) at all, but doing so costs one Willpower every 24 hours.

Weak Sekhem

The Lifeless possess a base Sekhem of 3—a carelessly woven fraction of the power given to true Arisen. They Descend as Arisen do, but obviously leave their incarnations far more quickly. Thus, Shuankhsen hunt mummies in part to prolong their own life cycles. Shuankhsen may also drain relics for Sekhem, but the process is opposite the Arisen's. They must *fail* a Sekhem roll (this is not a Descent Roll) to force the artifact's power into their corrupted Sekhem patterns.

Like the Judges, Ammut manipulates the Descent to further an agenda through her agents. A Shuankhsen's Descent clock almost always resets (see "The Descent," p. 153) when the Devourer accomplishes one of the following deeds through her mummy servant:

- Consume the flesh and soul of a sorcerer or spiritual adept.
- Destroy (preferably with much ritual) a relic without cannibalizing its Sekhem.
- Drive a mortal to commit murder or suicide without the use of supernatural mind control.
- Slay one of the Arisen, whether consuming his Sekhem or not.
- Steal any vessel from an Arisen tomb (once per tomb per story).

A Single Pillar

Ammut feasted on every Shuankhsen's soul, leaving one Pillar behind to support her return to the living world. The Shuankhsen's other spiritual functions cling to the lone Pillar as a kind of soul "residue." But in the face of suffering, the surviving Pillar grows strong. Thus, each Shuankhsen begins with four dots in this defining Pillar.

The Shuankhsen may not meditate to regain Pillar points, but all feel their souls strengthen when they selfishly assert themselves in the world. A Shuankhsen regains one Pillar point whenever he satisfies his Vice. This benefit occurs in addition to the standard Willpower point award.

Consume the Willing

Shuankhsen may drain the life force from a close associate to replenish Pillars. In each case, these people sincerely and out of their own free will are willing to sacrifice their lives for the Shuankhsen, even if they might not feel that way once they're called upon to do just that. These associates must be purchased as Retainers (**World of Darkness**, p. 116) or acquired during the chronicle. All Fasad (see p. 200) may be drained in this fashion. This occult proscription is imposed by the Devourer, who seeks to not just consume souls, but *meaning*. Violating trust destroys the meaning the victim gave to his commitment, and souls that enter Duat bereft of such meaning can never find their way to her waiting maw.

The Shuankhsen must make close physical contact with the victim. As an instant action, he rips the living spirit out of the companion. Roll the mummy's Sekhem; each success drains one dot of an Attribute and converts it into a point in a Pillar. The Shuankhsen may only drain Attributes to recover depleted Pillar points, and only for a Pillar he possesses. Each Attribute coverts to Pillar points as follows:

- **Ab**: Strength, Stamina, or Presence
- **Ba**: Strength, Stamina, or Wits
- **Ka**: Strength, Stamina, or Resolve
- **Ren**: Strength, Stamina, or Manipulation
- **Sheut**: Strength, Stamina, or Composure

The Attribute drain is permanent. Reducing Strength or Stamina to 0 in this fashion kills the victim, while reducing a Mental or Social Attribute to 0 removes the capacity for independent thought and, in particular, the ability to perform any task governed by that trait. The Shuankhsen cannot use this ability on anyone who did not feel capable of sacrificing herself or who was coerced into this state through supernatural mind control.

Despite centuries of fervent, disgusting occult experiments, the Shuankhsen have never been able to steal Pillar *dots* from mortals. In other words, the Shuankhsen drain mortals to refresh their souls, but they hunt the Arisen to expand them.

Jaws of the Devourer

Ammut gave all Shuankhsen the power to steal Sekhem from conscious beings by *eating* them. By spending 1 point in any Pillar, the mummy may give himself the wide, sharp-toothed jaws of the Devourer for a scene. In combat, the Shuankhsen may bite enemies without grappling, as if using a weapon with a damage rating of 2(L), but employing the Brawl Skill, not Weaponry.

The Shuankhsen may drain a level of Sekhem from an intelligent target who possesses a Sekhem rating (typically Arisen, but Shuankhsen can technically eat each other) every time he inflicts 3 or more points of aggravated damage using Jaws of the Devourer. Remove the level from the victim, and give it to the Shuankhsen.

Wounds this severe indicate that the Lifeless has bitten and swallowed a sizable chunk of Sekhem-infused flesh. Inflicting more than 3 points of damage doesn't drain any more Sekhem; the Shuankhsen must attack again. If the target runs out of aggravated health boxes, extra damage doesn't drain more Sekhem even if the victim is somehow continuing to function (as an Arisen might when sealing the flesh).

The Shuankhsen may eat enemy Sekhem relatively easily, but its power protects the real prize: the target's Pillars. This defense vanishes for an instant after the Shuankhsen consumes an Arisen's last level of Sekhem. In the moment before his victim's soul departs, a Shuankhsen may steal one *dot* from one of her Pillars and add it to his own. Shuankhsen usually do this to add Pillars other than their remnants.

Shuankhsen may also use the Jaws to steal Pillar points from unwilling mortals, but the Sekhem inside living mortals (who are not also sorcerers) is life force in its weakest *and* most transitive form, so doing it is far less efficient than with Consuming the Willing. If the Shuankhsen eats a mortal's heart, he gains a point in the Pillar of his choice.

Once the Shuankhsen eats as much as he can, he usually rips his victims to shreds or devours them whole to stymie investigations or, in the case of the Arisen, easy resurrection. Any flesh consumed using Jaws of the Devourer disintegrates in the Lifeless' gullet an hour later. It usually takes about five hours (one hour per Size point) to completely consume a typical human body.

Stolen Sahu

Shuankhsen were never given a magical template to rebuild their bodies, so they lack the ability to reincarnate within an independent sahu. They must begin their Descents in stolen corpses. If the mummy possesses a cult, its members might steal a suitable body. Otherwise, a Sh-

uankhsen who loses all of his Sekhem or whose body is utterly destroyed claims the nearest unburied, relatively intact corpse of any human without a supernatural template. If the body is sanctified, or otherwise ritually prepared, the Storyteller can call for a contested roll (typically the Shuankhsen's Resolve + Remnant rating vs. the ritualist's Intelligence + Occult); otherwise, no roll is required.

Once the Shuankhsen awakens, his Sekhem removes all of the corpse's wounds and replaces them with signs of the trauma that killed him. For example, a Shuankhsen who was decapitated might possess a seeping wound encircling the entire neck. Otherwise, the Lifeless appears to be a subtle mixture between the stolen corpse's form and that of the Shuankhsen's original body. In a weak body, strong Shuankhsen develop muscular bulk. Bodies also take on characteristics from the Shuankhsen's self-identified gender, but they don't change their actual, physical sex, taking on a quasi-androgynous appearance instead. Many Shuankhsen impersonate the former owners of their corpses, at least for a time. These typically pass casual inspection, but close associates may eventually suspect that there's more to the story than a new diet or elaborate make-up regimen. Whatever appearance they bear, the Shuankhsen are the kings of the Lifeless and are thus given a wide berth by same.

Remnants, Not Decrees

The Shuankhsen were never given a chance to declare themselves before the Judges. Instead, Ammut ate most of their souls, leaving but a single Pillar to support an animating consciousness. The Devourer spared different Pillars depending on the characteristics of her slaves—whatever Pillar likely *would* have become their defining one. Where the Arisen define themselves in part by decree, Shuankhsen cling to their remnants.

The mummy may increase his Attributes as if he belonged to a member of the corresponding decree, but he may not use the decree's signature methods for recovering Pillar points in their defining Pillar. Instead, they replenish points when they fulfill an exaggerated passion:

Ab: Twisted vitality turns Shuankhsen into berserkers, stalkers, and obsessive-compulsives. They cannot completely feel an emotion without acting upon it. The Lifeless mummy regains one Ab point when he acts upon an urge it would be better to suppress. Once per chapter, he replenishes all Ab points when he satisfies his Vice by acting on an inconvenient urge.

Ba: The spirit remnant manifests as the desire to dominate. It isn't enough to wield power; the Lifeless must demonstrate it by controlling someone else. The Shuankhsen regains one Ba point when he coerces another person to perform an task she finds immoral or disgusting. Once per chapter, he replenishes all Ba if his "inferior" dies in the process of carrying the order out.

Ka: Where the Bull-Headed are stubborn, Shuankhsen of the ka remnant are monomaniacal. Once the Lifeless makes a decision, he will *not* be moved by a mortal, god, or anything in between. The Shuankhsen regains one point of Ka when he refuses to stray from a defined plan in the face of a new threat. Once per chapter, he regains all Ka when he survives a mortal threat (even if the Shuankhsen can be resurrected or reincarnated into a new Descent) without altering his plans.

Ren: Shuankhsen of the name remnant indulge in eccentric, self-aggrandizing actions to assert their identity. They crave a quiet notoriety. The Shuankhsen regains one point of Ren when he risks his safety or plans to make himself known with a "calling card" of some kind, such as a personal symbol or even a person (or type of person) he spares to spread his legend. Once per chapter, he replenishes all Ren when he discovers that another person recorded his unique identity (not just his name, but something that undeniably describes *him*) of her own accord.

Sheut: The shadow remnant encourages selfish, paranoid behavior. Protective instincts overwhelm his compassion for or even acknowledgment of others. The Lifeless regains a point of Sheut when he identifies a hidden threat. Once per chapter his Sheut points are restored in full when he preemptively *destroys* a threat.

Affinities and Utterances

Like other mummies, the Shuankhsen begin play with at least three Affinities. Bane Affinities are Ammut's domain, so Shuankhsen require nothing special to learn them, but must select at least one of their starting Affinities from the list of Bane Affinities (in lieu of a Guild Affinity).

Shuankhsen do not begin unlife with Utterances; the rote patterns of Iremite sorcery are foreign to them. They can learn Utterances under the tutelage of a skilled Sekhem-wielding sorcerer, but more commonly, they acquire them by ripping the understanding straight from a mummy's flesh. If the Lifeless steals more than one Sekhem dot from an Arisen, he also steals knowledge of one of her Utterances. Developing this potential still requires the standard amount of time and effort (and experience points, if you choose to track them), but a teacher is no longer necessary—he develops a newfound instinct for his victim's power. Shuankhsen can only steal the secret of one Utterance per victim per unique Descent. In addition, a Shuankhsen stands a chance of manifesting an

Consuming Noncombatants

To simplify bookkeeping, the Storyteller should allow the Shuankhsen to use Consume the Willing on noncombatants (**World of Darkness,** pp. 203-205) by draining two dice from one of their pools in exchange for one Pillar point. The noncombatant dies or becomes an ineffective, shambling creature when his largest dice pool drops to one or zero dice. Don't worry about noncombatant Attributes; allow the Shuankhsen to harvest any Pillar he likes. The two dice (as opposed to one point) drain balances out the lack of specificity.

Utterance (given the same time and effort) after being successfully targeted by that Utterance. While a Shuankhsen must still meet all the prerequisites for new Affinities, he is considered to have met the prerequisites for all three tiers of any Utterance he steals or manifests. The Lifeless must still find a way to *pay* for those second- and third-tier unleashings, however, and that means hunting down and consuming at least one dot in the required Pillar.

Bane Affinities

Like a fighting dog's master, Ammut whips, cuts, and smashes her hunting slaves into shape. Shuankhsen may develop standard Affinities, but they also harness the supernatural consequences of their disfigured souls to manifest their own ephemera: Bane Affinities.

Bane Affinities are powerful, but they possess inherent curses. Most of them not only challenge the user's Morality, but require a certain dearth of it to use (which varies from Affinity to Affinity). If the user's Morality (or Memory) rating exceeds the *maximum* rating, as listed under its prerequisite, he loses access to that Affinity's effect but, in most cases, continues to suffer its curse. In addition, other circumstances may prompt a dangerous backlash.

The following Bane Affinities are examples of the powers that may spring from the Devourer's eldritch influence. Storytellers can invent others with similar themes and associated drawbacks. Arisen who survive an encounter with a Shuankhsen might find themselves manifesting one of the foe's Bane Affinities, but Shuankhsen need only meet the listed prerequisite and ruthlessness to develop them. Thus, while Bane Affinity descriptions refer to the typical Shuankhsen user, the same systems apply to other mummies who dare master (or find themselves saddled with) them.

Shadow Rending

Prerequisites: [Morality] 7–; Sheut 2

Effect: Manipulating his shadow like a puppet or pet, the mummy uses it to strike his enemy's sheut, transmitting the trauma to her physical form. The shadow warps into talons, jaws, tentacles, blades—whatever fits his personality.

The mummy may only use this power in a shadowy area, not places filled with bright ambient light or total darkness. In such places, he may use his shadow as a weapon that inflicts between 1 and 3 damage, depending on immediate light levels. Use Dexterity + Weaponry (+ the damage bonus) to resolve attacks. His shadow's reach extends 10 yards and inflicts lethal damage, but it can't be used to grapple enemies or manipulate objects.

The user doesn't attack enemies directly—his shadow strikes theirs. Targets may not usually apply their Defense against Shadow Rending. When the mummy's shadow strikes his enemy's, wounds erupt across corresponding locations on the target's body.

Curse: In the event of a dramatic failure while using this power—or any time more dice roll a 1 than roll 8, 9, or 10 combined—the user's shadow turns against him. Roll the



user's Sheut + local damage bonus to resolve attacks each turn until he flees to an area without shadows (bright light or total darkness) or spends a point of Sheut to calm and appease his soul's shadow.

Ammut's Feast

Prerequisite: [Morality] 6–

Effect: Emulating the Devourer, the mummy is rejuvenated every time he eats a fresh, whole human heart. He immediately regains one point of Willpower, and his player rolls his Sekhem rating as a dice pool. If the roll succeeds, the mummy gains a reset on the Descent at his current Sekhem level. Hearts suitable for transplants are sufficiently fresh, but Shuankhsen more often acquire them directly. This power does not work on the hearts of the Arisen, the Lifeless, and other undead creatures.

Curse: For the next scene after devouring the heart, the mummy feels whispers of the victim's conscience. He risks Morality degeneration for sins that would apply to the victim at the level of Morality she possessed while she lived, but does not enjoy the dice pool granted by the victim's trait. Given the sorry moral state of the average Shuankhsen, this often increases the chance of degeneration, but some try to ameliorate the curse by feeding only on the hearts of the wicked.

Wormheart

Prerequisite: [Morality] 5–

Effect: Mummies store occult patterns of rot and predation within them. Calling upon these energies, the user concentrates his Vice into a flesh-eating grub that crawls out of his heart. When the mummy satisfies a Vice, he may grow the worm in his heart instead of recovering a point of Willpower. He immediately suffers a point of aggravated damage as the worm tunnels its way out.

Once summoned, the worm wanders through his flesh and grows, waiting to be called forth. When the mummy desires it, the foot-long, sharp-toothed grave grub erupts from his throat to plunge into a victim's flesh. This allows the mummy to inflict aggravated damage with grappling attacks. It also adds three dice to grappling attacks, as the worm is strong and threatening.

If the mummy kills an opponent with the worm, it devours his enemy's heart, and the mummy recovers all of his spent Ab points (if any). (The mummy may combine this power with Ammut's Feast when the worm eats a human heart.)

The user may only keep one worm at a time. For every hour the worm waits, it eats more of its host's sahu, inflicting a point of aggravated damage. The mummy may expel the worm completely (at which point it dissolves into black muck) as an instant action. Expelling the worm inflicts another point of aggravated damage on the worm's master.

Curse: Once a mummy learns this power, the worm is always there. When it hasn't materialized, it's an occult potentiality that reacts to the owner's spiritual condition. When the user satisfies a Virtue and refreshes his Willpower, his Ab fills with energies that poison the worm, forcing it to flee the heart. From this moment forward, fulfilling a Virtue automatically activates Wormheart, inflicting damage and forcing the mummy to use it or suffer injuries from having to reabsorb it.

Blood Cartouche

Prerequisite: [Morality] 4–

Effect: The mummy binds an ally's name to his own. When he connects two names within the Blood Cartouche, he may transfer wounds and ailments to his ally.

The user selects a target among the set of people who would qualify as victims of Consume the Willing: individuals who were once ready to sacrifice their lives for the mummy. (This requirement remains even if the Affinity is being used by one of the Arisen.) He must learn the target's full legal name, along with any name she would reflexively answer to. Supernatural beings may not be bound by a Blood Cartouche.

To activate this power, the mummy visualizes his name merging with his victim's. Both names bloodily rip themselves into the user's flesh (he chooses the location—the back, chest, and forehead are common) surrounded by a single cartouche: a stylized oval border used to contain the names of kings. The user suffers a point of aggravated damage. For the remainder of the scene (at most, an hour), the mummy and the target may exchange injuries and other physical conditions, along with the inspiration provided by satisfying a Vice.

The mummy's player rolls Resolve + Stamina + Ren – the target's Composure whenever the mummy suffers an injury, poisoning, or intoxication. Subtract a die for each additional use of the Affinity during the scene. If the roll succeeds, the mummy transfers the damage or other effect to his ally. In the case of damage, transfer two points of damage per success to the ally—the mummy suffers the remainder.

The user may drop the Affinity at any time before the scene is up. If he activates it again during the scene, he pays the price of a point of aggravated damage again, and the power "resets," so that he no longer suffers dice penalties for multiple uses.

Curse: On a dramatic failure, the mummy's ally becomes the dominant will in their combined identity. The ally may use the Blood Cartouche in reverse, transferring injuries and ailments to the mummy for the scene. The ally senses a connection but requires special knowledge (Occult 3 or higher) to utilize it. The ally instantly knows the mummy's complete true name and further intuits that the mummy attempted to undermine his identity or abuse him somehow.

Hateful Bau

Prerequisite: [Morality] 3–

Effect: The mummy's aura inspires others to hate a particular group far more intensely than they would otherwise. When the user speaks, his words carry the weight of a high priest or master orator, and the instruction to hate an enemy feels like a divine command.

The mummy argues that a group of people are despicable or inferior. He distinguishes this group from others by using an understandable, superficial distinction such as (but not limited to) religious belief, sexual orientation, gender, or ethnicity. This distinction doesn't need to be precise or defensible—it only needs to be as clever as the classifications used by ordinary bigots everywhere.

Roll Presence + Expression + Ba and select a number of target witnesses. Reduce the dice pool by the highest Composure among all targets, with an additional –1 penalty for each ally beyond the first. The user doesn't need to target everyone he communicates with. He can, for example, spout his bile at a large rally, but key his words to shake a handful of "elect" in the front row.

If the roll scores an exceptional success, targets will commit Morality-risking, degenerate acts against members of the hated group—theft, vandalism, and even murder. These allies will not, however, take excessive risks unless they would already be inclined to do so and do not become the mummy's lackeys. They follow their hate according to individual preferences.

The effects of this power last for 24 hours. Supernatural beings are immune to this Affinity, but can be made a target for hatred.

Curse: The user develops the Megalomania derangement for the duration of the Affinity's effect. Furthermore, if he suffers a dramatic failure on the activation roll, targets hate *him,* instead, and will be willing to carry out heinous, morally degenerate acts just to make him suffer.

Designing Shuankhsen for the Chronicle

Basic Shuankhsen are weaker (and less numerous) than the Arisen, so they work as stock supernatural combatants. Jaws of the Devourer provide a memorable motif. If you want to use the Shuankhsen for these simple purposes, leave them with nothing but the remnant Pillar and other default traits. Remember, though, that although Shuankhsen might be weaker than the players' mummies, they're still pretty damned tough by the Storytelling system's standards because they can increase Attributes and seal the flesh as mummies do. If you'd prefer a more pulp-style conflict where thugs drop after a hit or two, stick with mortal cults and Amkhata.

Other Shuankhsen acquire enough power to raise them into "lieutenants" or major antagonists. They grow strong when they find a way to reliably feed on Arisen prey, so any Shuankhsen that graduates to these ranks has already done enough to earn Arisen ire. They may cultivate cults and tombs, and even recruit other Shuankhsen (especially since, in a pinch, they can devour them to stave off Descent). Ammut doesn't especially care about vessels (save relishing in their destruction), but strong Shuankhsen know the Arisen are obsessed with them. A clever Shuankhsen may possess a veritable arsenal of mystic artifacts to not only employ against enemies, but also to attract Arisen prey.

Powerful Shuankhsen often target particular Arisen. Some target a weakness in the mummy's character that makes her easy prey, but a few recognize the Arisen from Irem—they were the mummy's slaves or experimental subjects for horrifying vessels. The Shuankhsen single them out for revenge. Best of all, a clever Shuankhsen can exploit a mummy's clouded memories to enjoy her shock and suffering over and over.

Nefersobk: The Crocodile Queen

Quote: *"I can only imagine the pleasures you've experienced through the ages. I cannot give your existence balance through pain because I can't inflict enough of it, but… oh, I will try."*

Background: Nefersobk knows that she was treated better than most slaves. She served the embalmers. Absorbed in the precision of their work, they never subjected her to much abuse. She was too intelligent to kill as part of some experiment, and too busy with fine work to distract with rape or severe beatings. She was a human tool, trained to stitch skin and salt bodies according to the specifications given by her masters.

But once she was more valuable dead than alive, her overseers didn't hesitate. Her murder was neither quick nor painless. The embalmers weren't killers; they lacked the skill to dispatch her right away. They smashed the life out of her over the course of an hour. She learned that only the powerful were truly human—the weak were their tools and scrap.

Although she rose screaming into a stolen corpse, Nefersobk adapted quickly. The Crocodile Queen was a genius before she was thrown to Ammut; enhanced by stolen Sekhem, her mind devises strategies beyond the understanding of any mortal mind. She tracks a select set of Arisen (the exactly number is left to the Storyteller) through multiple incarnations to provide a reliable source of Sekhem. Nefersobk keeps one or two under direct control, trapped in stone sarcophagi, and tracks the rest through agents planted in their cults.

Having come to understand the Sothic Cycle, Nefersobk instructed her own cult to awaken her early, in 2002. She used murder-suicide to switch bodies with John Douris, a Greek-American mobster who specialized in stolen art and antiquities. She replaced difficult lieutenants with members of her cult and renovated Douris estates in Ikaria and the Hamptons to include the prison-tombs of her Arisen "cattle." She used their subordinate cults to raise them for feeding across two subsequent Descents; her own servants expanded her power base while she lay dead, and selected athletic, beautiful women to serve as hosts. Her organization has no name—in fact, she specifically forbids it—but outsiders often call it "the Lizard's Eye," or "Crocodile."

The Crocodile Queen rules one of the largest art theft rings in America. Side interests in arms trafficking and heroin exist to trade for the beautiful, rare things she loves. When vessels pass through the organization, she tracks



them to find the Arisen who pursue them. She uses a gilded lead rod to break her victims before eating them, slowly.

As the head of a criminal cartel, the Crocodile Queen believes she has "earned" humanity. When educated criminals see the reptile eye cartouche, they know a business or shipment is under her protection—and people who fuck with the Crocodile Queen meet bad ends. They don't usually die; instead, they show up months later, thin, crazy, and unwilling to talk about what happened. *Then* they die from rapid infections, stupid accidents, and straight up suicide.

Description: Nefersobk takes the bodies of beautiful, strong women with long, dark hair. In life, she suffered from scoliosis and a lopsided face—traits that helped her owners overlook her intelligence. They named her "Beauty of the Crocodile" as a joke. No matter the incarnation, she suffers from the marks of her demise: crooked arms and legs that look as if they were fractured, but never set to heal straight. She speaks in a slightly agitated monotone and confronts others with a blank, distracted expression. Anyone with psychological training recognizes this as the lack of affect that accompanies a disturbed mind.

In the grip of Sybaris, horrified mortals most often see an elongated, distorted body covered in green copper scales along with large, unblinking golden eyes.

Storytelling Hints: Nefersobk is a genius, but none of her plans have ever given her a sense of purpose. She feels no particular loyalty to Ammut, regarding the Devourer as a cosmic force to be placated. Beyond survival and respect, she follows no particular agenda. She owes her success to brilliance over determination, planning her conspiracies as elaborate games: amusing, but ultimately meaningless. Tormenting the Arisen injects a rare burst of anger into her existence. She indulges this by torturing her "herd" and entangling other Arisen in elaborate plots.

She possesses a calculating magnetism in that anyone who meets her feels as if she's gauging his usefulness and how to exploit it. Instead of finding the experience repellent, associates feel especially eager to please her. She rewards merit and punishes incompetence according to the severity of the situation. She invests most of her wealth in rewards for cultists, fine art, and commodities she believes will remain valuable through the ages. She is most manipulative when her Sekhem is capable of supporting her superhuman intelligence. During these periods, she records detailed plans for use by subordinates—and for the future, "stupid" version of herself. Arisen might discover her notes, written in a personal shorthand derived from ancient Greek and Iremite. A successful Intelligence + Academics roll (Storytellers should set the penalty they feel is appropriate) is usually necessary to decode them.

Nefersobk has been designed to act as a major antagonist, capable of marshaling mundane thugs, sorcerers, weaker Lifeless, and even Arisen dupes to oppose the players' characters. Her temperament was designed so that she can be used as an unobtrusive background character until you decide to activate her. She sticks to a passive, yet competent "neutral mode" until it's time to maker her move. Decide when events shake her out of her melancholy, and adjust her motives to fit the story's needs. For her, the events of the chronicle represent a moment for character development, and justify making any personality changes required.

Concept: Street Mastermind

Remnant: Shadow

Judge: Ammut, the Devourer

Guild: None

Attributes: Intelligence 6, Wits 5, Resolve 4; Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Presence 5, Manipulation 4, Composure 4

Skills: Academics 4, Brawl 2 (Specialty: Biting), Computers 1, Crafts 3, Empathy 4, Firearms 2, Intimidation 5, Investigation 4, Larceny 4, Occult 4, Politics 3, Socialize 4, Stealth 2, Streetwise 4, Subterfuge 3

Merits: Allies 4, Contacts 5, Cult (Conspiracy; Reach 4, Grasp 4), Retainer 5, Resources 5, Status (Criminal) 4, Tomb (Geometry 0, Peril [traps] 5)

Affinities: By Steps Unseen, Fearsome Soul, Shadow Rending, Voice of Temptation

Utterances: Awaken the Dead, Command the Beasts; Jaws of the Devourer (power)

Pillars: Ab 4, Ka 3, Ren 3, Sheut 5

Sekhem: 7

Willpower: 8

Morality: 2

Virtue: Prudence

Vice: Pride

Initiative: 7

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Jaws	2(L)	7	Drain Sekhem
Machine Pistol	2(L)	7	Clip 17+1;Range 20/40/80; Autofire

Armor: 0 (She can acquire it if she wishes.)

Health: 9

Derangements: Melancholy

Notes: Equipment—Smartphone, tablet (connected via remote desktop to a secure server), ancient gold jewelry, machine pistol in concealed holster.

Serve the Servants: The Fasad

The baying hounds and rotted minions of the Shuankhsen, the Fasad (or "husks," as they are sometimes called) are slaves to the black hunger that drives the Lifeless to the greatest acts of cruelty and nihilism. They are created in much the same way as the Sadikh of the Arisen, but differ in ways both obvious and subtle. The Rite of the Engraved Heart is a nightmarish affair for the Fasad, who are often tricked or bribed into facing an ordeal that leaves them psychologically twisted and physically ruined. Amnesia and nightmares are a common side effect of their tortured existence, but a few retain the memories and skills of their living life.

All Fasad are marked by a horrific taint that causes their flesh to split open with seeping wounds, lesions filled with a stinking rot that will, slowly but surely, consume the Fasad's entire body. Older husks are cold-eyed insanities—rotting zombie-men who only find peace or satisfaction when their master gives them leave to wring out the sobs and tortured screams of the living.

A Shuankhsen can have as many active Fasad as his Sekhem rating. Like the Arisen's Sadikh, husks do not age, and they gain the three-dot Iron Stamina Merit. They take bashing damage from all non-magical attacks except fire, and their bodies continue to act normally up until the point that all of their wound boxes are filled with aggravated damage, at which point they finally fall. Fasad can be "resurrected" by their masters in the same fashion as Sadikh, but the wounds that caused their death often remain on their already tormented forms, and the Shuankhsen's Sekhem rating remains a limitation—if it dropped since he created the Fasad, he can't resurrect it without making room (by killing one of her other Fasad) or somehow regaining a dot of Sekhem. Once a husk has fallen, it can be returned to its active, undead state up until a year has passed. The resurrection of a husk costs a Shuankhsen a Willpower *dot* (which makes it a rare event), and the body knits itself back together immediately but not fully, healing a number of aggravated wounds equal to the master's current Sekhem rating. A Shuankhsen gains no comfort from the remembered name of a fallen companion, as his memory lives little room for sentiment.

Lastly, the corrupted rite that gives birth to husks fills them with an insatiable but often just as directionless rapacity that prevents them from enjoying even the mild reprieve of the false life. Fasad are eternally awake, stalking the corners of the Earth and trying to satisfy their nameless cravings or tending to the embers of their master's cult. Thus, husks always suffer a –2 penalty to all degeneration checks, devolving into mindless zombie-slaves when their Morality finally reaches zero. Even with their Morality intact, husks never question their Shuankhsen masters and are filled and driven by a fanatical loyalty whenever their creator is present and active.

A husk who has not lost all of its Morality can use one of its master's Affinities or Utterances once per scene. It may access any Affinity its master possesses and any Utterance that its master has used in its presence. If he allows his servant to draw upon his power thusly, any Pillar or Willpower costs are paid by the Shuankhsen. Any rolls required by the power used are rolled for the husk, and when making such rolls, Fasad are assumed to have Pillar ratings equal to their master's. Husks, regardless of Morality rating, are always treated as having a Sekhem rating equal to half of their master's current total, but only for the purposes of resisting supernatural powers. This magical resistance is ignored by their master.

Lastly, Fasad gain unique abilities that make them tenacious opponents of the Arisen and their allies. All Fasad have a bite attack that inflicts +2 lethal damage, and they can lend their senses to their master to help them find sources of Sekhem. This last ability functions in a manner similar to a shark smelling blood dribbled into water; it allows the husk to smell the power that resides in relics, vestiges, and the Arisen. If they are near a vessel of Sekhem, husks grant a +2 bonus to their masters' attempts to locate these reservoirs of refined life force. (This bonus is not cumulative if multiple husks are tracking the same object or target.) Additionally, husks gain an extra ability based on their master's remnant Pillar, as detailed below:

Devouring Heart (Ab): The husk hungers for life, and its terrifying aura drains hope and compassion from the living around it. Apply a –2 penalty on Composure rolls made for any mortal in the husk's presence. In addition, such mortals cannot spend Willpower unless doing so as part of a supernatural ability. Alternatively, if a mortal serves one of the Deathless (by being a cultist or Sadikh, usually), a mummy's player can choose to pay the Willpower for the mortal.

Call of the Black Soul (Ba): The Fasad calls to the worst impulses in others. When it is near, it is difficult to crowd out intrusive thoughts and sudden urges. Make a Composure + Resolve roll for any person in the husk's presence who attempts to resist temptation when presented with an opportunity to act on his Vice. Those who try to resist and have the roll for them fail must take the opportunity presented to them, but regain no Willpower for it.

Body of Corruption (Ka): The husk's flesh is prone to scarring and grows toughened nodules. This grants the husk an armor rating of 2/2 and one additional health level.

Branding Wound (Ren): The Fasad brands those it injures with the name of its creator, establishing a mystical connection between them. Those wounded by the husk grant a noncumulative +2 bonus to the husk's or its master's attempts to track or identify them, so long as the wound remains.

Selfless Shroud (Sheut): The husk is unobtrusive and often ignored by others. Any rolls (usually Stealth) made for the Fasad to remain undetected gain a +2 bonus. Additionally, attempts to track or remember identifying characteristics of the husk receive a –2 penalty. Ordinary mortals never remember the Fasad's specific appearance, though most will remember that the being they encountered was disfigured or otherwise horrid in some way.

Wormflesh

Quotes: *"I feel your hunger, master. Unleash me, and I shall sniff out a proper meal."*

Background: Wormflesh has served its master for over a century, and its body has been burned, flayed, scrapped, and whipped countless times. In the 1920s,



Huahra's cult came to call him Wormflesh as an untreated infestation of fly larvae bloated and warped the skin of his face and left arm. While the fly larvae and the cultists are long gone, the mottled pockmark scars of the infestation remain. Now it takes the name Wormflesh as its own because it has more meaning than the name its half-remembered parents bestowed upon it when it was alive… or when it dreamed of being alive. On at least one occasion, Wormflesh was killed when a powerful Arisen set a trap for the husk and his master. After Huahra was victorious, he breathed new life into Wormflesh as a symbol of his power and cruelty. When Wormflesh is alone, it tries to remember if it felt any peace or relief at that moment of death, but it recalls nothing.

Description: Wormflesh is a walking corpse. Its face is a horror, a ruined mask of flesh that has been torn and ripped by blade, disease, and parasite. It often conceals its disfigurement with bandages and heavy coats when it must travel amongst the living, but when called upon to fight, Wormflesh prefers to reveal its wounds to unnerve opponents.

Storytelling Hints: Huahra is a traveler and a hunter, and Wormflesh is his most useful hound. As the most aware husk in the Shuankhsen's retinue, Wormflesh leads the others when they must assault a stronghold or tomb. Wormflesh delights in flushing out its master's enemies, bearing the brunt of their defenses and sniffing out their allies while Huahra studies their weaknesses from afar. In private, Wormflesh is quiet and contemplative; in its master's presence, it is groveling and subservient; and when on the hunt, Wormflesh tends to be dramatic and loud, dressing the part of a stage villain.

Concept: Murderous Stalker

Master: Huahra

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 4, Resolve 1; Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2; Presence 1, Manipulation 1, Composure 4

Skills: Athletics 3, Computer 2, Investigation 1, Larceny 4, Occult 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 4 (Night Life), Subterfuge 2 (Disguises), Weaponry 4 (Knives)

Merits: Fast Reflexes 2, Fighting Style: Two Weapons 4, Fleet of Foot 2

Remnant Ability: Body of Corruption

Sekhem: 1, only for resisting the supernatural

Willpower: 5

Morality: 3

Virtue: Fortitude (Despite all of the insults and indignities Wormflesh must suffer at the hands of its master, it believes its perseverance shall one day be rewarded.

Vice: Envy (The living make Wormflesh anxious and hungry. It longs for the trappings and pleasures of a normal life, but it is also repulsed by the weakness and mortality intrinsic to such a life. Most galling insult of all, Wormflesh must slink in the shadows and hide his true nature from such insects.)

Initiative: 10

Defense: 4

Speed: 14

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Bite	2(L)	2
Knife	2(L)	8

Armor: 2

Health: 8

Flaws: Amnesia

Derangements: Paranoia

Notes: Equipment—Knives, bandages, black opera coat, black hoodie, boots.

THE LIVING

As of 2012, seven billion people live on planet Earth, and even more in the World of Darkness. If even one in a thousand has any contact with the truth of the Arisen—gets a special feeling looking at a ring in a museum, feels the ugly compulsion to flee a tomb, or just serves a mummy a cup of coffee without paying any attention—that's over seven million points of mortal contact. That sounds like a lot. But of those millions, how many really notice? How many follow up on the weirdness instead of dismissing it to move on to the next exhibit in the museum, the next stop on the tour, or the next mocha latte? At best, one percent pursues.

One percent of such a high number is still tens of thousands of people, including ignorant cultists, superstitious archaeologists, and unfortunates who survived the tag end of an Utterance. Easily half have the entirely rational response of getting as far away as possible, then hiding under the covers. So, thousands upon thousands of people *could* follow up and keep at it.

Cultists with a clue probably account for 20-40% of that population. That leaves a healthy global remainder dwelling in Irem's shadow, setting their own agenda, armed with some combination of drive and information that makes them more threat than annoyance.

Small Cabals and Lone Nuts

Some people stumble across a brief glimpse of a stranger, older world and become fixated. Now, if you're willing to drop everything and chase mummies because it gives your life purpose, it does not speak highly of how much meaning you'd found before then. Such people lock onto the Arisen out of desperation. Jobs, family, connections to the community—those all become resources to exploit in the quest, not distractions from it.

Worst of all is when they find one another.

Sticky-Fingered Tomb Bandits

He offered me two million for the mask. I told him to take a hike. He said three, plus I could sleep with his wife.

—Professor Blake "Christmas" Croft, archaeologist

Whether they're accredited archaeologists with teams of lawyers and high-tech ground sonar, or just barefoot urchins who find a weak spot in an old edifice, one enduring threat to the Arisen are mortal tomb robbers. In all truth, the tech doesn't make a huge difference, so long as the interloper is fearless, highly motivated, and has good reaction time. They get in like ants, steal anything that isn't nailed down, and run.

The biggest problems arise when luck (or research) leads them to vessels of genuine power. Grave robbers often have a knack for unleashing the powers of relics in the worst ways at the worst times, and then abandoning the mess behind them. The worst (meaning, most skilled) seem able to daisy chain their successes, using one artifact to steal another and another, then fleeing to crow over their treasures while the curses, trailing behind them, always seem to doom their children or companions. Many of these reprobates then get angry at the Arisen, blaming them for the curse that claimed their wife (or whoever) and turning the relic's power against their guardians. They never learn.

The higher grade of tomb thief has either a criminal gang backing him (treat as a conspiracy cult with Reach 1, Grasp 3) or a university (enterprise cult, Reach 3, Grasp 1).

Hunters

DIE, THING OF EVIL!

—Yancy Rand, Jr., gunsmith (last words)

Instead of greed, lust, or madness, some human enemies are motivated by uncomplicated fear and bigotry. They see something that looks weird or that violates their parochial view of "nature," and pretty soon they're waving torches and pitchforks—or, in modern days, camcorders and assault rifles.

Fearless monster hunters tend to want two things, both bad for any Arisen agenda. First, they want to win a fight, and depending on where a mummy is and who her hunter is, she could be facing a hobo with a shotgun or a well-armed citizens' militia with armored pickup trucks, heavy weapons, and GPS tracking units. (In cult terms, think a Reach 1, Grasp 2-4, tribal organization.)

Second, they want to be *right* and to have everyone know it. Whether they're claiming the Arisen are demons incarnate or radioactive shock troops sold to petty dictators by the collapsing USSR, they want to prove their point with evidence. That means that, in addition to trying to blow up a mummy's tomb, they could out her cult as well.

Unwise Empiricists

Something must be wrong with the gauge, because these readings are off the… AIEEEE!

—PhD candidate Levi Kornelson (last words)

Uh-oh… science can measure Sekhem.

Anything as powerful as the occult force that brings the Arisen back to life can have a drastic impact on the physical world (especially when expressed through Utterances). Physical actions leave traces, and those traces are detectable with the right equipment. Scientists who detect Sekhem's "flares" (when a mummy first rises, his direction might be detected from miles away) and "sparks" (emitted from powerful Utterances, though much weaker—perhaps only a brief reading if one's within a few miles) are attempting to locate their source. All they know so far is that there's something powerful and radiant. They have vague plans of turning it into a sustainable energy source, but right now, they just want to find what's causing it and how.

Handled correctly, the research group doing this could become a valuable component of a cult, possibly even developing devices to sniff out hidden vessels. Handled poorly, they could reveal the existence of mummies to the world. Not everyone would believe them, of course, but they'd provide a handy narrative ("alien energy parasites?" or "extra-dimensional invaders?") for anyone who happens to witness Arisen actions in the future.

Rogue Scorpion Cults

Do not pledge fealty lightly. To those who swear our oath, we replace mother and father, husband and wife, daughters and sons. We will be your all, and we will be worth it.

—From *The Handbook of the Nyctopian Masters* (1979 ed.)

The Nameless Empire was a big deal, and erasing its traces entirely is too difficult for either skulking conspiracies or thousands of years. There are whispers and stories that have passed from generation to generation. Sometimes, there are more—practices and rituals and proud lineages. There are, in a word, cults.

Some of these are Amkhat churches, creating abominations as subjects for idolatry, seeking vessels to sacrifice for their vile false gods. Some follow texts spread by Shuankhsen that detail methods to identify and combat the Arisen, alongside scurrilous lies to incite zealotry against them.

Worse, there are cults that were lost to the Judges when their Arisen… went astray. Many of these organizations persist on autopilot, fiercely defending vessels from interlopers *and* from the Judges' rightful agents. With their inside information, these cults know exactly how best to threaten the Arisen, their tombs, and their cults.

The damnable thing about these cults is that their beliefs are close enough to be dangerous. They all have some view of the Shan'iatu, though they may not know that name. They all know that there is a group of undying intelligences occupying a physically unreachable realm and that these entities pursue agendas in the human world. They may think they're fighting ghosts, aliens, demons, or their own envious ancestors, but no matter what errors they make with the details, the outline is too close for safety.

Beyond their guesses about Duat, rogue cults generally know other secrets. Not every cult knows everything on the following list, but most know several, and they aren't shy about applying them. Optional damning details are included in parentheses.

- Our unseen enemies pursue ancient objects of terrible power. (These objects are dangerous to possess. Destroying them can create or liberate malignant monsters.)
- Their most fearsome agents are undead mummies, which get weaker as time passes. (After an initial period of acclimation, these creatures appear human, though are often shorter than average. They fear only fire.)
- Cults attempting to bring forth their dread masters operate all over the world. (They often identify themselves with language and iconography from predynastic Egypt. Attacking these cults is often the safest way to delay and impede their undying puppeteers.)
- The afterlife conspiracy preserves many tombs, often in secret, often serving as rallying points for their human servitors. (These tombs often come originally from Egypt, and they retain their mystical powers even when moved to new lands. Their dread servants often return to these tombs. They are storehouses for occult treasures.)
- Mortals make pacts with these forces for extended life. (These agents hibernate in a delusional fugue state. Provoking them with the inconsistencies of their memories drives them mad.)

Every rogue scorpion cult operates differently, though most follow the conspiracy or tribal models. Some are essentially hate groups that seek out those loyal to Duat and murder them in drive-by shootings. Others focus on artifacts, constantly seeking and destroying anything that shows signs of occult potency. But the most dangerous are ideological. They don't hate the servants of the Shan'iatu because of what they are, but for what they're doing. They believe that the Arisen and their mortal aides are pawns in the hands of malignant, inhuman entities that loathe freedom and long to enslave the world. They're not necessarily brutes or greedy for treasure. They're heroes who are willing to give up their lives to preserve their children's liberty.

Last Dynasty International

Purity Holds a Righteous Arm Over Hubris
—Corporate motto, Last Dynasty International

LDI gets its own heading because, in terms of mortal menace to the Arisen, it's in a class by itself. Picture an unholy marriage between scientific curiosity and forbidden knowledge from dead ages. Throw in a few obsessives, techniques for turning mummies into longevity elixirs, plus the secrets of Amkhat creation, and you've got the nastiest thing to face the guilds since the Shuankhsen.

Last Dynasty got its start when Muhammad Ali Pasha al-Mas'ud ibn Agha took control of Egypt in 1805 after Napoleon's brief occupation. He was advised by a now-forgotten cabal of English gentlemen: Adam Drake, Esquire; Major Rhys Treharne, M.D. (ret.); and the Viscount James Killwarden of Curke Island. The story of how a disgraced lawyer, a military surgeon, and a penniless nobleman helped an Ottoman soldier seize control of a country is unwritten, which is a shame, because it's full of cold treachery, fundraising antiquities theft, military brilliance, espionage-via-seduction, brazen bluffs, torture, unlikely escapes, double- and triple-blind maneuvers, and an episode in which the lives of a dozen captured Turkish soldiers were staked on a single pitch of the dice. Although Muhammad Ali Pasha never really trusted the Three Gentlemen (as they were known), their interests aligned, and he grudgingly accepted their help when it came time to have his underlings sent to Europe for education.

Unknown to Egypt's ruler, Major Treharne had made a separate deal with a native woman who'd been helping Egyptians escape the Wāli's harsh conscription policies. In return for setting up her three daughters and two sons in Wales, she initiated him into the Loyalists of the Final Dynasty. A cult founded by one of the Arisen, it had gone rogue and embraced the blasphemies of Amkhat construction after its mistress vanished. The Three Gentlemen, with uncharacteristic humbleness, accepted the occult teaching of the Loyalists and paid for them with European trade connections. Everybody won: The Loyalists exploited the Gentlemen's connections to the Wāli in order to get on the warm side of the government. The Gentlemen learned mystic secrets that they eventually deployed to squeeze out the Turkish leaders, setting the stage for the British occupation. They were unnoticed parasites getting rich off Egyptian cotton until the Great War blindsided them, shattering the sect and scattering Loyalists of the Final Dynasty throughout Europe, Asia, and Africa. It wasn't until 1942 that the broken branches began to knit back together, when a British tank commander realized some of his Egyptian captives knew countersigns from the secret society he'd joined at university.

After the war, it was clear to the conspirators that the only games in town were Communism and bald, corporate greed. They made their choice, incorporated as Last Dynasty International in Hong Kong, transitioned into pharmaceuticals in the 1970s, and remain a glamorously mysterious company

with its major research unit in North Carolina and its executive HQ in Thun, Switzerland (though, for tax purposes, they're incorporated in the Seychelles).

Much of their product is mundane. Some of it is exceptionally potent, incorporating mystic energies pirated from the Arisen. And sometimes they use the occult-infused medicines for a while to build up a reputation, then sell the same drugs without the Sekhem boost. After all, their supply of mystic energy is thin and unreliable. It all depends on the ritual of the Golden Vial.

LDI has agents throughout the world searching for relics, many of them crazed antiquarians, but the higher-ups—and yes, the Three Gentlemen are still alive and well, thanks to Cell-Scrub (see below), which is just an improved version of an old spell called the Rite of the Pearlescent Fountain—know better than to tempt curses by getting grabby. (Rhys Treharne, currently known as "Dr. Reece Trombley" is still on a restricted diet and has to have yearly gastro-enterological reconstructive surgery after a nasty encounter with an effigy.) No, they just take the treasures and use them as bait to draw in the Deathless.

Last Dynasty Pharmaceuticals

So, what of the mysterious substance, the Exudation? Why is LDI willing to go to such lengths to acquire it? The answer lies in the fact that the Exudation is the foundation for several highly profitable treatments. One dose of Exudation can, with the proper mixing, produce the following:

50,000 doses of Amphlex™: This immune-system booster has just recently been approved for use in the United States, but while the stuff Americans get is chemically identical to the Exudation-treated medicine, it won't do anything. (It won't hurt anyone; it's just a complex placebo.) Much of the genuine, mystically potent Amphlex™ has been given away in Africa, where it's been found that a single dose after exposure to HIV can prevent the infection from taking hold. If you're looking for a sinister motive for LDI's massive donation program, there isn't one. The Three Gentlemen are appalled at the AIDS situation and, from the perspective of extreme age, only see it getting worse unless someone sensible does something. Of course, they aren't unaware of the great publicity they're getting; it has increased sales of the dud Amphlex™ in the developed world wonderfully.

2,000 units of Nortromadine™: This miracle trauma drug is just a rumor to most, but select U.S. military units in both Iraq and Afghanistan were issued single doses of what they were told was a mix of epinephrine, painkillers, and clotting accelerants. And indeed, all that stuff's in Nortromadine™, so even without Exudation, the formula gives a +1 equipment bonus when people are making First Aid rolls. But the real item instantly heals injured mortals of one point of lethal damage, no roll needed. It retails to defense contractors for $1,000 per 2cc dose, so they only issue it to elite soldiers whose training costs (and high-risk missions) justify the price.

100 courses of Mendathinol™ treatment: Top-tier athletes seek out Mendathinol™ to retain their edge, while those

The Golden Vial

To perform the ritual of the Golden Vial, a mortal needs a fair collection of specialized tools (all cast in gold); containers that are blasphemous mockeries of the traditional canopic jars (again, gold); a bright noonday sun; and a restrained member of the Deathless. That last component is, of course, the hard bit.

Starting the ceremony at the stroke of noon, the priest recites a lengthy and (to Iremite loyalists) devastatingly foul chant decrying the Judges, undermining all they hold dear, and brazenly declaring his intent to undo their greatest works. While this chanting is going on, he unwraps the mummy and then (using the implements mentioned above) "vents" the seats of certain mystic body processes. This means piercing the skin and lightly agitating the organs within (or at least their sahu equivalents). The five seats are: the spleen, the heart, the lungs, the right carotid artery, and the left eye. When that's done, a hollow spike is driven through the anterior fontanel of the mummy's skull, and her entire body is upended over each of the five jars in turn. They call the golden plasm that pours out "the Exudation."

For each Pillar the Deathless has that has at least one point left in it, a jar fills, and she loses a level of Sekhem (though she can't lose more than she has remaining). ***Example:*** *Ilipep is at Sekhem 7. At his maximum, he has Ba 4, Ka 2, Ren 2, Ab 1, and Sheut 0. While struggling to resist and escape, however, he burned through a lot of Pillars. Now he's down to Ba 2 and Ka 1. If the ritual succeeds on him, he'll drop to Sekhem 5 and LDI will get two units of Exudation in the process.*

This is the Descent at its fastest and most destructive. Fortunately, it doesn't always work. Sometimes, it just does a point of lethal damage for each vented seat and another point of lethal damage when the spike goes in. (LDI has surgeons on hand to try and minimize mortality, but that's hard when the ritual has to go off uninterrupted. Usually, they just try to get the mummy into good shape before it begins and patch her up if she survives.) To cast the spell successfully, the player of the priest has to succeed on an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficulty 2), and it's not an extended action, nor one that anyone can help him with. So Willpower often gets spent, leaving the caster depleted and ill-tempered afterward. If the mummy survives, the researcher can always wait until his prisoner heals up and then take another stab at it, assuming the mummy doesn't just send herself into a death cycle.

who haven't quite made the Wheaties box chase rumors of a super-steroid that's infallible and undetectable. Taken over two weeks, seven Mendathinol™ suppositories cause their user to rapidly gain muscle power, even if he doesn't bother with exercise. (That's only been confirmed with LDI's internal tests, of course. The pros buying this stuff would never break training.) Interestingly, unlike normal steroids, Mendathinol doesn't cause massive bulk gain, but its modest mass additions work with incredible efficiency. Moreover, the development is almost universally even, preventing some of the side effects that imbalanced athletes suffer (like tearing a joint with a too-hard sneeze). Any mortal who takes Mendathinol™ as directed permanently gains a point each in Strength and Stamina.

"Cell-Scrub" therapy: LDI hasn't submitted samples of its core Cell-Scrub products to the USDA or the EMA, and it hasn't even bothered to trademark the name. Given that one full unit of Exudation is required for a Cell-Scrub, it's not something the company's ever going to need to market: The next five treatments are already allocated to LDI stockholders, researchers, and executives. Bidding to get on the waiting list starts at one million U.S. dollars, and the price of the treatment itself is simply "whatever the market will bear." Cell-Scrub, you see, is a no-kidding fountain of youth. For outsiders, they tart it up with injections and tests and by flooding their lungs with terrifying oxygenated pink slime. There's some simulated plastic surgery in there, too, but the real treatment's hidden in the second day of a concluding spa weekend. Those in the know just slip into a tub full of warm, frothing, pearlescent water and get out feeling 20 years younger. Gray hairs start to regrow in their natural color, skin becomes smoother, tissues firm up, and the mind regains its youthful acuity without sacrificing a whit of the guile and knowledge of age. No one has been Cell-Scrubbed to an effective age under 20—the amoral boffins in Research would love to try it on an adolescent, but children are way cheaper than Cell-Scrubs, and no one's going to get out of the queue just so some lab-coated sociopaths can *play*.

The Killwarden Memorial Conservation Fund

Do you know why teachers and daycare providers have to go through tons of background checks before they can professionally tend others' children? It's to screen out the perverts. Even a dumb pervert can figure out that the best way to access children is to be entrusted with their care.

It was in that exploitative spirit that James Killwarden's supposed heirs founded a conservation fund in his name. The Killwarden Fund buys up the nesting grounds of endangered owls, and pays field researchers to track threats to apex predators, and arranges for conservation biologists to get access to LDI's extensive labs and log time on its computer networks. Individual nations may have better data on the biomes within their borders, but KMCF's global models rival the United Nations Environment Programme.

They do a shocking amount of good, considering that all the conservation is protective camouflage—like a school janitor who leaves 99% of the students unmolested.

The initial purpose of KMCF is to locate canid, ophidian, feline, ursine, and avian rarities for incorporation in Amkhata. (There's some bee and scorpion experimentation going on, too, but those tend to be less endangered than big cats and Egyptian jackals whose bloodlines haven't been polluted by someone's escaped pet over the last 5,000 years.) The inhumane branch of KMCF that poaches, breeds, and sacrifices threatened animals accounts for only 2% of the Fund's personnel, but a whopping 45% of its budget.

Right now, the occult seed in the flesh of the KMCF is primarily concerned with devising a metric for the occult potency of an ingredient animal. The two dominant theories are the "originist" and the "malevolist,"

Originism argues that the closer an animal is to its analogue from Irem's days, the better it works to mock and defile Iremite sorcery. Therefore, they try to isolate out genetic drift from later centuries, along with raising stock in conditions as close to ancient times as possible. (Among other projects, they're building a biodome for lions west of Qasr Farafra and attempting to filter all modern pollutants out of its atmosphere.)

Malevolism, on the other hand, holds that the rarity of the animals makes them more powerful *because* the enchantment is powered by inflicting harm on nature. Therefore, the more harm inflicted by a single sacrifice, the better the outcome. The apex result predicted by malevolism would be to kill the very last living animal of its species.

Originism is the numerically and fiscally dominant theory, but the malevolists are crazier and nastier.

Integrated Transport Solutions, LLC

After the 1982 Tylenol poison murders, LDI made aggressive moves to vertically integrate every aspect of their pharmaceutical operation. Since the completion of the changeover in 1985, ingredients have been raised in private greenhouses or refined in LDI factories, blended in LDI labs, packaged in proprietary shops, transported by LDI-owned ships, and delivered to pharmacies by unmarked LDI trucks from LDI warehouses.

As with the Killwarden Fund, most of the operations in the transport branch are completely benign. Most people driving the trucks and maintaining the facilities (all of which are unlabeled, and tucked into obscure commercial and industrial parks, with unlisted phone numbers and addresses "for security reasons") are entirely innocent of any conspiratorial behavior. But the Vice President of Transportation Security (whose driver's license reads "Drake Adams" this century) has extensive dossiers on his personnel, focusing on oversights, blunders, indiscretions, and plain ol' crimes that people *think* they've put behind them. So if the Three Gentlemen, or any of their nastier agents, need an undisclosed location to hide in or an innocuous white-panel van, well, there's a site manager who'll look the other way in exchange for a promise that the Polaroids won't surface or a driver who's grateful that his supervisor overlooked that one time he showed up drunk to work. When LDI's sinister purposes required enough poison to entomb a mummy's whole cult? Grown at the greenhouse, mixed at five different labs so the quantity wouldn't attract attention, packaged after hours, and delivered right on time by a granddad teamster who had no idea he was an accessory to mass murder.

THE DEAD

Considering the endless cycle of death and awakening experienced by every true mummy, it is not surprising that the spirits of the dead can play a significant role in the world of the Arisen. From the ancient and morbid obligations of servants, to loved ones and cultists, to the unpleasant side effects of a freshly summoned soul who arises angry and confused at his awakening, droves of the dead have been left in the wake of the judgments of Duat over the centuries. Even in the cases of ghosts not caused by the Arisen's actions or inactions, mummies bleed the Sekhem that empowers them, and as such, ghosts (and other supernatural creatures) are drawn to them like moths to a flickering flame. Whatever the reason for their presence, ghosts should be emblems of consequence in your **Mummy** chronicle—the voices and dreams of a mummy's past.

And so, two primary categories of ghosts exist with which a mummy must concern herself: those dedicated servants and allies who have accepted their role in the Arisen's existence, even beyond death, and those vengeful and troubling ghosts seeking revenge, balance, or resolution.

THE BLESSED

Hundreds were ritually slain in the names of the pharaohs, but many gave their lives willingly. When willing to die for or otherwise dedicated to the cult, the ghost is a sort of spirit in death that is one of the finest allies an Arisen can have: A fellow member of lost Irem's blessed dead. Committed to both the path of the mummy and the will of her Judge, it is not uncommon for cults of the dead to gather around the mortal cult of a powerful Arisen, forming ranks of devotees within the Twilight realm that support both the living membership and simultaneously act as specialized agents for the mummy. Capable of superhuman feats of espionage and surveillance beyond anything a human cultist could manage, ghosts can act as the eyes and ears of the Arisen in specific locations where his dead cult members are active. These disembodied dead are few in number, as it is the rare soul who can handle the strains of being denied both afterlife and form, but when they are around, active, *and* sane, they can be a boon to the Arisen unlike any other.

Many living cultists believe that, upon death, a mortal comes into contact with forces that trigger a Gnostic communion with necromantic energy that provides a greater understanding of the mummy's reality. This is not the case. For spirits of the deceased, entering a cult of the dead is more like internment in a convalescent home than an initiation into greater understanding. The cult's rings of initiation and rituals of devotion, in conjunction with cryptic and eccentric dogma, provide a net of attachment and familiarity for the ghost. In extremely rare cases, the mummy's cult is the farthest spread branches of a single family that came to serve the Arisen in remote antiquity. These families maintain enormous shrines dedicated to the most prominent and dedicated of their ancestors, which provide great nourishment for their family ghosts. In turn, the ghosts function as guardians and assure that, in death, the family's deceased will be cared for into eternity. These sorts of arrangements between cultic legacies and Arisen are incredibly advantageous when they function optimally. Nonetheless, with all the members of a cult being bound incestuously by familial ties and cultic vows, when things do go wrong, they tend to go *terribly* wrong. This sort of event can result in wars, suicide pacts, or wholesale conversion to an opposing cause (Last Dynasty International?), and can spell the total destruction of an Arisen's support network.

Despite the rarity of mummy ghost cults, many living cultists take great pains to insure that they become members upon death. Most of these cases assume that the mummy is dealing with the dead of his own cult. Among those deceased servants who were conditioned in life, one should expect complacency and obedience, with only the most extreme cases of mutiny violating the contract between cultists and mummy. The dead who constitute the cults of other mummies can sometimes pose more obstacle than provide assistance. The ghosts of obstinate thugs appointed as guardians of much-needed vessels, oath-bound priests who are the lineal keepers of initiatory and magical secrets, and protected loved ones who refuse to intervene on behalf of the interests of anything other than their own cult can all serve to stymie the best laid plans of a canny Arisen. These sorts of servants can be pressured with votive offerings, destruction, or control, but ultimately, such negative and intense treatment can backfire. Even the most subservient ghost cultists have limits to their patience and what they will endure in the name of duty. One who is overly abused may simply refuse to appear or otherwise comply with his Arisen's wishes.

Sometimes, the Blessed involved in ghost cults tied to the mummy's living cult prove the most frustrating and difficult of obstacles. Arguments concerning dogma or the exact wording of a core prophecy or spiritual verse can precipitate weeks, months, or years of dispute. This sort of "red tape" is more than just an annoyance to a mummy whose time is so literally at a premium. The Descent does not wait patiently during exhaustive philosophical or psychological discussions until the mummy and her cultist come to a sound agreement on behalf of everyone's best interests. Instead, they come to loggerheads and cause, at best, terrible delays and, at worst, violent schisms that fracture the mummy's death cult, possibly inverting its purposes and turning the powers of its ghostly initiates against the Arisen they formerly served. However, in the best cases, wise and loyal ghosts can provide unimaginable aid, even acting as guides through the past or being mentors to the Arisen so that she may better recover the secrets of her ancient life.

THE RESTLESS

The care and shepherding of one's cultists is an art that requires finesse, sensitivity, and when called for, the ability to wisely and forcefully implement power and violence. Through these methods, even the most insubordinate of the

dead can be brought to heel. In the very worst cases, though, a spirit is too furious, confused, or willful to comply, and it turns its dark powers fully against the interests of the Arisen.

The malevolent plans of the restless dead vary dramatically when it comes to mummies. Some of their ill wishes are small and intimate, which says nothing in terms of how nasty their execution may be. Some are insane spirits who cannot escape a cycle of suffering, who may see their association with the Arisen as the cause of the spiritual trap in which they find themselves. Although the cause may be minor, the personal mythologies of the Restless include vast, delusional conspiracies that tap into a kind of inner darkness only the Shuankhsen could connect with. Other Restless are more driven, tied to an ideology through which the ghost becomes a vengeful spirit ordained by the cosmic mandate of that dread, elder force that wiped away Irem.

On occasion, the Arisen is only a symbol to the wrathful spirit. In this case, the situation is impersonal, but the mummy has found herself linked to key or dramatic events that have bound the ghost to her for other unrelated but powerful reasons. The mummy might be the only piece of a ghost's spiritual puzzle that still exists, the rest washed away by centuries of lost time. As such, the vengeful ghost may even have to cooperate with the mummy out of mutual interests and goals.

Perhaps the most dreadful of the Restless is the wrathful ghost of a spurned or betrayed lover. As the poets guessed, the torments for such a being in the shadow realm are often one hundred fold. The emotional nature of the Twilight's metaphysics conspires with the ghost's emotional force to create a perfect storm of total malice. To make matters worse, it is not unheard of for mad or desperately lonely Arisen to coax the company of past lovers who now walk the Twilight as disembodied spirits. Sometimes, the Arisen is just ignorant of what calling spirits for thus entails, as well as what the repercussions of such a magical act may be. In other cases, the mummy knows full and well what hellish possibilities await and meets them willingly, as a gesture of her devotion, and amplified by a creeping madness brought on by the hazards of the Descent.

The restless and angry dead can pose serious headaches, but they aren't always the worst thing in the world for an Arisen. Tomb robbers and punished cultists often meet a grisly end at the hands of their undead masters within the burial chamber. In addition to the mummy's own curse, the haunting of these wrathful ghosts is usually yet another level of security between the foolish and the mummy's treasures. Sometimes, the haunting is vindictive—an angry apparition that wanders the tomb, punishing intruders out of sheer spite. Other times, the haunting is the result of a terrible event brought on by chance or by the victims themselves, such as the activation of a trap within the crypt or a cave-in. The worst instances involve those who were actively murdered, tortured, or sacrificed, either by the mummy or at her word. These ghosts are elementals of pain and malice, mindlessly thirsting for the destruction of anything that violates the site of their ruin. Although these monsters believe they are harming the mummy, whether consciously or by their destructive nature, they are ultimately aiding the Arisen by providing another supernatural deterrent to defend her tomb, albeit a superficially unwilling one.

New Numina

Mummies have extensive dealings with ghosts. Not only does this broaden the range of spectral phenomena they encounter, but their own Utterances allow the Arisen to transform and augment the dead. The following Numina are uncommon or rare, but theoretically available to all ghosts. Some require others Numina as prerequisites as noted. Manifestation modifiers can be found on page 210 of **World of Darkness**.

Dead Eyes

Prerequisite: Intruder or Revenant. Through the reflexive expenditure of two points of Essence, the intruder/revenant can see ghosts for a scene.

Dead Skin

Prerequisite: Intruder or Revenant. Through the reflexive expenditure of one Willpower point and one Essence point, the embodied ghost enters Twilight and becomes incorporeal like a ghost for (Composure or Resilience) turns. It remains visible in the material world as a blurred apparition. Both intruders and basic revenants can be harmed as ghosts by holy or enchanted weapons while dematerialized. This Numen may be used to evade an attack that can't harm beings in Twilight, provided the revenant perceives the attack.

Flight of Shadows

While ghosts can walk through solid matter, they generally must move in a manner similar to the living. By spending one Essence point per day (or five turns for revenants) on this Numen, however, a ghost can hover or fly at its ground speed, out to the limits of its anchors. Its Corpus or animating power blurs behind it in trailing wisps of darkness.

Hallowed Passion

Prerequisite: Impassioned Soul. The ghost has devoted one of its Passions to a task given to it by one of the Arisen. It is no longer vulnerable to holy weapons, and whenever it takes an action in direct support of its assigned Passion that requires a roll, the target number is reduced by -1. The ghost cannot knowingly take actions that directly contradict this Passion, whether by choice or compelled by magic.

Impassioned Soul

Prerequisite: Untethered. Some ghosts are driven by a need to accomplish something, an obsession that transcends attachment to people, things, or places. Accordingly, such an apparition lose its anchors, Morality, degen-

eration-induced derangements, Virtues, Vice, and one dot of Resilience (or Composure for Lucid Dead). Instead, the ghost's personality is wholly ruled and supernaturally fueled by up to three Passions: clearly defined goals such as "Avenge my death" or "Obey Imhotep."

Whenever the ghost successfully takes any action that makes progress toward resolving a Passion (as per resolving an anchor; **World of Darkness**, p. 213), roll a variable number of dice: one (related to goal), two (some progress), three (significant progress), four (nearing completion), or five (completed). Each success restores one point of Essence. Ten Willpower points can be cumulatively spent for a ghost to form a new Passion after one resolves.

The power and freedom of Passions comes at a price. The ghost gains 10 dots of permanent Essence and loses one dot per week that passes without a Passion roll being made for it (or per day for a revenant). Such losses are permanent, and the ghost fades into the great beyond upon reaching zero. Unlike with spirits, this trait only functions to track the ghost's dissolution. A ghost with Passions must pursue them relentlessly or burn out its existence.

Inspiration

Prerequisite: Impassioned Soul. Pay one Essence point, and roll (Power + Resistance) or (Presence + Resolve), contested by the target's (Composure + Resolve) or (Power + Resistance). For each success remaining, the target feels one of the ghost's Passions for one turn. While afflicted with a Passion, one Willpower point must be paid for the target, or he acts to fulfill that Passion in the most expedient and effective manner possible. If the victim surrenders to the Passion, his actions receive a +2 bonus.

Intruder

Prerequisite: Lucid Dead. The ghost can steal a dead body to inhabit as a Lifeless revenant, and she need not have any special association with the corpse. She no longer needs to manifest or use Numina to interact with the physical world, but is largely cut off from perceiving or interacting with other ghosts. However, she can only enter with the assistance of external magic or specific conjunctions of Fate. The intruder uses the victim's Physical Attributes, Size, Speed, species factor, appropriate Merits (e.g., Striking Looks, Giant), and any other traits specifically associated with the body.

Intruders can't heal their stolen flesh without Numina. If one's body is destroyed, she is spiritually ejected with full Corpus and continues to exist as a ghost, but loses all her Willpower and Essence from shock and pain and must wait for a new opportunity to take a body. These body snatchers gain Impassioned Soul, Siphon, Untethered, Will From Power, and three other Numina for free as part of acquiring this Numen, but they lose a dot of Wits. While an intruder doesn't risk Essence loss for not pursuing her Passions, her player must pay one Willpower point and one Essence point each day at sunrise for the character or she loses one dot of permanent Essence. Moreover, these ghosts can't hold more points of Essence than their permanent rating. Unlike standard revenants, intruders also remain vulnerable to holy weapons and exorcisms.

Lucid Dead

The ghost experiences a miraculous personal revelation that restores some of her humanity. She loses her basic ghost Attributes and regains the Attributes, Skills, and Merits she possessed at her time of death. She likely possesses the Untethered Numen. She can regain Morality through good deeds like a mortal, but she cannot raise it by any other means. Ten cumulative points of Essence may be spent for her to form a new anchor from a valid target in her immediate presence, to a maximum of (Morality + Composure) anchors.

The changes to a Lucid Dead ghost's traits alter the dice pools for manifestation (Presence + Wits, Presence rating determines detail of manifestation), resisting abjurations and exorcisms (Resolve + Composure), and using basic Numina: Animal Control and Ghost Speech (Presence + Wits, max of Wits rating animals controlled); Clairvoyance, Compulsion and Possession (Presence + Resolve); Ghost Sign, Magnetic Disruption and Telekinesis (Dexterity + Presence); Ghost Speech (Presence + Wits); Phantasm (Manipulation + Subterfuge); and Terrify (Presence + Intimidation).

Lucid Dead ghosts have enough personality to make playable characters. They gain and spend experience as mortals, but may also pay 15 experience points apiece for additional Numina. Starting Lucid Dead characters follow mortal character creation rules, adding three other Numina and two anchors.

Maddening

Prerequisite: Terrify. Whenever the ghost's manifestation or undead revenant body scares mortals away using the Terrify Numen, victims develop a derangement for one month chosen by the Storyteller (usually a phobia or avoidance of ghosts). Further exposure during this time means their players must choose a severe derangement and the duration resets.

Old Soul

The ghost gains Age as a supernatural advantage trait with one dot for each century that passed since its death (maximum Age 10). With Age 6 or higher, the ghost's Attributes (and/or Skills if it has them) may be raised to a maximum of its Age. The ghost also gains additional capacity to hold Essence points equal to (10 + [Age x 2]). Furthermore, whenever a dice pool is rolled for the apparition to defensively contest a supernatural power, add a bonus equal to the ghost's Age (unless the dice pool already includes supernatural advantage). Time fogs the past and fades human mores, however, so apply the ghost's Age as a penalty to rolls for the spirit to memorize or recall information, or to resist degeneration. This penalty can explicitly reduce degeneration checks to a chance roll.



Phantom Arsenal

Through the expenditure of two Essence points per scene, the ghost can grow horrible claws or barbs or other such weapons out of its Corpus or revenant body. Its "unarmed" attacks gain a +1 bonus and inflict lethal damage, adding the "9-Again" rule to each strike. Ghosts with the Telekinesis Numen can apply their Phantom Arsenal benefits when directly assaulting with psychic force.

Pyrokinesis

The ghost can start small fires within two yards, with its player spending two Essence points and rolling (Power + Finesse), applying manifestation modifiers. Success causes a torch-sized flame with candle heat to flash into existence at the desired location. The supernatural fire may be any color and extinguishes itself after a turn; any secondary fires started as a result burn normally.

Regeneration

One Essence point can be reflexively spent for the ghost to heal one point of bashing damage to its Corpus or its revenant body. Reflexively spending one Willpower per scene allows the same Essence expenditure to heal lethal or aggravated damage.

Revenant

The ghost physically enters its own corpse or another corpse that is one of its anchors and becomes one of the Lifeless. It gains one of the following Attribute dot modifications: (+1 Power and Resilience; –1 Finesse) or (+1 Strength, Stamina, Presence, and Resolve; –1 Wits). It no longer needs to manifest or use Numina to interact with the physical world, but it is largely cut off from perceiving or interacting with other ghosts. Its body is a mobile anchor allowing it to travel through the living world.

Revenants can't heal without Numina. They can mimic life to pass for human (heartbeat, regular breathing, etc.) by spending two Essence points, unless their bodies were embalmed. In general, revenants cannot return back to being ghosts and endure only so long as their bodies do.

Revenants gain immunity to special harm from abjurations, exorcisms, and holy weapons. They also gain Will From Power and three additional Numina for free as part of their embodiment. Finally, they may also add Impassioned Soul and Untethered for free as a package deal, and most do since ghosts willing to inhabit a corpse generally want mobility. (More information on revenants can be found on pp. 33-39 of **World of Darkness: Antagonists**.)

Siphon

The ghost can drain the psychic energy of other ghosts via a successful "skin-to-skin" touch. Roll the Numen user's (Power + Resistance) or (Intelligence + Presence) in a contested roll against the target's (Power + Resistance) or (Resolve + Composure). Every remaining success transfers two Essence points from the victim to the attacker. If the victim runs out of Essence, each success drains one Willpower point and gives the attacking ghost two Essence points.

If the ghost is in a position to touch a living being (such as a revenant attacking a mortal), draining away the last of the victim's Willpower allows each success to inflict one point of automatic lethal damage to restore two Essence points.

Spectral Toughness

The ghost doesn't suffer wound penalties or risk falling unconscious when its Corpus fills with bashing or lethal damage. It continues on in the face of injury until aggravated damage destroys it completely. For a revenant, this invulnerability also includes suffering bashing damage from bullets, but its last five points of aggravated damage remove one limb each and finally the creature's head until it falls apart completely.

Spirit Prowess

Up to five points of Essence can be reflexively and cumulatively spent to augment the ghost's Corpus (or revenant body) for a scene. One dot per point may be added to any combination of the ghost's Power, Finesse, Resilience, Strength, Dexterity, or Stamina. A reflexive expenditure of one Willpower point reallocates the bonus among Attributes. Adding to Power or Finesse does not increase a ghost's Defense.

Stalker

After an expenditure of five Essence points and one Willpower point, the ghost can choose a person it has observed and make her a new anchor, even if she isn't present currently. The ghost can only gain one anchor this way at a time; reactivation resets the target. The target must be someone the ghost has demonstrated strong feelings for or reasonably could develop such for (such as a girl meeting the victim profile of a dead serial killer).

Stolen Pillars

Prerequisites: Siphon, Lucid Dead. The ghost is treated as one of the Lifeless and may use Siphon to attack corporeal targets while manifested. Whenever it feeds on a mummy, it can drain a specific type of Pillar in lieu of Willpower. Stolen points may give the ghost one dot of that Pillar (maximum ••), but these dots bleed off at the rate of one per week and don't come with points (or a means to gain any).

Upon gaining any Pillar rating, the ghost may manifest soul Affinities just like a mummy, provided the ghost meets the Pillar minimums. If the ghost's stolen Pillar rating drops below an Affinity's minimum, that power goes dormant until the ghost can again feed on one of the Arisen. The Storyteller should prohibit ghosts from purchasing Affinities that don't do anything useful for them.

Twilight Abduction

The ghost can attempt to drag victims within one yard into an incorporeal state, allowing it to freely interact with the target where other mortals cannot see or help. Spend three Essence points, and roll the ghost's (Power + Finesse) or (Presence + Wits), applying manifestation location modifiers. The target resists with a roll of (Resolve + Composure + Sekhem). If the ghost wins, shadows drag the mortal and his worn possessions through a sudden imploding tear in space. In an instant, the rift closes, and the mortal enters Twilight for one hour per remaining success. He rematerializes more quietly, excepting his screams and sobs. Should he die in Twilight, his body does not return; he likely becomes a ghost.

Untethered

The unusually intrepid ghost can travel beyond its anchors, though Willpower may be spent for it to snap back to their relative safety or to recover Essence. While away from its anchors, the ghost can't heal by any means and suffers one automatic point of aggravated damage each day (unless it also has Impassioned Soul).

Will from Power

The ghost may spend three points of Essence reflexively to regain one Willpower point.



Chapter Six
Vessels of Power

The blood of Isis, the charms of Isis, the power of Isis...they are a protection unto me, and they crush that which I abhor.
— The Book of the Dead

The Arisen are not the only things to have been crafted and shaped by the ancient magic and occulted mysteries of mighty Irem of the Pillars. Ancient relics and vestiges of the time before time are known to the Arisen as vessels. Vessels were objects of great power even during the time of Irem, shaped by the city's guilds to contain, focus, and refine the Sekhem of that golden age. Many of those are today but a shadow of themselves and a memory of a time never to come again. While not all vessels take the shape of containers, they are called such because they all carry precious Sekhem within. Unlike the Arisen themselves, vessels can never forget the touch of Irem, and the whispered rumor of a vessel can fill a mummy's dead heart with a sublime hunger. Active Arisen endeavor to recover as many of these strange artifacts as possible, especially those which form or purpose bears a special connection to lost Irem or to the Arisen's own guild. The connection between the Arisen and these vessels of power is a powerful mystical bond that cults can use to call upon their patron dead in times of need.

Relics

While all vessels contain dim memories of the past, a reward precious enough for the Arisen, some vessels are "supercharged" with distilled Sekhem and infused with strange magical powers. This type of vessel is known among the Arisen as a relic. Most often, these objects were crafted by the guilds of Irem, or by those who copied their great art, but a rare few are the organic products of a more long-term distillation of Sekhem. Just as many of these relics are tied to the City of Pillars, they are also tied to the guilds that ruled that ancient city and brought forth the great magic that allowed for their making. Not all relics were birthed from great and golden Irem, but the germ of their mortal crafting was born there. That knowledge wafted as a seed on the wind of time, planting itself in the fertile soil of one great culture after another.

Vestiges

While these vessels do not contain the focused magical power of relics, they are the touchstones upon which the Arisen can moor their memory against the eternal turbulence of time and fate. The raw Sekhem contained in these vessels is the retained life force of those who valued them best. While ancient vestiges are most prized by the Arisen, modern vestiges can sustain and comfort their sahu just as well. In times of need, an Arisen can strip a vestige of this pathos, to cannibalize it for the power required to continue her toil. Vestiges resonate with the inner being of a mummy, and her purpose draws her to them as an iron filing to a magnet. Most vestiges the Arisen will encounter will be modern objects, but the treasures and debris of lost Irem will call to her like no other. Upon seeing a treasure that may have survived from ancient Irem, the Arisen's first instinct will likely be to preserve and to guard this reflection of her; to lay dead hands on that which her own living hands may have once chanced upon. In darker, more desperate moments, the Arisen's longing for a vestige may be cruder, born of a hunger for the pure-form Sekhem contained within it.

Vessels and the Arisen

Consider chess.

It's an elegant game, the rules are short and simple, but the emergent strategies are mind-boggling. The ultimate goal is not to capture the opposing king, but to bind him—a lovely, subtle refinement. The mightiest piece is the queen, capable of swooping across the board and (with a few notable exceptions) usually able to destroy anything that threatens her. She can be blockaded, but her power and versatility are unparalleled. This is doubly true when the board is mostly clear. In the endgame, the queen's dominance is assured.

Each player only gets one, however, and she has a huge, fat target on her from the opening move.

The Arisen are the queens of the Judges' chess matches. The vessels? They're the other pieces. Relics are bishops and rooks, while vestiges are the pawns. They're not as swift as the queen, but they're essential to constructing robust gambits. Besides, if a pawn advances to the back row? It gets promoted to queen. In a pleasing synchrony, vessels are what mortals use to summon the Arisen.

Mummies are the grand and flashy point men of the Judges' will for the world. They're powerful assets, but still pieces, not players. Sometimes—not always, but sometimes—they're sacrificed to protect another piece. Like a relic. Or the king.

The Avaricious Urge

The Arisen are needful—especially of powerful artifacts that can kill a man, or make him rich, or bring disaster upon a harvest. All relics belong to the Judges, but less in the way one would say "That's my car" or even "That's my home," and more in the sense of "That's my child." Just as the Iremites believed that all nondomesticated animals belonged to the gods and the Judges, so too do they believe the same of all relics. As such, it follows that the Arisen would seek out and return such treasures to their original owners, whom they serve.

Moving through the world, every object radiant with Sekhem reorders reality around it, taking from one direction and acting in another. While holding one gives magic powers, it also strains the world, or the people, or the order of reality around it. This is their true curse—that relics seem to renew their might destructively, unraveling the order of life in ways that only the Arisen are readily equipped to forestall. Although a mummy's relationship with a relic may be more complicated, all Arisen can destroy relics for personal gain.

Often, relics work in tandem with vestiges—objects whose history endows them with a spiritual and/or emotional resonance, but that have no other *blatant* mystic effect. Vestiges on their own create minor feelings when held or examined, rarely anything more overwhelming than seeing a sunset over Paris or hearing one's favorite song on the radio. When in close proximity to a relic, however (say, within the same room), their influence may get more widespread. Relics have powerful, actual effects on individuals. Vestiges have mild, emotional effects on individuals. A vestige close to a relic can project emotional effects onto *populations* (see "The Lifeweb," p. 80).

All the more reason, then, to restore them to their rightful place in Duat, where their proper masters can decide where or how their power should be deployed—if such meddling is to be countenanced at all. Upon returning to her rest with a vessel secured, the mummy takes the power of the item down to the afterworld with her, permanently draining it of all its Sekhem (and, therefore, its occult powers). As ever, this is the only truly safe way to "disarm" a relic.

Vessels and the Resurrection

Resurrecting a mummy from the sleep of ages is not necessarily a complicated procedure. In fact, many hapless thieves have accomplished it in perfect ignorance and to their intense (but usually brief) regret. Unfortunately, people who want something other than efficient and immediate violence from a mummy need to take a more nuanced approach than cracking a tomb and moving stuff around. They need to make a resurrection Call.

To perform the Call, a sorcerer (or more commonly, a cult of believers) enters a tomb, bearing at least one vessel, but more often, as many vessels as possible. He implores his undead patron to arise and aid the cult in its time of need, usually at great length and possibly with some sort of additional offering or sacrifice. If he's fortunate enough to have one of his patron's relics, that object can be used for the summons over and over. The Call merely drains the relic of its power temporarily (see sidebar). Absent of such personal connections, the Arisen can be called with an unfamiliar vessel, but doing so inexorably destroys that vessel; thus, unfamiliar relics are used only in dire emergencies. (Note that when a mummy's personal item is used for the Call, the summons is often accompanied by a vision of her mortal days.)

Most often, a Call is the kickoff for the chronicle and, as such, should be completed automatically. (The story starts when the mummies arise and having that be anything other than a lock is rarely anything but stupid.) When the mummy being summoned is a Storyteller character, that's another matter. In that case, the Storyteller may simply fiat that it succeeds (or fails). If the Story-

How Deep the Well

The question of just how often a cult will summon its immortal patron is one that's usually determined by the answer to a different question: How often *can* the cult call on its mummy? Because no matter how one drives home the narrative, the bottom line for cults (which are composed of human beings) is usually the *means*.

If a cult has no relics from its mummy (a semi-regular occurrence), it will have to *sacrifice* a vessel (of any type) each time it wishes to issue a resurrection call. If it has one of its patron's relics, however (often a centering relic), the call only drains the Sekhem temporarily. How long it takes for that relic to recharge—and thus, how frequently a cult can call its mummy for free—is the bottom line in question.

The baseline is seven weeks. Add to this the result of two die rolls (2-20), also in weeks, and subtract from the total one week for every dot of the relic in question—giving a range of between four and twenty six weeks. Since the Arisen can be active for that long during a life cycle, this often poses no great obstacle for a mummy and its cult beyond it denying them use of their disempowered relic. A partially recharged vessel can't be drained to issue a call, but it can be sacrificed for one. Storytellers looking for a more threadbare view of Sekhem and resurrection can substitute "months" (or even "years," in the case of the especially unforgiving) for "weeks."

teller wants to roll it, a single officiant of the rite determines the dice pool and must have at least one vessel at hand. However, every additional vessel (past the first one) adds +1 to the power of the summons, as does every additional dot beyond the first, in the case of a relic. (Sacrificing a relic for a resurrection call is like ridding yourself of a roach problem by demolishing your house, but there it is). Having at least 10 other people to chant, wave censers of incense, and the like adds +1 die as well. If the ritual officiant has 20 or more co-congregants, that bonus rises to +2.

While the resurrection Call is the *first* time a mummy gets called back in the course of a story, it may not be the last. Mummies who die from aggravated damage at Sekhem 2+ will return… eventually. (As described in Chapter Three of the Player's Guide, that process can be hastened by restoring the body to a rough semblance of its proper configuration, wrapping it up in linen, and putting it back in its tomb—an action usually requiring neither rolls nor vessels.)

Note that since Calls encourage cults to put together as many vessels, of any type, as they can get, it's possible for them to activate vestiges without meaning to, or without any idea that their efforts just might just be putting a subtle slant on the mood of the local citizenry.

The Nature of the Five Vessels

The constructed relics of Irem and other cultures (and the vestiges, which usually arise from circumstance but are, on rare occasions, made with intent) are defined more by nature than by purpose. Tendencies exist (since form follows function, after all), so amulets often impart knowledge or skill, alchemy often changes physical nature, effigies work as levers for changing form, texts reconfigure positions or elements, and uter amplify traits that are already present.

As a guideline, if you look at a relic, those broad categories are what it's *likely* to do. There are plenty of exceptions, however, and relying on the lazy idea that, "It's not an effigy, it can't harm me" is an excellent way to get hurt.

In fact, a careless attitude toward *any* relic is a good way to suffer, because they're all cursed, as are a smaller fraction of vestiges. Ignorant people believe these objects cause damage because their makers built in safeguards to keep them from being misused. Some of the Arisen even believe that; and in some cases, it's half-true. But it's also like saying that a car is "cursed" because you have to put gas in it to make it run.

Magic is the energy of meaning, and energy doesn't come from nowhere. Most relics power themselves by draining the world around them, and the nature of their hunger or thirst varies. So long as a relic operates in the mortal realm, you can probably bet that it is stealing something from the world around it, or from the people using it.

Amulets

Amulets usually take the form of jewelry, but they can also be seals and other items. Whatever its form, an amulet usually instills knowledge or competencies in its wearer. Most Skills and many Merits can be simulated by having the right amulet. Its holder simply finds the necessary knowledge (or reflexes) in his mind as if graven there by years of effort and study. Amulets that provide protective alerts (perhaps mimicking the Danger Sense Merit from p. 108 of the **World of Darkness** rulebook) were particularly popular. Pillar-activated powers can accomplish far more extraordinary feats.

The Curse of the Engraved: The problem with a device that can open one's mind and put stuff in there is that it may carry patterns one doesn't want there. Amulets often reshape their bearers. That is, if you take an amulet that teaches one how to move silently and unseen, it was probably constructed from the soul-stuff of an executed criminal. While using it, the idea of stealing may suddenly become far less distasteful, as the amulet nibbles away at the energy one would expend resisting temptation (perhaps forcing the holder's player to spend Willpower for the character to resist). Alternately, an amulet might feed on some *other* Skill or body of knowledge, disordering it to leach out its meaning. (So, an amulet that gives a character +3 Brawl might penalize him with –1 Subterfuge.)

Effigies

An effigy is an image of a person, object, area, or class of thing. By manipulating the effigy, its user causes targeted change in whatever it is that's depicted. The most well-known example would be the "voodoo doll." It looks like a human and has some sort of parallelism installed, so that what you do symbolically to the doll happens in reality to the target. Similarly, an effigy of a building might be shaken to inflict an earthquake on a real structure. Or a map might be set in the sun to cause the land painted on it to become fertile. (Such a map might be a text instead of an effigy though, depending on how it was made.)

The Curse of Form: Effigies, more than any other vessels, seem to have *agendas*. They pull their power out of their surroundings, and not in helpful ways. One might suck positive emotional energy out of anyone within a few miles (giving negative modifiers on social rolls, or just stealing Willpower). Another might weaken the barrier between the mortal and spirit realms, making a busy noontime street as easy to haunt as a graveyard at midnight. (See p. 210 of **The World of Darkness** for examples of how this is handled.) Or a third might physically weaken a class of matter, reducing the Durability of appropriate objects (**World of Darkness**, p. 135).

Regia

Built on bronze and gold as much as flesh and blood, the Nameless Empire relied on superior materials to

dominate the Stone Age world. The few prehistoric states that worked copper or panned gold from creek beds could never match its sorcery-forged wealth. Iremite mining didn't always use better technology, but the Priests of Duat could will copper to meld with tin or turn servants' flesh to gold. Iremite alchemy was a wide-ranging, essential art.

Alchemists also made medicinal compounds, unbreakable stone, and glittering jewels, all transformed from primitive precursors. Where matter was lacking, magic could provide, so long as the magic was fueled with appropriate sacrifices to "charge" these mundane components. Once transformed, these materials went from foundries, quarries and apothecaries to lesser artists capable of shaping raw materials into pastilles, sword blades, and other effective forms. Ultimately mundane substances such as bronze and gold required no further treatment, but truly magical materials required a final rite to seal the Sekhem within them.

A regium's powers are not defined by the symbolism of its form, but the properties bound to its substance. Nevertheless, this doesn't limit regia to peculiar physical properties. A regium jewel might possess a hypnotic beauty, and a regium blade might be able to cut immaterial ghosts.

The Curse of Alchemy: Alchemy tends to corrupt the physical. The few Arisen who've observed hard radiation poisoning suspect that nuclear scientists are doing something very much like alchemy. Using an alchemical concoction might expose the user to a Toxicity rating (**World of Darkness**, pp. 180-181) as the magic fuels itself by turning the orderly energies of the life process into a drained and chaotic snarl. Or it might weaken metals (reducing Durability like an effigy). Or it might simply leave an indelible stain on any surface exposed to it, with a peculiar color pattern making the object easy to track and difficult to hide.

Texts

Texts derive their power from the written word, whether those words were painted on a scroll or carved into an obelisk. This makes them versatile, abstract, and as unpredictable for their targets as alchemy can be for its creators. Broadly, they tend to rearrange what *is*, rather than giving things new traits (like amulets) or enhancing aspects already present (like uter). Obviously, that covers a lot of ground, which leads the scribes to consider texts the most evolved form of magic.

The Curse of the Word: The abstract powers of texts tend to wreak havoc on an abstract level—specifically, the minds of those nearby. One notorious text made people ignore anyone who read it. That was a case of the curse and the effect being the same, for while the agent who used the scroll became impossible to catch, he also couldn't communicate with anyone—even messages he left were sucked from the minds of their readers by the hunger of the scroll. He eventually killed himself, but not before destroying the scroll. More commonly, text relics have been known to force periodic Morality rolls (either for the holder or for those around him), to penalize Morality rolls that arise from bad behavior, or to force people to pay Willpower to keep unearned derangements at bay.

Uter

Relics of the shell are made from living things and derive their power from the nature of their source. A scarab beetle preserved in liquid resin, a mummified hand, a fur that came from a leopard the size of a minivan… all fine examples of uter. (On the other hand, a leather strap with mystic glyphs on it could be uter if the glyphs are evoking leathery traits, or it could be a text if the leather is just what the words happened to be written on.) Typically, uter enhance qualities that are already present in an object or person, but when they break from this rule, they *shatter* it.

The Curse of the Shell: Uter often prevent positive change in their users. Metaphorically, they're like corrupt bureaucrats stealing energies (of whatever type) that, though intended for good ends, wind up only fattening the embezzlers. So a shell might prevent natural healing or impede the recovery of Willpower through sleep. It might prevent the expenditure of experience on certain traits, or it might simply "steal" one experience point per chapter.

Sundered Vessels

What happens when a storage unit of mystical energy gets ruptured? Nothing good. Energy tends to move from an organized (or useful) state toward one that's more entropic, dangerous, and chaotic. But sometimes, the alternatives are far worse.

Guilds and Relics

Relics are hungry for power. Mummies come forth soaked with power and broadcast it throughout the Descent, often wasting it pointlessly. These two problems solve one another.

Guilds specialize in one category of vessel apiece, and the appropriate guild members can handle their types of relics with no (or reduced) curse effects. Instead of letting the relic drain the world, the mummy lets it drain Sekhem that would otherwise just bleed away. For example, amulets can nourish themselves on the energies radiating from the Maa-Kep, and therefore don't need to damage anything else.

This connection also allows the Arisen to seek out similarly guild-aligned relics. (See "The Kepher's Path," p. 145.)

There are three ways to destroy a vessel, and *who's* doing the damage matters a lot more than how it gets done. Vessels can be drained by Arisen, pillaged by Amkhata, or broken by mortals (or other misfortunes, such as earthquakes). They're often tougher than equivalent objects that boast no such Sekhem buffer, but they can still be destroyed, sometimes with relative ease.

Destroying Relics

Arisen, being laced with the same kind of occult force, are capable of draining vessels of Sekhem and using the life force for themselves. If a mummy chooses, she can cannibalize the Sekhem bound within a relic. If she's interrupted in the middle of this blasphemous travesty of her duties, she might get a reset of her current Sekhem level (see p. 154 for what that means), but the relic is now damaged beyond repair. If she drains the whole thing without interruption, she gains a number of Sekhem dots/levels equal to the relic's rating, to a maximum of 10. Of course, doing this is a terrible crime against her purpose—forcing an immediate Descent Roll (at her new Sekhem rating[s]) for each dot gained—but it's happened more than once. Way more than once.

Amkhata can also drain the Sekhem from relics. If one completes the process, each dot so drained is sufficient to give it a week of continuous materialization, as it seeks to carry its prized Sekhem off to its master (if it has one).

Finally, sometimes regular people will smash or burn a relic (often because they've noticed that it's driving their family mad, or making them sick, or having some other entirely undesirable effect). When this happens, the energy inside grounds and, as likely as not, creates a lesser Amkhat.

Destroying Vestiges

Vestiges contain a lot less energy than relics, so draining and breaking them is less dramatic. Again, it matters less how they come to destruction than who (or what) is standing around to suck out the life force. If it's a human being, there's no effect. Mortals aren't equipped to deal with this (saving the occasional sorcerer, but those are edge cases best left to the Storyteller).

If a mummy drains a vestige, she can recharge her Pillars off it. As with relics, it takes one instant action per dot to drain completely, but in the case of vestiges, she drains the Sekhem as she goes, at one dot per action. The act restores one point of any Pillar for every dot taken. If she stops before the vestige loses all rating, it remains at its new rating until again cannibalized.

If an Amkhat eats one, the creature gets a day of materialization for each dot it drains from the vestige. It takes a turn per dot to drain a vestige completely, and its energies can't be hauled back to master.

Amulets of Note

The engravers of the Maa-Kep produced many a wondrous talisman during Irem's rise, first to power and later to Duat, and other cultures soon followed suit. Amulets' ability to hold and transfer power makes them prized acquisitions. Some of the most notable amulets include the following.

The Tefket Stele (Amulet •)

Durability 2, Size 4, Structure 6

A thousand years before the birth of Christ—meaning, about 3,000 years after the last soldier pledged fealty to Irem—Pharaonic Egypt was at its height. During that time, the New Kingdom (also known as the Ramesside Period), this stele was carved. It resembles a modern upright tombstone, being a plate of carved stone with a curved top. It depicts a husband and wife, Tefket and Humach, seated at the right by an offering stand. On the left, their daughter Tahui stands with a man named Ahmose, who may be either her husband or her brother (perhaps both). Both men hold lotus flowers, while Tahui pours a libation.

The black lacquer that originally covered this stone is almost all gone, but its function remains. Whoever Tefket was, someone thought enough of her to preserve some of her wisdom. (This may have been with her consent or against her will.) Her knowledge of her time's version of Iremite magic lacks the depth and power the Arisen have by their nature, but it's far from useless to them. For a mere mortal, of course, it's a gateway to a wider, hidden world.

The 380-pound (170 kg) slab is on display at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and its occult properties are not unknown there. At least two dozen human researchers are aware of the aid it can offer, though they're usually circumspect about sharing this knowledge for fear of sounding crazy. Moreover, at least a dozen entities that aren't fully human are familiar with its properties. They suspiciously share it and guard it from interlopers.

Power: The player of anyone who pours a libation of wine or olive oil before the stone while invoking Tefket's advice gets a +1 bonus to all Occult rolls made for that character for 24 hours. When dealing specifically with Egyptian mysticism from before the Common Era, this bonus rises to +2. Additionally, during this 24-hour period, the bearer can speak/read 12th-entury BCE Egyptian as if a native speaker.

Curse: To fuel its knowledge, the imago of Tefket's learning leaches the sensation of experience from its user. While no modern knowledge of slang, advertising, TV, or music is removed, the patina of familiarity is stripped from it, making it all seem alien and off-putting. Anyone benefitting from the Stele's power has a –2 penalty applied to all Streetwise and Socialize rolls his player makes for the character as he blinks and stammers like an overwhelmed rube. Maa-Kep, being able to insulate themselves, are immune to this drawback.



THE OLYMPIC FROG ⟨AMULET ••⟩

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 4

This small amulet is in the form of a frog. It's made from dense, smooth stone covered in a thin layer of gold. At one time, a pair of black pearls was set in its eye sockets, but one is missing. Although the inscription on its belly is in authentic hieroglyphics, an expert could point out a dozen elements of design—proportions, technique, text style, and workmanship choices—that show a Greek influence.

The provenance of the artifact appears to stretch back to around 150 BCE, probably originating in Alexandria. Last anyone saw of it, the Frog was in the guardianship of a Maa-Kep Arisen entombed in Okāa, Pakistan.

Power: The item must touch its user's skin to be invoked, and if the contact is broken, its benefits (and curse) cease. Once activated, the user develops a tremendously increased sense of proprioception (the sense of one's body's position in space). This sense is easy to overlook until one suddenly gets a drastic increase of it, raising it to the levels of a top competitor in a finesse-based sport. It gives any bearer's player a +1 bonus to all Dexterity-based Skill rolls made for the bearer; if a mummy uses it, her player can spend a point in any Pillar to gain the further benefit of the 8-again rule on all such rolls. The effects of this boost last for one scene, and afterward, the user will feel clumsy and disconnected at the return of his normal obliviousness to his own body's place in space.

Curse: The physical virtuosity embodied in this item was drawn from an elite competitor at the Olympic games (according to that Pakistani mummy), an athlete who lived at full speed, full power, all the time. It's exhilarating to be able to truly put the hammer down with one's body, but it comes at a cost. Any but Maa-Kep who use the Frog lose a Willpower point to activate it.

THE SUNDERED SEAL ⟨AMULET •••⟩

Durability 2, Size 3, Structure 5

During the height of the West's mania for Egyptian archaeology, quite a few ancient burial sites were unearthed without ever making headlines. In 1920, one particular expedition—consisting largely of local Egyptian diggers, but led by academic experts from Rhode Island—all but vanished into the swirling sands. A few of them did return to civilization, in the company of a peculiar and highly charismatic Egyptian, but none would identify him—perhaps he was one of the Deathless, himself—and none would say what happened to the rest of their expedition. As they traveled, they abandoned, lost, or sold various trinkets of the dig, none of which seemed to have any real value.

Save one.

The Sundered Seal is a chunk of dull gray stone, roughly the size of a small CRT monitor, clearly broken from a larger piece. Portions of a figure are embossed into the surface—a part of an arm and a bit of torso. While the

style of the art appears to be ancient Egyptian, it could potentially come from half a dozen cultures of antiquity, or perhaps even from Irem, itself.

While three of the Seal's edges are jagged, the fourth is almost perfectly straight. Some who have examined (or at least heard of) the relic suggest it was part of a barrier meant to block ingress to a tomb or pyramid. Anyone familiar with its mystical abilities can attest that this is almost certainly the case.

Power: If the Sundered Seal is touched to a door, a crate, or any other portal that includes a lock or a latch, that portal locks itself in all available ways. Note, however, that the Seal cannot be used to *unlock* doors, so the consequences of careless use can range from embarrassing to deadly. This power does not require the expenditure of any resources, but merely a single instant action.

Beyond this minor benefit, the true power of the Seal comes into play only when it is placed within—or used as a piece in the construction of—a tomb. As soon as the Seal is within the tomb, that tomb gains three extra dots in Peril. This threat takes the form of an immaterial curse, either establishing a new one or adding to the potency of a curse already in place. (The Peril rating still cannot rise above 5.) Furthermore, the tomb also gains the Radiant Endowment, aligned to the Ka Pillar.

Curse: So long as she owns the Seal—and simply having it in one's tomb automatically qualifies as owning it—the bearer becomes full-on paranoid about thieves. This holds true at all times, not merely when she's actually in the tomb. If the owner finds herself in a position where she has even vague reason to suspect someone of thievery—she sees someone where he's not supposed to be, someone bumps into her in a crowd, someone seems to have suddenly acquired a large amount of cash—her player must roll a chance die. On a normal failure, she must spend a Willpower point to avoid having the character immediately attack that individual, with full intent to kill. On a 10, the player need not spend the Willpower point to avoid having her character attack. On a 1, the player does not have the option of spending the Willpower point; her character *must* attack. Mummies of the Maa-Kep are never *forced* to attack—that is, a 1 is treated like any other failure—and they can choose not to attack without an expenditure of Willpower, but only on a result of 8, 9, or 10.

If the bearer actually witnesses someone *unmistakably* committing theft, the cost to keep the character from attacking is 3 Willpower points, or 1 if her player rolls a 10 on the chance die. (Maa-Kep must spend 2, or only 1 if their players roll 8 or higher on the chance die.)

The Amundsley Pebble ⟨Amulet ••••⟩

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3

This small stone was probably a shabti, once upon a time, but the 6,000-odd years since it was first crafted by one of Irem's artisans have worn and blunted it until it's merely a small oblong with a few ridges and declivities. Perhaps it once represented an owl? A fish? A gauntleted hand? It's impossible to tell now. Whatever it was, it almost certainly represented alertness and martial vigor.

The Amundsley Pebble got its name from Edwin Amundsley, a minor officer in the Crimea's storied 13th Light Dragoons. He credited his "lucky pebble" with seeing him safely through their infamous charge at the Battle of Balaclava. Edwin's son Arnold dismissed his father's tales as superstition, but his son (Arnold Amundsley II) had the Pebble with him when his plane was lost over Germany in April of 1917, and after making it safely back to France, had the Pebble embedded in a sturdy steel framework for safekeeping. (If this enclosure is still in use, it adds a point to both Durability and Structure.) This pendant passed to his son, Arnold Amundsley III, who disappeared in Egypt in 1942. A tank commander, Arnold III was last seen in Cairo during that disorganized retreat from Rommel's forces known as "the flap." If he survived, it is unknown whether he kept his family's legacy with him.

Power: Anyone in possession of the Amundsley Pebble gains access to the following Merits: Ambidextrous, Brawling Dodge, Fast Reflexes (••), Quick Draw, and Weaponry Dodge, even if he lacks the Attributes or Skills that might normally be necessary for them. These Merits persist for about 12 hours (or one chapter) after the amulet is removed.

Curse: The alertness and paranoia that arise from the Amundsley Pebble incur a steep penalty on any who use it. First, they cannot get any benefit from meditation (**World of Darkness**, p. 51), though Arisen bearers may still meditate upon their Memory to regain Pillars. Far worse, while benefitting from its advantages, they cannot restore lost Willpower by sleep or by indulging in Vice. (Arisen who choose to burn Sekhem for Willpower can still do so, however, and Virtue can still restore Willpower.) A Maa-Kep bearer suffers to a lesser degree: Her Vice still stops restoring Willpower, but she can still regain lost Willpower with rest.

The Jackal's Hunger ⟨Amulet •••••⟩

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 2

With servants such as Sab-Setteru, the Shan'iatu had fewer enemies—nor did they need as many, for General Sab-Setteru's service could do an empire as much damage as a barbarian uprising.

In times of peace, it is said that Sab-Setteru was like a beast in a cage; uneasy, bitter, and ready to take a piece out of anyone who came within range of his paws. But given a war, ah! The man was a genius. He was, to chariot warfare, what Mozart was to the string quartet. So, while the Shan'iatu couldn't quite contain him, they couldn't quite give him up, either. For his battlefield efforts, and for the fly-drawn carnage they wrought, the career soldier earned himself the moniker "the Jackal of Empire."

That is, until the day he explained to the Shan'iatu why he should join their august ranks, despite being of dilute blood and magically illiterate. When they pointed out these obvious disqualifications from becoming a Priest of Duat, he pointed out the massed army of spearmen and khopesh fighters that had Irem effectively strangled from within. After brief consideration, the Shan'iatu cut off his head and cast his body aside for the jackals. His blood, however, they used to color in the engravings of a lapis-lazuli amulet, which retains the military genius that was the best of Sab-Setteru. (There is some debate among the ill-informed over whether it's the container or the blood that carries the power—that is, whether this relic is amulet or uter.)

Unfortunately, that's not all the relic bears. It's almost as if his ability to arrange the symphonic slaughter of soldiers in their thousands was inextricably linked to the personal urge toward rape and brutality that had been conveniently overlooked during his years of loyal service.

Power: Anyone who holds the Hunger has access to the long-dead general's military genius. Mostly, this effect is going to be in the Storyteller's hands, but just assume that if the amulet's bearer is giving commands in any kind of tactical or strategic conflict, it can offset any five of the following factors: being outnumbered 2-to-1; having troops who are barely trained; having limited weapons and supplies; heavy positional disadvantage; lack of food and medical services; or suffering from poor tactical intelligence. If the fight is anywhere near equal, the bearer wins unless there's an absolute military genius on the other side, as well.

Now, Sab-Setteru's battles were always notoriously bloody, so the relic doesn't help if one is planning on taking uninjured prisoners, or if one is discriminating between enemies and noncombatants, or if one is a sentimentalist who wants to minimize casualties among his own troops. Sab-Setteru aimed for glory and struck true. He never, in life or death, exhibited a single drop of mercy.

On the level of individuals, if a bearer of the Hunger makes a plan involving a fight, the player of anyone following it gets +1 to all Skill rolls related to carrying it out. If the bearer possesses Pillars, her player can spend a point of any Pillar reflexively to add an additional +2 to such a roll. She can do this for herself and for allies helping to turn her character's strategy into a real victory, but only once per roll.

Curse: If one opts to bear the Hunger, one has a choice to make: Either obey the mad urges of Sab-Setteru by committing a lengthy (and likely sexualized) murder, or fight off the urge by sacrificing a Willpower *dot*. The bearer must make this choice once per week of use. Members of the Maa-Kep have an easier time of it, being required to only spend a Willpower point, though they still have to endure the constant obsession with blood, pain, and violent perversion.

Effigies of Note

The masons of the Tef-Aabhi erected for the glory of Irem the most wondrous monuments the world had ever seen, from the Nameless Empire's sublime marbled statues to many of its renowned pillars. Indeed, it's said that the last things to be swallowed by the sands were Irem's beautiful, glorious effigies. Among the more modest of such offerings include the following.

The White Ibis (Effigy •)

Durability 2, Size 4, Structure 6

This stork-like sculpture, standing roughly four feet in height and carved from solid sandstone, seems oddly named to those unfamiliar with its background. Only mummies who retain memories of the Ibis from millennia past know that it was once coated in a brilliant, almost gleaming whitewash and held a position of honor in the courts of pharaohs of multiple Egyptian dynasties. Today, it's just another historical curiosity of worn rock, rough edges, and a spiderweb of deep cracks. Fascinating for students of history, perhaps, but not many others.

Those selfsame students of history, if they were to examine the Ibis more closely, might begin to understand that it is more than an ancient statue. As air blows across the sandstone, sifting dust from crevices, an observer might, just might, catch a whiff of something that couldn't possibly be: a peculiar meld of dried parchment and wet feathers.

Power: As those familiar with Egyptian mythology will have already guessed, the White Ibis was a holy icon to the god Thoth. Invoking the power of the statue requires a full minute of prayer to Thoth; success is determined by an Intelligence + Occult roll, with the addition of an extra bonus die due to the simplicity of the knowledge required. Failure on this roll simply means that a character is not part of this particular invocation. Up to six individuals can participate in a given invocation of the Ibis.

Additionally, the player of one (and only one) of the participants whose roll succeeded must spend a single point of Ren.

All participants in the invocation are briefly and very subtly linked. Choose one Mental Skill when the White Ibis is first invoked. (If the participants disagree, the one who spent the point of Ren decides.) For the duration of the scene, any time the player of *any* participant makes a roll that involves that specific Mental Skill, she determines her dice pool as though her character had as many dots in that Skill as the participant with the highest number of dots in that Skill. For instance, if a quartet of the Deathless invoke the Ibis to share their Investigation, and the four of them have Investigation 4, 3, 2, and 2, respectively, they would all roll Investigation checks as though they had four dots for the remainder of the scene.

In addition, players of participants gain 9 again on checks involving the invoked Mental Skill for the scene. (Players of mummies of the Tef-Aabhi guild gain 8 again, instead.)

Once invoked, the White Ibis must be exposed to at least one hour of natural starlight before its power can be called upon again.

Curse: Once linked to the knowledge of others, however briefly, it's difficult to readjust. For 24 hours after the scene in which the Ibis was invoked, all participants lose confidence in their ability to make use of the chosen Skill by themselves. The first time the player of a participant attempts a roll involving that Skill, if it occurs within the 24-hour period, she must spend a Willpower point to make the roll. Mummies of the Tef-Aabhi do not suffer this curse.

Nolan's Lamborghini (Effigy ••)

Durability 1, Size 1, Structure 2

It's a sad fact of life in the World of Darkness that those who suffer are frequently innocent of any wrongdoing. Such was the case on a rainy night in Houston, Texas, in November of 1984. A clash involving a mummy, several of her cultists, and an immensely potent poltergeist resulted in the deaths of over a dozen bystanders. One, a salesman by the name of Richard Sims, was crushed by a pickup truck hurled by the raging spirit—and his gruesome death was witnessed by his son, Nolan, who was outside playing with his favorite toy.

Nobody knows much about what happened to Nolan after that day, but the toy is another matter entirely. The relic is a small model of a red Lamborghini Countach, made of plastic and cheap diecast metal, badly battered, scratched, and bent. (The model could once be manipulated so that it would turn into a toy robot, but the physical damage it's taken—as well, perhaps, as the mystical alterations—now prevent it.) Unless one is already capable of sniffing out relics, nothing about the Lamborghini marks it as at all unusual. Indeed, it has changed hands via eBay or various toy conventions more than once.

Power: Nolan's Lamborghini can grant its wielder some measure of control over vehicles that resemble the model (see below). This ability only works, however, on vehicles that are currently running and occupied. Activating this power requires that the bearer spend a point of Ba. His player rolls Intelligence + Drive or Occult (his choice) against the vehicle's driver. Subtract the driver's Resolve + Drive from the dice pool. If the attack succeeds, the bearer gains control over the vehicle for the next turn. (On an exceptional success, he retains control for two full turns.)

Each turn, the bearer's player may make additional rolls in order for his character to retain control. These rolls do not require the expenditure of additional points of Ba so long as they continue to succeed. If the roll fails even once, however, the player must then spend another point of Ba if his character wants to try to reestablish control.

This control works as though the bearer was driving the vehicle. It does not allow him to make the vehicle do anything it could not normally do.

If the target vehicle is a sports car, add an extra die to the pool to gain control. If it's any other sort of car (or comparable motorized vehicle, such as a go-cart), the roll is unmodified. If it is another four-wheeled motor vehicle—pickup, van, etc.—subtract one die from the pool. If it's a motor vehicle with fewer or more than four wheels—motorcycle, big rig, etc.—subtract two dice.

Curse: Nolan's Lamborghini calls to certain spirits around it. It does not summon ghosts to an area in which there are none, but if ghosts are both present and hostile, they are likely to choose the bearer over other targets. If the ghost of a child attacks the bearer, any attack rolls made for the ghost gain 9 again. The Tef-Aabhi suffer a lesser version of this curse: Only the ghosts of children attack them in favor of other targets, and those ghosts do not get the 9 again benefit.

The Wooden Pharaoh (Effigy •••)

Durability 1, Size 2, Structure 3

This marionette would be an item of some mystery even without the magics it contains. A worn wooden figure, its blues and golds dulled by time, it bears only rotted, lingering threads to show where its strings were once attached. The figure is clearly that of a stereotypical Egyptian sovereign, from headdress to squared beard to the ankh-headed staff clutched in one carven hand. The problem is that the figurine appears to come from the earliest days of Italian Renaissance puppetry, in the 17th century—yet it appears to include cosmetic details of garb and jewelry that are unlikely to have been known in the West until the 1800s.

Other than this seeming anachronism—which is not so dramatic that it couldn't be explained away—the Pharaoh seems nothing more than an old remnant of times past, scarcely of sufficient quality even for display in a museum.

Power: So long as the Wooden Pharaoh is in his possession, its bearer gains the Inspiring Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 115). In addition, he benefits from the 9 again rule on all Intimidation, Persuasion, and Socialize rolls made for him.

In any situation in which the bearer is interacting with someone who has authority over him, his player may spend up to four points of Ab and/or Ren, in any combination. He gains a number of bonus dice equal to the number of points spent on the next supernatural ability or Social Skill he rolls against that individual. There is no limit to how often the bearer can use this ability in a given scene, so long as circumstances permit and the player is willing to keep paying the cost.

Whether someone has authority over a bearer can be quite situational. The high priest who raised a mummy bearer always qualifies, as does an employer, a political official of the territory in which the bearer is currently operating, or anyone to whom he's offered obedience. A police officer, however, would only have authority if she caught the bearer committing a crime or pulled him over for a traffic violation, but not if she happened to be eating in the same café.



Players of Tef-Aabhi gain bonus dice equal to the number of Pillar points they spend +1, though still to a maximum of four. Thus, without any expenditure, they gain one bonus die to supernatural power and Social Skill rolls against someone with authority over their characters. If they spend one point, they get two bonus dice, and so on.

Curse: While the Pharaoh grants great power, it is unforgiving to those who prove unable to wield it. If the bearer's player fails an Intimidation, Persuasion, or Socialize check while the Pharaoh is in his character's possession, he loses one die from all dice pools used to *resist* any Social Skill—or any magic power that grants someone else control over the character's actions—for the duration of the scene. The Tef-Aabhi are, of course, immune to this penalty.

If this failure occurred on a roll in which one actually used the Pharaoh's power, the player loses a number of dice to such pools equal to 1 + the number of points spent when activating the relic. Even when that scene is concluded, he still loses one die from such pools for 24 hours in-game. The Tef-Aabhi are *not* immune to these penalties, but they do reduce both dice pool penalties by –1.

The Blasphemous Depiction (Effigy •••••)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

The Final Judge, Arem-Abfu, is never depicted or represented. Its visage is so awful, the human mind breaks upon the touch of it. To create a representation of Arem-Abfu is an act of madness, beyond even its insulting impiety. Even the Shuankhsen would blanch before such a deed.

It has only been done once.

The Blasphemous Depiction is about the size of a human hand and is forged from dense, heavy metal. One report states that it was lovingly inlaid with citrine gems and imported green jade, but it's an unreliable document at best. No one who has looked upon the Blasphemous Depiction is ever trusted again.

It was created in a direct assault upon the Nameless Empire from within, a betrayal from the very top. Its maker's name has been scraped from every monument, burned from every text, blasted from every memory. Even the desecrator's gender is unknown, and all his or her servants were killed to bury the story. No depiction remains.

And yet the wound was dealt, and the Empire's remnants still seek the weapon of betrayal—the Blasphemous Depiction. It is now believed that, during the Iron Age, it was in use in the sphagnum bogs of Northern Europe, and that some of its progeny may still walk the Earth. The inanimate "bog body" mummies believed to be sacrificed kings (such as Old Croghan Man and Clonycavan Man) probably reflect ignorant rites conducted in powerless imitation of the rites bestowed by the Blasphemous Depiction.

Power: Anyone who holds the Depiction gets insight into an earlier, primitive version of the Rite of Return. So

long as he's in the presence of a ghost and a dead body, he can put one in the other and have it resurrected, conscious and fully in control of itself. (The spirit does not have to be original to the corpse, either.)

Individual Storytellers are welcome to modify this for their particular needs: Perhaps the Blasphemous Depiction is the source of a zombie plague, or is the ultimate origin of vampirism. More simply, one can run Blasphemous Depiction returnees largely as mortals. They have no special vulnerabilities or requirements or abilities. The exceptions are as follows: They never heal from aggravated damage, filling up with lethal damage only renders them unconscious, and they can't die from starvation, thirst, age, or illness. They heal from bashing and lethal injuries at the normal rate.

Curse: To look upon Arem-Abfu's naked visage is to have one's mental filters shredded. All humans live within a perceptual tunnel: One can choose to focus on one letter on this page, but one can't focus on all of them at the same time, because the mortal mind can't process that much information simultaneously. One who has looked upon the unveiled Blasphemous Depiction takes irreparable damage to those filters. He loses his perspective and has serious problems determining what's important, what needs to be dealt with, and what's irrelevant. A sense of proportion goes out the window.

The character permanently develops the derangements Schizophrenia and Irrationality (**World of Darkness**, p. 99). The Tef-Aabhi, being more resistant to effigy curses, can focus through it with effort. They are stricken with the Vocalization derangement only (**World of Darkness**, p. 98).

The Mirror of Brass Ivy ⟨Effigy •••••⟩

Durability 1 (mirror)/3 (frame), Size 4, Structure 5 (mirror)/7 (frame)

This relic is exactly what it sounds like: an oval mirror, perhaps four feet high and almost three across, in a framework (and atop a stand) of brass shaped like winding leaves of ivy. Not even the most knowledgeable of the Deathless know precisely where it comes from. The Mirror's first *known* appearance was in the 1750s, in Austria, but who crafted it—or why it possesses such potent magics—remain a mystery. It has popped up in the hands of various mummies throughout the years, only to vanish once more. Where it appears, chaos follows, because few of the Deathless are willing to allow any other mummy to possess it for long, lest they find themselves victimized by it.

Note that the magic of the Mirror is actually in the frame, not the glass. Thus, if the glass is destroyed, simply replacing it with a new mirrored surface, cut to fit the frame, restores the relic to its full potency. Only by actually destroying the *frame* can the relic potentially be eliminated.

Power: If the bearer can see someone else reflected in the Mirror, she can target any supernatural power or attack at the subject as though looking at him directly. The attack will reflect without damaging the Mirror in any way. This, however, is only a side effect of the relic's true power.

Any time the bearer and another individual are both visible in the Mirror, the bearer can spend a point of Sheut to initiate a mystic transference of power. This takes the form of an opposed action: The owner's player rolls Intelligence + Presence, opposed by the target player's roll of Resolve + Composure. If the target is not aware of the true nature of the Mirror, he loses one die from his pool.

Whoever has the lower roll loses a number of *permanent* Willpower dots equal to the difference in successes between his player's roll and the winner's. These dots can be regained if the losing character succeeds in killing the winning one within sight of the Mirror; otherwise, they can only be restored by increasing Resolve or Composure, through experience points, or via magical means.

If the winner is a mummy, she immediately gains a number of dots of Sekhem equal to the number of successes garnered beyond her opponent's tally. This is "true" Sekhem in every way; it can be burned, it slows the Descent, and so on. If the winner is not a mummy, he gains the difference in successes as Willpower points.

Regardless of who wins or loses, neither of the two characters involved can activate the Mirror again for a full week (though they can still be *targeted* by it). A mummy needn't own the Mirror to launch this attack; she need merely know what it is. Thus, it's possible for someone to use it against its owner, even if it's technically in his possession, if the mummy's faster than he is.

Curse: These are incredibly potent magics, and linking souls at that level causes the lines to blur and personal identity to fade. Once the attack is resolved, the player of whoever initiated the exchange must roll a chance die. On a 10, the instigator suffers no ill effects. On an 8 or 9, her player must make a degeneration check for the character with two dice. On a failure, the character loses a dot of Memory. On a roll of 1, she loses a number of dots of Memory equal to the number of Sekhem dots gained. Thus, the longer a mummy remains in the world via the Mirror of Brass Ivy, the more potent she becomes, and the less human she remains.

Unlike with most effigies, the Tef-Aabhi gain no particular benefit when dealing with the Mirror.

Regia of Note

After Irem vanished into the sands, Arisen alchemists transmitted distorted fragments of the old Art to students—or had it tortured out of them by enemies. Thus, the legend of Egyptian alchemy passed to other civilizations. Even without the final secrets, one mortal in a generation rediscovered effective alchemy. The Shan'iatu clad armies in mystic bronze, but a mortal alchemist might produce one masterpiece in a lifetime. These items join the panoply of regia.

Pyropus (Regium • To •••••)

Durability 3, Size 1-3, Structure 4-6 (based on Size)

Until the Shan'iatu came, Irem's tribal metalworkers hammered cold copper into rude knives and ornaments. The Priests of Duat gave them the secret of how to make one metal from many, using sorcery-laced fire and burnt offerings. The alchemist-smiths made bronze in an age of flaked stone, armoring the Nameless Empire's matchless legions. But ordinary bronze was the lowest grade of "fire metal." The Shan'iatu clad their elite in the gold-bronze alloy Roman alchemists called pyropus. Over the centuries, alchemists have replicated lesser forms of the metal, but the finest examples were made in the shadow of Irem's columns.

Blood, gold, and magic mark the differences between pyropus and ordinary bronze. Irem produced it in relatively large amounts, but never as much as mundane bronze. When scholars in later ages learned its secret, many refused to create it, as it demands a price in gold and human sacrifice. Pyropus requires a 20th of its weight to come from gold, and it must be bathed in about a pint of blood per pound. Arisen believe that its strange shine comes from the movement of still-living blood preserved in the metal. The Priests of Duat stabilized pyropus with their rites; occult geniuses did their best to reproduce them, but never achieved the same degree of skill. The Shan'iatu had the benefit of a disposable population to master their craft: an unlimited number of throats to cut for the sake of creating a superior metal. Some Shuankhsen remember being killed for the forges of Irem and take great pleasure in reclaiming blades crafted from their own blood.

Unlike ordinary bronze, pyropus requires an infusion of Sekhem to survive the forge, but it can be melted and reforged as many times as its owners desire. Thus, pyropus takes many forms. Discerning occultists prefer ingots; they're less likely to carry the taint of some prior purpose, like the curse of a bloodthirsty weapon. Unfortunately, as the metal is eternally malleable, it's impossible to know whether or not any mass of pyropus used to be something else.

Even in ancient such breastplates, kopeshes, and figurines, pyropus never greens with age. It shines like blood reflected in polished gold. The odd, rippling hue never exactly conforms to surrounding light sources. That subconsciously unsettles most people, but it still doesn't reveal itself in any type of scientific analysis. Its exceptional qualities contradict scientific tests that reveal nothing more than an archaic bronze alloy.

Most collectors believe these relics are merely well-preserved bronze artifacts. They value them, but usually keep them in storage because observers find them unsettling. Aware of their value, knowledgeable occultists keep pyropus weapons and tools close by. The magic is in the metal, not its shape, so it is not unusual to see modern devices such as wrenches and pistols made of it.

Power: Pyropus never tarnishes. It's strong as steel and can temporarily sustain as much heat before melting. Sustained heat at the melting point of bronze will eventually have an effect, but it can be used for short-lived applications that expose it to higher temperatures. Four and five dot pyropus objects are Iremite; only the Priests of Duat could make the metal that powerful.

A tool that's more than half pyropus by weight adds the metal's dot rating to its equipment bonus. In the case of weapons, add its dots to damage. For armor, add it to the armor bonus. (Pyropus may not be forged into modern, bulletproof armor.) The pyropus must be built into a tool's working components; a case or scabbard isn't enough. This advantage only belongs to mechanical devices, including those with chemically driven moving parts, but nothing that requires electricity to function. This advantage can be used by anyone, mortal or not, so long as the pyropus has been crafted into a tool. (Using an unworked bar as a hammer or lever doesn't provide an enhanced bonus.)

Arisen and other beings capable of channeling their souls may unlock the blood within the metal. Made of stolen life, pyropus provides extra vitality to those able to bond it to themselves. By spending one Pillar point of any type per day, the Arisen's player may add the vessel's dot rating to her character's total Health points. These Health points are always the first to go in the event of injury. Each point lost to aggravated damage reduces the vessel's rating by a dot. If the vessel's rating drops to 0 dots, it turns into ordinary bronze. The Arisen must carry the pyropus object (or ingot) on her person. She cannot benefit from more than five dots of pyropus at any given time; if she carries more, it provides no further Health points.

Each pyropus vessel possesses a Size rating of 1 to 3. Larger chunks of the metal exist, but these are extremely rare and, in any event, count as multiple vessels.

Curse: Pyropus still attracts the blood from which it was made. When someone using a pyropus tool or carrying an ingot suffers lethal or aggravated damage for the first time during a scene, roll that individual's Stamina + Sekhem. Failure causes the wound to bleed profusely. The victim loses a point of lethal damage to blood loss for a number of turns equal to the vessel's rating. Blood flows from the wound to the pyropus. The metal absorbs it and, for a time, takes on an especially reddish hue. Fortunately, this curse only applies to the first such wound suffered during a scene—treat subsequent injuries normallPotions and Other Ephemera

The rarest regia are potions, pastilles, and other consumable products of alchemy. Most of Irem's were swallowed, rubbed into wounds, evaporated in sacred fires, or otherwise used centuries ago. Later sorcerers reproduced many of the better-known formulae, though each generation added eccentric effects of imperfect knowledge. Most are third, fourth, seventh, or even tenth generation reconstructions, filled with unwanted side effects.

Mortal sorcerers create consumable regia more often than permanent masterworks because they're easier to

make—a gifted occultist might be able to brew three or four in a lifetime—but this exacerbates the "copy of a copy" problem. Serious mortal alchemists look out for reports of unopened ancient amphorae and other signs that true, ancient potions might remain. If they get their hands on them, they might be able to reverse engineer the most potent alchemy. It generally pleases the Judges when Arisen thwart such attempts.

Minor Djed (Regium ••)

Durability special (unbreakable), Size 3-10, Structure special (unbreakable)

Irem was a city of sacred pillars, each a representation of the spine of Azar: parts of a grand spell, but made of individual magic as well. The great spines—the djed—vanished with the city, but lesser examples remain. Some hail from the Nameless Empire, but many are later copies.

An Iremite minor djed is a crowned, fluted basalt pillar. Flecks of dye cling to it: remnants of colors that symbolize the parts of the soul. Later copies take the shape of columns made from a variety of materials. They range in size from two to a dozen feet in height.

The sorcerer-priests of Irem constantly experimented with their magical arts and took great care to perfect every column of their home. Should any column fall, the great occult diagram of the city would fail.

Thus, the Shan'iatu made prototypes of each pillar: scale models containing a fraction of the final product's strength. They tested them with blades, fire, and spells to simulate the unimaginable forces of Duat. They called upon alchemists to perfect the stone against these powers. If the models held true, the Priests of Duat would apply their magic to a new pillar. After that, they ordered their alchemists to destroy the models, but the alchemists often kept these minor djed for themselves as monuments to their skill.

After Irem fell, the minor djed fell into the hands of kings, craftsmen, and scholars. Most of them were regarded as ordinary treasures and curios. A few mystics discovered their true power and managed to reproduce them, but they never understood their purpose. Instead, minor djed were used to strengthen fortress chambers and protect tombs from invisible threats. The last minor djed were built before the burning of the Serapeum: the last collection from the library of Alexandria. Most Arisen believe that the secret vanished its ancient texts.

Modern scholars believe minor djed to be craftsmen's models or aristocrats' toys. Occultists seek them out to help them deal with ghosts and other spirits, as it is possible to use the djed to trap such beings, or bar to them from a ritual chamber.

Power: Minor djed are indestructible to ordinary forces, and remain solid against spiritual beings such as ghosts and astral bodies (beings said to exist in a state of "Twilight"), as well as entities passing through spirit worlds that lay parallel to the physical. When activated with a point from any Pillar, a minor djed extends this benefit to any immobile object of up to Size 20, such as a small cottage or a large vault. The effects last for a scene or an hour, depending on how the Storyteller wishes to measure time. This benefit vanishes if anything moves the object, or against a magical source of aggravated damage.

Curse: Although a minor djed can protect users from ghosts by erecting barriers they cannot traverse, it also alters ghosts who linger around them. Drawn from the deepest chasms of Duat, a minor djed's power is alien to living patterns. Once exposed to them, ghosts develop bizarre deformities: jagged talons, whip-tendrils, and compound eyes.

After a scene (or hour) in close proximity to a minor djed, roll a degeneration check for a ghost as if it had committed a Morality 1 sin. If the ghost's player fails both the check to resist degeneration and the check to avoid a derangement, its ephemeral form mutates, and it gains an additional point in Power, Finesse, or Resistance. Make an additional check for the next game chapter (or day), week, month, and finally, annually. After four failed checks in a row, the ghost also gains one additional Numen—often a power that emulates an Affinity or Utterance. Thus, ghosts trapped in places reinforced by a minor djed gradually become powerful, utterly inhuman monsters.

The Masr Grail (Regium •••)

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3

One of the most famous alchemical vessels, the Masr Grail has traveled farther than any other, passing from collector to mystic to Arisen…then to be stolen and exchanged again. There are hundreds of candidates for the Holy Grail—the cup Jesus supposedly drank from at the Last Supper—but few possess a legitimate historical pedigree. The Masr Grail is one of a handful that not only possesses a credible history, but true power.

The Masr Grail first surfaced in Old Cairo under the protection of a group of Coptic occultists. Coptics aver that *Yeshua ben Yosef* and his family settled in what is now Old Cairo, where he impressed local mystics with miracles and precocious wisdom. The secret society that discovered the cup believed it was made by local sages to honor the young Messiah, and that he kept it as an adult until the Last Supper. After that, it traveled to Alexandria with Joseph of Arimathea. Joseph followed a Phoenician trade route to Europe, but the Grail passed into the stewardship of local Christians, who returned it to its "true home." Thus, it is named the Masr Grail after an old (but still used) name for Egypt as a whole.

Arisen have identified the Masr Grail as an Iremite vessel, perhaps one used by a Priest of Duat to prevent poisoning and supervise inferiors. They cannot deny the possibility that it might be the true Holy Grail, but they generally don't believe that association gave it any special powers. Nevertheless, its pedigree has saved it from sacrifice to the Judges. Mummies who pretend to be Christians used it to rule their cults. Educated thieves steal it as soon

as they know where it is, as it has inestimable value to religious orders, occultists, and collectors alike.

The Masr Grail's history makes it a nexus for occult conspiracies, religious orders, and antiquities thieves around the world. While it possesses significant power, its background drives most of the activity around it. This makes it an excellent way to introduce antagonist groups, visiting Arisen, and other story elements from beyond what the players' Arisen have experienced before.

The vessel is a battered copper Egyptian wine cup with a gold band encircling the center. The copper is almost completely free of tarnish; the gold band is a bit loose and battered, but still impossible to pull from the cup. The basic design of the cup is one that has been used by Egyptian for thousands of years, so it's difficult to date on that basis, but it's of a type that might have been given as a gift during the period that Mary and Joseph took the young Jesus to Egypt. The surface of the cup is covered with indecipherable scratches—a kind of occult graffiti that looks vaguely like Iremite Egyptian to anyone who recognizes that lost language, but modified using some kind of lost personal cipher.

Power: The Masr Grail removes all poisons and pathogens from any liquid poured into it. If it's filled with an inherently toxic substance, that converts into thick red wine. Once consumed, the beverage provides refreshment and a sense of optimism born of contact with some unknown, sacred power. The drinker heals all bashing damage and, once per game chapter (session), recovers a point of Willpower. These benefits may be enjoyed by any mortal, but not by undead such as the Arisen.

A mummy or soul-channeling sorcerer may activate a second power. By drinking a sip of wine from the Grail and passing it to others, this supernatural being may forge a sympathetic bond with the other drinkers at a cost of one Pillar point (any type) per drinker. The bond lasts for a day, and allows the mummy (or other supernatural being) to sense another drinker's location and emotional state. Furthermore, she may use supernatural powers upon the bonded subject as if he was in her line of sight.

Curse: The Grail's sympathetic bond works both ways. Other supernatural beings may use the connection to use their powers on the owner as if she was in their line of sight, so long as they are capable of understanding these supernatural bonds. (This normally requires an Occult Skill of 3 or better, or possession of a supernatural template.) Furthermore, the last person to hold the cup always maintains a connection, even if it has passed out of her possession. The next owner may invoke that connection by sipping from the cup himself. Thus, anyone who uses the Masr Grail is loath to ever let it leave her presence.



Acherusian Wine (Regium ••••)

Durability 0 (liquid), Size 1, Structure N/A (liquid)

While many potions have vanished from the world, the substance called Acherusian Wine has not—it can be recycled from the bodies of drinkers. Its name is inaccurate, drawn from later legends, as the potion actually dates back to the Nameless Empire, where it was first refined from the dead through the intercession of the archdemon Shezmu. He allowed the righteous to pass through the Gates of the Underworld, but crushed the unworthy beneath his feet. Iremites and later Egyptians called him the "god of the wine press" because he made the liquefied remnants of evil souls into refreshment for the gods.

The Shan'iatu sent hundreds of souls to Duat with brands marking them as "unrighteous." The spirits of enemy soldiers, traitors, and rebels all fell beneath Shezmu's clawed feet. Priests of Duat then directed alchemists to prepare amphorae of blood-laced wine to receive Shezmu's bounty. The Priests of Duat gave the Wine to elite warriors, emissaries, and other operatives. These then drew upon the knowledge stored in liquid souls. Once they returned, the sorcerer-priests and their alchemists recycled the Wine by crushing their servants or beneath granite slabs.

After Irem vanished, Acherusian Wine passed from person to person, entering Greek chthonic cult lore. It eventually inspired secret societies that sacrifice "anointed ones" and "winter kings" from one generation to the next. Sometimes, Acherusian Wine has vanished from these traditions, but Arisen search through them still, for the Wine in drinkers' blood.

Acherusian Wine is a deep purple, oily substance that's a little thicker than unmixed wine. Unidentified, fleshy particles float in it, dissolving when anyone attempts to sieve or pluck them out and reforming after a few minutes. It tastes like a mix of wine and blood because that's essentially what it is.

Power: Arisen (and certain other beings) may activate Acherusian Wine after it has been consumed. If they wish to rouse its powers in another person, they must establish flesh to flesh physical contact. Both of these are instant actions requiring a moment's concentration.

Acherusian Wine contains four points in one specific Pillar, but no *dots* in it. The type of points depends on the Wine's "vintage," determined by the crushed soul that made it. If the drinker or someone touching him possesses dots in the matching Pillar, he may refresh spent points by drawing them from this extra pool. If *both* the drinker and someone in contact with him possess matching Pillars, the drinker decides what happens to these Pillar points.

Arisen and other Pillar users may spend a point from any of their Pillars to activate memories in the Wine. The drinker gains four dots divided among one or more Skills, depending on the Wine's "vintage," including the experiences of past drinkers, as each adds a whisper of her soul to the substance. The effects last for one scene or hour, and they stack with existing Skill dots. They might boost ability to superhuman levels.

If all the Pillar points contained in Acherusian Wine are consumed, the substance no longer grants any supernatural effects. It must be harvested from the drinker and given to someone else. Note that Acherusian Wine may not be dissolved for Sekhem in its ingested state, but neither can its other powers be used when it sits outside the drinker's body.

Curse: Acherusian Wine can be found in bottles and more often, people. After it's consumed, it collects in internal organs long after its effects wear off. None of it sweats, bleeds, or pisses out of the drinker. To reclaim it, an enterprising, ruthless individual must squeeze and sift through the drinker's remains; the substance flows from ground up flesh and eventually pools together. Kepher detects a drinker as if he was a living regium—and if killed first, he can be sacrificed for Sekhem like one, too, without being ground to pieces. It is rumored that Shuankhsen might be able to consume it by eating the containing body whole, but Arisen lack their special capacity to devour, and must crush it as Shezmu does. When cults use Acherusian Wine, they often dose their holy sacrifice with it at an early age. Arisen may thus be forced to kill innocents to claim this regium.

The Eye of Wepauwet (Regium •••••)

Durability 5, Size 1, Structure 6

Although it appears in numerous legendary battles, descriptions of lost regalia, and even rumours of jewel heists, sources don't agree on what sort of gem the Eye of Wepauwet actually is. All the stories have in common is that the Eye is a fist-sized stone that captivates onlookers with its beauty—and attracts the protection of gangsters, soldiers, and armed fanatics.

This Iremite weapon was used to conquer enemies in two ways. A product of the highest alchemy, it distilled the essence of violent rule. On the field, it inspired elite warriors to fight with uncompromising ferocity. Shan'iatu generals would also cross enemy lines with a few retainers, carrying the Eye of Wepauwet into foreign camps. Once revealed, it enslaved their commanders.

The Eye was never meant to survive the sinking of Irem; it was lost during a final revolt against the Priests of Duat. When a small group of scholars realized the Shan'iatu's plans for the Empire, they stole the Eye to improve the chances of a successful rebellion. The uprising failed, but the Eye was taken out of Irem, where it passed from one warlord to the next. Shuankhsen venerate the gem as a symbol of resistance. They're especially interested in recovering it, but their short lives ensure that, as of yet, none have been able to use its powers in any particularly daring fashion.

A gemstone expert would identify the Eye of Wepauwet as a huge ruby or sapphire (both are types of corundum) cut into a smooth orb. The jeweler would be intrigued at the gem's ability to change color. Mortal eyes never see the shift, and it usually happens after someone looks away for an extended period of time. The Arisen see many colors in the stone, spinning and clashing like bands of smoke.

The Eye has been set into crowns, pectorals, sceptres, and other types of regalia. In the modern age, it often changes hands by itself; thieves earn more selling the setting separately, so they replace the great gem with a cheaper stone. Occultists track these objects to help them find the Eye itself. The surest sign this vessel is close is the presence of mortals willing to die to protect its owner.

The Eye of Wepauwet now finds its way into the hands of mobsters, dictators, and megalomaniacs. They sense its potential but lack the ability to harness it. A sorcerer or Shuankhsen might offer to activate the Eye for one. Whether this operator continues to serve or seizes the reins of command doesn't change the fact that the Eye's slaves serve the user, not her "master."

Power: The Eye of Wepauwet grants its user 10 dots in the Retainer Merit (**World of Darkness**, p. 116). By displaying the Eye and spending a point in any Pillar, she may assign some of these dots to an intelligent being she sees. Roll the user's Presence + Socialize + Sekhem – the victim's Resolve (a supernatural beings also subtracts his core supernatural power trait, such as a vampire's Blood Potency). If the roll succeeds, the victim becomes the user's retainer for the scene or hour.

Assigned Retainer dots indicate the tasks and general degree of creativity the victim employs on his master's behalf. For example, enslaving a sorcerer by investing only two dots of Retainer ensures the victim will carry out the same tasks as an unskilled person, but won't use his magic or esoteric knowledge. The Arisen cannot inspire performance beyond a slave's abilities, and her player might misjudge how many dots to assign.

If the Eye's master spends double the usual dots, her servant will carry out tasks without regard for his safety or moral code. The user may also assign dots to existing retainers, spending extra dots from the Eye equal to the servants' current Retainer dots in order to ensure complete obedience.

Curse: The Eye was made for warriors. Its servants feel uneasy without the prospect of a battle. Unless they're under orders to commit acts of violence, they experience a variant of the Irrationality derangement (**World of Darkness**, p. 99). Unlike the standard derangement, victims are not only capable of initiating violence during an episode, but usually resort to it to cope with stress and uncertainty. If madness strikes, Eye-bound servants may even turn on their master, ignoring commands until they experience some type of violent catharsis. Wise masters of the Eye feed their retainers a steady diet of mayhem to keep them focused and pliant.

Texts of Note

Some of the most renowned relics in history were scrolls, books, tablets, or other collections of inscriptions. Along with amulets, texts are among the vessels most readily accessible to non-mummies, but their curses make this distinction a dubious one, at best. Some of the most (in)famous of Sekhem-imbued texts include the following manifestations of the cosmic Word.

The Guruwari Record (Text •)

Durability 3, Size 1, Structure 3

The six two-inch-thick, basalt-and-meteoric-iron discs collectively referred to as the *Guruwari Record* form a sphere when placed next to one another, with the two largest center discs being 15 inches in diameter. They are illustrated in the style of ancient Australia, depicting a spiraling pattern formed out of the stylized images of crocodiles and snakes. Despite the traditional designs that dominate the discs, if one looks closely, one notices a fine relief that covers each disc, a mass of cyclopean glyphs barely detectable beneath the busy ochre patterns. These discs are ludicrously heavy and cannot be readily carried by a normal human being.

Any art historian can take one look at the *Guruwari Record* and discern that it is most certainly a fine example of Australian indigenous folk art, dating back thousands of years to when hunter-gatherers were still exploring their world. Albeit a charming premise, the reality of the discs is one of other worlds, for the discs and their markings have remained unchanged since Australian shepherds first found the steaming sphere—already split into six slices, each covered in strange rings of a language that had not been written since the days of lost Irem.

Although the practical use for which the discs were originally prepared or formed remains as much a mystery to the Arisen as anyone, the discs have proven to be extremely useful, for when placed together in a ring, the six discs allow the controller to see into the Twilight and to witness the supernatural wonders that reside **Power:** The bearer's player spends a Willpower and makes a Wits + Occult roll (add +2 to the roll for Sesha-Hebsu). If the roll succeeds, the character can now perceive creatures who dwell in Twilight (mainly ghosts and other spirits). Accessing the power requires at least the two central pieces, and the effect lasts for the scene.

Curse: When used, the *Record* becomes as the only flame in the midst of Twilight's endless darkness. When one accesses the power, the relic is immediately noticeable to any supernatural creature within 100 yards of the discs whose player succeeds at a Wits + Investigation check. When one of the Sesha-Hebsu uses this relic, its "flame" is dimmed—it's noticeable only to ghosts (or other once-mortal dwellers in Twilight), and even then, only to those within a radius of 20 yards.

The Scroll of the Forgotten (Text ••)

Durability 1, Size 0, Structure 1

The Scroll of the Forgotten is a simple leather scroll approximately three feet in length. The language etched upon its surface is written in the English alphabet but does not depict a single actual English word. It is, effectively, nonsense but may be articulated easily enough. The edges appear to be severely water damaged.



The Scroll of the Forgotten was created sometime within the last 100 years. At best guess, the work came out of the early 20th century occult revival, drawing on both ceremonial magical formula as well as some strange personal style of sorcery based on nonsensical vibratory chanting. Based on the *Scroll*'s special ability—the ability to render its user forgotten—it is suggested that the item was created to escape the repercussions of a terrible transgression during an extradimensional ceremony.

The great drawback of this text is that its power eventually begins to effect its user, bringing on bouts of severe amnesia during times of stress.

Power: While controlling the *Scroll*, the bearer is able to spontaneously vanish from the minds of others. The bearer's player rolls Wits + Stealth (Sesha-Hebsu add +2). Upon a success, the character vanishes from the thoughts and memories of those around him, but if he remains in their immediate vicinity without hiding or establishing a new identity, he'll return to their awareness at the end of the following turn. On an exceptional success, he is effectively invisible to those present for the power's scene-long activation period. With a failure, the *Scroll* has no effect. If the bearer is Arisen, her player can spend a point of any Pillar to attempt the roll again on her next turn. If *that* attempt fails, she cannot invoke the *Scroll*'s power again for the rest of the scene.

Curse: Many users of the *Scroll* are either paranoid or genuinely being hunted. So it is by this madness that the relic works its curse. Whenever the player of a character in possession of *The Scroll of the Forgotten* spends Willpower for the bearer, he suffers a severe form of the Fugue derangement. This effect lasts a single scene, regardless of how much Willpower the bearer spends. The scribes of the Sesha-Hebsu are immune to this effect.

THE LIAO SUTRA ⟨TEXT •••⟩

Durability 2, Size 0, Structure 1

Pressed between two black lacquered boards upon which absolutely nothing is written or carved, each of the 11 parchment pages of the *Liao Sutra* are adorned in perfect classical Chinese calligraphy, with the glaring exception of the central pictograph of each page. In addition to the writing, small brush paintings depict the progress of a bearded hermit on some variety of spiritual pilgrimage. The story progresses uneventfully until pages 10 and 11. At that point, things take a turn for the horrific as the hermit becomes *something else*: the 10th page depicts the grotesque transformation, and the surface of the final sheet appears consumed by a massive, swirling monstrosity which has now replaced the hermit.

The *Liao Sutra* is a magical document created by a long-lost cult of Taoist sorcerers—wicked eunuchs, every one—who operated during the Warring States period of ancient China. The *Sutra* is a meditation on forbidden desire, so delicious that no uninitiated man or woman can resist the allure of its teachings and magic. Despite the disturbing end of the tale, the pages are works of art, and the style of their decoration represents the finest ex-

amples of their era. Even if the book is a pile of nonsense, its seductive magic is a delight to any who experience it, though the drugged vapors its reading produces can ultimately steal one's soul.

Power: Those who are present while the *Sutra* is being read become overwhelmed with a narcotic sensation that is roughly twice as strong as extremely high quality opium. The effect causes even the reader to become a bit sluggish and dreamy, but massively amplifies her attractiveness to others, exuding a powerful presence of well-being and safety—even when she actively intends harm to those around her. The reader's player spends 2 Willpower and makes a Presence + Expression roll. If it succeeds, the player gains a +3 bonus to Presence, Manipulation, and Occult rolls, and the players of other characters in the area suffer a –1 to Dexterity, Intelligence, and Wits checks. If the roll fails, the reader gains a +1 bonus instead, and the *Sutra* doesn't penalize others in any non-narrative way. The effect lasts for as long as the *Sutra*'s bearer continues to read, or until listeners are forcibly removed from the area where the pages are being read.

Curse: Although the reader of this text may think herself safe for a time, it soon becomes very clear that the magic of the *Liao Sutra* is not for the uninitiated. Each time its bearer uses the relic, she forgets something that previously defined her. This forgetfulness takes the form of the loss of a dot in a single Skill other than Occult. Dots can be reacquired, given time and experience, but not until a soul other than the bearer has suffered this curse at least once. For a Sesha-Hebsu, this loss is only temporary; lost Skill dots return the next time the mummy resurrects or returns to the Descent.

The Book of Sailing the Sea of Stars ⟨Text ••••⟩

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 1

The Book of Sailing the Sea of Stars is a 200-foot-long papyrus covered in strange curling etchings and pseudo-mathematical poetry. These elements are blended together in such a way that one would have a hard time categorizing the *Book* as a work of art, fiction, or science. Part idyll and part formula, the *Book* is a narrative that beckons to some proto-form of the star goddess Nuit "to reveal her splendor"—the quality of both the art and poetry do not betray her virtues. As to the mystery of the *Book*, one can only remember the grim verse of one of its translators when he wrote, "Thus have I blasphemed the Lord and Giver of Life for Thy Sake."

This lengthy and beautifully illustrated scroll was pursued by a pair of Arisen who briefly recovered it from a Mongolian khan in 1922 before losing it in turn to an opportunistic Cossack who was last seen chugging west in the engine compartment of a heavily armed Russian "gun train." By the time the Arisen caught up with the train, it had been derailed and attacked by something capable of twisting the railroad tracks like string. There was no sign of the scroll, and they completed their Descent before finding it. The *Book* has been lost ever since.

Power: If read under an open, starlit sky, the scroll's possessor can sweep himself and a few companions away to distant lands… arriving as soon as the destination is also under a starlit sky. Although the true grandeur of this item is not what it was before the advent of aircraft and mass transport, it still allows for technology-ignorant mummies to avoid future shock (not to mention infuriating TSA pat-downs).

Reading *The Book of Sailing the Sea of Stars* requires an hour and a successful Intelligence + Occult roll. For every success, the reader can bring one companion with him. (If he has fewer successes than companions, his player can spend his character's Willpower points on a one-for-one basis to expand the travel allotment.)

Curse: To see the *Book* is to desire it. To have it is to fear losing it. Anyone who sees it must either (1) have a Willpower point spent for her to dismiss the sudden, acute longing for it; or (2) try to get the thing, by hook or by crook. Moreover, anyone who hasn't spent had a Willpower point spent for her becomes jealous and resentful toward the *Book*'s owner, whose player thereafter suffers a –1 penalty on all Social rolls made for his character to deal with those so enthralled.

The player of anyone who *has* the *Book* must make a Resolve + Composure roll every week for his character to keep his head on straight about it. Otherwise, he starts to suspect everyone around him of plotting to steal it (not entirely unreasonable). Should the roll fail, his player takes a –1 penalty to all Social rolls made for the character thereafter due to his unattractive paranoia until he loses the *Book*. The exception is the scribes of the Sesha-Hebsu, who are able to recognize the distortion for what it is and dismiss it. As bearers, their players don't have to make the weekly rolls, nor do they have to spend a Willpower point for their mummies to resist the *Book*'s attraction, but they can't do much of anything about the desires of others.

The Lost Brush of the First Scribe ⟨Text •••••⟩

Durability 2, Size 1, Structure 3

The Lost Brush appears somewhat typical for an Egyptian reed brush. The ways in which it differs are subtle, but remarkable. If one examines the area around the Brush's bristles, one will note the residue of three colors of ink (black, red, and blue), all of which are still slightly wet to the touch. If one dips the Brush into water from a running river, ink will fill its bristles, and the scribe will be able to render hieroglyphs in any of the three colors. Although certainly a great trick, this is an utterly superficial ability compared to the true power the Brush commands.

It might also be important to note that the Lost Brush is significantly longer than one typical of its period: nearly a foot and a half in length. In addition, the Brush is also thicker and apparently made of a freakishly durable wood, incapable of being snapped by any who have attempted it.

The Lost Brush's origin is tied to that of yet another artifact of the Nameless Empire. Crafted in Irem, the

Statue of the Scribe's remote origins have long frustrated archaeological scholars of the modern day. And despite its excellent condition and fine workmanship, the Statue is, in and of itself, entirely inert: not a drop of Sekhem exists within its painted form. This is due to the fact that the only truly magical portion of the statue has been missing for thousands of years, stolen silently from the one who crafted it, rendering it an insufficient gift for the Pharaoh for whom it was intended.

Ordered by the Pharaoh's sister in celebration of her brother's birth feast, the Statue of the Scribe was intended to serve the ruler in life and then to be buried with him for all eternity, to record the wisdom of his words after death. Its craftsman, known for both his unequalled skill and significant madness, grew terrified at the request, knowing that, if he were to fail, he was sure to be executed for his mistake and sent to the deepest recesses of the Underworld, his name wiped from the akashic record and forgotten by the living forever. Given a full year to complete the project, he quickly finished the likeness of the high illuminator of the Sesha-Hebsu, and was impressed by his own handiwork and the realism he had imbued in the statue. Nonetheless, the scribe knew that if he were to truly capture the essence of the scribe of scribes, he would need to craft a brush for the statue capable of true wonder; and so it was for the last eight months of his endeavor that the materials and rituals of that brush's making were gathered and worked.

With special writ from the Pharaoh's sister, he set up his workplace in the Temple of Tehuti itself, the eyes of the Scribe of the Gods upon his work for the duration. Although the special arrangement was clandestine at first, the temple priest's agreeing to secrecy, it was not long before courtly gossip and the interest of powerful men turned to the sculptor's project. Guards were assigned to keep the work protected, but soon the Pharaoh himself learned of his impending gift, and many visitors to the temple went unchecked. Much to the disappointment of onlookers, there was not much to see, merely a two foot length of the finest reed, slowly worked with oils and strange lacquers. What the public did not see were the hours of prayer and sacrifice made upon Tehuti's altars in the dark of night, and the blood of those sacrifices, which was mixed with the curing oils and worked into the thing's fibers. It was these rites that filled the Lost Brush with its power, so that the Brush itself might know the true name of every extant thing.

The day of the Pharaoh's birthday came, and processions of slaves bore great palanquins heaped with splendorous gifts and swaying fronds of palm adorned with the blossoms of Nile lotuses. Beautiful women brought golden platters of the finest dishes, and rich incense perfumed the air. When the time came for the mad sculptor to present his finished statue, the Pharaoh's sister called for silence as the proud artisan wheeled the palette bearing his masterpiece into the grand throne room, the Statue of the Scribe covered only with a simple linen tarp. With a hidden smile of deep self-satisfaction, the Statue was unveiled, and gasps rippled through the crowds, the least of which came from the Pharaoh's own lips. Descending the dais upon which their thrones were set, the Lord of Irem and his sister came closer to inspect the wonder. When his eye turned to the hands of the scribe, he let out a derisive chuckle and said, "But sister? What is a scribe without a brush with which to write?" and pointed at the Statue's upraised hand, which was empty. The sculptor's eyes met with those of the king's sister, and amidst the cacophony of laughter that responded to the Pharaoh's remark, the sculptor realized this day would be his last.

What happened to the Brush is anyone's guess. Most who have heard this rare tale think the Brush was stolen moments before the presentation, a cunning thief making off with it to embarrass the Pharaoh's sister. However, there are some who believe that it was, in fact, taken by the sculptor himself, who chose to die rather than hand over an item so powerful that it could destroy any man who stood between heaven and earth.

Powers: Imbued as it is with the knowledge of the God of Sages, the Lost Brush allows the scribe who wields it to read and write any language known to man. However, the Brush has no effect on what languages that scribe can speak.

In addition, saturated with the blood of ritually dedicated sacrificial offerings, the two-foot length of reed is impervious to all mundane forms of attack.

The most feared and terrible of the Brush's powers, however, is its ability to channel the names of the akashic record, itself. This simple tool can reveal the true name of any creature of this world or the next. Only the most primordial horrors need not fear the Brush, for those things have only the names given them by those that fear them. Mechanically speaking, the effect of having access to any being's true name could have any number of powerful, plot-altering effects, from total control over some ancient supernatural entity to the revelation of a long-hidden enemy that has expended every resource to hide its true identity. To activate this power, the user's player must spend 2 points of Willpower and 1 Health point, as the Brush must write this name in its bearer's own blood. All mummies are expressly immune to this power, as their true names have already been sealed.

Curse: Despite the meticulous precautions taken during the Lost Brush's creation, it is believed that the mad sculptor did himself spill blood in its making. With blood and prayer, the sculptor infused the simple reed with his own madness, and as such, this insanity became the very glue by which the magical forces cohered within his creation. Any who expend Willpower to activate the Brush will receive two permanent derangements that endure as long as the Lost Brush exists. Mummies of the Sesha-Hebsu receive only a single derangement, but it persists just as long.

Uter of Note

After amulets and texts, relics of the shell are the most accessible to mortals, and indeed, are among the most common of those created by mortal will-workers. The purposeful investiture of Sekhem into organic flesh and bone is one of the oldest ritual practices in the history of man, yet in all that time, none have learned how to mitigate the often crippling curses they carry. Some of the more memorable (and dangerous) uter include those in the following grim array.

The Firewalker's Trumpet ⟨Uter •⟩

Durability 2, Size 2, Structure 4

The Firewalker's Trumpet is a hollowed thigh bone that has been blackened with masterfully applied flame. At both ends of the Trumpet are fittings of brass shaped into the arabesques of stylized flames. When blown, the Trumpet makes an awkward yet grim groaning sound.

The Firewalker's Trumpet is a Bon relic from the mountains of Tibet and Nepal. Although there is some irony in such a relic hailing from such a frigid place, the instrument was likely used in mystical operations dealing with beings of flame. One shaman states that the master of the Trumpet meditates in flame and is purified of the burdens of previous lifetimes. Although a matter of faith for some, the mystical implications of such an item in the hands of a spiritual Arisen are intriguing to say the least. Regardless of the bearer's religious or superstitious beliefs, the use of the Trumpet does, in fact, render the person playing it partially resistant to the damaging effects of open flame.

Power: The user's player spends a Willpower point and rolls Stamina + Survival, and his character becomes resistant to flame for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled. During this time, lethal flame damage is treated as bashing damage. The Arisen can use this power, reducing aggravated flame damage to lethal, but for their players, the cost is a Willpower and a point from their defining Pillar. If an exceptional success is rolled, the user is protected for the duration of the scene.

Curse: After using the Trumpet's power, the relic bearer becomes less aware of his surroundings as if drunk or otherwise sedated. While under the effects of this trance, the character's player suffers a –2 penalty to all Skill checks made for the user for one 24-hour period for each scene in which the Trumpet is employed. The Su-Menent are *not* immune to the Trumpet's curse, but for their players, the penalty is reduced (–1).

The Keening Box of Karl Von Becker ⟨Uter ••⟩

Durability 2, Size 0, Structure 1

The Keening Box is a one-foot by one-foot framework of polished bone dowels, over which has been stretched a membrane of cured human flesh. Curiously, the skin that covers the outside of the armature seems to have not a single stitch, seem, or tear; it's as if it were grown around the bone frame, itself. In dim light, the Box will occasionally emit a barely visible glow.

The eccentric Austrian artist Karl Von Becker was known neither for his sanity nor his talent. He was, however, hanged by the neck until dead as punishment for the six young men cut to ribbons by his pruning hook—a series of crimes Von Becker claims birthed the strange device that would become his legacy.

Since its creator's execution, the Box has been in the possession of a litany of unimaginably horrible people, from Ugandan warlords to Balkan human traffickers to American serial killers. Because the relic plays host to a being of seemingly pure malice, it will only assist in matters of ill doing, be it murder, theft, or simple wanton destruction.

Power: The Box just wants to help. So it is through a barely audible but constant keening that Von Becker's device can convey a nearly omniscient insight into any situation where a character's vices are being exploited. In the case of mortals, this is their Vice. In the case of mummies, things can be more complicated. While in possession of the Box (i.e., in the same room with it), the bearer can call upon it to grant him up to three dots of Skills. These dots are dynamic from scene to scene, so they can provide an enormous edge when the character needs it most. To awaken this ability, the mummy's player must spend a point from any Pillar. This is a reflexive action, and the expenditure doesn't count against his per-turn limit. The bonus Skills last for the scene.

Curse: The Keening Box takes what it needs. In order to sustain its grotesque physical form, the Box must feed on the vitality of its owner. While possessing the Box, the bearer ages at twice the normal rate. This doesn't apply to mummies, of course, but the curse still takes its toll; the player of a mummy not of the Su-Menent (who are exempt) must make one Descent Roll at the end of any session in which his character even once called upon the power of Von Becker's accursed fetish. The player may spend a Willpower point to subtract three dice from this roll.

The Lion's Jaw ⟨Uter •••⟩

Durability 6, Size 2, Structure 6

Formed from a wooden haft and the halved jawbone of an enormous lion, this primitive looking hatchet leaves much to desire aesthetically. The bone curve of the Jaw still holds the majority of the teeth that were attached to it while the lion still lived. The teeth themselves are stained with a black resin that was applied to hold them in place once the natural tissues decomposed. Where teeth are missing, sharpened pieces of black, glassy stone have been wedged into the holes and fastened in place by pieces of sinew fit with beads of the same stone. The handle of the weapon is carved with a scene of an adult lion hunting what appear to be ghosts and skeletons, a

bizarre image rendered in a style of iconography difficult to identify. Where the images stop, the handle is wrapped in strips of lion skin, and the butt is capped with an extraordinarily large lion incisor.

In addition to its magical abilities, the Lion's Jaw counts as a hatchet when used as a weapon.

Although the origin of the Lion's Jaw is shrouded in the mists of antiquity, its story begins in a Maasai village in the remote wilderness of what is now northern Tanzania. Although the initiatory rites for males of the tribe have traditionally included the slaying of an adult lion, the beast to which the Lion's Jaw once belonged was a creature of legend, still recounted for disobedient children descended from the weapon's creators. They called the animal Armadai, which means "madness" in the Maasai language. It is said that, for four seasons, no boy could become a true warrior of the tribe because a great monster of lion-kind stalked the savannahs and let no human take of his kin. Those who tried vanished or, worse, were left as glistening red strips dangling from the branches of a leafless bush.

Although the details of Armadai's defeat are cryptic, it is said that he was not slain by brave warriors, but by a sorcerer who had once been exiled from the village for bringing illness upon its people. Nonetheless, in their desperation, the villagers summoned the wicked man, who traveled alone into the lion's hunting grounds armed only with a small bag filled with a mysterious concoction. As the villagers waited out the night, the sorcerer did not return, yet when morning came, the hulking corpse of Armadai was stretched out at the center of town—as if sleeping, but for the great pool of blood beneath its massive head where its jaw had been torn from its face—the sorcerer's only payment for protecting the village from the monster.

Powers: The Lion's Jaw detects the presence of the last creature to whom it has dealt lethal damage, out to a distance of up to one mile. Beyond this distance, the uter adds three dice to rolls made for its wielder to track or hunt the creature.

The Lion's Jaw does aggravated damage against any creature its possessor has pursued for more than a week. Against all other prey, the weapon does lethal damage as a normal axe of its size.

Curse: To hunt with the Lion's Jaw is exhilarating to say the least. Practically atavistic, the hunter takes on the awareness and confidence of the largest of male lions hunting within its own territory. For a being who lives in the constrained reality of modern civilization, this experience becomes addictive to say the least. The user will want the Lion's Jaw in his possession at all times, and his player will incur a –1 penalty to all rolls for each day his character is without it. The penalty will increase for seven days and then be shaken, renewing if the addicted subject makes contact with the relic again. While the character possesses the item, however, he is unnerving and predatory to those around him, his player suffering an increased penalty of –2 to any social roll made for the character that does not involve aggression or intimidation. The Su-Menent are immune to these penalties.

THE PALE BROOD ⟨UTER ▪▪▪▪⟩

Durability 6, Size 1, Structure 4

Lined with tightly woven wool and stitched with thick sinuous cord, this white linen bag holds exactly 22 large petrified scarab carapaces, each sealed with ornaments of gold set with small, flat pieces of bone. Each bone face is carefully etched with a name of power associated with strange intelligences from deep within Duat over which the Judges have established sovereignty and dominion. The names are pictographically represented by sigils originating some time before the founding of Irem, their true pronunciations and meanings known only to the Judges themselves and, perhaps, to the beings to whom these names belong.

No soul has ever viewed the contents of the shells since their crafting, but it is well-documented in the scrolls of the Su-Menent that the Pale Brood is filled with all manner of obscure regents, dedicated as offerings to prehuman forces of destruction. Although no priest would ever allow for this to be validated, the effects of the shells when handled by an initiated master all but confirm that this is the case. Nonetheless, the 22 shells are remarkably hard and well crafted, creating more than a dogmatic barrier to further investigation.

The origin of the Pale Brood is a nightmare even among the Arisen.

It is written that, at the height of Irem's power, the one who would become known as the Eater of Blood began his spiritual exploration of the spaces between death and the vast nothingness that lies beyond even Duat. Although the texts are cryptic beyond poetry when conveying the actual meditations and formulae worked in the sanctum of Unem-Sef's ritual chamber, it was the Pale Brood upon which he laid the names and ceremonial links to the 22 alien entities that gifted him with a strange and terrible set of powers.

Believed to have taken the form of a nonlinguistic dialogue, the eldritch entities named upon the scarabs conveyed the very tunnels that underlie the entirety of what disturbed sorcerers now refer to as the *mundi morior* (the "diseased world"). The manner in which this was conveyed was through the evocation of 22 massive red scarabs manifesting at the feet of Unem-Sef, which then burrowed into his flesh and transmitted the map through days of agonizing pain. According to the scant clues that remain, the beings of this dimension believe that their world was the first attempt of whatever ancient cause forged creation. These beings are gods of madness from the perspective of most, and aliens of terrible intent to the wise and blooded. Upon receiving the anti-wisdom of these abominations, it is said that Unem-Sef ripped the



beetles from his flesh, sealed them forever in the shells of the Pale Brood, and finally, forbid their use by any but the priests who would serve him.

Power: When shaken, the rattling of the scarab shells echoes with an incredibly distorted resonance that awakens a cacophony of subtle sounds ranging from distant crying to the hum of locusts to the softly murmured pleas of a lover. When one focuses on them, they vanish entirely, or cohere into more complex and monstrous speech. Either way, what these voices want is the name of an offering. Upon hearing it, the Twenty-Two Voices of Undoing take their due by way of the Pale Brood's curse and then visit gratuitous horrors upon the victim, ranging from permanent derangements to terminal illnesses to vulgar expressions of pure violence. (The exact nature of this power should be tailored by the Storyteller to fit the needs of his story, but it should be adequately heinous as to justify the character's sacrifice).

Curse: The inverted nature of the Pale Brood is such that its existence actually opposes the principal of life in its entirety. As the beings associated with it are bloodthirsty gods of an unmade dimension, their mad ire spills forth when the Brood's power is accessed, devouring as much life as it can before it once again falls inert. The bag causes four levels of lethal damage to its user immediately after the power of the Twenty-Two Voices of Undoing is accessed.

THE HEART OF HEB-HEMERTET (UTER •••••)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 4

It is believed that the heart of the legendary priestess Heb-Hemertet is so perfect and beautiful that men would weep blood if it were to set even its disembodied gaze upon them. Nonetheless, this is mere speculation, as the Heart has been encased within a sturdy but attractive bronze oblong (about the size of an adult's fist) since the moment it was extracted during the priestess's burial rites. Upon examination, it's evident the casing depicts scenes of import from Heb-Hemertet's life.

The priestess Heb-Hemertet was known for her fierce beauty and for her profound mystical insight. Alas, one of those factors has been ground to dust beneath the turning of aeons, and it wasn't her insight.

Prepared for service to the Shan'iatu from adolescence, Heb-Hemertet was a gifted channel of spiritual wisdom even by the standards of her powerful masters. It was said that the priestess was given her beauty by the gods themselves as compensation for leaving her otherwise empty, a chosen conduit for their vision and word. At first, the sorcerer-priests treasured the girl and bore her about as a sacred relic, passed between them as a prized possession with elaborate contractual agreements to regulate her use and assure that each would get their time with her gift. Nonetheless, with such desirable insight at their finger-

tips, tempers and desires soon flared, and the priestess's fate was sealed by the jealousy and resolved by the pragmatism of the priesthood. She would die. This girl and her oracle's heart—and the wisdom it contained—would become the Shan'iatu's alone. And so it was that Heb-Hemertet was sacrificed on the altar of avarice and made immortal by the black art of the uter.

Powers: Anyone in possession of the Heart of Heb-Hemertet gains the benefits of the following Merits: Danger Sense, Holistic Awareness, and Meditative Mind (**World of Darkness**, pp. 108-109). Still connected to the force that gave the priestess magical prowess in life, the Heart also yet contains secrets unimagined. While the bearer holds the brass case containing the preserved organ, his player benefits from the 8-again rule on rolls using the Occult Skill.

Curse: So long as a character has the Heart in his possession, his player can't spend experience points for the character to improve Skills or gain new Specialties. All the attention that would have made new connections in the possessor's mind is, instead, lost in the contemplation of the subtle and beautiful insights the relic permits. The Su-Menent, however, are immune to half this distraction: They can't gain new Specialties while in possession of the Heart.

Vestiges

Fragments of life tied to objects that bore witness to events of great joy, sudden passion, or even cold and lingering sorrow, vestiges resonate with emotions and glimpses from the past, and are thus attuned—or "fettered"—to both one Virtue and one Vice. Mortals find themselves gripped by these fettered feelings when they are in possession of such objects, finding inhibitions eroded from unexpected directions. Arisen and their ilk are not swayed (unduly) by vestiges in this manner, but find a kinship with those objects that reflect their own Virtues or Vices. Those rare vestiges that align with an Arisen in both Virtue *and* Vice are the most difficult to consign back to the Judges of Duat, and are typically reserved for addition to the Lifeweb of one's tomb.

While vestiges offer no mystical powers to those who possess them, some are known to bear curses just the same. As a rule, the tendencies can be drawn along two axes: First, the likelihood rises with the power of the item—one-dot vestiges almost never have a curse, while roughly half of the most powerful vestiges certainly do. Second, vestiges formed from or suffused with extreme negativity—anger, despair, and hate being the Big Three™—tend to be cursed much more often than those bearing the Sekhem patterns of passion, joy, or love. If you, as Storyteller, want a vestige to have a curse, consult the curses of one- and two-dot relics for inspiration.

The Drowned Carburetor (•)

In 1971, Edward Taylor bought his first car, a Dodge Charger, glossy black with a fat white stripe down the side he'd stripped and repainted. Black on black suited him best. The car wasn't new, and he couldn't have afforded her if she had been, since hauling scrap, stripping copper out of the walls of abandoned buildings, and selling weed were the extent of Ed's marketable skills when he was a teenager. The previous owner was a regular buyer of his, and with cash in hand, she was all his. From then on, they were inseparable. On the weekends, he'd hunch bare-chested under her open hood, his sweat playing an intermittent beat of hollow taps as it dripped onto her hoses, down her engine block, into her beautiful carburetor. She was high maintenance, but he had all the time in the world for her. When she was around, his mind never had any problems putting the right words together, and his hands could feel out her faults and imperfections, and without accusation, set them right. Until he met Maggie, the Charger was the only girl for him.

Behind the wheel, Ed's bleary eyes stared out of the impeccably clean windshield. The lake was swollen from the weeks of spring rain, and it conspicuously lapped at the trunks of several evergreens. The sky was cloudless and blue as Ed looked over the water. As he shifted the gear box into neutral, it occurred to him that he still didn't feel any calmer. He thought about the years of wrangling and fighting as the Charger's black polished wheels started to turn, her nose beginning to point toward the lake. He thought about the for-sale sign on the house and the pittance left in his savings; he'd sweated away half his life for those things. The car's wheels slipped on the wet grass and her ass-end started to fish tail as she picked up speed. With 50 yards to go, Ed yanked the wheel hard right, then left to correct her. Yeah, sure he'd made mistakes and all that; on the road scrounging and selling auto parts, you get lonely, and it was never about anything but that. The loneliness was all it was; they could have worked that out better than this. But Ed knew better. It was about the car—the only baby he was ever interested in pampering. That old one-stack house would never sell, and the only way she'd get her half of the Charger was for him to sell it. Maggie always hated him on the road so much, and every spare second at home spent under the Charger's hood… a court-ordered execution suited her just fine.

Well, that ain't happening. He'd send her into the drink and not speak a peep. *Stolen*, he'd say. When he was back on his feet, maybe he'd figure a way to get her back out; he knew a few people who might do for the job and keep their mouths shut… a few people with ex-wives of their own. That last thought allowed a grin to stretch over Ed's unshaven face. He pushed open the driver-side door as he let off the gas. The Charger slowed but had enough momentum that it was the lake for her. The wind forced the door closed as Ed flopped out of the car, trying to roll onto the spongy mud of the lake shore. When mud kept racing past Ed's clawing fingers, he realized something didn't add up. The back fold of his leather had gotten caught up in the door, pressing his backside tight against the car's flank as she rolled slowly into the lake. He clawed and fussed at

the door handle behind his back as his Monster Magnet t-shirt filled with frigid lake water….

Fetters: Justice and Greed.

THE TIN CROWN ⟨••⟩

It was around the holidays—Thanksgiving, I think. We still lived out on the farm (that's what Michael always called it, anyhow); the small rancher with the gravel driveway. I think it was five years before we had a real next door neighbor; it was the Boonies back then, although it's all strip malls and the like nowadays. When my son Michael was six, come Thanksgiving, I got it in my head to make him a crown for Christmas, like my grandfather had done for me and my brother when we were small. (He'd come over from England, and that was a thing over there.) My brother lost his, o'course, but me, I kept it a long while. Dearest thing in my heart until my first car or my first girl, can't remember which, finally displaced it. I don't have to say I didn't bring it with me to Vietnam. I spent two years in that war digging holes and firing artillery shells out into the jungle; never did see the enemy, alive or dead. Lost the crown soon after I came back, and I was bitterly ashamed of that fact when granddad passed. Came time to try my hand at crafting one, and I used some old tin snips and a scrap of sheet metal I got special, just to make it. Brand new, it was something special, with colored beads glued to its points. I even put some cloth around the inside so the edges wouldn't leave a scratch from long wear. It's not so fine-looking now, but it's still special nevertheless.

Michael was happy to get the crown, but he didn't have much opportunity to wear it. I'd elbow him to put it on for his mom come November, but he knew I was the one eager for him to get along with the thing. By the time he was 11, it spent most holidays on my shelf, and come the time Michael was 15, I'd lost track of it altogether. When the army called up Michael's unit, he packed up his apartment and asked me to store his things in his old room, for when he got back. We shook hands, and he was on his way. I was mighty surprised to find you-know-what amongst his boxes and laundry bags. Michael written plain and all spelled out in black marker on the cloth lining. Damn near cried when I saw it, but I can save the tears for when he gets back.

Fetters: Fortitude and Pride.

THE WARPED KEY ⟨•••⟩

After the water-soaked timbers were cleared away, the insurance men picked through the ashes. The fire itself had done most of the damage, but the firemen's high pressure hoses and red axes had done for the rest of the house. An insurance policy taken out by the bank for the abandoned building was still valid, even though the house's owner had moved out months earlier while fighting repossession attempts by his creditors. The policy would likely cover any losses the bank might have accrued from selling the house in today's volatile housing market. Amongst the ruins they found an old key, the teeth melted from extreme heat to form a wavy but smooth curtain of metal. Miraculously, it had otherwise kept its shape and hadn't fused with the iron mouth of the lock it had been found near. The victims, fists pounding on the door like the last beats of their hearts, likely forced the key out of the door before the fire ended their lives.

The top floor had collapsed before it had been completely engulfed by the fire. Thus, the victims, a male and a female, aged 12 and 16 years respectively, were likely crushed or smothered before their bodies were burned to ash and char. The condition of the bodies made identification virtually impossible, but investigators believed they were squatters from out of town and that a kerosene lamp they were using started the initial fire. The flames then encountered some gas cans that must have been forgotten in the garage or kitchen, resulting in the explosion and sudden structural collapse. The house's original owner is believed to have taken his small family with him upon moving out of state, and although he has yet to respond to any inquiries into the matter, the county has suspended any further investigations.

Fetters: Faith and Wrath.

THE LONELY DOLL ⟨••••⟩

This 14-inch doll was delivered to a Denver post office in 1927, ordered from a catalog, its rosebud mouth, pale skin, and painted swirls of auburn hair a delight to the young girl for whom it was intended. "Patsy" was everything the young child had imagined, and when they both laid down at night, tin eyes painted blue snapping shut under fiber lashes, their time together continued in dreams. Although hardship and scarcity fell upon the family in the years soon after, father never looked upon dearly paid for, and more dearly cherished, Patsy with covetous eyes. As the years passed and the family's fortunes were mended, so too were the injuries that befell Patsy's stiff, pale, painted form. Her white dress was cleaned, patched, and continuously sewn back to pristine condition. Her silver buckled black shoes never failed to reflect a smile. From mother to daughter to granddaughter to cousin dear, Patsy, their ever present friend, nose rubbed a raw silver and repainted pale white for the next eager child to plant Eskimo kisses on.

After nearly 60 years, the doll was maintained better than the family whose children had so cherished her. Even with no more children in the family to keep her, moth and dirt were not for Patsy, for she was still well loved. Now she rests amongst a box of more common toys, as she has for decades, but she is still rarely without a young companion. In the cancer ward of a Chicago children's hospital, beautifully pale Patsy, with the faded auburn locks, is much prized. Her new playmates hold her lovingly, if lightly, in their cold hands. Their shallow, medicine-scented breath does not ruffle her hair as her ever smiling face presses against them. For the lonely doll, her young friends never stay with her for too long, disap-

pearing through one of the white swinging doors or the other. But there are always new children who will hug her tight against them, and when they both lay down at night, tin eyes painted blue snapping shut under fiber lashes, their time together continues in dreams.

Fetters: Hope and Envy.

THE HEAD OF AHMUL-REI ⟨•••••⟩

West of Boston lays the well-manicured community of Weston, Massachusetts. On the grounds of a large estate there lies an immaculate garden of hedge and stone, and within its heart rests the head of Ahmul-Rei. Immense statues crafted by this revered artisan and architect hands were common beneath Irem's pillars. Now this great seven foot stone head is all that remains of one of these grand works, its features worn smooth, weathered, caul-like. While it is unlikely this nine-ton effigy is of the great artist Ahmul-Rei himself, it is unmistakably the work of his mind, if not his hand. Some occultists believe that the head whispers prophecies to those who know the proper offerings and press their ears to its eroded and unsmiling lips. The head's powerful connection to ancient Irem and its successors give it an almost oppressive air, as if the untold years and undocumented calamities it has endured linger on in its presence.

In 1919, the estate's original owner, John A. Piers, an adventurer and dilettante, intended to move an entire temple complex from the Arabian mountains where he discovered the sculpture. A reversal of his family fortunes put paid to those plans, and only the gigantic head made the long journey to the Boston suburb where it now rests. Hoping to reclaim his fame and fortune, Piers made his way to Aden, but opium and dysentery ended his life before he could mount another expedition.

Currently, the head of Ahmul-Rei is in the possession of a strange cult of mortals who live communally in the sprawling mansion that dominates the Weston estate. Funded by a slew of questionable online activities and led by a charismatic recluse, this occult-themed commune has had no success calling upon the mystical powers of the oversized vessel in their midst. So far, their subdued orgies and tentative steps into cannibalism have yet to greatly impress the cold unblinking eyes of the great stone head. Their erratic leader has assured the cultists that the artifact has warned them of impending danger on numerous occasions, supposedly allowing them to head off a government raid through a court injunction. Ominously, the head's most important quality seems to be its ability to draw supernatural creatures to the cult's unassuming and relatively remote lair. After a strange man was caught on their grounds, and almost escaped their clutches using strange powers, the cult has grown more vigilant and more heavily armed. The cultists hope more powerful occult beings will soon fall into their hands, drawn to the powerful mystical resonance of the vestige. The cultists have been assured that these interlopers clearly represent the sacrifices required to finally awaken the head of Ahmul-Rei.

Fetters: Faith and Lust.



Chapter Seven
Framing Immortality

Each life makes its own imitation of immortality.
—Stephen King

"Storytelling." It's right there on the cover and in the name of the system. It's a game, yes, but a game whose primary purpose is the shared telling of a rich, thematic, mood-appropriate tale.

It's true of every World of Darkness game, of course, but **Mummy: The Curse** comes with its additional responsibilities and challenges for the Storyteller. This new Storytelling system game is a heavily focused one; more so, in many respects, than any prior Storytelling system line. The main inhuman protagonists of the game are not numerous, as compared to the likes of werewolves or vampires in their own game worlds; of all the primary types of supernatural entities in the World of Darkness, only the Created are potentially as rare in their default setting as mummies are in their own. Because of that scarcity, one generally doesn't find large communities of mummies. They do not, for the most part, rule entire cities behind the scenes. They don't traditionally operate in "packs." In a world full of supernatural activity, they are the one percent.

Of even greater importance than the rarity of mummies is their sporadic existence. As Storyteller, it simply isn't feasible for you to build a long-term chronicle in the same manner you would for, say, **Vampire: The Requiem**. Where vampires have long periods of activity interrupted by brief lengths of downtime, mummies experience the precise opposite: They awaken for relatively brief periods, then engage in temporary bursts of activity before once more slumbering for years if not decades on end.

As a **Mummy** Storyteller, you must take all of this into account when designing your stories and chronicles. It's more than important; it's absolutely necessary. Without a solid framework that makes use of these aspects of Arisen existence—or, at the very least, takes them into account—**Mummy** fails to function as either a game or a storytelling medium.

Frameworks

Fortunately for you as Storyteller, the very makeup of your players' meret will *suggest* an appropriate structure, or framework, lending itself to specific sorts of stories and chronicles both. Decide what types of characters you want in your game, and much of the chronicle's framework builds itself in response. The following frameworks represent only the most foundational or obvious of set ups; the game's ideas certainly allow for others.

The Allied Dead

Under this framework, the characters' meret is made up entirely, or at least primarily, of Arisen all served by the same cult or offshoots of the same central cult. This is, in

Merit or Mandatory?

Certain of the following chronicle frameworks make particular mechanics mandatory, rather than optional. Any meret composed, in part, of mortal members of a mummy's cult obviously requires said mummy have the Cult Merit. Even if the meret consists entirely of mummies, your concept might still require the Merit. The same might be true of the Tomb Merit; you are well within your rights to mandate such a thing, and that's why both of those Merits were worked into the standard character creation process.

While it's certainly possible to play a **Mummy** chronicle (or certainly a story) without cults or tombs, doing so usually loses a substantial amount of flavor and richness. The tomb is an integral part of mummy fiction; the cult a nigh-vital detail to allow the mummy to function in modern society.

Optional Rule: In a chronicle in which the characters all share the same cult, you might wish to consider a compromise between giving players the Cult Merit for free and making them spend substantial points on it, to reflect such a vast cult. You might, instead, allow the players to pool their Cult points. Under this system, each player must contribute at least one point to the total, and no single player can contribute more than four. (The total possible to spend on the Cult stays the same.) This allows the players to decide amongst themselves how important they want their cult to be, and to spread the cost around, while ensuring that they all possess at least some connection to the plot-centric cult.

Showcase: Kabul

What is now the nation of Afghanistan has been the seat of one urban culture or another for over four millennia. Sitting at a strategic point along Middle East trade routes, it has always possessed a level of both cultural and economic importance in the region. It should come as no surprise, then, that it has also been the home of this Arisen cult or that since the first Sothic Turn. From the days of forgotten antiquity to the Pashtuns, from the nation's scattering among multiple outside empires to its reunification, these cults have been present. Power ebbed and flowed; cults came and went; but always, always, at least one mummy and his servitors maintained a presence.

It was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 that changed the balance of power, not merely among mortals, but the Arisen as well. Arisen cults throughout the world are focused, in whole or in part, on the preservation of relics and other vessels, both for the power they hold and for their cultural importance. Several of those cults flocked to Afghanistan in hopes of protecting the land's treasures–mundane and magical, known and unknown–from destruction under the Soviet guns. The local cults, too, sought to defend themselves. Unfortunately, these cults spent as much time battling one another as they did their shared enemy.

Those internecine struggles continued even after the Soviet withdrawal in the late 80s, and they might have continued indefinitely if not for the efforts of two mortal forces:

The Taliban, and the United States military.

The violence on both sides of the Taliban insurgency throughout the 90s, the deliberate shelling of ancient statues and artwork by the Taliban around the turn of the millennium, and the chaos and devastation caused by the U.S. invasion were finally sufficient to convince the local cults, native and foreign, to combine forces. Under the shared leadership of various priests, these factions eventually coalesced into a single cult, consisting of native Afghans, Arabs, and North Africans of various ethnicities, and a small but significant minority of American and former Soviet military personnel. Calling themselves the Dera al-Qadim, the cult has nearly half a dozen mummies on which it can call, to defend its members and the region's treasures against mortal military forces and scavengers both mundane and supernatural.

The eldest and most potent of these Arisen–Suten Mdjai, one of the Mesen-Nebu–spends as many of his waking moments enforcing the continued cooperation and shared identity of the cultists and other mummies as he does fighting the actual enemy. The bulk of the cult is indeed united, but a small number of malcontents continue to brew dissent.

many ways, the most obvious of the ways to build a chronicle, and what some players might assume to be the default. It's a game called **Mummy: The Curse**, so naturally, the players should portray mummies with aligned interests. It's a reasonable assumption.

It also, however, comes with its own difficulties—details that you must work out, or at least consider, before building a chronicle around this framework. First off, only the largest or oldest of cults have multiple mummies on whom they can call. It's an enormous amount of power and responsibility just to have *one*. To have three or even more—enough to form an entire meret? Fewer than a dozen cults or factions in the entire world would have that sort of capability. Almost all **Mummy** chronicles require the Storyteller and players to devote real attention to the creation, behavior, and motives of a cult, but that's especially true of this framework. How did the cult gain so much power? How long has it had it? What does it intend to do with it?

Of equal importance to the nature of the cult is the question of why multiple mummies are awake and active at the same time. Nobody raises a mummy *casually*; it's often the step that a cult takes when things have well and truly gone to hell, one way or the other. So how bad does the situation have to be for a single cult to call up *three* of them?

You can, of course, always use the Sothic Wheel as an explanation. That's one of the reasons it's part of the game at all; so you have a justification for multiple Arisen awakening when all else fails. It's not, however, a crutch you want to rely on regularly.

What this means, ultimately, is that while the "Allied Dead" framework might seem the most obvious set up, it's also the one that requires the biggest stories. Cult-threatening, culture-destroying, even world-ending stories. Nothing smaller is likely to encourage a cult to raise multiple Arisen at once—at least not often. If you're looking to include smaller, more personal stories in your chronicle, this may not be the best choice of framework for you.

(Alternatively, you can combine this framework with the Rotating Pyramid or the Living and the Dead frameworks, on pp. 243-244 and 244-245, telling smaller stories when only one Arisen is awake and larger ones when multiple mummies are active.)

The Rival Dead

Another framework in which all the players portray Arisen, this chronicle concept involves a meret in which the mummies all serve different cults from one another. This need not automatically lead to conflict, but it almost certainly entails an element of suspicion under even the best of circumstances. Not all cults are enemies or seek to destroy one another, but ultimately, they're like any other collection of competing factions: struggling for the same resources. Relics and ancient lore are the most obvious points of rivalry, but anything and everything—control over a given territory, political power, even just social status—can set cults against one another.

And where the cults are opposed, their Arisen are almost certainly opposed.



It might seem that a Rival Dead chronicle requires stories just as huge as those of an Allied Dead one. After all, surely only the most important of events would inspire potentially hostile Arisen to work together?

Well, yes and no. Important does not, in this case, have to mean earth-shaking (though it certainly can, if you want it to). It's far more likely that mummies belonging to multiple cults may be active at the same time—simply due to coincidence or overlapping purposes—than it is for multiple mummies of the same cult to awaken all at once. Therefore, whatever has inspired these Arisen to work together does not need to be an event quite so monumental as one that would cause one cult to raise three or more mummies simultaneously. The Arisen might work together to thwart some great, world-spanning evil. On the other hand, they might cooperate to rescue a relic of their shared culture from someone they all hate or to seek vengeance on a faction that has committed crimes against all their separate cults.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the Rival Dead and the Allied Dead frameworks is that the former is far more likely to include inter-meret intrigue and even betrayal. In this regard, if few others, the Arisen are not unlike a political alliance consisting of members from different parties: They might share a common purpose now, but their long-term goals are almost always at odds.

The Pyramid

Considering that the Arisen most frequently work alongside members of their cults, rather than other Arisen, it would make sense for some **Mummy** chronicles to be built with that format in mind. This is the Pyramid framework—a meret in which only *one player* portrays one of the Arisen, while the others portray some combination of his Sadikh and his other allies. This is normally assumed to mean members of that mummy's cult, but it doesn't have to. It could be a band of occultists, ghost hunters, archaeologists, even law enforcement or military. (Most such set ups are probably better suited to single stories rather than full-length chronicles, but they can potentially occur any time a given group of people and one of the Arisen find themselves pursuing a common goal.)

This structure opens up a wide opportunity for some fascinating roleplaying with the introduction of a simple question: How much do the Arisen and these allies know about one another? If they are, indeed, members of the mummy's cult, odds are they have certain beliefs and legends about him, his personality, and his abilities—but how much of what they think they know is actually true? In turn, the mummy likely has some solid ideas on what his cultists should believe and how they should behave, but those ideas are almost guaranteed to be inaccurate (especially if the Arisen hasn't awakened for a while).

Showcase: Rio de Janeiro

Arisen cults have thrived in Rio—as well as all of Brazil, and even the bulk of South and Central America—since long before the arrival of the first Europeans. Precisely what point they arrived is unknown, but the tribal natures and totemic/spiritual beliefs of many of the native peoples lent themselves almost perfectly to worship—or at least reverence—of the Arisen. By the arrival of the Portuguese in 1502, the land that would become Rio de Janeiro was already home to multiple cults of both Tupi and Botocudo extraction.

Unfortunately, the cults and the Arisen were just as surprised and overwhelmed by the newcomers as the rest of the population. They initially failed to understand the need to fight against the Europeans, and even once they did, they proved unable to put their own conflicts aside. Legend tells that several of the French pirates who frequently raided the coast were, in fact, members of an Arisen cult themselves, but the true foreign danger came later. When a Portuguese Arisen cult arrived with the explorers toward the end of the 16th century, any advantage the native cults might have possessed was all but nullified.

The true name of this Portuguese mummy is Teshra-Gemet. However, her cultists (and thus, her enemies) know her as better as O Pardal Vermeilho ("the Red Sparrow"). She and her cult remain the predominant supernatural power in the more peaceful and affluent portions of Rio de Janeiro to this day.

The remaining smaller cults and their Arisen, from which a meret of player characters would be drawn, occupy the many levels and winding alleyways of Rio's favelas—packed, ramshackle communities of the poor, crammed so tightly onto the city's hillsides as to leave little if any room for roads. Many of these favelas consider themselves their own communities, even their own cultures—and some have their own Arisen protectors.

This, then, is the current state of the once proud native cults of Rio de Janeiro. The factions spend much of their time squabbling over territories throughout the favelas, almost like street gangs (albeit usually less violent), hoping to increase their own membership and power at the expense of their rivals. That said, when an outside force threatens the good of their people as a whole, these cults—and the Arisen on whom they may call—have, indeed, learned to put their differences aside and work together, at least in the short term. In cooperation, they have managed to protect their cults against the machinations of O Pardal Vermeilho and her own people; some of the worst depredations of the region's violent drug cartels (some of whom have their own supernatural connections); and the nigh-countless restless dead spawned by the constant bloodshed and want.

If the allies *aren't* members of this mummy's cult—or if they are, but the cult has largely let its practices lapse in the modern era—they may know almost nothing about their Arisen master. Their beliefs may come entirely from Universal horror movies. And again, if the Arisen himself hasn't been awake for a few generations, he's likely to have absolutely no basis for understanding these mortals if they're *not* part of his cult. Learning about them becomes a lens through which the Arisen learns about the entire world into which he's awakened.

Indeed, if it were *purely* a question of what was most common in the **Mummy** corner of the World of Darkness, the Pyramid structure would indeed constitute the most common framework; the default, if you will. No matter how story-intensive the game may be, however, one cannot lose sight of the fact that it *is* also a game, and must lend itself to the enjoyment of everyone involved.

This framework only works, then, with gaming groups that do not mind playing with a vast imbalance of power between players' characters. You certainly can—and in most cases, *should*—take steps to minimize the practical effects of that difference. Perhaps the human characters gain bonus points to spend on Skills and Merits, or have access to some of the psychic/supernatural abilities presented in the World of Darkness core rules. During the course of play, their familiarity with the modern world and advanced technology can become an advantage, allowing them to make use of equipment or solve problems that the less savvy Arisen cannot.

Still, at the end of the day, the mummy character *will* vastly overpower the others. For groups who enjoy that sort of play, that's fine, but some players don't care for it, and you, as Storyteller, should respect that. For such groups, you should probably choose one of the alternate frameworks—or perhaps the Rotating Pyramid variant, discussed below.

They Walk Among Us

An Arisen who isn't currently bursting with Sekhem is capable of passing as human, at least for a brief time. Most of them give themselves away fairly swiftly: their knowledge of modern technology, culture, and speech is lacking, or their inhuman thought processes impact their behavior. A very few of the Arisen, however, possess sufficient knowledge and/or sufficient skills at deception and improvisation to maintain a mortal masquerade for a prolonged period of time.

They Walk Among Us is a subset of the Pyramid framework, in which the group of players' characters is made up primarily of humans, with a single Arisen. The difference is that, in this instance, the humans *don't know* there's a mummy in their midst, at least not initially. The characters—and if done right, even the bulk of the *players*—only discover that one of them was an Arisen when she finally reveals herself, at an appropriate point in the story. They might be cultists who know mummies exist but don't realize their superiors have awakened one; monster hunters, who aren't aware that their new ally is more than she

seems; or normal people just discovering the existence of the supernatural, with whom the Arisen has joined for some mysterious purpose of her own.

The recommended way to do this is by running a World of Darkness game, telling only the player of the Arisen that this is actually, in part, a **Mummy** chronicle. You don't *have* to orchestrate it this way; you can choose to tell all the players what's going on and simply let them roleplay their ignorance. Doing it that way may well prove less satisfying, however, for a great many groups.

The flip side, of course, is that you can only run such a story for a group you know very, *very* well. After all, not only are you putting the players in the circumstances of having a substantial power disparity between their characters (as described previously), but you're doing it without asking first.

As such, even with groups that you as a Storyteller know well and believe would enjoy such a game, you should probably limit this framework of play to a single story or to a smaller portion of a larger chronicle. Both for the out-of-character reasons just explained and for the in-character reason that no mummy can sustain this sort of deception indefinitely, it simply makes more sense not to try maintaining this situation for any real length of time.

The Rotating Pyramid

As mentioned previously, the Pyramid structure is—in the confines of the game world itself, at least, without allowances for game *play*—by far the most common meret composition. It's not only the most likely purely in terms of numbers (Arisen vs. mortals), but it's also arguably the most thematically appropriate to **Mummy: The Curse**, as written. Also as mentioned, however, many groups aren't comfortable with such a vast disparity of power—or of importance, be it accurate or merely perceived—between one player's character and another. Even groups that *are* comfortable with such things initially can grow tired of them, as it feels to them as though the Arisen character is accomplishing most of the group's goals or receiving the lion's share of the spotlight.

The Rotating Pyramid "sub-framework" offers you a potential solution to that dilemma. In this sort of chronicle, one player portrays an Arisen while the others portray humans—but the Arisen player *changes* from story to story.

Showcase: Salem

It's known and accepted, in the modern era, that the bulk of the Salem witch trials—not only those that occurred from 1692 to 1693, but the various trials and purges both before and after that *specific* panic—largely targeted innocents who were guilty of no real wrongdoing, supernatural or otherwise. Even at the time, despite the fear and accusation, a substantial portion of the population knew that what they were seeing was paranoia and oppression, rather than any sort of legitimate inquisition against evil.

And even at the time, certain forces were willing to use the violence as cover for their own even more nefarious purposes.

The Nesbit family—very much a clan unto themselves, once you factored in all the various siblings, cousins, second cousins, in-laws, and so forth—had dwelt in Massachusetts for almost 100 years by the time of the witch trials. Through all that time, they had maintained a good Christian façade in public, but continued to venerate their Arisen patron and some of his ancient beliefs in private. The Nesbits—who could trace their lineage directly back to dynastic Egypt (where their eldest known ancestor was named "Nebit")—were but one branch of a much larger cult, and though their patron was entombed half a world away, and none of the living Nesbits had ever seen him, their beliefs never faltered.

During the panic of the witch hunts, someone began murdering members of the Nesbit family. No amount of care, no amount of security, seemed capable of halting the slow but steady progression of funerals. At the scene of every murder, they found the same peculiar object, perhaps a fetish: a tobacco leaf folded around a musket ball. Nobody else in the community knew of the Nesbits' cult affiliations, but to the Nesbits themselves, this was very clearly an attack on their practices and beliefs.

Eventually, the Nesbits sent several desperate messages to the Old World, and their fellow cultists responded. The community surged with newcomers—but more importantly, they brought with them their immortal protector, rebuilding his tomb brick by brick in a mausoleum hidden deep within the woods.

With the arrival of the Arisen, the murders ceased—mostly. To this day, the cult is still based in and around Salem, and their protector still rises now and again to aid it. The cultists stay in part to protect the many vessels (and a few mystically empowered locations) left over from the time of the witch trials, in part to protect the locals from the ghosts that also linger from that period, and in part for no other reason than this is their home.

And to this day, once every few years, a member of the cult is murdered, a tobacco-wrapped musket ball left near the body, and even the Arisen has been unable to find the person—or thing—responsible.

Showcase: Prokneft

Since time immemorial, a small but exceptionally powerful Arisen cult thrived in an obscure village, roughly equidistant from what would eventually become the cities of Tomsk and Novosibirsk, in Siberia. Although the village itself was never formally named, it was often referred to by the name of the eldest local family–and also, incidentally, the bloodline at the center of the cult–the Shchavichev.

For centuries, the Shchavichev comprised one of the most potent Arisen cults in the region of what would, in time, become Russian territories. In secret, they and their mummy patrons (of which they had at least three) scoured the area, protecting and retrieving relics from various conquerors and even, eventually, the forces of the czars.

With the rise of the Soviet Union and the militarization leading up to the second World War, the Shchavichev recognized that they would not be able to keep their existence, or that of their tiny community, secret for much longer. They needed allies in high places, someone who could protect them from Stalin's military and secret police.

They found one in Jaska Prokhorov, the patron of a family powerful in Soviet military and industrial circles. Through a series of marriages over the course of the following generation–some of which might have been "helped along" by the necromancies of the cult's mummies–the Shchavichev tied themselves inextricably to the Prokhorov line. Many of the Prokhorov were slowly and subtly drawn into the cult's beliefs, practices, and efforts. The remainder, when they finally discovered the truth, swiftly realized that they could not expose the Shchavichev without destroying themselves. Some of their members sought a way out, and a few had to be "disappeared" before they could cause problems, but over the generations, the two families truly became one. The Prokhorov became fully invested in the Arisen and their efforts, while the Shchavichev benefited from their governmental, industrial, and military ties.

When the Soviet Union fell, the Prokhorov were among the various families and businesses whose wealth and influence skyrocketed. Today, their primary business identity is Prokneft, a major Russian oil company. Based out of Novosibirsk, Siberia, this company maintains the family's profits and wealth–but more importantly, it provides cover for cultists to travel the world, infiltrating areas both rich and poor. Their primary motivation remains the collection of relics, confiscating them from any who would misuse their magics. (Of course, it is the Prokneft board of directors–all of whom are tied to the Prokhorov or Shchavichev families–who decide what "misuse" actually means.) They also endeavor to study and locate other Arisen cults throughout the world, to determine which might prove a threat to Prokneft interests.

Although Prokneft has several mummies on whom it can call, it prefers to do so only under the most extreme circumstances, otherwise relying on well trained and mystically savvy mortal agents. The current chairman, Makari Prokhorov, is a veritable genius in international, political, and occult affairs. He worked, during the last decades of the Soviet Union, as a KGB analyst, and while he has zero field experience, his knowledge is substantial. He seems to have an almost supernatural knack for determining in advance which efforts and operations require the assistance of one of the Arisen and which do not. Only he and the eldest of the board are privy to the full extent of Prokneft's efforts and agenda; even other cult members are kept in the dark as to specific details.

Prokneft, or a similar entity, can function as a model for any of the three sub-frameworks–They Walk Among Us, the Rotating Pyramid, and the Living and the Dead.

Assume, for instance, a cult with multiple mummies on whom they can call. In one story, they call on Amonit, of the Su-Menent, to assist them. Once that story is concluded, Amonit returns to sleep, and when another problem arises, the cult instead raises Nifé-en-Ankh of the Tef-Aabhi. The player who portrayed Amonit in the prior story now takes on a human character, and one of the other players temporarily puts her human character aside to portray Nifé-en-Ankh. On particularly rare occasions, when a *truly* important plotline erupts, the campaign may even switch to an Allied Dead model, with multiple Arisen active at once.

This, like the Allied Dead framework, requires a cult large and powerful enough to possess more than one Arisen patron (unless characters are willing to swap out playing a single mummy between them). Unlike the previous framework, however, it doesn't require that all such Arisen be active at once, making it much easier to build more personal stories around.

The Living and the Dead

The final variant of the Pyramid framework is a chronicle that is more accurately a World of Darkness chronicle that occasionally crosses over into **Mummy: The Curse** territory. In this setup, all the players portray human characters the bulk of the time. These may be purely normal humans, or they might have some of the unnatural abilities presented in the core rules, but they are absolutely mortal. They are also, however, members of an Arisen cult (or some other organizational entity with Arisen connections) with its own goals, activities, and objectives. For the bulk of their efforts—that is, the bulk of stories in a chronicle—it's these mortals who

are involved. Only on rare occasions—and only in the occasional story—does the cult awaken a mummy to aid them. During these times, the campaign shifts to the Pyramid or Rotating Pyramid format, reverting to an all-human group when that particular plotline is dealt with.

The challenge for you as Storyteller in this format is to avoid falling into the trap of thinking that only stories in which an Arisen is active are "important" ones. It's vital for the human characters to accomplish significant victories on their own, and to feel like vital protagonists, not merely placeholders. They may require Arisen assistance to deal with *bigger* problems, but they shouldn't require it to deal with any or every major one. Remember, too, that the mummy is normally awakened for one specific objective, not just to hang around and provide assistance for as long as the group can make use of him. The Arisen should never become a deus ex machina or Get Out of Jail Free card for the players.

Running the Descent

The game rules for the Descent are meant to balance between **Mummy**'s dark fantasy elements and its occult horror aspects. Both probably appeal, but where exactly to set that slider is a question that each group has to answer for itself. As Storyteller, your handling of the Descent rules can do a lot to enforce the tone you've decided to set.

If you want the game to be mostly adventure, badass tomb raiding, and noble conflict with the Lifeless (or at least the illusion thereof), you can keep a fairly loose hand on the Descent gauges. Be generous with resets, especially early on, when Sekhem's high, and provide plenty of opportunities to earn them. (If you really want to downplay the horror tone, let the players spend Willpower to reduce their characters' Descent Roll pools, but honestly, that's inappropriate for the game's overall themes and tone.) Even in a game with a slightly more heroic tone (which, again, is expressly not recommended), the Descent is a powerful tool. Think about every action movie you've ever loved. Did it start out with the hero demonstrating powerful competence? But then things went wrong, making his mission harder and harder. Finally, you wonder how the hell he's going to pull it off in the face of overwhelming opposition, but then he does, and it's pretty awesome.

That's the Descent right there. Mummies start out amped up on life force, casually cranking their Attributes to 10 in a single turn and spitting out Utterances like triumphant rap battlers. This lets you start your game with a hell of a bang. In fact, it practically demands it. It establishes the characters' badass credentials, which is often an important tone setter in stories of that kind.

But tick-tock, the clock is running. In less time than it takes your eyeglass vendor to turn around a new pair of lenses, that supernatural vengeance machine has been reduced to Sekhem 8, almost certainly. (If the players' characters don't drop to Sekhem 8 of their own accord, don't give in to the temptation to be sloppy about the Descent Rolls at 10 or 9—those are not only the most likely to succeed, and to provide giddy player joy if they do fail, but they also establish the pressure of the Descent. You want your players to think you're going to be a hard-ass about whittling away their precious power, even if you're not.) Can they find the clues in time to get where they need to go before their powers wither? What does it imply if their enemies know enough to stall them? What if they find out that all their pursuit has just led them into a clever trap, just as they're beginning to weaken?

If the meret decides to sail to Cuba in order to avoid the hassles of air travel (perhaps their enemy has a whole fleet of winged Amkhata), that's probably going to take a lot of downtime. If they're doing stuff on the cruise, playing out interesting scenes, you may want to track it on the loose, story-oriented scale of scenes. If they fast-forward, a switch to days may be more appropriate. Just make sure you use Descent Rolls to increase pressure and tension, and make sure they're ready for the risk. Scheduled Descent Rolls are dreadful because they're anticipated, like a dentist appointment. You want them to know it's coming, and have the opportunity to maybe squirm out of it. Springing a time-based Descent Roll as a surprise is more likely to elicit groans or complaints than genuine dread or suspense. And fostering an atmosphere of horror is officially a Good Thing™.

To make **Mummy** more properly horrific, be stern with the Descent. To explain how this works, we're going to discuss a splendid horror movie: *John Carpenter's The Thing*. It's the story of a group of scientists in Antarctica who are, as near as anyone can tell, testing the effects of firearms on alcoholism. (Seriously, they are drunk and well armed, and the movie never even pretends you should care what their research is about. It's glorious.) They get trapped in their outpost by the titular Thing, which can mimic any living being it encounters or go into Gore Mode and tear folks apart. *The Thing* beautifully establishes three conflicting patterns of threat, and reducing one *almost always increases another*.

The threats are the environment, distrust, and direct violence. Confronting the Thing head-on makes violence almost certain, but brings the humans together, reducing the distrust. Running away from it puts people at risk from the freezing temperatures. Moreover, when someone runs and returns, everyone's half-afraid that he's now the Thing in disguise. Trying to unmask the hidden monster decreases mistrust, but brings them right back to violence, which can be fled into the environment… round and round, constantly avoiding disaster only by courting a different kind of disaster.

For **Mummy**, the Descent is our Antarctica. It's the factor that says, "If you do nothing, you lose by default." So, superficially, the Descent's purpose is enforcing the will of the Judges, but it's also one more stick for poking the players when they're getting bogged down by indecision or distraction.

If you're wondering about the other elements of *The Thing*'s terror triad, Descent Rolls can also help you with them, to a lesser extent. Consider the element of violence. Part of the "awesome dark fantasy" component to

Mummy is the incredible punishment mummies can soak up. Even if killed, they return; but that's far from perfect. They come back diminished, and they take that hit on their Sekhem level. This is what's known as a death spiral: Resurrecting costs you Sekhem, and lost Sekhem means you're more vulnerable, which means you're more likely to resurrect again. Every fight is a greater risk, not only because you can spend fewer Pillars per round and get less bang for the buck, but because every death brings you closer to Sekhem 1, at which point you're barely better off than a puny human being, insofar as your effectiveness is concerned.

Violence is probably the simplest aspect to incorporate, though, especially if you're an experienced gamer. The thing to remember with **Mummy** is that the characters aren't getting increasingly badass, or at least not universally. An opponent they casually batted into a coma at Sekhem 8 could come back when they're down to Sekhem 2 and show them a thing or two about crude but enthusiastic payback. This is a *good idea.* Games are scary when the protagonists have power taken away from them, and the Descent steadily leaches their ability to defend themselves against physical assault.

But what about the third leg of *The Thing*'s hellish milking stool? What about the social distrust and backbiting? The Descent is least useful there, but can still offer you a light lever to lean on. Here's how.

Unscheduled Descent Rolls happen when the Powers That Be (whether it's gods, Judges, Fate, or dead priests) are displeased, and reprieves happen when the Powers are happy. If you want to sow mistrust and suspicion between Arisen, make sure they're working for different Judges (and maybe guilds, too), and make sure that they're a bit secretive about which Judge they serve. If one mummy saves another and doesn't get a Descent reset out of it, he knows he's now working with someone who serves a different master's interests.

A **Mummy** game emphasizing social conflicts should have strictly enforced Descent Rolls for the servants of those covert, conflicting interests. More, though, as Storyteller you should emphasize the ebb and flow of Sekhem. Use vivid terms to describe the relief of a level reset, and be bleak when a level drops. Make the Descent Roll feel ominous, regardless of whether it fails or succeeds. Make sure the Arisen know that the Judges are constantly monitoring them, evaluating their deeds, instantly rewarding them for compliance and just as quick to punish any deviation from the mission. Once they really feel that the Judges (and possibly the gods, too) are spying on them without ceasing, that's when you start to make them question their masters' agenda. If you can make a mummy legitimately resent her own Judge, you've set yourself up for all the paranoia and internal conflict you could possibly want.

Congratulations!

The Arisen Journey

Running **Mummy** can seem intimidating; you've all the usual pressures of Storytelling, combined with added responsibility for your players' characters to which you might not be accustomed. Their true backgrounds; the nature of their service to the Judges and the Shan'iatu; and their many lives and repeated deaths are largely up to you to decide. You can plan as little or as much of that as you like before the chronicle starts, but once the stories are underway, you also have the job of guiding scenes to meet your intended theme and mood. **Mummy** presents a set of themes—alienation, responsibility, memory, and self-discovery being chief among them—that suggest a default character arc, with characters discovering details of their shrouded pasts and reclaiming their humanity. In this section, we'll give you advice on how to achieve all that and to have a satisfying game doing it.

Creative Agency

Mummy makes two main assumptions about the play style of troupes. These won't be true for every chronicle, but most Storytellers will deal with them at least to some extent:

- Players supply their characters, but not (most of) their characters' backgrounds.
- The Storyteller supplies those backgrounds, and they are revealed during play.

Your players might be comfortable with the idea of shifting creative agency like this, they might need a little reassurance, or you might need it yourself. If you've never run a game like this before, don't worry. It's not as difficult as it seems, and by understanding a few tricks to the trade, you'll be up to speed in no time.

The first thing to remember is that you don't have to do *all* the work yourself. Book One of this set describes the players' half of the deal; they focus on describing their concepts as the characters they want to play, along with a few ideas for still-retained memories. These details, once confirmed with you during character creation, must stand. You can work around them, reveal details of what was *really* going on in half-formed memories, and even, with care, call memories into question; but whatever happened to the character in the past must have led to the present.

The second thing to remember is that the player, not you, decides how her character acts in the present. Even if you reveal that a character courted the idea of betraying her Judge in previous life cycles, the player chooses how she reacts to remembering that heresy. Your revelations are just another stimulus to character growth and shouldn't be used to try to control what the players do with their characters.

The amount by which you can play with expectations comes down to the level of background twisting with which your troupe is happy—a spoken or unspoken social contract of what's acceptable. For some **Mummy** troupes, it might be okay to reveal memories that conflict with an Arisen's sense of who she is but not to directly contradict the concept, even

in a flashback set millennia ago. Other troupes will be happy to try anything. If in doubt, ask your players; limits of creative agency are better off understood than accidentally broken. You don't have to say precisely *what* you intend, though. That would spoil the surprise. Be aware that different players will have different views on what they consider inviolate about their characters and what they're happy for you to test.

Chronicling History

So, you've read the secrets in this book. You've learned the terrible history of Irem, you know what the Shan'iatu intended for the Arisen, and you've got ideas about using Anpu and the death cycles. You've got a collection of character sheets and concepts supplied by your players, along with a few ideas for historical context.

Now what?

At heart, creating a background on behalf of someone else is no different than doing it for a detailed Storyteller character or for playing a character of your own in another roleplaying game. It doesn't have to be a detailed account of 6,000 years, with every arising accounted for; that would take years to write. A few broad arcs noting periods of activity will suffice—major events that shaped subsequent Descents for the meret. You can always go into more detail later.

A backstory has to meet both your needs and the player's needs. The best way to do that is to tie the plot's needs into the character, and to do that, you'll need to find the hooks in the game traits your players chose. Where a player has intentionally left gaps for you to fill in—a Fated Affinity, a free choice of Judge, a Skill she doesn't know how her character learned—you should make decisions according to your chronicle design. Grant Fated Affinities you know will be useful or give a hint as to previous Descents the character can't remember. If the player finds no emerging preferences, or is having difficult choosing for herself, you can assign a Judge that's appropriate for the character, then note for the player how it might be pleased or angered by her actions, including perhaps a few points where one or the other took place.

Beyond filling in the missing pieces of the character, look over what your player *did* put in for potential plot hooks. The mummy's decree (or Judge, if the player was that specific) combined with the guild gives a sense of the character's overall priorities and personality, but look at the Attributes and Skills as well. Skill Specialties are the most telling traits for determining what's key to your player's vision of her character, followed by high-dot ratings in low-priority areas (e.g., if she spends most or all of a tertiary category in a single trait, then it's *important*,) then which categories were primary, and finally high dots in general. Every dot tells a story, and you can frame flashbacks and weave backstory around any of them. Take any cases where your players provided memories during character creation as the gift they are, and include them in your plans where possible. When you reveal what happened just before or after a scene the player provided, that player will appreciate your effort to include that work.

Once the chronicle is underway, watch how your players act during the game. Can you identify common themes in their roleplaying, or guess how they'd react as their characters in a given situation? Then use those quirks and habits in your background. Does something in your backstory no longer make sense, but hasn't yet been revealed to the players? *Change it*. Adapt your plans to fit how the characters behave in play, look for events in the chronicle you can mirror or invert in the backstory for contrast and listen if your players speculate about what their characters did. You might find they have a better idea than you had.

Playing to Theme

Preparation is all very well, but where is your chronicle *going*? **Mummy,** as a World of Darkness game, is an environment for Storytelling games of personal horror and, specifically to **Mummy**, self-discovery and reclamation against the confines of the Descent. The themes support this design—mummy characters begin alienated from mortals, ground down by the loss of memory and their driving instinct to serve their purpose, but they may eventually learn to reclaim their lives, rediscover their memories, and even rebel against their eternal servitude to their absent and largely undeserving masters.

Alienation

To be alienated is to be cut off, separated or divided from those around you. Mummies, at least at the level of Memory starting characters possess, do not consider themselves to be part of the human experience. They walk through the living world but lost any right to it they may have had when they underwent the Rite of Return. At least, that's what they usually believe. Every time a mummy rises, she is faced with a leap into a future she might not understand. She can make the effort to adapt to the new world, but one arising later, she'll be doing it all over again. Little wonder most don't bother; potentially hundreds of Descents and four Sothic Turns have taught them not to.

The alienation of mummies is part culture shock and part disassociation. You can use either in your games to get the theme across. Alienation is best used at the start of a chronicle or after an extended time lapse as a character dies and returns to life years later to find everything changed.

Culture Shock

Mummies' situation as time-displaced undead monsters might make you imagine scenes of failing to understand innovations and being unnerved by them, but culture shock isn't technological in basis. Human beings—even spiritually rebuilt, millennia-old human beings—adapt just fine to new tools and technologies once they've seen them used. More importantly, mummies have a great deal of experience with unexpected leaps in science. Encountering an electric switch or a gun for the first time won't make a mummy think of magic, and they can pick up the nature of most things by inference; a mummy encountering firearm-wielding enemies will realize from stance that they're *weapons*. Once you see someone using a cellphone, the purpose of it is obvious even if you don't understand the science behind how it works. And really, how many people do, anyway?



Culture shock is more pervasive, and more emotional. It's entirely based on being immersed in a foreign or unfamiliar social context (which happens to mummies *all the time*), and it resembles the stages of grief. At first, someone displaced and cut off from home falls in love with the new culture, then finds things he doesn't like about it, and thus begins to feel anxiety. Eventually, the traveler gets used to the new circumstance and reaches a kind of equilibrium, where he understands the culture and has come to terms with his likes and dislikes, but still feels slightly alienated. If he ever progresses (and most people don't), then he "goes native" and suffers shock again if displaced back to his original culture.

Mummies can't return to lost Irem, and they don't usually have time to reach that equilibrium, either. When Sekhem drops and Memory rises enough for them to truly take in their surroundings, they live in a mixture of joy at discovering the new and unease at how much they've been left behind. Letting Memory fade into the fog of past Descents, losing oneself in the drumming heartbeat of Sekhem—that is a viable escape, and it's always available. All the mummy has to do is stop trying to fight it.

You can bring culture shock into your games by emphasizing the differences and similarities between your setting and Irem. Mummies feeling alienated look for elements of the local culture that remind them of home, and the modern world is definitely Irem's heir in that regard. It has its masters and slaves (although you have to pretend to pay them minimum wage now), its temples, and its wars. It offers empires taking tribute from less powerful nations in resources or workers. Introduce scenes that bring these similarities across, as well as ones in which the characters have to deal with something with which they're *not* so familiar. Pick something—big or small—that's different about your setting from Irem, and point it out via the medium of your story to the player and her character.

And finally, there are mummies who *do* last long enough to acclimatize to the age into which they have returned: those who betray their mission and sacrifice relics for Sekhem. When your characters encounter these traitors, you can use scenes showing the antagonist mummies as perhaps being comfortable, where the players' characters are still uneasy. They've gone native, and by claiming vessels for themselves, they've achieved what the characters can never truly have. It does double duty as a marked difference and a lingering temptation. If the characters committed the same crime, maybe they could find the same contentment, however fleeting.

DISASSOCIATION

Mummies are so ground down by the Descent that, at low Memory and high Sekhem, they resemble fleshy, angry automatons. Only as they descend and regain their finer faculties do they notice the world around them, and even then, they don't truly take it in until Memory has risen; and for some, it never does. You can help your players get into this mindset by being careful in how you describe scenes. When the characters are at low Memory and Sekhem 9 or 10, the whip of Sekhem is driving them to their mission while they ignore, hear without hearing, or see without processing. Pare

down your descriptions, don't give the names of NPCs, and consider not even fully roleplaying what those characters say. Summarize it instead. Be vague about background characters.

Then, as Memory rises and the Descent begins to bite, shade more and more detail into your descriptions. Slip the names of your supporting characters in, and begin roleplaying their speaking voices; pick out details in the characters' surroundings that you would have glossed over earlier.

RESPONSIBILITY

Alienation is so strong that a natural instinct of the Arisen would be to do nothing but meditate in their tombs until death takes them again, but they aren't reborn devoid of purpose. Every mummy has responsibilities—to her creator, to her Judge, to her meret, to her cult; responsibilities that she feels a powerful, occult urge to fulfill. But responsibility doesn't end with duty. Consider other ways to use the theme in your games.

THE MISSION

Relics and vestiges seem almost fated to show up around mummies, the possessions of the Judges working their way subtly into the hands of the Judges' agents in the living world. Regardless, the drive to reclaim items containing Sekhem and return them to Duat makes for a handy narrative device, and is a story hook you'll likely return to again and again as a **Mummy** Storyteller. Just as a basic chapter of **Vampire: The Requiem** involves waking, hunting for blood, and then dealing with a character's place in the neo-feudal domain, a basic chapter of **Mummy: The Curse** often begins with a character rising, either called by her cult to recover a vessel it has learned of or else forced back to life by a theft or Sothic Turn.

You'll need to strike a fine balance here; too much emphasis on recovering vessels and your chronicle will begin to feel samey, but the game is about being a slave to duty one can't escape even by dying. Eventually, a mummy might rebel, but if you intend your chronicle to go down that route, you need to have something for the characters to rebel *against*. If your players are showing signs of getting bored with relic hunts, try to shake things up a little. Consider having a relic that was already retrieved stolen, or drawing back the curtain a little to show what the Judges intended for a relic set in the meret's collection. As Chapter Three notes, the combination of a relic and a vestige creates a wide-ranging, if subtle emotion-warping effect; that effect is going to be centered on the community among which your characters hide. Decide what it is, and gradually show the results of past retrieval missions on your setting. By making the results positive, your characters are rewarded for loyal service. Detrimental effects, introducing the idea of rebellion, support stories about the relationship between the Arisen and their masters.

ACTION/INACTION AND CONSEQUENCE

All World of Darkness games focus on the consequences of characters' actions—the protagonists lose levels in their Morality traits in response to things they are forced to do to survive the story of the week, becoming jaded, broken, and quite possibly deranged in the process. Actions have consequences.

Mummies, though, were reduced to the barest scraps of memory by the Rite of Return, and 6,000 years later, Arisen characters begin play having barely managed to rise above that nadir, and making further progress is simply beyond some of them. The combination of alienation from humanity and the driving responsibility of Sekhem means they often simply *don't care* what gets in their way. A newly arisen mummy with only a few dots in Memory (that is, a typical starting character,) will burst from the tomb brimming with Sekhem's power, snap the tomb robber's neck with a slight tinge of satisfaction, and take back her relic. The character's actions don't weigh on her. They're just means to an end. If you introduce too many scenes in which a character is forced to sin against the few dots of Memory with which she started, you'll soon run them into madness.

Instead of focusing on actions, consider introducing scenes that tempt the character with *inactions*. Responsibility means "if you don't do this, bad things will happen." At early stages in a chronicle, plots can be sparked by characters not noticing or thinking to correct situations when they're small enough. The mortal they terrified and then ignored returns, older and more prepared, in a future life cycle. The problem they told cult members to deal with themselves (while the meret fought a chimera, perhaps) snowballs to become the focus of a later story. Once the players have bought more dots in Memory and the characters are therefore able to appreciate what they did, have those consequences bite. And for extra contrast, suggest that they were in the *right* to concentrate on their duty.

WORKERS, NOT KINGS

Responsibility carries connotations of, well, *work*. Mummies are laborers and soldiers, scribes and smiths. They were never kings, and remain servants of the Judges and of their own purpose.

You can emphasize this aspect of the game not only by revealing flashbacks to lost Irem and hints of the Judges' agenda, but by drawing parallels between mummies and the people around them who labor in similar thematic circumstance. Mummies are at home among poor migrant workers, the serving underclass, developing nations, those who toil at dangerous jobs on behalf of far-off beneficiaries, and the like. Many of the supernatural beings that inhabit the World of Darkness take positions of wealth and privilege when they interact with humanity, but although a mummy can leverage her cult to play in that arena if she really must (or just can't control her desire), the CEO's boardroom and the playboy mansion are most often the realms of the Arisen's foes.

You can highlight this theme by selecting antagonists who are "above" the level of the mummies' allies, or who abuse privilege over others. Last Dynasty International is tailor-made for this kind of story, exploiting the sahu of the mummies themselves for profit. As described under "The Mission" (above), having a relic amplify a vestige, causing harm to the community around the meret's tombs, can begin a story exploring rebellion against the Judges' "selfishness." If a player's character does rise to a high position, or rules a par-

ticularly large or wealthy cult, emphasize how alien it feels to be waited on (especially if the character has spent experience to increase her Memory rating). Cultists are "meant" to be fellow servants of the Arisen, not the servants *of* the Arisen. Test the line between the two by giving characters the opportunity to abuse power and have it all go wrong.

MEMORY

Memory is more than just a Morality trait; it's the central concern of a mummy's existence. Drowned by power and sheer age, the memory of previous life cycles fades with the centuries, leaving an Arisen grasping at tattered fragments in order to maintain a sense of self. By using the memory theme in your games, you give it the prominence it deserves in your characters' repeated lives.

DEFINITION

Here's a question that's been mulled over by philosophers since before the days of lost Irem: How much of a man is the sum of his experiences? Is there an essential self beyond memory, and what happens if memory is altered or lost? If there's no soul, no self that transcends impermanent memory, then anything about a person is open to change. An injury to the brain or a vampire's hypnotic gaze puts everything about the past in doubt. Change the past of an unfortunate—the subjective memory of the past—and you change his personality.

The Arisen know that things aren't quite *that* bad. The soul exists in its complex Egyptian form, and the decree is a statement that no matter what force is brought to bear, the core nature of a mummy isn't warped, even if she loses every memory of her human life. Unfortunately, the Arisen also know that the decree and the soul are limited, capable of being damaged, and susceptible to being overwhelmed by the energies of the Rite of Return. A mummy without memory is a husk, following the commandments of its purpose without any true personality. Memories, then, are what define a mummy as a person rather than a tool of the Shan'iatu, and they are all the more precious for it.

You can use the gradually returning memories of past lives to highlight aspects of a character's self identity, by reinforcing or casting doubt on her ideas about herself. Bear in mind the limits of your players' tolerance for you revealing their character's background, and consult any notes you have about how the character developed into the state she was in at the start of the chronicle.

Memories—real human memories, not just those of the Arisen—are strongest when linked to an emotion or a sense. When your players spend experience on raising the Memory of their characters, look at what the mummies have been *feeling* recently: Did anyone refresh Willpower through Virtue or Vice in the last chapter? Did the meret encounter a particular type of antagonist or social situation? Did an Arisen express a strong belief about something? If you can link the prompting experience to part of a character's background, you can then promote the character's growing self-identity by providing a memory that mirrors the prompt. Alternatively, you can present a moment from the past that mirrors and inverts the event to show how the character has changed. This can end up reinforcing the character's sense of self anyway—the character can always declare that she was wrong in the past—or cause a moment of self-doubt and reflection, but either way, it emphasizes the theme of memory's role in shaping our lives.

Most recalled memories will be short, snapshots of distant times, and can be handled by description and narration. For particularly important recollections, though, you might want to play through the revelation. In these cases, you can employ a flashback.

FLASHBACKS

The flashback sequence is a staple of fiction, revealing hidden character traits and providing the necessary jigsaw piece of information to make sense of the story's plot, but they aren't used very much in traditional roleplaying games, thanks to a few problems when adapting the technique to games. In most games, flashbacks to dangerous situations feel defanged, as the characters can't have been seriously injured or killed, so the Storyteller is forced to provide an "out" of any conflict. More importantly, though, the flashback in these games steps on the toes of player agency; it can feel wrong to a player to experience her character out of sequence, as events that take place later chronologically but were played earlier have had no way of being informed by the scene; and the player can argue that she "should have" known any information revealed. If you avoid any sense of threat and make sure the character didn't change emotionally or learn anything, then there's little point in playing the flashback at all. **Mummy: The Curse**, however, shares none of these problems. Characters can easily die in flashback action sequences, and the Arisen condition means that the character is learning whatever happened at the same time as the player; there's no discontinuity when the mummy simply forgot what occurred until reminded of it centuries later.

Flashbacks should be linked to the rest of the story by theme, mood, or event, but you don't have to wait until characters regain Memory to use them, and benefit from a degree of forward planning in the set up. When the scene starts, describe where and when the characters are, along with any pressing points about what the characters are like in the time period presented, but try not to use flashbacks to show the characters acting completely against their later beliefs until your players get used to the technique and become a little more adept at shifting gears.

Remember the limits of your role as Storyteller; if you think of a flashback as having a definitive beginning, middle, and end, and you "know" what the characters did, then it's better to substitute a narrated memory instead (which can be just as useful, if not more so). Flashbacks are for scenes where there's an opportunity to learn something, a decision to be made, or actions to undertake of which you don't know the outcome ahead of time. They're particularly good for introducing information, as players tend to be better at taking in things that happen to their characters when they're playing them than when presented with exposition. Use flashbacks to have the meret encounter a situation or enemy in a way that "trains" them for the main story, to introduce clues if your players are stumped in a mystery, or to allow players who can't decide what the best course of action for their characters is to "try out" different options in similar situations their characters encountered in the past.

A SHADOW OF DOUBT

Memory can be dangerous. Once a mummy starts to recall more and more about her lives, she might begin to rely on the insights into her past and make herself vulnerable. If you want to shake players' confidence in their characters' pasts, then there are a few ways to introduce a little doubt. It shouldn't happen in most chronicles, but if memory is used to hint at the "correct" path too often, the players—and their characters—could grow to rely on it.

Flashbacks and recollected scenes lack *context*, and can give misleading impressions about past events. For example, if an Arisen were to remember "discovering" the fact that a particular guildmate was a spy for the Deceived, but not that she then found him to be innocent when given further information, she might confront him in the present with tragic consequences. Mistakes don't have to be earth-shattering or threaten the mission, though; they can be as deeply personal as remembering a lost love, gathering strength from it, but not being aware that the affair ended in the mummy being jilted and heartbroken. When the revelation finally comes, the mummy can experience the pain of rejection all over again, mixed with anger at herself for the mistake.

Beyond lack of context and outright manipulation, there is simple deception. The enemies of the Arisen are often familiar with their weakness of memory, the Shuankhsen and the Deceived being mummies themselves, and an apparently friendly approach by an unknown Arisen who claims to have known the mummy in the past can hide an attempt to twist the victim's sense of self. If a mummy is known to rely on her cult to prompt her about past actions, that cult presents prime opportunities for infiltration. Wise Arisen learn to be cautious when someone "reminds" them of an event they're not sure about—caution that, tragically, can lead full circle back to becoming alienated and cut off.

SELF-DISCOVERY

The final and perhaps most central theme of **Mummy**—that of self-discovery—has been touched on in the discussions so far. As a mummy begins to pull back from her alienated state, she begins to learn what it means to be *her*.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

First and foremost, make your stories *personal* to the characters. It's good advice for any World of Darkness game, but it bears repeating for clarity: **Mummy** is best when the events of the chronicle mean something to the characters. Use plots that are linked to a character's obsessions, pet loves/hates, or beliefs; and provide Storyteller characters who remind the mummies of themselves or contrast against them, defining the players' characters by opposition or absence of a key trait. If a mummy is learning that she is brave, introduce someone for her to look up to or a coward against whom she might define herself. If another character is tempted to consume relics purely for Sekhem, bring in another mummy who *did* such a thing to whom he might compare himself.

REBELLION

The Judges are harsh masters who prefer to guide by punishment rather than reward; a mummy feels the disappointment of her creator, her gods, and her Judge in the loss of Sekhem when she transgresses, which, as she regains her personality, may lead to acts of rebellion. Going too far leads to the Descent being rushed, but an Arisen doesn't have to toe the party line *all* of the time, and one of the most important lessons a mummy will learn on her journey is how much she can get away with without inviting the wrath of Fate. If you want to explore this in your game, introduce opportunities for a character to go against Duat's commands. Perhaps another Arisen offers a trade for the relic she arose to find, or her cult sees an opportunity to gain power without it being linked to the mission.

LEARNING TO LIVE

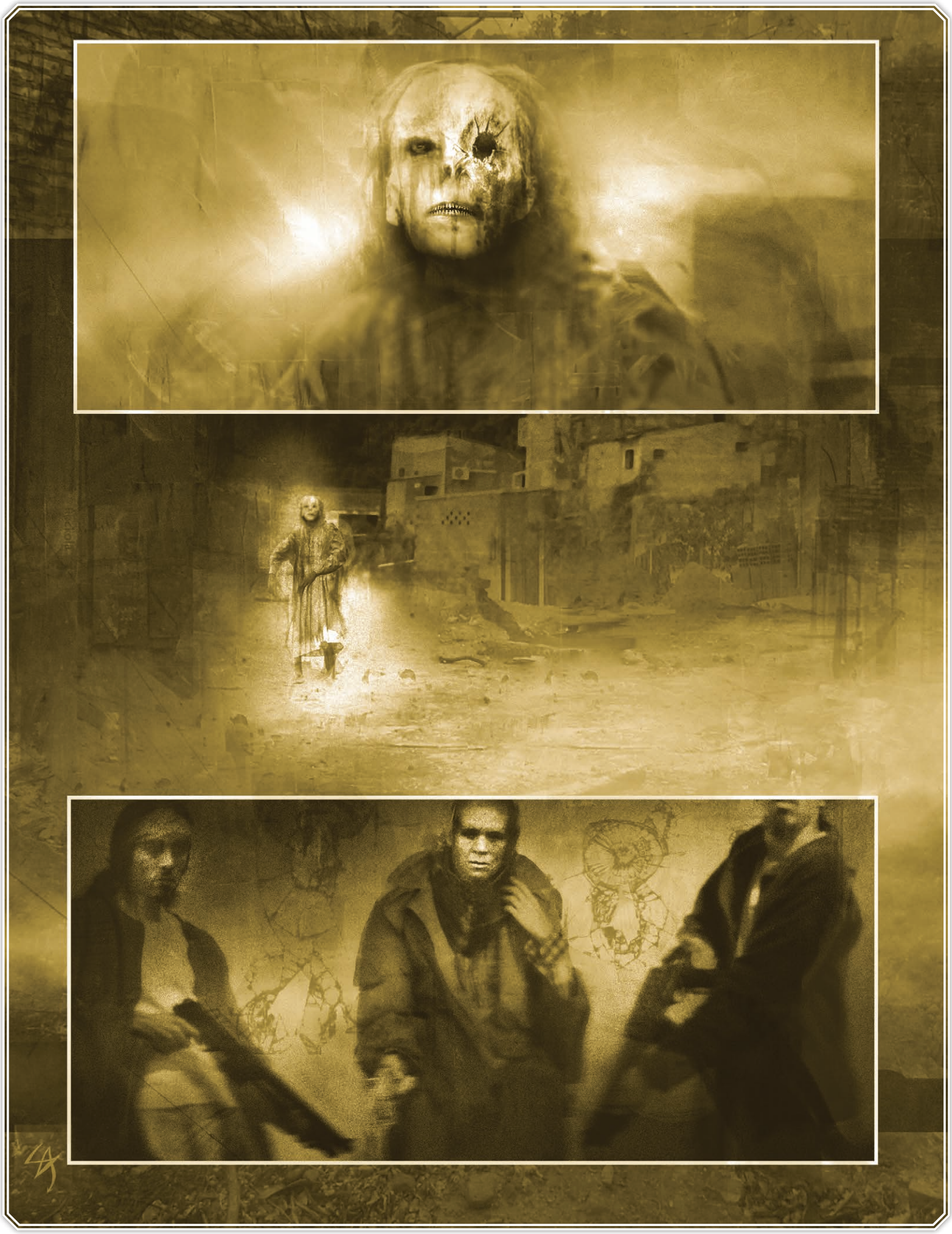
Once Memory is at mid-to-high levels, a mummy has a much better grip on herself as a person. But that achievement needs to be reinforced against further alienation. Once the mission has been achieved, or the reality of arising to a Sothic Turn without a specific command has set in, a mummy has time for personal interests. A mummy thinking only of duty will spend this time maintaining her cult and tomb and keeping watch for enemies or vessels, but one who is beginning to reclaim herself has other options. Do your characters have secret hobbies or interests? Do they attempt to keep current with technology, telling themselves it will make future cycles easier but really taking satisfaction in it for its own sake? Once Sybaris isn't an issue, they can even meet people in managed situations—do they recruit new cultists, take lovers, make friends? Encourage your players to think of these details and then *use* them. A friend's skills become vital to finding a chimera. A mummy's knowledge of the modern world comes in handy when tracking an enemy cult.

LOSING YOURSELF

If Memory only went up, mummies' struggle to discover the truth about themselves would be easy. The characters in a typical **Mummy** chronicle begin at Memory 3—implying that they can fall even lower. They can be crushed by repeated deaths and disappointments, give up on rebuilding their past, and let themselves be lulled by the tidal rise and fall of Sekhem. After all, they did it before.

If the characters lose Memory dots during play, you can hint at how comforting and terrifying it is to them to feel themselves succumbing. If they are consistently raising Memory without suffering setbacks, you can still bring this up in game by using flashbacks to periods when they lost themselves for a time.

Once you have the characters questioning if they're doomed to an eternal cycle of losing and reclaiming their humanity, that can be just the right time to bring in Apotheosis.



Appendix
Eve of Judgment

When you want something with all your heart,
that's when you are closest to the Soul of the World.
— Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

Introduction

Rio de Janeiro is a city divided, its poor and dispossessed crowded into favela slums that occupy the surrounding hills and ridges. The slums are ruled by violence: armed drug gangs for the majority, and brutal occupation by police for those that become political liabilities. The Arisen concealed in the slums remain hidden, ignoring the bloodshed whenever they can and using it to hide their own struggles. Tonight, though, the violence is targeted at *them*. Called back to life by their cults, the mummies of the favelas face an unknown threat with no time to prepare—cultists are dying *right now*, and armed men are on the way.

"Eve of Judgment" is a short story that introduces the core elements of **Mummy: The Curse**, intended as the kick-off story in a chronicle or a one-shot game to get used to the mechanics and setting of **Mummy**. It's intended to move quickly, keeping the pressure of time slipping away throughout, and features a branching set of scenes that, in the middle section of the story, can be taken in any order. If you're using it as the first story in a chronicle, you'll find several hooks and opportunities for expansion.

Treatment

Armed assailants are invading cult sanctuaries across the slums, desecrating tombs and stealing vessels as they go. One mummy has already been returned to death (as far as the cults can tell), and out of fear for their lives, the remaining cultists have banded together despite deep-seated rivalries to protect their own vessels and to buy time to perform the rituals necessary to wake their Arisen defenders. Those rituals are completed, and the characters arisen, just as the attackers enter the favela the cults chose as their final bolt-hole. The Arisen don't have time to debate defensive strategy, they have minutes at most before they're fighting for their lives.

The attackers are a heavily armed gang, which believes that it is taking out rival narcotics "businesses" across the city; the gang members are the manipulated catspaws of Kasmut, the "killed" meret member, who set them up when last arisen. He's orchestrated the destruction of his own cult in order to break with Duat's laws and flee his duty, chasing his memory away from Brazil. To stave the Descent off long enough, though, he needs the Sekhem from his fellow Arisen's vessels and has staged the attack to take them.

The story contains the following key scenes. Storytellers might remove some, add connecting scenes that take place between them, or change the order around entirely.

"Blood at Midnight": The characters arise late at night, deep in the hillside favela Dona Marta, surrounded by hastily arranged vessels and terrified cultists mixed from their respective followings. A street battle is already underway, and the meret must defend its property.

"Accusations": With the immediate threat fought off, and the Descent restoring more of the characters' personalities, the cultists begin to blame one another for their predicament. The characters learn what transpired over the last day while keeping the defense of the vessels strong. If they're to track down whoever is behind the attack, they'll need the cultists to work together.

The story now splits. The characters can follow up three possible leads in any order: the vanished Kasmut, the attackers themselves, or Teshra-Gemet—whom the slum-dwellers call O Pardal Vermeilho ("the Red Sparrow")—the Arisen pirate-queen who claims the wealthy South Zone downtown of the city as her territory. They have time for one scene before another Descent Roll, which will restore their human appearance in most cases. Each of the next three scenes contains clues leading to the other two; if they trace the attackers first, they may well come away thinking that their assailants are an Amkhat cult, for example.

"The Scene of the Crime": The characters head to the Rio das Pedras favela, locating and digging through Kasmut's tomb, finding broken vessels and dead cultists, but no sign of his khat. They find clues pointing them on to their next destination and signs that they don't have much time to catch their attacker.

"The Queen of Ipanema": Teshra-Gemet is an old rival of the meret, but she's still one of the Arisen, and she may be about to be attacked. Alternatively, the characters may have already discovered that she is somehow involved. Unfortunately, she's currently dead, and the characters must persuade or threaten her cult into raising her or do it themselves at the cost of more Sekhem before they can put their questions to her.

"Fourteen Years Ago": Tracking the attackers back to their base of operations, a warehouse near Rio das Pedras, the characters remember that they've been here before. The realization frames a flashback to years ago, when the meret faced an Amkhat while nearing the end of their Descents. The scene plays out with the meret of yesteryear stalking the Amkhat through the warehouse, and a broken vessel putting the spark of an idea in Kasmut's mind.

Once the players do realize what happened (and there's an optional pointer to it in each of the three preceding scenes that can be included if it's the last in the chain), the characters have the opportunity to catch their errant meret member.

"As the Sun Rises": The characters confront Kasmut at an airfield, as he prepares to make his escape. Will they hear out his reasons, and how will they react to his betrayal? How do they punish an immortal? *Should* they punish him?

Theme

A glimpse of the future. Kasmut has experienced the pain of the Descent one too many times, and he's decided to do something about it. He was the characters' friend, as much as any Arisen can be said to be friends with one another, and he regrets betraying them, but his own newly awakened self-interest is stronger than loyalty to their alliance. Do the Judges deserve the Arisen's service? His actions tonight might fail, but they might also plant a seed of doubt in the characters' minds. What if he was right?

Mood

Confusion, and the Ticking Clock. The meret are one step behind what's going on at every turn, called back too late, thanks to their squabbling cults, and forced to make sense of the night's events while trying to retake the initiative. The players should always feel like they're being timed. The raw power of Sekhem in the initial battle soon gives way to the Descent, as the mummies race to find Kasmut before it's too late.

About the Storytelling Adventure System

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you should be able to get your bearings quickly and find your way around the adventure. For space reasons, however, we haven't included many of the core suggestions at the heart of the SAS. For those unfamiliar with the format, we recommend the free SAS Guide, found at the SAS website: www.white-wolf.com/sas

A Chapter in Your Chronicle

"Eve of Judgment" starts with the characters newly arisen, so while it can be used to mark the beginning of a new story arc in an existing chronicle, it works just as well as the first story in a brand new chronicle. It gets the players used to making Descent Rolls, teaches them how mummies fight at both high and low levels of Sekhem, and introduces the game's central themes of recovering memory and gathering vessels while hinting at questioning the characters' duty to their masters. The end of the story, with Kasmut attempting to flee the city, introduces the idea that there might be Arisen mummies who rebel against the Judges.

If your chronicle isn't set in Rio de Janeiro, the scenes here should be easy to adapt to your own setting by substituting locations. Any city with clearly divided rich/patrolled and poor/lawless neighborhoods can be used; the scenes will work with only a little adaptation to chronicles set in Mexico City, London, or Abu Dhabi. "Eve of Judgment" assumes the chronicle is using the Rival Dead framework (see pp. 240-241 for more on frameworks), but if it isn't, the only scene that will require much modification is "Accusations," replacing the threat of the cultist's alliance falling apart with another reason to hurry up and find the perpetrator. Perhaps consider introducing clearer signs that the attacking cult is going to try again—maybe a prisoner is taken, who can be interrogated to discover that there's a second attack on the way.

A Story By Itself

"Eve of Judgment" works just as well as a one-off story, a convention game, or similar. The time-pressured nature of the plot compliments the constraints of convention gaming in particular, although you may wish to cut down the flashback scene and remove some of the hints to a wider rebellion against the Judges if you aren't going to follow up on them with future stories.

Setup

Two turns of the Sothic Wheel ago, the Arisen first came to South America. Long before Columbus sailed to the New World, mummies migrated there in search of new lands and new vessels. Most of them can't remember *how* they found themselves in what is now Brazil, but by the time the Europeans arrived, the "native" mummies had had hundreds of years to build their tombs and gather indigenous cults. Then they lost it all.

The first-wave mummies now find themselves displaced to the slums of Brazil's big cities, along with the descendents of the tribes they once cultivated, while the wealthy, safer areas are taken by the "European"/second-wave Arisen. Banding together only when threatened by external forces, the mummies of the favelas bitterly direct their cultists to wrestle territory and resources from one another. Many among

Pushing Back the Clock

If you want to use Eve of Judgment as an introductory story but don't want to deal with the aftermath, the solution is simple—use it as a prequel, and set the whole thing in the past before the characters arise another time in the modern day. The favelas were largely built in the 1950s, and grew into their present-day overcrowding by the 1980s, when they became virtual no-go areas for the Rio de Janeiro police until occupation units began moving into the most violent areas relatively recently. That leaves plenty of years in which to set this story.

them feel abandoned by the Judges, or accuse the Portuguese-speaking newcomers of forsaking their duty for a comfortable existence. The colonists accuse them in turn of simple jealousy born of failure.

Fourteen years ago, the favela Arisen faced a grave threat; an Amkhat, stirred to malice by a broken relic, hunted for trouble and Arisen prey before being trapped in a warehouse adjoining the Rio das Pedras neighborhood. The Rio das Pedras is the territory of Kasmut, who rallied a loose alliance of native Arisen to destroy the creature. They succeeded, but in the process, one of the meret was forced to absorb the Sekhem from a vessel before the Amkhat could draw power from it, temporarily reversing her own Descent in the process.

Kasmut brooded on what he'd seen that night, and on the injustice at what he saw as thousands of years of diligent service ending in squalor. He reached out in secret to other Arisen with rebellious leanings elsewhere in the world, and he formed a plan. Kasmut would abandon Brazil and seek a means of holding the Descent off entirely, but to survive long enough without returning to Duat, he would need a stockpile of vessels to drain of Sekhem. He knew he couldn't gather that many himself, so he went for another option—he would steal the calling relics of all the other Arisen in the city.

The last time he was alive, Kasmut made a bargain with Teshra-Gemet, leader of the "European" Arisen downtown. In exchange for the promise of his territory once he left Brazil, she instructed her own cult to supply a large quantity of drugs to a location he specified. That became the payment for a violent drug cartel, which he lured with promises of taking over operations in other favelas. The "gangs" targeted by his new allies were his own cult and those of the other members of the meret. They don't know what the vessels they're after are, only that they're valuable antiques and that he'll pay handsomely for them—or says he will, at any rate. The cartel is well armed but entirely unprepared for supernatural resistance; Kasmut reasons the weight of firepower will bring down any of his compatriots who manage to arise before the theft is complete.

Setup

"Eve of Judgment" is set over the course of a single night in late January, at the height of the Brazilian summer. The cramped favelas retain the heat of the day, but sleep isn't in the cards—the invading drug gang is indiscriminant in its use of force, and the gutters are running with blood.

The story assumes that the players' characters are members of the loose favela meret, and know Kasmut as an ally or have worked with him in the past. It starts right from the characters being called back to the living world by their panicking cultists, so any story set before it should end with an indication of how the characters succumb to the Descent and die again.

Storyteller Characters

The following three characters—two Arisen and an example of the attacking gang—are central to the story.

Kasmut

Quotes: *"I regret this, brother, but my need is greater than yours."*

"Have the Judges not abandoned us? Should we not then make our own way in the world?"

"There's so much we don't know, about our world, about ourselves. I intend to find out."

Background: Embittered by being swept up in Brazil's social changes along with his cult, jealous of the Arisen who arrived with the Portuguese, and desperate for a way out, Kasmut has slowly regained his memory to the point that he is ready to rebel. He has only fragmentary memories of Irem and his time in Africa, and he doesn't know how he arrived in the New World.

Description: When in human form, Kasmut appears to be a short and slight North African man in his early 30s. He has nimble fingers used to precise work. He often flips small objects (pens, coins, and so on) through them when nervous, but he holds the rest of his body stock-still. Most favela-dwellers who see the habit assume he's a junkie needing a fix. When the Sybaris takes hold, an afterimage of a spirit falcon mixes with the apparition of him shaven-headed and dressed in ritual garb as a model-maker, holding a fine set of mason's tools.

Storytelling Hints: Kasmut tries to come across as calm and collected but is bursting with nervous energy—he's *afraid* of what he's doing, knows it defies his Judge, but he is too far gone to back out now. He's been planning this night for a decade, whenever he's been alive to do so, and has already sacrificed the last remnants of his own cult to the cause. In his own mind, he did so partly out of justice so that he would suffer just as the rest of the meret must for his plan to succeed.



Concept: Traitor to the meret

Decree: Name

Judge: Kenemti, the Penitent

Guild: Tef-Aabhi

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 4, Resolve 3; Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Skills: Academics 1, Computer 1, Crafts (models) 4, Empathy 1, Expression 3, Larceny 2 (palming), Occult 2, Persuasion 1, Politics 1, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Subterfuge 2, Weaponry 2

Merits: Cult 0 (at the story's start, Kasmut's had all its members killed to cover his tracks), Fleet of Foot 1, Guild Status (Tef-Aabhi) 2, Language 2 (Portuguese), Language 2 (Tupi), Tomb (Geometry 1, Peril [traps] 2)

Affinities: Gift of Truth, Model Lifeweb, Retributive Curse, Soulsight

Utterances: Rebuke the Vizier, Secrets Ripped From Skies

Pillars: Ab 3, Ba 3, Ka 2, Ren 5, Sheut 4

Sekhem: 6 during this story

Willpower: 5

Memory: 5

Virtue: Justice (Kasmut believes that the Arisen have been wronged by the Judges, and although his actions to seek out redress will harm the meret, its mummies won't be permanently destroyed. Without their calling relics, they'll have to wait for their cults to find new vessels to drain for the Call, or—as a worst case—without any surviving cultists, they'll only arise again in the next Sothic Turn. That's in just a few months' time, and he reasons that they'll at least be able to put their affairs in order or follow him into vessel consumption when the Wheel turns.)

Vice: Greed (Kasmut has found a potential way out—a contact in Canada who claims to have staved off his own Descent. In order to get there, though, Kasmut needs to hold the Descent off for as long as possible. The entire meret sharing the available vessels wouldn't last long enough [they've been dutifully returning relics and vestiges they find to Duat], so rather than share, Kasmut has decided to make sure he survives, even if by doing so he traps everyone else.)

Initiative: 6

Defense: 4

Speed: 12

Size: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool
Knife	1(L)	4

Armor: 0

Health: 8

Notes: Equipment – Engraving stylus, knife, cargo plane charter documents.

TESHRA-GEMET

Quotes: *"I don't concern myself with what you do up in the hills. Don't concern yourselves with what I do, in turn."*

"We came to an arrangement. I didn't care about his reasons."

"Everything you see here, I won."

Background: The mummy who would become Teshra-Gemet can't remember much of her time in the Nameless Empire; she suspects, given her interests, that she was given to the people-management duties of the guild of alchemists, moving slaves and goods to where they could be usefully employed. Throughout history, she has used her skill at navigation and her talent for sailing the open sea to become rich, as a merchant during the first two Sothic Turns, then as a trade house

owner in the Iberian peninsula. Teshra-Gemet's appearance counted against her in Iberia; as a "Moor," she stayed throughout the Reconquista out of stubbornness, but entered the 16th century with virtually no influence in mortal society. Piracy, and the opportunity to seize unknown vessels being returned from the New World, gave her a new purpose. Her business has evolved in the centuries leading up to the new Sothic Turn, changing from outright piracy to privateering to, in modern times, legitimate shipping; but the core idea remains the same. Teshra-Gemet ships valuable goods all around the world but keeps her eye out for vessels. When they appear, she doesn't hesitate. She *takes*.

Description: When her mortal visage returns, Teshra-Gemet appears to be a woman of Moroccan descent, heavily tanned and bearing scars on her palms from rope-burns. When manifesting the Sybaris, her image is briefly overlaid with a spirit-falcon and the hazy silhouette of herself as a ship's captain, holding a sextant in one hand.

Storytelling Hints: You apologize for nothing, own your own actions, and decide your own destiny. Let other people worry about how they come across, or dream of rebellion. You serve your Judge, win vessels in his name, and direct your cult in the pursuit of more. When an opportunity comes to expand your influence, you treat it like the treasure you plunder, taking it without reservation.



Concept: Arisen Pirate Queen

Decree: Spirit

Judge: Shet-Kheru, the Orderer of Speech

Guild: Mesen-Nebu

Attributes: Intelligence 3, Wits 3, Resolve 4; Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Presence 2, Manipulation 2, Composure 2

Skills: Academics 2, Athletics 4, Brawl 2, Computer 1, Crafts 2, Drive 2, Intimidation 2, Larceny 1, Politics 2, Streetwise 2, Survival 4 (Sailing), Weaponry 3 (Swords)

Merits: Cult (Enterprise; Reach 4, Grasp 4), Fighting Style: Two Weapons 2, Guild Status (Mesen-Nebu) 2, Tomb (Geometry 5, Peril [traps] 4)

Affinities: Divine Flesh, Guardian Wrath, Pharaoh Reigns Anew, Wisdom of the Ancients

Utterances: Revelations of Smoke and Flame, Torn Veil of Forgetting, Water of Life and Death

Pillars: Ab 4, Ba 5, Ka 3, Ren 1, Sheut 1

Sekhem: 10 if roused during this story

Willpower: 5

Memory: 4

Virtue: Fortitude (Teshra-Gemet was not always this successful—she forged her success through surviving adversity, as a female Moor in Iberia, as a pirate, and as a colonist.)

Vice: Pride (Teshra-Gemet is both a Charioteer and an alchemist. Everything she has, she won herself, under her own merit, and her holdings are a testament to her personal abilities. The characters hide in their slums because they haven't the will to take better roles for themselves. Her superiority to them is self-evident.)

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 11

Size: 5

Armor: 0

Health: 8

Notes: No equipment when newly arisen.

Invading Drug Gang Member

Quotes: *"What the fuck is THAT?"*
"My god, it's moving!"
"Kill it! KILL IT!"

Background: A favela-dweller who grew up with violence and made his move to be on the side wielding the gun, the gang member is swept up with his friends in what he thinks is a straightforward war to take over rival businesses in Dona Marta.

Description: A young Brazilian man, lean through malnutrition rather than honed exercise, sporting expensive jewelry and even more expensive weaponry that he doesn't quite know how to use. What he lacks in military training, though, he makes up for in sheer enthusiasm—at least until the desiccated *things* start smashing through walls to rip his friends apart.

Storytelling Hints: At first, the gang's members will feel 10 feet tall, striding through Dona Marta, opening fire on any armed cultists they see, and making their way to the cult safehouse. They shout mocking slogans and dare cultists to come out and face them, terrorizing the slum's population as they go.

Once the mummies join the battle, however, all that poise shatters. The characters represent something that the gang members aren't capable of dealing with, mentally or physically, and they react out of sheer terror. If anything, that tips the violence from "focused" to "indiscriminate," as they stop worrying about collateral damage in an effort to survive.

Concept: Violent catspaw

Attributes: Intelligence 2, Wits 3, Resolve 3; Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Presence 3, Manipulation 3, Composure 2

Skills: Animal Ken 1 (Dogs), Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Firearms 1 (Autofire), Intimidation 1, Investigation 1, Larceny 3, Politics 1, Socialize 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3 (Favelas), Subterfuge 1, Weaponry 2

Merits: Resources 1, Allies 2, Contacts 2, Language (English) 1, Direction Sense 1

Willpower: 5

Virtue: Fortitude (Growing up in the slums has made this young man a survivor, gathering strength from overcoming a world's worth of adversity. He fights for respect, for money, and because he'd rather fight than lie down and take it.)

Vice: Lust (The 'ganger *wants*. He wants the lifestyle of the rich tourists he's seen all his life, the flashy cars that pass the bus he's on, and the drugs that he whiles away his time using.)

Initiative: 5

Defense: 3

Speed: 10

Size: 5

Morality: 5

Weapons/Attacks:

Type	Damage	Dice Pool	Special
Light Pistol	2(L)	4	Clip 17+1; Range 20/40/80
Heavy Pistol	3(L)	4	Clip 7+1; Range 30/60/120
Small SMG	2(L)	5	Clip 30+1; Range 25/50/100; Autofire
Large SMG	3(L)	5	Clip 17+1; Range 50/100/200; Autofire
Shotgun	4(L)	4	Clip 17+1; Range 20/40/80; 9 again

Armor: 0

Health: 7

Notes: Equipment—one of Light Pistol, Heavy Pistol, Small SMG, Large SMG, or Shotgun.

Blood At Midnight

Mental •• Physical ••• Social •

Overview

The characters are pulled back from death by desperate cultists, arising in an unfamiliar location. Rather than their tombs, the allied cults have brought them back to a safe house buried deep in the Dona Marta favela. Members from all their cults rush about, handing out weaponry and relaying updates on how close the invading gang is getting.

A representative from the cult with the highest dot-rating explains, haste cutting through his normal deference. All day, the cult-houses of the favela cults have been attacked, one-by-one. Kasmut's cult has been entirely wiped out, and his khat is missing. The characters' own cultists desperately took their khats and sacred relics to safekeeping, but now the attackers have found them even here, so the cults have been forced to perform the Call. The Arisen must defend themselves, their followers, and their possessions.

This scene is designed to throw the players into **Mummy** at the deep end, with an extended action scene that has no lead-up. The mummies must act *now* or lose everything.

Each mummy's cult has fallen back to the favela, but they aren't working well together—only a few members of each cult, equal to the higher of Reach or Grasp for their Cult Merit, are posing meaningful opposition to the invading gang. If a player decides for her mummy to rally the cultists and coordinate the counterattack, every success on a Presence + Intimidation or Presence + Persuasion roll adds one more combatant. The attacking gang numbers twice as many gang members as cultists *before* additional cult combatants are added due to coordination.

As the scene starts, the attacking gang members are making their way in as straight a line as they can manage through the favela (betraying the fact that they've been told where the safehouse is). Once the mummies enter combat themselves, the effects of the Sickness strike at the invaders, and the battle changes as the gang scatters throughout the slum, trying to regroup and fight off the supernatural monsters.

The Dona Marta favela is a three-dimensional and close-quarters environment. The tenement buildings of the slums are packed too close together for conventional roads, except for one between each "tier" of the hillside, dividing the blocks of slum. Winding alleyways and ladders provide means of access, but finding one's way is difficult—without the Direction Sense Merit or being a native, navigating is a matter of a successful Wits + Streetwise roll.

The slum's overcrowding leads to innocent bystanders being everywhere, getting under the feet of the Arisen and in the way of the mortal combatant's weaponry. Improvised weapons abound, from cooking equipment to pieces of scavenged construction material. In addition, the building materials of the favela were substandard even when the slums bore any resemblance to town planning. When the invaders use autofire, bullets rip through walls and kill cowering bystanders on the other sides. With Sekhem enhancing their undead bodies, characters can crash through walls, rip support beams out for use as weapons, shatter floors to drop onto their foes, and otherwise act as engines of destruction. Point this out to the players by letting their characters hear enemies moving on the far sides of walls, but remember to let them see how much devastation they've brought to the people caught up in the violence once Sekhem fades and they regain control of their faculties.

Description

(on first arising)

You hear the Call, and you obey. Sekhem pours into your khat, pulling your soul back from death and forcing long-dead sinew and bone to move.

You are not as you should be.

Instead of the security of your tomb, you are sitting up on a wooden table in a cramped dwelling of some kind. The dwelling is crowded—you recognize some of those present as being your retainers—and the smell of fear is in the air; sweat mingled with adrenaline.

You sense another flare of Sekhem; blindingly close, within the room.

You are not alone.

(on exiting the safehouse)

You exit into a narrow passageway, an alley barely wide enough to fit one of you down at a time. After a corner, makeshift rungs sunk into the material of the building opposite allow you to climb up.

You're on a rooftop, overlooking a crowded collection of makeshift buildings. In the distance, the city proper is a blaze of light laid out before and below you. The night air is thick with the smells of cooking and the buzz of insects, but the sounds of a mortal community at rest are missing —you can't hear any voices or music.



Then you hear the violent roar of modern weapons coming from the slum, ahead and to the left of you, and the missing voices return as screams.

(on confronting the invaders)

The invader sees you moving and backs away, the heels of his shoes squeaking as he stumbles slightly. His eyes betray panic, and he whimpers, bringing his weapon to bear. When you move closer, he screams, and his weapon erupts in a deafening hail of fire.

Storyteller Goals

Your goals here are both to impose a sense of desperate urgency and to allow the players to be a little bit badass—if this is their first game of **Mummy**, they need to know how impressive the newly risen are in a fight, and this is a fine time to let them learn. Emphasize both the desperation of the mortal cultists and the panic as the invaders realize what they've antagonized.

Trapped between the two sides are the ordinary occupants of the battleground. Don't dwell on the human cost of the battle right now. The characters are still at maximum Sekhem and can't be expected to care about anything other than the imperative to defend their cults. But when the fight is won, remember to call for Sekhem rolls, and show them what they did.

If the fight becomes completely one-sided, in either direction, and you want to draw it out a bit more, then the locals can get involved, retrieving weapons from hiding places or dead combatants and attempting to defend their homes.

Character Goals

In this scene, the character's goals are dictated by the Rite of Return; their cults have performed the rituals and begged the Judges to send their champions to defend them, so the Arisen are compelled to do so.

Actions

Defending the Favela

The Arisen are mighty enough to win most individual combats in the scene, but there's more at stake than just their own lives. Conducting a successful defense of the favela means cutting the attackers off from the safehouse with the all-important vessels in it and allowing the cultists to trap the gang members while they flee from the Arisen. The overall success of the battle can be run as an extended action, each roll coming at the end of a more conventional sequence of combat turns.

Dice Pool: Wits + Streetwise vs. 5 (calculated based on the gang members' Wits + Composure).

Action: Extended and contested, with each roll representing 10-15 minutes of urban warfare.

Hindrances: The Arisen have been injured during the fighting, and at least one attacker saw it and got away (–1), one of the Arisen has actually been killed (–3), one cult's contribution to the defending forces is wiped out entirely (–3)

Help: The characters successfully use stealth to get the drop on a group of invaders (+2), someone cuts the power off (+2), an attacker has died in a single combat turn, and another has escaped to tell the tale (+2)

Dramatic Failure: For the players, a dramatic failure means a group of invading gang members has reached the safehouse. If the Arisen can't get there in time, one or more vessels will be stolen. For the invaders, a dramatic failure means they forfeit all successes accumulated thus far.

Failure: The mummies and gang members chase one another around the favela, making no progress in forcing the other out.

Success: The meret make progress in containing the gang. Once the number of successes equals the number of remaining attackers, the gang has been successfully funneled together; play out one final combat with the characters and any remaining cultists ambushing the gang members.

Exceptional Success: The meret's efforts display tactical know-how; perhaps one of the characters was a general in a previous Descent? The gang is contained even without meeting the target number of successes, and the final confrontation plays out as per success.

Consequences

With the attackers killed or chased off, the meret can return to the safehouse while the cult searches for any lingering gang members. If they thought to take any prisoners, the mummies can interrogate the gang members to learn what they thought they were doing (taking over a rival dealer) and where they're based (in a warehouse near Rio das Pedras).

Remember; the characters have now been active for a scene since they arose, so it's time for a round of Sekhem rolls. Note the consequences of dropping to Sekhem 9 to those players who succeed at the roll; the Arisen's eyes are beginning to function by themselves, so the bright definition of their Sekhem-powered senses are beginning to dull. More importantly, though, they can now feel emotions other than righteous outage, and the sheer amount of damage to lives and livelihoods they've committed in the name of defense starts to become obvious.

If the attackers got away with any vessels, the Arisen have the added urgency of recovering their stolen property. Using their lifesense reveals the vessel or vessels to be heading off toward the coast but staying on the move. The characters might assume this means the gang knows about its Arisen pursuers, but in fact, the gang members have just been given instructions about when to deliver the goods by Kasmut, who is understandably keen not to have the meret simply follow them back until it's too late.

Accusations

Mental •• Physical • Social •••

Overview

In the aftermath of the violence, the remaining cultists take stock, inform the Arisen of the events leading up to this night, and then fall to blaming one another for their predicament.

After the cold opening of the last scene, this is where the characters get their info-dump. The cultists tell them about the previous day, in which the gang attacked first Kasmut's cult and then moved on their own territories, and about how they decided to group together for mutual defense. "A strategy that is obviously not needed anymore".

And that's the problem. After a very long day in which they've seen friends, relatives, and lovers killed without warning, the cultists are looking for someone to blame. Some raise the possibility that this might be the work of O Pardal Vermeilho's cult, which they've always suspected of wanting to swallow the slum-territories up for their use in supplying muscle. Others are suspicious of those cults that they perceive as not having pulled their weight in the battle.

The threat is still out there, the mission incomplete. The mummies know that they can't rest until they finish what the cults called them to do—defend them against whatever is attacking them. The Arisen need to find out where the assailants came from and what they were after, and to prevent any reoccurrence. In the meantime, though, the mummies need to make sure the cultists can defend the vessels while the Deathless go about their business.

Description

(returning victorious)

You enter the tenement you arose in, taking in more details. The furnishings and wall coverings resemble those popular when you were last alive, but they have faded with age and poor upkeep. Wounded cultists are being tended to by their fellows, splatters of blood marking the cheap, rubbery coating of the floor.

(as tensions rise)

The hush is broken by a single wounded cultist, snapping in harsh tones at a member of another group, who stops to check his injuries. The injured cultist is brimming with defiance and rage, spitting as he accuses his counterpart of not having done his part—or worse, having had something to do with the attack.

Storyteller Goals

Your goal here is to remind the players that, although they may work together, their cults are set up in the Rival Dead framework and downright *resent* being forced to cooperate in this way. We've intentionally left the details of the cultists themselves undefined, so that you can play this scene with whatever Storyteller characters you have designed for your chronicle. The mummies are still drunk on Sekhem, regardless, so they won't be taking in the fine details of who is who.

Theories of who attacked and why fly around the room, becoming increasingly aimed at those *in* the room. Your job, though, is to raise the three possible avenues of investigation in the players' minds:

The cultists don't know if O Pardal Vermeilho has also been attacked. Some are speculating that she might have had something to do with the attack.

The vessels of Kasmut are missing, his cult is destroyed, and he has not been seen. His tomb is in Rio das Pedras, but the cultists are afraid to intrude in case they disturb his khat and he rises. They didn't steal his vessels, but in a newly Arisen state, he might not realize that. The mummies, though, should be able to find out if he's still there with relative safety.

The characters can trace the attackers somehow—perhaps a cult member has found one of their abandoned vehicles and discovered evidence inside, or a still-living gang member can be tortured for information. If the opportunity presents itself, the characters could learn about the warehouse the gang have been using as a staging area near Rio das Pedras.

Everything else is just icing, a look at the interaction of cultists and mummies, and potential future plot hooks. If you find yourself getting bogged down in the scene and you've hit those three points, cut it off.

Character Goals

The characters' main goal in this scene is to decide where to go next. Their secondary goal is to make sure there's still somewhere to come back to. They're still at

Sekhem 9 or 10, still obviously inhuman and still inflicting Sybaris on their newer cultists, so a stern stance and a demand that the arguing stops will go a long way.

Actions

Forcing a Truce

Tensions rise to the point that the mummies must take charge, ordering the cultists to work together. Each mummy speaks to his or her own cultists, addressing their concerns but telling them that they need to work together, for tonight at least.

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Expression

Action: Extended, with each roll representing five minutes of argument. The cultists know better than to argue back against a still-potent Arisen, but the player needs to accumulate five successes (the cultists' Willpower) to succeed.

Hindrances: A mummy from a rival cult attempts to pitch in (reverse usual teamwork bonuses), the cult had members injured (–1) or killed (–3) during the battle, only one cult member survives (–5)

Help: The cult only took superficial injuries (+1) or enjoyed great success in the battle (+3), the mummy succeeded at coordinating the rival cults during the battle and capitalized on that success (+4)

Dramatic Failure: The cult refuse to take part in the joint enterprise, and it is so shaken that its Reach or Grasp is reduced by one dot.

Failure: The mummy makes no progress in convincing her mortal assistants and must try again.

Success: The mummy makes progress in putting her argument across.

Exceptional Success: The mummy makes a stirring argument. Her cultists regain a point of Willpower.

The Scene of the Crime

Mental ••• Physical • Social •

Consequences

Once the favela is secure and the cultists are organized, the meret can head out to its choice of destination. Remember to call for Sekhem rolls for any characters who failed the first one. The mummies still haven't regained their human appearances, and all of the options are several miles away, but one of the cultists has a suitable (stolen) vehicle for ferrying them around.

Overview

The characters arrive at Rio das Pedras, the favela occupied—until tonight—by the Serpent-Headed Kasmut, searching for his tomb so that they may look for clues.

Locating the tomb is the first difficulty. Mummies—even occasionally allied ones—don't often share the locations of their resting places with one another. Whenever Kasmut wanted to get in touch with another member of the meret, he used cultists as intermediaries. The favela is subdued tonight, after the murder of the extended family who were, unknown to the locals, Kasmut's cult. If the Arisen have Descended to the point of appearing human, they can ask around to find where the deaths took place (it may occur to the players that the tomb would be nearby). Otherwise, they can deduce that from looking around the favela or, ignoring the dead cultists entirely, figure out where the tomb "should" be by geomantic principles.

Asking after the murder victims requires a successful Presence + Persuasion roll, and it can only be attempted at Sekhem 8 or lower. If the characters can't think of any other way to find the tomb and this is their first destination, suggest that one of them voluntarily spends a dot of Sekhem for Willpower, dropping to the next stage of the Descent in the process. Doing so if this is the third investigation scene played means the roll has a two-die penalty for the lack of people still up (it is, by now, very late at night). Figuring out the crime scene's location just by looking around Rio das Pedras requires a successful Intelligence + Investigation roll.

Finding the tomb by occult means requires five successes on an extended Intelligence + Occult action, each roll representing 15 minutes of looking around the favela. If the character knows where the cultists lived, that puts him in the right region—her player enjoys +1 dice per roll. If the characters enter the apartment once owned by the now-dead cultists, a reflexive Wits+ Composure roll is enough to spot the tomb's entrance.

The tomb is a chamber buried beneath the favela, made of stolen storm-drain cylinders buried beneath a tenement's foundations when the slum was first expanding. It is accessed by a grate in the floor of a cultist's apartment, covered by a threadbare rug that shows signs of having been moved. The concrete shaft leading to the tomb was trapped with a poisoned needle mechanism on certain rungs of the ladder, but the trap has been disabled recently.

Fortunately, a member of the cult, a girl named Adriana, has survived. She will make herself known to the Arisen after watching them enter the apartment from a hiding place nearby.

Description

(entering the apartment)

You step over the flowers brought as offerings to the dead and enter the home of Kasmut's followers. The rooms are still and smell strongly of chemicals; the locals have been trying to clean the bloodstains away. Even sentiment cannot override the need for more living space in the crowded slum.

Images of the cultists, smiling at the picture-taker, hang from the walls. The wreckage of a piece of furniture, smashing when one of the dying fell against it, is neatly stacked in a corner. Bullet holes riddle the walls, the backs of the seats, and the mattresses on the beds.

(the scene of the crime)

Kasmut's tomb was small—a hollow concrete cylinder, made of pipe sections stolen from some big construction site or another and sunk beneath the favela. You have to stoop slightly to walk, but you can't see much in the pale light of an electric lamp. It's clean and dry down here, thanks to diligent maintenance by his cult, but the only furniture is an old wooden chair with high arms that Kasmut must have sat on whenever he returned to Duat.

(the cultist's appearance)

As you climb back up into the apartment, you hear a noise from above you. When you reach the dwelling, a girl is crouched waiting for you, staying out of sight of the windows and entrance but keeping herself obviously visible to you.

You recognize her from the images on the walls.

Storyteller Goals

Your goal here is to let the players' characters explore their compatriots' tomb and to get enough information across to allow them to progress to the next scenes.

If the mummies enter the tomb, they find signs that it has been broken into and ransacked, but in a curiously staged way. Success at searching the tomb and apartment (see below) shows that vessels have recently been destroyed in the tomb. Looking around the apartment turns up invoices in the cult's paperwork for the hire of a warehouse just outside the slum.

If they treat her kindly and ask, or if they demand answers while still inhuman, then Adriana can supply the missing information; the cult was instructed to hire the warehouse. More importantly, though, Kasmut has been active for two weeks already after having given his cult express orders to Call him on that date. He also left before the attack came—there's no khat because he wasn't there, and didn't come back to help his followers. She suspects he had advance warning and says that she thinks he went to see O Pardal Vermeilho when he was last arisen.

If this is the third investigation scene, then she will tell them that she performed one more service for Kasmut over the last few days: she arranged for the hire of a cargo plane, out of Jacarepaguá Airport.

Character Goals

Searching the tomb and finding clues to Kasmut's plan (while, hopefully, not realizing that he isn't a victim if this is an early investigation scene) is the obvious goal for this scenario.

Actions

Searching the Tomb and the Cult's Apartment

Both searches are combined as a single action.

Dice Pool: Wits + Investigation

Action: Extended, with each roll representing five minutes of searching the sparse apartment or sparser tomb. A player needs eight successes to get all of the available information, but if she stops before uncovering everything, she'll still receive some details, depending on how many successes were accumulated.

Hindrances: The meret has attracted the attention of the locals (–2)

Help: The mummy uses physical traps in her own tomb (+1)

Dramatic Failure: A dramatic failure on a roll means a valuable piece of evidence is destroyed. Choose one of the pieces of available evidence—no matter how many times they attempt the search, the characters won't find it.

Failure: The character makes no progress on the search.

Success: The character makes progress on the search, potentially uncovering a piece of evidence. Every two successes uncovers one of the following:

- Vessels were destroyed in the tomb, leaving small piles of dust on the floor at odds with the general cleanliness of the space.
- The tomb's trap was disabled.
- The cult hired a warehouse near the slum on the behalf of Kasmut.
- The tomb's entrance was neatly opened, not forced.

Exceptional Success: The character makes progress on the search, and she also realizes that the vessels were not destroyed tonight, and weren't just smashed. There's no trace of Sekhem having leaked into the area.

Consequences

If this was the first investigation scene, the characters have the choice of going to see Teshra-Gemet or checking out the warehouse. If it was the second, they have already been to one of the options, so the information they learned here was more filling in the blanks. If it was the third, then they should now have enough to put together Kasmut's status as the instigator of tonight's violence and head to the airfield to confront him.

Of course, the characters might have figured it out ahead of time, which will change the tone of future scenes from "investigating the attackers" to "finding Kasmut." Without the airfield information, though, they have the same lines of inquiry open as if they still think he's a victim of a terrible crime rather than the perpetrator.

The Queen of Ipanema

Mental • Physical • Social ••

Overview

The meret suspect or, depending on how many investigation scenes have been played, *know* that Teshra-Gemet knows something about the attacks on its cults. To find out exactly what she knows, the mummies will have to go to Ipanema and ask her.

Fortunately, O Pardal Vermeilho's cult is in the guise of a corporation, and the location of her tomb is an open secret among the Arisen of Rio de Janeiro. RS-Global is a shipping concern based in a tower block in Ipanema, and the mummy herself has converted the top levels into a high-security tomb.

Getting access to RS-G is easy; the meret can just walk right into the lobby from the street. Gaining access to the mistress of the house, though, is more difficult. Unless the meret is still high enough in Sekhem to not pass for human, it members will have to convince the cult of their credentials. Even then, there's one major complication—Teshra-Gemet passed into Duat two years ago and has not yet returned. If the meret wants to speak with her, it'll have to arrange for her to rise.

The night security guards aren't clued in on the existence of the Arisen, but they know enough to call for a duty manager should anyone speaking certain key words turn up. Those words include Teshra-Gemet's name, "Irem," "Sekhem," and so on. The cultists take shifts, ensuring that there's always at least one member who knows the score on duty at any time. Right now, that's Jay de Sainte Croix, a hereditary servant of the Red Sparrow.

To get Teshra-Gemet called back to life, the meret must persuade Jay to perform the rite, or force their way up to the tomb and do it themselves. If they choose the second option, the tomb has Peril ••••. Choosing the first is detailed below.

Description

(meeting Jay)

"Thank you Miguel. That will be all".

The guard glances in the direction of the new voice, nods, and backs off. The newcomer is a woman of Portuguese descent, dressed in an elegant grey skirt-suit. She smiles, her poise not quite covering her nervousness, and half-bows to you.

"Holy Ones. Welcome. Please, follow me, and I will do my best to assist you."

(start of the rite)

The tomb chamber is lined with lacquered wood and floored with dark marble. The walls slope inward, putting you in mind of the inside of a pyramid. Lighting is provided by upward-facing spotlights embedded in the floor, and the only furniture is a raised dais of the same marbled stone.

Teshra-Gemet lies on the slab, covered from head to toe by a golden silk cloth. As you watch, Jay touches a hidden control on the wall to open a recess and retrieves a heavy, gold amulet.

The rite begins.

(Teshra-Gemet returns)

The shape on the dais moves, then sits up. The cloth slides away from Teshra-Gemet's form, revealing brown skin stretched tight over a skeleton. She gets to her feet, ignoring you, while Jay opens more compartments in the walls, retrieving heavy gold and lapis jewelry that she puts on her mistress.

Once adorned with bracelets, rings, and her amulet, Teshra-Gemet turns to you. Her voice cracks with years of not being used, but she speaks in the language of lost Irem.

"Why have I been Returned?"

Storyteller Goals

Your goal here is to show the players how the other side of Rio's population live, by illustrating the difference between O Pardal Vermeilho's setup and their own. She spends her downtime in a clean, guarded chamber in a tower, not curled up beneath a hovel. Lay on the juxtaposition.

Once Teshra-Gemet is arisen, you can play the conversation to the needs of your chronicle, making her antagonistic or sympathetic depending on how you intend to use her in future stories. The Red Sparrow is a Falcon-Headed Alchemist; she's biased toward not deeply analyzing or feeling guilty about her actions on both a decree and a guild level, and full to the brim with Sekhem immediately after arising, she won't hide her involvement. Kasmut asked her to help him contact criminal mercenaries, in exchange for his territory when he fled the city. She saw it as a good deal under the principles of her guild and agreed. If the meret wants to punish him for wronging it, that's its problem. She *can* help, but the players' mummies will have to trade her for it; and what do they have to give?

If this is the third investigation scene, she'll tell them that she advised Kasmut on how to charter a cargo plane. She suggests they search the airfield nearest to his tomb.

If, however, they've harmed her cultists, she'll refuse to help them at all. Depending on how they play it, and bearing in mind the impulsive nature of her decree, she might even attack them where they stand or call in guards.

Character Goals

To learn about how Kasmut was put in contact with the gang and to meet an Arisen who is potentially a major recurring Storyteller character for a Rio-set chronicle. Raising Teshra-Gemet has the advantage of showing the characters what a calling rite looks like from the outside, making it an important scene for a first story.

Actions

Raising Teshra-Gemet

Persuading—or possibly intimidating—Jay into performing the Call.

Dice Pool: Presence + Intimidate or Persuasion vs. 4.

Action: Instant

Hindrances: Being antagonistic or threatening (–2), openly stating hostile intent toward Teshra-Gemet (–5)

Help: Being obviously Arisen (+1), swearing not to harm Teshra-Gemet (+1), serving the same Judge (+3), being a member of the Mesen-Nebu (+2)

Dramatic Failure: Jay asks them to leave, and triggers a silent alarm that calls for armed backup from the cult's hirelings to enforce her request.

Failure: Jay is not convinced she should perform the rite of calling.

Success: Jay performs the rite as described above.

Exceptional Success: Jay performs the rite as described above, and Teshra-Gemet arises with the urge to deal peacefully with the meret.

Consequences

At the end of the scene, the characters should either know where Kasmut is going or have had severe doubts cast on his loyalty that deserve to be followed up on closer to his tomb. If they did not raise Teshra-Gemet and haven't any other means of following him to the airport, you'll have to introduce the thread by another means—perhaps Jay won't summon her mistress, but does look up Kasmut in the corporation-cult's records and find details of the airfield there.

Fourteen Years Ago

Mental •• Physical ••• Social •

Overview

Having learned either that the gang who attacked Dona Marta was based out of a warehouse near Rio das Pedras, or that Kasmut had hired that warehouse, or both, the meret breaks in to look around. The place is deserted, but they have a nagging sense of having been there before, and soon, their exploration triggers the return of memories from a previous arising.

The warehouse is easy enough to break into: if a simple Dexterity + Larceny roll isn't able to get past the padlocked chain on the doors, then the members of the meret should still be at a high enough Sekhem rating to rip the chain in two. Inside, the warehouse is dark and empty.

Players of characters looking around may instigate an extended Wits + Investigation action, with each roll representing five minutes of effort. Five successes finds evidence—discarded packaging and chalk residue—that indicates the gang was cutting and storing cocaine here until recently.

That evidence, however, is only the prelude to the main part of this scene. While looking around, the characters are struck by a sense of déjà vu. They've been in this warehouse before…

The scene proper takes the form of a flashback to 14 years ago. The meret (including Kasmut) had tracked an Amkhat to this location, which at the time was a working storage facility for goods awaiting customs inspection. The Amkhat had been hunting a vestige being imported on behalf of a wealthy businessman, and it had reached the warehouse with just enough energy remaining to feed. As the flashback begins, the meret has followed the Amkhat in and found the vestige; a carved wooden idol from Polynesia that radiates a feeling of calm. If the Amkhat consumes the Sekhem within the vestige, it will be able to escape.

For the purposes of the flashback, the characters are at Sekhem 4, as this all took place toward the end of a Descent.

The meret, therefore, has to find and kill the Amkhat while keeping it from breaking the vessel (if it does, it can automatically absorb the Sekhem inside it and gain enough power to flee). The meret possesses one surefire way to deny the creature its prize. however; one of the meret's number can drain the vestige, instead. If anyone does so, that mummy regains a Pillar point of the player's choosing.

The flashback can end in several ways;

- The characters kill the Amkhat.
- The Amkhat breaks the vessel. Everyone witnesses the monster absorb the Sekhem and may continue to attempt to kill it while it tries to escape.
- One of the Arisen cannibalizes the vessel. The Amkhat will switch to trying to grapple and absorb Pillars from one of them, until fought off.

Either way, the last thing the characters remember of the flashback is Kasmut lingering near the scene of the battle, looking like he's realized something profound but can't quite process it, yet.

Description

(arriving)

The area outside the warehouse is deserted, an expanse of bare asphalt surrounded by a high, razor-topped fence. The car barrier is down, but the security hut isn't occupied, and the floodlights that once lit the place are either turned off or broken.

(start of flashback)

You have been here before. The shape of the place, the feel of the walls, was once obscured by crates and storage pallets. The thin smells of men and drugs were once the thick musk of dust and wood.

You were searching for something. A creature born of wasted Sekhem, with a raging hunger for vessels. A misbegotten mistake with the head of a dog and the body of a lean, thin cat. An Amkhat, a creature of shadow that hungers for life force.

Fourteen years ago, you tracked it here.

Storyteller Goals

Your goal here is to run the cat and mouse hunt for the Amkhat through a warehouse stocked with antiquities, suggesting (via Kasmut) that it's too dangerous and that one of them should just risk their Judge's anger by removing the vestige entirely.

The lesser Amkhat is Maasu Sabxent—a jackal-headed lion the size of a large dog that runs, catlike, along the ceiling supports and darts in and out of packing crates while evading the meret. (For full Amkhat rules, see Chapter Five.)



Although the story works if the Amkhat was killed or if Kasmut absorbed the vestige, it's much more satisfying if a player does it instead, preferably while Kasmut watches. Don't push too hard to have the flashback go that way, however; it's not a narration, and the players still get to decide what their characters do while they're playing them.

Character Goals

The characters have two goals here, though the players may only be aware of one of them. The first is to remember their earlier exploits, wondering at the coincidence of the gang using the same warehouse and, perhaps, speculating that the gang may be trying to steal vessels to feed an Amkhat (it isn't).

The other goal is to see the genesis of Kasmut's escape plan, without realizing it. This is when he was confronted with the idea of consuming vessels for power.

Actions

Hunting the Amkhat

A dangerous game of cat and mouse, trying to keep a monster that can hide away from a Sekhem-filled vessel… in a warehouse filled to the brim with antiquities.

Dice Pool: A player (pick one, with the others and Kasmut providing teamwork bonuses) rolls Wits + Investigation vs. the Amkhat's Dexterity + Stealth

Action: Extended and contested, with each roll representing two minutes of the Amkhat attempting to find a route to the vestige while the Arisen try to find it. If the players achieve 10 successes, the Amkhat runs out of Sekhem and returns to Twilight. If the Amkhat achieves 10 successes, it makes it to the vestige and pounces, extending its tangibility before fleeing for the nearest ceiling-hugging window it can break to escape.

Hindrances: For the player, the Amkhat breaks the fuse box of the warehouse, plunging it into darkness (–3); for the Amkhat, the Arisen put the vestige in a container, preventing easy access (–4)

Help: For the player, the Arisen clear the area around the vestige, forcing the Amkhat to make the final jump in the open (+2); for the Amkhat, it takes advantage of the cover (+1 to +3) or manages cover of darkness (+3)

Dramatic Failure: For the player, a dramatic failure means the Amkhat has broken the vestige and is now attempting to flee. For the Amkhat, a dramatic failure means the monster has run out of Sekhem and has faded into Twilight.

Failure: For the player, the Arisen can't see the damned thing anywhere. For the Amkhat, it probes at the Arisen's defenses, but shies away from making a break for the vestige.

Success: The Amkhat stalks closer to the vestige. The Arisen spot it moving in the shadows, or running quickly across a railing.

Exceptional Success: The players catch the Amkhat off guard, entering combat. If the Amkhat survives long enough to flee, it can attempt to hide again in order to continue the extended action through a successful Dexterity + Stealth roll, contested by Wits + Composure.

Consequences

After the flashback, the characters can look around some more. If this was the first or second investigation scene, their choices are now narrower but still clear. If they haven't yet been to see Teshra-Gemet, they should have still been told Kasmut went to her by his cultist in "The Scene of the Crime." If they have, they've now been jogged by the flashback into moving on to his tomb.

If this was the third investigation scene, Kasmut should be looking pretty guilty to them. As they leave, a car containing five surviving members of the drug cartel drives up to the warehouse. The gang soldiers have come back here to wait for their friends in defiance of Kasmut's orders following the rout at the favela. If confronted, they surrender and tell the characters they were meant to deliver the object to a nearby airfield. If not, they eventually tire of waiting and drive off to the airfield to make their rendezvous, giving the Arisen chance to follow them.

As the Sun Rises

Mental • Physical • Social •

Overview

Having discovered Kasmut's treachery, the meret has tracked him down through its investigations to a cargo airstrip on the outskirts of Jacarepaguá Airport. Kasmut is waiting by his chartered plane for the gang he hired to deliver the meret's vessels, but by now, his cronies are long overdue, and he's on edge. The characters arriving will make him consider a run for it, but he knows he can't win in a many-against-one fight, especially as he is further along the Descent than them. So he'll try to get them talking and retreat to the plane. Maybe even try to persuade them to let him go, depending on how outraged they are.

If any of the meret's vessels *were* successfully stolen, he's already put them on the plane and will be even swifter in offering to accept exile, hoping that they won't detect their property onboard until he's underway.

Description

(finding Kasmut)

The commercial terminals are in the distance, across the expanse of runways and taxi lanes, but here there's little more than dark hangers, the sound of the wind, and the hum of the small planes' engines.

Kasmut paces in the open mouth of a hanger, checking his watch nervously. As you approach, he snaps his head up to stare right at you. He seems dismayed, and utters a single word:

"Ah."

Storyteller Goals

Having brought the players to this point, your goal as Storyteller is to help them resolve the story however they see fit. Kasmut doesn't want to die —if the meret destroyed his personal relics and khat, there's no one left to help him resurrect into a new body, and he might be trapped in Duat for a long time—and he will plead and bargain for his continued existence. If combat results, he'll fight like a cornered animal, spending Pillars and using vessels against them long enough to get onto the plane and escape.

Character Goals

This scene is about tying up the investigation for the characters and dealing with any loose ends along with Kasmut. If any gang members escaped the attack on the favelas, they'll be here, for example. In the long term, Kasmut might reveal under interrogation where he was trying to flee *to*—a mummy in Canada who claims to have a means of staving off the Descent. Such is heresy, of course, but it might just plant the notion in their minds…

Consequences

Kasmut is dealt with, punished according to the meret's sense of justice, and the danger is passed. The characters have fulfilled their mission and now have what remains of their Descents to rebuild their cults and salvage what they can from this strange, new life cycle.

Epilogue

Ankh-Nephris stood with his hands pressed against the glass of his office window on the 17th floor of the Meriwether-Holst Building. At this height, the world below was reduced to a swirling murk that made him feel even more removed from what had already been a long and confusing Descent.

Long, yes, but soon concluded, he thought.

Soon enough, Nujalik would walk through the double doors of his opulent chamber and the grasp of his Judge's command would slip from him at last. And for a brief moment before death, he would know respite the likes of which he had not known for nearly a century. Arisen who do not achieve their purpose feel death like a weight upon their very existence. It sends some of them roaring from their tombs in a rage. For those who accomplish their Judge-forged mandates, death is like falling into a soothing nap, only to be woken at some indeterminable time later, to succeed once again. In all the millennia of his arising, Ankh-Nephris never once failed to achieve the will of his Judge, and this time would be no different.

He tapped the glass, testing its thickness and durability. He was a craftsman before the Rite claimed him, a master of his art, able to create beautiful things in that city that vanished so many ages ago. It was a wonder, really, that the humans of this modern age were of the same ilk as those loyal and fearful masses that once mobbed at Pharaoh's heel. Now they were without humility or direction, each thinking its own flickering moment upon the face of time is significant and that each romance and success holds meaning beyond their immediate experience. From Ankh-Nephris's perspective, this was an impossible folly. Too many years spent adrift between years and too great an understanding of what he served and what, he imagined, *those* beings might serve.

This time, as ever before, his intentions were undistracted. Sefet Qam's traitor priestess, Nujalik, and the means to Heraf-Het's end were one and the same. She loved Ankh-Nephris more than her selfish, angry heart could express; or at least a base approximation of love—a need to be essential, significant. And she *was* essential, Ankh-Nephris knew.

She was essential to the fruition of *this* plan, in *this* time, and in *this* place. Her importance, though fleeting, must be acknowledged and honored. To do otherwise would show a great disrespect to both the improbability of her success and the greater plan of the One Whose Face Is Behind It; an intention that made this Nujalik more significant, if even for a flashing second, than she could have ever dreamed.

The mummy crossed the room to a large stele mounted upon a raw brick wall and lit by spotlight from both above and below. This four-foot-high, tombstone-shaped slab of basalt had been carved and painted well after the fall of Irem, during one of the New Kingdom dynasties, when there were no more sorcerer-priests and the Rite of Return's proper performance had been long lost to time. This one had been carved to preserve the memories of his past, to be of use in the present. And despite the guidance of the scholars within his cult and the dissonant revelations the stone jarred within him, Ankh-Nephris had not apprehended its pure wisdom until that very moment.

"Sacrifices must be made. Secrets must be kept."

He nodded at his own reflection in the window glass.

"The lady Nujalik has arrived, sir." The rushed, nasal voice came from a face lit by the pale greens of a security monitor. "Do we let her up now?"

"Wait," whispered the mummy from somewhere behind the man. Ankh-Nephris was transfixed by the small blurry image of the Inuit priestess on the screen, his eyes narrowing as if mesmerized by the dance of something underwater. How could he blame her for what she had done? For betraying his enemy?

For offering him the Seven-Times-Hallowed Mask on a platter of gold?

"Sacrifices must be made."

So they must.

† † †

His massive office was cast in golden orange by the setting sun when the guard escorted Nujalik inside. The mummy reclined on a chaise with his head turned over the back of it, staring off at the receding solar sphere. "Mine is the heart of carnelian, as red as murder on the day of Sutek's feast..." he mouthed in the low utterance of a prayer meant only for the gods. He turned and rose to face her.

There she stood, the very likeness of the dawn. Her skin as brown as it was in those lost days, her gaze as hard as it ever was. Alas, the zeal of her service and a slight physical resemblance were the entirety of the comparison. His love was a woman enflamed by spiritual fervor, who had become something altogether elemental, beyond even the reach of his love. Nujalik was a predator prowling the perimeter, on the hunt for her prey.

A guard shuffled in his suit behind her, the sweat on his brow a testimony to the weight of the carved wooden chest that he struggled to hold aloft. His master's bright blue eyes flashed, and the man huffed the box onto a Bauhaus table, the chrome tubes chiming as the weight settled. The man started to struggle with the chest's clasp but was stilled by Ankh-Nephris's raised hand. The look on his master's face was the closest to happiness the man had ever seen. He withdrew to the edge of the room.

Nujalik stepped closer as Ankh-Nephris bent to examine the carving on the chest's lid. "Your people's?" he mumbled. She nodded, though he couldn't have seen her do so.

As if expecting a great flash of biblical light, all eyes present widened. But the mask simply sat in the packing straw, inert... dull, even, to the naked eye. To the initiated, however, its every fiber sung with precious life force, a battery of mystical energy crafted by the hands of master sorcerers and imbued with powerful forces that would now serve Heraf-Het, Whose Face Is Behind It. Ankh-Nephris exhaled slowly as he took the sacred mask into his hands.

It was then that the dead man looked upward and wept. He wept for his toil and for all that had to be done in order for his purpose to find fulfillment at this exact moment. Praise be unto Heraf-Het in His ageless wisdom!

As reverie gave way to reality, the mummy's gaze fell to Nujalik. Like himself, she'd been fully committed to this moment... and was now expecting her reward. *Although her devotion to the ideologies and ceremonies of my cult was never in question, her petty, cruel, and power-seeking nature could never be trusted*, he decided. The mummy stared at his reflection in the golden face, thinking. What was the girl getting out of this that she would so readily betray her own cult? His own motivations were absolute. The will of Heraf-Het *would* come to pass, and Ankh-Nephris was his Judge's instrument in the living world. Nujalik could not know these things. She would never serve in the way he served.

"Thank you, Nujalik." He inhaled evenly. "You cannot understand the importance of what has come to pass by your deeds. A great transgression has been healed with the recovery of the mask. Although there will be those who will seek it out and cause trouble for those who serve me, we stand triumphant in this greatest of moments, at this fated culmination. Another circle has been sealed with flame, and I will pass into Duat with the marks of my Judge clutched to my chest. I will wear the vestments of the life I lived so many ages ago in that Nameless City, as I wear the clothing of this cycle beneath them." Ankh-Nephris brushed his hair aside with his hand and straightened his suit jacket. "This has all come to pass, just as it had to... and you, priestess, are to thank."

Nujalik was taken aback by the directness and intensity of the mummy's gratitude. It had always been assumed that he viewed her as a piece in his game of eons, and perhaps as a reminder of some fleeting memory that once pleased him. That was all she could ever be to him. Or was it?

"In this house, there are many hands and many minds at work. They have toiled for generations to insure that, when my coming is warranted, I am summoned in my master's name and go forth to do His will. Many are descendents of great lines that have aided me through many Descents, and some have been drawn into my service more recently... devotees such as yourself."

As Ankh-Nephris spoke, Nujalik's eyes cast about the room. The mummy's collection of antiquities and oddities was unlike anything else on Earth. To the traitor priestess, the hall was a trove of riches. To the Arisen, it was nothing but a makeshift attempt at recollection and memories lost to the tides of Duat. She looked at the statues, tapestries, and painted urns with avarice in her eyes. Ankh-Nephris looked at Nujalik with passing appreciation and a newly resonant contempt.

"Even to my most devout vassals, I give little. For what is greater thanks than to know that one has served the will of his Judge? What gratitude compares to that most perfect knowledge?"

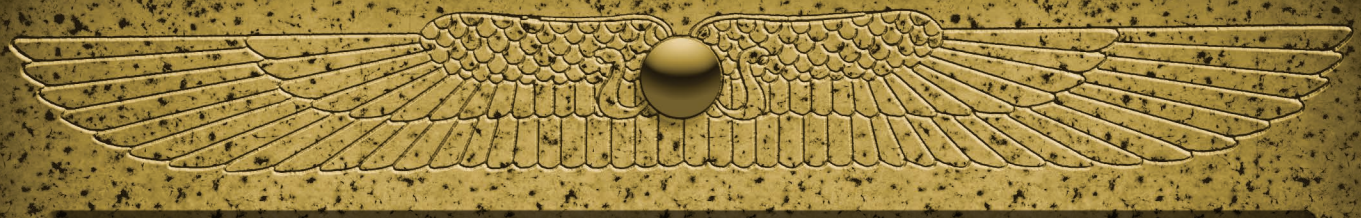
A concerned look dawned across Nujalik's face. For all his talk of the great moment, Ankh-Nephris suddenly seemed more a monster to her now than ever. She could not help but revere the ancient creature, but also could not wait for him to just... depart. He could do nothing but terrify. The mummy put his hand upon her shoulder and squeezed, gently. She turned to see him walking toward the window.

"For what you have done, girl... you will join a precious few by my side. You will learn the secret of my state and will be liberated from the darkness of aeons invisible to so brief of life, as I was."

Ankh-Nephris walked to the doorway leading to the elevator, and the guard gestured for Nujalik to follow. He twisted a brass key in the sub-panel and the trio took the elevator down 19 floors into the building's subbasement. When the doors opened, they were greeted by four men in suits wearing the threaded emblem of Ankh-Nephris's Judge: a lunar sphere wreathed with black falcon wings. These men escorted her down a hallway that gave way to a set of carved doors easily 12 feet high and coated from top to bottom with gold and inset tiles of lapis and jet. The doors split a perfectly symmetrical representation of Heraf-Het cleanly in half, his vast featureless face a mirror for the soul of the candidate who aims to enter the initiatory chamber. Nujalik gaped in awe at the image until the opening of the doors tore her momentary trance in two.

The chamber was a great square, the corners consecrated to the four elements and great ingots of silver imbedded in the floor in accordance with ancient star patterns. At the center loomed a great sarcophagus lifted at an angle to face the entryway. Formed of smooth black stone, it was cut with veins of paleness carved into an alien arabesque of interlocking discs etched with the oldest script to ensure that the least number would know the names written there. Surrounding the dais sat eight additional sarcophagi, simpler but no less fine in their craftsmanship. A few were unlidded, but the men in suits were busily engaged in the preparation of the sarcophagus at the center of the chamber.

Ankh-Nephris could see that the priestess of his enemy was moved by the grandeur of his burial vault. He had always seen the room as a gateway rather than a place in its own right—a perspective impossible for any but the Arisen to understand. From this chamber he would enter the doorway within that black stone coffin and set sail upon the great sea of stars over which his most satisfied Judge stood sovereign.



"It is time, good priestess."

Two of Ankh-Nephris's cultists moved quickly to seal the only exit from the vault. Nujalik knew immediately something was wrong. She should have had nothing to fear, as she had done only that which would please her new master. Hadn't she? Was there some ritual formality to which she had not adhered and thus inadvertently offended yet another of their countless unseen gods?

"Nujalik." The sonorous voice of Ankh-Nephris echoed like an iron chime in the funerary vault. The priestess trembled. The five drones swarmed in on her. Instinctively galled at their temerity, Nujalik's contempt turned to rage as she thrashed about within the hold of her captors—a short-lived zeal, snuffed out when the baleful gaze of Ankh-Nephris fell back upon her.

"*Be still*," came the command from the mummy's lips, a syrupy vibration of syllables that sank unquestioned into the minds of all those present. The whole room seemed to settle into its foundations.

"You have served my purpose and the will of my most holy and revered Judge, called Heraf-Het," the mummy began. "In this, you are to be rewarded in the fashion that is most pleasing to the One Whose Face Is Behind It."

In addition to the central sarcophagus, five of those surrounding it were then unsealed.

"The Seven-Times-Hallowed Mask now adorns the throne of my Judge, and it is your name that will be written eternally within its record and legend. You will live forever through this deed alone, Nujalik."

The woman's eyes dilated.

"You are hereby honored by the rites of old to drift with your lord upon the tides of the afterlife. While I shall return from the cycle of stars and years to further heed the Judges' will, you shall sleep undisturbed until you fade into the memory of the stars alone."

Nujalik's survival instinct kicked into overdrive. Adrenaline pulsing through every cell, she shook off the priests and bolted for the vault door, senselessly ripping at it with her bare hands. With a shriek, she turned to face Ankh-Nephris and his men. It occurred to her then that their faces registered the type of calm that only men who have resigned themselves to the most grotesque of inhumanities can experience. The mummy at the center of it all, however, was not now—nor ever again—a man as she understood one.

"Do not fight, girl," it said. "For you to fight this is as obscene a denial of the truth as this body of mine continuing another hour upon this Earth. We must accept our fates, priestess. We must."



The woman's face reddened as three of the men secured her. A linen sack closed around her neck, covering her head, six rough hands hoisting her into the air. She bucked her body against them, but it was no use. She came down hard, her elbow banging painfully against something stony and smooth. *A sarcophagus*, she thought.

Nujalik screamed and screamed, and then she screamed some more. Within moments, the shrill begging of her shredded voice caused the metal mask being fitted over her head to hum from the sheer vibration of her panic. The grating noise was cut short when her new master's cultists slid the lid of her burial vault into place.

Looking down at the concrete coffin in which the woman had been interred, Ankh-Nephris turned now to the matter of his own death. With the help of his servants, he made his way into the strange, sigil-laden capsule within which he would soon set sail upon those vast expanses that only the dead can know.

Fading now, he is handed the stylized crook and set of burnished silver scales. They are a blur in his crossed hands as he reclines against the cool floor of his sarcophagus. With the light dying all around him, with the name of Heraf-Het upon his life's last breath, Ankh-Nephris descends once more into the lost dreams of Irem.

Scene: Blood at Midnight

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●●
SOCIAL ●

Hindrances

The Arisen have been injured during the fighting, and at least one attacker saw it and got away (–1)

One of the Arisen has actually been killed (–3)

One cult's contribution to the defending forces is wiped out entirely (–3)

Help

The characters successfully use stealth to get the drop on a group of invaders (+2),

Someone cuts the power off (+2)

An attacker has died in a single combat turn,

Another has escaped to tell the tale (+2)

STs	Have an action-packed "cold open"
PCs	Defend the *favela*

Scene: Accusations

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●
SOCIAL ●●●

Hindrances

A mummy from a rival cult attempts to pitch in (reverse usual teamwork bonuses)

The cult had members injured (–1) or killed (–3) during the battle

Only one cult member survives (–5)

Help

The cult only took superficial injuries (+1) or enjoyed great success in the battle (+3)

The mummy succeeded at coordinating the rival cults during the battle and capitalized on that success (+4)

STs	Outline the three possible lines of enquiry, establish cult NPCs
PCs	Learn recent events, make the cults work together

Scene: Scene of the Crime

MENTAL ●●●
PHYSICAL ●
SOCIAL ●

Hindrances

The meret has attracted the attention of the locals (–2)

Help

The mummy uses physical traps in her own tomb (+1)

STs	Give the characters a chance to gather information and talk to Adriana
PCs	Gather information; learn Kasmut has been active for weeks

Scene: Queen of Ipanema

MENTAL ●
PHYSICAL ●
SOCIAL ●●

Hindrances

Being antagonistic or threatening (–2)

Openly stating hostile intent toward Teshra-Gemet (–5)

Help

Being obviously Arisen (+1)

Swearing not to harm Teshra-Gemet (+1)

Serving the same Judge (+3)

Being a member of the Mesen-Nebu (+2)

STs	Introduce Teshra-Gemet; give the characters a chance to gather information
PCs	Gather information, witness a calling rite, meet Teshra-Gemet

SCENE: FOURTEEN YEARS AGO

MENTAL ●●
PHYSICAL ●●●
SOCIAL ●

HINDRANCES

For the player, the Amkhat breaks the fuse box of the warehouse, plunging it into darkness (–3)

For the Amkhat, the Arisen put the vestige in a container, preventing easy access (–4)

HELP

For the player, the Arisen clear the area around the vestige, forcing the Amkhat to make the final jump in the open (+2)

For the Amkhat, it takes advantage of the cover (+1 to +3) or manages cover of darkness (+3)

STs	Give the characters a flashback
PCs	Catch the Amkhat (past); gather information (present)

SCENE: AS THE SUN RISES

MENTAL ●
PHYSICAL ●
SOCIAL ●

HINDRANCES

For the player, the Amkhat breaks the fuse box of the warehouse, plunging it into darkness (–3)

For the Amkhat, the Arisen put the vestige in a container, preventing easy access (–4)

HELP

For the player, the Arisen clear the area around the vestige, forcing the Amkhat to make the final jump in the open (+2)

For the Amkhat, it takes advantage of the cover (+1 to +3) or manages cover of darkness (+3)

STs	Bring the story to a conclusion
PCs	Decide Kasmut's punishment

SCENE:

MENTAL
PHYSICAL
SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

HELP

STs

PCs

SCENE:

MENTAL
PHYSICAL
SOCIAL

HINDRANCES

HELP

STs

PCs

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Mummy the Curse

NAME: _____ CONCEPT: _____ DECREE: _____
PLAYER: _____ VIRTUE: _____ GUILD: _____
CHRONICLE: _____ VICE: _____ JUDGE: _____

ATTRIBUTES

POWER	☐ INTELLIGENCE ●○○○○	☐ STRENGTH ●○○○○	☐ PRESENCE ●○○○○
FINESSE	☐ WITS ●○○○○	☐ DEXTERITY ●○○○○	☐ MANIPULATION ●○○○○
RESISTANCE	☐ RESOLVE ●○○○○	☐ STAMINA ●○○○○	☐ COMPOSURE ●○○○○

SKILLS

MENTAL
(-3 UNSKILLED)

- ☐ ACADEMICS _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ COMPUTER _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ CRAFTS _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ INVESTIGATION _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ MEDICINE _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ OCCULT _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ POLITICS _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ SCIENCE _____ ○○○○○

PHYSICAL
(-1 UNSKILLED)

- ☐ ATHLETICS _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ BRAWL _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ DRIVE _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ FIREARMS _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ LARCENY _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ STEALTH _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ SURVIVAL _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ WEAPONRY _____ ○○○○○

SOCIAL
(-1 UNSKILLED)

- ☐ ANIMAL KEN _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ EMPATHY _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ EXPRESSION _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ INTIMIDATION _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ PERSUASION _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ SOCIALIZE _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ STREETWISE _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ SUBTERFUGE _____ ○○○○○

OTHER TRAITS

MERITS

- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○
- ☐ _____ ○○○○○

FLAWS

_____

_____

PILLARS

AB _____ ○○○○○ □□□□□
BA _____ ○○○○○ □□□□□
KA _____ ○○○○○ □□□□□
REN _____ ○○○○○ □□□□□
SHEUT _____ ○○○○○ □□□□□

AFFINITIES

_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:

HEALTH

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

WILLPOWER

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

SEKHEM

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

MEMORY

10 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
9 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
8 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
7 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
6 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
5 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
4 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ ○
3 _____ ○
2 _____ ○
1 _____ ○

SIZE _____
SPEED _____
INITIATIVE MOD _____
DEFENSE _____
ARMOR _____

UTTERANCES

_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:
_____ PAGE:

Attributes 5/4/3 • Skills 11/7/4 (3 Specialties) • Judge (record Affinity) • Guild (record Affinity) • Pillars 9 dots • Health = Sta + Size • Willpower = Resolve + Composure • Defense = lowest of Dex or Wits • Memory = 3 Initiative Mod = Dex + Composure • Speed = Str + Dex + 5

EXPERIENCE _____

When you trespass,
the reason you feel
you are being watched
is because you are.

THE FEAR IS REAL.

When you steal,
the dread that comes over you
is neither guilt nor paranoia,
but the cold certitude of fate.

THE CURSE IS REAL.

When you die,
know that your life was but a flash
upon the face of the deep
in the mind of your judge.

WE ARE REAL.
AND WE ARE ARISEN.

— Ankh-Nephris, the Hand of Wisdom

