

L6

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Mini-dungeon Module L6

Sands of Saqua-Ra

by Matthew E Kline

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 6-8



Dune striders set out from the walled city of Jewel each day, carrying sages and sightseers across the desert out into the sprawling ruins of Saqua-Ra. On this day, three expeditions set out but only two came back...

Sands of Saqua-Ra is part of a series of mini-dungeons designed to drop into existing adventures or campaigns. Use them as side quests or a way of getting in a quick adventure when you're short on time.



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Writing, design, layout: Matthew E Kline
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Sands of Saqua-Ra

Dune striders set out from the walled city of Jewel each day, carrying sages and sightseers across the desert out into the sprawling ruins of Saqua-Ra. On this day, three expeditions set out but only two came back. There were reports of a sandstorm, larger than any that have been seen for quite some time. Possibly the storm delayed the group, or maybe there's something more sinister's at work...

About This Product

Although it can be scaled by the Gamemaster for groups of other sizes, Sands of Saqua-Ra is designed for 4-6 adventurers of level 6-8. This product is part of a line of mini-dungeons designed as quick, drop-in adventures. They're ideal for use as short side quests, or for gaming sessions where you're pressed for time. You could even string them all together as a mini dungeon campaign.

Gamemasters should feel free to adjust this adventure to suit their group's style of game-play or level of difficulty.

It's recommended that the Gamemaster read through this product at least twice in order to familiarize themselves with the adventure prior to playing. They should also take note of any new monsters or magic listed at the end of the document.

This product requires the use of the *Swords & Wizardry* rules. More information can be found online at www.swordsandwizadry.com

On the pages that follow you'll find boxes like the one surrounding this text. These boxes hold suggested descriptions of the rooms that can be read out loud to the players.

After most of the room descriptions you'll find one or more of the following symbols:



This symbol indicates that there's a monster or monsters in the room.



This symbol indicates there's a treasure or treasures in the room.



This symbol indicates that there's a dangerous obstacle in the room.

A description of the monsters, treasures, or obstacles encountered follows after each symbol.

About Dungeons of Dazegoneby

I can remember a time in my distant past when I could head to the local mall walk into one of the two bookstores they had at the time, plunk down around five dollars, and walk out with a brand new Dungeons & Dragons module. Our *Dungeons of Dazegoneby* line is a tribute to old school gaming, paying homage to a time filled with graph paper maps, wandering monster tables, hand-drawn character sheets, and lazy afternoons filled with adventure and wonder. We hope you enjoy playing these products as much as we enjoyed making them.

You can find more of our RPG products on RPGNow. Please feel free to visit us at www.creationsedggames.com or like us on Facebook. Thank you for your support!

Gamemaster's Eyes Only:

The ruins of Saqua-Ra lay five miles out of Jewel, half-buried beneath the drifting dunes of the Sandsea desert.

A once bustling hub of commerce, Saqua-Ra became a "ghost town" almost overnight after the death of its Queen Ayaneth, nearly a century ago. The queen believed herself an earthly incarnation of a goddess of life and beauty. She ordered that her tomb be built over the main well and that all other wells be filled in. Upon her death her tomb would be sealed, thus ensuring that her city died with her. A group of fanatics known as the Cult of Ayaneth saw to her requests, even going as far as to entomb themselves with their beloved queen. The cult also put in place a trap that would curse anyone seeking access to the well after Ayaneth's death.

Recently a group of visitors to Saqua-Ra sought shelter among the ruins from a sudden and terrible sandstorm. During a lull in the storm they discovered that the shifting sands had revealed the entrance to an unknown tomb. The group believed that this entrance could lead to the interior of the Saqua-Ra pyramid, a half-buried structure rumored to contain the Tomb of Ayaneth, whose access had eluded seekers up until this point. The group entered the tomb, seeking better shelter from the storm, with the prospect of making a historic discovery, possibility finding some treasure along the way.

Unfortunately the group only succeeded in triggering a curse, turning them to sand and reanimating the long dead queen. Someone needs to journey out to the ruins, lift the curse, rescue the tour group, and lay Queen Ayaneth to rest once more...

Set Up

Maybe the party arrived at the walled city of Jewel following a rumor of treasure to

be found out among the ruins in the Sandsea, or maybe they just finished escorting a merchant to its gates. However they arrive, it isn't long before they attract the attention of Dazir Salarr.

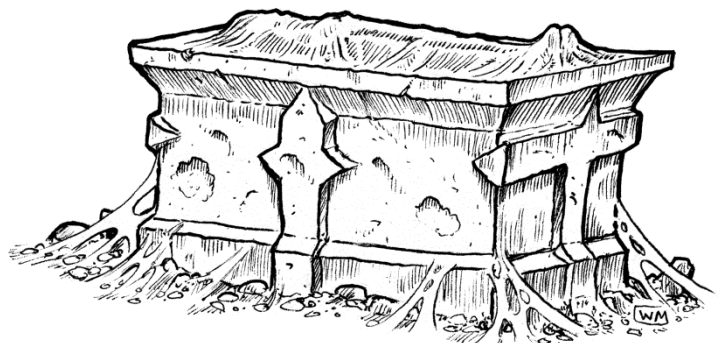
Dazir approaches them and introduces himself, explaining how he runs Salarr's Striders; sending tour groups out to the ruins of Saqua-Ra. He's concerned that one of his striders didn't return. He's also concerned about the tour group (in just that order.) He explains that there were reports of a huge sandstorm (perhaps the players even experienced a little of it themselves on the way into the city, or saw the sand plumes out in the desert.) He believes that the group was just delayed, but there could be other factors at work here; maybe they're stuck, maybe they were attacked by bandits, or worse.

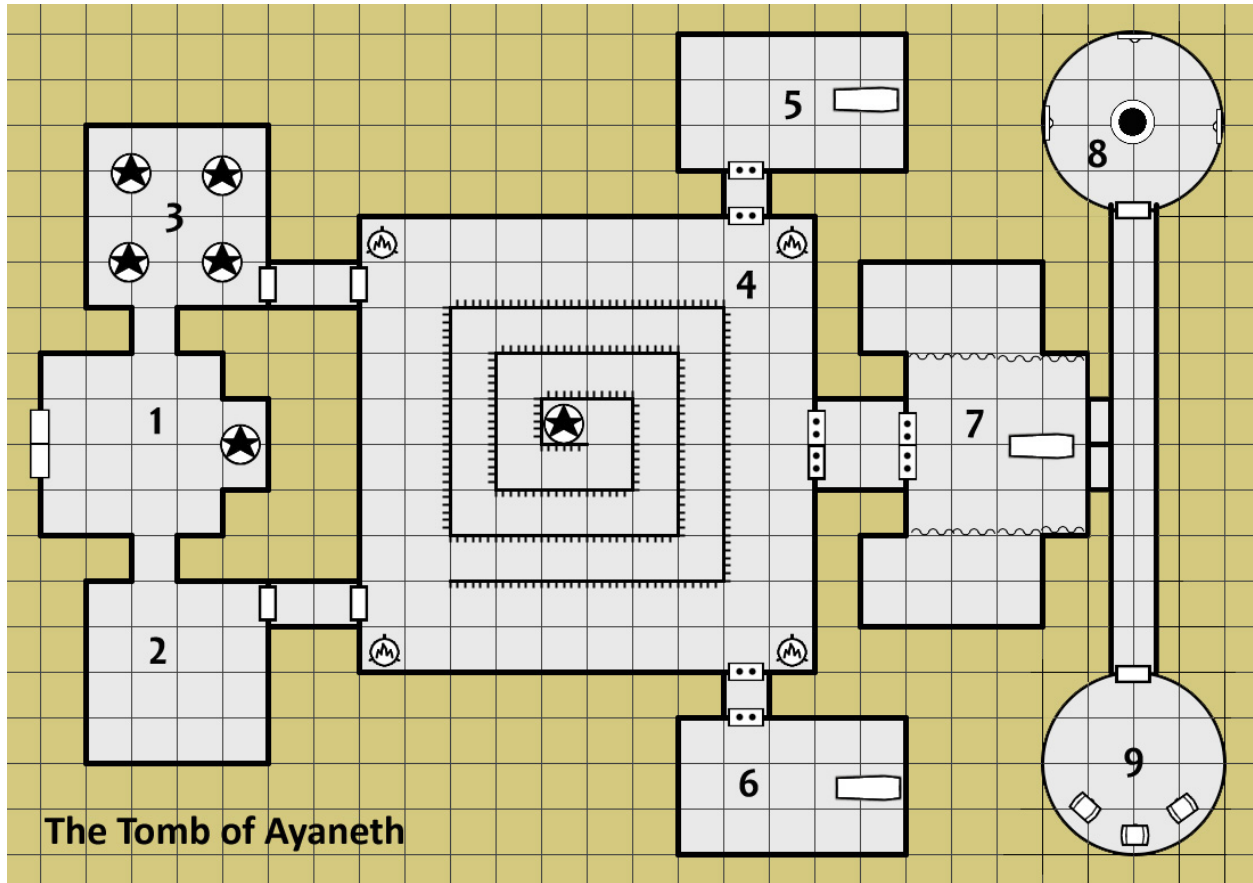
He wants to send another strider out however the driver is reluctant to go without the proper support and a few stiff drinks. Dazir is willing to pay the group 2,000gp to accompany the driver out to the ruins, and bring back the errant strider, along with the missing tour group of course...

A Note to the Gamemaster

This set up is only a suggestion. Feel free to introduce this scenario to your group in any way you see fit.

Perhaps the party is hired by a Guild of Archeologists to discover the fate of a missing expedition.





Key to the Tomb of Ayaneth

The trip to the ruins of Saqua-Ra by dune strider takes from a half hour to forty-five minutes. The creature leads the group to the missing strider huddled near a large crumbling wall, half buried in sand. The creature appears uninjured and perks up when the player's strider approaches.

The entrance to the Tomb of Ayaneth lies nearby along the side of a particularly large sand dune. A set of stone doors stand open revealing a gradually sloping passageway that descends into darkness. The passageway leads in the direction of the large stone pyramid that sits at the center of the city ruins. After traveling about 200' the passageway ends at a pair of large stone doors.

Fresh scratch marks on the corridor's floor indicate that the stone doors have been recently opened. Large iron rings set in the doors facilitate their opening. The doors swing shut if they're not held open. It takes a collective strength of 25 to pull a door open or push a door open from the inside. All doors throughout the tomb have these same attributes.

1. Entrance Room

Hallways exit to the north and south of this 20' x 20' square room. A couple of steps in the east wall lead up to a raised alcove where a statue stands. The statue's arms are crossed in an 'X' over its chest. There's a body laying face down at the bottom of the stairs.

The statue is a likeness of Ayaneth. It once held a mace and scythe in its clenched fists. Both are now under the body at the base of the stairs.

The body belongs to a human male who was a member of the tour group. The man pulled the mace and scythe free from the statue, summoning the wraiths from **Area 2**. Both the mace and scythe were cursed to attract the wraiths causing them to target their holder. The wraiths returned to **Area 2** once the cursed man was slain. The rest of the tour group fled to **Area 3** when the man came under attack.



The scythe has a silver blade and an ornate gold handle studded with gemstones. The mace has a gold handle studded with gemstones as well. Its head is a large piece of red quartz crafted to resemble a rose. Both the scythe and mace are worth 1,500gp each.



Picking up the mace or scythe causes an individual to become cursed. This curse causes the wraiths from **Area 2** to emerge and attack the cursed individual (or individuals.) The wraiths will focus their attacks against those who are cursed, ignoring all others present unless provoked. If the cursed individual is slain the wraiths return to their chamber.

2. Guard Room

A stone ledge runs along the wall of this room roughly two feet above the ground. A total of eight clay jars sit on the ledge.

When it came time to be entombed with their queen a few members of the Cult of Ayaneth had a change of heart. They were slain by their more fanatical associates. Their mortal remains were reduced to ashes during a mystic ritual and stored in the spirit jars that now line the room (see New Magic). The ritual created eight wraiths that now serve as guards for the tomb.

If not already encountered in **Area 1**, the wraiths will be found here. They will attack any who enter this room but will not pursue characters that flee to **Area 3** or **Area 4** (the characters however may find the wraiths waiting for them upon their return.)



Wraiths (8): HD 4; HP 24,22,21, 19,17,16,14,10; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 touch (1d6+ level drain); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 13; CL/XP 6/400; Special: drain 1 level with hit.



The clay jars are filled with ash for the most part (the remains of the wraiths stationed here.) Each contains an item or two once possessed by the wraiths while living. A gold locket (worth 100gp), a small jade statue of a coiled snake (worth 125gp), and a pearl set in a gold ring (worth 175gp) are the only items of value that can be found within the jars.

3. Temple of Ayaneth

This room holds four stone statues. Each stand at a corner of a 10' x 10' copper plate set into the floor.

The statues are of Ayaneth dressed in a flowing white robe. Each hold a different object and face in a different direction.

Statue A

This statue faces to the north and holds a copper bucket in her hands. It stands in the northwest corner.

Statue B

This statue holds an ivory torch in its hand. The torch is topped with a large piece of amber carved to resemble flames. A baby fire beetle is visible trapped in the amber. The statue faces west and sits in the southwest corner of the square.

Statue C

This statue holds a bronze horn. The statue faces south and stands in the southeast corner.

Statue D

This statue holds a stone war hammer. The statue faces east and stands in the northeast corner.

The copper bucket, ivory torch, bronze horn, and stone war hammer can all be removed from the statues. They're required to access the well in **Area 8**.



The copper plate should raise the party's suspicion. Removing an item from a statue will trigger a trap, electrifying the plate. Anyone standing on the plate at the time will be dealt 3d6 damage (a successful save vs spell will cut the damage in half.) All four items must be removed from the statues at the same time to avoid triggering the trap.



The horn is worth 400gp. The torch is exceptionally well crafted and worth around 1,300gp.

4. The Spiral

This large room must be beneath the pyramid at the center of the ruins. A smaller multi-tiered pyramid stands at its center rising 40' in the air. A series of ramps running around the structure allow access to its topmost tier

The floor of this huge room is covered in several inches of sand, formed into small dunes in some areas, mirroring the desert above in miniature. A lit brazier stands in each corner of the chamber.

The party will hear the sound of rushing sand coming from somewhere above. Ascending the spiral at the chamber's center the players will find the source of the sound. The structure is topped with another statue of Ayaneth, this one holding a large marble basin before it. A column of falling sand streams endlessly from the chamber's ceiling into the basin.

When the tour group entered this chamber they lit the braziers, triggering a curse which set the sand flowing between magic portals positioned in the statue's basin and the ceiling above it.

As long as this sand flows a powerful curse is in effect, one that transformed the room's occupants at the time into Sand Creatures (see New Monsters) and animated the mummy of Queen Ayaneth in **Area 7**. The only way to stop the sand from flowing and end the curse is to defeat Ayaneth, at which point the sand creatures will revert back into the members of the missing tour group.

The stone doors to **Area 5**, **Area 6**, and **Area 7** each have a dozen ½ inch holes bored in them, allowing the sand creatures to flow between the rooms.

Some of the sand in front of these doors may have to be moved before they can be opened.

Three of the sand creatures are present, dormant and merged with the sand on the floor near the doors to **Area 7**. If the doors are approached the creatures will form from the sand and attack the intruders. In 1d4 rounds two additional creatures will flow through the holes in the doors to **Area 7** and join the battle.



Sand Creatures (5): HD 4; HP 27,20,16,15,14 AC 6[13]; Atk strike (1d8+2); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 7/600; Special: ½ damage from non-magical cutting and piercing weapons.



5. The Consort's Chamber

A dwarf-sized sarcophagus sits against the east wall of this chamber. The wall itself is covered with an elaborate bas-relief depicting the construction of the Saqua-Ra pyramid and its inner tomb.

A group of dwarves were employed by Ayaneth to help construct her tomb. During construction Ayaneth fell in love with the group's leader Derg Dramass.

Intoxicated by her beauty Derg, along with many of his group became members of the Cult of Ayaneth. While this burial chamber was constructed in his honor he can be found among the mummified warriors in **Area 7** (see New Monsters).

Three more sand creatures are in this room. They're banging their fists against the walls of the room as if searching for a way out. The party has a chance of gaining a surprise attack if they act quickly and quietly.

Like **Area 4** the floor of this room is covered in sand as well.



Sand Creatures (3): HD 4; HP 24,16,13 AC 6[13]; Atk strike (1d8+2); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 7/600; Special: ½ damage from non-magical cutting and piercing weapons.



The sarcophagus is empty save for Dramass's journal. Written in dwarven it tells the story of the dwarf falling in love with Ayaneth after building her tomb and deciding to serve her after death as one of her mummified warriors. The journal could be worth up to 1,000gp to the right buyer.

6. Faithful Advisor?

The western wall of this room is covered in a bas-relief depicting an elderly man clad in golden robes standing atop a tower, surveying all of Saqua-Ra in its former glory.

This was to be the burial chamber of Ayaneth's chief advisor Ardaxiss. The human sized sarcophagus against the west wall stands open its lid standing against the wall to the south. Apparently at some time in the past before the queen's death Ardaxiss decided to get while the getting was good...

The floor of this room is covered in a few of inches of sand as well. Two sand creatures lie dormant in the sarcophagus. They attack if the sarcophagus is approached.



Sand Creatures (2): HD 4; HP 23,17 AC 6[13]; Atk strike (1d8+2); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 7/600; Special: ½ damage from non-magical cutting and piercing weapons.

7. Tomb of Ayaneth

A sarcophagus sits against the far wall of this room, its lid laying in shattered pieces next to it. A female wrapped in bandages sits on the stone casket's edge. She's holding a hand mirror, studying the reflection of her face.

The female is the animated mummy of Queen Ayaneth. She's momentarily distracted by the condition of her face examining it in the mirror she was buried with. She'll angrily order her mummified warriors to attack the party once she's



aware of their intrusion.

The warriors stand behind thick gold colored curtains which run the length of the room. There are a total of eighteen present; nine of dwarven build stand behind the curtain to the north and nine human-size behind the curtain to the south awaiting the command of their queen.

Ayaneth will continue looking at herself in the mirror for 1d4 rounds until the sound of battle annoys her to the point where she'll join in.



Mummified Warriors (17): HD 4; AC 5[14]; HP 23,22,22,21,20,19,18,15,15,15,15,14,14,13,13,12 11; Atk Weapon or fist (1d8); Move 8; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Lesser rot, ½ damage from non-magic weapons.

Dramass (mummified warrior): HD 4; AC 5[14]; HP 24; Atk Weapon (1d6+2) or fist (1d8); Move 8; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Lesser rot, ½ damage from non-magic weapons. Gear: +2 *hand axe*

Ayaneth (mummy): HD 6+4; HP 33; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 fist (1d12); Move 6; Save 11; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Rot, hit only by magic weapons.



Each of the mummified warriors, including Dramass, wears a copper helmet with a silver faceplate crafted to resemble the face they bore in life. These helmets are worth 480gp each, provided they weren't too damaged during the course of battle.

As noted above Dramass is armed with a +2 *hand axe*.

Ayaneth was entombed with a silver hand mirror (worth 53gp) which she placed back in her sarcophagus when she joined the fray. She also wears an elaborate necklace worth 750gp.



A pair of levers behind the curtains to the north and south must be pulled at the same time to open the stone doors set in the east wall. This allows access to the corridor beyond.

8. Well Room

A stone well sits at the center of this circular room. A rotted wooden roof sits above it along with winch and rope for drawing water. Unfortunately the bucket is missing.

Dropping a coin or torch into it will give the players some idea as to how deep the well runs (several hundred feet). An item dropped into it will eventually hit bottom, making a noise other than "splash". The well is completely dry; the source of its water cut off by Dramass and his crew.

Stone hands resembling the hands of the statues in **Area 3** are set in the walls to the north, east, and west. If the bronze horn is placed in the hands to the north, the stone hammer placed in the hands to the west, and the ivory torch placed in the hands to the east (each item facing the direction they were facing when found in **Area 3**) the party will hear the sounds of mechanisms working behind the walls and echoing from deep within the well. The sound of rushing water will then be heard.

The well will fill to a point where, if the copper bucket is attached to the rope, the winch may be worked to draw water.

9. Treasure Chamber

The door to this room is covered with a faded and peeling painting. From what you're able to make out it looks like an image of a market square where several people have gathered to draw water from a well.

The door to Ayaneth's treasure chamber is held fast by the same device that Dramass designed to seal up the well.

The door can only be opened once the items from **Area 3** have been placed in the proper positions in **Area 8** and the flow of water to the well has been restored.



The majority of Ayaneth's wealth went to building her tomb and sealing off the city's wells however what remains of it can be found within the three chests here:

Chest #1: 5,050sp (loose); 2,975gp in a *bag of holding*; a scroll of three 1st level cleric spells (*cure light wounds, light, purify food and drink*) in an ivory scroll case (worth 38gp) **Chest #2:**

9,366cp (loose); 707gp in a small silver coffer (worth 56gp); a small sack holding 40 gems worth 25gp each, a +2 *dagger* in a gem studded scabbard (worth 308gp)

Chest #3: 8,132sp (loose); a gold statuette of Ayaneth (a smaller version of those found in **Area 3**) with a gem studded base (worth 1,000gp)

Wrapping Up

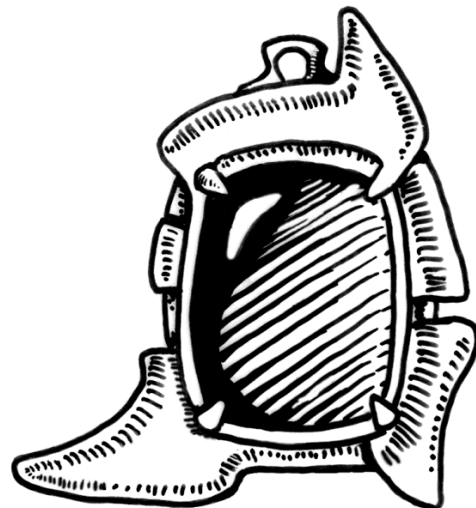
After defeating Ayaneth the ten members of the tour group will revert back to normal, fully restored. They'll be eager to return to Jewel and grateful for being rescued. If however they see the party loaded down with treasure they may feel they're entitled to some of the spoils. They were first ones in after all. Only two of the group's most vocal members will continue to push the issue after the initial statement is made. The rest fall silent while passing the body in **Area 1**, realizing the price of greed.

Salarr, anxiously awaiting the party's return now fearing the loss of two striders, will meet the group at the gates to Jewel. He'll be relieved to find the

striders, party, tour group, and drivers in one piece (in that order.) He won't realize that one of the group is missing unless it's pointed out to him, a fact that'll he'll morn for a moment before stressing that there were waivers signed.

The driver of the errant strider was among the members of the rescued tour group. He'll explain to Salarr how they were caught in the sandstorm, sought shelter, and discovered the Tomb of Ayaneth. Salarr's eyes will light up at mention of the tomb. He's sure it held treasure. He also knows the legend of the well. One of the tourists will make Salarr aware of the fact that the party is in possession of treasure from the tomb. Salarr will make a half effort to explain how he deserves a share of the treasure, after all if not for him what would they have? He's more concerned however about the tomb and the well, realizing that the discovery of both will dramatically increase the area's tourism trade, and in turn, strider rentals...

If Salarr's informed that the well is active again news of this will quickly spread throughout the city. The city council will plan a ceremony in honor of the group's discovery. A reward of 10,000gp will be split among the party and members of the tour group. Each will also be given a copper and amber medal in honor of their service to Jewel (and its tourist industry)



Continuing the Adventure

Here are some suggestions for further adventures:

✘ One of the more insistent "share the treasure" members of the tour group turns out to be a tomb robber who was visiting the ruins specifically to search for the lost tomb and the treasures it held. He assembles a group of thieves to tail the party and acquire his "share" of the treasure.

✘ A prominent Bard's Guild learns of the existence of the journal of Dramass. They believe the love between Ayaneth and the dwarf would make good subject for song. The descendants of the Clan of Dramass aren't too keen on having part of their history that involves shutting off a city's water supply, suicide, and mummification of one of their ancestors becoming immortalized as tavern entertainment. Both groups are determined to possess the journal.

✘ If the jade snake statue was recovered from the jars at **Area 2** its possessor becomes plagued by visions of phantom snakes. The reason for the visions and their meaning is unclear...

✘ Ayaneth's hand mirror is discovered to have the ability to show a corpse's face as it once was in life. A young woman wants the party to use the mirror to locate and retrieve the corpse of her father from among the ranks of a necromancer's undead army.

✘ One of the items taken from the tomb has cursed a party member who slowly starts turning into a sand creature. Only Ayaneth's advisor Ardaxiss can remove the curse, but he's been missing and dead for over a century...

✘ The party is summoned back to Jewel. Upon their arrival they're informed that there's a giant sand creature loose in the desert. It's believed the group is somehow responsible for its appearance...



NEW MAGIC

Spirit Jars

These jars are created by means of an elaborate and profane ceremony. The corpse of a victim is prepared and then burned in a ritualistic fashion. The ashes are then placed into a clay jar along with a few items of sentimental value to the victim. After a spirit jar has been created a *raise dead* spell cast upon it will result in the creation of a wraith. The wraith is bound to its spirit jar and cannot venture more than 50' away from it. The wraith will view the caster of the *raise dead* spell as its master and will accept simple commands from them, such as guard this treasure, or attack anyone who enters the room. The wraith will always return to the location of its jar after its task has been completed. While next to its jar the wraith regenerates 1 HP each turn.

Smashing a spirit jar while the wraith that's bound to it is still active will have one of the following effects:

Roll 1d20	Effect on Wraith
1	Wraith is no longer bound to the jar.
2-5	Wraith is dealt 1d8 damage and is no longer bound to the jar.
6-10	Wraith is dealt 2d8 damage and is no longer bound to the jar.
11-15	Wraith disintegrates.
16-17	Wraith goes berserk for 1d4+1 rounds dealing +2 damage and suffering a 2 point penalty to its AC before disintegrating.
18-19	Wraith disintegrates explosively dealing 1d4+1 damage to all creatures within 10' of it.
20	Wraith goes berserk, as above, before disintegrating explosively, as above.

A wraith that's no longer bound to its jar may flee, continue attacking, or leave to seek revenge upon its creator.



NEW MONSTERS

Mummified Warriors

These are usually soldiers or guards who served their master or mistress fanatically while living, going as far as to volunteer to be killed, mummified, and interred with their leader in order further serve them after death. These lesser mummies are usually created as treasure guards or bodyguards for true mummies and are often animated by the same magic. As a result when a mummy is destroyed each mummified warrior that serves it must make a saving throw. If they fail they are destroyed as well, crumbling to a pile of dust and bandages. If they succeed, their current hit points are halved, they suffer a -1 penalty to damage dealt, and a 2 point penalty to their AC for the remainder of their existence.

The touch of a mummified warrior requires the victim to save vs. poison. Failing results in the character being infected by a lesser version of mummy rot. This disease causes the result of magic healing upon the character to be halved. The infected character also regains hit points at ½ their normal rate. A *cure disease* spell will return the character's non-magic healing rate to normal however a *remove curse* spell is required to completely remove the lesser rot's effect.

Mummified Warrior: HD 4; AC 5[14]; Atk Weapon or fist (1d8); Move 8; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Lesser rot, ½ damage from non-magic weapons.

Sand Creatures

These unlucky elemental beings are often encountered in the desert near forbidden places charged with powerful magic such as an enchanted oasis or cursed ruins. The magic of these places twist the forms of trespassers into creatures of living sand, creatures who mindlessly attack anyone who venture near.

Often breaking an enchantment or lifting a curse will cause the creature to revert back to normal, restoring them to their original health, despite any damage done to them while in their sand form.

At rest a sand creature resembles a pile of sand often merging with larger dunes in a desert setting. When they spring to attack from this form they have a 50% chance of gaining a surprise attack, even against alert opponents. Their sand form allows them to flow through small openings, such as the space at the bottom of a door, and reform on the other side.

Edged weapons tend to pass right through their sand form without causing much

disruption, as a result slashing and piercing weapons deal ½ damage however they still take full damage from the magic variety.

Once a sand creature has been defeated its form disrupts and it falls to the ground in a pile, or merges with the sand of its surroundings. However if the cause of the being's transformation isn't dealt with (oasis disenchanting, curse lifted) the sand creature will fully regenerate within 24 hours.

Sand Creature: HD 4; AC 6[13]; Atk strike (1d8+2); Move 12; Save 13; CL/XP 7/600; Special: ½ damage from non-magical cutting and piercing weapons.

Art Credits

We'd like to thank the following companies, people, and resources for providing great spot art at low cost.

Shaman Stock Art provided the Dune Strider for our cover and inside cover.

The Monster, Treasure, and Obstacle icons were made by Lorc. Available on <http://game-icons.net>

The Sarcophagus on page 2, Medal on page 9, and Adventurers on page 10 were provided by Outland Arts, © William McAusland, and used with permission.

The Sand Creature on page 6 was created by Jeshields, who did a fantastic job bringing this creature to life. You can find more incredible artwork at jestockart.com

The image of Ayaneth on page 7 was created by Storn Cook.

The image of the Mummified Warrior on page 11 was created by Eric Quigley.

The map for our "old school" tomb was created using dungeonographer mapping software from Inkwell Ideas.

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