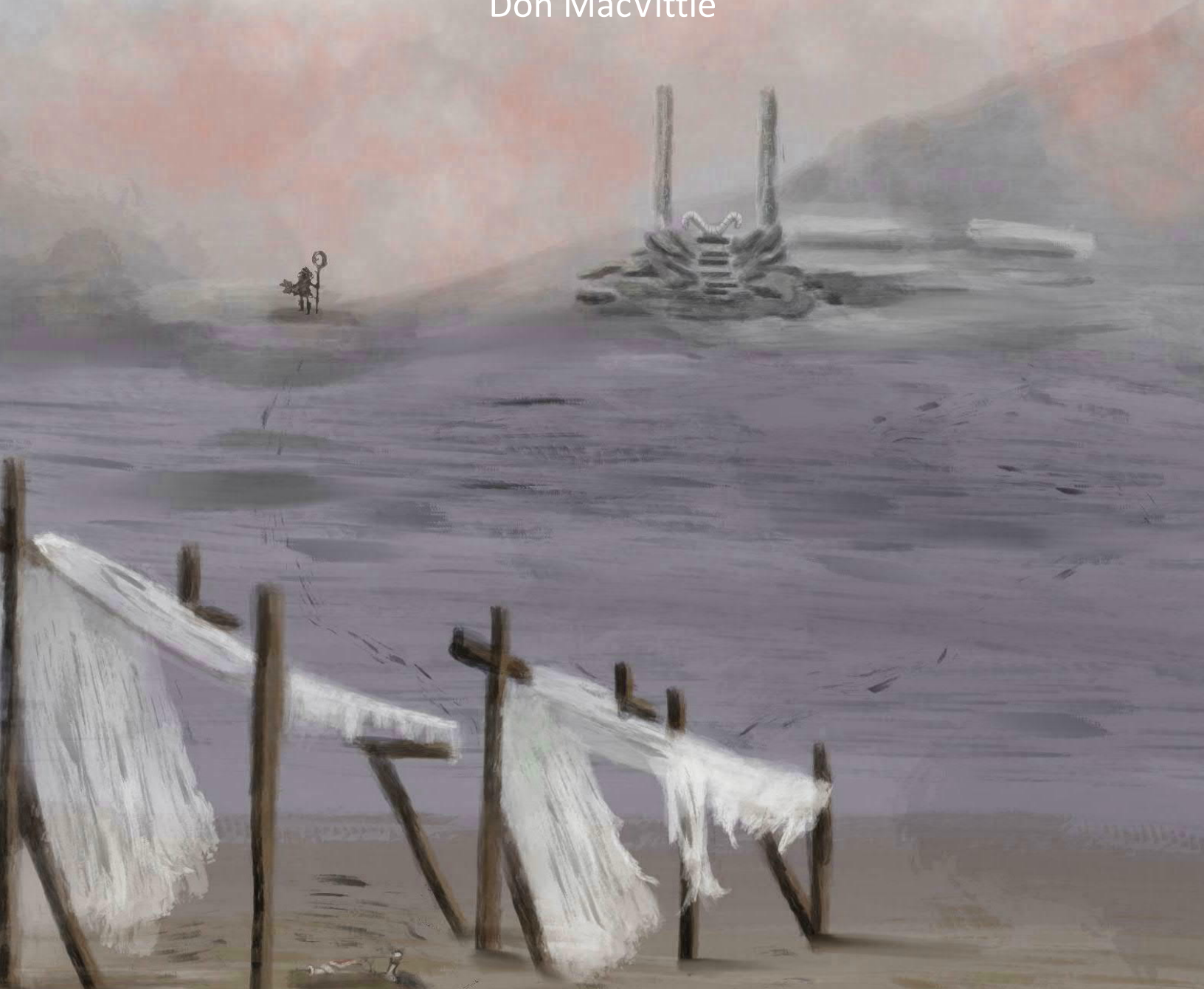


One Night Adventures™

Death at the Oasis

Don MacVittie



An Adventure for second to fourth level characters.

The Oasis at Sia has long been a safe haven in the heart of the desert. But as you approach, tendrils of smoke still curl up from some of the burnt tents, and the usual traffic is nowhere to be seen.



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Death at the Oasis

By Donald MacVittie

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVELS 2-4



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The stories are too much to be believed. It is said that the Oasis at Sia, meeting place and rest stop for all of the clans of the desert, has been attacked by one of the clans, the people present enslaved and the settlement destroyed. Someone needs to go discover what has happened.

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INTRODUCTION

Player Introduction

For centuries, the Oasis at Sia has been a safe haven for tired and dehydrated travelers. Occasionally, one of the other desert kingdoms tries to wrest control of it from Talifa, but it is near the center of the kingdom, and control is rarely in question. Now, there are stories of the oasis being destroyed. Of people dying as others ran. Of slavers and monstrous creatures. And of death.

If you intend to play this module. Stop reading here. Only information for the Game Master is beyond this point.

Game Master Introduction

The Oasis at Sia is indeed ruined. Slavers from Chazim, driven partly by thirst, and partly by a desire for goods, raided the oasis.

Water in Chazim has been failing. Oases have become polluted, Wadis remaining dry, and the underground springs no longer run as they have for centuries. People in Chazim are on the edge, barely surviving by trade with neighboring kingdoms for water. A mystic from the desert told the Derivesh Inseni that their water supply would be restored if they went on pilgrimage to the burial mound hidden at the Oasis of Sia and returned with the *Scepter of Ice*. They tried, but access to the burial mound was restricted by the Talifan guard here.

So Inseni warriors and the mystic planned an attack. Their goal was to destroy the guard and enter the secret entrance under the Sphynx of Sia. The entire oasis rose up against the invaders from Chazim. While the raiders fought for their very lives, the mystic disappeared.

By the time the fighting was over, the oasis lay in ruins. Most of the inhabitants dead, the few survivors locked up in chains, and the tents were burning. When the exhausted Inseni went to drink from the pond, the water rose up and attacked them. Only by retreating away from the water were they able to survive. The mystic returned, but warned them that they were no longer strong enough to enter the Sphynx. They quickly coffled their slaves and set out to gather more Inseni. They have left behind a mess.

The party will find that the bodies here are not all dead, and the water is infested with monsters. The mystic works with a group called The Cult of Water, and they will be sending people to enter the Sphynx, now that resistance has been

shattered. If the party is still here 24 hours after they first arrive, Derivesh warriors from the Cult of Water will come to retrieve the Scepter.

The Cult is under strict instructions not to leave witnesses. Should the party be here when they arrive, it will be a fight.

Derivesh Raiding Party – The Cult of Water

The Cult of Water seeks to return water to the parched lands of Kantor Doorne, returning the desert to the lush grassland that it was in ancient times. The Scepter of Ice is part of their plans. Should the party have it and be gone, they will follow. The raiding party will consist of 5-10 (d6+4) Derivesh Fanatics, and a leading Cult of Water Priest.

(Derivesh Fanatic AC 15, HD 2d10, HP 11 Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Special: +1 on attack and damage, Alignment LN, XP 15+2/37 each)

(Cult of Water Priest AC 16, HD 4d8, HP 20, Attacks Light Mace 1d6, Spells Detect Magic, Endure Elements, First Aid, Light, Cure Light Wounds, Resist Elements x2, Aid, Silence Alignment LN, XP 90+4/170, Mail Hauberk +1, 100 gold)

Scaling – Should this group of fanatics actually meet up with the party, the encounter should be epic. If the party is small/weak, reducing the number of Derivesh Fanatics is the best option, while if the party is higher level or strong (high stats, more than average magic items), maximizing HP for the Fanatics is the best option. Changing the Priest's 2nd level spells to Hold Person is also a good option for making the fight more difficult.

Introducing the party

There are a variety of ways to introduce PCs to this scenario. Below are a few recommendations.

1. Salla Ephelia staggers into the town where the party is staying, telling stories of horror about what happened at the oasis.
2. Al-Esellin, trader in dates, arrives in town talking about stories he heard from other traders - that the Oasis at Sia is unsafe.
3. A shipment is late, and a merchant asks the party to travel the route it would have taken, looking for the caravan.
4. The party happens upon it while traversing the desert.

In The Port of Dakhalla Adventure Tome, any of these works, though the default is that Salla Ephelia went to the tents of the Kingdom of Basarin to the north of town, and the trade representative for Basarin will ask the party to go avenge a caravan they lost in the attack.

AREA KEY

The Oasis

In the middle of the desert, this collection of statues, a few buildings, and dozens of tents is normally a haven to travelers. But today it is anything but a haven. Smoke is rising from the ruins of tents, and bodies lie strewn everywhere. The sand is stained brown, and the scent of death is everywhere.

The Timeline

Start tracking time when the party comes within sight of the oasis. Twenty-four hours after the party sees the destruction that has occurred here, the Water Cult Patrol will arrive. This patrol will delve into the tomb, then come back out five hours later. They will rest until healed – making a total of 24 hours in the oasis – then leave, bound for their camp. The patrol will not hesitate to kill the party. Because they are fanatics, they do not check morale. If the party leaves the oasis and returns while the patrol is present, the patrol will try to kill them, but should have some level of injury from going into the tomb.

If the party goes into the tomb and comes out with the scepter, leaving within 24 hours of arriving, they will miss the patrol. Once the patrol determines the scepter is not here, it is possible they will follow the party to recover the scepter – but they will need a way to know who took the scepter.

Area Key

1. Jasinia's Trinkets

A large tent with the side open to the trail smolders here, while a smaller collapsed tent lies next to it. The smaller tent has dark stains splashed across it, and two bodies lie in the burning larger tent.

Jasinia and Amarellen sold small items that are useful to travelers here. If a party pulls the smoldering tent away quickly, they can salvage three ornate knives (2 gold each), a bead necklace (1 gold), two sandstone statues of Doorne (5 gold each), and an ivory bracelet depicting palm trees (25 gold). The bodies are Jasinia and Amarellen. They thought the raid was thieves and attempted to protect their tent. They died in the defense, and the mystic turned them into zombies. They lay here waiting for people to come by. And the party is obliging. As soon as the party approaches the tent, the two will hop up and attack.

(Zombie AC 12, HD 2d8, HP 10 each, Attacks Slam 1d8, Special: slow, Alignment NE, XP 10+2/30 each)

Scaling – Most oasis encounters are meant to raise awareness that something more is going on here. This encounter should not be deadly, and we do not recommend scaling it.

2. Alsalla's Food

The smell of burnt meat surrounds the small bright colored tent here. Two men in the white robes of desert raiders lie outside the tent, both obviously killed with spears. Two smaller tents have been set aflame and are mostly consumed.

The burnt meat smell is burnt child. Should the party look into the tent, they will find a charcoal grill with a smaller child laid upon it. The charcoal is mostly burnt, and so is the body. There is nothing of value in any of these tents.

3. The Inn

A large sandstone statue of a man is outside this building. He is wearing a pyramid for a hat, holding the sun in one hand, and a sheaf of wheat in the other. This building has a sign out front that shows a barrel under a palm tree. The door has been kicked in, and the body of a woman dressed in traders' robes lies in the doorway. The building shows no signs of fire, but the windows have been smashed in.

The body in the doorway is just a body. It was a patron that was killed trying to get away. The inn is two large rooms – a common room and a kitchen. The common room has tables overturned and twelve bodies laying about it. During the attack, many tried to hole up here and hold the doors, but there are too many windows, and the attackers came from windows and doors alike. Behind the bar is a tapped keg of ale.

Five of the bodies here have been turned into Zombies by the mystic.

The back room holds no bodies, and there is a lot of preserved food here, along with two untapped kegs of ale. If a party searches the room, they can find 20 weeks of rations for one person (so four weeks for five people, etc) plus the two barrels of ale (15 gold each). Assuming they have some way to transport the ale anyway.

(Zombie AC 12, HD 2d8, HP 10 each, Attacks Slam 1d8, Special: slow, Alignment NE, XP 10+2/30 each)

AREA KEY

Scaling – We do not recommend scaling this encounter.

4. El-Alouph Camel and Wagons

Three smoldering wagons stand outside this building, largely gutted by fire. Camel tracks go away from the building to the east, southeast, and north. Piles of camel dung lie smoking to the north of the building. There are only two doorways in the building, one man sized and one much larger. Both doorways were covered in cloth that has been ripped down and thrown outside.

The El-Alouph family fixed wagons and treated camels for various ailments. When the fighting broke out, the family surrendered, believing that life as a slave offers a chance of escape, which death simply does not. They were taken as slaves and lead off into the desert.

The building has all of the tools, supplies, and equipment that are used when repairing wagons and treating camels for common ailments. If the party searches, they can find feed for camels (a mix of dates, wheat, and oats), and a complete wagon repair kit. The family guard dog is tied up here, and starving to death. Should the party untie it, the dog will go after the nearest food – them. Should the party have any way to calm the beast – such as a Druid's *Animal Friendship* spell or food – the dog is domesticated and trained. Unable to find its family, it will follow the party, or lead them on the trail to its family.

(Mastiff (Wolf) AC 13, HD 2d8, HP 10, Attacks Bite 1d8, Special: Trip, Scent, Twilight Vision, Tracking 10, Alignment N, XP 25+2/45)

Scaling – Adjusting hit points up or down will be best for this encounter, should it come to a fight.

5. Elven Goods

This large tent has the charred remains of various mostly wooden objects in it, along with several burned bodies. A sign, casually tossed to the ground, says “Elven Goods” in Doornian and shows a man with pointed ears.

Abd Al-Doorne and his wife Afara own this shop, and have a daughter named Dasara. As the party explores this area, have the person with the best Wisdom make a CL 5 Wisdom check. On success, they will hear sniffing. Afara and Dasara are in a hidden hole in the ground that the family set up when first they came to the oasis. It is dug out of the sand, lined with wood, and has a wooden top. When the

attack started, Abd got his wife and child into this hole, and covered it up. He was going to another hole he has arranged near the pond when he was caught and killed. The sniffing is his daughter, hungry and scared. The party will have to decide what to do with Afara and Dasara in this case – they have no money, nowhere to go, and no idea what to do next.

(Afara - Human - AC 11, HD 1d6, HP 4, Saves M, Move 30, AT 1, Dam 1d4, Alignment LN, XP 5+1/9)

(Dasara - Human child - AC 10, HD 1d4, HP 2, Saves P, Move 25, AT bite, Dam 1d2, Alignment LN, XP 5+1/7)

Scaling – We do not recommend scaling, as this encounter is not intended to be a fight.

6. Temple al Sia

This small sandstone building has pyramids engraved at regular intervals around the outside. There is a door and two small stained-glass windows on the western wall, with two glass-free openings on each of the other three walls. There are bodies around the building, and the oak door stands open.

This is the temple to Mighty Doorne at Sia. All forms of Doornian worship were welcomed here. Unfortunately, the mystic is secretly not Doornian. He snuck in here and killed the priest during the assault, just because he knew the Inseni would not kill a priest of Doorne.

There is a silver setting on the small altar in the building, and a lock box containing 87 gold pieces, 23 silver pieces, and 106 copper pieces. It should go without saying that anyone who steals from this temple needs to hope they are not caught. Nearly every person in the desert would chase them until they had been caught and killed.

7. Talifan Camp

The bodies of many desert warriors, most dressed in the red, mustard, and tan of the Kingdom of Talifa lay around burning tents. Their weapons are missing, but each still wears their robes and chain hauberk. Several desert warriors dressed in all white robes lie among them. All died violently.

This is where the raiders hit first and hardest. They took some losses, but destroyed the Talifan guard that was here to protect the oasis. There are twelve dead Talifan guards, and five dead desert raiders. One of the Talifan guards does

AREA KEY

not wear a chain hauberk, but rather a black breastplate under his robes.

Four of these bodies have been taken over by **Hiyawiyya** whose purpose is to prevent anyone from reporting what happened at the oasis for a week. They will jump up and attack when the party gets close.

(Hayawiyya AC 14, HD 4d8, HP 20 each, Attacks Slam 1d8, Special: Animation, Water affinity, Alignment N, XP 90+4/170 each)

Scaling: It is best to adjust hit points if needed, but changing the number of Hayawiyya works for extreme imbalance.

8. Oasis Waters

These once-pristine waters are murky with mud swirling in them as if agitated. The swirls head toward the center of the north shore of the waters.

The north bank of the water has a **Lesser Mud Elemental** on it, placed there by the mystic. The elemental will stay melded with the mud until someone comes close, then it will lash out. It will not leave the mud bank of the oasis voluntarily.

If the mud elemental is overcome, it will melt away, leaving behind a large silver coffer with gold inlay showing a man with a pyramid for a hat overseeing workers in a wheat field. The coffer is worth 500 gold if cleaned up, but more importantly, it is wax sealed. Inside is a king's ransom. This box was hidden at the bottom of the oasis centuries ago, and the mud elemental discovered it upon summoning. The contents of the box are 570 gold pieces, 300 silver pieces, and ten platinum pieces – all dating from the ancient age of Doornian empire. There is also a Crystal Vase that is unfortunately cracked, but still worth 56 gold pieces, a small soapstone statuette of a man with a pyramid for a hat worth 100 gold pieces, and a desert slave choker made of gold with a fine platinum chain hanging off of it. Under all of this is a diamond *Ring of Protection* +2, and a thin, rigid sheet of metal engraved with spells. This is a scroll of *Shout* (4th), *Haste* (3rd), and *Shatter* (2nd).

(Elemental, Lesser, Mud AC 18, HD 7d8, HP 35, Attacks Slam 1d10, Special: Mastery +1 to attack rolls, Darkvision 60 ft, Regeneration 2, Suffocation, Weapon Immunity +1 or better, Alignment NE, XP 530+7/775)

Scaling – This is one of the true challenges outside of the sphynx. Scaling hit points is the best option, but hid dice can be changed in line with notes in Monsters and Treasure.

Total XP value of treasure: 8176 (1960 MI XP value, the rest GP sale value)

9. Sphynx of Sia

The famed Sphynx of Sia is more stunning up-close than the stories of it can describe. Twenty feet tall and deep red sandstone, it is the body of a powerful lion and the head of a man wearing a pyramid for a hat. It rests upon a plinth that rises five feet above the sand, with steps leading up between the paws. There are muddy footprints leading up the steps.

The Sphynx of Sia is known throughout Talifa and all of the neighboring Kingdoms for its impressive beauty and size. About fifty feet long, fifteen feet wide, and twenty feet tall, it is a massive monument to the empire that once ruled all these lands. It is believed by many in the desert that this very sphynx will come to life and speak to announce the return of water to the lands of the empire.

There is a secret door between the sphynx's paws that opens on stairs going down. It can be found with a CL 1 Wisdom check. Normally this check would be CL 5, but the muddy tracks lead to it and disappear, making the finding significantly easier. The walls of the stairwell are covered with frescoes of people in a fertile land, living life as normal.

9a. Hall of Water

This room is ornately decorated, frescoes on the walls showing life in a thriving empire. The black marble floor is streaked with gold flakes, two swirling pools of pristine water stand before the wyrmwood door on the west wall, and two more before another wyrmwood door on the east wall. There are also wyrmwood doors on the north and south walls. A statue of a woman in traditional desert garb stands in each corner.

Even before the war that destroyed the empire, this region could be arid. The people equated water to the heart of life, and these pools are one of the simple ways they incorporated it into the worship of their god. The statues are carved in the likeness of *The Brides of Doorne*, a knightly order that served Doorne but is believed to have died out.

AREA KEY

Two of them are **Caryatid Columns**, however, which are undying. If no one in the party is openly wearing the pyramid of Doorne, when the party approaches any door, both statues will jump to the attack.

(Caryatid Column AC 14, HD 4d8, HP 20 each, Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Alignment N, XP 40+4/120 each)

Scaling – As always, hit points are the preferred scaling method, then Stone Guardians are a tougher opponent. For a particularly weak party, removing the Caryatid Column is an option.

9b. Guardian Ants

As you open the door to this room, some of the giant ants standing along the north and south walls go from immobile to rushing toward you. The walls have bas-reliefs of ants eating people who are staked out in the desert.

The tomb builders placed Twelve **Giant Ants** here in stasis. They sit and wait for someone to come along, then activate two per turn (six rounds) and attack. The builders knew not to take the route through this room, but that information is largely lost to the world, perhaps surviving in some library somewhere. The ants will fight to the death, and any that are killed will be replaced in d4+1 weeks by new ants called by the magic of the room.

(Giant Soldier Ants AC 16, HD 2d8, HP 10 each, Attacks Bite 1d4+1, Special: Acid Sting, Alignment N, XP 15+2/35 each)

Scaling – Having more or less ants activate at a time is the easy way to scale this room.

9c. Hall of the Great God

This long 20-foot-wide hallway is adorned with frescoes of desert people in lush environments worshipping the man with a pyramid hat in every form. From offering him the bounty of their harvests to sacrificing elves, each fresco shows a pyramid in the background somewhere. Some of the pyramids are being struck by lightning, some have the sun just touching their pinnacle, others have wheat growing out the top. The ones with sacrifices feature a skull on the side of the pyramid. Near the far north end of the hall stand two statues of men in ornate armor of desert style, each with his hand on the hilt of his sword.

While the frescoes are beautiful, and show much about life in the empire ages ago, there is nothing special about them or the statues. There is a superbly hidden secret door between the two statues though. It requires a CL 10 Wisdom check to notice that there is something there. If a character mentions it is weird that there are only two statues, about five feet apart, reduce the check to CL 7. If someone notes that two similarly placed statues in the west hall have a door between them, reduce the CL to 5.

9d. Skeletal Guardians

As you open the door to this room, the heads of eight skeletons, two in each corner, turn toward you.

These **Skeletons** are here to guard the complex. They will attack as soon as someone enters the room, and will chase any characters that run away. The frescoes in this room depict people being sacrificed in front of a pyramid with a skull on its side.

(Skeletons AC 13, HD 1d12, HP 7 each, Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Special: Undead, Alignment N, XP 5+1/12 each)

Scaling – Adding or subtracting Skeletons is relatively easy, making them Zombies or even Ghouls can challenge a more powerful party.

AREA KEY

9e. Statue Guardians

Statues of men and women in priestly regalia line the south wall of this room. The other walls have frescoes showing people either worshipping in front of pyramids or at the feet of a man wearing a pyramid for a hat. One shows a pair of sphynxes genuflecting in front of such a man. There is something chiseled into the south wall above the statues in large letters using the language of the desert.

If someone manages to read the writing on the wall, it says in both Doornian script and hieroglyphs “Praise Doorne The All-Knowing and live.”

If anyone in the party makes praises to any of the names for the polyglot Doorne – Doorne the All Knowing, Mighty Doorne, Doorne the Omnipotent, or Doorne the Creator – the party may walk through this room unmolested. But if any character travels fifteen feet or more into the room before praises are uttered, one of the statues will animate and attack the party. It will fight to destruction, but not follow the party out of the room. It is a **Stone Guardian**, and his sole purpose is to keep unbelievers out of the tomb. Should someone figure out the safety phrase after the statue is activated (perhaps shouting praises to Doorne in the middle of combat), the statue will stop fighting and return to its place – unless it is attacked after the phrase is shouted.

(Stone Guardian AC 18, HD 4d10, HP 24, Attacks Two fists 1d4, Special: Immunity to Poison and Disease, Immunity to Mind Control, See Invisible, Resistance to weapons (edged do 1/4 damage, missiles zero damage and arrows/bolts are destroyed, wood weapons 25% chance per hit of being destroyed), Alignment N, XP 130+4/226)

Scaling – We recommend only scaling HP on the guardian.

9f. Minotaur Guardian

Unlike the other rooms in this complex, the frescoes about this room have been smashed and scratched, blood staining the entirety of the north wall. In the center of the room is a minotaur, his axe over his shoulder. He turns to face you, lowering his head and bellowing a challenge.

This is An-Zefful, **Minotaur** of the tomb. He is cursed by Doorne to guard this room and kill anything that enters. When no one is in the room, he is in a form of stasis. When someone enters, he awakens and is hungry. An-Zefful

always fights with his *Battle Axe +1* unless he is somehow disarmed. Fifteen minutes after the last living being is gone, he reverts to his stasis state. The damage to the walls is from the various times throughout history that he has awakened. He will attack a party regardless of size, because he has a death wish. In death, he will finally be removed from this curse. He cannot follow a group out of the room, and if he is somehow magically transported out, he will turn to dust.

(Minotaur AC 14, HD 7d8, HP 35, Attacks Head Butt 2d4, Bite 1d4, or Battle Axe +5 to Attack, 1d8+5 damage, Saves P, Special: Powerful Charge, Darkvision 60, Never Surprised, Alignment CE, XP 450+7/695)

Scaling – It is best to scale HP on An-Zefful, but for a particularly weak party he might forego his battle axe to Head Butt, and for a particularly strong party he could be given specialization in battle axe.

9g. Coffer Corpse Guardian

There is a life-like statue of a man in desert garb throwing a spear just outside this door.

The walls of this room are covered in paintings of natural phenomenon, from sunrises to floods, all with a giant man wearing a pyramid for a hat standing and smiling over them. A lifelike statue of a desert warrior stands in the room, as does a statue of an ugly, buzzard-like creature. A long dead woman turns from the northeast corner, raises its arms, and starts running toward you.

This room contains a Rockatrice! The statue is a bandit that was looting the tomb and got caught. The statue in the hall was his partner. The buzzard-like statue is a cockatrice that was here, but was turned to stone as the last desperate act of the bandits. The “zombie” is actually a **Coffer Corpse**, the current guardian of this room. If a party somehow transforms the Cockatrice statue back to flesh, the it will attack.

(Coffer Corpse AC 12, HD 2d8, HP 10, Attacks Hand 1d6, Saves P, Special: Turn at -2, Choke Attack after hit automatic d6 per round, only magic weapons hit, Alignment CE, XP 25+2/45)

Scaling – Being only one of many opponents here, we recommend keeping scaling to adjusting hit points, though a partner could be added, or the Cockatrice could turn back to flesh on its own for a powerful party.

AREA KEY

9h. Ogre Guardian

The walls of this room have been painted black, yellow dots of light shining on them. A large man wearing a pyramid for a hat is painted on the far wall, staring at the door you enter. The decaying corpse of an Ogre standing below the painted figure opens its eyes and stares at you when you open the door.

This is the Ogre Guardian, a specialized **Monster Zombie**. He has the HP and attacks modified for an Ogre, but is otherwise a Zombie. He will fight until destroyed, but will not chase intruders out of this room.

The yellow dots of light are citrine gemstones reflecting the party's light. There are 22 of them in the walls and ceiling, each worth 20 gold pieces. They will take half an hour to pry out. It can be done in 15 minutes, but damage to the gems will result, making them worth only 10 gold pieces each.

(Monster Zombie, Ogre AC 12, HD 4d8, HP 20, Attacks slam 1d6+4, Saves: P, Special: Slow, Alignment NE, XP 40+4/120)

Scaling – First is to adjust Hit Points, but he could be statted as a standard zombie for weak parties or given a partner for strong ones.

9i. Ghoul Guardians

This room reeks of death when the door is opened. The bas-reliefs on the walls show the man with the pyramid hat, a skull on the side of the pyramid. He is standing in the center well of a dakhma, surrounded by laid out bodies. He is motioning with his hand, and four of the decaying bodies are standing, long fangs and claws evident. Four creatures that look like those depicted in the bas-relief stand in the room, and begin to shuffle toward you.

(A dakhma was a Zoroastrian tower used to expose bodies to the elements and keep contagion from leeching into the ecosystem in heavily populated areas. Westerners often call them "Towers of Silence", but the inside pictured here is simply concentric circles of bodies)

These are four **Ghouls**, people who died while accursed of Doorne. They will fight until destroyed, but will not follow a party out of the room.

(Ghoul AC 14, HD 2d8, HP 10 each, Attacks 2 Claws 1d3 one Bite 1d6, Saves: P, Special: Paralysis on hit strength save to avoid 1d4+1 minutes, Darkvision, Alignment CE, XP 20+2/40 each)

Scaling – Adjusting hit points will be the best option, making them ghouls for a stronger party or zombies for a weaker party is an option for large differences.

9j. Hall of the Forgotten Guardians

The walls of this hall are decorated with humans working in mines and building mighty tombs, each leader wearing a pyramid for a hat. Two brightly painted statues stand on the east wall, just over half-way from south to north.

One of the statues is a **Gargoyle**. He will pursue characters throughout this hallway, but not beyond.

(Gargoyle AC 16, HD 5d8, HP 25, Attacks 2 Claws 1d3 one Bite 1d6 Gore 1d4, Saves: P, Special: Freeze, Darkvision 60, Alignment CE, XP 120+5/245)

Scaling – Adjusting Hit Points is, as usual, your best option. Replacing them is an option - Stone Guardians (see area #9e) are slightly harder to fight if the party is weak, and Caryatid Columns (see area #9a) a little easier.

9k. Zombie Guardians

The walls of this room are decorated with deep bas-reliefs showing people clawing their way out of the ground while a man wearing a pyramid hat smiles on. Four desiccated corpses shuffle toward the door, raising their arms and groaning.

These four corpses are **Zombies**, more of Doorne's less faithful followers, serving him better in death than they did in life.

(Zombie AC 12, HD 2d8, HP 10 each, Attacks Slam 1d8, Special: slow, Alignment NE, XP 10+2/30 each)

Scaling – We don't recommend this encounter be scaled. They cannot all be life-and-death fights after all.

AREA KEY

9l. Scarab Guardians

This beautifully decorated room shows a bright sun filling the northwest corner, a green stone floor with an inlay of people dancing around the walls, hands joined. Laying in the center of the floor is a beautifully wrought golden scarab.

The scarab is the key to summoning a **Swarm of Scarab Beetles**. The beetles will rush in from the east and west walls, pouring forth as a flood, converging on the character that picked up the scarab. When the swarm's hit points have been reduced to zero, it will swarm back into the walls, leaving many squished/burnt/sliced bugs.

The scarab really *is* intricately crafted and made of solid gold, with rubies for eyes. But should a character take the scarab, they will not sleep well enough to heal or recover spells until it is returned here. Dropping or selling it will only have it reappear in their path. Each time they sleep, they will dream of being in this room and placing the scarab back in the center of the floor. A *Remove Curse* spell will break this curse, but unless the spell is cast by a priest of level nine or higher, the curse will return after 24 hours.

(Scarab Beetle Swarm AC 16, HD 4d8, HP 20, Attacks 4 Bites 1d3 + Disease, Saves: P, Special: Disease, Alignment NE, XP 60+4/450)

Scaling – After adjusting Hit Points, increasing or decreasing number of attacks per round is the best scaling option.

9m. Temple of the Sphinx

This large room is obviously a temple, and is stunningly decorated. An ironwood podium sits in the center of the south wall, a chair behind it and large statues of seated men with dog heads and pyramid hats flank it. The eyes of the left statue are rubies, the eyes of the right statue are emeralds. Rows of ornately carved benches fill the rest of the room. There are doors on the east, west, and south walls. The door on the west wall is inlaid with a beautiful golden sun, the door on the east wall a mother of pearl moon, and the door on the south wall a brown soapstone pyramid.

The gems in the eyes are real, the rubies worth 400 gold pieces each, the emeralds worth 600 gold pieces each. The inlay material can be carved out of the doors, claiming 10 gold pieces from the sun, 5 gold pieces worth of mother-of-

pearl from the moon, and two gold pieces worth of soapstone from the pyramid. Again, note that if word gets out that the party defiled this most holy of temples, nearly everyone in the desert will be out to kill them.

9n. Tomb Guardians

There are five stone coffins resting upon catafalques in this room, each covered with a bas-relief of a knight with a sword. There are statues of the man wearing a pyramid hat in both the northeast and southeast corners, knights flying on gryphons carved into the walls between them.

This room holds members of the Empire's knightly order The Griffon Blades. The order still exists, but knowledge of this tomb has been lost. The Griffon Blades are an elite unit of knights that ride Griffon nearly exclusively (they ride horses when not on official duty), and are honored across the desert.

Four of these catafalques actually do hold the bodies of famous Griffon Blades, while the center one is home to a **Dark Creeper**. As is their normal behavior, when the party brings light into this room, he will use his darkness and start stealing light sources.

(Dark Creeper AC 20(16 in light), HD 1d10, HP 6, Attacks Short Sword +1 1d6+1, Saves: P, Special: Darkness-6th lvl, Rogue Skills-4th lvl, Alignment NE, XP 11+1/17)

Scaling – This creature is more nuisance than challenge. As such, we don't recommend scaling the encounter.

9o. False Treasure Room

This must be the treasure room of this complex. Paintings on the wall show a man whipping slaves, fighting in war, and lounging with beautiful women. There are two wonderfully crafted ivory chests on the north wall, two more on the south wall. On the west wall stand two golden statues, one of a warrior, the other of a priest, both in ceremonial garb.

The ivory chests are worth 50 gold each. Close inspection will show the ivory to be thin and clad over birch – a soft wood that is marked and dented inside. The first chest on the north wall contains 300 copper pieces of an ancient mint, the second chest on the north wall holds 300 shaved silver pieces worth only 25 gold if a moneychanger weighs them. The first chest on the south wall holds a matched pair of throwing daggers made of bronze with copper wrapped

AREA KEY

leather hilts worth 20 gold pieces as a pair. They are poorly weighted for throwing and suffer a -1 attack penalty when thrown. The last chest holds a suit of chain mail that appears to be made of silver, but is actually pewter coated with silver. It is worth 75 gold pieces as a collector's item, and only provides AC +3.

Total Treasure XP: 323

The warrior statues are covered in fine gold leaf. The gold can be scraped off easily, but is only worth 10 gold pieces. Underneath is worm-eaten birch. Both statues are also trapped. If they are moved before a switch hidden behind the northwest chest is pushed, the entire floor of this room will give way except a two foot ledge in front of the secret door. Those on the ledge can make a Dexterity saving throw (CL 5) to cling to the wall. Those who fail, and anyone else in the room when the floor collapses, will fall 10 feet onto a spiked floor, taking 1d10 damage. The spikes were originally poisoned, but the builders did not anticipate this being a desert when they designed the spikes, and the poison is long gone.

The secret door is well disguised (CL 6), but easy to open once found. If the floor has collapsed, the CL is lowered to 2, simply because there is only a two foot ledge right in front of it.

9p. Tomb of Sia

This room displays a wealth most people can only dream of – buried with the sarcophagus against the west wall. The south wall holds a weapons rack with gilded weapons on it, a closed chest made of ivory, a pile of silken pillows, and an altar with a golden pyramid upon it. The north wall holds a sealed crate, two open chests overflowing with coins and gems, and an ornate chair. The west wall holds an intricately carved sarcophagus with gold inlay flanked by two canopic jars.

This is the actual tomb, and of course Sia was buried with his treasures to take with him to the afterlife. His favorite chairs, the cushions that his concubines sat upon, his coins, his weapons, a crate loaded with his armor, packed the way it was when he traveled in life, along with his beloved scepter.

In a spectacular display of disloyalty that was as rare in the empire of Doorne as it is in modern-day Talifa, Sia's high priest poisoned him, then raised him as a **Wight** to protect the tomb from robbers. The high priest thought to come

back, turn the Wight, and take the treasure, but The Great Destruction came, and all was laid to waste. The priest never returned here. And Sia is here, thirsting for flesh, hoping to finally be allowed peace.

When the first character enters the room, the wight will throw off the lid of the sarcophagus and attack immediately. It will attack relentlessly, chasing the living beings where ever they run, hoping to kill or be killed.

His treasure is real. There are 3000 silver pieces, 500 gold pieces, 20 rubies worth 100 gold each, a *Heavy Scimitar* +1, a *dagger* +2, a decorated suit of *Splint Mail* +1 With a dog head for a helm, and the *Scepter of Ice*.

Total treasure XP Value: 6050

(Wight AC 15, HD 4d12, HP 28, Attacks Slam 1d6, Saves: M, Special: Create Spawn, Energy Drain, Darkvision 60, Alignment LE, XP 100+4/212)

Scaling – For larger or more powerful parties, Sia could be a Wraith or even a Mummy, while scaling Hit Points is best for a smaller party, and making Sia into a Ghast is best for a party that is both smaller and weaker.

Alternate Ending – If the CK wishes, the mystic may have already taken the scepter during the fighting. In that scenario, the scepter will be missing, and the Wight will wail about its theft by “someone like you!” the entire time it is fighting. The party can then track and fight the mystic (a level 5 priest with two level 2 fighter guards) in the desert.

AREA KEY

Scepter of Ice, Relic: The Scepter of Ice was forged during the war that eventually turned the empire into desert. It is a silver scepter with a diamond embedded in the head. It functions as a Staff of Frost, with an additional power. Each morning, as the wielder offers thanks to Mighty Doorne, if they are facing Khozan (east of the pyramid), one charge is restored to the staff. Only one charge may be restored this way each day. It has a limited form of telepathy and will impart this information to any faithful of Doorne that touches it. Should the Scepter's charges ever reach zero, this function stops working, and the Scepter will recharge at a rate of one charge a day once it is no longer in the possession of the character that drained it of charges. Non-faithful will be frozen for 4d6 damage when touching the Scepter. Failing to drop it immediately will see an additional 4d6 damage dealt the next round.

There are many myths and legends about the Scepter of Ice, but few know what it looks like. As such, only a small number of people would be willing to pay what it is worth – 30,000 gold pieces – and some of those people are less than honest.



NEW MONSTERS

SCARAB SWARM

A scarab beetle with a shiny carapace scuttles through the light, seeming scared of the light and the people that hold it, peering into the darkness inside the tomb. There is a faint skittering sound from the darkness where the scarab first appeared. Suddenly, thousands of the beetles come rushing out of the darkness. Swords cut them, but for each beetle they cut, hundreds more continue to rush forward. The screams of the invaders choke off as scarabs fill the open mouths, biting as they go, each trying to grow larger than the others...

In the dark recesses of the earth, where the sun rarely shines, there are more insects than there are people. These insects survive on detritus and grubs, but prefer something more substantial to spur on growth of the swarm.

Swarming over any living thing in their path, the Scarab Swarm will leave little but bones in its wake. Thankfully, they are rarely found outside of deep caves and enclosed tombs.

Module Usage: A cursed artifacts calls forth a Swarm of scarabs in this module. The artifact is tied loosely to the desert god, but this is for flavor only.



SCARAB SWARM

Number: 1

Size: Medium/Large

Armor Class: 16

Hit Dice: Medium - 4 (d8), Large 8 (d8)

Hit Points: 20 or 40

Move: 50 ft.

Attacks: 4 bites 1d3

Special: Disease

Treasure: 3

XP: 60 + 4 per HP or 375 + 8 per HP

Disease: Any creature bitten by a swarm has to make a successful constitution to avoid being infected by a disease. The Castle Keeper should refer to the Castle Keepers Guide for examples, but the disease should have a base CL of 2.

(Scarab Beetle Swarm AC 16, HD 4d8, HP 20, Attacks 4 Bites 1d3 + Disease, Move 50, Saves: P, Special: Disease, Alignment NE, XP 60+4/450)

NEW MONSTERS

CULTISTS

A man dressed in all white slips through the window and looks about the room. Spotting his target, he slips a half-written letter from the desk into his robes. He glances about the room, and steps quietly to the door. Cracking the door and quietly peering through the crack, he spies the author of the note. Bursting the door open and calling upon his brotherhood, the white-robed man attacks...

The historical myths and reality of cults and secret organizations are numerous. The organizations vary in purpose and intent, but motivation is cult following – of a leader or a splinter of a religion. These groups aim for a specific goal... Protection of a sacred relic, changing the world, serving their deity, changing rulers... The number of possible goals is innumerable. What is constant between them is that they are secretive, constantly working in small groups, and when they commit, they commit in large numbers.

We do not delve into all possible cultists here, but only those important to this module – The Derivesh. As noted at the end of the Derivesh description, this module has one sub-set of Derivesh, the Halriadah.



Desert Cultists – The Derivesh

In the heart of the desert reside those who believe the world has gone wrong, and that they are the ones to right it. Some believe they must keep information and power out of the hands of those who would abuse it. Some believe they should withdraw from contact with all men. Some believe they must right the wrongs with action. The Derivesh are this last kind. They believe they must strike out firmly against those not of the desert to correct all of the wrong in the world.

Strictly ordered to reflect the needs of living in the desert and the martial life they have chosen, the Derivesh are always Lawful in alignment, but their ranks include people who are both good and evil. They are united in a single purpose, and while cultists vary in this purpose, the Derivesh focus on returning the destroyed desert empire to its former glory. Though centuries have passed, their faith has not. It is their belief that Mighty Doorne will return his people to greatness when the time comes. Until that time, the Derivesh must persevere, and fight for the desert, against those without who would weaken their people, and those within that would harm those same people.

The Derivesh have a hierarchy, with Cultists at the bottom, Fanatics above them, and Priests above that. The Derivesh have no single Cult Leader, but each group in the Derivesh is controlled by a Minor Leader. No group of Derivesh is the same, but generally for each ten cultists there will be four fanatics and a priest. If a group is more than six cultists there will be a Minor Leader coordinating their efforts.

Fanaticism

The Derivesh are fanatical. There is nothing that will turn them from their purpose. They do not make morale checks, the only time one runs from a fight is if he is ordered to go pass a warning to others.

Intense Focus

The Derivesh train constantly. This grants them a bonus of +1 on all attack and damage rolls. Some few specialize in thievery instead. These individuals instead get a +1 bonus on sneaking and thieving rolls. Other focuses are possible.

Module Usage: The Insemi are a sect of Derivesh cultists who believe that Doorne expects men to return water to the desert, and only then will he be pleased with his creations. Unlike most cultists, they train with great scimitars, and stat blocks above reflect this fact.

NEW MONSTERS

DERIVESH CULTIST

Number: 5-50 (1d6)
Size: Medium
Alignment: LN
Armor Class: 12
Hit Dice: 1 (d8)
Hit Points: 5
Move: 30 ft.
Attacks: Scimitar (1d6)
Special: +1 on attack and damage rolls
Treasure: 1
XP: 7+1 per HP
Fanaticism: Derivesh Cultists never check morale.

DERIVESH FANATIC

Number: 2-12 (1)
Size: Medium
Alignment: LN
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 2 (d10)
Hit Points: 11
Move: 30 ft.
Attacks: Scimitar (1d6)
Special: +1 on attack and damage rolls
Treasure: 1
XP: 15+2 per HP
Fanaticism: Derivesh Fanatics never check morale.

DERIVESH PRIEST

Number: 2-12 (1)
Size: Medium
Alignment: LN
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 2 (d10)
Hit Points: 11
Move: 30 ft.
Attacks: Heavy Mace (1d10)
Special: +1 on attack and damage rolls
Treasure: 1
XP: 20+2 per HP
Fanaticism: Derivesh Priests never check morale.
Spells: (4/4/2) Detect Alignment, Detect Magic, First Aid, Light, 2xCLW, Sanctuary, Shield of Faith, Delay Poison, Detect Traps

DERIVESH SUBLEADER

Number: 1 (0)
Size: Medium
Alignment: LN
Armor Class: 15
Hit Dice: 5 (d8)
Hit Points: 25
Move: 30 ft.
Attacks: Scimitar (1d6)
Special: +1 on attack and damage rolls
Treasure: 2
XP: 180+5 per HP
Fanaticism: Derivesh Priests never check morale.
Spells: (4/4/2) Detect Alignment, Detect Magic, First Aid, Light, 2xCLW, Sanctuary, Shield of Faith, Delay Poison, Detect Traps
Invoke Derivesh: The Derivesh Subleader can rally the faithful by shouting out to them. All Derivesh who can hear him speak out are +1 to hit and +1 AC. This effect lasts for 1d6 rounds.

(Derivesh Cultist AC 12, HD 1d8, HP 5 each, Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Fanaticism, +1 on attack and damage, Alignment LN, XP 7+1/12 each)

(Derivesh Fanatic AC 15, HD 2d10, HP 11, Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Special: +1 on attack and damage, Alignment LN, XP 15+2/37 each)

(Derivesh Priest AC 15, HD 2d10, HP 11, Attacks Heavy Mace 1d8, Spells, Special +1 attack and damage, Alignment LN, XP 72 each) Suggested spells: Detect Alignment, Detect Magic, First Aid, Light, 2xCLW, Sanctuary, Shield of Faith, Delay Poison, Detect Traps, Alignment LN, XP 20+2/42)

(Derivesh Subleader AC 15, HD 5d8, HP 25, Attacks Scimitar 1d6, Special +1 attack and damage, Fanaticism, Spells, Invoke Derivesh, Alignment Any Lawful, , XP 180+5/305) Suggested spells: Detect Alignment, Detect Magic, First Aid, Light, 2xCLW, Sanctuary, Shield of Faith, Delay Poison, Detect Traps

CONVERSION NOTES

HAYAWIYYA

NUMBER: 1-4
TYPE: Extraplanar
INT: Animal
ALIGNMENT: Neutral
SIZE: Small
AC: 14
HD: 4 (d8)
PRIME: P
MOVE: 20 ft.
ATTACKS: 2 Pseudopods (1d6) or slam (1d8)
TREASURE: 3
SAVES: P
XP: 90+4
SPECIAL: Animation, Drowning, Water Affinity



Hayawiyya (also known as *Silent Killers* and *Liquid Life*) are creatures native to the elemental plane of water that have been specifically summoned to our plane. They are amorphous blobs that appear to be water, always of blue to grey to white in coloration. In water, their colorations make it difficult to see them unless one is looking (Wisdom check to notice, CL 3). They can be summoned into water, into a body, or into a container. When summoned into water, they will lie in wait for a humanoid to come to the water. When summoned into a body, they will animate it and make it their home. When summoned into a container, they can be poured out over water or a body, and they will take over that home and make it their own.

Hayawiyya never come to our plane voluntarily, they are always summoned, and always with a purpose. Those who summon a Hayawiyya without a purpose either fail in their summoning, or find that the creature so summoned has one purpose – kill the summoner. Once their purpose has been completed, the Hayawiyya returns to the elemental plane of water. Some purposes are vague, causing the Hayawiyya end up stuck in our plane. Those Hayawiyya become hateful, and kill everything in their path, hoping to somehow complete their task.

COMBAT: The Hayawiyya in its natural form attacks with two pseudopods, attempting to drown an opponent. If an opponent is disabled in any way (paralyzed, dead, unconscious), the Hayawiyya will take one round to pour into that opponent's mouth and then rise as an Animation, attacking with slam attacks, much as a zombie would.

ANIMATION: When a Hayawiyya is exposed to a body or a person unable to move, they will animate it, much like a zombie. Hayawiyya zombies have the same statistics as the Hayawiyya, and can be identified by changes to their coloring – skin goes grey, and the whites of the animated person's eyes go blue. Hayawiyya are summoned for a purpose, and will animate a body to achieve this purpose. Through their animation, the Hayawiyya is able to communicate in any language the body knew. A party that promises to help complete the Hayawiyya's mission may leave it in peace. Hayawiyya zombies cannot be turned.

DROWNING: When a Hayawiyya is fighting a humanoid, their pseudopods hit the face on a natural 20. A hit to the face allows the pseudopod to rush into the mouth and strive for the lungs. A PC must make a CL 0 Constitution save this round, and adding one to the CL each round until the creature is killed (at which point the PC expels water out of their lungs), or a Constitution Check is failed. If a constitution check is failed, the PC falls at -7 and loses one HP per round until dying at -10. For complete drowning rules, see the CKG.

WATER AFFINITY: The Hayawiyya is attracted to water, and outside of combat situations will stop at each water source it finds to swim, whether animating a body or not.

ESSENCE OF HAYAWIYYA: When a Hayawiyya is summoned into a container, it is trapped within until released. Very rarely, a Hayawiyya is found in this form. The Hayawiyya appears as a vial of water that "doesn't move right", and occasionally manifests an eye to stare at the owner. If the container is opened and tipped over the mouth of someone incapacitated (sleeping, paralyzed, unconscious, dead, etc.), the Hayawiyya will crawl in and kill/animate the person. It will then set out to fulfill the mission it was summoned for, no matter how long it has been. On occasion such a Hayawiyya will be trapped on our plane because so much time has passed while it was contained that it cannot complete its mission. In this case, the Hayawiyya can be bargained with by a wizard or priest of sufficient power. The wizard or priest must be able to, and agree to, use magical means to return the Hayawiyya to its home plane, then the creature will change its focus to the wizard's goal.

HAYAWIYYA IN NORDALIA

Hayawiyya is the name given these spirits by inhabitants of the Sevich Desert. They are considered a mythical, almost god-like creature that is much feared. Parents teach their children that only those who are faithful and honest can avoid the Hayawiyya.

In the far north, they are known as Liquid Life, and are associated with the serpent goddess. Her servants, they are known to hunt down those who stray from her teachings.

In the lands to the northwest – the Raiderspoint Alliance, Kingdom of Dilorn, and even the Kingdom of Trioton – they are known as The Silent Killers. Believed to be used by a clutch of assassins to kill targets in their sleep. This leaves a body with no signs of foul play.

CONVERSION NOTES

Overview of Adventure Tomes

Death at the Oasis is a standalone One Night Adventure, but it is also the last *Tale* in a series of One Night Adventures that can be connected together with the *Port of Dakhalla* (AT-4). If played as a series, all four *Tales* (ONA13, ONA14, ONA15, ONA16) plus *The Port of Dakhalla* combine to make the *Port of Dakhalla Adventure Tome*.

Placement in your game world

If this module is used as a stand-alone module, it plays well if placed anywhere in the desert, desolate enough that the waters of the Oasis are necessary. If played as part of the Adventure Tome, it should be placed with the Adventure Tome and our map or a variant of your creation should place it within a week's travel of the port.

Scaling encounters

This module is designed to challenge a party of second to fourth level characters. For most parties, inline scaling notes should suffice. Generally speaking, reducing Hit Points per Hit Die is enough to take care of the problem. If the module is to be used with a weak party or in a world where characters are generated using the straight 3d6 system, reducing the type of creature – such as replacing the Zombies with Skeletons is an easy transcription that plays well.

Using *Death at the Oasis* with Other Game Systems

Death at the Oasis was designed for use with the *Castles and Crusades*® role playing game, and playtesting was performed with that system.

The hardest part of conversions will be the new monsters – Derivesh can map to human variants in most systems, but Hiyawwiya will have to be converted. Scarab Beetle swarms are easy enough in most SRD-based systems. For your converting convenience, here is the list of creatures to translate

Encounter Key	Number	Type of Creature
Second Raiding Party	4	Derivesh Fanatic
Second Raiding Party	1	Cult of Water Priest (Lvl 4)
1	2	Zombies
3	5	Zombies
4	1	Mastiff (Wolf)
5	1	Commoner, Adult
5	1	Commoner, Child
7	4	Hiyawwiya Zombies
8	1	Lesser Elemental (Mud)
9a	2	Caryatid Columns
9b	12	Giant Ants
9d	8	Skeletons
9e	1	Stone Guardian
9f	1	Minotaur
9g	1	Coffer Corpse
9h	1	Zombie, Monster (Ogre)
9i	4	Ghouls
9j	1	Gargoyle
9k	4	Zombies
9l	1	Insect Swarm (Scarab Beetles)
9n	1	Dark Creeper
9p	1	Wight

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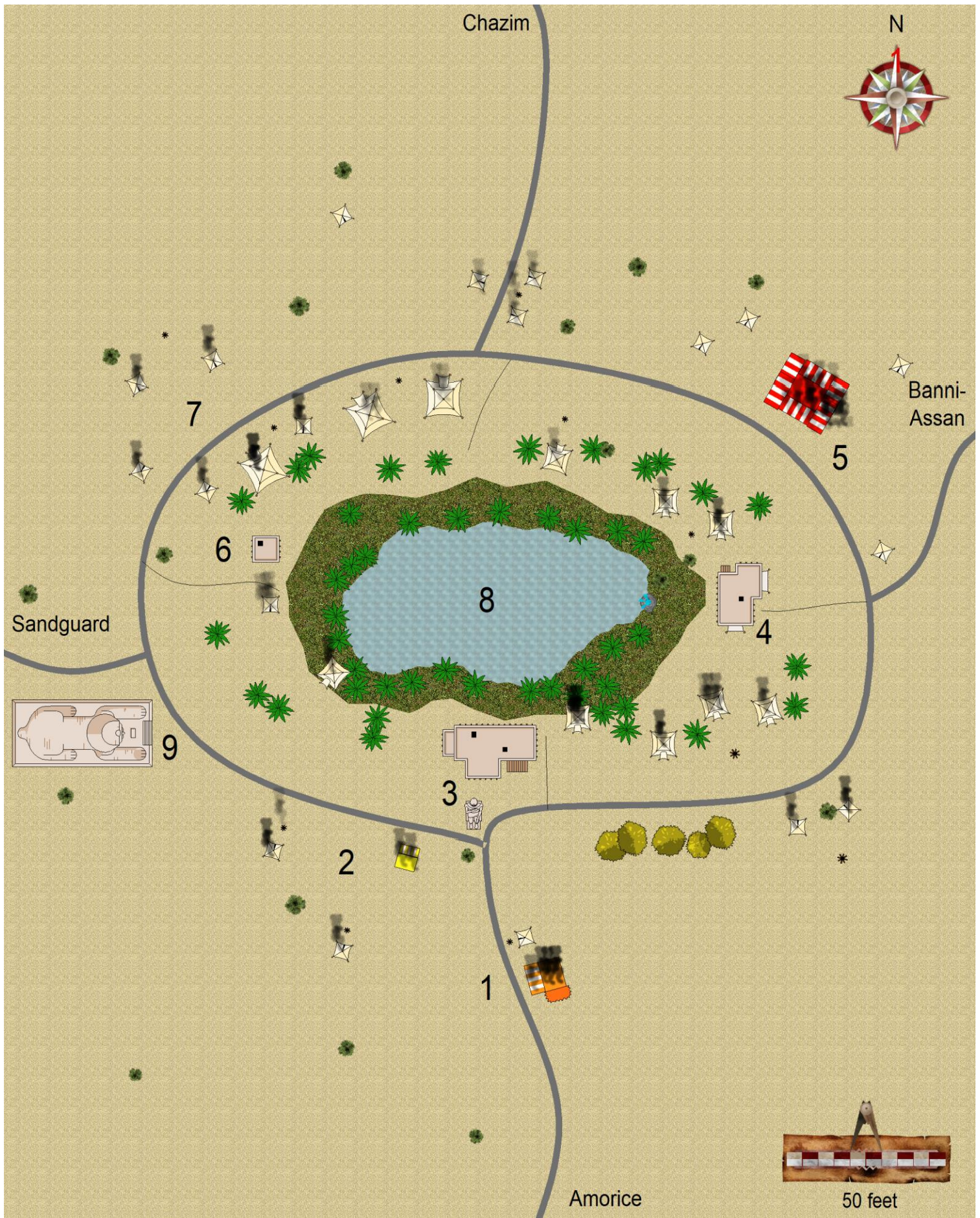
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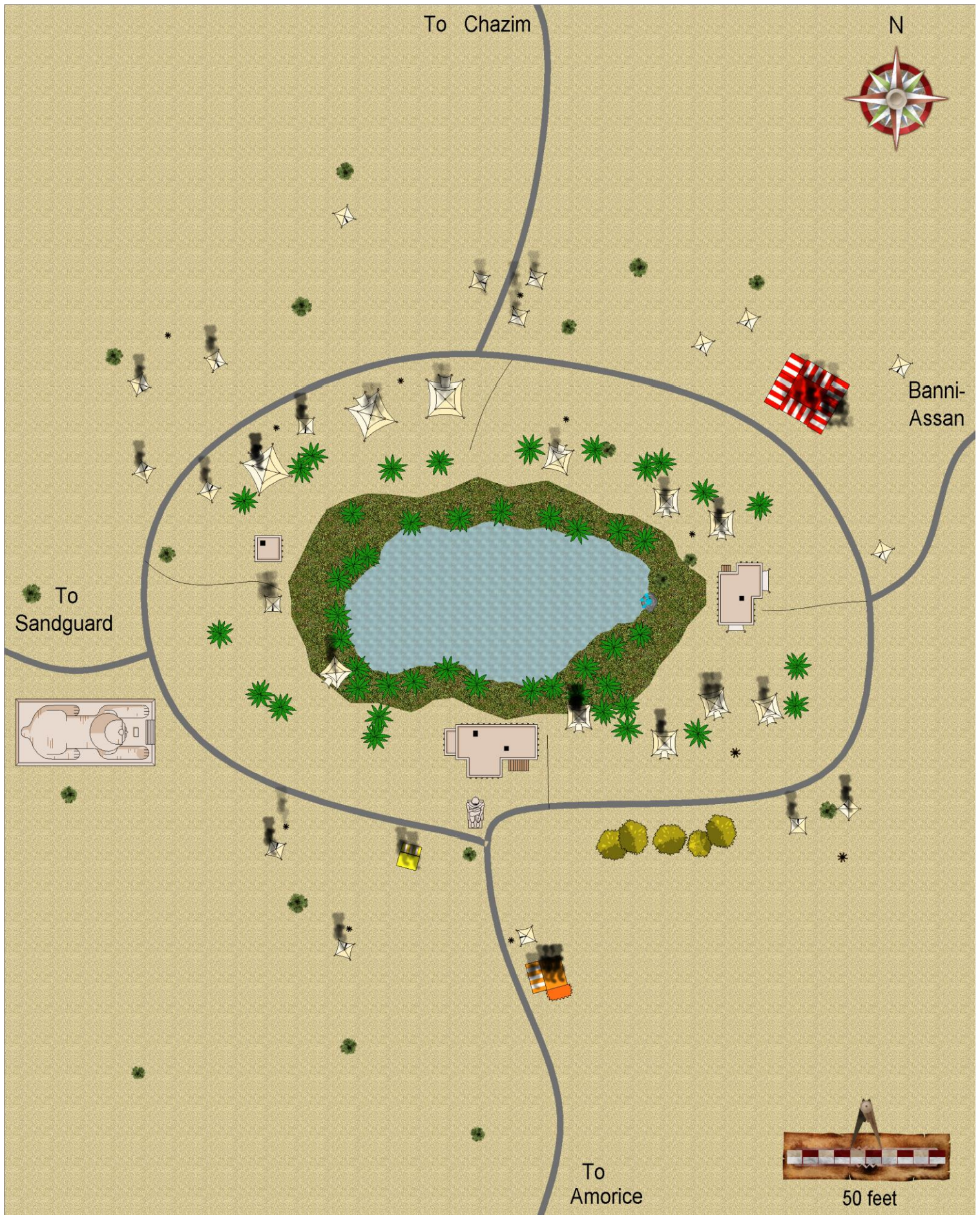
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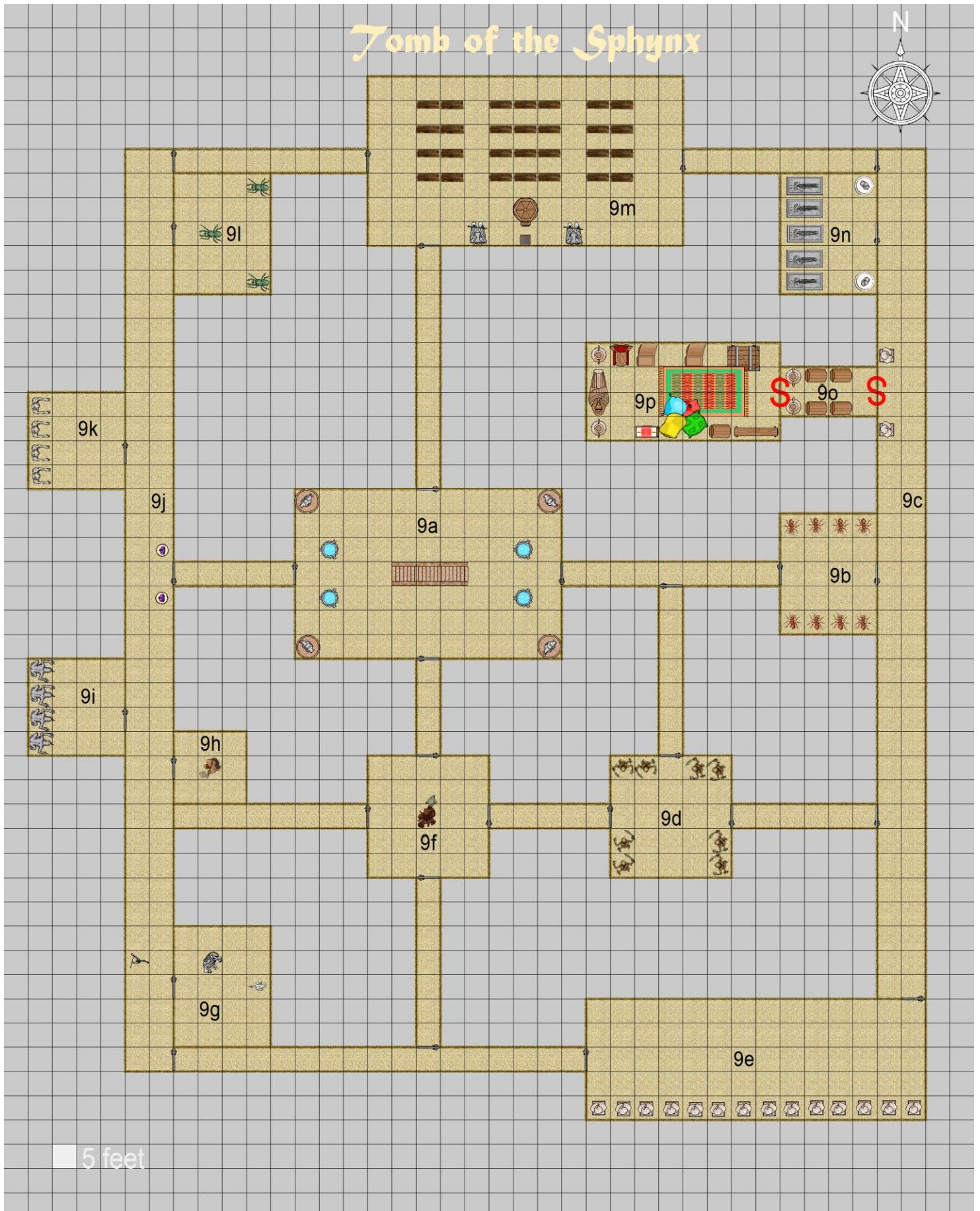
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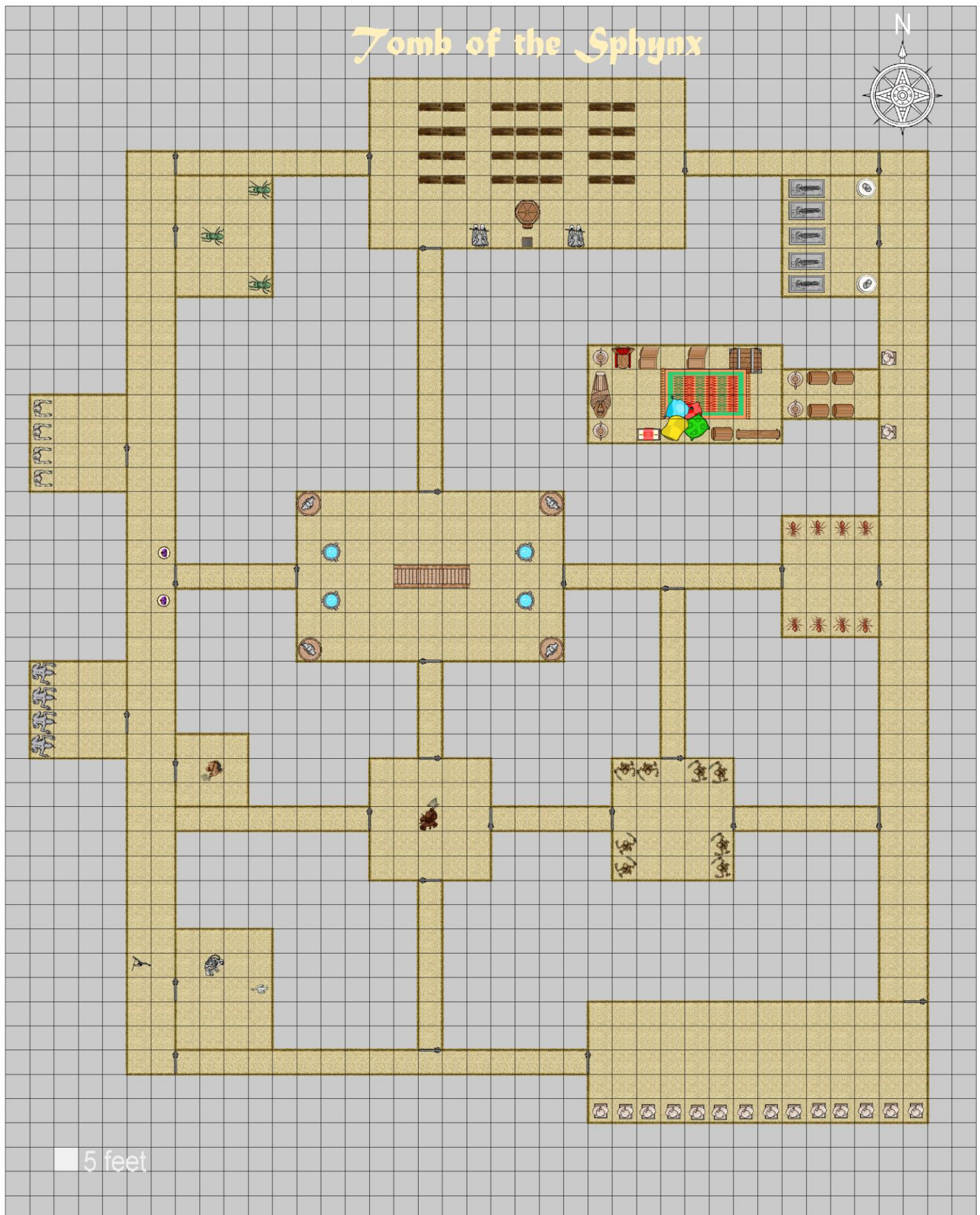
OASIS AT SIA – PLAY MAP

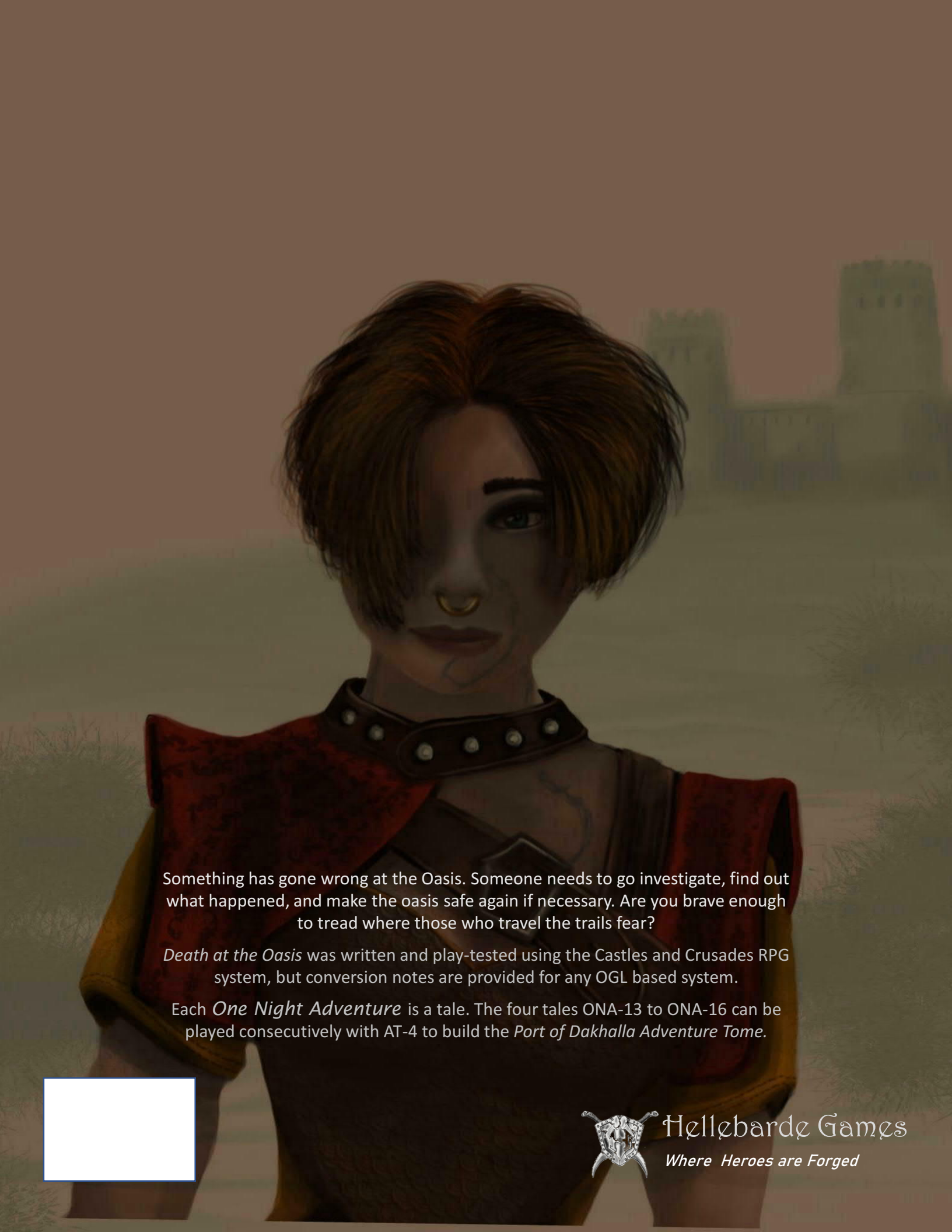


TOMB OF THE SPHYNX – CK MAP



TOMB OF THE SPHYNX – PLAY MAP





Something has gone wrong at the Oasis. Someone needs to go investigate, find out what happened, and make the oasis safe again if necessary. Are you brave enough to tread where those who travel the trails fear?

Death at the Oasis was written and play-tested using the Castles and Crusades RPG system, but conversion notes are provided for any OGL based system.

Each *One Night Adventure* is a tale. The four tales ONA-13 to ONA-16 can be played consecutively with AT-4 to build the *Port of Dakhalla Adventure Tome*.



Hellebarde Games

Where Heroes are Forged