

# GAMERMASTER™

## The Vault OF THE Whispering Tyrant™



MINI  
ADVENTURE  
INSIDE

### COMPLEAT ENCOUNTER™

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# The Vault OF THE Whispering Tyrant

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ANY SETTING • HIGH-LEVEL (13TH–16TH) • DUNGEON CRAWL

The lich-king Tar-Baphon stirs in his secret vault, sending monsters to attack perceived enemies and seizing control of others' minds to further his strange plans. Under his influence, kings babble nonsense at

royal weddings, old friends turn on each other, and diplomats attack their hosts. Tar-Baphon roams the area near his vault like a spirit, never physically leaving his lair but expanding his reach every day. Dedicated heroes must find his lair and destroy him before his meddling leads to war.

This Compleat Encounter™ uses the information found on the maps and data cards in this set to create a mini-adventure. The cards include information and game rules for the lich-king Tar-Baphon, his mummy-queen Lar-Tasha, and an ancient magic item called the *soulstone* which feeds on and protects his phylactery. You'll need the cards for the relevant game rule information when running this encounter. See the Scaling the Encounter box on Card 4 for tips on how to scale this adventure to a variety of character levels.

Although the miniatures, maps, and plots in this Compleat Encounter can be used with any fantasy roleplaying game, the rules included herein are compatible with the Open Game Licensed rules of the world's most popular RPG. You can download a copy of those rules at [dzosrd.org](http://dzosrd.org).

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The mighty wizard Tar-Baphon ruled a large part of the world long ago, uniting a dozen barbarian tribes under his rule. Tar-Baphon's magic repelled all invaders, but as the decades passed his body began to grow weak and he feared for the future of his people. Tar-Baphon chose to become a lich so he could watch over them for all time, corrupting his soul to ensure their protection. He ruled for a hundred years, becoming increasingly harsh

with his subjects as the evil power of his transformation slowly suffused his soul. When they murdered his beloved consort-queen and bodyguard, Lar-Tasha, the lich embalmed her body and brought her back as a mummy. He then punished those responsible and their families for two generations. When his subjects finally rose up against him in retaliation for this punishment, Tar-Baphon took his queen and whisked her away with magic to the vault where he had given them both the gift of undeath.

Tar-Baphon has now spent a thousand years with only his silent queen and whatever he can conjure in his magic circle to keep him company. He descended into madness long ago and now relives the years he ruled his long-dead empire. Though insane, he recognizes intruders to his lair and deals with them harshly, shouting the names of those who betrayed him in the past and hurling curses and insults in a dead language.

Though most years he does nothing but rest in his bedroom or in Queen Lar-Tasha's sarcophagus, every few decades his mind becomes clear and he meddles with the outside world for a short while by conjuring creatures and sending them to attack nearby settlements or by manipulating powerful people with remote enchantment. These times of clarity rarely last



more than a few days, but every few hundred years he remains lucid for several weeks, and now is one such time. Tar-Baphon has been scrying on his old haunts and the areas near his vault, extending his hand like a skeletal puppeteer and seizing control of whatever catches his interest. He perceives the modern kingdoms as an affront to his rule and now tries to turn them against each other so he can gain control of them.

Long ago, before his retreat to the vault, Tar-Baphon bonded his soul to the minor artifact called the *soulstone*. In addition to concealing his phylactery, this gives him additional powers shown on the card describing that item. The *soulstone* slavishly follows behind him wherever he goes in the vault.

## USING THIS COMPLEAT ENCOUNTER

The PCs may resemble some of Tar-Baphon's old minions or enemies, one of their NPC allies may fall under the influence of his spells, or the PCs might accidentally get in the way of some creature he summoned or controls. A scholarly PC may find a record of the ancient legend of the mad lich-king, or a necromancer may find a treatise on lichdom penned by Tar-Baphon and want to find out what happened to its author.

The description of the vault is meant to include enough detail and ideas that you can use it as the

setting of any other adventure involving powerful intelligent undead. If the party is too low level to defeat Tar-Baphon, you can still use the vault as the lair for any undead villain in your campaign, and the miniatures provided in this set can likewise serve as less-powerful foes.

## VAULT OF THE WHISPERING TYRANT ENCOUNTER KEY

The Vault of the Whispering Tyrant is a small crypt and magical sanctum hidden deep within a mountain peak. Powerful magic shrouds the labyrinthine passages that lead to it, and the route contains several conventional secret doors requiring DC 20 Search checks to find. As Tar-Baphon never physically leaves his vault, and most of the creatures he summons leave no tracks, finding the exact path is difficult.

The passages to the vault are 5–10 feet wide and rarely more than 5 feet tall. Dread wraith and flesh golem sentries watch over the tunnels, waiting in alcoves or hiding incorporeally within the walls.

The vault is a natural cavern that Tar-Baphon shaped and smoothed with magic. Sealed behind great stone doors and warded with spells, the vault was furnished with items transported here magically by spells or conjured slave creatures. As its inhabitants have no need to eat or breathe, it remains sealed for years at a time, empty of provisions and its air foul and stale.

- **Dread Wraiths (2):** hp 104; MM p. 258.
- **Flesh Golems (4):** hp 79; MM p. 135.

## GENERAL TRAITS

The lich has used *permanency* to make the following effect permanent throughout the vault.

*Mage's Private Sanctum* (Caster Level 12): This renders the vault and creatures within it immune to *scrying* effects and *detect thoughts*. Creatures outside the vault looking in see only dark fog, and the spell blocks sound going in or out.

The walls and doors are made of common dark gray stone. The doors are magically reinforced and locked.

**Doors:** Hardness 10; 170 hit points; Open Lock DC 30; break DC 35.

## I. ENTRANCE

Because of the *mage's private sanctum* spell, any creature trying to look into this area from outside the vault sees an impenetrable fog—more dense even than normal thick fog, which allows 5 ft. of visibility; creatures cannot see any distance across the edge of the effect. Once past the threshold of the effect, the area appears as follows:

Dead, stale air fills this ten-foot-tall chamber with a putrid stink. Walls and floors are made of plain gray stone, covered in a thick layer of dust. Two plain stone doors stand in the center of the north and east walls.



Any noise or activity is likely to attract the attention of the dread wraith in area 2.

## 2. GUARD AND TRAP ROOM (EL 13)

The walls of this chamber are carved with what appear to be hundreds of kneeling figures, stretching all the way around the room. The door in the eastern wall has been carved in the likeness of a tall human male richly dressed in opulent robes and wearing a crown capped with two large horns that curve back above his head.

The 5-foot square in the center of this room hides two connected traps. The first is a magical *mass suggestion* spell, which suggests that everyone in the room sit down and relax for a while. The second is a pressure plate that causes the walls of the chamber to close in and crush everything in the room. In addition to the traps, a dread wraith flits about this room, hiding within the walls. If it hears noise in area 1 or the stairwell to the east, it investigates; otherwise it waits here. If forced out of the room (by turning or by losing most of its hit points) it goes to the lich and then the mummy to tell them of the invaders.

- **Dread Wraith:** 58 hp; MM p. 258.
- **Mass Suggestion Trap:** CR 7; magic device;

proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell *mass suggestion* (CL 12th, Will DC 19 negates); multiple targets (up to 12 creatures in the room); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

- **Crushing Room Trap:** CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; walls move together (16d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft.-by-15-ft. room); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 20.

## 3. STUDY

This appears to be some kind of study, with an ornate writing desk and several bookshelves crammed with books. There is a plain stone door in the east wall, and a passageway leads off to the north.

This area is Tar-Baphon's study. He prepares his spells daily at the desk. The bookshelves contain his spellbooks and other records relating to maintaining his ancient kingdom. The records are valuable to sages interested in ancient history, and may be sold to such a person for 2,000 gp.

A permanent audible *alarm* spell wards the stairway between this room and area 4. Both Tar-Baphon and his mummy consort know the password to bypass the spell (xorcanix).

## 4. MUMMY-QUEEN'S SARCOPHAGUS (EL 12)

The far end of this room has a large stone sarcophagus covered with intricate carvings of men and women worshipping a radiant female. Paintings on the wall show servants and slaves bringing gifts and making submissive gestures.

Queen Lar-Tasha usually rests in her sarcophagus here, but if notified by the dread wraith (area 2) or her king, she goes to Tar-Baphon. Because of the *alarm* spell in her hallway (see area 3) she always knows if someone approaches her room. She does not tolerate any living things disturbing her rest and immediately attacks any intruders.

- **Mummy Queen Lar-Tasha:** hp 89; Card 8.

## 5. LAB AND MAGIC CIRCLE

One half of this room has a worktable and a pair of shelves filled with alchemical and magical tools and reagents; the other half is empty except for a large magic circle inscribed on the ground. A strong wind blows through the room toward the open hallway.



The lab is where Tar-Baphon researches new spells and conjures creatures to serve his will. The lab area contains fragmentary notes on many of the spells he has researched (worth 2,000 gp to an arcane spellcaster trying to recreate new spells) and 2,000 gp worth of materials used to test and scribe spells.

Because of the spells and materials used in making the magic circle, anyone using it to conjure a creature (whether using a calling or summoning spell) gains a +1 bonus to their caster level or to the DC of the spell (caster's choice). If alerted to the presence of intruders, Tar-Baphon tries to get to this area so he can summon one or more creatures to wear down his enemies before returning to his balcony in area 6, hopefully with his queen in tow.

## 6. CRYPT (EL 16)

A small balcony on the northern wall overlooks this large, cold chamber. Six massive stone sarcophagi dot the room, each covered with an intricate set of carvings depicting various battle scenes. In each carving, the same powerful robed figure watches over and commands the activities of the others. A dark passageway leads off to the west, while two stone doors stand on the eastern wall. An ornate throne rests on the balcony above.

The sarcophagi in the crypt contain dead bodies of valued lackeys Tar-Baphon brought here in case he needed undead servants in the afterlife. He forgot all about them once he arrived, however, and now nothing remains in the sarcophagi except dust and bones.

Tar-Baphon prefers to attack from the balcony. He uses area spells on enemies within the room or singles out heavily armored opponents to target with enchantment spells. If Lar-Tasha is present, she dances among the PCs using her mobility to engage one enemy at a time for as long as possible. She has evasion, so her king can launch area spells without any serious worry of harming her. If brought below 25 hit points he uses *dimension door* to escape, bringing Lar-Tasha and the *soulstone* with him if possible.

• **Lich King Tar-Baphon:** hp 98; Card 6.

## CONCLUDING THE ENCOUNTER

With the lich and his queen defeated, the PCs have dealt with the source of the region's problems, but they may still need to play peacemaker and explain who was responsible. Unless they destroy Tar-Baphon's phylactery, the lich will return and want vengeance. If the PCs keep the *soulstone*, other spellcasters (particularly undead) eventually hear of it and make plans to take it for their own, resulting in repeated attacks on the PCs.

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## SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

In place of the guardians listed in the area descriptions, the vault can feature different mixes of monsters to accommodate different party levels.

**Beginning Parties (Levels 1–4):** Area 2: 1 shadow and scything blade trap; area 3: historical documents worth 250 gp; area 4: 1 bugbear zombie; area 5: 500 gp worth of scroll- and spell-creating materials; area 6: gems worth 100 gp each, mummy. The *soulstone* merely provides fast healing 5 to the master of the vault.

**Low-Level Parties (Levels 5–8):** Area 2: 1 wraith and ceiling pendulum trap; area 3: historical documents worth 500 gp; area 4: 1 mummy; area 5: 1,000 worth of scroll- and spell-creating materials; area 6: gems worth 100 gp each, vampire Wizard 6. The *soulstone* merely provides fast healing 5 to the master of the vault.

**Medium-Level Parties (Levels 9–12):** Area 2: 1 dread wraith and well-camouflaged pit trap; area 3: historical documents worth 1,000 gp; area 4: 1 mohrg; area 5: 2,000 worth of scroll- and spell-creating materials; area 6: gems worth 100 gp each, vampire Wizard 9.

**Heroic Parties (Levels 17–20):** Area 2: 3 dread wraiths, crushing room trap, and *wall of the banshee* trap; area 3: historical documents worth 4,000 gp; area 4: 1 greater mummy; area 5: 8,000 gp worth of scroll- and spell-creating materials; area 6: gems worth 100 gp each, advance lich to Wizard 18.







**Tar-Baphon, male human lich Wiz12:** CR 14; Medium undead (augmented humanoid); HD 12d12; hp 83 (98 with *false life*); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Base Atk/Grp +6/+8; Atk +1 *unholy battleaxe* +5 melee (1d8+3/x3) or touch +8 melee (1d8+5 [Will DC 18 half] plus paralysis [Fort DC 18 negates]); Full Atk +1 *unholy battleaxe* +5/+0 (1d8+3/x3) and touch +3 melee (1d8+5 [Will DC 18 half] plus paralysis [Fort DC 18 negates]); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA paralyzing touch, fear aura (DC 16), spells; SQ DR 15/bludgeoning and magic, immune to cold, electricity, polymorph, and mind affecting, summon familiar (weasel), turn resistance +4, undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +13; Str 14, Dex 13, Con —, Int 24, Wis 12, Cha 14; MM 166.

**Skills:** Concentration +18, Hide +9, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (the planes) +22, Listen +13, Move Silently +9, Search +15, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +24, Spot +14.

**Feats:** Alertness (as long as familiar is within arm's reach), Craft Wand<sup>B</sup>, Craft Wondrous Item<sup>B</sup>, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll<sup>B</sup>, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (evocation).

**Languages:** Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, 1 ancient language.

**Wizard Spells Prepared** (+7 ranged touch): 0—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 19), *detect magic*, *mage hand*; 1st—*expeditious*

*retreat*, *mage armor*\*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*; 2nd—*false life*\*, *hideous laughter* (DC 21), *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*\*, *web*; 3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *fireball* (DC 21), *fly*, *hold person* (DC 22) *suggestion* (DC 22); 4th—*charm monster* (DC 23), *confusion* (DC 23), *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*; 5th—*cloudkill* (DC 22), *dominate person* (DC 24), *quicken magic missile*, *mind fog* (DC 24); 6th—*chain lightning* (DC 24), *mass suggestion* (DC 25), *transformation*.

\* Already cast.

**Possessions:** +1 *unholy battleaxe*, *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +4, *headband of intellect* +4, *potion of bull's strength* (3), *scroll of chain lightning* (CL 12th), *scroll of gust of wind*, *wand of acid arrow* (11 charges), *wand of false life* (8 charges), *wand of invisibility* (10 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 8th, 5 charges), *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 8 charges), 1,000 gp worth of royal regalia and other jewelry, silk rope.

**Spellbook:** as above plus 0—all; 1st—*alarm*, *animate rope*, *burning hands*, *charm person*, *color spray*, *comprehend languages*, *disguise self*, *grease*, *jump*, *obscuring mist*, *sleep*, *true strike*; 2nd—*arcane lock*, *cat's grace*, *command undead*, *darkvision*, *daze monster*, *detect thoughts*, *fox's cunning*, *gust of wind*, *locate object*, *rope trick*; 3rd—*deep slumber*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *magic circle against good*, *nondetection*, *summon monster III*; 4th—*animate dead*, *fire shield*, *lesser geas*, *resilient sphere*, *scrying*, *stone shape*, *stoneskin*; 5th—*cone of cold*, *mage's private sanctum*, *lesser planar binding*, *sending*, *summon monster V*, *teleport*; 6th—*geas/quest*, *guards and wards*, *planar binding*, *summon monster VI*.









**Lar-Tasha, female human mummy Mnk7:** CR 12; Medium undead; HD 8d12 plus 7d8; hp 89; Init +6; Spd 50 ft.; AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 25; Base Atk/Grp +9/+17; Atk unarmed strike +17 melee (1d8+8 plus mummy rot); Full Atk unarmed strike +16/+16/+11 melee (1d8+8 plus mummy rot); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; SA despair (DC 20), flurry of blows, ki strike (magic), mummy rot (DC 20), Stunning Fist (DC 15), unarmed strike; SQ darkvision 60 ft., DR 5/—, evasion, fast movement, fire vulnerability, still mind, slow fall 20 ft., purity of body, undead traits, wholeness of body; AL LE; SV Fort +10, Ref +12, Will +14; Str 27, Dex 14, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16; MM p. 190.

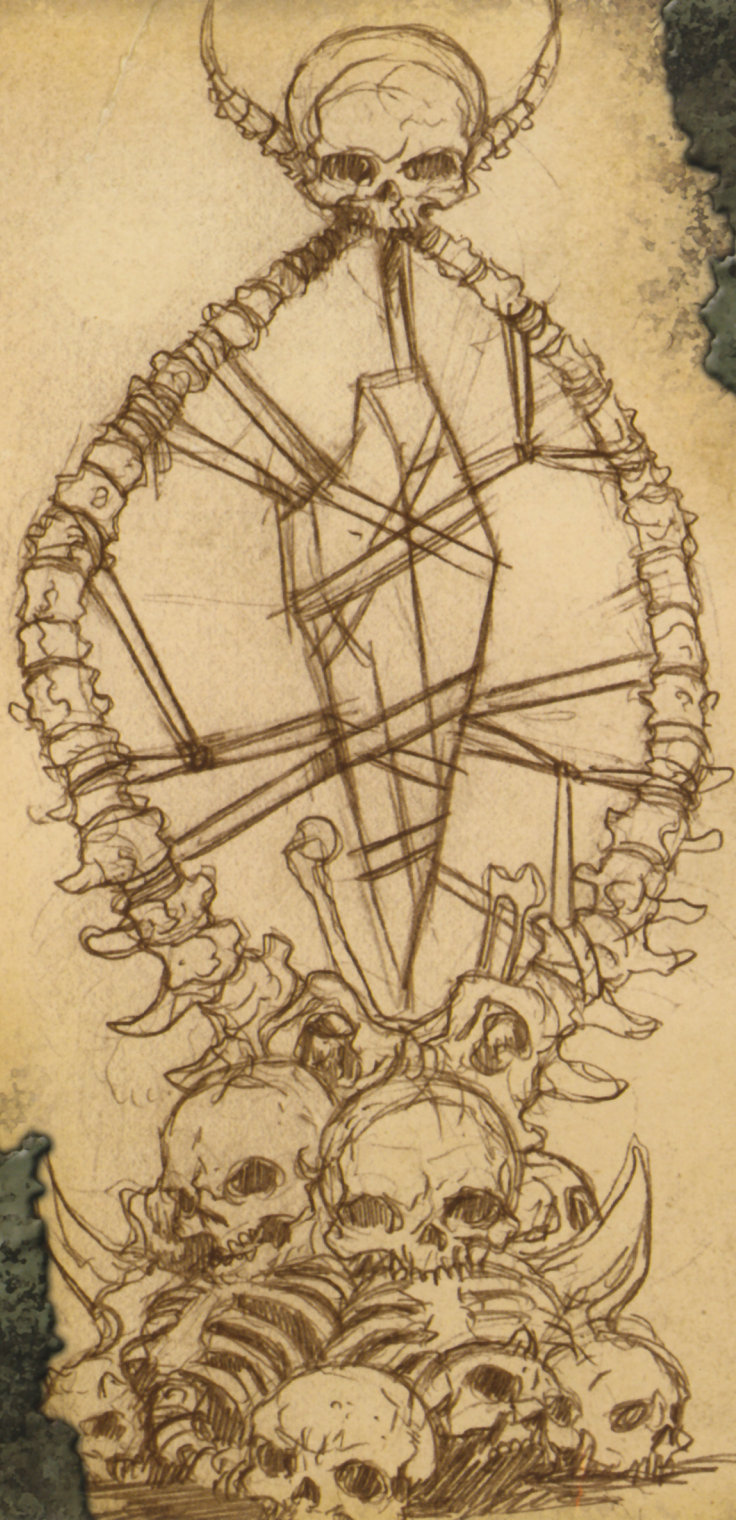
**Skills:** Balance +5, Diplomacy +11, Hide +10, Jump +10, Listen +15, Move Silently +10, Perform (dance) +7, Spot +16, Tumble +10.

**Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip<sup>B</sup>, Improved Unarmed Strike<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Stunning Fist<sup>B</sup>, Toughness.

**Possessions:** *ring of protection* +1, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *bracelet of strength* +2, 1,300 gp worth of regalia and other jewelry.









## NEW MINOR ARTIFACT

The new magic item on this card plays an important role in The Vault of the Whispering Tyrant Compleat Encounter, and could have a lasting impact upon your campaign. Be sure to review this card before you start the adventure.

**Soulstone:** This ancient device consists of a cluster of ribs and skulls that serve as a base, as well as a pair of arched spines extending upward, capped with another skull. The arching spines support an iron ring holding a large glowing gem, though legends from different sources disagree on the gem's color, shape, cut, and size. The skulls shift position from time to time as if looking around, and the artifact can use the ribs on its base to slowly move around.

To use the *soulstone*, a creature must establish a magical bond between their soul and the item. The method of creating this bond depends on the abilities and nature of the prospective owner.

**Spellcaster**—Cast one of the following spells on the *soulstone*, which establishes the bond instantly: *limited wish*, *magic jar*, *miracle*, *raise dead*, *resurrection*, *soul bind*, or *wish*.

**Lich**—Incorporate its phylactery into the item, either by using a large gem as its phylactery and using Craft Wondrous Item to incorporate this gem into the item,

or by concealing the phylactery within the artifact's base. The phylactery can be removed and destroyed as normal. If the phylactery is removed or destroyed, the *soulstone* is nonfunctional until the stone is replaced with a gem worth at least 5,000 gp.

**Other**—Maintain contact (incorporeal touch counts) for 24 hours, making a DC 15 Concentration check each hour.

Only one creature can be bonded to the *soulstone* at a time. A creature attempting to form a bond when one already exists must first succeed at an opposed Charisma check with the current owner; failure means they cannot attempt to form a bond for 24 hours.

Once bonded, the *soulstone* grants the bonded owner several abilities.

**Fast Healing**—As long as the owner is within 100 feet of the *soulstone* the owner has fast healing 5. This ability ceases to function if the owner's hit points drop to 0, or if the owner dies.

**Project Image**—Once per day the owner can use *project image* (as the spell, caster level equal to the owner's character level). In addition to the normal effects of the spell, the owner can send the image up to ten miles from his position (not requiring line of effect). Casting spells through the image without line of effect is costly; in addition to the normal spell slot used for the spell, the caster must expend two other slots of the cast spell's level or higher. For example, to cast a *magic missile* in this fashion requires expending two additional spell slots, both of which must be 1st level or higher.

**Extended Senses**—The owner may shift his senses to the *soulstone* or back to his own body as a free action. The

*soulstone* can see, hear, feel, and smell as well as a human, and has low-light vision and 60-foot darkvision.

**Remote Movement**—The owner can telepathically direct the *soulstone* to move under its own power as long as they are both on the same plane, or can command it to follow him, maintaining a fixed distance as best it can. The *soulstone* has a speed of 10 feet.

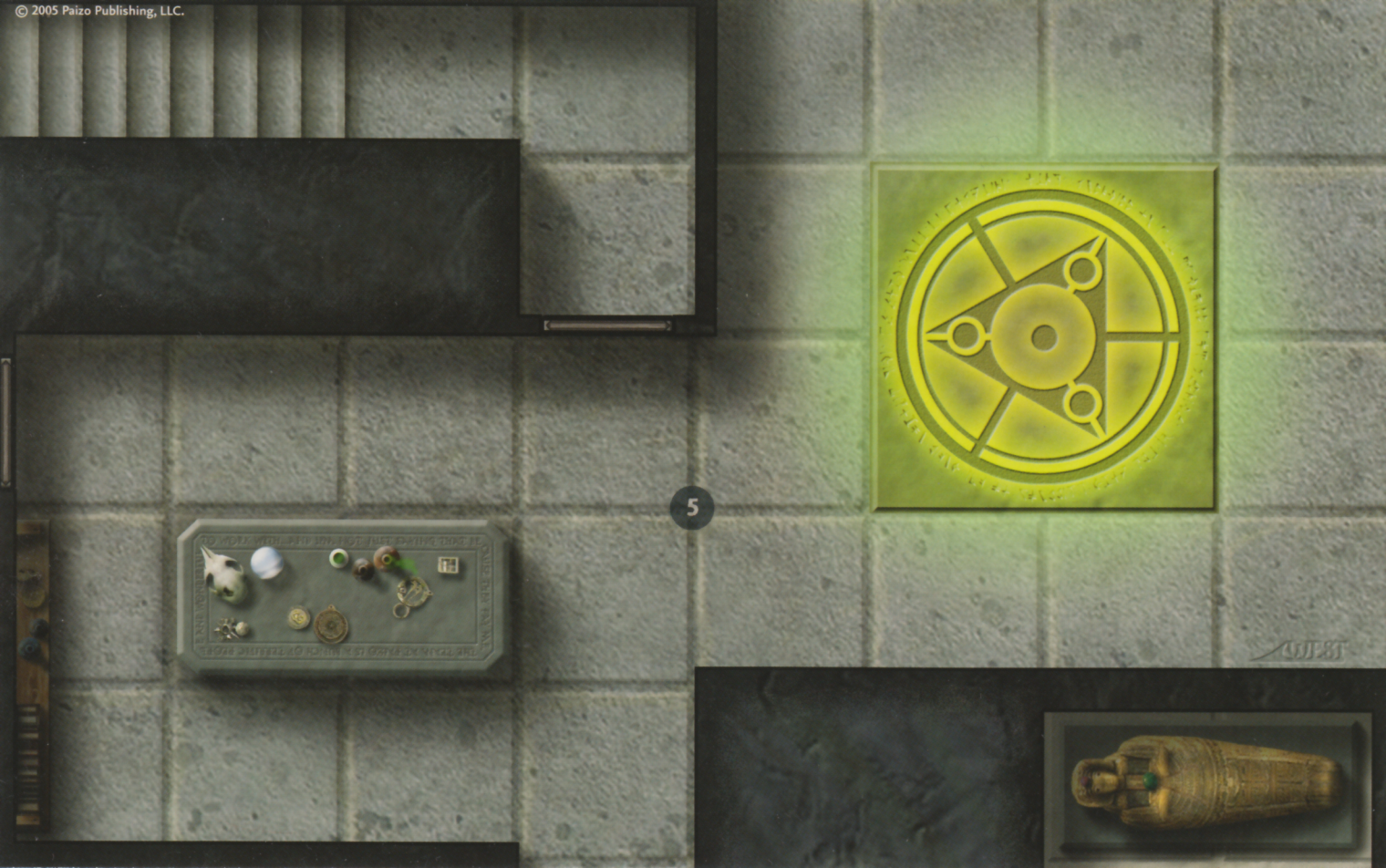
Strong necromancy; CL 20th; Weight 50 lbs.











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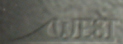
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# The Vault OF THE Whispering Tyrant

A 13TH-LEVEL ADVENTURE SCALABLE TO ALL LEVELS OF PLAY

RAMÓN PÉREZ • SEAN K REYNOLDS • DENNIS MIZE • CHRISTOPHER WEST

Ages ago, he swore that his rule would last forever, that the kingdom need never fear life without his protection. Now he lives on as a lich, issuing terrible decrees in a hoarse whisper through rotting teeth. A Compleat Encounter, scalable to any level, featuring a lich sovereign, his mummy queen, and the wretched soulstone.

This Compleat Encounter features three lead-free pewter miniatures suitable for use in any fantasy roleplaying game. 10 double-sided full-color cards provide a complete map of the Vault of the Whispering Tyrant scaled for miniatures play, an adventure that uses the miniatures provided in the set, and complete statistics for the enemies and magic items encountered within. All game rules adhere to the Open Game Licensed version of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

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