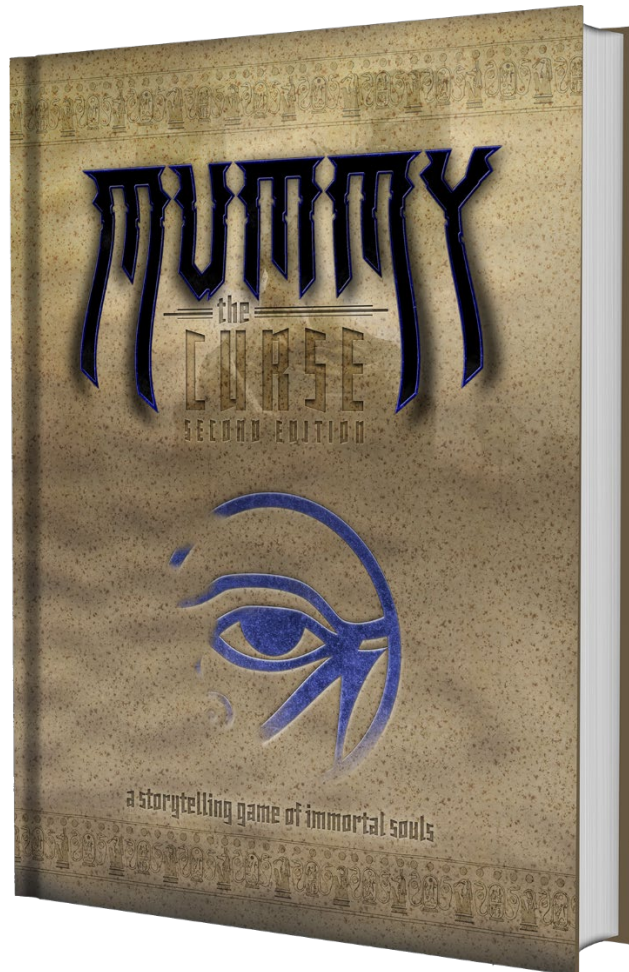


MUMMY

the
CURSE

SECOND EDITION

Kickstarter Manuscript Preview #5



Chapter Six: A World for Exploring

I am a forest, and a night of dark trees: but he who is not afraid of my darkness, will find banks full of roses under my cypresses.

— Friedrich Nietzsche

Deathless awaken outside conventional timelines and ideas of past, present, and future. They Descend and arise in locations miles away from the warmth of their homeland, sometimes in years prior to their last awakening, sometimes in years far into the future. They walk among people from every part of the world, adopting cultures not even their scarce Memory can recall, and feel the inexorable pull to hunt their artifacts. Throughout centuries, the Deathless spread and wander in pursuit of their own faith.

They crawl from tombs and crypts, some Arisen for the first time, others for the hundredth, some asleep on top of undisturbed mountains or deep within silent bogs, others to the noise of cars in a large pulsating city. True for them all, is the need for survival and adaptation in a world once again new and unexplored. What little they have left of their Memory is the only thread tying all of what was lost in a previous life to a new Descent, and the foggy puzzle pieces are enough to create meaning or pave the road for what is to come.

Use the examples in these templates to create playable areas for a first chronicle. Traverse different time periods and experience how the existence and goals of the Deathless change according to the context in which they exist.

Historical Adventures

Though the countries and cities presented in this chapter provide settings for play in the modern day, **Mummy** is a game that encourages Storytellers and players to set their games in historic and even future eras. The nature of the Timeless Chronicle is such that books such as **Dark Eras**, **Dark Eras Companion**, and **Dark Eras 2** are perfect sourcebooks for **Mummy: The Curse**, with **Mummy** receiving special coverage in eras including Cleopatra Egypt, Revolutionary France, and Scandinavia when wracked by its witch trials, to name a few. The eras absent of mummies in these books are still incredibly useful, with many locations, events, and characters transferable into a game of **Mummy** with minimal effort.

Cuzco, Peru

Even before the first Sothic Turn, villages existed in the fertile valleys along the northern coast of the land now known as Peru. Around the time of the second turn the Chavin civilization brought both the lowlands and the highlands under imperial control. They built massive monuments in the Ancash highlands, including a vast temple marking out the cardinal points of solstice and equinox, following principles familiar to those who study sacred geometry. The Huari and Tiwanaku empires dominated the third turn and continued the tradition of building sacred geometry in solid stone as did the Inca who followed.

As well as masonic arts, the region houses many mummified bodies, the oldest verified individual dating back to 7020 BC. This would seem, at least on the surface, to be prior to the time of Irem. Could the Shan'iatu have been active in the Andes before they came to Irem? Was Irem's, perhaps, not the first performance of the Rite of Return? These questions fascinate the Whisperers and the Morticians, many of whom have sent their cults to join the flocks of tourists and archaeologists who frequent the area in modern times.

Although tourism provides the primary source of income for the people of Cuzco there have been interesting agricultural developments in recent decades. Many local farmers have reverted to Inca crops and methods of cultivation. This has proven profitable (the Inca, after all, fed huge numbers of people from a limited amount of land) and many of the ideas and methods are spreading to other mountainous areas around the globe. Some locals believe that reversion to traditional methods of cultivation can help combat climate change.

The Origin

The Inca rose to prominence in the early 1400s and continued to dominate the area until the Spanish invasion. In Cuzco they kept royal mummies, and clad their Temple of the Sun in plates of gold. Pizarro entered the city in 1533, six years after his appointment as governor and captain of conquests in New Castile. The Inca, weakened as they were by civil war and the diseases the Spanish brought to the Americas, presented him with little challenge. The Spanish knocked down the walls of the temples, stealing the gold and building their churches on the foundations. The conquerors records state they tracked down and destroyed every last Inca mummy, bringing an end to idolatrous worship.

The churches built upon the walls of Inca masonry came down in a devastating earthquake in 1950, but the Inca buildings remained as intact as the conquistadors had left them. The city became a UNESCO world heritage site in 1983. Since then, tourists have been flooding in, to the extent that most of the population work in services that support those who work in tourism. Indeed, all the local universities run oversubscribed courses in tourism. Some visitors stay only a few days, touring round the museums and the older parts of the town, acclimatizing themselves prior to taking the challenging trek up to Machu Picchu. Colorful street markets and traditional festivals, along with a significant student population keep Cuzco lively, as well as an array of nightclubs and bars.

No one knows precisely how long Iremite mummies and their cults have been active in Cuzco. There are certainly rumors that some Necromancers travelled to the Americas around the time of the first Sothic Turn. Some believe a portion of these made their way across the Amazon and the Andes and were present when the Inca made Cuzco their capital. Whatever route they took from Irem, there was a definite Su-Menent presence in Cuzco during the Inca era, and possibly before that.

Whether or not the conquistadors succeeded in destroying all the mummies, their cults took a hit. Cultists are not immune to measles, smallpox, influenza, and other plagues the Spanish brought to the continent. Many sacrificed themselves bravely in defense of their mummies. Enough, however, lived to pass their lore on to their descendants.

After Pizarro took the Inca capital he moved on, leaving a garrison behind. Among these were the core of the cult of Zadkhiau, a mummy of the Tef-Aabhi fascinated by tales of the ancient buildings in the Andes. His cult carried him with them to New Castile and managed to hide him from the rest of the soldiers and the priests. Zadkhiau installed himself in one of the temples high in the Andes, an area as rich in vessels as the cities had been rich in gold. The cult swiftly gained the trust of those Inca who resisted conversion to Christianity and, together, they were able to prevent the despoiling of many more remote caches of Sekhem.

Macchu Picchu is on every backpacker's bucket list. There are, however, plenty of Inca and even older ruins within a day's travel from Cuzco and many descendants of the Inca earn their living by accompanying tourists on lesser known trails. Zadkhiau's tomb, once hidden, has become more accessible as tourists — thieves, cultists, sorcerers, and worse among them — infest the Cuzco region. Mummies are not the only seekers after Sekhem.

For centuries, Zadkhiau felt secure from the Shuankhsen and other rivals for his hidden horde of vessels. All that changed with the UNESCO listing and the re-discovery in 1999 of the mummified bodies of three children sacrificed on the peak of Lullailaco volcano about five centuries ago, at the height of Incan dominance. Suddenly, there's a huge increase of interest from the Tef-Aabhi and the Su-Menent, and the desire to profit from these discoveries brings these guilds into conflict.

Story Hooks

- LIDAR is a relatively cheap technology which uses pulsed lasers mounted on airborne vehicles to generate three-dimensional mappings of structures on or just beneath Earth's surface. LIDAR's ability to reveal previously hidden tombs has been a game-changer for Arisen all over the world, but it is having particularly devastating effects in the Americas. An archeological expedition headed for a site found in this manner is currently assembling in Cuzco. The academics are hiring guides and preparing their equipment. They are heading for a location containing a sizeable cache of vessels. Some Arisen are encouraging their cultists to infiltrate the expedition, whether as academics or local guides, in order to ensure these vessels return to Duat.
- Around the time of the first turn, several of the Arisen, hearing tales told by merchants blown adrift while rounding the Cape, took that route deliberately and arrived on the coast of Brazil. Slowly but steadily they made their way west. Eventually they arrived in the area that is now Peru and, over the next millennia, fostered cults that reached their zenith along with the Huari, a civilization preceding the Inca. When the conquistadors arrived, it was the cultists who led the Inca in hiding the sacred mummies from conquistadors determined to wipe out all traces of paganism. This game of cat and mouse required every scrap of ingenuity and influence the cultists could summon.
- One of the Deathless who undertook the journey to the Americas was Petemet of the Su-Menent. Only the descendants of her cult know anything about her. Most believe the conquistadors destroyed her, as they confidently reported no mummies remained. It is, however, not unusual for reports to state what their writers believe their superiors wish to hear. Some of the cult's descendants believe that Petemet survived and they want to find her.

The Guilds

Until the current turn there were few Arisen present in Cuzco. Now, with the ease of air travel, news travels faster and the guilds have all caught drift of the treasure troves of vestiges hidden in the area.

Maa-Kep

Maa-Kep cults in South America are active in syncretic religions and social justice issues. They are aware that the vast area covered by the Andes holds many treasures and there is some debate within the guild as to whether they can spare the resources to look into every single Inca, Aztec, or Huari ruin. Some reliable cultists have travelled to Cuzco to investigate and, should it prove worthwhile, mummies will follow.

Mesen-Nebu

At the time of the conquistadors, when all talk was of cities of gold, many Mesen-Nebu became interested in South America. They found less gold than they hoped, and the aesthetic of the pre-Columbian cultures was far from that of Irem. Did dedwen flow through the work of the Inca artists? While the Brokers debated, the works of the Inca were melted down, lost in the mountains, or shipped off to Spain. The Alchemists still don't fully comprehend the

pre-Columbian aesthetic, but some have decided that Incan artifacts are worthy of closer study.

Sesha-Hebsu

The Inca had no writing. They kept records by tying knots in strings, storing these quipu carefully as a means of keeping their accounts. The Lorekeepers explored, of course, along with the Spanish, but they found little to interest them. They were happy enough to leave exploitation of the area to others and concentrate more on the northern and eastern parts of the continent where records exist in more florid format.

Since Macchu Picchu became a tourist magnet, the Scribes have been re-examining the area. The beliefs and practices of the pre-Columbians seem to many like a distortion of the true belief and just laws of Irem. Some Diplomats begin to wonder whether a mummy was responsible for these distortions and are keen to look into the possibility of irresponsible behavior.

Su-Menent

The Shepherds dominated the small group of Arisen who travelled to the Americas during the first Sothic Turn and subsequently established their cults among the Huari and, later the Inca. Today even those unaware of this part of their guild's history on the continent find the Andean mummies fascinating and wish to study them further. Unfortunately, from their point of view, there is a movement, apparently driven by indigenous people, opposing the uncovering and study of further mummies.

The cult of the Necromancer Ta-Hemi have encouraged a number of indigenous elders to express concerns about the distribution of the economic benefits arising from the display of Andean mummies. "Surely there would be more profit for the children of the Inca were more such bodies displayed," they reason. During the fourth turn, they organized a motion at the Third World Congress of the Quechua Language to support further investigation of the Llullailloco Children, arguing that this would allow the greatness and evolution of the Inca ancestors to diffuse widely through global culture, emphasizing the continuity of belief from ancient times to the present day.

Tef-Aabhi

The Tef-Aabhi presence in Cuzco dates back to the Spanish defeat of the Inca, though only Zadkhiau has remained consistently in this nome. In order to protect his own tomb and resources from rivals and to prevent the destruction of vessels, Zadkhiau mobilized his cult. Through Quechua language media, they started a movement to protect the mummified corpses of the Andes. Archaeologists believe there are at least 40 unexplored sacred sites high in the Andes, but the Director of the Museum of High-Altitude Archaeology has given in to the cult's demands and forbidden any further disturbance of mummies in the area.

Zadkhiau's relationship with his guild has, to date, been distant. However, now the non-Inca world is realizing the value of pre-Columbian artifacts, the area is attracting more exploration and exploitation. As more humans and Deathless move in, the Tef-Aabhi are taking a keener interest in Zadkhiau's activities.

Notable Characters

Zadkhiau: Zadkhiau has been in the area since 1533. The recent influx of tourists has forced him to adapt to the presence of other seekers after Sekhem. He fears coming under investigation by his own guild as, to his shame, he has been hoarding vessels he should have

returned to Duat. His cult's efforts to prevent further unearthing and study of the Andean mummies are bringing them into conflict with the agenda of the Morticians.

Ta-Hemi: Ta-Hemi believes that some mummies of her guild migrated to the area at the time of the first or the second Sothic Turn. She is keen to know more. She believes Zadkhiau has relevant information but, as they are at odds over the disposition of the Llullaillaco Children and other Andean mummies, they have not been working together.

Simon Hernandez: A sorcerer in the Cult of Ta-Hemi, Simon is studying the vessels her team unearths. Their explorations encounter constant opposition from the cult of Zadkhiau. Simon has had some contact with Zadkhiau himself as both spend long hours at the museum.

Simon is unsure where his future best interests lie. He does not like Ta-Hemi, feeling she is too arrogant. He is beginning to suspect that Zadkhiau is an immortal being of some kind.

Simon could well become a double agent.

Ahmet Almasi: A Shuankhsen going by the name of Ahmet flew into Cuzco economy class and has since overstayed his tourist visa. He is aware that there are many valuable vessels in remote parts of the area. After stealing LIDAR records from the Andean University of Cuzco, he tracked down a previously unexplored ice mummy tomb. Hiring a couple of local petty criminals to assist him, he broke it open and stole the vessels it contained. He needs more, but the tombs he can reach are well-guarded by Zadkhiau's cult. Ahmet is looking for ways to get around the security but, meanwhile, he has become convinced that he can find what he needs along the Inca Trail. He finds it easy to tag along with parties on the trails towards Machu Picchu and does his best to manipulate them into carrying out actions which will perpetuate his existence.

Notable Locations

Choquerquirao Regional Conservation Area: Zadkhiau's tomb is here and many of those responsible for the area's conservation are members of his cult. His tomb once housed a Huari mummy who does not seem to have experienced the Rite of Return. Zadkhiau moved his tomb's former occupant to Vilcabamba, a site which only became known to archaeologists in 2011. For the best part of 500 years, Zadkhiau has been looting a vast number of vessels from Vilcabamba. He has delivered some to Duat but he keeps many more in his tomb. Despite Zadkhiau's depredations, Vilcabamba remains rich in history and relics.

The Inca Trail: Only limited numbers are permitted to walk the trail at any one time and it is an expensive and exhausting experience. It represents a significant gathering of rich tourists made vulnerable by the rigors of the hike. There is little blatant robbery, but small cons like persuading a client to tip overgenerously or selling "handmade" souvenirs mass produced in the PRC are common.

Some tourists report seeing odd things; ghostly figures that fade in and out of sight, a tall, pale man with sharp incisors or, maybe, fangs, a jaguar who seems to be made out of smoke, something that looks like rotting flesh wrapped in bandages. Hikers tend to ascribe such experiences to altitude sickness, exhaustion or the gastro-intestinal disturbances that plague so many walkers on this trail.

Ahmet Almasi is always keen to offer his services as an 'unofficial' guide who knows the way to places the authorities do not want the public to visit.

Denmark

Burrowed deep within the frozen mulch of arid planes, drowned in compact swamp water, and hidden underneath cliffs and caves, lies ancient secrets with origins far away from the cold North. Times of secular beliefs and paganism mark the grounds and generations of Scandinavian inhabitants. The belief in several gods is not uncommon to its people, and with the appeasing of the gods came sacrifice — living sacrifice, some of whom once again arise. The raw and untamed frozen climate forced families together, in efforts to forget the bitter cold. Some became more than family, and found solace in cultism and untraditional beliefs, performing rituals in effort to forget the hardships of living.

In modern times, Danes no longer fight for survival and Denmark is a country with high living-standards, social security, widely regarded as a healthy location to live for both body and mind. However, the old and dark days still flow in Danish veins, reminding them of their origins and what secrets sleep beneath their feet.

Now, the bogs once again pulsate with magical energies. Sekhem sparks old bones and preserved remains into existence. Traditions of cultists surviving generation after generation call Deathless from their tombs, returning to their masters in hopes their necromancy will not be in vain.

The Origin

Denmark covers a large area of diverse cultures, but centuries of fighting for survival have created a hardened mindset in many modern Scandinavians. Nothing comes between them and their nearest, and relations with strangers are prioritized last. This state of mind creates isolation keeping them safe from harm but preventing many opportunities of social interaction. They do not take kindly to strangers, not because they dislike diversity, but because they see ill intent before positive.

Before talks of Vikings, and the foundation of established chiefdoms and towns, Denmark was home to the Maglomosians, the first people to inhabit the Scandinavian peninsula after the last glacial maximum. They hunted and gathered their way into a previously frozen Denmark, and became some of the first humans to settle down in the region. Not much is known about the Maglomosians' cultural traditions, but a particular group went down in Deathless history as the earliest northerners to successfully awaken an Arisen from Scandinavian soil.

It is unknown what brought a group of three North Africans to the stark North in the first place. When the communal grave of the three individuals was excavated, several spices, fabrics, oils, and ceramics only found in Egypt proved they were migrants from areas specific to the Nile, and scientific tests show they were around the same age and all male. They also died at the same time, as they were found in the same grave, placed in fetal position next to one another, with several bone lacerations and fractures. According to the Sesha-Hebsu, these three individuals were not mauled by a wild animal or attacked by anything human. They were slaughtered by the mummy they carried to Denmark and awoke on its soil. Despite the group's thorough preparations, it is believed they quickly succumbed to the mummy and many other settlements fell victim to its wrath upon awakening.

In the spring of 1920, the mummy's excavation. A loose noose around its neck and the fact it was found in a bog lead the Su-Menent of today to assume it was forced into slumber. When the Necromancers heard word of the mummy excavation, it did not take long for them to confiscate the archaic drawings and symbols found on the linen buried in the muddy tomb, before mortal hands dug in too deep. The mummy is still in the hands of the Su-Menent, and they keep its whereabouts confidential.

Denmark attracts sorcerer cultist from around the world, and the cult that worshiped the first mummy bog mummy never truly died out. Stories of the cult spread throughout the supernatural inhabitants of Scandinavia, and a young hunter cell calling themselves “Gungnir” have taken a great interest in the former cult. The guilds fear the Sekhem of the first mummy still lingers in the bog where it was found, and the mummy somehow uses its slumbering powers to gather a new cult and once again rise. As its guild affiliation is unknown, as well as its Decree and why it didn’t wake during any of the Sothic Turns, how it’s been able to sustain a cult through its dreams is a mystery the mummies of Denmark want answered.

Story Hooks

- Mortal interest in the first mummy of Scandinavia, kept in custody by the Su-Menent, is growing. Gungnir researched intensively in its history and whereabouts and the public eye in shape of media attention is compromising the safety of the mummy. Websites and groups on social media sharing their knowledge of the mummy grow and increasingly spread information, factual and otherwise. The Su-Menent are forced to open up to their fellow guilds in order to gain their support and protection from mortal scrutiny.
- A mass grave found in a bog near Roskilde was recently excavated, revealing up to 30 bodies arranged in contorted and unnatural positions. All of the bodies were arranged to shape a large wheel, all buried with their faces pushed toward the bottom of the bog. Each of them is either arranged with or holds what archeologists describe as “objects not originating in Denmark or wider Scandinavia”. They believe the bodies were sacrifices but are unsure by whom and for what purpose. Pictures of the objects circulate in newspapers and social media and are theorized to be millennia-old artifacts originating from the Nile region.
- A new, disordered cult consisting of a black metal band named calls itself Screams from the Bog. The Screams claim to feel the surge of Sekhem calling them to localize and summon the ancient mummy, or the “Urfader”, from his slumber. This catches the attention of several guilds, as exposure of the Deathless world could cause a public uproar and the possible demise of mummies in Denmark and later Scandinavia at the mouths of hungry Shuankhsen. Additionally, if these “Screams” truly feel the Sekhem of the Urfader, they could wield dangerous powers and unleash a destructive Deathless they have no control over. The guilds expect the Screams from the Bog will meet the same fate as the group awakening the Urfader years before them, but the concern comes from what the mummy will do with its peers after waking.

The Guilds

Over centuries, Denmark and Scandinavia have attracted enough mummies to create sizable representations of each guild. Through years of adaptation, they have been shaped by society and shaped it with their own values and ideas. Their focus and purposes are different, but what is common for every guild is their desire to create a world suited for the Deathless.

Maa-Kep

The Engravers are one of the latest additions to Denmark, and only grew large enough to truly represent and utilize their abilities in the last 90 years. They simply never saw Denmark as an important area. This all changed when the Urfader was first unearthed. As the former secret police of Irem, they feel an unmatched need to keep an eye on the powerful creature. Unlike other guilds, they do not seek to manipulate it directly, but rather observe other Deathless and their behavior around the ancient mummy. They want to ensure whatever happens will happen with respect for the Shan’iatu and the Judges. Although they do not hold

the largest representation in the North, they are powerful enough to make an impact on other mummies and make them look over their shoulders before taking unorthodox action.

Mesen-Nebu

The Alchemists came to the North primarily for the vast amount of raw material, such as oil, and little to no competition in the beginning of the 19th century. Many Mesen-Nebu to this day influence large parts of the oil export trade. They paid little attention to the unearthing of a Deathless' bodily remains, and had even less interest in getting their hands on it. However, they did find the prospect of something so untamed and raw with such potential power intriguing, and a few Mesen-Nebu fell in love with the idea of polishing a lump of coal into a diamond. Before they could get their hands on it, the mummy disappeared out of sight, and it is only now with the increased attention they once again become aware of its presence.

Sesha-Hebsu

The Scribes are one of the oldest guilds of Denmark. They were greatly involved in the Scandinavian witch trials, as some of their own were hunted as demons due to their unholy magical abilities. Since then, they settled down and made it their duty to prevent any future mortal hunt of the Deathless. They wish not only to record history from the perspective of the mummy, but also learn from it and adapt and reform into something better. The Sesha-Hebsu followed the path of the Urfader closely, and have used centuries studying old texts, runestones, and drawings describing the legend. They think the Su-Menent's direct involvement with the creature is despicable and unnatural, and believe history should take its natural course. A potential awakening of the mummy would be dangerous, yes, but so very interesting to record.

Su-Menent

The Shepherds were the first guild fully established in Denmark. They arrived long before any of their peers, and it is rumored the Urfader is Su-Menent and this is from where the guilds' interest in him derives. Attracted by the conversion from one large set of beliefs, from Asatru to Christianity, the Su-Menent made its way to the North. They felt a spiritual connection to the shift in faith and pure curiosity drove them onward. When the Urfader fell into mortal hands, they had to act immediately. Disturbing the tomb of something so rare and ancient could be fatal and is also against any Judge's will. They stole the bog mummy without leaving a trace, and have only grown more protective with the public eye slowly turning toward the activities of their servitor cults.

Tef-Aabhi

The New Pharaohs arrived in Copenhagen as Christian IV expanded the city. He built one extraordinary building after another as a band-aid on the gaping wound that was his kingdom's defeat in the Thirty Years' War. He could not manage the constructions alone and hired builders from around the globe to help him construct, and thus Tef-Aabhi cults smuggled their masters in. The immortal architects settled down as an established guild in the 16th century, hearing rumors about a disturbed tomb and mortal fingers in what is supposed to be a resting place. The heka had been destroyed and they intended to recreate what was lost and are now more interested in bog than the Urfader. If only they could get more information from the Su-Menent, they could rebuild the mummy known as Urfader to its former glory.

Notable Characters

Urfader: When Urfader's cultists awoke him upon arrival in the land that became Denmark, his Sekhem was so powerful and his summoners so unprepared he destroyed them where they

stood, flinging them into a nearby bog with several lacerations. He raised havoc in nearby settlements, almost destroying the entire population, when the last mortals standing made a final blow, bound the mummy and through a sacrificial ceremony subdued him in a nearby bog. His Sekhem, although not enough to awaken him, affects groups of mortals dedicating time enough to research him, and he is on the verge of once again roaming Denmark.

Daunil Khamet: As a Deathless she arose with one purpose only, and this was to protect the remains of the Urfader. She has known nothing else throughout her existence in Denmark and serves as the protector and keeper of the mummy. The Su-Menent treat her as a lesser being, almost like a Sadikh, although she is as powerful as any other Deathless. Her guild reasons that if they kept her in isolation from the world, and only focused on the shepherding of Urfader, they might prevent the sleeping mummy from infecting her with its dreams and spreading chaos throughout Copenhagen. Daunil is slowly realizing there is more to her existence than bodyguarding, but her increased curiosity is not welcomed by her guild.

Sarkalis: Sarkalis — a dreaded Iremite legend of folklore among mortals and mummies alike — exists and thrives in Denmark. Rumors often heard in temples and tombs around the world tell of the mummy Sarkalis, of the Wadjet-Itja, who gambles with the Judges over the lives of thousands, for his own personal enjoyment. Many wars are ascribed to the flawed mummy, who — with his meret — was supposedly brought low by a Judge's outraged avatar. In the late 1800s, his body was disinterred and transported to the Danish National Museum as part of the first mummy exhibition on Scandinavian soil. Mortal archaeologists unearthed him from a mass grave containing many of his kind, the corpse wearing only torn rags. He wouldn't have drawn much attention but for his pristine body, which led to his selection as an exhibit. Sarkalis currently wanders the museum basements, where he drains the Sekhem from stored away mummies and antiques, but his supply is running low and he will soon be forced from his hiding place to hunt Arisen among the Danes.

Notable Locations

Grauballe Bog: The bog from which Urfader was found is situated in the city of Silkeborg. The bog in itself is small and unnoticeable in the landscape, but holds great importance to the people in its area, providing them with peat to heat up their homes and stoves. A peat digger stumbled upon Urfader's body as he dug his spade into the mummy's shoulder blade. Since then, the bog has attracted activity from curious mortals who want to visit and even search the waters for findings making them famous or wealthy and also the Deathless. If a being of such power was found in the bog, chances are he wore, or brought with him, artifacts of great importance. Merets therefore search the area in order to hunt items and to gain information about the Urfader and his story.

The National Archives: According to mummy scholars, the National Archive in Copenhagen holds the most information about the Urfader and several reports of mummy activity throughout time. Even Sessa-Hebsu, being the owners of the most mummy information in Scandinavia, yearn to dig deeper into the lore of the Deathless from the perspective of mortals. What they know about the Urfader might prove valuable to them in their research but falling into the wrong hands could end in catastrophe. The chief historian running the archives does not give out information to just anyone and has begun to wonder where the interest for the ancient mummy originates.

Tingstedet: When the cellar bar opened in the early 1970s in Odense, a city placed in the middle of Denmark, between Jutland and Sealand, the Sadikh owner had more in mind than serving customers. He wanted to create a free haven for mummies to enjoy their evenings without having to fear mortal interruptions. The bar is heavily guarded without being visibly

so, ensuring no unwelcomed guests enter. Tingstedet has long been a known spot of security for Deathless and increasingly attracts both them and their cults. The bar is one of a kind and highly loved and protected by the Deathless community.

K'jipuktuk (Halifax), Canada

Sea and storm buffet Halifax, the largest Canadian city east of Quebec. Famous for its breweries, waterfronts, and proud military history, Nova Scotia's capital hosts Canada's largest naval base. Halifax's intimacy and comfort attract thousands of university students from across North America each fall. Yet Halifax does not comfort the Arisen.

Mummies have a long history in Halifax, rich with war, resentment, and betrayal. The city's guilds never unified and still strive to undercut each other. Under the best of conditions, this makes Halifax a nest of conspiracy and intrigue, but these are not the best of times. Vessels no longer flow from Halifax to Duat, and the Judges are angry. The Arisen search amid their ranks for the mummy whose sabotage disrupts the natural order, but everyone knows their shattered Memories have robbed them of crucial information. The Saboteur could be anyone, even the mummies searching for them.

Facing the Judges' wrath, the Arisen must adapt or face oblivion, yet they are stubborn and unchanging creatures. The return of Memory forces Halifax's mummies to confront uncomfortable questions. If the guilds set aside centuries of hatred and mistrust, does anything stop them from setting aside their devotion to the Judges as well? Are the Judges gods worth worshiping? No one has an answer yet, but one thing is sure: When change comes, it will crash like a cold wave on the cliffs.

The Origin

Settlers founded Halifax in late 1749, but Arisen presence in the region dates back even farther. The first mummies in what is now Nova Scotia were Shepherds hidden amid the Acadian colonists from France in the 1600s. The Mi'kmaq First Nation utilized Halifax Harbour for centuries, calling it K'jipuktuk, the Great Harbor. Catholic priests hoped to convert the Mi'kmaq to Christianity, while the Su-Menent saw them as a vector to spread their cults inland and establish themselves in the new world.

British imperial ambition shattered the relative peace between the Acadians and the Mi'kmaq. Frequent skirmishes broke out as British colonists expanded northward from the Thirteen Colonies, but the establishment of Halifax was a direct challenge to French and Mi'kmaq power in Acadie. The Su-Menent found themselves conflicted. Their cultists fought to retain their way of life, but the Maa-Kep and the Tef-Aabhi both allied with the invading British. Deportation to the Thirteen Colonies or back to France followed the Acadian defeat in 1755. The Necromancers remained, yet those who remember the Great Expulsion have not forgiven the other guilds for devastating their cults.

With Nova Scotia now firmly under British control and Halifax as its capital, the city's fortunes rose and fell with the tides of war. Halifax served as a primary naval base for the Empire through the Seven Years' War, the American Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the American Civil War. Blood flowed on the ocean's ship decks and the world's battlefields as war funded Halifax's development. The Arisen took their due, using the sacrifice of military souls to harness Sekhem, dedwen, and heka.

Initially, World War One marked the continuation of this wartime prosperity. Halifax languished for decades following Canadian Confederation, but war in Europe meant Halifax was the last port of call for soldiers from across the nation. Their raucous parties before sailing off to make the ultimate sacrifice fueled debauched Arisen rituals. The war lingered

on and dragged more and more cultists away to die across the sea. The few who returned came back broken, even the immortals. In late 1917, two ships collided in Halifax Harbour, setting off the TNT they carried in the largest detonation the world had ever seen. The Halifax Explosion decimated all the guilds, but the Su-Menent were the worst hit and blamed the other guilds once again for destroying their cults.

In the following decades, the guilds regrouped, infiltrating Halifax's neighborhoods once again. Among them was Africville — a long-neglected and abused African-Canadian community. Something about Africville's population, marginalized yet vibrant and thriving, stirred the Arisen's Memory, recalling a time before the Shan'iatu demanded their service. A disproportionate number of mummies developed Touchstones within the region, creating a neutral ground where the guilds laid aside their grievances. For the first time, Halifax's guilds began to coalesce into a unified whole, but then mortals ruined everything.

In the mid-1960s, Halifax's government forced the people of Africville from their homes, seizing and demolishing their property to make way for industrial development. In the chaos, the Arisen lost their Touchstones as the community broke apart. Those Arisen who attempted to defend Africville found that the Judges considered such actions to be a frivolous waste of Sekhem, barring them from aiding the community. Denied an outlet for their anger and remorse, the Arisen lashed out at their oldest foes — each other.

Deathless flesh smashed Deathless bone as the Tef-Aabhi and Maa-Kep accused each other of intentionally withholding information about Africville's impending doom. The Mesen-Nebu lamented the other guild's foolishness in squandering Africville's potential, while the Su-Menent protested that losing their Touchstones was one more grievance on their list that reached back to the Acadian cults. There would be no peace, no grand coalition. War came to Halifax once more, but this time it was a supernatural war in the shadows far from mortal eyes.

Today, The Royal Canadian Navy maintains a strong presence within Halifax, but the city moved on beyond its military roots. For decades, Halifax has used its universities to attract young minds, many of whom put down roots in the city. Halifax now possesses one of Canada's top tech sectors, a booming manufacturing industry, and a hotbed of political activism. The mummies stand in contrast to the eddies of change ensnaring their cultists. Centuries-old grudges encase the Arisen like insects in bloody amber, as they wring each other's throats for Sekhem and power. Enraptured in their constant feuds, the guilds failed to notice when one of their number broke ranks and crippled the city's Relic Architecture. Now the Saboteur's vandalism threatens to bring the Judge's wrath down on everyone, but the Arisen are too myopic to notice.

Story Hooks

- Halifax's Necromancers hear whispers amid the ghosts of Argyle Street of something powerful, valuable, and lost on the Titanic. Many of Halifax's Arisen assume this is a potent Relic, but others suggest it is a high-ranking mummy, perhaps even a guildmaster. Mending the ghosts' fragmented memories uncovers the truth, but reaching the wreck on the Atlantic's floor is a different matter.
- Captain William Kidd met the gallows decades before Halifax's construction, but rumors have always persisted that he buried treasure along Nova Scotia's south shore. Most Haligonians have fixated on Oak Island as the location of Kidd's stash, but something calls to the Arisen through the Lifeweb as construction disturbs the city's foundations. Is the buried pirate treasure in Halifax itself?

- Not all Necromancers remained in Halifax during the Acadian expulsion. Wesem chose to return with her cultists to France, instructing them to transplant her to Spanish Louisiana. In New Orleans, the Acadians became Cajuns and the cult rebuilt its power, but revenge never left her mind. She has yet to return to Halifax, but even now her cult works to insinuate itself within the Junta's and the Geomancers' minions. When the time is right, Wesem intends to claim her foes' vessels, to desecrate their tombs, and to shatter their cults, regardless if they remember their crimes from centuries ago. Revenge is a dish best served cold and paid with interest.

The Guilds

History fractured Halifax's guilds. For centuries, resentment has built between them, which now comes to a head thanks to the Saboteur's meddling. Clenched teeth and a dagger hidden behind the back accompany what little cooperation exists between the guilds. While this has never before handicapped executing the Judges' will, it now places Halifax on the precipice of disaster.

Maa-Kep

When the British set off across the Atlantic Ocean, they needed labor, organization, and strong bodies to build their colony — all things the Junta were happy to provide. The Maa-Kep knew the Acadians' defeat and expulsion would have a detrimental impact upon the Su-Menent, but they viewed this as a necessary sacrifice. Halifax would not become a monument to Irem if a hostile fifth column developed within the city. These days, the Spies have evolved to exploit university journalists and activists, to keep their fingers on Halifax's pulse and to weaken their foes through manipulation and propaganda.

Maa-Kep opinions on the Saboteur are uniform, they must find and stop this heretic. The Judges decreed that vessels must flow to Duat once more and the Spies are willing to pay any price to fulfill this command. For all their zealotry, they refuse to consider if the Saboteur could be from within their own ranks. If the arsonist is found to be a Maa-Kep, it could unify the guild's enemies and spell their end in Nova Scotia.

Mesen-Nebu

The Mesen-Nebu weren't in the first wave of mummies to arrive in Halifax, but the northeast coast's dramatic transformation during the Seven Years' War made it clear powerful dedwen was active in the region. The Alchemists occupy a liminal space within Halifax. They observe the transformation of dedwen on transatlantic and transcontinental journeys of people and ships in and out of Halifax. Their cults spread across Canada and the Atlantic, while the Arisen remain in Halifax like a spider sitting in a web. Most mummies struggled through the World Wars, but the Alchemists thrived on the constant flow of people through Halifax, callously watching the transformative power of spending their lives.

The mastery of dedwen the Saboteur exhibited in manipulating the Lifeweb intrigues the Revolutionaries. They are sure that if the Saboteur isn't Mesen-Nebu they are familiar with Alchemist philosophy. They have every intention to eliminate the Saboteur, but they intend to learn as much from them as possible before that day comes.

Sesha-Hebsu

The Lorekeepers are a neutral party in Halifax's guild squabbles. The Sesha-Hebsu were relative latecomers, but they thrive in Halifax universities, recruiting from their prestigious law, history, and philosophy programs. The Lorekeepers clash with other supernatural organizations embedded within the schools, including independent sorcerers and the Sanguine Fellowship.

The Arbiters are uncertain how to deal with Halifax's vessel crisis. The Judges demand they bring the Saboteur to justice, but what happens after restoring order? Defeating the Saboteur won't put an end to the guild war that has plagued Halifax for decades. Furthermore, recording the failure of Halifax's Lifeweb onto the Scroll of Ages would despoil the sacred history, but as far as anyone can tell the damage the Saboteur has wrought is unique. If the Sessa-Hebsu keep the Scroll ignorant of this blighted time do they risk even greater folly in the future?

Su-Menent

Halifax's Shepherds are self-made pariahs, resentful toward the other guilds for slights real and imagined. The Spies and Geomancers devastated their Arcadian cults, the Alchemists let the other guilds drown during the World Wars, and the Lorekeepers refuse to take a side, even though justice demands they do so. Fortunately, the Shepherds have a secret ally. No one knows how the Kher-Minu came to Halifax, but the Su-Menent have discovered Stone Spears throughout the city and have kept their existence a secret. The guildmasters are loath to deploy the Stone Spears, least they tip their hand, but soon they will be in position to cripple all their enemies at once.

The Shepherds fear the Saboteur is part of their guild and lashed out at Halifax's Arisen in righteous frustration. Whatever the identity of this mysterious Arisen, the Su-Menent intend to find the Saboteur before the other guilds to prove they are the Judges' most loyal servants.

Tef-Aabhi

British Geomancers recognized the value of colonies. Instead of molding a preexisting city's Lifeweb to suit their purposes, building Halifax from the ground up gave them immediate dominion over the settlement. The New Pharaohs wish to force the Dapifers into submission, but they despise the Morticians, feeling no guilt over the shattered Acadian cults. What did they expect when obstructing the Judge's designs? The Tef-Aabhi have every intention of grinding the Morticians to dust and to ensure it, they made a deal with the devil. The Tef-Aabhi recently promised every Su-Menent in Halifax to Last Dynasty International in exchange for LDI's performance enhancers and scientist-sorcerers. Already the Geomancers have helped kidnap several Morticians, with many more abductions planned.

The New Pharaohs agonize over the Relic architecture within Citadel Hill. Failing to recognize the subversion of Halifax's Lifeweb wounded their pride, making them quick to lash out against those who get in their way. Beneath this angry bluster is a fear no Tef-Aabhi wants to admit. Whoever perverted the Lifeweb manipulated architecture. Any of them might be the Saboteur without realizing it.

Notable Characters

Halifax has accumulated a large collection of sorcerers, cultists, immortals, Lifeless, and Deathless over the centuries. These are a few of the most prominent.

The Locust Man: When thousands of insects consume corpses, cultists know the Locust Man stalks the streets. The Locust Man preys on mortals and immortals alike, but as a Fasad, he must be cautious when combating mummies. The Locust Man isolates his Arisen foes — consuming their mortal allies and eroding their powerbase. As their Descents end, clouds of insects ambush the Arisen and begin gnawing at their sahu. None know which Shuankhsen the Locust Man serves, but the Lifeless master will reveal herself soon.

Kaneferu: Halifax's most prominent Bull, Kaneferu is a Diplomat who records Halifax's history to discern the city's Essence. Anyone searching for secrets buried in the past would be wise to consult her, as would anyone attempting to call a ceasefire between the guilds.

Kaneferu also studies the Essences of other supernatural beings as a passion project. Rumors say she obsesses over vampires whose Ka have abandoned their bodies. These whispers are more accurate than anyone suspect. Kaneferu's most trusted lieutenant is just such a vampire invested with several Pillars.

The Saboteur: This anonymous mummy is the source of Halifax's woes. Over an entire Descent, spite drove them to modify public works throughout the city so the Citadel would act as a trap for vessels, starving the Judges of the Sekhem they require. Their Descent then ended and they reawakened without remembering their crimes. As a final act to vandalism before returning to rest, the Saboteur commanded their cultists to seek out and destroy as many immortals. By sending them westward they deny the Arisen their most potent allies, although they must do so behind their newly awaken master's back.

Notable Locations

Argyle Street: In 1912, the survivors of the Titanic's collision with an iceberg arrived in New York on the Carpathia, but the dead came to Argyle Street's morgue. Today, downtown Halifax's best clubs, eateries, and theaters line Argyle Street. The morgue became a high-end restaurant decade ago, but some of the Titanic's victims' ghosts remain. Tourists visiting the Titanic graveyards provide the Essence to sustain these shades, and no few tour guides are cultists ensuring the ghosts receive the tithe keeping them loyal to the Arisen.

Citadel Hill: The star-shaped fortress atop Citadel Hill is Relic architecture, linking the Lifewebs of Arisen tombs into a massive Sekhem-collecting network. This Sekhem draws a large population of Arisen and sorcerers, all looking to exploit the abundant resources. A year ago, the Saboteur subverted the Citadel, anchoring every vessel within the city's Lifeweb and preventing mummies from consigning them to Duat. Bastu's Manifestation, the Writhing of Eyes, conveys the Judge's displeasure, and commands the Arisen to remedy the situation or be held complicit in this blasphemous crime.

The Universities: Halifax's six universities are the city's economic engine, as well as being a major attraction for Arisen aiming to expand their cults. Young, impressionable students come to Halifax seeking life-changing experiences the Arisen are happy to provide, but Amkhata infestations plague the campuses. A jilted professor on Last Dynasty International's payroll has gone rogue and distributes the company's manuals to various student groups. Armed with just enough knowledge to make them dangerous, these undergraduates become useful pawns or treacherous rivals.

Antarctica

The Nameless Empire wiped itself from the annals of history, but mummies know that its remnants lie all over the world. Irem lives on through its Arisen. Resurfaced memories reveal just enough to give cultists a vague sketch of its history, with its expansions being the clearest. By almost all accounts, the empire was strongest in North Africa, with major annexations within Eastern Africa and the Levant. It appeared to have connections to other parts of the ancient world, though few know the exact details.

The memories within some vessels, however, show a different aspect of the Nameless Empire, a desert of snow and ice. The vessels bring strange images and sensations to their users: masked figures riding many-limbed horrors trudging through the sea, animals and people chained together in the freezing wind, priests dying of exposure on the ice.

Some learned the vessels' origin long before others, but the fourth Sothic Turn made the answer clear for all Arisen: the Nameless Empire maintained a colony in Antarctica, an Irem in frozen desolation. Its secrets will bring answers, or merely death.

The Origin

The full story of the continent's discovery and subsequent colonial outing is still unknown. If all the vessels forged during that time were collected and consumed at once, the memories within them would still not fill in major gaps in its history. However, corroborating visions and memories with very careful studies of archeological records reveal a basic historical outline that the guilds can agree upon.

Sometime between the empire's rapid military expansion and the Rite of Return's casting, the continent came to the attention of the Shan'iatu. There are two theories as to how this happened. The first is that a naval scouting force tasked to sail to Southeastern Sumer, through the Persian Gulf, went wildly off course and returned to tell the tale. The second is that the empire's mystical research pointed them toward an immense source of power in the south, well beyond Africa. The idea of a vast, unconquered land must have been attractive to the empire, since a large settling party set out for Antarctica soon after.

The colonists landed somewhere in East Antarctica, on what is now known as Dronning Maud Land. Then, like now, the land was bitterly cold and with only two half-year long seasons. The guild members among the colonists used memories of their people's suffering to create vessels that would make life bearable. Their efforts worked, since initial findings show evidence of Iremite civilization spreading to the Filchner-Ronne Ice Shelf. There, the settlers constructed at least one pyramid, which still exists beneath the shelf. Today, Arisen refer to this area as "Second Irem."

Second Irem provided little food, precious metals, or slaves, but it brought knowledge to the Nameless Empire. The six month long night proved beneficial to the empire, bringing about updated astrological charts. The penguins, birds, and sea life became fodder for Amkhata construction experiments. The guilds embraced the challenge of Antarctica's desolate Lifeweb and made unique Relics. Some Arisen speculate that Second Irem grew large enough to serve as a base camp for further expeditions around the world.

For all its theorized success, the fact remains that the colony completely vanished, just like its namesake. Those active during the 19th and 20th century were delighted by the continent's discovery by modern civilizations, and partially funded research expeditions. Some even placed cultists on expedition crews. In the years since the Sothic Turn began anew, the Arisen's interest in the continent increased. Those who learn of Second Irem hope to be the one to discover the truth behind its fate.

There are no Arisen that remember living in Second Irem, and even those with a strong Memory to recall their time in the Nameless Empire only remember it as something mentioned only mentioned in passing, or idle talk of a faraway vassal state.

There are three theories as to why. The first is that only mediocre or faulty guild members were sent to Second Irem. The Rite of Return needed the very best crafters and magicians, an impossible task if even one of them lived on the bottom of the world. The second theory claims that after the Rite of Return and the empire's decline, Second Irem's population migrated to Patagonia, the southernmost region of South America. The recent reemergence of Amkhata on the continent and the appearance of ancient ghosts that stalk the Arisen form the basis of the third theory: Second Irem's people were annihilated in a single, horrific event.

If the first theory is true, the continent is a mere historical footnote. If the second is true, it's an important cultural link. If the third is true, Antarctica is a forsaken land that craves only vengeance.

Story Hooks

- Belgrano II, an Argentinian research base, is haunted by Golden Mourners, ghosts with a grudge against the Arisen. Their grieving howls keep the twelve crew members awake at all hours, and contact with the stains of their golden tears induce vivid visions of mass sacrifice. Ben Valdez, the base's head scientist, becomes convinced that sacrificing some of the crew will appease the ghosts and prepares an altar. One of the meret's cultists is a member of Belgrano II's crew and on Ben's kill list. The cultist sends a desperate plea for help, and then goes dark. Can the meret stop the sacrifice and banish the ghosts?
- It was supposed to be a simple task. Impersonate a visiting science team, convince an inland camp's personnel to give you access to their resources; seek out the powerful Relic the Judge wanted, then head home. It was going so well, too: the crew still believes your cover story and the Relic is yours. Then the wind kicked up and trapped the camp in a furious snowstorm. Now, the meret and crew must survive and await help. To make matters worse, a pack of Amkhata have tracked you down, and they're starving for Sekhem.
- After years of cutting red tape, the meret organized an excavation team to dig into the Filchner-Ronne Ice shelf and raise up the Pyramid of Nekhenhu the Innocent. Whatever secrets lie inside will be yours. There's just one problem: Neith of the Tef-Aabhi and her cult have infiltrated the excavation company, hoping to claim the discovery themselves. At the moment she's unaware that her rivals are the dig's secret benefactors. The meret must thwart her without alerting her cult, or stopping the excavation entirely.

The Guilds

The Arisen agree that Second Irem served a purpose for the Nameless Empire. Whether the purpose was useful is a matter of debate among the guilds.

Maa-Kep

The Maa-Kep believes that disloyalty brought about Second Irem's downfall, a natural consequence of leaving so many people on a land distant from its imperial master. They see the continent as a cautionary tale with a still-unknown climax. The Spies embark on private expeditions funded by world governments and large charities, hoping to uncover moments of treachery that doomed the colony.

What fascinates the Junta is that Antarctic Amulets appear to be instruction manuals formed from the dying memories of those who perished from the continent's harsh climate. Their bearers become perfect survivalists, dedicated to overcoming any situation — at the expense of everyone else, including their loved ones. The initial settlement period must have been horrific, and some within the guild fear that while their creations saved lives, they may have sown the seeds of the colony's destruction. If so, perhaps the continent's cautionary tale is their own.

Mesen-Nebu

The Mesen-Nebu, with the benefit of hindsight, see Second Irem as an ambitious plan destined to fail. Anything can be polished, all things can gleam, but even the Alchemists know that doing so is a matter of time and attention. Somethings just aren't worth the effort to improve them. The Nameless Empire had rivers and precious metals from which to build upon; Antarctica barely had stone.

This doesn't mean the guild is uninterested in the continent. Antarctic Regia strengthens a body's resistance to the elements in exchange for missing or repurposed organs, and that alone is worth returning to the Judges. It is also important to uncover all of the colony's shortcomings and develop ways to rectify them. As mankind looks to the stars and faces

climate disaster, there will be a need to build another Second Irem, and the Revolutionaries will show their peers how to do it properly.

Sesha-Hebsu

The Sesha-Hebsu searched for evidence of the Antarctic settlements long before the continent's discovery. Their duty to the Scroll of Ages compels them to fill in the gaps of the Nameless Empire's history, and Second Irem may be one of its greatest absences. Now that the colony has a specific geographic location, the guild feels vindicated. Mankind may have more literacy than the Scribes are comfortable with, but its strong academic interest in Antarctica allows the guild to place their cultists on the continent's research bases with little difficulty.

One of the most surprising aspects of Second Irem is the rarity of its Texts. With such a great distance between colony and colonizer, the Lorekeepers expected to find a wealth of their written word about the continent. It is for the best. An Antarctic Text evokes the continent's beauty, but the tales of hypothermia, isolation, and cannibalism within can be too much for the mind to bear.

Su-Menent

The Su-Menent were the first to purpose that Second Irem met a violent end. Their evidence lies in the Golden Mourners, a kind of Ghost (p. XX) tethered to the continent. They weep streams of golden tears and scream at all passersby. The Necromancers are certain the ghosts are a creation of the guild's making, for a reason none can remember. Some attempt to put them to rest, while others bind them into their service.

Antartica's Uter may have played a part in the Golden Mourner's creation. They enhance strength, speed, and heartiness at the cost of dampening a person's ability to feel positive emotions. Perhaps the ghosts were people who became too dependent on the Shepherd's Relics, and are only now able to express anger and grief they suppressed in life. If so, the vessels must return to the Judges immediately.

Tef-Aabhi

The Tef-Aabhi are proud of Second Irem. What other guild could design as city to compliment one built from the spine of Azar? While its fate was probably grim, its remains exist within the ice, and therefore stand as a monument to the Nameless Empire's power. The New Pharaohs study the regions where the Iremites may have landed, migrated, and settled, hoping to glean an approximation of what Irem's sacred geometry might have been like. The most ambitious hope the colony can be restored, and made into a holy place for the Judges to dwell.

The Antarctic Effigies may make both of these goals difficult. While they transform land, sky, sea, and animal into more hospitable and fertile forms, they also tear at the fabric of space and time. Antarctica's reality is surprisingly easy to shatter. Perhaps it is naturally that way. Some Geomancers wonder if the continent's temporal weakness may have played a hand in the colony's fate.

Notable Characters

Sofia Faustin: Sofia was a respected scientist well before she discovered sorcery. This made life very difficult for her. While Sekhem can be measured scientifically with the right tools, convincing the skeptic community that it's an ancient life force was another matter entirely. Her failure drove her to lead a low-profile life, employed in the one place where she can be

alone with her studies. By day, she studies ice core, but by night, she trains Amkhata, preparing her revenge.

Nuru: Nuru claims that she is the Guildmaster of the Antarctic Sessa-Hebsu. No one challenges her title seeing as that most of the time, she's the only Scribe on the continent. She takes her duty seriously, and has instructed her cultists to prepare a tomb that can withstand the continent's harsh climate. Once that's completed, her next plan is to construct a mighty Guildhall, one that's ready for use in the fifth Sothic Turn.

Kambish: The Shuankhsen remember everything, and Kambish remembers Second Irem. When he's not ripping Sekhem from Arisen foolish enough to cross him and scientists foolish enough to be alone with him, he spends his time walking among the flurries. There, he talks to the Golden Mourners. He begs them to speak to him as they did when they were alive. They never respond to his please, and many scream at him at an even louder volume than they do for the Arisen.

Notable Locations

Recuredo: The first stop an Arisen makes on an Antarctic journey is usually Recuredo, or "Reminder." It's a small, unofficial base on an island off the coast, run by the cult of Pisisir of the Mesen-Nebu. The cult ran to the island years ago, for reasons they refuse to disclose, but they offer their headquarters and supplies to all who swear an oath to remain loyal to the Judges, and to owe Pisisir one favor when he next rises. The Sothic Turn's power has yet to revive him, but the cultists have no desire to speed up the process. They'll wait as long as it takes.

Killwarden Base: The base is, officially, an indulgent side project of Last Dynasty International. It's a part of a feel-good PR campaign, promoting the corporation as a caretaker of nature. It's a large base, with forty people working all year round. In reality, it's an Amkhata wrangling center, an extension of LDI's research. They are particularly interested in the development of penguin-based Amkhata. They've made excellent progress, and have quite a few prototypes online.

The Pyramid of Nekhenhu the Innocent: The pyramid is the largest remaining structure of Second Irem, and perhaps the only remaining structure of the Nameless Empire. It resides deep within the Filcher-Ronne Ice Shelf, and emanates a radio signal. Mortal scientists discovered the pyramid through the signal, but cannot decipher what it was and have no explanation as to how such a building can exist in the first place. The Arisen hear its Iremite message loud and clear: "Step within. See the shadow of lies torn apart." No one has entered the pyramid, but it is only a matter of time.

Johannesburg, South Africa

Once farmland, Johannesburg transformed into South Africa's largest city thanks to gold discovery and the rush that accompanied it. The city is a battleground long fought over by the Mesen-Nebu and Tef-Aabhi while the other guilds look on in confusion. The metropolis is home to an array of cultural, technological and commercial interests that draws in tourists, industry and money, and the criminal element inevitably associated with these.

Before the goldrush, the farm that would become a city was barely noticed by the immortals. In ages past, long before the modern gold discoveries, the Sotho people worked the area and attracted some minor interest from the Arisen for their skill at mining and smelting. Though these skills were crude compared with the magical, wondrous workings of the Nameless Empire, some Alchemists dabbled with cults in the northern stretches of the Sotho kingdoms,

but no Deathless has yet claimed memory of having been as far south as what became Johannesburg.

The Origin

Bustling cities founded on gold strikes is nothing new. Immortal eyes barely took notice of the mortals scurrying to make their brief fortunes. This changed when Uadjit of the Mesen-Nebu acquired a nugget of the newly uncovered gold. At first she thought nothing of the purchase, she simply required some unworked aurum to further one of her projects. Her attitude quickly changed when she held the nugget. She could feel concentrated Sekhem lingering within. On closer examination she believed the nugget to have once been part of an artifact, somehow broken to base component and returned to buried ore beneath the earth.

This discovery spurred Uadjit to activity, moving south to be closer to the origin of the strike and uncover more of the mystery. Each additional piece of gold she gained strengthened her hypothesis that some lost wonder of Irem once stood at this location, and it was her duty to her Judge and her Guild to uncover its secrets. Uadjit couldn't maintain sole authority over the area for long. Other Mesen-Nebu came and other guilds soon followed, drawn to the newborn city and the growing pull of unearthed Sekhem.

Conflict arose when the Tef-Aabhi arrived, with Menkhetu as vanguard. The landscape actively repulsed the geomancers, as the ley lines radiated a sense of wrongness demanding correction. As Johannesburg grew from mining camp to city, the Tef-Aabhi fought to guide its layout, directing what should be dug up or destroyed, and where structures should be built. The changes began to reshape the incorrect geomantic energies to align them with sound, ancient principles. Unfortunately, the macro changes to the cityscape weakened the concentration of Sekhem bound within the raw ores brought up from the mines. Whatever grotesqueries existed in the landscape were inexorably tied to Johannesburg's value to the Mesen-Nebu. The stubborn immortal wills of the Uadjit and Menkhetu — combined with an aura of mistrust permeating through the area — couldn't help but bring the two guilds into conflict.

Tensions

The broken energies underlying Johannesburg makes the Deathless more inclined to view small sleights and disagreements in the worst light possible. This effect isn't strong enough to require systems or dice rolls, but Storytellers should describe the actions of other mummies and their cults through this lens. Coincidental meetings appear as deliberate maneuvers. Minor misunderstandings are calculated insults to draw a reaction. Manipulating how events appear gives an aura of paranoia and suspicion to everything going on in the city. The inability to trust precisely what she sees and feels about events is as much part of the mummy's curse as is the loss and slow recovery of memory.

Mortal tensions overtook immortal concerns when the Second Boer War brought British-loyal forces to occupy young Johannesburg. Violence broke out in battlefields around the city and much of the workforce left to avoid the conflict, creating labor shortages and confounding both Uadjit and Menkhetu's maneuvers. The vacuum left by worker shortages soon filled with Chinese immigrants moving into to take on the work and establish themselves as an enduring presence in the city. Along with this influx the Maa-Kep took the opportunity to bolster their presence and bring in more of their cultists and allies to develop a better understanding of what was feeding the conflict between guilds.

As mortal peace returned to the city the stalemate between the Revolutionaries and the Architects couldn't hold for long. The rebuilding brought new opportunities for the Tef-Aabhi to reaffirm the sympathetic connection between the strong city foundations and the slowly transforming landscape but the Mesen-Nebu controlled the wealth and flow of materials and moved to confound the Architects wherever possible. The struggle reached a stalemate, with both sides making minor advances but neither able to secure dominance over the city.

None of the Arisen had a hand in introducing the racist Apartheid policies to South Africa but Menkhetu was swiftest to take advantage of human misery and weaponize it against the Alchemists. Many of Uadjit's cultists were now legally defined as lesser people, restricting their ability to wield influence on her behalf. In contrast, Menkhetu's followers walked among the privileged and powerful to move Johannesburg along with the Architect's vision for the city. Uadjit's forces appeared to be all-but defeated while the Tef-Aabhi moved vast amounts of Earth and humanity in their ascendancy.

Though South Africa finally managed to free itself from the shackles of Apartheid in the 1990s, Uadjit's cults are only slowly rebuilding their influence in the city and working to undo the damage caused by the Tef-Aabhi — if it can be rectified at all. The Engravers have an opportunity with Menkhetu almost preparing to return to Duat. Uadjit may finally have freedom of action, but her time is also short — the conflict's nature may soon transform as a new generation of Arisen gain power over Johannesburg.

Story Hooks

- The Nameless Empire wasn't as all-powerful as the Deathless (sometimes) remember. It had dissenters and opposing views, usually scattered far from the heart of the kingdom. Within these rogue states blasphemous experiments ignored the proper order and tapped into mercurial and dangerous powers to achieve their goals. Irem crushed these dissenters when it could, grinding their works to dust so the horrors they leashed could never rise. Johannesburg squats above the shattered ruins of one such corrupted rebel, with profane works waiting to be discovered and horrors locked in stasis ready to run amok across the world. Only the unending conflict between the Mesen-Nebu and the Tef-Aabhi has prevented this misery from sweeping across the world. When Uadjit and Menkhetu's times pass the true nature of what Johannesburg covers may be revealed.

- Both the Tef-Aabhi and Mesen-Nebu have validity to their views. In other places and times, the Guilds would compromise for the greater good, but Johannesburg is different. Ancient machinations stir antagonism and irritation between the Deathless. This affects other supernatural creatures to a lesser degree, and mortals barely at all. The curse drives mummies to fight along their ideological lines, between and within guilds. Civility and accord between immortals is near impossible to find, and cultists for all Arisen grow weary of how the vindictiveness of their gods prevents them from working towards the cult's needs. Different cults have tentatively reached out to each other — even those serving warring Deathless — to compare notes and work out how to remove the mummies if they've outlived their usefulness.

The Guilds

While the Alchemists and Architects have historically been the most notably active Arisen in Johannesburg, mummies and cults aligned with all the major guilds exist in the city, with many firmly entrenching themselves within its fabric. Though the schemes of Uadjit and Menkhetu are distracting, Arisen not of their guilds try to focus on their own interests and avoid falling victim to the selfish, irrelevant skirmish of the squabbling children.

Maa-Kep

The Spies' perceptions are just as twisted and paranoid as every other Arisen in the city but the Maa-Kep are familiar with the game and aware that what they're seeing isn't the truth of what's going on. Something doesn't want the Deathless to decipher Johannesburg's mysteries and that just makes the Maa-Kep even more intrigued. With their awareness, the Spies are playing peacemakers between other guilds, which when combined with the uneasiness in the city is a role they feel ill-suited to perform.

Mesen-Nebu

The Mesen-Nebu aren't anti-progress like the Tef-Aabhi would like to believe. They sponsor local designers and artists — even mortal architects — to design works to improve the city. The precise form of an artistic endeavor is unimportant, what matters is the local connection to the city and its use of locally-sourced materials. Pulling the ingrained Sekhem from beneath the Earth and spreading it around the city strengthens the guild and frustrates the Tef-Aabhi's plots to destroy the natural resource. Like the Architects, Mesen-Nebu cults push to take advantage of the city's bureaucracy and gain representatives and allies that can protect their treasures through mortal means, but aren't above violent sabotage if needed.

Sesha-Hebsu

The Diplomats are frustrated. They work to bridge the gap between the Tef-Aabhi and Mesen-Nebu but the goals of each guild appear incompatible and no single Arisen in this place appears willing to work in good faith. Even fellow Sesha-Hebsu are suspect and seem to be working against the guild's intentions. Diplomats are increasingly abandoning any pretense of solving this issue and simply work towards collecting as much Sekhem as they can before seemingly inevitable open immortal war breaks out.

Su-Menent

The Necromancers feel omens of lingering doom about Johannesburg, piquing their curiosity. The Su-Menent believe something much worse will come from this place that will overshadow all petty squabbles. They want to discover the city's secret but the guild is split on what to do when they find it. Half believe they must work to prevent the coming darkness, while the rest insist that the Judges want to unleash the death and destruction as a new Irem will rise like a beacon to unify humanity. The Su-Menent are uncommon in the city, more interested in the caves of ancient humanity outside its boundaries. Every secret they learn here provides more fuel for the guild's debate.

Tef-Aabhi

The Tef-Aabhi don't trust one another but are united under Menkhetu's banner. They've forged partnerships with rich property investors and maneuver their cultists into key positions in the city's planning offices and courts. The Architects confound the Mesen-Nebu's spies by flooding the bureaucracy with a myriad of design proposals and urban renewal projects across the city. The sheer number of geomantically-irrelevant proposals hide those that will truly reshape Johannesburg's lifeweb. As Menkhetu prepares to pass, the guild's unity is already suffering and individual Architects turn their thoughts to more self-serving projects.

Notable Characters

Menkhetu, the Visionary: Menkhetu is close to the end of his Descent. He has taken a long time working towards achieving his mission and he is frustrated that it will likely end in failure. Menkhetu is also frustrated at his impasse with Uadjit, with whom he has no reason to quarrel except a difference of opinion over what the Judges would consider the best outcome

for Johannesburg. In moments of quiet contemplation he can see Uadjit's point of view though he politely disagrees with it. In moments of decision, confrontation, and action, he only sees her as an intransigent stumbling block dedicated to confounding the will of the Judges. In these moments he wants nothing more than to destroy her and all the Mesen-Nebu. Above all, Menkhetu is tired. He has one last gambit involving the Ponte City apartments, having had his cult quietly fill the renovated sections with people loyal to a vision of stability and growth for Johannesburg. This makes them allies of the Tef-Aabhi, though none have any direct knowledge of the Arisen or the true struggles going on.

Uadjit, the Master Crafter: Uadjit's days are numbered. She has lingered too long to understand the source of Sekhem and knows that profound punishment awaits her in Duat. She wanted to be able to present answers to her Judge but they've always been just out of reach. Her desperation has driven her to madness as she's convinced that the Tef-Aabhi will triumph when she departs the living world. She plans to prevent this loss by bringing mass destruction and devastation to Johannesburg so none can claim its prize. Her followers have planted explosives and deadly chemicals in buildings, structures and public places across the city, intent on so thoroughly impacting the population and cityscape that the Tef-Aabhi will be forced to abandon Johannesburg. Uadjit has placed her most faithful servants in charge of enacting the plan but many more moderate cultists are hesitant about carrying out their mistress's final wish. Unfortunately, these more sensible individuals don't know where every device hides and will need considerable help in preventing the wave of death that will sweep across the city.

Nemur, Who May Remember: Nemur has no memory of it, but he stood where Johannesburg now stands back when it was a hidden outpost for a breakaway kingdom. As a mortal, Nemur was completely given to his devotion to the Shian'atu. He infiltrated the rogue state and gained access to its secrets. He learned of the blasphemies conducted to destroy Irem and fled back to his masters just ahead of discovery. Nemur suffered terrible mental and physical tortures on his return to Irem to verify his loyalty and the truth of his reports. The Shian'atu were impressed with Nemur's skill and commitment and rewarded him with eternal service while they buried the rogue kingdom in fire from the heavens and plagues of creatures that devoured everything living and dead to return them to their base elements. Today, Nemur remembers none of this and works to unravel the mystery of why his fellow Arisen are so quick to conflict with each other. He feels a deep unease with Johannesburg that he can't quite place, and experiences a strong pull towards the Cradle of Humanity where he believes he may find answers.

Notable Locations

Ponte City Apartments: Johannesburg's unique architectural jewel serves as an effigy to hope and folly for the city's human inhabitants, and a raging battlefield to its immortals. The cylindrical Ponte City was intended to be a crowning achievement for the Tef-Aabhi, a gravity point for geomantic energies that would drag the unharmonized Lifeweb back into alignment, dampen the negative energies while realignment took place, and eventually focus the correctly aligned Sekhem in service to the Judges. Unfortunately for the Architects, the Mesen-Nebu learned of its purpose. They were too late to prevent the tower's construction so used their wealth and their cults' lower-caste status imposed on them by the country's politics to draw brutal, organized crime gangs to the area. Though the apartments stood, the Architects couldn't maintain the required utterances and oblations without engaging in prolonged bloodshed that would have been incompatible with the required changes. They managed to reclaim the area after nearly 30 years of civic wars to eradicate the criminal element and have secretly repopulated the renovated sections of the building with people

supportive of their goals for the city. The Mesen-Nebu haven't discovered this link but Uadjit's most loyal servants have riddled the structure with explosives, ready to bring the whole thing down with callous disregard of the humans living within when their mistress returns to Duat.

Cradle of Humankind: Not within Johannesburg itself, the Cradle of Humankind is a site 40 miles northwest of the city, riddled with limestone caves that hold the remains of some of humanity's earliest ancestors and competitors. The fossilized remains of thousands of different non-*Homo sapiens* species, each up to millions of years old, across the different caves within the network, makes the site a World Heritage listed treasure trove for the scientific community. Undiscovered caves deep within the limestone labyrinth hold other horrors waiting in undead stasis to awaken so they can commence bringing pain and suffering to the world. These flawed horrors are products of the breakaway kingdom, dreaming of their never-ending hunger for warm, living Sekhem. Without a constant supply of life to devour, the horrors' withered bodies fall still but their minds never stop hungering with awareness of the slow passage of time as they wait in the never ending dark. Even without this madness-inducing hunger, having to suffer the passage of millennia one moment after the next has driven each horror beyond all reason. All they need is one human to inadvertently stumble across their resting place and the horrors will be free to hunt and kill and devour and grow every stronger. Once these creatures are unleashed upon the world the Deathless would have little time to restrain them before their hunger and fury brings about a scenario consistent with prophetic end times.

Wellington, New Zealand

In a faraway corner of the world, the country of New Zealand is a hidden beauty of the southwest Pacific. A popular tourist destination and well-known Hollywood set, one could think that these secluded lands are as untouched as advertised. However, should you scratch the surface of this modern façade, you will see how the Arisen's influence permeates the capital. The different guilds work together to preserve their history by creating untouched tombs while the world outside grows ever more uncertain.

Tensions often flare up between them, but they sizzle down quickly as they all see the big picture — in this isolation, cooperation benefits them more than competition. Though their collaboration seems peaceful at first glance, everyone acts as if monitored by someone or perhaps *something*. Both Arisen and their loyal followers try to be on their best behavior, as showing any signs of hesitation means they could become the next target of the *Netra-Peri*.

The *Netra-Peri* — the bold cleansing warriors — are a group that seeks to “purify” those who are beginning to turn their back on the Judges and the glory of Irem. While those taken never return, they send messages to reassure everyone that they've found true purpose in their re-education. In the beginning, many tolerated these *Purists* as they believed it was necessary to use force to keep everyone on the straight and narrow path. However, as the number of abductions increased, fear began spreading among the Arisen that this secret sect might be a dreaded enemy establishing their hold on the islands.

The Origin

Being one of the last places colonized by humans, early Polynesian settlers came by canoe in multiple waves between 1250 and 1300. These pioneers, under long isolation, developed the unique culture of the Māori people. The Arisen didn't come to New Zealand until after 1841, when New Zealand became a British Colony. Though some believe mummies and their followers may have arrived earlier, the Sessa-Hebsu remain adamant on their status as the pioneers, since no evidence before their arrival exists.

It was through the British Empire that the Deathless first learned of the islands, and so the first wave of the Aisen moved to the newly established colony to learn more. The subsequent migrations occurred during the World Wars. Masked as logistics of war, massive transportations between the different territories of the empire carried the Aisen and their relics to New Zealand. Of the two world wars, the second was the most significant influx of arriving Aisen. The third wave outlasted the war, as the uncertainties of the world shaped the conservation mindsets of many now in New Zealand. The 1940–50s in Egypt evoke fear in many, as the growing Arab nationalistic movement was increasingly showing signs of hostility. Fearing that further destruction wrought on by war was inevitable, they fled with priceless relics as far as they could, so they could live to serve the Judges another day, perhaps even undisturbed.

Island life is indeed peaceful, perhaps too peaceful for the ones who are looking to serve the Judges faithfully. The laidback attitude of New Zealanders often frustrates the Aisen who have not acclimatized to the islander's pace, but those who've been here for a while will remind them to let things take their time. One can afford to be patient when immortal. Though it may be strenuous to remain on cordial terms with other Deathless and their followers whom you may not agree with all the time, you always feel like they are nearby. There aren't enough resources to go around for all cults to be prosperous even if the country has modern technology and western influences. An element of competition is prevalent among the guilds, but they know that if they turn their back on each other, they won't last very long in isolation. Hence, they make a valiant effort to remain civil with the others to try and have a collaborative effort as the islands aren't large enough to escape each other's presence without cutting all ties that may help you to serve your Judge. However, being "trapped" in a small area means that if it's harder to get in, it may be easier to keep others out.

As it was a new place for mummies and their cults, they believed that through strong regulations they could keep their enemies out. These barriers, namely the importation laws, are also one of the first hurdles an Aisen faces when attempting to interact with the world. It's a system set in place to protect the environment, and many items get seized due to being hazardous to the wildlife — occasionally some of these goods are ancient relics.

The further away one is from the original home, the more likely one is to remain more conservative and traditionalist. Some welcome new changes, others desperately cling onto their old traditions, even when those traditions continue to change in their country of origin. For many in this place, Starfall begins as one starts to embrace something new and different — an aspect or perspective which they felt was missing in their existence. For some, it's the unique nature which surrounds them. While the Nameless Empire was a beauty in the desert most cannot remember, they cannot help to be in awe of the landscape that's in front of them. Winds are dangerous in lands of sand, but in Wellington where windy weather is commonplace and not as destructive, the Aisen can enjoy the feeling of the wind going through one's hair and watch how the air moves both land and water. Others find themselves absorbed by the different cultures and people who live here. Like in other civilizations with modern western culture, many of the Aisen don't understand the concept of individualism, until something triggers a lost memory to return.

Those who have seen this pattern before, try to remind their friends or followers not to forget their sense of purpose. The Aisen of New Zealand have a unique opportunity to work on the conservation of Irem in a remote place with easy access to modern technology, so the more traditional Deathless think of the outside cultures as distractions.

Many thought the members of the Netra-Peri are of the traditional persuasion that wants to maintain the culture of the Nameless Empire, but their true *modus-operandi* is unknown. Are they targeting those who are starting to lose their sense of purpose because they don't want to see their comrades fall? Or are they targeting them because they are in a vulnerable and impressionable state?

Story Hooks

- The rumored relic thief struck again. One of the guilds used their influence to fly over ancient relics from lost civilizations for a temporary installation at one of the museums in Wellington. The transport was intensively planned out and carried out to perfection. Right after landing, the items passed their verification, but someone intercepted the delivery route between the airport and museum. The relics have all been replaced by copies, meaning that the ones who stole the items were fully aware of what the relics were and had ample time to make falsified versions of them. Who are these thieves, and what do they do with the antiques they steal?
- Every mummy and their cult knows the second wave of Arisen, who migrated here after the Second World War, are dedicated to their cause of building and preserving secret tombs. Now that modern tools of war shatter the earth, and scientific devices detect sacred burials, convinced that more than ever Arisen need hidden shelters that are undisturbed by mortals, these traditionalists operate in secrecy. The locations of these tombs are only shared by a trusted few, but disturbing reports of a map found in Wellington Harbor is said to show the location of several tombs all over the country.
- One of the missing Arisen chosen for purification by the Netra-Peri is reported destroyed along with all his members dead. It's a new pattern in the behavior of the Purists, as often the Deathless taken leave messages, stating they were in dire need for re-education as otherwise, they will lose sight of their purpose. No one had foreseen that Hakim would be chosen, so with his destruction, investigators are thinking it may be a copy-cat, or perhaps the Netra-Peri are finally showing their true colors?

The Guilds

Being the capital of New Zealand, Wellington acts as the hub of activity for the Arisen. While not the most populous city, Wellington is the political center, but also an international hub for those culturally hungry. It provides resources for all the guilds to tap into and to do what suits them best.

Sesha-Hebsu

The first who came to New Zealand was a meret lead by a Sesha-Hebsu named Aharon. Wanting to learn as much as they could about this new part of the world, they came under the guise of British diplomats and settlers. Today, you can find the Diplomats gathering knowledge in the National Archives of New Zealand and Victoria University of Wellington. The Sesha-Hebsu are using their influence in the academic world to ensure the international university offers courses on subjects on which they wish to collect information.

Their presence and status are weaker than what it was in the past, and they prefer to remain where they have the most power. Clinging to their history, Aharon, being the most prolific Diplomat in the city, is commonly asked to attend meetings as a moderator and offers his counsel in important matters, and so his cult awakens him at least every five years.

Tef-Aabhi

After the Diplomats, came the Tef-Aabhi, who immediately began researching the unique buildings built by the Māori and planning the constructions of the British settlements. The Architects are spread out in the country, pulling their strings in the regional offices of Heritage New Zealand to preserve monuments brimming with Sekhem. The head office is in Wellington, the Antrim House, a grand manor surrounded by skyscrapers.

Maa-Kep

The Maa-Kep view themselves as the most successful guild in Wellington, but don't openly flaunt their influence. Instead, they smirk to themselves as the other guilds come to them for aid. Anyone who wants something from outside of the country will have to ask the Maa-Kep as they have contacts in all of the international airports across New Zealand.

They have infiltrated the political and law enforcement, and the Mesen-Nebu are the ones coordinating imports of regia. While the airport isn't a spiritual place, the Spies like to arrange meetings there, as it's a significant place where they hold power. Anything caked in mud can carry foreign seeds or insects, or goods made of animal or plant matter has to be declared if coming from abroad. Objects that fail to pass declaration go to the incinerator — at least for the common public.

Tension between the guilds arise when precious vessels or vestiges are either delayed or end up in the wrong hands, ending with the Maa-Kep sweet-talking some sense to the frustrated guild while sending out cult members to fix these errors.

Mesen-Nebu

The Mesen-Nebu was the last guild to establish a foothold in the country, but with them came an increasing success. In recent years, New Zealand and its capital has garnered more attention as its untouched nature have been featured in big blockbuster movies, resulting in the nickname *Wellywood*. The Mesen-Nebu's attention shifted to the movie industry to capitalize on this sudden transformation. The Alchemists arrived to the city after the Second World War and settled in the Cuba Street neighborhood, which now is known as the artistic part of Wellington.

There's a strong divide among the guilds who want to focus on innovation stemming from the country, rather than to risk inviting foreign powers. The traditionalist views aren't the prominent one among the Alchemists, something many attribute to their guild not being present in the country until after the World Wars.

Su-Menent

While the Necromancers are prominent in the country, only a few reside in Wellington, mostly sending out representatives in their stead. They arrived in the country early, and studied the Māori funeral rites. The first recorded Starfall was an Arisen of the Su-Menent who lost his faith after seeing what consequences the British colonization had on the native people. It brought memories back on how history will always repeat itself and erase those who refuse to assimilate — he could no longer serve the Nameless Empire which at its height sought to conquer all nations.

The National War Memorial is a location which the Necromancers of New Zealand visit, almost like a pilgrimage. The tomb of an unknown soldier is poetic and evokes a response in most Arisen, but to the Necromancers who constantly contemplates the existential journey of death, it's a sacred place in need of protection.

Notable Characters

Aharon of the First: Aharon is the most famous mummy in Wellington, as he was part of the first meret which arrived in New Zealand. It's unknown if he keeps in contact with his meret, but whenever rumors arise about the other members Aharon disappears, supposedly chasing up the hearsay. His periods of vanishing have increased both in frequency and time spent away, raising suspicions among the Deathless that he has connections with the Purists.

Baraja, the Heretic: Baraja is the name of a suspected Shuankhsen who's on the mind of those who have begun to fear the Purists. The follower who served one of the missing Arisen died soon after, rumors of who Baraja was begun to spread. Only little was extracted before the servant perished, but all of it sparked both a sense of hope and dread. The leader of *Netra-Peri* is not serving Irem, the missing Deathless are either forcefully taken or have turned their backs to the Judges. As bleak this may seem, there have been escapees who know the sect's inner workings.

Uma: A mummy of the Su-Menent guild whose current location is unknown. She and her cult vanished, leaving only a letter signed by an unknown person, stating Uma needed purification. Recent reports mention a sighting of Uma on the outskirts of Wellington. Whether she's part of the Netra-Peri or not isn't known, but it was her followers who leaked the information of the Purists' leadership.

Notable Locations

The Beehive: Nicknamed after the building's unique shape, the Executive Wing of the New Zealand Parliament Buildings is known as the Beehive. The Maa-Kep utilizes their observation skills to tap into the plans and discussions which are on-going in these buildings. As it is one of the most distinctive buildings in the country, the Tef-Aabhi found themselves drawn to its architecture. It's a common meeting ground for the Architects, and they chuckle among themselves about how the mortals going in and out of the buildings do fit the image of bees — mindless drones in a hurry to carry out their simple jobs as tools, but an important job nonetheless.

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: Built in commemoration of the lives lost in wars, the National War Memorial in Wellington consists of several parts. The War Memorial Carillon, the Hall of Memories, and the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior built in 2004 are the most famous ones.

This modern tomb resonates with many, and serves as a neutral ground where either one's belief is reaffirmed or shaken. It's a place the Su-Menent has great interest in and are trying to find the reason to why this particular place awakens an Arisen's lost memories. A rule to monitor any Arisen in this place is being enforced by some cults to prevent desecration by Shuankhsen, or a Deathless group referred to as "the Deceived".

Hong Kong

A city born out of two clashing cultures, Hong Kong has long been known as a place where east meets west. It is a dense, bustling, vibrant jungle of concrete, steel and glass, on which the towering structures of wealthy corporations reach high above the teeming masses who bustle through its narrow streets.

The Deathless have made many forays into China over the centuries. Many cults made the long trek across the trackless expanses of the world in search of lost treasures, and many enemies followed. The Shuankhsen flocked to the realm like a dark tide, devouring everything they could find. The first Arisen to arrive there found a land in turmoil, riven by domestic strife. They required a safe harbor from which to conduct their business and through which their allies and compatriots could be safely brought in to the region.

The British “acquisition” of Hong Kong as a result of the Opium Wars of the 1800s provided well placed Iremites with just such an opportunity.

The Origin

Hong Kong Island was ceded to the British in the Treaty of Nanking, in 1842. The struggling colony was little more than a minor fishing port until it expanded following further conflicts to include Kowloon Peninsula and Stonecutter’s Island. As a safe port for European sailors rebuffed from Chinese ports for decades, it quickly became a key trading site for merchants looking to sell highly prized commodities such as tea, silk and porcelain.

The opportunities created by this colonial port were not lost on the Deathless, whose tendrils had already crept into London society. Chinese based cults were contacted and Arisen began positioning themselves around the area in greater numbers in order to facilitate the movement of personnel and materials out of China and into Hong Kong, where it could be returned to its rightful place and spared from the hands of Shuankhsen.

While many Iremites supported and celebrated this stride forward in the recovery of their lost relics, others feared such a gathering of Arisen in one place would only increase the ravenous hunger of the Shuankhsen and attract them to the city. Such fears would not prove unfounded and the cultists, hirelings and Triad gangs of rival immortals have let blood on the streets of Hong Kong for many years, particularly looking to control the means of shipping and Victoria Harbour.

Arisen in this region are newly landed reinforcements, some of whom are brought into the bodies of native cultists through the ancient rituals of Irem. Others have been operating in the region for many hundreds of years. Those are well established, often in the guise of respected businesses, niche collectors’ trusts, ritualized crime syndicates and even tour operators, offering transport to and from mainland China.

The end of British colonial sovereignty in 1997 broke down one of the main political barriers holding back the forces of Ammut from entering the city. The Arisen do not know how fully, if at all, the Shuankhsen have infiltrated the Chinese administration and its officers who now oversee the special administrative region. As they strive to maintain both their strong position in the area and the authority of their interests, which are linked in many ways to the Hong Kong government, they must contend with the unknown quantity seeking to leverage ever more of the region’s autonomy back to Beijing. Paranoia grips the slumbering hearts of the Arisen and each new face that visits the Executive is a potential enemy or ally. The situation is precariously balanced between those who wish to preserve their standing in the region and those who believe the time has come to strike out once more into the mainland as their forebears did.

The Diplomats hold the keys to power in the region, which is to be expected in this multicultural and diverse place. They form the networks allowing the Arisen and their cultists to move freely throughout the territory. Their hegemony is supported by the Maa-Kep who move in the city’s underbelly and keep their ears to the ground for the influence of the Devourer. Challenging the status quo are new arrivals of the Mesen-Nebu and Su-Menent who look to exploit both the vast riches that have been gathered in this metropolis and the poverty and deprivation suffered by those on the wrong side of the poverty line.

For now, a cabal of ancient cults keep the old guard in place and the challengers on the fringes. However, as enemies gnaw at the defenses of the Deathless’ tombs and relics of greater and greater power are brought through the port, opportunities arise for new powers to

stake a claim on the region, challenging even the Tef-Aabhi who, it is rumored, maintain a presence within modern day China through their centuries-old links to powerful families.

Part melting pot, part pressure cooker. Hong Kong is teeming with life and death. It is one of the most densely populated Deathless cities on the planet with large numbers of Arisen active in the city at any one time, either passing through or from one of the many long-established cults.

Story Hooks

- The ancient Cult of the Wave Dragon lives on in Hong Kong as the Lucky Serpent Shipping Company. The Diplomats all look to Khama'at as their senior, for he has been here since the 1500s. His Sadikh, Shang Mo Chou, was once a feared pirate who was known as the Queen of Guangzhou but now her life of adventure has been tied to the fortunes of her slumbering master. A life of freedom shrunk to a small measure as she directs the very trade upon which she used to prey. Now, Khama'at has awoken and called a conclave of the Diplomats. Ms Shang knows it is no mere coincidence that her master awoke just after that luxury vessel containing the negotiators from Beijing pulled into the harbor.
- A shadow war has engulfed the streets of the city as the 14K Triad and their traditional enemies, the Sun Yee On, are battling for supremacy in the illicit drug trade running through the docks. The Deathless of the Maa-Kep guild have ostensibly supported both organizations at different times and rivalries between cults are ignited by the conflagration. As a new cult comes into town, they must choose a side, or perhaps they can negotiate a peace between them both. One thing is for sure, without the Maa-Kep's foot soldiers monitoring for signs of the Shuankhsen, the streets are far less safe. This situation needs to be resolved and soon.
- The Tef-Aabhi known as Wang Zhang Wei extends his new "colleague" an invitation to meet him and a couple of other new arrivals at the Central Government Building. His people secreted a truck with an ancient relic of Irem into the city, but they have reported being pursued by the Shuankhsen and some of their number were killed bringing it into the safety of Wang's new tomb. In order to prevent the shipment from being discovered before the Lucky Serpent can move it out of the city, Wang proposes it be moved each night to a different safe house and guarded by each of their cults in turn. He adds that he can offer extra assistance from his many hired guards and loyal followers, if any of the others should require it, for a price. Some believe Wang has been infected by the memory of his new host body, others seem keen to take him up on his offer. It remains uncertain if he intends to help the other new arrivals or attempt to embarrass them with failure.

The Guilds

A feeling of paranoia grips the guilds of Hong Kong, as mummies from other guilds test the Diplomats' influence over the region and the Shuankhsen look for any opportunity or point of egress they might exploit to erode Deathless control over their cults and vessels here.

Maa-Kep

Largely concerned with the lower classes of the city, the Maa-Kep have a firm agreement with the ruling group of Diplomats that they will keep watch on the streets for the arrival of any Shuankhsen from China or beyond. The many relics gathered here are a great attraction for the hungry foe and the Spies have the eyes on the street to spot them and enough gunmen within the Triads whom their cultists control to do them harm.

They seem to have accepted their role as unofficial Deathless police force of the city, since it not only affords them access to the rich spoils of relics, wealth and information flowing

through the busy ports and markets of Hong Kong, but it allows them to pull the strings of the lesser guilds, many of whom are keen to send their members into China via this strongpoint. They clash mostly with the resident Mesen-Nebu, whose propensity to gentrify the lower value areas of the city as part of some ridiculous quest to perfect its structure has robbed them of many viable safe houses and dens for their operations.

Mesen-Nebu

Hong Kong's Alchemists seek to marvel at the immense spoils being returned from their loss to China and craft the city into a shining jewel and example of all that can be achieved from well guided endeavor.

The oldest and most well-established of the guild's members in the city were at the forefront of the campaign to demolish the Kowloon Walled City and replace it with the park that now stands there. The tearing down of that eyesore and stain on the city's populace was a great boon to the Mesen-Nebu but earned them the ire of the Maa-Kep and their Triad associates. The campaign did, however, give the Mesen-Nebu excellent links within the offices of the Executive Council and the Alchemists have extended an invitation to certain members of the New Pharaohs to join their efforts in directing the growth and prosperity the city enjoys. Such tactics may shift the ire of the Maa-Kep from this ambitious guild, but will do nothing to please the ruling Sessa-Hebsu.

Sessa-Hebsu

The most well-established cults in the city belong to the Diplomats. Some came with British delegations when the colony was first being established, others used the city as a safe haven from which to strike at the Shuankhsen and gather information on the lost relics within China for others to pursue. In modern times, they operate as consummate professionals, smoothing relations between the local government and the Chinese Central Government as well as monitoring and guiding the activities of the other Arisen coming and going from the city.

Hong Kong is the gateway to the east for many of the Deathless and the Sessa-Hebsu enjoy the news that such travelers bring from across the globe, as well as the many news outlets and international trading firms they have an interest in. If Hong Kong is a gateway, then the Diplomats are the gatekeepers. They have long established allies among the oldest and strongest cults in the city and they brook no challengers to their very comfortable seat. Besides the Shuankhsen, the Sessa-Hebsu fear the arrival of Tef-Aabhi in numbers, both from China and further afield. The New Pharaohs are instantly suspected of being there to usurp the Diplomats from their unusual spot as top dogs in this city.

Su-Menent

The Necromancers are strangely limited in number in such a densely populated city teeming with the hum of life and energies of death. Many independent sorcerers have studied the arcane secrets within Hong Kong and their secrets are certainly of interest to the discerning necromancer.

More than anything else, the Su-Menent see Hong Kong as a proving ground for all sorts of experimental rituals and procedures. The streets are awash with spiritually bereft and hopeless people, just ripe for the picking and willing to sacrifice just about anything for a chance at a better life. While such experiments are beneath the immediate concern of the Sessa-Hebsu, they do not sit well with the Maa-Kep or the Mesen-Nebu. Both for their sheer wastefulness of life and in the attention that it draws to certain parts of the city's underworld. With most of the Arisen in Hong Kong worried about Shuankhsen attacks, reports of ritual blood sacrifices and the like attract the wrong kind of attention.

Tef-Aabhi

The New Pharaohs are the ascendant guild in China, so it is surprising to find them relatively under-represented here. However, the Diplomats have always tried to point those arriving in Hong Kong to pastures new, and there are no shortage of suitable destinations within striking distance of Hong Kong. More recently, Architects have been coming in at the invitation of established cults of Mesen-Nebu and have looked to exploit their links within the local political community to begin to exploit their synergistic goal of bringing order to the chaos that is this city.

Some people may disdain the rigid order and ruthless enforcement of law favored by the Chinese, but the Tef-Aabhi understands that to keep structure in place, you must apply to it the most careful order. The Diplomats think they are in control of the city, so be it. The New Pharaohs are happy for them to harvest all of the scribbles in the world for their dusty scrolls. Meanwhile, they will get on with the real work, which is making Hong Kong a beacon of all that Irem could have been in time.

Notable Characters

Khama'at: This enigmatic member of the Sesha-Hebsu is regarded as one of the foremost Arisen in the city and perhaps in the whole of China, depending on who you speak to. His influence over the Victoria Harbour and the airports means that nobody can enter or leave the city without him hearing of it. Khama'at's cult are a loose collection of merchants, academics and political aides, led by his Sadikh, Shang Mo Chou, who was once a feared pirate. She now operates the Lucky Serpent Trading Corporation in her master's name as well as maintaining many of her age-old underground links. Many mummies whisper that it is she and not Khama'at who truly runs Hong Kong, as her links to the Triad families forms the basis of the Sesha-Hebsu alliance with the Maa-Kep that keeps Khama'at in his lofty position.

Wang Zhang Wei: Mr Wang claims to be a member of a family of imperial descent. Staunchly pro-Chinese, he arrived in the city not long after the British lease expired. As a relatively new face on the scene, this craft Tef-Aabhi has made a habit of befriending new arrivals to the city and offering them opportunities which, ultimately, indebt them to him. He is enigmatic and strange, even to other Deathless, who feel that his adoption of his host's name and, seemingly, some of his mannerisms, is a sign of his deterioration. Perhaps the transposition ritual was not entirely successful in his case, as when he is awake he seems to retain more memory from Mr Wang than from his former Iremite self, down to the fact that nobody knows his true name. Some even suspect that he himself cannot remember it. A rumor boosted by his voracious hunger for artifacts coming out of ancient Chinese stories for any hint of memory as to who he was and where he came from. Wang hides this behind his grinning façade and is an impresario who likes to hold meetings in important buildings.

Khimpec the Hollow: The ancient malice this Shuankhsen feels for Khama'at and his brethren knows no bounds. He spent a century growing fat off of the delights brought to him down the silk road, only for the Deathless to follow him and ruin it all. While his compatriots are scattered, Khimpec has lost none of his foul hunger and rage over the years. If Hong Kong falls, the glory days will be back, and if he plays his cards right, perhaps he can even keep the relics and unsuspecting Deathless rolling in to the city to sate his hunger for all time.

Notable Locations

Victoria Harbour: This natural harbor is the main reason for Hong Kong's primacy and growth as a colony under British rule and for much of its prosperity even now. Its location in the South China sea makes it a perfect hub between colonies in the southern archipelagos and

mainland China and Japan. It also services shipping from the United States, Canada and any number of Central and South American Countries. Controlling this landmark area is the key to controlling Hong Kong and the Lucky Serpent's grip on the shipping makes sure the Sessa-Hebsu stay in control for now.

Temple Street Night Market: A visit here is like stepping back in time and many Arisen come here to get lost in the faded memory of their distant past. The buzz of bartering and the bizarre mixture of sights and smells are evocative and attractive to many. The Maa-Kep keep this area under a tight leash as many a shady deal can be done in the ramshackle stalls of this area, especially if the local police are paid to look the other way.

Kowloon Walled City Park: Once, this historical park was the site of the worst slum in Hong Kong. A series of run-down towers, each block within it, a town within itself. Overcrowded and dangerous. The Mesen-Nebu see this park as a testament to everything that is great about their philosophy, a sign of the grandeur that awaits all of those who join with them in bringing perfection to the world.

Chapter Seven: Creating Timeless Tales

There are many ways a troupe can tell a story of **Mummy: The Curse**, and what appeals to one group will not necessarily appeal to another. Some groups prefer competition, and some prefer co-operation. The modes are equally valid. The most important thing a Storyteller can do prior to planning a chronicle is to sit down with players and try to get a feel for what they want. She can introduce the players to the bones of the chronicle she is planning. Is she envisaging a cinematic chronicle with the meret encountering increasingly powerful foes until they get to the final confrontation with their archenemy? Or, perhaps, something more contemplative where the characters explore what it means to be an extremely powerful, immortal being who is nonetheless bound to live episodically, with little opportunity to learn from the past, and who is bound into service to a barely recollected god? There is, of course, no rule to say the troupe can't have a bit of both these extremes. Different troupes want different emphases and a long-running chronicle works best when everyone starts out with the same understanding.

At this initial meeting, the Storyteller should find time to discuss the characters the group is interested in playing and start to work out how these would fit into the chronicle. She should try to discourage people from setting their hearts on playing a concept unsuitable for the rest of the meret, or a concept ill-suited for the game's flow. For example, if most of the group want to play co-operatively toward common goals it can be difficult to incorporate a character whose main goal is to undermine the rest of the meret. On the other hand, if the players are asked "would you be happy if characters worked against each other in this game?" it might provoke excitement and intrigue within the story.

Tips for the Storyteller

A mummy's existence is tough. No doubt about it. She exists to serve her Judge and mostly, when she returns to the living world from henet, she doesn't remember what she was doing before. But, if the chronicle is entirely dark, the troupe will start to take this for granted. Darkness works best when contrasted with light. Sometimes mummies and their cultists relax, sometimes they enjoy the presence of a friend or a lover, the feeling of satiation after a wonderful meal or the thrill of attending a concert. Do not be afraid to include the occasional shot of humor.

Avoid saying "No"

When a member of the troupe comes up with an idea that seems, on the face of it, to be incompatible with the chronicle, don't just say "no". The Storyteller may need to ask for time to think about it. Most ideas can fit into most chronicles with a bit of ingenuity. If it's really off the wall, she may want to ask that player to compromise, to alter her amazing idea so it fits in with the rest of the story.

This guideline is particularly important when a new player joins an ongoing chronicle. Existing players need to acknowledge that a new member of the group may take things in a different direction, and this is something to celebrate.

There are situations when a Storyteller needs to say "No" and those occur when a player or players are taking things down a track that spoils the story for another player, takes away another player's agency or cuts another player out of the action. In such cases, no really must mean no, but follow up with an explanation of why this decision was made.

Nothing survives contact with players

It is essential for a Storyteller to love the concept they have for their chronicle. Without that, everything feels flat. Players, however, are intensely creative people and will want to take things their own way. A storytelling game is a collaborative effort and sometimes the best laid plans of the Storyteller do not come to fruition because the meret has decided to do something utterly unpredictable. In such situations, the Storyteller needs to think on her feet. Not everyone finds this easy and it's perfectly fine for the Storyteller to take a break or run a side scene or even to tell the players they weren't expecting these developments, and they need time to think about them. The worst thing a Storyteller can do is to try to force the meret back onto the path they had planned. Character actions are for the players to decide. The Storyteller should let them handle the consequences of their decisions, but never let them think their characters' decisions cannot affect the story.

In real life, most of us want to make a difference. This is even more the case when it comes to participating in a story. The characters are not spectators, they want to be awesome and effective in this story, and it is the job of the storyteller to make sure this happens.

Make it feel real

The use of appropriate lighting and a suitable soundtrack helps many people, though it's not always practical. There are also number of storytelling tricks that increase immersion and enjoyment. The most important of these is 'show, don't tell'. Rather than just saying "It's dark in the alley" try expanding; "as you enter the alley a shadow seems to fall over the world. The streetlight flickers intermittently. It's not bright enough to see clearly. Clouds obscure the moon. You find yourself squinting as you try to make out detail of the rotting crates stacked against the wall." Rather than saying "Your questioning makes the shopkeeper angry" try "As you ask the shopkeeper what he saw last night, his face turns red, you see his left hand shake slightly as he forms a fist with his right, his eyes narrow and he brings his right fist down hard on the shop counter."

Try to avoid making up a new Storyteller character for each situation. Use and re-use the same cast so the characters can form relationships with them. Let them have their friends and enemies, the stall holder they believe they can trust, the bartender who always shortchanges them. Use a few, well-described locations so that, if the meret goes exploring somewhere strange and unfamiliar, it is a significant contrast to the places they know so well. Let them have places where they feel comfortable and places where they know they must pay attention to their surroundings.

Everyone is Awesome

Every character in **Mummy: The Curse** has some special skill or resource. Every character has some weakness or flaw. All of these should feature strongly in every story. As the meret progresses through its journey, characters (and players) should develop an increasing awareness of what their companions can do well and put those characters forward for tasks at which they can shine. They may also learn to cover for each other's weaknesses.

Sharing the Spotlight

In a roleplaying game, everyone deserves an equal share of the Storyteller's attention. Some players like to be in the spotlight all the time, some are more reluctant to grab it. It is part of the Storyteller's task to ensure that everyone gets a chance to shine, though some people will want to shine less obviously than others. Storytellers should ensure every character — from the mightiest Deathless to the most humble mortal cultist — has a chance to stand at the forefront of their tale, providing players with the opportunity to tell a story and providing the

chronicle with a study in contrasts, where a mummy's concerns might be cosmic, and a cultist's might be when his starving family are next going to eat.

Safety Guidelines

What many players want from **Mummy: The Curse** is an intense, immersive experience facilitated by a deep and complex backstory, the immense power available to Arisen, the tragic loss of Memory, and the inexorable drive to achieve one's purpose. The issue with intense experiences is they have the potential to get out of hand and cause distress to participants.

Propose a gesture, word, or place an X-card within reach of everyone in the gaming space. This mechanic is there for a person to "tap" when they are not feeling okay, or if they need to pause the game for any reason. Everyone needs to know it and respect it. The person gesturing might wish to continue with the action toned down a notch, or they might need a break to think things through. A player should always be able to use a gesture or X-card and they should not have to explain their reasons to anyone. This is really an issue of giving every member of the troupe the space they need to feel comfortable.

Troupes and Pyramids

The nature of the Arisen makes it unlikely that a great many of them are active in the same place at the same time. In a universe-shaking chronicle it is, of course, possible, but even then, there will be stories where only one or two members of the meret are active.

The Mummy Meret

Finding four or five mummies active in the same place at the same time outside a Sothic Turn is rare without a joint cult to summon the entire band, a tomb robber raiding a communal burial ground, or a widespread necromantic event raising them from henet. There is no reason why a troupe should not use such rare events to tell a story, however. Such stories make the mummies primary players on the world's stage and provide players with a lot of resources to have fun telling tales of godlike power.

Do all the Mummies have the same Cult?

Mummies may possess individual cults or pool a larger one between the meret. Cults, however, may have their own designs. Over the centuries it is not unthinkable that two powerful cults might decide to merge, increasing their power and having relations with two or more mummies. If this is going to be the basis for a chronicle, the mummies could pool their Merits to buy up the Reach and Grasp of their shared cult. This is a solid design for a troupe who like their characters to work harmoniously.

Where the mummies have separate cults, there may be some intra-meret conflict. At the character creation phase, it is worth taking time to ensure that, while the characters and their cults might have different aims, these aims are not so incompatible as to tear the group apart. It is possible to unite to combat mutual threats and achieve common aims while differing in philosophy, precise direction, and ideal methodology.

The cults of two or more mummies might merge as part of the ongoing chronicle, if the plot gives them adequate reason to do so. To some troupes this may feel more organic and authentic than announcing that the cults merged at some time in the past as part of the chronicle background. Of course, with the non-linear nature of this game's timeline, it is always possible to revisit past events in future chapters.

Mummies and Cultists

Not every player has to portray a mummy all of the time or even at all. Some troupes will enjoy the power disparity involved when only one of the meret is a mummy. A number of features of this game make playing a member of the mummy's cult especially rewarding.

When a mummy arises, for whatever reason, she is full to the brim with Sekhem and has little memory, no knowledge of the current cultural matrix and scant self-control. At this point her cultists play a vital role in covering up any untoward incidents or faux pas the mummy creates, teaching the mummy how to operate in the time and place to which she awoke and pointing the mummy in the right direction to achieve her purpose. The mummy has more raw power, but without her cultists she may not be able to use it effectively. As the Descent progresses, the mummy becomes less powerful and may invest more and more of her Pillars in her cultists. This does not constitute a role-reversal, but it does change the balance of respective roles.

While some cultists are normal mortals, a Storyteller might give them some extra experience, so they become exceptional. In this model, one member of the gaming group could play the mummy's Sadikh: an immortal who can funnel their Arisen master's Sekhem but rises and falls with the mummy. Other immortals and sorcerers can ally with the Arisen and there is no reason to avoid bringing in monsters from other game lines if the players and the Storyteller are happy with this.

Rotating Mummies

In a long running chronicle, players can take turns at portraying the mummy. That might mean a single mummy, played by different individuals each session or each Descent. Where players are looking to run a long chronicle with considerable time jumps, having a different player portray the same mummy for an entire Descent is an interesting concept because of the way it mirrors the gradual growth of memory during a mummy's time in the world. An alternative arrangement would be for each player to have two characters, one of whom is a mummy and one of whom is something else, such as a vampire or sorcerer. This allows for different mummies to be present in different chapters of the chronicle. The non-mummy character might be responsible for summoning the mummy character into play.

Another issue worth considering is how to run a chronicle spanning eons of time when some of the characters are mortal. A vampire, Sadikh or Blood Bather may be with the mummy in 1546 CE and again in 1832 CE, but that is not going to be possible for most mages or sorcerers. Reborn and Eternals are workable solutions here. The Reborn reincarnate over and over again, retaining their memories, which makes them an interesting foil for mummies. Often regarded as hostile (as they remember all the unpleasant things mummies have done to them) they could just as easily be allies. Unlike mummies, they exist in linear time, so they may remember things in a different order. In any case, having a Reborn in their cult, or even as an ally would be of value to a mummy who cares about regaining her memory. The Eternal store their souls in relics. To the average mummy, these relics are a store of Sekhem, to return to Duat or drain. What will the mummy do when he discovers the relic discovered houses the soul of someone of importance to his cult? The Eternal is a suitable candidate for a player character in a pyramid troupe where the apex rotates.

Alternatively, in a time-hopping chronicle, members of the troupe might prefer a choice between re-creating their mortal character with enough twists to make them credible as a grandfather or great-grandchild of the character they played previously and making a completely different character for the next time zone. The Storyteller should grant such

characters some or all of the experiences earned by the characters played by those players previously to maintain balance with any immortal characters in the mix.

Playing the Pyramid

Every character should have a chance to make a difference to the outcome of the story. Some prefer to work quietly, from the shadows, but they deserve the Storyteller's time and attention just as much as the social butterfly character. In a pyramid-style chronicle, whether a single player portrays the mummy or there is some form of rotation, this becomes even more essential.

In this type of chronicle, it pays for the mummy to invest her Pillars in the rest of her meret. The mechanics explaining how to do this start on p. XX. The Storyteller can help here by making sure everyone starts with enough experience to minimize the difference in power between the various character types, though the balance of power will change over the course of the chronicle as the mummy descends.

How do the mummy and her cult members feel about each other? Do the cultists worship their mummy and try to appease her? Do they see him as a resource for exploitation? Most will be somewhere between the two extremes and not every member of the meret needs to feel the same. This is a point of potential character growth and change for the entire troupe. Perhaps the mummy's behavior encourages the cult to feel greater awe, perhaps she acts in a way that makes them start to despise her. All these dynamics feed into the story of a pyramid style chronicle.

If mechanical balance doesn't matter to the group, examining mummy through the lens of different levels of cultist — one playing a mortal, another a sorcerer, another an immortal — provides many opportunities for interesting stories. The Storyteller must keep in mind that while the mummy is godlike, he acts as a beacon to Shuankhsen, suffers from a loss of Memory or subtlety, when pulsating with Sekhem, and of course inflicts Sybaris on those unfortunate enough to come close to him. Mortals have access to a whole world beyond the mummy's reach. Sorcerers have access to a kind of magic and society neither mummies nor mortals can understand. Immortals practice rituals and consort with others of their kind, pursuing their own paths while attempting to strengthen their long lives. Every character offers something to the tale.

The Truly Epic Chronicle

Mummy: The Curse lends itself to a truly epic style of play where the action takes place over different periods of time and areas of space. This type of chronicle is bound to raise questions about how time travel works. The meret will not necessarily experience time travel, but, as there is no need to play out the story in strictly chronological order, everyone will have to give some thought to how scenes occurring in 1591 CE might interact with an already-concluded story set in 2015 CE. Mummies may have little by way of memory when they first begin each Descent, but players all bear the responsibility for keeping continuity. The meret may think they have put an end to that sadistic Blood Bather in 1591 CE, but clearly, she found some way to revive herself and come back to taunt them in the 2015 CE story. How pleased she must be to find the mummies and their cults have completely forgotten their victory and how angry she must be that the epic battle five centuries earlier did not make much of an impression on the meret. And that amulet the sorcerer cultist found in the attic in 2007 CE? Who put it there for him to find back in 1736 CE? This chronicle gives the troupe infinite opportunities to backfill the plot holes that inevitably occur in the best planned of story arcs.

Cultists and other Allies

Sadikh and Witnesses are the obvious possibilities for pyramid play. Other allies (even cultists) are possible and immortals like Blood Bathers (p. XX) and Body Thieves (p. XX), though normally perceived as adversaries, may join or work with a cult. Some combinations are more likely than others. Sorcerers and Deathless can work very well together and are as likely to be allies as they are to be enemies.

Sadikh

Sadikh are half-alive servants — sometimes called “companions” — created by the Arisen. They are sometimes interred with them at death, as they’re chained to the same cycle of death and rebirth as their masters. When the mummy wakes, the Sadikh wakes too, without the issue of lost memory. For this reason, the Sadikh makes for a useful guide for every mummy.

Sadikh are the most obvious choice for a mixed-meret chronicle. They are almost as immortal as their Arisen partners and have an obvious and well-defined role in relation to their mummy. They may not exercise the same raw power, but they have a much better grasp on the ever-changing world of mortals as well as having considerable sway over their arisen partners. What they lack is an ongoing relationship with the mummy’s cult, due to their need to rest whenever the mummy slips into henet. It is possible they could become jealous of a powerful cultist who gets too close to the Arisen in the meret and equally possible that cult members would be resentful of the ‘special relationship’ between the mummy and the Sadikh.

Blood Bathers

Although many regard the Blood Bather’s manner of attaining immortality (p. XX) as abhorrent, a meret could value an individual able to remain alive and without mental infirmity through vast tracts of time. A Blood Bather could help orient the mummy to his current Descent and ‘jog’ the mummy’s memory of past Descents. Only her inevitable loss of Integrity limits the Blood Bather’s usefulness. The struggle against that decline forms a central part of this character’s story and other members of the meret will either attempt to help her resist or take advantage of her hardened heart by having her perform those actions they find too horrible to contemplate.

Body Thieves

Body Thieves share with mummies a hatred of Shuankhsen, who can drain life from the Thieves. This makes Body Thieves keen members of scorpion cults as they believe they offer some degree of protection or, at least, a common enemy. As with other immortals, the Body Thief brings memory with her when she becomes part of a cult or even a meret. She can be present at any number of Descents. In return, the cult may provide her with a succession of hosts and the mummy can invest her with Pillars.

Body Thieves are, ultimately, ordinary mortals. They carry their Mental and Social Attributes and Skills from body to body but adopt the physical equivalents of the body they inhabit. Although they are functionally immortal, they tend to be weak in several areas compared to some other characters in the meret. The Storyteller might wish to give them more experiences to reflect their great age, but those should go into Mental and Social Skills and Attributes and appropriate Merits.

A Body Thief character can take part in stories covering many Descents and can change her body to suit the circumstances.

Eternals

Eternals have removed their own Sekhem and stored it in an anchor while their body, mind, and spirit persists. Their immortality persists for as long as they can protect their anchor. They are viable as members of a meret and might be useful in helping to procure vessels, due to their familiarity with relics. They work well with the Mesen-Nebu due to a mutual interest in dedwen (though the Eternal will not necessarily recognize that term). Like other immortals they can assist with memory and many mummies regard this as a desirable trait.

In return for service to a mummy, the Eternal could gain protection for her anchors, though trusting a mummy would be a big step. Building up that trust could be a theme that runs through the chronicle.

Reborn

In some ways the diametric opposite of mummies, these mortals have learned to keep their identities and memories through successive incarnations. A mummy would learn a great deal about memory and techniques for retaining and regaining it through different Descents if she had a Reborn in her cult. They retain memories of their previous lives but these take time to develop and a young Reborn is very vulnerable to loss of the thread that holds her incarnations together.

As with the other Timeless, it might take several Descents for the Arisen and the Reborn to learn to trust each other. On the face of it, dealing with a mummy spells danger for the Reborn, while for the mummy, the Reborn represents an almost perfect form of immortality with all the joys of youth, love, and even death presented to these immortals again and again.

Mortals

Mortals will almost always be the largest group within the mummy's cult. Mortals have a number of advantages other creatures lack. They have real and unbroken connections to the contemporary world. They have living connections to supportive friends and family who may be influential within their communities. They have real identities that stand up to the closest inspection. Each mortal is unique and, therefore, unpredictable. Mortals are familiar with the way the world works for ordinary people, something other types of creature often find difficult to understand.

The Arisen need mortals. They need them to interact with the alien (to them) world in which they find themselves on each Descent. They need them to provide hope, connections, and friendship. They need them to form and sustain their cults.

Ordinary mortals are important for the meret and while they may lack gnarly supernatural powers, their mortal skills and social contacts are more generically useful. If some of the troupe are playing mortals, it is important to ensure they are provided with the strong skills and social contacts which more obviously powerful characters need to achieve their aims. For some players this may not compensate for only being able to participate in one or two Descents (whereas the Timeless and Deathless keep going through millennia) and general lack of supernatural power. Others, however, may enjoy playing the apparently weakest character in a meret, one who has to rely on his natural endowments and wits rather than being able to sweep all obstacles aside with a powerful Utterance. Storytellers should pay special attention to ensure this character does not miss out the action by arranging things so that, from time to time, the mortal's community connections or specialist skills are the only thing that can get the meret out of a tight corner. This way, the character can prove that ordinary people are a match for the Deathless, the Timeless, the Lifeless and everything between.

Sorcerers

Anyone can perform sorcerous rituals if they possess the correct tools, knowledge, and setting. Learning sorcery is a lifetime's study, however, and most mortals have other things to do with their lives. Sorcerers are ordinary mortals who have devoted their lives to learning to do extraordinary things. Sorcerers and the Arisen can form mutually advantageous bonds. The mummy can provide the sorcerer with Sekhem and invest her with Pillars, both of which make sorcerous rituals more efficient. In return, the mummy and her cult gain a member or ally who has a deep understanding of ritual and one who may be able to create vestiges.

Sorcerers are mortal and will not be able to serve the mummy or her cult through multiple Descents. Sorcerous cults, however, keep extensive records whether written or through oral tradition, and being in a position to consult these can be profitable to the mummy and her cult. A cult member who is also a sorcerer is in a good position to obtain access to the lore of mummies and fellow sorcerers alike.

Witness

From the Arisen's point of view it is very convenient to have at least one Witness in her cult and, given the Witness' obsession with mummies, they are not difficult to recruit. There is often a strong reciprocal emotional connection between the Witness and the mummy he serves. As a mortal, the Witness cannot directly assist the mummy in remembering her own past. He may remind her of someone she knew or something she felt in the distant past but the Witness himself does not remember. He may act as the mummy's Touchstone or as a member of her cult, valued for his individual abilities or connections.

Witness characters give their player a chance to weave the complex relationship between the Witness, the mummy and the rest of the meret into their story. Like other essentially mortal characters they can provide access to mortal communities and resources as they are inherently rooted in the living world around them, but unlike mundane mortals, Witnesses do not feel all the pains of Sybaris, and might one day become Sadikh.

Monstrous Cultists

Vampires, being functionally immortal are an obvious choice for cultists. Vampires, like mummies, have periods of inactivity and, while they tend not to forget everything from past active periods, they suffer from torpor dreams that distort their memories. It is unlikely a vampire would remember much about Irem, though some were active at the time of the First, Second, and Third Turns. Both mummies and vampires have their fingers deep inside mortal political and social issues, using their influence to tune Empires to their agendas.

The Awakened with an interest in the soul or the nature of the afterlife might well find the memories of mummies fascinating and could join a meret out of curiosity and a desire to discover more. The Created are interested in all forms of immortality as they wish to counter their own. The effects of Sybaris on the mortal subconscious might draw the attention of a Begotten and some Sin-Eaters would be fascinated by a creature who straddles life and death. A changeling could perceive a mummy as a powerful defense against her pursuers. Many such characters, however, have a limited lifespan, just as a mortal does.

The Storyteller is free to say that Sybaris does not affect mages, vampires, and other creatures already entwined with the supernatural.

Purpose and Descent

Purpose is one of the fundamentals of a mummy's existence. While most characters have choices about their priorities, a mummy's purpose is set in stone and forms an essential part of this game's dynamic. There is a constant tension here between fulfilling purpose and the preservation of Sekhem. Non-mummy characters in the meret can influence this balance in interesting ways. They, after all, have their own needs and motivations. Everyone will want to influence the apex of the pyramid to follow their personal agenda, though the character may see it as doing the right thing rather than doing things their way. If the cult awakens the mummy, it is they who set the mummy's waking purpose. Due to this, while the mummy may be able to exercise powers beyond a mortal's wildest dreams, her cultists are firmly in the driving seat. It may not be every cultist who realizes this, but it is something they could learn over a period of time.

In a pyramid-structure chronicle, the Storyteller may wish to be stricter with Descent rolls than she would be if dealing with a meret of mummies. As the mummy loses her Sekhem, the pyramid flattens. The non-mummy characters may choose to take advantage of this, or they may rally around their failing god and much will depend upon their personal choices.

Neter-Khertet

"I'm right here!" Officer Wilson screamed, but his fellow officers heard nothing.

Out of the corner of his eye, he glimpsed the crocodile-headed horror slowly drifting toward him. With a scream, he ran blindly.

At the sight of a man shining like a beacon, embers of hope rekindled. He called out as he ran towards him, but the shining one's gaze remained fixed on the horizon. He looked towards the approaching horror, then back to the man. Grabbing him, he shook, finally resorting to a slap across the face. "For the love of God, help me!" he screamed.

"You shouldn't have interfered," the blazing man replied coldly, turning away. "Suffer the consequences."

Deathly Twilight laps at the world of the living, waves of death crashing onto the shores of life. Occultists, mortal and otherwise, understand Twilight as the natural state of ghosts outside the Underworld, an ephemeral existence composed of death, emotion, and memories. They glimpse only the shallows. The Arisen perceive a realm in its own right, the kingdom of Anpu, Opener of the Way. A desert shadowscape filled with blistering winds, echoing voices, and chaotic memories, Neter-Khertet disorients those falling into it unprepared. Neter-Khertet mostly shares its geography with the physical world, though there are some notable differences. In Neter-Khertet, most physical features of the environment appear to be heavily shadowed and worn, Light and sound seem muted and distorted, as though perceiving them underwater. Physical matter is naturally intangible to entities in Neter-Khertet.

Entities touched by Sekhem perceive two great mountains dimly visible on the eastern and western horizons, called Bakhu and Manu respectively. Traveling far enough in either direction eventually brings an entity to the mountain, where gateways for souls remain eternally open. Each sky gate, or akhet, is a shimmering portal permitting souls to move between one realm and another. Transient gates open in other places, often resulting from interactions of sacred geometry with celestial events.

Shades

In addition to ghosts, wild Amkhata, and escaped fiends, Neter-Khertet is also home to strange shadowy entities called shades, similar but distinct from ghosts. Frequently preyed upon by fiends and Amkhata, shades lurk within the storm of Neter-Khertet, hiding in

unnoticed corners and clustering in groups. Shades appear as living shadows, some seeming almost human, others monstrosly deformed. Like ghosts, shades hold memories of once living people, sometimes even identifying as them when convinced to communicate. Unlike ghosts, they require no Anchors to resist the Underworld's pull, instead being faintly drawn towards Duat. Shades avoid confrontation, striking opportunistically at weakened entities when they feel they have the advantage. Rumors persist of more potent shades, nourished on stolen Sekhem, lurking deep in Neter-Khertet.

The Ashen Storm

An eternal storm, called the Neshshu by the Arisen, whirls through the depths of Neter-Khertet, concealing them from ghosts and other Twilight observers beyond a hazy shroud of sand and funeral ashes. The storm does no harm, but whirling sands and echoing voices are disorienting, inflicting the Sandstorm Tilt. Entities aware of it may attempt to hide in the storm, concealing themselves as though within shadows, a common tactic for Amkhata, fiends, and shades. This is a basic attempt at stealth, but success renders them functionally invisible. Any being capable of perceiving deathly Twilight may attempt to pierce this concealment, contesting it with a Perception roll.

The Caverns of Neter-Khertet

Accessible through gates appearing in places strongly affected by death, the Caverns of Neter-Khertet beckon Arisen intrigued by death and the afterlife. These Avernian gates periodically open, pulling ghosts down into its depths. Mummies in Neter-Khertet may follow these hapless ghosts if they wish, entering an area called the Upper Reaches by mortal occultists. Explorers find a network of caverns sheltered from the storm, steadily descending towards patchwork cities crafted by the teeming hordes of the forgotten dead alongside bizarre Rivers dividing the Upper Reaches from the Lower. It is a constant source of frustration for inquisitive mummies that Anpu appears to turn them back from the Rivers, denying them the ability to cross over into the strange lands of the dead beyond. Anpu also appears to mummies seeking to leave the Caverns, opening the Gate to allow them back into the living world.

The Soul Unleashed

When a mummy is killed, they gain the Disembodied Condition. In this state, the mummy exists in Neter-Khertet but remains focused on the events of their death cycle, unless outside influences pull them from away. With no sahu to shelter it, the mummy's soul shines like a beacon. The sight of their eternal soul revealed is terrifying to ephemeral entities of lower Rank, inflicting the Awestruck Condition. Mummies attempting to hide in the storm of Neter-Khertet shine even through the swirling sands, suffering their current Sekhem as a penalty.

Arisen distracted from their death cycle by outside forces and those outside of their bodies by other means may freely interact with other entities in Neter-Khertet or explore as far as the Rivers in the Caverns.

If an ephemeral mummy is defeated by entities in Neter-Khertet, they disincorporate, reforming at sunset beside one of their Anchors (p. XX) with a single level of Corpus and a single point in each depleted Pillar. Reforming consumes a dot of Sekhem, potentially plummeting the mummy into *henet*.

Death Cycles

While death drops mummies into Neter-Khertet, they do not share the experiences of other entities in this state unless forced by an outside force. The mummy is only vaguely aware of events occurring in Neter-Khertet or the physical world, instinctively journeying in search of resurrection through a haze of memories. The mummy's purpose drives them toward Anpu, while one without purpose is adrift in Neter-Khertet, more prone to falling victim to other entities dwelling within the storm. Anpu awaits them at the end of this journey, offering a torch to guide them, sometimes silently imparting wisdom or important revelations as well. If their first purpose has been fulfilled, Anpu offers the choice between resurrection and *henet*, the torch and the jar of ashes. When taking the torch, the mummy must journey towards the *akhet* that will return them to life, facing the echoes of their past along the way. The visions encountered force the mummy to confront aspects of their past they've forgotten or repressed.

System: Upon being killed, the mummy gains the Disembodied Condition. The mummy remains focused on their death cycle unless damaged by an outside force or targeted by supernatural powers. Navigating their labyrinthine memories to find Anpu requires they follow the guiding symbols, provoking a Memory roll, suffering a -2 penalty if their first purpose has been fulfilled. Record the result. Anpu directs them toward the appropriate *akhet*, granting the mummy the ability to perceive and use the soul portal. Accepting the ashes and *henet* immediately ends the mummy's current Descent, bestowing any remaining *Sekhem* upon Anpu. Accounts of Anpu offering this *Sekhem* to desperate mummies with unfulfilled purposes remain apocryphal. The torch illuminates any *akhet* the mummy nears, making it visible as a shimmering portal, but they must still journey to their *sahu* or organs. Confronting their past is a purely narrative experience, although successfully facing it always carries revelation for the mummy. Upon reaching the *akhet*, the mummy may attempt resurrection.

Resurrection

The mummy steps through the *akhet* to their *sahu* or organ. Roll Memory. If the Memory roll to find Anpu succeeded, add one die, or two for an exceptional success. If it failed, subtract one die.

Dramatic Failure: The omnipresent shades of Neter-Khertet see the mummy wavering, and descend upon them, tearing apart their *Sekhem*. The mummy loses two dots of *Sekhem* in their resurrection.

Failure: The mummy loses one dot of *Sekhem* to resurrection, and immediately suffers a Descent roll.

Success: The mummy loses one dot of *Sekhem* to resurrection.

Exceptional Success: The mummy resurrects, immediately suffering a Descent roll.

Duat

"It doesn't have to be this way. I can make it stop," she said.

Meresankh looked up, tears streaming down her face. The speaking woman wore the beautiful face of her lover, marred by a smile far too wide and sharp.

"Say the word," she continued. "Give yourself to me, and it all ends."

Meresankh collected herself, staring defiantly up at the Devourer. "I will not! My soul is scarred by battle, but I have faced a thousand fiends and still stand!"

"I know," she said pleasantly. "You'll face a thousand more. It doesn't end, Meresankh. Suffering never ends. Not without me."

In the timeless Before, the Judges decreed the Law of Suffering, that all that lived and died would obediently suffer pain, fear, and misery. The Nameless Serpent, Sutek, recoiled from this cruelty. While he could not revoke the Law, he decreed that life would have will and rebel against their lot. Duat was birthed to judge the worthiness of souls, to allow those capable of proclaiming the Decree of Will to rise above the Law of Suffering and achieve starry A'aru. Those who fail dwell in Duat, eternally awaiting sacrifice to the jaws of the Devourer.

All who enter Duat face judgment. All who enter Duat suffer. Neither time nor death offer respite. Within Duat, nothing truly dies, except those giving themselves to the Devourer, who stands eternally ready to offer an end to suffering. It is impossible to tell in Duat which experiences are true and which mere figments of the mind, or whether the companions one meets along the way are real or merely visions or fiends. The lands are different for each who enter, the geography twisting itself to ensure every soul is challenged, subjected to the mercy of fiends and their past. The Pillar Trials, testing each aspect of the soul in turn, grow from the memories of the Descended, shaped to inflict the greatest torment. Henet is not rest. The Decree of Will is not a choice, but a journey.

Denizens of Duat

Regardless of appearances at a given moment, Duat teems with entities bound to the Law of Suffering, both inflicting and enduring it, often in equal measures. These entities are known as fiends, or more rarely, as akheriu. Neither living nor dead, fiends serve as enforcers of the Law of Suffering and its purest expression. Existing in a state of constant torment, fiends find their pain lessened as they inflict suffering upon others. Death offers no release for fiend or victim. A shade eviscerated by a Slaughterer's blade awakens to find their Trials continue. A mummy armed with relic weaponry slashes through hordes of minor fiends, but this gives only brief respite, the horrors' destruction a mere inconvenience to them. Bypassing the challenges instigated by fiends requires personal decisions, whether it is a battle of wits and riddles, the striking of odious bargains, or pushing through a harrowing nightmare without faltering. Victory resides not in a lucky roll of the dice, but in the choices made.

Fiends are incredibly diverse in form and capabilities, no two identical. The weakest cower in hidden corners of Duat to avoid the attentions of their more potent brethren. The greatest fiend, Ammut's monstrous serpent Apep, dreams of consuming the gods and even the Judges themselves. The clouded vagaries of memory render comprehensive classification of fiends impossible, but flashbacks to the horrors of Duat and fiendish intrusions into the sunlit world have allowed the Arisen to recognize some of these horrid entities.

Anukhu — Mortifiers

The Anukhu feast upon regret and self-loathing. In their natural state, Mortifiers appear as shimmering hazes of noxious gas, twisting into vague shapes to express themselves. Upon encountering the Arisen, it takes the form of its intended victim, distorting their perceptions and clouding their memories until the mummy is unable to be certain which of them is the mummy and which the fiend, and which memories are true and which the twisted fabrications of their foe. This direct assault upon the mummy's memory overwhelms them with remorse for sins never committed. The fiend generously offers absolution, but acceptance unleashes its plague upon the sunlit world, binding it into an object until a mortal touches it. The Mortifier infects this host, spreading from person to person like a highly contagious disease. Infected individuals find their memories bleeding into the memories of other victims, twisting their perceptions, leaving them questioning their very identities. As the Mortifier clouds

memories and twists the flesh of one to resemble another, the barriers between the self and the other crumble.

Behenu — Sand Vipers

Those attempting to deny their Trials by fleeing or lingering are pursued by these children of Apep. The Behenu lurk mostly in the sandy reaches of outer Duat, rarely bursting forth into Neter-Khertet or the other realms of Duat in search of prey. Sand Vipers are enormous red and black scaled serpents burrowing through the desert sands hunting errant souls. The smallest Sand Vipers rely upon a venomous bite to lay low their prey, but their more commonly encountered gigantic relatives prefer to simply swallow their prey whole. Sand Vipers more easily escape from Duat, but unlike most fiends, they prefer to remain below, breaching the surface only briefly to consume unfortunate shades. When called to the sunlit world, they single-mindedly pursue a single target to drag down to the depths of Duat.

Fetu — Soul-Gnawers

Dwelling within the realms of the Pillar Trials, each Fetu resonates with the connected Pillar and is unable to cross any Gates without the shelter of an Arisen soul. These small fiends seem cobbled together from fragments of different animals, but the Arisen seldom see this form before it's too late. These fiends take advantage of a mummy's Trials, wrapping themselves in the illusion of something pitiful, often a lost loved one or an imperiled human soul. What they wait for is an invitation or offer of aid, exploiting any compassion a mummy might have to obtain it. When such an invitation is made, the fiend reveals its true form, forcing itself down the mummy's throat to bind to one of their Pillars. The mummy cannot rid themselves of the parasite in Duat without intervention of Anpu or the Judges. Upon returning to the sunlit world, the fiend is immediately shunted into the world by the mystical protections inherent to the mummy's sahu. The Soul-Gnawer flees in search of humans to prey upon, targeting those favoring their resonant Pillar. Breaking the bond requires the fiend be slain while the mummy's resonant Pillar is depleted. So long as the bond persists, the Soul-Gnawer will be dragged to and from Duat with every Descent.

Kheti — Broken Faces

Broken Faces are among the most pitiable of fiends, and among the most human. Each Kheti seems spliced together from two or more shades, often possessing a greenish tinge to their twisted flesh. Their minds are similar patchworks, with each possessing a minimum of three identities. Two are completely human, holding fractured memories of life in the sunlit world. Many of these are even helpful. There is no more deception here than any human would offer, and a Broken Face swearing friendship often means it wholeheartedly. The trouble lies in their fiendish third identity. While the human identities remain unaware of each other, the fiend is completely aware of their shared experiences and their fractured identity. Filled with envy and bitterness at those blessed with a consistent identity, it wishes to tear away that stability, ripping away memories and experiences to add to its own. It seeks completion, to be a whole being rather than a twisted horror stitched together from the shards of other identities. Splicing new memories into itself never brings this completion, though, as each new fragment added brings merely another fractured identity to join the others. On the rare occasions one reaches the living world, they abduct people who seem comfortable in their own skin, tearing their minds apart with endless tortures in an attempt to discern the secrets of integrity.

Mekharr — Guardian Fiends

Shackled to their duties, Guardian Fiends are eternally frustrated by their lack of freedom. Guardian Fiends are tasked to watch over something, often one of the Seven Gates, protecting

it from all trespassers. Bearing the heads of scarabs or other insects, the armored Mekharr must lie in wait for someone to violate the sanctity of their charge before inflicting suffering upon them. Guardian Fiends do not naturally slumber, nor may they hunt victims of their own. They must abide by the rules governing their vigil, which often spare those successfully passing a Trial or exploiting loopholes. Those unprotected by such things find Guardian Fiends to be as brutal as any other fiend. While Guardian Fiends called to the sunlit world must still stand guard over something, they often have more leeway in interpreting and enforcing their orders.

Menhu — Slaughterers

Of all the fiends, Slaughterers are the ones most familiar to mummies. This is partly due to the cruelty and brutality they inflict upon their victims, but also because Menhu are among the most aggressive in seeking escape from Duat. Their most notable feature is a stone blade sharper than obsidian appearing just before they attack. One wields a great stone axe, while another has a stone hook in place of a hand, but every Slaughterer has one. Slaughterers possess humanoid torsos and arms, but their heads and lower bodies are invariably monstrous. Few see this form before it's too late, however. Slaughterers speak with voices echoing people prominent in the memories of their intended victims, and may choose to appear as the owner of the voice while using it. Many Slaughterers maintain the illusion by quietly humming as they stalk their prey or lie in wait. Slaughterers live for the moment when their blade sinks into a fresh victim, regardless of whether the victim is a mummy or a forlorn soul. A Descended mummy unable to overcome or escape a Slaughterer's attacks will have a Pillar point stripped from them in addition to the other consequences for defeat in Duat. When unleashed upon the mortal world, Slaughterers often rack up large body counts before being banished back to Duat.

Fiends in the Flesh

The natives of Duat sometimes escape into the sunlit world, either through gates opened through bizarre astronomical conjunctions or the crafting of representations of the creatures. Their torment is muted outside of Duat, and mortals provide easy targets for their attentions, easing their misery further.

Fiends in Duat lack any form of mechanical traits, requiring creative narrative decisions to outmaneuver or overpower. When they escape from Duat, fiends may be confronted directly by the Arisen or foolhardy mortals. Fiends encountered in the sunlit world function mechanically like Amkhata, with the following differences:

Fiends have Heads, Bodies, and Limbs appropriate to their appearance where applicable. The Essence total of these parts sets their minimum Rank at the lowest where the combination is possible. Attribute dots are distributed accordingly.

Fiends have the Twilight Form and Idol Manifestations, as well as a number of additional Manifestations equal to their Rank. Fiends using the Possess Manifestation may choose to leave the host conscious but helpless by spending 1 Essence. Fiends automatically have the Fiendish Resilience Dread Power, plus a combination of additional Dread Powers or Numina equal to their Rank.

Fiends have an Influence related to suffering, such as agony or sorrow, equal to their Rank. Fiends feed on this aspect of suffering, regaining 1 Essence per day when witnessing this suffering at work, or a number of Essence per day equal

to Rank if they personally inflict it. Each Essence requires a different target. The presence of their Influence provides the Open Condition.

Unhallowed Presence: Fiends do not belong outside of Duat, and where they linger for more than an hour, the world itself suffers. In areas with lingering fiends, the Unhallowed Ground Tilt applies. Fiends are immune to this Tilt, but such areas provide the Open Condition for them. The Tilt remains active in the area for the same amount of time the fiend has lingered multiplied by the fiend's Rank. Fiends suffer the mechanical drawbacks of Unhallowed Ground in areas with the Hallowed Ground Tilt.

Idol: By spending 2 Essence, the fiend instantly transports itself to a visual depiction of itself in the sunlit world. This depiction provides the Open Condition for the image or sculpture itself and its surrounding area. The fiend may use Idol instead of the Fetter Manifestation, but only for the depiction itself.

The Seven Gates

Upon returning to henet, a mummy enters Neter-Khertet, but they cannot be distracted or hindered from their journey to Duat. They feel the inexorable pull of Duat, drawing them ever westward until they encounter a great river of blood. The Nebtet, formed from the tears of Sutek, flows towards the western mountain, Manu, where the river falls through an akhet into Duat, flowing through the realm like the Nile. Guardian Fiends protect this Gate against any who would enter, slashing at the steady flow of shades descending into Duat. They take a special interest in the Arisen, but calling upon Anpu brings the Keeper of the Way to permit them peaceful entrance to the realm below.

The First Gate — The Outer Realms

Beyond the First Gate, the Descended beholds a desert of red and black sand and the endless chasms of outer Duat. While the Arisen do not recall their time in Duat, the horrors of it haunting their dreams most frequently are found within the outer realms. It is here one finds great cities of fiends, eternally seeking to lure the unwary into their lairs with familiar voices and whispers of temptation. Here, one finds Khast, the legendary Lake of Fire. Oases of blood, surrounded by poisonous flowers, call one to rest for a time. A thousand perils and more await in this hellish land, and where beauty is found, it is but an enticement to tarry long enough for the fiends to find the unfortunate once more.

The Descended must walk through this grim desert, following the path of the twinkling stars in the sunless sky. The Descended is not alone. Fiends of all sort dwell here, waiting to torment any weaker than themselves to ease their own suffering for a time. The shades, descended from Neter-Khertet, seem human here, every bit like a person who once lived, but they must also endure the torments of Duat or hide in places of perceived safety. Some of these will offer friendship or aid, others standing as foes against any who encroach upon their shelters. Even when walking alone, there will be times the Descended feels crowded, echoes of murmuring unseen crowds or whispering voices emanating from all around.

Passing this Trial requires only that the Descended reach the Second Gate, facing the eternal yet ever-shifting lands, and their constant perils. Following the Nebtet westward brings the Descended into dangers, but these ordeals must be endured to reach the Second Gate. Beyond it, crafted from memories unique to each mummy, the Pillar Trials await.

The Second Gate — The Trials of Heart

Beyond the Second Gate, the Descended faces echoes of their passions. The land is shaped from the memories of places where the Heart once sang with delight, rage, or sorrow. The

Trials of Heart create emotional experiences for a mummy to endure. One faces a dire enemy, while another is reunited with lovers long lost. Some relive their most passionate moments, taking paths unchosen or savoring forgotten moments. Passing the Trial requires one's Heart to sing once more, embracing it without drowning in its song.

The Third Gate — The Trials of Spirit

Beyond the Third Gate, the Descended must prove their mettle. The land is shaped by memories of places where the Spirit was tested and forged. Through endless battlefields, blazing fires, and roaring storms, the greatest challenges the mummy faced return to haunt them. This gives some a chance to succeed where once they failed, while others must confront the consequences of their victories. One cannot hide, for cowardice brings only death. One who would pass the Trial must be bold, but never reckless.

The Fourth Gate — The Trials of Essence

Beyond the Fourth Gate, the Descended must withstand incessant hardship. The land is shaped by memories of places persisting from one life to another. Timeless oceans and blistering deserts join with gauntlets of cruel fiends to turn the mummy from their destination. Some find themselves endlessly set upon by foes or echoes of torments once endured. Others face moments from the living world where their resolve once wavered. Shunning both arrogance and despair, one must endure the torments to pass the Trial.

The Fifth Gate — The Trials of Name

Beyond the Fifth Gate, the Descended tests the keenness of their mind and their knowledge of themselves. The land is shaped by memories of places visited and geography seen only in the mind's eye. Some mummies must decipher riddles or reveal their knowledge to impress guardians with their cleverness or education. Others must craft elaborate deceptions to mislead others into taking a desired course of action. Passing the Trial requires one to demonstrate knowledge and cunning, but never proclaim knowledge unknown.

The Sixth Gate — The Trials of Shadow

Beyond the Sixth Gate, the Descended must demonstrate their wisdom and insight into occult practices. The land is shaped by memories of forgotten things, secret places, and sacred ground. Some mummies are called to enact sacred rites or the crafts of their guild. Others must defeat powerful fiends, or deal with unworthy shades trapped within the Trials, binding them or helping them to escape from their prison. With resolve and humility, one must bear the torch of their wisdom to pass the Trial.

The Seventh Gate — The City of Black Spines

Beyond the Seventh Gate lies the City of Black Spines, where the Descended face the Trial of Judgment. A road of bronze and lapis lazuli leads to a city of black stone, where endless dwellings house peaceful shades and tranquil fiends. The road leads to a great square, known as the Place of Slaughter, overlooked by the great throne of Azar. The Pharaoh of Duat holds no audience with the Descended, sparing them the madness certain to arise from their unworthy ears hearing his sacred voice. Shezmu, Winemaker of the Gods, stands ready to crush unworthy souls into wine for the pleasure of the Judges and the Gods. Other gods dwell here as well, but it is Anpu and the Judges that hold interest in the Arisen. The very sight of the Judges drives madness into the souls of their servants, preventing the Arisen from looking upon them directly.

The Judge of the Descended gazes upon them, cruelly lashing them with past failures and blasphemies, judging their worthiness. The loyal servant will be rewarded with continued service, while the truly worthy may be granted freedom from their Curse and starry A'aru.

Those unable to prove any worthiness face oblivion. To pass this Trial, one must endure the torments and accusations of their Judge, holding true to their decree and will to justify their existence, lest their Judge cast their unworthy servant to the Devourer. With judgment fulfilled, Anpu offers the Descended a cool drink, permitting a brief rest before their inevitable return to the sunlit world.

The Trials of Duat

Any being entering Duat must endure the Trials, but only the Arisen receive any guarantee of returning to the sunlit world after. Other entities return only through the good graces of Anpu, the Judges, or the Devourer, and none help without strings attached. Attempts to avoid the Trials only delay the inevitable, as the changeable eternal geography of Duat twists back upon itself, bringing only greater torment. Through their efforts to avoid the Trials, a character often discovers they have been enduring them all along.

Every player gets a chance to be the Storyteller during the Trials of Duat, as each player poses a Trial for the mummy to endure. The Trials can last as long as a group wishes. Each Gate might indicate the beginning of a new scene with a single brief Trial, or a new story with a particularly involved Trial or multiple Trials. It is possible to run an entire chronicle within the depths of Duat, if every player is amenable. The player responsible for creating the Trial runs the scenes, and acts as the final arbiter of whether the mummy passes the Trial or not. Other players and the Storyteller offer input while creating the Trial and control characters involved with it.

The Trials are intended to be an intimate and sacred experience for each mummy. At their core, each Trial should threaten to destroy the mummy, physically, mentally, or emotionally. The Trials of Duat should be extremely traumatic for the mummy enduring them (not the mummy's player). Each Trial is a single narrative scene, and should be resolved through the character's choices. Neither the mummy nor their foes possess character traits within Duat, so the character's intent is very important. It is strongly recommended that any actions the character takes succeed, with success or failure in the Trial depending on choosing the right course of action rather than luck. Each should give the mummy a chance to develop as a character, learning more about themselves from their success or failure. At the discretion of the player running a given Trial, the mummy may gain a benefit for exceptional performance or catharsis.

The mummy may benefit from suitable Affinities and Utterances, paying any costs immediately upon rising. They may also freely use any relics they carry with them, gaining the benefits of wielding them without the drawbacks of their curses. Any curses instead settle into objects within the mummy's tomb or in close proximity to their remains, affecting the first valid individual to touch the object. Relics may also be used to bribe the Guardian Fiends at the Gates. Such bribery allows a mummy to bypass a Trial. While this doesn't count as passing the Trial, it doesn't impose a penalty.

One inevitable event during the Trials is the offer of Ammut. She, or one of her underlings, such as Apep, will always approach the Descended at some point to offer an escape from their Curse. This is not a Trial in its own right, but the consequences are far more dire. While she often wears a pleasing form, the Devourer doesn't conceal her identity. She offers whatever she thinks will tempt the character to give themselves to her. This may be the full return of memory, but most often she offers an end to suffering. Even the promise of oblivion should be regarded warily, though, as any swearing themselves to the Devourer likely arise as Shuankhsen.

Upon completion of the Pillar Trials, the mummy passes through the Seventh Gate into the City of Black Spines, where their Judge awaits them. It is recommended that the Storyteller play this role. The Judge will confront the character, and the mummy will need to justify their actions, both during the Trials and during their last Descent. The Judge will then determine whether they are worthy to resolve their Curse. Almost invariably, the mummy is not, as the Judges are loath to lose useful servants in the world. Any relics carried must now be surrendered to the Judge.

Once the Judge has given their verdict, the mummy is free to wander the City of Black Spines to their heart's content, although most wish only to rest by this point, and their next Descent cannot begin until they have done so. Anpu offers the weary mummy a cup of cool liquid to quench their thirst. Consuming the liquid immediately strips the mummy of a dot of Memory, along with the memories of their journey through Duat. Weariness overtakes the mummy, as they settle down into a sarcophagus for a brief respite, sleeping dreamlessly until they are called once more to the sunlit world. Any benefits or penalties settle onto the character upon awakening. Mummies incarnating into the body of a cultist also gain the Memory Bleed Condition.

But I Don't Want to Torment My Friend!

Some players may not feel comfortable designing Trials for a mummy to endure or playing a role in said Trials, leaving the Storyteller to handle these details. While this can be done in a private session between the player and the Storyteller, some players may still wish to be included. Here are some optional approaches to including other players in the Trials:

Aspect of the Shabti: In this approach, other characters bring representations of themselves in the form of carved shabti statues to the Lifeweb of the character in henet, spending a point of their defining Pillar while meditating on their relationship with the slumbering character. The shabtis vanish into Duat, where aspects of the characters appear to accompany the Descended on their journey. While these are not truly the characters themselves, they are able to interact with the Descended as though they were, acting as additional bodies for actions related to their defining Pillars, wielding relics or offering encouragement and advice.

Henet Pact: When you're part of a meret, you're never alone. The characters journey through Duat together, facing the torments and challenges united. All of the characters will find themselves challenged, but they may assist each other in these challenges, or even complete them for each other. Completing the challenge of another successfully gains neither character a benefit or penalty at the conclusion of the Trials. Henet pacts make the journey somewhat safer, but also require all characters to enter henet before they can begin.

Benefits

Benefits reflect blessings from Anpu, the Judges, or the Trials of Duat, which enhance the mummy's experiences in their next Descent. Benefits are chosen by the Storyteller, with input from the players based upon the events of Duat. The player may choose to sacrifice a benefit to cancel a penalty. The mummy earns a benefit for passing their first Trial successfully, and another if all Trials are passed successfully. Offering one or more relics to their Judge earns another. The Judge may grant another benefit if they are pleased by the mummy's behavior.

Anamnesis: Visions of other Descents inundate the mummy, bestowing a dot of Memory or the Echoes of Descent Condition.

Blessed Life: Your character's Sekhem is blessed. The mummy receives the Auspicious Descent Condition.

Moment of Destiny: The mummy receives a vision reflecting future glory, gaining the Driven Condition.

Omens: The character gains insight into the events of their future. The character benefits from a Sybaritic Omen, usable at any time during their next Descent.

Reinforced Pillars: The mummy's Pillars are strengthened from their Trials. The mummy gains the Luminous Pillars Condition.

Sanctified Ground: The mummy's tomb is purified upon their awakening, gaining the Hallowed Ground Tilt until it is desecrated or the mummy returns to henet.

Shifting Stones: The mummy's tomb subtly alters itself to promote the flow of Sekhem, bestowing the Geometric Alignment Condition.

Penalties

Failed Trials cannot destroy a mummy or prevent them from beginning a new Descent, but they can make things more difficult for them. Penalties reflect complications for the mummy's next Descent, and are chosen by the player. The mummy suffers a penalty for failing a Trial, and another if all Trials are failed. Dying in Duat inflicts another. The displeasure of the Judge may impose another.

Amnesia: Your character's memory is impaired by the Trials more than usual. The character suffers the Amnesia Condition upon awakening. Selecting this penalty multiple times lowers the character's Memory by 1 each time or bestows the Forgotten Skill Condition.

Damaged Pillar: One aspect of the character's soul has been horribly damaged. The character gains the Damaged Pillar Condition for one of their Pillars, which is never their defining Pillar.

Fiend Haunted: Echoes of Duat follow you to the sunlit world, inflicting the Ominous Condition. This Condition is linked to a fiend loose in the sunlit world, and cannot be resolved until it is banished back to Duat.

Fleeting Sekhem: Your character's Sekhem is weakened. They begin their next Descent with the Precipitous Descent Condition.

Penance: Your character gains a specific mission from their Judge. The character begins their new Descent with the Obsession Condition related to this mission, but working towards this mission doesn't count as denying the primary purpose of their current Descent.

Tempted: The Devourer's words echo within, inflicting the Devourer's Urge Condition.

Escaping the Cycle

The Curse is not something easily shed. While a mummy is judged after each Descent, the game is rigged against them, and the mummy is unlikely to ever be deemed worthy of escaping their Curse. Without something extraordinary occurring, the mummy is doomed to return to Duat time and again, never to enjoy the blessed fields of starry A'aru. There are several hypothetical ways to break the usual cycle of Duat:

Abandonment: The Judges are loathe to lose a useful servant, but they may willingly part with a mediocre one. This is a difficult path to walk, as one must prove useless enough to abandon without enraging the Judge enough to destroy them. This involves suffering constant penalties from displeasing the Judges, resulting in a series of miserable Descents. The mummy would also need to do something that pleased their Judge enough to spare them without giving them a second chance. Abandoned mummies, or Nehu, labor under the Curse of the Arisen, but are unable to regain Sekhem without consuming relics, and are barred from Duat upon entering henet. Instead, they drift aimlessly within Neter-Khertet until their cult or Fate assigns them a purpose. Barring extraordinary circumstances, Nehu arise at Sekhem 1.

Apotheosis: Achieving Apotheosis reputedly draws the mummy's True Name away from the Judges. These mummies experience a death cycle instead of Duat during henet, arising at Sekhem 1 if they awaken.

Reward: Earning true release is hypothetically possible, but in practice the Judges never release useful servants. A worthy servant is more likely rewarded with greater power and responsibilities. At the Storyteller's discretion, a Judge pleased by prolonged terms of faithful and effective service may rarely bestow an akhu, a divine soul, upon their favored servant. The resulting Amakhu gains a sixth Pillar, Akhu, at 1 dot, which may be increased like any other Pillar. By spending a point of Akhu, the mummy increases their effective Sekhem by their Akhu rating for a number of turns equal to their defining Pillar. Points in the Akhu Pillar may only be regained when all other Pillars are fully replenished. By meditating, the Amakhu and one of their Judge's other Arisen may share senses. This is always the same mummy, chosen by the Judge when bestowing the akhu, and either may initiate the link. The Judge chooses Affinities to bestow upon their champion for this Pillar. The Judge may bestow new missions upon their champion at any time, imposing the Penance penalty. Flaunting the Judge's will is not tolerated. Descent rolls triggered by increasing Memory or acting against the Judges gain bonus dice equal to the mummy's Akhu rating. Upon returning to henet, the Amakhu must endure the Trials, but they are considered to have passed regardless of outcome due to their Judge's favor. A Judge pleased with their champion's performance likely grants further benefits, while a displeased Judge is certain to rip the akhu away from an offending mummy.

Secret Names: Uncovering the True Name of their Judge or Anpu may allow a mummy to escape the normal cycle of Duat. Learning the True Name of their Judge allows the Arisen to demand their freedom in exchange for the Name, or other services at the Storyteller's discretion. Learning the True Name of Anpu allows the mummy to shift their allegiance from the Judges to Anpu, who would now be free to help his new servant however he wishes.

Usurpation: Overthrowing one's Judge and taking their place would be the subject of an entire chronicle in its own right. The Judges' vast power make success at the endeavor nigh impossible. Success would trap the mummy in the Judge's role, bestowing both servants and duties upon them.

Storytelling Timelessness

Ever since the dawn of civilization, people have not been content to see events as unconnected and inexplicable. They have craved an understanding of the underlying order in the world.

— Stephen Hawking, A Brief History of Time

The origins of the curse of the Arisen's timelessness comes from the same source as the curse of their fractured Memory — the Rite of Return. The great magic performed by the Shan'iatu broke the world but served the Judges well. The Rite drew upon — or created — Duat's own timeless nature, separating the shifting sands from the limitations of a world bound by finite time. It bound Sekhem to the souls of the Deathless and established their immutability. None but the Judges can permanently alter the Arisen, and even they face limitations.

The Rite of Return also forced a different state on their unending servants, who must walk in the world to secure all Sekhem across every time for their masters. This unresolvable paradox exists within each mummy, establishing their existence as inevitably fixed points within time, while being unanchored and ever-subject to its chaos. Understanding the Deathless requires examining how time's nature and how it interacts with the mummies.

Adrift in Endless Waters

Non-Arisen scientists and philosophers sometimes describe time as river, with its waters forever flowing from past to future. They say each decision makes a potential branching point where the waters can follow one stream or another, endlessly branching as the future unfolds. Others suggest that time's inevitable momentum ignores most change points and continues its flow in a single direction until encountering a temporally significant event, from which the river may branch to follow the different outcomes. Still other wise people believe that time follows its path regardless of the choices made by lesser beings, and that those choices were inevitabilities regardless of any illusion of free will. Regardless of how these theories visualize the future, they know the past is unchanging, and even if interference was possible, it would result in further branching and potentially disastrous paradoxes that could destroy the world as we know it.

Mages and other mystical beings with access to magics that influence and control time quickly abandon the river metaphor, preferring to take the still imperfect description of Time as a spinning wheel that gathers strands of unspun temporal material and weaves them into a tight thread. To these individuals, the future is unwritten and ever-changing. They can use their magic to see possible futures, but these are only potentialities that can be changed until they come to pass. Though the past is bound within the thread, they can magically separate the strands and alter what occurred. Changing the past this way isn't simple, as the weight of history resists alteration as much as it can, but mages with enough power can achieve such effects anyway.

No Time Police for Me, Thank You

Mummies are timeless, unique creatures made from magic that never should have been and broke the world. Through this, the Arisen have a relationship with time that differs from that of every other creature. This section explores high concepts underpinning Deathless existence and reality within the Chronicles of Darkness. It gives descriptions for parallel time streams, endlessly repeating cycles, and areas that run faster or slower than normal, and tools for characters to take advantage of them. Here players have the opportunity to explore the depths of what 'timelessness' can mean.

This aspect may not be for every group, especially those with mortals, other immortals, or other supernatural creatures who aren't mummies. These other beings are mostly blissfully ignorant of the totality of Deathless existence, even if they work alongside a meret. Mummies themselves are often ignorant of the temporal truths behind their lives. They arise, they seek Sekhem, they Descend, mostly unaware of why or how time works differently for them. When you're a magical immortal being from a sorcerous kingdom before recorded history, you stop questioning many things and simply accept.

Nothing will break if you choose to not use the options presented here at your table. The Arisen still live their lives out of order, but at your table that just means you get to run whatever period you want each time the mummies awaken. Ultimately, the purpose of any game is to have fun; only use what makes it fun for you.

The Churning Maelstrom

The Deathless have a far less gentle experience. To them, time isn't a flowing river but a deep ocean of violently turbulent waters, dragging those within it beneath the surface with irresistible force and tossing them every which way in the chaotic darkness. The undying victims of these rips and currents occasionally manage to reach the surface to take a too-short breath before inevitably disappearing once again into the mysterious depths. When the Arisen speak of time at all, they personify it with the ancient Egyptian god Osiris, who Irem once knew as Azar, the divine patron of the Nameless Empire. Though Azar and the other gods were secondary to the Judges, the still held power and influence. As well as watching over Irem, Azar was god of water, fertility and cycles. As Osiris, he was torn asunder and scattered by his jealous brother who commanded the desert and storms and wanted to usurp Osiris' power. Despite the destruction, Osiris resurrected upon his reconstruction and took the domains of resurrection and afterlife for his own. To the Deathless — who serve the jealous, spiteful Judges in their desert kingdom prison — the tale holds many truths to their experience. They see a more powerful hand at work in their existences and wonder if the old gods of Irem have their own interests, and how those intersect with that of Duat.

Other creatures move at the surface of the maelstrom, their footsteps splashing ripples at the unremarkable beginning of their journey until they vanish from the ocean at their unexceptional end. Even great immortals who view their existences as analogous with mummies make only slightly larger, more sustained waves before they too fade.

Unlike everything else treading time's surface, or even the strange, alien creatures that inhabit the darkness below, each Arisen has been flung the length and breadth of the ocean, from the sands of the shore where it all began to the cliff-face rocks marking the point that it all ends. From the moment where the magics of the Rite of Return broke the world and divorced the Deathless from the natural cycle, every mummy immediately existed across all of time, beneath the surface in the timelessness of Duat and throughout history making ripples of their own.

By this reckoning, every waking moment of each Arisen is already mandated and done. That each individual has yet to experience it is irrelevant to the churning maelstrom. This is the singular fate of every Deathless, an inescapable truth. Yet the waves each mummy makes in these waking moments ripple outward for an eternity, overlapping with each other, echoing with their own footsteps from other periods, and building or silencing the motions other creatures make on time.

Those musing on temporal theories talk of time splinters, parallel paths, or alternate realities, which mummies view as currents in Osiris' ocean. These different flows occur naturally with remarkable frequency in time's vast ocean but can also be the products of deliberate artifice by those who know enough about time's workings. Even those with a different view and paradigm can alter the temporal flows if they have magic or other power to do so. Regardless of origins, differing time currents are never completely divorced from one another. They always swirl around and through each other though few creatures can detect them. They can leave vague sensory impressions, confusion and mirages as they move through one another and influence the different instances of everyone within each current.

Differing flows don't necessarily affect the entire world at once. Some do, and changes within an alternative time stream may be wholly different to what we would consider the norm, such as global geopolitical landscape being entirely different if the Axis powers won the Second World War, or the entire ecosystems changing if a key species had never died out. Such dramatically different realities are rare, and differing times are more likely to have a local or regional effect with the world around them being oblivious to the differences. Urban legends of small towns or valleys that seem stuck in decades past are commonplace, as are those where people live with revolutionary technologies beyond what should be possible. These tangles of time exist alongside but apart from the main currents but non-mummies rarely stumble across these areas and they remain in the realm of stories and myth.

As all of time is part of the ocean, no time periods, alternative histories, or unlikely futures are off limits to Deathless, whether awoken by cult or fortune. Similarly, none of time's peculiarities can permanently limit the Deathless condition. Sekhem still depletes even in recalcitrant time loops. Mummies still function where time moves faster or slower than normal progression. And alternative histories that never were or futures that can never be cannot stop the presence of the Arisen even if that particular timeline never allowed for the possibility of their existence.

Mummies and Paradox

As creatures of the grand ocean of all time, spread across its breadth and depth, simultaneously existing everywhen and none, mummies are immune to temporal paradoxes that may trouble lesser beings.

Some speculate that this is because everything and every possibility is already in the Arisen's past. Others say that the Deathless are more real than everything except the Judges and Duat, and the shadows of lesser beings can't trouble their progress. Ultimately, regardless of why, mummies act and time adjusts. They can kill the parents of someone they despise in a later time but that doesn't change the fact that they grew to hate that person in the other period. They're unlikely to return to that time to discover whether their actions had an effect, and if they remember to research him in future Descents in some he'll exist and others he won't.

In short, this may be a mystery that infuriates other creatures, but mummies don't have all the answers, don't have the luxury of spending their time musing on the nature of existence, and the Judges don't care. Duat is even more timeless and disconnected from reality than the Arisen themselves.

Anchors in the Waters

Every type of divergent time current has at least one Anchor that drags the flow away from the main stream. This Anchor could be a person, event, location, or almost anything within

the current, and is usually involved — unaware — in the point where the current diverted. A woman who chose to catch a train instead of a cab could be the Anchor for one divergent current, while a man who can't move on from the death of his husband may be the Anchor of an endlessly repeating whirlpool. An example of an Anchor dragging time into a slow eddy could be a beloved building scheduled for demolition, where the residents refuse to accept its fate. Or Anchors for accelerated time rips frequently occur around holidays and vacations, which always rush by so fast for the children Anchors who eagerly awaited their arrival. Longer-lasting flows tend to have more than one Anchor as the weight of history reinforces the alternative time, giving itself power within time's ocean. If an alternative current becomes sufficiently weighted with Anchors it could even challenge to overwhelm and subsume the primary time streams within it.

Eyes of the Storm

Throughout time's grand ocean of divergent currents, swirling waters and strange tides, the Deathless exist as points of calm certainty, though individual mummies may believe their existences are anything but. The Rite of Return shattered the world and rebuilt it around the chosen few as a never-ending paradox. Though each Deathless always exists across the lengths of time, they are also definite points firmly established in their cycles of death and awakening. They are the greatest snarls in past, present, and future, experiencing their lives out of order, but they are also calming points that smooth out the ripples of disruption on a cosmic scale. When mummies walk, time returns to its established path. Where the Deathless rise, events become more certain and more difficult to shift. What the Arisen care about becomes weighted in historical significance.

Whatever the Anchor in a divergent time period, mummies can work to identify, understand, and resolve it and return the strange flow to the primary waters. The form of this resolution varies depending on the Anchor and the current, and can be as simple as ending a life, but often requires more effort to achieve. Alternatively, Arisen have the power to work to strengthen these time variations, protecting the Anchors and encouraging the development of more. In this way they can look to rewrite the future, but they only have a limited period to achieve these goals. Sekhem continues to drain no matter how local time works. Eventually the Deathless completes her Descent and departs the alternative current to return to Duat.

Different Flows

The most common peculiarities to time's flow are outlined below. None exist as isolated events, merely being part of time's vast ocean. Though the waters sometimes run faster, slower, or in different directions to the rest of the ocean, they're all linked and affect one another, as the ripples and forces of one inevitably brush against those alongside it. Similarly, though people, other creatures, and objects are usually singular entities within time, nearly everyone always exists as a variable and possibly infinite number of versions across different time streams, all coexisting and constantly splitting, rejoining and diverging again. This has no ill effect on individuals and is one cause for the baseline uncertainty that plagues much of humanity.

Feeling the Flow and Timeless Conditions

At the moment they underwent the Rite of Return, each mummy became an avatar of timelessness. As outsiders looking in, Deathless can sense when time moves differently. Arisen can use different time flows to their advantage, gaining appropriate Timeless Conditions (detailed in the Appendix, starting on p. XX). Certain types of timestream have their own Condition, whereas others can apply across a variety of currents. Applying appropriate Timeless

Conditions is one way of rewarding characters gaining exceptional success on rolls while near, experiencing, or interacting with time's variations. While the Deathless are attuned to these, the Storyteller can decide that awarding such Conditions is appropriate for other characters as well.

A mummy can try to 'Feel the Flow' to see if she senses that she is in an alternative timestream. This requires an instant action and rolling her Defining Pillar + the Pillar in which she has the fewest dots, comparing the result as below. Arisen can attempt this roll even when in a normal time current. Though this can confirm the normal flow of time they don't gain Timeless Conditions as a result.

Dramatic Failure: The character can't feel any differences to time and is simply another swimmer caught in its currents.

Failure: The Arisen knows can feel that time moves differently, but she doesn't know how. She may change this to dramatic failure and take a Beat.

Success: The Arisen knows what kind of alternate time flow she is within but doesn't feel sufficient affinity to directly influence it. She may spend a point of Sekhem to upgrade this success to an exceptional success and gain the relevant Timeless Condition.

Exceptional Success: The character's Pillars resonate strongly against the altered time flow. She gains the relevant Timeless Condition and possesses the ability to manipulate local time to her advantage.

Currents: What other time models may call splinters, forks, or parallel universes the Arisen know as different currents in the ocean. All of time moves with their currents, and most move from past to future. Within the ocean there is no one correct current, though some have a greater weight of history behind them. Alternative currents move away from the main flows constantly, randomly following the ramifications of a decision taken differently or an uncertainty collapsing towards a different outcome. Sometimes these currents endure for years or even centuries, but most often they succumb to the greater impetus of the larger flows and drift back to rejoin their turbulent waters. A separate current may experience radically different choices with distinct outcomes, but these differences usually fade as the momentum of the more powerful stream overwhelms the inertia of the lesser current. Those living within the currents rarely notice any difference beyond feelings of déjà vu or dreamlike memories. Minor and quickly resolved shifts in the currents can result in small changes like a person misremembering where he left his wallet or keys, whereas larger alterations may lead to that person — or many people — being unable to find a location they know well and have visited many times before. Most are inevitably explained away or forgotten as human memory and flawed history adjust to cope with the differences. After all, people forget things all the time, everyone has at least a few instances of keys, jewelry, or other personal items not being in the usual place, and historical records frequently contradict one another or remain vague on details of precisely who was responsible for outcomes.

Eddies: Strong or fast currents sometimes leave eddies in their wake. These swirling, meandering pockets of time move more slowly than the surrounding waters. Time within an eddy moves in pace with itself, leaving the inhabitants unaware of the different pace of the world and having little to compare it to. Though they move more slowly than the main flows around them, eddies usually resolve much like alternative currents by being assimilated by a time stream with greater weight of history behind it. When eddies rejoin the main flows the people within may feel that the world somehow moves along faster than they can grasp, and that technology and society changes so quickly.

Mirages: The adage that history repeats itself is somewhat true. Fate moves in cycles and events with temporal similarity resonate with their past and future alignments. Strong expressions of this resonance can overlay sensory impressions of other times on people, structures, or events in the present, creating a mirage of other times. Temporal mirages are more than just false sights, sounds and smells, and those willing to take the chance can try to focus on the alternative views to live out those versions of events and try to gain insight into the workings of their own and other times.

Rips: The opposite of eddies, rips drag time along faster than everything around them. These direct currents are as self-contained as other flows and tend to rejoin the more historically weighted time streams as their Anchors lose importance or distinctive potential. People within rips don't consciously experience the difference but often have a sense of the rest of the world lacking energy and vigorous. Everyone else seems stuck in the past and unwilling to move on, even though both may find themselves at the same point when the time swirl completes.

Whirlpools: More unusual than rips and eddies, time within whirlpools loops back on itself to repeat the same events endlessly. Most whirlpools have a natural transition point of similar environment where the most advanced moment links to the loop's beginning without drawing undue attention to itself. The darkest hours of the night or the middle of thunderous storms or snow-filled blizzards that occupy the first and last moments are common transitions, where time's passage loses clarity even outside whirlpools. Rarer whirlpools are less subtle, simply jumping from one point in time to another. These are more common when centered around an Anchor in an intense emotional state. Such whirlpools may start when the individual and her lover enter their vehicle and suddenly return to the beginning just before another distracted driver smashes into the side of the car, killing the loved one in an act of random change. Whirlpools like these are short and brutish and allow little opportunity to resolve them. Most whirlpools run their course over a reasonable length of time — 24 hours or a few days, perhaps a month. Those with the greatest unresolved historical weight can run years but are rare. Even the Deathless must 'reset' when the whirlpool begins its course again, but certain absolutes can't be cheated even within the loop. The mummy's Sekhem continues to deplete as time stretches on and doesn't increase with the restarting of events, and relics or other containers of Sekhem can't be harvested more than once — the physical form of the relic will return for the Arisen to find again but it is lifeless and inert once harvested.

Still, Calm Waters

Though the ocean of time is a vast, chaotic pool of interweaving and swirling currents moving in different speeds and directions, not every moment is so unpredictable. Each Sothic Turn is a moment of silence within time, a great certainty where the ocean calms and the primary currents flow in a single direction. Here the waters grow shallow, pushing every Deathless to the surface to wakefulness. At the Sothic Turn, so many weaker currents fade and return to the main streams, currents of different speeds and directions alter to match the weight of history all around them. Some of the more powerful streams persist but overall the ocean shrinks at these points of history.

Blasphemous Deathless suggest that the Sothic Turn is when Duat grows closer to the living world and the Judges can taste the warmth of Sekhem directly, almost to the point of taking it for themselves. At the turning of the wheel the Judges hunger for life and all mummies rise to feed their alien appetites. In these shallow times the Arisen walk without clear purpose and dictate their own fates as much as they ever can. Though they have rare surcease from the demands of the Judges, this may not be true freedom. Indeed, the choices and actions of

Deathless in these times are perhaps all that prevents starving gods breaking free of their self-imposed prison kingdom to bring apocalypse as they feast upon the world.

Time's stillness in the Sothic Turn never fully departs the Arisen as they are Duat's servants. Other beings with the ability to sense temporal flows can feel the permanence of the Deathless and their resistance to change outside their own fates. These creatures feel the horror of the Rite of Return tearing world-defining paradox on each of the Arisen, the shattering of time's grasp and the ever-clutching maelstrom that rules their existences. The bonds of time and fate on the Deathless is as alien as the gods they serve and antithetical to powers less than those that broke the world. Common sense would be to flee or at least avoid angering these old gods but the lure of power and mystery is too much for some. To fate and time, the moment each Arisen survived the Shan'iatu's magic she lived out her entire existence in a moment, spreading across all of time until she reached its inevitable end. The fact that individual mummies haven't yet experienced all time yet is a paradox as irrelevant as any other to the Rite of Return.

Mummies and Awakened Magic

For those with **Mage: The Awakening**, attempts to use the Fate or Time Arcana magic on an Arisen, *except* Knowing or Unveiling Practices, automatically fail. Mages have no innate awareness of this and still compile and roll their dice pool but gain no effect for disallowed Practices regardless of the number of successes achieved. Additionally, the spellcaster automatically incurs Paradox dice equal to the highest Fate or Time Arcana used, even with permitted Practices. If the Paradox dice pool achieves success (or exceptional success), the caster suffers the Abyssal Backlash Condition as the Judges in Duat take notice of the mage's meddling, as if they were an Annunaki in the Abyss. Spells from Arcana other than Fate or Time don't suffer this effect.

Tales through the Sandglass

Mummy: The Curse is a Storytelling game of incredible breadth and depth. The Deathless spawn from a time before time and assume that as long as Sekhem remains in the world it will be their duty and curse to arise again for their Judge's pleasure. Mummies live and die through impossible realms divorced from logical reality and endure countless hardships on their journeys to satisfy the never-ending hunger of ancient gods.

The Arisen's timeless nature gives access to everything that happened history — and everything that never happened except in lost splinters and closed loops. The Storyteller has more than a world to play with, she has the entirety of humanity at her fingertips. Nor does this only apply to the mummies themselves. Everywhere in the living world that the Deathless walk, their servants, cults, and other immortals are never far behind. These other denizens don't follow the same chaotically timeless paths as mummies, but many endless immortals endure the ceaseless turning of day into night and back again for the times where they once again meet their timeless friends or foes.

Together, these factors mean that a **Mummy: The Curse** chronicle can be set almost anywhere and at any time. A chronicle could explore the challenges of daily existence in a world unfamiliar from anything the character knows. It could focus on Deathless society and how once-human individuals work to relate to each other and those around them through fragmented memory and the crushing inevitability of brief lives. Or the chronicle may let the characters take the fight to the gods themselves, challenging the Judges and questioning their claimed divine right to punishment and retribution.

The scope of **Mummy: The Curse** chronicles is as endless as immortals themselves. Explore, challenge, and have fun.

Biker Fiends from Duat

Violent crime is on the rise. A biker gang terrorizes the city, murder and mayhem keeping the populace fearful to leave their homes at night. Police take their time responding to reports of gang activity, desperately hoping they'll have moved on before they arrive. The worst biker gang stereotypes have come to life, putting the city at its mercy with no hope of salvation. It wasn't always like this.

The Spears of Michael Motorcycle Club was once a welcome sight to the city's destitute. Sick of seeing justice denied to those most in need of it, the Spears formed to bring safety to their neighborhoods. Embracing the biker lifestyle, the club started cleaning up the community, organizing charity events and helping the people wherever possible. Perhaps most importantly, they engaged in vigilante justice, driving out the local gangs and severely curtailing the drug trade.

While celebrating the tenth anniversary of the founding of their club, the Spears stopped into Death's Head Ink to get new tattoos. Falling in love with the terrifying images created by the young tattooist, Salvador Rosales, each chose one of his images, unaware they were choosing the Slaughterers that would take over their bodies. Salvador's new sketches depict horrifying creatures in elaborate detail, each drawn from the nightmares he's experienced. Salvador has always coped with nightmares by depicting them, but he has recently begun dreaming of Duat. Completely unaware of the truth behind his new designs, Salvador thinks nothing of tattooing them on anyone who requests one. With undeniable talent, his popularity can only grow, and with it, the number of people gaining fiendish tattoos.

The fiendish intrusion brings unfamiliar perils. Some possibilities:

- While initially dismissible as typical human violence, the mayhem coupled with the formation of unhallowed ground forces the cult to acknowledge something unusual is occurring. As the violence continues to escalate, they realize their mummy might be their best chance to survive and end the gang's reign of terror. If the fiends perceive the mummy's tomb or sense the imminent Call, they'll stop the cult at any cost.
- With the Spears of Michael gaining a fierce reputation, many unsavory individuals begin approaching seeking membership. The leader of the fiends, Aarta, clothed in the flesh of Heather Davidson, embraces the idea of a recruitment drive, and newly welcomed members are taken to Death's Head Ink for initiation. Complications arise when someone dear to the cult or their mummy receives an invitation.
- The presence of so many active fiends causes magic in the area to go awry more frequently. While the horrible effects of chaotic magic are untenable at the best of times, intrusions of strange entities from botched rituals twist reality, leaving the future uncertain for all.
- The Spears terrorize everyone, but Salvador is under their protection. In the face of the disasters befalling the city, he seems to be living a fairytale life, discovering needed things conveniently left where he can find them. Now, a major publication has heard of him and seeks to do an article on his work. Aarta's ambitions have grown beyond one city, and now she wishes to bring him to prominence. When he becomes famous, she'll gain additional hosts she can seize or allow more fiends to escape from Duat to wreak havoc. Either way, Aarta wins.

The Shadow of Sothis

The Tef-Aabhi understand sacred architecture and effigies better than any other, but some mysteries baffle even the Geomancers. One of these is the Eternal Star, an effigy tied to Sothis itself, which appears following odd astronomical events. When installed into sacred architecture, the effigy causes all mummies within a metropolitan area to rise from henet. This has only become more potent as urbanization expands the size of cities and surrounding suburbs. Some philosophers among the Architects hypothesize ever increasing urbanization and dwindling wilderness will eventually allow the Star to awaken entire continents at once. Wars have been fought between cults over the object, the effigy seldom remaining in the possession of one group for long. Tef-Aabhi records indicate it has been destroyed or consigned to Duat on several occasions, but the effigy continues to resurface. Some hypothesize the object is as Deathless as the Arisen, while others assume there's simply multiple effigies in existence. Whatever the truth, with the latest Sothic Turn having passed, knowledgeable Arisen and sorcerers suspect the Star shall soon resurface.

Here are some potential ways the Eternal Star could surface:

- A museum unveils the unusual object discovered in their collections, drawing attention from several cults bent on obtaining it for their own use or denying it to their rivals. As efforts to retrieve the object intensify, the conflict between cults threatens to spill out into the open.
- An aging sorcerer has compiled all the information they can about the Eternal Star. With its recent discovery at an archeological dig, they recruit the rest of the cult to obtain it to ensure it doesn't fall into the wrong hands. The sorcerer conceals their true motives. They are ready to become Eternal, and believe the Star could prove the perfect anchor.
- After discovering the Star on the shelves of a curio shop, the cult uses the relic to call the mummy back to life. Following the unexpected murder of a young cultist, the mummy begins undermining the cult's long-term efforts. With creeping dread, the cult begins to suspect a traitor in their midst.
- The meret awakens without an immediate purpose to act upon. They feel as though Sothis has arisen once more, but a single look at the night sky reveals the next Turn to be far in the future. Aware of the consequences awaiting them, the cult responsible hasn't given a purpose yet. As the mummies search for answers, the cult searches for an expendable patsy to pay the price.

The Eternal Star (Effigy •••••)

Durability 4, Size 1, Structure 5

Some relics seem to lead strange lives of their own. The effigy known as the Eternal Star has surfaced and vanished from the attention of the Arisen and their cults innumerable times, always resurfacing in the wake of significant astronomical conjunctions. While it dates back at least as far as the third Sothic Turn, the Tef-Aabhi have yet to determine the ones responsible for its creation. Crafted from meteoric iron, the Star consists of a central disk of roughly hammered metal surrounded by eight smoothly polished rays. When installed into relic architecture, the silvery Star blazes with blue light, causing nearby mummies to arise en masse. The Star can be destroyed or consigned to Duat normally, but consuming it destroys it without benefit.

Power: When installed into the Lifeweb of relic architecture or a mummy's tomb, a pulse of Sekhem bursts forth, awakening all mummies in henet within the connected metropolitan area. Mummies arise without a first purpose like during the Sothic Turn. This can change. By

touching the Star and spending a point of Willpower to activate it, an individual may declare their wish. This becomes the first purpose of all mummies raised by the Star until it is fulfilled or a new order is given.

Curse: The Eternal Star hungers for Sekhem, consuming life force in every possible way to power itself. Mortals activating the Star suffer the Soulless Condition as the relic absorbs their soul, with further uses causing a level of aggravated damage. Mummies activating the Star immediately lose a level of Sekhem.

Far From Home

Memory is forever a curse for the Arisen. No matter the call, a mummy inevitably awakens angry, confused, and without the sense of self awareness that everyone takes for granted. As the Descent begins anew and the Deathless sees her surroundings without the red mist of rage and violence over her eyes the first scraps of knowledge start to return. She is helped along this journey of rediscovery by devoted servants passing down knowledge of her history from parent to child, maintaining the exclusivity of secret knowledge and indoctrinations. If the mummy is particularly lucky, she awakens within a meret who are initially just as unaware but who work together to begin reassembling the broken pieces of their minds.

Without those support mechanisms the Arisen is even more confused and alone. Throughout history the cults of the Deathless watched over their charges, tending the tombs with the proper care and protecting them from incursions of the ignorant and the unbelieving. For millennia these guardians had greater control over such events as their charges' resting places remained isolated from the wider world and hidden beneath the sands that buried Irem and left the Nameless Empire without even whispered legends. Discovery was unlikely with distance and inconvenience, while those explorers and grave robbers who did uncover the secrets then faced the combined challenges of enraged mummies briefly awakening at the disturbance, or when that failed the tyrannies of distance and crude transport to return the stolen treasures — and remains — to civilized people who would desire and purchase such wares.

The coming of the modern age overcame most of these challenges. To immortal lifespans, the greed of coveted wealth evolved into the greed of scientific exploration and discovery in the blink of an eye. Tomb robbers were now well financed and resourced, with powerful tools to discover and uncover the hidden tombs and even more powerful backers to make political and legal obstacles go away. Protective cults were swept aside and unliving probes were the first to disturb the Deathless and face its wrath. Humans followed safely behind careful to recover, catalogue, and classify everything they found and return it to civilized museums and universities for further study.

None know how many tombs remain unsullied by these archeological expeditions, but more are discovered each year. Tombs are excavated with depressing frequency, treasures are separated from their inert Deathless and sent to different expert locations for further study, to disappear into private collections, or to be displayed for children to gawk at when they can tear their eyes away from the latest app on their hand-held device.

- The inert Deathless are separated from their artifacts and taken to warehouses and entered into a complicated distribution system. Merets are scattered across the globe while the sleeping mummies have no awareness of what awaits them. When the Arisen awaken it is without even the familiarity of cults who know the proper exchanges or other Deathless who cause any recognition to flicker in confused minds. They're unlikely to know where they are and few but the luckiest are close to where the Judges demand their attention. These merets of chance must decide whether they will band together or go their separate ways in pursuit of

purpose and the relics that were stolen from them. Recovering their treasures will take time and effort, perhaps more of both than these scattered Deathless have available.

- A cult for the new age wants to open the eyes of the hapless masses to the truth of the world and the demonstrable power of their gods over the hidden faith of mainstream religions. They've decided the best way of converting the world is to show the power of their master-servants over death itself. This cult has the smattering of lore required and everything needed to perform the rituals of summing, except the Arisen who will answer their cause. Luckily, the local museum has scheduled an Egyptology exhibition and has unknowingly secured the loan of a group of gods from the true old kingdom. The cult will enact its ritual to a livestream broadcast and reveal the secrets to the world. Unfortunately, for the cult, they have little idea what awaits them if they succeed.
- For reasons unknown, the Deathless wake in transit, bursting forth from their carefully packaged sarcophagi to the usual confusion and destruction. Unfortunately for the mummies, this time their rampage occurs at 30,000 feet in the air, tearing through flimsy fuselage and bringing down the air transport in a fiery crater of twisted metal and molten plastic. The renewed power of Sekhem coursing through their bodies keeps the Arisen from suffering serious injury despite the cataclysm surrounding them as they walk from the destruction, unaware of their location but with the distant sounds of emergency first responders racing to the scene and coming closer with each second the mummies wait in confusion.
- The Arisen awaken within the halls of display, misidentified as the legacy of some lesser civilization who copied the trappings but not the power of the Nameless Empire. Confused and somewhat delighted or bemused crowds watch as the Deathless return to life in a masterpiece of interactive entertainment. The benign witnessing swiftly turns to horror as the mindless mummies rampage through the crush of innocent onlookers vying for a better view of the show. Copious bloodshed, dozens of gruesome deaths and mass hysteria and the terrified crush of fleeing victims follows before the Deathless can take control of themselves. As word reaches the city's other Arisen they must take action to control the damage and rescue their peers before the situation deteriorates any further.

Children of Irem

The Rite of Return tears apart an Arisen's soul, reforging it in the fires of pure Sekhem and binding it forever to the mummy's immortal existence. The Rite brings life to the Deathless at the cost of so much of their humanity being sacrificed to the altar of eternal service. The earliest stages of when a mummy returns to life reveal the monster forged by the Rite of Return. Sekhem's lifeforce provides anima to the desiccated flesh and bone but makes no pretense of the humanity long left behind. As the Descent sets in the Sekhem begins to fill out the mummy's appearance, giving him the superficial semblance of humanity to aid his service to the Judges. Despite appearances, the burning Sekhem and fragile memory ensure the Arisen is ever-aware that he only moves among humans but is never one of them.

Though the Descent is inevitably too brief, many Arisen take the opportunity of walking the living world to briefly enjoy the transient pleasures that flesh provides. Mummies indulge in food, drink and other pleasures when able. This hedonism isn't condoned by the Judges but it's overlooked as long as the servant continues to fulfil her obligations. If the Deathless strays too far from purpose in the pursuit of pleasure, his Judge simply has something more to torment and challenge when he next enters Duat.

An Arisen's artificially-prolonged shell only obtains limited joy from these pleasures anyway. Food and drink are empty flavors that aren't required for continued existence as

Sekhem provides. Sex is simply stimulated nerves without any hope of fulfilling biological imperatives or establishing true emotional connection. The Rite of Return has tarnished even these small moments that make life worth living. As the physical shell is no longer meant to allow fully functional humanity, neither can Arisen have children. Beyond biology, raising offspring and furthering a new generation is a distraction that the Judges cannot allow. The Deathless swore devotion to the Judges above all else and will not be permitted to divert this purpose to such trivial, temporally fleeting concerns.

Nonetheless, a mummy has claims to have produced a child and foes assemble to challenge the Deathless, exploit a weakness, or punish him for the oversight. For his part, the Arisen parent is determined to prolong his Descent to give the child the best start and provide the parenting it needs to the best of his ability.

- The meret awakens with a call to join the hunt for the rogue parent. The mummy is derelict in its duties to the Judges, who have decreed that the Deathless and all of its line must be punished and exterminated from the world. Though the punishment of death may inevitably be temporary for the Deathless, the remembered pain of its failure and the destruction of what it created will serve as an eternity of punishment.
- The Su-Menent possess a prophecy concerning a half-immortal child, though whether this comes from sorcerous scrying of the future or partly remembered history from a future waking is unknown. What the Necromancers do recall is that the child will usher in the Nameless Empire reborn, or erase all trace of its existence — including the Deathless — once and for all. Now the guild takes sides and draws in supporters to ensure what is foretold comes to pass, or to prevent it from ever happening.
- The meret decides to reject the Judges' demands and assist the parent. Maintaining protection on the immortal offspring against all threats is further hampered by the hastening of the Arisens' Descent as they avoid their masters' decree. The time with the child is a sweet instant in their never-ending existences, perhaps extended for mere moments if they can recover relics and keep the Sekhem for themselves. Or perhaps these Arisen sacrifice the artifacts they find to ensure the child's parent can endure just a little longer.
- The child of the Deathless is a unique and sorcerously potent component, coveted by other immortals to use for their own vile purposes. The best scenarios call for raising the child to prepare it for sacrifice or transfer of the immortal's essence into this infinitely more potent vessel. The worst plans need to drain the child of blood and life as soon as possible in excruciating fashion. Whatever the designs, the scion is a wellspring of potential with competition who will do almost anything to secure the prize.

The Darkest Turn

The Sothic Wheel turns regardless of the actions of mortal or immortal creatures. The Shan'iatu were wise and powerful but not all seeing. They were the scholars and possibly architects of the wheel of death and rebirth and knew more of it than perhaps anyone since, but even their knowledge was incomplete. The Deathless are the undisputed experts of experiencing the effect of the wheel's grinding renewal but they don't necessarily understand its sorcerous workings better than anyone else. Whether the Shan'iatu knew of the bond between Sothic alignment and temporary freedom of purpose for their servants may never be known. Whether they knew of the lesser alignments is even more inscrutable.

Several lesser alignments influence the Deathless in ways they barely understand. Some awaken all the Arisen of a particular guild, or all mummies with particular strength in one of the pillars of the soul. Others call forth Deathless without any discernibly consistent traits. In

these times, the Arisen sometimes believe that their Judges have some mysterious purpose for them, even if they waste their Descent in confusion trying to discover these intentions.

One Sothic alignment brings a shiver of dread to even the most resilient of immortals. This darkest manifestation of the Rite of Return is a time of horror and disharmony for the Deathless. For this one turn, the failure of memory is more blessing than curse, as few mummies want to remember their actions in these times. This unnamed alignment drags the Arisen from their graves filled with a hunger and desperation for Sekhem beyond anything else they experience. The Descent begins immediately and progresses faster than at any other time, driving the Deathless to feed the relentless starvation.

The horror comes not from the hunger but from the inability of any relics or artifacts to satisfy it. The only vessels of brightly shining Sekhem that grant some temporary reprieve are the bodies of other Arisen. In the dark Sothic turn, the Deathless hunt, slaughter, and *consume* each other until the remaining few are unable to reach each other and finally fall into the ravaging starvation pain until the cycle finally ends.

- In this time the Arisen avoid alliances and friendships with their own kind. Other mummies are simply victims waiting to happen. Unfortunately, none of the Deathless can hide as their Sekhem cries out for others to notice. The mummy's cult becomes more important than ever, concealing their charge as best they can, confounding anyone who comes seeking the Arisen, while hunting out and exploiting the weaknesses of other cults to make their charges vulnerable. The secret societies formed in this time pass down very different legends of the Arisen and may have strange expectations when their descendants next seek out the Deathless' service.
- The call to destroy their own doesn't stop between members of a meret but it can be diverted somewhat by a constant feast of mummies other than immortal friends. The Deathless can clamp down on the urge to a degree, ignoring it the way a human can ignore the rumbles and pangs of hunger within her belly, but just like hunger eventually it demands to be fed. In a meret, the urge most frequently comes about at times when a mummy is distracted or another Deathless displays weakness before her. Merets swiftly turn on their weak and few Arisen can control the hunger for long when harboring such obvious morsels.
- The horror of these times doesn't end when a mummy nears his Descent's end and prepares for the trials of Duat. As the Arisen's flesh shrivels the hunger doesn't end, nor does the last traces of Sekhem fade from his body. The Deathless remains tied to the living world, unable to move or speak but dimly aware of events occurring around him, and keenly aware of the starvation that gnaws at his stomach and sanity. This last lingering Sekhem still calls to other Deathless for them to come and consume. The last awareness of many immortals in this time is being eaten alive by their fellow mummies as they're unable to beg for death's release.
- The Sekhem within the Deathless shines like beacons to draw in others like moths to a flame. Sometimes other scions of Irem such as the twisted Deceived or other immortals also attract the Arisen to bring hungry enemies towards them. Perhaps the Judges watch on in amusement as their servants engage in global gladiatorial combat. Perhaps the Rite of Return was flawed and this price balances the cycle. Or perhaps no explanation exists for the bloodlust that sweeps across the cursed and they simply have to endure this as one more aspect of their eternal existence, and somehow look their fellow Arisen in the eyes when the next, less murderous turn arrives.

Memory Broker

The only thing that hurts the Deathless more than the loss of memory is its return. The mindless rage and instinctive violence as the mummy awakens once more into life is a time of purity before the Arisen knows what she is or what she has become. As the Descent takes hold, she slowly regains more of herself, always too little and too late. She begins to learn who she is and must reconcile that with what she has done in service of the cult that called her forth, and the Judge whose will she serves. She sees the blood staining her hands and the sins staining her soul and knows that this isn't who she has to be. She knows that she could be more — is more — and that the hateful sands of Duat steal this away from her each time. Worse, so often she learns that her wants and needs are always secondary to what others want just in time to once more descend into the sands to face Judgement once more and be scrubbed of everything that made her unique.

Mummies sometimes wonder how their existences would change if they didn't suffer the curse of unknowing. If they returned to the world fresh and whole, would they be masters of their own existences or would they find that they were still at the mercy of others? Other powerful beings from the dawn of time watch the cycle of life and death and blood and pain that endlessly consumes the Deathless. Most of these creatures rightly stay far away from the Arisen, cowed by their own memories of the Shan'iatu who bound or banished them, or flayed their Essence in pursuit of sorcerous experimentation or simply morbid curiosity. Others know nothing of the Nameless Empire but are wary of the vengeful powers held by those with magic that defies death.

These creatures can't remain timid forever. The lure of power is hard to resist and as these denizens of the shadows have watched and learned they've come to the realization that the Deathless walk alone in the world, the last remnants of a failed empire that is never coming back. They start to believe that they deserve the service of eternal slaves, and stealing them is so much easier than trying to create their own. And what enticements could attract the Deathless better than a promise of remembrance and self-awareness from the moment they awaken?

One such creature stalks the modern world. Sef-ammut, an ancient godling of regret and renewal that skulked the fringes of The Nameless Empire, has finally decided that its time has come and the Shan'iatu are no longer returning to drive it away. Sef-ammut retains everything that anyone ever trusted into its care. It takes away pain and leaves the happiness of obliviousness. Unfortunately, Sef-ammut's clients live such short, pointless lives that it barely gains any sustenance from the bargain. The ignorance Sef-ammut gifts to others is the curse the Arisen are desperate to overcome. Sef-ammut has served the needs of the cults of the Arisen for millennia, consuming the unspeakable demands and horrors they're forced to comply with for their masters. The rituals to call the memory-eater are passed on easily between cults, all seeking some respite from the trauma of the unspeakable demands in return for the knowledge they pass down from Irem. Sef-ammut cares for these clients with the precision of a scalpel, taking away the trauma and has slowly pieced together just enough lore to know that the sorcerers of Irem are no more and their former servants are now vulnerable to its approach.

- Creativity of thought is not a feature that comes naturally to the creature but more than one of the cultists believed that its services could be valuable or dangerous to their control of their undead servant/masters. The cult no longer believes this — the memories are long since taken — but the creature has approached the cult's mummy with an intriguing proposal. Entrust the creature with the mummy's memories before they descend to Duat and it will find the Arisen and return the memories when they come to life once more.

- Holding and imparting memories isn't the creature's only talent. It can blend what it holds in new combinations, changing the nature of what an Arisen might think about herself. It can swap memories entirely, imparting a mummy with the personality and recollections of someone other than who they are. The creature doesn't do so for amusement, it experiments on its new clients to twist their perceptions and make better, more effective servants for itself.
- The Rite of Return makes an Arisen a fixed point, with some flexibility but essentially immutable with each Descent and reawakening. The creature can't permanently steal away the core being of the Deathless — if it can't reach a client in time the mummy's own fractured personality and recollections begin anew. If the creature does return the memories as soon as the Arisen returns her own natural memories are locked away for that Descent.
- The meret awakens with the task of recovering a host of Deathless who have disappeared from the Judges' oversight. The number of missing servants increases with each passing Descent, and the Judges are jealous masters who won't tolerate others having power over their slaves. The missing mummies have fallen for the temptation of self-knowledge and remembrance and have entrusted themselves to Sef-ammot. They no longer remember their proper purposes or histories, only that they should continue to serve Sef-ammot as best they can. Though they don't admit it, the Judges are desperate for the return of their servants, and afraid of what might happen if this doesn't occur.

Mortal Power

Fake news, manipulation of information and subversion of systems designed to protect the will of the people. Every mummy has experienced plenty of each in their existence. Now one of the them has prepared to take advantage of these flawed human systems and build himself the greatest cult in the history of the Arisen — an entire country — or at least the majority of one who believe in the dream of freedom and wealth.

This isn't the first time one of the cursed has desired mastery over others, but it is certainly the most obscenely ambitious attempt. Over the endless years it hasn't even been unusual for a Deathless to be awoken for the purpose of subduing some tribe or nation who stands in the way of the Judges' relentless need for Sekhem. During each Sothic Turn, so many Arisen build their influence over others as part of defining their purpose until they once more succumb to the Descent. But every previous exercise of power has always been of far more limited scope. No one has even considered trying to cow and awe a nation of millions before, especially in this modern time. The relentless media scrutiny combined with the realities of the Descent places a burden on the immortal candidate unlike that experienced by her mortal competition. The Arisen has the advantage in being tireless as long as the Sekhem sustains him, but the constant public appearances and need to interact with humanity may unravel the whole scheme. In the world of social media, fake news and dissembling politicians, a Deathless can make a killing. No one knows precisely what could happen with a mummy as president of an emerging Balkan nation, solidifying its belief and purpose after seemingly endless regional conflict, cementing power while anchored with the inevitability and certainty of its secretly immortal leader. He could usher in a golden age guided by the wisdom of eternity or bring a wave of further darkness to the world as supernatural enemies all take aim at the Arisen making a target of himself.

- The religious truths laid down by the Shan'iatu and followed by cults dedicated to the worship of the Judges' power have spread throughout the world, even calling to powerful nations like modern America. Indeed, the shadow halls of elite colleges and universities have long concealed groups willing to use any advantage in their desire for wealth and power. Ensuring the success of this Balkan nation may help these young, ambitious, and morally

ambiguous future leaders with their own political goals, with a powerful ally behind them as they follow the mystical trappings of the Nameless Empire's religion on their own route to power. That they work to summon servants to help fulfill the cult's goals is a bonus.

- The plan is as audacious and unlikely as it appears. The modern route to power has rules and requirements placed around it by tradition and privilege in part to ensure that the wrong types of people can never gain the throne. The Arisen, backed by his cult, is determined to subvert and tear apart these norms and expose them for the false limitations they are. The candidate and his entourage have employed money, intimidation and supernatural power to sweep away the resistance of these structures but they remain a vulnerability that could be used to expose the truth.
- Drawing out enemies is precisely what the cult intends from such a grotesquely public display. While the Arisen enjoys the spotlight and the trappings of power, he still remains a pawn to more powerful interests, just like always. The cult is hoping that providing such a prominent and obvious target for those aware of the candidate's true nature is more than their hidden foes can stand and that they'll be forced to reveal themselves in a desperate attempt to destroy the cult's influence. Thankfully, the realities of the process mean the Deathless is surrounded by hordes of mortal protection, with the final line of defense being an angry mummy himself.
- The Judges chose each Deathless as an avatar of never-ending servitude and submission. When their masters call, the mummies respond. Most Deathless make some kind of peace with this existence — the absence or unreliability of memory certainly robs them of much agency otherwise — but a few periodically try to throw off the shackles and rise to something greater. Throughout the ages these petty queens and chieftains have risen to importance within their limited regions before fading to obscurity as they reentered Duat once more. History remembers the names of some of these historic personages and ascribes legendary acts to their greatness, but these stories have no more credence than any other tale that grows in the retelling.

First and Foremost

Among the Deathless, a rumor exists of a force that permeates from the Judges in Duat, a force driven to shape the world and events to suit the gods' unknown design. Those cursed who give credence to such tales call the force Shaba-nekh and believe it is a manifestation of the Judges' combined will given anima in the lands of the living. The Arisen believe they play a different role, providing for the Judges and enacting their individual desires. The power of this force seeps into mortal consciousness and influences their paranoia and suspicions. Because of this, mortals have developed many names for the effect, personifying it as a shadowy unseen group that has fingers in every pie and controls everything for the power and wealth it delivers. A common name for the Shaba-nekh in the modern world is the Illuminati, with its well-known iconography of the all-seeing eye within the pyramid believed by the Deathless to not at all be a coincidence, but instead a glimpse into the truth of reality. A symbol of the Judges that witness everything Deathless do and decide what their servants must do next to please them.

Unsurprisingly, the mortal conspiracy theorists are wrong. The Illuminati isn't a group with control of everything, twisting the world to their benefit. The Arisen are also wrong, and the Shaba-nekh is not a metaphysical trickle-down from the Judges in Duat to the Earth. However, the Deathless are correct that something serves as the Judges' herald to mold the world into what they need it to be. This power — the Shaba-nekh — stretches back to the Nameless Empire and is in fact a single, ancient woman, Khepriya.

For untold thousands of years Khepriya has maneuvered herself into the role of adviser, counselor, vizier, confessor, and more. She walked from the Nameless Empire at the dawn of time to guide the historic destiny of each tribe, nation, or kingdom that she came across. Through this all she always draws together webs of cults, favors, promises and coercion, always limited by the tyranny of distance that even her great power couldn't fully overcome but always ensuring the segment of humanity she guided moved towards a future aligned with Irem's grand vision. Recent centuries — the blink of an eye to Khepriya — have seen a change in the grandeur of her task. Modern communication, rapid transportation, and the complex web of international economics resembling nothing less than sorcerous workings have expanded her power until it reached everywhere.

Khepriya's existence and task has always been different from other mummies. Guildless, she did whatever task the Shan'iatu demanded. Rewarded for her efforts and dedication, she was honored with the still-developing Rite of Return, that she might give her life and suffering so that the Shan'iatu would be one step closer to unlocking the secret of immortality. To their surprise, it worked, but was far from perfect. Many more failed experiments would die on during mummification before the Rite was considered ready. Gifted with one success, not yet understanding the true nature and limitations of the Deathless's endless death and rebirth, the Shan'iatu gave Khepriya a task that may take all of human history to accomplish. According to the legends, Khepriya has never reentered Duat or suffered the harrowing memory loss that accompanies the Call. Her memory of all time is perfect and she recalls every betrayal, hurt, and manipulation from her impossibly long Deathlessness.

- If the stories are true and Khepriya has lived so long one day at a time, she knows that what other mummies consider a curse to be a blessing. Even the beneficiaries of the Rite of Return shouldn't exist forever and know everything. The endless ages have sent Khepriya quite mad, twisting her psyche to something more like a Judge than any mortal being. Humans exist for the briefest lives and are almost beneath her notice. Even other Deathless seem transient and barely important to her. Their value comes simply from their utility when she manipulates their cults into following her will or summoning their brief charges to life so they can unknowingly serve her needs, and those of the Judges, of course.

- Some believe that Khepriya's existence is an essential part of the Rite of Return, anchoring all Deathless to the living world. Without her the fivefold soul wouldn't have the foundation to finally claw its way back to life. While Khepriya was hidden away from the world she was safe from enemies of the Arisen looking to disrupt the Rite and break their power. Now that she is revealed to the world they are aligning themselves against her. Not every threat is external either. The curse of immortality has led many Deathless to also view Khepriya as the best way for them to destroy the Rite of Return and end their eternal suffering.

- The Judges want Khepriya returned to Duat to face their scrutiny over her long and largely unaccountable existence. The meret rises once more, urged by the Judges to bring about the death of one of their own. Khepriya's ongoing Descent has allowed her to amass a treasure trove of artifacts, knowledge, and power against such assaults, and she is ready and willing to repel attackers with whatever force she can muster. The Arisen must study her carefully to learn of any possible weaknesses that might help them achieve their goal. This assumes that Khepriya can actually suffer death and return to Duat. If this is possible, the meret must also contend with the real possibility that ending Khepriya's life will also permanently sever the Arisen's ability to cheat death.

- Khepriya is the only Deathless who may know the truth of the fall of the Nameless Empire. The others arose for the first time long after the civilization was gone, with no

information around what had transpired to kill off the most powerful kingdom the world had ever seen. This knowledge could hold the key to raising Irem from the grave just like the Arisen rise, or it could point to some unknown and insidious enemy that could destroy such a powerful civilization with little trace remaining. Khepriya may even hold what happened to the Shan'iatu in the final nights, and their final fates in connection with the Judges.

Build-a-Beast

In several cities, Arisen cults have been stealthily attacked, their cult leaders brutally slain and the slumbering mummies vanishing. It seems to be the work of large predatory animals, but the attacks almost seem coordinated. Reports of strange creatures begin pouring in, baffling law enforcement and animal control officials. Numerous alleged unicorn attacks are reported by local fringe media, as mainstream media quietly buries these unbelievable encounters.

The creatures in each incident have been Amkhata created by a group of sorcerers calling themselves the Jigsaw Concern. The sorcerers convert their unnatural talents into material gain, selling customized Amkhata for obscene prices. Each Amkhat is designed to order, carefully constructed from the highest quality cadavers available, and fitted with a control talisman permitting the bearer to command it. Discounts are offered for those providing their own components or ritual sacrifices.

With so many Amkhata in the hands of amateurs, chaos spills out into the streets, leaving mortal authorities at a loss for how to proceed. The Arisen and their cults struggle to keep the situation from getting further out of hand, often becoming targets of the creatures in the process. To make matters worse, Last Dynasty International caught wind of the Jigsaw Concern's operation and actively searches for the sorcerers, with every intention of dismantling or appropriating the operation.

These are some of the Jigsaw Concern's clients:

- Oscar Marchand has big dreams, and he'll do anything to achieve them, even purchasing a jackal-headed lion. Already a successful businessman, Oscar knows he can do better, and he's already sent his creature to slay some of his business rivals. Now turning his eyes towards politics, it's only a matter time before his detractors begin meeting gruesome ends.
- A trio of Shuankhsen purchased multiple beasts from the Jigsaw Concern to strike against their foes. Sending the abominations to strike at Arisen cults, they've had success eliminating the leaders and absconding with their slumbering mummies. Rescuing the lost mummies and stopping the Shuankhsen won't be easy, but the alternative is waiting until the meret becomes their next target.
- Damian Leroi prides himself on his wealth, but when it comes to pleasing his spoiled daughter, Myra, money is no object. Accustomed to getting whatever she wants, Myra is prone to loud, violent tantrums when denied. When Myra began demanding a unicorn, Damian purchased one for her ever-expanding menagerie of impossible creatures. With a horse's head, a bull's body, and the tusk of a narwhal upon its head, the unicorn was everything she'd hoped. Now, having lost her control talisman, Myra's unicorn continues acting on its last orders, which were "Go feed yourself." Myra demands a new unicorn, threatening to unleash the rest of her menagerie if she doesn't get her way.
- Outside the city, a gigantic inverted pyramid has been constructed, far larger than the Jigsaw Concern's usual facility. The construction is funded by Final Twilight, a doomsday cult willing to pool their resources and offer their members' labor to expedite the process.

They wish to create the largest Amkhat in history, constructed from myriad species. They believe the world is already doomed, but intend to preserve themselves by sacrificing the rest of the world to the Devourer.

The More You Know

Knowledge is power. The Lorekeepers agree on this point. Differences in opinion arise about who deserves this power and how it should be used. Two mummies, Kagemni and Ahaneith, have warred against each other over this point for millennia, but the advent of modern communications has ramped up hostilities. Other Sesha-Hebsu choose a side or seek to mediate their rivalry, but their battle has intensified to the point where even outsiders find themselves threatened.

Kagemni seeks to concentrate knowledge into as few hands as possible, parceling it out as needed to achieve his ends. His cult, the Veiled Lantern, encourages ignorance among the mortal populace, ensuring the power of knowledge remains in the hands of the worthy few. The Veiled Lantern carefully records valuable information, concealing it until Kagemni finds it expedient to utilize it. The unworthy masses receive deceptions, false accounts repeated enough to be accepted as truths, encouraging unreasoning hatred and distrust. While ostensibly seeking to ensure the Sesha-Hebsu maintains a position of dominance, he is paranoid about someone else overthrowing him and wresting control of his vast stores of knowledge.

Ahaneith directs her cult, the Hetchi-Abata, to spread the light of knowledge across the world. The existence of secrets grates upon her, driving her to provide information to all who wish for it. The exceptions to this are her own, although she justifies this by acknowledging these, too, will one day be known to all. The Usheb wishes to uncover every secret and witness the completion of the Scroll of Ages. Mortals may not be as wise as the Arisen, but they are numerous, curious, and exploitable. The Hetchi-Abata encourage research in all fields, but especially areas where mortals come in contact with the supernatural. The madness inflicted and lives destroyed by subjecting mortals to the supernatural are small sacrifices. When the Scroll of Ages is completed, the mysteries of the world will stand unveiled, and the one holding it will command power greater than the Judges. Ahaneith intends to seize it for herself.

With their war intensifying, several extreme measures could be taken:

- The internet has proven a mixed blessing for Ahaneith. While an excellent method of disseminating information, rumors and lies spread faster than truth. With efforts to improve data quality failing, the Hetchi-Abata seek to bring the worldwide computer network down, so it might be rebuilt under their watchful eye.
- Mummy cults possess esoteric knowledge, even if their sovereign has misled them. The Veiled Lantern infiltrates the ranks of other cults, feeding information back to their master until the right moment arrives to destroy the cults from within.
- Kagemni's paranoia has grown through the centuries. Upon returning to henet, the cult destroys the Kheru's remains, permitting their master to return in a new body each time. His changing face makes it harder for rivals to track him, and provides new information with each Descent. Seeing foes everywhere, he undermines other Arisen, even former allies. Hiding behind an unknown new face, rumors spread that he's struck an alliance with the Shuankhsen, offering other Arisen to keep himself safe.
- The Hetchi-Abata's efforts threaten to expose the existence of the supernatural to the mortals. Where once they could isolate mortals to study them in asylums, they now must find

other ways to conduct such studies. The choice of a nearby small town seemed sensible initially, but their experiments are causing something large and unnatural to rouse beneath the town.

Mummies on Mars

Arisen and their Cults calculate that the fifth Sothic Turn will occur in the 32nd century, as humans in fourth turn measure time. Both 21st century scientific theory and the memories of Arisen who have experienced Descents in the future indicate that the Earth will be in a degraded state by that time, possibly uninhabitable by humans. The guilds debate how best to prepare for this.

Some decide it is time to look towards other planets within the solar system for the events of the next Sothic Turn. Cultists take influential roles within space agencies such as NASA and ESA and, once there, they promote the launching of probes to Mars and work toward human flight to the red planet. This is a distant prospect, but the next turn is many centuries away, so there is no great hurry. Their placement within the agencies gives them access to landers, several of which have carried material the governments associated with the agencies do not know about.

More than 50% of landers fail to communicate with Earth centers after arrival on Mars. The general belief is that, as the space agencies report, they failed to land safely. This is not the whole truth. Many of these lost landers carry canopic jars so, when human cultists finally arrive on Mars, the Deathless can awaken in their new home.

- It is the fifth Sothic Turn. A meret of mummies awaken on Mars where there is a small but thriving human colony. They struggle to find the remnants of their cults. The meret learns that Earth is a burned-out husk, with relics ever more difficult to find and the planet desperately over-populated and polluted. Mars, on the other hand, is a hive of human creativity. Furthermore, each original colonist brought with them objects from Earth and many of these, handed down generation to generation, have become vestiges, brimming with Sekhem.
- On the dying Earth, the Arisen, facing Judges hungry for an ever-diminishing supply of Sekhem, are desperate to find vessels. Some actively seek to migrate to the off-Earth colonies. On Mars, perhaps, or maybe one of the asteroids or moons of Jupiter, could they build a new Irem? With effort, cultist could secure hotly contested space for their masters on the few ships that still leave Earth headed for the colonies. But, once there, how will the meret find the vessels their Judges demand or the Sekhem they need to achieve their aims? How will they persuade the independent-minded colonists to support their agenda?

Duat Falls

Duat is an inevitability for all Deathless. The place tears at the soul and strips away everything that a mummy is except the core tenet of her being, the one thing a worthy soul refuses to relinquish no matter what the torment. Duat is the home of the Judges, where they are most powerful, where they exercise ultimate authority over the souls who come before them. Duat is where a mummy must prove her worth to prevent being utterly destroyed and lose the final piece that she clings to.

Duat is a lie. A lie the Judges desperately hope their servants never realize.

Far from being a place of power where the Judges are unassailable. The City of Black Spires is a prison where the Judges hunger for the scraps of Sekhem their harrowed servants offer. The Seven Gates of Duat purposely demand confrontation and sacrifice from individual

mummies to ensure they only come to the Judges from a position of weakness and servitude and desperate hope for favor. Even the glamors of the Judge's sanity-shattering visages work to prevent an Arisen seeing beyond the superficial and realizing that the balance of power is not what they were told. It's all theatrics with little behind the curtain.

The truth is that an Arisen's soul can triumph over the trials and emerge at the City of Black Spires filled with strength and will. A mummy who learns this can stand before the Judges and dictate the outcome of her trial and dare the Judge to disagree. The Arisen can refuse Anpu's cup and return to the world filled with memory and purpose. This cycle reinforces itself as the Arisen undergoes her Descent and returns to Neter-Khetet and Duat still in possession of the knowledge required to overcome the Judges' rigged game.

- The Judges are petty tyrants, jealous of the power they hold over their servants. They know that Duat can be overcome and they conspire to learn which of their servants have the will to beat the Judges at their own game. These mummies are more likely to suffer even greater challenges and more terrifying foes when they return to Duat, as their Judges try harder to break them and return them to ignorant slavery. This isn't without cost to the Judge, who risks further weakening its position if the Deathless doesn't halt her advance.
- A meret of Arisen have severed their leashes and are dictating their own destinies more than ever before. This group is eager to recruit like-minded Deathless to teach the secret and have another mummy join them in shaking off their shackles. The meret intends to gain enough support to overthrow the Judges once and for all. Whether they choose to end the cycle of life and death or usurp the thrones of gods is unknown. The Judges are aware of this insurgency and call forth loyal, ignorant servants to hunt their own and protect their gods. This is a dangerous gambit as they risk exposing more servants to the corruptive influence of rotten freedom.
- The Judges' role is twisted and abusive but it isn't without purpose. The Sekhem they take from down beaten supplicants doesn't just sustain the Judges' existence; it fuels the ongoing magic of the Rite of Return. Without the offerings the Rite begins to fail. Fewer Arisen answer the call to life and those who do return suffer the Descent faster than ever before. The rebellious Arisen can see the changes and know that only one source can truly answer the cause and what can be done. Together they must confront the Judges and do something no mummy has done before — discuss the problem before Judge and Arisen both end as their symbiotic cycle drains the last of its power. What will these Deathless be prepared to sacrifice to continue their own existence? Will they reenter slavery, or if the price too high and they'll consign all their kind to extinction?
- The meret learns of rituals to perform that short-circuit the Descent and draw the Deathless together in Duat, to make their journey united in strength and willing to suffer and sacrifice for each other. Through this ritual the Deathless can stand before the Judges together instead of apart. The characters are approached with this knowledge to trigger their own return to Duat filled with power and Sekhem, with the goal of overthrowing the Judges and ascending to godhood. Will they take this ultimate challenge in pursuit of greatness and power, or will the loyal servants wait until the time is right to betray the others in the hope of earning reward from their masters for their treachery?

A Glimpse of the End

In the 32nd century, the Sothic Wheel turns once more. Arisen drag themselves to life to find nothing but the lifeless husk of a burned-out world and the slowly eroding ashes of what was once long ago humanity's triumph and folly. The world's dwindling Sekhem pools in the last few relics the Deathless can find and recover. Most mummies endure an all-too-brief Descent

before falling back into Duat to face the wrath of starving Judges whose endless hunger may have brought this apocalypse to the world.

Is this the inevitable fate of the world, or is this future a glimpse of possibility that the Deathless have the opportunity — and possibly the responsibility — to prevent as they continue to move through timeless Duat? Have the mummies themselves facilitated this nightmare by removing life's energies from the living world and passing them to undead gods? Some Deathless believe the events are unconnected, that Sekhem is eternally replenishing and inexhaustible, and no amount of the energies gifted to the Judges could bring about this future. Others concur that they are the cause of the destruction, that Sekhem is the life of the Earth itself and the Deathless have drained it over millennia like innumerable stinging parasites. Still others blame humanity, who have forever possessed the greatest capacity to destroy themselves and mutilate the planet around them.

- Detail is hard to find in a world of death and ruin but some Arisen manage to find scraps of information and news scattered alongside the dead. They discover the cause of humanity's fall wasn't the previously imagined candidates of climate change and destruction, or mutually assured destruction from weapons of unholy power. No, the Deathless brought on this fate one relic at a time, dragging Sekhem's life force away from the living world and casting it into the hungry maws of dead gods. As the Descent comes all too quickly to these mummies, can they change anything of the past to prevent this dead future?
- Some Deathless take an optimistic view of this dead time, wondering at a future where no humans exist except the immortals who rise and congregate every millennium. The world now truly belongs to the Arisen, who now appear ready to share their brief future Descents forever going into the unknown future until the Earth finally dies in dying solar fury and the mummies have nothing left to return to. From now until that bleak eternity, these Deathless try to make something enduring to look forward to. Sekhem is a rare commodity — mostly what the Arisen bring with them on rising from the grave — but they can turn that towards building an eternal city of the second, or third Irem.
- Whatever the truth of why the world is now this way, mummies are faced with a stark reality — they may continue to rise and die in an ever-worsening existence until the world is utterly destroyed and the stars finally burn out and end the Sothic alignment. This depressing thought leads more than one to seriously contemplate seeking out a means to secure final, unrecoverable destruction of themselves so they're no longer forced to endure the horror.
- A mummy has memories of waking in a distant future time. As he remembers, he leaves messages with information and clues on how to fix the future. He faces the inevitable challenges of remembering his purpose every time, figuring out where he would leave clues, and interpreting the meaning of the clues his other timeless self imparted. Perhaps he is part of a meret of like-minded individuals leaving clues for themselves and each other, working together to piece together what the past and future hold. Unfortunately, this Arisen isn't alone in seeking the clues and deciphering their meaning. Powerful beings have considerable interest in knowing what the future holds and have also discovered tantalizing snippets left behind by this unknown prophet. Some may even seed their own clues for the prophet to find, either so he unknowingly serves their interests, or to send him hunting for false information and undesirable outcomes.

Begins Again

The Rite of Return forever linked the mummies' existence with the Sothic Cycle, bringing forth all Arisen in accordance with the cycle of the stars and the turning of the world. That the cycle exists is beyond question. Whether it existed before the Rite of Return was enacted,

or whether the Rite itself bound the heavens within the magic is unknown. The Arisen are also blind to whether the Sothic Turn was deliberately woven into the enchantment binding their souls to eternal life and service, or whether it was an accidental side effect of powerful magic that could never be entirely controlled by humanity. Most Deathless don't dwell on the details and simply accept the truth that they will have times when they awaken without purpose and have freedom to define their own destinies for time.

But what few Arisen — and perhaps none of the Shan'iatu — considered, was that the nature of cycles moves forwards and backwards. The turning of the Sothic period combined with the unknowable timelessness of Duat means the Deathless sometimes rise from their tombs with fragmented memories of when they were active in a future time with events yet to unfold. Sometimes their Descents can take them far back indeed.

Whatever the truth of the Sothic Turn, once it existed after the Nameless Empire was no more it also existed before the great civilization had ever stood. Binding the Deathless to the cycle gives access to these earliest times, paradoxically to even before the Rite of Return was performed to bind the mummies.

This is the time the Arisen awaken into, as the stars align in the nights before the Shan'iatu leash the eternal slaves to the Judges' never-ending service. The mummies walk in the long forgotten Nameless Empire, drawing upon the broken pieces of their fragmented memories to make sense of the time without the benefits of cult to help them adjust. Awakening now is an opportunity for the Deathless to shape their own destinies — perhaps the only true chance they'll ever have. They may even alter their own fates to prevent their mortal selves from being bound by the Rite of Return and the turning of the Sothic Wheel.

- Any changes the Deathless make in this time risk unknown changes or paradoxes in the future, possibly even costing them their existence. Or perhaps they were always present at the beginning, making the Rite of Return a stable paradox loop. Every step a mummy makes may have already been trod by her long before she was cursed with immortality. She may make herself known to the Shan'iatu — who may be horrified by what they see or emboldened in their own skill and power — or keep away and focus on other elements of her existence. Every Arisen carries fleeting memories of unfinished business and lost loved ones from their mortal years, times that they desperately want to relive. This Sothic Turn gives them that chance, to make right the things they never said, or undo the harm they carry with them forever. A rare few may even succeed in rewriting their regrets and moving to their Descent with renewed conviction in themselves.

- Many Arisen are weary of their existence, its eternal servitude and the relentless torture that awaits them at the end of each Descent. When their fickle memories work, they recall how they've grown to loathe harvesting power for malevolent gods who seemingly care nothing for the world except what they can take from it. For these mummies, awakening in this backwards-cast Sothic Turn gives an opportunity to end their torment before it begins. They can work to stop the Shan'iatu before they enact the Rite of Return, either through direct and brutal means, or by disrupting the rite. Some Deathless may use this opportunity to subvert the Rite of Return to serve their own needs, either seeking to take the place of their Judge or forging a less painful path through Duat.

- The Shan'iatu first came to *Kemet* from unknown lands beyond, gifted with powerful magic and rumored to not be entirely human. Is it possible that the Arisen could awaken in a time before the Nameless Empire began, to fulfill the roles of their own rulers who would later find and choose the ones who would become their immortal servants? What does this mean for the Deathless? Do they seek out their mortal selves and curse them to an eternity of

torment, and find other victims to curse in their stead? Are such changes even possible, and what does it say about history and memory if the Deathless can't find their previous incarnations to carry the curse's burden? Perhaps this is the nature of the eternal cycle, that the world resets and the same individuals are not doomed to forever live out the loop.

- For some Deathless the secrets of Irem aren't their focus in this time. Instead, they look for ways to avoid attention and prolong their Descent until long past the Rite of Return. These mummies seek the truth of what happened to the Nameless Empire, what dark fate felled the greatest empire with the most potent sorcerers the world had known. For these Deathless, remaining active to witness the nation's descent is of prime importance. Was it an external force, did the Judges strike down the overly ambitious empire for their presumptuousness, or did the Rite of Return itself inadvertently destroy the Shan'iatu and the Nameless Empire when the awesome magics they wielded proved too much for any mortal being to control?