

SLAVE TO THE POWER OF DEATH

By Elven Tower and MikWewa Maps



LEVEL 9 ADVENTURE

A MID-TIER ONE-SHOT ADVENTURE FOR THE WORLD'S GREATEST ROLE-PLAYING GAME

SLAVE TO THE POWER OF DEATH

He is a man and a god but he will die too. The pharaoh's demise shall empower the birth and rise of the next one in line. Such is the raw power of death...

Annals of the Ancient Gods

Great rulers inspire their subjects with feelings of national identity, aspiration, and bravery. No leader is stronger than that whom the commonfolk envy and respect. Such an overlord is both loved and feared but the most important thing is that the figurehead causes the kingdom to thrive and prosper. Some of those leaders are chosen by the people, others inherit the position as it is believed that their royal blood incurs a birthright. In some cultures, their leaders are said to be unlike the common people...

The ancient pharaohs of the Styxian Kingdom were said to be incarnate manifestations of the gods. A flesh-and-blood eidolon of sacred creation. Born in the land of mortals to walk, eat, and bleed like one. But of godly ascendancy nevertheless. They possessed great magical powers. The *Annals of the Ancient Gods*, a large collection of treatises, biographies, and historical recounts that pertain to the old Styxian Kingdom, make such a claim. Alas, very few know the truth... That the dynasty of pharaohs were, in veracity, slaves to the power of death.

FALL OF THE STYXIAN KINGDOM

IN OLDEN TIMES, the pharaohs were regarded as the highest authority by the commonfolk. None could contradict their edicts nor evade their justice. A dynasty of 185 pharaohs ruled the Styxian Kingdom. When a pharaoh turned 40, the order of priests was charged with the preparation to transition to the next pharaoh. The pharaoh was then removed from his position and ritually sacrificed. The ritual allowed the godly spark within him to move to a new vessel. Always a 13-year-old pupil, specially prepared for becoming the next ruler.

When the last pharaoh, Rekh-Mara, turned 40, the customary change-of-ruler preparations began. Rekh-Mara was a philosopher who became convinced that the pharaohs' existence was a mockery as they were not allowed to live free. With envy for the peasantry's freedom, and consumed by the weight of his obligation to further the pharaonic line, Rekh-Mara rebelled against the priesthood and crafted an incantation to protect his soul and the godly spark that lived within. The priests ordered the pharaoh's capture and performed the ritual by force. Rekh-Mara lost his life but the divine spark remained. The line of godly, pharaonic, rulers was thus broken.

RISE OF THE ANCIENT TOMB

WITHOUT THE PHARAOHS, the Styxian Kingdom collapsed under its weight and moved on after a few generations. Rekh-Mara died 2,000 years ago, approximately. He was the last of a dynasty that lasted over 5,000 years.

Today, little remains of the Styxian Kingdom. Archaeologists study the few remnants of their culture that have survived to this day; mostly stone and clay tablets, trinkets, and tools. Of their grandiose stone architecture, there was nothing until recently. Found records speak of grand pyramids that the pharaohs used as burial and ceremonial sites but few of them have been located. A large pyramid suddenly appeared within Varlin Forest a week ago but the few scholars investigating the subject do not agree on the reason. Some claim it rose from below in a thunderous roar, others say it fell from the naked sky. None agree on anything. Some people have delved inside the gargantuan monument but none have returned. Others speak of the ineffable horrors that meander close to it. But most tomb-robbers salivate at the untold Styxian treasures that must be hidden therein.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Slave to the Power of Death may begin with one or any combination of the following adventure hooks:

CULTURAL EXPEDITION

The closest metropolis to the unearthed pyramid is of the sentiment that all artifacts and value in the pyramid belong to them, as it is within their territory. They offer a 5,000 gp bounty for clearing the place so that archaeologists and scholars can come and go safely.

THE IMPATIENT RESEARCHER

Donna Adari (**scout**) is a reputed student of Styxian Culture. She wants first-time access to the pyramid and its contents. Donna seeks bodyguards and offers her knowledge in exchange, claiming it may save the characters as Styxian ruins are said to be filled with deadly traps.

THE ROTTING AFFLICTION

People close to the pyramid have caught a strange lethal illness. Father Ider begs the characters to find the source and cure in the befouled pyramid in Varlin Forest.

THE HERMIT'S REFUGE

I meandered the great pyramid's halls. Its images and symbols are forever burned into my mind. Leave be me to my misery. I shall trouble you no more

Trothar, the Hermit

Tlonely man named Trothar lives close to Varlin Forest, a few hours away from the recently erected pyramid. Trothar is a quirky and impatient hermit that lives in a small cabin near the lake. His humble home is located next to the ruins of an old walled gate. The fortified structure saw its glory hundreds of years ago, in a way that few remember even happening. Now, fortifications such as these dot the countryside and serve as the hiding places of some highway criminals, gangs, and a few antisocial folks such as Trothar. He was once a proud family man and a farmer but tragedies took everything from him but his life. And so, he became a secluded outcast by choice.

Trothar sculpts stone and wooden trinkets and tools to sell in nearby towns when he musters the courage to abandon his cabin. It happens once a month, if at all. The hermit worked the farmland by his cabin when a loud thunder came from Varlin Forest. He is one of the few people who witnessed the pyramid emerge from below, tearing apart trees as if they were made of paper.

THE FIRST EXPLORER

TROTHAR, IGNORING THE danger that delving inside presented, grabbed his gear and marched to the pyramid in the morning. Thinking to retrieve something of value to keep or sell, Trothar became the first person to step into the Styxian pyramid in thousands of years.

Within the decrepit edifice, Trothar found the ancient halls and burial places of some of the most important pharaohs of the time. It was all lost to him as he was an illiterate man with no knowledge of the Styxian Kingdom or its rulers. His presence awoke the pharaohs of yore from their undead slumber. The soulless abominations loomed closer to Trothar, gazing from dark corners.

A chill up Trothar's spine rose and he attempted to flee but was closed off by three bandage-covered, scepter-wielding, eyeless creatures. The mummified pharaohs grasped for Trothar's clothing but he managed to escape their clumsy, clawed hands. Unfortunately, Trothar caught the terrible rotting disease from the, albeit short, contact with the mummies. Now he suffers in solitude as the rot consumes his organs and senses and he becomes an undead vessel for the pharaohs' powers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

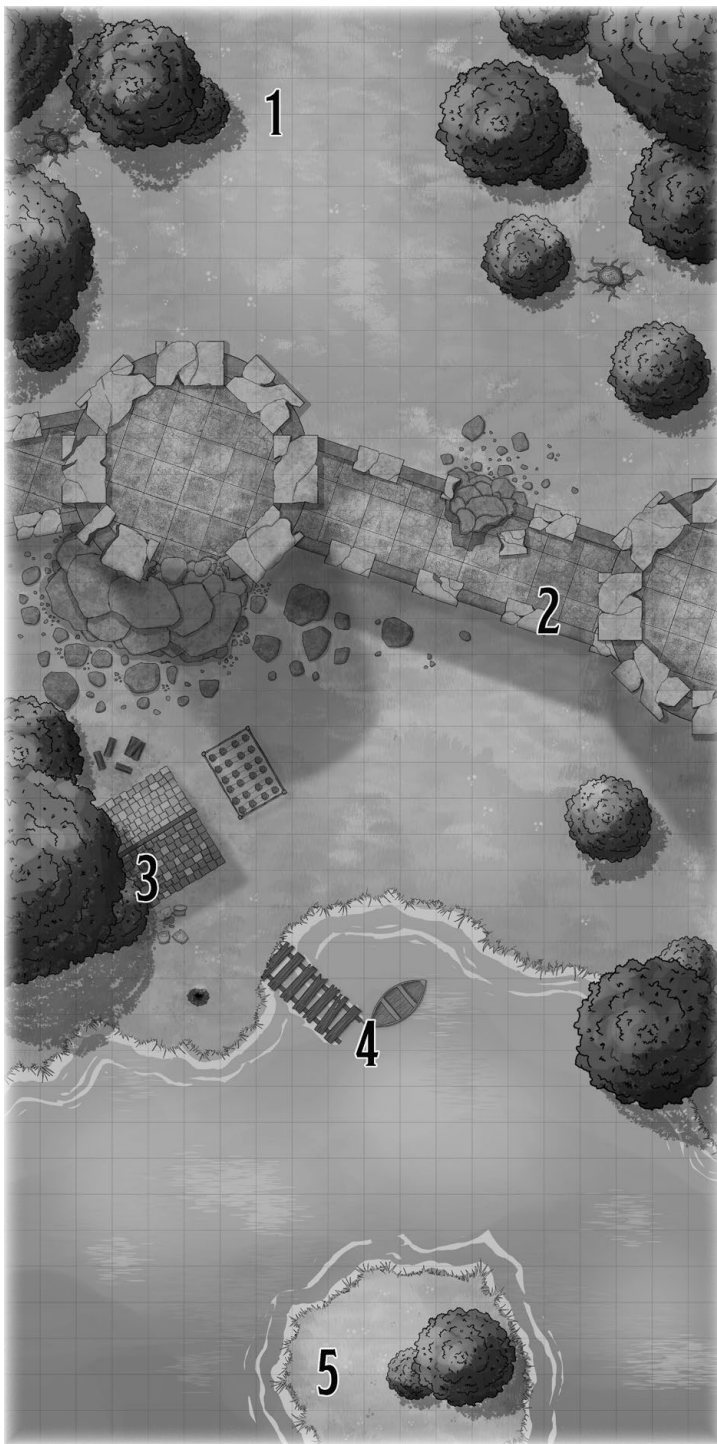
Landscape. The region enjoys a temperate climate this time of the year. However, plant life suffers as a strange layer of ash-like powder blows with the wind from Varlin Forest. Creatures in contact with it have a 10% chance of catching mummy rot per day of exposure.

Sounds and Smells. Trothar's raspy, out-of-tune voice mutters traditional songs as he sits by the hearth. The gut-wrenching stench of rot and death surrounds the cabin and can be detected from a distance of 40 feet.

MUMMY ROT

The Styxian pharaohs and the ashy dust that surrounds the pyramid can spread the disease (DC 11 Constitution save for the dust). Those afflicted cannot regain hit points, and their hit point maximum decreases 3d6 for every 24 hours that elapse. When the reduction reaches 0, the target transforms into a servitude-bound mummy.





1. THE SHORTEST ROAD TO VARLIN FOREST

The characters receive clear directions to the pyramid. The closest path to it requires them to travel south and cross a region that once featured a large wall. Little of it remains, the characters are told, since it marked the place of an old border that was later moved to the west.

If the characters ask around (DC 14 Persuasion), they learn that a hermit lives in the gate ruins. The road south is uneventful but the characters may notice the dire effects of the ash on the fauna and plant life (DC 14 Nature). It shall end all life in the region if not stopped.

2. WALL OF AGES PAST

The 20-foot wall and gate marked an ancient border. This wall is miles long, decrepit, and half ruined in many places. The gate has stood the passage of time a little better than the rest of the edification. A stone tablet above the gate bears an eroded sigil of an old royal family.

3. TROTHAR'S CABIN

The house is in disarray and the source of the putrid stench. Poor, dying Trothar sits by the burning hearth on a rocking chair. His skin has patches peeled off and the gloomy man is rotting alive where he sits. He is but moments away from perishing from the mummy rot. He cannot be cured. He is blind and somewhat mad. If approached with care, he speaks of his visit to the grand pyramid in Varlin Forest and the strange, bandage-covered creatures within. In a fleeting moment of dissociation, Trothar mistakes the characters for his dead wife and children and promises he shall do better so that they do not have to suffer the grim agony of life.

Trothar dies after this conversation. A few minutes after his demise, he awakens as a **mummy** and attacks the characters alongside six **shadows**. His journal sits on a nightstand; reading it for 10 minutes reveals that he lost his family many years ago, it confirms his small expedition into the pyramid, and it mentions that he hides a treasure with some valuables on the small island nearby.

4. ABANDONED PIER

A small oar boat is tied to the wooden pier. Trothar fished in the lake. This was his main source of food and he was good at it. The boat contains a bucket of rotten bait, an envelope with varied hooks, and an empty canteen.

5. TROTHAR'S TREASURE

The small isle is empty but for a pair of fig trees. Curious or perceptive individuals notice a patch of land that was disturbed or dug recently (DC 18 Perception). Trothar keeps his hoard in a buried chest. The enclosure is buried 4 feet down and requires 2 hours of work to dig out.

Treasure. The chest contains 750 sp, 6,542 cp, two *potions of healing*, and the deed to a house in the city.

REACHING THE PYRAMID

THE OUTSKIRTS OF Varlin Forest are a one-day ride from Trothar's cabin. After reviewing the effects of mummy rot on Trothar's body, Donna Adari remarks that the effects are consistent with an old curse that some tablets and tomes of Styxian origin refer to. She advises the characters to be careful as this condition is certainly lethal. The way to Varlin Forest is uneventful. When the characters approach the forest, they witness the towering structure of the Styxian pyramid from afar...

SEAT OF THE ANCIENT GODS

Each pharaoh shall empower the rise of the next. Their fate foretold and unavoidable. They are gods but bound to eternal servitude and obedience.

Annals of the Ancient Gods

The pharaohs' pyramid features a single entrance at its southern side's base. If the characters explore the ancient structure they find no other opening or access point. The pyramid was built this way to funnel trespassers through a series of traps and impede their sacking of the pharaoh's treasures. The godly remains of each pharaoh are the magic source for the magic traps and summoned guardians within the pyramid. The last pharaoh, Rekh-Mara, managed to retain the divine spark that was passed down from ruler to ruler. After thousands of years of regenerative slumber, Rekh-Mara has awoken at last. The undead pharaoh is consumed with greed and hate for the thousands of years that were robbed from him. He is ignorant of the brave new world that surrounds the pyramid but possesses the power to take over the region.

For a week, Rekh-Mara the undead pharaoh has infused the mummified bodies of his ancestors with necromancy. Thus reanimating them to serve once more. Rekh-Mara shall soon emerge from the pyramid with an ever-growing army of merciless, mummified undead.

1. ENTRANCE HALL

Soapstone statues of pouncing cats flank the entrance. Donna Adari explains that cats were regarded as the guardians of the afterlife, in Styxian culture.

2. HALL OF REMEMBRANCE

Two rows of pillars, inscribed with the names and visages of the old Styxian rulers, support the vaulted ceiling; a painting of the night-sky looms from above.

The names of the 185 pharaohs are carved on the eroded stone pillars. Upon inspection, the characters learn that Rekh-Mara was the last pharaoh. If asked, Donna Adari claims that no one knows why he was the last one. *"After his death, no other pharaoh ever came. No one knows why, but I have a suspicion that this may be his resting place. We are fortunate"* The two **mummies** in the alcoves between areas 1 and 2 attack the characters.

3. THE BROKEN OBELISK

A broken, carved obelisk lies on the floor, it collapsed under its weight after centuries of erosion. The carvings reveal that the mummy rot illness is meant to create obedient servants for the pharaohs (DC 18 Intelligence).

FEATURES OF THE PYRAMID

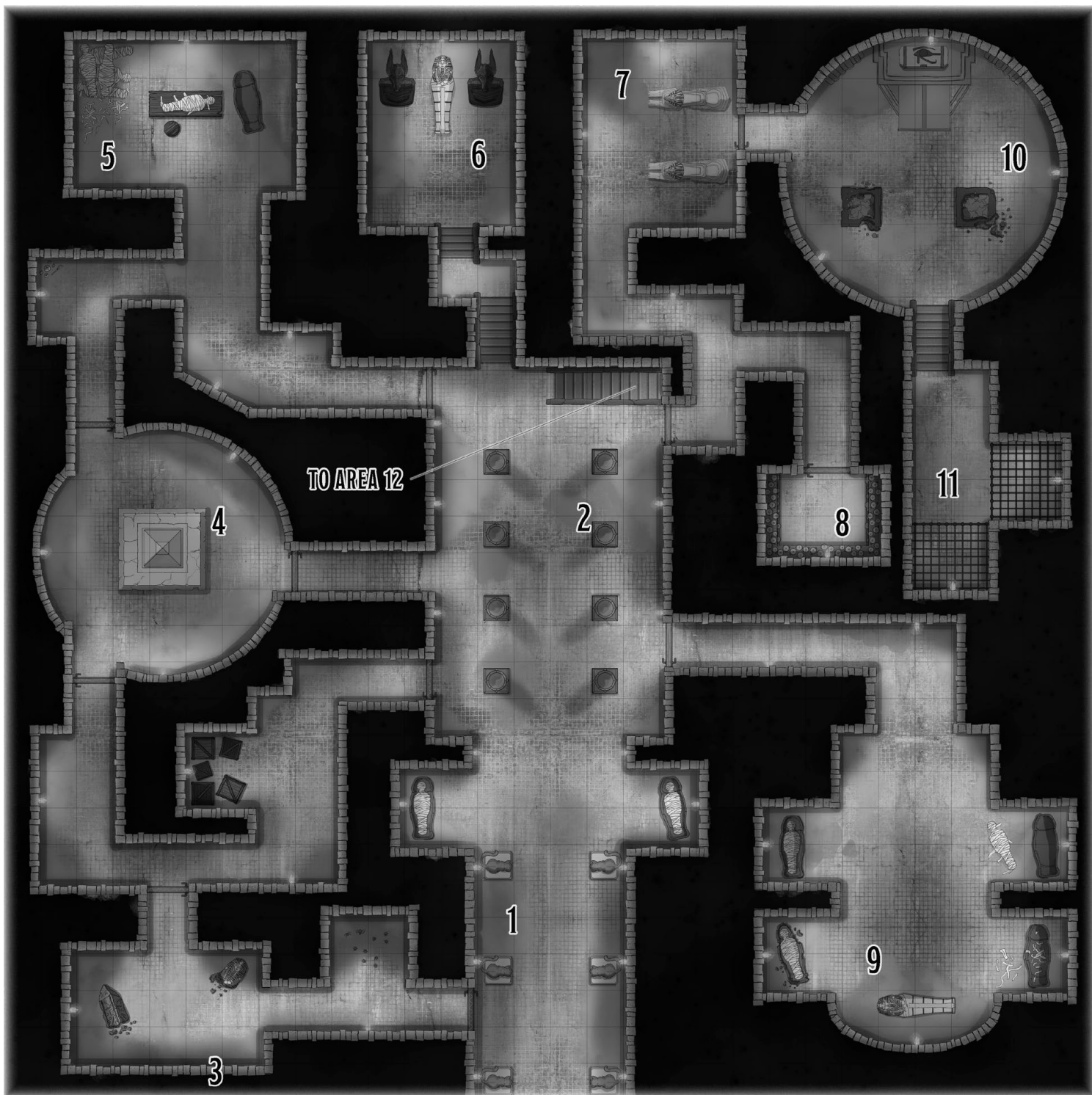
Light. The sconces in the mausoleum feature *continual flame* spells. The magic fades in 1 minute if removed.

Locks. All doors are made of soapstone slabs with eroded, low-quality locks (DC 15 Thieves' Tools). When a door is opened for the first time, there is a 2-in-6 chance that it features a hidden *glyph of warding* (DC 18 Perception). If triggered, thick, bubbling, salt-based acid is sprayed within 10 feet of the door, dealing 5d8 acid damage (DC 18 Dexterity). If dispelled or bypassed, each trapped door resets magically at dawn.

Chamber Ceilings. All areas have 15-foot-tall, domed ceilings decorated with intricate bas-reliefs and eroded runes with passages from the *Annals of the Ancient Gods*. The rite book speaks of pharaohs' deeds, their way of life, and the nature of their half-godly existence.

Arcane Chaos. A magic-disrupting field generated in area 26 shifts and transmutes spells cast within the pyramid (DC 14 Wisdom save per spell). On a fail, the spell cast is replaced by a different one on the caster's spell list at random. New targets may be chosen for it.





4. PYRAMID'S MODEL

A 12-foot-wide, accurate representation of the pharaoh's pyramid sits on an eroded soapstone dais.

The pyramid's scale model contains an accurate representation of the chambers and halls within. Unfortunately, it does not open or offer any windows into it. The characters can explore it if they have the means to enter the small 10-inch entrance. A small enough familiar may fit through it. A polymorphed or wild-shaped character can surveil the model too. In addition, spells such as *arcane eye* allow a spellcaster to explore the model.

5. EMBALMING ROOM

A desiccated, bandage-covered corpse lies on a rotting, wooden table. An empty sarcophagus lies by it.

In olden times, worthy individuals were brought here after their demise to be embalmed and mummified. A toolbox under the table contains several embalming implements and empty solution jars. Donna Adari may explain the purpose of each grim implement, if asked. Six pharaoh **mummies** of the Styxian Dynasty rise from the corner and table where they lay. They lounge at the trespassing characters with uncontrollable fury.

6. THE PHARAOH AND THE WOLVES

An ornate, gilded sarcophagus with an impression of a pharaoh stands in the room, flanked by the busts of two warriors with wolf heads and crossed scimitars.

As the characters arrive at this chamber, Donna Adari remarks that the person interred here must be of great renown. She suspects, incorrectly, that it may be the tomb of the last pharaoh. However, deciphering the runes and hieroglyphs reveals that Pharaoh Taragammon lies here (DC 18 Arcana). He preceded Rekh-Mara by two-thousand years. Opening the lid releases the old ruler, a **bo-dak**. Two **wraiths** emerge from the busts to fight too.

Treasure. The sarcophagus lid is embedded with pearl inlays and emeralds (1,400 gp), weighs 150 pounds.

7. THE SPHINXES QUANDARY

Two lions with human heads sit by a closed door. They possess a penetrating gaze and curious visages.

Two **gynosphinxes** protect the Chamber of Passing's entrance. They don't live here; their magical bond to the pyramid allows them to *plane shift* here when the need arises. They allow the characters into the room only if they can answer their eerie riddle: "*Some try to hide, some try to cheat; but time will show, we always will meet. Try as you might to guess my name.*" The answer is 'Death'.

8. ROOM OF PRAYER

Thousands of ever-burning candles are arranged on shelves from floor to ceiling. Each eternal candle is engraved with the name of a young boy who never got to become a pharaoh. Donna Adari explains that those trained for the position but that became older than 13 years old, were exiled from the kingdom and forgotten. New pharaohs could never be older than 13.

9. PHARAONIC CRYPT

Four open caskets await within dark, 10-foot alcoves. A gilded, immaculate sarcophagus hums loudly.

The strange hum from the sarcophagus is caused by thousands of flesh-eating scarabs that have been magically summoned within. Two pharaonic **mummies** and eight **swarms of insects** attack when the lid is lifted.

Treasure. The gilded casket contains 15pp, 800 gp, two *potions of poison*, and a *+1 breastplate armor*.



This adventure belongs to a series of collaborative projects that involve other Patreon creators. This one-shot adventure features work by [Elven Tower](#) and cartographer [MikWewa Maps](#). Check out their [Patreon page](#) for great cartography and inspiration!

10. CHAMBER OF PASSING

A decorated, clay sarcophagus stands on a pristine dais. The Eye of Styxia is engraved on the lid. Two broken pillars lay in shambles across from the dais.

The purpose of this chamber and its importance due to it being guarded by the sphinxes in area 7 defies explanation. The clay sarcophagus is empty. The broken pillars bear ancient runes and glyphs that reveal what the chamber was used for but their study requires 1 hour of work (DC 18 Arcana). When the pharaoh turned forty, the Ceremony of Passing took place. The pharaoh was placed in the clay enclosure and drugged with lotus powder. Then a priest slayed him with a gilded blade. The next in line, a boy of 13 would stand between the pillars. He would receive the divine spark and be branded pharaoh. If the characters study the chamber, Donna claims this is the greatest breakthrough in Styxian archaeology.

The ghost of a young lad appears in between the pillars. He claims that the Ceremony of Passing for Pharaoh Rekh-Mara failed. He refused to give up the spark of divinity that would make the young boy the next pharaoh. Both the man-god and the young lad perished from the failed ritual. After that, the pharaonic dynasty ended.

11. PREPARING QUARTERS

Two quarters with spare accommodations lie open. A tablet by the cells lists hundreds of Styxian names. The characters notice that the names on the tablet are the same as those on the candles in area 8, if they have visited that area (DC 17 Intelligence). The boys prepared for pharaonic duties lived in these chambers with considerable privilege so they would be ready in case the pharaoh suffered a premature death. After turning 13, they would be exiled only to be remembered by a lonesome candle.

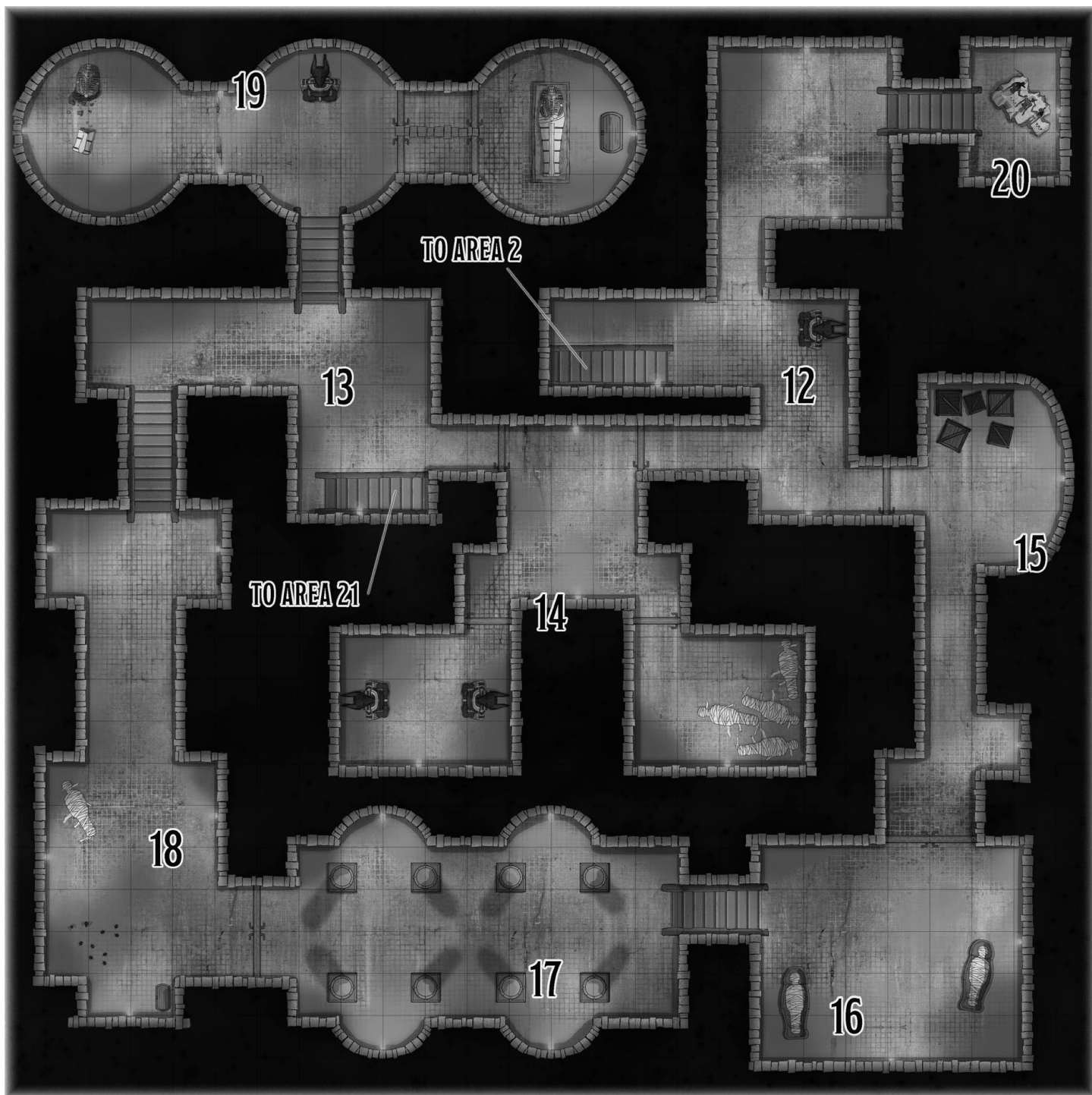
12. SECOND-LEVEL LANDING

A single, obsidian bust of a wolf-headed warrior stands by the corner of this landing. The effigy's eyes return the characters' gaze as they approach. It is enchanted with a strong divination charm and can be used once per hour to cast either *divination* or *locate creature*.

13. HALL OF PRIESTS

15-foot-tall frescoes and mosaics on the walls portray the lavish opulence of the order of priests that oversaw the pharaohs and their closely-controlled lives.

The imagery displays the priests of the Styxian era as the true controllers of the kingdom. They controlled the pharaohs, they raised the boys who would be next in line, and they stood immune to the whims of rebel rulers. Donna Adari claims that the end of the Styxian dynasty also spelled the erasure of the order of priests that selfishly moved the divine spark from vessel to vessel.



14. VOICE OF THE PHARAOH

Two adjoining chambers stand south of the second-level landing. The east one is the resting place of four pharaohs who, in life, underperformed and became a shame to the dynasty. The mummified corpses lie on the floor without honor or name; the embalming procedure for the corpses was botched on purpose too. They were of such irrelevance to the dynasty that Rekh-Mara summoned them back as four mindless **ghouls**, instead of sentient, yet compliant mummies. Hunger awakens them from their deep slumber. They stumble about in confusion before charging at the trespassing characters.

The west chamber contains two wolf-headed busts. They are identical to the ones found in area 12. They face each other as if in conversation. Through these busts, the last pharaoh, Rekh-Mara, can communicate with the characters in the ancient Styxian language: *“You dare roam my tomb uninvited. Foreign explorers, be ready to abandon all sentience and become decerebrate pawns of my grand plan. With my return, a new world order shall begin and you shall become my loyal instruments”*.

The characters may converse with Rekh-Mara but the immortal ruler shall not suffer fools or insults. Such slights cause an *insect plague* spell cast from the busts.

15. STORAGE ROOM

Scattered across several steel-reinforced, wooden crates are an assortment of carving tools, painting implements, and spare frames and beads for mosaics. Artisans of yore store their tools here for future renovations and artistic representations that never came to be during their lives.

16. THE FAILED MUMMIES

Two open caskets lie in this chamber. The embalmed corpses within desiccated and decayed beyond use.

The mummies in this chamber suffered a botched embalming attempt thousands of years ago (DC 19 Medicine). The bodies are halfway preserved; little more than bones remain. Pharaoh Rekh-Mara brought these wretched bodies back from death as **zombies**.

17. HALL OF STYXIA

Two rows of carved pillars display great craftsmanship. They portray landscapes and images of the greatest cities and monuments of ancient Styxia.

An accurate map of Styxia and the night-sky of that period is scattered across the eight pillars. Donna Adari claims that such cartography is a great resource that may be sold to universities and scholars. Making sense of the pillars and creating a rendition of the map requires 6 hours of work and drawing skills (DC 17 Dexterity).

18. THE CRAWLING VERMIN

Dozens of scarabs run away from approaching steps and squeeze through cracks in the walls to hide.

A single, embalmed pharaoh lies on the floor of this chamber. The mummy was originally in area 14 but was moved away by thousands of scarabs that tried to move it into their lair in the walls without success. When the characters come within 10 feet of the corpse, seven **swarms of insects** emerge from the cracks and attack.

19. FAKE TOMB

A wolf-headed bust and a broken sarcophagus lie in this chamber. The script on the lid spells nonsense and hints that it may be a fake casket (DC 17 Intelligence). A fake wall (DC 18 Perception) may be brought down to reveal the real burial chamber of Pharaoh Gor'vaddom. Donna Adari claims he ruled almost four thousand years ago. The corpse somehow resisted Rekh-Mara's necromancy.

Treasure. The chest contains a golden scepter (1,200 gp, a +1 *dagger*, and seven *arrows of slaying*).

20. THE RELIC OF EONS

A broken wall section lies in the middle of this room. An inspection reveals that it is not Styxian but rather from an older civilization (DC 17 History). It was added here as a collectible piece, its meaning unknown.



21. THIRD-LEVEL LANDING

An intricate mural on the landing's south wall portrays three armor-clad, spear-wielding, Styxian warriors.

This landing features two sets of stairs that connect to the second and fourth levels of the pyramid. The imagery on the walls is a tribute to the Styxian Guard, an order of mighty bodyguards that protected the pharaohs and the order of priests. Deciphering the hieroglyphs under the mural reveals the names of the three warriors. They were considered valiant heroes in their times.

22. CRYPT OF GUARDIANS

Three caskets contain mummified remnants. Above them, countless funerary niches dot the stone walls.

The bodily remains of the three warriors portrayed in area 21's murals are here. The rest of the order of bodyguards were cremated and placed in the niches.

Opening the niches or inspecting the contents of the caskets causes the three guards (**ghasts**) and four **specters** to emerge from their timeless containers and attack. Even in death, they are loyal to the pharaohs and protect them.

23. SIGIL OF STYXIA

A sigil painted in crimson red of a winged scarab with feathery wings, cryptic runes, and intricate patterns is etched on the floor of this circular chamber.

Hidden in the runes and symbols is a sequence that can be used with a *circle of teleportation* spell (DC 18 Arcana). A translation of the scripts on the walls reveals that the order of priests and the Styxian pharaohs used this circle to come and go unannounced. Donna Adari asks for 20 minutes to copy the intricate emblem.

24. PERIL FROM BELOW

A flight of stairs descends into this flooded chamber. Dark shapes move to and fro underneath the surface. The pond's bottom is not visible beyond the depths.

Two **giant zombie crocodiles** swim in the 30-foot-deep pond. Their bite spreads mummy rot like the mummies' Rotting Fist ability. In Styxian culture, reptilian sages are the wardens of death and are paid for the trip to the afterlife (DC 20 History). If a jewel worth at least 1,000 gp is dropped, the crocodiles allow passage.

Treasure. A collection of gems lies at the pond's bottom. There are 32 gems worth a total of 9,600 gp.



25. FAKE VAULT

A clay coffer with the Eye of Styxia engraved on the lid in bright paint stands by the far, stone wall.

The chest is empty. This area is a trap for greedy, shameless tomb-robbers. There is a pressure plate in the square in front of the coffer. 80 pounds of weight cause it to trigger and release a barrage of poisoned darts from dozens of holes in the walls (DC 19 Perception). Creatures in the chamber take 10d6 poison damage (DC 14 Constitution / half). The nefarious traps reset at dawn.

26. CHAMBER OF DISINTEGRATION

Two wolf-headed busts stand in the room opposite to each other. Their heads swing from left to right as if looking for something. Their eyes glow deep green.

Each of the busts is capable of casting *disintegrate* once per round when it sees a moving target. They can be deactivated by operating the strange device in area 37.

When any creature enters the busts' field of view, either of the effigies tracks the target and shoots a disintegrating ray. The target takes 8d6 + 20 force damage (DC 16 Dexterity). A *dispel magic* spell can nullify one of the busts for 1 minute (DC 16). A daring or rather foolish character may attempt to direct one bust's disintegrating ray against the other bust to destroy it permanently.

27. ANNALS OF THE ANCIENT GODS

Two scroll racks cover the walls from floor to ceiling. A broken section of a wall lies on the floor, embedded with runic symbols and ancient, Styxian hieroglyphs.

The left side of a stone tablet on the floor contains a translation of hieroglyphs into numerous dialects. It can be used to translate texts from the time if cross-referenced with the one in area 31. The scroll collection contains the *Annals of the Ancient Gods*, a fragmented document that contains dozens of biographies of pharaohs and priests, historical recounts of the time, and works of poetry and philosophy by some of the pharaohs. This body of work is quoted in countless documents but it has never been found. Donna Adari is ecstatic about this discovery. She claims that if the other half is found, it shall revolutionize the study of Styxian archaeology.

28. DISPOSED OF CASKETS AND FAILED MUMMIES

The room contains four empty, unmarked caskets and two embalmed bodies. As in area 16, the mummies in this chamber suffered a botched embalming procedure (DC 19 Medicine) and have been raised as **zombies**.

29. FOURTH-LEVEL LANDING

An otherworldly vision assails the characters when they arrive at this, otherwise empty, landing:

A dagger-wielding priest opens a man by the chest and retrieves a glowing ember from within. A young lad, bound in chains, is forced to swallow the ember.

The vision is caused by a magical effect akin to a *major illusion* spell. If the characters revisit this chamber, the vision reappears but all characters are different. A different priest, murdered pharaoh, and young boy. Each illusion portrays the Ceremony of Passing of a different pharaoh. The grim ritual always occurs in an illusion of area 10.

30. ARCANE OBSERVATORY

The domed ceiling of this large chamber is enchanted. It glows with a detailed representation of the night-sky. A spellcaster can will it shift so it portrays the stars of a different time (DC 16 Wisdom). Once a week, a spellcaster can meditate below the stars to recover a spell slot of any level.

31. THE ROSETTA STONE

The stone tablet in this chamber is the right side of the one found in area 27. Together, they can be used to translate all content from Styxian origin. In addition, a treasure map hides in plain sight when reading both tablets (DC 18 Intelligence). It leads to the hiding place of the *Scepter of the Mind*. Legends speak of the might of this Styxian artifact. Retrieving it is an adventure for another day...

32. POISON GAS TRAPS

This area encompasses a shifting hallway limited by three doors. Each door features an automatic locking mechanism that activates when the trap is triggered (DC 19 Perception). Inspecting any of the two open caskets in the room triggers the deadly trap. Three things occur:

- The three doors close and lock (DC 21 Thieves' Tools). They are reinforced (DC 19 Athletics).
- Poison gas pours into the chamber. Creatures in contact with it take 5d6 poison damage per round of exposure (DC 16 Constitution / half).
- The two **mummies** rise and attack. The mummies are immune to the poison gas.

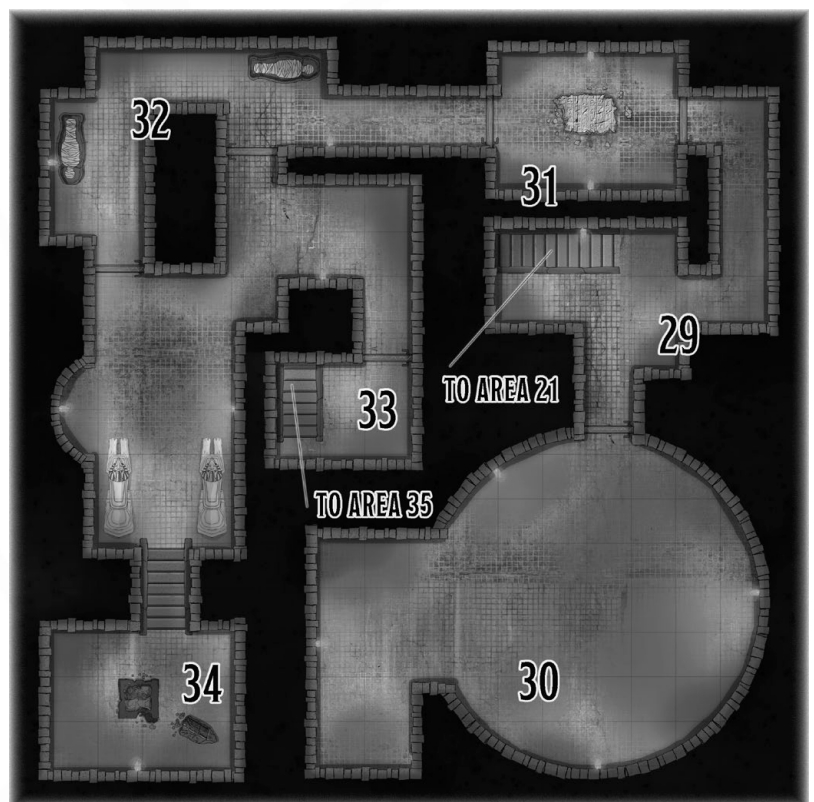
33. FIFTH-LEVEL ACCESS

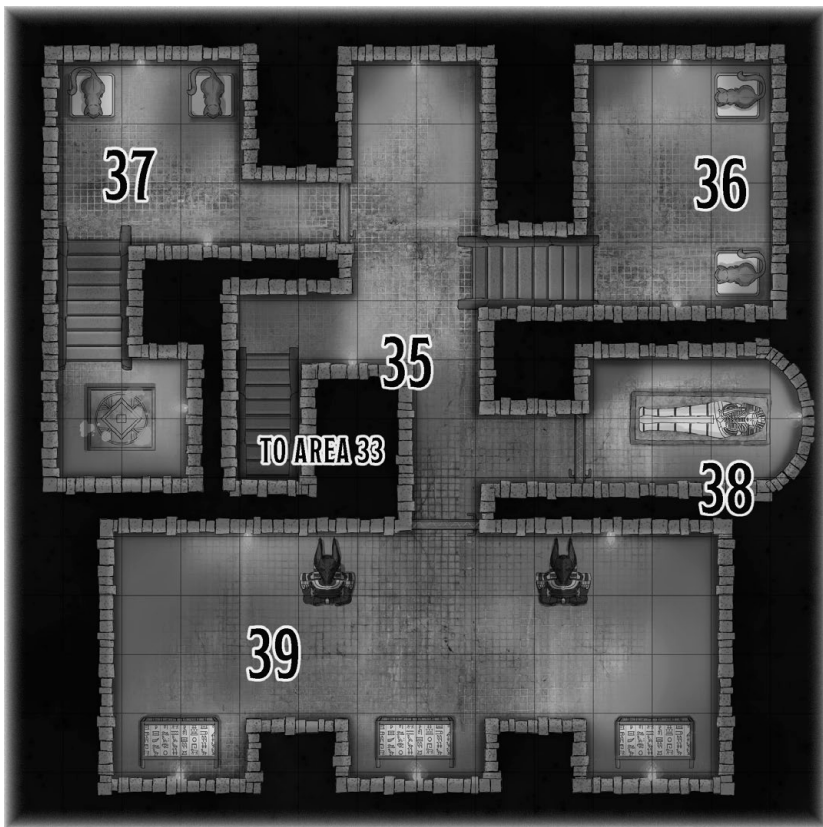
The small chamber is the only means for climbing to the pyramid's fifth level. The humming chant from area 39 can be perceived from here. Donna Adari recognizes the lyrics as an ancient Styxian chant to honor the pharaohs.

34. BROKEN OBELISK

A broken obelisk inscribed with Styxian hieroglyphs lies on the floor in shambles. Eddies of magical auras are visible to the naked eye around the eroded stone.

A *detect magic* spell reveals a strong abjuration aura in the obelisk. The symbols on the broken stone speak of mighty guardians meant to keep the pharaohs in check. Rekh-Mara destroyed it. The nature of the guardians is not revealed. The stone cannot be restored to function.





35. FIFTH LEVEL LANDING

A loud, humming chant comes from the south. Its melody a haunting procession of forgotten notes.

The door to area 39 is ajar and inviting. The characters can proceed to confront the last pharaoh at once. However, visiting some of the other areas may prove useful in the confrontation with Pharaoh Rekh-Mara.

36. THE PRIEST

A floating, ghostly, humanoid figure hovers by the far wall, flanked by two feline busts with emerald eyes.

A Styxian **ghost** has managed to infiltrate the pyramid. The ghost claims in the old tongue that the divine spark in Rekh-Mara's power is a threat to the world. The priest claims that their ways solved this by passing the spark from pharaoh to pharaoh before they grew too powerful. Alas, they failed. The ghost priest wants to aid the characters in the final fight against the man/god, Pharaoh Rekh-Mara. He also offers a weapon (see below).

Treasure. The *Priests' Scepter* (+2 mace with advantage on attacks against pharaonic creatures).

37. PYRAMID'S CONTROL STONE

A spellcaster can spend a level 3 spell slot to operate the rotating device in the room. Doing so deactivates the busts in area 26 and all traps; it also unlocks all doors.

Treasure. Each of the cat busts is worth 600 gp due to their craftsmanship and the emerald's fine cutting.

38. REKH-MARA'S SARCOPHAGUS

The largest and most opulent sarcophagus awaits in a chamber of honor. The walls decorated with murals of the last Styxian pharaoh.

The casket is empty; Rekh-Mara is located in area 39. Within the enclosure, the characters find a false bottom compartment (DC 18 Investigation).

Treasure. The casket contains 800 pp, 2 *potions of superior healing*, and 2 *potions of resistance*.

39. CONFRONTING THE MAN/GOD

A figure in pharaonic attire stands proud, surrounded by prostrate, chanting figures. Currents of floating sand and necromancy circle around Rekh-Mara, the last Styxian pharaoh.

Rekh-Mara (**mummy lord**) is surrounded by a court of worshipers, two **zombies**, three **ghouls**, and three **mummies**. The pharaoh utters the following in a deep, rasping, deep voice:

I am a man and a God! You vermin shall not interfere with my plans. You have no use other than to populate my endlessly growing army of obedient vassals. Surrender or learn the hard way the true suffering I can bring upon this sorry excuse of a world that betrayed me!

Rekh-Mara begins this encounter with *insect plague* and then targets any cleric or divine caster with *harm*. After that, he and the other mummies target any creatures already afflicted with mummy rot. The pharaoh uses its Dreadful Glare ability to keep strong combatants at bay.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure. They must face the consequences of their deeds.

Defeating the last pharaoh causes him to turn to desert sand. Its glowing beating heart teleports out of harm's way. The pharaoh is defeated but not completely destroyed. He returns at a later time to exact his revenge.

Upon returning to town, the characters receive the promised 5,000 gp reward and a feast of heroes is thrown the following night. People are sad to know that Trothar has perished but few people knew him.

Soon, archaeologists travel to the pyramid to explore it. If Donna Adari survives, she becomes the leading researcher on the subject, rises to academic prominence, and becomes a wealthy patron in a few years.

Those afflicted with mummy rot heal naturally after a couple of days. Father Ider thanks the characters for their hard work and promises to keep them in mind for future quests and missions related to the church.