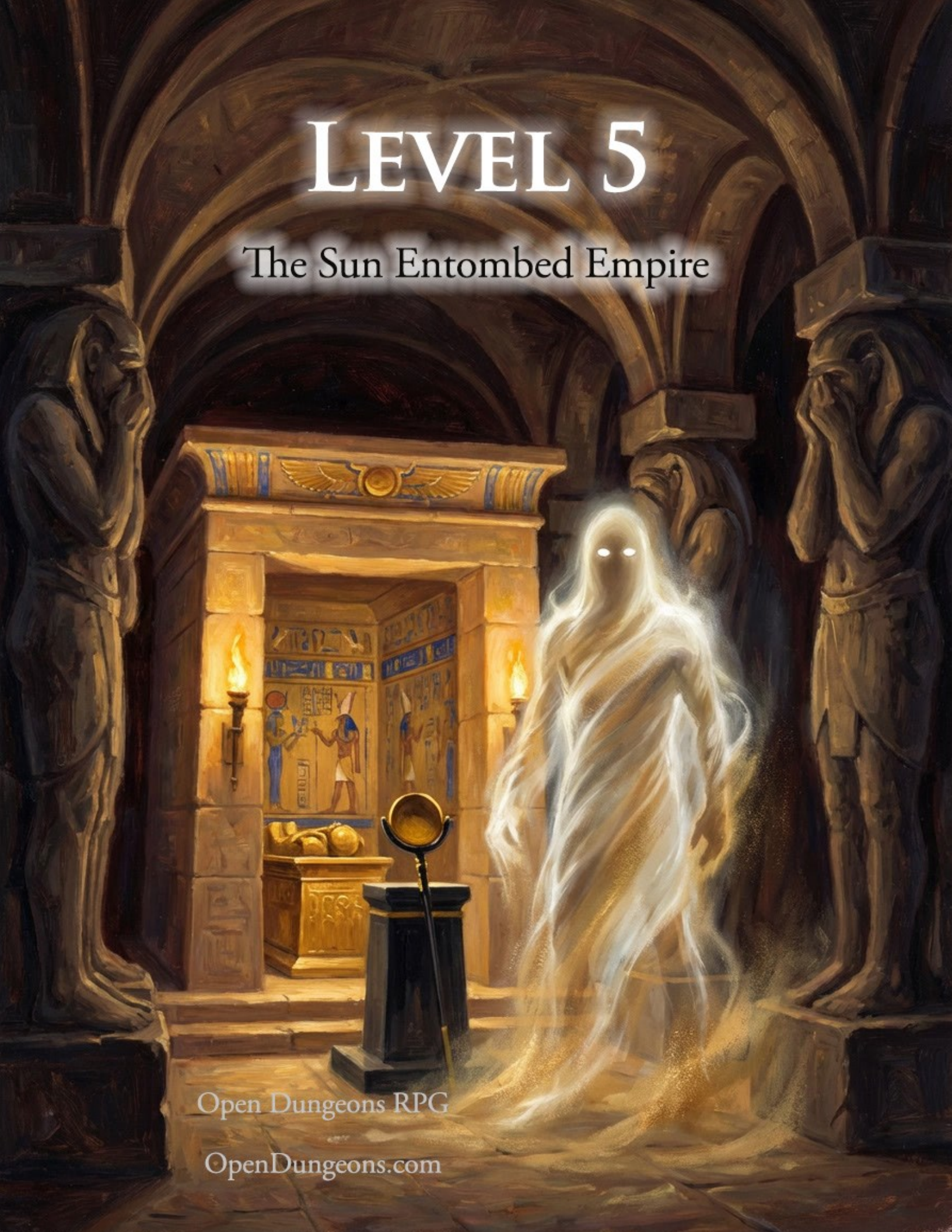


LEVEL 5

The Sun Entombed Empire



Open Dungeons RPG

OpenDungeons.com

How to Read Adventure, Color Coding

DN NOTE - mechanics, room dimensions, trap details, DM-only

TO PLAYERS - read-aloud text

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER - enemy stats, combat balance notes

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS - loot and item descriptions

STORY DROP - narrative connections and lore context

THE SUN ENTOMBED EMPIRE

LEVEL 5

Open Dungeons RPG

DN LEVEL OVERVIEW

This is the deepest, grandest section of the prison - the necropolis where the gods sealed the Pharaoh's body alongside the instrument of his crime. The architecture here is staggering in scale. Even ruined, even mocked, even rebuilt wrong by divine hands, the sheer ambition of the original design bleeds through. Massive columns. Vaulted ceilings that disappear into darkness above the sand. Walls carved with scenes so detailed they seem to move in torchlight.

The Buried Temple of the Scarab (E6) is the most important room in the dungeon. It holds the Pharaoh's sarcophagus and his staff - the anchor that sustains the prison. The Divine Sentinel Guard guards it. This is the encounter the entire adventure has been building toward.

The Sunken Oasis Chambers (E22 and E27) are the prison's cruellest trick. One is real - the only safe rest in the entire dungeon. The other is a trap. Finding the real one first is a coin flip unless players have been paying attention to clues.

The Sand-Choked Vaults (E33 area) contain the Pharaoh's burial goods - mixed real and divine mockery. The Sand Dunes of Temples (E31) is a surreal landscape of buried temples players navigate by hopping between exposed rooftops.

Ma'at's scale sits in an alcove near the sarcophagus in E6. One cup of silver water. The only full-restore healing in the entire dungeon — all HP, all conditions, everything. The Pharaoh placed it here as a contingency. The gods never noticed.

No water anywhere else on this level except the natural spring in the oasis (E27) and the condensation pool in E23. The wind from Level 3 does not reach here - the gods' attention is focused on guarding the staff, not grinding down intruders.

E1 - North Entry Hall

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 40x35 ft, ceiling 25 ft. The main entry into the necropolis. The architecture shifts immediately from whatever level players came from - the stone is darker here, basalt instead of sandstone, polished to a dull sheen. The ceiling vaults upward and the columns

supporting it are massive, each one carved as a standing figure with arms raised overhead, bearing the weight. The figures aren't gods. They're people. Thousands of them, stacked, holding the ceiling on their backs.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 13: the figures are all different - different faces, different clothing, different expressions of strain. They represent the people whose faith was consumed during the forced Ascension. Even in the necropolis, the Pharaoh's crime holds up the roof.

No enemies. No traps. Atmospheric entry.

TO PLAYERS

The stone changes. Everything before was sandstone - pale, warm, familiar. This is basalt. Dark, heavy, cold under your palm. The corridor opens into a hall with a vaulted ceiling that disappears upward into shadow, held aloft by columns so massive two of you couldn't link arms around one. The columns are carved. Figures. Not gods, not kings - people. Ordinary people. Thousands of them, stacked on each other's shoulders, arms raised, faces straining under a weight they never agreed to bear. The entire ceiling rests on their backs.

NAVIGATION

South leads to E2 and the central corridors.

East leads to E34 and the tomb network.

West leads to E4 and the Collapsed Grand Hall (E5) approach.

E2 - Central Corridor Junction

DN NOTE

Wide corridor junction, 20x20 ft. Connects E1 (north) to E3 (west), E8 (south), and the eastern tomb complex (E41/E42 area). Sand deepens from ankle to knee heading south. The walls here bear a continuous carved frieze depicting a funeral procession - but the body being carried isn't wrapped. It's standing upright on the bier, arms at its sides, eyes open. A funeral for someone who isn't dead.

Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: the standing figure on the bier holds a staff. This is the Pharaoh's funeral procession, but he was still alive when it began. The ritual was supposed to end with his mortal body being interred while his ascended self departed. The funeral was premature.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A junction. The corridor widens and passages branch in every direction. On the walls, a carved procession of mourners carrying a body - except the body isn't lying down. It stands upright on the platform they carry, arms at its sides, eyes open. The mourners weep. The body does not.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E1.

West leads to E3 and E4 (toward Buried Temple of the Scarab).

South leads to E8 and the central level.

East leads to E41, E42, and the tomb network.

E3 - Western Antechamber**DN NOTE**

Medium chamber, 30x25 ft. Transitional space between E2 and the Buried Temple approach (E4/E5/E6). Stone benches line both walls - a waiting area for temple pilgrims. Sand has drifted into the seat depressions. The ceiling is lower here, 12 ft, creating a compression that builds anticipation.

On the south wall, a painted mural shows the Pharaoh entering the temple complex. He is alone. No retinue. No guards. He carries the staff himself. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14: his shadow on the ground behind him is too large. It has wings. He was already changing when he walked this path.

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Dead adventurer slumped on bench: 11 GP. Rusted hand-axe (1d6 slashing, -1 to hit from corrosion). Journal page: "Found the temple. Can't get in. The walls are sealed and something watches from inside. I don't think it's human. I don't think it ever was."

TO PLAYERS

An anteroom. Stone benches, sand-dusted, lining the walls. The ceiling drops lower. The space presses in, narrowing your world to the passage ahead. A mural on the south wall shows a man walking alone toward a temple, carrying a long staff. No crowd. No guards. Just one man, walking toward what he built, and a shadow behind him that doesn't match his shape.

NAVIGATION

East leads to E2.

West leads to E4 (upper passage toward E5 and E6).

South leads to E7 and E8.

E4 - Upper Temple Approach

DN NOTE

Elevated passage, 15 ft wide, 50 ft long, climbing 10 ft via worn stairs. Connects E3 to E5 (Collapsed Grand Hall) and ultimately E6 (Buried Temple of the Scarab). The stairs are wide, processional. Every fifth step bears a carved scarab - Khepri's symbol. The scarabs face inward, toward E6. They're showing the way.

If players carry the jade scarab pendant from Level 2 (B25): it warms in their pocket/hand as they climb. The pendant recognizes where it's going.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

Stairs. Wide enough for a procession, climbing upward toward something important. Every fifth step bears a carving - a scarab, precise, facing inward. They're all pointing the same direction. Toward whatever lies at the top.

NAVIGATION

East (downstairs) leads to E3 and E2.

West (upstairs) leads to E5 (Collapsed Grand Hall).

E5 - Collapsed Grand Hall

DN NOTE

Massive chamber, 55x40 ft, ceiling partially collapsed. The entry hall to the necropolis's temple district. This was a ceremonial gathering space - the last place the congregation assembled before the procession to the Buried Temple. The collapse is divine, not structural. The gods dropped the ceiling after the curse was laid.

Multi-level ruins. Strength Chance Roll TN 12 to climb rubble. Dexterity Chance Roll TN 13 for tight gaps. Cave-in risk on loud noises: Probability Roll 1-3 on d6, DEX Quick Save or 1d6 bludgeoning. DR applies.

Among the debris: remnants of the Pharaoh's funeral procession. Shattered ceremonial vessels. Crushed offerings. The remains of servants arranged in careful rows. Even the gods' mockery preserved this detail - in death, his people still served him. Whether that's a testament to loyalty or a reminder of what his ambition cost them is left for the players to decide.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Tomb Spiders (x4) - sand-and-bone constructs, dog-sized, nesting in upper debris. Drop from above.

7 HP each, AC 11. Bite d20+2 vs AC, 1d4 piercing + Wisdom Chance Roll TN 13 or minor hallucination for 1 round (see random item from corner of vision, -1 to next attack). Fast - 30 ft, wall/ceiling climb. Pack: if 2+ attack same target same round, +2 to hit each.

Balance (2 players): 28 HP total but fragile. (3-5 players): Easy. Real danger is cave-in during combat noise.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Ceremonial silver anklet (20 GP). Crushed offering chest: 18 SP, gold incense burner (30 GP, bent but functional). Servant's bone talisman carved with the sun disc (no gold value; Cleric holding it feels a pulse of residual devotion).

TO PLAYERS

The ceiling fell. Or was dropped. The grand hall stretches fifty feet across but you can only glimpse it through layers of collapsed stone. Slabs lean against each other, rubble fills the gaps, and getting through means climbing, squeezing, trusting surfaces that shift under your weight.

Between the debris, arranged with impossible care, offerings. Broken vessels. Crushed flowers turned to sand-impressions. And bones. Small ones. Servants, laid out in rows, hands folded. Even in the wreckage. Even in the ruin. Someone made sure they were buried properly. Or something wanted the Pharaoh to see that they were.

NAVIGATION

East leads to E4 and E3.

West leads to E6 (Buried Temple of the Scarab).

South (through debris) leads to E7 and E9.

E6 - Buried Temple of the Scarab

DN NOTE

THE MOST IMPORTANT ROOM IN THE DUNGEON. Large chamber, 50x40 ft, ceiling 30 ft. Dedicated to Khepri, god of rebirth. Sealed behind layers of divine warding. Getting inside requires either:

- Solving the mechanism: a scarab-shaped depression in the temple's facade. The jade scarab pendant from Level 2 (B25) opens it automatically. Without the pendant, Intelligence Chance Roll TN 16 to find the depression, then pressing by hand triggers the same mechanism.
- Brute force: Strength Chance Roll TN 18 to break through magical barriers. Costs 1d4 necrotic damage (DR does NOT reduce) per attempt as divine wards retaliate.

INSIDE: The temple is pristine. No sand. No decay. No wind. Time stopped here the moment the curse was laid. The air smells faintly of incense. Torches along the walls burn with steady, warm light. It is the only beautiful place in the entire prison, and that beauty is the final cruelty - a perfect snapshot of everything the Pharaoh destroyed.

At the center: the Pharaoh's sarcophagus, carved from black stone, inlaid with gold. Sealed. Radiates power. His body lies within, but his soul is not here - distributed throughout the prison. The sarcophagus is just a shell.

Beside it, on a stand of polished obsidian: THE PHARAOH'S STAFF. Dark wood, tall, slender, capped with a golden sun disc. It hums with constrained energy. This is the anchor. While it remains here, the prison holds. Every soul trapped by the sandstorm remains trapped.

MA'AT'S SCALE: Set into an alcove near the sarcophagus. A feather balances against a small pool of silver water. One cup. One draught. Heals all HP, removes all Exhaustion,

clears all conditions including Weary. The Pharaoh placed it here before the ritual - a contingency hidden where even the gods didn't bother to look.

DIVINE SENTINEL GUARD: Guards the staff. Not undead, not a construct, not a beast. A fragment of divine will given physical form - blinding light and grinding sand. One purpose. Does not speak. Does not tire. Does not negotiate. The gods' final answer.

Taking the staff triggers no alarm or trap. As it leaves its stand, something deep in the stone shifts, not sound, not movement, but the loss of a tension that has held for centuries. The temple does not collapse. It remains pristine. The Pharaoh is already paying.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Divine Sentinel Guard (x1) - FINAL BOSS ENCOUNTER. Fragment of divine will.

60 HP, AC 16 (divine radiance). DR 3 (light-hardened sand).

Attacks (2 per round):

- Radiant Strike, $d20+3$ vs AC, $1d6+2$ radiant damage (DR does NOT reduce radiant).
- Divine Rebuke (recharge 5-6 on d6): 20 ft radius burst centered on Sentinel. All creatures: WIS Mind Save or $1d8$ radiant + blinded 1 round. Save = half damage, no blind.

Special: Immune to poison, disease, psychic, charm, fear. Resistant to physical damage (half from non-magical weapons). Regenerates 5 HP per round while inside E6. If lured outside E6, loses regeneration and DR drops to 1. Does not pursue beyond E7.

If reduced to half HP (30 or below): blazes with intensified light. All attacks in the room are at -1 (blinding radiance) unless players avert eyes (costs half movement).

Vulnerable to necrotic damage (double damage - it's made of divine energy, and necrotic is its opposite). Players who found the Sunfire Salve on Level 3 (C12) deal bonus fire which does NOT trigger vulnerability. Players who figured out necrotic weapons or spells from earlier levels are rewarded.

Balance (2 players): 60 HP + regeneration + 2 attacks/round = DEADLY. Reduce to 40 HP and 1 attack/round. Luring it out of E6 is the smart play - emphasize this if party is struggling. (3-4 players): Deadly to Hard. Regeneration is the key problem. (5 players): Hard. The fight should feel like the culmination of everything.

The Sentinel can be fought OR bypassed. If players create a distraction (noise, illusion, fire in E5), the Sentinel investigates for 2 rounds. A coordinated grab-and-run on the staff while it's distracted is a valid strategy. The staff can be snatched in 1 round from the obsidian stand (no roll required - it's not locked, just guarded).

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

THE PHARAOH'S STAFF (quest item - THE quest item). Dark wood, golden sun disc. Carrying it outside the prison boundary and driving it into the ground ends the adventure. While carried inside the prison: faint vibration, grows warmer near exits. While the curse holds, no merchant would buy it and its magic makes it too dangerous to appraise. Worth everything in story.

Ma'at's Silver Water (one draught, consumed on use). Full HP restore, removes all Exhaustion levels, clears all conditions including Weary. If saved for later instead of drunk immediately, it can be carried in any container. It stays cold and clear indefinitely. Cannot be split - one cup, one drinker.

The Sentinel drops nothing. It dissolves into a pillar of light that fades over 6 seconds. The room remains pristine. The torches keep burning. Everything is exactly as it was. Minus the thing that was guarding the staff.

TO PLAYERS

APPROACHING THE TEMPLE:

The facade is staggering. Columns forty feet tall frame an entrance sealed with stone that pulses faintly with light - not amber like the rest of the prison. White. Clean. The stone is warm to the touch and hums against your palm. Carved into every surface: scarabs. Hundreds of them, in concentric circles, all facing inward. The temple doesn't want you here. The seals make that clear.

If players use the jade scarab pendant:

The pendant pulses once in your hand. Warmth floods through it. You press it against the carved depression and it seats itself with a click that resonates through the stone like a bell struck underwater. The seals fracture. The white light stutters. The entrance slides open, slow, heavy, ancient, and warm air rushes out carrying the scent of incense that should have faded millennia ago.

ENTERING THE TEMPLE:

The sand stops at the threshold. One step you're standing in the prison. The next, you're standing in something else. The floor is polished obsidian. The walls are painted with murals in colors so vivid they look wet. Torches burn in sconces with steady, warm flames that have been burning since before anyone alive was born. The air smells of incense and cedar. No sand. No wind. No decay. Time stopped here the moment everything outside began.

This is what the empire looked like before the gods unmade it. And it is beautiful. Painfully, heartbreakingly beautiful.

THE SARCOPHAGUS AND STAFF:

At the center, a sarcophagus of black stone inlaid with gold. Sealed. You can feel the power radiating from it - not threatening, not dangerous. Just heavy. Like standing next to grief that has solidified into something physical.

Beside it, on a stand of polished obsidian, a staff. Dark wood. Tall. Slender. Capped with a golden sun disc that catches the torchlight and holds it. The staff hums. Not a sound. A vibration. You feel it in your teeth, in your chest, in the place behind your eyes where headaches start. This is the instrument that almost unmade the boundary between mortal and divine. It's been waiting here for longer than your civilization has existed.

MA'AT'S SCALE:

In an alcove near the sarcophagus, a small golden scale. One pan holds a white feather that doesn't move in the still air. The other holds a shallow cup of liquid - silver, luminous, perfectly still. The water gives off no scent, but looking at it fills you with something you haven't felt since entering this place. Hope. Whatever this is, it doesn't belong to the prison. Someone put it here for whoever might come after.

THE DIVINE SENTINEL GUARD (when it activates):

Light. Not from the torches. From everywhere. From the stone, from the air, from the sand that shouldn't be here but suddenly is - spinning, coalescing, taking shape. It rises from the floor between you and the staff. Eight feet tall. Then ten. Made of light so bright it has edges, wrapped in grinding sand that moves like muscle under skin. No face. No voice. Two points of white fire where eyes might be, locked on you with the absolute certainty of something that has never questioned its purpose.

It doesn't roar. It doesn't threaten. It simply moves between you and the staff, and the temperature in the room drops twenty degrees, and you understand - not with your mind but with your bones - that this thing was placed here by beings who create and destroy worlds, and its only instruction was: no.

STORY DROP

The Buried Temple of the Scarab is the emotional and mechanical climax of the dungeon. The beauty of the preserved temple contrasts with everything players have endured. Ma'at's scale is the Pharaoh's one act of foresight that wasn't about power - he hid healing for whoever might eventually reach this place. The Divine Sentinel Guard is the gods' final statement: they stopped paying attention to the rest of the prison, but they never stopped guarding this room. Taking the staff doesn't trigger anything because the prison was designed to keep the Pharaoh in, not the staff secure. The gods didn't anticipate anyone actually making it this far.

NAVIGATION

East leads to E5 (Collapsed Grand Hall).

South leads to E7 and E9.

No other exits. Critical room - players enter and leave through E5.

E7 - Inner Necropolis Corridor

DN NOTE

Wide corridor, 20 ft, connecting E3/E6 area south to E8 and the central level. Basalt columns with lotus capitals. The floor is tiled - alternating black and gold stone, a pattern leading south. On the west wall: a mural showing the staff being forged. Craftsmen, not priests, working dark wood and gold. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14: the lead craftsman's face has been preserved while all others are scratched out. The Pharaoh remembered who made the staff for him. That person mattered.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A wide corridor paved in black and gold tiles, leading south. Columns line both sides, dark stone, lotus flowers carved at their tops. On the west wall, craftsmen work. Not a prayer scene, not a ritual - a forge. Hands shaping wood, pouring gold, assembling something tall and thin. One face among the workers is intact. Every other face is gone. But this one, the gods let stand. Or the Pharaoh's memory refused to let go.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E3 and E6 approach.

South leads to E8.

Southwest leads to E9 and E10.

E8 - Central Necropolis Hall

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 50x40 ft. The central hub of the necropolis. Multiple corridors radiate outward. Sand knee-deep throughout. The ceiling is 30 ft and painted with a massive sun

disc - directly overhead, always overhead, no matter where you stand in the room. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 12: the optical illusion is divine in origin. The sun follows you. Even underground. Even here.

A stone wayfinding marker stands at the center, carved with directional indicators. Most are still legible. It was placed by the empire, not the gods - a navigational aid for temple pilgrims that the prison inherited.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

The necropolis opens around you. A central hall, corridors branching in every direction, sand filling the floor to your knees. The ceiling is painted with a sun disc, massive, golden, directly above you. You step left. It's still directly above you. You step right. Still there. The sun follows. Even underground. Even here.

A stone marker at the center, carved with arrows and text. Directions. Someone thought people would need help finding their way. They were right.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E2 and E1.

West leads to E7 and E3.

South leads to E14, E15, E16.

East leads to E33 (Sand-Choked Vaults) and E32.

Northeast leads to E41, E42 (tomb network).

Southeast leads to E22, E23, E24.

E9 - Western Funerary Chamber

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 25x25 ft. Cluster of preparation rooms for the dead. Stone slabs for body preparation. Basins for ceremonial washing (dry). Hooks for linen wrapping. The tools are here - hooks, blades, jars for canopic organs - all made of sand. Realistic enough to fool from a distance. Up close, wrong. The hooks are blunt. The blades have no edge. The gods replicated the shapes without understanding the function.

Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: one set of tools on the far slab is real. Bronze. Sharp. Functional. They weren't recreated - they survived from the original temple. The gods missed them.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Bronze embalming tools (functional as improvised weapons: 1d4 piercing, or 10 GP as a set to a collector). Real canopic jar, sealed, containing preserved herbs that still carry scent (5 GP, or useful as incense for 3 uses of Cleric rituals).

TO PLAYERS

A room for the dead. Stone slabs. Basins. Hooks on the walls. Tools arrayed in neat rows beside each station - everything needed to prepare a body for the journey beyond. Except the tools are sand. The hooks are soft. The blades crumble when you press a thumb to their edge. Everything is shape without substance. Except on the far slab. Those tools catch the light differently. Bronze. Real. Sharp. Someone missed these when they built the lie.

NAVIGATION

East leads to E7.

South leads to E10 and E11.

North leads to E5 approach.

E10 - Southwestern Tomb Complex

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 40x35 ft. Eight sarcophagi in two rows. These are high-ranking priests who served the Pharaoh - his inner circle, the scholars and administrators who built the infrastructure for the forced Ascension. Their sarcophagi are ornate - more gold, more detail than the military crypts on Level 3.

Opening sarcophagi (Strength Chance Roll TN 13): real mummies here, not hollow. The gods preserved these bodies with care because the Pharaoh cared about these people specifically. Each mummy holds an item relevant to their role: a prayer tablet, a mathematical instrument, a scroll case, an astronomical chart.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Entombed Priests (x3) - these mummies animate if more than 3 sarcophagi are opened. They don't attack immediately. They stand, face the direction of E6 (the temple), and begin chanting. The chanting grows louder over 3 rounds. On round 4: divine energy pulses outward. All creatures in room: WIS Mind Save or 1d6 psychic damage and Shaken condition (-1 all rolls, 10 minutes). The priests then collapse and don't reanimate.

If players DON'T interrupt: the chanting completes the prayer the priests were performing when the curse hit. It has no practical effect except emotional weight. They're finishing what they started thousands of years ago.

If players DO attack before round 4: priests fight back. 12 HP each, AC 12 (dried wrappings + ceremonial bronze). Claw d20+2 vs AC, 1d6 bludgeoning. Immune to poison, disease. They look confused. They don't understand why they're being interrupted.

Balance: Not designed as a real combat. Letting them finish is the smart play.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Sarcophagi collectively: 45 GP in gold leaf and ceremonial items. Astronomer's brass sextant (20 GP, functional). High Priest's prayer beads (25 GP, acts as holy symbol for Clerics, +1 to first divine spell cast each day per Magic Stacking rules).

TO PLAYERS

Priests. Eight coffins, ornate, gilded, carved with titles that speak of knowledge and devotion. Opening them reveals something different from the hollow shells elsewhere - these bodies are whole. Preserved. Real. Whatever force built this prison took care with these dead. They mattered to someone.

If players open more than 3:

They stand. Slowly, deliberately, joints cracking, wrappings shifting. Three figures, upright, facing the same direction - west, toward the temple. They don't look at you. They begin to chant. Low, rhythmic, the sound of something that was interrupted mid-word and has been waiting to finish. The air vibrates. The sand hums. Whatever they were doing when the world ended, they're doing it now. They have been waiting a very long time to finish this prayer.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E9.

East leads to E11 and E12.

South leads to E13.

E11 - Connecting Passage (Southwest)

DN NOTE

Narrow corridor, 10 ft wide, connecting E10 to E12 and E7 area. Walls bear carved catalogues of the dead - names, titles, dates of interment. Hundreds of entries. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: the dates span decades, but the final entries are clustered - dozens of burials on a single day. The day of the Ascension. The ritual killed them all at once.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A corridor of names. Carved into both walls, floor to ceiling, in neat columns. Names, titles, dates. A catalogue of the dead. The dates stretch back decades. But near the bottom, the entries cluster. Dozens of names, all sharing the same date. Whatever happened on that day, it happened to everyone at once.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E7 and E9.

South leads to E12.

East leads to E14.

E12 - Embalmer's Workshop

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 20x20 ft. A working embalming room, not a ceremonial one. Stone tables with drainage channels. A kiln for sealing canopic jars. Unlike E9, this room has real tools mixed with false ones - the gods were less careful here. Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14 to distinguish real from sand-formed.

One table has a half-prepared mummy still lying on it. The work stopped mid-process. One side is wrapped, the other exposed. The body is genuine - a young man, maybe 20, wearing a scholar's sash. He was being prepared when the curse hit. The embalmers never finished.

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Real bronze scalpel (1d4 piercing, extremely sharp, +1 to hit on surprise attacks). Intact canopic jars (4, worth 8 GP each as a set). Embalming resin (can be used to seal wounds: stabilizes a dying character, 1 use).

TO PLAYERS

A workshop. Not for show - for work. Drainage channels cut into the stone tables. A kiln in the corner, cold now but stained with use. Tools mixed real and false, some that hold weight and some that dissolve at a touch. On one table, a body. Half-wrapped. The work stopped in the middle. One side bound in linen, careful, professional. The other side exposed. Young. A sash across his chest marks him as a scholar. He was twenty years old, maybe less, and whoever was preparing him for burial never got to finish.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E11.

East leads to E13.

E13 - Southern Crypt Row

DN NOTE

Long chamber, 45x20 ft. Wall niches contain burial urns and small sarcophagi. These are common citizens who served the necropolis - groundskeepers, laborers, the people who maintained the temples. Their burials are simple. Clay urns. No gold. No inscriptions. The gods recreated them as background detail.

One niche, at eye level, contains something different: a child's urn, smaller than the rest, painted with blue lotuses. Real paint. Real clay. The gods either missed this or deliberately preserved it. Inside: ashes and a small wooden toy - a bird with articulated wings that still move when tilted.

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Wooden bird toy (no gold value. Priceless. The only children's toy in the dungeon that isn't made of sand.)

TO PLAYERS

A wall of the dead. Niches stacked floor to ceiling, each holding an urn or a small stone box. No names. No titles. These were the workers. The people who swept the temple floors and trimmed the oil lamps and never appeared in any mural anywhere. Their burials are as anonymous as their lives.

One niche stands out. A small urn, painted with blue flowers - real paint, not sand. Inside, ashes and a toy. A bird, carved from wood, with wings on tiny pegs that swing when you tilt it. The wings still work. After everything, the wings still work.

NAVIGATION

Northwest leads to E10 and E12.

Northeast leads to E14 and E16.

E14 - Central Southern Corridor

DN NOTE

Wide corridor, 20 ft, connecting E11/E13 west to E15/E16 east and E8 north. Major transit route. Sand ankle-deep. The corridor widens into an alcove midway through, holding a stone bench and a carved wayfinding post (partially legible - points toward "Temple Quarter" west and "Royal Vaults" east).

Dead adventurer on the bench. Different era from others - more recent gear, better preserved. Cause of death: a single wound in the chest. They were killed by the Divine Sentinel Guard and made it this far before dying. Their face is peaceful. They almost got out.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Dead adventurer: 22 GP. Longsword (1d8 slashing, good quality). Chain shirt (DR 2). Healer's kit (5 uses). Journal: "Reached the temple. The guardian is divine. Not undead. Not a construct. Divine. My sword went through it like water. Found the staff. Could see it.

Couldn't reach it. If you're reading this, you need something that hurts light itself. The opposite of what it's made of."

The journal entry is a HINT: necrotic damage is the Sentinel's vulnerability. Players who read this and have access to necrotic sources (wraith weapons, Cleric spells, the Sand Wraith encounters from earlier levels) should connect the dots.

TO PLAYERS

A wide corridor with a stone bench and a signpost halfway through. On the bench, a body. Recent compared to the others - gear intact, leather still supple. A single wound in the chest, clean, cauterized at the edges as if cut by something burning. They made it to the bench. They sat down. They died looking back the way they came, toward the temple. Their face is calm. Whatever killed them, they had time to accept it.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E8.

West leads to E11, E13.

East leads to E15, E16.

South leads to E17, E18.

E15 - Sand-Choked Passage (Central)

DN NOTE

Corridor segment, 15 ft wide, sand chest-deep. Connects E14 to E16 and E32. Movement reduced to 5 ft per round. CON Tough Save after 3 rounds or Weary (-2 all Save Rolls until 6+ hours rest). The sand flows slowly from east to west, pushed by an unseen current. Something deep beneath this level is still moving.

No enemies. But the sand movement can push unanchored items (dropped weapons, loose gear) westward 5 ft per round. Players who lose items into the sand: Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14 to recover by feel.

TO PLAYERS

The corridor fills. Sand, chest-deep, flowing - not sitting, moving. A slow current from east to west, like a river of grit. Getting through means fighting the current and the weight. Your legs burn. Your armor drags. And the sand takes things. Anything loose, anything not gripped, starts drifting west with the flow.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E14.

East leads to E16.

North (through sand) connects to E32.

E16 - Southern Junction

DN NOTE

Junction room, 20x20 ft. Connects E15 (west), E17/E18 (south), E19 (southeast), E32 (north). Sand ankle-deep - relief after E15. Walls are bare basalt. The only decoration: a single handprint pressed into the south wall at shoulder height. Not carved. Pressed, as if someone pushed their hand into wet stone. The fingerprints are visible. Human. Real.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 13: the handprint is recent compared to the stonework around it. Not ancient. Decades old, maybe. Another adventurer made it this far and left their mark. Their body isn't here. They either escaped or died somewhere else.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A junction. The sand drops back to your ankles and the relief is physical. Four ways to go. The walls are bare except for one thing: a handprint. Pressed into the south wall, fingers spread, palm flat. Not carved. Pushed into the stone while it was somehow soft enough to take the impression. The fingerprints are clear. Human. Someone was here. Someone wanted to prove it.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E15 and E14.

South leads to E17 and E18.

Southeast leads to E19 and E20.

North leads to E32.

E17 - Southern Entry Passage

DN NOTE

Narrow corridor, 10 ft wide, 30 ft long. This passage serves as both a surface entry (for players who chose this path from the hub) and an inter-level connection to Level 4.

The corridor descends gradually, temperature cooling as players go deeper. Carved into the wall at the entrance, in multiple languages (Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, and Hieratic): “THE DEAD DO NOT REST HERE.” Added by adventurers over centuries, each one translating the warning for the next.

INTER-LEVEL CONNECTION: The southern end of this corridor connects to D8 on Level 4 (The Lost Tombs of Zerzura) via a long ascending passage. The basalt gives way to pale sandstone as players climb. The passage is walkable - no Chance Rolls required in either direction. Players emerging into D8 find themselves inside the hidden corridor between D7 and D9. From there they can access D15/D16 (the Pharaoh encounter) or exit into D7.

If players entered Level 5 from the surface hub, the hub-side entrance seals behind them. The D8 connection remains open.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A corridor descending into the earth, narrowing as it goes. The temperature drops with each step. On the wall near the entrance, writing. Not one language. Four. Different hands, different eras, the same message passed forward like a relay. “The dead do not rest here.” Someone wrote it first. Three others made sure everyone could read it.

The passage branches at its southern end. One direction leads upward - the stone lightening from dark basalt to pale sandstone, the air growing warmer, drier. Academic stonework appears in the walls. Star charts. Formulae. Wherever that passage leads, people studied there. Thought there. The weight of the necropolis lifts as you climb, replaced by something quieter.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E18 and E16.

South passage ascends to D8 (Level 4 - The Lost Tombs of Zerzura). Two-way - walkable corridor, no Chance Rolls.

E18 - Southern Corridor

DN NOTE

Connecting corridor, 15 ft wide, between E17 and E16/E19/E20. Unremarkable transit space. Sand ankle-deep. One detail: the floor tiles are cracked in a radial pattern emanating from the east wall. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14: the pattern suggests a shockwave. Something hit this wall from the other side with enormous force. The wall held. Whatever hit it didn't.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A corridor. The floor is cracked in a starburst pattern - fractures radiating from the east wall like something struck it with tremendous force from the other side. The wall held. The floor didn't. Whatever happened here, it happened once and was over fast.

NAVIGATION

South leads to E17.

North leads to E16.

East leads to E19 and E20.

E19 - Eastern Processional Hall

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 45x35 ft. A grand processional hall connecting the southern entry to the eastern necropolis. Columns line both sides - these ones are carved as palm trees, fronds fanning outward to support the ceiling. The naturalistic design is at odds with the basalt architecture. This was the Pharaoh's attempt to bring the living world into the city of the dead.

Floor mosaic, partially visible under sand: a map of the original empire at its peak. Rivers, cities, borders, trade routes. Wisdom Chance Roll TN 15: the scale is enormous. The empire

covered a continent. The Pharaoh wasn't a minor king with delusions of grandeur. He ruled the most powerful civilization the world had seen. That makes everything worse.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A grand hall lined with stone trees. Palm fronds carved from basalt spread across the ceiling, supporting it the way real trees support a canopy. It shouldn't work in stone. It does. Someone wanted the dead to walk through a garden on their way to burial.

Under the sand, tiles form a picture. Scuff enough aside and a map emerges. Rivers. Cities. Coastlines. Trade routes spanning distances that take months to cross. This wasn't a small kingdom with a grandiose tomb. This was an empire that covered a continent. The man who ruled all of this looked at it and decided it wasn't enough.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E18 and E16.

North leads to E32 and E22.

East leads to E20 and E21.

E20 - Southern Passage (East)

DN NOTE

Narrow passage, 10 ft wide, connecting E18/E19 to E21. Sand ankle-deep. Walls show the only graffiti in the dungeon - not adventurer markings, but ancient. Hieratic text, scratched hastily, not carved with care. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: "We are still here. The sand did not take us. We are still here." Written by someone trapped in the prison during its first years. Not an adventurer. A citizen. One of the Pharaoh's own people, trapped alongside him.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A narrow passage with something scratched into the walls. Not carved. Scratched. Hasty, desperate, the letters uneven. "We are still here. The sand did not take us. We are still

here.” Not a warning. Not directions. A declaration. Someone trapped here needed to say out loud that they existed. That they hadn’t been erased yet.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E18 and E19.

East leads to E21.

E21 - Sunken Oasis Chamber (South) - THE TRAP

DN NOTE

CRITICAL AREA. Circular chamber, 35 ft diameter. Contains what appears to be a pool of cool water surrounded by living plants - green ferns, flowering vines, a small tree. The air is humid. It smells like rain. After the relentless dryness, this room is salvation.

IT IS A TRAP.

The oasis is a divine illusion. The water is sand enchanted to look and smell like water. The plants are stone painted with divine magic. Approaching within 5 ft of the pool: Wisdom Chance Roll TN 17 to notice the shimmer is wrong (the reflection doesn’t match the room). Touching the water: the illusion collapses. The pool becomes a sand-slide, 30 ft deep, dumping players into a vault beneath E32. The fall: 2d4 bludgeoning, DR applies. The vault exit loops back to E18, forcing players to retrace.

DISTINGUISHING REAL FROM FAKE: The real oasis (E27) has imperfections - algae in the water, dead leaves among the living ones, insects. E21 is too perfect. Too clean. No dead leaves. No bugs. No algae. If players have been to E27 first, they’ll notice the difference on Wisdom Chance Roll TN 13 (easier because they have a comparison).

If players have NOT been to E27, they have no frame of reference and must rely on the TN 17 perception check or the “too perfect” observation.

TO PLAYERS

Green. The word hits before the sight does. After hours - days? - of sand and stone and dead amber light, there is green. A pool of water, clear, cool, surrounded by ferns and flowering vines. A tree. An actual tree, with leaves, growing from soil. The air is humid. It smells like rain. Like the world outside. Like everything this place isn’t.

Your throat tightens. Your hands shake. Everything in you says run to it, drink, rest, be safe. Everything in this dungeon has been telling you to stop trusting what you see.

If a player touches the water:

Your fingers break the surface and the world shatters. The water isn't water. The green isn't green. The plants crack and fall away like painted shells and the pool opens into a hole - deep, dark, sand pouring inward like a drain pulling everything down. Including you.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E20.

Sand-slide drops to vault beneath E32 (exits back to E18).

E22 - Sunken Oasis Approach (North)

DN NOTE

Curved corridor, 15 ft wide, connecting E16/E19 area east toward E23 and E24. The architecture transitions from basalt to natural stone - cave formations, stalactites, moisture on the walls. If the party reached Level 5 via the main descent, this may be their first true moisture. If they entered from Level 6, they already saw damp stone and moss in the cave passage to E25. A natural underground water source exists nearby (deeper within Level 5).

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 12: the moisture increases as players move east. The stone is cool and damp. Something alive is ahead.

TO PLAYERS

The stone changes. Worked basalt gives way to natural cave rock - rough, irregular, dripping. Dripping. Your hand touches the wall and comes away wet. Not sand. Not illusion. Water. Actual water, beading on stone, trickling down in thin rivulets. The air tastes different. Clean. Something ahead is alive in a way nothing else in this prison has been.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E16 and E19.

East leads to E23 and E24.

Southeast leads to E25 approach.

E23 - Eastern Junction

DN NOTE

Small junction, 15x15 ft. Connects E22 (west), E24 (north), and E25 (southeast toward the real oasis). Natural cave formations. A pool of condensation has formed on the floor - actual water, maybe an inch deep. Players can drink from it. It's fresh, clean, and restores 1 HP. Not magical. Just water. After the entire dungeon's bone-dry cruelty, one inch of standing water feels miraculous.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A small junction where the corridors meet. The floor is wet. Not damp - wet. An inch of water, clear, pooled in the depression where the corridors converge. You kneel. You cup your hands. It's cool. It's clean. It's water. One inch of actual water on a stone floor, and it's the most extraordinary thing you've found in this place.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E22.

North leads to E24.

Southeast leads to E25 and E26/E27 (Sunken Oasis Chamber - the real one).

E24 - Eastern Necropolis Hall

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 50x35 ft. A secondary grand hall mirroring E8, connecting the eastern sections. Columns and vaulted ceiling. Sand knee-deep. This hall connects to the Sand Dunes of Temples area (E28-E31) to the northeast and the vault/tomb network to the north (E29, E30).

Notable feature: a stone map table at the center (similar to the wayfinding marker in E8) showing the necropolis layout. Most details are still legible. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 12: the map shows both oasis chambers. E21 is labeled "Sekhmet's Mirror" (Sekhmet = goddess

of destruction). E27 is labeled “Tefnut’s Breath” (Tefnut = goddess of moisture/rain). Players who read the map and know their mythology (Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14) realize E21 is the trap.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Stone map knowledge: equivalent to a partial map of E21-E31 area. More importantly, the naming convention is the clue that distinguishes the real oasis from the trap.

TO PLAYERS

Another grand hall, columns reaching upward, sand filling the floor. At the center, a map table - stone, carved with the layout of the surrounding areas. Most of the labels are still readable. Two chambers are marked with names. One to the south: “Sekhmet’s Mirror.” One to the east: “Tefnut’s Breath.” The names mean nothing to you. Or they mean everything.

If players know the mythology (Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14):

Sekhmet. Goddess of destruction, war, and scorching sun. Tefnut. Goddess of moisture and rain. One of these oasis chambers is named for water. The other is named for the goddess who burns things to ash.

NAVIGATION

South leads to E23 and E22.

West leads to E8 (through corridors).

Northeast leads to E28, E29, E30, E31.

East leads to E25, E26, E27.

E25 - Eastern Passage

DN NOTE

Winding natural corridor, 10 ft wide, connecting E23/E24 to E26 and E27. Cave formations continue. Moisture increases. Moss grows on the lower walls - actual moss. Green, living, the first living thing in the entire dungeon that isn’t part of an illusion. It survives here because the gods’ attention never fully reached this corner of the prison.

INTER-LEVEL CONNECTION: A side passage branches south from the main corridor, hidden behind a curtain of hanging moss. Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14 to notice. The passage is natural cave - not constructed - and it descends steeply through wet rock before the moisture abruptly stops. The stone becomes angular, oppressive, deliberately wrong in proportion. The passage connects to F7 on Level 6 (The Labyrinth of Divine Punishment). Players emerge near the sandfall shaft network between the Statue Graveyard Hall and the Cracked Sun Altar.

Climbing back up from F7: Strength Chance Roll TN 14. The passage is steep but has natural handholds in the cave rock. Players know they're approaching Level 5 when the air turns humid and the moss reappears.

No enemies. No traps in the main corridor.

TO PLAYERS

The corridor winds through natural stone. And on the walls, something impossible. Moss. Green, soft, living. It grows in patches on the lower stone, feeding on moisture that seeps through cracks. In a world of sand and death and divine cruelty, something is growing. Quietly. Without permission. Alive.

If players notice the side passage (Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14):

Behind a curtain of hanging moss, a gap in the rock. Not carved - natural. A cave passage descending steeply, wet stone giving way to dry, the moss thinning, then gone. The air beyond the moss is different. Dry. Oppressive. The stone becomes angular, smooth, deliberately shaped to make you feel small. Whatever is down there, the moss won't follow you.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E23 and E24.

East leads to E26 and E27 (Sunken Oasis Chamber).

South passage (behind moss) descends to F7 (Level 6 - The Labyrinth of Divine Punishment).

Two-way - Strength Chance Roll TN 14 to climb back up.

E26 - Oasis Antechamber

DN NOTE

Small natural chamber, 15x15 ft. The transition space before the real oasis (E27). The air is noticeably humid. Insects buzz - gnats, tiny beetles, things that require moisture to survive. The sound of insects after the dungeon's dead silence is almost shocking.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 10 (intentionally low): this place is imperfect. Dead leaves in the corners. Spider webs. A patch of mold on the ceiling. Life is messy. The fake oasis (E21) had none of this. If players have already been to E21, this imperfection is reassuring.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

Insects. The buzz hits you before you see the room. Gnats, circling in the humid air. A beetle crosses the floor. Webs in the corners. Dead leaves. Mold on the ceiling. After the prison's sterile cruelty, the mess of actual life is beautiful. Wherever you are, it's real. Real things are messy. Real things have dead leaves and spider webs and gnats that fly into your mouth.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E25.

East leads to E27 (Sunken Oasis Chamber - the real one).

E27 - Sunken Oasis Chamber (East) - THE REAL OASIS

DN NOTE

CRITICAL AREA. Circular chamber, 35 ft diameter. A genuine underground oasis fed by a natural spring. Cool, clear water fills a shallow pool (2 ft deep, drinkable). Living plants - ferns, reeds, a gnarled acacia tree that has somehow survived in underground conditions. Insects. Algae in the water. Dead leaves. Imperfect. Real.

THE ONLY SAFE REST IN THE ENTIRE DUNGEON. The curse's grip weakens here enough to allow sleep. Players can take a Long Rest in this room. HP recovery per normal rules. Weary condition from Level 3's wind clears after a full rest here. One level of Exhaustion recovers per Long Rest (but Ma'at's water in E6 clears everything instantly).

The water is drinkable and refreshing but NOT magical. It doesn't heal beyond normal rest recovery. It's just water. In this dungeon, that's everything.

If players rest here: the acacia tree drops a single seed pod during the night. Inside: a tiny scarab beetle, gold-green, alive. It crawls onto the first player who touches it and stays on

their hand for 1 hour before flying away. No mechanical effect. Just a moment of grace in a place built for suffering.

TO PLAYERS

Water. A pool, shallow, clear, fed by a spring that bubbles up through a crack in the stone floor. Ferns grow around its edge. Reeds cluster in one corner. A tree - gnarled, small, stubborn - grows from a pocket of soil between the rocks. Its roots reach into the water. Algae clouds one side of the pool. Dead leaves float on the surface. A dragonfly rests on a reed, flexing its wings.

It's the most beautiful place you've ever seen. Not because it's grand. Because it's alive. Because it's real. Because in a prison built by gods to make an empire suffer forever, a spring found a crack in the stone and a tree decided to grow.

You can rest here. You can sleep. You can drink water that tastes like the world outside. For the first time since the sandstorm took you, you are safe.

If players rest overnight:

You wake to something tapping your hand. A seed pod has fallen from the tree overnight. It splits open at your touch, and a tiny beetle crawls out. Gold-green, no bigger than your thumbnail. It sits on your finger for a long moment, wings folded, antennae testing the air. Then it flies away, into the dark, looking for the sun it will never find. But it flies anyway.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E26 and E25.

No other exits. Dead end - players must backtrack. The safety is the reward.

E28 - Sand Dunes of Temples (West Entry)

DN NOTE

Large irregular chamber, 40x30 ft. The beginning of the Sand Dunes of Temples district. An entire temple district buried under rolling dunes that have formed inside the necropolis's enormous chambers. Temple rooftops poke through the sand like islands. Players navigate by hopping between exposed structures.

Dune navigation: Strength Chance Roll TN 12 to climb a dune. Dexterity Chance Roll TN 13 to hop between exposed rooftops (15 ft gaps). Falling off a rooftop into sand: 1d6 bludgeoning, buried waist-deep (Strength Chance Roll TN 12 to extract). Sand-slides

trigger if more than 2 players stand on the same dune (Probability Roll 1-3 on d6): the dune shifts, all players DEX Quick Save or slide 20 ft and buried knee-deep.

Three temple rooftops visible in this area. Rooftop A: flat, stable, 15x15 ft. Has a chimney-like opening you can descend into (10 ft drop into interior). Rooftop B: peaked, unstable, 10x10 ft. Dexterity Chance Roll TN 14 to stand safely. Rooftop C: partially collapsed, accessible from dune level.

TO PLAYERS

A desert inside a building. Dunes roll across a chamber so large you can't see the far wall. And poking through the sand like ships on a frozen sea: rooftops. Temple rooftops, carved with symbols, painted with faded murals. An entire district buried under sand so deep the buildings are drowning in it. Only the tops survive. Getting across means climbing dunes and jumping between islands of stone, trusting your weight to structures that have been slowly swallowed for millennia.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E24.

East (across dunes) leads to E29, E30.

Northeast (across dunes) leads to E31 (Sand Dunes of Temples - main area).

E29 - Temple Interior (Accessed from Dune Level)

DN NOTE

Small temple interior, 20x15 ft, accessed by dropping through a roof opening in E28 or climbing through a sand-filled window from E30 area. Sand fills the room to 3 ft. The walls show murals of daily worship - morning prayers, evening rituals, communal meals. This was a neighborhood temple, not a grand cathedral. The prayers on the wall are informal. Personal. "May the river flood kindly this year." "May my daughter's fever break."

One wall holds a sealed niche. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14 to find. Inside: an offering bowl with three gold coins and a dried flower. A real offering, left by a real worshipper, thousands of years ago. The gods didn't touch it. It's too small to matter.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

3 gold coins (ancient, worth 5 GP each to a collector, 3 GP face value). Dried lotus flower (no value; Cleric or Druid holding it feels a pulse of old, genuine faith - not the harvested kind, the freely given kind).

TO PLAYERS

You drop through the roof into a temple the sand hasn't quite finished swallowing. The walls show simple things. Morning prayers. Shared meals. Written requests to gods who might have been listening: "May the river be kind this year." "May my daughter heal." Not grand theology. Just people asking for small mercies.

In a niche in the wall, sealed with old clay: an offering bowl. Three gold coins and a dried flower. Someone left this here for their god, and the gods who built this prison either didn't notice or didn't care enough to corrupt it. It's the most honest thing in this place.

NAVIGATION

Up through roof leads to E28 dune area.

Sand-filled window connects to E30 (difficult passage).

E30 - Dune Passage (Between Temples)

DN NOTE

Narrow sand-filled gap between temple structures, 8 ft wide, connecting E28/E29 area to E31. Sand waist-deep. Movement at half speed. The walls on both sides are temple exteriors - carved figures and text visible at the sand line, disappearing below.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 14: one temple wall has a carving at sand level showing a scarab beetle rolling a sun disc. Beneath it, text: "Khepri brings the dawn. Even after the longest night." It's a message of hope left in the necropolis by a priest who believed the curse would eventually end. They were right. The players are here.

TO PLAYERS

A gap between temples, sand waist-deep, walls pressing in on both sides. The temple exteriors show carvings at the sand line - figures and text slowly being swallowed. One carving catches your eye: a beetle pushing a golden disc across a sky. Beneath it, words that

have been waiting for someone to read them: “Khepri brings the dawn. Even after the longest night.”

NAVIGATION

West leads to E28/E29.

East leads to E31.

E31 - Sand Dunes of Temples (Main Area)

DN NOTE

MASSIVE AREA. 60x40 ft, ceiling 35 ft. The heart of the buried temple district. Six temple rooftops visible. Dunes 15-20 ft tall roll between them. This is the most surreal landscape in the dungeon - an indoor desert burying sacred buildings.

Same navigation mechanics as E28. Sand-slides more frequent here: Probability Roll 1-2 on d6 when standing on dunes.

Temple Rooftop D (northeast): large, flat. A stone altar on the roof, used for sky-worship. Intact astronomical instruments bolted to the stone. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 15: the instruments are calibrated to a specific date - the same date as the star map ceiling in Level 4 (D7). The night before the Ascension. Every temple in the empire was tracking the same alignment.

Temple Rooftop E (east): peaked, unstable. A body draped across the ridge beam. An adventurer who climbed up and died of exposure. Journal in their hand: “I can see the green from here. East. Through the passage. Real water. Real trees. I just can’t reach it.” They died in sight of the real oasis (E27) but couldn’t cross the dunes.

Temple Rooftop F (south): partially collapsed into the interior below. Interior accessible via careful climbing (Dexterity Chance Roll TN 12). Inside: a treasury. Sand-covered but not sand-formed. Real gold, real gems, real objects - offerings accumulated over generations. The gods buried the temple but left the treasure intact. There was no point corrupting it. No one would reach it.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Dune Prowlers (x3) - sand constructs that move beneath the dune surface, erupting to attack players on the dunes. Sharks in sand.

14 HP each, AC 13. Attack: Sand-jaws d20+4 vs AC, 1d6+2 bludgeoning. Can only attack from below (players on rooftops are safe). Move 30 ft through sand. Emerge, attack, submerge (Wisdom Chance Roll TN 15 to detect before emergence).

Balance (2 players): 42 HP total but avoidable by staying on rooftops. (3-5 players): Challenging. The terrain is the real enemy.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Temple F treasury: 80 GP. Ruby pendant (60 GP). Gold ceremonial chalice (40 GP). Scroll of Protection from Sand (single use - creates a 10 ft radius zone where sand cannot enter or shift for 10 minutes. Incredibly useful in this dungeon).

Dead adventurer (Rooftop E): 8 GP. Shortbow with 6 arrows. Climbing gear (rope, pitons - grants +2 to Strength Chance Rolls for climbing in the dungeon). Journal (lore/emotional value).

TO PLAYERS

A desert inside a tomb inside a prison inside a desert. Dunes fill an enormous chamber, twenty feet tall in places, and from their peaks you can see the rooftops of temples poking through the sand. Six of them, scattered like islands. Between them, nothing but shifting sand and the knowledge that something moves beneath it.

Temple Rooftop E - the dead adventurer:

Draped across the ridge of a temple roof, a body. Dried, preserved by the heat. In their hand, a journal opened to the last page. The handwriting is shaky. "I can see the green from here. East. Through the passage. Real water. Real trees. I just can't reach it." They died looking at salvation. Close enough to see it. Not close enough to touch.

NAVIGATION

West (across dunes) leads to E28, E29, E30.

South leads to E24 area (via climbing down from dunes).

Interior of Temple F (climbing down) connects to vault areas.

E32 - Sand-Choked Vaults (Outer)

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 40x30 ft. The outer ring of the Pharaoh's burial vault complex. Sand knee-deep, flowing slowly (same current as E15). Stone shelves and alcoves line the walls, containing burial goods - gold, gems, weapons, artifacts. Mixed real and divine mockery per the summary.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 15 to distinguish real from fake before touching. Real items: solid weight, slight temperature difference (cooler than the sand). Fake items: slightly too light, too warm, dissolve/tarnish on contact.

Tomb constructs activate when anything is disturbed. Picking up a real item: silent. Picking up a fake item: the shelf rumbles and a construct pulls itself from the wall.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Vault Construct (x1 per fake item grabbed, max 3) - stone-and-sand guardians embedded in the shelves.

15 HP each, AC 14. Attack: Stone fist d20+3 vs AC, 1d6+2 bludgeoning. DR 2 (stone body). Slow - 15 ft movement. Cannot leave E32/E33 area. Immune to poison, disease.

Balance (2 players): 1 construct per fake item caps the danger. Smart looting = no combat. (3-5 players): Manageable unless they get greedy.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Real items on shelves (Wisdom Chance Roll TN 15 each): Gold funerary mask fragment (25 GP). Bronze ceremonial spear (1d6+1 piercing, ornate, 35 GP). Lapis lazuli scarab brooch (30 GP - another Khepri connection). Healer's herbs wrapped in linen (2 uses of healing poultice, restores 1d6 HP each).

Fake items (tarnish/crumble on contact + trigger construct): Everything else on the shelves. Gold that turns to black sand. Jeweled weapons that dissolve. Gems that crack into ash.

TO PLAYERS

Treasure. Shelves of it. Gold vessels, jeweled weapons, carved figurines, ceremonial armor - arranged with care, gleaming in the amber light. After rooms of sand-formed lies and empty promises, the sight of actual treasure is almost painful. You reach for a golden cup. It's heavy. Cool. Real. You reach for the one beside it. The gold blackens under your fingers and runs like water, and the shelf behind it starts to move.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E8 (through corridors).

South leads to E15 and E16.

East leads to E33 (Sand-Choked Vaults - inner).

North leads to E42 and tomb network.

E33 - Sand-Choked Vaults (Inner)

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 30x25 ft. Deeper vaults. Sand thigh-deep. Same real/fake mechanic as E32 but the ratio shifts - more real items here, fewer fakes. The gods cared less about guarding the inner vaults because they assumed no one would make it past the outer ring.

The centerpiece: a large sarcophagus-shaped chest, sealed with Khepri's scarab seal. Opening it (Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14 to solve the locking mechanism, or Strength Chance Roll TN 16 to force). Inside: the Pharaoh's personal effects. Not ceremonial items - personal ones. A comb. A mirror. A pair of sandals worn smooth by use. A small portrait painted on wood showing a woman's face (the same face as the sand-formed figure in Level 2's B28 - the woman with the cradle). His wife. His child.

No enemies. Opening the sealed chest does NOT trigger constructs. It was never trapped. The Pharaoh packed these himself.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Sealed chest: Portrait of the Pharaoh's wife (no gold value; showing to Pharaoh in Level 4 D16 triggers: long silence, then "I packed that chest the night before. I told myself she would understand. She would have hated what I became. She would have been right."). Bronze mirror (15 GP). Gold comb (20 GP). Royal sandals (10 GP).

Vault shelves (real items, Wisdom TN 15): Gold arm-band (25 GP). Turquoise amulet (35 GP, faint protective aura - +1 to WIS Mind Saves, per Magic Stacking). Obsidian dagger (1d4+1 piercing, counts as magical for resistance bypass, worth 30 GP).

TO PLAYERS

Deeper vaults. The sand is thigh-deep and the treasures on the shelves look different here - less ceremonial, more real. At the center, a chest shaped like a small sarcophagus, sealed with a carved beetle. Not gold. Not grand. Just a chest, locked with care.

If players open the chest:

No traps. No guardians. The lid lifts and inside - not gold, not gems, not weapons. A comb. A mirror. A pair of sandals worn smooth by someone's feet. And a portrait, painted on wood, small enough to hold in one hand. A woman's face, young, looking directly at the artist with an expression that might be love and might be worry. These aren't a king's treasures. These are a man's.

STORY DROP

The personal effects are the final piece of the Pharaoh's humanity. He packed his wife's portrait the night before the ritual. He knew what he was going to do. He said goodbye. The woman in the portrait is the same one whose sand-form sits in the cradle room on Level 2 (B28) and whose stone figure sits in the garden on Level 2 (B47). The gods recreated her grief as decoration. The Pharaoh kept her portrait hidden where they couldn't touch it.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E32.

No other exits. Dead end - backtrack through E32.

E34 through E47 - The Tomb Network

DN NOTE - SECTION OVERVIEW

The northeastern quadrant of Level 5 is a dense network of smaller tomb chambers, corridors, and storage vaults. This area holds the bulk of the necropolis's burial population - hundreds of individual interments ranging from minor officials to wealthy merchants. The rooms are smaller, more numerous, and less narratively critical than the western temple complex. They provide exploration content, combat encounters, and supplementary treasure.

The tomb network is **OPTIONAL**. Players do not need to explore it to reach E6 (the staff) or E27 (the oasis). It exists for thorough parties who want to clear the level completely, and for the DN who wants more session content.

E34 - Tomb Network Entry (North)

DN NOTE

Junction chamber, 20x15 ft. Entry to the dense northeastern tomb network from E1. Sand ankle-deep. A stone archway frames the entrance, carved with “THE FAITHFUL SLEEP HERE” in Hieratic. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 12 to read.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

An archway carved with text. A declaration. Not a warning. Whatever lies beyond, the people buried here chose to be here. Or someone chose for them.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E1.

East leads to E35, E36.

South leads to E37, E41.

E35 - Minor Official's Tomb

DN NOTE

Small chamber, 15x10 ft. Single sarcophagus. A tax collector, based on the inscription. His burial goods: an abacus (sand-formed, crumbles), a stylus (real, bronze), a stack of receipts (sand). Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: his inscription includes “Served faithfully for 40 years.” No mention of the Ascension. He died before it happened. A man who lived and died normally in an empire that was about to end.

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Bronze stylus (3 GP, functional as improvised weapon 1d3 piercing). 5 SP scattered around the sarcophagus.

TO PLAYERS

A tax collector's tomb. A life reduced to an abacus and a stack of receipts. The inscription says he served for forty years. No mention of gods or rituals or Ascension. He just worked. For forty years. And then he died, and someone buried him with the tools of his trade, and the world ended, and here he still lies with his paperwork.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E34.

South leads to E37.

East leads to E36.

E36 - Temple Storehouse (Northeast)

DN NOTE

Large chamber, 40x35 ft. Storage for the necropolis's temple offerings. Stone shelves stacked with burial goods awaiting interment. Most are sand-formed, but the volume is impressive - this storehouse served the entire district. A sand dune has pushed in from the northeast wall.

Buried in the dune (Intelligence Chance Roll TN 15, requires 10 minutes of digging): a locked chest containing genuine temple offerings that were never distributed. 40 GP in gold leaf, a silver incense burner (20 GP), and a prayer shawl woven with protective sigils (grants +1 AC for 1 hour when worn, single use, then falls apart).

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Sand Scorpion (x1) - nesting in the dune. Smaller than the constructs in Level 4 but venomous.

12 HP, AC 12. Sting d20+3 vs AC, 1d6 piercing + 1d6 poison (CON Tough Save negates poison). Claw d20+2 vs AC, 1d4 bludgeoning. Burrows into sand if reduced to 4 HP, resurfaces 1 round later for surprise attack.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Locked chest (see above). Shelves: 3 intact clay offering bowls (4 GP each). Ceremonial bronze knife (1d4 slashing, ornamental, 10 GP).

TO PLAYERS

A storehouse. Shelves stacked floor to ceiling with offerings waiting to be placed in tombs that never received them. Most crumble at a glance. But the volume is staggering. This place was preparing for hundreds of burials when the world ended, and the supply chain froze mid-delivery.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E35 and E34.

South leads to E39, E40.

E37 - Corridor of Niches**DN NOTE**

Long corridor, 10 ft wide, 40 ft long. Both walls lined with burial niches, three high. Standard interments. Most sealed, some cracked open (empty or sand inside). One niche, mid-level on the east wall, has been deliberately broken from the inside. Scratch marks on the interior. Something got out. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14: the scratch marks are fresh compared to the stone. Whatever this was, it happened recently (by dungeon standards - decades, not centuries).

No enemies here. But the broken niche foreshadows the Sand-Born encounters in E40 and E45.

TO PLAYERS

A corridor of the dead. Niches on both sides, three rows high, sealed with stone. Most are intact. One is not. The seal has been broken from the inside. Scratch marks on the interior stone - deep, desperate, recent. Something inside decided to leave. Looking at the empty niche, you notice the sand below it is disturbed. Footprints. Leading deeper into the tomb network.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E34 and E35.

South leads to E41.

East leads to E38.

E38 - Scholar's Tomb Cluster

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 25x20 ft. Four sarcophagi. Scholars and researchers from the Pharaoh's academic circle. Their burial goods include clay tablets, astronomical instruments, and writing implements - all real, preserved with care.

Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: one scholar's tablet is a dissenting opinion on the forced Ascension theory. "The mathematics work. The ethics do not. We can force the threshold, but the cost is measured in souls. I will not sign my name to this." It's signed. The name matches the turned-away figure in Level 2's Buried Sun Temple (B44) panel 1.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Dissenting scholar's tablet (quest item - if shown to Pharaoh in D16: "She refused to sign. I destroyed her career. I destroyed her. And she was the only one who was completely right."). Astronomical sextant (25 GP, brass, functional). Scholar's ring (10 GP, engraved with the university seal).

TO PLAYERS

Scholars' tombs. Their burial goods aren't gold and jewels - they're tablets and instruments and writing tools. The things they valued. One tablet, resting on a scholar's chest, isn't research. It's a refusal. "The mathematics work. The ethics do not. We can force the threshold, but the cost is measured in souls. I will not sign my name to this." She signed it anyway. Her name is at the bottom. She wanted people to know who said no.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E37.

South leads to E39.

E39 - Connecting Passage (Northeast)

DN NOTE

Short corridor connecting E38 to E40 and E36. Sand ankle-deep. Unremarkable transit space. One detail: a child's handprint pressed into the wall at waist height. Different from the adult handprint in E16. Small. Five fingers spread wide. Children were buried in this necropolis too.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A short passage. On the wall, at the height a child could reach, a handprint. Small. Five fingers spread wide, pressed into stone that took the impression. Not the first handprint you've found. But the smallest.

NAVIGATION

Northeast leads to E38.

South leads to E40.

North leads to E36.

E40 - Sand-Born Nest

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 25x20 ft. COMBAT AREA. Four broken niches line the walls - occupants have escaped. The room is warm. Sand drifts in patterns on the floor, forming and reforming. Sand-Born constructs have nested here - undead that have been reconstructed from burial remains and divine sand.

SUGGESTED ENCOUNTER

Sand-Born (x3) - mummified remains animated with sand. They look like half-formed mummies held together by packed sand.

14 HP each, AC 13. Attack: Sand-claw d20+3 vs AC, 1d6+2 bludgeoning. On hit: sand adheres to wound, -1 to AC until cleared (1 action to brush off). Immune to poison, disease. If destroyed: reform in 3 rounds unless bodies are dragged out of E40 or fire is applied to remains.

Balance (2 players): 42 HP + reforming = Hard. Burn or drag. (3-5 players): Challenging. The AC debuff stacks.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Among the nesting debris: 15 GP. Bent copper amulet (5 GP). Intact mummy wrappings threaded with gold wire (20 GP as textiles).

TO PLAYERS

The niches are broken open. Four of them, stones scattered on the floor. Whatever was inside got out and stayed. The sand moves in the center of the room - not flowing, not settling. Forming. Shapes press upward, collapse, press upward again. Then they hold. Three figures, half mummy and half sand, pulling themselves together like something learning to stand. They look at you with eyes made of compacted grit and they don't look confused. They look hungry.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E39 and E36.

West leads to E47.

South leads to E45, E46.

E41 - Western Tomb Row

DN NOTE

Long chamber, 35x15 ft. Burial niches along the west wall. East wall is decorated with a continuous procession mural showing the dead being led to their tombs by Anubis. The jackals in the mural have been recarved with laughing mouths - the gods' sense of humor. The guardians of the dead are laughing at the dead.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A row of tombs, niches sealed along one wall. The opposite wall shows a procession - the dead being led by jackal-headed figures. Anubis, guardian of the afterlife. But the jackals are wrong. Their mouths are open. They're laughing. The guides who were supposed to protect the dead are mocking them instead.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E34 and E2.

South leads to E42.

East leads to E47.

E42 - Central Tomb Hall

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 30x25 ft. Hub connecting the tomb network's inner sections. Stone benches for mourners. A dry fountain (decorative, never functional). The floor has a mosaic of Osiris weighing hearts against Ma'at's feather - the judgment of the dead. The mosaic is intact and genuine.

Wisdom Chance Roll TN 13: the mosaic is the only depiction of divine judgment in the entire necropolis that the gods didn't vandalize. They left Ma'at's judgment untouched. Perhaps because even they believed in it.

TO PLAYERS

A mourners' hall. Stone benches face a dry fountain. The floor mosaic is extraordinary - a god with a scale, weighing a heart against a feather. The judgment of the dead, rendered in tile, perfectly preserved. Every other divine image in this prison has been cracked, recarved, or mocked. This one is untouched. Even the gods who built this prison didn't vandalize their own court of judgment.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E41 and E2.

East leads to E43, Northeast least to E47.

South leads to E32 (Sand-Choked Vaults).

West leads to E8.

E43 - Merchant's Tomb

DN NOTE

Small chamber, 15x15 ft. A wealthy merchant's burial. Sarcophagus carved with trade scenes - ships, caravans, marketplace transactions. Burial goods: clay models of ships (sand-formed, crumble), a real bronze balance scale (functional, 15 GP), and a strongbox bolted to the floor.

Strongbox (Thief pick lock or Strength Chance Roll TN 15): 50 GP in mixed coins. A jade ring (20 GP). A merchant's ledger on clay tablets - still legible. Last entry: "Purchased 40 amphoras of temple wine for the Gathering. Payment: compulsory. Price: nothing. The Crown takes what the Crown needs."

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Strongbox: 50 GP. Jade ring (20 GP). Bronze balance scale (15 GP). Merchant's ledger (quest flavor - evidence that the Gathering confiscated private property).

TO PLAYERS

A merchant's tomb. The carvings show ships and caravans and stalls piled with goods. He was buried with the tools of his trade - a scale, a strongbox, the clay tablets of his accounts. The strongbox is still bolted to the floor. Whatever he saved in life, he meant to keep in death.

If players read the ledger:

The last entry is businesslike. Clinical. "Purchased 40 amphoras of temple wine for the Gathering. Payment: compulsory. Price: nothing. The Crown takes what the Crown needs." Even the merchants knew. Even the people who counted coins for a living understood that the Gathering wasn't voluntary. They wrote it down in their ledgers between the regular transactions, filed it, and went back to work.

NAVIGATION

West leads to E42.

South leads to E44.

E44 - Artisan's Tomb

DN NOTE

Small chamber, 15x15 ft. A master craftsman's burial. Sarcophagus carved with tools and creations. Burial goods include real woodworking tools (chisels, files, a small saw - all functional, 15 GP as a set) and a miniature model carved from dark wood: a temple. Exquisite detail. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 14: the temple model matches the Buried Temple of the Scarab (E6). This craftsman helped build it.

No enemies. No traps.

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Woodworking tools (15 GP as set, functional). Temple model (quest item - no gold value. If brought to E6: the model exactly matches the temple's layout, confirming the craftsman's involvement. If shown to Pharaoh in D16: "He carved that from memory after the temple was finished. He was proud of what he built. He had no idea what it would be used for.").

TO PLAYERS

A craftsman's tomb. Chisels, files, a small saw - real tools, sharp, cared for. And beside them on the burial shelf, a model. Dark wood, carved with extraordinary precision. A temple in miniature. Every column, every doorway, every carved scarab. He spent his life building things. This was the last thing he made - a model of his greatest work, small enough to hold in two hands and take with him wherever the dead go.

NAVIGATION

North leads to E43.

Northeast leads to E45.

E45 - Eastern Tomb Chamber

DN NOTE

Medium chamber, 25x20 ft. Six burial niches, two broken open (the Sand-Born from E40 originated here). Rubble on the floor. The intact niches contain standard interments - sealed, undisturbed.

One niche contains a soldier's burial. Intelligence Chance Roll TN 13: the inscription reads "Private Nefer, 4th Infantry. Died of wounds sustained at the Northern Campaign." Cross-reference: the 4th Infantry is Sergeant Djet's unit from Level 3 (C16). Nefer served under Djet. They're buried in different levels of the same prison, separated forever.

No enemies (Sand-Born have migrated to E40).

TREASURE / MAGIC ITEMS

Soldier's bronze short sword (1d6 slashing, military issue, 15 GP). 4th Infantry unit medallion (5 GP; carrying it in Level 3 causes Sergeant Djet's inscription in C16 to glow faintly - no mechanical effect, just recognition).

TO PLAYERS

Tombs, some broken open, some sealed. One sealed niche holds a soldier. The inscription is simple. Name, rank, unit, cause of death. "Private Nefer, 4th Infantry. Died of wounds sustained at the Northern Campaign." A soldier. Not a hero. Not a general. Just someone who fought and bled and was buried by people who knew his name.

NAVIGATION

Southwest leads to E44.

North leads to E40 and E46.

South leads to E24 area.

E46 - Narrow Connecting Passage

DN NOTE

Narrow corridor, 8 ft wide, connecting E45 to E40 and E47. Unremarkable. Sand ankle-deep. The passage curves, limiting visibility to 15 ft ahead. A good place for the DN to create tension - the curve means players can't see what's around the bend.

No enemies. No traps.

TO PLAYERS

A narrow passage that curves, hiding what's ahead. After the open chambers, the tight space and blind corners feel like a held breath.

NAVIGATION

South leads to E45.

North leads to E40.

West leads to E47.

E47 - Inner Tomb Chamber**DN NOTE**

Medium chamber, 20x20 ft. The deepest room in the tomb network. Four sarcophagi, ornate. These are the Pharaoh's personal household staff - his steward, his bodyguard, his secretary, his nurse. People who knew him as a person, not a king.

Each sarcophagus inscription is personal. The steward: "Served the boy. Served the man. Served the king. Never served a god." The bodyguard: "Protected him from everything except himself." The secretary: "Recorded every word. Wished she'd recorded fewer." The nurse: "Raised him. Loved him. Couldn't stop him."

No enemies. No traps. No treasure. Just epitaphs.

TO PLAYERS

Four coffins. More personal than any others in the necropolis. The inscriptions aren't titles and achievements. They're confessions.

"Served the boy. Served the man. Served the king. Never served a god."

"Protected him from everything except himself."

"Recorded every word. Wished she'd recorded fewer."

"Raised him. Loved him. Couldn't stop him."

Four people who knew a man before he became a king before he became a monster before he became a prisoner. They're the closest thing to family he has left, and they're buried here, in the deepest room, where even the gods might not think to look.

STORY DROP

The four epitaphs are the most human moment on Level 5. They show the Pharaoh as a person before the ambition consumed him. The nurse who “couldn’t stop him” echoes Commander Khet-Am from Level 3 - people who loved him tried to prevent the Ascension and failed. The steward’s “never served a god” is both a statement of fact and a rebuke. These are the voices of people who watched someone they loved destroy himself and everyone around him.

NAVIGATION

East leads to E46 and E40.

West leads to E41 and E42.