

# ***THE TOMB OF KHNUMP-HOTEP***

## ***INTRODUCTION:***

A few days ago, you were contacted in Cairo by the local Delphi Council agent, Mercy Jelani. (The Delphi Council is a globe-spanning organization dedicated to stopping the plans of the High Lords and saving Core Earth, under the leadership of former soldier-of-fortune Quinn Sebastian.) The Delphi Council has been observing the activities of the mad villain The Yellow Jackal, one of Pharaoh Mobius' dastardly lieutenants. The Yellow Jackal and his shocktrooper thugs have been searching all over the Empire for the location of the tomb of an old pharaoh from the Egypt-That-Never-Was, Khnem-hotep. Determined to find out what he is after, you searched the stacks of a secret library maintained by the Temple of Wadjet and learned that Khnem-hotep was disgraced and cast out for his use of a dark magic which he used to summon sandstorms. The source of his powers was believed to be a green gem he used in place of his missing left eye. While in the library you also discovered a lost shred of the same map Yellow Jackal has, containing some sort of cryptic markings. Then you tracked his squad of shocktroopers into the Sahara on their search for the temple complex of Khnem-hotep. But you know something they don't – which building is Khnem-hotep's actual tomb! Now, observing from the ridge of a nearby sand dune, you see the remains of the temple complex, half-emerged from the hungry sands. The Yellow Jackal's shocktroopers are spread out through the complex. Frequent thundering explosions tell you he's using dynamite to blast something open, perhaps believing he's close to the tomb, but the real target is a crumbled building on the outskirts. If you can get in there quickly without being seen, you might be able to steal Khnem-hotep's gem right from under Yellow Jackal!

Be sure to hand the piece of the map to the players.

## ***SCENE 1: THE SECRET OF THE SPHINX***

**Standard. Nile Empire Dominant Zone.** Lay out the map and place the heroes along the edge. Shocktrooper garrison tents are on one side, and two stray shocktroopers linger in the area looking for clues.

This section of the ruins isn't much more than piles of old stones rising out of the sand dunes. Inside is a relatively sheltered area where some of the old floor tiles are still visible. The wind blowing through sounds eerily like the moan of the dead. A large, crumbling sphinx statue dominates one side of the ruins, while a strange statue of a sparrow sits nearby. A round nave is all the remains of what must have once been a fine temple. The shocktroopers put up some supply tents just outside the building. Two shocktroopers comb this part of the ruins for clues. They seem preoccupied.

The challenge here is taking out the shocktroopers without making much noise. The temple complex is large, but gunshots or other loud sounds will alert the Yellow Jackal and his goons, who arrive two minutes later.

The key to accessing the temple is in the orientation of the two statues. Where their gaze converges is a pressure plate which causes a panel of the floor in the nave to open, revealing a tomb below.

## ***SCENE 2: VAULT OF THE PHARAOH***

**Standard. Nile Empire Dominant Zone.** The next challenge is retrieving the gem from Khnem-hotep's body.

Khnem-hotep chose an unusual tomb: a vertical shaft extending some 50 feet into the earth. It is dark and still as the grave. For light, you drop down a flare. About 30 feet down it falls into a larger chamber, and for a moment you can see a stepped dais upon which rests a stone sarcophagus, while twenty-foot-tall statues of Sebek hold up the room's corners. Then bolts of green lightning arc out of the eyes of three of the statues, instantly disintegrating the flare. All that remains is a hissing pile of burning potassium, just bright enough that you can see a gaping crack in the wall. For about thirty seconds you hear gears grinding behind that wall, following by a distinct *click* and then silence.

The heroes can easily rappel down using ropes tied to columns outside. However, entering the chamber itself (the bottom 20 feet) triggers a specialized Lightning Trap that can be avoided with a Heroic (-8) *dodge* and does 20 + 2BD (or 20 + 2BD on a Mishap). The trap takes 5 rounds to reset. During that time, the trap can be deactivated, though this requires a Dramatic Skill Resolution.

**Step A:** Pry open the panel. This is a Standard (DN 10) *Strength* test. Doing so reveals a turning gear.

**Step B:** Jam the gear. This takes a Standard (DN 10) *Strength* or *science* test. The gear shudders, and the ancient mechanism goes haywire, causing a counterweight to collapse the wall. Unfortunately, sand starts to pour in through the wall, preventing the hero from reaching the counterweight.

**Step C:** Plug the hole. This is a Hard (DN 12) *Strength* or *science* test. The sand still sifts in slowly, but now the hero can reach the counterweight.

**Step D:** Cut the counterweight chain. This is a Very Hard (DN 14) *Strength* or *science* test. When the counterweight drops, the machine spins out of control and the dynamo generating the electrical charge explodes with its own power. Unnerving, but harmless, energy continues to zap through the statues the rest of the time the heroes are down here.

It might also be possible for the heroes to simply damage the statues so they can no longer discharge the electrical buildup. Each statue has a Toughness of 15 and must take 2 Wounds before it ceases to function. As usual, shock has no effect. One of the statues is already damaged and does not work.

Once the mechanism is disabled, or the statues are destroyed, it is safe to enter the room. The sarcophagus is heavy but can be wrenched off with a couple of rounds of work. Inside is the moldering old mummy of Khnem-hotep. His withered arms are free of their wrappings and the heroes can see signs that he had clawed at the inside of his sarcophagus. However, he is wholly and completely dead now. They can safely pluck the gem from his gaping eye socket.

The moment the gem leaves his body, a beam of astonishing green light shoots upward through the shaft, bursts through the stone ceiling high above, and enters the clouds. The Yellow Jackal and his shocktroopers will surely see it, so time is of the essence.

### ***SCENE 3: DESERT DUEL***

**Dramatic. Nile Empire Dominant Zone.** The heroes now need to escape, a prospect which seems increasingly unlikely.

**As soon as you climb out of the chamber, the full gravity of the situation is apparent. Not only have the shocktroopers surely noticed the green beam, the clouds are starting to rotate around the beam as if forming a tornado! Already wind is starting to whip around the ruins, kicking up dust. You sprint for your jeep, which awaits you near the top of a nearby sand dune. Behind you, a full-on sandstorm is already consuming the ruins and growing bigger by the second. Suddenly, several vehicles emerge from the storm: another jeep, a motorcycle, and a cargo truck, all driven by Yellow Jackal's shocktroopers. Yellow Jackal himself stands in his jeep, raging at you. "I'll have that gem, Storm Knights, or you'll be swallowed by the sand itself!" You get the jeep going and race for the safety of a nearby oasis town. Yellow Jackal is gaining on you, and the storm is a wall of churning sand closing in behind.**

Yellow Jackal fires at the heroes from a position of partial cover inside the jeep, which is being driven by one of his shocktroopers. One shocktrooper rides in a motorcycle alongside. The remaining six shocktroopers are in a deuce-and-a-half truck with a mounted M1919 Browning .30 caliber MG (damage 15 AP2, 500/1K/2K, long burst).

This chase does *not* use the Dramatic Skill Resolution method, but rather employs the Vehicle rules from Torg Eternity. The participants can attack vehicles or their occupants, attempt to ram, trick, or outmaneuver the others, or simply try to stay alive. After the third round, the growing sandstorm consumes any vehicles behind the Storm Knights' position, and then the Storm Knights themselves are plunged into the storm on the fourth round. Inside, all *land vehicles* tests are Hard (-2) and visibility is reduced to 30 feet. Anyone exposed to the savage wind-blown sand takes an additional 2 Shock every time Fatigued comes up on the Conflict Line.

If the heroes are defeated, Yellow Jackal (or one of his minions) takes the gem and leaves the heroes to the desert. The sandstorm eventually subsides and the heroes battle the elements, eventually staggering into the oasis town to recuperate and start the hunt for Yellow Jackal anew. If Yellow Jackal is defeated, his fate is similar, turning up some weeks later after finding a place to recover – and plot his revenge!