

MUMMY RUSTLERS - SESSION SUMMARY 1/1/2017

TODAY'S EPISODE: STRIKE FORCE WATI

Our heroes have been tomb raiding in Wati's necropolis under the auspices of the Church of Pharama's official "We Love Organized Tomb Raiding" contest. They have enjoyed some success, enduring hardships, betrayal, murder, revenge, loot, and love. However, Wati is now overrun with undead, fearful citizens, indiscriminate summoned monsters, arson, and an alarming lack of looting. Our heroes have run hither and yon suppressing lynchings, killing undead, and asking, "WTF is going on?" Fortunately, the church of Pharama is there to collect reports and direct our heroes toward... something.

New leveling rules have been implemented this session. Cost was "current level + 7 xp", now cost is "(current level + 7 xp) * 2".

Our heroes are:

- Patrick as Usif bin Adeen, Osirian human Immolator 5
- Tim as Denat, ifrit Cleric 4?
- Chris as Murdus Sangaree, Osirian human Fighter 5
- Ernest as Khaled, Keleshite human Burglar 5

Operation "Judgement"

They return to the Pharasman temple. The weird golden bird that's some kind of psychopomp familiar to Ptemenib, the Pharasmin priestess, appears to them to excitedly explain that her mistress was kidnapped by the *Silver Chain*. Then the priests not busy killing undead or being killed by undead share their latest "most alarming" intelligence:

Judge Poponeim has risen from the dead and resumed his office. He is armed with his staff of execution (and some undead court officers) and is handing out punishments (mostly death and eye removal) for trivial crimes (e.g. foreigner, loitering, not being undead) in a roughly a one block radius around the Wati courthouse.

This and the general situation (undead everywhere) leads to another round of folks asking, “And why do we keep making mummies? And burying them everywhere where people live? It just seems like a bad idea?”

The courthouse is a low sandstone building whose exterior is dotted with statues holding law devices such as books, scales, and rods. Several dozen corpses litter the ground in a fan out from the court’s front doors, indicating that eye popping is taking place inside and the victims drag themselves some distance outside before succumbing to their wounds.

“Shall we go right inside or do something clever?” asks Khaled.

They hear a horrible scream from inside the building.

“OK, so much for a clever plan.”

They enter and quickly locating, thanks to screaming, an undead judge and a pair of bailiffs passing judgment on a man – the judgment is eyeball removal.

Murdus asks the judge questions about the proceedings until the judge sics his bailiffs on him. Meanwhile, Khaled sneaks around to the back of the courtroom while Usif flings fire at the judge.

Murdus hits a bailiff with his ax, then a pair try to pin him... for judgment. Another pair leap upon Usif and despite getting burned, grab him too.

He points at Murdus, "Judgement! Talking!"

He points at Usif, "Judgement! Reckless use of fire!"

Khaled strikes from the shadows, slashing the judge from behind with a pair of kukri. One kukri gets hooked in judge's rib cage. Murdus uses his strength to swing the bailiff skeletons like giant book ends into the judge – a skeleton breaks into bits. Usif summons a fire brand and destroys another bailiff.

Then the destroyed skeletons explode, showering everyone with shrapnel. Murdus snatches up the bailiff clinging to him and bull rushes the judge, driving both hard into a stone wall. The bailiff skeleton accords into splinters and explodes, showering both Murdus and the judge with bone shrapnel. Another bailiff wrestles Usif in front of the judge, who in turn begins scooping out Murdus' eyeballs.

Khaled tries to distract the undead with an ancient law room maneuver, moving the statue of their law deity from the guilty to not guilty position in the back of the courtroom, but finds it has no impact.

Murdus swings an adamantite flail into the judge, shattering him into many pieces.

The one-eyed man is bandaged and therefore does not bleed out and die. Murdus heals himself via healing potion. Khaled claims the judge's fez and some pocket change from the victims.

Usif sacrifices the eyes (a huge bowl full) to the flames to gain *insight* into the current wave of undead anarchy – he sees: *A man standing as a pharaoh complete with crown. Behind him was a throne/sarcophagus and a pair of blind folded minions feeding herbs into braziers.*

Operation “Rescue”

They rush off to rescue Ptemenib from the Silver Chain with Kaseem, her psychopomp, as a guide. “I saw which building they dragged her into a building. I’ll take you! I will! I will!”

They follow Kaseem’s chirping voice, stopping only to interrupt a gang of youths looting a tea shop. “THE ONCE AND FUTURE PHAROAH BIDS YOU BEGONE!!!” roars Murdus. The utes scatter for the hills. The old man comes out and offers his saviors some special tea. This tea is used by mystics to see the future.

As they continue onward they observe that some areas of the city have returned to normalcy – a few shops are open though only if well-guarded.

Kaseem points out an old brick works that recently (5 years ago) burned down. “She’s in there!”

Khaled announces, “I’ll scout it out.”

Murdus counters, “But Kaseem can do so invisibly.”

Khaled replies as he sneaks inside, “Yeah, if you want to know where the best bird seed is located.”

Kaseem sulks, “But I’m really smart. I speak eight languages!”

Inside Khaled skulks about, locating a pair of city watchmen guarding a large interior room. He orders Kaseem to knock on the outside door in 20 counts, while he readies a pair of arrows coated in sleep poison. The knocks draw their attention and the first man falls asleep with an arrow in his thigh. The other man, now suspicious, opens the door and runs through and thereby avoids the arrow meant for him.

Khaled chases the man and barely keeps him from locking the door, slamming into it just as the man gets the key in. Murdus and Usif hear him yell out, "Come quickly!" They rush inside. Khaled stabs the man to death and the corpse slides down the stairs.

Just inside the now open door are kegs of saffron (150gp). Khaled sneaks down the stairs into a long hallway with a sandy floor and several heavy, wooden doors further down. Murdus and Usif join him there. Khaled locates a counterweighted pit trap, which they bypass cleverly. There is no light and no noise at the first door.

They guess incorrectly which door Ptemenib was drug through. The door opens into a large ceramic tiled room. Pillars and chains section the room off; in those sections are boxes, crates, and sarcophagi. A bundle of cloth lies nearby.

Kaseem announces, "I recognize these! It is Ptemenib's vestments and holy symbol."

"Well, now I'm having trouble not picturing Ptemenib naked," whispers Khaled to Murdus.

There are two doors exiting this room. One shows no lights. The other door has light and men's voices on the other side. And the sound of running water. Murdus watches Khaled's hand signal and kicks the door open.

Inside the room is pair of Silver Chain men and a trained hyena guarding the area. Murdus slays the hyena with one blow of the adamantite flail.

A Silver Chain guard whispers, "Dang! So much for training hyenas!"

The other guard shoots a crossbow bolt at Usif, missing. Usif does not miss with his thrown fire; the guard dies. Murdus snatches up the last guard who punch daggers into his ribs in

return – luckily the dagger only stabs into Murdus’ dead cat sarcophagus (worn as a necklace).
Khaled saps the man unconscious.

They loot hand crossbows, some pocket change, anti-toxin 2, silver chains, alchemist fire 2, healing potion 2, holy water 2, and some mundane gear.

It Rubs The Lotion Into Its Skin

The living guard is roused and interrogated.

“We kidnapped her for the Forgotten Pharaohs. We put her in the old sump well room.”

Khaled ties a noose to the man’s neck and orders him, “Take us to her.”

The man does so, leading them back the first hallway and the second door.

Usif asks Khaled, “I thought you said this wasn’t the right door.”

Khaled replies, “Yeah. It’s called the lazy rogue, where they don’t bother covering up their kidnapping drag marks.”

The man points out, “That well over there.”

They find Ptemenib bound and gagged at the bottom of that well. She is retrieved out and her gear is returned to her. Khaled tries not to ogle her while she dresses. Kaseem rejoices at her rescue. Ptemenib draws on Pharasma’s power to heal her wounds and those of her rescuers.

Khaled asks the prisoner questions, “Who’s in charge in your organization?”

“Exrim-Kurnec is the leader. He came in with a bunch of Forgotten Pharaoh guys and took over our group. They’re crazy about masks and finding old stuff in the necropolis.”

“Where are they now?”

He points at a nearby door. The group gets a lot less belligerent and a lot quieter.

“How do you feel about the Fading? Want to join up?” Khaled asks.

“Yes. If you can clear up that problem I had with killing that one Fading guy’s kid.”

Khaled assures the man, “No problem.” He pushes him backward into the well.

They share out and don Forgotten Pharaoh masks, then stride thru the door that has been promised as “the cultists are there”. The room is furnished with ancient furniture, mismatched from many periods. Tapestries cover the walls. A half-finished meal lies on one long table. Four Forgotten Pharaoh cultists stand up from the table.

“Who are you?”

“We bring a message...”

“From Pharaoh Fang...”

“I recognize your masks but I know you are imposters!”

Khaled quick draws a hand crossbow and fires at the leader. Murdus slams one with his ax, discovering that they have magic shields.

Usif sets one on fire, then another cultist sets him on fire with burning hands. Usif bends those flames back on the man, consuming him in flames. A cultist rushes him with shocking grasp, which he evades. Murdus throws a cultist into those shocking grasp; both take the shock. Murdus then chops at the man’s hands and Usif finishes him off with fire.

The leader draws a pair of khopeshes, one bleeding pink dust. He rushes Khaled.

Khaled draws rapier and kukri in reply, announcing, “It’s time to go!” He cuts the man with his kukri and is slashed by the pink khopesh in return – it burns.

Usif asks, “It’s time to go?”

Murdus says, “I think he meant it’s Go Time!”

The cultist leader taunts Khaled, “How do you like my natron fang?” NB: Natron is a pink salt used in mummification.

Khaled uses fancy rapier work to relieve the man of his magical khopesh, but takes a slash from the other khopesh for his trouble. He then pretends to face off, sword to sword, to duel the man and then kills him by throwing a dart into his throat.

They examine the natron fang; it is a magic item, a khopesh made of the pink salt, natron. Murdus is given the sword until a better use is found for it.

Khaled drinks a healing potion. Usif locates blank paper, an inkwell, quill, and copper bird with only three feathers – clearly the magic communication device.

Ptemenib locates her remaining gear in a chest. Khaled locates another chest, locked. It is opened and contains jewelry, small statues, and other valuables (300 gp). The dead men have thieves’ tools, brass funerary masks (3), turquoise stones (9), 12 gp in pocket change, spell components, spell books, and random stuff. The leader has a gold funerary mask.

Usif claims the spells books for sacrificing. Khaled claims several pages for wrapping mummia in.

Operation “Press Onward”

Usif locates a secret door that opens onto an old, dry canal tunnel with rubble on one end. Clearly it is used for smuggling. The secret door is closed.

They investigate other areas of complex. They find a brick making equipment. Eight bunks for the Silver Chain members. A room turned into a makeshift bar – they even find a bottle of *Old Mummy* complete with bandage floating inside. A well turned into a bath. A book titled, “A guide to Osirian Numbers”. Khaled finds drugs – *pesh, dream spider venom, and donkey punch*.

The entire complex is ideal for raiding the necropolis, which is located nearby, and smuggling it out via the canal or the dry canal tunnel. They investigate the doors leading to the complex’s southern areas.

They open a boarded up room to find a cramped room filled with beakers and flasks. The air is heavy with chemical odors. Usif investigates this mummia manufacturing lab. The odor causes his vision to swim, but he still spots a note in the hand of a corpse.

The note says, “Your sect’s efforts will lead to our triumph! Bind the Silver Chain to your will. Use their base to find the Mask inside the necropolis.” It is signed, Narec-Ha-Tet. To Murdus this note means the moment of Hacotep’s resurrection is close. He grinds his teeth.

Operation “Profit”

Khaled asks the others to escort Ptemenib back to the church, while he and the prisoner head out the other way. He will sell the location to the Fading who might loot enough to make a handsome profit.

Khaled takes his Silver Chain friend to a perfume shop where the Fading leadership, a pair of foreigner brothers, can be found. He tells them about the just cleared Silver Chain base and its riches and its mummia lab. And he introduces his new friend... who is promptly drug off to answer for the murder of one foreigner brother's child.

Khaled watches the Silver Chain man get drug off, then continues his sales pitch. In turn they offer to set him up as a Fading lieutenant and he could run the ex-Silver Chain base. They just have to clear it with the boss and introduce the boss to Khaled.

Khaled leaves and walks back to the church.

Operation "Fight Club"

Murdus and Usif successfully escort Ptemenib back to the church. In main yard, they find the high priestess, Sebti, arguing with Noctepshes, the man responsible for summoning the crocodile chimera psychopomps that eat undead. Noctepshes is enthusiastic about summoning more psychopomps to clear out the undead and let the gods take any collateral damage. The other priest points out that the innocent will pay a heavy price as the psychopomps are indiscriminate killers.

Usif and Murdus argue for the high priestess' point of view, which leads to a plan of "mercenaries vs psychopomp fight, winner gets to decide how to unleash psychopomps... upon the general population or not like a giant asshole."

Usif and Murdus agree. A runner is sent to retrieve the giant stoic reaper looking psychopomp from the necropolis gate.

The psychopomp enters the room. His hood and robe fade, revealing a skeleton with bird head with wings and fur. And a really big scythe. Khaled arrives on the scene, just in time to be embroiled in a pointless fight (as he protests repeatedly).

Noctepshes summons several crocodile chimera psychopomps. “We wouldn’t want the numbers to be uneven,” he sasses them.

Ptemenib casts bless on Murdus and whispers, “Psychopomps are vulnerable to adamantine.”

The bird-winged psychopomp rushes Usif, but Khaled throws a tanglefoot bag right onto the creature, which then stops to remove the tangle foot bag goo in his wings. A crocodile type rushes Khaled, who climbs up out of reach on a pillar. The crocopomp, quite a climber, follows him up. He kicks the creature in the face, dropping it right onto Noctepshes. Noctepshes is forced to dismiss the creature or be bitten and clawed.

Murdus smashes the second crocodile creature with his adamantine flail; the creature lies still then fades away. Usif uses a wand of grease to make the bird’s scythe slippery. This allows Murdus to land a vicious flail blow on the creature. And receives a scythe cut in return. Usif hits it with thrown fire, destroying it.

Noctepshes takes his defeat the way he takes success, like a giant douche.

A sense of order is restored and the city benefits.

A meeting is held to discuss the next steps in defeating the undead tide. Ptemenib shares the intelligence she got while investigating the Silver Chain. Unfortunately, she has no solid clues. And Khaled has a hard time concentrating since he continues to picture her naked. Sebti

suggests contacting Unwrapped Harmony and the dark folk inside the necropolis to see if someone or something inside the necropolis is responsible. Ptemenib suggests using the smuggling tunnels in the Veins to get inside.

Sebti tells them about several dozen elegiac compasses hidden inside the necropolis. They detect necromantic energy. She has the locations of five; the others have been lost or destroyed. These devices can be used to triangulate the problem, though she is convinced it is the lamia sisters. The Pharasmin Church often trades with those sisters – they are given atheists corpses for interment and in turn the church ignores their presence.

Usif sums it up with, “We will use the Silver Chain smuggling tunnel to enter the necropolis during the day (Ptemenib nods enthusiastically at that), visit the elegiac compasses to triangulate the problem, and if that falls through visit Unwrapped Harmony for intel on the lamia sisters.”

Khaled wants Usif to draw from his recent memory enough detail to craft a replica of the stolen funerary mask. Usif says, “I can make such an item. I use fire to shape the metals.”

The *natron fang* is identified – it deals extra damage to undead and lesser though still extra damage to incorporeal creatures. It is made from one piece of magically strengthened natron.

Usif’s magic head band is also identified – it gives minor protections, plus if you die while wearing it your head rips off and becomes an undead creature.

Operation “Search and Destroy”

Our heroes rest that night, intent on entering the necropolis in the morning (and light). The city goes from *only unsafe at night* to *generally unsafe during the day*.

In the morning, they re-enter the Silver Chain hideout. A rough review of the warehouse goods is made for useful equipment, but though valuable none is helpful to adventurers. They share a bottle of honeyed wine while walking the dry canal tunnel to the necropolis. The tunnel leads directly into a tomb containing an elegiac device, which has been smashed into copper and bronze junk.

Snakes fill the chamber, blocking their exit via climbing out over a shelf of rock. Usif uses his fire to drive the snakes back and they climb out of the snake pit.

The map provided by Sebti is consulted:

- I – Unwrapped Harmony and the dark folk
- H – Cenotoph Cynic and the lamia sisters
- J – Gaunt Cadaver
- G – Snake Pit and elegiac compass
- Plus four more elegiac compass locations

They avoid the locations near the necropolis gate as the undead are crowding there, looking to get out. They do get close enough to investigate an elegiac compass location inside the "Shiny Bauble", a glass maker's shop turned family mausoleum.

The shop has been looted. The device is missing its inner core. Usif determines that a treasure obsessed dragon took it and slunk back to a sink hole in back yard. He also thinks the

shop was looted by the dragon for the choicest bits. It might be open to trading for precious gems and jewelry.

No one is excited about fighting an ox sized dragon, so Khaled arranges some flashier looking loot for a trade.

The sink hole is fifty feet deep. No one is excited about climbing down, so Usif uses a *whispering wind* scroll to request a parley. The dragon appears at the hole's bottom and quickly flies out. It lands on store turned mausoleum and spreads its wings. It is clearly a crystal dragon.

The female dragon asks, "Who are you?"

"Usif of the fire, Murdus once and future pharaoh, and I, Khaled. We want to trade for the device that was in this building. It will help us quell the undead problem."

"I care not of your undead problems. The device is magical and valuable. You must trade great items for it."

Khaled offers 100gp, then 175gp in gems and jewelry, all placed on a silk sheet. The dragon turns her nose up at that, then finally accepts when Murdus places the natron fang on the silk.

"I am Shardashodd. We have a deal."

She urges them back, snatches up the silk sheet and valuables, then returns quickly with the missing device. She yells back as she departs, "Return here again if you find more to trade."

Usif uses his metal working skills to repair and hook up the device. The compass points at the necropolis' center. And it passes thru two more of the elegiac compass locations, meaning only the fifth site will help narrow down the possibilities.

They enter the streets again, swinging wide past the necropolis gate, to find the fifth compass... in a collapsed building. The compass is ruined. They sift the rubble and Usif finds a *magic lens* that aids in discern reality.

They walk the streets carefully and arrive at the Dark Folk's base of operations. En route they are stalked by something, though only Khalid notices. He sneaks away to counter stalk. He finds Hetshepsut's decayed body, bow in hand, climbing up the side of a short building. He follows her up but is too late, she is taking aim at her – late? - brother. She loosens an arrow that strikes Murdus.

Usif and Murdus quickly spot the pair on a nearby rooftop. They rush to help. Usif stops in the street and throws a burning brand – it hits and sets her dry form on fire.

The undead screams, “You killed me too!” She loosens an arrow that glances off Usif's stolen Forgotten Pharaoh funerary mask.

Khaled cuts her bow string as she curses her poor luck. He leads her several times across the roof and trips her off. And Murdus chops her in twine mid fall. He gathers up the remains and bags them for reburial.

The Dark Folk greet them at the front gate and a short time later announce that Mistress Unwrapped Harmony will see them.

Inside, Harmony greets them. Khaled explains that the undead are a problem and that they need help. Harmony agrees that the undead are a problem.

“My handmaidens saw a strange figure near the Merides bath house arguing with something in a brass cage. The Merides bath house is the collapsed elegiac compass building. And they recovered this scrap of paper that was left behind.” Usif examines it and determines it is a star chart.

“My people have seen these figures, wearing funerary masks, moving about town for some time. Especially near the snake pit. But we do not know where they dwell.” She rattles off a short list of stores, government buildings, and meeting halls where they have been spotted.

They share their map with Harmony, along with their last elegiac compass reading. She identifies two locations where the strangers were seen:

- Observatory of Truth and Wisdom
- Pyramid of Arithmetic Bliss

They decide to visit the compass sitting between these two locations, which will identify the true location. They leave.

They cross paths with four ghouls twenty minutes later. The ghouls are examining a building and turn when Usif lights his burning brand. They skulk toward the living.

Words are exchanged and the ghouls attack. An arrow from Khaled bounces off a ghouls head, Usif destroys one with fire, and Murdus chops on apart. Murdus and Khaled team up on the ghouls that partially paralyzes Usif. The last ghouls proves to tougher, it dodges past Khaled, takes an ax hit from Murdus, and claws viciously at Usif. Khaled dices it apart.

“Who were those guys?”

“They said something about red shoe strings.”

“Oh, the Sunset in Red. They’re a local ghoulish gang, says Harmony.”

Khaled examines the markings that the ghouls were looking at. They discreetly point at another nearby building. They approach that building and quickly notice chemical smells. Khaled gives the secret knock and they are let in.

Operation “Breaking Bad”

Palm Leaf, a member of the Fading, lets them inside. Palm Leaf is dressed in heavy, stained coveralls, a primitive gas mask, and smells unwashed.

He complains, “Our chemist... err, our alchemist is wiggling out. We’re going to have to dirt nap him.”

“Do you want me to talk to him?”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.”

“How about something to eat? “

“Yeah, yeah, yeah.” He spoons up some thick stew served on flat bread. Everything tastes of chemicals which are barely covered by the heavy spices.

“Have you seen anything weird?”

“Yeah, guys in funerary masks keep coming and going thru the snake pit. And some guy in a gold mask went into the Pyramid.”

A voice hisses from the darkness, “Is that meat ready yet?” The group turns to face the voice and can barely make out a figure standing just behind a beaded curtain.

Khaled takes him a plate of meat and asks, “Hey, can you tell another group’s product by trying it?”

The man takes both the meat plate and the envelope of mummia. He snorts the mummia and quickly identifies it as, “Alahser the Learned, a Fading alchemist, made it.” He snarls thru his meal of meat, then turns back to his lab. Khaled stabs him at that moment, making this his last meal.

The alchemist ghoul pulls a bomb, which Khaled stabs. It goes off in both of their faces. The alchemist dies and the lab does not explode... or catch fire.

Palm Leaf waits for Usif to clear the fire and smoke, then enters the lab to determine how much mummia went up the alchemist’s nose. The alchemist’s personal treasure includes some poisons, which are claimed by Khaled. His alchemist recipe book is also pocketed.

End of the Session

- Bonds
 - No one has a resolved bond.
- Alignments
 - *Almost everyone fulfills their alignments by stealing, defending the weak, and endangering themselves to heal others.*

- Did you learn something new and interesting about the world (Yes/No)?
 - *The necropolis dragon, the elegiac compasses, smuggler tunnels, and more.*
- Did you overcome a notable enemy (Yes/No)? *Multiple psychopomps.*
- Did you loot a notable treasure (Yes/No)? *Natron Fang*

Usif levels to 6th.