

THE DEATH OF THE MYSTERY MEN

This is a special adventure created for GenCon 2018. It determines the fate of the Mystery Men, whether they remain a factor within the Nile Empire after the death of Dr. Frest or they are eliminated to make way for new heroes. It also offers the first look at an alliance between High Lords. This is a Beta Clearance adventure, and the appropriately leveled Mystery Men themselves are included so you can play as the survivors looking for the rest of their team. At the end of the adventure there's a survey so the GM can record the choices players made, and those choices will be referenced in the game line going forward!

PLOT SYNOPSIS

It's near the end of the first year of the Possibility War. Dr. Frest is gone, and Dr. Mobius has started targeting the rest of the Mystery Men to eliminate them one by one. He's found a pocket reality and learned more about his own origin and how it relates to The Egypt That Never Was—but more than that it's a reality without the Law of Inevitable Return.

He's caught several Mystery Men and entombed them in this dangerous place, and carefully set a trap to lead the rest—or some equally powerful and troublesome heroes into the same doom. And he's brought in a powerful ally to make certain things go his way this time!

SCENE ONE: ON THE TRAIL

Standard Scene. El Alamein Zone, Nile Empire Dominant. Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

This all started when the Yellow Crab was on the trail of something, a stela that wasn't connected to the current network. It had been spotted at a dig in Rashid at the fort garrisoned there. He went to investigate and didn't return. Colonel Cairo and the others went to find out what happened and also haven't returned.

Now you're the only ones left to crack this mystery and rescue the others! Given the disappearance of such powerful figures this mission is rated Beta Clearance, and the



The seaside fortress is a mixture of old ruins and new construction.

Delphi Council recommends extreme caution. Investigate the stelae and disappearances and report back. If this team also disappears the investigation will be classified as a deathtrap and closed permanently, so no further rescues are coming.

Come back alive!

GETTING THERE

The heroes are currently in Alexandria, and there are two easy options for getting to the site. They may drive one or more automobiles along the coastal road into the city of Rashid, or charter a

boat from one port to the other. Either way the journey is only a few hours, and there's no trouble along either route so long as the characters take minimal precautions to keep a low profile. The dig site isn't visible from the highway, but it can be seen from the sea—along with the large cannons of the fortress there!

FORT RASHID

The most important thing about Rashid is the Nile Empire fort nearby. The team might investigate around town for information, take to the water to get a first hand look, or even try to bluster their

way inside. Here are a few possible methods of gather information and what they find.

An *evidence analysis* test in the city records (DN 12) uncovers supply requisitions that give a good idea of how many troops are there and the fact that construction and reinforcement is ongoing.

A *streetwise* or *persuasion* test (DN 12) could discover off-duty Shocktroopers in town for some rest and relaxation, and convince them to let slip how many other are at the fort and what they've been working on.

An *intimidation* test (DN 12) might force information out of a reluctant member of the fort's crew. The tricky part is capturing a guard or patrol without putting the whole base on alert.

A Hard (DN 14) *scholar* test reveals that this fort is has been abandoned and rebuilt multiple times throughout the centuries. During the Napoleonic Wars it was named Fort Julien, and it's where the famous Rosetta Stone was found.

A standard (DN 10) *stealth* test gets close enough to observe the troops and construction directly without alerting anyone. With a boat and binoculars a test isn't even required—however getting too close may prompt the fort's Eye of Ra to fire!

Regardless of how they get information, the fort turns out to be little more than a hill, some ruins, and an Eye of Ra mounted in a turret on the main battlement. The fort's purpose is to watch for encroachments from the Mediterranean Sea, this turret is one of many that can be turned against approaching Core Earth forces.

A low wall surrounds the fort with a gate large enough for trucks to pass through. Two squads of 20 Shocktroopers are stationed here, led by a reality-rated commander. The troops split their time between watches aimed more towards the sea than the land around the fort, manual labor reinforcing and improving the buildings, and resting in the barracks inside the main building.

There's a lot of new work where the older building has been extended, generators installed, and the battlements reinforced. Most of the material used for construction is stone from the site itself, reusing the ruins of the previous versions of the fort. Whether through a stealthy heist or a frontal

assault it's also clear that they'll have to get inside to find any more clues about whatever brought the other Mystery Men here.

- Nile Empire Shocktroopers (40): see page 9.

- Nile Empire Shocktrooper Officer: see page 9.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

The main building of the fort has three levels. The lowest is a barracks. The upper floor is dedicated to the operation of the Eye of Ra. The middle floor is where the offices are, and going through the papyrus here gives the clues to what happened and where the Mystery Men went next.

There's plenty of evidence that the commander and all of the men are new transfers to this fort, the original garrison was wiped out when the Mystery Men came through. The heroes clearly weren't captured, they found something that led them somewhere else.

Digging a little deeper into the paperwork or questioning any prisoners reveals that the garrison found something interesting while excavating the older ruins to salvage stone blocks for the fort. It was an object from the Egypt That Never Was while doing improvements, and Pharaoh Mobius demanded the artifact be sent to Wadi El Natrun.

Wadi El Natrun is a small desert town off the El Alamein highway with little in the way of facilities, and there's no indication why the Pharaoh would be interested in it at all, much less why he would demand an important archeological find by sent there.

There is some information available on the object that was found: it was a stela resembling the Nile Empire's, but far older and with a separate reality signature. It was covered in Coptic writings from Core Earth, the form found on Terra, and the different, more difficult to read form found in sites from the Egypt That Never Was. There's nothing in Rashid that says what was on those writings.

SCENE TWO: WADI EL NATRUN

Standard Scene. Wadi El Natrun is barely a stop off the highway. There's a fuel station, a few places to eat, and some industrial buildings that seem little more than warehouses. A *streetwise* test (DN 10) uncovers rumors of a group of masked heroes heading into the Syrian monastery in town but not coming out, and also of a caravan of trucks delivering something large to a building out by Abou Jiyad lake.

The trucks were taking the stela to a secret lab, but that's not where the Mystery Men went—or if they did they went to the monastery after.

There are only two locations of interest in the town: the lab by Abou Jiyad and the Syrian monastery which contains the Gate of Prophecies. Even without *streetwise* just poking around the small town the heroes are bound to bump into the monastery. It's quite easy to go straight into the monastery without discovering the truth about the stela in the lab.

THE LAB

The lab is a rather unassuming industrial building on a street near a small, heavily alkali lake. It's locked (*lockpicking* -4 or *Strength* DN 18) but not under guard from the outside. In fact, the entire building is eerily quiet with only 20 *Gospog* of the Second Planting inside.

There are no windows in the lab and the *gospog* are motionless until intruders breach the lab. Once the door opens or any disruption occurs they draw their rifles and attack.

• **Gospog of the Second Planting (20):** see page 8.

Once the *gospog* are evaded or defeated there's little else but a hermetically sealed chamber with the discovered stela inside. Anyone who speaks Egyptian can read the hieroglyphs themselves, otherwise translations are available in the files strewn around outside.

The inscription describes a dynasty of ancient reality raiders called the Golden Kingdom. Their empire expanded into another cosm now known as Terra, where they battled for centuries before masked rebels eventually defeated them. The survivors fled here hoping to restart the empire anew, but this place was under the protection of the Akashans at the time. Thus, they realized they must be in the penultimate epoch foretold beyond the Gate of Prophecies, where the Golden Kingdom would lie dormant until its final rise.

No test is needed to find evidence that there's a place in this very town, the Syrian monastery, known for having paneled door called the Gate of Prophecies.

THE GATE OF PROPHECIES

The Syrian monastery stands out thanks to its Christian trappings. Before the war it was a minor tourist attraction, with its main attraction being a door with carvings that supposedly depict the rise and future of the Christian faith.

Heroes expecting trouble may be disappointed. There are no signs of struggle within the church, and everything seems to be intact. The priests do say that masked men barged in a few days ago, demanded to see the Gate of Prophecies, and then disappeared. They're happy to show the investigators to the same spot so they can investigate the door themselves.

The Coptic Priest caretakers seem to be fine—but they are secretly Amaatist priests who have replaced the originals. They may slip up and be discovered if a suspicious hero starts quizzing them: they aren't Syrian, don't know Christian doctrine, and know little about the artifact they are guarding beyond what's in their own tourist brochures.

If discovered they get down on their knees and beg for mercy from the heroes. Pharaoh Mobius instructed them to maintain the church and care for the gate—not the door—but he didn't offer explanations as to why.



Whether guided by the caretakers or not, it doesn't take long to find the "Gate of Prophecies," which supposedly refers to an ivory inlaid door showing seven epochs of Christianity, but actually refers to a stone portal underneath the sanctuary hidden directly behind that door. A Hard (DN 14) *find* test discovers the secret passage down winding stairs to a small alcove with the carved gateway.

Here there's a closed, magical portal opened by completing a Dramatic Skill Resolution within the standard five rounds:

- **Step A:** A DN 14 Mind test—any skill adds in ancient Egyptian count—as the Storm Knight studies the symbols on the gateway.
- **Step B:** A DN 14 reality test as the gateway awakens and reacts to the presence of a reality-rated user.
- **Step C:** ADN 16 reality test to focus the gate's energies.
- **Step D:** A DN 18 reality test to finally open the portal and discover what's on the other side.

If completed successfully everyone in the chamber is transported to somewhere else, referred to in this adventure as **Tombspace**. They know the contents of the alcove will return back to the Nile Empire with a single mental push from the Storm Knight who completed Step D. If the Dramatic Skill Resolution failed everyone in the alcove is still teleported to Tombspace, but now the trip may only be reversed after completing the same Dramatic Skill Resolution—or five rounds later after failing.

SCENE THREE: TOMBSPACE

Dramatic Scene. Null Zone. Anyone in the chamber when the Dramatic Skill Resolution was completed appears in an identical alcove set within a much larger underground chamber. Be generous here! If a Storm Knight specifically wanted to remain outside they know only that their fellows have disappeared. Allow them to initiate the same Dramatic Skill Resolution to join the others, but



Mobius is here to handle this situation personally.

note that sends anyone in the alcove back once completed.

Reality is strange here. Although nothing is contradictory in this place, there are no World Laws in effect. Any characters with unspent Cosm Cards immediately lose them, and gain one Possibility instead.

The Storm Knights sense that they aren't on Core Earth or even Terra. This must be a pocket dimension of some kind. There's a large pool in the center where stars reflect despite there being no sky. There are simple sarcophagi lining the walls, a more ornate tomb at the far end, and (make a fear test at -4) Mobius himself.

The ornate tomb seems to contain a Terran foe of the ancient invasion there. His name has been forgotten, and Mobius states to the newcomers:

"Here it is. True, everlasting death: to be forgotten. This shall be the fate of the Mystery Men," he gestures around to the tombs, "and to those who come seeking them! Buried alive for eternity in a place where heroes don't come back."

Five of the sarcophagi show signs they were recently opened, a clear sign that they likely contain the missing Mystery Men. Mobius is ready for a fight, and with his One Step Ahead Special Ability he should always get the first action. He has a raygun he can tune to any of the types of Rays. He starts with a Freeze Ray unless one of the heroes has a specific weakness he can exploit. When his inevitable Setback comes this raygun overheats and explodes.

Mobius is wistful and philosophical during this encounter. This place speaks to the scientist in him. He's curious about its greater ramifications, and happy to talk about what he's discovered with only the slightest prompting.

Mobius believes this is a remnant of a different reality, one that invaded Terra and perhaps Core Earth long ago. He has discovered his own ancestors were reality raiders of a sort and finds it fascinating that he has somehow become the scion of their unknown legacy. Destiny perhaps? He finds the notion mildly distasteful, preferring to believe he makes his own destiny rather than following some path laid out for him by fate.

He believes the Egypt That Never Was is a phantom of these ancient raider's Cosm, the Golden Kingdom, exhumed by the axiom wash of Terran reality across so much Possibility Energy—hence the artifacts of a third history unrelated to known events from Core Earth or Terra.

He'll also point to carvings on the walls describing the Epochs of the Golden Kingdom both past and future: it's early dynasty unified by the first Pharaoh, a long period where it was torn asunder by internal squabbles, an era of conquest across other worlds, an epoch where it lay dormant and defeated, and then a last, troubling phase to come where it will rise again—at the end of creation. These are the same phases described by the Gate of Prophecies back on Earth, only seemingly related to rise and fall of Christianity.

Mobius goes about the business of destroying the heroes while he speaks. He wants the heroes KOed to be placed in stone tombs like the others—left in the dark to go mad and eventually be forgotten. Or just be killed, he isn't picky at this point. He's a little forlorn that he won't have the chance to drain their energy with his Omegatron, but the heroes have been thorns in his side for too long and he needs to accelerate his plans.

He doesn't attempt to bring in any reinforcements via dimthread. He already has someone far better than a minion to support him if things slip out of control.

RESCUING THE FALLEN

A DN 18 Strength test pries open a sarcophagus. The ones that contain heroes are obvious, any others opened are empty. The missing Mystery Men are inside, near death and comatose. No effort to revive them has any effect here in Tombospace, only once they're brought back to the Nile Empire do they show any signs of recovery.

The last to be found is always the Yellow Crab, and he's quite dead.

Mobius isn't content to let the Storm Knights exhume his victims and battles them every step of the way.

DEFEATING A HIGH LORD?!

If the Storm Knights manage to trigger Mobius' Second Wind, deal him a Wound, or if either side draws a Setback a new foe emerges from the pool in the center of the room: Baruk Kaah!

Mobius greets his ally:

"At last! Help me finish these interlopers just as we dispatched the others, and you shall have the reality bombs you desire!"

The Tyrant Lizard doesn't have much to add to the conversation, preferring to speak with his spear instead.

ESCAPE AND AFTERMATH

Defeating one High Lord, let alone two, shouldn't be the goal here. The Storm Knight's main objective is to escape back through the alcove alive—no mean feat! A Martyr card buys time to get away, but not much more!

If they succeeded at the initial Dramatic Skill Resolution to transport to the Tombspace then escape can be triggered when desired, but anyone not inside the space matching the alcove is left behind.

Neither High Lord follows the heroes back to the Syrian monastery. If no one is left conscious and fighting in Tombspace the encounter is over. No further attempts to activate the gate work, and anyone on the wrong side is gone for good.

THREATS

(Δ) HIGH LORD MOBIUS

Attributes: Charisma 16, Dexterity 15, Mind 18, Spirit 17, Strength 14

Skills: Air vehicles 18, dodge 20, energy weapons 20, faith 22, find 23, fire combat 20, intimidation 22, land vehicles 20, maneuver 20, melee weapons 20, persuasion 21, reality 24, scholar 23, science 28, stealth 20, taunt 21, trick 24, unarmed combat 20, water vehicles 18, willpower 22

Move: 15; **Tough:** 17 (3); **Shock:** 19; **Wounds:** 5

Equipment: .455 Webley revolver (Damage 14), was scepter, cowl (grants +3 Full Body armor).

Perks: Amaatist Hem-Netjur, Flight, Forcefield,

Gadgeteer, Gizmos, Miracles (all Amaatist and Hem-Netjer miracles), Trademark Weapon (Webley revolver), Weird Scientist

Possibilities: 10

Special Abilities:

- **Apophis:** Mobius' Darkness Device allows him to use the Negation Perk. If he Negates a Negation a reality storm breaks out between the two characters as though he had the Storm Caller Perk—see Torg Eternity.

- **Curse of Amat-Ra:** Once per scene, Doctor Mobius suffers a Setback. This occurs on the first Mishap or on the seventh round, whichever comes first.

- **Dimthreads:** The High Lord may use Apophis' dimthreads to teleport himself away from or reinforcements to his location. His overconfidence prompts him to ignore this ability until he has suffered 2 Wounds.

- **Dread:** While Mobius is present, any Standard Scene counts as a Dramatic Scene instead.

- **Everything Is Going According to My Design:** If Doctor Mobius performs a successful Approved Action, he discards a Destiny card of his choice from each of the affected player characters' Action Pools.

- **Minions:** Mobius may transfer any hit to a lackey within a few meters if he succeeds at a reality test.

- **One Step Ahead:** Mobius may spend 1 Possibility to act before the heroes if the villains would move second according to the current Drama Card.

- **Second Wind:** The first time Doctor Mobius would be KO'ed he instead recovers all Shock and gains 10 Possibilities from Apophis.

GOSPOG OF THE 2ND PLANTING

Attributes: Charisma 5, Dexterity 11, Mind 7, Spirit 10, Strength 9

Skills: Dodge, 12, find 8, fire combat 14, trick (10), unarmed combat 13, willpower 12

Move: 11; **Tough:** 9; **Shock:** —; **Wounds:** —

Equipment: KK81 rifle (Damage 14)

Perks: —

Possibilities: Never

Special Abilities:

- **Claws:** Damage Strength + 2 (11)

• **Fear:** Gospog of the 2nd Planting appear to be mummies. The first time a character encounters a gospog in an act, he must make a *willpower* or *Spirit* test or become Very Stymied.

• **Mindless:** Gospog are immune to *intimidation* and *taunt* interactions and telepathic powers.

• **Relentless:** Gospog ignore Shock.

• **Synchronized:** Apply any bonus from a Combined Action to damage, as well as the attack itself, when multiple gospog attack a single target.

• **Undead:** Gospog are immune to poison and other effects that require breathing, eating, or other "living" processes..

NILE EMPIRE SHOCKTROOPER

Attributes: Charisma 6, Dexterity 7, Mind 7, Spirit 8, Strength 8

Skills: Beast riding 8, dodge 8, find 8, fire combat 8, first aid 8, heavy weapons 8, intimidation 9, land vehicles 8, maneuver 8, melee weapons 8, streetwise 8, survival 8, taunt 7, trick 8

Move: 7; **Tough:** 8; **Shock:** 8; **Wounds:** —

Equipment: Short sword (*Strength* +2/10), MP-40 (Damage 13, Short Burst, Range 10/25/40)

Perks: —

Possibilities: Rare (2)

Special Abilities: —

SHOCKTROOPER OFFICER

Attributes: Charisma 9, Dexterity 8, Mind 9, Spirit 10, Strength 8

Skills: Air vehicles 11 (air force only), beast riding 10 (army only), dodge 10, faith 11, find 10, intimidation 12, fire combat 10, first aid 10, heavy weapons 9, land vehicles 10, maneuver 9, melee weapons 10, missile weapons 9, persuasion 12, reality 11, survival 10, streetwise 11, taunt 11, trick 10, unarmed combat 10, water vehicles 11 (navy only), willpower 12

Move: 8; **Tough:** 8; **Shock:** 10; **Wounds:** 1

Equipment: KK08 pistol (Damage 13), KK81 rifle (Damage 14), Khopesh (*Strength* +2/10)

Perks: Lead from the Front, Rally

Possibilities: 2

Special Abilities: —

(Δ) HIGH LORD BARUK KAAH

Attributes: Charisma 12, Dexterity 18, Mind 11, Spirit 18, Strength 18

Skills: Beast riding 23, dodge 27, faith 26, find 18, intimidation 25, maneuver 25, melee weapons 28, missile weapons 23, persuasion 17, reality 23, stealth 23, survival 16, taunt 19, tracking 16, trick 18, unarmed combat 26, willpower 23

Move: 18; **Tough:** 22 (4); **Shock:** 18; **Wounds:** 5

Equipment: Rec Pakken

Perks: Bolster, Miracles, Relentless, Spirit Bane, Star Eyes, Vehemence, Vengeful, Whip Tail

Possibilities: 10

Special Abilities:

• **Armor:** Stone skin +4.

• **Bite/Claws:** Damage *Strength* +2 (20).

• **Dimthreads:** The High Lord may use a dimthread to teleport himself away or bring reinforcements to his location. He usually refuses to use this ability until he has suffered three Wounds.

• **Dread:** While the Saar is present, any Standard Scene counts as a Dramatic Scene instead.

• **Fear:** Kaah exudes an aura of menace and terror. Test *willpower* or *Spirit* or become Very Stymied.

• **Large:** Kaah stands over three meters tall; attacks against him gain a +2 bonus.

• **Lightning Speed:** The Saar may spend one Possibility to take a second turn in a round.

• **Living Tornado:** Kaah may strike up to eight adjacent foes without suffering Multi-Target penalties.

• **Rec Pakken:** As a spear deals *Strength* +5 (23) damage, AP 10. Any *reality*-rated character hit by Rec Pakken must make a Near Impossible (DN 20) *reality* test or lose one Possibility. Each round Kaah chooses whether to gain *taunt* (40) or *trick* (40) as a defense from the spear.

• **Rejuvenation:** Baruk Kaah recovers all Wounds at the end of each scene.

• **Second Wind:** The first time Kaah would be KO'ed he instead recovers all Shock and gains another 10 Possibilities from Rec Pakken.

ADVENTURE RESULTS

WHICH HEROES WENT AFTER THE MISSING MYSTERY MEN?

WHICH MYSTERY MEN WERE RESCUED FROM TOMBSpace?

DID THE HEROES VISIT THE LAB?

DID MOBIUS GET A CHANCE TO TALK ABOUT HIS LINEAGE?

WAS BARUK KAAH REVEALED?

WAS MOBIUS DEFEATED?

WAS BARUK KAAH DEFEATED?

WHO WAS LEFT BEHIND IN TOMBSpace?

GM:

PLAYERS: