

GAME SESSION 96: INSIDE THE DEATH STONE – 1

(This Ravenloft game was played April 2nd, 2023. Everybody is present except JF and Philippe)

DM design note: new session title, as we enter a new part of the campaign, after the fun Borca intrigue arc. As a suite of the Borca adventures (they are asked by Ivana to go to Har'Akir to investigate on the Deathstone), the following sessions are based on Touch of Death (adapted to fit my campaign. I kept the Isu / Senmet parts, most of the sequence of night events, ending with the Tomb of Pharaoh part, but I changed the end to have the players more involved – it will be a boss fight ending with Senmet and Isu instead).

As I like to mix things up, in the middle of the Har Akir stay, my preferred ~~nazis~~, err, Falkovnians, will find a pyramid. This search is lead by Nebta-Kufre, an evil NPC they learned about from their recent adventures in Falkovnia, when they saved Al-Wawat and his family. I will also insert two Pathfinder adventures, the Pact Stone Pyramid and Entombed with the Pharaohs. Both are based on Pathfinder's Four Pharaohs (that happened 10 000 years ago, way before Anhktepot), and are merged into a dangerous dungeon crawl.

July 17, 748

Meanwhile, Austizel and Macrazbunare stayed at the Tephu library to copy spells: *blink* and *deep slumber*.

The heroes leave the temple around 3 p.m., after their discussion with Isu. It's the peak of the heat and hardly anybody is seen in the village until they reach Al-Wawat's house.

There, they see the vistani are ready to leave. Dulcimae explains that they feel too many people are hostile to them, and there are kids throwing rocks at the vardo. So they are moving their camp just outside the village's walls.

DM note: so the ToD sequences can happen. :)

The heroes then enter the house and discuss. Later, around six p.m., Austizel and Macrazbunare are back from the library. They say they have finished copying the spells. They add that Amehemoft and Kemat-Tii are planning to stay late to study a last pile of documents.

They know the open market is usually open in the morning, but they decide to go there to see if there are rumors to be picked. Indeed, most of the stalls in the market are closed at this hour, but there are three that are open: one making tea and pastries, another for coffee and a third is barbecuing lamb. They decide to eat supper there.

There are about a dozen customers, separated into two groups. The first appear quite hostile to the heroes, but the other one waves at Al-Wawat and invites the group to share a meal and talk.

The folk of Muhar are small, brown-skinned people. Their faces are weathered and lined by the desert climate. They wear loose, white robes and burnouses to keep the heat at bay. The burnouse can be drawn across the face when the wind stirs the sand.

The akiri asks where the heroes are from, and Varadan answers (he has the akiri language scarab and explains that the other heroes do not speak akiri). Both sides are eager to know more about the other's culture.

At one point, one of the men warns Al-Wawat: he says that about half of the Muhar people want the PCs sacrificed to the gods as they believe the murders are a punishment handed down upon Muhar by Osiris, the god of the dead. They believe that an offering will appease Osiris and stop the killings.

The other half see the people as the god's answer to the murders: these villagers want the heroes to try and stop the killings.

Since about the last month, every few nights, someone from the village is kidnapped and taken into the desert. Nobody has ever seen what manner of man or beast is responsible. Some believe it is the god Osiris walking the land in human form, others believe that it is the dead pharaoh Anhktepot. Now, when the villagers hear a scream in the middle of the night, they hide away in their homes until daylight as they fear becoming the next victim.

If a body is found, and many are not, it is a dried-out husk, as if all the water had been sucked out of it. There are no visible wounds, but the face of the corpse is locked in an expression of horror. The corpses that are found are half-buried in the sand. There is no particular place where most of the corpses are found. Corpses which have been located are given a proper burial at the temple, according to the customs of Muhar.

At this point, the hostile group leaves, and some of them spit on the ground, a sign of disrespect.

They talk about the Falkovnians: they come to the village once every 3-4 days, to buy supplies and hire as many people as they can to dig in the desert.

The heroes ask more about Anhktepot, and Al-Wawat tells the following tale. The other locals agree at key points, it seems like a well-known akiri story.

The pharaoh Anhktepot ruled centuries ago in the land of Har'Akir. This nation encompassed a very large region. According to our beliefs, the pharaoh is the link between man and the gods. The pharaoh is himself a god of this land. The pharaohs ruled by the divine grace of Ra, the sun god.

Anhktepot greatly feared death. It was known that when a pharaoh dies, he becomes a servant of Ra in the underworld, exalted above all other servants. But for some unknown reason, Anhktepot did not want to die. Anhktepot commanded his priests to find a way for him to cheat death. Many slaves and prisoners died horribly as subjects in Anhktepot's gruesome experiments in immortality.

Tora: this is similar to the Fordstone history (session 37)? And Fordstone was from Borca?

DM note: no links!

Frustrated by his lack of success, the pharaoh had several temples burned and razed. He stalked into the Husek Kah temple, greatest priest in all of Har'Akir, and cursed the gods for not granting him his heart's desire. Ra answered Anhktepote. He told the pharaoh that when he died, he would live, though he might wish otherwise. However, for cursing the gods, Anhktepote would suffer eternally. Ra did not say how this curse would be manifest.

Anhktepote left the temple elated but confused. He still did not know how to cheat death. That night, when he touched Nephyr, his wife, and she died instantly! Everyone he touched that night died. His wife, several of his servants, and his eldest child all died by his hand.

Anhktepote soon understood that after the sun left the sky, his touch was death. So long as Ra shone upon him, he was safe. But once he was no longer under the sun's watchful eye, whomever he touched died horribly.

According to our customs, Anhktepote's wife and child were mummified and entombed in great buildings in the desert. The funerals took over a week. Shortly after the final ceremony of his wife's funeral, he was visited in the night. A mummy wrapped in funeral linens entered his chambers. By the vestments he knew it was Nephyr. Unable to speak, the mummy tried to embrace Anhktepote. Horrified, he screamed for her to leave him forever, which she did. Nephyr walked into the desert and was never seen again.

Anhktepote was also visited by the mummified bodies of other people he had killed. He came to understand that he controlled them utterly. The mummies did his every bidding. He used their power and his own deadly touch to tighten the reins of his evil power over Har'Akir.

He killed many priests, making them into his undead slaves. Occasionally he would find one of his mummies destroyed, burned from the inside out. Some scholars believe Nephyr was responsible for the destruction of Anhktepote's mummies, but no one knows the true answer.

One day, the priests rebelled against Anhktepote and murdered him in his sleep. As he was still the pharaoh - a god and blessed by the gods, the priests gave him a funereal befitting his station. Shortly after the funereal, the Walls of Ra appeared cutting us off from the rest of Har'Akir.

DM note: Har'Akir became an island in the mists.

Before that, Har'Akir' land was much larger in all directions. All that remains is Muhar, a patch of desert and the tomb of Anhktepote. All of this happened many generations ago.

Occasionally the villagers say they have seen the mummified body of Anhktepot staggering across the sand dunes. They blame most of their ill luck on him and use his name to frighten small children.

Then the heroes discuss: are the Falkovnians trying to find the tomb of Anhktepot? No, Varadan says, Udjebet said they are trying to find the pyramid of the Four pharaohs.

At this, Al-Wawat, hearing this for the first time, is surprised. He says "The Four Pharaohs are legendary! They were active a long time ago, maybe 10 000 years ago! The Four Pharaohs of Ascension, as they were called, were renowned for the mythic pact in which they at last ended their violent feud, joined forces, and presided over a period of legendary prosperity."

Al-Wawat suggests that the heroes should ask Amehemofit about the Four Pharaohs, as the scholar will be able to tell them a more complete story.

8 p.m. The locals say it's getting late, and because of the many disappearances, people like to be home early ...

They say goodbye to their new akiri friends and go back to Al-Wawat's house and sleep there.

July 18, 748

The heroes cast *endure elements* on themselves.

9 a.m. they go to the open market and see a small group of people have gathered around one akiri. They get there and listen. They learn that the man, Heru, is a farmer who wanted to check on his fields at night as some wild animal rampaged parts of it the other night. His tale:

I had just left the city walls when I saw a lone figure illuminated by the moonlight. It was a man wrapped in strips of linen funeral wrappings! Stray ends of the cloth fluttered in the breeze. The creature moves a step or two toward me and its movements were stiff-legged and awkward. The smell of death and sickness mingled with the sickly sweet scent of spices. Then, a whispery voice, like sand in the wind, told me "Go away". I ran back home!



Some akiri are in fear and they think Anhktepot is again walking the desert! "He is not asleep anymore! We should sacrifice something to appease him!" Some look at the heroes menacingly...

They inquire if someone has vanished last night: negative.

At 10 a.m., they are at the library to meet Amehemof and Kemat-Tii. Their eyes are red, and the heroes think they must have spent a large part of the night reading old tomes instead of sleeping.

But they appear to have found information on the Deathstone: in front of Kemat-Tii is a large open book, showing the drawing of something very similar to the mysterious stone in Ivana's cellar!



They appear very excited about their findings. Amehemof starts:

These artifacts were created millennia ago. A powerful sorcerer whose civilization was troubled by the undead decided to create a receptacle that would forever keep the dark souls of malefactors imprisoned, so that they could not rise again to plague the living. The stone was created to hold up to 1,999 souls, at which point they buried it and created a new Deathstone.

Fascinating detail: the sorcerer found that a Deathstone powder can induce physical transformation, but into what, we didn't find anything about it. Given the nature of the Deathstone, we guess it is somewhat poisonous or necromantic?

The heroes remember the Deathstone in Ivana's cellar has been grated as with a lime, and that some shards were also taken from the stone. Varadan says that it could be how the ermordenungs were created?

Amehemof continues:

Also, shards chipped from the Deathstone can be fashioned into weapons known as Deathstone daggers. Each of these weapons is the equivalent of an unholy dagger. The soul of any person killed by a Deathstone dagger is trapped within the Deathstone!

Also, anyone slain while in direct contact with the Deathstone has his soul drawn into it. We suppose many executions of criminals were made while the criminal touched the stone. There were perhaps other ways to fill the Deathstone, but we haven't found more information.

Then Amehemof turns to Kemat-Tii and asks her to tell the last part she found early this morning.

But this is a very dangerous item to manipulate, Kemat-Tii says. Should a 2,000th soul ever be trapped within the Deathstone, it would shatter, and every soul inside is released as an angry spectre that immediately seeks to slay any living being it encounters. The ancient scrolls also reveal that when it is near full, it releases a warning with the voices of the slains...

The heroes thank the scholars for their research, and they are quite surprised about these new findings.

“OK, then... err... who will tell Ivana?”

Varadan says he will tell her this important information. He understands Ivana probably did not tell them everything (she probably uses the grinded powder and/or the daggers). He fears Ivana has made Deathstone daggers and that she might be slowly filling the Deathstone with souls ... He is quite sure she has no idea of the fact the stone can eventually be filled to capacity, with terrible results if it ever does. If 2,000 specters are freed from the stone, they think all Levkarest's inhabitants would be killed, and possibly the whole of Borca.

They ask Amehemot if there is information on how many souls were kept in a typical Deathstone, before it was buried for oblivion. He doesn't know, but suggests that given the deadly consequences, someone with wisdom would stop using the artifact way before it was filled, to keep a good safety margin?

They then discuss the Muhar murders. Al-Wawat tells Amehemot that he did share Anhktepote's tale with the heroes yesterday night.

Amehemot adds the following to Al-Wawat's tale.

Some documents say that Anhktepote served three generations of pharaohs as high priest. When the second pharaoh died, her unworthy son ascended to the throne. The new pharaoh quickly became unpopular among the people and priests. Seeking a remedy for this, Anhktepote came to believe that the gods wanted another to take the pharaoh's place, one with knowledge of rule and the deities' blessing.

So on the day of the ritual that would consecrate the pharaoh's connection with the gods, Anhktepote rallied his loyal priests and murdered their liege. Anhktepote then swiftly took his place as Pharaoh and became a god.

But he feared death. Because when we die, we are judged by the gods. Maybe he feared the wrath of Ra should the sun god discover that Anhktepote had been an illegitimate pharaoh.

Then Al-Wawat asks his friend to share more about the Four Pharaohs. He also tells Amehemot that the heroes learned that the Falkovnians are digging for the Four Pharaoh pyramid. The old scholar and his apprentice are surprised of that. Amehemot tells the tale of the Four Pharaohs:

They are legendary pharaohs of an era about 10 000 years ago. The Four Pharaohs of Ascension were renowned for the mythic pact in which they at last ended their violent feud, joined forces, and presided over a period of legendary prosperity.

The Four Pharaohs of Ascension were Anok Fero the Cerulean Pharaoh, Hetshepsu the Fiend Pharaoh, Ankana the Radiant Pharaoh, and the Pharaoh of Numbers, whose true name has been lost to time. Although each pharaoh brought different strengths to the alliance, each was the equal of the other.

Together these four god-kings ushered in an age characterized not only by long lost technological and magical advancement, but unprecedented military conquest. Har'Akir territory was by then at its largest.

Legends state that the four pharaohs were only able to set their mutual distrust aside and ally with one another after they magically bound their fates together in a solemn pact that rendered any further attacks against one another suicide. It involved an item called the Pact Stone.

Amenhemoft also knows that one pharaoh died from an incurable disease and dragged the others to their deaths by the very pact that was once the secret to their success. Although several theories still circulate to this day, it was never known what disease brought down this pharaoh.

Scholars believe that if the fabled Pact Stone were to be located and destroyed, the three pharaohs who were once compelled to die by their pact would be freed from their oaths and would resume the remainder of their natural lives. Only the fourth pharaoh, the one who supposedly succumbed to disease, would remain lost. Amenhemoft believes that if three of the Four Pharaohs were to return, the golden reign of pharaohs would begin again.

Ahn'Selota (the name of the fabled Pact Stone Pyramid) has never been found. Reliable information on Ahn'Selota is almost impossible to come by. In order to protect the secrets within the pyramid, the Four Pharaohs made it a crime to record the pyramid's location in writing. It is said that ordinary citizens were forbidden to even speak of the pyramid's existence, even though it may have rested in the very center of their city!

Scholars have virtually no information as to where the Pact Stone came from or how it was made. Some have theorized that the source of the Four Pharaohs' pact magic was inspired by dark magic originating from the planet Aucturn. Aucturn was intensely studied by the Pharaoh of Numbers, an astronomer and an architect with talents centuries ahead of his time.

The heroes are not familiar with planets and Amenhemoft explains quickly what a planet is.

Aucturn is the eleventh planet from the sun. Although large, it is quite distant and the slow-orbiting body is rarely visible with the naked eye. Every 56 years, Aucturn and Har Akir orbital paths align, reaching their closest proximity, a phase that lasts for approximately 4 months. During that time, while Aucturn's gravitational influence is so

slight as to go unnoticed by most of the world, it has a considerable excitation effect on the elementals. In the deserts, it causes a massive spike in sandstorm generation, resulting in local geodesic shifts and the cyclical unveiling of ancient secrets. The Pharaoh of Numbers was a devotee of the planet Aucturn.

Kemat-Tii adds that they have spies at the digging site, and that they will know it if the Falkovnians find something.

Macrazbunare and Austizel again stay at the library to copy the other spells from the torn spellbook.

The others go at the temple to meet Isu. They ask her if the found dead villager body is still at the temple: she says yes. The heroes explain they would like to cast *speak with the dead* on the corpse to find what killed it. They say they plan to do it tomorrow morning.

They discuss with her the four questions they are planning to ask: what killed you? Where were you when you died? What made you leave your house that night? When did you leave your house?



DM note: SPOILER ! If you have read Touch of Death, you know Isu is an evil priest. Her brain is spinning fast when she hears the heroes discuss their plan with her! She does not want her scheme with Senmet to be discovered by the heroes. So she plans to do a speak with the dead spell herself on the body at the earliest hour tomorrow morning, as the spell can be cast only once a week on a corpse...

After that, they go to Al-Wawat's house to sleep.

July 19, 748

During Tora's watch duty, around 2 a.m., Tora hears a deep and dry whispery voice, like sand in the wind. "Dulcimae," it says. The vistani girl name! The whispers sound like the speaker is standing next to him! Tora watches around but he is alone. The other heroes are still sleeping. He waits for a moment, listening, but he hears nothing more.

He then awakes the other heroes, and they run toward the vistani camp.

Varadan arrives first – the camp and the vardo are empty. There are many traces around the vardo, and something passed *through* the fire, as some logs are scattered from the main pit. There is an abandoned hand axe on the ground.

Varadan smells an odor of death, and sun-dried meat. Tora tries *ghostsight*: nothing.

Other than their own, there are no traces leading to the camp, or leaving it?! Watching the form of the sand, making like small waves, they start to think the attack may have come from below?

Macrazbunare casts *detect invisibility*: nothing.

Then two pairs of hands erupt from the ground and try to grab Tora! These dry hands twist and grab his legs! One fail but its talon rips a piece of his pants instead. The hands try to bring Tora *into* the sand, but he shakes off the grappling hands.

They attack the hands, and Petrak kills one with *searing light* (-34!). The other hands retreat in the ground, one of them still clutching wildly a piece of clothing. Tora manages to hit it in the ground one last time with his short sword.

Thinking the vistani could be underground and in need of help, they dig the sand. They find an earring and a tobacco pouch, both objects they identify as being worn by one of the vistani brothers.

They cast *detect magic* – nothing. They know the spell's reach is only about 3 feet in the sand.

Macrazbunare turns into a badger and starts exploring the ground near the vardo – nothing.

Tora unearths the cadaver who was killed by *searing light*: it is an akiri man, all dried out. Its face is frozen in a horror mask.

They check the vardo and see traces of nails on the wooden floor, as if someone was violently pulled out of it ... They think of Dulcima...

Exigu retrieves the vistani horse, that wandered away, and they go back at Al-Wawat's house.

They show the body to Al-Wawat: that body died at least a year ago, maybe more? It looks dried out by the sand, and there is also sand encrusted in the creature's hands and flesh, hardening it.

They think it is a kind of zombie, and that something controlled it.





Source : <https://twitter.com/langlacier/status/1284479072232497152/photo/1>

They decide to go at the temple (it's 2h30 a.m.!) and tell Isu about the zombies. She answers the knock at the door after a few minutes. She is alarmed when she sees the heroes at this early hour: "what happened?"

They tell her about the zombie attack. They tell her they think these monsters are responsible for the vanishing, and that they bring their victims into the sand. She is distressed by this news.

The heroes tell her they will do *locate object* tomorrow morning, to try to find a silver brooch Dulcimae always wore.

DM note: knowing this, Isu will put all Dulcimae's belongings in a lead coffer :)

Isu asks if they want her to learn the *locate object* spell and cast it tomorrow. The answer is they will do it themselves, but that she could learn it too in case they need another.

They go back to sleep.

7h30 a.m. They awake and search the vardo for Dulcimae's silver brooch: negative. So it can be used as the spell focus. Petrak gets on the vistani horse, and he cast *locate object* (on the brooch). He covers the whole village as well as 1500' radius all around it: nothing.

Tora wants to go to the library to learn more about the zombies. On the way, they see a group of people gathered around a cadaver! Another villager was found dead, this one north of the village, near the agricultural zone.

They examine the corpse. Someone opens the cadaver's hands to see a piece of torn clothing...

... then someone in the crowd notices that the piece of clothing is from Tora's pants!

The crowd suddenly erupts in shouting and menaces at the heroes! Tora tries to defend himself but doesn't speak the language! The heroes decide to quickly leave the square.

They go out to the northern agricultural area, where this last body was found, for another *locate object* on Dulcimae's brooch: nothing.

From afar, they hear angry shouting inside the village...

The heroes manage to sneak inside the library, to ask for information about the desert zombies, and Amehemoft asks a scholar about it.

His name is Ptolemy. Hearing the desert zombie description, he says this is a very old monster that roamed Har' Akir, but it hasn't been seen in decades, perhaps hundreds of years. He says the first ones were created by evil priests in order to protect temples and tombs. These creatures are dried up corpses, desiccated in the desert heat so they do not rot like usual zombies. Desert zombies retain their abilities. Also, they can swim in the sand like a fish into the water.

He also asks if the heroes think it's the thing that captures people in the night?

Petrak thinks it could be something the Falkovnians unearthed?

Exigu then suspect Isu. If the zombies are related to a temple, this is the only one in the area? *Isu is too sweet and good-looking, that she could hide something*, he says.

Petrak: so if the monsters have a master, he could be somewhere in the area? Who could that be?

They decide to explore the temple. They do not take the staircase to the rooftop, but use the main entrance. The two massive entrance doors are plated in bronze. They are decorated with relief sculptures of a rising sun over a funeral barge.

The main hall is 90' x 90'. It is an homage to the nine main Har' Akir deities (there are also many minor deities). The center of this area is open to the sky and surrounded by massive columns. Reed mats are scattered on the floor for worshippers to kneel upon. There is no other furniture here.

Each of the columns is five feet thick and carved into a statue of one of the gods. Well sculpted and painted in vivid colors. Each god faces both into and out of the courtyard, so the backs of the gods are never depicted. There is no place inside this room that is not under the watchful eyes of the gods.

Those gods are :

a Anubis, Guardian of tombs and mummification, gatekeeper of the underworld - jackal head – has a flail. Virtually every Akiri tomb contains images of the jackal-headed god Anubis, the god of mummification and protector of tombs. He presides over funerals and embalming, and guides souls to await their judgment in the afterlife, punishing tomb robbers and defending the dead on their journeys to the eternal rest.

b Neith (f), hunting, war, weaving – she has a bow. Ruler of Arrows (most Akiri are proficient with a bow). Neith is a goddess of war and hunting, but also of domestic arts such as weaving.

c Sekmet (f), goddess of slaughter, war and vengeance, carries a bloody axe. The story says that when the sun god Ra grew old, his human subjects rebelled against him, so he sent his daughter Sekhmet to punish them. Going further than was planned, Sekhmet took on the task with such fury that Ra feared she would exterminate the human race... Ra had to intervene to stop her.

d Horus, god of righteous vengeance - falcon head, holds a saber. Horus is the god of the sky, the celestial falcon whose eyes are the sun and moon, whose speckled feathers are the stars, and whose wings are the sky.

e Osiris, god of nature and rebirth - holding crook and flail.

f Isis (f), goddess of motherhood and children - ankh and raised hand. She is also a deity of magic, both arcane and divine. Isis appears as a beautiful human woman with winged arms, wearing a crown shaped like a throne.

g Set, god of jealousy, secrets, and evil - donkey head. Of all the deities, none is as hated and reviled as Set. He represents the storms that destroy crops, and the dead that rise from their graves. He is evil personified, the enemy of all that is good, a god of sickness and disease, confusion and madness, rebellion and strife. He is a usurper, a murderer, and a stealer of souls. Patron of kinslayers, murderers, usurpers, assassins, rogues, and necromancers.

h Bastet (f), goddess of cats, women, guardian of wealth - holding a rattle-like sistrum—a musical instrument associated with her worship— worshiped as a goddess of cats and a deity of celebration, pleasure, and secrets. Bastet is one of desire and sensuality.

I Ra - King of the Heavens, god of creation, rulership, and the sun – golden spear. Ra is the god of the sun.

j Wadjet (f), The Green Empress, goddess of good serpents and wisdom. A teacher and giver of wisdom.

An altar is found near the wall: this large flat stone is engraved and painted on the four sides with hieroglyphics of pharaohs and priests presenting gifts to the gods. The various symbols of all the nine gods line its sides. Gifts to the temple are placed on this stone altar – dried fruits, flowers.

A door leads to the Vault of Anubis, a room they already saw the other day with Isu: there, corpses are mummified. Their sarcophagus is placed against the back wall for a few days while friends and relatives celebrate the deceased's journey to the underworld. Currently, there is only one dead villager lying here (the one the heroes brought when they arrived in Muhar).

Another door from the main hall leads to a ceremonial chamber: Most of the religious trappings are kept here. The walls are lined with cabinets and shelves. Priestly robes and headgears are here in quantity, a different one for each of the deities. There are also tapestries with various images of the akiri gods. There are staves, crooks, flails, and ankhs all made of wood layered with gold. Many objects appear of high value.

The last door is closed. They are wondering if the thief Exigu should open it (Exigu, Tora) or not (Petra think it could be sacrilegious in his own church so he does not approve).

After a moment, it opens and Isu appears! She says, “Oh, you are there, I didn’t hear you”. Beside her is a lavishly decorated room, with cushions on the floor.

The heroes explain they are exploring the temple because the desert zombies are created in a temple, from what they learned in the library, so they wondered for a moment if this temple was to be the source of this evil.

They ask if the temple was built upon another temple, so that it could hide something in its basement. Isu says there is no basement in this temple. She’s been in charge of the temple for the last five years only, but her father before her was in charge and he never mentioned anything like that.

DM note: Isu lies. The access to her evil god worshipping is downstairs, accessible by her room, under a rug. If they ever check the library for the temple plans, they can eventually find out there is a basement.

Bashat then enters the main hall and hisses at Varadan... Isu ignores her cat.

Isu suggests that the zombies could have been created far away, then they have been moved to this area? There are many religious temples in the Valley of Pharaohs, she adds.

She offers to show them her private quarters, and the heroes decline, suddenly embarrassed to have been that bold. “The remaining rooms are storage rooms and a guest room, if you want to see them”, she says. The heroes know everything about the ground floor and found that there is nothing suspicious going on at the temple.

Cut scene – year 710 (send by email with the session journal)

That fateful night, a younger Ivana kneeled and prayed again before the icon of Ezra. As she prayed, the painted scenes on the icon changed before her eyes. She ceased praying, as if expecting this change, narrowed her eyes and observed the icon. The left panel now showed an image of her long-time friend Nostalia and herself in her laboratory. She noticed the exact list of ingredients for the potion she plans to use on Nostalia is on the table. The middle panel showed Ivana near the Deathstone, a heavy metallic lime in her hand, grinning. The right panel showed Nostalia waking up in Ivana's laboratory. Her friend was transformed, and she appeared as a fearless warrior smiling at Ivana. Also, from an already beautiful woman, Nostalia was even more strikingly beautiful in this last panel.

"Beautiful and deadly...", muttered Ivana.

Ivana studied again the three panels carefully for clues, then closed it with a slap and threw the icon on her bed, like a discarded toy. "At last!", she murmurs, "the missing ingredient to transform men and women into loyal killing machine".

"Ermor de nung ... *act of killing* in Falkovnian... yes, that sounds ... perfect", she says with a grin.

"Oh! My dear mother, your end is near... Borca is mine", Ivana says softly, and then she laughs madly, alone in her room.