

SENTINEL
COMICS

#86

TOMIE OF THE BIZARRE

ISSUE #3/4/5

WHERE THE UNDEAD LIVE



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BADELL • REBOTTARO • BENDER

FIRST THINGS FIRST

This issue is one of the three that can be played in any order following Issue #2. If this issue is the first one you're playing after Issue #2, you can skip to Issue Background below. However, if it's the second or third of the #3/4/5 issues that you're playing, use the following information to connect the stories.

★ IF PLAYING THIS ISSUE AFTER PRIME WARDENS #67

The heroes met up with Tempest and a new Haka. They might have also helped Insula Primalis become a new Nexus of the Void. They also encountered a good deal of Baron Blade's handiwork, but have no reason yet to connect him to what's going on in Megalopolis.

★ IF PLAYING THIS ISSUE AFTER JUSTICE COMICS #740

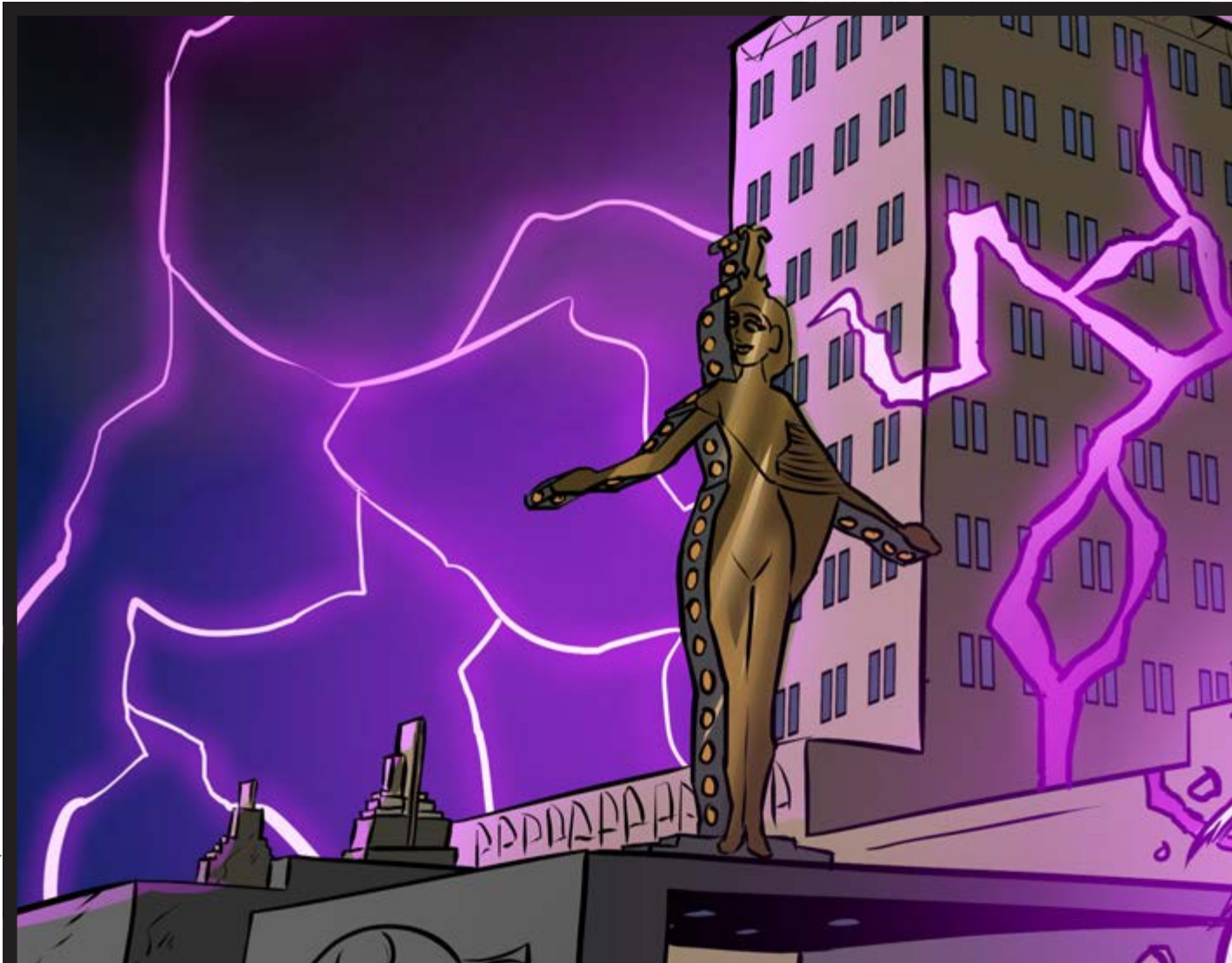
The heroes have just dealt with Fanatic and Proletariat, and they have a strong feeling that there is some greater villain behind all of this. Fanatic has returned to Megalopolis to help Argent Adept and Visionary with the defense of the city and the Akash'Flora tree.

★ IF PLAYING THIS AFTER BOTH

If the heroes have succeeded in the previous issues, have gathered lots of information, and are actively attempting to figure out who is behind this, they should be able to figure out that Baron Blade is the ultimate foe by the end of this issue. However, if they have been barely succeeding, or are not working towards solving the mystery, they will likely go into the final issue still unaware.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Baron Blade has enlisted the assistance of Aminia Twain, AKA the villain Miss Information, to lure heroes into a trap. She rigged up a large warehouse in Rook City to be indistinguishable from the Tomb of Anubis using Blade's devices, high quality sets, and her reality-twisting illusory powers. Blade lent her a teleportation device to link the entry of the "tomb" to an ornate doorway in the old abandoned Cleopatra Casino in Las Vegas. Between the portal's displacement and Miss Information's power, anyone who steps through the portal will think and feel that they've gone from a tacky Vegas casino straight into the Tomb of Anubis somewhere in the Egyptian desert, but really they've just been transported to a warehouse in Rook City, a considerably more banal location.



Someone recently took up the Rod of Anubis (and with it, the mantle of Anubis) and dedicated himself to searching out and combating evil wherever he found it. He was lured into the portal and quickly captured.

Miss Information herself isn't present—she is operating the entire facility remotely. However, as the Freedom Five enter this false Tomb, Miss Information is unlikely to sit on her hands. They are her greatest foes, after all.

ISSUE STRUCTURE

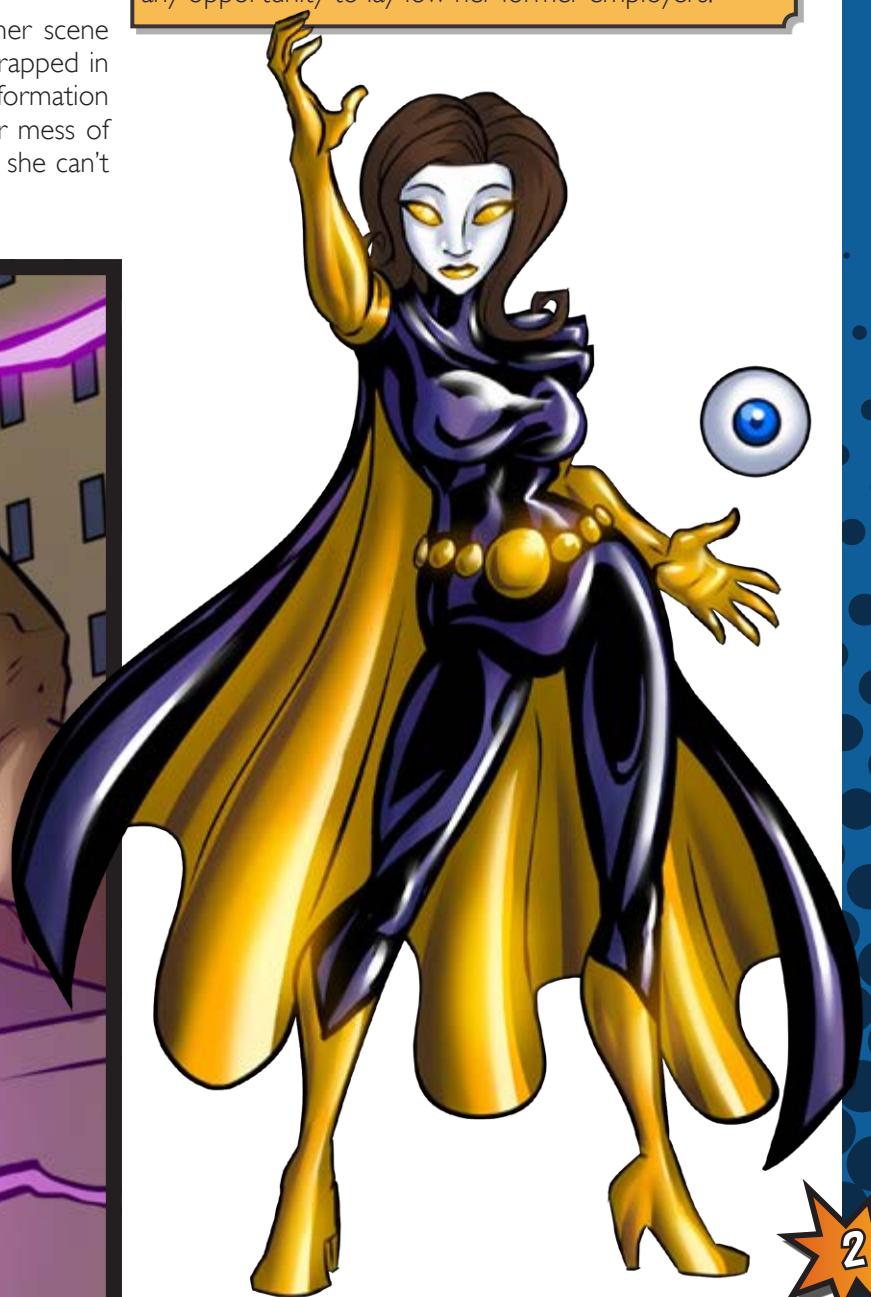
The primary focus of this issue is Scene 1: a mapless dungeon where the heroes advance from chamber to chamber via Overcome actions, with twists and the environment setting off traps, opponents, and other complications as the heroes progress. Scene 2 is a brawl between the heroes and a number of robots in the guise of colossal statues of ancient Egyptian deities.

If the heroes fail to get to the end of either scene before the scene tracker runs out, they'll be trapped in the tomb for hours or even days. And Miss Information herself might get involved and make a further mess of things! She won't fight the heroes directly, but she can't resist gloating.

MISS INFORMATION

Aminia Twain was the faithful and hard-working secretary and assistant to the Freedom Five for many years. However, when she was killed in another timeline, her consciousness from that timeline traded places with the mind of this reality's Aminia Twain, the process twisting her dedication to the team into hatred. They let her die, after all. Over years, she began secretly sabotaging the team, until she was finally revealed as a villain in her own right: Miss Information. Initially, she had no powers other than the impressive amount of intel she had about each of the heroes and their allies. However, in a later conflict, she was doused with dangerous chemicals that should have killed her. Instead, she gained reality-twisting powers and puts them to good use fighting against any so-called heroes who would attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of those around them.

Miss Information is critically deranged, and will jump at any opportunity to lay low her former employers.



ENVIRONMENT: "TOMB OF ANUBIS"

Once the heroes all step through the portal, it closes behind them with a hissing snap. As far as the heroes (and the players!) know, they are in the Tomb of Anubis, deep in a colossal stone monument somewhere in the Egyptian desert. They're actually in an abandoned and refitted warehouse in Rook City, where Miss Information recreated the Tomb in as much detail as possible. The heroes will probably notice that a mummy isn't really a mummy when they smash it and gears fall out, but don't let them know that they're Blade tech. The robots are designed so that they are difficult to identify.



GREEN

Minor Twists

Should Have Taken That Left Turn: You get very, very lost, and waste a great deal of time finding your way. Check off one box in the scene tracker.

Hieroglyphs of Confusion: As the heroes ponder some hieroglyphs on the walls of a passageway, they fail to notice a hypnotic confusion suggestion hidden among the ancient symbols. Roll the environment's dice pool and use the Max die to Hinder the next Overcome action any hero makes.

Quicksand! The floor suddenly disintegrates into sand, sucking the heroes in! Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack each hero with the Min die, and Hinder each hero with the Mid die. This penalty can only be removed by an Overcome success.

Major Twist

Spike Trap: Spikes burst from a hidden panel in the wall! Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack one hero with the Mid die. Additionally, one item of that hero's gear is damaged, requiring a successful Overcome action to repair. Either disable one of their abilities related to a piece of equipment until repaired, or Hinder them with the Min die, if there is no applicable gear or ability.

YELLOW

Minor Twists

Bat Swarm: The heroes stumble upon a bat cave! (The bats are actually bats, not robots, but someone with an appropriate knowledge quality might realize they're common North American brown bats rather than Egyptian bats.) Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack each hero with the Min die, and Hinder each hero with the Max die. The penalty remains until someone drives the bats away with a successful Overcome action.

Stick to the Schedule: Unseen coordination (it's Miss Information doing her organizational expertise thing) assists the minions. Roll the environment's dice pool and Boost all minions with the Mid die until the end of the environment's next turn.

Major Twist

Sand Trap: The narrow passage suddenly begins filling with tons of sand! Each hero is trapped until someone (them or someone else) spends an Overcome action to free them. Any hero still trapped on the environment's next turn is Attacked by the environment's Mid die.

RED

Minor Twists

Swinging Blades: The heroes must navigate a chamber filled with giant, razor-sharp blades swinging from the ceiling! Roll the environment's dice pool and Attack all heroes with the Max die.

Trial of Fire: Flames burst from lion-headed statues! Roll the environment's dice pool. Attack each hero with the Mid die and Hinder each hero with the Max die. The penalty can only be removed by an Overcome success that extinguishes the flames.

Major Twists

Ceiling Trap: Stone doors seal off the exits to this chamber and the ceiling begins to descend. The trap will spring on the environment's turn; the heroes cannot continue until they escape the room, which requires one successful Overcome action for every two heroes to disable the trap. When the trap springs, roll the environment's dice pool and Attack all targets in the chamber with the Max die, and repeat this attack every time the environment acts until they complete the challenge. Once the heroes succeed at the final Overcome action, they proceed to their destination chamber.

Miss Information: Though she is monitoring the tomb from the safety of her secret base, Miss Information can't help herself when it comes to gloating at the Freedom Five—her former employers and first foes. She appears before them, taunting them about their predicament, but before they can attack her, the floor falls out from under the heroes, depositing them in a different chamber that somehow ended up below them. Are the chambers moving? Is Miss Information behind all this? What's going on? Roll the environment dice pool. Each hero takes falling damage equal to the Max die. Now they have to figure out where they are.

Note: Do not use this twist until the heroes have started to figure out that things are not quite what they seem. Miss Information only shows up after the heroes are already feeling suspicious.

"TOMB OF ANUBIS" THREATS

When the environment's turn comes up in the action order, select one of these threats and activate it, using its Tactics text.

MUMMIES!

8 MINIONS

DESCRIPTION

With ghastly groans, a group of mummies lurches towards the heroes. (The mummies are secretly robots!)

ABILITY

Already Dead: Mummies have +1 to minion save rolls.

TACTICS

When this threat is activated, roll the environment's dice pool and add mummies equal to the Mid die.

Mummies attempt to gang up on their toughest foe.



SKELETRONS

8 MINIONS

(1 FOR EVERY 2 HEROES)

DESCRIPTION

Their "bones" clacking and clanking, several skeletons wielding bronze khopeshes shamble down the hall. (The skeletons are also secretly robots!)

ABILITY

Khopesh Slash: Skeletrons have +1 to Attack rolls.

TACTICS

When this threat is activated, add one skeletron for every two heroes.

Skeletrons spread out, each seeking a different foe.



SWARM OF SCARABS

1 8 LIEUTENANT

DESCRIPTION

A swarm of angry beetles surges from the ceiling. (You guessed it: the scarabs are secretly nanobots!)

ABILITY

Seething Swarm: A swarm of scarabs cannot Attack, but has +1 to Hinder rolls.

TACTICS

When this threat is activated, roll the environment's dice and Attack each hero with the Min die. Then, add one swarm of scarabs to the scene.

The difficulty of fighting a swarm of things is represented by the swarm of scarabs being a lieutenant opponent.



IN THE "TOMB" OF "ANUBIS"

SCENE TRACKER

START

END



RUNNING THE SCENE: SECRETS

This issue contains a big secret: the "tomb" isn't really an Egyptian tomb at all! It's an elaborate set built in a warehouse in Rook City, powered by devices and illusory powers. The big reveal is intended to happen when the heroes complete the issue and climb outside—but what happens if someone figures it out early?

Don't fight to protect the secret until the time it's "supposed to" be revealed. This is true for secrets of all kinds in the **Sentinel Comics RPG** (or any RPG for that matter). Secrets aren't interesting until revealed! Drop a subtle hint and see if anyone bites on it. If they figure it out early, that's awesome—you have engaged players who have a feeling of accomplishment. Everybody wins!

THE SITUATION

This scene is a multipart challenge. The heroes make their way through chambers of the "Tomb of Anubis" toward the Hall of Mysteries, which they learn about in the first room by examining the hieroglyphics on the wall.

Each stage of the challenge represents reaching a milestone chamber within the tomb, and various twists and setbacks represent stumbling into rooms that confuse, that spring traps, or that reveal enemies. Keep track of where the heroes are along the milestones to their goal (we assume they move together); if a twist occurs as part of a success, select one from the environment's list—the heroes achieve their goal but via a chamber that exposes them to some danger. Outright failure means that something strange has happened and they arrive one chamber back from where they started, rather than one chamber ahead—they got lost in the labyrinthine corridors, they fell into a slide trap that took them backwards, etc.

On the environment's turn, either introduce a new threat from the environment's threat list, or if a threat is still active, use one of the environment twists of the appropriate zone instead.

To start things off, describe the heroes walking through the dimly-lit halls of the closed-down Cleopatra Resort & Casino, several blocks off the Vegas strip. In a back hall, there's a glowing circular doorway, once leading to a private party room labeled "The Asp Room." This is the portal leading—as far as the heroes and players think—to the entry of the Tomb of Anubis.

CHAMBERS WITHIN THE TOMB

There are eight milestone chambers in the tomb, each achievable from the previous chamber via an Overcome action. The final chamber is the Hall of Mysteries.

ENTRY

This is the entryway, the only chamber immediately accessible from outside. The wall is covered with hieroglyphics. Any scholarly character can read them with an Overcome action: "The Hall of Mysteries contains treasures undreamt of, but only to the stout of heart and the strong of will."

A set of stone stairs leads up into a cramped corridor...

FRONT ANTECHAMBER

This chamber is about twenty feet square with a high ceiling. Hieroglyphs cover the walls, telling tall tales of Anubis and his heroics.

An open stone doorway leads to a dark corridor...

OUTER BURIAL CHAMBER

The outer burial chamber is a small crypt containing a large stone sarcophagus. As in the previous chamber, hieroglyphs adorn the walls, depicting rewards owed to a faithful servant in the afterlife.

A long, dark corridor leads away, turning sharply to the right after several dozen meters.

UPPER BURIAL CHAMBER

A large burial chamber, this one containing four sarcophagi. The hieroglyphs on the walls here describe the steadfastness of warriors who fight on the side of the gods until the end.

Steps lead further down into darkness...

LOWER BURIAL CHAMBER

The occupants of the two sarcophagi found in this chamber were clearly vastly wealthy in life. The room is filled with chests full of treasure (it's all fake), precious stones (also fake), engraved wood and stone figurines (fake jade, fake malachite, fake ebony), and woven tapestries and rugs (real, but hardly hand-made).

A crawl space is exposed by a hole broken in the wall...

LONG FEATURELESS HALL

This long passageway, about ten feet wide and as tall, stretching off into the distance.

A doorway beckons at the far end...

SECRET PASSAGEWAY

This thin hall, the entrance of which had to be found by thorough searching, runs the length of a few other chambers with hidden view holes every few feet. Once this hall is exited, it is even harder to find again.

A secret exit lies at the other end of the hall...

ASTRONOMY CHAMBER

This chamber has tiny openings that look out to the sky, aligning with various objects in the sky at important calendar dates. Stone planets circle on bronze arms around a wooden pedestal under a brilliant sun orb in the center of the room. Hieroglyphs on the wall describe what celestial objects are visible when, and star patterns glow in the domed ceiling. With an Overcome action, an observant and scholarly hero would realize that the astronomical schedule is wrong for Egypt, but correct for Rook City, a detail that Miss Information overlooked.

Stone steps lead downward...

LARDER

This is a large chamber filled with earthenware vats and pottery sealed with wax. It's perhaps best not to contemplate what's contained in them.

A door leads to the Hall of Mysteries and Scene 2!

IF THE HEROES FAIL...

If the heroes don't reach the Hall of Mysteries by the time the scene tracker runs out of boxes, huge stone doors fall across the exits of whatever chamber the heroes happen to be in, sealing them in darkness. Unless they have some way to progress, it will take them hours to dig their way out. What terrible mischief will Baron Blade make while the Freedom Five is out of action? If this occurs, Anubis will have to find his own way out, and may miss the fight in Megalopolis, but the Freedom Five can still make it back to their city for Issue #6.



THE HALL OF MYSTERIES

SCENE TRACKER

START

END



THE SITUATION

The Hall of Mysteries is a huge rectangular chamber, a hundred feet long and seventy wide, with a floor made of alternating tiles of malachite and sandstone. The ceiling is 20 feet high, and sunlight filters through mirror-lined slots leading upward through the distant top of the “pyramid.” 14-foot-tall statues of Egyptian gods line the walls: Anubis, Isis, Montu, Osiris, and along the far wall, Bastet, Thoth, Sekhmet, and Horus. Any of the statues might actually be robots, ready to fight the heroes. Additional threats are ready to fold, spindle, and mutilate the heroes in numerous other ways—on each environment turn, another threat from page 8 may activate.

This scene is a knock-down drag-out brawl. Start the scene by activating the robotic gods, who move to attack. If the heroes eliminate all of their opponents before the scene tracker runs out, they win! Otherwise, they’re sealed in, just as in Scene 1!

THREATS

GODS OF EGYPT

◆¹⁰ LIEUTENANTS

(1 FOR EVERY 2 HEROES)

DESCRIPTION

A few of the 14-foot-tall “statues” of the gods (choose from Bastet, Isis, Montu, Osiris, Sekhmet, and Thoth—all secretly huge robots!) come to life, advancing to smash the Freedom Five with their fists, staves, and feet.

ABILITY

Deific Avatars: Upon selecting a god statue, give it a permanent +2 to one of the five basic actions: Attack, Overcome, Boost, Hinder, or Overcome.



SLITHERING SNAKES

6 MINIONS (1 PER HERO)

DESCRIPTION

Venomous snakes are released into the chamber! (Any hero looking closely at a snake realizes they're western diamondback rattlesnakes native to North America, not Egyptian asps, but they're still very dangerous.)

ABILITY

Envenomed Bite: Whenever a snake Attacks and deals damage, it also Hinders with the same roll.

TACTICS

The snakes are not terribly dangerous on their own. However, since they both Attack and Hinder with the same roll, they can be notable threats if they gang up on a single hero. Which they'll try to do.



NET TRAP

DESCRIPTION

A net drops from the ceiling!

ACTION

Roll the environment's dice pool. Hinder all heroes with the Mid die.

RESOLUTION

A successful Overcome action destroys the net.

ANIMATED DART GUNS

8 MINIONS

(1 FOR EVERY 2 HEROES)

DESCRIPTION

Dart guns built into the walls begin shooting at the heroes, seeming to aim of their own accord.

ABILITY

Well Built: Dart guns have +1 to minion save rolls. However, a dart gun can be taken out with a successful Overcome action.

TACTICS

The dart guns shoot at any moving thing in the room that's not one of the statues. The heroes are the most notable moving things, but if they all hold still, the dart guns will fire at the snakes instead! Otherwise, the dart guns just target whatever heroes are moving the most.

RESOLUTION

If the heroes defeat all the threats before the scene tracker runs out, the statue of Anubis topples over, revealing a pit trap beneath it—containing a black-haired man in a rumpled linen jacket and canvas pants sitting on the floor of the pit. He wipes the sweat from his brow as he squints at the heroes above him. "You're some of Dr. Washington's old friends, aren't you?" he asks after a moment. "That is, Ra's friends, rather. I'm Martin Adams. I was a grad student under Dr. Washington. Anyway, I'm probably more use to you like this."

He picks up the Rod of Anubis, which was leaning against the wall of the pit. With a couple words of what must be ancient Egyptian, a burst of green light envelops him, starting at the staff and spreading up his arm to finally engulf his whole body. When the light subsides, a taller, more impressive figure stands in the pit, the Rod of Anubis in one hand, and the other glowing an eldritch green. He grins wryly at the heroes, "Well, now that you're here, you can help me get out of this trap and I can get back to work!"

DEACTIVATING CONTAINMENT PIT

DESCRIPTION

The pit appears to be just a large, deep hole in the stone, but if anything physical attempts to pass through the entrance to the pit, a laser grid snaps into existence and slices it to ribbons.

ACTION

As long as the pit containment field operates, Anubis is trapped in the pit.

RESOLUTION

- Deactivate the pit's containment field: Two Overcome checks (The first could be to locate a power source and the second to turn it off, or the first could be to find some sort of mirrored shield to deflect the lasers and the second to put it in exactly the right place. Encourage your players to be creative!)

OUTCOME

Once you deactivate the trap, you can easily help Anubis out of the pit.

If the heroes question him, here are some answers:

- **What are you doing here?**
 "I was investigating some Anasazi ruins not far from Vegas when I felt the presence of a reality shift and went there to check it out. Next thing I know, I'm in a fake Egyptian temple full of killer robots! Then, I fell in a trap. I'm not proud of that part at all."
- **What's with the rod?**
 "After the OblivAeon fight, I went to the last known location of Ra, hoping to find any trace of my old teacher. I couldn't find Dr. Washington or the Staff of Ra, but some rescue workers there did uncover the Rod of Anubis. When I asked if any of them had found any Egyptian looking things, they gave it to me. They were able to handle it without any trouble, but when I touched the Rod, it changed me. So, I guess I'm Anubis now."
- **Did you learn anything?**
 "Sure! Upon turning into Anubis—or, rather, the avatar of Anubis—I gained the knowledge of life and death, and have been driven to further uncover its secrets. Oh, wait, you mean about this fake Tomb of Anubis. Right. Well, I didn't get much of a chance to look around but it's pretty obvious that this isn't really an ancient tomb. Everything is too new. The stone is artificially weathered, there's not near enough dust and sand. Sand gets everywhere, not just a few piles here and there. The hieroglyphs are all wrong, the grammar is terrible... Oh, and the robots are a pretty strong giveaway."

• How did you end up in the trap?

"While I was dealing with some of those ridiculous fake mummies, the floor just opened up under me, and that big statue slid over the top, and there I was. Judging by how hungry I am, I think that was last night. Any of you got a fruit bar or something?"

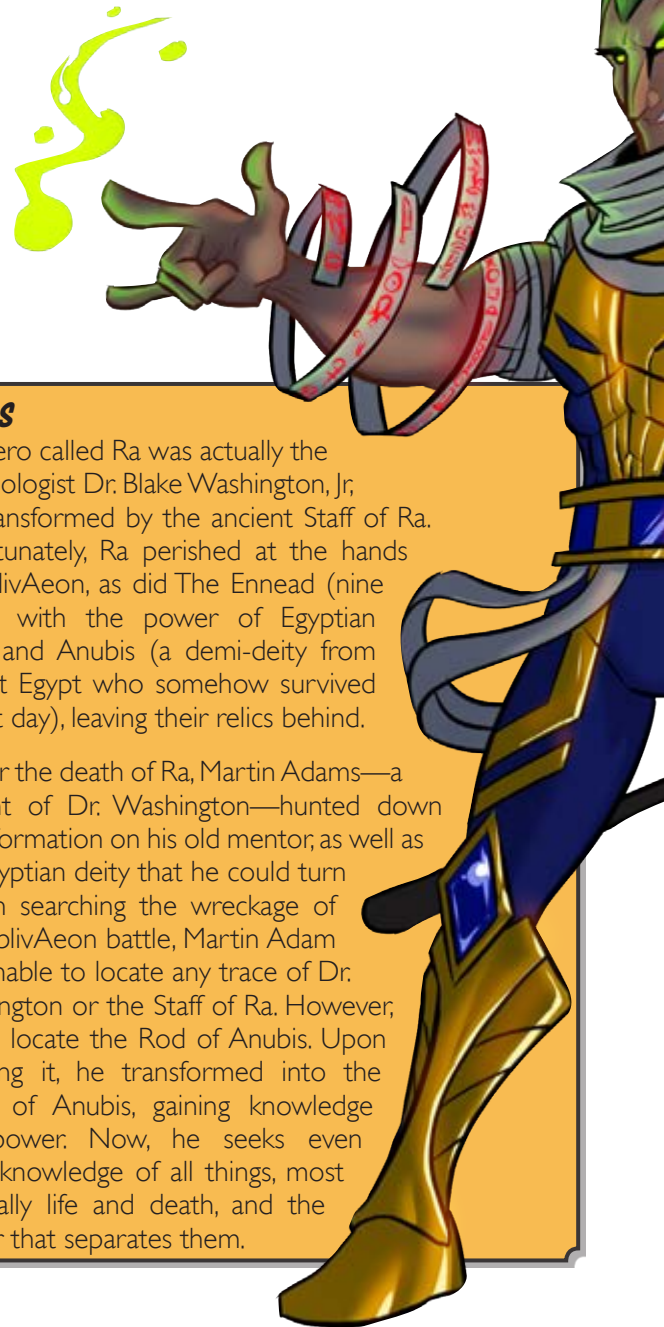
• Who built this?

"No idea. Someone who likes robots more than proper historical accuracy and thorough research."

• What are you going to do now?

"I'm in search of more knowledge! No specific plans right now. I'm just happy to be out of that pit."

If the heroes mention Argent Adept, Visionary, or the Akash'Flora tree, Anubis will be very interested to learn more. The tree is potentially a source of both knowledge and power, and he is eager to get to Megalopolis.



ANUBIS

The hero called Ra was actually the archaeologist Dr. Blake Washington, Jr, but transformed by the ancient Staff of Ra. Unfortunately, Ra perished at the hands of OblivAeon, as did The Ennead (nine villains with the power of Egyptian gods) and Anubis (a demi-deity from ancient Egypt who somehow survived to that day), leaving their relics behind.

After the death of Ra, Martin Adams—a student of Dr. Washington—hunted down any information on his old mentor, as well as the Egyptian deity that he could turn into. In searching the wreckage of the OblivAeon battle, Martin Adam was unable to locate any trace of Dr. Washington or the Staff of Ra. However, he did locate the Rod of Anubis. Upon touching it, he transformed into the avatar of Anubis, gaining knowledge and power. Now, he seeks even more knowledge of all things, most especially life and death, and the barrier that separates them.

EPILOGUE

With the traps disabled and Anubis freed, the heroes go to exit the fake tomb. The portal they came through has closed, but they easily locate a large stone doorway that seems to lead to the surface. They walk through it, only to find themselves walking out of...

...a warehouse in the Rook City industrial district.

What?



INVESTIGATIONS

The heroes could just hop a plane for Megalopolis, but if they stick around to figure out what's up with the "tomb," they can learn some of the following:

The "mummies" and "skeletons" and other "monsters" here are robots, of the same advanced but aggressively generic design as the heroes encountered in Issue #1. The "tomb" is indeed built into a warehouse, using an ingenious combination of the sorts of stone and sand you'd expect in the real Tomb of Anubis, with supporting structure of modern steel scaffolding, plaster, and materials worthy of a modern big budget movie soundstage.

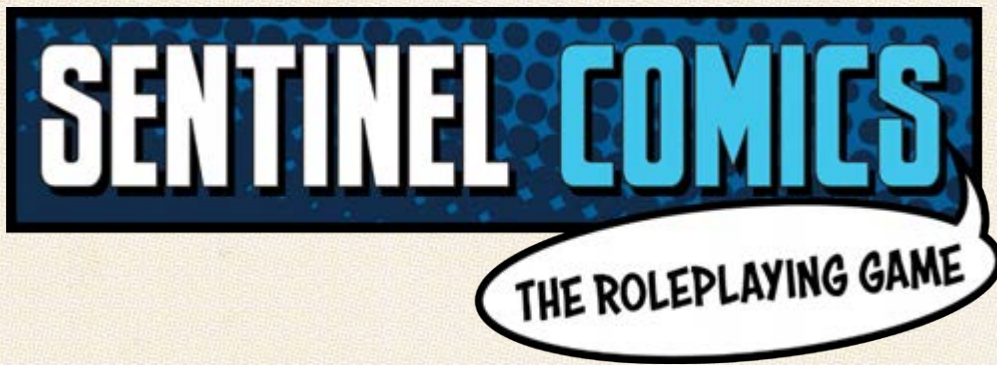
Wireless listening devices and cameras are hidden throughout the tomb. Various sensors and actuators are found that allowed remote control of the traps and robots. Whatever network they were once connected to, they're disconnected and untraceable now.

The reality shift portal stopped working not long after the heroes left the entryway. Its construction suggests similar technological origin to the robots, but it seems to have been specifically designed to be hard to trace.

Somewhere, Miss Information is monitoring the heroes and laughing quietly to herself. Next time, the Freedom Five won't get away, she's certain.

NOW, THE HEROES ARE EITHER OFF TO ONE OF THE OTHER MISSIONS THAT VISIONARY GAVE THEM, OR THEY'RE ABOUT TO RETURN TO MEGALOPOLIS.





WHERE THE UNDEAD LIE

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