



NEFERTITI 2.0 overdrive QUICKPLAY

HIGH OCTANE ACTION
IN ANCIENT EGYPT

by Fraser Ronald of
Sword's Edge Publishing





NEFERTITI
overdrive
QUICKPLAY

by
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WHAT IS THIS?

Welcome to a sneak peek/quickstart for *Nefertiti Overdrive 2.0*. This product is intended to introduce you to ***Nefertiti Overdrive*** in support of a ***crowd-funding drive to help finance an update of the game*** and the printing of some hardcover copies. This product provides condensed rules, pre-generated characters and an introductory adventure. It has minimal art and maps, both of which will be more plentiful in the final product, especially if we do well with the crowd-funding campaign.

In *Nefertiti Overdrive*, you are the greatest heroes of the 25th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt. You all come from various places, and your fates have lead you to Thebes and the service of the Kushite Pharaohs. This royal house is threatened both by the powerful Assyrian Empire—perhaps the greatest military force of the age—and an upstart pretender from Lower Egypt, intent on taking the Double Crown of United Egypt. Can you—the legendary warriors of this age—protect the royal house from conquerors and traitors? Can fists, steel, and will triumph over naked aggression?

SO YOU KNOW

These are terms used throughout the rules, so I'll define them here for you.

A **player** is someone in the real world either acting as the game master or controlling a character in the adventure the game master is facilitating.

A **Game Master** or GM is a player who facilitates an adventure.

A **Character** is a fictional construct created using the rules of the system and representing an individual within the fictional universe of the game.

A **Player Character** or PC is a character controlled by a player.

A **Non-Player Character** or NPC is a character controlled by the GM.

A **Turn** is a discrete section of a scene in which one character acts.

A **Round** is a discrete section of scene, in which each player has a chance to act.

A **Scene** is a set of actions or movements revolving around a specific, short-term goal or problem, such as a fight against some opponents or an information gathering conversation.

A **Session** is a single sitting of gaming.



An **Adventure** is a scenario or story that may last a few sessions, but rarely longer than that.

A **Campaign** is an interlinked series of adventures that tells a larger story.

QUALITIES

The most common element to describe a character in *Nefertiti Overdrive* is the **Quality**. A Quality is a short descriptor, which is usually a single word or short phrase. Your character is defined through Qualities.









Qualities modify actions to which they apply, and are measured by die-type: the higher the die-type, the better the Quality. A Quality applies to an action when the player is able to describe to the GM how it applies. It's up to the GM to decide if the explanation is acceptable. This is discussed more under **Test**.

DICE

Dice are used in *Nefertiti Overdrive* to resolve actions, and the process for resolving such actions is called the **Test**. The results of Tests are decided by rolling dice against another player, including the GM. We'll get into the mechanics of Tests later.

In cases in which the die type rather than the result is important, dice can be combined to create a larger die. A die can be combined with another of equal or no more than one die-type lower to increase that die by one die-type (see **Die Types**). For example, a d8 can be combined with a d6 to create a d10. Only a single d10 is created from the combined dice. A d4 cannot be combined with a d8 since it's more than one die-type lower, although two d4s could be combined to create a d6, which could then be combined with a d8 to create a d10.

When combining dice, there are sometimes intermediary stages between d12 and d20 (d12+d4 and d12+d6) which are not used in play—a player still rolls a d12 even though the Quality is rated at d12+d4.

Die Types	
	d2
	d4
	d6
	d8
	d10
	d12
	d12 + d4
	d12 + d6
	d20



CHARACTERS

Characters are built using Qualities that are rated by die type ranging from d6 to d12. Qualities are categorized in **Attributes**. Characters in *Nefertiti Overdrive* are defined by four Attributes. These quickstart rules include six pre-generated characters

Concept includes two Qualities related to the role of the character in the game.

Elements include two Qualities describing the character's skills, talents or outlook.

Traits include two of the following three Qualities, which describe the character's natural features and characteristics: Physical, Mental, Social.

Drivers include two Qualities that motivate the character to be heroic.

Each Attribute is measured by two die types. The lower of the two is called the *base die* and the higher of the two is called the *max die*.

When the player explains how an Attribute is involved in the action covered by a Test, the player may use the Attribute's base die. When the player uses an exciting description, provides a detailed scene, or paints an incredible picture with words that include the Attribute, the player may use the Attribute's max die.

PIVOTS

Each character also has Pivots. A Pivot is a goal toward which the character strives. It is also a signal to the GM of the kind of situations and hooks that the player desires for the character.

A PC can have three Pivots, but if the character moves toward the Pivot in a session, the character has 'hit' that Pivot. When a PC hits a Pivot, that PC gains an **Advancement**. Each Pivot can only provide one Advancement per session.

ADVANCEMENT

At the end of each session, a player may improve their character by using an Advancement received from moving towards (or *hitting*) a **Pivot**. Each Advancement allows one attempt at increasing one of the four Attributes.

The attempt has the player roll the character's lowest die—the lowest of all the character's dice, which is a d6 for the pre-generated characters—against the GM, who uses the die to which the player wishes to advance the Attribute. The player's roll must *exceed* the roll of the GM. The max die is increased if it is two die-types greater than the base die or less, otherwise the base die is increased.



TESTS

When a character attempts something that could lead to narratively important consequences—positive or negative—the player must undertake Conflict Resolution, which is done through a **Test**. Every Test is against a Challenge. The Player Characters set their Qualities against the difficulties of the GM's Challenge.

All dice “explode,” meaning that if a die rolls its maximum (4 on a d4, 8 on a d8, etc), another die of the same type is added to the characters' dice pool and rolled.

The Test is described for a PC, but is no different when a Challenge acts against a PC. If there are differences depending on whether it is a PC's or Challenge's turn, that will be explicitly highlighted below. This is a summary of the Test process, which is fully explained in the actual rules set.

1. Explanation: The GM describes the situation, including the Challenges the PCs face and the stakes of the encounter. Players are encouraged to add details. The GM will indicate the Trait of the Test at this time.

2. Round: The round begins—a period of time in which each PC and each Challenge has the opportunity to act.

3. Sequence: Each player rolls the higher of their character's two dice from the Trait for the Test—identified in *Explanation*—or a d4 if the character lacks any dice for that Trait. Challenges use their Difficulty die for *Sequence*. The results decide the **Sequence Order**—the order in which PCs and Challenges act.

4. Action: The PC's player describes the action their character is taking. If the GM and/or other players find the description exciting, detailed, or entertaining, the PC's player may use the higher of the two dice assigned to their PC's Qualities in *Assembly*. When a Challenge acts against a PC, this also includes the PC's player describes how the PC is avoiding or resisting the action.

5. Assembly: The player and GM choose one Quality from each of the PC's and Challenge's Attributes based on the description provided in Action. These dice are their **Hands**. If the other players found the PC's player's description in Action compelling, the PC's player can use the higher of the two dice provided by each Quality chosen. The GM can add dice from their **Threat Pool** (a collection of bonus dice the GM can use in any Test—though they are used once and then lost).



6. Conflict: The players roll dice from their Hands. If a player rolls a 1 for a PC, the GM pays Luck to add that die-type to the Threat Pool.

7. Target: The GM uses as many dice from their hand as they like to set the Target Number which the PC's player must exceed to succeed. The GM always sets the Target Number. The PC's player can also use as many dice as they like for *Target*. The dice used for *Target* are removed from the players' Hands.

8. Impact: If the acting character (the PC or Challenge whose turn it is) succeeded, they choose from the remaining dice in their Hand and build an Impact die. This is reduced by the Impact die the opposing player builds from their character's (or Challenge's) available dice. The remainder is the damage. A PC's Trait or a Challenge's Difficulty is reduced by the damage. The dice used for damage are removed from the players' Hands.

9. Effect: Whichever character succeeded in *Target*—PC or Challenge, no matter which character's turn it is—their player can use dice remaining in their Hand to inflict one or more Conditions on the other character. This is reduced by the Effect die(s) the opposing player builds from their character's (or Challenge's) available dice. If a player had available dice but did not use them in Impact, they cannot then use them in Effect.

10. Outcome: The PC's player provides any narrative that they feel is required to complete the character's turn.

11. Progression: When a character's turn ends, the next character in the Sequence Order begins their turn at *Action*.

12. Repetition: When a round ends, if any PCs or Challenges remain in the scene, the Test continues at *Sequence*.

13. Conclusion: Once either all the PCs or all the Challenges have been removed from the scene, the Test ends., with rewards gained or penalties imposed, as per *Explanation*.



LUCK

Twenty-four (24) tokens representing Luck are set in a bowl or other receptacle in the centre of the gaming area. Any player can provide another player with a Luck token when that player does something that entertains, amuses, excites or otherwise impresses. Only one player should provide a token at a time, so a player should not receive multiple tokens for the same action.

A player can use Luck to:

- *Add another die.* A Luck token allows a player to add one other Quality from the PC's Attributes during *Assembly* to their Hand.
- *Re-roll a single die.* A single die used in a Test can be re-rolled using Luck. The higher of the two results (the original or the re-roll) is retained for the Test.
- *Remove d6 worth of Conditions:* A single Luck token can remove d6 worth of **Conditions**, so either removing a Condition at d6 or lower, or reducing a larger Condition by d6 (such as reducing a d10 Condition to d4).
- *Recover Trait:* At the end of a Test in which damage reduced the character's Trait, the player can spend a Luck token to improve the Trait by one die-type.
- *Rest and Recover:* At any point in the game during which the narrative indicates the PCs are resting, a player can spend Luck to recover one die-type from any Trait that has been reduced.

When a player uses Luck, the player provides that token to the GM.

The GM can use Luck to re-roll one die or to buy a die for the Threat Pool (a collection of bonus dice the GM can use in any Test—though they are used once and then lost). Whenever a player rolls a 1 on a die, if the GM has Luck, they must spend it to add that die to the Threat Pool. A die in the Threat Pool may be used in any Test, although only during *Assembly* and not at any other time in the Test process.

CONDITIONS

A Condition is a penalty Quality that provides dice to those opposing the character with the Condition. The Condition must logically follow from the action that imposed it. For example, if a character were in combat, a Condition might be 'Stunned,' 'Broken Bones,' or 'Bleeding Out' but couldn't logically be 'Enrapt,' 'Gullible,' or 'Joyful.'

A Condition imposes a penalty die available to any opposition in a Test, if the player can explain how it applies.

During *Effect*, if the succeeding has an Effect die of d2 or greater, they can create a new Condition or increase an existing Condition by one die-type rather than inflict a new Condition. See the **Die Types** chart at **Dice** for die progression.

At the end of a scene, a player can use Luck to remove Conditions from a character. Each Luck can remove d6 worth of Conditions. At the end of a session, a player can remove a number of Conditions equal to the character's highest max die.

MULTIPLE OPPONENTS

In the case in which multiple opponents face a single character—multiple PCs on a Challenge, or multiple Challenges against a single PC—each opponent, up to a maximum of five, receives a bonus die equal to their highest die for the Trait identified for the Test.

ASSISTING TEAMMATES

Rather than multiple PCs acting against a single Challenge, they can instead render aid to a single PC. In such a case, one PC takes the lead in the effort. Each assisting PC can offer the die from their PC associated with the Test's Trait and one other die from any other Quality which they can explain as applying to the action.



PLOT ARMOUR

The term 'plot armour' refers to the immortality of the main character in most media due to their importance to the story. The default for *Nefertiti Overdrive* is that all characters have plot armour. They cannot be killed. All sorts of other things can affect them, but they can't be killed. However, players can remove this from their PC, and they can offer criteria for the removal of their character from a game.

There are four general settings for plot armour, but this is a spectrum, and the players can decide how they want it applied.

INVINCIBLE

An invincible character's Traits are never reduced in a Test. For an invincible character, the damage they sustain in *Impact* is applied as a specific Condition called **Wounded**. Just like any other Condition, Wounded provides a penalty die to opponents facing the invincible character. Unlike other Conditions, Wounded is removed at the end of a Test.

STANDARD

A standard character can be harmed, can be removed from a scene, but can't be killed. This is the default for *Nefertiti Overdrive*.

LAST STAND

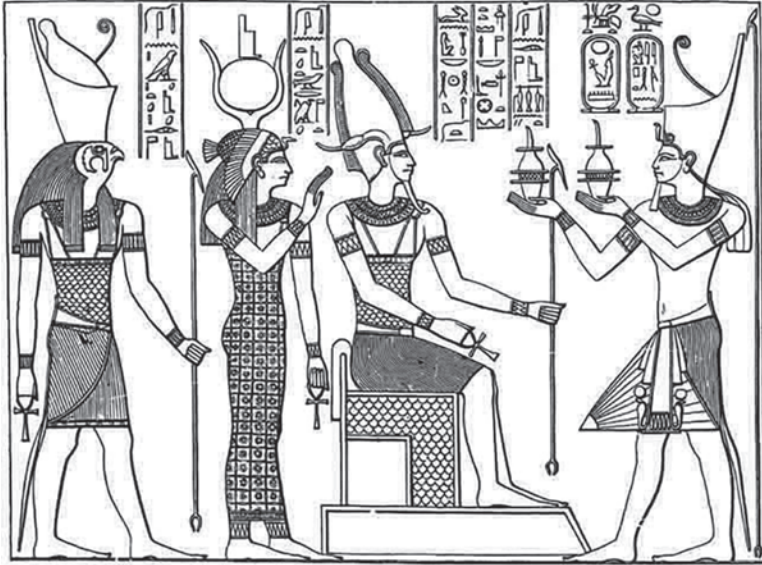
A last stand character can only be killed in the climactic scene. As such, the GM must indicate this in the Explanation phase of the Test for the climactic scene. The player of the last stand character should provide the heroic narrative for Test's completion, allowing them to craft the heroic narrative of their character's removal.

DEAD WALKING

A dead walking character is removed from the game if they are removed from a scene.

DAMAGE

Damage in *Nefertiti Overdrive* reduces Traits. The specific Trait reduced is based on the Test's Trait, as identified in **Explanation**. During the **Impact** phase, the successful character's player chooses a die/dice from their Hand to be their Impact die. The player whose character is receiving damage also prepares an Impact die. The successful player's Impact die is reduced by their opponent's Impact die. What remains is the damage applied to the opponent's Trait. The Trait is then reduced by the damage's die-type, with a minimum of reducing by one step. When a character has at least one die reduced to below d2 in a Trait, that character is removed from the scene.



At the end of the scene, any of the removed PC's Trait dice that have been reduced to below d2 are recovered to d2. They are able to mechanically interact with the story again, but they are highly vulnerable.

At the end of a scene, the player can use **Luck** to recover the Trait that received damage during the Test. For each token of Luck the player spends, their character can recover one die-type in the Trait that received damage in the preceding Test.

CHALLENGES

Any obstacle that the PCs must overcome mechanically is a Challenge. A discussion with a trader to get information could be a Challenge, as could a locked door, tracking down an opponent, a chariot chase careening through crowded streets, or even an attempt to leap from the top of the Great Pyramid and float serenely to the ground using a sheet as an improvised parachute.

The creation of Challenges can generally be done on the fly with reference to the Challenge Level Table. Like those for a PC, a Challenge's Qualities are rated by die type. Challenges have four Attributes, all of which provide dice: Difficulty, Threat, Environment, and Complexity.

Difficulty indicates the level of effort this particular Challenge represents.

Threat indicates how dangerous the Challenge is to the character.

Environment indicates the how the surroundings, atmosphere, or even feeling or sense of a place may affect the Challenge.

Complexity indicates how many factors impact the Test.



AN EXAMPLE OF PLAY

For this example, the pre-generated character of the Mercenary is on their way to the docks to rally the troops when they are faced with a group of four Assyrian warriors.

Explanation

The GM explains that the Mercenary is faced with a group of four Assyrians that have been looting and slaughtering on the outskirts of Thebes. This will be a Physical Test. The Assyrians are presented as one Challenge rather than four for mechanical ease.

Round

The first round begins.

Sequence

The Mercenary's player rolls a d8 for their PC's Physical—the higher of their character's two dice from the Trait for the Test. The GM rolls the Challenge's Difficulty die, a d8 also. The player rolls an 8, which explodes (maximum result), and then rolls a 4, for a result of 12. The GM rolls a 3.

Action

The player says that the Mercenary sees the Assyrians as enemies of the House invading the holy city of Thebes in a time of war, and the Mercenary will not allow them to slow him on his progress back to the troops the Mercenary leads. The Mercenary moves to a ready stance, with shield up, and spear ready. Sizing up the four opponents, the Mercenary acts relaxed, as though these guys are no big deal. The Mercenary starts to smile as they casually saunters toward the enemy, lulling the Assyrians into overconfidence. As the Assyrians attack, the Mercenary bears down on them, eyes mere slits over the top of their shield, smashing into them with that shield and sweeping out with spear. The other players applaud the narrative and the Mercenary's player gets a Luck.

Assembly

The Mercenary's player chooses "Captain d6/d8" from Concept, "Perfect Soldier d6/d10" from Elements, "Physical d6/d8" from Traits, and "Loyal to the House of Kashta d6/d8" from Drivers. Their narrative was definitely exciting, so they absolutely get the max dice—2d10 and 2d8. The Challenge has d8 for Difficulty (a pack of poorly trained soldiers), a d8 for Threat (hedge of iron-headed spears), a d6 for Environment (cluttered alleyway), and a d6 for Complexity (four heads are better than one).

Conflict

The player rolls a 1 and a 3 on the 2d8, and a 4 and a 7 on her 2d10s. The GM puts a Luck token in the container and adds the d8 to the Threat Pool because it was a 1. The player spends their Luck to re-roll the 1 on the d8, receiving a 2. Not much better. The GM rolls an 8 and a 3 on the 2d8 and 2 and 1 on the 2d6. The 8 on the d8 explodes, and that comes up 1.

Target

The GM sets the Target Number as 11 (8 and 3 from her d8s). The player is desperate and combines their d10s and the 2 from their d8s for a result of 13—which exceeds the Target Number. The Mercenary is successful.

Impact

The Mercenary's player has a d8 left for Impact. The GM has 2d6. The Mercenary's player uses their d8 for their Impact die, and the GM combines their 2d6 into a d8. While the Impact die is therefore reduced to 0, the minimum Impact result is d2. The Challenge's Difficulty is reduced to d6.

Effect

The Mercenary's player does not have dice remaining to apply to Effect and so cannot place a Condition on the Challenge.

Outcome

The player narrates the Mercenary plowing into the group, tripping their leader up with a sweeping spear. The rest of the Assyrians scurry back, shocked by the aggressive maneuver. Another player likes that narrative, and gives the player a Luck token from the Luck Pool.

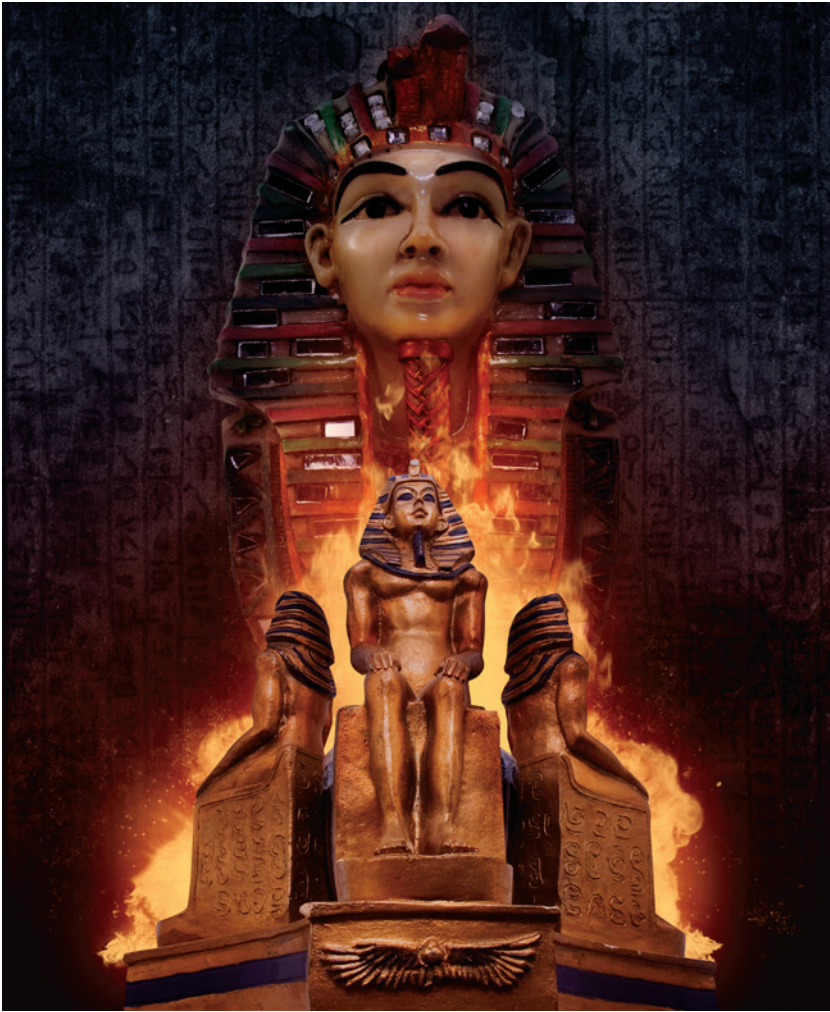
Progression

The Mercenary player's turn ends, and now it is the Challenge's turn.

Action

The GM narrates the Challenge as the Assyrians shaken, but realizing they still outnumber the Mercenary. Standing abreast to fill the alleyway, they lower their spears and charge. The Mercenary's player narrates the PC's response as quickly judging the poor training of the Assyrians and recognizing they could break without their leader, the Mercenary vaults over their heads, targeting their leader. The Mercenary realizes each moment they are delayed, their soldiers are put at risk, and so wants to put down the Assyrian leader as quickly as possible.





Assembly

The Mercenary's player chooses "Captain d6/d8" from Concept, "Perfect Soldier d6/d10" from Elements, "Physical d6/d8" from Traits, and "Dedicated to those they lead d6/d8" from Drivers. Their narrative was definitely exciting, so they absolutely get the max dice—2d10 and 2d8. The Challenge has d6 for Difficulty (reduced in the last turn), a d8 for Threat, a d6 for Environment, and a d6 for Complexity, providing 1d8 and 3d6.

Conflict

The Mercenary's player rolls a 5 and a 6 with their d8s, and a 2 and 10 with their d10s. The one d10 explodes, and the player rolls a 5 with the added d10. The GM rolls a 3 on their d8 and 2, 4, and 1 with their d6s.

Target

The GM—without much on their dice—sets 9 as the Target Number, leaving only their d6. The Mercenary's player uses the 10 on their d10 and succeeds.

Impact

The Challenge did not succeed and so cannot damage the Mercenary.

Effect

The Mercenary succeeded in Target, and so their player uses their remaining dice to create two Conditions on the Assyrians. With one remaining d8 and one remaining d10, they create a d12 for the Condition "Terrified." With the other d8 and d10, they create a d12 for the Condition "Lacking Leadership."

Outcome

The GM leaves the narrative to the player, who says that the Mercenary indeed leapt over the charging Assyrians. The Mercenary just barely clears their heads, tucking their legs up as they pass over. The Mercenary lands, rolls, then turns and throws their spear, taking the Assyrian leader in the back of their neck. The spearhead juts out of the leader's throat as they slowly slide to the ground. The Mercenary draws their sword, rises to their feet and smiles at the remaining Assyrians.

Let's hope they wore their brown pants.

Progression

Both the Mercenary and the Challenge have had turns, so there are no characters left to take a turn in this round.

Repetition

With a PC and Challenge both still in the scene, a new round will begin at Sequence.

The Test would continue until either the Mercenary or the Challenge was removed from the scene. This hopefully provides some insight into how a Test proceeds. There are more examples and longer explanatory text in the *Nefertiti Overdrive 2.0* RPG.



THE PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

The characters presented here are the iconic characters of Nefertiti Overdrive, and were part of the inspiration for this game. Although Nefertiti Overdrive 2.0 includes rules for character creation, for this quickstart, players can use the iconic characters.

The **Princess** is a child of the royal blood, counsellor to Pharaoh and a natural-born leader.

The **Bantu** is the loyal bodyguard and surrogate father of the Princess.

The **Mercenary** is the perfect warrior, exiled from their homeland and certain they will die in a foreign land.

The **Amazon** is barbarian royalty, born to horse and bow, intent on proving their worth.

The **Misfit** is a wandering philosopher with deadly fists and a clown's levity hiding a past tragedy.

The **Serpent** is an assassin, from the streets of Thebes, linked by oath to a goddess of death.



THE PRINCESS

CONCEPT

d6/d8 Leader, Royalty

ELEMENTS

d6/d10 Inspired, Hand of Amun-Ra

TRAITS

d6/d10 Social, Mental

DRIVERS

d6/d8 Empowered by the plight of her people; Dedicated to her dynasty

PIVOTS

I will protect my people and the honour of my house.

I am the servant of the gods.

STORY

You are a child of the late Pharaoh Khunefertumre¹, and hold the offices of the Divine Adoratrice of Amun and the God's Hand, two important political and religious offices. You assist your great aunt who is the God's Wife of Amun—the High Priestess of Amun-Ra and the most powerful position a woman may hold in Kemet². You are always accompanied by your faithful bodyguard, the Bantu—whom you consider as a father in your heart. Through wit and wisdom, you have become the key advisor of your cousin, Pharaoh Bakare,³ who faces the incursions of the dreaded armies of Asur.

¹ Also known as King Taharqa of Kush

² Ancient Egypt

³ King Tanwetamani of Kush



THE BANTU

CONCEPT

d6/d8 Protector, Surrogate Father

ELEMENTS

d6/d10 Everything Is a Weapon, Well-travelled

TRAITS

d6/d8 Physical, Mental

DRIVERS

d6/d10 Empowered by threats to the Princess; Dedicated to honour

PIVOTS

My life for hers.

Through me, the Princess will learn what honour truly is.

STORY

You lost everything when your home and lands were overrun by a neighbouring people. Though there are others who speak a language similar to yours, you believe you may be the last of the People of the Great River's Heart. You followed that great river north, through kingdoms, desolations, and savannahs until you reached the lands of Kush. You impressed its leaders with your skills and determination. In time, you became part of the royal bodyguard, and a constant companion to the Princess. Pharaoh Bakare¹ saw in you a person of honour and unbending will, and so set you as his cousin's protector. You have watched the Princess grow and become wise and kind. In your heart, you sit the Princess with the children you lost so many years ago.

¹ King Tanwetamani of Kush

THE MERCENARY

CONCEPT

d6/d8 Captain, Political Exile

ELEMENTS

d6/d10 Perfect Soldier, Stoic

TRAITS

d6/d8 Physical, Social

DRIVERS

d6/d10 Dedicated to those he leads; Loyal to the House of Kashta

PIVOTS

I will lead from the front – first into battle and last to leave.

I can never regain that which I leave behind.

STORY

You were a great officer among the mercenary soldiers of the independent city-state of Qart-hadast¹, once a colony of great Khna². You had a spouse and children, on whom you lavished attention and affection. In a war with a particularly troublesome tribe of Tamazight nomads, you refused the senate's orders to slaughter even the children—to erase the tribe and its memory. Your soldiers loved you, but the senators whom you had defied began their scheming. They sent assassins against you—who failed, of course. Rather than initiate a civil war, you accepted exile. You left behind your spouse and your children. A child of a noble house, your spouse asked you to stay, and refused to leave when you chose exile, fearing what the family might find beyond the walls of Qart-hadast. You have always expected to die in a foreign land in foreign pay, but you will die as a consummate warrior, and will not let any soldier die in your place. You wear a cloak of weary cynicism to hide your real affection for your troops. You cannot forget that you will never embrace your spouse and children again, and blame your pride and the pride of “great men” for that.

¹ Carthage, from the Phoenician for New City

² Phoenicia, whose people called themselves Kenaani or Kinaani and their city Khna.



THE AMAZON

CONCEPT

d6/d8 Scout, Healer

ELEMENTS

d6/d10 Mythic Archer, Nomadic Barbarian

TRAITS

d6/d10 Physical, Mental

DRIVERS

d6/d8 Empowered by alleviating suffering; Dedicated to proving her martial worth

PIVOTS

I shall prove that I am a worthy queen of a warrior tribe.

No man is my better.

STORY

The second child of a great Numidian¹ queen. The tribe celebrated you as the perfect warrior and believed you would be your mother's heir. Your eldest sister—a quiet and reserved half-sister from a different father—supported your leadership. Unfortunately, your elder sister's first consort dominated her entirely, an especially heinous situation among your tribe. She never took another consort, and when the Queen died, your elder sister took the crown. You had the support of the tribe, and slew both your sister's father and her consort in honour duels. This turned your sister against you, and she used her position as queen to banish you. Unwilling to raise your hand against your sister, you chose exile from your homeland instead.

¹ The Numidians were a Tamazight people speaking the Berber language living west of the Nile River in modern Libya and Algeria

THE MISFIT

CONCEPT

d6/d8 Deadly Clown, Kind Philosopher

ELEMENTS

d6/d10 Lightning Fists, Patient Confessor

TRAITS

d6/d10 Social, Physical

DRIVERS

d6/d8 Empowered by looking death in the face and laughing at it;
Still waters run deep

PIVOTS

None will suffer while I can strike.

I am a guide onv the road to redemption.

STORY

You once lived as a jester and play companion to the young child of a powerful house in the Kingdom of D'mt¹, to the east. When enemies destroyed that family, you gave your life trying to save the young scion, though you failed. A shining god came to you and gave you back your life, though you pleaded to allow the child to live. There was some purpose to his choosing you over the child, and you have sought for it while also seeking death—to stare it in the face and laugh at it, showing that you are truly without fear. You have become inseparable from the Serpent, as you can see that they know true evil, and have turned away from it. Also, you are pretty sure no one else can make them laugh.

¹ Modern north-east Ethiopia and Eritrea



THE SERPENT

CONCEPT

d6/d10 Assassin, Child of the Streets

ELEMENTS

d6/d8 Fangs of the Serpent, A Shadow

TRAITS

d6/d8 Mental, Physical

DRIVERS

d6/d10 Provoked by seeing evil prosper; Protector of innocents

PIVOTS

I have seen evil and serve justice.

Laughter has more value than gold.

STORY

As a young child, alone on the streets, you learned violence as a way to protect yourself. You thought yourself willing to do anything, no matter how vile. You then faced true evil and realized that while you had anger in your heart, you were not a bad person. It was too late. You had sold your soul to Set. Now, you must send 100 dark souls to be eaten by the Ammit—the Devourer of Souls—to free your own. You will only send the souls of the truly damned, and you can see the blackness of a heart when you touch a mortal with one of your twin blades—your Fangs. You and the Misfit share a familial bond as you know they have seen into your heart and found something wholesome there. And they make you laugh. No one else can.

NEFERTITI OVERDRIVE: RUMOURS OF WAR

This adventure begins a series of adventures linked to the story of the invasion of Ancient Egypt by the Assyrians, and specifically the fall of Thebes during the last days of the 25th Dynasty. Further adventures include *Judged*, *Get Netiqret*, *The Icon of Amun-Ra*, and *The March Up Country*. A Nefertiti Overdrive adventure not linked to the 25th Dynasty—*Daughter of the Sun*—will also be published, chronicling the tribulations of Ankhesenamun—the widow and half-sister of Tutankhamun—after her husband’s death.

It’s unlikely the story will progress as presented in the adventure, and the scene may change dramatically from how they are presented here. Players should be provided with substantial narrative control, and so can affect how the story progresses. As long as the GM is familiar with the purpose of each scene and the Challenges that might arise, they can modify the action as necessary. Think of the adventure as a template or suggested topics rather than a script.

Each scene includes a map suggestion, a ‘mechanics’ volume, a purpose, suggested PC spotlights, possible Pivots to be achieved, a description of the situation, and likely Challenges the characters will face.

The **map** section provides a suggestion for searching for useful maps and a link to an existing map which could be used in the scene. The abstract nature of the Test means a map is generally not necessary, but the GM or players may find one useful as a reference. The links were valid at the time of publishing.

The **volume** describes the amount of mechanics the scene will likely require. A *loud* scene is very mechanics-heavy, with lots of dice hitting the table. A volume of 5 indicates that there are ways to achieve the purpose of the scene without using dice. *Quiet* means the scene is designed to be a simple role-playing opportunity without dice. Given that no module survives contact with the players, these are guidelines only. You can use the Challenges provided as templates for any mechanical interaction not covered in the listed scenes.

The **purpose** of each scene tells you what the PCs are meant to achieve or gain. Each scene is intended to move the story forward, provide information, or support one of the PC’s narratives. Some of the purposes are pretty important to the completion of the adventure, but no scene is necessary. If the players find a way to achieve the purpose without hitting the scene, that’s completely fine.



Spotlight tells you how certain PCs have the opportunity to shine in that particular scene. In general, this is based on the characters' Concepts, though sometimes it is linked to particular skills a character might have.

The scene also has **Pivots** that characters might 'hit' or move towards. Scenes are built to hit Pivots, so it is important that if the PCs don't encounter a particular scene, that another opportunity to hit the Pivots is provided. If the players seems to have missed the possibility of hitting a Pivot in a scene, the GM can certainly mention the possibility.

The **description** gives a brief synopsis of the scene, the surroundings, some of the NPCs involved, and how the PCs might enter and/or exit the scene.

Challenges that might occur in the scene have their details included. These Challenges can be adapted for other scenes or even moved around if the PCs do not encounter the scripted scenes.

THE STORY

Nefertiti Overdrive is set at the fall of the 25th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt, which would place it about 656 Before the Common Era (BCE). Of course, at the time, the royal family would not refer to themselves as the 25th Dynasty. They'd probably call themselves "the Royal House."

The royal family of this period was not Egyptian, but rather Kushite from the area commonly known as Nubia—generally the area of modern Sudan. The Kushite royal house conquered a divided Egypt, made it whole again, revived many ancient traditions, and then found themselves—after almost 100 years of rule—ousted by a challenger from Lower (Northern) Egypt backed by the Assyrians—the period's military superpower.

This story takes place during the war between the Kushite dynasty and the Assyrians—assisting the Lower Egyptian dynast.

The adventure takes place in and around the ancient Egyptian religious capital of Thebes—probably known to the Egyptians as Waset. It begins with a crossing of the Nile. Some sources suggest that to the Egyptians, the East side of the Nile was the Land of the Living, while the West side was the Land of the Dead. Across the Nile from Thebes are the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens. These are the burial places of the rulers of Egypt since the time of the grandfather of Tutankhamun.

The Princess—the primary counsellor of her cousin, the Pharaoh—continues to uphold their religious duties. The war has gone poorly, and the Princess has crossed into the Land of the Dead to seek inspiration from

the gods and the ancient rulers of Egypt. It is a holy day, a propitious time to seek commune with the dead, and the Princess travels to the Shrine of Horus. Unfortunately, this journey has not been kept a secret, and fearing for her safety, her bodyguard, the Bantu, has sought out the Mercenary, leader of an elite mercenary unit, to help provide protection.

The Princess has been targeted by a cabal of nobles and courtiers looking to curry favour with the new dynasty coming from the North with their Assyrian allies. None of this cabal is actually willing to shed royal blood personally, so they have turned to a cult of assassins known as the Judges of Amit. The decision has been made to end the Princess' life in the Land of the Dead, then destroy the body and those of their companions in the hopes that not even their shade will be able to provide inspiration or guidance to the Pharaoh.

These guys are hardcore.



THE AMBUSH

The PCs are attacked on their way to the Shrine of Horus

MAPS

The fight takes place outside of the shrine itself. For an image of a shrine, try an image search for “Egyptian shrine” or “Egyptian altar.” A good artist’s rendition can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1w0thK3>.

PURPOSE

This sets the adventure in motion, as well as giving a narrative reason why the PCs gel as a group—they will prove themselves in combat

VOLUME

Loud: expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Bantu as Protector: the Princess is the target of the assassins, and everything else is diversionary—the murder of the Princess is the primary goal of the attack.

PIVOTS

The Bantu: *My life for hers.*

It is expected the Bantu will put himself in harm’s way to protect the Princess

The Mercenary: *I will lead from the front – first into battle, last to leave.*

The Mercenary should throw himself into combat, both as an example for their soldiers and because that’s what they do. They’re a Mercenary!

DESCRIPTION

This scene starts off the adventure with a bang. The Princess’ procession has not yet reached the Shrine of Horus when it is attacked. The group is passing through a narrow passage in the rocks before reaching the secluded shrine. It is the perfect place for an ambush, and one can expect the characters to be on edge and watchful.

It would be good to allow the Bantu to discern the threat, or perhaps allow the Amazon, who is a scout, to do so. There is no need for a Challenge, just let the Bantu (or whichever character) spot a dark-robed figure, with a black mask on its face and a dagger in its hand on the defile above the group. There’s not just one, but a bunch of them. In general, a group of four assassins per PC should provide some excitement, but shouldn’t be too great of a threat to the PCs, but that’s okay, because the point of this scene

is to get the adventure going and clue the players in to how awesome their characters are.

Not all the PCs need to be directly involved in the combat, but can still impact a Challenge. A character developed with Social or Metal as their focus can provide moral support or tactical advice. This can either be through aiding another character, or an abstract narrative of how the PC is supporting their group. These PCs can still mechanically impact a Challenge, even if the narrative is more abstract and doesn't have them directly beating up the badguys.

If you want to add some risk, make each character face a group of six assassins. It is still likely the PCs will triumph, though things might be close. Although **Meriptah** (important later) is there leading the assault, he doesn't actually take part, and once he sees the fight going poorly, he's going to run, so the PCs won't even know he was there. If they investigate later, you can tell them someone else was there but left in a hurry.

CHALLENGES

Assassin (individual)

Difficulty: d6, somewhat trained

Threat: d6, whatever it takes

Environment: d8, prepared ground

Complexity: d6, paid assassin

Assassins (4)

Difficulty: d8, bravery in numbers

Threat: d8, many blades

Environment: d8, prepared ground

Complexity: d8, experience together

Assassins (6)

Difficulty: d10, trained and numerous

Threat: d10, forest of daggers

Environment: d8, prepared ground

Complexity: d8, experience together



Q & A

The PCs question any captives they may have taken.

MAPS

This will likely take place at the site of the ambush.

PURPOSE

The survivors of the ambush can provide the PCs with information to help move the plot forward.

VOLUME

Loud: expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Serpent as Assassin: the Serpent knows the ways of assassins and can see the truth behind a fog of lies. She will be able to piece together much of the assassins' purpose just from their actions in the attack.

PIVOTS

The Princess: *I will protect my people and the honour of my house.*

The Princess needs to learn who has targeted her in this time of war to protect her subjects.

DESCRIPTION

At the end of the ambush scene, there should be a lot of bodies lying around. It would be good to remind the players that some of these NPCs can be alive if the players decide this is how they would like to resolve the previous scene. It provides the opportunity for a scene in which the PCs question the survivors of the fight.

There should not be any real threat in this questioning, as the Challenge is pretty paltry. Still, dice will do what dice will do. It is important that even if this scene goes completely sour and the players learn nothing, that there should be an alternative method for imparting the location of the meeting place. This might be tracking Meriptah, or one of **Ahmosé's** agents might inform the PCs of a suspected den of assassins. Ahmosé is the Right Hand Scribe of the Pharaoh and master intelligencer, and so is an ally of the royal house while Meriptah is the Count of Juka, a courtier whom the Princess would not be surprised to learn is a traitor (Ahmosé enters the adventure in **Ahmosé the Spymaster**, while Meriptah does not make an appearance until **The Cave**, although lots of NPCs talk about him.)

It is important to stress that when NPCs are removed from a scene because the PCs overcame the Challenge, it does not necessarily mean the NPCs are dead. They can be, but the decision rests with the player. The Misfit's player might decide that the NPCs they best are unconscious, while it's likely the Mercenary doesn't leave too many opponents breathing.

During the questioning, the following information can be provided, perhaps one piece for each success. After the Challenge is removed from the scene, the captive is considered to be compliant, meaning they will seek to truthfully answer any question the PCs put to them, though their knowledge is limited.

First, a captive can tell the PCs that they were sent to kill the Princess, though they don't know why. Secondly, they received their assignment from Meriptah, whom the Princess knows as Count Meriptah of the province of Juka (or Nomarch Meriptah of the sepat of Djewqa—which is probably the terms that would have been used at the time). Finally, before the attack, they assembled at the Broken Villa, a rather well-known locale north of Thebes.

CHALLENGES

Questioning the Captives

Difficulty: d4, already beaten

Threat: d8, deception

Environment: d4, the place of their defeat

Complexity: d8, experienced at evasion



THE PLACE OF MEETING

The PCs investigate the Broken Villa, where the assassins may have met before the attack.

MAPS

An image search for “caravanserai” should provide useful images for the Broken Villa. Most caravanserai layouts are medieval, though you may find a basic drawing of a more ancient style at: <https://bit.ly/3lQbSQI>.

A medieval layout can be found at: <https://bit.ly/48Hf78b>.

PURPOSE

The scene provides more information for the PCs as well as emphasizing the malevolence of the opposition.

VOLUME

Quiet: you shouldn’t expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Serpent as Child of the Streets: as one who has survived the streets and prospered, the Serpent can speak to these captives and quickly gain their trust.

The Amazon as Healer: these people are suffering, and the Amazon can help alleviate their pain and aid in their recovery.

PIVOTS

The Amazon: *I shall prove that I am indeed a worthy queen of a warrior tribe.*

A true queen shows mercy, and given her role as Healer; the Amazon should advocate for the safety of these captives.

DESCRIPTION

This is the Broken Villa. This was once a caravanserai for the route north from Thebes, but shifting sands and poor management have left it a ruin. Rumours sprouted a few years back that it is haunted, and the locals take that kind of thing seriously. This little fiction has served the Judges of Amit well. They have used it as a prison and a safehouse, and once they took Meriptah’s coin, the headquarters for the attempt on the Princess’ life.

Although they needed to confer with the Judges, Meriptah and his confederates rarely attended the Broken Villa and preferred to meet elsewhere. The cabal was quite put off with the blood rituals in which the Judges dabbled. The Judges maintained captives, and sacrificed them

to call on dark forces to blight their weapons and cover the assassins in shadows of protection. After the failure of the attempt on the Princess, the Judges had enough sense to abandon the Broken Villa. They did so quickly, and didn't bother to remove their captives, most of which are on death's door. If the PCs investigate this place of meeting, they will find a handful of prisoners in extremely dire conditions.

The captives will be more than willing to tell all that they know. If the Serpent is in play, the captives—penniless beggars, itinerant labourers, prostitutes and street urchins—gravitate to one whom they sense understands their community. They do not know much, but can provide the following information:

1) They heard their captors speak of Meriptah as their paymaster, though they spoke of him with some contempt.

2) The Judges have a secret hand signal by which they can identify one another. The captives can teach the PCs this hand signal. This can be useful in later adventures against the Judges or the PCs can use it to infiltrate the Cave (see ***The Cave***).

3) Meriptah is seeking an alliance with a courtier known as Ahmose. The captives heard the Judges refer to Ahmose as the grand scribe named Ahmose, and they did not speak well of him.

The PCs know of Ahmose the Right-Hand Scribe of the Pharaoh and master intelligencer of the dynasty. That would be the only 'grand scribe' that they could think of with that name.

CHALLENGES

There is no Challenge in this scene.



AHMOSE THE SPYMASTER

The PCs seek out the one who might be called a ‘grand scribe.’

MAP

For the villa of an Egyptian noble, searches for “Ancient Egyptian villa” or “Ancient Egyptian home” will provide some good images and layouts. One for Ahmose’s villa can be found at <http://bit.ly/1uHP2Me> or perhaps <http://bit.ly/1rdoYZ4>.

PURPOSE

This scene emphasizes the precarious nature of the nobility’s loyalty and how alone the Princess truly is.

VOLUME

5: dice won’t necessarily hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Princess as Royalty: as a leading figure in the dynasty and the most important counsellor of the Pharaoh, the Princess should expect loyalty. Any hint that Ahmose is acting for his own benefit is an affront to the Princess.

The Mercenary as Political Exile: the Mercenary knows only too well how quickly one can lose political support and how lost one is without it.

PIVOTS

The Bantu: Through me, the Princess will learn what honour truly is.

In comparison to the “nobles” and officials of the court, the Bantu is the one that is truly honourable.

DESCRIPTION

Ahmose the Spymaster is the Right-Hand Scribe of the Pharaoh and the royal family’s master intelligencer—basically the Pharaoh’s second most important counsellor after the Princess. The information gleaned in the Place of Meeting may bring the PCs to Ahmose’s impressive villa. The Spymaster will meet the PCs if the Princess is with them.

If questioned, Ahmose will deny that Meriptah has approached him with a plot to supplant the royal family. Ahmosbut suggests that Meriptah could be linked to **Parenfer**, the Seer of Isis—an important office in the religious hierarchy, with political influence. Parenfer has opposed Ahmose in the past, however Parenfer has made many social calls to Meriptah’s villa, and they support each other in court. While Ahmose suspects

Parenfer's loyalty, he has no proof. If pushed on this, he'll admit to some anger with the courtier, due to his antagonism and opposition. This may be clouding his judgement.

In the scene, Ahmose should point out to the Princess that she can trust no one. Those who have attached themselves to her royal house do so for their own profit, and if they see advantage in supporting the Northern Pretender, they will likely switch sides. The Bantu is the counterpoint to this and someone needs to mention it. Although not an Egyptian or a Kushite, the Bantu has proven their loyalty. The Bantu likely agrees with both—the nobles of the court are self-serving, but there are always those whose loyalty cannot be bought.

CHALLENGES

Ahmose's Honesty

Difficulty: d10, he's a politician—deception is his breath

Threat: d10, he could lead them into a trap

Environment: d10, at home

Complexity: d10, devious manipulator



THE SCYTHIAN

A Scythian mercenary has tracked the PCs and seeks to prove himself by destroying the Amazon.

MAP

This will happen in the streets of Waset. You can just freehand a map if you really need one, and for inspiration, here is a street scene that is supposed to be Ancient Egypt: <https://bit.ly/48J7gao>.

PURPOSE

Provides a chance for a peek at one character's backstory while also providing some skull kicking time.

VOLUME

Loud: expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Amazon as Mythic Archer: the Scythian is here to taunt the Amazon, but she should best him with her amazing skills.

The Mercenary as Captain: no one messes with his soldiers. No. One.

PIVOTS

The Amazon: *No man is my better.*

The Scythian seeks to shame the Amazon as she beat him before, and he feels demeaned by that. Of course, this won't end well for him.

DESCRIPTION

Kagu, a Scythian noble who is a mercenary for the Assyrians, leads a group of his confederates in an attack on the PCs when they leave Ahmose's villa. This ambush is not planned by Meriptah nor the Judges. Kagu is a mercenary in the pay of the Assyrians sent to scout out Thebes. He went a few steps further. Once Kagu learned of the Amazon's presence, he took his mercenaries and hunted her down. He has a grudge. She made him look bad in the past, and he now makes a point of singling her out, calling her by name, and saying that he has come to make her his slave. After he has subjugated her, he will send her tresses to her sister's consort, whom he refers to as King of the Issayk Alta—a degenerate people with women who do not know their place.

The Amazon likely doesn't even know who this guy is. She's beaten down more than one egomaniac. She isn't keeping score. Her lack of recognition will feed his anger.

While the Amazon should face off against Kagu, the others can each handle four Scythians, which should not prove too great a challenge. If four assassins proved no problem, try six mercenaries as these guys aren't quite as tough as the assassins.

If the Amazon is not a PC, this scene can still be useful as an action scene in between two scenes with interpersonal interactions. Who doesn't enjoy a good fight? It also points that the Assyrians have many agents in Waset, assassins and soldiers.

CHALLENGES

Kagu, the Scythian

Difficulty: d10, warrior prince

Threat: d12, master of the double axe

Environment: d6, uncertain ground

Complexity: d12, a professional soldier

Scythian Mercenaries (4)

Difficulty: d8, bravery in numbers

Threat: d8, iron swords of the horse lords

Environment: d6, uncertain ground

Complexity: d8, served in many campaigns together

Scythian Mercenaries (6)

Difficulty: d10, overwhelming force

Threat: d10, field of blades

Environment: d6, uncertain ground

Complexity: d8, served in many campaigns together



THE SCAPEGOAT

The PCs pay a visit to Parenfer to hear what he has to say for himself.

MAP

Like Ahomse's villa, good search terms for Parenfer's villa would be "Ancient Egyptian villa" or "Ancient Egyptian home." An image of a noble's villa can be found at <https://bit.ly/3vtz9F1>. A map that conforms to these images can be found at <http://bit.ly/1l8VNG0>.

PURPOSE

This scene provides more information to the PCs and shows that even the people "on their side" may sometimes lead them wrong.

VOLUME

5: dice won't necessarily hit the table

SPOTLIGHT

The Princess as Royalty: the Princess is a superior to the nobles of the court. Parenfer is as much her courtier as her cousin's, and will almost certainly act like that.

The Misfit as Kind Philosopher: the Misfit's nature likely makes them the best choice to question Parenfer, putting him at ease.

PIVOTS

The Serpent: *I have seen evil and serve justice.*

At the conclusion of questioning, it should be clear Parenfer is not an evil man, and the Serpent should advocate for him as an innocent.

The Misfit: *I will see the Serpent redeemed.*

The Misfit will support his friend as they speak for justice, making the Misfit both proud and hopeful.

DESCRIPTION

Likely after speaking with Ahmose, the players will want the PCs to question or at least meet with Parenfer. He lives in a villa not far from that of Ahmose. He will welcome the PCs, especially if they have the Princess among them. Otherwise, a runner has brought an introduction from Ahmose, which Parenfer will honour, but it makes him highly suspicious.

While Parenfer has certainly been caught up in a web not of his own making, he is not disloyal. Certainly, he is foolish and ambitious, but how many courtiers are not? He provided assistance to Meriptah to bring men into the city, to provide them with lodgings, and to seek information about the Princess and her doings. It was he, through his religious office, who

learned of the Princess' intent to seek inspiration at the Shrine of Horus, so in a way, he was at fault for the ambush.

Parenfer will provide all the information he can to the PCs, but he doesn't have much. If necessary, the truth of his statements can be tested through the linked Challenge. He might seem nervous or unfocused, but that's due to the threat to his family (as related in **The Note**, below).

Further, he will admit under questioning that when he learned of Meriptah's scheme, he backed away from supporting the nomarch. Meriptah is a blasphemer who belittles Amun. If the attack while the Princess went to seek the guidance of Horus was not enough, Parenfer has heard Meriptah speak ill of Amun and has denigrated the royal family's bloodline. Now, Meriptah seeks to force Parenfer's cooperation. He had sent word to Parenfer to meet him at the steps of the temple to Amun, but the nomarch did not arrive. When Parenfer returned, his family were gone and he found a note waiting for him (upon a pottery shard—see **The Note**).

CHALLENGE

Questioning Parenfer

Difficulty: d6, he's being honest, though he's a politician, so why believe him

Threat: d4, he is no threat to the PCs

Environment: d4, he has lost his family and speaks with sincerity

Complexity: d10, the PCs likely expect deception



THE NOTE

Meriptah seeks to force Parenfer to betray the Princess by threatening his family.

MAP

This scene is in the same area as *The Scapegoat*, so you can use that map.

PURPOSE

This scene provides some role-playing opportunities and a chance for the players to catch their breath and plan.

VOLUME

Quiet: you shouldn't expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Bantu as Protector: if the planning involves danger, and it is obviously a trap, the Bantu should try to stop the Princess from going. As the Protector, they are strongly motivated to protect these innocents.

PIVOTS

The Mercenary: *I can never regain that which I leave behind.*

The loss of family should hit the Mercenary hard, and he knows how to solve this situation. Kill everyone and get the family back.

DESCRIPTION

The note is written in ink on a pottery shard. Parenfer—or the Princess—can verify that it seems to be Meriptah's writing. The note demands that Parenfer bring the PCs to a market in the Carter's Quarter that night. Meriptah will release Parenfer's wife and children to him there. If Parenfer does not bring the PCs, he and his family will be killed. Parenfer will beg for the aid of the PCs. He describes his young children—they are the same age as the Mercenary's children when they were parted.

Should the PCs agree to willingly subject themselves to this trap, Parenfer will be concerned about the PCs violently retrieving his family, but in the end, he will defer to their decision.

The PCs might question Parenfer's sincerity. If they undertook a Challenge to verify Parenfer's honesty in *The Scapegoat*, you can let them know that the success in that scene has carried over into this one. Should they have accepted Parenfer's earlier statements in *The Scapegoat*, but question his honesty now, you can run the Challenge from that scene, but Parenfer is being sincere. Meriptah has taken his family—or at least that is what Parenfer believes.

There should be no question among the PCs that Parenfer's family needs rescuing. It is possible that the PCs will be suspicious, but roll so poorly that they do not gain any successes either in ***The Scapegoat*** or in this scene. Should that happen, have Ahmose or some other NPC (perhaps the Princess' niece—Netiqret, the Princess' heir as God's Hand) sends word that they have information important to the PCs. This NPC will let the PCs know that Meriptah and some thugs were seen with a woman and children believed to be Parenfer's family, near the Carter's Quarter. The NPC fears something foul will befall the family, and that cannot happen.

Whatever the parent's crime—if there is indeed even a crime—the children are innocent. There is no way the Misfit or the Serpent will allow these innocents to be abandoned. Frankly, no matter the PCs' feelings toward Parenfer, none of them should be willing to allow innocents—especially children—to suffer. They need to get in there and be big goddamn heroes.



THE HOSTAGES

The PCs need to save Parenfer's family, which means walking into an ambush.

MAP

Images or maps of street scenes for Ancient Egypt are difficult to find; however, if you search for "Amarna" or "Model Amarna" you can find some reproductions of what an Egyptian city would look like. The following has multiple images that might help: <https://bit.ly/3w2kFJy>.

PURPOSE

Provides the chance for the PCs to be heroic saving innocents, and allows for characters who have not had a spotlight to do so.

VOLUME

Loud: expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

If some characters have not yet hit a spotlight due to changes in the adventure, give them a unique foe that will allow them to have a nemesis in the fight.

PIVOTS

The Misfit: *None will suffer while I can strike.*

The Misfit should not allow innocent children to suffer, no matter how many heads they must crack in the process.

DESCRIPTION

The Carter's Quarter is not a nice place. It is the home of the economic underclass and those who don't share in the kingdom's prosperity. The buildings are squat tenements, close together and of uncertain stability. There are few if any lights in the quarter, and the tenements cut off most of whatever ambient light the stars and moon might provide. This is a place of winding alleys, dead-ends, and ruins. It is unusually quiet and seems all but abandoned. Sure, it's after sundown, but there are always people out and about for entertainment or business. Tonight, though, the residents sense the storm brewing and hide indoors.

This is—of course—a trap, and the assassins will leap out of the darkness at the PCs. There are no surprise rules, and besides, the PCs are legendary warriors and heroes. No one gets the jump on them. The fight commences! Each PC should face a group of six assassins.

When the PCs are about to triumph (of course they'll triumph) an Assyrian and two local toughs will come out of a winery on the edge of the

market with the wife and two children at knife point. The Assyrian calls out to the assassins that he is taking the family to the Cave. In case the PCs need the hint, it should be clear that they shouldn't let the Assyrian escape! The toughs are considered part of the Challenge "The Assyrian Kidnapper."

At least one of the assassins should survive to be questioned. If the PCs didn't spare any of them, one has been hiding, fearing the PCs. In questioning, the assassin will always reveal that the Cave is an old, collapsed temple in the Land of the Dead (near the Valley of the Kings).

A Challenge is also included if the PCs want more information. The captive can reveal that there are only a handful of assassins at the Cave. At least four or five of them will be on watch. The assassins in the cave are masters of their craft, far superior than any the PCs have yet faced. They are led by the Captain, a great war-leader from a faraway nation. The captive heard that Meriptah—whom the captive considers a traitor—is also at the Cave.

CHALLENGES

Assassins (6)

Difficulty: d10, trained and numerous

Threat: d10, forest of daggers

Environment: d8, prepared ground

Complexity: d8, experience together

The Assyrian Kidnapper

Difficulty: d10, cold-blooded killer

Threat: d12, born to war

Environment: d8, chosen ground

Complexity: d12, a professional soldier

Questioning the Captives

Difficulty: d8, trained to resist

Threat: d8, skilled at deception

Environment: d4, the place of their defeat

Complexity: d6, some experience at evasion



THE FAMILY

The PCs can savour their victory, having protected an innocent family.

MAP

This scene is in the same area as *The Hostages*, so you can use that map.

PURPOSE

The scene provides a last moment of peace before the big fight.

VOLUME

Quiet: you shouldn't expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

The Misfit as the Deadly Clown/Kind Philosopher: The Misfit has the skills to put the family, who have suffered, at ease.

PIVOTS

The Serpent: *Laughter has more value than gold.*

The Serpent should cajole the Misfit into entertaining the children, or congratulate them after, reassuring the Misfit how important these small victories are.

DESCRIPTION

Let's assume that the PCs are successful and save the family. It is also hoped that Parenfer survived this encounter. He will be happily reunited with his family, and there will be much hugging and breathless thanks. The children, as should be expected, are absolutely terrified. In truth, so are their parents. Parenfer and his wife (**Mekyaten**) work hard to comfort their children, but they are as terrified as the youngsters, and are too distraught to do so. The children pick up on this—as children do—and it increases their distress.

Sure, the PCs need to get going to the Cave, but what kind of heroes would they be if they left this family in distress? It's important to remember that both the Misfit and the Mercenary have histories that should prime them to act in this circumstance. The players might need reminding.

The Misfit is a clown, and so the perfect character to distract the children and make them forget their fears. The Serpent, as dark as they may be, should see that this family needs comfort. They should also realise that their good friend, the Misfit, is the one to do this. Point out the Pivot "Laughter has more value than gold" if the player seems uncertain how to move forward. The Mercenary, as a parent, should also have the skills needed to calm the children, but they are maybe better at calming

the parents while the Misfit is pretty much built to make the kids laugh, and knows that is what they need.

This is the last chance for the PCs to catch their breath and make their plans before they face the Cave. Parenfer has not been there, but he has met the Captain, and he will warn the characters about this man. He knows little, but he sensed the Captain is a man of blood. He heard him speak, and believes he is a foreigner, probably Assyrian. He seems to be the boss. That is all the help Parenfer can provide. His family needs him much more than the PCs do.

If there are Pivots that need to be hit or a spotlight that needs to be shone, see if you can work it into this scene. Maybe the PCs don't see comfort and care provided to those caught in the crossfire as important as beating villains into dust, but this is very heroic as well, and you should try to make them feel heroic when they do. The gratitude should be in the eyes and voice of the parents, and something close to worship should emanate from the children.

And then, it's time to leap out of the frying pan and directly into the fire



THE CAVE

The PCs go to face the traitor and the threat to the royal family.

MAP

A search for “Ancient Egypt temple layout” should pull up lots of good maps. I used: <http://bit.ly/1kTpoyN>.

PURPOSE

The climax.

VOLUME

Loud: expect the dice to hit the table.

SPOTLIGHT

Again, if some characters have not yet hit a spotlight due to changes in the adventure, give them a unique foe amongst the enemies below that will allow them to have a nemesis in the fight.

PIVOTS

The Princess: *I am the servant of the gods.*

Remember, Meriptah is a blasphemer who denigrates Amun (see ***The Scapegoat***), and the Princess must see him defeated.

DESCRIPTION

The lair of the enemies of the Princess has been revealed. It's time to confront them in the Cave. This is little more than the main hall of a collapsed temple buried deep in the sand near the Valley of the Kings. There will be master assassins watching the entrance—one for each PC. They will attempt to remain hidden. If the PCs do not take care, the assassins will attack them just as they enter the Cave, and the surprise will raise their Threat by one die type (from d10 to d12); however, watchful PCs will be able to identify them.

Inside the temple there is one master assassin for each PC, as well as Meriptah and the Captain. Meriptah is not the boss. He's also not the man with the plan. He would like to think otherwise, but he's really just a minion. The Captain is an Assyrian warrior, and it was he who hired the Judges of Ammit. He remains determined to get the Princess' head.

If the PCs eavesdrop, the Captain and Meriptah discuss the war. The Assyrians do not care if the royal house flees to Kush. In fact, they would prefer it. The Captain is dismissive of Meriptah, especially when he states that the Saite dynast—the Northern pretender—wishes to crush the Kushites. The Captain is not impressed with the Saite dynast, and he says quite clearly that the new pharaoh will do as he is told or the Assyrians

will find someone who will. But it would be best for all concerned if the Princess were removed. The Captain believes the Kushites will lose their nerve without her.

The assassins, the Captain and even Meriptah will have little to tell the PCs, if captured. The Captain, should he be left alive, will remain arrogant, taunting the PCs, hoping they will kill him. He knows nothing of the Assyrian strategy, but if this is the introduction to a longer campaign, the Captain can admit to knowledge that foreshadows later adventures. For example, he can claim there is another traitor, of which not even he—the Captain—knows the identity.

Challenges

Master Assassins

Difficulty: d10, highly trained

Threat: d10, only the finest steel

Environment: d8, knows all the nooks and crannies

Complexity: d8, of one mind

The Captain

Difficulty: d10, warrior prince

Threat: d12, master of the double axe

Environment: d6, everything is a weapon

Complexity: d12, Assyrian warlord

Meriptah

Difficulty: d6, paper lion

Threat: d8, some skill with his khopesh

Environment: d8, he knows this place

Complexity: d6, courtier rather than soldier



DENOUEMENT

The immediate threat of the Judges has been removed. No one knows—though—who actually leads them. There are more of the Judges out there, and perhaps before the Assyrians reach Thebes, the PCs will need to root out these killers-for-profit.

If this is part of a larger campaign, published adventures can help flesh out the further story. The PCs hunt down the rest of the Judges of Amit in *Judged*. Then the actual Assyrian invasion of Thebes and the rescue of the Princess' niece is provided in *Get Netriqet*. The PCs must then track down a revered religious item in enemy territory in *The Icon of Amun-Ra*. Finally, after doing so, they must reach Kush and safety in *The March Up Country*.

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If you are interested in learning more about Ancient Egypt and/or the 25th Dynasty, these are some of the books that helped me advance my knowledge.

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AUDIO

I am also a fan of podcasts and recorded lectures, and Dr. Bob Brier's [Great Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt](#) and [The History of Ancient Egypt](#) from [The Great Courses](#) were of immense interest to me and helped round out my knowledge. I highly recommend both.