

MUMMY RUSTLERS - SESSION SUMMARY 10/09/2016

TODAY'S EPISODE: POSSE UP

Our heroes gather for the first time as the players create them from the raw stuff of the universe using the Dungeon World rules, preparing to undertake Paizo's Mummy's Mask Adventure Path. They have gathered in the Garundi city of Wati hoping to be selected by the Church of Pharasma to go loot tombs in the city's Necropolis.

Our 1st level heroes are:

- Patrick as Usif bin Adeen, Osirian human Immolator
- Tim as Denat, ifrit Cleric
- Chris as Murdus Sangaree, Osirian human fighter
- Ernest as Khaled, Keleshite human burglar

Character Backgrounds and Bonds

Usif bin Adeen

- Is a member of the Followers of the Burning Sands, a fire-based occult group
- Has scars and a hoarse voice from his initiation rites
- His enemies include rival fire cults
- By tomb raiding in Wati he hopes to find an elemental gem important to his cult... and the same is true for the rival fire cults.
- Bonds
 - Murdus owes him for the many times he has fixed metal items.
 - Khaled is his contact to an antiquities dealer.

Denat

- Is a red skinned, devil horned, fat man (an ifrit).
- Is a cleric of Thisamet, an empyreal lord. Essentially a demigod of food, pantries, feasts, grain silos. His symbol is a cornucopia of food, and sacred animal is the cow. “Food for the Food God!” is his unsettling battle-cry.
- Their mortal enemy is Urgathoa and her followers. In particular, the halfling Pox Boy.
- In the necropolis he hopes to find ancient recipes for dishes and beer, and even possibly ancient ingredients.
- Bonds
 - Usif insulted his deity and trust must be rebuilt, starting with Usif’s cooking of meats which he over cooks.
 - He must convert Murdus to his Thisamet worship.
 - Khaled gave him a bunch of saffron.
 - Use Usif’s immolator fire in his rituals.

Murdus

- He believes himself the reincarnation of an ancient pharaoh, Hetshepsu the Fiend Pharaoh. He passed out and had a “Moon Knight” kind of episode in the desert and awoke with his conviction and a big ol’ axe.
- His deity is Sekhmet, lady of slaughter. Her visage adorns his axe.
- He believes in Osirian nationalism and throwing off the yoke of foreign oppressors.

- He hopes to gain proof of his blood line in the necropolis, possibly even Hetshepsu's bone plated book of fiends, the Darcon Codicil.
- His evil sister believes she is the feminine reincarnation of that same pharaoh
- He has local allies in the shape of the Osirian nationalists who run and gather at the Moist Palm, a local brothel.
- Bonds
 - He is sworn to protect Denat, who he will add to his priestly ranks in the new nation state.
 - Khaled owes him his life, mostly from their long journey together, whether Khaled admits it or not.

Khaled

- A young, hip looking man with an Assassin's Creed hood. He hopes to earn enough to comfortably retire with a modest sized harem.
- He learned burglary in Absalom then departed to Wati recently for greener pastures and membership in the Fading, a smuggler group.
- Members of the criminal organization, the Silver Chain, are his rivals ever since he stole a big score of saffron out from under them.
- He bedded the daughter of the Sanctum of Silver and Gold's leader, earning his enmity.
- Bonds
 - Denat resurrected him and now Khaled owes him his life.

- Denat knows about his criminal past
- Usif has hired him for his architectural knowledge of the Wati tombs
- He encountered Murdus shortly after he found his axe and they have hung out ever since.
- He will find proof of Murdus' pharaoh background in the necropolis.

The Lottery

Our heroes gathered together several days ago to declare themselves a group worthy to adventure in Wati's necropolis, now open to looters under controlled circumstances. They were awarded a token that will be entered in the lottery – token selection determines which locations each group will get. Khaled holds the team's token, an entry into the lottery.

They are traveling to the market from their suite at the Tooth and Hookah for the first lottery via alleys, when the alley mouth is suddenly cut-off by a tumble of baskets and goods from the roof top. Frost forms on their breath and the temperature lowers noticeably. Murdus' sister, Hetshepsut, steps out onto the flanking rooftop accompanied by her ice lizard, Stacy.

She demands, "Give me your token, brother and false pretender. I will double my chances at the lottery and obtain pharaohhood." Her own token she holds proudly high above her head in one hand.

Khaled asks Murdus, "Is that your sister?"

Murdus replies, "Yes. You can tell because she is a huge c***."

Khaled whispers, "I got this." Then loudly, "Well sweet heart, let's cut a deal so that..."

Hetshepsut shrieks, "Why is your servant talking to me, Murdus?"

Murdus decides he hasn't a clever comeback and replies, "My servants are better than yours! Attack!"

Usif says to no one in particular, "OK!"

Hetshepsut issues a command in ancient Osirian to her ice lizard; it moans loudly. Replying moans answer from the doors and windows of the alley. More ice lizards crawl into view and attack.

Khaled ignores biting lizards, throws a dagger at Hetshepsut's hand, and knocks the token out of her hand and down into the alley. Rinds of ice from the surrounding lizards pin him in place. Murdus swings his axe in a wide arc, killing several lizards. His axe too is covered in a rind of ice that burns his hands. Denat grabs up a large basket and charges down the alley, scattering ice lizards like a linebacker. Usif dashes to where the token fell and scrambles about to locate it.

Khaled throws a grappling hook and pulls himself free of the ice and alley, minus his boots. Murdus kills another lizard, spraying gore all over. Denat finds himself among the sprawled lizards who recover quickly and swarm him; he fends them off temporarily with Thisamet's favored weapon, an oversized meat tenderizer. Several desperate swings sees the weapon knocked from his hand by a hard skulled lizard. Usif throws fire at the approaching lizard, Stacy. The lizard laps at the flames which diminish and then disappear. He quickly determines that ice lizards eat fire and maybe heat. He snatches up the token and runs!

Khaled loudly declares, "I will see you all at the market!" as he scampers over the roof and drops out of line of sight. Safely hidden he runs further down the roof to sneak up on Murdus' sister. Instead of her back, he finds a small group of archers huddled quietly near the woman. He stabs the first one dead quietly and efficiently.

Murdus moves to defend Denat from the attacking lizards. He kills one lizard, causing the others to turn and freeze his feet in place with ice. Denat uses this brief opening to kill a lizard with his retrieved meat tenderizer. Usif is pursued by Hetshepsut's personal ice lizard, Stacy. He stumbles just as it lunges, allowing it to miss his hand but bit down on the token. The lizard waddles quickly back to Hetshepsut, and climbs onto the roof. The pair flee with Hetshepsut declaring, "I will always win, brother!". They are followed by the remaining archers, except the last one in line who Khaled knocks unconscious with a dagger pommel.

Denat grabs up a wicker basket, scoops up a lizard, and holds the lid shut tight against its mad thrashings. Murdus swings his axe in a wide arc that ends the last two lizards.

The battle is over. Denat heals himself and the other wounded. The basket trapped lizard escapes during the confusion. Khaled returns with 18 silver coins, a bow, arrows, and an unconscious archer.

The group gathers around the unconscious archer to interrogate him. The man is dressed like an oiled up version of Cupid, complete with "sexy" diaper, marking him as member of Hetshepsut's dude harem. Khaled binds his hands and feet. The man is slapped awake and threatened expertly by Khaled.

Cupid declares, "I will not betray my pharaoh!"

Slaps, genitalia threatening, and genitalia waving ensues. A cowed Cupid spills the information. Hetshepsut and her harem are staying at the Whispering Stone, an inn and gaming house, infamous for its “monstrous pets allowed” policy. Khaled beats the man unconscious again while Usif points out, “That place is the opposite direction from the lottery; they won’t go back there soon.” Khaled pens a note in Hetshepsut’s hand and voice that instructs unconscious guy and dead archer to waylay and murder people in this alley. He drops the note at their feet and wipes away his comrades’ tracks.

Murdus tells Usif, “Take a note, Usif. When I am running this country I will not employ gendarmes so easily fooled by a staged crime scene. No one faints after committing a horrific crime onto a piece of damning evidence.” Usif pretends to take a note.

The team departs the alley, circles around and continues to the lottery.

The Drawing

The lottery contestants gather near the reflecting pool to await the drawing. A crowd of locals have gathered to watch. A smaller crowd of gendarmes have gathered to keep order amongst the infamously unruly adventurers. Merchants and prostitutes are also present selling gear and whatnot. The contestants settle in for a long wait, as the drawing does not begin until noon.

Denat examines dead ice lizard remains to determine the best cooking method. His sharp eye spots *brown mold* beneath icy feathers. He walks the remains over to a pile of hands at the base of an obelisk with an Osirian sign that declares “The Pillar of Second Thoughts”. Gendarmes glower at him.

Khaled wanders around and meets the competition:

- The Dog Soldiers, a squad of halflings and their riding dogs. One of their dogs is hauling around two barrels of alcohol.
- The Daughters of the Desert, an all-female group with a well-muscled Ulfen woman staring daggers at anyone coming near.
- A mixed group including many nationalities - Chunderin's Champions.
- A group that includes an infamous female assassin, recognized only by Khaled as head killer of the Silver Chain, the Sand Scorpions.
- The Scorched Hand, a group led by a Taldan noblewoman in an enormous purple hat. Next to her is a young man and an older man with a magnificent green scorpion perched on his shoulder. The older man asks many questions about Denat's heritage. Khaled puts on the full court press on the noblewoman.
- The Flickering Four, a group led by an Initiate of the Flame, Fairgrim. Within the group are a barbarian, a scholar dragging about a large bag of books.

Khaled engages the Taldan woman in conversation, she brushes him aside. He invites her and her friends to join them for dinner at the Tooth and Hookah, claiming Denat a great cook. Her party pressures her into accepting.

The sun slowly rises to late morning. The clergy of the Church of Pharama gather beneath an awning. A single priestess stands and sings a prayer to Pharama. The crowd echoes their words. There is a moment of awkward silence, and many of the adventurers shift uneasily.

Priestess Sebti the Crocodile opens her eyes once more. She surveys the crowd again, her expression somber.

"Four thousand years ago, the city of Wati was founded. For many years, our ancestors were blessed by peace and prosperity. Wati would have thrived, perhaps, had not the cult of Lamashtu come. On that day, on that year, the cult of Lamashtu released on the city a plague, the scourge of Wati. It was a Plague of Madness that affected all. The Lady's halls overflowed as the population of this city dwindled, its people driven to madness and death by the disease. For centuries, this city was abandoned."

Sebti pauses in her story, allowing her gaze to rest upon one or two of the adventurers in the crowd.

"In the year 2953 AR, the church of Pharasma returned to Wati led by the high priest Nefru Shepses, and the Grand Mausoleum was established. The old city was walled off, and the settlement was allowed to grow once more, untroubled by the Plague of Madness. The necropolis, as it came to be called, was consecrated in honor of the city's dead, and gradually was overshadowed as the new city grew. Over the next seventeen-hundred years, Wati became the jewel it is today. Now, it is a relic of an age long past, a tribute to the will of the Lady. At long last, by the command of the Ruby Prince, our pharaoh, the tombs of the necropolis are opened."

Sebti the Crocodile smiles at all of you, though it is not a smile of pleasure nor happiness.

"Let the lottery begin! Although many of you have requested specific sites to explore, we must leave these matters to fate. The Lady of Graves is a far better judge of destiny than we of this mortal sphere. The gates of the necropolis will open at sunrise tomorrow. Use this evening to

prepare yourselves for the task ahead. Let these rules guide you in your endeavors in this holy place: remember how this came to pass; every slave's hut is a memorial; honor the departed."

Sebti departs and another Pharama official takes over the lottery drawing. Each drawing is accompanied by an announcement of the site then discussion between the group and Pharama official. Some conversations are quick, others long. The purple hatted Taldan argues her case the longest, then stomps away unhappily with her Scorched Hand in tow.

Thanks to Khaled making the rounds, the Mummy Rustlers and Dog Soldiers enjoy a shared breakfast cooked by Denat and washed down with halfling alcohol. Gendarmes glare at the cook out.

Finally, "The Mummy Rustlers" are called up. Ptemenib, a Pharasmin priestess, gives them building #23. It is a doubly unusual location in that it was a tomb that existed before the Lamashtu plague. They are also given the rules:

- You may take whatever treasures you find.
- Hand over any information gleaned to the church.
- No willful or unnecessary damage to the necropolis and its contents. You must destroy undead, but the dead at rest must be treated well and returned to their resting places.
- Do not fight or interfere with the other groups.
- Do not enter or bother structures other than the ones you are assigned.
- Priest patrols will enforce these rules.
- Avoid the necropolis after dark. Hole up if you cannot avoid this.

The Mummy Rustlers depart for the Tooth and Hookah as another group is called forward. Khaled hangs out to get intel on what sites other groups draw.

- The Dog Soldiers are assigned a tannery.
- The Daughters of the Desert get a pawnbroker's house.
- The Scorched Hand is assigned a brewery.
- Hetshepsut's group is assigned a building close to the Mummy Rustlers' building. Khaled immediately begins to scheme.

That Night

At Khaled's prodding, Denat prepares a dinner worthy of romancing a Taldan noblewoman... or at least at close as 18 silver pieces of ingredients gets you.

Murdus and Usif accompany Denat on his shopping trip. Denat purchases meat of questionable origin from a shifty merchant. He uses a sanctify prayer to cleanse the meat of any issues.

They return to the Tooth and Hookah inn, that includes a crocodile smoking a hookah sign, a nearby well with a mascot crocodile, and an interior choked with hookah pipe smoke.

The Scorched Hand arrives for dinner. They are:

- Velriana the Taldan noblewoman
- Azaz the young man with a wicked green scorpion
- Idorii the young half-elf woman armed with khopesh and kukri

- Khelru the dusky priest of Nethys

Group dynamics occur:

- Khaled dominates Velriana's time, angling subtly toward intercourse. Or business. No one else can tell. He works on a deal to share information and perhaps exchange looted goods. He is unable to close the deal, but she does share that their first "tomb" is a mall and she wants clues to the Erudite Eye's location (some kind of Nethyan holy site).
- Khelru asks Denat many questions. For his part, Denat attempts to be accidentally fascinating to the priest. Azaz interjects himself into the conversation, clearly jealous of Khelru's interest.
- Idorii sits quietly and watches the door. Then the Mummy Rustlers. Then the door.
- Usif sits quietly too.
- Murdus eats and drinks heroically.

The evening ends early as both groups announce, "We want an early start tomorrow!"

Necropolis – Freshmen Day

Most of the adventuring groups show up before dawn and queue up. A giant hooded figure sits alongside the Pharama priests at a long table located next to the necropolis gates. They accept each team's token before allowing them to enter.

Ptemenib tells the Mummy Rustlers that the ghoul gangs clashed in the necropolis last night, which isn't unusual. Just a regular Monday.

The Mummy Rustlers enter. They pass the first landmark - Pharama's Needle, a huge obelisk, which several earlier groups have stopped at for prayers. The next landmark is an immense shaft capped by a stone plug that does not quite muffle an eerie sucking noise.

They stop at the building assigned to Hetshepsut's team. It is a round building with thousands of names carved in its exterior. Khaled spots a nest of ghost scorpions near the entrance. He moves some debris about so that opening the door will disturb the nest.

Usif examines another nearby building at a distance until he hears a voice in his head whispering to him, "Come closer and learn!" He decides, "Yup! I'm about the learning" and walks toward the building. Denat grabs his shoulder and yanks him back to reality. He points to the pile of disemboweled corpses at the entrance.

Denat casts a spell to aid Khaled's examinations. Then he hears a sweet voice that only he can hear from the same nearby building, "Come to the Cenotaph of the Cynic. We will teach you truth and wisdom." He decides against that and the voice leaves him be.

INTO THE TOMB

The group arrives at building #23. A carved head with elaborate head dress (identified by Usif as military) sits above huge, almost seamless doors that are the only entrance. Denat decides the doors are designed to only open from the inside... or worse they are permanently sealed. Khaled examines the doors and area nearby for traps. He gives the all clear, then the team clears away several feet of sand using a single shovel. A pry bar is used to open the doors, revealing a large open room with a giant wheel on the far wall.

Khaled examines the dust and sand covered floor for traps. The wheel has engravings and seems to be stuck in a track. It is a door to the next room. It is 10' in diameter and weights thousands of pounds. Usif examines the carvings sitting at shoulder height in the room until he encounters a ghost scorpion back at the entrance.

Usif dances clear of the ghost scorpions tail and claws, then sprawls. Murdus leaves a savage axe wound in the scorpion's hide. Khaled drags Usif clear. Denat stands ready with his meat tenderizer. Usif attacks with his immolator powers – the burning scorpion poisons him in turn. Khaled throws a volley of daggers into the scorpion's head.

The monster's legs and claws are harvested for food.

Denat says, "I'm not sure they make good eating."

Usif replies, "They are the lobster of the desert."

The hieroglyphs are ancient Osiriani and reveal to Murdus that the tomb's occupant is Akhen-tepi, a celebrated military commander. Warnings include "The Lady of Graves protects this place. A failed grave robber is her favorite grave robber." Clearly, Murdus has been studying ancient Osirion.

A rock is retrieved from outside to block the wheel door open. Murdus and Denat strain to roll the door aside, while Khaled holds the rock. Usif, with fire in his hands, stands ready to burn anything and everything. The door opens to an empty room.

The next room includes a 60' deep shaft. A spike is stuck fast into the floor near the shaft; a rope tied to the spike disintegrates when touched. Clearly these items have been here for a

while. Khaled ties off another rope to the spike then descends the shaft, noting that its walls have been smoothed and lacquered to deny hand holds.

He finds a khopesh wielding statue at the shaft's base. A corpse lies at its feet. A stain on the floor seems to have emerged from the corpse and sprayed the nearest wall. Double doors on the west wall are the only exit.

While Khaled examines the room below, those above hear a voice at the wheel door. Hetshepsut announces, "Your ghost scorpion trap killed several of my harem. Why shouldn't I release this door?" Her mannish foot rests heavily on the blocking rock.

Murdus replies, "I won't strangle you when I become pharaoh."

Hetshepsut, "You don't scare me!" The wheel door slams shut. Denat makes a heroic effort to keep the door from closing and is slammed heavily for his effort.

Khaled yells up the shaft, "What was that slamming noise?"

Murdus yells back, "You did a poor job blocking it open with a rock."

At the same time, Usif yells down, "Wind slammed it shut."

Sealed Inside Akhentepi's Tomb

The others descend the rope to join Khaled who has been unable to find any traps. They open the doors to reveal a long hallway lined with engravings of great battles and slaughter by chariot riders. The great general's visage decorates the door at either end. Khaled attempts to deactivate pressure plate near the far doors, but the plate slips his grasp and the hall is filled with shooting needles. Murdus throws himself clear and Khaled blocks needles with a now ruined bow.

The doors are pushed open using a 10' pole, thereby avoiding the pressure plate. Then they jump over the pressure plate.

This room is a large square with two more exits of double doors. A faded tapestry shows the general, his family and their estate. Mummified cats sit pedestals flanking the tapestry.

Khaled says, "We can use these to prop open the wheel door if we ever get it opened again."

The three Osiriani gasp collectively over Khaled's suggestion to use the cat corpses for such a sacrilegious purpose. He quickly explains, "The pedestals!" This leads to another round of gasps, "You can't take the cat, noblest of beasts, off its pedestal." Khaled rolls his eyes.

The doors south are opened. They descend the stairs beyond into another square room. The far wall has a mirror mounted on it. Tracks show movement from the double doors in the east and west walls. The tracks are probably a large vermin. The mirror is probably magical.

The team moves to the western double doors, open them, to stairs heading downward. Another set of stairs takes the hall down again to another set of doors. Vermin holes dot the hallway mid-way through. Usif ticks off the types of vermin that this might be, "fire beetle, ankhegs, camel spiders, etc..."

Khaled picks his way down the stairs and across the sandy floor. The floor explodes upward and bashes him heavily, forming into a snake head made out of sand. Denat rushes forward, heals Khaled, and attracts the monster's attention. He bashes it with his meat tenderizer. Murdus injures it with his axe, noting that its flesh is magnificent for deflecting chopping blades. The monster sprays a jet of sand at Murdus and Usif, burying Usif. Khaled yells and prods the

monster at its flank, drawing its ire to give Murdus a better shot. But the axe's spikes pass harmlessly through the creature's sandy body.

Denat heals Khaled again, then dodges the monster's attack --- it flows down through the sand and emerges at Denat's feet to deliver a pummeling that does not land. Khaled clears his eyes of sand. Murdus drops his axe, seizes up a large rock, smashes the monster with his rock, missteps, and tumbles down the stairs. Denat slams the sand beast with his meat tenderizer.

The monster decides to run. It dives back into the earth and escapes.

The Mummy Rustlers gather themselves quickly and press into the next room. This room includes a framed tapestry on the south wall, depicting the dead climbing into space in a spiral. A statue stands in each corner. There are double doors in the north and west walls. Denat takes this time to heal Khaled further.

Break Time

They make camp. Denat cooks a scorpion leg over the immolator's flames. Some nap while others guard.

They examine the tapestry and determine its condition is such that it can be carried out. Nothing else of interest is in this room, so they exit through the northern doors which show stairs going up. Everyone groans, "More stairs!"

Murdus commands Usif to take a note, "My new pharaoh's regime will have more lounges and escalators."

The stairs lead to an octagonal room that includes another exit, urns, caskets, and a sarcophagus on a dais at the room's center. Khaled checks for traps; he thinks stepping on the dais activates a trap, probably starting a magic or electricity trap between the pillars at the four corners of the dais. It might also open the doors at the far end of the room. Everyone decides this room is probably not the actual tomb.

They retrace their steps back to another door they haven't investigated. This leads to a hallway populated by vermin tunnels and *mining beetles*. Their eyes pulse with light. Khaled retreats back to a room where Usif finds a secret door. Murdus attempts to force the one-way only door open, but creates so much noise that the mining beetles (dog sized) come to investigate.

Denat, who was watching for such things, is ready for the beetles. He destroys one and gets gnawed upon by the rest who climb and surround him. Usif burns a beetle but gets dazzled by another beetle's eyeball lights. Murdus hacks at the beetles and narrowly avoids hitting Denat. Khaled throws daggers. The dazzled Usif powers through his burned retinas to burn the last few beetles dead.

The secret door is bashed down to reveal an earthen tunnel that leads to another door. And another attack by mining beetles. Denat bends over to examine a small hole and receives a mining beetle to the face. His companions note many more such holes as more beetles rush into the tunnel. Usif and Denat kill a beetle with fire and blade. A beetle latches onto Murdus' face and is just as quickly yanked off by Denat.

A partial tunnel collapse cuts Usif off from his comrades and their attackers. The last beetle puts up a heroic fight, until it is driven into a trap that summons a cockroach swarm that covers Murdus. He rolls on the ground, then crawls clear of the swarm allowing Khaled to light it

up with an alchemist's fire. The burning swarm presses forward, Murdus retreats again by stopping, dropping and rolling. Denat waves his torch about; the cockroaches ignore this torch and swarm him. Khaled throws his second alchemist's fire at Denat, who being ifrit, is immune to fire. The swarm is greatly reduced and dissipates. Khaled catches the edge of the fire and is extinguished by Denat the quick witted.

The team digs through the tunnel collapse to rejoin Usif.

END OF THE SESSION

The game session ends here:

- Several bonds between characters have been resolved.
- Alignments checked:
 - Denat rushed into danger to heal others.
 - Khaled stole whenever possible.
 - Murdus drove off the sand monster
- What has been learned about the world? Wati and the necropolis
- Overcome a notable enemy? Yes, the sand snake
- Loot a notable treasure? Nope.

Khaled, Denat, and Usif level to 2nd. Murdus misses leveling by one xp.