

TOMB OF THE DESERT QUEEN

By Miska Fredman

The legends say that a millennia ago the great Sypherian nation was betrayed by one of their own. Archmagus Zupina A'Khalmos made a pact with one of the old gods and betrayed the Council of Magi. Other wizards and sorcerors of the council fought back with everything they got and eventually managed to drive the traitor warlock and its dark allies into the Red Desert.

Soon after the War of the Wizards Archmagus Zupina A'Khalmos turned themselves into a lich and since then Great Witch has ruled the desert kingdom of Khalmos with its loyal servants and dark minions. The most loyal servants are rewarded with the blessing of undeath and turned into mummy lords and liches.

In recent years the undead lords of Khalmos have been testing the borders of Sypheria and even wandered North over the mountains into the jungles of Zef'vael and over the sea to South into the plains of Rhulgard. One of the most powerful armies is commanded by a mummy lord Vishnat – better known as the Desert Queen. Her undead armies have already devastated a many towns and cities at the border of the Sypherian nation and their numbers are growing after every victory. The fastest way is to strike down the Desert Queen, but it would be impossible to defeat her on the field. Instead the wise archmagi of Sypheria have found the location of her phylactery hidden deep in the Khalmosian desert. A small group could travel there undetected and destroy the canopic jars tethering the soul and body of the desert Queen into the material plane.

GENERAL FEATURES

The tomb of the Desert Queen is located in a vast and desolate desert infested with undead and demonic creatures. The tomb is a pyramid made out of stone. Its tunnels are dark and dry, except for a few magical lights or small apertures letting air and light into the otherwise dark tomb.

Doors are made out of stone and they can be opened from a switch next to the door. Some kind of magical mechanism powers the doors.

LOCATIONS

1) Entry hall

A hall with an altar and a statue. The pillars and walls are mostly featureless except for some ornamental geometric engravings and paintings.

2) The Mural Room

This is a long room with colorful murals painted on the walls. The paintings seem almost alive if you stop to look them more carefully. They seem to tell a story of a great wizard who saves a city from a mechanical army and is then exiled into the desert by a coven of evil witches.

3) Fake Tunnel and Traps

This long tunnel seems to lead somewhere but suddenly ends to a strange face on the wall made out of bronze (3A). When someone comes to investigate it. It opens its hollow eyes and mouth and thick noxious gas starts pouring out of its mouth and eye sockets. It also triggers a pit trap (3B). The pit trap falls down 6 meters and the wall is extremely hard to climb up.

4) Fake Treasure Room

This looks like a treasure room with a small sacrificial altar, but actually, everything here is worthless and well-made copies of actual artifacts. Some items, like coins and scrolls, are even laced with slow-acting poisons.

5) Fake Tomb

This is a fake tomb with a sarcophagus and canopic jars. There are remains of some person inside, but they are not the Desert Queen.

On the Eastern wall, there is a secret door hidden behind shelves.

6) Serpent Altar

This ceremonial room has an altar and a serpent staff placed standing in front of a bowl of something that looks like blood filled with leeches.

7) Servant Tomb

The door to this room is locked. The Desert Queens servants were buried here alive and they have turned into ravenous undead creatures who will attack anyone opening the door.

8) Beetle Room

A room with beetle tapestries. If anyone grabs the treasures on the table, the tapestries activate and the beetles turn into material giant beetles that attack the grave robbers.

9) Crystal Room

In this room, there is a statue and a prismatic crystal. There seems to be an aperture on the room letting in sun or moonlight. There is also a secret door behind the statue. To open the secret door one needs to get the serpent staff from the serpent altar (6) and put it in the hand of the statue. Then the light from the prism hits the staff and a secret door behind the statue opens.

10) Sacrificial altar and snake pit

This is a strange room with two elevated walkways and an altar, and a snake pit beneath these. A gold plaque reads in an archaic language that "a blood sacrifice must be made". Any blood sacrifice will do, even a snake from the pit. If no sacrifice is made, the walkways are unlocked and tilt sideways when someone walks on them.

11) Guardian room.

A giant snake guards the entrance to the Desert Queens canopic chamber. When the characters enter the room a giant serpent appears suddenly from the shadows and attacks. Once the serpent is defeated, the players find a key attached to its tail. The key fits the mechanism on the floor and opens a secret door on the Southern wall.



12) The Canopic Chamber

This is the sacred chamber holding the precious pieces of still living tissue stored inside liquid-filled thick glass jars.

- At the center of the room, there is a pool of sand. It seems normal, but this is actually a magical portal.
- At the back of the room there is a dais and top of it lies the Desert Queens remains stored in an golden sarcophagus.
- On the sides there are alcoves with six sarcophagi. They hold inside loyal guardians of the Desert Queen. They are alerted when someone destroys a canopic jar, steps on the sand, or tries to open the Desert Queens sarcophagus.
- Next to the pool of sand there is a floating crystal ball. This is a magical artifact that controls the sand portal and the canopic jars. It is impossible to use this by others than the Desert Queen.

The players need to destroy the canopic jars, but after they have destroyed one, the sarcophagi open and up to 6 undead warriors attack. When there's only two jars left the desert Queen appears through a sand portal at the center of the room. It's weakened but still a formidable enemy. Once the jars are destroyed the mummy lord de-materializes.