

LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE MODULE

FIFTH EDITION FANTASY #6

◆ RAIDERS OF THE LOST OASIS ◆



BY CHRIS DOYLE

RAIDERS OF THE LOST OASIS

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RAIDERS OF THE LOST OASIS

By Chris Doyle

R*aiders of the Lost Oasis* is an adventure designed for use with the 5th edition of the first fantasy roleplaying game. It is intended for four to six 4th-level characters and should be able to be completed in a single session. The characters begin the adventure as captives and lack all of their equipment, both magical and mundane. A variety of character

classes is suggested to tackle the challenge of escaping the clutches of the raiders and eventually the oasis. It should be noted that spellcasters are at a serious disadvantage as they will be bereft of most, if not all, of their spells. The adventure is set in an isolated oasis surrounded by a glass sea in a barren expanse of a trackless desert.

BACKGROUND

Millennia ago, Ankhotep was a devout priest of the Sphinx Queen, when she ruled the great desert wastes. From secret shrines and concealed sanctuaries, the priest led many forbidden rituals for the glory and favor of his goddess. But on a fateful day, the forces of good rose up against the Sphinx Queen, and although their victory was not complete, her rule was shattered and she was imprisoned in a forbidden tomb. Ankhotep and most of her other followers scattered among the hot desert winds and went into hiding. All the while, the Sphinx Queen's whispers guided her dedicated followers, and Ankhotep embraced her seductive lessons. He was soon convinced of her eventual return, and set about to plan to be at her side during her triumphant return.

He founded a new temple, secluded in a remote oasis, situated in the middle of a sea of glass. The Glass Sea is a scar on the forsaken wasteland, created during an elemental battle centuries before. Using his considerable wealth, and the overflowing coffers filled by his faithful congregation, he constructed an elaborate tomb under the temple. Fit for a pharaoh, the tomb was stocked with everything Ankhotep would need in the afterlife, which he intended to spend with his beloved Sphinx Queen. Mundane objects, a place for his wife, and his remaining abundant material wealth were all added to his burial chambers. His master architect, Horeb, was tasked with the design of several deadly traps, designed to protect his physical body and his hoard. The priest

underwent the sacred ritual of mummification and was sealed in his tomb to await the return of his goddess. But Ankhotep's undoing was his blind trust in his master architect.

Although by no means wealthy, Horeb had a comfortable life. But he was greedy, and believed that locking away a hoard of golden objects and fine jewels in the fanciful belief of an afterlife was foolhardy and wasteful. Not to mention he'd had a forbidden tryst with the priest's wife, Nebetia. Ultimately, it was her seductive pleas that convinced him to betray his master, and plunder the tomb he was entrusted to design. He commanded that a secret passage be installed from one of the general burial chambers, bypassing a trapped entrance door to Ankhotep's tomb. Following the installation, Horeb poisoned the workers to protect his secret. A few weeks after the burial, the master architect used the secret passage to enter the burial chambers. Using his knowledge of the other traps, many of which he designed, he penetrated the innermost chambers and over the course of several nights, robbed the priest of all his worldly possessions, save those adorned on his very body. In the final act, perhaps out of superstition, Horeb sealed the priest's sarcophagus with molten gold, just in case Ankhotep is resurrected. Horeb and Nebetia fled the oasis with more gold and jewels that they could ever spend in a hundred years.

Yet, Horeb's betrayal did not go unnoticed, as the Sphinx Queen herself bestowed the gift of undeath on

her devoted disciple. But unable to escape his stony prison, Ankhoteb wallowed in freakish misery and rage by the betrayal of his wife and his master architect.

The Lost Oasis and the temple were largely forgotten over the centuries. At times the temple was buried under the shifting sands of the desert, but eventually exposed for a few years following lashing sand storms. Several years ago, enterprising desert raiders, using massive blades affixed to the hulls of keel boats, have rediscovered the Lost Oasis. The temple is now in ruins, and the main burial chambers are sealed from a reckless tomb robber decades ago. The raiders favor the location as a hidden hideout, where they can swiftly launch raids on caravans, and quickly retreat to safety in their swift-moving boats. They are aware of the lower chambers, and have converted several of the outer chambers into holding pens for captives, awaiting ransom.

CAPTURED!

The characters are the most recent victims of one of the raiders' bold attacks. Several days ago, the characters woke up in an underground chamber with a single stone door, locked from the outside. They are unaware they have been transported many miles to the Lost Oasis. All of their items, mundane or magical, have been removed, save for a few tattered undergarments. Although in good health, the characters have been unable to rest fully and are weak from the heat, and reduced food and water intake. All characters are manacled to the wall by their arms and feet. Spellcasters are gagged with cloth and have their hands bound behind their backs. Spellbooks, spell components, holy symbols, and spell foci are gone as well, leaving them with nothing more than their wits to survive and escape. But our heroes do have an opportunity. One character has managed to slip his bonds shortly following a commotion on the surface above that shook the very foundation of the tomb. That disturbance has revealed the cracks of an ancient secret door, with a dark passage beyond.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

This adventure begins with the characters imprisoned in an underground cell, stripped of all their belongings save tattered undergarments. It's up to the GM to decide how the characters became captured, but it is

strongly recommended that the GM use discretion and avoid a heavy-handed approach for the sake of running this adventure. In general, players don't enjoy being railroaded, so the GM should instead look for an opportunity in the campaign where being captured is a better option than a total party kill, for example. Below are a few sample methods to get the characters involved. Hopefully, they will not get frustrated by their situation, but instead embrace the challenge of using their wits and problem-solving skills to overcome the challenges presented herein.

- The characters suffer a defeat at the hands of another villain. Instead of being slaughtered, the characters are rendered unconscious and are captured. The villain turns the characters over to the raiders based at the Lost Oasis. The characters wake up shackled in a cell, wearing but a few tattered garments.
- The characters are part of a caravan trekking across the expanse of a trackless desert. The caravan is attacked by raiders and the characters are defeated. Instead of being slaughtered and left for carrion birds, the characters are transported to the Lost Oasis and wake up shackled in a cell, wearing but a few tattered garments.
- The characters are travelling across a trackless desert when they are overcome during a sandstorm. The characters survive the sandstorm, but when they awake, they have been captured by raiders and transported to the Lost Oasis. The characters wake up shackled in a cell, wearing but a few tattered garments.
- Although it requires quite a bit of effort on the GM's part, the adventure can be modified so the characters do not begin as captives. Instead, they have traveled to the Lost Oasis with the goal of freeing an important prisoner. Perhaps this is a sultan, who refuses to pay an outrageous ransom for his kidnapped daughter and hires the characters, or maybe an NPC family member, patron, or mentor important to the characters requires rescue. If this is the case the encounters need to be adjusted to be more challenging, as currently they assume the characters are missing most of their equipment for much of the adventure.

Quest: Escape the Lost Oasis. Regardless of the hook used, the characters' goal is to first escape their cell (with the help of a timely distraction), and then find a way out of the underground tomb. Once they escape the tomb, they need to recover their gear and find a way to escape the oasis before falling back into the clutches of the raiders!

SPELLCASTING

If the GM opts to run this adventure with the characters starting out captured and bereft of equipment, spellcasters will be at a serious disadvantage. It is recommended that the GM utilize the following rules presented below to regulate spellcasting. But ultimately, it's up to the GM to decide how limited spellcasting should be. Perhaps finding a middle ground to the rules below is more appropriate, especially when less experienced players are at the table. For example, clerics, bards, or sorcerers might be able to regain a spell slot (or two) following a short rest.

Regardless of the number of spells a character knows (such as bards and sorcerers) or prepares (such as clerics or wizards), a spellcaster can only cast a certain number of spells before resting. Since their capture and the general lack of food and water, the characters have not been allowed to take the equivalent of a full rest. It is also assumed that they don't have any spells fixed in their mind due to the process of capture and the following ordeal of captivity. Cantrips are an exception to this rule, as repeated practice has ingrained the process of wielding this minor magic routine. However, the spellcaster still needs to be able to speak (for verbal components), move his hands (for somatic components), and possess any necessary material components to cast cantrips.

Keep in mind that wizards will not have their spellbooks (they are in area 2-4), and thus the feature Arcane Recovery is not possible. Spellcasting foci and holy symbols are also missing, so these can't be utilized as a substitute for material spell components. It is recommended the GM strictly enforce the need for specific material components to cast spells that require them. Fortunately, several suitable material components or equivalent items are noted in the text of the encounter areas.

Since clerics lack holy symbols, they will also not be able to use their Channel Divinity feature if it requires the use of a holy symbol (such as Turn Undead). If the

cleric has a simple holy symbol (such as a cross), he might be able to fashion a crude one with discovered items in the tomb, at the GM's discretion.

THE ORDEAL OF BEING CAPTURED

The last several days for the characters have been a challenge. They have been deprived of the proper amounts sleep, nutritious food, and (most importantly) water. They are in a desert after all, and although cooler underground, the chamber is still uncomfortably hot. It is recommended that the characters begin suffering level 2 exhaustion. This means that the characters have disadvantage on all ability checks and their speed is halved. The exhaustion levels are below for reference. Recall that the effects are cumulative. To make the adventure more challenging, the GM can start the characters at level 3 or even level 4. To make the adventure easier (recommended for novice players), start them at exhaustion level 1, or not exhausted at all.

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on ability checks
2	Speed halved
3	Disadvantage on attacks and saving throws
4	Hit point maximum halved
5	Speed reduced to 0
6	Death

TAKING A REST

The characters are likely going to want to take a rest, especially if any spellcasters can get access to some spell slots. This should be discouraged. Short rests (assuming three or less) don't have any impacts, but if the characters take four (or more) short rests or a long rest, the following game impacts should be applied:

- Unless the characters have access to food and water, they increase one level on the exhaustion chart, and don't regain spell slots or lost hit points.
- The dragon at area 2-4 has a chance to fully digest, and his starting attitude is adjusted to hostile.
- At the GM's discretion, the raider party arrives at area 2-2, forcing the characters to overcome another adversary to escape the oasis.