

HEART OF THE GODDESS

by Elise Cretel

CREATURE: *Ma'at* | **LEVEL(S):** 10

SYNOPSIS

For centuries, Ma'at's temple sat peacefully in silent beauty; a great symbol of justice and harmony. The gems of its glistening ceiling glitter and fade with each rising sun as Ra lights the daytime sky. Isfet, the god of chaos, Ma'at's greatest enemy, has grown restless. Some have rumored that he tore out Ma'at's heart out of jealousy of her power. The bravest of adventurers must face the challenges of Duat and keep up with the determined Ma'at.

This adventure is designed for 4-6 players of level 10.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

- **ANCIENT TEMPLE:** A temple suddenly appears nestled behind trees, cliffs, or dunes along a well traveled path. Many are curious what is inside.
- **SINGING:** Under the crisp, starlit night sky, the sound of singing comes from the temple door that is slightly ajar.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ma'at is a goddess of ancient Egypt. She is depicted as a strong woman with wings along her arms. She symbolizes justice and harmony and is known for helping those passing through the dangerous trials of Duat, the passage to the Egyptian afterlife. Isfet is the god of chaos and destruction who seeks to destroy Ma'at.

Duat is the path from the world of the living to the Egyptian afterlife known as The Sea of Reeds. Duat is sometimes called the Twelve Gates of Hell and has a cavern for each hour of the night of the living world that is tracked by the sun traveling across the sky of the underworld. Duat is full of trials such as lakes of fire, hordes of undead, fire-breathing snakes, and jackals ready to devour unworthy souls.

This adventure can introduce Ancient Egyptian mythology into any campaign with remote trails, mysterious woods, or with a desert theme. The temple of Ma'at can suddenly appear anywhere in a whirlwind of sand or can be a part of ruins the party stumbles upon.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

- **MA'AT:** Goddess of the stars, harmony, truth, and justice. During creation, Ma'at was created by Ra and the god of magic, Heka, to bring order and cohesion of the newly forming universe making Ma'at one of the oldest of the Egyptian deities. Treat as a **deva**.
- **ATUM:** Atum created himself from a lotus flower and became the first deity. He is also the boatsman who takes souls to the underworld (also known as Atum-Ra). Treat as a **solar**.
- **AGRIPPA:** An ancient Roman general who passed to the underworld. He is handsome, middle-aged, and charismatic. Treat as a **gladiator**.
- **NEFURA:** Priestess of the goddess Hathor who has passed to the underworld. She is calm, quiet, and smart. Treat as an **archmage**.
- **NEPHTHYS:** Goddess of death who is known as the protector of souls and mummies. Treat as a **planetary**.
- **ISIS:** Goddess of life and the mother of all pharaohs. She symbolizes life and helps souls journey to the Sea of Reeds. Treat as a good-aligned **empyrean**.
- **OSIRIS:** God and ruler of underworld who is considered kind and giving. He is the husband of Isis. Treat as a good-aligned **empyrean**.
- **ISFET:** Evil aligned god of chaos and destruction. He is impulsive and despises harmony and peace. Treat as an **erinyes**.

Note: The good-aligned deities are high powered to emphasize the power and immortality of the gods.

CHAPTER 1 – THE TEMPLE OF MA'AT

Great, lotus tipped-pillars rise above the sandstone doorway. Paintings of a powerful goddess and her heroic feats wrap around the pillars. Large statues of a winged goddess are carved along the front of the temple. The temple door lies slightly ajar. A warm, twinkling light glows inside in shades of purple and blue welcoming travelers inside.

A round stone altar sits at the center of the room with a constellation carved into the stone and embedded with illuminated crystal stars. Silver torches burn with blue and purple magical fire revealing many detailed ancient wall paintings depicting a winged women heroically defeating an evil god and banishing him to the underworld. There are also depictions of the evil deity escaping and stealing her heart. A DC 14 Intelligence (Religion) check identifies the winged goddess as Ma'at and the evil god as Isfet and their lore.

Lying on the altar are 3 glowing amethyst stones that fit perfectly in the many indentations that form a constellation. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal that this is the constellation of Orion. A DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check of the altar will reveal a secret message saying, "The secret lies in the Great Pyramids of Giza." Placing the three stones in Orion's Belt will solve the puzzle. (The three pyramids of Giza were once aligned with the three stars of Orion's Belt.)

The third stone gently thuds into place and the altar suddenly glows with a bright, white light. A portal appears in the wall, and a woman quickly enters the room. A golden bird headdress adorns her fine black hair, and her winged arms reach out to place an amulet around each adventurer's neck with a sense of urgency. "With these you shall pass" she explains as she gestures for the party to step through the portal door deeper into the temple.

THE BOATSMAN

The next room leads to a massive cavern with a dim purple light shining down. A giant ancient-style boat made of reeds and wood floats in a large quiet river that leads off into an endless cave. A muscular man with eyes lined in kohl stands in the boat holding a crooked staff.

Ma'at's wings rustle as she quickly moves toward the boat. A man's sandal steps down from the boat and sinks into the sand as he holds out a concerned hand toward the goddess. You notice a large intricate beaded necklace around his neck and the folds of tunic lined with gold stitching as Ma'at greets her friend and easily climbs aboard without help. He waits calmly in silence for everyone to join them. The boat gently rocks as each person walks across its wooden deck. Ma'at stands tall at the stern with her mace gripped tightly in her hand. The boatman easily lifts a massive oar and silently pushes the it into the still water.

DUAT

The boat glides off into the darkness. Gradually a green light appears in the distance. Soon the boat leaves the cave and stops ashore of a desert. Ma'at jumps off the vessel like a seasoned athlete and asks the party to fight with her. She then runs ahead and disappears through the gate as Atum waits for the adventurers to step onto the sandy shore.

Everything is dark except a bright green light at the horizon as an eerie and unearthly sunrise begins to rise. The ground begins to tremble, and the sound becomes louder and louder. A giant horse-drawn chariot bursts forth from the horizon with a massive, falcon-headed god racing across the sky pulling a green fiery sun behind him. The sun seems so close you feel like you could reach out and touch it.

Everything is a strange shade of green in the Duat morning light. A large sandstone gate lies ahead covered in hieroglyphs. The *comprehend languages* spell will reveal the gate is covered in prayers for the deceased, and “The First Hour” is written across the top of the gate. Ma’at takes the lead and helped the party in battle as an NPC.

THE FIRST GATE

On a sandy hill, two wooden stakes are stuck in the ground. One has the head of a beholder and the other a head of a jackal. The two heads bicker with each other like old friends. Another gate lies ahead in the distance with a giant fire breathing snake wrapped around its columns.

When approached, the beholder immediately asks the party members to tell her a joke. The player must tell a joke and make a DC 13 Charisma (Performance) check. If the party fails to tell a joke or failed the check, roll from the Beholder’s Curse Random Encounter Table. On a success, roll from the Beholder’s Gift Roll table.

Note: After hearing 3 jokes, the beholder becomes bored and tells the players to go.

The jackal will answer questions, but will demand tribute for answers. Once players have laid something of value before the jackal, she will truthfully answer questions. She lies if the players fail to offer tribute.

Note: The beholder (**beholder zombie**) and jackal head (**spectator**) do not have a movement speed unless removed from the pikes. They do not attack unless intentionally harmed.

BEHOLDER’S CURSE RANDOM ENCOUNTER TABLE

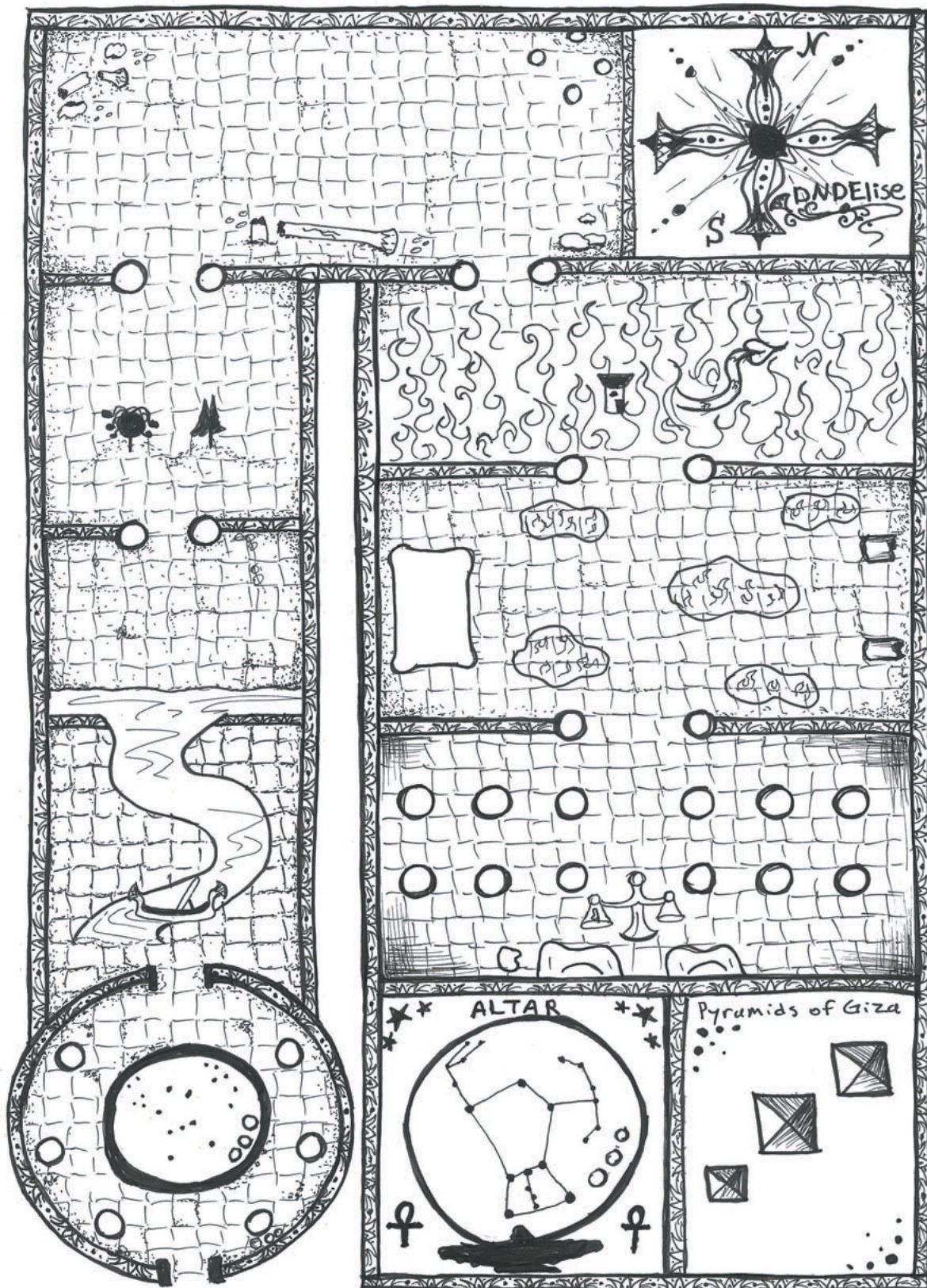
1d10	ENCOUNTER
1	A frost bolt falls from the sky and targets the character.
2	A wight suddenly appears and grapples the character.
3	1d10 angry death dogs appear in the form of jackals.
4	The character’s backpack rips and everything falls to the ground.
5	The <i>sword of vengeance</i> appears before the characters.
6	1d10 ancient zombies appear.
7	2 flaming draft horses pulling a chariot with an Egyptian shield guardian appear.
8	A red slaad with a sword riding a giant vulture appears.
9	A chalice full of poisoned wine appears before the character.
10	An Egyptian Queen wraith riding a warhorse skeleton appears.

BEHOLDER’S GIFT ROLL TABLE

1d10	ENCOUNTER
1	A scroll with the secret name of the fire breathing snake. Speaking the name Apophis will subdue the snake.
2	2 potions of greater healing appear.
3	1 trinket appears.
4	1 bag of caltrops appears.
5	1 flask of alchemist’s fire appears.
6	1 flask of fine wine appears.
7	1 <i>potion of invisibility</i> appears.
8	1 scroll of <i>chromatic orb</i> appears.
9	1 potion of speed appears.
10	1 scroll of <i>entanglement</i> appears.

MAP BY ELISE CRETTEL

THE TEMPLE OF MA'AT



PATH TO JUDGEMENT

The eerie, green sun is pulled further into the sky. Its solar flares arching in slow motion as they cast shadows onto slow moving lines of souls long passed. Ancient fallen ruins litter the landscape. You walk past many expressions, and the eyes of a woman in ancient clothing meet yours. You see Ma'at pushing through the crowds ahead toward the next gate.

Many lines of souls wind and meander the sandy landscape toward the next gate. 1d20 **snakes**, 1d12 **alligators**, and 1d4 **swarms of insects** infest and wander the vast sandy landscape. They only attack if the party gets within 10 ft. The jackals (**death dog**) devour the heavy hearted and weak souls. The jackals pursue characters with evil alignment. There are rows of large, fiery braziers that guide the lines of souls toward a nearby temple. A woman in priestess robes greets you. Her name is Nefura who was a high priestess of the goddess Hathor (Goddess of happiness, dance, and motherhood represented by horns and a solar disk.) She carries a beautiful silver sword. She introduces her friend Agrippa who was once a general of legions of military forces while he was alive. Nefura can tell you about Duat and about the gods Isis and Osiris who will weigh every soul's heart against Ma'at's feather of truth on their great scales. If souls full of evil outweigh the feather of truth, the soul disappears into oblivion.

LAKE OF FIRE

The entrance of the gate is guarded by a large fire breathing snake. It hisses fire as the party approaches and quickly slithers into a massive lake of white fire that blocks the path toward the next gate. Jackals weave in and out of the fire unscathed. Ma'at rushes into the flames with her mace in hand.

The *comprehend languages* spell reveals that the top of the gate says, "Only those with a true heart may pass." After passing through this gate, the only path forward is through the lake of fire. Those with an evil

alignment must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw for every 20 feet in the fire. On a failed save they take 1d12 psychic damage. All other alignments are unharmed by the flames.

The fire rises high above everyone's head. Occasionally spirits or mirages pass by as jackals playfully chase each other through the flames. Suddenly the face of a gentle, **ancient white dragon** appears, and an Egyptian goddess climbs down and approaches the party through the towering white flames. In a calming voice she says her name is Nephthys. She reaches out to touch one of the party members on the arm (restoring 1d12 hit points.) and asks them what their greatest fear is. If they answer her truthfully, she will guide the group to the next gate and her peaceful dragon will trail behind to ensure the party is unharmed. A DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check reveals Nephthys as the goddess of death and protector of souls. Once the party is at the gate, she points south and says, "The creature you seek is there." Ahead are two massive statues of Osiris and Isis that seem to touch the sky.

APOTHIS

Small lakes of blue fire appear across the uneven sand. You wonder if your mind has played tricks on you. The giant statues ahead seem to have adjusted in a blink of an eye. Your focus is broken by a line of fire stretching out toward the party. A giant snake slithers from a nearby lake of fire and rears its head up high above the party. You see Ma'at stealthing behind a pillar ready to strike.

This sandy area has multiple lakes of fire and an empty abandoned temple with massive pillars. The temple is empty except for a few broken stone benches and a statue of an unknown goddess. A giant snake named Apothis (**spirit naga**, with a *breath weapon* from **chimera**) darts between the lakes of fire and comes out to strike at the party. Six **fire salamanders** and three **salamanders** slither out of the lakes of fire.

Creatures of evil alignment that touch the lakes of fire receive 1d12 psychic damage. Other alignments are not impacted.

HALL OF TWO TRUTHS

You enter an outdoor complex full of lotus-tipped pillars covered in beautifully painted hieroglyphs. Before you stands a massive scale with a gleaming, golden ostrich feather floating above one of the plates. Beyond the scales are two colossal statues. A booming women's voice asks, "Who enters?" as you realize the massive statues are the deities Isis and Osiris.

Suddenly, one side of the giant scales slams to the ground as a creature runs its hand along the other side. The Feather of Truth glows with gold light as it rejects the evil soul disturbing its sacred scale. Ma'at confronts Isfet and demands to have her heart back.

Isis and Osiris move in slow motion and are magically bound to their thrones. The evil god, Isfet, holds up a canopic jar holding Ma'at's heart as Ma'at firmly holds her mace to his neck. Giant braziers of fire light up Isfet who is dressed in a black tunic lined with gold trim. He carries a black *staff of power* and his face is gnarled and twisted like a lich. He sneers as he levitates up to place the jar on the scales, causing them to balance again (20 feet high). He comes back down to forcefully attack the party and Ma'at begins to strike him with her mace. 1d6 **mummies** appear. Everytime Isfet takes a turn, 1d10 **skeletons** appear.

When Ma'at makes contact with her heart in any way, she is suddenly lifted up in the air in a heavenly light. Magic and color burst from her being as her heart restores itself. She spreads her winged arms and slowly spins high in the air as she regains her power. Once the party weakens Isfet below 20 hp, Ma'at turns into a giant female **androsphinx** that dives toward Isfet. She pushes her powerful claws into Isfet as a great shockwave quakes across Duat. The goddess Isis raises her staff and the sand begins to whirlpool around creating a great swirling pit to oblivion. Isis's voice booms as she tells the party to finish Isfet who is now underfoot.

Once Isfet is thrown into oblivion, the ground quickly closes up and everything is peaceful again. The gods are released from their confinement. Ma'at

returns to her human form and thanks the party for their great deed. The giant gods nod with approval. Isis strikes the ground with her staff with a loud thunder creating a river back to the cave. Atum arrives with the reed boat and heads back to the temple. When everyone returns through the portal to the room with the altar, they see their bodies lying on the ground unconscious and pale with death. Ma'at tells them not to worry. She takes an amulet off a party member and their soul is reunited with their body. Their bodies are engulfed with healing light and they gasp for air as their body is brought back to life unharmed.

REWARDS

Once everyone is restored, Ma'at rewards the party for their valiance. The treasure reward for this adventure is at the DM's discretion. Any coins rewarded have ancient symbols on them.

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