

Shadowdark Solo 001

AUGMENTED IMAGINATION with Shadowdark SOLO

I'm starting a new campaign as a step-by-step example of using the new Augmented Imagination framework for Solo or Co-op play, this time with Shadowdark. It's meant as a guide to one possible way to play an RPG without a GM.

My previous set of examples used D&D5E and a solitary Character playing an emergent story with no pre-planned storyline. This time, I'm using the Framework with Shadowdark, with a party of three adventurers and playing a Pre-Written Scenario (one I haven't read at all yet!).

This is a BIG departure from the original intention for the Framework, where the Scenes Mechanism drove much of the play. The pre-written area descriptions will now provide the Scene Focus and Scene Details, but I'll be trying to distill from the descriptions an underlying challenge, then focussing on that to "Play out the Scene". I'll be relying heavily on Ask the Bones and on defining lists of Potential Outcomes BEFORE making the key dice rolls in each Scene.

Shadowdark (along with many other OSR-inspired games) tends to reward "**what the players say their characters are doing and saying**", rather than just rolling Skill Checks. This usually relies on the GM knowing more about the situation than the Players and then interpreting their actions (generously) to make a decision whether it works, so I'll try to find other ways to inject Augmented Imagination's trademark tension and surprise.

All documents about Augmented Imagination, including the FREE Rules PDF can be found from the <https://iGM4u.com> website, under the heading Augmented Imagination.

The scenario I'm going to play is called Tomb of the Serpent Kings, by Skerples. Available for FREE on DrivethruRPG or directly from his blog at

<https://coinsandscrolls.blogspot.com/2017/06/osr-tomb-of-serpent-kings-megapost.html>

The blog post also offers a couple of links to additional versions of the map that I may use.

In this first session, I'll be following the Augmented Imagination guidelines for "Starting a Campaign" and picking ONE of the three party members as my main "**viewpoint**" character for that process. As I'm not reading ahead, there may be some info in the Scenario which I have already contradicted by the time I learn about it. The first Journey will be to the Dungeon, rather than to Home, but where possible, I'll stick to the steps outlined in Augmented Imagination.

They MIGHT not reach the Tomb itself in this first session.

There are a set of suggestions in an appendix about Adjustments to the Game Mechanics of Shadowdark to improve survivability of Solitary Heroes. I'm only going to use SOME of those, particularly for this "viewpoint" character because I plan to run a party of three heroes.

If the Viewpoint Character dies, I'll promote one of the other party members and they will start getting the benefit of the "viewpoint" characters adjustments.

Shadowdark Solo Adjustments (reprinted from Augmented Imagination)

a. ~~You may want to allow a Solo hero to try and give themselves Advantage on an attack by making a relevant Skill check as a Bonus Action (eg. DEX or CHA for a feint, DEX to swing on a chandelier), or INT representing a clever idea, if they can't get chances for Flanking bonuses from allies. Perhaps risking Disadvantage if the roll fails. Come up with some narrative justification to exercise your creativity.~~

a. **I won't be using this as I've got a Party of three adventurers. However, when it makes sense for another character to provide Help, they will.**

b. You may want to ignore the extra damage dice from critical hits made **against** your Solo hero.

a. **I will be ignoring Critical hits against all Player Character Party Members.**

c. You may want to have your hero's critical hits always do **maximum damage on the additional dice rather than rolling.**

a. **Only my one "viewpoint" character will gain max damage from the extra Critical Hit dice.**

d. You may want to let your hero always gain maximum hit points each Level and when spending hit dice to recover or when receiving healing from potions and spells.

a. **Only my "viewpoint" character will gain max healing, but all PCs will have max HP per level.**

e. ~~You may want to award your hero a LUCK TOKEN whenever they roll a "1" as it can be easier to have a "mechanical" rule like this than to have to judge if something you did is worthy of gaining Luck Tokens. **Allow your hero to have (and start with) a number of Luck Tokens equal to their Level instead of just a single one. Also gain a Luck Token at the start of each session.**~~

a. **As I have a party of three characters, they can have just a single Luck Token each, but I'll allow multiple Luck Tokens for characters who manage to get into a stable Romance (as noted in one of the Augmented Imagination Supplements "Romance in Solo RPGs")**

f. ~~You may want the Death Timer to count how many rounds the "dying" hero is helpless for. When it runs out, the hero automatically stabilizes and returns to 1hp. The Solo hero only dies when it seems narratively fitting that the enemy (or environment) actually finishes them off.~~

a. **I'll NOT be using this as Shadowdark is meant to be slightly more brutal than D&D5E and hopefully if a character goes down, one of the others can save them in time.**

g. You may want to allow your Solo hero to begin at a higher Level. Typically, 3rd Level is a decent place to start, with more options (An extra Talent Roll, spells, hit points etc)

a. **I'll start all three members of the party at 2nd Level.**

h. ~~You may want a non-magical hero to be able to cast spells, so feel free to grant your non-spellcasting hero first-level Priest or Wizard abilities **ON TOP OF** the abilities of their starting class. When they increase in level you can choose whether to increase their effective Class Level or their Spell-casting Class Level and gain more "Spells Known By Tier" and choose which Talent table to roll on.~~

a. **I won't be using this as I have a party of three characters but will add Cure Wounds and Light to the spell list of any spellcaster If I don't have a Priest.**

Last Time...

- As this is the FIRST session of my Shadowdark examples, there is no “Last Time” info.

Starting a Campaign

Augmented Imagination has a chapter with this title. It is really about starting to play a game with an emergent story ie. One that emerges from imagination and randomness. In this case however, we just want a simple Setting in which to place the Tomb of the Serpent Kings.

Just from the name of the scenario, I immediately thought of the Hyborian Age world of Conan (Robert E Howard’s barbarian hero) and particularly the land of Stygia which has a Serpent Throne and worships the great serpent god, Set.

Step 1 suggests finding *a hex map that looks interesting*.



The map I found for Stygia doesn’t have a lot of detail, not much variety of terrain types, but it will do and my mental images of Stygia can help to fill out the setting of fertile grasslands around the City of Khemi and all along the delta of the River Styx, swiftly turning to dry desert as you go South. I’m going to set the Tomb into the mountain range shown at the coast and decide to go with 25-mile hexes (roughly a full day of travel). Remember that Augmented Imagination isn’t really concerned with Distances and Days, just with the number of interesting and challenging Scenes that make up each Journey. The number of hexes/days will only affect how many days’ worth of Rations my characters will need.

1. Imagine a Setting

I already imagine that Stygia has an oppressive Church and powerful Sorcerer Priests ruling over it. It has brutal slavery, court intrigues and nomadic desert tribes. It should be easy to fit Shadowdark characters into the setting. I will probably add some elements from Cursed Scroll 2 (Red Sands) as well, such as the Desert Rider class and the environmental dangers of desert travel, camels and possibly other desert-based monsters from that zine.

Next, the framework suggests you *just zoom in and pick an area that looks interesting to use as your home region*. I'm going to say my adventurers (at least my viewpoint main character) comes from the great city of Khemi.

I'm going to use the Augmented Imagination web page to store my Lists (People & Other Monsters, Places, Things) and I can already add a few places to my List of Places directly from the map (including the Tomb)...

1.	Khemi
2.	The Western Mountains
3.	The Tomb of the Serpent Kings
4.	???

So, if I ever need to roll for a place, I can start with a d4 (or a d6) to get one of these or one of the empty slots.

2. Imagine a few LOCAL FOLK

Bear in mind that I still don't exactly know who or what I'm going to play at this point, but the framework suggests I imagine a family member and then a person of authority in the area.

Let's imagine that my character's uncle is a Camel Merchant. I'll call him Faruk ben Hassan. Since my father died, he's been "looking after" my mother and me although he has a son of his own who gets EVERYTHING while mother and I are treated more like servants.

For the person in authority, I COULD go for the King of Stygia, but I think I'll have the mid-level Sorcerer Priest Taran ibn Gazali. He is feared (as he chooses sacrifices if there are poor harvests or bad storms) but respected for his knowledge and learning.

I add those two (and the as-yet un-imagined Mother) to the list of People & Other Monsters

1.	Uncle Faruk ben Hassan ("guardian" of my widowed mother and I)
2.	Sorcerer-Priest Taran ibn Gazali
3.	Mother (widowed)
4.	???

3. Pick a nearby hex as a place to start

I'm instead going to start in the city as we are about to set out for the Tomb.

4. Answer These Three Questions...

4.1 Why are you here?

Desperate to get enough money to get Mother and I out from under Uncle Faruk's oppressive "guardianship", I'm heading for the Tomb to see what treasure I can amass.

One of the Hooks mentioned in the Scenario is that we have a map showing the location of the Tomb, so I'll go with that as our motivation.

4.2 Why are you alone?

As I plan to have three player-characters, this question isn't directly relevant. My answer to 4.1 explains why my main "viewpoint" character is here. The others are likely to be similarly driven by greed and desperation, or possibly just out of friendship for the viewpoint PC.

4.3 Why are you heading home?

As mentioned already, in this session we aren't heading Home, but heading to the Tomb of the Serpent Kings, following our mysterious map. We'll call it an expected minimum of **TWO SCENES** (not counting any Additional Scenes we might get) to get to the entrance.

5. Work out the FIRST SCENE for the Journey home.

The basic procedure in Augmented Imagination is as follows...

Step 0: Estimate HOW MANY SCENES you want your intended activity to take.

Two Scenes.

Step 1: Choose your preferred/intended type of Scene

Once we reach the Tomb, I'll stop choosing Scene Focus and Rolling for Scene Focus, but let's try to get there first. The options are Combat, Environment, Knowledge or Social.

I'll go with KNOWLEDGE and be studying the Map for clues if the dice give me "Chosen Focus"

Step 2: ROLL a d6 to determine the SCENE FOCUS

I got a "6", SOCIAL

Normally, we'd now roll for the Scene Details on the SOCIAL Table, but the guidelines suggest that we now Create our Character so that we can let the character's nature and capabilities influence what we imagine when we first see the Scene Details.

CREATE YOUR CHARACTER

The Framework includes some suggestions for how to play Shadowdark with a single character. I've already described above which of the guidelines I'll be using.

I'll roll stats for all three characters and then decide which one to make the "viewpoint" character. If I don't get a 14, I'll turn the lowest result into a 14 rather than re-roll and I'll allow one swap of stats.

A) STR:4 DEX:12 CON:12 INT:8 WIS:12 CHA:9 (fortunately, the 4 STR can become a 14)

B) STR:11 DEX:8 CON:8 INT:12 WIS:11 CHA:16

C) STR:10 DEX:17 CON:8 INT:12 WIS:10 CHA:4 (sadly, they are stuck with the 4)

Stats "A" will become my viewpoint character a **2nd Level Desert Rider** (from Cursed Scroll 2) called Kaylid Al-Bakar

Stats "B", swapping STR & DEX will become a **2nd Level Witch** (from Cursed Scroll 1) called Felura. She casts spells using her Charisma. I'm going to add Cure Wounds, Turn Undead & Light to the Witch spell list as I don't have a Priest.

Stats "C", will become a hideously ugly **2nd Level Thief**, Duthor. He uses his high Dexterity for Thievery.

As the Hyborian Age is predominantly human-centric, I'll keep them all human. (I was tempted to have Duthor be a goblin, but I'll resist the urge). They all get **AMBITIOUS** which gives them an additional Talent Roll.

I'm going to pick Backgrounds rather than roll...

- Kaylid the “Desert Rider” is a **Scout (advantage on skill checks for Observation, Stealth & Speed)** - has been working as a Caravan Guard for Uncle Faruk’s Camel business. I’m going to interpret the “Charge” feature to work mounted AND on-foot. He has a special bond with his Camel “Kalahari”.
 - Talents: Ambitious +2 STR (16), +2 DEX (14), +1 to Attacks
 - Class Features: Charge (3/day for double damage), Special MOUNT
- Felura the “Witch” can be flavoured as more of a Devotee of an obscure cat goddess. Her Familiar will be a cat. She is a **Cult Initiate (narratively explaining her priestly spells and advantage on skill checks relating to Mysteries, Magic & Undead)**.
 - Talents: Ambitious +2 Charisma (took her to 18!), Advantage on Casting Cure Wounds, +1 on Spellcasting Checks
 - Class Features: Familiar, Spellcasting
 - Spells: Cure Wounds, Light, Shadowdance (a minor illusion), Hypnotise
- Duthor the “Thief” began as a street **Urchin (with Advantage on skill checks dealing with criminal contacts and local knowledge in the city of Khemi)**. He got +2 Dex during character creation, but I only gave him +1 and moved the other point to STR for 11. (I didn’t feel that starting characters should go over 18 in any Stat)
 - Talents: Ambitious Backstab (+extra d6), +2 DEX, Backstab (+ extra d6)
 - Class Features: Thievery, Backstab



Zafirah, the Cat Familiar Fierce, Loyal and can Speak common!

I gave her AC 14, HP 2 a +2 Claw for 1 dmg (TRIVIAL*)

She is good at Climbing & Stealth

**** I saw a Reddit post that described “TRIVIAL” damage for small animals like cats. Only one hit point of damage against a normal-sized opponent, but it can’t take the last hit point.***

I'll be using the cat's token on the region map to indicate the position of the party.

I bought extra rations for the party and mounts, carried in saddlebags, so they have 3 days each and another 12 days each on the mounts with 12 days for the mounts too.

Kaylid starts with a Camel and I'm going to say he has "borrowed" two more from his Uncle Faruk.



SCENE 01 – Setting out for the Tomb

Two Scenes to get to the Tomb. Our heroes are following Kaylid's map.

Just before creating the characters, I determined that the first Scene would be SOCIAL.

Step 3: Scene details

I'm using the website at <https://aigm.iGM4u.com/aigm.html> to make the rolls for the oracle tables and "Ask the Bones". I paste the results into boxes...

SOCIAL Scene:ENEMIES - In some way, an Enemy is involved with the Scene. If it's unlikely to be direct involvement, you could perhaps receive a message concerning them. Alternatively, you get a chance to make a new Enemy. Envision what this could be. Make rolls on the Spark Tables for inspiration if necessary. Some kind of Skill check should be needed.

As this is a SOCIAL Encounter with an "Enemy", it could be Uncle Faruk who might have discovered his two missing camels. Alternatively, I could easily imagine an enemy for Duthor or maybe one for Felura. I'll go for Uncle Faruk.

Not far from the city gates, Uncle Faruk catches up with them, accompanied by his bodyguard, a menacing-looking warrior called Abdul. He's shouting at Kaylid, saying the "boy" should be grateful for everything Faruk has given him over the years, not STEALING camels!

From Kaylid's point of view, he would have paid to rent the camels if Faruk had paid him a decent wage for all his work. He's hoping that Faruk will not report them to the authorities (because of the dishonour it would bring in his Uncle's household).









Step 4: Play out the Scene

Kaylid will attempt to Persuade his Uncle (a Charisma Check DC15 as it sounds like Faruk is an Enemy) that he will return in a few days and pay for the Camel hire (or buy the camels) and add that he hopes to earn enough from his expedition that he can finally “relieve his Uncle of the burden of supporting him and his mother”.

I’ll imagine some possible outcomes...

- Nat 20 – Full Agreement – no charges will be brought. The Fees can be discussed when they return.
- Extreme Success (by 5+) – Full Agreement. No Charges will be brought against Kaylid for a full Month
- Success – Agreement, but an additional 1gp fee will be levied each day, per Camel
- Fail – Choose (take only 1 Camel, but MUST Purchase it now – going into debt with interest fees if necessary)
- Extreme Fail – Antagonises Faruk further, Demands return of the Camels, threatening to have Abdul administer a beating! I’ll imagine Abdul as a very tough/scary bodyguard, perhaps a Ras-Godai assassin from Cursed Scroll 2!
- Nat 1 – Triggers Combat (starts non-lethal). Kaylid’s mother MAY be thrown out into the street!

Charisma (-1) = 1 (at least it wasn’t a nat1).

Turn Order	
Count: 5	Sort 
 Duthor	17
 Felura	15
 Kaylid	15
 Abdul	11
 Faruk	5

As that was **Kaylid's** Action, it would be **Abdul to go next**. He will ride alongside Kaylid and try to Intimidate him.

I imagine he's delivered a few beatings during Kaylid's life growing up in Khemi, so I'll give him Advantage and go for an opposed Charisma vs Kaylid's Wisdom.

Abdul Charisma (+0) Advantage = **15** & 8 vs Kaylid Wisdom (+1) = 13

Kaylid flinches back from the scary-looking assassin. I'll say he'd get Disadvantage in combat (if it comes to that) until he manages to make a Wisdom Save to gather his courage.

Then it would be **Uncle Faruk**. He will demand the return of the two camels. I'll give him Advantage due to Abdul's menacing presence and assume that his background as a Camel Trader means he's at +2 for trading.

Faruk Charisma (+2) Advantage = **19** & 15.

It's not going to be easy talking Faruk out of this!

Duthor certainly won't be trying to persuade the angry merchant but he'll edge his camel a bit further away and try to slip out his sling unnoticed (just in case this turns nasty).

With Abdul and Faruk focussing on Kaylid, this sounds like an Easy DEX Check.

Duthor Dex (+4) Advantage vs DC 9 = **24** & 6 CRITICAL SUCCESS

I'll say that if combat starts, Duthor will get to strike first with surprise and be able to get his Backstab damage bonus.

That brings us to **Felura**, who is the only person with a chance of talking their way out of this due to her high Charisma [or could use Hypnotise on Abdul so they can ride off!]

I'm going to resist the inclination to try and use seduction. Instead, she'll try appealing to his greed and logic. "Our trip into the desert can only end in one of two ways... either we find the treasure we seek, and you will be repaid in full... with a bonus... and then be rid of Kaylid and his mother for good, or we die and you are still rid of him for good. All you are risking is a couple of Camels, and what is that to a man of YOUR enormous wealth and dignity?"

It sounds good to me, so I'll give her Advantage. She still has to beat his 19 success from earlier.

Felura Charisma (+4) Advantage 6 & 12... LUCK TOKEN to re-roll 5 & **18**, fails by 1!

As that's so close, I can imagine the vile Faruk offering a deal that involves Felura agreeing to spend the night with him if payment is not received in full for the two camels (100GP) within the month!

Kaylid is appalled by the idea (so is Felura!). He'll make the DC15 Wisdom check to see if he can overcome his fear of Abdul. His outrage can give him Advantage.

Kaylid Wisdom (+1) Advantage = 2 & **21** CRITICAL SUCCESS

He urges Kalahari (his special camel mount) past Abdul's camel. The superior Kalahari knocks the lesser camel aside making Abdul have to struggle to stay mounted. As he draws alongside his uncle he stares down at the leering merchant.

"And what would my Aunt think of this grubby little deal you propose? Perhaps we should run the details of this new contract past your wife!"

That seems like a suitable end to the Scene, so I'll say that Faruk backs off, letting them go with the camels (but still insisting that payment is made on their return). Abdul is glaring at Kaylid and there will definitely be some future trouble with him.

Faruk may take out his annoyance on Kaylid's mother.

I make a few additions to the three Lists that are part of the Augmented Imagination Framework. I'm storing them in the webpage at <https://aigm.iGM4u.com/aigm.html> ...

	People & Other Monsters
1	Uncle Faruk ben Hassan (Enemy) Camel Trader, "guardian" of Kaylid's mother & Kaylid
2	Sorcerer-Priest Taran ibn Gazali
3	Mother of Kaylid (widowed) supported by Uncle Faruk but as an unpaid servant
d4	Felura (PC) charismatic Witch/Cult Initiate
5	Duthor (PC) hideous but nimble and deadly Thief/former City Urchin
d6	Kaylid (PC) the viewpoint character. A Desert Rider/Scout
7	Abdul (Enemy) Faruk's bodyguard, a Ras-Godai Assassin
d8	Aunt ??? Uncle Faruk's long-suffering wife
9	
d10	

	Places of Interest
1	Khemi - home City in Stygia
2	The Western Peaks
3	The Tomb of the Serpent Kings
d4	

	Treasure & Things
1	The Map to the Tomb of the Serpent Kings
2	The Rumoured Treasures of the Tomb of the Serpent Kings
3	
d4	

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

Our three heroes ride south into the desert.

SCENE 02 – Can Love Bloom in the Desert

I've gone for 24-mile hexes for this region map and will assume that it takes a day of normal travel to cross each one.

Step 1: Choose your preferred type of Scene

I'll try for Knowledge and Felura will be studying the strange symbols on the Map.

Step 2: Roll to see what you get

Scene Focus: SOCIAL

Step 3: Scene details

SOCIAL Scene: ROMANCE - You (or somebody in your party, or somebody from your 'People & Other Monsters' List) gets the chance for Romance. If you are playing with others, check whether this topic is acceptable and use the Lines & Veils procedure to determine whether to go into details or even skip it altogether. 'Identify a Target' to see who is available, and then imagine who you (or they) could become romantically interested in. If you aren't directly involved, you could 'Identify a Target' twice.

I hadn't intended to push the story in this direction (at least not so soon) but as it has come up...

"The Romance in Solo RPG" supplement (available from the website) presents a possible mechanical structure for handling romance, with a mechanical benefit and potential risks. I'll see if Kaylid can make any progress with Felura...

Step 4: Play out the Scene

I imagine the conversation as they ride away from Faruk. Kaylid is still fuming to himself with indignation.

"Does that fat fool think he'd have any chance with a woman like her?"

Zafirah the cat snorts... "What do you mean... a woman like her?"

"So... so... so beautiful, so wonderful!" and then he reddens, realising he said that aloud.

Major Differences in Social Class, Nationality & Alignment can add to the difficulty of Romance Checks, but (by chance) I chose the same alignments for Kaylid & Felura and they are both similar social class and all three heroes are from the city of Khemi in Stygia.

There are some problems because of the disparity in Charisma & Wisdom modifiers

Felura +4 Charisma vs Kaylid's -1 in personality & looks she's out of his league, +5 to the DC

Felura +0 Wisdom vs Kalid's +1 he's slightly more mature and has more emotional intelligence, +1 to the DC.

The Normal DC is 12, so it becomes DC18. That seems like it will be a problem.

Emotional Hit Points begin at 5 + Level + Wisdom Modifier + Charisma Modifier

Kaylid has 7 Emotional Hit Points. Felura has 11.

Kaylid is initiating the Romance. He's throwing himself into it and will buy +5 to the roll at the risk of 2d6 Emo HP Damage! He has a Luck token to re-roll if need be.

Charisma (-1) DC18 +5 for the Emo HP risk = 19.

It seems that Felura is pleased with the compliment and smiles back at him. I imagine Zafirah getting slightly annoyed and sniffing haughtily. Success grants him a Luck Token, but he already has one. He'll give it directly to Felura as she already used hers.

The aim is to get 3 successes before 2 Failures in order to reach a stable romantic position. The mechanical benefit of the stable romance is to be able to hold additional Luck Tokens.

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

As the whole journey was estimated as Two Scenes, they have "mechanically" reached the Tomb already, but I usually make a check for each Long Rest, and it is two Hexes to the Mountains and then another to the Tomb. Each Long Rest I knock off rations.

They spend the first night camping in the Desert. Do they get an undisturbed Long Rest?

Ask the Bones Likely: 6 (5,1,1) No

As this is the first "**Ask the Bones**" of the story, I'd better explain...

ASK THE BONES

Most Solo RPG systems provide a way to make decisions that would normally be made by a GM. Augmented Imagination uses 2d6 or 3d6 or 4d6.

STEP 1: Make sure you ask a YES/NO Question. If it is clear that one answer favours the Character and the other answer is bad for the character, try to phrase it so that a YES is the “good” answer.

For something ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE,	roll 4d6 and add the two lowest results.
For something that is UNLIKELY,	roll 3d6 and add the two lowest results.
For a “Normal” 50/50 question,	roll 2d6 and add the results.
For something that is LIKELY,	roll 3d6 and add the two highest results.
For something ALMOST CERTAIN,	roll 4d6 and add the two highest results.

Result	Answer
2-4	No and... (there is some major drawback/penalty in the result)
5-6	No
7	No But (the character may get some minor benefit)
8	Yes But (there is some minor drawback or issue)
9-10	Yes
11-12	Yes and... (there is some major additional benefit in the result)

Benefits MAJOR or Minor

Imagine, choose or roll 1d6...

1	It didn't take long
2	It didn't draw attention
3	It made future attempts easier
4	It didn't cost as much
5	Something connected happened at the same time
6	Something unconnected happened at the same time

Drawbacks MAJOR or Minor

Imagine, choose or roll 1d6...

1	It took longer than expected
2	It drew attention
3	It made future attempts harder or was only a temporary success
4	It cost something, or cost more than was expected
5	Something connected went badly at the same time
6	Something unconnected went badly at the same time

SCENE 03 – First Night in the Desert

Step 1: Choose your preferred type of Scene

I'll stick with Knowledge and have Duthor studying the Map. I plan to use the "Always On Initiative" of Shadowdark as much as possible to make sure to spread around the spotlight of Scenes and Checks.

Step 2: Roll to see what you get

Scene Focus:CHOSEN FOCUS (Choose or Roll Scene Details)

Step 3: Scene details

I choose...

SECRET:You encounter something secret or learn a secret. Alternatively, you are put in a position where you must struggle to keep a secret. Imagine what it could be and/or how you learn of it or who/what could be trying to wrest the knowledge from you. Make rolls on the Spark Tables for inspiration if necessary. Some kind of Skill check should be needed to benefit from the knowledge or keep it hidden.

Step 4: Play out the Scene

There is clearly something to learn from the Map. I'll imagine that it relates to the first trap they might encounter in the Tomb and make the check with Advantage as it is covered by Duthor's Thievery Class Feature.

Intelligence (+1) Advantage DC12 = 2 & 16

Duthor learns something useful about this first trap that will give them Advantage in dealing with it (or +2 if they already have Advantage).

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

The rest of that Long Rest passes peacefully. They and each camel use a Ration.

Second Night in the Desert. Do they get an undisturbed Long Rest?

Ask the Bones Likely: 3 (2,1,1) NO! And Drawbacks: Something unconnected went badly at the same time

SCENE 04 – Second Night in the Desert

Step 1: Choose your preferred type of Scene

I'll stick with Knowledge and have Felura study the Map again when she and Kaylid take a break from furtive smiles and blushes.

Step 2: Roll to see what you get

Scene Focus:CHOSEN FOCUS (Choose or Roll Scene Details)

Another lucky result!

Step 3: Scene details

I choose the same details...

SECRET: You encounter something secret or learn a secret. Alternatively, you are put in a position where you must struggle to keep a secret. Imagine what it could be and/or how you learn of it or who/what could be trying to wrest the knowledge from you. Make rolls on the Spark Tables for inspiration if necessary. Some kind of Skill check should be needed to benefit from the knowledge or keep it hidden.

Step 4: Play out the Scene

There is clearly something more to learn from the Map. Felura doesn't get Duthor's "Thievery" Advantage.

Intelligence (+1) DC12 = 4

Felura learns nothing more that's useful.

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?: NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

The rest of that Long Rest passes peacefully. They and each camel use a Ration.

Third Night, now in the foothills of the Mountains. I'm going to assume that encounters are more likely in the mountains and decrease the chance of a peaceful night to 50/50.

Do they get an undisturbed Long Rest?

Ask the Bones 50/50: 3 (2, 1) NO! And
Drawbacks: Something unconnected went badly at the same time

SCENE 05 – Third Night (in the Foothills)

Step 1: Choose your preferred type of Scene

I'll go for ENVIRONMENT and hope that Kaylid can discover a source of rations.

Step 2: Roll to see what you get

Scene Focus: CHOSEN FOCUS (Choose or Roll Scene Details)

Three lucky results in a row!

Step 3: Scene details

I choose...

EXPLORATION: You either find something or believe there is something to find, or you stumble upon something unexpected. Perhaps a place, perhaps a thing or perhaps a person. Imagine what could be found. Some kind of Skill check should be needed to locate your target or to cope with or understand what you have found.

I'll imagine that Kaylid, the experienced Scout, finds a hidden oasis at the base of the mountains with fresh water and some edible plants. For the "Something unconnected went badly" I'm going to say that the water might be tainted and some of the edible plants are poisonous!

Step 4: Play out the Scene

I'd say that Kaylid's Scout background will give him Advantage on working out if the water and plants are safe.

I'll break it up into two checks. Does he notice in time to stop the Camel's drinking and if not, does he notice before the heroes drink?

Wisdom (+1) Advantage DC12 = 19 & 21 CRITICAL SUCCESS.

He realises that something is wrong and stops the camels in time. They use their own rations and water.

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?:NO - You get some breathing space between scenes if you want/need it unless you think it is more appropriate for the narrative to continue immediately.

The rest of that Long Rest passes peacefully. They and each camel uses a Ration.

The last day of the Journey is through the Mountains. We've done enough Scenes for the Journey, but I'll just make a check for Navigation to see if we find the way through to the Tomb today.

I give Kaylid Advantage for being a Scout.

Kaylid Intelligence (-1) Advantage – 11 & 5 LUCK TOKEN for Re-roll 3 & 17

They arrive at the entrance to the Tomb just as night is falling.

Wrap Up

Once they are in the Tomb, we'll see how Always-On Initiative works with the gradual reveal of the pre-written Scenario and how spotting traps and secret doors works without turning into a Skill Check.

If you are finding the story and the system interesting, or have any comments and suggestions, please let me know.

Hopefully see you next time.