

# Shadowdark Solo 003

## AUGMENTED IMAGINATION with Shadowdark SOLO

Continuing my step-by-step example of using the new Augmented Imagination framework for Solo or Co-op play, this time with Shadowdark.

I'm using the Framework with the Shadowdark RPG mechanics, a party of three adventurers and playing a Pre-Written Scenario I haven't read at all yet.

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

The scenario I'm playing is called Tomb of the Serpent Kings, by Skerples. Available for FREE on DrivethruRPG or directly from his blog <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. I'm using the Isometric one created by Andrew Duvall.

### Augmented Dungeon-Crawling Procedure

1. Describe the Party's actions and intentions
2. Read some of the Area description
3. Distil the nature of the Area's Challenge
4. Play out the Scene
  - a. If it makes narrative sense, stick to the Always-On Initiative mechanism
  - b. Because I often take breaks, or spend time setting up the VTT scenes, I don't want to use the real-world 1-hour timer for Torches. Instead, I'll make a 1d6 roll at a critical point in every Scene to see if the Torch goes out.
  - c. If there's no reasonable way to determine Success/Failure, I'll try outlining some possible Outcomes and then making a Check
5. Check for an Immediate Additional Scene
  - a. Additional Scenes are **LIKELY** to be replaced with Random Encounters (I haven't read enough of the scenario to know if there are wandering monsters, but if there's a table, I'll use that)
6. As this is a perilous environment it will be 50/50 whether we can get a Short Rest and Unlikely we can get a Long Rest undisturbed. During a Short or Long rest, I'll give myself the option of a Social or Knowledge Scene if I want one, but with the risk of rolling for Scene Focus and rolling for an Additional Scene afterwards. If **implausible** Social/Knowledge scene details arise, I'll swap them for Combat scenes!

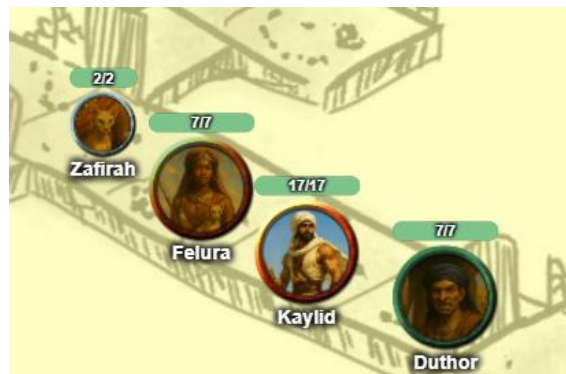
### Last Time...

- Our heroes – Kaylid the Desert Rider, Ferula the Witch/Priestess & Duthor the Thief – entered the Tomb.
- Duthor discovered and deactivated multiple poison gas traps in four small chambers off the first tunnel and recovered minor treasures.
- Duthor took a silver ring from one of the small chambers which (unknown to the heroes) is cursed! A shadow rose to reclaim the ring, but our heroes killed it.
- They managed to deactivate a DEADLY Trap at a significant-looking door at the end of the first tunnel.

## SCENE 01 – Fight for the False Tomb

### Step 1. Describe the Party's actions and intentions

Still tapping the floor and checking carefully for pits and ceiling traps, Duthor and Kaylid will enter the room (assuming no dangers are immediately apparent). Duthor has scimitar and torch, Kaylid has his Pike. Felura has a torch lit too, but will wait at the door with Zafirah, ready to cast spells (or run!).



### Step 2. Read some of the Area Description

*The burial chamber of a decoy snake-man king and his two brides. On the north wall are three wooden coffins painted with stylized sleeping snake-men. The coffin in the middle is larger and more ornate. Each coffin contains a **Skeleton** (HD 2, MORALE 12, ATK 1d6 [Claw]) who will immediately attack if their rest is disturbed*

**Skeleton page 250** but modified... AC 13 (chainmail), HP 11, ATK 1 Claw +1 (1d6), MV near, S +1, D +0, C +2, I -2, W +0, Ch -1, AL C, LV 2. The scenario suggests they don't have the usual weaponry and only claws for 1d6 and adds that they **take less damage from slashing weapons** – I'll take that as half damage from edged & pointed.



	Skeleton 3	20
	Kaylid	19
	Duthor	13
	Zafirah	13
	Skeleton 1	13
	Felura	13
	Skeleton 2	10

### Step 3. Distil the nature of the Area Challenge

Duthor would check the nearest coffin for traps, find none, carefully put down his torch and prise it open with his scimitar (switching to a crowbar if it is difficult).

This triggers the undead to attack, so I'll go straight into combat.

### Step 4. Play out the Scene

#### Round 1

**Skeleton 3** pushes open her coffin and lurches a couple of steps to Duthor then slashes at him.

Skeleton 3 Claw (+1) 18 for 1d6 damage = 4

Duthor reduced to 3/7 HP.

**Kaylid** moves to block the doorway (shielding Felura) and thrusts at the skeleton.

Kaylid Pike (+4) = 14. Hits for 3 damage (halved to just 1)

Skeleton 3 is down to 10/11 HP

**Duthor** slashes at it with his scimitar and then drops back behind Kaylid. He can't afford to get hit again.

Duthor Scimitar (+4) = 13. Hits for 4 (halved to 2)

Skeleton 3 is down to 8/11 HP.

**Zafirah** will run away and hide.

Skeleton 1 rises from the middle coffin and rushes at Kaylid. I don't think it's technically a rule in Shadowdark, but I'll say getting up takes half a creature's Move, but that still leaves enough to reach and attack.

Skeleton 1 Claw (+1) **1 CRITICAL FAIL**

I'm going to use the suggestion from the Shadowdark book page 78 about Nat1s "An attack roll automatically misses and might even strike an ally". I'll say it's UNLIKELY to happen for PCs and their allies but LIKELY to happen for non-PCs. I know that's putting my finger on the scales a bit, but my small party needs all the help it can get!

Does the skeleton, hit its ally?

Ask the Bones Likely: 11 (6,5,2) YES! And

For the "And" I'll say it's an auto hit for full damage 6 (still halved to 3) and Skeleton 3 is down to 5/11 HP.

I glimpsed the next sidebar in the book, so I don't know if I'd have thought of this myself...

*PCs can use the environment against them (lure them into the hammer trap).*

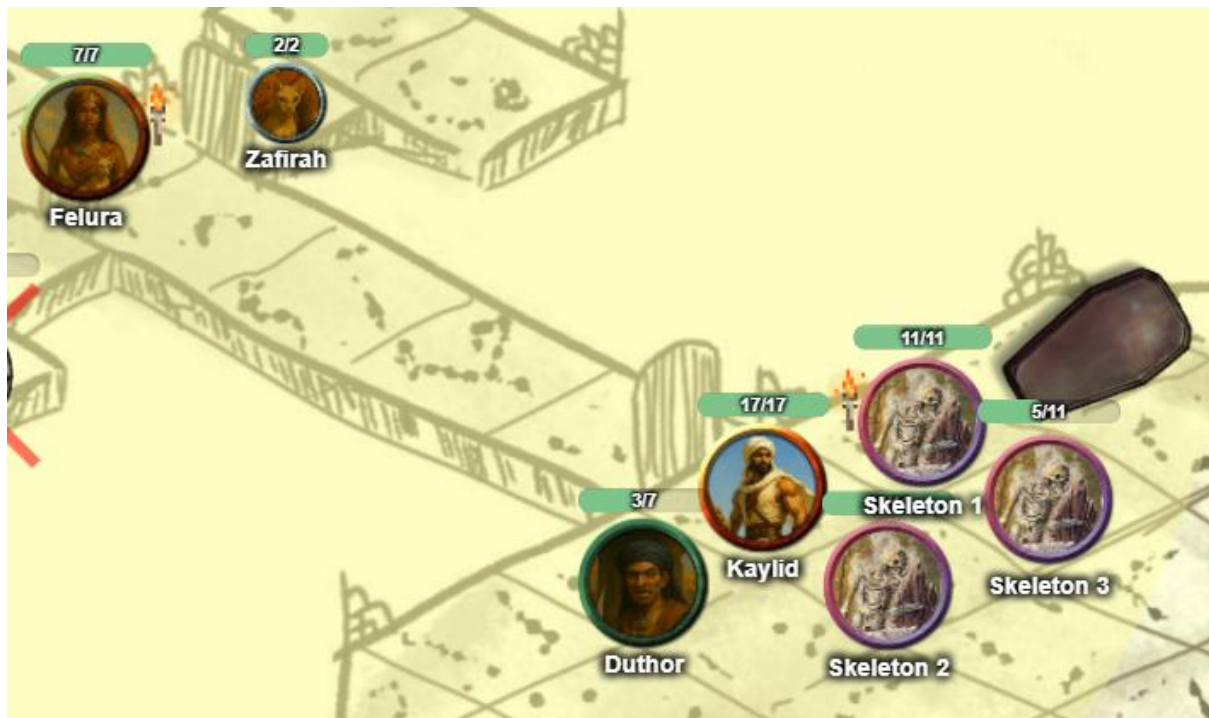
It IS the sort of thing I often try when I'm a player in a game with a GM, so I'll give Felura a Check to think of it as she doesn't currently have anything better to do (although we're not in a position to try it immediately).

**Felura** Intelligence (+1) DC12 = 9. She doesn't think of it.

She moves back so the others can retreat into the tunnel and face the monsters one at a time.

**Skeleton 2** gets up but can't quite reach Kaylid with her remaining movement.

## Round 2



**1 in 6 chance the Torches go out = 5.**

**Skeleton 3** is now blocked from hitting Kaylid from here but can easily scuttle around to get another angle from adjacent to Duthor & Kaylid. It will be 50/50 who she hits from there. I'll phrase the question so the "good" result is Kaylid. "Does she attack Kaylid?"

Ask the Bones 50/50: 11 (6,5) YES! And

I'll take this "benefit" to mean that she has Disadvantage because of all the jostling.

Skeleton 3 Claw (+1) = 8

**Kaylid** will stab her back and then retreat a couple of paces through the doorway, calling Duthor to come through too.

Kaylid Pike (+4) = **24 CRITICAL SUCCESS** and gets 9 + max damage with the additional d10 = 19

Skeleton 3 is shattered into loose bones.

**Duthor** steps across and slashes at Skeleton 1 then backs out of the door slipping past Kaylid. *It's a good thing there are no "Attacks of Opportunity" for backing away in Shadowdark (although the freedom of movement sometimes seems a bit unrealistic it balances out as it affects PCs and enemies the same). In Shadowdark, you can split up your movement however you like around your Action (page 88).*

Duthor Scimitar (+4) = 9. Misses.

**Skeleton 1** steps into the tunnel after Kaylid, blocking the way for Skeleton 2.

Skeleton1 Claw (+1) = 12. Misses.

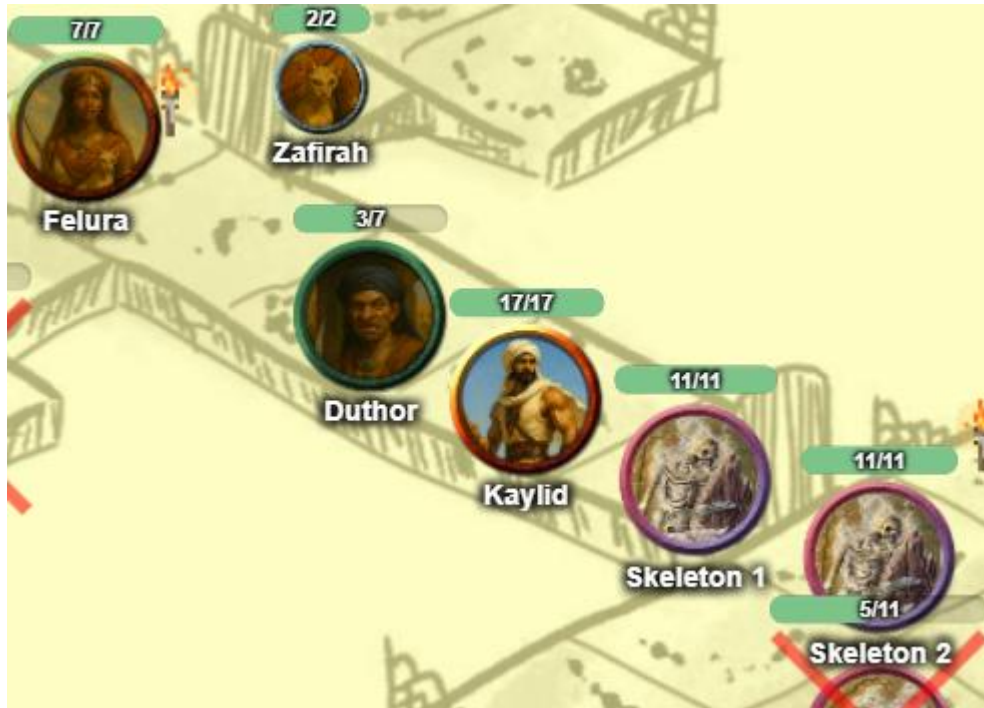
**Felura** can have another go at remembering the trap.

Felura Int (+1) DC12 = 15.

She calls out to Kaylid to bash the roof and release the hammer trap.

**Skeleton 2** moves up behind Skeleton 1 but is unable to get close enough to attack.

Round 3



**Kaylid** will use his action to bash the roof and step back out of the way to let the hammer trap smash down for 2d6+4 crushing damage = 10.

This leaves Skeleton 1 on 1 HP and pushed backwards into the room.

I'll give Skeleton 2 a Dex Check DC12 to get out of the way.

Skeleton 2 DEX (+0) = 4.

Both skeletons are now at 1/11 HP and the doorway is now obstructed by the swinging hammer stone hanging down from the ceiling. I'll say it's an Easy Dex Check to get past it but takes an Action.

**Duthor** will fire his Sling at Skeleton 1 (with Disadvantage because of the hangin stone blocking the way)

Duthor Sling (+4) Disadvantage = 10 & 7 miss.

**Skeleton 1** will try to squeeze under the hammer stone.

Skeleton 1 Dex (0) vs DC9 = 6

It is struggling under the stone and attacks on it would have Advantage.

**Felura** casts Cure Wounds on Duthor.

Felura Cure Wounds (+5 Advantage) = 21 for 9 HP

Duthor is healed back to full 7/7 HP.

**Skeleton 2** can't get past.

Round 4

**Kaylid** stabs at the skeleton wriggling under the stone.

Kaylid Pike (+4) Advantage = 13 & **17** for 9 damage.

The skeleton is smashed.

**Duthor** will try another slingshot.

Duthor Sling (+4) Disadvantage = **10** & 22 miss.

**Felura** will hurl her dagger.

Felura Dagger (+0) Disadvantage 15 & **5**. Miss.

**Skeleton 2** will try to wriggle past the stone.

Skeleton 1 Dex (0) vs DC9 = 10

It gets through but that used its Action.

Round 5

**Kaylid** will try to skewer it.

Kaylid Pike (+4) = **5 CRITICAL FAIL** glad I'm not counting Critical Fails for PCs!

**Duthor** will try another slingshot.

Duthor Sling (+4) = 22 hits for 4 damage.

The skeleton collapses.

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Is there an ADDITIONAL Scene?: **YES** - There is a new Scene immediately, before you have time to recover. Choose a Chosen Scene Focus and then roll for the Scene Focus as usual.

I'll choose Knowledge and hope to learn something about the Tomb

Scene Focus:ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENT Scene:MOVEMENT - Something impedes your Movement, perhaps an obstacle to be overcome or an injury. Perhaps a locked door or a dead-end. Perhaps unexpected guards or traps or dangerous flora/fauna. Imagine what could be in your way. Some kind of Skill check should be needed to overcome the issue. Make rolls on the Spark Tables for inspiration if necessary.

I'll imagine this as the door to the South is locked and will need picking or noisily breaking down.

Duthor Lockpicking (+4 Dex Advantage) 15 & 14 vs DC12. Success.



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.

## SCENE 02 – The Locked Door

They can squeeze past the hanging stone without making Checks when not in a hurry.

There's no treasure in the room of three coffins and the scraps of clothing look suspiciously tatty and shoddy workmanship – enough that it's clear this is a decoy tomb.

### Step 1. Describe the Party's actions and intentions

They crack open the door south after suitable close inspection by Duthor.

### Step 2. Read some of the Area Description

*This room contains a giant statue of a hideous snake-man god, resembling a cross between a toad, a heap of intestines, and a melted candle. Water leaking into the tomb has eroded the floor, revealing a secret passage under the statue to **LEVEL 2** of the dungeon.*

x



### Step 3. Distil the nature of the Area Challenge

There's no Challenge in this room. It is meant to let players know there may be secret tunnels.

### Step 4. Play out the Scene

Our heroes will **carefully** explore the statue and find the secret tunnel.

**1 in 6 chance the Torches go out = 4.**

### 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.

## Wrap Up

The method continues to work well. I'm looking forward to exploring Level 2.

After 3 Sessions in D&D5e, I would normally think about Levelling Up to 3<sup>rd</sup> Level but usually in Shadowdark, this is a function of accumulating XP (mainly for Treasure and for Carousing in town) and so far, they've not found much at all. I'll stick with it requiring XP but am going to award them each a Luck Token and the following XP...

- 1 XP for the only meaningful Treasure so far (the Silver Ring – even though it's cursed!)
- 1 XP for the “clever idea” of using the trap against the Skeletons
- 1 XP for uncovering the secret passage down to Level 2.
- 1 XP per session

This puts them 6/20 XP towards 3<sup>rd</sup> Level.

I'll estimate that the 2 Torches go out and that the whole exploration has taken about a half-day.

I must try to remember Duthor's cursed finger after their first long rest!

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.