

Shadowdark Solo 009

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 and 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 Rest (8 hrs + Rations in Shadowdark), 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 2nd-level heroes – Kaylid the Desert Rider, Ferula the Witch/Priestess & Duthor the Thief continued exploring the second level of the Tomb.
- They encountered an “unkillable” Skeleton covered in a strange jelly that seemed to instantly regenerate any damage. They pushed it off a ledge into a chasm, but it seems to be able to climb walls and soon returned!

SCENE 01 – Areas 31 & 33 & 35

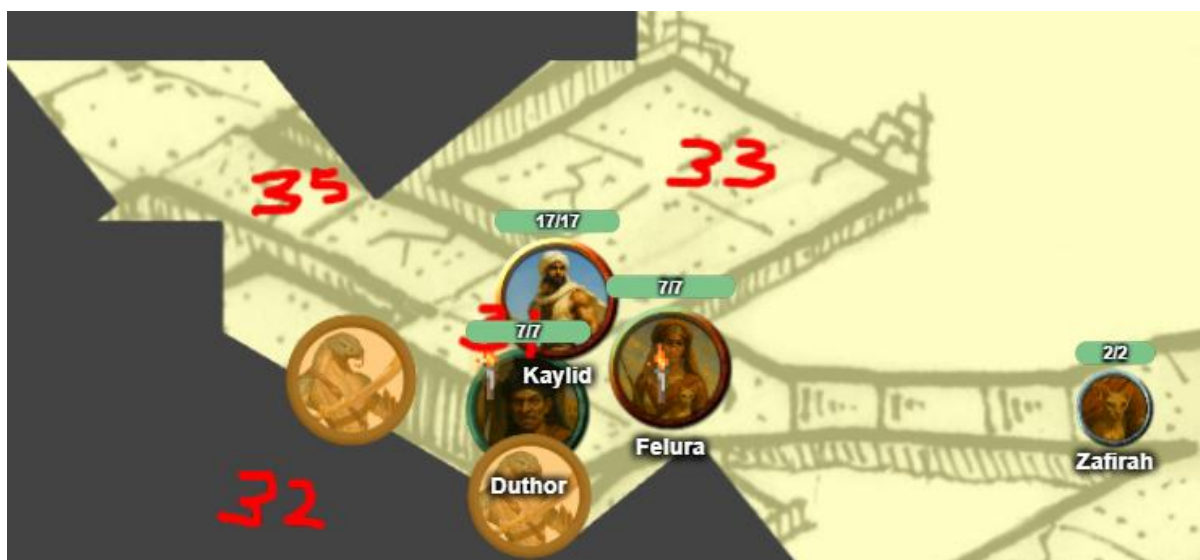
They failed to identify that the two lifelike “statues” of snake-headed men are really petrified living creatures, but they are suspicious that these things are significant and likely to animate if they try to get through the door between them.

They are in a hurry as they know the invincible “Jellyton” isn’t far away.

Step 1. Describe the Party’s actions and intentions

Duthor will lasso one of the statues and pull the rope tight around its legs. When it doesn’t animate, he’ll tie the other end of the rope around the legs of the second one.

While he’s doing that, because of the time pressure, the others will peek into areas 33 and 35 while Zafirah keeps a lookout at the bottom of the stairs.



Step 2. Read some of the Area Description

Kaylid looks into the open room (33)...

33: SHRINE ALCOVE

An alcove containing a shrine to one of the many cobra-headed gods of the snake-men. The statue has two holes in the base large enough to fit a human arm. The statue can’t be lifted, but it rattles and it can be turned easily. Almost any effort, inspection, or action will turn it slightly. Turning it counter-clockwise 90° will release poison gas (d6 damage in a 30' cloud). Turning it clockwise 90° will cause a lot of gold (2d100+10gp) to spill out, rolling onto the floor.

*Some pieces will roll into **35: BLADE TRAP HALLWAY**.*

Lessons: treasure is hidden behind statues. Some traps follow a pattern.

Felura looks up the open corridor to the north-west (35)...

35: BLADE TRAP HALLWAY

This hallway is trapped. The ceiling is ridged like the gullet of a snake: bands of tiles wind across two 10' squares. Stepping on any of the raised tiles will activate four swinging blades that slice down from the ceiling. PCs must Save to Dodge or take 1d6 damage. Any movement through the two 10' squares requires another Save to Dodge for three rounds after the trap activates. PCs

who stand still don't take any damage. If a PC fails their Save, they take 1d6 damage and don't move that round. On the fourth round, the entire trap comes crashing down in a tangle of stone, blades, and springs, dealing 2d6 damage to anyone in the two 10' squares.

Lessons: traps are not always reliable. Move quickly out of danger. Check the floor.

Step 3. Distil the nature of the Area Challenge

There's no significant challenge in area 31 as the two petrified Snake-men don't animate.

Will Kaylid spot the holes in the base of one of the cobra-headed gods in the shrine and realise they could be for poles to act as levers to turn the statues?

Will Felura notice the trap in the open tunnel?

Step 4. Play out the Scene

Kaylid INT (-1) DC12 = 3. Fail.

Kaylid declares the room to be of no immediate interest.

Felura INT (+1) DC12 = 5. Fail

Felura declares the tunnel as uninteresting too.

Duthor finishes tying up the two statues and checks the door for traps. They would be worth money, but are too large to easily transport back to the City of Khemi.

Step 5: Check for an IMMEDIATE Additional Scene

Check twice as Duthor is still being cautious for traps. Additional Scenes are likely to be Combat Encounters with the Wandering Monsters.

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.

No traps and it doesn't even seem to be locked.

SCENE 02 – The Summoning Room (32)

Step 1. Describe the Party's actions and intentions

Duthor will pull open the doors between the statues using one of Kaylid's two rope&grappels. As he wants to do it from a distance, he'll back up either into area 33 or up the tunnel 35 that Felura declared "safe".

Will Duthor go into the safe room 33?

Ask the Bones 50/50: 4 (3,1) NO! And

Oops! He starts to back off up the tunnel and triggers the scything blades trap!

...requires another Save to Dodge for three rounds after the trap activates. PCs who stand still don't take any damage. If a PC fails their Save, they take 1d6 damage and don't move that round. On the fourth round, the entire trap comes crashing down in a tangle of stone, blades, and springs, dealing 2d6 damage to anyone in the two 10' squares.

I'll say that on a Nat 20 he'd leap back to safety, on an Extreme Success he'll stay still for next round and then try again on round 3, on a success he's hopping from pressure plate to pressure

plate trying to save each round. On a fail, he's hit. On an extreme Fail he's hit and knocked onto a second plate. On a Nat 20 he will stand still for 3 rds and still be there when the ceiling collapses.



Duthor DEX (+4, Advantage from Thievery) DC12 = **12** & 5. Success.

The nimble thief ducks the first blade but is still moving about between them.

Duthor DEX (+4, Advantage from Thievery) DC12 = **19** & 19. Extreme Success.

He realises that if he stays still the blades will miss him. He turns to the others and gives a thumbs-up, waiting for the blades to slow and stop.

On the fourth round, the entire trap comes crashing down in a tangle of stone, blades, and springs, dealing 2d6 damage to anyone in the two 10' squares.

Duthor DEX (+4, Advantage from Thievery) DC12 = **9** & 8. Fail. **Kaylid will use one of his two Luck Points to shout a warning as he sees cracks appear in the roof.** = **9** & 8. Fail

Duthor takes 2d6=9 damage as the ceiling collapses on him! He's knocked out and buried in rubble. Death Timer = 3 rounds.

Kaylid will try to dig him out, following the line of the rope to get Advantage.

Kaylid STR (+3, Advantage for following the rope) DC12 = **21** & 15 = Success, digs him out.

Felura will try and cure Duthor.

Felura CURE WOUNDS (+5, Advantage) DC11 = **16** & 20. Success for 11 hp.

Duthor is cured back to full 7/7 HP.

There was quite a lot of shouted warnings and then the huge crash of the ceiling collapse, so I'll make THREE checks for Wandering Monsters (each 1-in-6) = 6 & 3 & 5. Phew!

The battered Thief glares at Felura "You said...". Felura interrupts "I said it LOOKS clear" and Kaylid is quick to jump to her defence. "It did LOOK clear. You should have jumped back to

where you knew it was safe instead of prancing around like a lunatic among the swinging blades!”

Unfortunately for Duthor, I just remembered that Cursed Scroll 2 has rules for **Enduring Wounds** when you take a lot of damage and are brought to zero HP!

Duthor CON (-1) DC12 = 1. Fail.

D20 = 7. **Concussion**. You permanently lose 1 point of INT

Duthor CON (-1) DC12 = 0. **A Nat 1!** Fail.

Poor Duthor just lost his +1 INT bonus as he drops to INT 11.

The door to area 32 is pulled open and our heroes peer inside...

Step 2. Read some of the Area Description

32: SUMMONING ROOM

*A long, narrow room with a huge pile of junk (broken shields, bent swords, candlesticks, branches) piled at the entrance. Clearing the pile takes thirty minutes, and makes a terrific racket. This room was once a summoning chamber. It contains a bound **Succubus** (pg. 17) summoned by the snake-men to answer questions about the lower hells. She appears as a young botanist in an ankle shackle, of the same race as the first PC she sees, and of an amenable gender. She will claim to have been captured by the goblins. The shackle around her ankle is an illusion. All she needs is for someone to step across the (dust-covered and mostly obscured) circle binding her.*

The room also contains a small altar, 2 gold bowls worth 15gp each, a +1 magic dagger, and a wavy stone snake that detects as magical.

*The snake is used to open the door to **46: THRONE ROOM**. The succubus isn't hostile to the PCs, but she will try to isolate and kiss one of them (Save vs Death, 1d6 permanent HP and Con damage if survived, age 1d10 years. +10 to Save if she likes you) so she can refuel and fly away. Her true name (Baltoplat) is written on a scroll in **15: PRIEST ROOM**. The goblins fear her. Xiximanter knows her true nature, but assumes the party knows as well. She's immune to petrification and very, very good at dodging. She will immediately flee from any conflict. If made to bargain, she can detect poison, reveal ancient secrets, or agree to kill any one mortal the PCs can name. She is patient and cunning, but true to her word.*

Lessons: some monsters have hidden agendas. There are illusions. Don't let yourself be isolated. Don't make noise.

Not sure why the room is barricaded from the inside! I'll say the "captive girl" will cough and splutter, introduce herself as "Flora", a botanist, and beg for help, claiming to be a prisoner of the goblins, left here as a sacrifice.

Step 3. Distil the nature of the Area Challenge

Will they believe her? Probably a INT Check with DC18.

Will one of them approach close enough to break the binding circle before they spot the Binding Circle under the dust and rubble? Probably a INT Check with DC15 (with Disadvantage for the distracted males).

If they do release her, they are bound to notice the illusory ankle chain vanish, so maybe that will give another Check? She can try to claim that the ankle chain appeared magically when the goblin high priest brought her to the altar.

The description of the Succubus' powers isn't quite in line with the statblock I have (from the Shadowfinder Complete Bestiary for Shadowdark RPG). **Sorry - I keep forgetting that this module is NOT originally written for Shadowdark!**

DEMON, SUCCUBUS

Incredibly beautiful demon who seduces and beguiles mortals for their master.

AC 14, **HP** 29, **ATK** 1 kiss +4 (1d6 + drain) or 1 charm, **MV** near (fly), **S** +2, **D** +4, **C** +2, **I** +3, **W** +2, **Ch** +5, **AL** C, **LV** 6

Change Shape. In place of attacks, transform into any similarly-sized humanoid.

Charm. One humanoid in near CHA 15+ or bewitched by succubus for 1d6 hours.

Drain. The target takes 1d6 WIS damage. A target reduced to 0 WIS this way swears its soul to a demon lord

I'll say she currently has only 1 HP because of being contained for so long in the magic circle and needs to be over half HP (15+) in order to be able to fly. She wants to return to her current Master (an evil necromancer in the City of Khemi).

I'll add on the extra ability from the area description ...

Kiss of Death. Against a Charmed victim only (doesn't need to be isolated), [[1d6]] CON Drain and [[1d6]] STR Drain. She recovers HP equal to the amount drained. The Charmed Victim gets another chance to break out of the Charm (CHA DC15). The CON & STR Drain is temporary.

Step 4. Play out the Scene

"Flora" sounds pretty sincere.

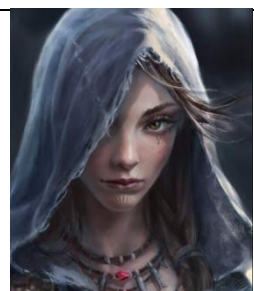
Kaylid INT (-1) DC18 = 17. Fail

Felura INT (+1) DC18 = 6. Fail

Duthor INT (+0) DC18 = 13. Fail

They assure the girl they will rescue her and dig through the mound of rubble and broken furniture, not noticing it is covered in dust as though it has been here, blocking the doorway for many years.

When they can finally see the girl, her illusory body is sweet and innocent and VERY pretty.



Will they notice the magic circle also partly obscured by rubble.

Kaylid INT (-1, Disadvantage) DC18 = 9 & **4**. Fail

Felura INT (+1) DC18 = 4. Fail

Duthor INT (+0 Disadvantage) DC18 = 17 & **10**. Fail

As Duthor steps forward to examine the ankle manacle, it mysteriously disappears and the partly concealed magic circle flickers and fades.

They all look at her with renewed suspicion.

“Flora” gasps and says. “The Goblin High Priest made the chain by magic. You must have just broken the spell... thank you SO much.” She steps towards Duthor to embrace him.

Kaylid INT (-1, Disadvantage) DC18 = **3** & 11. Fail

Felura INT (+1) DC18 = 3. Fail

Duthor INT (+0 Disadvantage) DC18 = 6 & **6**. Fail

I’ll say the warm embrace of the pretty girl (something Duthor might NEVER have experienced before) is enough for her to have cast Charm on him.

Duthor CHA (-3) DC 15 = 2. Fail.

Zafirah will probably have scampered up the stairs by now and will be suspicious of any girl who would willingly hug the hideously disfigured Duthor.

Zafirah INT (-1, Advantage) DC18 = **16** & 8. Fail.

Nobody suspects Flora! Duthor is already Charmed by her.

Will she NOT attempt to Charm Kaylid too?

Ask the Bones Unlikely: 7 (**1,6,6**) No But

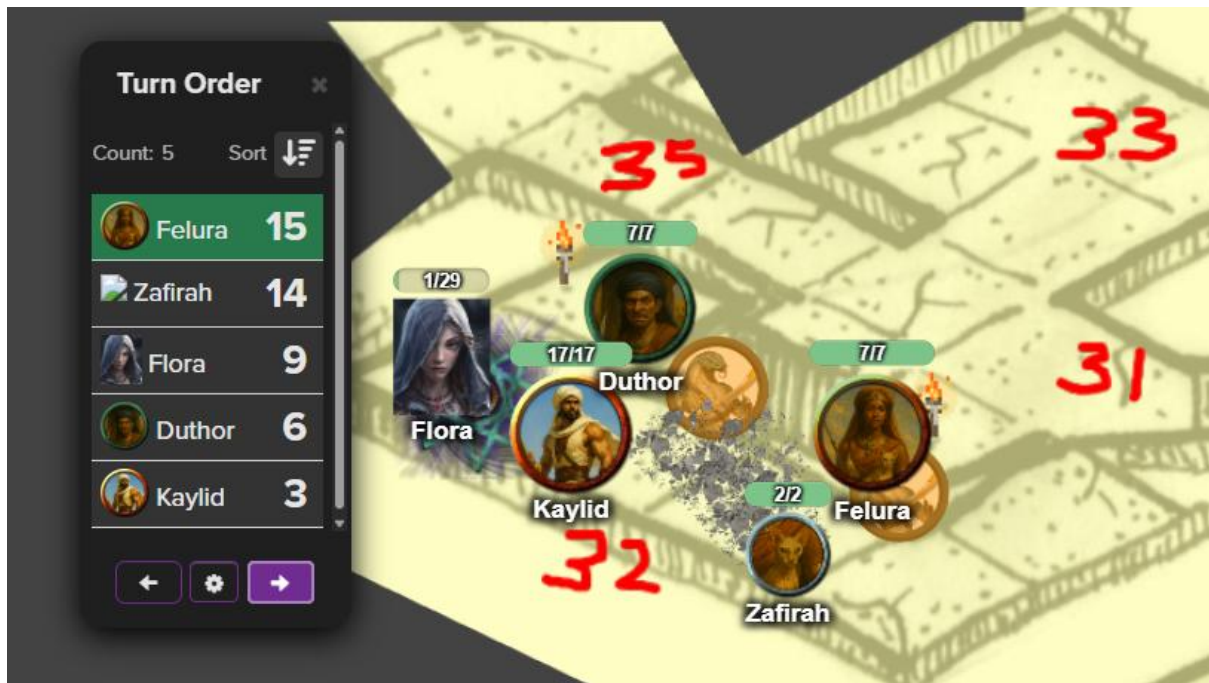
Apologies for the double negative there but I needed to twist the question around so that a YES result would have been better for the heroes. As it is, Flora WILL try the same thing on Kaylid.

I’m going to give Kaylid Advantage on the Charisma Check because he is already in love with Felura.

Kaylid CHA (-1, Advantage for True Love) DC 15 = 2 & **19**. **A Nat 20** Success.

He accepts the quick hug, but shoots an embarrassed look at Felura and gently pushes the girl away. She seems surprisingly strong (only slightly weaker than he is) and a look of suspicion forms on his face.

I’m going to have that trigger INITIATIVE as Flora knows the game is up and she’ll want to use her Kiss of Death on Duthor to recover some HP before trying to get away.



Round 1

Felura acts first, but hasn't got much to go on. She was probably considering casting Cure Wounds on the girl, but seeing the suspicion on Kaylid's face she'll instead try to put together the presence of a beautiful girl trapped in a magic circle and the scroll she read yesterday that described the Serpent-Priests' attempt to summon a Succubus (the scroll mentioned the demon's True Name).

- Nat 20 – Learn that the True Name will make the Succubus vulnerable to her spells (such as Hypnotise) despite Level discrepancies. It can also be shouted at the demon to act as an opposed CHA distraction, preventing the demon from acting for a round.
- Extreme Success (by 5+) – Learn that the True Name will make the Succubus vulnerable to her spells (such as Hypnotise) despite Level discrepancies. Also Duthor has already been Charmed
- Success – Learn that Flora is a Succubus
- Fail – Learn nothing
- Extreme Fail – Believe that only Silvered or Magical weapons can harm her.
- Nat 1 – Believe that Cure Wounds will harm her (but it will instead heal her!)

Felura INT (+1) DC12 = 3. Will spend her **Luck Token** to re-roll. = 8. Fail.

Zafirah doesn't really know what's going on. The slight and feeble-looking young girl doesn't seem to present much of a threat to Kaylid and Duthor.

Zafirah INT (-1, Advantage) DC18 = **13** & 9. Fail.

She is too confused to act.

Flora will step across to pull Duthor into a deep kiss! Trying to keep his body between her and Kaylid.

She drains 3 CON down to 5 and 3 STR down to 7 (he was still drained 1 from an earlier encounter!) from poor Duthor and she gains 6 HP taking her to 7/29 HP.

Duthor CHA (-3) DC15 = 0. Failed. He's still Charmed.

Duthor is in HEAVEN! He isn't acting, and he's happy to let Flora position him to give Cover (Disadvantage) on any incoming attacks as she holds on to him, locked lip to lip!

Kaylid slow to realise what's happening, will strike her with the butt of his long spear (doing d6), hoping to knock her out, rather than kill her.

I usually give Disadvantage if using an unsuitable weapon but he's got Disadvantage anyway because Duthor is a human shield. I'll say if he misses by 5 or more, he accidentally clobbers Duthor.

Kaylid Spear Butt (+4, Disadvantage) vs AC14 = 23 & **20**. Hits for 3HP. Down to 4/29 HP.

Round 2

Torches go out? 1-in-6 = 6.

Felura will try to work out what's going on again.

Felura INT (+1) DC12 = 4. Extreme Fail.

She starts shouting that Flora is a Succubus and can only be harmed by Magic or Silvered weapons!

I'll say that gives Duthor an immediate additional save to snap out of the Charm (still pretty unlikely, he might even be happy to die this way!)

Duthor CHA (-3) DC15 = 6. Failed. He's still Charmed.

Zafirah thinks that her claws count as Magical, so leaps to scratch (still at Disadvantage and with a risk of hitting Duthor).

Zafirah Claw (+2, Disadvantage) vs AC14 = **6** & 17. Miss and hit Duthor for 1 HP, down to 6/7 HP.

I'll say that sharp scratch gives Duthor an immediate additional save to snap out of the Charm

Duthor CHA (-3) DC15 = 11. Failed. He's still Charmed.

Flora continues the Kiss of Death...

She drains 2 CON down to 3 and 2 STR down to 5 from poor Duthor and she gains 4 HP taking her to 11/29 HP.

Duthor CHA (-3) DC15 = 11. Failed. He's still Charmed.

Duthor is now looking physically drained, bloodless, shrivelling before his friends' eyes. Another round of this could easily kill him!

Duthor CHA (-3) DC15 = 12. Failed. He's still Charmed.

Kaylid will stop trying to knock her out and will go for a full thrust, despite the danger to Duthor. He still has one Luck Token, so has a better than average chance of not killing Duthor!

Kaylid Long spear (+4, Disadvantage) vs AC14 = 22 & **21** hits for 5 damage down to 6/29.

HP	6	/	7	AC	15	
STR	5	-3		INT	11	0
DEX	18	4		WIS	10	0
CON	3	-4		CHA	4	-3

COUNTERS

6	/	11	5	/	8
Drained STR			Drained CON		

Round 3

Felura will try to work out what's going on again.

Felura INT (+1) DC12 = 12. Success

"She's definitely a Succubus!"

Zafirah rolls her eyes! "Oh you two were meant to be together!"

The cat climbs up Duthor's back and tries to scratch "Flora".

Zafirah Claw (+2) vs AC14 = 13! Miss.

Flora continues the kiss...

She drains 5 CON **down to ZERO** and 3 STR down to 2 from poor Duthor and she gains 6 HP taking her to 12/29 HP.

She lets his limp and shrivelled body drop to the floor as the cat jumps away, and she grimaces at the hideous wreck of a man at her feet. Then she smiles at Kaylid as her body warps and changes "Well hello there, don't you look strong and manly..."

Duthor is DEAD!

Keylid CHARGES at the demon now that Duthor is no longer in the way.

Kaylid Long Spear (+4) vs AC14 = 9 uses Luck Token = 14. Hits for 3 x2 = 6 Damage. Down to 6/29 HP.

Round 4

Felura will rush at the demon now that Duthor is no longer in the way (even though she believes only Magic or Silver will work)

Felura Dagger (+0) vs AC14 = 2. Miss.



Zafirah, will leap to scratch the demon's face.

Zafirah Claw (+2) vs AC14 = 4. Miss

Flora has a choice of two targets but as Kaylid has already resisted her Charm, I'll say that successfully resisting grants immunity for 24 hours.

Will she try to Charm & Drain Felura?

Ask the Bones Likely: 10 (5,5,5) Yes

Felura CHA (+4, Advantage for being in Love with Kaylid) vs DC15 = 8 & **20**. Success.

Now they are both immune to Charm and can't be Kiss of Death drained unless they willingly submit to it.

Kaylid will thrust again.

Kaylid Long Spear (+4) vs AC14 = **24 CRITICAL HIT**. Hits for 4 + 10 Damage.

The Succubus is DEAD!!!

They both weep for Duthor. Even Zafirah refrains from making snide comments.

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.

They have chance to loot Duthor's body and search the rubble in this chamber to find...

On Duthor...

- The cursed silver ring
- A Sling
- A club
- A Scimitar
- A Bolas
- Leather Armour
- Rations x 3
- A Torch

In the Altar Room...

- 2 gold bowls worth 15gp each
- a +1 magic dagger
- a wavy stone snake

I'm going to let them retreat back outside, barring the door down to the Chasm behind them. They will take Duthor's body for decent burial in the mountains.

Outside, will they get an undisturbed night's Rest?

Ask the Bones 50/50: 12 (6,6) YES! And

Wrap Up

They will get to Level Up to 3rd Level. With the value of the 6 additional Camels and what they've acquired so far, they easily have enough to pay off Uncle Faruk. It's time for them to head back to Khemi and try to recruit one (or two) more folk if they hope to explore any further in the Tomb of the Serpent King.

Kaylid gets max HP +8 for 3rd Level, making his total 25/25 HP, and rolls 2 for the Talent "You can use any rider-bearing creature as your mount".

Felurah gets max HP +4 for 3rd Level, making her total 11/11 HP, and rolls 8 for the Talent "Gain Advantage on casting a Spell" (Hypnotise) and she learns a new Spell of 2nd Tier INVISIBILITY.

There is enough XP to take them both to 6/30 XP towards Level 4.

I MAY leave the story here for a while as there are other games I want to play, but I feel sure that Kaylid & Felrua will return in time.

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.



The Kiss of Death

IN MEMORIAM

DUTHOR THE THIEF