

TOMB OF GILGAMESH

✕ Plot ✕

During the final years of Gilgamesh's life, the most majestic pyramid the Sumerians had ever built was erected as his tomb: its lower section the size of a small town, the summit rose as high as the tallest peaks in the Taurus mountains. Lush gardens filled with the rarest plants covered its large terraces. The sarcophagus of the great king was placed in a room at the top and a new one beside him was made for his long-dead friend Enkidu. When the king, who had once sought immortality, eventually passed away, it was foretold he would rise again in Mesopotamia's greatest time of need. Alas, that time has definitely come and no sign of him has been spotted.

The sky darkens as the Moon covers the Sun for one final time and becomes still, and as darkness engulfs the land between the two rivers, the stars detach from the Vault of Heavens and start crashing down to Earth. People pray to the same gods that have spelled their end, and regret the loss of the only man who has ever been able to counter divine will.

A trio of old sages asks a group of daring warriors and travellers to attempt one last feat: Enter the Tomb of Gilgamesh, climb to its top and wake up the lost king and his friend with a long forgotten word for "life".

Once in the garden, the party will witness a comet shooting down from the sky and passing mere metres above their heads, finally crashing down near the base of the pyramid in a blast of mesmerising light.

The garden is home to grass and bushes, and in its centre is the skeleton of a man, curled up with a knife in his hands. A tablet lays beside him with cuneiform writings on it: "I, Madt, architect of the pyramid, die right below my king as instructed by Him. According to His will, His tomb is secure, His sleep shall never be disturbed."

This room used to be more than one, but now the inner floors and ceilings have crumbled and little remains. At the bottom of the room is a pile of gold coins, but the only way forward is up, as a narrow window at the top connects this room to 7. The remainders of floors and stairs, as well as irregular, climbable walls, can be used to reach the window, but each floor has a groove all around its walls in which a blade runs in circles. No platform is large enough to stand on it and avoid a blade at the same time.

The ladder to this room is blocked by a hatch underneath it if the puzzle on the ground floor has not been completed, but the hatch can be forced open.

In the centre of the room is a large statue of the goddess Ishtar, which will release a cloud of poisonous gas upon intruders. The cloud will impede vision and will not stop unless Ishtar's heart, clearly exposed on her chest, is removed.

On the wall in front of Ishtar's statue there is a slit showing one side of 5.

The room also has a stone door which leads to the hanging garden outside. There is also a lever on the ceiling on the far corner of the room compared to the door, but the walls are smooth and not climbable. It is possible to climb the statue and jump towards the level from its top.

Once hit, the lever will open a second hatch in the floor and one right below it, in 1. The glimmer of water can be spotted below the last hatch: this is a spring in the basement of the pyramid (3.) and, despite the narrow opening, can allow a safe dive.

The garden was supposed to mimic a forest, but is now overgrown to the utmost degree and any step requires chopping through branches and bushes. Still, the adventurers can see the shower of stars falling down to Earth and the eclipse from here. Bright flowers line the tree trunks and an imposing statue of the monster Humbaba, who was a hybrid between a lion, a bull and a vulture, with scales covering his body. The statue has a vertical slit in its chest and carries a greataxe made of meteoric ore. If anyone attempts to take the axe, two stars will float down from the sky and take the form of a spectral bull with four horns. The plants will retreat as if showing respect for the divine creature, forming a space where a fight can happen, as it will be aggressive right away. There is a vine which winds up the wall and can be climbed up to a window in 6.

The floor of the basement is filled with thick mud, which halves movement for the party, except for the aforementioned spring. Square stone pillars act as foundation for the pyramid. In the mud, large rats scuttle and will attempt to bite any intruders. One giant rat hides in the darkness, a stone sword embedded in its left hip.

If the adventurers manage to defeat it, said sword will later fit into the slit in Humbaba's chest in 4:

The statue will now let go of the greataxe.

The only way out is another hatch next to a pillar, which can be climbed to and opened. In the mud under the hatch is a wand that allows the user to climb walls effortlessly twice before breaking.

The hatch leads to the hut with the barred door in 1.

Another ladder in a flower-shaped room leads to one last hatch: here, the coffins of the king and his friend are kept. Once the right word is uttered in their ears, both of them can come back to life, old but otherwise surprisingly well-preserved. Gilgamesh will eventually explain that his last wish was to rest forever next to his friend, and not to be disturbed. The prophecy of his return was a lie to make the Sumer feel safe, but they, clearly still stuck in their childhood, could not do without pampering: they sent a party of desperate people to force the two heroes back to life against their will.

"FINE!" says Gilgamesh while Enkidu punches a gaping hole in the wall of the chamber.

The king picks up his warbow and shoots an arrow at the Moon, shattering it and letting sunlight through once again.

The stars stop falling, but now his eyes are glowing with flames: no one will get out of there alive.

Gilgamesh and Enkidu fight the party together, showing strength and agility far beyond any normal human's.

In the meantime, due to the force with which the arrow hit, pieces of the Moon start drifting down and crashing into the pyramid. The roar and force of the impacts can be felt all the way up.

Eventually, the pyramid cannot stand anymore and crumbles. This can heavily wound all people involved, but does not kill them: the fight, even more desperate now, continues among the imposing ruins.

If the adventurers win, they will have to choose what to tell the sages about the ancient king and saviour of the Sumer.

Note

The hatches to 2, 8, (now broken), 9, and the closed one to 6, are rectangular because they were used to lift the coffins up the pyramid. The ladders were also used by the workers.

In this even narrower room, a giant snake is coiled up and adheres to the walls, leaving space in the middle. The floor is covered in the old skins shed by the snake, but the current one still looks consumed. In general, this snake looks like it should have died long ago but is being kept alive by something. It can still die if killed and will turn to stone once dead, its body now climbable.

The snake cannot reach down with its mouth but will attempt to tighten its coils and kill the adventurers.

There is an open hatch in the ceiling and also a stone door leading to a small garden.

The floor of this room is covered in broken eggs and small venomous snakes which will attempt to shoot poison at the adventurers.

The walls are climbable and there is a hole in the ceiling.

A very large snake tail dangles from the hole.

This room can either be accessed from the hole in its wall or from a window overlooking the garden on the same floor. The floor is unstable and will tilt if stepped on. It has one support in the centre, so it can tilt in any direction. Losing one's balance will result in a fall all the way to the ground floor, but using weight in the right way can prevent this.

There used to be a pillar in the centre of the room, but now this is only a stub.

The upper part of it hangs down from the ceiling with a ever-lit brazier dangling from it.

On the floor, there is a golden cup which will roll down easily.

On one corner of the ceiling, giant wasps have made their nest and will attack as soon as anyone enters the room, flying around the upper part of the pillar and the brazier.

There is a hole in the ceiling which can be reached if the floor is tilted up below it.

It leads to 7.

ENTRANCES

A: a huge square gate sealed with a slab of stone. It needs to be broken down or through in order to be opened.

B: in the back of the pyramid, faint light shines through a hole in the wall of the first floor. A series of badly placed bricks allow adventurers to climb up to it and enter 5.