

# Busiris RPG – Adventure 1. The Lion Roars

## Introduction

The Emperor has chosen to remove the Governorship of Busiris, and the Kif Monopoly, from the El-Jebir, and give it to the El-Karan. This change is supposed to go smoothly, however, these things seldom do. The El-Karan are planning for the worst and are recruiting mercenaries to assist in their 'peaceful' takeover.

An officer in the El-Karan advance party approaches the Adventurers in Thebis, the Imperial Capital. The advance party are responsible for clearing out the Governor's Palace in Busiris prior to the arrival of their Lord and his family. It is certain that the El-Jebir will have left assassins, booby traps and other little 'presents' for the El-Karan.

They will be one of several parties engaged in this operation. As outsiders they should have no political allegiances that might taint better-established groups.

They would be well paid and would obviously benefit from the patronage of the new Governor, and more importantly, his Master of Assassins. On the downside they may become marked by the El-Jebir.

The party will be given free passage to Busiris aboard the ocean-going Dhow, Foam Rider. They will dock at night and follow guides to the Palace. There they will form one of several assault parties and will be assigned an entrance to clear.

The reward will be the free passage (worth 300 silver) and 400 silver each upon successful clearing of the Palace. Capturing enemy assassins alive will draw extra rewards. The El-Karan would prefer to keep the bloodshed to a minimum. It is not their policy to kill unnecessarily.

## Overview of Scenario

This is a timetable of events for the GM:

1. Negotiation & Briefing by the El-Karan.
2. Approach by the El-Jebir.
3. Ambush at the Docks in Thebis.
4. The Sea Journey to Busiris.
5. The Cave of Korrabar.
6. Under the Palace.
7. Assault.
8. Aftermath.

### 1. Negotiation & Briefing by the El-Karan

The Adventurers are presently staying at an Inn in Thebis. The Inn, the Hungry Vulture, is situated behind the Temple complex of Bubastis. They have comfortable individual rooms and have let it be known that they are looking for work.

One evening an Officer in the Household Guard of the El-Karan family invites them to dinner. This is an ancient and well thought-of Noble House and they choose to accept. Over dinner, in a private room of the Inn, they are offered the job detailed in the introduction.

If pushed the Officer, Ka-ebek-im, will go to 400 silver for the mission, per head. Half will be paid in advance, half upon completion. Spookily he has whatever advances they agree with him already counted in individual bags.

The bonuses for capturing important El-Jebir alive will be discretionary, and will depend on how important they are.

The Officer will be fairly frank in the briefing and will ensure that the party understand that it is the El-Karan way not to send any man to his death not knowing why he died.

They will be told to be ready in two nights time when the Officer will return to escort them to their ship.

### 2. Approach by the El-Jebir.

At a convenient moment sometime the following day a tall, suave, well-dressed and unnamed man will accost one of the adventurers. It will be somewhere public and busy.

He will explain that he represents certain 'interests' in the imperial court who would prefer if the El-Karan's takeover of Busiris and the Kif Monopoly did not go entirely smoothly.

He is willing to pay handsomely for any details of the operation for which they have been selected.

If the adventurers agree he will advance them 500 silver for the information that they currently have (even though he knows most of that already). He will then promise to contact them again at a suitable time, and disappear.

If they refuse or challenge him he will retreat rapidly throwing dire threats. Several well-armed bodyguards will appear out of the shadows to discourage any pursuit. If the adventurers push their luck use the following:

#### The Contact

Race: Old Kingdom                      Profession: Noble  
STR [3], DEX [3], INT [4], SPT [3].  
Agility [6], Craft [7], Fighting [9], Lore [8], Perception [7], Persuasion [6], Shooting [8], Speed [6], Stealth [6], Toughness [6].  
Special Abilities/Spells: Air of Authority  
Weapons: Dagger, Pistol.  
Armour: None.  
Other Kit: Healing Potion, 1,000 Silver.

#### 8 Bodyguards

Race: New Kingdom                      Profession: Soldier  
STR [4], DEX [3], INT [1], SPT [2].  
Agility [6], Craft [4], Fighting [10], Lore [4], Perception [3], Persuasion [4], Shooting [8], Speed [7], Stealth [5], Toughness [8].  
Special Abilities/Spells: Double Trouble.  
Weapons: Tulwar and Dagger.  
Armour: Breast & Back, Shield  
Other Kit: Healing Potion.

Six of the Bodyguards will do all they can to delay the adventurers while the contact flees with two others.

### 3. Ambush at the docks in Thebis

Ka-ebek-im will meet the adventurers at the Hungry Vulture shortly after midnight on the second night after their meeting. He will guide them through the darkened streets down to the docks.

There he will give them a sealed scroll for the Master of the Foam Rider and point them to a jetty. Their Dhow is riding at anchor out in the harbour but a longboat is moored at the end of the jetty awaiting their arrival.

The jetty is 30" long and 3" wide. Alongside it are a dozen fishing dhows, all apparently quiet and deserted. Once the adventurers reach the halfway point on the jetty a team of assassins shall spring their ambush, appearing both before and behind the party.

At first they will not attack and the adventurers will be addressed by the El-Jebir contact, who is at the foot of the jetty with two bodyguards.

He will tell them to put down their weapons and leave, and will assure them that nothing will happen to them if they do. If they took his money the day before he will offer them more if they comply. In fact he has no intention of honouring this offer and just wants them disarmed when his assassins attack.

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### 6 Assassins

Race: Unknown Profession: Assassin  
STR [4], DEX [3], INT [1], SPT [2].  
Agility [8], Craft [4], Fighting [10], Lore [4], Perception [6], Persuasion [4], Shooting [8], Speed [7], Stealth [8], Toughness [8].  
Special Abilities/Spells: Martial Arts, Poisoner.  
Weapons: Martial Arts [+2 to Fighting], Poisoned Darts [2 each].  
Armour: Martial Arts [equivalent of medium armour]  
Other Kit: 1 Healing Potion each.

The assassins will attack in complete silence, even when hit they will utter no sound. A wounded assassin will take his Healing Potion and rejoin the fight.

If things are not going well for the adventurers have a group of El-Karan sailors join the fight from the Foam Rider's longboat. They will be fierce men armed with pistols and Tulwars.

Once half the assassins are KO'd or dead the others will flee.

If the adventurers' check, the El-Jebir contact will have disappeared into the night.

Any KO'd or wounded assassins will be quickly despatched by the sailors and thrown into the harbour.

### 4. The Sea Journey to Busiris.

Upon the Dhow are the Master and his crew of thirty men. There are also forty El-Karan soldiers and their Captain Ki-aban-el.

The journey takes three weeks and is mostly uneventful until three days before you are due to arrive in Busiris, when the dhow drops anchor by a small island. Over a hundred other dhows are already there and the adventurers are invited ashore to meet the El-Karan Master of Assassins Ja-awan-as.

He is a short elderly man with handsome features and a strong handshake. He appears confident and in command of the situation.

He explains that while most of the El-Karan troops will land in the City Harbour and then work their way up through the city, the adventurers will be dropped off at the base of the cliffs upon which the Citadel and Governor's Palace stand.

They will be met by a local guide, a Bedu called 'Rezig' who will lead them through the Cave of Korrabar and then into the tunnels below the Citadel. They should appear in the Governor's quarters where they are expected to secure the Governor and any of his officials they can catch.

The El-Karan Advance Party will meet them there as soon as they can get through the city. This party will have a support group including Khemite Priests. These will provide free healing to any injured in the takeover.

All El-Karan mercenaries will be given facemasks and tabards in the family's signature colour – dark red. The reason for the uniforms is to try and prevent any friendly fire incidents. Just before the troops go in each will be given a golden silk cummerbund in case the El-Jebir have some mock El-Karan tabards, and a password – 'The Lion Roars'.

The mask is to allow the mercenaries to act without fear of recognition. Some may wish to settle in Busiris afterwards, and their identity as El-Karan men may cause them some trouble until the new Governor's more benevolent administration wins the hearts and minds of the general populace. El-Jebir street orators have been demonising the incoming El-Karan.

This is the adventurer's opportunity to get any questions about the mission answered. Ja-awan-as is patient but he doesn't have a great deal of time, so he may pass them onto one of his aides.

They will be given a sketch map of the Governor's quarters.

### 5. The Cave of Korrabar.

Two days after the meeting at the island, and couple of hours before dawn the adventurers are rowed ashore by the crew of the Foam Rider.

Waiting for them is a slender man, in desert robes, with a face covered in tribal tattoos. He introduces himself as Rezig. He explains that it will take at least three hours to climb up through the cave and then through the tunnels. He is hopeful that the main landing in the Harbour will draw away most of the El-Jebir guards and retainers so making their passage easier.

Give one of the players the following:

### Bedu Tribesman

Race: Bedu Profession: Hunter  
STR [2], DEX [4], INT [1], SPT [3].  
Agility [8], Craft [5], Fighting [8], Lore [2], Perception [6], Persuasion [6], Shooting [10], Speed [6], Stealth [9], Toughness [7].  
Special Abilities/Spells: Survival  
Weapons: Tulwar, Dagger, Bow [12 Arrows]  
Armour: None.  
Other Kit: None.

He will explain that he came here by climbing around the cliff from the city, though he has been through the Cave and tunnels many times when he worked for the El-Wazir, the noble house that had the Governorship before the El-Jebir. Whenever he says 'El-Jebir' he spits.

He gives each adventurer a small oil lamp to guide their way, and once they are just inside the entrance he lights them.

Unknown to Rezig, a nest of four Ichneumon have taken up residence in the Cave since his last visit. As the party make their way through the slippery sea cave towards some carved steps at the back the Ichneumon will attack. Two come from each side.

### Ichneumon

*Imagine a wasp four feet long with a vicious sting and a long curved proboscis. It is a deadly hunter with a vile method of reproduction.*

*It paralyzes its victims and then uses its proboscis to inject up to eight eggs into them. These hatch in 2-3 days and the larvae feed off their still-living victim.*

Race: Insect Profession: n/a  
STR [3], DEX [4], INT [1], SPT [2].  
Agility [8], Craft [5], Fighting [8], Perception [6], Speed [8], Stealth [6], Toughness [8].  
Special Abilities/Spells: It can fly, hover and walk on walls.  
Weapons: Sting [+1]. This injects a poison (strength 2) that paralyzes its victims.  
Armour: Light (chitin).

If the party are being badly beaten then their cries will attract the sailors who will shoot down the Ichneumon down with their bows.

If they run for the steps they will be safe once they pass through the doorway at the top. It is too narrow for the Ichneumon to fly through.

Note that the Ichneumon cannot see in the dark and are attracted by the lamps. If an adventurer douses or throws away his lamp the Ichneumon will ignore him unless he attacks them in close combat.

If Rezig is killed then the adventurers will have to find their own way through the tunnels. This will take an extra 1D6 hours.

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## 6. Under the Palace.

The next two hours consist of climbing stairs and going through ancient, dusty tunnels. At one point they will need to pass a locked gate through brute force or burglary.

The more perceptive will begin to get the feeling that they are not alone. They hear the occasional noise not their own, or a shadow in a passage they have just left. It is not until they reach Rezig's first resting place that they will find out the grim truth.

Rezig takes them to a large chamber with an artesian pool of clear water in the centre. Six passages come into the chamber, two of which are barricaded with stones.

They are being hunted by a Tomb Cobra. It will wait until the adventurers settle down to rest and drink and then will attack one of their sentries (assuming that they set any).

### **Tomb Cobra**

*These large and powerful snakes hunt through the tombs and tunnels in and around Busiris. They have venomous fangs, the ability see into the infrared and a hypnotic power.*

Race: Snake Profession: n/a

STR [4], DEX [4], INT [1], SPT [2].

Agility [10], Fighting [10], Perception [6], Speed [8], Stealth [6], Toughness [10].

Special Abilities/Spells: Infrared vision. The pattern under the Cobra's hood affects anyone who looks at it like a Daze spell. Once affected by a specific Cobra's pattern you cannot be affected by that one again.

Weapons: Bite, poisonous (Strength 3).

Armour: Medium (scales).

The Tomb Cobra is fast, deadly and cunning and should give the adventurers a real fight. It will not stand still and will use its Daze power to best effect.

Rezig will hang back during the fight and use his bow whenever he has a target. Most Bedu are immune to the Cobra's Daze power so he will not get caught by it.

At the end he may reveal that he has four Healing Potions and three Potions of Purgative if the adventurers need them.

## 7. Assault

The adventurers will eventually be guided to beneath a grille in the Palace. It opens out into a small courtyard in the centre of the Governor's quarters. It is a little after dawn and most of the courtyard is still in shadow.

Before they can exit the passage into the courtyard they hear an enormous blast on a horn and dozens of men run through the courtyard and out through a gate.

Once they have gone the adventurers can climb out. Rezig says that is as far as he's paid to go and wishes them well. Remind them that they have a map of the Governor's Quarters.

Following the map they will quickly find their way through the maze of small corridors and rooms and up onto the second floor.

As they go they will see a few servants looting their former master's wares. If they don't interfere the servants will not raise the alarm.

At the top of the marble stairs is a long corridor. Halfway along is the heavy ornate door to the Governor's chambers. Guarding the doors are two enormous Nubians. These will fight to the death to protect their master.

### **Nubian Guards**

Race: Nubian. Profession: Soldier

STR [6], DEX [3], INT [1], SPT [3].

Agility [6], Craft [4], Fighting [13], Lore [2], Perception [4], Persuasion [6], Shooting [8], Speed [9], Stealth [6], Toughness [10].

Special Abilities/Spells: Double Trouble

Weapons: Tulwar, Dagger

Armour: Breastplates.

Other Kit: Healing Potion each. Lots of gold bling.

Once the adventurers have dealt with the Nubians (?), then the doors can be opened to the Governor's inner sanctum.

This is a handsomely appointed chamber with sofas, tables and several amphorae of wine. At the far end of the chamber is a huge bed cloaked in curtains.

From behind the curtain is coming a terrible wheezing sound that ends with an awful crack!

Inside the curtains is a slim and beautiful woman dressed as a Houri. She is an El-Jebir Assassin who has just strangled the former Governor.

She will offer to pay the adventurers to let her go with silver or other pleasures, or the promise of future employment. If they took the El-Jebir Contact's Silver she will act as if she was expecting them and will know their names. She will then give them a time and a place to be in a week's time to meet their contact again before escaping through a window.

If they do let her go they have about twenty minutes to come up with a convincing story for their current employers.

If they decide to capture her she will fight them tooth and nail until KO'd.

### **Houri Assassin**

Race: Old Kingdom Profession: Assassin

STR [3], DEX [5], INT [5], SPT [4].

Agility [10], Craft [10], Fighting [12], Lore [10], Perception [10], Persuasion [12], Shooting [12], Speed [10], Stealth [15], Toughness [12].

Special Abilities/Spells: Martial Arts, Poisoner.

Weapons: Martial Arts [+2 to Fighting], Poisoned Dart.

Armour: Martial Arts [equivalent of medium armour]

If this fight goes too easy add a couple more Nubian Guards.

## 8. Aftermath.

Despite being not entirely happy that they could not execute the Governor themselves, the El-Karan keep to their word. The adventurers will be paid in full.

If any of the Nubians or the Houri Assassin are captured by the adventurers (i.e. KO'd and then tied up) the adventurers will receive an extra 200 Silver for each.

They can sell the hooded head of the Tomb Cobra (poison glands intact) for a further 200 Silver to Ja-awan-as.

Later that day the adventurers will be guided back down to the Cave, now full of El-Karan soldiers offloading supplies etc. Then taken back out to sea and transferred to a cargo dhow heading for Busiris Harbour.

If they were successful, Ja-awan-as will probably use them again in future missions.

## The Story Arc

This is the first episode in 'The Lion Rises' story arc.

It takes the characters to Busiris and reveals their first patron Ja-awan-as, the El-Karan Master of Assassins. He will feature as a key character in the coming episodes. Initially as a patron and later as a deadly enemy. They have also had the opportunity to pick sides between the El-Karan and the El-Jebir. Something that will become important in later episodes.

It is also the rules-teaching episode for new players and their characters. Hopefully it will cure some of them of their traditional [D&D] expectations of a RPG, i.e. kick down the door, kill the monster & take their treasure.

The key thing here is not to kill them. You can give them a good hiding but we have built in opportunities into each fight for assistance to keep them alive. It is key to the story arc that they finish the mission.