


# SHADOWS OF APEP



## Background

Hundreds of years ago, a boy named Menetnashte suffered from terrible nightmares. Every night the nightmares talked to the boy about dark and horrible things. Many tried to help the tortured boy, with medicines, rituals, and prayer, but nothing seemed to work. What no one was able to figure out was that the nightmares weren't ordinary nightmares; they were actually the whispers of the demon-god Apep. Something about the boy made it possible for Apep to contact him in his sleep. After years of suffering, Menetnashte couldn't resist the whispers any longer. He woke in the middle of the night and silently murdered both his parents in their sleep. With their blood still wet on his hands he then fled into the desert.

With that one act Menetnashte became Apep's chosen disciple. Apep granted Menetnashte great magical powers and made him the high priest of the cult of Apep. Under Menetnashte's rule the cult became larger and more powerful than it had ever been before, or has been since.


After many years of faithful service Apep felt Menetnashte was ready for a task of incredible importance, one that only the high priest was powerful enough to accomplish. Menetnashte was commanded to prepare a ritual that would free the demon-god and his fiendish minions

from the Underworld. The high priest began preparing for the ritual without hesitation.

Menetnashte was almost able to keep his activities secret from the rest of the world. Only a couple weeks before the ritual was to be completed a young prince named Amenut learned of Apep's plans. Amenut gathered together an army as quickly as he could, then marched on Menetnashte's temple-fortress. The young prince's army arrived on the day the ritual was to be completed, and immediately found itself facing a massive host of human cultists, serpent folk, shadow serpents, mummies, and an assortment of unnameable horrors summoned from the Underworld, all loyal to Menetnashte and Apep.

Apep's army may have been larger, but Amenut's was better equipped and better trained. The young prince realized that the resulting stalemate would drag on and on, allowing Menetnashte plenty of time to complete his ritual. Amenut decided that while the battle raged on he would take a small group of his personal bodyguard and sneak into the temple-fortress where the ritual was being performed. By the time Amenut found Menetnashte the prince stood alone, all his bodyguards having been slain by the traps, cultists, and nightmare inducing monsters infesting the dark interior of the temple-fortress.





After a long and brutal battle Amenut's strength began to fail and yet Menetnashte showed no signs of tiring. In a desperate move, the young prince lunged forward and impaled Menetnashte with a magical spear that had been gifted to him a long time ago by the goddess Bast. The magical spear ripped through Menetnashte's magical defences as easily as it pierced the high priest's heart. With the battle over, Amenut succumbed to his wounds and died.

With Menetnashte's death the ritual collapsed and Apep's army scattered into the desert. Amenut's men searched the temple-fortress and recovered the bodies of both their prince and of Menetnashte. Amenut was given a heroes burial while Menetnashte's body was cursed and sealed away in a secret tomb. The curse trapped Menetnashte's spirit within his own body, forever preventing him from joining Apep in the Underworld.

During the centuries since the battle between Menetnashte and Amenut, many other followers of Apep have attempted to perform the ritual that would free their master from the Underworld, but all have failed. Because of this, the cult of Apep has scoured every square inch of Niserri to find Menetnashte's tomb and reawaken him. It wasn't until just recently that they finally succeeded. Unfortunately, the tomb proved to be warded against anyone and anything loyal to Apep. Refusing to be thwarted when so close to their goal, the minions of Apep decided to trick some people from the nearby town of Muat to help them break into the tomb and recover Menetnashte's body. Fortunately for them a group of heroes just happen to be in town.

## Timing

A major part of this adventure is that Menetnashte is attempting to complete his ritual to free Apep. The amount of time needed to complete the ritual has been left purposefully vague, it should take however long the GM needs it to take. The players shouldn't be made aware of this, however. As far as they should know the ritual could be completed at any moment. No one

the heroes talk to will know exactly how long the ritual will take to complete either, instead giving vague answers like "the ritual will be completed very soon". This doesn't mean the heroes should be given all the time in the world to lay about and do nothing. If the players delay too long the GM can push them along a bit, maybe by having signs begin to appear, such as the sky darkening, water turning to blood, swarms of locusts, etc. If they continue to delay then the GM should feel free to simply complete the ritual and end the world.

## Part 1: Muat

Muat is a small town a short way into the desert of Niserri. It's built around a large stone fountain, the only source of clean drinking water within a two day's journey in any direction. Most of the buildings in Muat are built from mud bricks, however there is a temple and palace both made of cut stone. A low mud brick wall surrounds the town, with entrance gates to the east and west both made from tightly bound bundles of straw. A pair of town guards stand watch at each gate. A wide road connects both these entrances, running more or less straight through the middle of Muat. Much smaller alleys branch off from the main road and wind through the rest of the town. Muat was obviously not built to withstand any kind of serious attack.

Muat is very roughly divided into three districts. The northern district is by far the largest, with houses that tend to be smaller and only a single story. The south-western district is much smaller but the houses are larger and are two or three stories high. Houses in both of these districts have a staircase that leads up to a flat roof that is often used as additional living space and sometimes even a pantry/kitchen. The south-eastern district has buildings that are large but only a single story. Most of these buildings are used to store food, building supplies, trash, and a variety of other supplies. Some function as workshops for various crafts, including bronze working, brick making, tailoring, etc.