

ADVENTURE PATH PLUG-INS



The illustration depicts a dramatic scene inside a cave. On the left, a man with glasses and a backpack is kneeling, aiming a crossbow at a massive snake. On the right, a woman with a white cape is also kneeling, brandishing a curved sword. The snake, with its mouth wide open showing a blue tongue and sharp fangs, looms over them. The cave is dimly lit with torches on the walls.

# SHRINE OF SERPENTS

WRITTEN BY ALEX RIGGS



**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



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# Shrine of Serpents

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# Welcome to Adventure Path Plug-Ins!

This product is a part of our line of support materials for extended Adventure Path-style campaign play for use with Paizo's Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. When you see the "Adventure Path Plug-In" logo at the top of a Legendary Games product, you can expect it is designed to fit directly with the themes of a particular Adventure Path campaign. The all-star team of designers here at Legendary Games is committed to bringing you—the busy GM or player—the absolute best third party support for your Pathfinder campaign. To deliver on that commitment, we've assembled the best of the best of current gaming authors, designers and layout experts so that you can feel comfortable that Legendary Games products will be the most creative, rules-legal and well-designed content you can find. Though Adventure Path Plug-Ins all share a theme with a specific Adventure Path campaign, they are designed to be easily incorporated into your home game regardless of what campaign you may be running.

## Hey, What's With the Names?

You will see us use phrases such as "Egyptian Adventure Path" instead of the title of the 14th adventure path published by Paizo Inc, covering issues #79 to 84. Or, you may see us use names such as the "Risen Pharaoh," the "Tomb City," the "Pharaoh Kingdom," or the "Goddess of the Dead" instead of the proper names of specific characters or places from those adventures or gods from the world setting. While we can create compatible products under the Open Game License, we still have to be respectful of certain content Paizo owns. Because we want to be very respectful of their content and work in partnership with them, we use these "replacement phrases." Plus, this helps the product have a more general appeal to those who may be running a home campaign that fits the same themes. In any event, we are 100% confident you know what we are talking about and will have no problem making the required connection. So, enjoy these pregenerated characters for use in your "Egyptian Adventure Path," seeking your fortune in the "Tomb City" and beyond. See, that wasn't so hard, was it?

## Special Electronic Features

We've hyperlinked this product internally from the Table of Contents and externally with links to the official [Pathfinder Reference Document](#) as well as [d20PFSRD](#). If it is in the core rulebook, we generally didn't link to it unless the rule is an obscure one. The point is not to supersede the game books, but rather to help support you, the player, in accessing the rules, especially those from newer books or that you may not have memorized.



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# What You Will Find Inside the Shrine of Serpents

The sinister serpent cult of Apep the Devourer has returned! Once hunted to near-extinction to quell their insatiable hunger for living sacrifices to their scaled god, a new power has arisen claiming to be an avatar of the dreaming serpent and has redoubled their rapacious campaign of terror with an inhuman cunning and savagery. Content to lurk in the shadows no longer, the serpent cult must be stopped before it spreads once more across the Pharaoh Kingdom and the sands again are stained with blood and venom while their mysterious master laughs.

*Shrine of Serpents* is a 9th-level adventure for the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game that can be played on its own or as a complement to the third or fourth volume (#81-82) of the [Egyptian Adventure Path](#) from Paizo, Inc. The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!





# The Hidden Temple of Apep

*Shrine of Serpents* is an adventure suitable for characters from 8th to 10th level. If you're using this adventure in conjunction with the official [Egyptian Adventure Path](#) by Paizo Inc. (issues #79–84), this adventure can be inserted somewhere in the latter half of the third adventure in the series, between the third and fourth adventure, or in the early parts of the fourth adventure. If used on its own, or as part of a different ongoing campaign, the adventure can begin simply by having the PCs be attacked as they wander through the wilderness, or they may simply find a mysterious clue in the middle of nowhere (see Beginning the Adventure).

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Apep is an ancient god of serpents, darkness, evil, and chaos, and even at the height of his popularity, when his faith was its most widespread, his followers still worshipped in secret, and were hated and feared by the people. As a result, many of Apep's old temples remain largely intact even though his worship declined with many of the other gods in his pantheon, simply because no one knew where to find these temples. In a few places, small cults devoted to Apep continue to operate, believing that through their faith they can restore the serpent god to power, and that if they do so, he will reward them by punishing their enemies.

One such cult has recently become a serious threat to travelers passing near its hidden temple, as they actively hunt for passersby that they can capture and use as live sacrifices to a massive snake, who they hope to ritually imbue with a fraction of Apep's essence, and transform into an avatar of their god. In recent months, dozens of travelers have been captured and fed to this snake, and, heaping misery upon misery, this has caused many to avoid the region entirely, causing nearby villages and towns to be cut off, and face imminent ruin.

But the cult itself is not without its own woes. A month ago, a snake-headed rakshasa named Talavar, who fancies

himself something of a historian, came to the hidden temple in search of rare ancient texts, and was surprised to discover an active cult in what he thought would be an abandoned temple. Claiming to be an avatar of Apep, he took the cult as his own, and has been spurring the cultists to hunt down even more sacrifices (including dragging victims in nearby villages out of their beds in the middle of the night), and he has increasingly been demanding that these sacrifices be cooked and eaten by himself and the cultists, in addition to those sacrifices destined for the giant snake. Thankfully, Talavar has no real interest in the cult except for the pleasure he takes in warping and twisting them, and so despite his grand promises to the cultists, he has no real intention of helping them rise to true power in the region.

## BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

There are several ways to begin the adventure. You should consider your playgroup, and choose which one is most likely to fit their play style, but if one hook fails to work, you can always offer one of the others.

The simplest option is to have the players stumble across a clue left behind by one of the cult's most recent captives. The merchant Ilfara (area A6) may have used her coin purse to leave a trail of copper coins as she was taken from the spot where she was captured to the cult's hidden temple. The PCs cross this trail (or find its starting point) as they cross through the desert, and follow it back to the hidden temple, exactly what the merchant intended. GMs wishing to cut to the chase might simply have the PCs pass directly by the cave mouth that houses the temple's entrance.

Alternatively, the PCs themselves may be attacked by the cultists as they travel through the desert. In this case, the party should face a group of four cultists of Apep (see area A2), who wait in position to ambush and flank them. The cultists' matching uniforms and strange holy symbols may pique the party's curiosity, and they may choose to take prisoners, who could lead them back to the hidden temple, they may follow a fleeing cultist, use Survival to track the cultist's footprints back to their lair, or they may even be captured and taken directly to area A6 (note that this effectively bypasses the dangers of areas A1 and A2).

The party could also be hired by any number of frustrated merchants unable to receive shipments, concerned families of victims that have gone missing, or local leaders worried about their settlement's ability to trade or survive





in the face of the cult's predations, to seek out the source of the disappearances and put a stop to it.

## THE HIDDEN TEMPLE

The hidden temple of Apep is hidden not so much in that it is hard for passersby to find, but rather that it looks

nothing like a temple from the outside. The structure is entirely underground, and has been dug out of the side of a small cliff, leaving only a rough cavern entrance visible from the outside. Inside, though, the walls are smooth, worked stone. Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings within the hidden temple are 10 feet high, all doors are strong wooden doors, and each room is illuminated with torches.



## A1. THE SERPENT'S MAW

*The rough, unworked stone of the cave entrance continues for only a few feet before opening into a chamber made of smooth, polished, and carefully worked stone. At the far end of the room is a doorway, framed by a massive serpent's mouth carved from the stone, its jaws wide open as though to swallow those who step through it. Beyond, a steep staircase can be seen, descending into darkness.*

This antechamber serves to scare off most of those curious enough to wander into the cave. Those whose curiosity overcomes their apprehension typically fall victim to the stairwell's grim trap.

### SERPENT'S GULLET TRAP

CR 4

XP 1,200

Type magic; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic (10 minutes)

**Effect** The jaws of the stone snake head that form the entrance to the stairwell between areas A1 and A2 snap shut, inflicting 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage to each creature on the first 10 feet of the stairwell. Then, the steps of the stairs transform into a smooth, steep slope, and develop a thick coating of greasy slime. Any creature on the stairs must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 20) or fall prone and slide to the bottom of the stairs, where they are deposited into the 30-foot deep pit filled with two venomous snake swarms in area A2. Each affected creature can attempt a Climb check (DC 25) to catch themselves on the lip of the pit, at the end of the greased chute. If a creature succeeds on this check, he is climbing on the wall of the pit, and can attempt to climb out on his turn. If he fails, he falls to the bottom of the pit (suffering 3d6 points of fall damage). See area A2 for more information about the venomous snake swarms in the pit. The trap is only triggered by characters entering the stairs from area A1. Characters moving into the triggering location from area A2 do not trigger the trap.

## A2. VIPER NEST [CR 10]

*The bulk of this room is occupied by a 10-foot-square pit, which extends some 30 feet down below, to a roiling nest of colorful serpents, which slither over one another like a giant knot of reptilian flesh. Other than the walls, which are covered in numerous paintings and tile murals depicting rampaging snakes, the room's only other feature is an open doorway that leads to hallway extending South.*

This room serves as the temple's primary defense against intruders, both because of the snake pit that occupies the majority of the room, and because of the fact that cultists are stationed here to serve as guards at any given time of day.

The walls are covered with depictions of snakes. Unlike in the first chamber, these depictions all seem to show large groups of snakes causing havoc in various ways. One large mural shows serpents raining from the sky on fields full of hapless and terrified farmers. Another shows a man or woman who has been almost entirely wrapped in snakes, so that only the figure's head is visible from the otherwise humanoid-shaped serpent form. Yet another shows an image of a riverbed overflowing with snakes, which are biting fleeing humanoids and livestock, and whose fangs visibly drip with green liquid.

**Creatures:** The pit that occupies the majority of the room contains two venomous snake swarms. These swarms are actually a single, giant swarm, and the snakes that make up the swarms freely move from one swarm to the other. As a result, neither swarm deals its swarm damage to the other, even if they occupy the same space. If the two swarms are occupying the same space, and are the target of an attack, there is a 50% chance that either individual swarm is hit (spells or abilities with an area of effect affect both swarms).

Additionally, at any given time, the room contains 2 low-ranking cultists, who guard the room against intruders. Long ago, a ritual question-and-answer password system allowed the cultists on guard duty to admit returning members, but the cult has grown so small in recent times that the cultists simply recognize one another, and attack anyone they don't recognize on sight. Characters disguised in the cult's ritual garb, and bearing holy symbols of Apep, cause the cultists to pause at least long enough for a conversation, but any attempts to convince the guards that they are members of the temple or otherwise belong there are considered to be far-fetched (imposing a –10 penalty on the check). The cultists take pot-shots at intruders that fall in the pit, but are mostly there to defend against intruders who manage to bypass the trap in area A1, and thereby the pit. They fire at such creatures as they descend the stairs, and switch to melee once the intruders make it around the pit.



**VENOMOUS SNAKE SWARMS (2)****CR 4**

XP 1,200 each

hp 37 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)**CULTISTS OF APEP (2)****CR 7**

XP 3,200 each

Human ranger 8

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Senses Perception +12

**DEFENSE**

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 72 (8d10+24) each

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +4

**OFFENSE**

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk short sword +10/+5 (1d6+3/19–20),  
mwk short sword +10/+5 (1d6+3/19–20)Ranged mwk composite shortbow +12/+7 (1d6+3/  
x3)Special Attacks combat style (two-weapon combat),  
favored enemies (elves +2, humans +4)Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th; concentration +6)  
2nd—*barkskin*1st—*endure elements, resist energy***TACTICS****Before Combat** The cultists cast *endure elements* on themselves at the beginning of each day. As soon as they suspect there is a likelihood of combat, they cast *barkskin* on themselves, but they do not cast *resist energy* unless they have seen evidence of a particular energy type being used.**During Combat** The cultists attack with their shortbows if possible, switching to fighting with two short swords if they are engaged in melee. If they are having trouble hitting opponents, they switch to a single short sword, but if they hit regularly, they begin using Power Attack.**Morale** Spurred by religious dogma, the cultists generally fight to the death. A cultist reduced to less than 20 hit points can be persuaded to surrender with a successful DC 29 Diplomacy check.**STATISTICS**

Str 16, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Base Atk +8; CMB +11; CMD 25

Feats Double Slice, Endurance, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +0 (–4 to jump), Climb +11, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (local) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +12, Stealth +11, Survival +12

Languages Common

SQ favored terrains (desert +4, underground +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track +4, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Other Gear +1 *breastplate*, arrows (40), mwk composite shortbow (+3 Str), two mwk short swords, *cloak of resistance* +1, 218 gp**A3. FEAST HALL [CR 9]**

*Black curtains are draped over the walls of this expansive room, and several small brass braziers hang from various points on the walls, all of which burn with emerald-green flames, which cause the room to seem to dance with supernatural shadows. A large, long wooden table occupies the majority of the northern section of the room, which seems set for a large group of diners. Three glossy obsidian statues of humanoids with serpentine heads are positioned in various places throughout the room. The southern section of the room is perhaps 20 feet lower than the rest of the room, and lined with sand.*

This room is used for dining, a daily ritual that takes on great religious significance within the cult, who hold elaborate and ritualized meals each evening, at dusk, in a symbolic re-enactment of Apep devouring the sun. The northern half of the chamber is for the cultists themselves to eat, while the southern half of the chamber is where they deliver food, in the form of live human sacrifices, to the giant snake in area A5, who they regard as an incarnation of Apep.

There is no kind of protective railing or any other safeguard separating the northern, upper half of the room, and the southern, lower portion, simply a sheer 20-foot drop. The thin layer of sand on the southern portion of the room breaks the fall of anyone who lands on it, turning any fall damage from this drop to nonlethal damage. This lower portion actually extends all the way into area A5, and the snake there is able to come and go between the rooms as it pleases, though it generally only comes here when it hears the sound of food.

**Creatures:** Three mythic graven guardians are stationed in this room. One stands against the North wall, in the middle, with another on each of the East and West walls. They will not attack anyone displaying a holy symbol of Apep, or anyone accompanied by such a creature, nor will



they attack snakes, but otherwise they attack any creature that enters this room. At dusk, the entire cult gathers here for one hour to perform an elaborate feast, meaning that all of the cultists from the other rooms in the temple can be found here, as well, including High Priestess Ismeni, and, for the first few minutes, at least, Talavar (area A11). In this case, the feasting is quite loud, however, and can be heard as far away as area A2 with a DC 0 Perception check.

#### MYTHIC GRAVEN GUARDIAN (SCALYKIND) CR 6/MR 3

XP 2,400

*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*

N Medium construct (mythic)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +1

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +11 natural)

**hp** 83 (6d10+50); fast healing 2

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

**DR** 5/adamantine and epic; **Immune** construct traits; **SR** 19

**Weaknesses** faith bound

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *keen dagger* +12/+7 (1d4+5/17-20 plus bleed) or *slam* +10 (1d6+6)

**Ranged** +1 *returning dagger* +11 (1d4+5/19-20 plus bleed)

**Special Attacks** bleed 2, channel negative energy<sup>MMA</sup> (DC 14, 3d6), fervor, magic weapon, mythic power (3/day, surge +1d6), rest eternal, slumber<sup>MMA</sup> (DC 14)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 5th; concentration +0)  
1/day—*haste* (self only)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Power Attack<sup>MF</sup>, Weapon Focus (scimitar)<sup>MF</sup>

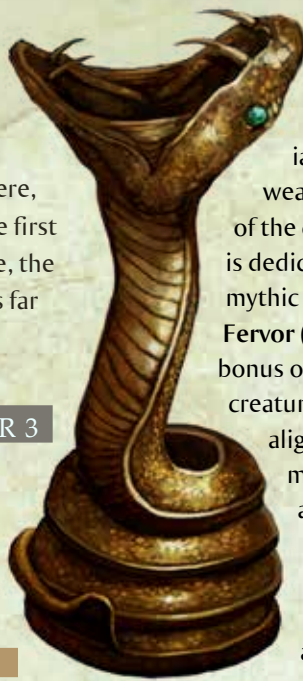
**SQ** guardian domains (Death, Repose)

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land

**Organization** solitary, band (2-4), or assembly (3 mythic graven guardians, plus 3-12 non-mythic graven guardians)

**Treasure** incidental (masterwork scimitar, other treasure)



#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Faith Bound (Su)** A mythic graven guardian cannot attack any creature that openly wears or displays the holy or unholy symbol of the deity to which the mythic graven guardian is dedicated unless that creature first attacks the mythic graven guardian.

**Fervor (Su)** A mythic graven guardian gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls made against creatures whose alignment is opposed to the alignment of its deity on one or both alignment axes (chaos vs. law, or evil vs. good), as well as against creatures who are followers of a deity that is an enemy of the mythic graven guardian's deity.

**Hypnotic Gaze (Su)** As a standard action, a mythic graven guardian can expend one use of mythic power to cause its eyes to glow hypnotically. All creatures within 30 feet become fascinated by the graven guardian for as long as it maintains concentration (requiring a standard action each round) and for 1d4 rounds thereafter (DC 14 Will negates). The save DC is Wisdom-based.

**Magic Weapon (Su)** A mythic graven guardian that carries its deity's favored weapon treats that weapon as a +1 weapon as long as it is wielded by the guardian. If the weapon is a melee weapon, it gains the *keen* weapon special ability (even if the weapon is a bludgeoning weapon). If it is a thrown weapon, it gains the *returning* weapon special ability, and generates new ammunition with each attack (this ammunition is destroyed whether or not it hits).

**Mindless Warrior (Ex)** A mythic graven guardian gains Power Attack and Weapon Focus as bonus feats, even though it is mindless. For Weapon Focus, it chooses the favored weapon of the deity it is associated with. Because it is mindless, it always uses its Power Attack feat.

**Venomous Weapon (Su)** As a swift action, once per day, a graven guardian can coat a single weapon it is wielding with a form of black adder venom. Non-mythic creatures take a -3 penalty on their saving throw against this poison and must successfully save twice to cure the poison. Venom-injury; *save* Fortitude DC 14; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con damage; *cure* 1 save (2 consecutive saves for non-mythic creatures).

**Treasure:** The table is set with plates, silverware, and goblets for 14 individuals, though there is no food laid



out at the moment. The plates are gold-plated, the chalices pure gold, and the utensils are silver. All are expertly engraved with a snake motif. In total, the set is worth 2,500 gp.

## A4. KITCHEN

*This cramped stone chamber is dominated by a large adobe oven, which has been carved to resemble the gaping maw of a hungry serpent. Dozens of pots and pans hang from hooks on the walls and ceiling, and a large counter occupies the middle of the room.*

This small kitchen is where the cultists' grand feasts are cooked.

**Creatures:** Previously, the cultists took turns preparing their meals, but a few months previous, they happened to capture a professional cook on one of their raids to gather sacrifices, and they ultimately decided to put him to work in their kitchen, rather than use him as a ritual sacrifice. This cook, a man by the name of Lloyd Ulmann, spends his days in here, and his nights in the prison cells in area A6. He is unable to cross area A3 without being attacked by the graven guardians there, and so he is left here without supervision all day, most of which he spends preparing the evening's feast, as well as a few snacks for the cultists, on demand, throughout the day. Lloyd stays in the kitchen during the feasts, and for a couple of hours afterwards to clean the dishes. He is escorted back to his cell every night around 3 hours after dusk, and is not here overnight.

**Development:** Lloyd is overjoyed to see the PCs, as he long ago determined that he was doomed to be sacrificed as soon as he ceased to be useful. He can tell the party about areas A3, A4, and A6, but he hasn't been in any of the other rooms of the temple (except when he was briefly taken through areas A1 and A2, and he does not remember how the trap in area A1 was bypassed). He can relate his own tale of woe, including the fact that in the months that he has been here, he has seen over a dozen people be sacrificed to "that damned snake" (in area A5).

He is quick to tell them about the nightly feasts that take place in area A3, which he sometimes watches with the kitchen door ajar, and he can even tell them about the cult's leader, Talavar, who he describes as "half man, half snake," and how he makes the rest of the cultists wait and watch as he eats first, with the entire room silent except for the sound of his chewing and the smacking of his lips. Then, he has the High Priestess Ismeni perform a quick

prayer, and leaves, allowing the others to eat. He can go on to explain that Talavar seems to be new to the cult; Lloyd first saw him about a month ago, though he doesn't know where he came from or how he became the leader of the cult.

Lloyd also comments that he's relieved not to have to cook those terrible dinners anymore, but doesn't elaborate, and becomes evasive if the PCs question him further. A DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that it is a source of shame and revulsion for him, and a DC 25 Diplomacy or Intimidate check is required to make him explain that, ever since Talavar arrived, sometimes the cultists would provide him with strange, unknown meat to cook, and that he quickly realized that they only ever did so shortly after one of the prisoners went missing. He breaks down sobbing as he admits that the cult has forced him to cook and serve the flesh of his fellow prisoners.

## A5. APEP'S CHAMBER

*This large stone chamber has a thin layer of sand covering the floor. The far wall features a large painting, depicting an enormous snake wrapped around the world, its mouth open freakishly wide as it attempts to swallow the entire globe.*

The door to this chamber is locked (Disable Device DC 25), and trapped. High Priestess Ismeni carries the key, but the room is very rarely accessed, with the cultists preferring to feed the snake in area A3, instead.

### POISONED QUILL TRAP

CR 8

XP 4,800

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 23

### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Reset** repair

**Effect** Atk + 15 melee (2d4+2 hp plus blue whinnis poison)

### BLUE WHINNIS POISON

**Type** poison, injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 14

**Frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds

**Initial Effect** 1 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** unconsciousness for 1d3 hours; **Cure** 1 save

The western end of this chamber opens into a short tunnel that leads to the sunken, Southern portion of area A3, where the cultists deliver meals to the snake, typically once per week, in the middle of their feasting ceremony.





**Creatures:** This room houses Apep, a giant anaconda of great religious significance to the cult. The cultists believe that, by giving the snake live human sacrifices, and performing special rituals that have been handed down by the cult since the time when Apep's faith was popular and widespread, they can imbue the massive serpent with some fragment of their god's divine essence, allowing it to transform into an avatar or manifestation of Apep himself, who can then lead the cult to victory over its foes, and restore the old glory days, spreading their faith far and wide. For the time being, however, Apep is simply a very large snake with a very grandiose name.

#### GIANT ANACONDA

CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 126 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*)

**Treasure** With a successful DC 20 Perception check, a small quiver, the belonging of one of Apep's previous victims, which fell off during its owner's brief struggles, can be found upended and half-buried in one corner. It contains four +1 *holy arrows*. A character that takes the time to search the surrounding sand and succeeds on a DC 25 Perception check finds four more such arrows scattered about.

#### A6. PRISON [CR 9]

*This dismal chamber contains two rows of cells, with a single aisle in between. The cell walls are simple metal bars on all sides, allowing the inhabitants of all of the cells to be observed at a glance. Several dirty and haggard figures languish within the cells.*

This room serves as a holding pen for the cult's victims, where they are kept until the cultists are ready to feed use them as ritual sacrifices. The prisoners receive only barely enough food and water to keep them alive, and may be kept here for as long as a month or so before they are finally sacrificed, watching their cell mates disappear one by one, only to be replaced by newcomers, until finally it is their turn.

The doors to the cells are locked (Disable Device DC 25). There are two keys, each of which can be used to open all of the cells. One of the keys is in the possession of High Priestess Ismeni, while the other is passed around amongst the cultists, and is always in the possession of one of the cultists currently on duty.

**Creatures:** At any given time, there are two cultists serving guard duty here (except during the feast hour, when the room is unguarded). As with the cultists in area A2,



they recognize one another by sight, and so are difficult to fool. They attack any intruders. If the party surrenders, they will lock them up with the other prisoners, but otherwise, they fight to the death. There are three prisoners in the room, or four, at night, when Lloyd Ulmann is here, instead of in the kitchen.

#### CULTIST OF APEP (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 72 each (see page 9)

**Development:** If the PCs can free the prisoners, they are very grateful, but unfortunately can provide very little information of any value. All can relate being captured by cultists as they travelled through the nearby desert. The most recent prisoner, Joran (male human ranger 2) was travelling alone, in search of his sister Mala, who vanished in the desert some weeks ago. The other two, Ilfara (female human expert 3) and Koriq (male human warrior 3), are a merchant and her last remaining bodyguard, respectively, their group of five having been captured by the cultists a month and a half ago; the other three have all been fed as ritual sacrifices to either Apep or Talavar. None of the prisoners know exactly what is happening to the ones that are taken away (except Lloyd, when he is here, but he simply doesn't have the heart to tell them), but they know that whatever it is, it isn't good. If asked, the prisoners can relate that they have heard the guards talk about a creature called Talavar, referring to him as an avatar of Apep, but that they also seemed unsure of him. They can also relate that they heard talk of an upcoming ritual, but they do not know any details about it. None of the prisoners has any fight left in them, and will not accompany the PCs deeper into the temple unless forced to do so, preferring instead to flee.

### A7. PERSONAL QUARTERS

*This simple corridor is lined with plain, unmarked doors on both sides.*

This hall houses the personal quarters of the cultists that live here. They are plain affairs, windowless chambers carved from sandstone, with a single bed, a table, an oil lamp, and a chest for their personal possessions.

**Creatures** At night, most of the cultists can be found sleeping here, minus the ones stationed as guards elsewhere in the temple. During the day, there is a 50% chance

that 2–4 cultists can be found sleeping in their individual beds here during the day.

**Treasure** The cultists have little in the way of personal possessions, and were forced to give much of what they did have to Talavar as tribute when he arrived one month ago. However, a thorough search of all of the rooms reveals a noble's outfit (worth 75 gp), three tiger's eye agates (worth 50 gp each), two gold necklaces (worth 100 gp each), one platinum necklace (worth 150 gp), a *potion of see invisibility*, 125 gp, 350 sp, and 926 cp.

### A8. HIGH PRIESTESS'S QUARTERS

*This bedroom is substantially larger and better furnished than the others nearby. A desk sits in one corner of the room, and a small stone altar sits opposite it. The bed is twice the size of that of the other bedrooms, and looks at least three times as comfortable.*

The door to this room is locked (DC 30) and trapped.

#### ELECTRIFIED DOOR TRAP

CR 9

XP 6,400

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 26

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touch; **Duration** 1d6 rounds; **Reset** none  
**Effect** spell effect (*shocking grasp*, Atk +9 melee touch [5d6 electricity damage]; additionally, each time the target suffers damage in this way, he must succeed on a Fortitude save [DC 20] or be paralyzed in place for 1 round, unable to let go of the door's handle. In this case, he is subject to the trap again on the following round [and must make a new save to avoid being paralyzed again], until the trap's duration expires).

This room serves as the private chambers of High Priestess Ismeni, and is where she sleeps, performs her private prayers to Apep, and handles the affairs of the cult.

**Creatures:** At night, High Priestess Ismeni can be found sleeping here. Her constrictor snake animal companion, Sofia, stands guard beneath her bed, and warns her if anyone enters the room by hissing loudly and attacking.

**Treasure:** In addition to some candles and incense, the altar contains an obsidian idol of Apep, which functions as an unholy symbol of Apep, and is also worth 500 gp as an art object. There are several papers strewn about the desk



haphazardly. The top drawer of the desk is locked (DC 25) and contains a small leather pouch containing 97 gp, 45 sp, and 395 cp; funds set aside so that cultists can buy supplies, or for other emergencies. The second drawer of the desk contains a small, black leather book.

**Development:** The papers on the desk are a mix of different things, including some half-written treatises and meditations on the nature of Apep that Ismeni has been writing, correspondence with the leader of a nearby bandit camp, discussing their division of local territory and those travelling through it, as well as a torrid and passionate love affair between them, and some basic accounting and inventory for the cult. The black leather book found in the desk's second drawer is Ismeni's journal, which describes much of the day-to-day events of the cult. Particularly noteworthy entries include one from a month ago, in which she elatedly reports that an avatar of Apep has come to visit them, describing a humanoid man with the head of a snake, and how he emerged triumphantly from what she refers to as "the room of forbidden night," (area A10), and some more recent entries, in which she becomes slowly disillusioned with this visitor, who seems to know little of Apep, spends nearly all of his time secluded, and has done little for the cult's cause since arriving.

## A9. CHAMBER OF REFLECTION [CR 12]

*This massive chamber is lit by four brass braziers, which occupy the room's corners. At the North end of the room is a statue of a massive, coiled serpent. The walls of the room are carved with a complex series of images involving snakes. In the center of the room, a circle of candles has been placed around an image of a snake devouring its own tail has been painted in what appears to be blood. On the West wall, opposite the entrance, is a pair of double doors painted with black circles.*

This grand chamber was once the place where great magical rituals would be performed, and where the cult's leader would address the assembled throng of the cultists. In more recent years, with the cult's numbers in decline, it has seen relatively little use, except as a location for individual prayer to Apep. In the last few months, however, as High Priestess Ismeni has been preparing to attempt the Rite of Rebirth to transform the giant anaconda in area A5 into a true incarnation of the god Apep, the area has increasingly been used for that purpose. The ritual is incredibly long, requiring an entire month to perform, and at the time the PCs arrive at the temple, Ismeni still has over a week left. Worse still for her plans, if she interrupts

the ritual for combat, she will need to start over from the beginning.

The images on the walls depict Apep's continuous cycle of death and rebirth. On the North wall, it shows a powerful Apep attacking Ra on his barge, and being wounded by set. On the East wall, it shows Apep being cut up into pieces, with each piece transforming into a snake and slithering off, until only the head remains. On the South wall, it shows Apep's severed head being burned, and on the West wall, it shows Apep in a black and empty void, as the flames on its head expand to take the form of a serpentine body, and then solidify into scales, leaving him powerful and vengeful, and ready to attack Ra once more.

**Creatures:** Most of the day, Ismeni and four cultists can be found here performing ritual prayers to Apep and recounting legends of his rebirth in the Abyss after each defeat, allowing him to return stronger from each and every setback. The four cultists can cease performing the ritual without disturbing it, but Ismeni cannot, and so as soon as the PCs enter, the four cultists break off to attempt to prevent them from interfering with the ritual, while Ismeni continues to pray until the fight begins to turn against the cultists, she is the target of an attack or spell, or for 3 rounds, whichever comes first.

### ISMENI, HIGH PRIESTESS

CR 9

XP 6,400

Female human cleric of Apep 10

CE Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +1; **Senses** Perception +13

**Aura** destructive aura (30 ft., +5, 10 rounds/day)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 23 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +3 shield)

**hp** 88 (10d8+40)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

**Melee** +1 *morningstar* +11/+6 (1d8+4)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 2/day (DC 16, 5d6), destructive smite (+5, 6/day)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +13)

6/day—venomous stare (1d6+5 nonlethal damage)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 10th; concentration +13)

5th—*animal growth* (reptiles only)<sup>D</sup> (DC 18), *slay living* (DC 18), *summon monster V*

4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *greater magic*



*weapon, poison*<sup>D</sup> (DC 17)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *cure serious wounds*,  
*deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *rage*<sup>D</sup>

2nd—*bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *hold person* (DC  
15), *resist energy*, *shatter*<sup>D</sup> (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless*, *murderous command*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 14), *obscuring mist*,  
*protection from good*, *sanctuary* (DC 14), *true strike*<sup>D</sup>

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*  
D Domain spell; **Domains** Destruction, Scalykind

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** Ismeni casts *greater magic weapon* each morning. If she is encountered while not performing her ritual, and she knows that combat is coming, she casts *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *protection from good*, and, unless she is separated from Sofia, her animal companion, she casts *animal growth* on her, as well.

**During Combat** If encountered while performing her ritual, she attempts to avoid combat and continue the ritual. She does the for 3 rounds, until she becomes targeted by an attack or hostile spell, or until it becomes clear that her cultists are losing the fight, though she directs Sofia to attack right away. If the fight does not seem particularly urgent, she casts the spells listed in her before combat section, above. Otherwise, she opens with *summon monster V* to summon a fiendish *emperor cobra* (Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2), followed by *slay living*.

**Morale** A true believer in her faith, and that if she dies in the service of Apep she will be reborn to reap bloody vengeance, Ismeni fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics –3 (–7 to jump), Intimidate +9, Perception +13, Spellcraft +13

**Languages** Common

**SQ** animal companion (Sofia; constrictor snake)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *potion of lesser restoration*; **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 morningstar, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +1, 22 gp

#### SOFIA

Female constrictor snake animal companion

N Large animal

**Init** +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +11

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 17 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 52 (7d8+21)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3 (+4 morale bonus vs.

Enchantment spells and effects)

**Defensive Abilities** evasion

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +12 (1d4+12 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d4+8)

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 17, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 2

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 28 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Power Attack





**Tricks** Attack, Come, Defend, Down, Guard, Track  
**Skills** Acrobatics +3 (–1 to jump), Climb +16, Perception +11, Swim +16

#### CULTIST OF APEP (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each  
hp 72 each (see page 9)

### A10. CHAMBER OF DARKNESS [CR 7]

*The room beyond this doorway appears to be nothing more than an inky black void, and no light seems able to cross the barrier into this room.*

This room serves as protection for the cult's vault, which lies beyond. Apep, as the enemy of Ra, was a god of darkness, and when his faith was prominent, he granted his most loyal followers the ability to see in magical darkness, making traversing this room fairly easy. It has been centuries since any member of this cult could safely cross the chamber, however, and so the only person who has been in areas A10 or A11 in the last hundred years is Talavar.

The room is cloaked in a permanent *deeper darkness* effect, which renders its interior constantly supernaturally dark, no matter what light sources are brought inside. The effect can be suppressed temporarily with a light spell of 3rd level or higher, but returns after 10 minutes.

Immediately on the other side of the doorway from area A9, a set of stairs leads down into the room proper. Anyone who doesn't expressly enter the room cautiously (or who can somehow see in the *deeper darkness* effect) must succeed on a Reflex save (DC 12) or fall down the stairs, suffering 1d6 points of damage and landing prone at the bottom of the stairs.

**Creatures:** Three aghash divs were summoned and bound to this chamber as guardians ages ago, and they attack anyone who enters the chamber, unless that person looks directly at them and makes a special hand signal, the knowledge of which was lost centuries past. The aghashes' claws are unable to harm Talavar, and their spells have yet to pierce his spell resistance, so he simply ignores them whenever he passes through. The aghashes fight to the death, but will not leave the room. They are able to use their cursed gaze only against creatures that are able to see them.

#### AGHASH DIVS (3)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each  
hp 42 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3)

**Development:** Once the aghashes are defeated, it is simply a matter of time before the doors to area A11 are

found by groping. Any character that keeps his or her hand to the wall as he navigates the room will automatically find the door as his hand passes over it.

### A11. TALAVAR'S CHAMBER

*The walls of this room gleam golden in the light of the torches that hang on silver sconces in the walls. A pile of velvet cushions sits in one corner of the room, and a large scroll rack hangs from one wall, but mounds of coins and trinkets occupy much of the rest of the room.*

This room was previously the cult's vault, but it was claimed by Talavar as his bedchamber when he took over the cult one month ago.

**Creatures:** Talavar spends much of his time here, plotting, scheming, and studying the ancient texts, searching for the information that originally led him to this place. Paranoid to a fault, he will not allow the PCs to leave once they have discovered him.

#### TALAVAR

CR 11

XP 12,800  
Unique variant [rakshasa](#)  
LE Medium outsider (native, shapechanger)  
**Init** +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +14

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 19 (+5 Dex, +9 natural)  
**hp** 115 (10d10+60)  
**Fort** +9, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8  
**DR** 15/good and piercing; **SR** 26

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.  
**Melee** +1 *kukri* +14/+14/+9/+9 (1d4+4/15–20), bite +8 (1d8+1 plus poison)  
**Special Attacks** *detect thoughts*  
**Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +10)  
3rd (5/day)—*suggestion* (DC 16), *vampiric touch*  
2nd (7/day)—*acid arrow*, *cat's grace*, *invisibility*  
1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent image*  
0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

#### TACTICS

**Before Combat** If Talavar detects the party's approach, he casts *mage armor*, *cat's grace*, and *shield* on himself, waiting until the sound of combat stops before casting the last spell.

**During Combat** If Talavar was ready for the PCs, he wades into combat, trusting to his natural de-



fenses and his supplemental magic to keep him safe as he slices up his foes. If the PCs reveal that they have a means of bypassing his DR, he uses *suggestion* on that creature to have them hand over the weapon in question, or otherwise leave the fight, and if injured, he uses *vampiric touch* to heal himself. If the PCs catch him by surprise, he casts *invisibility* first, instead, and then casts his pre-combat spells before beginning his assault.

**Morale** If reduced to less than 35 hit points, Talavar asks to parley with the PCs, explaining that he cares nothing for this cult, and was only here to look for information. He offers to gather his things and leave in peace, leaving the party to do what they will with the cultists and the remaining treasure. If reduced to less than 20 hit points, Talavar attempts to flee (usually after casting *invisibility*).

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 16, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 13, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 17

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Improved Critical (kukri), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

**Skills** Bluff +20, Diplomacy +16, Disguise +24, Knowledge (history) +14, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Stealth +18; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Bluff, +4 Disguise

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Undercommon

**SQ** change shape (any humanoid, *alter self*)

**Gear** two +1 kukris

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Detect Thoughts (Su)** A rakshasa can detect thoughts as per the spell of the same name (CL 18th). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. When a rakshasa uses this ability, it always functions as if it had spent three rounds concentrating, and thus gains the maximum amount of information possible. A creature can resist this effect with a DC 18 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Ex)** Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 22; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Con; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Treasure** This room contains 33,820 cp,

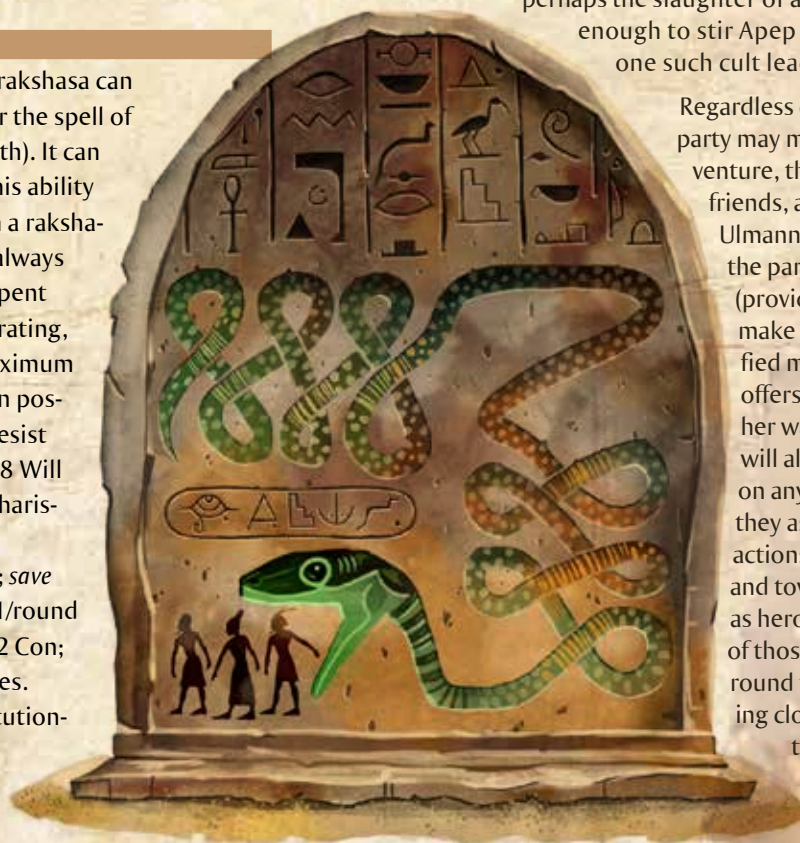
9,775 sp, 2,682 gp, and 78 pp, strewn about in large piles on the floor. The scroll rack contains various ancient texts of historical significance, worth a total of 4,000 gp to the right collector. The room also contains a set of eight jeweled and gilded daggers (worth 200 gp each), a golden snake statue (600 gp), three different gold rods, each studded with rubies or emeralds (350 gp each), and several ornate carpets (worth a total of 1,000 gp).

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the cultists have been dealt with, little remains but to help escort the remaining prisoners to safety. It is possible that the party may never discover area A11, and may not encounter Talavar. If this is the case, then the rakshasa's pride and indignation over losing its playthings—the cultists—will ensure that it tracks the PCs down to claim its revenge, his cunning and deceptive nature ensuring that he strikes when they are least prepared for him. By contrast, if the PCs do slay Talavar, he may have rakshasa kin who investigate his disappearance and wind up seeking vengeance on the party all the same.

Perhaps more dangerous than the rakshasa is the threat of reprisal from other cultists of Apep: while this particular cult was acting alone, and was not directly in connection with any other cultist cells, there are still other bastions of Apep's faith in isolated places scattered throughout the desert. The leader of one of these cults may have been using magical means to observe the progress of other cults, or perhaps the slaughter of an entire temple may be enough to stir Apep into sending a vision to one such cult leaders.

Regardless of whatever enemies the party may make as a result of this adventure, they're sure to make some friends, as well. The cook, Lloyd Ulmann, is happy to join on with the party as their official chef (provided they promise not to make him cook any unidentified meat). The merchant Ilfara offers generous discounts on her wares, adding that there will always be room for the PCs on any of her caravans, should they ask. If they reveal their actions to the nearby villages and towns, the PCs are lauded as heroes, and the loved ones of those lost to the cult gather round to give thanks for providing closure and justice for those that were taken..





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# Temple of Anen



Scale: 1 Square = 10 ft



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The illustration depicts a dramatic scene in a dark, cavernous setting. On the left, a man with glasses and a backpack is kneeling, aiming a crossbow at a massive snake. On the right, a woman with a white cape is also kneeling, brandishing a curved blade. The snake, with its mouth wide open showing a blue tongue and sharp fangs, looms over them. A plume of white smoke or steam rises from the snake's head. The background features stone pillars and a hanging torch.

# SHRINE OF SERPENTS

WRITTEN BY ALEX RIGGS



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