

WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 03/29/2015

Attendance

Paul and *Chris* open the day with a discussion of a new British television series featuring Ian McKellen as a snarky, aging, unsuccessful, gay actor. He spends a lot of time making sharp comments and slandering J. Lo's breasts. His luscious upstairs neighbor is played by the gentleman who plays Ramsay Snow in *Game of Thrones*. You know, the crazy fellow from the Dreadfort who likes flaying people.

Bruce avows as to how there's a lot more to the Dreadfort and to Ramsay Snow than just flaying people. For example, they also have a lot of psychoses going on, and you can't just ignore all of that.

Matt enters. He offers, "On the subject of flaying people, I brought an assortment of donuts from the Lone Star Bakery!"

Ernest is confused, "Why does that have anything to do with flaying? Just curious, you understand."

Matt explains that the quality and competence of Lone Star Bakery employees has taken a disturbing trend downwards. He suspects that their capabilities might be improved were one or two of them used to set an example for the others.

Patrick sneaks in on the side and addresses his attention entirely to his lunch. When asked about his opinions on flaying people, he prefers to feign ignorance to actually offering an opinion.

Tim straggles in later, in time to hear everyone else counting up the various marketing and creative missteps Sony has committed in recent years. There is some concern that there may not be enough numbers available to do a full count.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Tabregon	Bruce	Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity	10M5
Tsuguri Chiba	Chris	Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades	10M5
Antonius	Ernest	Male Tien Monk/Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury	10M5

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Trystan	Matt	Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity	10M5
Shawanda	Patrick	Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness	10M5
Calanthe	Tim	Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan	10M5

Planning for the Midnight Isles

The characters know that through the weird machinery in the next room lies a rift to the Abyss which they must enter to end the Nahyndrian crystal gathering scheme of their demonic foes.

Tsuguri suggests, “When we go to the Midnight Isles we should make sure to bring Crocs. They’re comfortable, and most important they breathe! That will be handy when we’re relaxing at all of the Abyssal beaches.”

Antonius suggests that everyone in the Abyss should have some kind of major disadvantage related to mass-market goods, primarily those that are “As Seen on TV!”

Tabregon reminds everyone, “When I get to the Midnight Isles I’m going to make sure to pick up a tourist brochure! I’d hate to miss any of the famous sights!”

Calanthe brings up an important point, “I don’t have the ability to cast *plane shift*! When we go into the Abyss we will be trapped forever! Trapped!” Both *Tsuguri* and *Tabregon* assure her that they cast divine spells and can cast *plane shift*. There is no reason to fear that anyone will be lost forever, at least as long as at least one of the divine casters survives. Hint, hint.

The Mistress of the Midnight Isles

The Midnight Isles are the combined realm and trophy room of *Nocticula*, the demon lord of murder, secrets and lust. Her followers are assassins, sex criminals, and prostitutes. The characters suspect that they might meet all manner of politicians and Bill Cosby when they visit her territory. The Isles themselves are the preserved bodies of those demon lords that *Nocticula* has slain.

Spellcasting in the Midnight Isles

Spells with the lawful or good descriptors are impeded: such spells and spell-like abilities are more difficult to cast on planes with this trait, often because the nature of the plane interferes with the spell. To cast an impeded spell, the caster must make a concentration check (DC 20 + the level of the spell). If the check fails, the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot. If the check succeeds, the spell functions normally.

The Chamber of the Rift

The Rift Chamber rises to a height of sixty feet. To one side stands the massive Nahyndrian distillery that processes Nahyndrian crystals into the elixir that empowers the demonic elite – a huge assembly of chains, gears, and organic parts that throbs and whirs in eternal labor. To the other side, half of the chamber is occluded by the swirling two-dimensional vortex that is the Rift. Two ash giants operate the distillery.

An unworldly breeze wafts from the Rift. It carries the pleasing scents of a tropical island, mixed with the stench of rotting flesh.

Calanthe leads by casting *mythic haste*; Tabregon provides *mythic shield other* to Antonius. Trystan has no patience with these preparatory activities and simply shoots one of the giants. He is dismayed to see that his shot glances off the giant's stony hide.

Antonius uses *amazing initiative* to invoke *titan's rage!* His heroic frame explodes with mythic power and size! He delivers a solid strike to one of the giants. *Shawanda* brandishes *Radiance* and strikes the other, again inflicting a solid wound. *Queen Galfrey* moves to assist Shawanda and strikes hard against the giant.

Calanthe moves in quickly, casts *hold monster* on a giant (which ignores the spell, because it is much more than just a monster) and retreats just as quickly.

Joran Vhane steps in with his adamantite greatsword and severs an ash giant's spine. The giant grimaces with crippling pain (10 DEX damage!) but remains in the fight. Trystan follows with a fusillade of arrows that strikes the giant down. He is taken by the cold wind that blows across the sea that may only be crossed once.

Antonius invokes mythic power! His strikes are strong and true, crushing the giant's ribs and breaking his legs. The giant collapses, his spirit fluttering into the dark clouds above that never clear.

Destroying the Nahyndrian Distillery

The tiefling bard *Uziel* has the skill of disable device, but is able to determine that damaging the Distillery is beyond his powers. To complicate things, the Distillery is able to regenerate from damage. Two of the characters have adamantine weapons. Between the two of them, they are able to break it into non-regenerating pieces in a few minutes of hard labor. Defeating *Mutasafan*, defeating *Ursuthella*, and destroying the Distillery counts as a Mythic Trial.

The Mysterious Device

The characters find a strange table carved with magical runes. Several disks are stacked on the floor nearby. Manipulating the runes activates one of the nearby floating disks. The disks can be programmed to go anywhere within the complex, in fairly complicated fashion. The previous tenants used them to transport Nahyndrian crystals, which are apparently fairly dangerous to carry. Tabregon figures out how to use it and the characters spend some time watching disks travel around the complex before they move back to the Rift.

Passage Through the Rift

The characters understand that time is a factor in dealing with the rift, as the eyeless *Minagho* recently teleported away from the Midnight Fane and is sure to return soon with reinforcements.

Antonius and Shawanda pass through the Rift (which he refers to as the Curtain of Goo) first. They are immediately transported to the opposite side. The characters feel the unnatural effects of the transition, but none of them suffer lasting effects. They emerge into a cavern with walls encrusted with tangled razor-sharp crystals glowing with a faint purplish glow.

Calanthe and Queen Galfrey use pages from the *Lexicon of Paradox* to start the ritual to close the Rift. As they perform the ritual the Gate starts to emit bolts of electricity.

A great voice thunders, “Who disturbs the portal?” A massive boar-headed demon thrusts its way out of the Rift. The characters recognize a *nalfeshnee* demon! It strikes Calanthe with a massive fist, shattering her concentration.

Antonius moves to protect Calanthe, striking the *nalfeshnee* twice and sending the creature staggering back. Tsuguri moves forward, taking a hit from the demon in the process but using the opportunity to allow Antonius to take an additional strike at the thing, leaving it heavily wounded. Tsuguri follows up with a *touch of death* that leaves the demon staggered.

Tabregon provides Calanthe with *shield other*, then invokes *energy body* to heal himself. She starts the ritual again after drinking down a potion of *cure critical wounds*.

The *nalfeshnee* responds by creating an aura of *unholy light*, dazing all who are unable to resist it. Tsuguri invokes the mythic *stand tall* power, giving the group the power to resist the demon’s influence with nothing more than his quiet confident assurance. “Stand tall!”

Antonius grabs the *nalfeshnee* by his little piggy nose ring and punches him in the face twice, caving his head in. The *nalfeshnee* shudders and drifts down the dark river that leads to the endless ocean with no shores.

Tsuguri casts a *communal resist energy* on everyone, shielding the group from the lightning bolts. Calanthe finishes the ritual in nine rounds while everyone watches the laser light show. The portal turns completely black, Calanthe casts *dimensional anchor*. The portal emits a shriek like a thousand death rattles and collapses, leaving a solid wall. The page of the *Lexicon of Paradox* disintegrates. And Tsuguri urges everyone to *stand tall* again, ensuring that nobody goes deaf.

Destroying the Midnight Rift counts as another mythic trial for the characters. This is the second of three trials needed to rise up to the sixth tier.

The Locals Are Suspicious

The characters walk only a few feet away from the (former) Gate before they encounter some locals. Two *bebilith demons* approach the characters, their spears lowered. One of them demands, “Speak the prayers to Baphomet or we will run you through!” Calanthe attempts to bluff past them, without having to offer any prayers to Baphomet that might endanger her alignment purity.

The demons are unimpressed by her rationalizations. The one with the scratched carapace rumbles, “The cult of Baphomet has set a charge upon us that we may not attack those who speak his prayers. You do not. We do not care who you are, we may kill you!” They scream and charge.

Calanthe smiles as she casts *mythic haste* on the group and watches Shawanda rush screaming past her to intercept a bebilith with *Radiance*. The bebilith staggers as the holy blade shears through its side.

Tsuguri washes his *aura of madness* over both demons, watching with satisfaction as one bebilith fruitlessly attempts to injure itself and the other attacks Shawanda. Shawanda easily evades the creature’s clumsy strike. Trystan loses arrow after arrow at it, destroying it.

Antonius moves on the surviving bebilith and clubs it down with its own severed leg. The characters move on as the two bebiliths float down the night-shrouded river to the ocean over which the sun never rises.

The Dangers of the Caves

The characters find a couple of paths onward. One of them goes deeper down a tunnel. The other leads to a lake of boiling purple lava. The characters decide to not test their lava-swimming abilities quite yet. They do see a ledge up above the lava, and an obsidian rod on the ledge. Everyone except Tsuguri and Shawanda has a trick allowing flight, so they all head to the ledge directly. Trystan is the first. He reaches the rod, grabs it, and is amazed as a section of the wall attacks him. It is an *advanced fiendish razored living crystal!*

Trystan quickly discovers that the living crystal's name is more impressive than the creature is. He evades its strike and brings back the rod. The rod has the word *oblivio* carved on the side. Investigation shows that it is a *rod of wonder*.

Meanwhile, Tabregon sucks down some poisonous fumes from the lava and ends up taking 15 points of CON damage before he recovers. One *restoration* from Tsuguri and he's right as rain.

The characters decide that Calanthe will be the spokesperson for the group. The others give her the *rod of wonder* with the instructions that she should shoot it off at anyone who challenges her, just to establish that she is chaotic.

The Abyssal Jungle

With some effort the characters find a way to the surface. As they near the exit they feel the oppressive heat of a tropical climate. They emerge from the caverns to see a massive topical jungle before them. Huge spires of black rock emerge from the jungle in the distance. Bird shapes that must be truly massive flap around the peaks of the spires. As the characters move away from the cavern they see that the cave system is in the base of yet another spire.

The sky above is dark, roiling with flashing clouds and a sense of manifest powers. The moon is out and bright, providing unnatural bright light (equivalent to torchlight).

A narrow trail leads away from the base of the spire. Trystan is able to find some tracks along the path, but the trail just ends – as if the demon he was tracking teleported away. The characters are not too sure whether they are actually in the Midnight Isles. They do think that most of the locals will not spend a lot of time walking through the jungles – they will either fly or teleport.

Antonius decides to get a better perspective by climbing the nearest spire. Once he gets above the tree line he is able to see that the characters are on an island, and that there are an unusual number of large ruined buildings perched on plateaus or peeking up through the jungle vegetation. In particular there is a large ruined temple nearby. He marks the direction.

Tabregon communicates with *Arueshalae*. She thinks that the characters are upon the isle of *Vasglar*, the remains of a demon lord of jealousy, ruined cities and loss. This island is only about 600 miles from the city of Alushinyrra. The city is at the center of the largest island, the island of *Alinythia*. It was an ancient demon lord of harpies. The largest islands are hundreds of miles across. In contrast, the island of *Vasglar* is less than a hundred miles across.

To cover the characters' tracks (and create lots of chaotic residue) Calanthe shoots off the *rod of wonder* a couple of times. She ends up levitating 10 feet in the air, losing 1 CHA, and gaining the ability to shoot 5d6 lightning bolts 3 times/day. A quick attempt at *lesser restoration* does not bring Calanthe's CHA back.

The Neighbors Provide a Warm Welcome

The characters travel some distance through the jungle and then set up Calanthe's *instant fortress* to rest for a while and regain those all-important mythic points. Less than an hour after they set up someone pounds on the door. Calanthe looks down from the battlements to see two ape-like creatures at the door. They are armored and armed with nets and tridents. They have blood-red fur, twisted horns, and fanged mouths in the centers of their chests.

"You do not look like a demon!"

"I am a succubus!"

"What about that one?" He indicates Trystan.

"He is mine. He is my love-toy."

"This looks like a valuable slave. How much will you take for it?"

"I'm not done with him. Make me an offer in a year and a day." Trystan acts submissive, to assist her Diplomacy roll.

"Maybe you have some other slaves you might trade? Let us inside that we might dine with you. We know succubi have many charm abilities that could make it easier for us to come back with a good crop of slaves. Cooperation could be very profitable for us!"

Calanthe invites the two *baregara* demons inside. Up close, they stand about 12 feet high and weigh in at 1500 pounds. Calanthe asks if they can get her the Nahyndrian elixir. The baregaras suggest that information can be had, for a price – perhaps the collection of fine slaves that she possesses.

They turn to bargaining, with the *baregaras* asking very intrusive questions about the talents and skills of the various characters. They explain that they will need to know this kind of information to get a good price at the slave markets of Alushinyrra.

Arueshalae tells Tabregon that *baregaras* are not actually demons, though they serve demons. They travel in troops led by the strongest fighter. They have a complex internal hierarchy determined by rules incomprehensible to non-*baregaras*.

The negotiations break down over the question of who is the best in combat. When Calanthe refuses to answer, the *baregaras* attack. One of them roars at Calanthe, leaving her shaken and demoralized. The *baregara* surges with power (+1 STR and +1 CON). The second *baregara* casts *quicken hold person* on Trystan and Antonius (who resist the spells) and then rushes to attack Trystan. The foul-smelling beast grabs hold of him and prepares to devour him with the mouth upon its chest.

Tabregon casts *cure serious wounds* on Trystan, confident that the paladin archer will be able to evade the grapple.

Antonius crashes into the *baregara* that roared at Calanthe, tearing through it with his bare hands. Shawanda turns *Radiance* upon the *baregara* grappling Trystan, stabbing it through the side and leaving it dripping reeking body fluids.

Tsuguri provokes the *baregara* that was engaging Antonius. The creature grapples him in return, but his *painful gambit* allows Antonius and Calanthe to savage and destroy the thing. Its shattered body slides to the floor as Tsuguri steps away from its grasp.

Trystan uses *Shelyn's blessing* to remove himself from the grapple. Nobody is exactly sure how this happens: one moment he was grappled, the next there is an image of Shelyn standing next to him, and he is free.

The characters drag the bodies outside the door, then scrawl "do not disturb" in demonic ichor on the fortress wall next to the bodies. The *baregaras* were carrying:

- 370 gold pieces
- A carved ankle-chain made of iron and gold (worth 2500 gold pieces)
- A *headband of intellect* +2 (knowledge (arcana))

Trystan notes that he doesn't have a headband, and could use skill in arcana. He puts it on.

They Just Never Stop



It isn't too long before a gargantuan lion-mantis-lizard (lion head, spider eyes, mantis claws) teleports into the tower and attacks! It is massive, almost the same size as the tower interior. It is 35' high and weighs in at 12,000 pounds. Calanthe yells out, "It's a shemhazian!" as it roars and bites Antonius. Antonius howls as he feels his strength (his actual STR!) draining away.

Antonius finds that only looking into the *shemhazian's* eyes is almost enough to stop him in his tracks... except that it isn't. He starts clobbering whatever parts of it that he can reach. For all that he is the *monk of the iron mountain* he cannot seem to reach anything nearby.

Uziel falls afoul of the demon's gaze and is paralyzed. Calanthe casts *quicken* and *mythic haste* and *dimensional anchor*. Tabregon is also paralyzed.

Antonius runs up the creature's arm and punches it in the face! It reels from the impact. Tsuguri avoids its gaze, but does suffer a bone-grinding hit and the associated STR drain. He makes a *painful gambit* and allows Shawanda to slay the thing with *Radiance*.

Sadly, cleanup is nontrivial. The characters chop the *shemhazian* into door-sized pieces and use *ant haul* (which Tabregon regards as the best spell ever invented) to cart them out of the tower. Except for the head, which Antonius mounts on the battlements.

Strangely, nothing bothers the characters for the rest of their resting time.

The Shrine of Nocticula

The characters decide to head to the nearby ruined shrine, hoping that they will find a way to get to the market in Alushinyrra. The shrine's stone walls rise up almost 100 feet, with a partial dome still far above. The walls are partly caved in, and rubble is scattered all about. The central shrine is surrounded by four statues of a beautiful demonic woman, apparently statues of Nocticula, each in a different pose and each bearing a different legend in Abyssal.

- In the darkness our Lady is unseen but not unknown
- To know our lady's kiss is to know the truest form of bliss
- To know death of our Lady's will is to become one with world.
- Our lady in triumph at the scene as a new midnight isle is harvested.

There are a couple of additional broken statues to the side. All of the statues radiate conjuration and teleportation magic.

Tabregon studies the statues. He believes that activating the magic requires activating the four statues, and a specific kind of spell to activate each one. He consults with Arueshalae – does she know about Nocticula's cult? She says, "I don't know, let me look at my stats." A moment later, she suggests that each statue evokes a different type of magic, and can be activated by casting a spell of that school upon it.

Calanthe tries casting *darkness* on the first statue. Red runes on the statue's wings glow as it absorbs the spell. *Charm person* works on the second statue. *Slay living* works on the third. And *animate dead* works on the fourth.

Once all four statues are activated, the altar stone ripples and peel open like curtains, revealing an open portal through which a strange purple city can be seen. Everyone heads through the portal, holding hands.

The Abyssal City of Alushinyrra

The characters are transported into a massive plaza. The scope and size of the city is like nothing the characters have seen on the mortal planes. Demons rub shoulders with planar travelers. Cricket fans share purplish beers with rugby enthusiasts. There are lots and lots of tieflings, cambions and alu-demons, plus no small number of humans, walking around the marketplace and shopping at the stands. Everything is dark, lit by shadowlamps that cast a dark glow over the reddish-purple city.

A large fraction of the trade is in slaves, but spells, fine jewelry, exotic clothing, shoes and magical items are also on offer. Shawanda in particular is tempted by the shoes of the Abyss.

The city is run through with canals, thick with ship traffic. Many of the boats are rowed by thanadaemons, the Boatmen of the Styx.

Do You Want a Local Guide?

As the characters look around like rubes, a thanadaemon steps in front of them. "Are you escaped prisoners? Do not lie, I will know it!"

Calanthe answers, "We are not. We are here for our own reasons. I am a succubus and this is my cult. And I am shopping for shoes."

"Would you like me to serve as your guide? I would be happy to do so in exchange for a soul."

"I don't think so."

"If you reconsider, please call for me first. My name is Xugunfarishandoon."

"Certainly."

Xugunfarishandoon gets back into its boat and paddles away.

The End of the Session

The characters have made it to the demonic city of Alushinyrra. The next step is to gain enough notoriety in the city to gain an audience with Nocticula – she will not grant an audience to just anybody.