

WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 08/17/2014

Attendance

Bruce calls in late owing to mysterious bell-related activities. *Tim* is far away, indulging in various Gods War incantations. This leaves the loyal companions: *Ernest* (who sounds like a dolphin), *Matt* (who sounds rather like a chipmunk), *Chris* (who indicates that Bruce sounds like a dolphin), and *Paul* (who wishes that everyone would abandon their various animal impressions in favor of playing a game). *Patrick* hides off in the margins, glad that nobody is comparing him to any sort of animal at all.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Tabregon	Bruce	Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity	2
Tsuguri Chiba	Chris	Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades	2
Antonius	Ernest	Male Tien Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury	2
Trystan	Matt	Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity	2
Shawanda	Patrick	Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness	2
Calanthe	Tim	Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan	2

Roll Initiative! There is Drama Afoot!

Tabregon finds himself in the midst of dramatic action – there are tieflings, there are paladins, there are other characters, and *Antonius* is clobbering a guy in the head with a three-sectioned staff (breaking bones). One tiefling collapses, leaving four to torment the others.

Tsuguri yells out, “Tabregon! Drop your bow and join us! Their flanking is killing us!” Tabregon (who doesn’t own a bow) is desperately confused. *Trystan* eventually figures out that the Tsukiyan cleric is talking to him.

Tabregon steps in and bashes a tiefling on the head. He bashes him very hard. The tiefling staggers. *Shawanda* steps in with the brilliant holy blade *Radiance* and slaughters the villain. The tiefling’s severed head flies through the air like an errant lacrosse ball.

Antonius faces off against the tiefling blademaster at the end of the line. The tiefling snarls and feints with his blade. Antonius ignores the devil-blood’s attempt and simply crushes his throat with his staff. The tiefling collapses.

Trystan heeds *Tsuguri*’s advice and steps in to slash at a tiefling, leaving him staggered. Only two tieflings remain standing. Then one wounded tiefling collapses, leaving the last one to flee. Antonius runs him down and drags him back by his devilish ears.

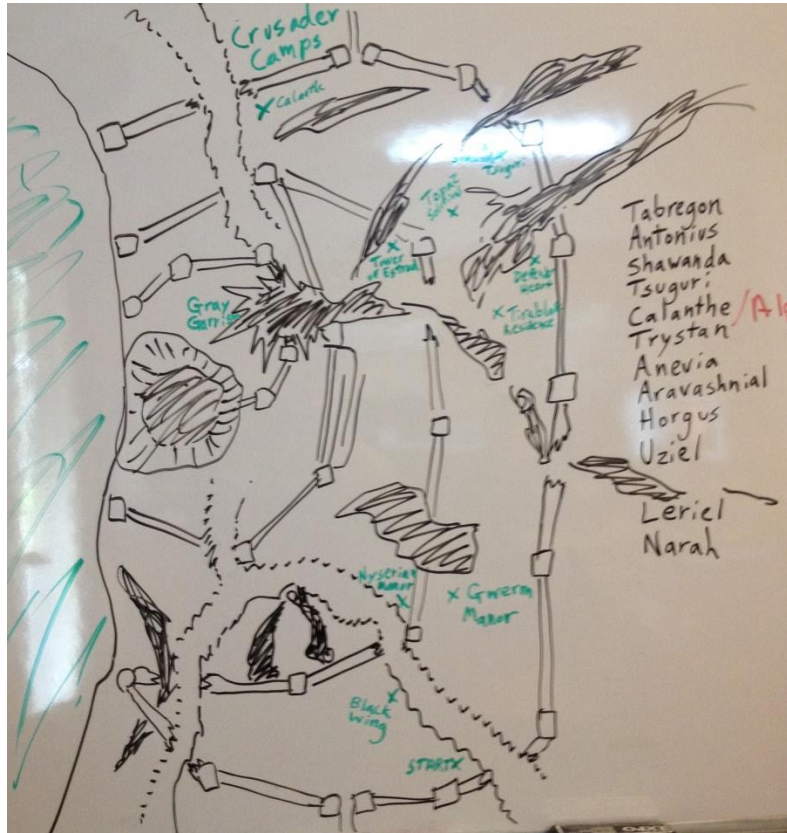
Three of the downed tieflings turn out to merely be horribly injured. Tabregon and *Shawanda* treat them while Antonius interrogates his captive *Sithril*. He learns that the tieflings are opportunistic cannon fodder, eager to help the demonic forces of *Areelu Vorlesh* when she comes to claim the city. They know nothing else of use. Their gear is similarly unimpressive: shortswords and studded leather armor. The only looting they have done was of an antique doll store – they have a bag of stuffed dolls.

Planning Conference at Defender’s Heart

The characters briefly return to the Defender’s Heart to drop off their prisoners and pass the cultist *Faxon*’s letter to the surviving leaders of the crusade. *Irabeth Tirablade* tells the characters that she has heard of *Nahyndrian crystals*, but that the Riftwarden leader *Quednys Orlun* will know more. He knows that they are possessed of great demonic power, doubtless intended to destroy the *wardstones* and (in his words) “To turn our hopes into despair!”

Quednys indicates that he has detected a remaining fragment of the Kenabres wardstone in the Gray Garrison, either flung there by the blast or taken there by cultists. The information he has from along the other nodes in the wardstone network suggests that the wardstones did not collapse utterly, and he thinks the survival of the fragment is responsible.

He fears that if the cultists are able to secure their hold upon the fragment they will be able to turn it into a weapon against the Crusaders.



The characters confer briefly and decide to head to the cultist safe house at *Topaz Solutions* next. The *Nyserian Manor* is on the other side of town, and quite difficult to reach through the ruins of the city.

The Path to Topaz Solutions

The characters venture out onto the streets of the ruined city. A hideous, exhausting baying sounds from the road ahead. Tabregon listens to the baying. He confirms that the sounds are not those of a natural animal. He promptly fails a Will save and takes a point of WIS damage. He feels just a little bit unhinged. But not so unhinged to prevent him from casting *Bless* upon the party,

Ahead on the wrecked street the characters see something canid with awful serrated barbs clustered from its shoulders and down to its back. Tsuguri hefts his ranseur as he invokes a divine power to give Antonius a bonus against mind-affecting effects.

Tabregon approaches the unnatural hound, his morningstar at the ready.

Trystan rushes past the oracle and slashes the hound. He exults, “I have a ranger level now! And outsiders are my favored enemy!” His blade bites deep into the lunacy dog’s shoulder. The hound snaps at him, and misses!

Shawanda slashes at the hound, delivering a substantial hit but taking damage from the creature’s vicious quills. Tsuguri reaches in and tries to place a *gentle repose* upon the hound, but cannot find an opening through the quills. Yipe, those things are sharp!

Tabregon gets spines broken off in his flesh, he is *sickened* until they are removed. He hammers it with his morningstar, leaving it critically wounded.

Trystan moves in and ends the thing.

Shawanda, Tsuguri and Trystan help each other remove the quills from Tabregon, inflicting more damage upon him in the process. Tabregon channels positive energy to heal himself, and other members of the party, and the spine hound! It’s awake! Kill it kill it kill it! Antonius and Tsuguri stab it down with reach weapons.

Tabregon and Antonius notice that they still hearing the howling of the spine hound. Even its death does not silence its voice! While they look around in twitchy alertness, the others organize the peasants and commoners the spine hound had been threatening and persuade them to leave the area for their own safety. The commoners agree with the plan of leaving, but insist upon doing it escorted by the characters. After all, there are awful spine-hounds about!

Topaz – For All Your Alchemical Supply Needs!

Topaz Solutions is marked by a wooden sign of herbs and flowers over a beaker of smoking liquid. The building’s windows and doors are tightly closed. The place has the look of an alchemist’s shop. Both Shawanda and Tsuguri know that it is an alchemist’s and herbalist’s shop run by *Aigon Topaz* and his wife.

The characters knock. A man in armor with a longsword answers. The building is under the protection of members of the *Ash Ravens* mercenary company, with between three and six mercenaries inside. They do not believe the characters’ story that the place is a safe house for Baphomet cultists.

Trystan peers around, looking for any sign that the mercenaries are cultists, or that there are other signs of cultists about. He finds nothing. Other characters search, and also find nothing.

The mercenaries indicate that the wizard Topaz who ran the place abandoned it. They have been sitting quiet here ever since the disaster.

After an hour and a half, the characters start to think that the supplies on one shelf are fake. Tsuguri holds up a jar and angrily proclaims, "These are not elf penises!" (He really means the elf-penis mushroom, but the others don't know that). The characters pry open the shelf and find a secret door behind it.

The Ash Ravens do not attack the characters.

Everyone accepts that this means the Ash Ravens are not cultists.

The Hidden Shrine of Evil (and Chaos)

The characters venture down into the basement. It is unfinished, with many gourds hanging from the ceiling, rotting plant matter on the floor, and a small clockwork statue of a six-armed snake woman on a table. A wooden chest carved in runes is under the table. A carving of a goat head with a star upon its forehead hangs on the wall over it. A vial of greenish liquid is carefully placed before the statue.

Tsuguri is able to sense a magical aura upon the room, centered upon the chest. He cannot tell much more than that.

Trystan senses an evil aura in the corner, underneath a pile of dried leaves. There is no evil on the six-armed statuette. Trystan tries shooting an arrow at the clockwork statuette. Nothing happens.

Shawanda volunteers to mess with the statuette, protected by a *Protection from Evil* cast by Tabregon. She touches the statue. A threatening voice urges doom upon the characters, hoping that the characters are not mere burglars for it would be a shame to waste such a powerful curse from Baphomet. At that moment, the concentration of evil in the corner turns into a horrible mandragora leaf-child that screams, leaving Shawanda, Trystan and Tabregon nauseated by the sound. The clockwork animates, shattering the bottle with its six blades. The bottle explodes, emitting a 30' burst of poisonous vapors. Tabregon feels his nose starting to bleed. Tsuguri feels a strange burning sensation. Trystan and Tabregon stagger out of the cloud.

The mandragora waddles at an incredibly fast pace, leaping upon Trystan and biting with its planty mouth.

Shawanda starts to feel a strange frenzied energy overcome her (+2 Initiative, -2 to DEX-based skill rolls).

Tsuguri does not abandon Shawanda. He steps in, weapon swinging and cutting. The mandragora turns its attention to him, leaping upon him and poisoning him. Tsuguri becomes both confused and fatigued.

Tabregon, into the cloud! Tabregon, burned! Burned with horrible acid damage! He tries to persuade Tsuguri to leave the cloud. He finds this impossible, as the mandragora has embedded the cleric in a mass of woody tendrils. Tsuguri struggles helplessly.

Antonius takes a deep breath of clean air and charges in to the rescue. He resists the effects of the foul cloud but isn't able to help with the mandragora. The mandragora continues throttling Tsuguri. Tabregon heals Tsuguri while Antonius tries to beat the mandragora away.

The mandragora finally chokes Tsuguri out.

Tabregon gains darkvision out to 30' from the cloud. He also picks up a keen glowing red eye effect. How to respond? Channel positive energy! Zammo!

Antonius finds himself wheezing, his breathing labored. Weirdly, this only gives him -2 to Stealth checks for 2 hours. You'd think that breathing problems would have more of an effect – perhaps this is just because Antonius is just a remarkable physical specimen. There is more hitting of the mandragora, this time with effect. He hurts it badly and watches planty juices fly! The mandragora lets go of Tsuguri and grabs for Antonius. It bites him, and wraps him up in its tendrils.

Tabregon gets wheezing breathing too. He drags Tsuguri out of the cloud, reasoning that Antonius can take care of himself. Tsuguri has a wonderful dream about being in a nice restaurant. The only problem is the shrieking child who prevents him from enjoying his meal.

Trystan finally cuts the mandragora into two pieces. It finally stops screaming.

The cloud dissipates after a time.

Tabregon unleashes one burst of positive energy after another until Tsuguri is moderately recovered.

Inside the chest the characters find five holy symbols of Iomedae and a note. "We don't need these anymore, but figured it would be funny for you to find them in a trapped chest." All five are coated with contact poison.

The clockwork is nicely made, worth some money.

The characters head back to the Defenders' Heart, along with the Ash Raven mercenaries (between three and six of them) and the people they rescued from the quill hound.

Demon Pack on the Loose!

On the way back to Defenders' Heart the characters find a pack of four *dretch* demons looting. They clearly have a poor understanding of how to loot, or of what kind of items are and are not valuable.

Trystan shoots one dretch. It grumbles.

Antonius runs at the dretch with a comb stuck in its ragged ear. He howls, "Grooming is for good only!" He hits the dretch so hard the creature drops the comb and takes 1 DEX damage. It and its two friends pile onto Antonius, gnawing and clawing at him frantically. They may be the lowest demons in the Abyss, but they are filled to the brim with an urge to viciousness and cruelty! They're like the reverse of Maxwell House, evil to the last drop!

Tabregon charges into the mass of dretches surrounding Antonius. The dretches respond by clawing him viciously. Tsuguri steps up and uses a wand to cast *cure moderate wounds* upon Tabregon, completely restoring him.

A dretch charges Trystan, inflicting a scratch so vicious that the paladin almost notices it. Shawanda intercepts the creature and slashes it across the torso, leaving it badly wounded. The dretch steps back and casts *cause fear*, leaving Shawanda briefly shaken. Shawanda strikes again, cleaving the dretch. She tells it, "I shall not show fear!"

Trystan steps up to the cluster of dretches, longsword swinging. He strikes one, and takes a bite from another in return.

Antonius moves to flank a dretch then crushes it with his cold iron staff. Two other dretches attack him, knocking him down.

Shawanda steps in with *Radiance* and critically wounds a dretch.

Tsuguri moves in, is staggered by a dretch, and heals Antonius.

Antonius leaps back into the fight and critically wounds one! It mindlessly gnaws upon Antonius in return.

One Sanctuary Left in the City

The characters return to Defender's Heart and get some much-needed rest for the evening. Tabregon and Tsuguri both lose more WIS points to the aftereffects of the awful baying. The spine-hound's sound is like an ear-worm that just keeps on giving. The surviving clerics at Defender's Heart can tell that Tabregon and Tsuguri are cursed, but none of them

are high enough level to cast *remove curse*. Once the curse runs its course, they are able to restore the WIS damage.

Irabeth Tirablade puts the Ash Raven mercenaries to work and takes charge of de-poisoning the Iomedae holy symbols. While the characters were gone, someone else reported that Nyserian Manor was in the path of a demon. There is nothing left there except for a pile of rubble and a massive scar across the landscape.

The wider situation is not good. All of Kenabres' greatest defenders have been slain or fled. Irabeth wants the characters to join the attack upon the Gray Garrison. She would not ask them to do anything she would not do herself, so she will join them. *Anevia Tirablade* asks that the characters keep her wife safe. She advises that the characters will probably not be able to clear everything from the Gray Garrison in one attempt – it will take multiple forays. The other Crusaders at the Defender's Heart will launch distraction raids when the characters attack, to help them sneak into the structure.

Gifts from the Riftwardens

Aravashnial is also at the Defender's Heart, along with all of the librarians from the Black Wing Library. He tells the characters that he visited a hidden cache of Riftwarden equipment, which he hands over to the characters:

- 8 potions of *cure serious wounds*
- 4 potions of *lesser restoration*
- 10 +1 *evil outsider bane arrows*
- A *chime of opening*
- *Wand of magic missiles* (31 charges, CL 5)
- *Wand of daylight* (24 charges)

Finally, *Aravashnial* gives the characters a *rod of cancellation*. If they are unable to rescue the *wardstone* shard, he advises them to use the rod to destroy it.

The people at Defender's Heart also provide *Tabregon* with a cold iron Morningstar and sell him a healer's kit. *Tabregon* takes the *wand of daylight*.

Allies from Underground

Irabeth has sent emissaries down to the mongrelmen. They have provided a team of mongrelman rangers who will work with the characters (each of them is a 1st level Ranger with favored enemy human; each player controls one of them). They are:

- Tibers (Shawanda)
- Rogoth (Trystan)
- Odeir (Tabregon)
- Silko (Tsuguri)
- Tusdar (Antonius) and
- Absentee (Calanthe)

Also, everyone goes up to third level!

To the Gray Garrison!

The Gray Garrison is a bleak, gray stone building. It was once a fortification but has lately been used as a museum. The cultists have clearly chosen to refortify it because it was once built for the purpose. It has only one entrance, which makes the task of “sneaking in” rather more difficult than it might otherwise be.

The characters approach with the rest of the crusaders, but break off to the side as the crusaders make contact with the defending force. They can see at least two or three dozen defenders of various types: cultists, dretches, tieflings, and so on. There are also some defenders outside the walls: the characters can see two massive, fat, naked dead men armed with scythes. One of them appears to be (or to have once been) *Lord Holrun*, the onetime ruler of Kenabres.

Answering the Defenders

There is a large stretch of cracked and broken terrain in front of the Gray Garrison. The characters prepare their mongrelman rangers in an archery line. They approach carefully to a range of 90’ and engage the corpulent defenders with archery. The arrows stick into the defending creatures’ sides, but inflict only limited damage.

The guardian revenants lumber towards the characters, taking three rounds to cross the distance. Trystan manages an excellent shot into Lord Holrun’s chest cavity with an *outsider bane* arrow, piercing it through. The worm-demon inside Lord Holrun’s body eats through his head and explodes up out of his neck. This heals the damage the characters did with arrows. Tsuguri invokes his *silver dragonscale* to align Trystan’s bow to good.



Antonius uses a charge from his wand of *enchant weapon* to enhance his ranger companion's longsword.

Trystan fires a good-aligned *outsider bane* arrow into the worm-revenant occupying Lord Holrun's body. His shot critically wounds the creature. It seems to be consuming its body even as the characters watch.

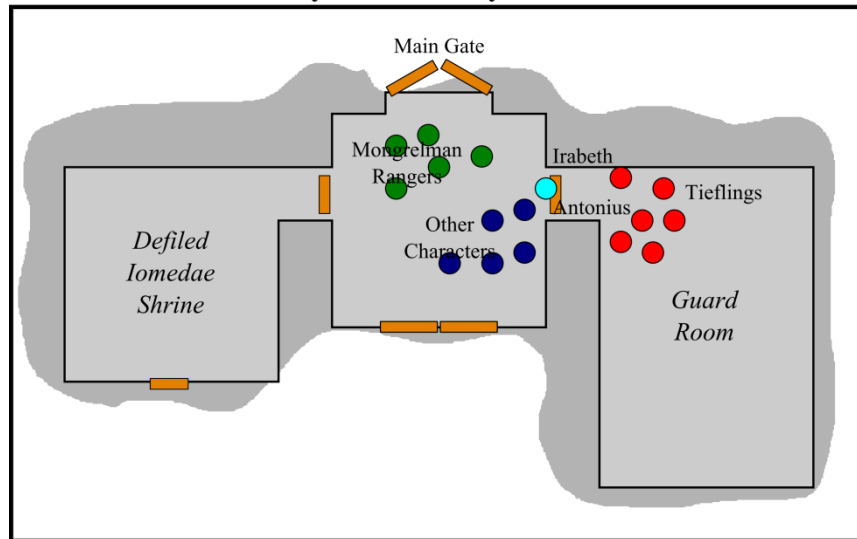
Shawanda shouts, "They're called vermleks!" The uninjured one lumbers past Tabregon, its dead eyes fixed upon Shawanda. Tabregon breaks the thing's kneecap with a cold iron Morningstar. Irabeth whirls and strikes true twice, dropping it.

Antonius yells, "Come on slurmy, let's get him!" and attacks the worm-headed vermlek. Amazingly, the thing dodges his attacks. Tabregon steps up behind it and crushes the evil obscenity's worm-head. Nobody corrects him that the creature is actually an evil outsider.

The Main Gates

The characters find the main gates to the Gray Garrison securely locked. The characters use the *chime of opening* to open it. Beyond the gates are doorways to the east and west. There are six tiefling guards to the west. A moment before they had been playing cards, using severed body parts as gambling chips (with a lot of disagreement over what various parts are worth). When they see the characters advance into the foyer they abandon their game and scramble for weapons.

Entry into the Grey Garrison



The characters advance into the room, mostly constrained by the fact that the doorway is not wide enough for everyone to pass, and blocked by tieflings to boot. Irabeth and Antonius are able to cut down the tieflings one at a time.

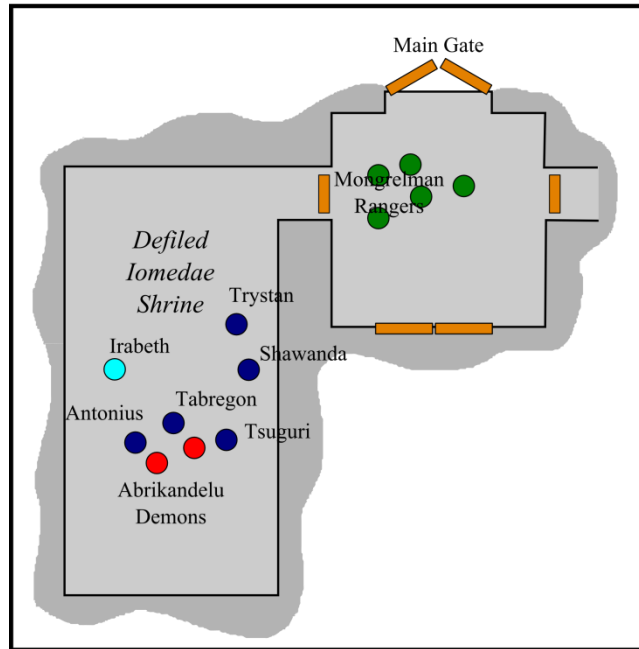
The Defiled Shrine

The next room over is a defiled shrine to Iomedae. Antonius listens at the door and hears two high-pitched shrieking voices speaking in Celestial. He understands not a word of the language, but he suspects that they are not speaking well of the Crusaders. Both Tsuguri and Tabregon understand Celestial and can tell that the speakers are mocking Crusaders and the various gods they serve.



Trystan peeks inside. He sees two hunched, ratlike creatures using the severed heads of Crusaders to conduct a conversation. They have two thumbs on each hand! (The creatures, not the crusaders.) Trystan recognizes them as *abrikandelu* demons, wrecker demons whose greatest purpose in life is to destroy beauty. Trystan starts a count of six, then busts open the door. Antonius and Tsuruchi storm past him, but not so fast that he doesn't manage to shoot one of the demons down with an *outsider bane* arrow. As a worshipper of Shelyn, he hates these demons more than anything.

The Defiled Iomedae Shrine



The others pile in upon the surviving abrikandelu and slaughter it. The characters inspect the remaining equipment. There is nothing left that might be construed as a thing of beauty, though they do find a morningstar made from black metal. On investigation, it turns out to be an *adamantine morningstar +1*. Trystan claims it.

The characters spend some time cleaning up and restoring the ruined shrine. As she scrubs some of the filth away, Shawanda notices that the words on the sunburst and the words on the walls line up in different ways. From the correct angle the carving depicts a longsword and a phrase in Celestial:

Let Us Inherit Thine Arms, Iomedae!

Shawanda tries speaking the phrase, but nothing seems to happen. The group earns **One Devotion Point** for restoring the shrine to Iomedae.

Deskari Cultists have no Artistic Sense

The characters pass through a central hallway and into a long room with a dais at the far end. Blood and filth stain the white stones of the floor. Severed limbs have been stitched into an awful locust shape upon the dais, perhaps in an effort to create an evocation of Deskari. Three Deskari cultists stand ready around their handiwork, though the characters notice that there are seven bedrolls upon the floor.

Tsuguri advances into the room with Silko and Trystan upon his flanks. Rogof piles in after them. Tabregon casts a *bless*. Silko looks at the cultist and grumbles, “Mmm... humans. Let us take them.” He shoots one through the chest with his bow, leaving the cultist seriously injured. Trystan sinks a shaft through the same cultist’s eye, dropping him.

The two surviving cultists charge with their scythes, straight into the prepared blades of Irabeth and the characters. They are cut down with dispatch.

The Evil Alchemist! His Name is Ophiru!

Shawanda advances into the hall, followed by most of the characters. The mongrelman rangers remain behind, keeping watch. It is at that moment that the rear door of the hall opens to reveal the tiefling alchemist *Ophiru* sporting a *blur* spell!

The alchemist flings a fire bomb at Tsuguri. The bomb is poorly aimed, injuring a couple of the mongrelmen. Irabeth is right next to him, so she steps to the attack! He ducks back, evading her swing. Shawanda runs up next to Irabeth to support her.

Tsuguri and Tabregon both cast *cause fear* at the tiefling, shaking him. Rogof the mongrelman ranger sends a red-fledged arrow through the tiefling’s throat, wounding him lightly and sending a spray of blood through the air.

Antonius and Pusdar hammer the assembly of limbs on the dais into fragments.

Ophiru flings another fire-bomb at Irabeth, setting her on fire and damaging some of the mongrelmen standing near her. Irabeth quickly extinguishes herself, stepping away to do so. Shawanda tries running past Ophiru and suffers a minor dagger cut for her troubles.

Silko moves in on Ophiru and stabs him. The mongrelman is frustrated to see the alchemist avoid his attack. Ophiru mocks the mongrel, “I am covered with layer upon layer of defensive spells! You cannot touch me!”

Ophiru flings a fire bomb straight at Silko, engulfing him in flames. Silko screams as he burns! Irabeth strikes back, leaving Ophiru critically wounded. Shawanda and Trystan follow up and cut Ophiru down. Tsuguri uses *create water* to extinguish Silko.

Searching the Alchemist's Lair

The alchemist's chamber has a long table. A long sword-case rests upon the table. The characters organize a squad of mongrelmen to guard the door and perform some healing. Meanwhile, Irabeth announces, "If nobody else is going to open that case, then I will." Without waiting for a response, she opens the case and announces, "Hey! That's my father's sword! How did it end up here? And look, there is also a note!" The note indicates that someone was going to give the sword to the evil anti-paladin *Staunton Vhane*.

It turns out that the other vermllek out front was *Camber Nyserian*, a respected member of Kenabres society who turns out to have also been a cultist. Whoever wrote the note was very pleased by the fact that he had come to a soggy end.

The cultists are all equipped with the standard cultist loadout, including scythes, scrolls of *cause fear* and *comprehend languages*, potions of *cure light wounds*, and so on. In contrast, Ophiru was carrying quite a bit of nice stuff:

- 2 potions of *cure light wounds*
- A potion of *cure moderate wounds*
- A potion of *barkskin*
- A potion of *invisibility*
- A potion of *spider climb*
- +1 *leather armor*
- A dagger
- *Ring of protection +1*
- A portable alchemy kit
- Four silver holy symbols (2 Iomedae and one each of Shelyn and Desna)

Secret Armory of Iomedae

The characters try the phrase to Iomedae again and a hidden door opens, exposing a hidden armory:

- 3 cold iron longswords
- 2 cold iron shortswords
- 2 heavy crossbows

- 1 composite longbow (+2 STR)
- 1 masterwork cold iron heavy mace
- 2 cold iron long spears
- 50 cold iron crossbow bolts
- 100 cold iron arrows
- 1 *longsword +1*
- 5 *holy arrows +1*
- 1 *arrow of evil outsider slaying*
- 2 sets of masterwork chainmail
- 1 *breastplate +1*
- 1 masterwork heavy steel shield
- 1 *heavy steel blinding shield +1*

Shawanda claims the *heavy steel blinding shield +1*. Tabregon takes the masterwork heavy steel shield and the *breastplate +1*. Antonius claims the *ring of protection +1*. The various magical arrows and the composite longbow go to Trystan, and the cold iron arrows are distributed among the mongrelmen. A cold iron weapon of some kind is issued out to each of the mongrelmen as well.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters in the Gray Garrison making plans to distribute the arms found in Iomedae's secret arsenal to the mongrelman rangers and the crusaders back in the Defender's Heart.