

WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 01/04/2015

Attendance

Bruce explains that he and *Georgina* have not washed or eaten regular meals for four days on account of their discovery of the game Minecraft. Bruce goes on and on about having created the Tower of Ultimate Masculinity, enough that *Chris* is eager to move on to another topic.

Paul arrives fresh and is more than happy to continue the conversation, reveling in *Chris*' visible dismay. He is particularly enthusiastic about explaining the addictive properties of the game, and how it has destroyed both lives and families. Sometimes at the same time!

Ernest shows up in time to offer his insightful comments upon the relative difficulty of hiring young, hot actresses for bad movies. *Chris* notes that there are several movies out there that would tend to suggest that the process is much tougher than *Ernest* thinks.

Tim brings a new topic to the table – proper control of prison populations now that we understand that in everything except a supermax prison the prisoners are able to walk around outside their cells much of the time. He offers, “It’s just a fine line, and when you cross it it’s *Lord of the Flies* all day, every day!”

Matt and *Patrick* show up around the edges of the camera and do their best to avoid describing their knowledge of internal prison policies. They are already far too familiar with *Lord of the Flies* to want to revisit it. *Patrick* in particular hopes that the conversation can move back to that Tower he has heard so much about.

| Character | Player | Description | Level |
|---------------|--------|--|-------|
| Tabregon | Bruce | Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity | 8M2 |
| Tsuguri Chiba | Chris | Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades | 8M2 |
| Antonius | Ernest | Male Tien Monk/Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury | 8M2 |

| <i>Character</i> | <i>Player</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Level</i> |
|------------------|---------------|--|--------------|
| Trystan | Matt | Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity | 8M2 |
| Shawanda | Patrick | Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness | 8M2 |
| Calanthe | Tim | Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan | 8M2 |

The Barbarians of the Winter Sun Hall

Last time, the characters traveled from Drezen to the Winter Sun Hall where they killed a lot of barbarians. Now they are on the hunt for a monstrous eyeless woundwurm, a sort of dragon mutated by the abyssal powers of the Worldwound. Contrary to initial belief, the barbarians had nothing to do with the woundwurm – though they were not good people and their leader carried an unusually powerful unholy symbol of Baphomet to prove it. The characters are concerned that the demoness *Jerribeth* might have been using it to control (or contact) the barbarian leader, so the characters decide to sequester it in a *bag of holding* to interrupt its ability to transmit. There is some thought that once the characters are able to change the Forge of Corruption into the Forge of Goodness it might be possible to transform it into a moderately-powerful good artifact.

The holy symbol situation takes on a more personal aspect when *Shawanda* reveals that her scars came from a demon attack in her childhood, a demon attack that might have been executed by *Jerribeth* herself years ago.

New Settlements in the Worldwound

The characters wonder if there are any new settlements that have been set up within the territory of the Worldwound, either since its eruption or since the characters reconquered the citadel of Drezen. The tiefling *Uziel* tells the characters that he comes from the town of Undarin, recently founded within the Worldwound. It's not clear to them how the settlement can survive, given that neither agriculture, nor hunting, nor

pastoralism is possible. Undarin is located more centrally within the Worldwound, south of the Frostmire Fen and along the banks of the Sarkora River.

It turns out that there are quite a few settlements, mostly tiefling and demonic settlements, within the territory of the Worldwound. Most of them are quite far from the characters' activities far in the northeast of the territory near to Drezen. The barbarians from the last session were somewhat exceptional, in that they had hoped to reclaim their ancestral lands along the now-dry river south of the Lake Lost to the Sun.



Finding the Lair of the Woundwurm

The characters believe that the woundwurm is living somewhere north of the dry lakebed of the Lake Lost to the Sun. Getting there requires crossing a lava flow and a dry riverbed. Beyond that, there are all manner of lesser local hazards. All of the local flora and fauna are toxic, so the characters know that they will need to bring their own provisions no matter what. They also bring the barbarian woman *Jestak* as a potential local guide.

The group tracks along the lava flow until it diminishes to nothing, then cross over and head to the west. *Trystan* has the best Survival skill of the group, so he breaks

the path. The characters come upon a narrow chasm. They break for lunch and take a look around. *Antonius* decides to name some terrain features. “I name this the Chasm of Chaos!”

Tsuguri advises that if *Antonius* names anything he should absolutely ignore anything the locals say about the geography. And if the characters happen to kill a lot of natives, make sure to name something nearby after their tribe.

The Crusader Cemetery – Shrine of the Fallen

The characters find an old site where some fallen Crusaders were buried. The monuments are nothing more than their swords and helms. *Tsuguri* leads the group in an impromptu ceremony. After that the group marks the location so the remains of the dead might be removed to a more appropriate location later. *Antonius* names it the Shrine of the Fallen with the general agreement of the company.

Fallen Crusaders on the March

The characters make camp some distance further on. The shades of night are drawing nigh, and nobody wants to attempt travel in darkness. *Calanthe* uses some mythic power to create an *alarm* while everyone else sets up camp.

Later in the night, *Tsuguri* and *Shawanda* are on watch. They see figures approaching, dark figures wearing armor bearing the symbol of *Sarenrae*. *Calanthe* studies them as they draw closer and sees that they are transparent. They march silently, their eyes glowing in the darkness. She tells *Tsuguri*, “Undead. I’m sure of it!”

The characters struggle to wake as the undead approach. *Shawanda* verifies that they are in fact evil (all undead around here are evil). *Tsuguri* decides that the characters are about to be overrun, so he invokes a *ward against death*.

The undead close to charge range. One of them rushes at *Shawanda*, who lashes out with her extended reach. Its armor feels solid to her blade, but once she pierces through there is no resistance – as if the creature is an empty suit of armor filled only with malign power. The creature stabs her, inflicting a noticeable wound. Another of the creatures strikes *Tsuguri*, inflicting a painful negative energy burn.

Antonius leaps to his feet and executes a sudden charge against an undead. Behind him, *Calanthe* casts *mythic haste* upon the group! However, none of the undead

creatures show much sign of injury. The characters recognize them as *fallen* as the third undead steps back and places *deeper darkness* upon the area! *Tabregon* puts an end to that with a quick *daylight* spell.

Antonius continues hammering upon one of the fallen. He is grateful to see that it is starting to look moderately injured. He continues hammering until the armor collapses and the creature disperses.

Calanthe invokes a *slow* spell upon the fallen, all of whom shake off the spell. Shawanda follows up with a burst of positive energy that only barely singes the fallen. The barbarian Jestak rages and unleashes strike after strike against another of the fallen. Unfortunately, she is clad only in her nightgown so the creature's return strike inflicts desperate harm upon her and leaves her locked in *despair* (-4 penalty on saves against fear).

One of the fallen stares deeply at Tsuguri and intones, "You must find my remains and consecrate the grounds!" Tsuguri realizes that the undead is trying to curse him, but his will is too strong to fall victim to the fallen's evil magic.

Trystan sees that Jestak is hard-pressed by one of the fallen. He ventilates the creature with a flight of arrows. Bits of unearthly ectoplasm spall away from the creature. Tabregon sends a burst of positive energy at the two surviving fallen, obliterating the one that Trystan had softened up. Jestak and Shawanda finish the last of them.

The characters are quite disappointed that the force armor vanishes along with the fallen. The next morning the characters return to the Crusader graveyard and appropriately *consecrate* their graves to prevent reoccurrence. As they do they can feel the spirits of the fallen move on.

The Defiled Shrine of the Fair One

The characters conclude that they must descend the side of the recently-named Chasm of Chaos. They clamber and *levitate* their way down the cliffs and start exploring. They find a shrine built into a cavern at the base of the escarpment. The face of the shrine is built into the cave, with a stairway rising up to the door and two statues of Baphomet flanking it. The characters note that though the statues are currently of Baphomet they

were not built that way originally: they have been magically altered, though the characters cannot tell from what.

Trystan, as he gazes upon the shrine, is overcome with a surge of sadness and despair. He recognizes that this was once a shrine to Shelyn. And then he is filled with divine rage, giving him a variety of bonuses against those cultists who have defiled a holy site of his patroness.

Shawanda tries the doors. She finds that they are not locked. Apparently, demons are very much like Canadians. She casts open the doors and steps into a large room of worked stone, lit by flickering torches. The chamber is dominated by a floor-to-ceiling statue of a bull-headed figure seated in a lotus position. There are six cultists present, all wearing lots of bull-themed accessories so they are easily identified as Baphomet worshippers. Shawanda whispers back to the others, “Did you know that the near-mythical folk of Crete worshipped the bull as a fertility symbol? And that Marduk was the Bull of Utu? And that in ancient Egypt the bull Apis was worshipped as the embodiment of Ptah and Osiris? It really burns me up that this stupid demon lord is co-opting the ancient and magnificent presence of the bull as a sacred entity! It makes me so mad that I could kill!” She advances into the shine, *Radiance* drawn and blazing with righteous fury. Trystan is stunned: he had not suspected that Shawanda spent near that much time studying mouldering cross-planar religious texts.

Tabregon follows Shawanda in, reasoning that Shawanda will need a lot of healing soon.

The cultists see the characters and bellow like oxen to raise the alarm. Shawanda’s eyes blaze red with manifest blood-lust. Tsuguri simply moves in and turns on an *aura of madness*. Tabregon follows that with a *mythic holy smite* on half of the cultists. Calanthe invokes *mythic haste* on the characters.

The cultists do their best to prepare for incoming as Antonius picks out various feats to use against one of them. He strikes his target many times, tripping the hapless cultist and then crushing him into the cut-stone floor, squashing his skull like a soft-boiled egg. Antonius tells the others, “Did you see that? That was my Coiled Dragon Staff technique! I am just like the *Fist of the North Star*!” Tsuguri rolls his eyes.

Jestak trades blows with a confused cultist.

Trystan steps into the shrine all full of divine wrath. He *communes* with Shelyn, asking her the completely needless question, “Should these demon-worshipping unbelievers be punished for defiling your sacred shrine?” Tabregon thinks that Trystan is leading the question just a bit.

To nobody’s surprise, Shelyn responds, “YES!” She sends down a wave of divine power to stun the cultists. Trystan follows up pinning one of the cultists to a wall with a volley of flaming arrows. Thunk! Thunkthunkthunkthunk! To everyone’s amazement, the cultist survives, though in horrible agony. Lo, the vengeance of the Goddess of Beauty is a thing to fear!

Shawanda notices that one (blinded) cultist is threateningly close to Trystan. She steps in and eviscerates the fellow. The cultist collapses like a half-full sack of old potatoes.

Calanthe backs up Jestak, firing a wave of *magic missiles* into the cultist the barbarian has engaged. Jestak steps up to the cultist and splits him through the middle.

The Bull-Demon’s Acolyte

A secret door opens in the massive dais. A strapping elven woman with a glowing crossbow steps out. A creature that is a strange amalgamation of dragon and bull stands at her side, six cloven-hooved feet upon the flagstones. The elf-woman is *Zanetra*! She leads off by casting *haste* upon all of her allies (even the confused and blinded ones).

Antonius immediately lashes his three-section-staff across her torso, inflicting a solid hit. She is quite sturdy – she takes the hit without missing stride.

Trystan sends four arrows into Zanetra’s bull-dragon creature, backed with *smite evil*. The creature collapses, pierced through. Its shattered vital organs leak unusual-colored fluids onto the floor. He explains, “My special power is called *barrage* for a reason, even though it only uses one arrow for some reason.” Almost carelessly he wings Zanetra with a leftover shot.

Shawanda continues carving through the cultists, slashing one through the abdomen and then driving her blade clean through the heart of a second. Tsuguri fells Zanetra, leaving her prone. Tabregon and Calanthe move into melee with the last standing cultist and slowly beat the man to the ground.

Zaneda demonstrates that she is not yet out of the fight by healing her bull-dragon and sending it to attack Trystan. It bites a sizable chunk out of his side. Antonius attempts to pummel her into unconsciousness and finds that she is well-defended enough to mostly ignore his attacks.

Trystan announces, “That dragon thing is still my smite target, so I’m going to deal with it. Arrows! Arrows! So many arrows! Fly with Shelyn’s divine favor!” He shoots it. It collapses.

Zaneda calls out as her monster falls to the floor, “Spinnarabeth! Oh no!” As Trystan’s arrows strike the dragon she becomes visibly more injured and withered as she gives it her life force to keep it alive. However, as the arrows strike her life force diminishes to the point where she does not have enough left to sustain it. And then Trystan’s final arrow leaves her unconscious.

Restoration of the Shrine

As soon as the characters defeat the Baphomet Templars and Zaneda the entire structure of the shrine transforms. The walls and statues vibrate and shudder, then the entire structure transforms into its original form as a shrine to Shelyn. Trystan is glowing with divine energy and is able to see the angels of Shelyn working to undo the damage inflicted by the cultists.

An armored woman carved from marble with angelic wings appears before the character. She is the *Spirit of Adoration* and Herald of Shelyn. She moves with unearthly grace. She informs Trystan that he is to be her champion in the world. He gains another Mythic Trial, placing him halfway to the fourth Mythic Tier. He gains Shelyn’s thanks for clearing the shrine of the corruption of the demon lords. And then she vanishes, leaving no trace of her passing.

Meanwhile, Tsuguri, Tabregon and Calanthe are all *charmed* by the very presence of the Spirit of Adoration.

The characters find a fairly large quantity of loot on the bodies of the cultists and Zaneda:

- 10 potions of *cure moderate wounds*
- 6 potions of *cure serious wounds*

- 6 suits of *full plate* +1 (very nice looking except for the foolish-looking helmet and the cloven-hoofed boots)
- 2 scrolls of *planar binding*
- *Leather armor* +1
- *Frost hand crossbow* +1
- Masterwork dagger
- *Cloak of resistance* +2
- Diamond dust worth 500 gold pieces
- Silver unholy symbol of Baphomet
- Iron key
- Silk pouch containing 320 platinum pieces and 6 pearls (100 gold pieces each)

The Rest of the Shrine

The rooms on the sides of the main altar chamber turn out to be barracks. There is an inner sanctum behind the shrine. All of these areas were once decorated with Baphomet-oriented graffiti but that is all gone now.

There are clean provisions in the back storeroom, and a large wooden table in the planning room. The planning room also contains a locked wooden cabinet that Trystan suspects fits Zanedra's iron key. Trystan is able to open the cabinet with it. The cabinet appears to be full of roiling gray clouds with evil-looking red eyes floating within it. Tsuguri identifies it as a mihstu, an evil creature from the Elemental Plane of Air. They are merciless hunters that form their mists into talons that drain their victims' vital fluids.

Calanthe tries speaking to it in Auran. "What is your business here?"

It responds in an awful whistling hiss, "I was tricked into this place. A mortal spellcaster used magic to trap me as a guardian to this cabinet. A horrible fate for such an immortal being such as me!"

"Would you prefer to go back to the plane of Air?"

"Of course I would! My orders were to attack anyone who picked the lock or broke the cabinet!"

"But you won't attack us because we used the key! Huzzah! Can you leave now?"

"The planar binding must be dispelled!"

The characters decide to just dispel the binding. Tabregon uses *dispel magic* to remove it. The mihstu goes back to its home.

The cabinet turns out to contain a variety of documents. The characters learn that this sanctum is one of dozens of similar sites scattered through the Worldwound. The main base of the Templars is nearby the Marshlands, somewhere east of the Gray Road. It is located within the ruins of the Greengates, beyond Vang's illusionary wall. The documents do not include the exact location of the place. There are mentions of *Xanthir Vang* and an elven woman named Jerribeth, both of them high-ranking members of the Templars.

The characters also find a letter about a traitor succubus who must be captured. Jerribeth has offered a reward of 1000 pieces of platinum to whoever brings her back. Calanthe notes that capturing any creature that can teleport would be difficult indeed.

Interrogating the Summoner

The characters bring Zanedra back around for some questioning. She is adamant that the characters and all of their fellow "Crusader filth" will die at the hands of her master. The characters allow as to how they are all mortal and will die, though maybe not at the hands of evil. Except for Trystan, who is no longer certain about the "mortal" part.

Calanthe decides to try an alternate approach. She *charms* Zanedra. Zanedra becomes much, much more cooperative. Calanthe asks, "Where is the Ivory Sanctum?" Unfortunately, Zanedra doesn't know much more than what is in the documents. She does tell her life story. Her faith in Baphomet is so strong that she was sent a divine messenger from the Lord of Minotaurs. Spinnarabeth was the answer to all of her prayers. In happier times, Spinnarabeth spent much of his time in the pit at the back of the inner sanctum, cracking the bones of his victims. Zanedra is clearly wholly bought in to Baphomet's ideology. Proposals that she should change her faith over to that of another, more socially-acceptable, bull god are met with blank incomprehension.

Tabregon suggests, "Have you ever considered serving Urox, the Storm Bull? He is the source of the Eternal Battle rune, he trapped the devil Wakboth beneath the Block, and he provides interesting rune spells like Face Chaos and Berserk. Also, he is married to Eiritha, mother of beasts, and she gives him Speak to Beasts as an associate spell." Zanedra doesn't even both to dignify Tabregon's comments with a response.

Zanendra had been used to contacting Jerribeth and the rulers of other shrines in the Worldwound by *teleport* and doesn't know much about the specific locality of most of the shrines.

Back to Drezen

The characters return to Drezen following the known (and thus somewhat safer) path. On the second day, the characters see a red dragon flying in the distance. Even with trigonometry, they are not able to figure out how big the dragon is.

The characters return to Drezen, sell their loot, look into magic items for sale, and find new leads. They also turn over the cultist Zanendra to the officers of the Crusade for trial and execution. Antonius asks Uziel to spy on Irabeth the paladin with the reasoning that so far they've got two or three bad guys with the suffix *-beth* on their names, so that merits extra suspicion on her part. The tiefling takes this line of reasoning with a straight face and promises to watch her dealings.

Magical Artifacts for Sale

There citadel of Drezen has grown to the point where it has a marketplace of sorts, with some limited magic items available for purchase. Items worth less than 2200 gold pieces have standard (roughly 75%) availability. The higher-value magical objects for sale are rather limited:

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Price</i> | <i>Page</i> |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| Boots of desperation | 2800 | M77 |
| Counterstrike bracers | 2500 | M90 |
| Oil of Magic vestment +5 | 3000 | |
| Potion of greater magic fang +4 | 2400 | |
| Raptor's mask | 3500 | M210 |
| Marvelous pigments | 4000 | |
| Rod of escape | 3500 | M173 |
| Doss lute | 4100 | M156 |
| Dragon's draft, blue | 4500 | M157 |
| Belt of priestly might | 6000 | M74 |

Appease the Ancestors

Tsuguri gets a message from his parents. They write that there is a lost crypt to one of the family ancestors in the Worldwound near Drezen. They are concerned that their ancestor is not resting quietly and needs to be appeased. As an incentive to act, they also note that he was buried near a hidden cache of demon-hunting gear, and that if he is appropriately propitiated he might tell the characters where to find it.

There is a simple map along with the letter, marking the crypt location near the abandoned town of Susker's Gully.

The Perfidy of Xanthir Vang

Aravashnial approaches Calanthe. He tells her, "I know you are not a Riftwarden, but your parents were and thus I feel I must look out for you. I have learned that your parents were assassinated on a mission for the Riftwardens, by a man named Xanthir Vang. He was once a man, but the name of Xanthir Vang is now borne by a creature made of worms, the awful ruler of the Ivory Sanctum. I think that the abomination of today is the same as the man of yesteryear. Your parents' remains probably no longer exist, but some of their belongings may remain among his trophies and goods."

Bad Dreams

Antonius starts to have disturbing dreams about the ritual he was exposed to as a child. Every time he wakes, he notices a strange emotional tugging in his mind, drawing him deeper into the Worldwound. He keeps the specifics to himself, but suggests the direction of the tug (southeast) as the next direction for the characters to explore.

Return to the Badlands

The characters head back to the badlands, traveling towards the abandoned town of Susker's Gully and the Chiba family crypt on the outskirts of town. The town is completely abandoned and in terrible shape, though there are a number of structures still standing. Antonius makes a point of walking down the boardwalk, each step creaking. The mausoleum is easily the largest intact structure. Its twin iron and bronze doors have

been cast open and the family name defaced. The whole place is covered with demonic filth.

The spectral shape of an old man appears before the characters and intones, “And now the child comes before me, not content with the parent’s torment. Woe the bliss of being forgotten yet eludes these old bones. The decades of torment have twisted and corrupted me!”

Tsuguri asks, “How can I relieve you?”

“There is a darkness down below where I may not enter. It must be removed from my crypt!”

The characters say polite things to the old specter as they proceed past, preparing to deal with whatever is lurking in the depths. Within the mausoleum, deep clawmarks disfigure the wall carvings. Demonic filth has been painted on the walls, spelling out “Filthy usurper!” in Abyssal.

The characters continue down, their way illuminated by *daylight*. They find six stone doors decorated with jade carvings in the image of the Moon and the Moon god Tsukiyo. Out of the corner, something unfolds itself. It is emaciated. Its skin is charred or dried, and its empty eye sockets trail smoke. It is a *bodak*, an extraplanar undead.

The characters leap to the attack with positive energy, *mythic haste* and *death ward*. The bodak responds by ladling out negative levels to Calanthe and Tabregon – which are immediately partially neutralized by Tsuguri’s *death ward*.

Antonius steps into the bodak and smites it three times with his three-section-staff. He destroys it utterly. Shawanda puts her sacred blade back into the scabbard with an irritated sigh. Tabregon and Tsuguri cast *restoration* spells to deal with everyone’s negative level problems. Managing bodaks is all in a day’s work for the group these days.

There are doors to the south leading to stairs down and another section of the crypt. The characters move in and find three sarcophagi, the occupants’ images carved upon the lids. And lurking beyond the sarcophagi is *Skullgrim*, a nabassu demon. Tabregon hits him with a *mythic smite evil* to blind him. Calanthe gives everyone *mythic haste*. In response Skullgrim casts *silence* on his axe and moves forward to engage the others.

Antonius moves in and hammers Skullgrim hard enough to send shattered demonic bone into the walls. To everyone's surprise, the demon is still standing at the end of Antonius' attack. Shawanda very optimistically hopes that she will have a chance to participate in the fight. She unsheathes *Radiance* and promptly buries it to the hilt in the demon's breastbone. Unconvinced that this is enough, she draws her ichor-smeared blade from the wound and swings again to sever Skullgrim's hand. Skullgrim's headless body falls as Shawanda claims her grisly trophy.

The characters are able to determine that only one of the three coffins still has human remains inside – the other bodies were removed long ago.

In gratitude for cleansing his burial site, the spirit of Tsuguri's ancestor guides the characters to a spot near the church in the abandoned town. They dig, and four feet underground they find a metal chest. It contains:

- *7 arrows of evil outsider slaying*
- *A horn of goodness*
- *3 doses of incense of meditation*
- *A rod of the python*
- *A scroll of resurrection*
- *A cold iron holy long spear +2*

Tsuguri claims the *cold iron holy long spear +2* as a gift from his ancestors. Beyond that, the nabbasu's axe is magical – it is a *vicious battle axe +2*. And it has *silence* cast on it for the next few minutes. Tabregon claims the *horn of goodness*. Antonius declares, “I already have plenty of pythons. Check this out!!!” and flexes for the group.

For cleansing the ghosts of his ancestors, Tsuguri gains a mythic trial.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters in the ruined town of Susker's Gully. The characters all go up to 9th level.

Goods and magical items sold in Drezen nets each character 7000 gold pieces. The characters grant the barbarian Jestak a masterwork dagger and a *breastplate +2* for her assistance in the wastes. Trystan claims the seven arrows of *evil outsider slaying*. He predicts that he shall swiftly put them to use slaying evil outsiders.