

## WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 09/28/2014

### Attendance

*Paul* tells the others, “We shall start in the middle of things!”

*Bruce* is taken aback, as he missed the last session and showed up late to this one. He only barely manages to figure out that *Chris*, *Ernest*, *Tim* and *Patrick* are also in attendance.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Tabregon	Bruce	Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity	5M1
Tsuguri Chiba	Chris	Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades	5M1
Antonius	Ernest	Male Tien Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury	5M1
Trystan	Matt	Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity	5M1
Shawanda	Patrick	Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness	5M1
Calanthe	Tim	Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan	5M1

### The Nabbasu and the Chapel

The characters are inside the stables of a chapel on the path between Kenabres and Drezen. Outside, a *nabbasu* demon mocks them. The characters very strongly believe that they are dealing with a trap. They believe this even more strongly when the demon *teleports* amidst them and launches a *mass hold person*, leaving *Trystan* paralyzed.

*Antonius* invokes *smite evil* and strikes the *nabbasu* in an amazing acrobatic flying kick. The *nabbasu* grumbles under his righteous strike. It roars in anger! *Antonius* stacks a *stunning fist* into the combo, which the *nabbasu* mostly ignores.

*Calanthe* casts a *magic missile* at the fiend, burning past spell resistance and delivering a solid strike! *Tabregon* notices that *Trystan*'s arrows are not yet aligned, he casts *align weapon* to make them good. *Tsuguri* uses a mythic power to grant everyone in the group a free move action, allowing *Calanthe* to *levitate* and the others to get into position.

The nabbasu activates its *death-stealing gaze* upon everyone in the group. *Tabregon* howls as he gains a negative level! Then it launches itself at *Antonius* with fang and claw, tearing through him and leaving him staggered.

*Shawanda* steps up to *smite* the nabbasu, wounding it deeply.

*Trystan* is out of *smites* for the day, but he has mythic power enough for a barrage! He shoots, again and again, delivering strange shattering wounds to the creature.

*Tabregon* casts a mythically-charged *cure moderate wounds* upon *Antonius*, bringing him back up. Filled with new energy, *Antonius* wraps his cold iron three-sectioned staff around the demon's throat and strangles it to death.

The fallen nabbasu is naked and free of loot. However, there is a wand of *hold person* (10 charges) lying next to the dead incubus the characters killed upon arrival in the chapel. They also find a strongbox containing:

- 383 copper pieces
- 710 silver pieces
- 3827 gold pieces
- A beryl worth 500 gold pieces
- Three opals worth 100 gold pieces each
- A gold holy symbol of *Sarenrae* worth 200 gold pieces
- A magical *knight's pennon*.
- A *chain shirt* +1
- A *returning dagger* +1

A *knight's pennon* is a narrow cloth flag that must be mounted upon a lance, spear or polearm. This is a *red knight's battle pennon*, allowing its user to benefit from *heroism* once per day (CL 6). *Tsuguri* mounts it upon his ranseur. *Tabregon* claims the wand of *hold person*. *Tsuguri* picks up the scroll of *cure moderate wounds* taken from the spy. *Calanthe* takes the spy's wand of *modify memory* (4 charges). *Shawanda* picks up a *belt*

*of mighty constitution* +2. Trystan tries on his shiny new *chain shirt* +1, while Tsuguri straps on his new *breastplate* +1. Nobody shows much interest in the unusual *aspergillum* +1.

### *Reclaiming the Chapel*

The characters spend a day in the chapel, searching it for a suspected cache of healing magic. They finally locate it in a lead-lined chamber underneath the altar. There are enough potions of *cure light wounds* to grant the characters' army the *healing potions* (3x) resource.

The characters also clean and restore the chapel, purging it of demonic filth. The whole area is affected by a *desecrate* that Tsuguri is able to dispel. As he does and righteousness flows back to the chapel the blade *Radiance* gains an additional +1 bonus.

The characters do manage to find some worthwhile weapons in the chapel and its grounds as they clear the wreckage away:

- 3 cold iron daggers
- *cold iron long spear* +1
- *longsword* +1
- masterwork battleaxe

There are several bodies of the original defenders scattered around in the kitchen, the halls, and so on. The characters move them out to the courtyard and inter them properly.

## **The Mysterious Green Cloud**

The characters return to the chasm path and march the army forward another 10 miles, to within three miles of Drezen. There is a gorge ahead filled with what appears to be a seething filthy cloud of green vapor. The characters decide to send two scouts ahead: Trystan and the scout Aron Kir (scout, siege engineer and trap expert).

As the pair approaches they are able to see that the cloud is actually a mass of hundreds of swarming creatures, loathsome flying insects. Aron Kir explains that the things are called *vescavores*, demonic locusts. He has never seen such a large swarm, implying the presence of a *vescavor* queen in a nearby underground lair. When a *vescavor* queen is deep in spawn the surrounding area becomes inundated with her

voracious offspring. Antonius suspects that they are resistant to electricity and fire and possibly immune to cold, like other demons.

The characters use the 250 gold in silver dust and the skills of their paladin army to produce 10 vials of holy water. They issue these to everyone in the group except Tsuguri, who can channel to harm evil outsiders. The characters lay their plans and approach.

As the characters move closer they can see clouds of the creatures emerging from a series of holes. The nearest hole is only 5' in diameter. The characters enter carefully, mostly by climbing down a knotted rope, except for Tsuguri who *levitates* using *Terendelev's scale*. The climb down starts out easy (knotted rope and wall) until suddenly there's no wall as the cavern opens out. Tsuguri realizes that his *levitate* effect can carry 1900 lbs, so he carries everyone else down to the floor of a crystalline cavern.

Disturbing, buzzing sounds echo through the caverns and threaten to bring madness. The walls are caked with a thick red rosin that resembles bloody mucus. The floor is coated with foul-smelling substances (-4 to Acrobatics and Climb). Here and there narrow fissures and vents in the ceiling provide a limited illumination.

There are three paths available. Trystan, equipped with a potion of *invisibility*, scouts them out. As he moves deeper into the tunnels he starts to see more and more vescavors. As new-hatched creatures they do not appear to have their full abilities. He thinks that the rest of the group might be able to make it down the corridor. At a crossing of four tunnels, he comes upon the large shape of the vescavor queen. He sneaks back to report to the others.

The characters decide for the stealthy approach, using *invisibility* potions to help the less-agile characters. The hive gets riled up, but the little monsters don't really know what is causing their agitation. As they swarm, they sing the chorus of the Abyss. Calanthe is affected by madness, she finds herself babbling incoherently and standing in place. Vescavors also start chewing through the characters in a way that leaves no doubt to their ability to skeletonize both characters and their gear. Everyone's armor is considered *broken*, except those characters who are not wearing armor – their weapons are *broken*.

Tsuguri casts *silence* to ward away the effects of the song of the Abyss. The characters forge on to find the vescavor queen. Along the way, the vescavors destroy Tabregon's armor.

### *Facing Down the Vescavor Queen*

The characters reach the intersection where the vescavor queen lurks. Trystan spots her first and shoots her with a well-placed arrow. He is answered with a horrifying blast of acid in response.

Calanthe decides to do something dramatic to the vescavor swarms. She casts a *gust of wind* at them. They prove extremely wind-resistant, ignoring the spell completely. Calanthe grumbles, "I was just so excited about finding a use for *gust of wind*!"

Antonius tells her, "Don't worry, the designers looked at the situation very carefully and ensured that even though this would seem like a place to use *gust of wind*, it would actually be useless." He uses a *fleet charge* to close with the vescavor queen, heavily wounding it with a series of strikes. Shawanda follows after him, embracing the madness of the Abyss to drive the strength of her arm. Between the two of them, they seriously wound the queen.

Tsuguri moves in towards the queen to place the attacking characters into the zone of silence. He channels positive energy to harm both the swarms and the queen. Tabregon heals everyone with another burst of positive energy.

Trystan shoots the vescavor queen twice, once through the heart and once through the other heart. Upon the queen's death a shrieking ripple tears through the swarms as they all spasm in midair, shrieking their little lungs out. The swarms lose interest in biting the characters and just flee.

### *The Purple Glow*

There is a purple glow coming from the south-east corner of the cavern. As the characters watch it shifts from purple to mauve and gets brighter. The characters move closer and see a roiling rift in reality in the corner of the cavern. The air carries the foul stench of burning flesh. There are a few vescavors slipping into it.

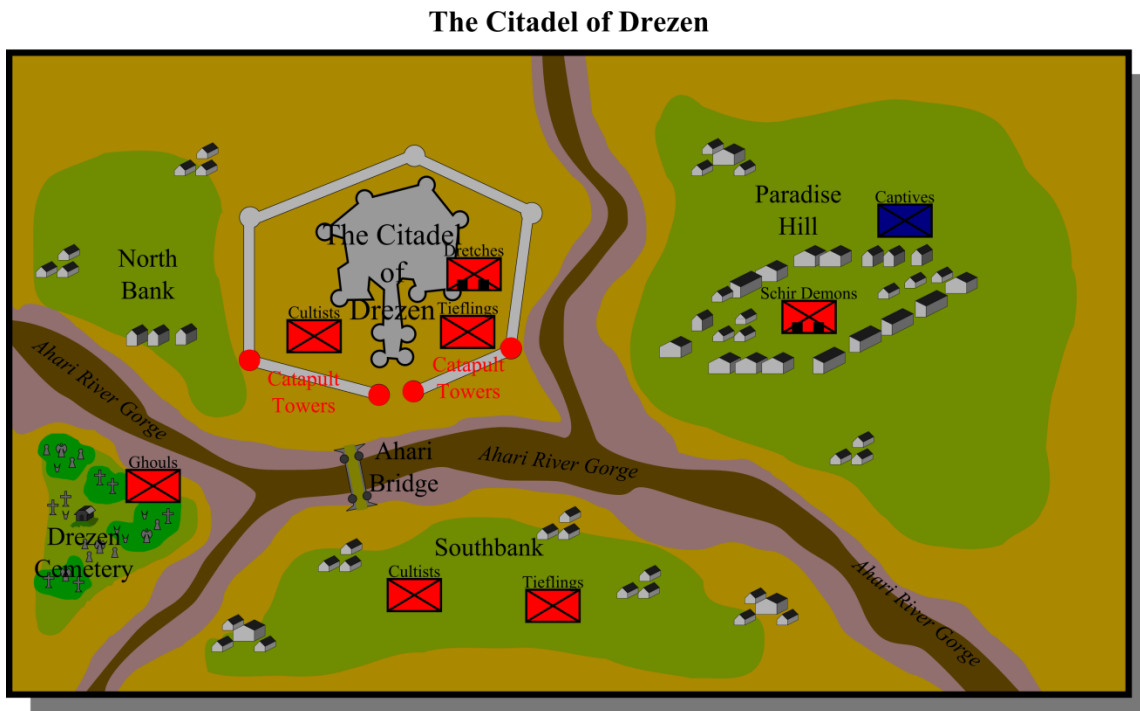
Tsuguri announces, "It's an Abyssal Rift! It's a two-way passage from our plane to the Abyss!" The others note that something seems to be creeping out of the rift.

Calanthe casts *dimensional anchor* on the rift, sealing it and leaving a severed demonic claw upon the ground.

Antonius examines the claw and announces, “Vrock! Those are turkey demons!”

On returning to the army Tabregon checks a masterwork breastplate out of the armory to replace his own breastplate (“Eaten by vescavors!” he tells the unbelieving armorer).

## Arrival at Drezen



After the vescavors clear it is only a few more hours for the characters to reach the fallen citadel of Drezen. The stink of smoke and grime on the wind provide the tell-tale sign of a city fallen to evil. It looks like most of the demonic inhabitants have left to fight with the armies to the south. The characters and their army lay siege!

### *Trouble in the Ranks*

Aron Kir (the siege engineer) is not feeling well or acting normally. Tabregon examines him and determines he is suffering from drug withdrawal. Tabregon tries diplomatically asking if there is anything wrong. Aron takes his inquiries poorly and storms off. Trystan tries talking to Aron’s lover *Sosiel* for additional information. Sosiel tells Trystan that he has been trying to help Aron out.

### *Sosiel's Story*

Before Sosiel found Aron he was living on the streets with a thieves' guild. He was leading an unhealthy lifestyle and using a lot of two drugs, *demonblood* and *shadowblood*. Demonblood is actually made from the blood of demons. He doesn't why they'd be affecting Aron now – he hasn't used them in years.

Trystan suggests that the proximity of demonic power might be having an effect upon him. He tells Sosiel that he wants to help, but Sosiel maintains that only powerful magics will be sufficient, magics like *remove disease*. As it happens, Sosiel does have this spell but he cautions that the spell will only help the physical aspects of the problem.

### *Shadowblood?*

Antonius talks to his pet tiefling *Uziel*. Uziel readily admits that he knows all about shadowblood but doesn't know where he would get any here. He does think that Aron had a source. The other characters guess that the false Halfling spy *Norah Dendiwhar* was his source, and now that she's dead he has no supply any more.

### *Treating the Scout*

Sosiel casts *remove disease* upon Aron, but it isn't clear if the magic is having any good effect. He doesn't seem to be improving, and thus isn't available for scouting.

## **Scouting the Citadel of Drezen**

The characters decide to send Uziel (the low-level tiefling rogue) and Trystan out to scout the defenders. There are six possible locations to scout:

1. Citadel
2. South Bank
3. Bridge
4. North Bank
5. Cemetery
6. Paradise Hills

The characters' army of paladins is approaching from South Bank, so they elect to send their scouts there, to the Paradise Hill neighborhood, to the Ahari Bridge, and to the Citadel itself.

### **South Bank**

The South Bank is guarded by companies of cultists, mercenaries and tieflings divided into two groups (one of cultists and mercenaries, one of tieflings). They are guarding a depot of captured crusader gear, and are in position to defend the Citadel or Paradise Hill.

### **Paradise Hill**

The neighborhood of Paradise Hill was once closely-built and wealthy, with plenty of stone-walled houses, guildhalls and warehouses. The area is defended by a company of *schir* (goat-headed) demons, led by a fearsome vrock demon. The demons have taken good advantage of the local buildings, fortifying them to make the entire neighborhood into a fortress supporting the citadel. From their protected refuge the demons are also in an excellent position to launch attacks against hostile forces attacking the Citadel.

In addition to the area's fortifications it is also being used as a prison. The demons are holding a large number of captured crusaders.

### **Ahari Bridge**

The one substantial bridge across the Ahari river gorge is guarded by a patrol of tieflings and cultists. They have chained four massive feral fiendish aurochs to the bridge supports down in the gorge. Their plan is clearly to destroy the bridge if they are in danger of losing control of it to an attacking force.

### **The Citadel of Drezen**

The Citadel of Drezen looms over the ruins of the rest of the city. It is shielded by guard towers along the exterior curtain wall. Four of the towers are armed with catapults manned by teams of small demons. The catapults are placed to be able to harry a force approaching from the bridge. But the scouts also report that if the catapults were taken, they could be turned to fire upon the Citadel instead.



## The Siege Starts: Strike the South Bank!

The characters elect to start by attacking the forces at the South Bank. The battle starts with archery, heavily damaging the tiefling formation and devastating the cultist mob. A followup strike eliminates the rest of the tieflings.

## Take the Bridge! The Bridge Is the Key!

The characters leave Sosiel in command of the field at the South Bank with orders to secure and distribute the captured crusader gear (upgrading the paladins' masterwork arms and armor to magic armor) and providing 15 points of food. The characters conceal themselves in captured cultist robes and run to the bridge, looking like escaping cultists.

The tiefling *Barrid Isen*, who looks like a horned, tailed hunchback, calls down, "What news of the battle, my friends?"

Calanthe responds, "It's a pitched battle! House to house! I must give a report!"

Barrid responds, "Sounds very plausible!" He and his eight tieflings are the warders over the four maddened man-eating aurochs down in the riverbed.

And then the ambush strikes. Tabregon starts by casting *shatter* upon the yoke of one of the aurochs. The yoke breaks, and the aurochs runs off into the riverbed.

Trystan calls out, "Surrender, o tieflings! Surrender to the forces of good!" Calanthe engulfs five tieflings in *glitterdust* (blinding them) to add weight to Trystan's words. Shawanda slashes the unfortunate Barrid Isen. Tsuguri grants everyone an additional move action, allowing Tabregon to reach the second chain and *shatter* it.

Two tieflings charge desperately at Calanthe. She evades one of them and takes a minor cut from the second. Shawanda cuts one down as he runs by. Trystan wounds one with an arrow.

Barrid Isen calls out a command in Infernal, "Aurochs! Destroy the bridge!"

Tsurugi grants everyone an additional move action, allowing Trystan and Tabregon to move to the other end of the bridge so they can deal with the aurochs over there. But they are too late! The bridge crumbles and everyone falls!

From the rubble, Antonius continues beating on the surprisingly-resilient Barrid Isen, who continues to fail to cast spells. Tabregon channels positive energy to heal his allies while Trystan buries arrow after arrow into one of the maddened aurochs. Calanthe

shoots an aurochs with *magic missiles*, critically wounding it. The other aurochs storms at Tabregon, who sidesteps with uncommon agility then clubs it with his morningstar. He notes with some surprise that the creature is resistant to bludgeoning, which prompts Trystan and Calanthe to join together and execute it.

Barrid Isen claws at Antonius, slashing him across the belly and leaving him bleeding and burnt. His claws are on fire! Who could have guessed! Antonius knees Barrid Isen in the ribs twice, finally taking the sorcerer down.

An aurochs bites Shawanda! Ouch! Tsguri stabs it and finds that it barely notices his long spear. It bites and gores him in return, delivering shocking huge, ragged wounds. Antonius hammers the thing into the ground.

The characters trudge back to the army to report their failure to secure the bridge. The fact that Barrid Isen was carrying some treasure does little to raise their spirits:

- Potion of *cure moderate wounds*
- Wand of *dimension door*
- *Amulet of natural armor +1*
- *Cloak of resistance +2* (with built-in hump)
- 125 gold pieces

Tsguri claims the *amulet of natural armor +1* and Calanthe picks up the *cloak of resistance +2*. The characters give the potion of *cure moderate wounds* to Uziel, to demonstrate that he is a valued comrade.

## Ghouls in the Night

Late that night, the ghouls from the cemetery come over to ambush the paladin army. Their attempt to ambush is less than impressive, and met by waves of positive energy channeling. The paladins ride the ghouls down. They are massacred to the last ghoul.

## Where Did Those Ghouls Come From?

The next morning the characters decide that more scouting is in order. The ghouls that attacked them came from somewhere, and wherever it was needs to be investigated and suppressed.

## *The Cemetery*

The scouts report that there are signs that there were recently a lot of ghouls in the Cemetery. Something awful must have happened to them. In more tangible matters, the largest vault in the cemetery is surrounded by vile shadows as if some terrible evil lurks within.

## *The Citadel*

Three great companies, one each of cultists, tieflings and dretches, shelter beneath the forbidding walls of the Citadel of Drezen. They are supported by the tower catapults, which have the mechanical effect of providing a +2 bonus to whichever side controls them.

## **Shatter the Resistance of Paradise Hill**

The characters decide that crushing the defenders of Paradise Hill and rescuing the many crusader prisoners is their next key goal. They decide that their plan will be to order the paladin army to execute a “reckless withdrawal.” The army’s morale is technically “nervous” (one step above “desperate”), except that the paladins simply cannot break. The fortifications of Paradise Hill provide a +4 defensive bonus to the schir demon forces. The “reckless withdrawal” tactic that has worked so well in the past may not do well in this case, as the opposing force has a secure base.

The characters’ archers volley at the defenders, who duck behind their stone barricades and let the arrows clatter harmlessly about them. The schir demons pop up their heads to mock the attacking crusaders only to be taken unprepared by the first rank of troops storming in under cover of the archers. The schir resistance is short and scattered, with most of the demons slaughtered in the first moments of the attack, victims of paladin *smite evil* and magical arms.

With the schir demons broken, the characters are able to liberate and equip a large army of captured mercenaries and crusaders.

<b>Mercenary Army</b>
LG Large Army of humans (fighter 2)
<b>HP 16; ACR 1</b>

<b>DV 14; OM +3</b>
<b>Special:</b> Bravery +1
<b>Morale:</b> 0
<b>Speed 1; Consumption 2</b>

They equip the mercenaries with masterwork armor originally used by the paladins. The overall army's morale is hopeful – there is a path to taking the Drezen Citadel. There are also six units of food and water available in Paradise Hill, which improves the army's morale.

## The Cemetery Crypt

The shadow crypt stands in the Western quarter of the graveyard. The entire building is surrounded by *unhallow* and *darkness* effects. The characters open the main door with the *chime of opening*. The atrium is strewn with bones. The characters cross over the atrium to the inner doors. A casting of *detect undead* turns up nothing.

The inner doors open into the inner crypt. The wall niches once contained the ashes of crusader commanders. As the characters enter, they see a hunched, bat winged green creature with a long tongue hanging out of its mouth sitting cross-legged in front of a crypt, apparently in a trance. It is a *berbalang*! Technically, it is an *advanced berbalang* and its name is *Moxaboo*! (for all that Antonius insists it should be called Riddle-Boo).

Berbalangs prefer to make their homes near humanoid settlements. They often disguise themselves as shamans or wise women, plucking their meals from the edges of civilization. And they are able to project their spirits away from their bodies.

Antonius kicks Moxaboo. Moxaboo barely moves, but does speak, “Why do you interrupt my trance?”

“Because you represent the forces of bad and we are the forces of good.”

The *berbalang*'s voice takes on an irritated cast, “This is my place now, the humans have abandoned this place.”

Tsuguri simply channels positive energy at it, burning it. Tabregon follows likewise, burning it more. Calanthe fires *magic missiles* at it.

The *berbalang* attempts to take control of Shawanda. She is able to turn back the thing's magical attack, then slashes the creature from shoulder to waist. Tabregon burns it

again with positive energy. And Trystan pierces it through the eye and the throat with arrows backed by *smite evil*.

Antonius wonders, “What was a Filipino monster doing here?”

The characters leave the crypt. They don’t immediately have a good way to remove the *unhallow* effect.

## Plans Interrupted

It will take four days to construct an improvised bridge across the riverbed. In the meantime, the characters plan to take the catapult emplacements on the towers. Each tower emplacement is commanded by *brimorak* demons, small goat-headed demons with flaming hooves and flaming swords. Taking them quickly enough that they cannot be reinforced by the Citadel defenders will be quite difficult.



While the characters are planning to move against the servants of Drezen, the masters of the Citadel send something to assault them. They send a chimera with the heads of a snow leopard, a white dragon, and a mountain goat. The characters spot it coming in at a range of 150 feet. Trystan starts shooting arrows at it from range. It responds by spraying ice and cold down at the characters.

Tsuguri invokes a *prayer* while Trystan keeps up the barrage of arrows. Shawanda fires upon it also and finds that it has epic damage resistance. It also has the epic power to act twice in a round – it swoops down and bites at Trystan, who evades. Calanthe casts *Resist Energy* upon herself and Antonius.

The chimera unleashes a coordinated bite at Trystan. It hits with two bite attacks and uses its crushing jaws to inflict unbelievable damage. Trystan staggers and almost falls. He whispers out a *shield* spell. Tabregon moves next to him and casts a mythic *cure moderate wounds* to seal up his injuries.

Tsuguri casts *weapons against evil*, allowing the party's weapons to ignore 5 DR... except for epic DR, which is what the chimera has. Tsuguri curses at the unfairness of having to fight monsters that have the same freaky powers that the characters do.

Antonius makes a mythic charge at the chimera, flanking it. His aim is true, and he manages to lightly wound it. Shawanda drives in with *Radiance* from the other side, badly wounding the creature.

The chimera turns its attention to Antonius. It claws and tears at him, shredding him bloody and dropping him. Calanthe is so shocked by the destruction of her comrade that both of her *scorching rays* miss badly. The chimera wheels and performs a coordinated bite against Shawanda. She avoids one set of snapping jaws, but still suffers a series of tearing wounds leaving her seriously wounded.

Tsuguri calls out *mythic defiance*, healing everyone a bit and bringing Antonius back to his feet. Trystan uses mythic power to defy his wounds and shoots twice. One arrow deflects harmlessly from the chimera's scales. The other strikes home, delivering a solid hit.

Antonius, wounded almost to the point of death, storms at the chimera howling, "Backbreaker attack! Mythic surge!" And he breaks it! The chimera collapses, its spine shattered! As he kills it, a strange purple radiance flows out of its body and explodes! Everyone goes to mythic tier 2! And 6<sup>th</sup> level! Also, the characters' army gains 5 Siege Points because the Citadel of Drezen is no longer protected by a mythic frozen chimera.

## The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters victorious over the mythic chimera *Soltengrabe*. Their army stands ready for the final assault upon Citadel Drezen as the characters plot to turn the Citadel's catapult emplacements to their own advantage.