

WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 10/26/2014

Attendance

Chris and *Ernest* start by regaling everyone with tales of going to see the movie *Fury* and then getting smashed upon various WWII-era cocktails. Both *Matt* and *Patrick* are enthusiastic about the idea of going to see *Fury*, though they are substantially less keen on the idea of discovering just how hard-drinking their grandparents might have been. The impact of the cocktails implies that those were some hard, hard drinking grandparents.

Bruce takes the conversation in a refreshing direction of strange by telling everyone in squeaky dolphin tones about how *Tyche* is getting her blanket laundered. Nobody really understands if there is a double meaning there or not.

Paul arrives just in time to find that the conversation has moved along to whether or not it is possible to purchase women's underwear from vending machines in Japan. Available evidence (one machine, shut down a decade ago) unearthed by a Western reporter proves nothing! Ernest proclaims, "Just because some white reporter can't find it doesn't mean it doesn't exist!"

By the time *Tim* arrives, the group is discussing the Twelve Most Ridiculous eBay Auctions, a subject that could be even more disturbing than panty vending machines. And then, on to the Marvel villain *Blizzard*, who combines the powers of cold with the powers of a lizard! And beyond that, the adult parody movie *Pants Labyrinth*, a film that even now causes Guillermo del Toro to twitch involuntarily.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Tabregon	Bruce	Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity	7M2
Tsuguri Chiba	Chris	Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades	7M2
Antonius	Ernest	Male Tien Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury	7M2
Trystan	Matt	Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity	7M2

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Shawanda	Patrick	Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness	7M2
Calanthe	Tim	Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan	7M2

Sweeping the Citadel

The characters hold the central and southwestern sections of the Citadel of Drezen. They have about 100 4th level paladins encamped in the Main Hall (F4) who can provide a useful backstop of blades and healing. The northern and southeastern sections of citadel remain out of their control.

Tsuguri has learned the trick of casting *restoration* and can eliminate the negative level *Tabregon* has been suffering from ever since the encounter with the nabassu demon.

The characters forge ahead into the Dining Hall (F10) and the Food Stores (F13), where they find 16 units of food stored. The characters' army consumes six units of food per day, and the new find raises their stockpile to 35 units, enough to operate for seven days.

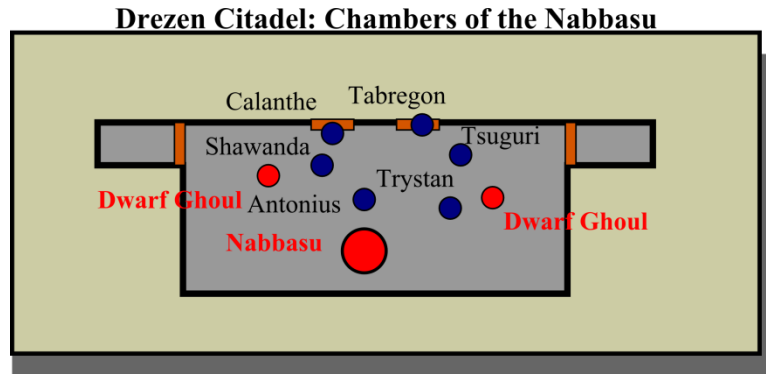
The Demon's Barracks

The characters move to a barracks full of overturned beds, debris, and dead cultists. Plus a very relaxed looking *nabassu* demon assisted by a couple of former dwarves who are now enjoying the experience of being ghouls. The demon is larger than the last one the characters encountered, probably because it has already converted a couple of creatures into ghouls.

Trystan leads with a barrage of arrows that is sadly rather poorly aimed. *Calanthe* casts *haste* upon the group, ensuring that even if the aim of the next arrow barrage doesn't improve, at least it will include a lot more arrows! Huzzah! And then *Antonius* slams the doors shut.

A moment later, the doors open up again. Impenetrable *deeper darkness* pours out of them, along with ghouls! *Shawanda* avoids a strike from a ghoul, and then a moment

later *Tabregon* uses a wand to cast *daylight* and eliminate the darkness! *Tsuguri* channels positive energy and burns both of the ghouls badly.



Shawanda, no longer afflicted by darkness, cuts down one of the dwarf ghouls with *Radiance*. Calanthe casts *magic circle against evil* and moves to the center of the party, shielding them from the demon's malign influence.

Antonius clobbers the last ghoul with his good and cold iron three-section staff, destroying it, and then executes a mythic fleet charge against the *nabassu*, striking it and flanking it.

The *nabassu* moves away from flanking and casts *mass hold person*. This gives Shawanda an opportunity to execute an attack of opportunity, leaving a long slash along its flank and causing it to lose the spell. Tabregon notes that Shawanda is slightly injured; he casts *cure moderate wounds*, both healing her and then granting her some temporary hit points. She exclaims, "I feel full of life!"

Tsuguri decides someone else should feel full of life – he channels positive energy, burning the *nabassu*. It grumbles about not wanting to be positive in the first place.

Shawanda steps in and chops the *nabassu*'s collarbone clean through with *Radiance*. The creature sags to the ground, bleeding awful ichor. She takes its head as a trophy.

The Captive Crusader

With the southeastern quarter of the citadel cleared of foes, the characters move north through the empty, echoing halls of the vast dwarven fortress. They proceed to the Garrison (F15). The chamber is furnished with orderly ranks of bunks. Also in the chamber is a human dressed as a swashbuckler and chained to a bunk. Antonius recognizes him as *Maranse Delaskru*, a human crusader who disappeared several years ago. His rapier lies on a table nearby, a comfortable distance out of his reach.

The characters address him. He responds, “I shall slay you all and use your bones to make skeletons!” The characters decide that he is under a *charm* spell. Tabregon tries a couple of *dispel magic* attempts, to no avail. Maranse continues to insist on his loyalty to *Staunton Vhane*.

Trystan determines that Maranse has an evil aura. He thinks that is very unusual, suggesting that he might actually be possessed. Trystan pours holy water upon Maranse, urges Shelyn to cast the demons out of him, and casts *protection from evil*. He is surprised when the holy water burns Maranse! That was a completely unexpected result.

Antonius very quietly moves Maranse’s rapier further out of reach, just in case the swashbuckler starts to manifest telekinetic powers. The blade is very nice, and coats with a sheen of ice as Antonius picks it up.

Maranse, still dripping with holy water, screams, “I’m melting!” He vanishes, then reappears with his hand upon his rapier! He attempts to wrest it from Antonius’ grasp. Antonius holds strong, reinforced by a *bull’s strength* spell cast earlier by Tabregon, and grapples the swashbuckler. Antonius uses his *imprinting hand* to learn about Maranse. He finds that what he has is your garden-variety succubus, able to charm people, change shape, go ethereal, and so on.

Tsuguri applies a *gentle rest* upon succubus-Maranthe, staggering her! She responds by using her *succubus’ kiss* upon Antonius, giving him a negative level and allowing her to *suggest* that he abandon his comrades and fight for her instead. His will is strong, and he is able to cast off her magic – he is in no way enjoying grappling with a naked woman... with horns and bat wings.

Shawanda is completely unimpressed by the succubus. She stabs with *Radiance*, though the succubus is only minimally hurt. Tabregon casts *protection from evil* upon

Antonius, to shield him from further kissing. And Antonius pins her and starts to crush the life out of her with the Camel Clutch.

Trystan steps up to the succubus and shoots an arrow into her throat. He shoots again, and again, and again. She gurgles and chokes upon demonic ichor as it wells up from her wounds. Tsuguri stabs her with his cold iron long spear. She collapses.

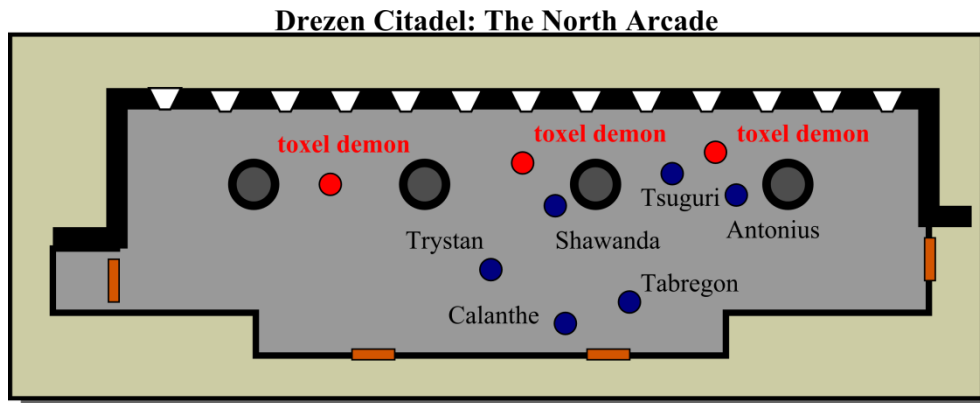
Antonius stands up and brushes himself off. The others proceed to loot her body. They are amazed to discover that she is technically wearing leather armor – there doesn't appear to be enough leather on her to provide any actual protection. Her goods include:

- *Boots of elvenkind*
- *Rapier of frost +1*
- White leather sex gargoyle armor (non-magical)

The characters discuss the likelihood that the unfortunate Maranse Delaskru might still be alive. Unfortunately, they don't have a *divination* available and *speak with dead* won't work on a dead evil outsider. They also try to convince Calanthe that, as their Khaleesi, she should don the white leather sex gargoyle armor, but she demurs.

The characters make a point of warning their paladins to be on the lookout for succubus infiltrators, to use the buddy system, and to *detect evil* early and often.

The North Arcade



The characters move on to the North Arcade (F16), which features an array of arrow slits looking out at the northern part of the courtyard. There are three *thoxel* demons lurking there. They are staggeringly ugly, resembling flogged bald men with vulture's beaks. They are insubordination demons, born from the souls of insubordinate soldiers whose attitudes caused the failure of military operations. They are able to take

the shapes of mundane soldiers and infiltrate military units to undermine the morale of the troops.

The demons snarl at the characters. Antonius wastes no time: he charges in and slams a demon with his three-sectioned staff. The demon opens its beak to snarl at him. He follows up with a flurry of blows that takes the demon's arrogant smirk away. Tsuguri follows up, stabbing the creature with his spear and slaying it. Unfortunately, Antonius and Tsuguri are both affected by the demon's *aura of insolence* and become insolent and uncooperative to their allies.

Calanthe casts *haste*, a spell that both Antonius and Tsuguri promptly refuse.

Shawanda storms in, ignores the second demon's aura, and slashes it. Trystan (who isn't feeling insolent) shoots the demon. The demon dies with an arrow through the eye. Trystan observes, "It's probably for the best – that was a filthy arrow, the poor creature would have just died of tetanus if it had survived." His last arrows leave the final thoxel demon winged and wounded, enough that Tabregon's morningstar strike can stagger it. Tabregon insolently exclaims, "See! I staggered it all on my own! I didn't need you guys at all!"

The demon falls to its knees and tells the characters, "Fuck Staunton Vhane! I don't need him at all! Spare me and I will join you!"

"Where is Staunton Vhane?"

"He is nearby! I will take you to him!"

Even the insolent characters don't think this is a good idea.

Shawanda asks, "Does Vhane have bodyguards?"

The demon grins and tells her, "Oh yes! Fiendish minotaurs!" He also tells the characters that Staunton Vhane is accompanied by his brother *Joran Vhane*, a worshipper of the evil dwarven deity *Droskar*, the god of slavery and cheating (mostly popular among the duergar, who haven't traditionally shown the best judgment in their selection of deities). Apparently, Staunton has allowed Joran to live only due to his skill in using the *Corruption Forge*, which the two of them use to transform holy items into unholy items. The characters can only imagine the two dwarf brothers going about their corrupting tasks with giggling glee, a vision that does nothing to help them to take the potential threat seriously. The minotaurs are in area F17, Joran is in F18 and Staunton is

in F20. The chimera *Soltengrabe* used to lurk in the tower atop the citadel before the characters slew it.

The characters execute the *thoxel* demon, convinced that it can never be trusted and that it has revealed all the useful information that it can.

The Masters of the Citadel

With three significant encounters ahead of them, the characters spend some time planning. Calanthe points out that she can summon a pair of *floating disks* to carry 1400 pounds of debris, handy to block off doors and prevent Joran from reinforcing the minotaurs. She also provides *haste* for everyone. Tabregon passes around *protection from evil*, casts *bless* on the group, uses mythic power to give Antonius *bull's strength*, and places *align weapon* on *Radiance*, Trystan's arrows, and his own *morningstar +1*. Tsuguri provides a *prayer* to add to everything else.

First the Minotaurs

The characters form an assault stack in front of the door to the minotaurs' chamber, then storm on through. Calanthe leads with a *slow* spell against two of the three minotaurs, then flies into the room trailed by her two debris-laden *floating disks*. She commands them to make their lumbering way to the next door and block it.

Shawanda charges straight ahead into a slowed minotaur. The minotaur slashes her brutally with his axe! Trystan stands at the doorway and opens fire with his bow, piercing the minotaur through. The creature falls with a mortal wound.

The surviving *slowed* minotaur moves to engage Calanthe, but cannot attack. Antonius uses a swift charge to engage the creature, taking an axe cut for his trouble. Antonius strikes back, killing the creature in a massive succession of blows that leave little but a bloody pile of fur. Tabregon notes that Antonius is injured and more than completely heals him with a mythic *cure serious wounds*.

The last minotaur, unimpeded by the magical *slow*, gores Shawanda. It turns to chop Tsuguri as he approaches to use *gentle repose*, but Tsuguri is too fast for the creature. The minotaur is staggered by his spell! Calanthe shoots it with *magic missiles*. The minotaur falls.

Joran Vhane

Calanthe removes her barricades and the characters move on to the next chamber. They see that it is occupied by the dwarf Joran Vhane and a pack of blood demons. The chamber is richly appointed with mahogany bookshelves and a nice desk. A book of prayers lies abandoned upon the desk.

Trystan calls out, “Joran Vhane! Give yourself up to the forces of justice!” He punctuates his command with a *distant barrage* at one of the demons.

Joran Vhane targets the characters’ *haste* spell and eliminates it as two blood demons rush Trystan in hand-to-hand combat. He doesn’t bother to even acknowledge Trystan’s demands. Instead, he casts *blindness* at the paladin, but Trystan’s virtue wins out against his evil spell. The others notice that Joran Vhane seems terrified even as he casts the spell.

Antonius moves in to engage Joran, in spite of the presence of the demons. A demon gets in his way and cuts him up. Antonius moves into a bastion stance. Tsuguri casts *silence* into the room all around Joran to interfere with his spellcasting. Calanthe peers over Antonius’ shoulder to cast *slow* on the demons and upon Joran Vhane. Her strong anti-demonic magic cuts right through their spell resistance, leaving two of the demons *slowed*.

Trystan shoots down one of the blood demons with his cold iron, good-aligned arrows. Joran Vhane steps forward unwillingly, hammer at the ready. He strikes at Trystan, keeping himself as far from harm as possible. Calanthe pays him back with a peppering of *magic missiles*. Trystan notes that he has been doing his best to give Joran an opportunity to surrender. Tabregon tries zapping Joran with a wand of *hold person*, but Joran throws off the spell.

Trystan fires another volley at a blood demon, ripping long wounds through its body with his broad-headed arrows.

Uncaring of the chance that Joran might be redeemable, Tsuguri and Antonius move up and attack him. He steps back and avoids their attacks.

Calanthe decides that everyone needs *haste* again. She recasts her spell.

The Situation Becomes Complicated

Trystan and Shawanda shoot and cut at Joran Vhane, leaving him critically wounded. And then the door smashes open and two more fiendish minotaurs pour in! Even worse, Staunton Vhane is following behind them. Shawanda absorbs a couple of serious axe hits as they arrive.

Staunton Vhane appears and announces (silently), “I have a lot of screwball mythic powers too! Just like you!” He attacks Trystan and then uses mythic powers to execute a second *sudden attack*. Trystan’s defenses are strong, and he suffers only a moderate wound – a lesser man would have been slain instantly. Trystan gestures to the others that his goal is force Vhane to use up as many mythic points as possible.

Joran Vhane uses this moment to surrender to the characters.

Tsuguri notices that Trystan has been seriously hurt, so he steps in to heal him.

Antonius turns his attention to the first minotaur in the door, slaughtering it in detail.

Calanthe notes that there are new bad guys in circulation and casts *slow* on them. Tabregon notes that he still has a wand of *hold person* and shoots Staunton Vhane with it, to no effect.

Staunton Vhane stands against Trystan and slashes at him with his glaive, opening up a bloody red wound. He grins at the paladin with a deranged spirit. Trystan strikes back at him, prompting Staunton to move back to the doorway and attack with reach. Staunton invokes *smite good* and delivers a solid strike that leaves Trystan bleeding and gasping for breath.

Tsuguri closes with the surviving minotaur, *graceful repose* on his hand. The minotaur is staggered. And then Antonius kills it.

Calanthe casts *invisibility* on Antonius. As he fades out, he mouths to Shawanda, “I’m totally going to steal your kill!” He heads out to hunt down Staunton. Tabregon notes that Shawanda is deeply injured, so he uses mythic *cure serious wounds* to cause her to virtually explode with healing power. She also uses mythic power to engage with Staunton and slash him again and again with *Radiance*. Staunton staggers back, dripping blood from multiple gaping wounds. Trystan follows up with a death-tipped flight of

arrows that cuts him down. Staunton falls, unconscious. The characters promptly strip him and Joran of their goods:

- Wand of *silence* (8 charges)
- *Banded mail of fire-resistance* +2
- *Heavy steel shield* +1
- *Light hammer of spell-storing* +1
- 9 gold pieces
- Wand of *blindness/deafness* (8 charges)
- *Spiked full plate* +3
- *Throwing axe of returning* +1
- Staunton Vhane's Glaive *Soulsshear*, a special weapon
- *Amulet of natural armor* +2
- *Belt of mighty constitution* +4
- *Headband of alluring charisma* +2
- The keys to the Citadel of Drezen
- 68 gold pieces

The characters examine Staunton Vhane's glaive very carefully. It doesn't radiate evil, but it might still be a malign item. Picking it up does not give Trystan a negative level. When Tsurugi (whose favorite weapon is the long spear, a reach weapon) picks it up, it becomes a long spear.

Defeating Staunton Vhane does count as a mythic trial, but at this point the characters need two mythic trials to increase their tier.

The Capture of Drezen

With the defeat of Staunton Vhane, the characters have taken the Citadel of Drezen. Any remaining cultists and tieflings flee the area and the characters' army moves in to the citadel. The paladins detailed to explore the upper levels report that there is a room with a massive quantity of treasure inside, the hoard of the fallen mythic chimera Soltengrabe:

- 3438 copper pieces
- 1319 silver pieces

- 7753 gold pieces
- 2 pearls (worth 500 gold pieces each)
- 3 garnets (worth 250 gold pieces each)
- 8 amethysts (worth 150 gold pieces each)
- 12 agates (worth 50 gold pieces each)
- Emerald and ivory scepter (worth 4000 gold pieces)
- Silver candelabra (worth 75 gold pieces)
- Gold signet ring (worth 50 gold pieces)
- *A bag of holding* (type 3) containing a library of rare books (+4 on Knowledge (planes) checks) and an empty *blessed book*.
- *Efficient quiver* containing two *javelins of lightning* and 19 *beast-bane arrows* +2
- *Elemental gem (earth)*
- One dose of *silversheen*
- *Potion of lesser restoration*
- *Scroll of dimension door*
- *Scroll of move earth*
- *Flaming longbow* +1
- *Ghost touch full plate* +1

To complicate things a bit, while the characters are totaling up all of the loot they find out that *Aron Kir* has vanished again. The smart money suggests that he has gone off to find a demon who can satisfy his addictions.

The Map Room

The maps on the wall of the citadel map room show planned invasion routes into Mendev and beyond. They are all quite out of date, but still provide insight into the planning processes of the otherwise unplanned demonic hordes.

Staunton's Chambers

Staunton Vhane lived in an immaculately spotless bedroom, everything in its place. His lawful nature clearly had some of the obsessive-compulsive to it. His ring of keys can open the large chest inside. It proves to contain:

- 133 copper pieces
- 1427 silver pieces
- 5786 gold pieces
- 376 platinum pieces
- 9 garnets (worth 100 gold pieces each)
- *A pearl of power* (2nd level)
- *A rod of metal and mineral detection*
- *A scroll of divination*
- A set of stone-carved dwarven figurines (worth 600 gold)
- An expensive pair of vases (worth 250 gold each)
- A silver coffer (worth 350 gold pieces)
- *An elixir of climbing*
- *A potion of neutralize poison*
- *A wand of nondetection* (23 charges)
- A dose of *oil of life* (mythic item)

The chest also includes *Staunton Vhane's Journal*, recording events of his life from his childhood in the Five Kings Mountains to his time in the First Crusade and his efforts to locate the lost Flying City of Jormurdan, right to his betrayal of Drezen and his time spent serving the demon Baphomet. The book provides details upon all of his atrocities in awful detail and is quite difficult for right-thinking people to read.

Staunton Vhane originally joined the Mendevian Crusade because he had heard that the mysterious *Flying City of Jormurdan* was present behind the demonic lines. His early enthusiasm was dimmed by the stalemate. Drezen was well-protected by the *Sword of Valor*, a magical banner. When the apparent elven woman *Jerribeth* (actually a glabrezu) told him that bringing her the banner would allow the crusade to crush the demons he cooperated. When the lack of the *Sword of Valor* allowed the demonic legions to destroy the defenses of Drezen, he changed sides.

Years later, Vhane returned to the Crusade, ostensibly as the captain of a mercenary company of Crusaders. He and his men were actually infiltrators, members of the Order of the Ivory Labyrinth. They would defeat trivial demonic enemies while feeding information to the Worldwound's leaders allowing them to achieve meaningful

victories against the Crusade. And through all of it, Vhane continued to search for the Flying City of Jormurdan.

In the last few days, Staunton chose to hole up in the citadel rather than riding out to meet the characters' forces directly. His writings show very clearly that he was under tremendous stress, perhaps fearful that failure against the characters' forces would prompt harsh rebuke from his demonic masters.

Vhane's journals also include a list of dozens of sacred and holy weapons and armor Staunton and Joran have subverted through the Corruption Forge. There are also notes on using the Forge, and notes on the shadow demon *Ustori*ax, a powerful demon who arrived in the possessed body of the crusader Maranse (now long-dead after being turned over to the succubus *Galanda*). *Ustori*ax carried stolen power in an elixir made from Nahyndrian crystals. The elixir promised to provide mythic powers to those who consume them. Staunton Vhane volunteered to be first, and was rewarded with mythic potency for his troubles. Likewise, the chimera Soltengrabe was also transformed into something greater. However, there was risk – the elixirs also inflicted grisly deaths upon a dragon and a zakarba who tried them. The last elixir went to Vhane's master *Aponavicius*, who also survived.

*Soul*shear

Staunton Vhane's weapon turns out to be an *intelligent transformative weapon* +2. Its name is *Soul*shear, though it hasn't yet talked to the characters at all. It may have other powers, and (though probably not evil) the characters do not know what its alignment is. It was forged by Staunton Vhane with the assistance of the Templars of the Ivory Labyrinth.

Calanthe tries to speak to *Soul*shear. This attempt is not successful, so Calanthe transforms *Soul*shear into a spiked chain and locks it up in a chest that she in turn puts into the *bag of holding*.

Other Key Information

The shadow *Ustori*ax remains in a chamber below the citadel, watching over the *Sword of Valor*, ordered there by *Aponavicius*.

Xanthir Vang is the local leader of the *Black Flame Adepts*. He is a revolting man but cannot be disregarded as he holds charge of the Ivory Sanctum, stronghold of the Templars of the Ivory Labyrinth. He was also responsible for the destruction of the Blackwing library in Kenabres. Staunton Vhane's writing suggests that Vang is made out of worms. Staunton Vhane did not like dealing with him at all.

The journals also make mention of a special prisoner – *Arushalae* the succubus, once kept in the dungeons. She is some kind of Abyssal heretic, waiting transport to a special oubliette and an appropriately horrible punishment. The journals note that she escaped, but her powers are crippled. She cannot turn ethereal or teleport, which should make recapturing her much simpler. Vhane writes that he hired an annis hag cultist of Sifkesh to hunt her down.

Learning about Shadow Demons

The characters use their new library on demons to learn about shadow demons. They find out that they are incorporeal (and also have Damage Resistance). These factors make them extremely hard to damage. They have all the customary resistance of demons, but have a weakness to sunlight – they cannot attack if they are in sunlight or extremely bright light. They can move around freely in sunlight if they are possessing someone. They can move incredibly quickly, can fly, and can pass through solid items. They become almost invisible in any kind of shadow. They have *teleport*, *telekinesis*, *fear* and several other powers (including casting shadow invocations of *fireballs*). All in all, they have a really impressive package of powers.

The End of the Session

The session ends with the characters firmly in command of the Citadel of Drezen, resting in preparation for their assault upon the forces of evil that still lurk in the basements.