

## WRATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS 03/15/2015

### Attendance

*Bruce* calls in late with some story about needing to pick up feral cats at the animal shelter. The usual crowd of *Paul*, *Ernest*, *Patrick*, and *Chris* choose not to believe him, but accept his story because the truth is probably far more damaging than they care to understand.

*Matt* surprises everyone by appearing as a remote presence. The others find that they are not fully ready to accept him as a disembodied voice quite as easily as they accepted *Bruce*, perhaps because *Bruce* is so much more disembodied in real life that the difference is not so noticeable.

*Tim* misses the session because he is heading back from a venture out in faraway, alien Dallas.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Tabregon	Bruce	Male Half-elf Oracle of Iomedae, Touched by Divinity	10M5
Tsuguri Chiba	Chris	Male Cleric of Tsukiyo, Child of the Crusades	10M5
Antonius	Ernest	Male Tien Monk/Paladin of Irori, Stolen Fury	10M5
Trystan	Matt	Male Half-elf Paladin of Shelyn, Touched by Divinity	10M5
Shawanda	Patrick	Female Mwangi Paladin of Iomedae, Exposed to Awfulness	10M5
Calanthe	Tim	Female aasimar Sorcerer of Shelyn, Riftwarden Orphan	10M5

### Queen Galfrey and the Lexicon of Paradox

The characters have returned to the citadel of *Drezen* following their adventures in the Ivory Sanctum. While there, they have an opportunity to speak to *Queen Galfrey* of

Mendel about the *Lexicon of Paradox*. The *Lexicon* was a mysterious document that was originally used to open the Rift – and in turn, it might also prove useful to close it.

The discussion on the *Lexicon* is not merely theoretical. Queen Galfrey has come into possession of it, and wants to use it to close down a small part of the Rift. Specifically, she hopes to eliminate the path the demons are using to bring the Nahyndrian elixir through to Golarion. And without the elixir, they will no longer be able to grant their leaders mythic powers. The plan in brief:

- Enter the rift
- Wreck the Nahyndrian elixir manufactory
- Close the rift
- Travel to *Nocticula*'s city of Alushinyrra.
- Obtain an audience with *Nocticula* and persuade her to abandon her alliance with the rest of the demons.
- Close down the demonic mining operation that is yielding the Nahyndrian crystals.

*Nocticula* is a mighty demoness, known as the Lady of Darkness and Lust, an assassin of demon lords. Her realm is the Midnight Isles and each isle is a slain demon lord that she killed personally. Her followers include assassins, whores, and sexual criminals.

As a complication, Queen Galfrey wants to accompany the characters on the first part of their mission, though not as far as going into the Abyss. She intends to do this very quietly, as an informal outing only.

The characters are understandably concerned about the idea that the Queen of Mendev might be abandoning her realm to go to the Abyss without even bothering to let her advisors know that she is leaving. They are not bothered (much) by the possibility that she could be some awful demonic monstrosity, in that they coordinated the meeting through *sending* and performed *detect evil* upon her upon her arrival. *Tsuguri* rates the chances that she is an impostor at only 50-50.

The characters try to persuade *Arueshalae* the reforming succubus to accompany them. She will be very handy as an infiltrator into “succubus-land”. *Arueshalae* refuses, for she is concerned that the Abyss offers her too many temptations, but she can provide

the *anarchic gift* so she can speak across the planes with the characters. *Trystan* and *Tabregon* head back to Drezen so *Tabregon* can accept *Arueshalae's* gift. *Tabregon* explains that he's already anarchic, so it carries no dread to him. *Antonius* is deeply concerned about it. The *gift* turns out to grant *Tabregon* a bonus of +2 to one ability score (CHA). As long as it persists, he is able to communicate telepathically with *Arueshalae* at any distance. It is removable by *Arueshalae* as a free action, or by *dispel chaos*. "Well, he is a mind slave of Chaos now," muses *Antonius*. "But of all of us, it's probably safest that it's *Tabregon*."

## The Road to the Rift of the Midnight Fane

The *Rift at the Midnight Fane* is located in a small cavern in a hill near what was once the headwaters of the Rolling River that flowed past Drezen in the days before the creation of the Worldwound. It is some 240 miles away from Drezen. The characters elect to travel the distance overland, though *Antonius* shows off his fancy new *carpet of flying* by traveling next to the rest of the group just above ground level. Most everyone else rides on horseback, trusting in *Tabregon's* claims that he is really excellent at caring for animals.

### *The Impostor Crusader*

The first night of the characters' journey they are approached by a ragged crusader who detects as evil. He claims to be the last survivor of a patrol from *Kenabres* that was destroyed by demons. *Tsuguri* checks this claim by lighting him up with positive energy. He burns and protests.

*Antonius* orders him to assume the position. The crusader complies, but as soon as the monk draws near he transforms into an awful demonic shape and attacks! *Antonius* leaps back as everyone else (who had been waiting for just this moment) moves forward, led by *Shawanda*. The characters make short work of the creature.

### *Derakni Demons Make Nests?*

On the second day, the characters spot a *derakni* demon making a nest high on a cliff, rather like a mud-dauber wasp. *Trystan* observes that this sort of behavior cannot be tolerated. He shoots the thing from ridiculous range, prompting it to *teleport* away.

### *Derakni Demons Remember!*

On the fifth day, the *derakni* demon returns, *teleporting* in right on top of Trystan. It attacks from surprise, trying to sting him and cripple him with poison. Trystan easily resists the poison, and then responds by shooting the *derakni* clean through. Shawanda stands strong next to her comrade, her blade *Radiance* a brilliant weave of light and death. The *derakni* cannot stand against the might of Shawanda's sword-work and flutters unsteadily down the dark path to the black mountain from which none return.

### *A Nabbasu and His Friends*

Several days later, Tsuguri takes a walk away from the camp into the wide, disturbing wilderness of the Worldwound to have a personal moment. He hears some suspicious noises, the sound of leathery skin scraping along rock. He immediately assumes that he is under attack and shouts, "Demons!"

Shawanda reflects, "Camp food can be rough on the digestion, but I didn't think it was that bad." She rushes to the aid of her comrade. Meanwhile, Tsuguri is running back towards the camp.

Antonius pauses from sheltering from the evening rainstorm of rotten raspberries to recognize that the group is under attack. He takes to the sky on his *flying carpet*, spotting a *nabbasu* death-demon and a pack of ghouls stalking Tsuguri. The *nabbasu* casts a *mass hold person* upon Tsuguri, Trystan and Shawanda, all of whom resist off the spell. Tsuguri, noting that he just saved against a mind-affecting effect, uses Mythic Bullshit to stagger the *nabbasu*. The *nabbasu* starts to think that he might have decided to torment the wrong band of wanderers.

Queen Galfrey lumbers forward, slowed by her heavy armor.

Tsuguri wields positive energy to burn the ghouls. They start to smoke. Trystan sees that Tsuguri is too close to the ghouls to be able to unleash an area strike upon them, so he pierces the *nabbasu* Abyssal dweller with arrows. Shawanda incinerates the rest of the ghouls using Mythic power.

Antonius invokes his *titan's rage* and grasps the *nabbasu* first with one hand and then with the other, tearing the creature into ichor-spattered fragments that he flings along the long path to the dark mountain from which none ever return.

## The Entry to the Midnight Fane

The knoll containing the path to the Midnight Fane is concealed by various arcane illusions. Queen Galfrey tells the others, “This was once a shrine to *Khalura the Shimmering Maiden*. It has long been consumed by evil.”

As the characters pass within the illusion they see a pair of doors. The Queen has no wisdom to give the characters, noting that from here all is a mystery. The characters cast various buff spells and move through the doors, down stairs and into a large octagonal chamber. Beyond it, they see another chamber dominated by the statue of a large black insectoid creature and an altar smeared with blood both old and new.

As the characters advance, a rasping voice announces very loudly in Abyssal, “Behold the glory of our locust host!”

The characters understand that the local defenders are now fully aware of their presence. Tsuguri observes, “This is going to be awesome.”

The 15-foot statue rumbles to life. The characters move to attack it, urged forward by Tsuguri’s *blessing of fervor*. Antonius and Shawanda fence with the creature. Shawanda slashes the statue with her *adamantine axe*, chipping the stone and cracking its limb. *Jhoran Vane* steps in with his *adamantine greatsword*. His strikes glance harmlessly from its armored flanks.

The Deskari-golem radiates a *slow* effect. It strikes Antonius a glancing blow. Tabregon’s *shield other* protects him, though the golem seems to inflict so little damage that it hardly seems worth it. Antonius’ return strikes are without mercy, tearing fragments from the golem and leaving it badly cracked. His final strike shatters the entire thing. Rubble rains down upon the characters. Antonius conducts a vicious pose-down.

## Welcome to the Midnight Fane

Three incubi walk into the room. They bow low towards the characters. “We are so pleased to greet you. The mistress of the Midnight Fane has been expecting you. We shall escort you to Her Magnificence that she might greet you.”

Tsuguri gets the idea that the incubi do not really expect the characters to comply. They are prepared to shriek out an alarm and flee if necessary. The characters decide to

work against type and follow them, for all that Antonius wants someone to cast *silence* so the group can massacre the incubi without disturbing anyone.

The incubi lead the characters into a domed chamber some 60 feet high, centered upon a massive mechanism that incorporates organic components. Even that is overshadowed by a huge roiling plane along the East wall. Two ash giants operate the machine. The characters take notes as they pass through.

## **The Mistress of the Midnight Fane**

The next chamber is a workroom with an overhanging balcony. The incubi lead the characters deeper into the compound. They finally end in an alchemical lab filled with an eye-watering miasmic purple haze and a massive alembic containing a strange purple substance. It bubbles, forming the haze above.

A woman dressed as a crusader stands in the lab, the tiefling *Mutasafet* at her side. She introduces herself as *Yaniel* the famous Crusader whose sword and armor Shawanda wears. She tells the characters, “It is like seeing a mirror image of myself.” She does not detect as evil.

The characters ask, “What are you doing in this place?”

She is glad to explain. “I have accepted Baphomet as my lord. The Worldwound is destined to win. The power you will win as reward, should you join me, is much greater than what your allies can offer.”

For his part, *Mutasafet* introduces himself as the creator of the Nahyndrian elixir. He recommends that the characters join him, that they might be permitted to drink from the elixir and become powerful beyond their wildest dreams. Of course, the elixir will only work upon those who have pledged their souls to the Abyss.

The characters politely decline.

*Tabregon* suggests that they might remember that *Yaniel* once served a higher power, that her immortality once resided in service to others. He urges her to remember this.

*Yaniel* responds with villainous shrieking, “If you will not join us, then you must accept marshmallows! And death!”

Antonius attempts to pummel the tiefling Mutasafet into submission. Mutasafet steps back and drinks an elixir of *displacement*. Trystan shoots him with *fortune's arrow*, unerringly striking him in the side. Tsuguri casts *mythic dispel magic* upon him, but the tiefling's magic is too strong. Tabregon drops a *holy smite* on Mutasafet, partially melting him, and then attempts to hit him with a *holy morningstar*.

There is chanting from the back of the room, some kind of summoning ritual. The characters aren't able to hear what kind of summoning, nor are they able to immediately identify what might be doing the summoning. In spite of all this, they aren't too concerned.

The incubi lead off with some *crushing despair*. The characters ignore their efforts, except for Tsuguri who staggers one of them with dismay at the depths of his failure.

Yaniel inflicts a *slumber* of seven years against Shawanda. On the plus side, Shawanda will not suffer hunger, thirst, or aging during that time. Yaniel names a condition to end the slumber, as is the tradition: "Your slumber will last until you are kissed by a Demon Prince!" Trystan demonstrates that he can use *break enchantment* to provide an alternate method – he simply shatters the enchantment.

Antonius grapples Mutasafet and proceeds to kick him with his *knees of evil outsider bane* (made possible with his amazing amulet). He inflicts truly astounding amounts of damage, crushing Mutasafet's torso and sending him on that dark road to the black mountain from which none ever return.

Tsuguri moves around the other side of the vats and finds two *shibboleth* filth-demons, one of them summoning the other one. He utters a *shout of defiance* to allow Shawanda to leap back into action.

The filth demons strike. One of them casts a *stinking cloud* into the chamber. The other tears a grapefruit-sized tumor from its body and flings it at Antonius, who largely ignores it – he is immune to disease!

Tabregon realizes that he can strike the entire room with a *mythic holy strike*. He burns and blinds all of the demons except for a single shibboleth. The incubi realize that the only useful thing they can try while blinded is to summon more demons. They start bringing in a squad of *schir* goat-demons.

Yaniel demands, “If you will not sleep, then you must turn to my cause! Obey me!” Her eyes become mesmerizing spirals as she completely consumes Shawanda’s will with *dominate monster*.

Antonius leaps in and attempts to grapple Yaniel. She proves that she has not forgotten her fighting skills, evading his grasp. He comes back with another attempt and grabs her. He tries to use the *hand of Irori* to understand her weaknesses, and comes back with no sense that he is even touching a creature – he feels a shell but no one’s home. She gazes into his eyes and urges him, “You really should consider joining our cause.” She’s already burned through her impressive spells, so she is only using a *charm monster*. And then Antonius realizes that he’s been fighting an illusion all along.

Trystan follows Tabregon’s plan and *holy smites* the room. The demons burn! The two *shibboleths* try the same tactic in return, casting *unholy smites* at the room. Tabregon launches another *holy smite*, reducing all three incubi into burning ash. The smoke wafts along the night-shrouded path to the dark mountain from which none ever return.

Antonius and Trystan turn their attention to the remaining *shibboleths* and destroy them. The creatures travel that lonely path to the dark mountain from which none ever return.

## The Real Mistress of the Midnight Fane

While Tabregon casts *dispel magic* to remove the *dominate* from Shawanda, she and Antonius search for the magician responsible for the illusionary Yaniel. Shawanda is the one who finds the illusionary wall and the magician’s quarters beyond it. Inside the room stands a woman with no eyes, minotaur horns and a tail. She tells Shawanda, “When you find me in the Abyss things will not go your way!” Then she *teleports* away.

The characters find the long-dead body of a human woman, her face twisted in anguish and her body curled in agony. The characters are able to identify her as the famous paladin Yaniel. Tabregon thinks that she has been turned into a *husk*, something that some demons are able to do. If the demon is killed, the wound from the death-blow is displaced and strikes the husk instead. The soul of the paladin is stuck in her body. After several attempts, Tabregon is able to break the enchantment and other characters are able to heal her back to full strength.



Yaniel sees that Shawanda is wearing her old equipment. She is somewhat behind the times, so the characters spend some time telling her about recent events in Sarkoris and the rest of the world. They also explain their quest to enter the gate and interrupt the flow of Nahyndrian elixir through the Worldwound. She asks to touch her sword *Radiance*, fully awakening it into a *holy avenger*, but also asks that Shawanda bear it into the Abyss in her name and with her blessing.

Antonius asks that Yaniel serve as a mentor and spiritual advisor to the reforming succubus Arueshalae. She reluctantly agrees, clearly skeptical at the idea of a reformed succubus. Antonius says “Me too man, if you end up needing to put her down you have my blessing.” The other characters frown.

Also found in the armoire – personal alchemy tools, journals and gear. Plus loot on the dead tiefling alchemist. All told:

- *Chain shirt +3*
- Masterwork longsword
- *Amulet of unnatural armor +1*
- *Belt of mighty constitution +4*
- *Ring of protection +2*
- *2 scorpion whips +1*
- Alchemy kit
- Formula book
- 8 double-strength vials of unholy water
- 6 alkali flasks
- 2 doses of *dust of acid consumption*
- 5 doses of *dust of dryness*
- 12 flasks of acid
- 9 flasks of alchemist’s fire
- 8 flasks of liquid ice
- 7 vials of unholy water
- 5 vials of *shadow essence poison*

The characters equip Yaniel with the *chain shirt +3* and the masterwork longsword. She is quite grateful, as the trip back to Drezen is quite long. Jhoran gets the *amulet of natural armor*. Shawanda take the *ring of protection +2*. Tabregon takes the *belt of mighty constitution +4*.

Antonius smashes the elixir works. There are some storerooms nearby that contain reagents for the creation of powerful alchemical elixirs. The characters pour them together and ruin them by pouring acid over them.

### *The Journal of the Alchemical Genius*

The characters rest for an hour. Tsuguri reads Mutasafet's journal. He learns that the alchemist spent many years in the Abyss, studying alchemy and working in the labs of *Haagenti*, Demon Lord of Alchemy. After many years, he escaped to the Worldwound where he found fame and fortune practicing alchemy at the orders of those lords. He impressed *Areelu Vorlesh* with his skills and at her command he developed the Nahyndrian elixir. He was becoming increasingly disillusioned with his current employment and was considering developing a version of the elixir that he might safely consume. His long-term goal was to replace Haagenti as the lord of Alchemy.

Mutasafet was particularly upset at losing his personal quarters to *Minagho*. He has become so upset that he was thinking of attacking her.

The notes in his journal do not include his method for creating the elixir.

Tsuguri uses *speak with dead* to force Mutasafet to answer questions on his work, on Minagho (of whom he knows little, except that she fears her father Baphomet), and on the other defenders of the Fane (amounting to the two ash giants who watch over the Rift and the woman who commands them).

### *Rift-Closing and Bug-Tracking*

The Queen's understanding is that the Rift can be destroyed using the Codex of Paradox by holding one plate to the rift on one side and one plate on the other side. Then one of a series of spells must be cast against the Rift from either side. The Queen and Yaniel will perform this task from the Golarion side.

The characters move on to a long discussion of Jira tickets. It turns out that a Jira license from Atlassian is available for as little as \$10/month for a workgroup of 10 users

or less. And for that money, you get a cutting-edge groupware productivity and messaging tool that will drive organizational outputs to a new Prigoginic level of complexity. Tsuguri comments, “That’s exactly right! Comparing our operation before and after Jira is like comparing human society before and after the development of tribe-level organization and cooperative forms of leadership selection!

The characters (many of whom wish that they had never heard of *Ilya Prigogine*, *Bruce Sterling*, or *Schismatrix*) find several lead-lined boxes suitable for carrying elixir bottles and the like. They take one along (in the *bag of holding*) as a way to safely store holy symbols and the like in the face of *detect good* spells. They think that might be quite helpful when they are trying to “infiltrate” in the Abyss. Antonius puts some of the bottles with purple residues inside, on the idea that the characters might be able to try and pass themselves off as elixir couriers if necessary.

## The Serpent and the Cage

The characters delve deeper into the Fane, seeking the woman who rules the ash giants. Shawanda leads the group down a corridor, bolstered by Tsuguri’s *insane focus*. She finds a large chamber occupied by *Ursathella*, a woman with the lower body of a massive white serpent. A barred enclosure fences off one side of the chamber.

Antonius tells her, “Mutasafet sent us. He says, ‘Blaaaggh!’ And do you know anything about the ecology of ash giants?”

The serpent-woman responds, “While would be very interesting to have a long conversation with you about ash giants, I think I shall have that conversation after you are dead. I have promised my mistress Areelu Vorlesh that I shall defend the Rift at all costs!”

Antonius offers, “You better simmer down or we’re going to *dimensional anchor* your snaky ass and murderhobo you.”

Trystan leaps to the attack first, shooting her with *fortune’s arrow*. He sinks the shaft cleanly into her throat. The heart’s blood fountains across the floor like cherry blossom petals in a spring wind, but she is only lightly wounded.

Shawanda strikes second, encouraged by Tsuguri’s battle cry of, “Go get some tail!” She performs an area-effect *greater dispel magic* with *Radiance*, eliminating

Ursathella's *fly* spell. She follows that with a well-placed jab that inflicts heavy damage upon the snake-woman. Tabregon follows with a *dimensional anchor* to keep her from flitting away. And Tsuguri casts a *mythic silence* that affects her, but none of his stalwart allies.



Ursathella would very much like to fly into the air and cast spells at the characters, but she cannot do either of those things. Instead, she attacks with her scythe because she firmly believes she cannot lose. She slips between Antonius and Shawanda (taking hits from both of them) in her hunger to strike Tsuguri with her scythe. Between the two of them, they slash her apart. In her death throes, her blade slices through Tsuguri leaving him slashed into two pieces. Tabregon is right there with *mythic breath of life* and *restoration* to stitch Tsuguri back together and eliminate his temporary negative level and WIS damage.

Antonius asks, “Tsuguri – what was it like on the Other Side?”

Tsuguri answers, “It seemed like I was there for a long time. I had a lot of time to think about all of the mistakes in judgment that you made.”

The others do not pay attention to the interesting philosophical discussion, as they have discovered that Ursathella was carrying an interesting variety of pieces:

- Facial piercing jewelry worth 750 gold pieces (including at least four pieces from her left ear)
- *Chain shirt* +3
- *Unholy scythe* +3
- *Cloak of resistance* +2
- The key to the cage in her chamber

Shawanda claims the *cloak of resistance* +2.

## **The End of the Session**

The session ends with the characters in control of most of the Fane of Midnight. They prepare their challenge against the ash giants, and their entry into the Rift!