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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 4 OF 6

THE MIDNIGHT ISLES

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table of contents

Foreword	4
The Midnight Isles by James Jacobs and Greg A. Vaughan	6
NPC Gallery by James Jacobs and Greg A. Vaughan	54
Wrath of the Righteous Treasures by James Jacobs and Greg A. Vaughan	60
Gazetteer of the Abyss by Mike Shel	62
Alushinyrra: The Porphyry City by James Jacobs	70
Pathfinder's Journal: Sweet Ichor 4 of 6 by Robin D. Laws	76
Bestiary by Amanda Hamon and James Jacobs	82
Preview	92



Gazing Into the Abyss

I've been wanting to write an adventure set in the Abyss forever. Alas, for a while, my schedule was making it look like it'd be impossible to write "The Midnight Isles," but then I heard from Greg Vaughan that he was having similar schedule problems. And so we helped each other out a bit, each taking a different portion of this adventure—I wrote Parts 1 and 2, while Greg tackled Parts 3 and 4. I hope you enjoy the results... or, at the very least, curse our names for the vile fates visited upon your characters by folks such as Minagho, Gelderfang, Hepzamirah, or the Fulsome Queen!

Facts about the Midnight Isles

Although the Midnight Isles might look like regions that could well exist on the Material Plane, especially when considering things on an encounter-by-encounter basis, you should never lose sight of the fact that they exist in an

entirely different dimension of reality from where most adventures take place. Reality in the Abyss works differently from how it does on the Material Plane. Make sure to read through the Abyss gazetteer in this volume to get a basic idea of what it's like to be on this hostile plane. In addition, several things to keep in mind while running the adventure are listed below—use these points as needed to remind the PCs they're not on the Material Plane anymore!

Banishment: While in the Abyss, the PCs gain a new subtype: extraplanar. This is not their home plane; consequently, spells like *dismissal* and *banishment* become threats to the PCs, and *blasphemy* is even more dangerous. Having a character banished back to the Material Plane in the middle of a fight can be more devastating than merely having that character die, since getting the PC back to the precise point of her departure after she's been shunted off-plane can be no small task. Keep in mind

that as long as a PC is back on her home plane, she can't take part in the adventure. If this happens (and chances are it will, since many denizens of the Abyss pack spells and attacks designed to do this), it's in the best interests of your game to get those banished PCs back in play quickly. A combination of *plane shift* and *greater teleport* can bring them back, and don't hesitate to simply have their allies provide these spells if the banished PCs can't get back into the battle on their own.

Constant Midnight: There is no true 24-hour day on the Midnight Isles, just cycling 8-hour periods of alternating moonlight and darkness. A full cycle is 16 hours—thus, a “day” in this realm is 8 hours shorter than normal. This doesn't change the duration of spells and effects that last for a day, of course—such effects are interpreted as having a duration of 24 hours. Being in an area where full daylight never comes is perhaps the greatest way you can remind the PCs that they're in an alien realm.

North Isn't North: The concept of “north” is a product of civilization on a planet where magnetic fields create the ability for a compass needle to always orient itself in a constant direction. On realms beyond the Material Plane, forces apart from planetary magnetism are at work. While they're not able to indicate a true “north” per se, magical compasses like *wayfinders* or spells like *know direction* still provide results, establishing “north” to be in a specific direction. In the Abyss, “north” is the focus of power for any one realm—here on the Midnight Isles, “north” indicates the direction to Nocticula's private boudoir, deep within her palace in the city of Alushinyrra.

Play with Expectations: And finally, make sure you're descriptive in the way the Abyss feels! Don't forget that the PCs have more senses than just sight—what sorts of strange whispering noises might they hear while exploring an Abyssal jungle? How about the noxious and strangely compelling scents they smell wafting up from a sewer grate? And doesn't the wind feel a little bit thicker as it brushes against your skin? Interject unexpected descriptions now and then—a plate of food that smells of decay yet tastes perfectly fine, trees that look normal but feel weirdly cold and rubbery to the touch, or how footprints left in the sand seem to slither and change in strange ways when you look at them out of the corner of your eye. Feel free to impose a –2 penalty on some skill checks now and then as the alien environs start to get the better of the PCs—they should never feel truly at home in the Abyss!

Mythic Trials in the Midnight Isles

This adventure presents the PCs seven mythic trials to face. The order in which they accomplish these can vary.

Trial 1—Destroy the Nahyndrian Refinery: To significantly curtail the Worldwound's ability to produce *Nahyndrian*

on the cover

Wayne Reynolds proves that succubi are still beautiful even when they're in full armor. Arueshalae is one of my favorite characters that he's painted yet—and the scene of the iconic heroes being ambushed by a swarm of shadow demons in a jungle ain't bad either!

elixirs, the PCs must accomplish three of the following tasks in the Midnight Fane: defeat Mutasafen, defeat Ursathella, destroy the laboratory in area A5, or destroy the grinder in area A8.

Trial 2—Close the Midnight Fane Rift: The PCs must close the rift between the Material Plane and the Abyss.

Trial 3—Defeat Minagho: The PCs must slay Minagho.

Trial 4—Become Notorious in Alushinyrra: The PCs must reach a Notoriety score of 40 or higher in Alushinyrra.

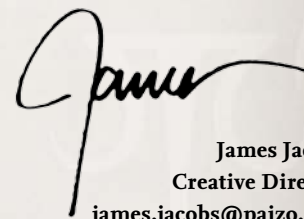
Trial 5—Secure Nocticula's Cooperation: The PCs must speak to the demon lord Nocticula and secure her aid in finishing their tasks on the Midnight Isles.

Trial 6—Defeat Hepzamirah: The PCs must slay Baphomet's daughter, Hepzamirah.

Trial 7—Witness a Clash between Demon Lords: The PCs must experience Baphomet's proclamation and witness his expulsion from the Midnight Isles at the adventure's climax.

Non-Mythic Midnight

In “The Midnight Isles,” events are rapidly approaching the limits of what a non-mythic adventuring party can handle. Forewords in previous volumes of the *Wrath of the Righteous Adventure Path* give some good advice regarding how to hand out experience, using hero points, involving more NPCs to aid the PCs, giving out extra supplies, and adjusting monster statistics. You can use these suggestions with this adventure as well. The encounters in this adventure generally fall into a CR range of 12–18. As a result, it's best if you start this adventure with 12th-level PCs. It might be easiest to simply inform the PCs when their characters gain levels and eschew the use of XP entirely. Make sure to check out the *Wrath of the Righteous* messageboards at paizo.com as well—I'll be there along with numerous other experienced GMs to offer advice.



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