

Journal of the Xterminators

Enlightening the Masses to Mystra's Grace

Written by Nathaniel Moonwayne, Paladin of Mystra

Journal Entry – 20 Novius 1008:

Day

Two days ago I was just concluding some training at 'The Beacon', when an acolyte invited me to visit with 'Mariah Perselen' a Cleric of Mystra. She told me that the Church of Mystra is very interested in learning firsthand about any magic items recovered from Shraevyn's Tomb. She went on to explain that I could learn more from a man known only as 'X', who lives in a manor just east of Whillip. I was summoned to the manor, where I met with this X, who told me about the Exterminators (Xterminators?), and their adventures. He stated he had an urgent message for Thrush, the whisper gnome scout, one of their group to take an extended leave of absence due to some family emergency.

Most recently the Xterminators had undertaken a secretive mission to recover some magic items and assist the freedom loving peoples of the Dales. He learned about the Zhentarim, Randal Morn, and the mystery of his kidnapping as well as the history of Shraevyn the renowned weapons mage. As the Church of Mystra is interested in all things magical, and keeping powerful magic items from those who would abuse or misuse such items to the ill of the Realms, I volunteered to deliver this message to the Xterminators, and to possibly assist in their latest quest since they will be a member down.

I met the Xterminators at Shraevyn's Tomb shortly after setting up a temporary camp outside the entrance. Apparently they encountered a number of undead, including skeletal owlbeats, and skeletal wyverns as well as more standard ilk. They were searching for evidence of Randal Morn, and specifically the Sword of the Dales, which they found placed inside an elaborate sarcophagus containing a wooden casket.

The Sword of the Dales had a note tied to the handle that Thrush read to the party as he casually handed it to Phineas, an elven illusionist, to hold. The note was given to Phullergh, the halfling druid, who apparently keeps track of such clues. Per the message, Randal Mourn is apparently somewhere in the Spiderhaunt Woods. If the party isn't able to find Randal Mourn, the note requests that the group find his sister in Shadowdale and give her the Sword of the Dales.

I delivered the message from X to Thrush as per my directions. Apparently his mother is in some sort of trouble that requires his attention. As a sign that it, in fact, came from his mother a plushie owlbear wearing a lumberjack outfit complete with wooden clogs was provided. Contained along with the note was a teleportation scroll, that would only work on Thrush. So giving his beloved hunting dog, Highflyer, that he was apparently using as a mount, into Vern of Shadowdale's keeping he read the scroll and BAMF teleported out. Why does such magic make such a hideous and obvious sound anyway? I must pray to Mystra to at least lower the vociferation of such magic.

The only other of note that seemed out of place is Phullergh, as he asked to see my greatsword, which I hesitantly handed to him. He proceeded to limp around the campfire awkwardly (he appears to have a permanent injury to one of his legs, I will pray to Mystra to allow us to discover magic to make him whole again) swinging the sword and making swishing sounds... I suspect he is mentally deficit. I can only hope that the others of this group are not similarly inclined.

Night

We decided to move camp a few miles down the trail to not be immediately outside of Shraevyn's Tomb given that the Zhentarim were aware of its location and were actively patrolling the area. We were beset upon by a number of skeletons in the middle of the night. Luckily I was awoken by the sounds of combat. What happened to the folks on watch and why didn't they alert the rest of us? Luckily it was only standard skeletons, that oddly enough seemed intent on my personage for some reason. I wonder if this has to do with the curse my mother told me about... Regardless they were destroyed by Vern turning undead. We estimate that it is roughly forty miles to the Spiderhaunt Woods, with only eight miles to get us to the Tethyamar Trail leading to the woods proper.

Journal Entry – 21 Novius 1008:

Day

Luckily the day was uneventful.

Night

We ended up being attacked by small band of a dozen goblins in the early morning hours. Combat was well underway when a boisterous Valkyrie battle cry was given by Wistari, our resident bard. Seriously what are the people on watch doing that combat is well underway before someone who wasn't even on watch had to call it out? They were armed with a number of weak barbed bolas, and equally barbed daggers. They were carrying a banner of two broken bones forming an X on a red background. After slaughtering almost all of them, three managed to escape running for the cover of darkness.

Journal Entry – 22 Novius 1008:

Day

That morning we decided to give the Sword of the Dales to Avylyn, a paladin similar to myself, but following the tenet of Lathander.

Night

That night we were greeted by Holly Haldane, a ranger of the Desert mouth Mountains, in the Dagger Hills. With her were three mountain orcs, two of whom clearly radiated evil to my sensitive perception granted the Lady of Magic. The orcs were dragging along an elk carcass and the group asked to join our campfire offering to share the elk for repast.

They had been hunting goblins of the Broken Bone Tribe, leaving a dozen or so to run off. Almost assuredly these are the same goblins who had attacked us the night before. They have a camp, specifically the Brightblade Trader's Camp where the Tesh River meets the mountains in the Tesh valley that has been attacked by this same tribe, hence the purpose of their hunt. They also warned us of the Zhentarim, as they have patrols along the Tesh River and Tethyamar Trail.

Journal Entry – 23 Novius 1008:

Day

Vern prepared Zone of Truth to question the goblins.

Night

The night was uneventful.

Journal Entry – 24 Novius 1008:

Day

The party found a caravan that had been attacked with three survivors (Zoshia adult human male, Teal adult human female, and Patrick adolescent human male) and a group of six freedom fighters who are heading to Shadowdale, as one of their number has a sister living there..

Night

The night was uneventful.

Journal Entry – 25 Novius 1008:

Day

The day was uneventful traveling until we met Temeron Flightseeker, Last of the company of Aerie. He was gravely wounded and succumbed to his wounds turning into a Sword Corpse. The party had to end the undead threat and put it down for good.

Night

The party continued traveling and set up camp to go through Temeron's belongings in the hopes of discovering what happened. There was a Vampire head in his backpack, clearly undead, and radiating evil, fangs glowed as magical. Garreck pummeled it into mush, Nathaniel used oil to put it on fire, then sprinkled the ashes with a vial of holy water, just to be safe.

The party discovered a Wooden Holy Symbol of Mystra that acts as a badge of life, i.e., when affixed to clothing, it provides a benefit, first time character would go into negative hit points, you go to zero, one use. It can be used to act as a successful Save vs. Death Magic. It counts as making your save, and then the symbol breaks. It radiates Moderate Necromantic Magic and is worth approximately 500gp.

Again the party dreamt that night that wind whips misty white clouds, flying with black feathers, then dive into the forest with dark and oppressive trees with spider webs among the branches... Numerous points of crimson lights stare from behind the leaves, while the road ahead leads to a clearing with a large stone tower when a cry is heard, "Help me, least your own soul belong lost amongst the pathways."

Journal Entry – 26 Novius 1008:

Day

Movement anywhere other than the Arachnid Pathway can not be done with horses, while off the path, it is one-quarter movement.

Encountered a group of Zhentarim on the trail, Nathaniel got a solid arrow shot on the lead Zhentarim, a female spellcaster, with Avylyn in front and moved into melee.

Lead Zhentarim spellcaster casted lightning bolt, hurt the party, dropping one of our horses, and killing one of their own fighters and shouted to beware the brimstone of thunder keep and promptly was killed by Phullergh with a sling bullet who then dropped the staff, that exploded, killing three more Zhentarim.

Unfortunately, another spellcaster came up, cast mirror image while supporting the fighters.

Phineas was casting magic missile like a madman, knocking out images along with Nathaniel shooting his bow. Vern cast silence on the mage.

Vern moved up and threw a spear, catching the real spellcaster and killing her, leaving two fighters left.

Phullergh moved up and healed the injured horse from the lightning bolt.

Avylyn took a hit from one of the remaining fighters, while the last one was still knocked prone from the thunder attack.

Then Avylyn took out the fighter in front of her, while the prone fighter finally got up and ran down the trail.

Phullergh pulled in front of the last fighter, who tried to run past Garreck, who promptly dropped him.

10 AM, two spell casters, six fighters, various items, black leather cloak with a name embroidered "Tierimar" symbols are the 13 symbols of power from the Arcanum of Decidarius that is a high level of quality worth 10gp, also has a petrified wood wand with an amethyst tip with zero charges that may be used to craft a wand worth 500g, magic Bracers of Armor +3 worth 9,000g, and an ivory and gold ring which Garreck immediately put it on...to no effect, but it is a Ring of Good Fortune +1 to saving throws and to +1 Dodge bonus to AC (3,000g). Two ingots of Carafon, lightweight metal ingots that resist force damage, approximately worth 500g each, scroll with an unfamiliar mage spell, no one was able to identify the spell, but Garreck swears that it is a Wish spell, and an obsidian dagger with a steel edge that is +1 (350g), along with an asbestos ring, which is a Ring of Fire Protection +1 to Saves (1,000g) all fire damage magical and mundane.

Seal skin knee-high leather boots, leather backpack, 5 days iron rations, red and black fur coat, along with four torches with a red resin on the ends as a preservative

Noon, flying dangers...Darken Beasts, also know as The Death Horror... black reptilian hide, fangs, claws, and glowing red eyes that are 3 to 4 feet long with a 6 foot wingspan... always under the telepathic control of a magic user.

Phineas managed to hit one with an acid arrow spell, and one of the dogs got a bite on one that had landed on one of the horses, knocking it to the ground.

Phineas expertly hit the one on the ground with his longsword. Wistari then followed suit, hitting the prone Darken Beast with her staff, with another dog jumping on it and attacking it, while Phullergh

attacked the other one, fumbling his attack hitting his mount, Sammy, and dropping his halfling sling staff.

The third one was surrounded by Vern, and three dogs who were constantly harassing the creature. The light warhorse even got into the action attacking the beast.

The last one flew off once its comrades were downed and turned into dust once dead.

Night

Three-way intersection... took the largest pass, became blocked by webs, hairy spiders possibly from the Gnome Crushers Clan of goblins.

Lots of venomous tiny hairy spiders attacked the party from the edges of the trail as well as above. Luckily, the party was able to fight off the nasty little things.

We set camp that night and Garreck set up his rope fence with pots and pans tied as a makeshift alarm to alert us.

We weren't attacked, but we had the same dream as before with the exception that a darkened beast swoops down and catches and eats your bird form in the dream.

Journal Entry – 27 Novius 1008:

Day

The party discovered what the spell on the scroll actually is. It's a new version of creating a Darken Beast.

Encountered a bone bat that is most likely the servant of whomever is in charge in the tower.

Then we met a gnome fighting a spider. It looked like he was trying to capture the spider in his grasp.

Madarn Spider Hunter is the gnome, supposedly from the village of Stormpenhauder.

Went to the village, encountered children, and met the village elder Telimas, the dream weaver.

Throughout the afternoon, the party investigates the village of approximately 125 gnomes. It is a thriving self-contained village of brick, mud, and stone. No wood in the construction of the buildings as they only take fallen wood, and they are afraid of fire. Most buildings are seven feet tall.

The party is given a warehouse to sleep in reserved for caravans. Years ago, they used to live in the trees until Telimas suggested that they open up a trading post.

They are in the spider trade, make spider silk clothing, and have a lot of spider type products, such as a wine with spider venom that gets you drunk and numb at the same time.

General store proprietor, Realya, they have fine clothing of spidersilk, as well as leather and chitin armor.

Spider mounts are 50gp for a large and 200gp for a huge. With a riding saddle for a large spider, it is 20gp and bit, and the bridle is 30sp with sturrops being 4gp, and a riding blanket is 6sp with full chitin barding being 1600gp and standard leather barding is 300gp. Spiders move 30" and climb at 20".

Garreck decided to purchase a large spider as a mount, appropriately named 'Stinky'. While the idea of a mount easily able to traverse all of these webs is appealing, spiders are far too alien, a creature for me to trust as a mount.

The reason for the founding of the trading post is that Telimas had a vision of a dark skinned elf (Drow) leading an army of spiders across the land destroying everything. The thought was that perhaps they could prevent this since Spiderhaunt Woods has a plethora of spiders.

Night

Shortly after midnight, a bunch of undead, skeletons, and bone bats, with a couple of ghouls, attacked the town. Phineas cast a web trapping five of the skeletons. Two of the villagers managed to escape away from the attacking undead. Vern turned undead, managing to destroy all but two attacking the village elder's home.

Nathaniel did a masterful hit on the ghoul between him and Garreck. Unfortunately, it managed to turn only to take a glancing blow, not taking much damage from the hit.

Phineas moved next to that ghoul and fired a silver sheaf arrow at the remaining bone bat, while that ghoul decided to flee, turning its back on Nathaniel, who made it pay with a solid hit crushing it into the ground.

The remaining ghoul and bone bat both ran due to Vern turning the undead in the area. The two skeletons at the elder's door ...

Avylyn rushed over to the elder's home, taking out one of the two skeletons there. Then Garreck rode over on Stinky to the last skeleton, taking it out. Phullergh managed to catch up to the running ghoul on his war dog mount and finally destroy it.

Phineas dropped the web spell, releasing the last skeleton, so Nathaniel charged it, crushing it into dust with his warhammer. The rest of the night was uneventful except for another occurrence of the same

dream. This time, as a bird, it is caught in the webs as crimson lights approach, turning into ghouls to rip us apart.

Journal Entry – 28 Novius 1008:

Day

Telimas states the tower is called the Black Shadow and is able to cast its shadow outward and that it is fatal. He also states there is a wizardess, Gothel, and not to say her name three times in a row as bad things can happen to those who do so.

He states the undead rarely attacks in numbers and that the night before was unusual. The Lakeside Trail is rough for horses and that we may want to leave our mounts behind.

The party decided to do so, with the exception of Stinky, who, as a spider, is fine. Garreck was given a wooden reed flute to call Stinky, but that other spiders may also show up.

It's about 10 miles to the shore of Lake Meletharn. Stinky stayed on the trail most of the time, but not always, but we were able to hear him moving.

At noon, we encountered a trio of tainted badgers... which is apparently a thing in these woods. They all were mutated from the taint here, with detachable Jaws that could reach out at range and multiple eyes, some with multiple jaws, and one with spiked hair akin to a porcupine or hedgehog.

The one Nathaniel spotted closed and was critically wounded as it closed.

The back-line was attacked by one, and Avylyn promptly critically hit it as it attacked her, killing it instantly.

Night

That night, we cleared a 20x20 space of forest to set camp. It took us two hours to do that. Just after midnight, Phullergh wakes up Vern to check on Wistari, who had contracted ghoulish fever and was being attended to by Vern.

Luckily, Wistari managed to pull through and overcome the ghoulish fever.

On Avylyn and Phineas' watch, they hear a crashing sound interesting the woods, which appears to be a leopard we had been warned about as they occasionally hunt the larger spiders.

Avylyn quickly dispatched it with help from Phullergh, and we returned to sleeping again with the same horrible dreams.

Journal Entry – 29 Novius 100Y:

Day

The party made it to the lake on this day. The trail winds around the eastern and southern edge of the lake. We found an old fishing shack that Garreck inspected discovering a family of raccoons.

We turned a corner in the trail coming face-to-face with a pair of half-ogres. Garreck immediately ran in, attacking the first one, knocking it prone and unconscious with a brutal overhand chop with his warhammer. While the other one turned and ran back down the trail. In an effort to prevent that one from alerting our enemies, Nathaniel took aim and let loose several arrows with his bow, scoring an excellent hit, but not quite dispatching the beast. Avylyn then managed to score a hit to drop the running half-ogre.

These were human sized, and if memory serves half-ogres are usually much larger... it makes me wonder what the other half is.

The remaining day was uneventful, so we decided to make camp past the lake.

Night

More nightmares, but at least we weren't attacked.

Journal Entry – 30 Novius 1008:

Day

Today is officially Day 60 of the party's start on this adventure even though I, Nathaniel Moonwayne, Paladin of Mystra, have only been among the group since Shraevyn's Tomb. The morning was uneventful, and later that afternoon almost evening we laid eyes on the tower that has been our destination since Shraevyn's Tomb.

Note from the DM: There may be a discrepancy with regards to the dates noted in the journal entry above. It's not really all that important. The only issue is with regards to whether the 30th of Novius is the 60th day of the journey, or whether Moonfest (a Festival day that follows the 30th of Novius) is actually the 60th day of the adventure. Regardless of whether we sort this issue out in a future journal entry, the journal entries written by players in our campaign are valuable and appreciated by all involved. Thank you to David H. for producing another excellent journal entry – The DM/CM of the "Rob's World! D&D Campaign" - Robert Vaessen ref: <https://www.robsworld.org/3ecampaign.html> PS: I made no changes to the journal entry, and hope that readers will overlook any irrelevant typos/variant spellings and or other factual inaccuracies.