



To HELL ... AND BACK?



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARIES OF DAGRIS DREAMCHASER. COMPILED BY BALASAR JHARTHAXYN
FROM DOCUMENTS FOUND ON THE PLANE OF AVERNUS.



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INTRODUCTION

The tome you hold in your hands was compiled by I, Balasar Jharthraxyn, from a set of diaries found on the infernal plane of Avernus. The story of how these journals made their way to my hands could fill a book of its own. In fact, it did. See volume 14 of "Balasar Jharthraxyn on Balasar Jharthraxyn" by yours truly, Balathar Jharthraxyn.

Contained within are the autobiographical adventures of one Dagnaris Dreamchaser, a halfling thief of some renown, now that I, Balathar Jharthraxyn, have put my literary approval on his work.

Read the unbelievable journey that he and the band of misfits that surrounded him undertook. No one could have known the excitement and peril that was in store for them. Live the tales told in his own words. I won't spoil it, but it is quite the page-turner.

I have included my own notes for the edification of the reader.

ORIGINAL PARTY

These Journals begin with Dagnaris already working in a group.

- **Dagnaris Dreamchaser** - A Halfling Thief
- **Sappi Cogsworth** - A Gnome Artificer
- **Zoey** - An Elven Archer

What led to this and what his life was like prior to these escapades is a matter of much debate among literary scholars. It is something that I, Balasar Jharthraxyn, will continue to study.

-- B.J.



Balasar Jharthraxyn



ENTRY 1



ur intrepid band was hired to ...liberate a certain object from its current, unworthy holder. The heist went mostly according to plan, but the crew managed to pick up a warforged during the getaway.

THE WARGORGED 5-11

The "Life" of the magical sentient construct originally designated 5-11 is interesting in its own right. What is known about this entity comes from the writings of Dagnaris and 5-11's own recordings. 5-11's writings are less narrative driven than the writings of Dagnaris. I will use 5-11's notes to illuminate the halfling's brilliant storytelling wherever possible.

-- B.J.

He seemed useful enough - *if a bit too talkative most times!* - so the band of 3 became 4 as we began the journey from Waterdeep back to Baldur's Gate as hired guards for Caster Morden. He's a rug merchant who just needed some muscle for the journey, and it made a nice cover story for our escape.

The item itself is a locked puzzle box about the size of a cigar box. As we traveled, my misgivings about the box grew stronger and stronger. The damned spirits that have been stalking me seem to have a special interest in the box itself. I thought I was running FROM them, but apparently I ran straight TO them as their incessant gibbering now emanates from the box itself. They want out. They demand release from the box day and night, but I've resisted so far. That busy-body Sappy Cogsworth tried to snatch the box one night, but my precautions payed dividends and he failed. I expect he won't give up so easily though. His curiosity about the box is almost as strong as my dread.

As we approached Baldur's Gate, the stream of travelers, most looking like shell-shocked refugees became more dense. We managed to get a little information out of them, although it didn't make much sense. It was just some nonsense about Elturel being gone. Not sacked or burned, but simply gone. Now THAT'S a heist story I'd like to hear!

THE STEALING OF ELTUREL

There is some dispute among sages over weather the Fall of Elturel actually occurred or if it is just a mythical story from Faerun's distant past.

-- B.J.

The journey to Baldur's Gate itself was uneventful, but once we neared the gates and were stymied by the flow of travelers, Sappy got us involved in a fight with some hucksters taking advantage of desperate refugees. It worked out in the end as we were able to retrieve the statuette the old couple lost as well as a few gold pieces for our trouble. It turned out to be a fortuitous event though. The old man's son is a guard in the Flaming Fist, named Sebastian Smith. He said to look him up if we ever need a hand. Having an "in" with the guards is never a bad idea.

Now the only problem is we are about to enter the city and the rest of the band still wants to turn the box over to the buyer. After what the spirits did to those poor bastards the first time they got what they wanted, I can't imagine what would happen if the buyer opens this box.

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Dagnaris has included me in his group.
- Zoey is deadly with her bow.
- Dagnaris will show mercy if the enemy has been broken.
- Sappi likes to throw a burning stick.
- Sappi said: "Old People are good."
- Sappi said: "Merchants are bad."



ENTRY 2

So as we started to forge our way through the crowd towards the customs gate, we were assailed by - and I'm not making this up - goostergeist. There was no physical signs of geese in the area, but this crazed honker persistently badgered us through the crowd and into the customs rotunda!

The customs inspector did not find the ghost goose's regaling at all pleasant and called in the garrison mage. He discovered it was some infernal contraption of Sappi's devising (which he of course denied). Caster was fined for, well, I'm not sure exactly what, other than pissing off the inspector. Caster took part of the fine out of our pay, but Sappi was amused by his prank, so made up the difference to the rest of the party. Luckily, Caster's wife was no where around during this whole debacle, or I doubt Sappi would have survived the encounter!

With our safe return to Baldur's Gate, we were assailed from every direction with people vying for our attention. It seems our ragtag band has already begun to develop a reputation, despite our efforts to go unnoticed. The customs inspector informed us the city has been locked down and if we wanted entry, we would have to "make ourselves useful". He sent us to speak with Cpt. Zojh about some work the Flaming Fist could use a hand with <wink wink>.

On our way to meet the good captain, a messenger scamp told us our "employer" would contact us when they were ready, but to stay close until then. I STILL haven't devised a good argument for keeping the box, or even better, dumping it into the bottom of the ocean!

Anyhow, once we met the Cpt, it seems the town has a problem with The Dead Three cult, but are already stretched thin maintaining any semblance of order with the crush of refugees. He generously offered 200g each if we manage to ... disappear the cult by whatever means necessary without getting sacrificed ourselves.

QUEST
Wipe out the Dead Three Cult.
Reward: 200g each.

THE DEAD THREE CULT

The Dead Three refers to three gods.

Deity Domain Symbol

Bane Tyranny Upright black right hand, thumb and fingers together

Bhaal Murder Skull surrounded by a ring of blood droplets

Myrkul Death White Human Skull

-- B.J.



He sent us to his local informant, Turina, after deputizing us. I don't know if I am amused, irritated, or befuddled at the twist of fate that, essentially, brought a mismatched band of thieves into the lawkeeping line of work!

Once we got to the tavern, 5-11 used his normal subtle approach to find our informant. He very subtly, while wearing a damned badge, announced he was looking for her! Luckily, it seems a well known "secret" that her information is for purchase from most anyone with the coin. Once we found her, she informed us she's in a spot of trouble, but if we would negotiate on her behalf, she would waive her normal info fee. We reluctantly agreed. While waiting, I tried to explain "aggressive negotiation" to 5-11. I fear we are doing a less than adequate job of educating this construct. He seems absolutely determined to misinterpret every plain, simple explanation I give him! <sigh>

We did hear some interesting rumors while waiting around for Turina's business partners. It seems the Grand Duke of the Flaming Fist was in Elturel during its demise. There seems to be quite a stir about who should lead the Flaming Fist in his absence, and if that absence is temporary or permanent. Velma Vamper has shown a distinct lack of sadness at his demise and has been consolidating her power in what many expect is a grab for his seat.

Once Turina's pirates showed up, negotiations quickly turned from verbal to physical. It was almost as if it was a forgone conclusion. If they had not been so inept, I would have been quite cross with Turina for misleading us so. It turned out well in the end, as we managed to resolve the situation with only minor damage to the bar, and we liberated some jewelry from the now-retired pirate.

TREASURE

Item	#	Value Each
Necklace	2	25g
Ring	1	125g

Turina pointed us to a public bathhouse as a known point of interest for the cult members. After what seemed like a total waste of time and effort, we managed to find the entrance to some catacombs just before giving up and leaving.

The catacombs were filled with etchings, tapestries, etc of The Dead Three, so we were fairly certain we had found the right hideout. We liberated Klem Jaso from a couple of thugs who appeared to be torturing him for fun rather than for profit. We should look him up later for a proper reward, although I think the blustering fool may have overstated his wealth and local importance by some small degree.

TREASURE

Item	#	Value
Iris of the Oracle	1	???
Silvered Flail	1	110g
Spellbooks	4	1950g

We haven't found anyone that seems to be in charge yet though, so I guess we shall have to blunder on until the right thug presents himself for dispatching!

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Dagnaris said: "Gooses are not worth it."
- I was made a deputy of the Flaming Fist.
- Dagnaris said: "Negotiation is a loose term. It starts with words and can end in violence."
- Sappi's electric stick is dangerous.
- At the bathhouse, Dagnaris told me. "No Badge! Don't talk!"
- We missed a lot of attacks in the catacomb.
- Fire! A room of fire. Will not go back!

ENTRY 3

ife is never dull around here. After our last foray into the depths of the city (and its rather toasty conclusion), we executed a strategic retreat - with 5-11 herding us at a pace my legs were NOT comfortable with - back into the light. I must admit we received a few more glances at our disheveled state than was comfortable. Who leaves a bath house dirtier than when they went in?!

We went back to the inn to recuperate and formulate a new plan, but Sappi and Zoey were quiet and kinda mean. Sappi started drinking and Zoey grabbed her stuff and stormed out in a huff. We did just get blown up, so I didn't think too much about it at the time. After taking a nap, 5-11 and I decided we needed to stock up and give it the old guild-try. Sappi wasn't quite so enthusiastic. He refused to join us and Zoey was nowhere to be found. Frustrated and short-handed, we decided to let the good captain know what progress we had made and see if he had any backup he could lend us....he didn't. He did however, give us the power to deputize a couple of mercs and pay them upfront to get the job done. With gold and badges in hand, we set off back to the inn to look for some hired muscle and MAYBE let Sappi and Zoey know the captain was not pleased with their cowardice. On our way, we saw Zoey. 5-11 tried chasing her down, but she managed to avoid us until darting into a mini-fortress we later found out belongs to one of the city patriars.

When we got back to the inn, Sappi was nowhere to be found and the barkeep let us know there were some people upstairs waiting for us. I'm not sure how they found us so quickly, but the most obvious answer was the 3 dead-heads were not happy with us blowing up their little clubhouse. It might also be admirers simply looking for autographs, but the former seemed more likely, so we headed upstairs ready for a fight.

As we topped the stairs, good ole' 5-11 just marches out in the open and tries to get to the room, thinking Sappi would still be there (I begin to despair of teaching this thing anything at all). I dodged into the shadows, waiting for my moment to try out some new moves I was working on. There were 2 separate groups waiting for us. One obviously wanted to kill us.

The other group...well, I'm not sure what to make of them: one was a scary girl rambling on about dreaming about me, and the other was a quiet elf, who I SWEAR knew I was carrying IT as soon as she looked at me with those too-knowing eyes.

NEW PARTY MEMBERS

- **Cascadazul** - An Elven Dignitary arriving from Evermeet
- **Vaneshi** - A Hellrider from Elturel

These new members joined Dagnaris and Five on the extraordinary adventure that began in the catacombs below Baldur's Gate.

-- B.J.

PARANOIA?

The "It" that Dagnaris references is the Puzzle Box that the group stole in Waterdeep. Whatever was inside it seemed to have a strange effect on both Dagnaris the halfling and Sappi the gnome. Is its hold on them related to their size? I will need to investigate more.

-- B.J.

Anyway, as was all-too-predictable, the first group was there looking for round 2. After I dispatched them with some fancy footwork and the pointy end of the stick, the ladies introduced themselves as being from Elturel, but they felt their destiny was to join my illustrious party. Since we were in the market for some help, this seemed like a great plan...and they seemed pretty handy in a fight, if a bit on the judgy, uppity side.

VANESHI

A Hell Rider from Elturel, Vaneshi escaped whatever fate befell the nightless city while on an assignment to escort Cascadazul. Her "Vision" led them to Baldur's Gate to join Dagnaris's Party. Who or What is the source for her "Visions"?

-- B.J.

The only thing of interest we found on the bodies was a note that said their contact told them where we had our rooms and to take care of us (I don't think that meant they were supposed to bring us snacks). It was just signed "V".

After the innkeeper begged us to stay, we declined since our fame seemed to be drawing more than just fans. We headed out to find an inn nearer to the bath house and discovered our, um, mishap below ground may have left a bit of a mark on the surface. The bath house and some of the surrounding area had collapsed into the room we detonated. Silver lining: it was much easier to re-enter the lair of the fiends!

We made some small progress in exploring the dungeon, but only managed to find a mostly-dead tiefling named Vendetta Cress, dispatch a few zombies, and a barracks of ill-prepared guards. I had a single moment of hope for 5-11 during this encounter! He actually lured one of the guards into the room with us! Then he dashed all my hopes for him right after. He had another chance to deceive another guard, and botched it in the most 5-11 way possible. <sigh> He told the truth. Ah well. It worked out anyway as the tiger-elf chased the guard down and we finished him and his friends off.

CASCADAZUL

The "tiger-elf" appears to be a reference to the druidic powers of Cascadazul. Cascadazul is a published author in her own right, though her works are more "academic" than the wrtings of yours truly, Balasar Jharthraxyn.

-- B.J.

Still no sign of the cult leader though, so our journey towards fame and glory continue!

5-11's NOTES

Things Learned:

- I'm learning to lie from Dagnaris. I don't think I get it.
- Cas is also a cat.
- Van misplaced her town.
- Did Zoey abbandon us?
- Did Sappi abbandon us, too?
- I was tricked into re-entering the fire room!



ENTRY 4

After clearing out the barracks, we regrouped and prepared to carry on the fight. As we surveyed the carnage in the hallways, it occurred to me we still had not found anything that would fit Vendetta's description of a grinding noise. After an expert evaluation of the passage, I found a hidden doorway. This seemed to cause some confusion for 5-11 for some reason. Who hasn't heard of secret passageways?!

Anyway, we stalked down the slightly-less flooded passage and discovered a massive bear of a man getting soundly beaten by a faceless... thing. It looked very human, except for the bare skull sitting atop its shoulders. As we rushed to the fray, it seemed to taunt the giant and run away.

We soon discovered the giant to be Mortlock Vanthampur, son of the Vanthampur patriarch family. He was betrayed by his own family and we chased off the last assassin that was meant to kill him. In return for our aid, and in retribution against his family, he is willing to testify to the guard if we can get him back to the Flaming Fist headquarters. He didn't have many details, but he knows his mother was in league with Thavius Creeg. The 2 of them hoped to sow enough chaos to kick the powers-that-be out and take over. I have to assume that things got out of their control in Elturel, and Baldur's Gate could soon suffer the same fate if we don't find



out how it happened. For now, we know the Dead 3 were bought and payed for by the Vanthampur family to make the Flaming Fist look incompetent. Fortunately for the Fist, they showed they have excellent instincts and hired us to solve the problem!

THE ELTUREL CONSPIRACY

It appears that Dagnaris and his followers stumbled upon evidence that Thalmara Vanthamper and Thavius Kreeg, leader of Elturel, conspired to remove Uldar Ravengard from power. The result was the destruction of Elturel. Vanthamper wanted to control Baldur's Gate. What did Kreeg get from the agreement?

-- B.J.

We found a fair amount of treasure stockpiled in one room. It looked like it was either to be a gift to a dragon, or gods forbid, the stolen hoard of a dragon. Either way, we have liberated it! Now we just have to decide if we are to chase down that craven assassin Vaaz, or go directly to the guard and hand over Morti.

TREASURE

Item	#	Value
Bronze Crown	1	250g
Cat-Eye Agate	10	10g
Porcelain Dragon Mask	1	25g

We left 5-11 guarding the exit while we explored the treasure, but he let someone sneak past. We've likely let Vaaz escape, but this wooden-headed dolt refuses to go back through the "fire room" and woke up some skeletons digging for a new way out. <sigh> I think its time to get creative in extricating my party from this now-defunct lair of vile worshipers!

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Dagnaris can open walls!
- Dagnaris said: "Sometimes Walls and Doors are the same thing."
- Vaneshi said: "Help the person not the skeleton."
- Cas was a tiger? and now is a Lion?
- Found a Dragon hat!
- Vaneshi's boss helped drag a city to the Nine Hells?

SESSION 5

After catching our collective breath, we proceeded up the steps where we saw Vaaz run away. Fortunately for him, he was gone and all we found was a room with 3 wooden effigies to the Dead 3. As I approached one of these wooden horrors, I was overcome by a powerful urge to bow before it. Despite my heroic efforts to the contrary, I was forced to one knee, head bowed, while I felt a sneer of contempt from the statue, and heard soft laughter from this damned box. I don't know if they are related, or if the box just took perverse pleasure at seeing me humbled.

Luckily, Vaneshi saw my strange behavior and pulled me out of my forced stupor. Upon coming back to myself, I set the statue ablaze with immense satisfaction! All of this seemed to intrigue Cas, so she began inspecting the statue of Merkul. She managed to separate the mask from the statue, but after a brief inspection and a sniff of disdain, she merely tossed it away over her shoulder. She's a strange one.

Beyond the room of statues, we found a supply room. It had miscellaneous sundries, but a few items of value, such as some potions of healing and some alchemist's fire.

TREASURE

Item	#	Value
Alchemist Fire (Flask)	3	50g
Caltrops	1	1g
Potion of Healing	4	25g

We decided that we had lingered long enough and went back to the half-collapsed room and pulled out the support beam. After some minor struggles, we managed to climb to the surface and exited an abandoned warehouse into the welcoming embrace of Baldur's Gate. We proceeded cautiously back to Capt Zojh with Mortlock in tow.

We escorted Vendetta to the Capt, where she lodged a formal complaint and went on her way. We offered our future help if she is ever in need. While reporting everything we found in the underground temple, the Capt, at the subtle urging of Morti, spotted and killed an imp who was spying on us. It was presumed to be a spy in the employ of Mort's brother. We will have to be wary of more invisible spies hanging about whenever we discuss anything of consequence! The Capt told us he doesn't have the power or support on his own to move against the Vanthampur family, but Liara Portiar should be returning to the city soon. If we can find some substantial evidence to back up Mort's claims, she would have the necessary clout to do something about it.

QUEST

Gather Evidence on Thalamra Vanthampur.

Reward: 200g each.

With that in mind, the Capt offered to double our pay if we can find said evidence. So we returned to the inn to rest up before doing a little shopping, interrogating Mort about the family compound, and raiding said compound. As seems to be typical for us, when we left the inn, another poor group of souls begged to be released from this mortal plane upon the edges of our blades. I must admit I was quite impressed by 5-11. He tried very hard to be diplomatic before - and even during - the fight. The dragon worshipers came to us demanding back their treasure. They stubbornly refused to offer a modest finder's fee in exchange for the crown. We dispatched the sad souls easily but I have a feeling we will be seeing more of their ilk before long.

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Dagnaris prays to Bane? I didn't think he was a religious person.
- Some dragon people wanted my Dragon Hat. They did not get it.
- Dagnaris and Vaneshi were very effective when I commanded them to strike in battle.



ENTRY 6

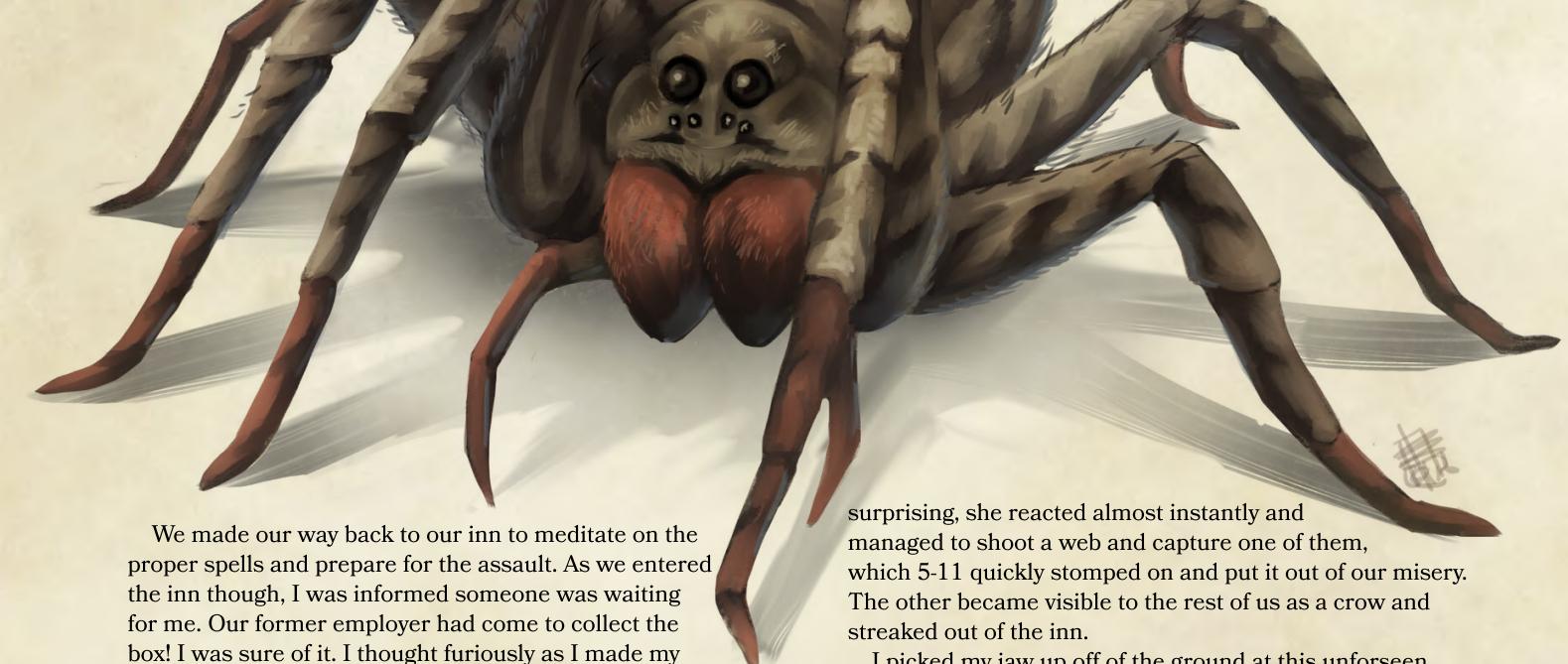
Ie made a general supply run after picking up what little the dragon cultists had of value. Cas upgraded her armor, but I didn't find anything worth my time. I need something with a certain panache! Flare! But also subtle, powerful, and intimidating. Hmmmm. Maybe I can commission something suitable. I did find a rapier with a beautiful, yet simple guard that seems quite a bit more striking than my old shortsword.

Anyway, after doing some light shopping, we headed back to the Flaming Fist headquarters and interrogated Mortlock about the estate. Capt. Zojh watched over us with his magic goggles to look for imp spies, but never spotted anything. Mort drew a legible, if not artistic, map and explained the workings of the villa as well as he could. There are 9 guards on patrol, in groups of 3. There is a stable in the NW corner, the main house in the center, and gates in the N and S walls. There is a basement off of the kitchen, which is near the NE corner of the house.

He told us we may be able to get his brother to aid our investigation, but it would be risky. He wasn't sure his brother would be willing to sell out his family. We sketched out a loose plan to cause a distraction on one side of the house and try to sneak into the kitchen, then basement. Capt. Zojh thought that would be certain to put everyone on high alert. We discussed it some more and came up with a brilliant strategic compromise. We will have Cas enter the estate as a cat, go into the stables, talk to the animals to get them to cause a ruckus. While that draws the attention of the guards, we sneak into the house. Cas can join us at her leisure as a cat. Hopefully, the guards will quickly settle back into their routine once they don't find any signs of problems in the stable. So we will scout out the estate today to verify Mort's info, and make our way into the estate tomorrow eve!

We went to the Upper City to do our scouting. We used our badges for now to get into the upper city, but we will have to stash them when we put our actual plan into action. As we entered the Upper City, it dawned on me that the Vanthampurs may have already distributed likenesses of myself and 5-11, so we stayed near the gates while Vaneshi and Cas went to check out the villa. While they were gone, 5-11 and myself went looking for some goods of a less common nature. We managed to find a pair of Sending Stones for sale. That will make future endeavors such as this, when our party must split up, much safer for everyone. They were pricey, but I think it will definitely be a worthy investment. When we returned to the gates, the ladies were there waiting on us. Mort's information checked out quite well. The plan is a go.





We made our way back to our inn to meditate on the proper spells and prepare for the assault. As we entered the inn though, I was informed someone was waiting for me. Our former employer had come to collect the box! I was sure of it. I thought furiously as I made my way to the private room he waited in. It was as I feared. He said I was to turn over the box immediately, but I fashioned a brilliant story of half truth and half deception. I convinced him we didn't have the box. That Capt. Zojh had confiscated it and was forcing us to work for him in order to get it back. He was skeptical, but I was brilliant! I pretended to be pained by his threats against Sappy and Zoey - the cowardly traitors! - and that I would "do my best" to retrieve the box by tomorrow.

After he left, we retired to my room, and I explained my tapestry of misdirection to the crew. This was the perfect opportunity! We would have to move our plan forward a bit, but we could run our normal plan in the early hours of the morning. If everything went perfect, we could have the evidence we need and present it to the captain, or go find Liara Portiar if we were being pursued. If our plan failed (ha! slim chance) we could take a counterfeit box with us, claiming we were just early to the meeting and anxious to get rid of it as we had to snatch it from the captain and the guard may be looking for us. When they take it and discover its a fake, well, how were we supposed to know? It fit the description and we were not told what it contains! Ah, a masterful plan and backup, just in case.

This backup DID require a convincing fake box though, so we decided to prevent being spied upon, I would take the real box, hide it somewhere, get a fake, and return to the inn. That way, only I know the location of the real box, and no spies could overhear our plan and take advantage. All we needed was a distraction so I could get out of the inn.

I went to the bar and sat down to wait for the action to begin. I didn't really think this was necessary, but its always better to be safe than dead! Moments later, Cas walks into the room and turns into a giant spider! I think Vaneshi will need a change of clothes after this. She is apparently not a fan of spiders. Huh. Anyway, as she changed, 5-11 began running around the room screaming "Bloody Murder!". Don't misunderstand me. He didn't run around screaming as IF he was being murdered, he literally ran about screaming the words "bloody murder". I can't tell if he is that unaware, or if he is playing us all for fools.... Anyway, against all odds, Cas spotted not one, but 2 imps when she shape shifted! Apparently a spider's Blind Sight can spot the little buggers. That could be a very useful skill in the future. Even MORE

surprising, she reacted almost instantly and managed to shoot a web and capture one of them, which 5-11 quickly stomped on and put it out of our misery. The other became visible to the rest of us as a crow and streaked out of the inn.

I picked my jaw up off of the ground at this unforseen confrontation, and lost myself in the crowd running for the door. After being as sure as I could that I wasn't being followed, I went back to the shop 5-11 and I were in previously. I found a very similar puzzle box for sale for a Ridiculous Amount of gold. I managed to bargain him down to Simply Exorbitant, and went on about my business. I put the flask of alchemist's fire inside of the box as a possible little surprise, but more importantly, to make our fake seem to be a weight that would suggest it actually contained SOMETHING. I then took the real box to [REDACTED]. With the fake safely in hand, and the real treasure hidden away, I returned to the inn. Tomorrow, we make our way into the dreaded lair of the Vanthampurs to find evidence of their treachery against the city, and possibly even an answer to this damned box and what resides within, so desperately seeking to get out!

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Captain Zojh let me try his magic goggles!
- Was able to buy Sending Stones to communicate within the group. They remind me of my homeworld.
- Dagnaris was a Double Agent for both the Flaming Fist and the Vanthampurs! I guess this makes me a Double Agent too?
- With my work for the Pathfinders, does this make me a Triple Agent? Is that a record?
- We created a diversion so that Dagnaris could sneak away from any invisible imps. My performance was both subtle and effective.
- I found out that Vaneshi is afraid of spiders. If we run into a fire spider we are in trouble!

ENTRY 7

So we awoke this morning ready to enact our bold plan! We set off, strangely unhindered, to the Upper City. The guards passed us through with hardly a glance, recognizing us from our previous visit. We made our way near the estate, then everyone except Cas settled in to wait for the signal. Cas went on to the estate to trigger the distraction. It took long enough that I was beginning to get nervous, but at last we heard a huge ruckus, and quickly headed to the gate....and that's when things began to get back to normal.

I asked 5-11 to boost me up so I could see over the gate to check if the coast was clear. He did. With gusto. He actually flung me well OVER the gate! I grabbed at the gate as I sailed over the top, but to little beneficial effect. I only accomplished sending myself into a windmilling stone, falling back to earth, cussing my muscle-bound companion. To add insult to injury, the gate was not locked. The only upside, was the guards were well and truly distracted by the rampaging horses. I dusted myself off, opened the gate, and ran to check the front door, which was indeed locked. It opened quite easily, and we darted inside as a couple of guards came charging around the corner pursuing one of the horses.

We thought we had a moment to catch our collective breaths, but were immediately assailed by several imps hiding in the entryway! We dispatched them quickly, but not before the little monsters managed to do a fair bit of damage to the group.



This, of course, just lead to the next disaster. In walks the butler with his nose in the air. While 5-11 failed miserably at ... whatever he was attempting, speaking to Sir Butt Ler, I hid the imp carcasses in the vases around the entry. Then I just gagged the butler and escorted him into the servant's quarters in the next room over. We tied him to the bed while reassuring him he would not be harmed.

Next came the kitchen. It was inhabited by the cook and the cat. I chose to ignore the cat, but jumped on the surprisingly stout cook, muffling her shouts, and instructed her to give me a piggyback ride back to the servants quarters, quietly. She complied and we gagged her so she could join Sir Butt Ler in a little nap while we explored. As if we didn't have enough problems at this point, 5-11 decided to stop and feed the damned cat! Which then decided to attach itself to 5-11 as we proceeded to the basement.



We found a plethora of crates there, just as Cas had told us. We began to check them out, looking for incriminating evidence, besides imp corpses, but only found more LIVE imps, waiting to burst out of the crates as soon as we touched them. They were a different type of imp, with spiked tails, but we dispatched these little pests too. I began to worry we were taking too long to get anywhere, and not finding ANYTHING, but we were well and truly committed to the path now, with little hope of the backup plain being of any use. The cook and butler screwed up that beautiful idea! People truly have no respect for my strategic genius.

There were 2 doors leading out of the main basement room. We chose the heavier, iron door and quickly found a couple of guards coming up the hallway. We sneaked up to the corner and surprised them as they came around the corner. They didn't put up much of a fight, but they also didn't offer us any evidence either. Very unhelpful chaps. So, our search goes on, while time grows short! We need to quickly find some solid evidence, and make a quick getaway before they call in the reinforcements!

5-11's NOTES

Things Learned:

- Met a new friend. He is furry and has wings. He needs a better name. I don't know many names.
- We need a better way of seeing imps.
- We need to get magic or silvered weapons. Our weapons and magic weren't effective against the fiends.





SESSION 8

We were again presented with two choices: go north, or south. We chose south. At first, this direction presented us with very little help or excitement. Then we came across the prison! There was a devil jailer watching over some prisoners, but we couldn't tell who. If they found these people important enough to guard, then we definitely needed to liberate the poor souls, even beyond just not leaving them to the gentle care of a devil!

We used our dispatched guards' uniforms to convince the jailer to let us in. Vaneshi began to converse through the door with the ugly purple beast in some foul-sounding language. It eventually let Vaneshi and Cascadazul lead 5-11 in, as if he were their prisoner. I stayed behind in the shadows. Before they could lock 5-11 in a cell, I leapt on the purple devil and plunged my rapier into its back! It grunted in irritation, and its beard flailed about wildly, but it didn't seem overly distressed at this sudden attack, so I slipped back into the shadows. We slowly wore the tough beast down until Vaneshi suddenly unleashed a holy storm upon and left little behind except his weapon and key ring.

Inside the various cells, we found the following prisoners. Satir Thione Hhune is an elderly patriarch of the city. She was being held as ransom to keep her family in line while Vanthampur tried to snatch the seat of grand duke. Falaster Fisk was sent by Sylvira Savikas of Candlekeep to investigate the Vanthampurs and, if possible, steal the Devil's Contract that they suspected would secure Vanthampur's rule of Baldur's Gate.

Fisk has guessed from our conversations that our box contains the contract. Its possible, but I'm still not convinced its a good idea to open it to found out. He believes Sylvira can open it safely. We will consider it.

We also found 2 other sad souls locked away. Sappi and Zoey! They admitted to conspiring with the Vanthampurs to get the box from us for a better price. Neither believed we would turn it over, so they sought to improve their pay, but were instead rewarded with rooms without a view. The other prisoners say their story lines up with their observations, and they didn't seem like the dastardly type from our time together. They just seemed like trouble.

Fisk has agreed to make us a decent map of this lair and wants to help us find better evidence than just their testimony. We plan to send Satir out with Sappi and Zoey as protection, and continue on with Fisk hanging about. He seems a useful type, if a bit on the back side of his adventuring days. Hopefully, Satir's position as a patriarch as well as whatever else we can find down here will prove sufficient to bring down this odious family.

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- Vaneshi vaporised a devil!
- Slobberchops can talk! Can he converse or is he like a parrot?
- Sappi and Zoey betrayed us! I did even know that was a possibility. What else have I trusted?



ENTRY 9

He headed to the southern exit on the map and found a metal grate covering the exit. With a crowbar and a little elbow grease, we made the gap between bars large enough to squeeze through. We sent Satir, Sappi and Zoey on their way. The rest of us continued down the hall to look for additional evidence. We

managed to avoid the patrolling guards, but could not find the secret entrance into the marked room. After fumbling around for a time and referring back to the map frequently, we decided to move on. We found a southern room locked a little way further down the hall. We managed to unlock that door and get inside before the guards came back around.

Inside we found Thavius Creeg! He seemed to be in good physical condition, but his shadow looked like a fat devil. We could not divine his exact ailment, but it quickly became obvious he was as corrupted as we were led to believe. While we were speaking to him, the shield on the wall began speaking to us telepathically. It warned us Thavius was up to no good. It informed us it was a celestial being named Hidden Lord, and it offered to assist us in getting to Elturel, which is now in Avernus. This was a good-news, bad-news situation. It was good that the city is still intact, but it was quite disconcerting to find out a whole city had been transported not only to another realm, but to Avernus! We tied up Thavius, gagged him, and searched the room. We found a nice cache of Vanthampur treasure to avail ourselves of, collected the Hidden Lord shield from the wall, and prepared to continue our hunt.



TREASURE

Item	#	Value
Azurite Gemstones	20	10gp
Glaive	1	???
Pieces of a Dagger named Fang	2	250gp
Electrum Ingots	30	10gp
Potions of Healing	2	25gp
Shield of the Hidden Lord	1	???
Silver Dagger	2	???

We next checked another southern room. It appeared to be a summoning circle for some sort of pit fiend. We just assumed if we summoned it, it would be less than willing to testify against the Vanthampurs without compensation we were unwilling to give. So we sneaked up to the main temple, but found it was filled with fanatics chanting praises to the arch devil Zariel. We had no desire to interrupt such a solemn gathering, so we checked the living quarters on the map.

We had a little more success here. It seemed to be Thavius local residence, or at least the desk was littered with his correspondence, as well as a holy symbol of Torm in the footlocker. The only other thing of note was a book titled Apocalyptic.



TREASURE

Item	#	Value
Book Titled "Apocalypto"	1	???
Holy Symbol of Torm	1	???

We decided we had probably overstayed our welcome, so we decided to recover Thavius and head out. Before we got far though, the alarm was raised. We sprinted for the room where we left Thavius. After 5-11 retrieved him like a sack of grain, we sprinted for the sewer exit while being pursued by another devil. We managed to get most everyone through the grate just as it turned the corner. 5-11 managed to bend the bars back into place while I fended the beast off with my rapier. It was caught halfway through the bars, so 5-11 took that opportunity to liberate its head from its shoulders, which had the positive effect of silencing the wailing nuisance. From there, we wandered through the sewers a bit looking for an exit to the surface. 5-11 seemed to believe Slobberchops was leading us, but I have serious doubts about the navigational skills of that animal. I think we just finally managed to wander out.

We quickly and quietly returned to Captain Jozh and reported everything and everyone we had found. Portiar came in while we were regaling him with our exploits below the surface. She seemed to be impressed and annoyed in equal measure by the things we had discovered, but we were paid handsomely for our efforts. As a whole, everyone agreed that the next logical step would be to retrieve the puzzle box and continue to Candlekeep with Falaster Fisk to see what Syvira could tell us about the box and the events so far. After doing a bit of shopping, that will be our next destination!

5-11's NOTES

Things Learned:

- Dagnaris said opening a wall was a "piece of cake", but he was unable to open the wall marked on Fisk's map. Maybe the wall is broken?
- Thavius Kreeg's body didn't match his shadow. Was he lying or his shadow? I don't trust either of them.
- A shield started to talk to us. It claimed to be a celestial but it looked like a devil. I don't trust it either.
- Is everyone a liar?
- Vaneshi translated chanting about Zariel winning the Blood War. This is information Feeny was after. Hopefully I will learn more.
- Slobberchops is a good navigator. I paid him with fish.
- We learned that the talking shield can make fire. I didn't want to hold that thing any longer.

ENTRY 10

I don't understand. Everything was going so well. We were on our way to saving the entire realm from the machinations of Avernum and their human puppets....then a simple trip from Baldur's Gate to Candlekeep unraveled the whole thing.

We started to leave town, and Falaster suddenly remembered he needed gear from his house. We went back and retrieved his gear, and started again. Then Vaneshi was suddenly overcome with a need to commune with her ... Boss? Guardian Spirit? God? Whatever. She just stopped in the middle of the road, dismounted, and walked off talking to the air. We didn't want to draw the ire of ANY gods, considering our current task, so we waited patiently for her to stop mumbling to herself.

Off we go again....for maybe 10 minutes before my horse through a shoe. Luckily, Cascadazul knows enough about animals, and we had the supplies to repair the problem without turning around. Except now, we had wasted so much time, we decided we might as well stay put for a meal before getting moving again.

FINALLY, we mounted up and were on our way....for a short time. Then this farmer with his cart came over the hill, glaring daggers at us, as if WE looked like brigands or beggars in his way. When he drew near us, before I could speak up to alay the poor fool's fears, he FLEW up out of the wagon and transformed into a winged devil. Three humans jumped out of the wagon and looked ready for a fight. Well, this suited me just fine. I was ready to find something squishy to bury my daggers and my frustrations in!

The fight went our way pretty quickly, as Vaneshi used Hidden Lord to summon a wall of flame to consume the humans while we harried the devil about. The devil did seem particularly interested in Vaneshi and the Hidden Lord. I get the impression he might either be important to their plans, or could be a key to STOPPING their plan. Either way, we should take special care to keep him close. Besides, he seems like quite a useful fellow to have around!

That seemed to be the end of our bad luck, as the rest of the trip was quite uneventful and we arrived safely at Candlekeep. Now we just need to gain admittance and find Sylvira.

5-11'S NOTES

Things Learned:

- We can't even trust simple farmers!
- Vaneshi made a Wall of Flame right next to me! Does she realize how dangerous that is?
- Vaneshi told us the story about how then the Angel Zariel saved Elturel and about the origin of the Hellriders.
- She seemed offended when I asked if she was with Zariel a hundred years ago.



APPENDIX A: QUESTS

ALL QUESTS

Quest	Giver	Promised Reward	Status
Wipe Out the Dead Three Cult	Captain Zojh	200g Each	Paid
Gather Evidence on Thalamra Vanthampur	Captain Zojh	200g Each	Paid
Talk to Sylvira Savikas about the contents of the puzzle box.	Falaster Fisk	Gold or Magic Items	In Progress



APPENDIX B: TREASURE

ALL TREASURE FOUND

Item	#	Value Each	Status/Location
Alchemist Fire (Flask)	3	50g	Split
Azurite Gemstones	20	10gp	Sold
Book Titled "Apocalypto"	1	???	Cascadazul
Bronze Crown	1	250g	5-11
Cat-Eye Agate	10	10g	Sold
Caltrops	1	1g	5-11
Electrum Ingots	30	10gp	Sold
Glaive (Infernal)	1	???	5-11
Holy Symbol of Torm	1	???	Vaneshi
Iris of the Oracle	1	???	Taken By Sappi
Necklace	2	25g	Sold
Pieces of a Dagger named Fang	2	250gp	Vaneshi
Potion of Fire Breath	2	25g	Dagnaris
Potion of Healing	6	25g	Split
Porcelain Dragon Mask	1	25g	Cascadazul
Puzzle Box	1	???	Dagnaris
Ring	1	125g	Sold
Shield of the Hidden Lord	1	???	Vaneshi
Silver Dagger	2	???	Dagnaris
Silvered Flail	1	110g	Sold
Spellbooks	4	1950g	Sold



APPENDIX C: CHARACTERS

5-11

A member of Dagnaris' Party. A warforged from a far away land.

AMRICK VANTHAMPUR

The son of Thalamra Vanthampur and brother of Mortlock.

BALASAR JHARTHAXYN

Biographer, Scholar, Adventurer and Writer. Author of this historically significant document. Daring Dragonborn. Confidant of Kings. Editor of the Royal Gazette of Who's Who in the Sword Coast.

CAPTAIN ZOJH

A Captain in the Flaming Fist. Tasked the group with destroying the Cult of the Dead Three.

CASCADAZUL

A member of Dagnaris' Party. A Druid on a research expedition from her elven home.

CASTER MORDEN

A Rug Merchant that hired the group to protect his carts on the trip from Waterdeep to Balder's Gate.

DAGNARIS DREAMCHASER

A curious halfling whose adventures inspired this tome.

FALASTER FISK

A prisoner rescued from a prison below the Vanthampur Villa. Pointed the party toward Sylvira Savikas at Candlekeep.

KLEM JASO

A man the group saved from torture in the catacombs below the bathhouse. Offered a reward at a later time.

LIARA PORTIAR

A member of the Flaming Fist and Uldar Ravengards replacement as leader.

MORTLOCK VANTHAMPUR

The son of Thalmara Vanthampur. Rescued by Dagnaris and crew in the catacombs below the city.

SAPPI COGSWORTH

A former member of Dagnaris' Party. A gnome artificer from the island of Lantan. Betrayed the party and was rescued from the Vanthampur prison.

SATIR THIONE-HHUNE

A prisoner rescued from a prison below the Vanthampur Villa. An opponent of Thalamr Vanthampur.

SEBASTION SMITH

A member of the flaming fist. The son of a couple that the group helped outside of Baldur's Gate.

SYLVIRA SAVIKAS

A sage who operates out of Candlekeep. She has been monitoring devil activity in Baldur's Gate and Elturel.

THALAMRA VANTHAMPUR

Head of the Vanthampur Patriar. Conspired with Thavius Kreeg to kill Uldar Ravengard and is attempting to take over the Flaming Fists.

THAVIUS KREEG

Leader of the city of Elturel. Last seen fleeing the city. Conspired with the Vanthampurs to kill Uldar Ravengard. Found by the party underneath the Vanthampur Villa. Seems to have the shadow of a devil.

THURSTWELL VANTHAMPUR

Son of Thalamra Vanthampur and brother of Mortlock. Has invisible imp spies throughout Balder's Gate.

TURINA

An informant at the Elfsong Tavern in Baldur's Gate. Possibly a member of a pirate group.

ULDAR RAVENGARD

Former Grand Duke and leader of the Flaming Fist in Baldur's Gate. Last seen in Elturel.

VAAZ

A faceless assassin sent to kill Mortlock Vanthampur.

VANESHI

A member of Dagnaris' Party. An Aassimar cleric and Hell Rider from the lost city of Elturel.

VENDETTA CRESS

A tiefling that was rescued from a torture chamber in the catacombs below Baldur's Gate.

ZOEY

A former member of Dagnaris' Party. An enigmatic elven archer. Betrayed the party and was rescued from the Vanthampur prison.