



TO HELL ... AND BACK?

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARIES OF DAGNARIS DREAMCHASER. COMPILED BY BALASAR JHARTHRAXYN
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

Our 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 WARFORGED 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 whether 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.

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!

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.

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 catecomb.
- Fire! A room of fire. Will not go back!

TREASURE

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



ENTRY 3

Life 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 writings 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 abandon us?
- Did Sappi abandon 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 patriar 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 Mortl.

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 Mort, 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.



APPENDIX A: QUESTS

ALL QUESTS

Quest	Giver	Promised Reward	Status
Wipe Out the Dead Three Cult	Captain Zojh	200g Each	Waiting on Pay
Gather Evidence on Thalamra Vanthampur	Captain Zojh	200g Each	In Progress



APPENDIX B: TREASURE

ALL TREASURE FOUND

Item	#	Value Each	Status/Location
Alchemist Fire (Flask)	3	50g	Split
Bronze Crown	1	250g	5-11
Cat-Eye Agate	10	10g	Sold
Caltrops	1	1g	5-11
Iris of the Oracle	1	???	Taken By Sappi
Necklace	2	25g	Sold
Potion of Fire Breath	2	25g	Dagnaris
Potion of Healing	4	25g	Split
Porcelain Dragon Mask	1	25g	Cascadazul
Puzzle Box	1	???	Dagnaris
Ring	1	125g	Sold
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 JHARTHRAXYN

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.

KLEM JASO

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

MORTLOCK VANTHAMPER

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

SEBASTION SMITH

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

SAPPI COGSWORTH

A former member of Dagnaris' Party. A gnome artificer from the island of Lantan.

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.

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 Balder's Gate. Possibly a member of a pirate group.

ULDAR RAVENGARD

Former Grand Duke and leader of the Flaming Fist in Balder'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 Balder's Gate.

ZOEY

A former member of Dagnaris' Party. An enigmatic elven archer.

