

The account of a simple dwarven adventurer is rare; most dwarves do not take the time to write their feelings and insights towards their day. Durifyur Egadoras is a noted exception. After his father joined Bruenor and died reclaiming Mithril Hall from the Duregar 16 years ago, Durifyur swore to train his body and mind in the ways of adventure. He also swore to write it all in this journal. How far will Duri make it?

Journal – Midwinter

I celebrate a newfound independence today as I celebrate Midwinter. The day started normally enough for a big holiday. King Bruenor spared little expense to celebrate the midpoint of winter in Mithril Hall, and casks of ale flowed with the scent of mead and roast pig and turkey lending solace to the usual dank and forgey smell of the mines. One of the captains had slain a dire boar a few days prior, and the size of the spit alone was awe-inspiring. Through a bit of a drunken haze we welcomed a messenger from Neverwinter. This messenger brought us good tidings of Drizzt Do'Urden, and we were pleased to hear that the dark elf-friend was planning a visit on the first day of Tarsakh. The Midwinter renewal of the friendship between the dark elf and our King made Bruenor very pleased, and the revelry began anew. Drizzt was known to us for his aid to Bruenor in the recapture of this Hall, and the entirety of Mithril Hall was excited to welcome Drizzt's visit. Later in the evening, King Bruenor summoned me to his side for a chat. He told me that he had been watching my progress in training, but had noted that I had the same wanderlust he had felt in his younger days. I assured him that my loyalty was to Mithril Hall, and after a chuckle and another swig of his ale, he told me that I would serve the Hall from the field. I was to leave Mithril Hall in search of adventure and valor; one of the first adventurers spared from the newly recovered Mithril Hall. My first task was to speak with Grumdin, a dwarven spiritmaster in Waterdeep. Master Grumdin was the brewer of Grumdin's Stonebite Spirit, a favorite of Drizzt. Although the trip to Waterdeep was long, King Bruenor entrusted me to return a cask of this spirit to the Hall before the return of Drizzt. After my return, I would be free to adventure and aid others as I saw fit. I gathered my sparse equipment, my new Waraxe that was masterfully made by Ribbin the Smith, and the letter from Bruenor for Grumdin in regards to releasing a cask of spirits to me and bedded down for the last time in at least the next month here in Mithril Hall.

Alturiak (Gregorian equivalent = February) was a month for new beginnings for Durifyur. Perhaps it was fate that ran him into a man, an elf, an avariel, and an air genasi. Perhaps just bad timing. Perhaps his journal explains it all.

Journal – Alturiak 15

After a tenday and a half of light travel, I have arrived in Waterdeep. The City of Splendors is a bit much for me, so I wasted no time in finding Grumdin's shop. After asking a few friendly townsfolk the way, I found the shop with little trouble. Grumdin was happy to make acquaintance with a trusted servant of King Bruenor, and after a half day's worth of talking about

Mithril Hall and drinking a good assortment of wines, ales, and spirits, I slept peacefully as a guest in Grumdin's house.

Journal – Alturiak 16

After a good night's sleep, I loaded two casks of spirits on my pony and left Waterdeep with Grumdin's blessing. Waterdeep was an interesting place, but too big for my liking. Fortunately for me, Grumdin was very generous and after provisioning me, he gave me two healing potions to help me find my way back to Mithril Hall. If I ever return to Waterdeep, I will be sure to repay Grumdin's generosity and kindness.

Journal – Alturiak 25

My travels have been swift, yet surprisingly quiet, and I have begun to wonder if there is any adventure to be had in North. Today's journey has been another day of the same for me and my pony, passing only a few travelers and merchants along my way. Night made this day noteworthy as I met a strange yet benevolent fellow along the path a few days west of Everlund.

I was nearly ready to settle down for the night when I heard a bit of a commotion from ahead. I ran to the sound of battle to find a lone man fighting off two starved wolves. Although the man seemed to have some prowess with his weapon, a spiked chain no less, he was outnumbered by the hungry wolves and was about to be surrounded when I arrived. I entered the fray with axes flailing, and after felling one wolf, the other decided that he was not hungry enough to die. After the battle I introduced myself to the man, and he introduced himself to me as "Silent Feather". I assumed that the name was some sort of tribal designation and that the man was from a nearby Uthgardt tribe, but actually the man was born in Calimshan and had moved to the North with his mother to avoid prejudice for what he was. It seems that he was the product of a human woman and a Djinn; a creature called a Genasi. His specific element seemed to be air, and after a demonstration of his levitation abilities and his ability to not breathe, he seemed to be a bit strange yet strong and stalwart. Although I had only just met him, I felt a strange sense of trust, and after learning that he traveled the same direction as me, we decided to travel together at least to Everlund.

Journal – Alturiak 28

Silent Feather, or Si, and I arrived in Everlund today after a brief scuffle with some goblins outside of town. We quickly learned that a small organization of Goblins had set up camp inside of The Great Wood to the south, and that adventurers were being sought to find a lost emissary of Everlund who went to speak with Turlund the Treant about this new threat. Although the Ale needed to make it to Mithril Hall by the end of Ches, I knew that my services were needed in Everlund, and I was happy to find that Si was also interested in helping. I found a scout who knew the way to Mithril Hall, and contracted him to finish the delivery for me so I could stay to aid Everlund. Si and I made acquaintance with Dumeye, a large human who headed up the

guard in Everlund. He decided to help us gain audience with the council in order to learn how we might help find the emissary. We would meet with them in the morning, and leave for The Great Wood soon after. I decided to turn in early as I was not sure of the next time my body would find a down mattress and my head a feathered pillow.

Journal – Alturiak 29

Morning found Si and me breaking fast and meeting with Dumeye shortly after. We were on our way to the audience when a bit of a scare hit the people of Everlund. An Avariel, which is a winged elf, flew into town pretending to be an angel. I immediately recognized him as the son of Haradir Anwemane, a powerful Avariel wizard and nearby staunch ally of Mithril Hall who kept an eyrie and wizard spire in the mountains just north of the Hall. In order to have a bit of fun, I told the townsfolk that he was a trickster, and after a bit of banter, I almost got him shot. Fortunately I have trained well in the arts of defending others and was able to block the arrow with my shield as it came in. The Avariel introduced himself as Kirian, Son of Haradir, and had come to join my cause and deliver a message from my King. It appears that my thoughts were the same as King Bruenor, as he had requested that I stay in Everlund to offer the aid of Mithril Hall in the impending threat to Everlund. I was pleased with myself that I had thought of the same idea before King Bruenor could direct me and I took it as a sign of my maturity in the ways of adventuring. Also, an elven ranger and a human sorcerer brought the corpses of an unfortunate dwarf and elf to town from the elven town of Greendale. They also wished to see the council, although they did not have an audience. After meeting with the council I decided to introduce them, and in doing so I learned that the elf was named Nym and the human Rafe. We learned that the head councilman had sent the emissary to speak with Turlund in order to learn of the encroachment of the forest over the ruins of Hellgate Keep and also for his guidance and blessing in the destruction of this new goblin threat, but the emissary and his entourage of guards had not been heard from in nearly two tendays. We were to find the emissary and any of his guards and either bring news and proof of their demise or escort them to Everlund. Kirian, Si, and I decided to aid Everlund, and Nym and Rafe decided to get the guidance of their council in Greendale before offering their aid. We resolved to stock up and begin the travel to Greendale later today.

Ches (Gregorian equivalent of March) was fairly calm weatherwise in the North, but many dangers faced the newly-formed party, from goblins to green dragons, and grizzly bears to owlbears. Who stood valiantly? Who blew dirt bubbles? Only Durifyur can tell...

Journal – Ches 2

After a few small skirmishes, we arrived in Greendale. We had an audience with Quariis, an elven wizard who led the council in Greendale. After speaking with him, we learned that the Emissary from Everlund never made it to speak with Turlund, and that the goblin stronghold located two days east through the heavy forest was the best guess as to where they might have been waylaid. Quariis was very interested in ridding his area of this new threat, and told us that

according to his scouts, the leader of the goblin stronghold would be wearing red robes and was a spell caster of some sort. We negotiated a 1,000 gold piece reward for the eradication of the stronghold, as well as 25 gold pieces per goblin scalp and the reward of an unnamed magical item for the return of the goblin spell caster alive. Although Nym and Rafe were a bit hesitant to accept money from their hometown, they eventually decided to travel with us as companions and guides in order to reach the stronghold.

Journal – Ches 3

We left for the goblin stronghold today after being given a 200 gold piece limit to restock our provisions. I used mine for 4 healing potions. We found travel to be very difficult through the undergrowth and snow, but we made the best time we could. Nym decided to scout ahead and alarm us to any danger along the way. Sometime in the early afternoon, we halted at the sound of a rustle in the forest ahead. Some of the animals seemed frightened, and the ranger had stopped ahead and began peering into the trees. We were all taken aback to discover that we were being hunted by a Green Dragon! Although he was fairly young he was still very dangerous, especially as Nym found himself facing the creature alone. I sprinted as fast as I could through the snow and bushes, and I learned the potency of the acidic cloud that the Green Dragon could spew forth. It fell Si and corroded my very skin and muscle as it enveloped me and found its way into my lungs. I stood strong however, and continued to make my way to the dragon. By the time I was able to reach it, the Green was quite wounded from the sword strikes of Nym and the magical blasts from Kirian and Rafe. I took a swing at it as I charged up, but was not able to penetrate its thick scales. The dragon knew that it was outmatched and asked me for quarter. I knew that a dragon never forgets a defeat and that we may be hard-pressed to fight it again when it came looking for us as an adult, so I refused its request. He struck me in rage, but I was able to withstand the sharp claws as they bit into my tough skin. Si found his feet after Kirian administered a potion to him, and the Avariel flew up to the dragon shortly after and struck it with his barbed whip dagger. The blow, although not very strong, was enough to break the heavily wounded spirit of the dragon, and he fell. After celebrating our victory, Nym tracked back to the dragon's lair, and we found a good sized fortune as well as a safe place to wait out the night. We decided to set camp early as this would be a very defensible area.

Journal – Ches 4

Today we awoke to an interruption by some gnomes. Although they seemed friendly enough, they certainly disturbed my morning ritual and forced my to don my armor a bit faster than I would have liked. Fortunately, the gnomes proved to be of no threat. They also proved to be of little help. They knew very little about the goblin camp that we were set upon, and other than the shock they displayed that the Green Dragon had been vanquished, they seemed pretty useless. After a bit of breakfast, the gnome scouts parted ways and we continued east into the forest.

We were accosted time and again by creatures along the way. First, we ran into a pair of strange, large cat-like creatures that were able to peel their flesh off from their skulls during their attacks. This startled Si, but we had little problem defeating the creatures that Nym had called Krenshars. Next, we were attacked by an orcish raiding party. Although they fought fairly organized, they did not seem to have any association with the goblins we were hunting. One of the archers sported a composite bow that was strung much tighter than a standard bow, and Si was eager to make use of it. At the bottom of a valley with a small clearing, we ran into a trio of goblin zombies. This was a bit unsettling; however they did not prove to be any more difficult to defeat than their breathing counterparts. Finally, we made it to the goblin encampment.

Nym scouted ahead with the help of a potion of hiding offered by Si. The stronghold was still fairly small and lightly defended, so we all scurried into position near lookout towers. Kirian took wing above the canopy of trees, and I decided that diplomacy might get us in and out with the captives better than the sword and axe would. I walked into the clearing and saw four small huts, a large building which appeared to belong to the leader of this stronghold, four lookout posts (three of which were under close aim by Rafe, Nym, and Si), and, disturbingly, an unlit burning pyre with three men tied to it. I tried to negotiate, scare, deal, and bluff with the goblins, but they were too stupid to reason, and with a blow from my horn, my party jumped into action. I ran for cover as crossbow bolts struck around me. Nym and Rafe handled their goblin lookouts quickly, and Si levitated up and threw his to the ground. Kirian flew into my aid as I had attracted a small cadre of goblin fighters. He cast a spell full of light which knocked two of my assailants unconscious. Then, out of the large building, an ogre burst followed by the robed goblin and two guards. We were all taken aback, and I knew that I had to close in with this ogre and use the tactics I was trained in at Mithril Hall in fighting giants. I tried to make it to him, but was unable to reach him before he knocked Si unconscious and headed toward Nym. Once again, Kirian made himself useful by entangling the spell caster with an alchemical goo and going to the aid of Si. I reasoned that I might be able to stop the ogre if I could threaten the now helpless goblin leader. I put my axe to his throat as he called for surrender, but the ogre paid no heed. I could only watch as Nym single-handedly fought the large creature. What I did not know was that Nym has studied and trained hard in the arts of fighting giants and knew better than I where their weaknesses lied. Nym took the beast down, and the remaining goblins decided to surrender. We tied them up and looted their treasure. The three men were unconscious but alive, and one of them appeared to be the emissary we were searching for. After scalping the dead goblins for their bounty, we prepared to head back toward Greendale to claim our reward.

Journal – Ches 5

We awoke the next morning to a nice late winter day. The air had only a faint chill to it, and the dusting of snow we had grown so accustomed to in the morning was not present. Grim Graycastle, the emissary from Everlund; Houn, the cousin of the councilman from Everlund; and the other two guards were preparing to continue their quest to speak with Turlang the Treant. They did not ask us for assistance, but Kirian and I felt responsible enough to make sure they

made their journey the rest of the way. Nym, Rafe, and Si decided to stay at the camp to rest and wait for any goblin scouting parties that might straggle in so they could catch them unawares. We parted ways with the other three and set out further east.

The trip went fairly quick despite the overwhelming silence in the air. I think we were all simply too weary from battle and they from imprisonment to do much else than scan the trees for new threats and pick our way through the underbrush. It was a full eight hours into the woods when we arrived at Turlang's Grove. Signs of spring were even more prevalent; the air had less chill, the trees looked as though they were about to bloom, and the ground had only a few patches of snow where green grass had already begun to grow. Grim and his party thanked us for our aid and assured us that they would be able to take it the rest of the way. I believe they were nervous about the effect my large axe would have on the living sentient trees in the clearing; I agreed. Before he left, he wrote a letter to the council in Everlund which explained the whole situation and confirmed our aid. He emblazoned a sigil on the letter with a quick spell, rolled it up, and handed it to me as he said goodbye. Kirian and I decided to try and make it back to the goblin camp as it was only late afternoon and the travel had been relatively light. So, we turned around and hiked back the way we had just come. Kirian spent some of the time flying ahead, and after fifteen minutes or so I would catch up to him resting or drinking. We did make it back to camp, albeit quite late, and we both turned in for the night.

Journal – Ches 6

After sleeping the entire morning and part of the afternoon away under the watchful eyes of our companions, Kirian and I decided to wake up and join the party as they headed westward towards Greendale. I had the unpleasant charge of carrying the goblin sorcerer we were to bring to Greendale. We had only been on the trail a short time when we heard loud rustling in the brush ahead. It was a pair of grizzly bears, and they and their cubs looked hungry. Apparently we looked like food to the hungry bears and they charged. Si and I held up the front while Nym shot arrows precisely over our heads and around our arms and Kirian and Rafe struck out with their spells. Standing toe to toe with a bear was a bit daunting, but I kept my focus and swung my axe defensively as I struck. I heard and felt the pounding on my shield as the bear frantically tried to break through it, but he was not successful as my party and I continued to rain pain upon it. Si fared worse, and he took some incredible wounds. He backed a bit away from the fray and drank some potions which mended the wounds at the same instant as he was delivering more to the bear. Finally, the bear facing Si gave up and ran, and shortly after the one in front of me took the same opportunity. Although I had a nasty wound of my own, I knew that the bears were only trying to feed their cubs and I hoped they would find some easier prey soon as they licked their wounds and fled. We traveled the rest of the day, bringing Greendale ever closer. We decided to set camp.

I was awakened by the feeling of teeth entering my leg and venom coursing through my veins. As we slept, we were ambushed by three monstrous spiders each the size of a wolf! Kirian also got bit, and nearly fell out of the tree he was sleeping in. The wound, although much similar to

mine in appearance, obviously affected the Avariel much more heavily; he struggled to find his footing. The venom I had simply dismissed found its way to Kirian's heart and had begun to sap his strength. Rafe was also bit, and although he looked considerably better for the wear than Kirian, I still feared for his safety. Si, Nym, and I put up a quick defense, and made short work of two of the spiders. The one that was left had bitten the goblin sorcerer and he fell unconscious. With some more quick work, we scared that spider away and Nym tended to the goblin. Kirian looked even paler, so he drank a vial of antitoxin and Rafe cast a spell upon him to bolster his immune system. I watched him for a couple of minutes very closely, and even with the chemical and magical bolstering, I feared that Kirian had fallen further to the venom. He looked very pale and began sweating and shivering. We rested the remainder of the night, but I barely slept; I kept one eye open and fixed on Kirian as he tossed and turned.

Journal – Ches 7

The weather had turned a bit to the worse as we prepared to travel the remainder of the way to Greendale. The familiar chill had found its way back into my bones, and sleet and rain fell steadily. Kirian's condition had improved; he had stopped shivering and the sweat that had beaded upon his forehead was no more. He still looked a bit weak though as he struggled to gain his equilibrium and nearly fell over when he stretched his wings. The goblin looked even worse after his bite. His face was drawn and pale; his eyes twitched in a furtive unconsciousness. Nevertheless, I slung him over my shoulder and led the way towards Greendale. We traveled as quickly as we could, but the rain and sleet made our footing uneasy and Kirian needed to stop more frequently. Fortunately our lack of good time was countered by our uneventful travel, and we reached Greendale in the late afternoon. The captain of the guard took the goblin away, and we were ushered in to see the council. They were most pleased with our work and awarded us 1,400 gold pieces; 1,000 for completing our task and 400 for the 16 goblin scalps we brought. We were lodged and dined, and then we turned in for a long rest. Nym tended Kirian's poison with some herbs and stayed up for at least as long as I did. Nym's ability as a healer was much appreciated and I was a bit surprised that we had such a need for his skills. Rafe counted out our coins into equal shares from our previous adventures and then counted out three even shares from the reward money. We didn't argue, although I certainly felt they deserved the reward. I suppose I would be hesitant to accept money from King Bruenor for the defense of my home as well. Si seemed content to count his money and I believed he stayed up and caroused with the townsfolk. He certainly has proven to be an interesting companion thus far.

Journal – Ches 10

We spent two more days feasting and celebrating our victory with the townsfolk, who had branded us as heroes. We were gifted with a magical ring for each of us. Mine was an elven silver band with a shield emblazoned into it. I felt the sense of combat run through my mind when I put it on, and knew that it was offering an additional protection to me. We drank and feasted with the people of Greendale until this morning, when we decided to leave for Everlund.

Kirian had recovered fantastically from the poison; color had returned to his face and there was a look of strength in his eyes as he easily shouldered his pack.

Travel was fortunately very quiet. The weather cooperated fantastically. Sunshine spilled into the heavy forest, and the sounds of birds chirping to give spring an early welcome began to filter into my ears. Although the path was muddy from the melting, it was fairly easy travel, and after a long stretch of walking we found a nice dry clearing where we set up camp. We bedded down and had just begun to fall asleep when I heard a crashing in the brush to the north. I knew that it was something huge so I wasted no time in blowing my hunting horn. My companions awoke and in that instant a massive spider emerged from the clearing. His body was a full ten foot in diameter, and his legs spread five feet in any direction from his body and stood nearly ten feet from the ground to their hairy tops. My duty was then very clear: I had to hold this monstrosity at bay long enough for my companions to mount an effective counter-offensive. I couldn't delay; I charged in.

Luckily, the beast's teeth darted off of my shield as I approached it, and my axe bit deep into its stomach. On my right, a fire beetle appeared out of nowhere and begun biting at the leg of the spider. Si joined me on my left, and arrow and spell crashed into the spider as I deflected lunge after lunge. Si also attracted some attention after a few strong blows, and I couldn't deflect the blow before it found its mark in Si's shoulder. The spider ripped a large chunk of meat off of Si and he cried out in pain. The venom ran thick down his arm, but amazingly it appeared as if most of it missed the wound. I struck it again, and then I too was bit. The poison was stronger than that of the smaller spiders we had faced the night before, but it still held no sway over me and I simply redoubled my efforts. Nym sized up the spider, drew back an arrow, and let it fly directly into the head of the beast. It clacked, screeched in an otherworldly sound, and fell lifeless to the ground as its legs bent up towards its body. We healed Si and then tracked the spider to its lair where we found an assortment of cocoons in the webbing. We picked up some coin and a few items of use, then went back to our rest.

Journal – Ches 12

Another entire day passed uneventful as we exited The High Forest and followed the River Rauvin west towards Everlund. We fought off the cold and the rain most of yesterday and all of today, and we were thankful to arrive in town tonight. In Everlund, Rafe divided a few more items up out of our party treasure, and we collected the 500 gold pieces from the councilman in exchange for Grim's letter. I took the gems we had acquired to Storm Bladebite, a gemologist and merchant. He gave me a fair price for them: 195 platinum pieces. The offer was over 95 percent of their value and I am sure we will be doing business with Storm again after such a good deal. We then rented some rooms and slept in feathered mattresses again. For as tough as I am, I still appreciate a good feathered mattress with down pillows. I think I might just spend some money when we get to Silverymoon on some creature comforts. I have not really had any since Mithril Hall's celebration of Midwinter. Greendale's party of honor, although certainly fun,

found itself lending more to drink and less to comfort. So, I am overdue indeed to spend some of my newfound wealth.

Journal – Ches 13

The trip to Silvermoon seemed almost effortless; the pass north along the River Rauvin was quite clear and devoid of monsters for us to fight. We arrived in Silvermoon in the early evening, and I went straight to work enjoying myself. I went to the Golden Sun, an exquisite inn near the middle of town, and rented an expensive room. I then went to the Gullywully, an inn of considerable less repute, and drank about 15 ales while flipping coins to the entertainment. I then met Giselle, a fine human woman. She was a bit thick to human standards, but to me she seemed perfect. I found out in conversation that Giselle was a lady of the night, and I procured her “services” for the night for 4 gold pieces. I took her back to the Golden Sun, and after a sharp look of disapproval from the innkeeper, we walked up to my room. Ah, creature comforts. I need to spend more of my money enjoying life I think! Before we began our revelry, my companions and I had decided to travel through to Mithril Hall in order to make Drizzt’s arrival. I knew that I could get in for this party, but we needed some motivation for King Bruenor to treat my new friends as honored guests, too. I bet that I could find some unsavory and dangerous task for us to take that would impress the King and perhaps even make us a few coins the richer. I also needed to talk to Ribbin the Smith; I had over 1,500 gold pieces to put down on a set of Mithril Dwarven Plate. Although a fortune to most, this would but cover a portion of the cost, but I knew its worth in battle. The trip to Mithril Hall is sure to be one worth the time.

Journal – Ches 14

When we awoke, we found that Si was gone. He told Nym that he was going ahead to Mithril Hall. We only have one more day before we get to the Hall, and I am pretty excited. We ate a quick breakfast, broke camp, and headed along our way. We were only on the trail about three hours when Nym noticed smoke in the distance. We rode up to investigate, and found that a small caravan of dwarven traders bearing the device of King Bruenor had been attacked; the carts all overturned, the horses dead and most of my kin lying dead. One still drew breath, albeit barely. He gave us a scroll to give to King Bruenor before he passed away. We could have healed him, but the wagon was atop of him, and we could not have moved it before he perished. Before he died, he told us that a hill giant was responsible for the carnage, and he was easy enough to track. We only went an hour or two into the woods before we found him gorging himself on the spoils of his raid. The fighting was fierce, but we had faced many deadly opponents in the past. One of his blows struck me quite squarely in the shoulder, but I shrugged it off as best as I could. We struggled with the beast until an arrow from Nym ended the creature’s miserable life. His limp, lifeless hand dropped a sack of treasure that was amazing. Some of it assuredly came from the dwarven caravan, so I was happy to reclaim it. We headed back to the caravan to find a Dwarven Paladin of Moradin named Roryn Crownshield guarding the remains. He agreed to stay until we could send a detachment to recover the bodies. We licked our wounds a bit, and then headed off towards Mithril Hall.

Although we were slowed down a bit, we still made the gates in the mountain by nightfall. After alerting the guardsmen about the downed caravan we headed to King Bruenor's private hall. He took the scroll, read it to himself, and although he looked a bit concerned, he said no more to us, and we took leave of the king and found our own lodging.

Journal – Ches 15

Oh, how I have missed my hovel in Mithril Hall. Although the down mattresses of Silverymoon, Waterdeep, and Everlund are most comfortable after a long day's worth of travel, it sure is nice to be home. We have been asked to do a few minor things to get ready for Drizzt's arrival, and we are quite busy. We also met back up with Si, and he has secured a forge from an apprentice of Ribbin in order to make himself a spiked chain of Mithril. I have also spoken to Ribbin, and he has agreed to take over 10,000 gold pieces in exchange for a custom measured suit of Mithril Full Plate. I think I am going to put down the journal for a little while in order to catch up here with my friends and family and to prepare for the party. Nym and Rafe seem a bit uncomfortable in the mines, but they have agreed to stay for a while. Kyrian has left to the Anwemane Spire to visit his father and probably will not be back until the 30th. It is certainly nice to be able to relax and not have to worry about whether we will survive the next mile of trail. Well, I have to see Ribbin for some measurements. I will write again when the celebration begins.

In Tarsakh, the adventurers welcomed spring with a trip into the Moonwood. Lycanthropy and Petrification were only two of the pitfalls that would befall the party. Maybe even another tangle with a dragon? or THREE!! Read on...

Journal – Tarsakh 1

Right on time, Drizzt has arrived! He was welcomed with a grand gathering of dwarves at the main gateways. Survivors and the progeny of those who fell at the reclamation of Mithril Hall were afforded the first meeting of Drizzt, and when he greeted me, he told me he had heard a song of me from a wandering bard in a tavern in Neverwinter. He heard me called "Durifyur Dragonbane." I laughed and told him that it was actually Kirian Anwemane who threw the telling blow, and he chuckled back to me. Then he told me that if he had done half of the things that were told of his exploits he would certainly be dead by now. After a grand lunch, we cracked ales and wines from around Northern Faerun, and began the celebration. I did break for a visit to Ribbin. He spent the morning and most of the afternoon working on my purchase. I told him that he didn't have to work the day away on a day of such revelry, but he told me that Si had spoke with him and told him that the rest of my friends began to grow restless in the mines, so he wanted to be sure the armor was ready for our departure. Kyrian arrived in the evening, and although most of us were quite drunk, he was welcomed and he delivered a gift of Wind Wine to Drizzt from his father. We partied well into the night, and into the next morning. What a grand revelry!!

Journal – Tarsakh 11

We have lingered in Mithril Hall long enough. Ribbin has finished my armor, and it is perfect. Although I am down to my last few gold coins, I am finally armored in a manner fit for a Defender of Moradin. Kyrian arrived last night, spoke with Drizzt for a few hours, and then met with me to tell me he was ready to continue our travels. Si showed off his new spiked chain of his own creation, and I must say I am quite impressed with his handiwork. With the help of Ribbin and a few of his close apprentices, Si's work is quite masterful. We have decided to scout the Moonwood in order to find the cause of the heightened monster activity in the North, as it has always been a source of trouble. Before we left, we thought it wise to tip our weapons with some melted silver pieces. It made my axe a bit dull, but with the prospect of werecreatures in the Moonwood, I knew that it would be worth it until we could get proper silvered weapons. We traveled throughout the night, and we ran into no trouble until the end of the evening. We had settled down, and during Si's watch, we were accosted by 6 wererats. I learned the investment in my very comfortable and very strong full plate in that I am more than comfortable wearing it while I sleep. The wererats bit at me, and more than once I heard the clang of teeth on metal as the werebeasts snapping jaws were repelled by the perfectly matched plates. My axe bit deep into two, Rafe singed one with an orb of fire, Kyrian fell one with a knife fashioned of arcane ice, Si snapped the neck of a fifth with a brilliant chain swipe, and Nym struck one with two arrows in a matter of seconds; it screeched and fell. The whole fight ended in less than a minute, and no one was worse for the wear save Si, who was bitten. He says he is alright, but I will be keeping a close eye on him. We rested the remainder of the night with no attacks.

Journal – Tarsakh 12

We awoke earlier than usual in the Moonwood; I don't think any of us really slept well in this eerie wood. As we broke fast and broke camp, a warrior approached us. Her name was Mara Stormwind, and she is a were-hunting cleric of Selune. It was a welcome sight to see a friendly face, but I kept one hand on my axe. This wood can hide all manner of were-creatures, and when the moon is resting they can appear as normal as the next adventurer. She explained to us that lycanthropes have been more prevalent as of late, and although she has done what she can to thin their numbers, she knows that her defenses and the defenses of the town of Quaervarr cannot hold for long. She has enlisted our aid in finding the source of the heightened attacks. She told us of the Lonely Tower, an abandoned stronghold in the northwest of the Moonwood. Apparently, the Lonely Tower has been occupied by a cult of Malar-worshipping lycanthropes calling themselves the People of the Black Blood. We are to go to Quaervarr in order to properly equip ourselves, then head to the Lonely Tower to rid it of this cult. It is quite a coincidence that the Moonwood has suffered the same increase in monstrous presence that the rest of the North has seen; perhaps it is not as much as a coincidence as we think. Mara has temporarily joined us in order to escort us to Quaervarr, and our journey should take a day and a half or two days. We traveled until nightfall, set up camp, and surprisingly had no encounters throughout the night; a welcome respite.

Journal – Tarsakh 13

Today has been a very trying day on our party, as we faced the most difficult encounter yet to date. Travel was easy; the weather had been fairly calm in the last few days, and the snow in the Moonwood had almost melted. Conversation was light between all of us, but that uneasy state of readiness still pervaded the group. Suddenly and without warning, we fell into an ambush from the trees as not one but five of the dreaded magical beasts known as cockatrices fell upon us. Mara, Si, and I did our best to form a line of defense for our spellcasting and arching companions, but it was impossible. Kirian and Rafe battled hand to hand with the creatures, and before we could help him, Rafe was struck and turned into a lifeless statue. Mara fought valiantly, but also felt the cockatrice's cold curse. Those of us who remained fought back; Si fell two with quick strikes of his chain, Kirian electrocuted one to death with orbs of electricity, Nym's arrow found the skull of one of the creatures, and it fell immediately, and my axe bit deep in one and almost cleft it in two. When the leaves had settled, we found ourselves staring at our companion and our guide, now solid stone and frozen in looks of fear. We knew we had to press on, and Rafe was still mounted when he was afflicted. We strapped the statue of Mara to Thunder, who was the strongest of our horses, and by leading Rafe's horse along we continued towards Quaervarr to see if they could offer us aid. At night, we were ambushed again by 5 giant dire rats. Although these creatures posed a significant threat to me only a few short months ago, my experience and toughness gained in the last months has strengthened my resolve, and I know my companions share that strength. We made short work of the rats and moved them off of our camp. However, the struggle must have alerted a band of Uthgart Barbarians who resided in the Moonwood. A patrol came to aid us and investigate the disturbance. When the captain of the patrol noticed our petrified friends, he offered to sell us a scroll of stone to flesh for 2,000 gold pieces. Although the price was high, the timing was perfect, and Kirian used his gold reserves to purchase the scroll. He then read it, and as the energy left the page and surrounded Rafe, the cold grey stone gave way to the colored fabric and bronzed skin of our companion. He fell onto the ground and looked quite shocked, but once we explained what had happened and assured him that he was safe, he quickly calmed down. We went back to sleep, but I noticed that Rafe could not rest, and stayed up for the night looking around nervously.

Journal – Tarsakh 14

We were weary. Although I would not have admitted it and certainly didn't show it, even I felt the growing decay in my muscles as well as my resolve as I awoke from my fitful rest. Too often the monstrosities and beasts in these wilds had pressed their attack, and all of us grew tired of the constant danger; paranoia began to set in. Rafe looked terrible; he still fought off the cold feeling of death that had enthralled him while he was petrified. He tried to focus his mind and prepare for another day of spellcasting, but I could see the difficulty. Kyrian seemed fairly strong of spirit, but the thought had certainly crossed his mind that the cockatrice he had fought off could have just as easily turned him to stone, and the blasts of flame he shot from his fingers

could have just as easily been aimed at him from another caster. He fumbled with the ring on his finger; the deep crimson ruby reflected the morning sunlight with a touch of extra brilliance. I knew that the ring would protect him from fire, but I doubted that it would be strong enough to help much against a Red. I think he knew that too. Nym seemed quite focused and spent much time listening to the sounds of nature, studying the skies, and also studying his companions. He could see what this trip was doing to our morale, and he knew that time was of the essence. The only one of us who seemed wholly unaffected was Si. He was as happy and ready to go as he would have been after a long night's rest in a fine inn. There was something in his nature that made him a very free spirit, and that served him well at the moment.

We arrived at Quaervarr in the late afternoon, and what a welcome sight it was. Although this village was not the biggest any of us had ever seen, it certainly seemed the most inviting, and we wasted little time tending to business so we could finally relax. Nym, Rafe, and I brought Mara's statue to the temple of Selune. They were horrified to see what had happened, but were quite grateful that we were able to bring her. They set about reviving her, and we left them to it. Afterwards, we checked in with the captain of the guard, a strong-looking man by the name of Bran. He told us to look for Mayor Moondown in the morning, but to find rest and food at a nearby inn. Kirian had spent some time in the marketplace looking for something, and Si wasted no time finding The Whistling Stag; the inn that we would be staying in for the night. He had already had a few ales by the time we met him, and had just set off up a flight of stairs with some buxom woman in tow. Nym found his opportunity to liven our spirits and restore our resolve; after buying all of us the best rooms in the Stag, he set down 4 Platinum Pieces and bid the innkeeper to take care of our needs. He obliged, and we all enjoyed the company of a small-town tavern for the rest of the night.

Journal – Tarsakh 15

What a horrid day this has been! How thankful I am that I am able to pen this journal, and how thankful my companions must be that they are also able to draw breath. We have decided not to camp for long so we can make Quaervarr before any new devilry befalls us, so in order to fit this in I shall make it as brief as possible.

The day started innocently enough. We met with Mara after she had been made soft again by the clerics of Selune. She still looked a bit confused and weary, so she decided to stay on at Quaervarr a bit longer to recover. However, she did introduce us to the Mayor of Quaervarr, a Mr. Edrick Moondown. Mayor Moondown explained to us that there was a haunted rumor of a malicious spellcaster in the Lonely Tower who was making pacts with all manner of evil in order to overturn some dark secret. The mayor was unable to offer us a reward, but did offer the services of his city and told us he would relay any other information he received. We spent the remainder of the morning provisioning ourselves and restocking our curative potions and our ammunition. We then set out north in search of the Lonely Tower. Early in our travel we encountered two Owlbears, however we had become strong and formidable, and the creatures

fell without much trouble. The real horror started just before dusk, and it would change some of us forever.

To our left, the sun was a blazing ball of fire on the horizon, to the right a looming storm began to brew and head towards us. We had entered a pattern in our march, and the rhythm of hooves in dirt had begun to lull me to sleep. Thunder, who had led the party with Si on his back, had paused for a moment, and we drew up reins. Nym could sense the fear in the beast, and after a few brief whinnies and snorts from Rafe, and then back from Thunder, Rafe confirmed that the horse had sensed something amiss in the air. I reached back for my shield and attached it to my left arm, then drew my axe. I scanned the horizon for riders or a creature of some sort, but I could find nothing. The other horses began to grow restless, and we all drew weapons and prepared for the nameless threat that loomed over us. Then, Kirian saw it; a mass of scales and leathery wings in the sky, a burning set of eyes visible even at this distance. It was a red dragon, and he was headed down to meet us. The horses all jumped and then bolted save Thunder. The dragon swooped down, and after catching a blast of electricity from Kirian, a wave of acid from the tip of Rafe's wand, and an arrow from Nym's bow, he made a lunge at Si and connected. Si flew from his horse in a shower of blood, yet landed on his feet with his chain drawn. There was a large gash in his chest, and rivulets of ichor flowed from the fresh wound. Nym shot a few more arrows at the creature before it landed, and Si and I rushed up to face the menacing creature. I knew that I would have to make a defensive stand and draw the creature's attacks to the best of my ability. I slashed at it a couple times; one blow landed too short and missed the creature's leg, the next skittered harmlessly off the tough scales in the dragon's chest. The party fanned out; Kirian took flight above us and hurled spells down, Si moved to the dragons left flank and drew a large net, which entangled and enraged the beast, Nym moved behind me about 30 feet and to my right where he let arrow after arrow fly at the dragon, and Rafe moved to my left and pelted the dragon with acid arrows and spells on his right flank. I swallowed the lump in my throat and stayed in place, attempting to draw the attention of the huge wyrm. I had been quite lucky, every blow so far that had beaten my defenses was light, and though I bled from nearly a half-dozen wounds, none were any worse than I had felt before, and they did nothing but fuel the stroke of my axe. I had landed a few good blows of my own, and the creature was blooded numerous times from axe, acid, ice, chain, and arrow. Si had been very effective in using nets to slow the creature; although the Red broke the nets with ease, it drew a bit of his attention each time, and it slowed his actions against us. The dragon began to be enraged by Kirian, who had washed the creature with a blast of ice. It leapt into the air, and slashed at the Avariel. The blow rung true and Kirian tumbled to the earth motionless. I was choked with fear and anger, and the thought of losing a friend and companion flooded my mind with emotion. I redoubled my effort, and I saw in the dragon's cold, calculating gaze that he meant to go after the other spellcaster next. I shifted my position so as to cut the creature off from Rafe, but my move had almost been my undoing, as I saw the creature draw a deep breath. I tried to jump to the side and I pulled my shield in front of me to deflect the blast, but it was too intense, too big, and too well-timed. I felt intense heat, then searing pain, then darkness and cold. What seemed like an eternity passed, and I thought I heard the echo of a hammer on a forge somewhere in the distance. Suddenly, I felt again; felt

pain all over my body. I could smell burning flesh and sulfur, and the threat of death crept over me again. I felt my blistered and blackened skin begin to remend itself, and I opened my eyes to see Si kneeling over me with an empty vial of healing in his hand. As soon as he saw my eyes open, he turned his attention away from me, and I feared that the dragon that I was just saved from would again strike me down. I drew to my feet, and grasped my Waraxe in my blistered and bleeding hands. However, I was surprised and relieved to see the dragon flying away with a hail of arrows from Nym and Si following behind it. We had not killed it, but we must have come close enough for the creature to fear for its life. I felt suddenly relieved as fear and doubt washed off of me, but I then remembered my companions, and I turned towards Rafe. He had also caught the blast of flame from the dragon, but he had not my sturdy shield or dwarven toughness to protect him. He was lying in a heap of melting flesh on the ground, and smoke rose from his lifeless body. Nym had pulled a scroll from his belt pouch and began reading it. Rafe's eyes snapped open, and he looked around in terror, then crumpled back to the ground; unconscious, but breathing. Si had gone to the motionless body of Kirian, and to his surprise he found that our friend still drew breath, albeit very shallowly. He quickly pulled a potion from his belt and poured the contents down Kirian's throat. The large puncture wounds in his lungs and stomach sealed off, and he coughed, spit out blood, and brought himself to one knee. Although the danger was over, I could not bear the pain of my melted skin, so I drank a few more of my potions and sighed deeply as most of my flesh mended. Nym had gone off to gather our horses, and Rafe awoke, his breath was rapid and he had a look of sheer terror on his face, but amazingly his wounds were gone, even his clothing was restored. When Nym came back a few minutes later with the horses, I asked him about the scroll. He told me that he did not know where it had come from or even why he felt compelled to read it, but it was responsible for healing Rafe. It was a gift from Moradin perhaps. After all, I could hear his hammer in my head just before I had been roused from near death. We decided then to head back to Quaervarr to recover both physically and mentally before returning towards the Lonely Tower.

Journal – Tarsakh 21

We have been here in Quaervarr for five whole days in order to rest, pray to our respective Gods, heal, relax, and re-equip ourselves. We had not realized the fast pace we had set for ourselves until the battle with the dragon, and the break was well-needed and well deserved. I decided to stop carrying the handaxes that my father had trained me with in favor of a weapon with a bit more range. When that flying terror leapt up to attack Kirian, I was unable to reach him with my handaxe, and that was a major problem. So I traded them for a large quiver and a half-score of javelins. I practiced with them for a few days, and they are actually quite comfortable. We have decided to leave for the Lonely Tower today, and I feel that now we are all truly ready. We left in the morning, and made it quite a ways before we ran into 5 hungry, rabid wolves. We dispatched them quickly, and Nym stayed his arrows and focused energy from his ring at one specifically. It did not seem to have effect, though, and I fell the wolf before it could bite him. We continued to travel until nightfall and then set camp. The horses began to be skittish again, and that same wave of fear washed over me. We jumped up and prepared for

the worst, another visit from the red. A large shape silhouetted against the moon, and it was a dragon to be sure. We set our defenses, and the dragon flew in. However, it was not as big as the red, and the intelligence that burned in the red's eyes was replaced by the instinct of an animal. It was the most base of the large dragons; a wyvern. We still stung from the wounds we received from the red dragon, though, so we spared no time or equipment fighting the wyvern. Although he did sting me, and I felt the poison course through my veins, it was not strong enough to effect me, and I continued to fight. We fell the creature quickly, and we moved camp away from the dead beast. We then settled in for the rest of the night.

Journal – Tarsakh 22

We awoke in the morning and began our usual breakfast and breaking camp rituals as we always do. The body of the fallen wyvern was still visible a short distance away, and it looked as if scavengers had begun to eat the meat. Suddenly, a shadow appeared over the camp, and another wyvern landed next to the body of the fallen wyvern. The beast looked at his dead companion for a moment, then turned his head towards us. He flew at us at full speed, but Si and Nym had already buried 3 arrows into it before it charged into my shield. I felt my boot dig deep into the soft earth as I slid a full four feet backwards before I finally caught ground and stopped the wyvern. I spun the talon off of my shield, and slid my Waraxe between his softer underbelly scales. He spilled ichor on the field, growled, and snapped at me again. I parried his jaw with the flat of my axe, and I heard a crystalline explosion on his side as Kirian sent icy death into the side of the monster. Si had by now drawn his chain, and began to whip the creature. Its will was broken, and it fell. We had already closed camp and had started to leave, when Nym spotted a large animal corpse in the distance. We traveled a bit east to the corpse, and Nym put his head to the ground. He felt the dirt and smelled the air. He then led us into the Moonwood. We traveled in the wood for nearly 15 miles, every thousand feet or so Nym stopped to smell or study something, and continued to lead us. Nym finally stopped, and with a smile on his face he pointed to a cave shortly ahead. It was the wyvern's lair, and it was filled with the corpses of a dozen adventurers; their valuables still intact!! After collecting the treasure, we headed back to the point where we fought the wyverns, although about 3 miles north. We nearly made it out of the Moonwood before dark, but we decided to camp nonetheless. Si took first watch, and he called the alarm only an hour after we had settled down. We got ready and armed as we watched two pair of Dire wolves circle us and prepare for pack tactics. One lunged toward Kirian, and I approached it to cut off its assault. Another went towards Rafe, and Si followed my lead. Only then did we learn the true tactics of the direwolves. The remaining two lunged at Nym. Nym dropped his trusted bow and drew his barely-nicked sword. He slashed at the wolves, but they began to overpower him. He then used some sort of item, and a thick cloud of fog appeared around him. He continued to slash, and the confused wolves were not sure where to strike. Si and Rafe had just downed their wolf, and I struggled to pull my axe out of the still twitching corpse of the direwolf that Kirian and I faced, and when the smoke cleared, the five of us focused our efforts on the two remaining wolves. With combined effort, we downed the last two wolves. Rafe credited with one kill, Nym

fell one on the tip of his sword, and I took the life from two. We then dragged the bodies out of our camp and continued to rest.

Journal – Tarsakh 23

There was little action today as we journeyed a bit closer to the Lonely Tower. The weather was quite nice, and almost felt like summer. It was a welcome sound to hear birds chirping and to feel the sun on my face again. We set camp a bit earlier than usual; Nym wanted to hunt a bit while light was still fair. Nym shot two raccoons and a quail, and we spit them and cooked them over the fire. I ate an entire raccoon by myself! We settled in to sleep, and I just knew that the day had gone much too well for our luck. I was right. Kirian awoke us late in the night; he felt something was amiss, and we had grown to trust his intuition. The sounds of nature grew quiet, and the rocks seemed to groan under my feet. I knew that my Dwarven heredity was all that made me feel it though; it was much too subtle for the rest of the party. I kept it to myself and prayed to Moradin that it was not a remorhaz that had been awakened from its hibernation. The rumble became a bit bigger, and soon the threat showed itself; a bulette, also known as a land shark, had burrowed up and began to attack. I stepped up in front of it and swung my axe proudly. It skittered off the creature harmlessly. Nym and Si sent arrow and chain respectively with similar results. Kirian hurt the creature deeply with a pair of Lightning Bolt spells, and I could tell it wanted to reach the caster, so I stopped wasting my energy on hitting the creature and focused on deflecting its powerful jaws. Rafe rifled bolts of acid at it time and again, and each one struck home and burned away at the creature. Si threw a net over it which it broke easily, and Nym continued to find chinks in its armor, but to no avail. Only the blast of lightning from Kirian and the persistent acid damage from Rafe finally brought down the creature. The fight reaffirmed to me the importance of spellcasters; although it never hit me I could feel my defenses weakening against the huge monster. We drug the body off of the campsite, and continued our rest.

Spattered with blood, the journal mysteriously ends here... What fate befell Durifyur and his companions? Perhaps that is a mystery yet to be uncovered...