

## Entry 24

We have fled.

As expected, Dalmasca has fallen into the hands of the Garleans. We tried everything to push them back but nothing we did was enough. Their machines were simply too much for us to bear and they demolished every last line of defense we had. I shall not go into the details here as I cannot think of them without hearing the screams of the people and seeing the blood run red in the gutters. The shining jewel of our home is now nothing more than a crimson soaked hell.

Our tribe has not fared well. We are left to but a few dozen of us who managed to escape in the night and we have nowhere left to go. One member, a trader, stated that he had heard Miqu'te form tribes in Eorzea. Somewhere in their desert. We will set a course for that and hope for the best.

## Entry 40

The journey was long but we have made it. This is similar to home, I suppose. It is arid, dry, and sandy. That reminds many of us of where we fled. Though it feels far more harsh here. Perhaps something to do with the Calamity? I cannot say. I simply hope we can make this work. This is a pitiful existence compared to what we had back home.

I must be grateful, however. The S tribe has allowed us to merge with them. At least for the time being. As such, we have adopted new names as per the customs of this land. I will now be going by S'rin Nunh. Nunh is how those who have bred and who are the breeding male of a harem are named according to our hosts. Given my status from our tribe back home, I simply went with this new title.

We are still getting settled but myself and the other elders have been commiserating. We want to return home eventually. Surely this war cannot last forever. Surely the Garleans will eventually become bored or tired of our city.

Truly futile, wishful thinking.

Instead, we will formulate a plan. We have lost contact with other survivors but we have each other. I will be going to the city-state of Ul'dah tomorrow. I hear from the tribe and the hyur of Little Ala Mhigo that there are several back alleys and shady rooms there to procure items and information.

We have children among our tribe who we can begin to teach and prepare for war.

*The diary pages suddenly jump forward in time. We lost most of it in the transition but managed to keep the following. If you wish to attract the Miqu'te, you'll need to use this. He has no idea what the truth is, as stated in the following entries, but he's desperate.*

*In my last mission to Coerthas, I spoke with him in an inn. He was tight-lipped about himself but he had a staff and was most certainly the mage you had your eye on. There were no more artifacts on the man but I believe we have him hooked. After ensuring he had enough to drink, I pried him on his past. His stories line up with what we know.*

#### *Entry 300*

As stated, we have been in contact with the thaumaturge guild in Ul'dah.

We are now raising several of the young ones to practice black magic as per the instruction of those mages within the guild. It is frowned upon in society to do this, as we know, but we have no choice. We are deep enough in the desert so as to not be monitored by those Immortal Flames and we have no cause to have them come out here. This is simply a matter of studying an art that exists on this star!

Besides, this is the only way we can fight back against the Garleans at this point. Even then, we may lose everything. Though we need to fight. We need to do something. I cannot sit idly by and wait for something to change.

As I stated in my previous entries, the Garleans destroyed our home in Dalmasca. We have lost everything and have banded with those Miqu'te of the Eorzean desert. Some of whom have also lost their homes... It has been many years now since we have been driven out but the pain is still fresh. Forming a new tribe in this way has hurt our pride and our children may never know of our true culture.

But with their power, they will know a new one. One in which we do not simply run away in the night while our land is decimated. All that we have learned so far is going straight to them. They are our hope now. They are our future.

#### *Entry 306*

This new tribe that we have formed has committed itself to helping our young ones with their studies. They have acquired books from traders and the Hyur of Little Ala Mhigo have provided us with what little resources they can as the focuses and tools for spellcasting. It is not much but it will do for now.

I have naught much else to state here until progress is made.

#### *Entry 320*

One of our students is excelling quite nicely - S'ylen Tia. He has not only been able to manipulate fire and ice, but has been able to practically apply this to keep control over them for as long as necessary. His spellcasting is far and above the best of the group and we hope to

expand that. The others are doing quite well along with him but he will be the one we begin to push harder.

He has been studying more than the others. This, he says, is because he wants to help us return home. He has heard tale of the old ways and where we lived in glory and his eyes shine with passion on finding his way there. He may not succeed in that but we can at least use this to our advantage.

#### *Entry 327*

The students have taken a trip to Ul'dah to discuss theory with the thaumaturge guild. It is a risky move to expose so many of them to a guild known to be outcasts within the city but we had to take that risk. We know the mages there will take care of them and be certain they do not fall afoul of the authorities. So long as it is merely theoretical, they are safe...

They need access to more than what we can give them.

#### *Entry 336*

The students returned after a few days in the city. They stayed with the guild the entire time so as to not attract any attention which was exactly what we had done upon arrival there the first time. Thankfully, the guild is also within steps from an exit so as to avoid the Flames. The last thing we need is for them to be followed.

We will ask what they learned tomorrow.

#### *Entry 337*

To no one's surprise, S'ylem was the one who managed to find a book of rituals within the libraries of the mages that may assist us. He brought the book back, with permission from the guild, and I have looked through it on my own all afternoon. There are some rituals that he has bookmarked as possibilities that I cannot truly make heads or tails of myself but he seems certain about their validity. The light in his eyes when he showed them to the council of elders showed us we were right to choose him.

One ritual seems most promising. It involves the Void but we must take the steps necessary.

I trust him.

#### *Entry 342*

After further discussion, we have decided to assign different rituals to different students. Hopefully one of them manages to find one that is not dependent upon calling things from the Void but if we cannot avoid it we will need to proceed.

There are so many options but we need to be closer to home for them to be as effective. Home being Dalmasca, of course. Which means those may prove to be impossible. Getting anywhere near will cause our own downfalls.

I worry that this may not work. We may not find a way to destroy the imperials who claimed our home. Though I must stay strong. I must be the rock this tribe needs.

### *Entry 348*

The children are exhausted. They have been conducting rituals day in and day out to try and master them. Most attempts have been useless and there may not be much else we can do. S'ylem says he cannot move on with his experiments unless he has access to a plethora of extra aether to use.

Black magic calls upon the aether around the mage. The mage is simply the conduit for the magic which makes it much different from white magic which comes from the elementals and draws upon the powers of nature to restore. Though upon information provided by the guild and that found in the tomes we have, black magic is also tied to the Void.

This tie is why S'ylem stated that we may need to call upon the Void to achieve our goals. If that is the case then so be it. A few Voidsent can be dealt with if it means that we can use this power for our tribe.

The ends will justify the means. They must. I care not for how tawdry that makes me sound.

### *Entry 350*

After a lengthy discussion with the other elders, we have decided to allow S'ylem to begin preparations for the ritual. I did not expect this to move so quickly but we need to press on now. I stated as much in our meeting and the others agreed. The longer we wait, the more we lose. I cannot let our tribe suffer any further indignity.

The ritual S'ylem has been studying requires a massive amount of aether in order to create a rip in reality that leads to the Void. From there, we can utilize some mild arcanisim to manipulate that aether into a trap to keep a Voidsent. Or so he has stated.

The trap will also allow us to control the infernal beast which should allow us to unleash it into Dalmasca and take control of things for us - much safer than any of us going in. Once it has slain all who stand in our way, we can move in and begin to rebuild. By that point we will have access to whatever the Garleans leave behind which should be enough to kill whatever beast comes forth.

S'ylem has warned us that we may not be able to manipulate the Voidsent enough to control who it attacks. He has also stated that if the arcanist sigils are not properly calculated, the Voidsent could take control of someone within the tribe.

I told him it matters not if that is the case. In either event, we will have a tool of war all for our tribe.

### *Entry 352*

There is a new obstacle in our way as we have come to find. As I have stated, S'ylem has noted that we need a mass amount of aether. This can often be found with crystals and using them in magical arts. However, in their time at the guild, the students have heard that mass amounts of crystals are what has been responsible for the various summonings happening throughout the land. Due to this, any attempt we make at acquiring crystals will be scrutinized and our plans will fall apart. I cannot have any of the governments finding out about us.

S'ylem stated there is another way. What he describes is a bastardization of white magic that combines its channeling concepts into the properties of black magic aetherial manipulation and destructive power. His current concept is to channel aether from the tribe members and utilize that to both cast the spell and power the arcanisim. In a sense, as all of us are tied to the aether, we can also be drawn upon.

Though, not we, I suppose. Them. The tribe will need to sacrifice some in order for this to proceed. Surely they will be fine and those who do not survive will simply be buried here and remembered for their sacrifice. It is what we must do.

I said yes.

### *Entry 353*

We have come up with a plan. I must prepare so I will detail this in a later entry.

### *Entry 355*

As promised, our plan is as follows:

We will be holding a large tribe dinner so everyone comes together. The food we prepare will contain trace amounts of venom that will incapacitate them all but keep them awake. None of this is lethal and is often used for medicinal purposes - we can obtain it easily from those in Little Ala Mhigo. This venom will ensure that they cannot run and cannot resist. We simply need them to be still in order for S'ylem to take their aether.

Once everyone has eaten and is unable to leave our camp center, S'ylem will begin the ritual. This will have him draw upon the aether found within each member of the tribe and use that to create the rift.

His concentration will be on the rift so the other students will be working on the sigils we need and conduct the trapping of the Voidsent. This allows S'ylem to open and shut the rift fast enough that we only let through one of those beasts.

When the foul demon is trapped, we will end the spell and everyone will be free. Should the sigils fail, we may lose some members or one may become possessed as stated by S'ylem. It is not a likely case according to him - that is if the sigils are properly drawn and used. Though if that is to be the case, so be it.

S'ylem is worried that this may not work. I told him we have 4 days for the trader to bring supplies to Little Ala Mhigo. He has 4 days to get over his fears.

#### *Entry 359*

We have procured all of the venom we need. We also took some of the nicer wines the trader had as a way to cover up the taste of it further. S'ylem said he wants more time to decide if he wishes to proceed with this. I have told him he has had enough time. The dinner will be tomorrow night.

At this point he will comply no matter what.

#### *Entry 360*

S'ylem has agreed to conduct the ritual as we asked. Tonight we will have our dinner and begin our plan. This must succeed. This must be how we win.

### *Entry 364*

The other elders and I have been running for days. I just now found a spot to rest and write. We did not succeed. Not exactly.

The dinner began as expected and everyone shared in the feast. Wine flowed, food consumed, and merriment went around. The whole tribe was excited to be able to spend a night together not worried about personal squabbles or petty politics. It was actually quite lovely...

One by one, they all began to fall. They were able to see what was going on and could barely speak, but had no control over what happened to them. This meant that, mentally, they could not hold their aether back which is exactly what we needed.

S'ylem began the ritual and we could see, actually see, the aether trail from each of the members and flow through him. His body glowed with lights like a rainbow after a storm. Bright. Vibrant. Chaotic. So young but so adept at manipulating aether. We chose right. I know we chose right.

What came next left me in awe. With hand outstretched, S'ylem swiped in a scratching motion through the air. His claws trailed in the brilliant rainbow light and the air before him ripped as if it were cloth. I cannot describe it any better... The air before him was simple, everyday cloth.

The rift... the tear... whatever it is... began to bleed purple and black. Not exactly smoke, not exactly liquid. Just color. It came forth in a slow trickle until it picked up speed and began to gush forth like a raging river or the smoke from a wildfire on the horizon. The rip he had made then widened as a vast, clawed appendage burst through.

The thing from the other side was like nothing that should exist.

The hole opened further and a vast, black as the sky above draconic head came forth. But it was all wrong. The eyes... there were too many eyes. Each side of the head had three, pitch black eyes that exuded some kind of light. No, not a light. An absence of light. A sort of glowing darkness.

The claws it had were huge. Bigger than the bodies of many of our biggest tribe members. Its teeth were even larger. Those teeth were hideous nightmares dripping with saliva that hissed as it hit the ground under where it emerged. Like gates of white stone clamped shut and coated in poison to fell any beast.

It snarled.

A hollow, piercing snarl that was devoid of life. It was as if it was inside of my head and tearing apart my insides which is what made me collapse to the ground before I had realized I had even moved.

Once I was down, I could not move. I could barely see. My eyes stung with tears and I could feel my muscles tense from the sheer presence of this beast. Everything inside of me burned with pain I had never felt before. Hatred? Perhaps.

Then S'ylem cut his connection. The other students had managed to create the sigils while he created the rift but now they too were collapsed on the ground by the intense pressure coming from the demon. The only one who could move, it seemed, was S'ylem.

I think, now, that it was his connection to the beast that allowed him to survive. Those of us who had not ingested the venom were able to resist just enough to not go mad as our bodies convulsed with that horrible sensation. At some point I managed to stand. I suppose we could repel the beast from our minds just enough to be able to stumble as I noticed the students crawling and tumbling away from camp. But S'ylem was able to run.

We got out of whatever zone of influence this beast had on us but it was too late for the others. When I turned, drenched in sweat and tears and coated in the dust of the desert, I saw it. I saw the horrible demon ruin everything right in front of my eyes. The demon opened its terrible mouth and the aether that had once flowed through the tribe into S'ylem was now being consumed by the demon. It was eating their aether.

There were no screams.

Either the venom robbed them of their ability to do so or the demon had killed them too quickly for them to even notice.

And then the glow was gone. The light extinguished. The beast roared out and made us all fall to our knees again and when we could regain composure, it was gone. The rift had been closed and there was no trace of the demon. Nothing to show it was once in our world. Aside from the bodies it was as if nothing was ever there.

With the tribe dead, we did what we had to in order to protect ourselves to fight another day. This meant dealing with the remaining survivors in two camps: those who would press on and those who would not.

I did not have the heart to kill them. Instead, I found a spell in one of the tomes that would erase memories.

The students assisted with the spell as we had no other recourse to get such things done. I will admit that the terror in their eyes as they watched on was upsetting. They had to see each of their friends fall victim to the spell that shattered their mind so horribly that each one forgot what happened that night. Or any night, I suppose.



But it is for the cause. I will not have our plans stopped and I will not let them speak a word of the truth. I cannot have that on me or the other survivors. This is all I have left.

We hurried to Ul'dah and caught an airship to Limsa Lominsa. The students were easy enough to handle as they had been knocked out by the memory spell and we were able to carry them. We simply told the ship staff that we were tired from wandering the desert on a pilgrimage and the students were the most worn out of us all. We got some looks but they believed it enough to let us on. I suppose.

Once we arrived, we left them wherever we could. Some by the inn, others at the docks, and some simply left on the airship. Then we ran. The sea is all around us and we will escape to somewhere we can regroup in quiet.

Perhaps one day we will reunite with the students. Though what is more likely is that we will not ever see them again. That is fine. We will take back Dalmasca.