

A History of My Life on Darktide

by

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*** *A Humble Healer* ***

Circle of Arms (Darktide)

The First Month 20/12/99

After a long sojourn in the Forgotten Realms, with the foul Sarevok slain, I hear that there is a shard of the land of Dereth where the people are sick in mind, and that, being trusted with weapons, their bodies often fall sick. I decide that it is my vocation to enter this land and heal the sick of mind and body. I hear that the town of Shoushi in the East is safe for newcomers, and make that my entry point.

12/99

My arrival in the land of Dereth is a hard one. Snow is everywhere. The people of Shoushi West are not friendly, and the town of Shoushi itself is rarely to be approached without great sound of slaughter. I am slain many times, for no discernible reason. My few possessions are invariably looted. Kobolds of low level are foul of mouth and lack interpersonal skills. They respond to my healing with treachery and hostility. Are they suspicious of my motives? Higher level character stop long enough only to slay me. Those that do not slay me stop not at all. Is there any order in this realm? I dine on rabbit stew, slain by my trusty staff, with which I am, however, unable to defend myself effectively because my training has been principally in the healing and magic arts. Though I am trained in the staff, If only I had studied melee defense!

12/99

I swear allegiance to a certain Syrena, but she repudiates my oath the next day, I think because I am too slow. In future I will be more careful to whom I swear. I meet Grey Wolf, level 14, who seems friendly, but is unable to accept my allegiance to the Aziles, of whom I know little in any case. A first stroke of luck, lying outside the gates of Shoushi I find a magic crossbow worth 3,000 gold pieces! I purchase some components for my few spells.

The Second Month

I have stumbled around Shoushi for several weeks, when to the west, in the snow-covered hills, I meet the noble Mel Anoma, a level 8 fighter. He slays me not, and I explain my mission to him. He is sympathetic, handing me a protection scroll, which, to my surprise, I am able to memorize. He tells me of a fine alliance, which I may join when I reach level 5, the Circle of the Eternal Dragon. I believe I have finally found a lawful alliance of like-minded souls! He tells me to practice my running, which is too slow to survive. The light has finally shone, and I decide to persevere in my mission!

1/00

I decide I can no longer survive around Shoushi. I flee south, to Baishi, after a tip off that it is safer there. Truly, I can hardly describe the strange feeling I have to enter a town, and not to be slain and looted immediately. Two fellows come up to me and give me money, several thousand pyreals, without saying a word! Another offers to be my patron, but I tell him that my mission is

to be a humble healer to the Circle of the Eternal Dragon.

1/00

I contact the noble Mel Anoma, who tells me that his guild is based in Samsur. After a long and arduous journey I arrive in Samsur, but the guild is nowhere to be found. In fact, Samsur is almost deserted. I meet Crotch McNastyass, a decent fellow, despite his name. I slay a number of Drudges of various descriptions near the lifestone there. It seems impossible to gain any experience in healing and the support schools of lifemagicks, since there is no one to heal.

1/00

The noble Mel Anoma tells me to venture to Sawato. I am not too keen on this, as I have just travelled from there, but I undertake another long and arduous journey, to a town in the swamps, which appears quite featureless.

1/00

Catastrophe has struck! The monarch of the Circle of the Eternal Dragon has decided not to recruit any further members. I will need to start again seeking a noble alliance to which I may pledge allegiance! Does no-one need a humble healer in this land? Truly, I have noticed that most fighters are able to heal themselves, and those who do not die immediately they are attacked, so there is little to do to help them. I have tried to persuade those who slay without reason of the error of their ways, and to turn them to the path of light, but never have I been successful.

The Third Month

By the lifestone north-west of Sawato, having slain a certain vicious rat that lives near a merchant there, I meet Darkside Avenger, who, when I explain my mission, says that there are many in Sawato who will be glad to hear my words. He suggests I speak to a certain Cragar. I cannot say I noticed any particularly helpful people last time I was there, but I go back to the town.

2/00

I meet this certain Cragar in Sawato. He is a laconic, businesslike fellow, and asks me if Darkside Avenger explained to me that his guild, the Circle of Arms, is peaceful. I agree to this (little does he know how long I have sought such a guild!). I have my second patron! I slay some particularly vicious Shreths to celebrate. I take part through a portal on a raid in the direlands, but am slain immediately. I have the good fortune to meet my monarch Xanthro, and introduce myself to him as a new recruit to the cause.

2/00

Another catastrophe. Cragar has dissolved my allegiance. Meeting him in Sawato, I enquire whether I offended him in some way. He is very apologetic, saying that since he had not heard from me he thought I had forgotten him. I swear to him again, resolving to bother him more often in future. He gives me directions to the guild notice board. So many useful spells posted there! I lay down my trusty staff and try to train more fully as a support lifemagicker.

A Humble Healer in the Swamps 3/00

I make several useful fellowships, in which I am able to play my support role as a healer and lifemagicker! I was fortunate to meet Impashark, Vain Ruby, Orson Throne II, William Tell and Erych the Red at various times. Met Wifbert the Seeker, a strange chap, I should like to talk to him some more, but he subsequently disappears. Found an odd Philosopher, Dr Pangloss, I wonder what his monarch Elohir is like? Do they recruit philosophers?

3/00

I meet my old friend Grey Wolf. He slays me, saying he is feeling stressful. This is what life on

Darktide does to the mind!

3/00

Fellowshipping is getting a bit thin on the ground. Most of my guildsmates in the Circle of Arms are of a much higher level than I, and I can be of little use to them. Most low level fellows are of poor character. We are continually raided by Dark Doomer, Shadowsoldier, Jade Knight, Mustaffa, and other minor villains to numerous to mention. Many guildsmen appear somewhat hostile to having low level characters such as myself in their allegiance. I think they suspect I may be a spy. My patron defends me nobly on the message board. But I think I will have to improve my life magic skills -- less talking, and more practice! I do not much like killing monsters, but Carbok suggests I do a bit of draining, but there is nowhere to drain monsters near Sawato.

Two Expeditions to Shoushi 3/00

I head off to Shoushi with some trepidation, hoping to drain a few Slinkers that hang around in the huts there. I hope also to help some newcomers to this shard. The trip is disastrous. I try to use the Stamina to Mana spell as Carbok suggested, but the amount of mana required to cast it exceeds the amount of mana I receive in return. Shoushi is overrun by Hill People, my lead scarab burns up and (as usual) I am unable to retain any armour, and cannot make it into Shoushi to shop. Completely broke and spell-less I return to Sawato, and get a handout from my patron, who doesn't say much, but is always quite helpful. The problem is that it is impossible to defend territory here, so we are permanently raided, and the area of our shard on the side of the good cannot be secured and extended. I do not know quite what can be done about this!

28/3/00

A second trip to Shoushi is much more useful. I reach level eight, which is not bad for a humble life mage. I am not able to show the way to Sawato to any useful novices; they are too busy squabbling with one another. I have decided to start improving my endurance as now I run fast enough, I think. The main consequence of being level 8 seems to be that my vitae remains around minus 21% rather than minus 18%! Soon I will train in an entirely new skill, I think. Maybe Latin (it seems popular to post in it). I thought that now I am a bit stronger I would have a go at some of the dungeons near Shoushi, but the portals will not let me in! All things conspire against me.

31/3

Our monarch has said we should move to another town, further from the portals, so we have greater security. I think I will ask my patron to magick me there next time I see him.

The Fourth Month

A Trip to the Seaside at Tou Tou 3/4

I make a trip to Yanshi, and have the honor to assist a young fellow of good character, Amon-Ra. However, I cannot find him subsequently, and believe he was slain by a fearsome stoneage warrior by name of Og. By judicious use of portals I find myself meditating on seaside in Toutou, but am unable to venture to Arwic since I am slain each time I appear at the portal by vicious Lochs, who say the followers of Xanthro are not welcome in that town. After a long and tiring journey, I return to Sawato.

A Residency in Sawato

4/00 - 7/5/00

Sawato is deteriorating. We are frequently raided. I can find no-one to fellowship with; often I am slain for no reason within minutes of entering Dereth. Furthermore, our monarch Xanthro is rarely heard from. I fear our guild is deteriorating, and the forces of chaos are claiming victory!

The Fifth Month

There seems to be some power struggle among the elders of the guild: each is avoiding deputizing to bring order to Sawato. I have not heard from my patron Cragar for weeks; one day I am informed (not by him) that he has abandoned the guild, and that I am actually now an independent! Not much future in being an independent healer, especially since some elements seem to think all the unallied should be booted from Sawato, my home for four months! Will the woe of Darktide never end?

Months Six to Eight

Draining in the Muddy Dungeon

I meet with a fine fellow, Crux Sanctus, who shows me a nice dungeon where vicious golems live behind gates (though to my surprise I find that their blows are so fierce that can actually injure me through the gate!) I venture there several times, being helpful to Caperon, Mystic Elf, Vespucci, Death Rattle, Assassin, and Jin Yauki. Priest Geoff V is especially friendly! It is rather a long way from Sawato, however.

A Change of Scenery - Baishi

My patron, whom I thought had abandoned the land of Dereth, appears, and opens a wondrous portal so I can accompany him to Baishi, together with his fellow vassal, Fantum. So I return to Baishi, which I last visited many months ago as a frightened novice running for my life! The air is much more bracing, and I am not sorry to leave the croaking swamps. I spend several happy weeks in the dungeons round there, and discover a pleasant fort just to the West, where Mosswarts can be craftily trapped on walls. I fellowship with Jae, Gruff and Sweet Leaf. A helpful fellow also is Kenjiro Matsuko (of Schattenkind, monarch of the Shadow Warriors) and Jhorei his servant. But now I am outside the Circle of Arms, it is difficult to form long term adventuring relationships.

I concentrate on improving my Life Magic skills. I cast my first level 3 spell (from a scroll given to me by Mel Anoma many months ago). It would be nice if I could find some more scrolls like that! I take some lessons in creature magic, a strange discipline, I must say, but it will help me to be a more effective support mage. I reach level ten.

Month Nine - Yet Another Catastrophe

After several weeks of studiously ignoring our tells, Fantum and I decide our patron Cragar is suffering a chronic Qwelch disease, rendering him unable to reply. Alas, the noble Lothander informs me that a harsh spirit has inhabited his body! How can this have happened, without us even having been notified? But the ever-knowledgeable Valadriel Aurynheim confirms the rumour! Truly the silver age of Dereth is passed, when cruel ghosts haunt the bodies of once noble heroes!

I consider joining the guild of FWH-Deathon (which means "fight with honor", apparently). But I return to Sawato, to rejoin the Circle of Arms. But what chaos is there! Emii invites me to join the training guild, then quits the next day. Xin and Garam think I will need to reach level 15, but are not quite sure. And I loose my only blood-drinking staff to a rough golem...

Month Ten - The Worst Month Yet

Alone, independent, and in the swampy suburbs of Sawato, I am inspired by a description I find on the message board, by my former lord Xanthro, of a staff-life mage. My vitae rapidly sinks to about minus 27 and remains there. I meet White Rose and Thuggin For Souls (who says he is

dedicated to countless slaughtering, but seems quite friendly). I am slain by Temerity, I am slain by Og. I can only cast level 1 spells for weeks on end, lacking components. Then Crispin (who he?) gives me 1,365 pyreals, for no reason. A strange place, this hard land. I post for a new patron, but have no luck.

Finally, I meet a youngish fellow, name of Ryan the Enchanter. He is kind enough to buy me some armour, and a pack of healing kits! With his help I finally lose my life penalty (strangely enough, at an abandoned citadel south of Sawato). He shows me that by casting some creature magic spells I can give myself the ability to cast war magic (I had never thought of that!). ZAP! Furthermore, I have rejoined the Circle of Arms, though in my absence some strange politiking has been afoot, and there does not seem to be much of it left. And who is this "Jackie" who keeps posting messages? Some relation to Jackiechan, perhaps?

Months Eleven and Twelve

But all is not roses! I am slain by Newbie', J-M-Bayle, A Jackel of Dereth, Wifebeater, Rocky Balboa, and Zerominus. I meet a strange fellow, Vegard Ravn, who wears shadow armor, which he says is very powerful, though he is only level ten. I guess he has useful friends. His monarch is Einherjer.

A lot of Bloods seem to be raiding, quite well organised, unfortunately. Oh, for the simple days of Jade Knight! Towards my anniversary on Dereth we start to turn the tide. Recruiting for the Circle is picking up a little. My patron disappears for a month or so, but by now I am accustomed to the ways of these young aristocrats! Then he appears to be inhabited by a strange spirit, in the same manner as my previous patron Cragar, though after a little while he recovers. I again meet my monarch (the second time). He says "Arise old friend". Perhaps he remembers me! But I am greatly distressed at the Circle's former sad splintering. A sad, bitter message to the Circle from Cicero, a former elder, depresses me, and in some delirium I have a [strange dream](#) of the final battle, where we are all united again, before our ascension to a far off place. I am inspired to turn it into a poem, which I title "Last Resurrection of the Dead". Aytalya, the legendary Dragon-bard of Stonehold, is kind enough to include it in her Darktide Library. Perhaps I will audition for the rank of Guild Minstrel.

I open a casino in the local tavern, playing "Sawato poker", but have difficulty in matching some of the stakes proposed. I think in the New Year I will ask my patron to back me...

The Final Month

Encouraged by the success of my epic poem, praised by Hektik, Ryan, Dysmal, Sheebs, Zojack the Mad, and many others (I am even contacted while peacefully strolling by complete strangers whom I know only by reputation!) I organise a poetry recitation in Sawato, the first, I believe. It is met by widespread indifference, but no actual violence. I have exciting meetings with Bourne, an important elder of the Warriors of Light, and Val Kelvartis, a leading warlock of the Circle (whom I strangely enough had never met before). He seems a bit of a loner. Both offer to help me, and Val Kelvartis hands over some valuable armour, commissioning a heroic poem from me. I compose a little number "[Ballad of Val Kelvartis](#)". We also discuss the possibility of a history of the Circle of Arms, to be written in verse.

Of course, I do not retain the gifts long. I am not only unable to be of help, but

am beyond help. It is time, I fear, to move to somewhere my talents will be more effective.

So it is with a sad heart that I reflect on my career on Darktide. So many noble warriors, but at the same time so much needless cruelty and heartbreak. Some say I was never cut out for this land. I am too weak in strength to defend myself with my staff, or to protect myself with armour. I am trained in the mysterious arts of alchemy, but not sufficiently trained actually to make anything useful. My life magic skills are potentially impressive, but in practice also nearly unusable. And healing is never required from a companion; its primary function is actually to expedite the use of the health to mana spell. And finally, the frenetic slaying of dumb beasts does not excite me.

What use I could have been on Dereth, I cannot say. But I have heard there is a far off land, where Baneful Shadows are surveyed by a pensive All-Father, in which a staff-wielding healer such as myself may have a chance to make a contribution.

And that is all I ask.

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