31 Eighthmoon

Hello. My name is Amarthiel Eldasilquendil. I am a student and an adventurer in Illmythil. This is my recollection of what occurred during our group's adventuring during Eighthmoon. The main purpose of my writing is for record-keeping and for my own memory, so if you are looking for entertainment, you have come to the wrong place.

We began the day speaking with Maírion Lamandhel. He is an archmage's apprentice and is a very experienced sorcerer. He seemed very academically-minded. In addition to a brief description of each mission, they described our job and situation in a little more detail. The archmages and various higher ups are occupied by the ongoing investigation into the King's disappearance. What this means is that for now, it is up to us to tend to some of the lower-level, logistical duties. This includes things like gathering ingredients for researchers and making sure the roads into and out of the city are able to be traversed. We were also notably put in charge of keeping the main mage tower and campus locked down. Our instructions are to not let anyone in unless we saw them leave. Simple enough.

Maírion challenged us to speak with someone we disagree with and someone we agreed with, then present a sort of thesis for what we think we should do and cite our sources. Min bravely went first and cited Maírion as the sole source since we got all of our information from them. Maírion described that this was incomplete. In hindsight, the sources we were meant to cite were likely closer to arguments our peers had made during discussion.

We also asked Maírion many questions. The main subject of the questions was clarifying what our job was and sorting out various potential situations. Things like "what do we do if xyz kind of official attempts to enter? Do we have authority over them?". I unfortunately do not recall many of the questions specifically.

These are the missions that I remember. Perhaps someone more studious can provide a complete list. The wording is also likely to be slightly off. They were also almost assuredly presented to us in a different order than presented below.

- Go into town and search for rumors about the disappearance
    - This was placed on our mission board by Samaníl Elentaril, our innkeeper from the Inquisitor group. I will describe more about this individual later. They hypothesized that, as nobodies, perhaps people will be more loose with their information with us than they would be with the Crown Inquisitors.
- Ask mages what help they need with research projects
- Gather alchemicals for research projects
- Guard mage tower entrance
- Meet with local fey and exchange rumors
    - This was in service of upholding a deal a higher-level mage had made partially to keep the fey out of the settlement
- Move/drive away talus blocking road
- Investigate rockslide blocking road

    - This was interesting because rockslides do not normally occur until later in the winter season

I believe it is not explicitly our job to gather information and assist in this investigation. That being said, some of the missions certainly gave us opportunities to do so. As such, I suggested we could tend to our regular jobs some of the time and go out and investigate some of the time.

The first thing we did was head out to guard the mage tower. On the way we found a researcher frantically trying to gather up slimes that had escaped from glass containers. It is my understanding that most slimes are the types that correspond with the five mage classes; white, blue, black, red, and green. Interestingly, many of these slimes were unusual colors, the ones I remember being gold and shadowy-dark. The shadowy-dark one could hide, which was concerning at first. Luckily for us slimes are not very intelligent so it came out of hiding fairly quickly. We were able to secure all the slimes for the researcher who seemed stressed out about the situation. I suspect encounters of this nature will be fairly common. A lot of the resources and energy that would normally be spending helping people tend to these projects is currently being consumed by the investigation.

We took a wrong turn and ended up finding a group of researchers discussing the goings-on. We admittedly did not spend very much time here. Maírion said that she would open the magical wards around the tower or in town ahead of us so we could move. We remembered this while talking to the researchers and got worried about the wards being opened for too long. Elethir took more detailed notes about the rumors that were being discussed. Perhaps you could get in contact with him if you are interested in more specifics. He also plans to publish a newspaper that could contain such details as well.

It seems that the most-repeated rumor is that the King turned into a wyvern. This is obviously untrue. I suspect, however, that as the most comedic rumor thus far, we will have to hear about it for a long time. Me writing this in and of itself is contributing to that rumor's spread.

Once we got there, we were let into the tower and tasked with guarding a long entrance hallway. A variety of people came in and out. It appears as though we were able to successfully keep the tower locked down. We gave out star stickers to particularly patient and understanding passers-by. I believe Maddia was the one who provided said stickers.

A few examples that I experienced of people trying to get in / out:

- A person who allegedly had to deliver a wand to a specific room. I resolved this by leaving two gold with them as collateral while I took the wand and delivered it myself. By the time I returned the person had left with my two gold. Unfortunate.
- A person with a very serious injury that needed to get to the healers. They were dropped while trying to run by and would not get up from regular first aid procedures. I carried them to healers elsewhere. I overheard someone suggest that they faked this injury as a means to enter the building. I do not think this is the case.

- Samaníl Elentaril, who we had not met yet, attempted to get in. They were accompanied by a bodyguard who was quite intimidating. I believe his name was Demetrius. The pair seemed cooperative when turned away. Samaníl said "I am going to go check the windows" as they left. This sounded vaguely suspicious so I followed them and kindly asked them what that meant. I believe they indicated that they were going to look in the windows to see what was inside and/or make sure the windows were not somehow a way someone could've gotten in and had access to the King.
    - They took a sticker from us and placed it on my cheek after I followed up with them. This indicates to me that this entire intrusion of theirs was some sort of test that we passed.

There was one noteworthy example that Min described to me, but I did not witness. Some details may be incorrect.

- A diviner was leaving the building with their hands on their head. When spoken to they described having investigated the room the King went missing quite thoroughly in some manner. They claimed that their head hurt. They were confused and kept repeating something along the lines of "The Key and The Empty Cup". Evidently their entire investigation amounted to those images/words.
    - This headache along with the totality of their investigation yielding so little specific information leads me to believe that there is some sort of reality-altering aspect to the King's disappearance. In other words, this disappearance was likely not a mundane, physical kidnapping or escape or something. I suspect there is a magical, primal, divine, scape-related, or outsider-related factor.
        - There will be a little more speculation on outsiders later, as we encounter some in another mission.

We then met with Samaníl Elentaril in the inn. They are a Crown Inquisitor apprentice. Their method for facilitating discussion was to have us try to find someone that we trusted and someone we didn't trust. They pushed us to really consider the difference between trust and agreement, that we can agree with someone we don't trust and disagree with someone we do.

This did not work very well for me. I've found it generally tends to go better when talking with someone to take them at their word unless you happen to know otherwise. Suspicion tends to come across as hostile, which I try to avoid being. As such it was difficult for me to find someone that I was willing to say I did not trust. Perhaps this is a weakness of mine. It could be wise for me to work on my peacekeeper skills, or work closely with someone like Leia, who possesses such skills.

I believe Samaníl also stated, as I previously described, they were the ones who put the rumor-gathering mission on the board. They also indicated that all three innkeepers were, in various ways, using us to accomplish their goals. Samaníl recommended we do the same the other way around. That is, play the innkeepers off of each other for our own benefit. This behavior feels more dishonest than I would like to be, but it could be wise to think of the innkeepers not only as people but as resources as well. At the very least we have been given implicit permission by

Samaníl to use the innkeepers to suit our needs beyond their assigned job of giving us the news. Despite this manipulative sense I got from them, Samaníl was my favorite of the three innkeepers.

The second mission we did was investigate the rockslide. Deluhel had previously heard rumors about earthquakes from nearby villages that lined up roughly with the King's disappearance time-wise, so we thought the rockslide could be a way to connect our base-level jobs with the investigation.

On the way we encountered a shepherd who was attempting to calm down a spooked, trampling group of yak-like mountain beasts. We impressively managed to calm them down without much combat. I also learned that my ability to calm people down applies to animals as well. This was interesting because I was previously under the impression I developed this by talking to people well, but the ability working on animals indicates that there is something deeper and more innate to it.

We found a few more slimes. I do not believe there was a researcher trying to wrangle them. I hope nothing noteworthy happened here, because if something did, I do not remember it.

We approached the bottom of the hill where the rockslide was and found imps and faeries arguing over all the rocks. The conflict seemed to be territorial in nature. The imps were primarily citing their "boss" telling them to be here as a reason they were allowed to move the rocks. The faeries seemed protective, and either didn't want rocks to move, wanted the imps to go away, or both. The faeries were too small for me to hear much besides buzzing when talking to them, so I could not get a strong sense of what specifically their issue was. The imps, although intelligible, were not very smart. As such, we decided to head up the hill to see if we could get any clarification from the "boss" of these imps.

Up the hill we found a big cave entrance. The imps here were all very, very scared. They did not want to let us in and they claimed their boss was very, very angry about the rocks. The imps claimed that the boss did not want the rocks to fall anymore. After a while of us trying to extract what information we could from the imps, there was a big earthquake. A huge demon with a morganti flail came out of the cave afterwards. It asked us if we were mages and if we were from the outpost. We told it we were from the outpost but we were not mages.. I attempted my normal interrogation procedure of asking it to describe its experience in an open-ended way so I could understand. *It responded by hitting me around the back with its morganti flail.* Unfortunate. We immediately decided to run away.

On our way out it asked us to tell the mages to stop. It did not provide any context for what this meant. My suspicion is that there is some sort of research going on that is causing problems for this demon. I also would not be surprised if this was connected to the King's disappearance, although this would be a somewhat worrying conclusion to come to. Demons being involved adds a new, insidiously dangerous angle to this whole incident. It is my understanding that demons are generally interested in acquiring more power. They also seem prone to violence and are usually evil. I may be biased in my assumptions, however.

On a side note, I was somewhat surprised by the assertion of the imps that the demon was upset about the rocks falling. It seems to me that the demon was mad about something else which caused it to make these earthquakes happen, and the imps simply interpreted this as the demon being mad about the rocks.

Once we got back, we spoke with Mirion Meilios. She is a Bard-In-Residence. She did not really know what she was doing but seemed confident in improvisation. She described that she was sent here to be kept out of trouble. She mentioned being a poet and an artist, which was allegedly problematic for higher-ups somewhere. I believe in Illion. I am unsure what this means. If I remember correctly she was very interested in getting into trouble. I think her method of facilitating discussion was to have us focus on goals in a general sense. She had us find someone whose means we disagreed with and someone whose means we did? Means, here, kind of alluded to purpose? When I spoke to the group I described that Zhe Nheedhel and I agreed that tending to the talus blocking the road was a good idea, but Zhe Nheedhel wanted to do it because it was fun and I disagreed with that reason specifically. This seemed satisfactory to Mirion.

We decided to speak with the fey and settle that agreement and go deal with the talus. I stayed behind for the fey and went to the talus. All I know about the fey mission is that we were able to earn two weeks of research from the fey in exchange for our juiciest rumors and likely something else I did not hear about yet.

Next, we went out to deal with the talus in the road. On our way down the mountain we found a wounded merchant of some kind surrounded by bandits. The bandits took their backpack full of feathers they were carrying back and ran. Some of the group went to chase down the bandits and some of us stayed behind to speak to the merchant. They described that bandits were an occasional problem. The bandits approached the merchant, asked for their stuff, and when they didn't hand it over, the bandits hit them. Pretty simple.

I reunited with the group once the bandits had been handled and we all attempted to interrogate one of the bandits. It was a little messy and unstructured. I poked at the bandit a little bit about numbers and if there was some kind of bigger organization at play here. The bandit indicated there wasn't really anything that deep going on beyond this person having stuff and the bandit and their group wanting it. Leia was able to catch the bandit lying when the bandit claimed there were not that many more of them around. I am not sure the bandits indicate a deeper issue afoot. Everywhere is going to have vaguely bad people who want to take things, I suppose. We were close enough to town that we took the bandits in to be processed by law enforcement.

The next bit of mountain had a lynx that was cautiously backing away from us. This was a very tense few minutes as we all expected something to happen, whether it be an ambush or otherwise. The lynx did not respond to us putting our hands out to smell. Attempting to pet it would have required us to run after it to catch up, which I think we all suspected would have spooked it. We opted to calmly follow it down the road.

Once we got there, as expected, there was a big talus in the road and various little taluses. I went into this imagining we could convince it to move somewhere else that it likes in a peaceful manner. Upon encountering the talus, however, I realized I had absolutely no idea how to accomplish this. They don't really eat like animals, so you can't motivate them with food. They are territorial. It appears their main motivations are to be where they are. Hard to use that motivation to get them to move. After some posturing and meandering around for a little bit, we ended up fighting the thing, defeating it, and rolling it and its little ones down the hill.

On the way back there were GNOMES coming up the mountain!!! I felt so terrible! They were so sad when we told them the rocks were gone! They picked up their own (notably non-talus) rocks to take up!!! They were the most adorable ever!!! I unfortunately had to take a rock from Nibs, a child in our party, and give it to the gnomes so they would move on. I attempted to give Nibs a new rock but I admittedly retrieved a rectangular one. The key factor that Nibs appreciated about his original rock was that it rolled well. As such, my rectangular rock proved unsatisfactory.

I would like to apologize for the outburst at the beginning of the last paragraph. It was an unprofessional tone shift that I would like to avoid. It is difficult to control how much I love gnomes.

That was the end of the adventuring day. I look forward to next moon. Thank you for reading.

*Amarthiel Eldasilquendil*