

The DeGroot Journals

Written by Sean Connors

Foreword

I would recommend that you read no further, if you enjoy your sanity. Within these pages are words that reveal the strange and phantasmagorical. Collected inside are the journal entries of one Maximillian DeGroot, a wealthy 19th Century business man, who lost his life tragically in 1881, when his family manor burnt to the ground. Only eye witness testimony and scorched journal entries tell of events that occurred. Much of this evidence says that the family brought madness in their wake. Copies of these materials were soon made, and had been circulating in private collections for many years with only whispers of what they told. What happened to the real journal is unknown.

However, I have recently come into possession of what I believe to be the true journal of Maximillian DeGroot. Several colleagues helped in validating these claims, comparing and contrasting one of the copies with the one in my possession. It was in its original, untranslated form, comprising of several different languages. The version contained within these pages however is translated into English for the reader's convenience, whilst keeping close to the dictation of the times. Some things may be lost in this translation however, and any modern colloquialisms included within the piece are a mistake on my part. There has also been an effort made to keep with the journals formatting, so as little is lost between versions

I urge again, you reading now, to stop and reconsider. This is the last warning I shall give, and if you read on, then so be it. Whatever happens is your own doing.

- *Doctor Ezekiel Providence*
Miskatonic University, Massachusetts, 1993

February 23rd, 1881

With a new home, a new journal is always a welcome commodity. It separates one from the past, allowing a clearer focus upon the present. So it is that I begin a journal of my life at this manor house. [1] We were much anticipated it seems, with the servants greeting us quite kindly upon our arrival. I had not seen this place since my childhood, yet it was still as welcoming as I remember it. My uncle was very kind to have left the manner to myself, though I suppose it was inevitable, having no children of his own. My darling wife and children are settling in nicely. My dear Maria does love the countryside more than the city, and already has schemes for how to whittle away her days. The children have never seen anything beside the city, and are amazed at nature's wonder. I believe they will enjoy it here. The countryside should do everyone some good, especially with the troubles of late. I don't wish to dwell on the scrupulous events that that last few months have brought, but I hope that everything will resolve itself in due time, whilst I take in the countryside and all its bounty. There stands a vast stretch of woodland nearby, and perhaps when it gets warmer I might traverse the woods and try my hand at hunting for game. However, the local legends say that the woods are haunted by spirits most macabre and dire. I do not believe such legends myself, but the notion that a patch of woodland is anything more than woodland is something I find absurd. [2]

-Maximillian

March 1st, 1881

I feel this is the best I have ever been. Such wonders that rest can do. We have had the pleasure of meeting many people from the nearby village, with most being quite delightful. Maria is intent on hosting a formal dinner now, and I feel as though I cannot dissuade her from this notion. I myself would not mind such an event, and would enjoy the company of these fine folk. The days also feel as if they are warming up considerably. The whiteness of winter is starting to fade away, and with it comes the new opportunities that spring provides. She has already shown her true colours, and the rains have started to fall. As I look out the window of my study, the deep grey of the sky beckons me, whilst droplets slide down the glassy panes. Such miserable weather, but it is the season for it. The gardens shall be quite magnificent after this downpour, with vibrant life beginning to show. Perhaps my darling Maria will be able to finally plant the rose garden she has been longing for. It would also be good for the children, who are seemingly attached to the halls of the house. It would do them well to roam the grounds and explore the countryside. Perhaps it might even do me some good, to take a long walk through the gardens and fields. The past still hangs over me like a dire phantom, waiting to strike. Such events are something I wish to forget, and perhaps the countryside may remove those worries. The grounds themselves are quite vast, and with woodlands beyond, who knows what wonders might be waiting out there.

-Maximillian

March 12th, 1881

I wish the day had not been more stressful than it has been. It seems there was an intruder on the grounds, who struck up conversation with the children. Thank the lord that no harm came to them. The groundskeeper spotted the fiend, scaring him away. Sadly no-one who saw him can remember his face, with the only details being that he was tall, and rather well dressed. I have told all the servants to keep an eye out for such a man, and informed the local law enforcement of this incident. It bothers me, perhaps more than it should. The children have been tight lipped, with me and Maria agreeing to keep them confined indoors and watched at all times by one of the staff if they have need to go outside. Maybe I am being over protective, as it is likely safer than the city streets they used to wander. My dear boy Patrick is almost six years of age, and he will need to grow his own backbone sooner or later. My darling Maria may not agree, and might wish to coddle him longer, rather than let him go, but it is necessary that at some point he must head down the road of manhood. But I don't want some fiend to walk upon my property, and harm my flesh and blood. I should hope the man should never come by this way again, lest he face my terrible wrath.

-Maximillian

March 23rd, 1881

I wish that I did not have to write any more accursed words into this journal, perhaps to instead curtail onto various niceties. But the days recently have been filled with sorrow, with one of the staff lost to us in a tragic manner. We awoke in the morn to find that they had been mauled, by what appears to have been a large dog of some sort. The wounds were most terrible, and their next of kin was informed post-haste of the passing. None of the dogs had escaped the pens, so it is assumed to be the work of a wild beast. The children have been sneaking out as well, and this worries me to no end. Not only is there some villainous man stalking our grounds, but now vicious beasts as well.

-Maximillian

March 31st, 1881

Damn the infernal devil and all his minions in their eternal hell! I know not how to write this down, whether it shows weakness or not. But I feel that I must. My boy, my child, Patrick has disappeared. He was stolen away from us by some villainous rogue. We have spent the day and much of the night searching, but to no avail. I pray that he is safe. I pray with all my heart. My dear daughter Annabelle was with him, but her young mind is incapable of discovering the harsh truths, of which I am thankful. They both snuck out and fled into the woods. It was there she lost sight of him. She grew scared, and fled when she saw the man. The same man who was haunting these very ground not a month back, by her description. We searched long into the night, but we found no trace. I fear for my son's safety, but I can't lose face. I must not, for my wife and daughter's sake.

-Maximillian

April 4th, 1881

I know not how to write this, or even the words to say. I know nothing. I feel nothing except the anger and sorrow which runs through my veins.

We found him. Oh, my dear Lord above, we found him. Out around ten miles from here, on the other side of the woodland. There was a tree, as tall as any I have ever seen one grow. And there he was... just hanging down like some piece of rotten fruit, swaying in the breeze. He was horribly disfigured, brutally so. His insides were spilt upon the earth, already pecked at by birds and beasts. We cut him down, and brought him back as best we could. We plan on having the funeral tomorrow. The sooner he rests and joins the Lord, the quicker we can begin to find peace. And if I ever find the demon in man's flesh who committed this act, I will enact my justice upon them.

-Maximillian

April 14th, 1881

It has grown cold. Not just the weather, but the halls and everyone here seem to be filled with a chilled sadness. My darling Maria still weeps, only stopping for guests and nourishment. She has locked herself within her chambers, permitting no guest whilst she is within. Even I have been turned away, when I go to comfort her. Annabelle puts on a brave face, though I know she barely copes. She seems to be having nightmares, of a creature at the foot of her bed who whispers to her. It is probably no more than a delusion brought on by grief. The house servants have been keeping an eye on her, though only a few are still in our service due to recent events. I have found time to do rounds of the house, talking to the staff and hosting guests. But they tend to be wary around me, carefully stepping over topics and talking only for what is needed and no more. I have grown stolid and distant. I am so tired. Perhaps I shall rest, when everything is attended to.

-Maximillian

April 25th, 1881

Oh wariness, bane of man. My daughter's delusion grows, and I fear for her. She was found this morning at the foot of her bed covered in deep wounds. She swears to me that they were not done by her hand, that it was the mark of some accursed beast. She is sickly and sleeping as I write this, though the doctor feels that she will make a full recovery. One tragedy is far too much, and weighs heavy on my soul. I pray that another should not occur. I have begun turning away guests, because the troubles of late have made me tired, and likely to explode with anger. Yet the burdens are still there, waiting to be carried. I must remain strong, if only for my family's sake.

-Maximillian

May 1st, 1881

It sickens me so much. The crazed pity I am forced to endure whilst my family suffers. The preacher man said that he believes this house, and my family, were cursed!

He rambled on through his thoughts, saying that evil had befallen us, and that we were doomed if we did not repent our sins. I am a man of God, the mighty lord. I visit his sacred halls on every Sunday. I confess when I have wronged. Yet this priest told me that my family were being played upon evils strings. I have lost my son to death, my daughter to madness, and my wife to grief. So I forced him out, and left him bloody and bruised by the time he reached his carriage. He told me that I would be judged by the Lord, and would be held accountable for my crimes. I told him to let the Lord come, because anything that causes such pain and sorrow deserves to know my wrath.

-Maximillian

May 3rd, 1881

I have no way to explain it. My wife has risen from her constant woes, and is seemingly her normal self. To see her smile again, it's such a sight to behold. She goes about her business with a spring in her step, which I almost feel jealous for. My daughter however is not doing so well. She keeps suffering with these scratches, some of which have begun to fester. The doctors who visit her have little explanation for the occurrence. One possibly believes it may be a recurrent form of stigmata, another believes it is the flesh rebelling from the soul. Such tawdry opinions I have to turn to due to the strange nature of her wounds. She is constantly under the spell of delirium, babbling about mad things. Of a hairless dog with claws a foot long, and of its whisper. A soft, terrible whisper, full of truths men cannot know. I will not lose her. I will not lose my darling Annabelle to this madness.

-Maximillian

May 5th, 1881

I must record this, lest it slips my mind, from madness or otherwise. My daughter, my darling daughter...I have no words for the pain I feel. I saw it. I saw what it did, the grotesque creature that sat at her bedside. It looked at me with its eyes, black as the night sky. They drew me in, drowning me in their depths. Then I heard its whisper.

Oh my dearest lord in Heaven, may I never hear such a thing again. It sounded so soft, so gentle. It told me things that my mind can't seem to grasp. It told me that I would be next. That my turn would soon come, and when it did, I would end the same way. A bloodied mess, brutalised beyond recognition. Then it absconded, leaving me alone in the room. I have told the staff of my daughter's passing, and to make the necessary preparations for her funeral. My wife has not heard of what has occurred, and I wish not to tell her. I don't want to lose her smile again.

-Maximillian

May 6th, 1881

I find myself retreating further into this journal. It seems to provide me comfort among the chaos. My daughter's body rests in her chambers, as we wait for the mortician to come by so arrangements can be made. I have turned away all guests, for I don't wish to face anyone. The household staff are keeping away, giving me and Maria time to cope. That would be if my darling Maria had any trouble coping. When I told her of Annabelle's passing, she just laughed and said that we all have to go sometime. She then proceeded to continue on her way, singing some strange rhyme. This wounded me harder than any dagger could. I tried to hold her back, to try and talk sense into her. She was cold, as if almost frozen. If some flight of madness has taken her over, I wish to know not of it. Yet I don't want to lose her, as she is all I have left.

-Maximillian

May 8th, 1881

My dearest Maria has grown terribly ill. An incurable cough has over taken her, leaving her drained and tired. She is bringing up blood in heavy amounts, though she will see no doctor. She just asks to see her boy. I try to calm her delusions, but she still asks for him. I tell her that he is gone and lost, but she refuses to listen. I pray for her. Oh dear father in Heaven, I pray for her.

-Maximillian

May 9th, 1881

Hell itself stalks these halls. I have seen devils and monsters with my own eyes. I went to see Maria, and found in her room a child. He was small, younger than my child Patrick was before he left this mortal coil. As I approached the boy, I saw his skin, so smooth and glassy. I realised that it was not flesh, but ice, frozen solid. It turned its head with a horrible creaking, like an ungreased hinge being forced open, and began to watch me. Then it spoke, with a voice like nails on a board.

“Here comes a candle to light you to bed.

Here comes a chopper to chop off your head.

Chop, chop, and chop.”

It was then that I noticed the room was slick with ice, as if a terrible Russian winter had fallen in those chambers. Fear overtook me, and I fled. Yet as I did, the halls seemed twisted and corrupt. Shadows hung where they had no place to. Noise filled the space, like an undying choir. It sounded like a pronouncement from God himself. At the other end of the hall stood a man dressed strangely, as if lifted from history itself. Despite being some infernal creature, it was dressed as a ‘plague doctor’, of all things. With every step it took toward me, I began to cough and splutter, blood coming through my mouth and nose. I ran and ran, and now I reside in the study. The doors are barred by a bookcase, and the blinds of the window are drawn. I have lit a fire, so as nothing can make it through the chimney. I know not what is going on. Am I mad?

May 10th, 1881

The scratching. It hasn’t stopped. All night it continued, outside the door. This horrid, ceaseless scratching. They try to get in, these servants of hell, but they are unable to. I have taken to burning the books held in this room in an attempt to keep the fire going. I must remain vigilant. I am not mad.

Undated [3]

I have lost count of the days. I barricaded the window, so no light can enter.

They call to me again. The demon spawn disguised as my livelihood taunt me. Disguised in the flesh of my family, they call me to join them. I must resist the urge. I must.

Undated

They call,

I respond.

They laugh,

I cry.

They offer me life,

I long for death.

Undated

They knock and I hear. Why do they knock? They have no reason. I am safe inside from all.

H	I
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Eternity shall pass me by, and forever shall be unreachable to me. I shall dig their graveS. [4]

Undated

Vereor, Absolve, Exuro, Perussi.[5]

I have abandoned all hope. I know what waits for me, behind the iron curtain of death. All the lords of Heaven could not slay these beasts. But I do have to wonder, does hellspawn burn?[6]

Undated

You are trapped.

You are lost.

You are alone.

Nothing left to guide you.

But don't turn around.

It's watching you.

It's breathing down the back of your neck.

As you read this it's watching,

Waiting,

Tasting the air,

Smelling your fear.

Undated

It hurts.

September 27th, 1881

I can think clearly again. I hope that it is not too late. I believe that the phantasms have not appeared in some time now, but I am not too sure. Perhaps it is my time to escape. I have one last task to do though. I must burn down this house, and all within it. Nothing must remain, so that no one suffers the same fate. The main hall is the ideal place for this, so it is there I shall head. This journal shall follow, so I can record these last moments.

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Everything is ready. Yet they stand and watch, as if curious. Creatures from beyond the mind itself, gathered for their end. So many of these monsters gathered for the feast I am about to provide. Even the remains of my family stand amongst them, drawn and ragged like old puppets. I had hoped for escape, but they have seen that it isn't going to happen. So I write my final words in this book, and discard it as a warning. Nothing shall stop what is going to happen, of that I am sure.

They shall burn with me.

Footnotes

[1] – Whilst the manor itself never had a formal name, it was often referred to as the ‘*DeGroot Keep*’.

[2] – This patch of woodland is likely a part of the Schwarzwald, otherwise known in English as the Black Forest.

[3] From here, many of the entries are undated. Only a few are readable due to damage taken by the Journal over the years.

[4] “The walls breath in life” and “Life bleeds in the walls” are the two vertical passages. The importance of this is unknown.

[5] – Latin phrasings. *Vereor* – to respect, to Fear; *Absolve* – To cleanse; *Exuro*- burn down, set alight; *Perussi* – Consume.

[6] – This is a strange occurrence. When transcribing this passage on the computers writing program, it appeared fine. But whenever it was printed, it kept being corrupted. Several printers were tried, but to no avail.