

Scribe notes for "The Alternate Adventure"

On my honour as a scribe, none of the following is a lie, though not all of it may prove to be true.

Berik Grundenstein

The Players

Callas (played by Ross), Human/F, Earth mage, party leader.
Erik (played by Michael), Orc/M, Namer, party mil sci.
Berik (played by Craig), Human/M, Wicca, party scribe.
Antonio (played by Peter), Human/M, Ice mage.
Lath (played by Jono), Human/F, Air mage.
Vila (played by Michael), Human/F, E&E mage.
Icaron (played by Manu), Human/M, Solar.
Stark (played by Jonathan), Human/M, fighter, insane.

The GM

William (played by William) - the mad one.

The Setting

The game was played from March to May 1996 AD (July to September 1995 AP), GMed by William Dymock.

The mission took place in Alusia-2 (sometimes called Ailusia), a mirror-plane of Alusia.

Note: In this document, if the context is unclear then I refer to anything in Alusia-2 with the suffix "-2", for example Berik-2 is my counterpart in the Chapter.

Physically Alusia-2 is the same as Alusia-1. Same continents, same weather. The seasons are six months out, i.e. it's winter there when it's summer here. The politics, however, are vastly different.

In Alusia-2 the Church of the Holy Elohimic Empire rules the entire plane, and has done so for about 50 years. It has ruled the Western Kingdoms for about 400 years. The Church has eradicated the Drow and subjugated the Orcs, and has never heard of the Calamar. The head of the church is Pope Louis IV.

There are four main arms of the Church: the Michaelines, the Raphaelites, the Urielites, and the Gabrielites.

The Church recognises and worships many Gods, all Elohim.

The heraldic symbol of the church is a black four pointed star on a white background. The four points stand for the four arms of the church, and also for the four virtues Hope, Valour, Peace and Happiness.

On Alusia-2 the language, dress and customs are similar to Alusia-1. The coinage is similar enough to pass a casual inspection.

The equivalent of the Seagate Adventurers Guild is the Seagate Chapter of Adventurers, in Segate, Karzala. It was created by the Cardinal (the ruler of Karzala) as an arm of the Church of the Western Kingdoms. He used the Chapter to unite various warring mercenary groups, and once he had them united he used them to annihilate all enemies of the church and to conquer the entire plane. Over the last two or three years the Chapter has been looking at other planes. The Chapter is run similarly to the Guild.

Chapter members are not required to belong to the Church, as long as they swear loyalty to the Chapter. All Guild members have a duplicate in the Chapter, with the same skills, talents, experience and tactical ability. The only exception is that there is no Flamis-2. We guess this has something to do with her being the Eternal Consort.

Members from either organisation can physically pass as the members of the other. Ignorance of people and events will, however, quickly show up the deception.

The Chapter hires out as mercenaries, but most of its work is done for the Church - rescuing people, eradicating evil, and generally behaving as the SWAT enforcement arm of the Church.

The Chapter seems stricter and more professional than the Guild. For example,

the Chapter has no Stupidest Adventurer award, they prefer to "teach by instruction rather than reward stupidity."

The Chapter headquarters is a large cathedral complex.

The current Cardinal is Phaeton-2 (just like Phaeton-1, except with a beard and a spine). He is very charismatic, well-liked man, and is very driven and hard-working.

There has been only one recorded account of contact between Alusia-2 and Alusia-1. A person from the Chapter encountered a Guild party about six months ago. The party concerned were quite loose-mouthed, and the individual learned a lot about us. The Guild believes this individual was Liessa-2, our client for the mission described below.

How did the Church gain supremacy? The current Cardinal used a device to travel back in time, and took a group of Chapter members with him to do over the Drow. While they were in the past Engleton killed the then King of the Western Kingdoms. The resulting power vacuum allowed the Church to take power. Was this an accident? Engleton only knows, and he's never told. The King's body was never found.

The Mission

We were hired by Liessa-2 to find some missing Chapter members.

Several months ago the Chapter sent a low-level party to the Drachensburg Mountains to investigate attacks on civilians in The See of Tiran (a Dwarven dominion ruled by a Bishop).

The party consisted of Fenton-2 (an Elf/M Binder), Bartholomew Toadswart-2 (a Human/M Mind mage), and Merik-2 (a Human/M fighter).

This party last contacted the Chapter in mid-April, which is about four months ago.

Normally the Cardinal would immediately send a rescue party. This time he hadn't. Liessa-2 didn't know why, but she was keen to get the Chapter members back, so she hired us surreptitiously.

She didn't know if the Cardinal would stop us, so we had to be quiet about it. She authorised us to use all force if the Cardinal did attempt to hinder us. Our mission was to return at least one missing person, preferably all three, to Liessa-2's house in Segate.

Our pay was 20,000 sp for the group, plus all loot.

Liessa-2 had an item that will transport us to Alusia-2, and back when the mission is completed.

Note: Liessa-1 does not know of these affairs. Liessa-2 said that meeting one's opposite would be very bad.

Diary

1 July

Transported to Alusia-2, by Liessa's item.

We arrived outside Seagate, then walked to Liessa's house, avoiding the Chapter building.

She gave us long white hooded cloaks with multi-coloured hems and the four-pointed star emblem on the back. These were Chapter uniforms, and so while wearing these we wouldn't be questioned by locals.

Cardinal Phaeton turned up, and Liessa, scared, told us to leave and meet her at dusk.

At dusk we met her as arranged, and she gave us directions to the Barony of Kahn (north, past Barovia, past Baratskyne, to the end of the mountain range). In Kahn we could get directions to the See of Tiran, which is east of Kahn. She gave us a sketch map of the area.

Stayed the night at The Bunch of Grapes, a quiet inn just north of Segate.

2 July

Flew all day, north then west.

Stayed the night in camp in a copse by a small hill.

Over dinner we were approached by a figure on Starwings, a human/M, early 30s,

wearing a symbol like Brother Rowan wears (we later learnt it is the symbol of Chantras, the Power that Brother Rowan is pacted to). He introduced himself as Brother Samuel, and offered us the hospitality of The Abbey to the Stroppet Shire (a stroppet is a small, magical herb, used in healing). We asked if there was any danger in spending the night outdoors, he said "no, this land is at peace."

We declined, and instead asked him flying directions to Brandenburg, which he happily provided.

3 July

Flew all day.

Stayed the night in camp in a clearing somewhere.

4 July

Flew all day. Arrived at the town of Kelvendor at the end of Western Kingdoms. This is Fenton's demesne, and we heard that Lady Casmira, Fenton's wife, was very worried about his absense.

Stayed the night at The Fields inn. The innkeep, Otto, said that Fenton has been the local lord for about three years, and that he was the first lord, this being a very new barony.

At the inn we meet Alexei, Daris and Michael (the leader), merchants for House Valmar. All three are rank 3 Assassin, Michael is an E&E, HR spell Slowness. Note: Michael Halsak Valmar-1 has hired the Guild several times on Alusia-1.

5 July

Flew, arrived about midday at town of Velar.

We went to Fenton's house, met Lady Casmira (Elf/F, Druidic Earth mage), and her children. The eldest, Ceneca (Elf/F, Mind mage) liked Icaron and gave him a scarf as a token - should be interesting when she meets Icaron-2!.

Lady Casmira knows Fenton is on a mission, but does not know what or where. She last heard from him several months ago. She knew he was missing (a messenger from the Chapter arrived nine days ago), and assumed we were the Cardinal's rescue mission.

Fenton's guards wear Gabrielite symbols. Fenton used to be a Raphaelite, but he "had a vision" and now supports all four arms of the Church.

Flew north and west, arrived about dusk at Elurok, a walled city.

We talked to the Captain of the Guard, using the authority of our Chapter robes. He remembered an ugly Chapter member visiting the town a few months ago. This had to be Toadswart.

Stayed the night in the Oak and Ram inn, a very high class establishment. Several "romantic liasons" happened during the night. Mine was broken up by the violent entrance of the husband of the lady in question. I spent the night in a tree just outside the town.

6 July

We questioned the Captain of the Guard more, now he had time to talk. He remembered the three Chapter members, and the ugly one was in charge. One was carrying a plank (for Instil Flight).

The party reported the break-in at the inn, I was later told, with lots of improvisation by Stark. If Berik-2 or any of the rest of our counterparts go to Elurok, they are going to get a "friendly" reception.

Flew east, stopped around midday on the slopes of a large mountain. Excellent view.

While flying, we passed a large town flying a black flag. House Valmar?

We Located Bart, and detected him, north of us, within 60 miles.

Flew north, arrived around noon at a settled valley, inhabited by Dwarves. On the rim of the valley was a big round dome, with a big wand-shaped thing, about 2 ft diameter, sticking out of the top. Stopped on the slopes of another mountain.

We met a snivelling goblin, who called himself Scratchy. We fed him, and asked him what he was doing. He said he was hunting food.

He told us there is a witch in the mountains, she heals people.

He told us of large, six-legged, winged flying beasts that went "ARRRRRRRR", called bandersnatches.

He told us of a big green dragon in a cave, eight days walk thataway. He said his village was three days walk thisaway. Which was the direction Bart was in.

He told us about the new goblin king, Britellus the Brave, and that he ruled "hundreds of villages".

We took Scratchy with us. He was to be Stark's "loyal retainer" and our "guide".

We flew to the village, which was very crude. Stone and wood buildings, a wood palisade, badly tended fields, etc.

We arrived at the village. A goblin fired a sling at us. We fragged the village, killing over half the goblins, including all the spell casters. What does "over-reacting" mean?

We met Britellus the Brave. He's Bart.

His story was that he woke up one morning and Fenton and Merik were gone, along with all their gear. He was discovered by the goblins, and decided to be their king and teach them things like hygiene and cooking and civilisation. He said he should have sent a message back to the Chapter, but he didn't get around to it.

Note: as far as Bart and the others were concerned, we were from the Chapter. We never said anything about the Guild.

Bart says that the mission they were on was to investigate some cultists in Tiran, some halflings who dressed in black. Bart, Fenton and Merik were flying (Fenton's Instil Flight on a plank), and got lost. They never found the cultists.

Bart guided us to the camp where Fenton and Merik abandoned him, and we cast around for tracks. We found one set, boots, humanoid size.

We Located Fenton.

We stayed the night at the old campsite.

7 July

Flew north for an hour to where Fenton was.

On the way we saw a big mountain, high enough to have snow, but it didn't have snow on it. Our map said "here be dragon." We avoided the mountain.

We landed close to Fenton. His position was at the bottom of a very deep ravine, where there were several humanoid-sized caves.

We climbed down and entered the caves, leaving Bart the coward at the top. The tunnels were small and cramped, and filled with mushrooms that Scratchy ate with pleasure.

Stark deliberately set off a booby trap and injured the party. Lath lightening bolted him, and set off some of Stark's possessions. Scratchy died in the explosions.

We passed a vertical shaft, at the bottom we could see the foot of a large dragon. We didn't see the rest, but then again we didn't try to see!

We got attacked by goblins, done by traps, wasted by more goblins, but we won through, and the goblins surrendered.

We looted and questioned the prisoners. They said that Fenton and Merik were held by "the other goblins" who were led by "the Great Magus, the terrible goblin mage who lives down there."

Our Locate showed that Fenton was "down there."

We went "down there."

Goblins attacked us. We dicked them. More goblins attacked us. We sort-of dicked them, eventually. Yet more goblins attacked us. We barely defeated them, with some help.

Several figures joined the last fight, and finished off the one goblin mage we hadn't killed.

These figures were Brother Rowan, Engleton, Kern, Phillippe, and Axes (or something). They had come on a rescue mission on their own initiative, the Cardinal didn't know they were here.

They said they had already rescued Bart, at the top of the ravine, and they were going to rescue the other two and get all the credit.

Not sodding likely was our response, but we really couldn't do anything about it. These five were fresh and prepared, we were exhausted and out of investeds.

They swanned off into another cave, and returned a few minutes later with

Fenton and Merik, who were both showing signs of imprisonment.

Callas asked Fenton what the three did to annoy the Cardinal. Apparently Fenton's golem Bob escaped and stole a few items of the Cardinal's, treasured items, and some of those items have not yet been found.

Fenton and Merik explained that they left Bart early in the morning to scout, and were jumped by goblins. The goblins were going to sacrifice Fenton and Merik to the Godstaff, an item in the possession of someone called The Prophet. Is this connected with the cultists they were investigating? No-one knew.

We persuaded Engleton et al to leave Fenton and Merik with us for now, and that we would try to help them finish the mission.

We left the cave, with Fenton and Berik. Bart was with Engleton and company, at the top of the ravine, in a camp replete with tents, banners, squires, servants etc.

We planned a cunning scheme to get Bart away from the camp. It didn't work, because Lath changed the plan halfway through but didn't tell any of us. So we left, and flew south.

8 July to 11 July

Flew to Segate.

Sent a message to Liessa to meet us at the Sign of Hope Inn.

She met us, we handed over Fenton and Merik and said that Engleton et al had Bart. She agreed that we had fulfilled the mission, in that we got the three Chapter members back to the Chapter, and arranged to meet us the next day with our pay and the device to send us home.

12 July

Sat around and vegetated.

We tested Locate, trying to Locate Stark when we knew that both Stark-1 and Stark-2 were in range. Our experiments seemed to indicate that Locate would find the nearest target.

Liessa arrived, with our pay and the device.

As she prepared the device a very large sword (several stories high!) appeared above the inn, pointing down at us. It's aura was long-lived sentient.

We didn't hang around to wait for the Chapter, who would certainly investigate such a thing. We left.

We arrived. But Toto, I don't think we're in Seagate. Or anywhere we recognised.

We were in a large cavern which had a ruined city in it. It seemed to be empty, but we kept catching sight of movement out of the corner of our eyes. Movement that stopped when we looked straight at it.

It's aura did show we were on Alusia, our Alusia.

A divination revealed that we were in the place where Sinking Doom victims go. We met a man called Jacob Carlisle, who also went by the names The Bard and The Traveller. We could not detect his aura. He had a cat called Whisker, whose aura was short-lived sentient, GTN cat. Accompanying him was the shade of a dead female elf called Alesia, who died in pre-Penjarre times.

Jacob said he could send us home, but he needed some "strange metal" as a component for his ritual.

We made camp in a ruined building.

A shade (aura of sentient undead) ran into our camp saying "you have to hide me, the priests are coming". We hid him and waited for the priests.

The priests (auras of sentient undead) were worshippers of "The Earth Mother". They were Earth mages. We used Sunlight to force them to withdraw. They promised to return with "the Beast".

They did return, with some summoned monstrosity like a mutant frog. We dicked them.

We followed the survivors back to their temple, a large mausoleum-like thing with big pillars, carvings, an open courtyard, all the works.

We scouted the building and found the treasure room. In there was a large black sword, made of "strange metal". It's aura was long-lived sentient, GTN "the sword". It said it could help us, but there was a price - it needed a wielder. Vila telekinetically wielded it, avoiding the curse.

We recognised this sword. Last we heard it had been physically removed from

Engleton's body and placed in the Guild vault. The deepest, most secure vault. We asked the sword more details about it's price. It wanted us to use it to permanently kill Engleton, for rejecting it.

We took it with us anyway.

We found the sword could produce all sorts of effects to help us. It created a small high-mana zone, it offered spells and talents. We still did not touch it, we just used TK to wield it.

Jacob ritualised us.

We appeared in a stone room. In the room were five women. They said that pirates had attacked them, and they asked us to save them (after they got over the natural hostility towards us, armed and violent and uncouth as we are!). They said we were in the Five Sisters.

We broke out of the room, attacked the pirates, then attacked more pirates. Then some of us sauntered towards the town while Stark and Vila carried the fight to the harbour. End result, we dicked the pirates.

During the fight the sword tricked Vila into touching it. The sword grew tentacles into Vilas hand and arm so that the sword could not be dropped. We commandeered a ship, and sailed it to Novadon to return the ladies, who turned out to be Novadon nobles. They promised to send a reward to Seagate as soon as they could raise the money.

28 July

Arrived at Novadon.

6 Aug

Arrived at Seagate.