

Scribe Notes for Investigation of D'arbres, Spring 802

GM: Mandos Mitchinson

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The Party:

Sir Christopher Reynard*	Troubadour	Male Human	Gabrialite, from Foxcourt
Lady Kathleen Reynard*	E&E/Warrior	Female Human	Novice Michaeline
Borghoff (Sandy)	Warrior/Namer	Young Human 6'9"	Demon hunter, candlemaker
Amelia*	Ranger/Healer,	Female Hobbit	Baroness of Gracht, experienced in Elfheim mountains, Healer
Motley*	Warrior	Grail Giant / human / hobbit / pixie	pacted to Feros
Silverfoam (Chevalier de Bourjela) +	Namer	Male Elf	Mil Sci, Troubadour, Healer

Assisted by:

Hagan	Republican	Male Human	Weaponsmith
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* can speak La Lange, the language of D'arbres, + can understand, but not speak La Lange.

Employer: The Marquessa of Bowcourt, represented by Andre.

The Mission: To discretely investigate and resolve (in the best interests of the Kingdom) the disappearance of 6 missing villagers of D'arbres, the eastern-most village of Neucourt (the eastern province of Bowcourt). Probably Fairy involvement.

Background:

Villagers going missing, starting with a 6 year old girl swimming in the pond, then others a couple of weeks apart. Nobody sees them go, no bodies found.

The Baron D'amberville of Neucourt had built a hunting lodge a mile outside the village, about 20 years ago, but the first hunt there went terribly awry, and they've never been back. Their intent was to hunt fantastical creatures (?) but bow strings rotted, swords rusted, food amiss etc. Likely Fairy involvement (or necromancy/wicca).

Astrology reading done by the court astrologer, 2 weeks before guild meeting.:

He met him on the green beneath the maypole, intimidated by the girls' quick steps, swirling dresses, sassy laughter. He knew he'd rescued the night from oblivion when he danced away from the crowd, into the tickling grass at the forest's edge. For thirty-one days he never cast his eyes on the dark horror down by the river, nor lingered on another plane. Tonight he'll put five different flowers under his pillow and dream of him clumsily claiming his land.

Summary

D'arbres has treaties with 5 fairy courts surrounding the village. The prince of the southern court had sought out support of Zepar, who sent a Hellhound to the area. The hellhound was killing fairies of the courts as it traveled around, and this triggered the disappearance of the villagers (for breaking the treaties.) The party killed the hellhound, and the Fairy King apologised to the humans for the mistake, releasing the villagers. The priest of the village used to be Michaeline, but had turned to Zepar, the Red Duke. The church was destroyed, the father given over to the Michaeline order in Bowcourt. The village forge was shifted off the southern court's stone to the ex-church site, conciliating the fairies. A successful mission.

Places visited

D'arbres village, in Neucourt, in Bowcourt.

D'arbres village

The village is a small 136 (and counting) person village, known to produce high quality ales as well as the wine common to Bowcourt. It is self sufficient, growing own produce, cotton, and own miner getting pig iron from the mountains. They don't import anything. Doesn't have strangers visiting, the last stranger arrived 4-5 years ago, Robert the forester/woodcutter, who is now mainly accepted as local. The village is set in a valley bordering onto the mountains that border the elven lands. They all speak only La Lange (except for the Reeve, Innkeeper & Forester who also spoke common). The only stone buildings are the church, tavern, the reeve's house and the mill. Don't complain too much about the taxes, possibly because the taxes pay for us, or they have a method of producing surfeit of ale, so taxes is no great hardship. Voluntary night curfew has been in effect since end of Frost, when they sent for help with the disappearances.

Village of Plenty, the weather is always nice and mild. No snow, frost, or even storms. There is ample food, and all of it very fine quality. The orchard has a strange mix of trees, cherry, oranges, apples, all sorts growing together even if they normally don't suit the same climate. The beer truly is excellent, and the brandy and whiskey.

Stones of War Binding, five set in a pentagon surrounding the village and a central stone behind the Reeve's house. Columns of stone 2' diameter, 6-7' tall, each with a different rune marked on the top. There were buried in the ground : at the bottom of the pond, at the western edge of the western crop field, under the smith's anvil, the north-forest corner of the orchard, on the left of the track to the hunting lodge 100' feet from tavern. Staying on close proximity of these stones seem to precipitate being pulled to them? And disappearing. They don't portal to any named plane "around about here". They are involved in a Pact with "The Fairy King", the power of them preventing war is countered by the pact being broken. The centre Reeve Stone has very old writing on it in La Lange. "This? [something smudged/worn out] humans not harm faeries. This pact shall last forever." Possibly known as the Luck Stone, a couple of generations ago, where people rub it for luck. Each stone is one sixth of pact, signed about 300 years ago. Each stone is a conduit to one Fey Court. When a fey of that group is killed (directly or indirectly) by a human, then that stone is 'primed' and takes a human life in retaliation. This is limited by only single people are taken, not groups, thus hold hands in close proximity! Though Prince Rummage said the stones are activated by the Fey in retaliation, and they stay primed for a couple of days. If no-one appears, the stones confuse and delude some human to coming closer.

Ley Line of High Mana: runs East-West, through middle of village, though not directly through any of the stones. Buried a couple of feet underground, but when exposed, creates a small high mana zone. Refer 'Forest Paraquin' in these notes.

The church: seemed to be consecrated to Michael, but had 7-8 years ago become dedicated to the demon Zepar, (the Red Duke, Illusionist, with club foot). Each mass strengthened the consecration, so that it was imbued into the very stone of the walls, the slate roof. The outside step to the church had 'Zepar' written on the underside of it - bit of a giveaway. Zepar could appear in the church - at will. The church was destroyed by the party, the site being used for the new forge/smithy.

Fairey Magic Area: seemed to be covering the valley, stopping magic using higher minion of both dark and light from entering, though they could mundanely walk in. Zepar could enter at the church. Zepar and Foras had direct involvement with the area, though Foras (illusionist), possibly since a party member pacted to him dies, and he appeared and mazed all the other dark or light aligned combatants. Seir and Ipos are watching area, Seir since the guild member's involvement, and Ipos at fighting with Seir, so watching for openings in their own little game.

Villagers:

We meet the 136 villagers, there are 15 familial groups, and all except the blacksmith's has had someone go missing from them. Everyone knows everyone, shortage of young marriageable women. We make list of everyone : name, age, occupation, DA reveals no magic been cast on them. An opportunity to study them. The population of the village stays the same, with a pretty much equal split between male & female. Somehow, there always ends up with the right mix of marriageable people.

Reeve Cohart is the leader, seemed very surprised at the size and quality of our group - was expecting a sheriff of the Baron at the most. They're perplexed at how to put up us & our horses. There is only one other horse, and 2 oxen in the village. The village gets together to vote on a reeve each year, but keep appointing him, as with his father and grandfather etc before him. For taxes, he takes the goods to the next village and gives them to the reeve there, usually only away one day, always glad to return.

Father Aubrey posed as the Michaeline priest of the church, 40-50 years old, drinks wine (unlike rest of village who drink the very good beer), had a compulsion put on him 34 years ago, about the last time he was at the chapter house. This was his first posting as a new priest. Wants to leave the village, keeps asking to, but never hears from the church. DA: Hasn't had any divine revelation. Best ability on other people is to bless. Has attempted exorcising bad spirits of the village, but to no avail. Talks a lot, complaining of his position. Villagers go to church each Sunday, go through the motions, then carry on with life, regardless of what he says. No-one comes to do confessions. He confessed to being sent into the church by his father for an indiscretion, then shortly after graduating as a priest had a further indiscretion with the Lady and survived the duel, and was sent to D'arbres as punishment. Not pacted to the PoL, probably pacted to Zepar, though continues to deny it. Says he feels bad for his actions starting the villager's disappearances.

Aubrey's version of what happened: At the end of summer just passed, a stranger came to him at the church, walked with a club foot, wore tatty red robes. Offered to make a deal, to organise getting Aubrey to leave the village. In return if someone came to ask for a favour, to show him to the help-asking-place. A Boggart did come and ask for assistance, and so was taken to the place. Shortly afterwards the villagers starting to disappear. Upon occasion Aubrey had gone to talk with Zepar, showing this by shifting a particular stone to the other side of the road, about 1/2 mile south of the village. After our chat with him on the Reapsday, he figured we were onto him, left the village, slashed his face (as directed to stop followers ie our locates) then made his way to the help-place. He was disconcerted to have the demonics appear, tried to leave, but was told to sit down and shut up, which he did, until we appeared, then he tried to run while they were distracted. The necromancer petit-morted him. He overheard the demonics praising "the work of their master's minion done well", and that "the breaking of the pact was progressing well."

Cursing Book he wrote (in very small script) a log during his time at D'arbres, starting off ranting against the specific church members who had banished him, tending towards ranting against the Church in general. Final phrase before he ran away "They're onto me. I'm going to join my master." Book seems to be a curse of some sort, not that actually affects people??

Refer Village - Church section of these notes

Widow's husband was the head woodcutter, but died during a logging incident. They had been cutting down 5 good sized oaks, part of a nice stand of the trees in the Paraquin forest, for the rebuilding after the war, 5-6 years ago. Uncharacteristic accident - Fairy revenge because he cut down the tree of a dryad, even though they had warned him not to.

Widow's Cats are actually Brownies, (GTN Hearth Spirit) summoned by saying "Here puss, puss, puss" They appear in order: Grey, Ginger, Tortoiseshell. They are part of are a court from far away, sent to look after the Widow after her husband died (they don't know how or why) since he had done nice things for them - rescuing and returning their The Stag when injured. They tell us of the surrounding Fey Courts, their territory is the village (which the other courts can enter, but can't do anything to the humans due to the pacts). They can see through illusions, can do real Glamours, have rank 15ish vs. invisibility. Arrange a deal for them to come with us to the forest edge to meet the other Fey Court, for return of widow, small cask of whiskey, and a bow (for their arrows) each made for them.

Robert the forester, 6'4" strapping man, the newcomer, sent in as replacement for the widow's husband. Brought with him two sons, now aged 12 & 15, well controlled in father's presence, know his trade too. Robert is fanatically scared of the fairies in the forest, but wears a basic iron cross which he claims will keep him safe from them (blessed by Michael Minion to protect against Fey magics. He has a geas to not enter the Fey Vastness of Gwyllion, in South Carzala (on pain of death) Speaks common. Was with the posse to hunt "the great beast" in the D'arbres forest when David went missing. It was David's idea. Bob the trapper and sons made up the five. Magical impacts include glamour, confusion, sleep.

Innkeep, late 30's speaks common, has younger wife - early twenties (one of the biggest age discrepancies). Is the brewer.

David, trapper was a friend of the Repulso d'livre, chatted to them when the posse entered the forest, left before the others, to return to the village to talk with someone, didn't say who. Stone took him on the way back?

Missing People: All disappeared during the day time, some while other villagers were potential observers. Their clothes and possessions have disappeared, but not the stuff they were carrying, e.g. the rabbit snares set, the herder's crook, the eeling spear. Gone into bubble, awaiting judgement by The Fairy King, probably a year and a day, depending on how busy he is.

Name		Age	Occupation	Last seen	court	When	What doing when
Adeline	F	6	Child	Pond	SoP	End Harvest	Swimming
Sylvester	M	18	Cooper's Assistant	Orchards	HotF	16w	Checking orchard woods
Didere	M	30		Pond	SoP	14w	Eeling
Helen	F	34	Widow/witch	?	HW	12w	?
Mark	M		Miner's assistant	Woods near orchard	HotF	10w	Rabbit snaring, s rabbits.
Julian	M	12	Sheep herder	Pond	SoP	End Frost	Crook & sheep fo
Damien	M		Miller's apprentice	Field 1	HW	7w	Checking seed sov
Yvonne	F	24		Orchards	SoP	6w	Didn't turn up for
Roland	M	30's	Farm hand	Field 2	FoD	5w	Checking sugarbe
Cyril	M			Near river	SoP	4w	Picking flowers
Simone	F	40's	Farm hand	Field 1	HW	3w	Picking cotton
David	M	30's	Trapper	Forest	HotF?	2w	Part of posse track
Francoise	M	15	Farm hand	Field 2	FoD	1w	Picking sugarbeet
Rosalie	F		Adeline's mother	Pond	SoP	2 days	Checking for Ade
SilverFoam				Pond	SoP	-1 day	
Villager				Field 2	FoD	-2	
Borghoff				Orchard	H	-2	

HotF=Home of the Free = Repulso d'livre = D'arbres forest

Southern Unseeley

HW=High Woods = Madeirus Elvedus = Panaquin forest ?North? = big court

SoP= Stream of Pain = Carego d'door = Nixie stream

FoD = Field of Dreams = Campo Dissonass

Fey Areas

Forest D'arbres, is "kind of enchanted" forest, high mana zone. A boundary with the tree line. Divination reveals some other sort magic than what we are used to, still ongoing. The horses sense something strange. The trees are evenly spaced out, with NO dead fall. Mainly beech, oak, hawthorn, hundreds of years old, about 150-200' tall. 4-5 mile long, by 1 1/2 mile wide, in a arc. D'arbres village at the Western end of the arc. Seems to be a clearing in the approximate centre, with a very large oak tree at its centre. Aging happens very rapidly : footprints 2 weeks old, appear 3-4 months old, but still discernable! Lots of mushroom rings, (incl. mixed species rings) not obviously magical, perhaps a concentration of the enchantedness. Lots of mazing tracks through the forest, takes 4 1/2 hours to get to the heart for 2-3 miles; normal travel speed to leave. North indeterminable for rangers & navigators. Locates to the outside still work

Hunting Lodge, non magical auras found. Very dilapidated building, aged about 200 years, rather than the 20. Walls and slates starting to break up and fall at the disturbances of our investigations, no storms to destroy it naturally. Door to large common room, with huge oak tree growing in the centre (20 y.o. , but last magic is 'growth'). 6 sleeping rooms around the outside. Broken crockery, hand tools strewn about floor, includes rusty iron. Kitchen, stables etc at back. Stones missing from the hearthstone in the kitchen. Well water doesn't seem brackish. The road to it still has slight ruts, but is overgrown with thick brambles, gorse, etc all prickly plants. No trees regrown there in the 20 years.

Heart Clearing, 12 "Yew trees" stand around a 70' diameter clearing with grasses, daisies etc. Centre of this clearing is the "oak tree". DA reveal these to be mana constructs: tree golems. The yews are activated by damage to the forest. They don't respond to enchanted language. In fact they don't respond. Last magic to impact the oak golem was 380 years ago.

Forest Paraquin, where the hunters go, mainly catching deer, occasional wolf. Robert the forester said the fairey involvement is not as bad as D'arbres Forest. Normal mana, except for caldera where the High woods fairey court is.

Place of Power, with a stone carved with a face on it. High mana. 9' tall rock in a natural looking head shape. Nature of the magic is Earth, and 'Time' releases the entity inside it. A rune on top of the stone seems to be made with a dragon's claw, is a draconic rune for 'fire'.

Ley Line running from Place of Power to the D'arbres forest, through the village, past the inn, the reeves and another house, avoiding all stones. Mana sensing indicated a string buried a hand's width beneath the ground, generating high mana when in very close proximity to it. Border to the southern fey court.

Fey Courts: Three fey can be a mob. When four or more fey apply to The Fairy King to become a court (either Seeley or Unseeley, depending on their inclinations). The oldest courts tend to be made up of one type of Fey, but more recent courts are just a mix of types, who get together with other like minded Fey to breed. When a court gets too big, they try to take more land, leading to war with the court next door, and lots die, so then there's plenty of room for everyone again.

Each court has their own deal for the pact. The 3 seeley courts seem on reasonably good terms with each other. They each activate the stones to penalise the humans for the indirect action, when the hellhound kills a fey.

D'arbres court, Home of the Free = Repulso d'livre : (orchard stone) pact broken if set fire or directly harm the forest. A dryad mind reads the sleeping Aubrey, they declare what we have said is true about Aubrey and the Boggart and Zepar, and the prince announces "We are going to war".

Prince Rummage, Consort Kensa, Quigley the herald/gossip

Southern Court, Carego Esterado :(Smith stone) Unseeley, possibly Kobolds?, Leader is Boggart (bad brownie in a similar manner to a drow elf), probably the prince who made a deal with Zepar. Nobody gone from their stone, with the smith's iron anvil sitting on it. The other fey courts know this, say the prince is very cross about it. Accused the Home of the Free for the Hellhound since it came across their border.

Paraquin Court, High Woods = Madeirus Elvedus: (West field stone) Big court, more influence with the Fey King's court. Very laid back, not worried by 6 of their 60,000 court going missing, but concerned when pointed out that the villagers making the ales and spirits for them were disappearing. They get their liquor from the village as part of the treaty/pact. Described the Ley Lines to us, the differences of "Going to War" (border skirmishes) and "Being at War" (annihilation of the other court, which would result in the pacts being broken).

River Court, Stream of Pain = Carego d'door: (Mill Pond stone) Nixies, bad tempered, Unseeley. Don't talk with any of the other Seeley courts, very bad. About an hour travel on foot North of D'arbres, following the river, is a lake 1-2 miles long, 1/4- 1/2 mile wide. When we visited, they didn't want to talk, instead issued forth killing water magics : Maelstrom, Flash flood, Water Spout. Schools of Pike were sent to attack us also. We took to the air, and ran up the hills around the lake to avoid the magics. And returned south quickly. A stupid idea to try to talk to them.

Field Court, Field of Dreams = Campo Dissonass: (East (sugarbeet) field stone), 'Mad according to the High woods, from eating so many mushrooms. We met Sylphs at the border, who were prophets, foretelling everything. They were unmoved by the potential pact breaking, saying the stones foretold that the humans would break the pact. - but not the Boggart, which they had to think about). Came to the village, but couldn't see the stone of the church, since they don't see things created by the Light or Dark, and find it difficult to see things 'blessed' by them too.

Astrology reading "Who wanted the truce broken?"

The one who has harboured the grudge has sought allies and their allies.

The great war never ends and the age-old grudge never resolved.

Events

Hell Hound : (from Prince Rummage) travels clockwise through the courts, arriving once a moon, staying for about a week. It roams looking for Fey to kill, which then disappears for 1 1/2 hours, sometimes more, sometimes less. Reappears in the same spot it leaves. Part of the demonic coin (which Angels are the flip side of), "a different state of being" hence no interaction with the Fey magic. Therefore must be human influence to have summoned it. D'arbres Fey magics no affect on it, as are their arrows (of magical poison and sleep). Avoids amulet of Jet.

It was a 5' high hound, massively built akin to a Clydesdale Horse, with long tail with poisonous spike at end. Cast nightmares, thus illusionist? Stench of sulfur when killed.

Borghoff's Disappearance, tug towards Orchard stone, then arrive in black 'bubble', that doesn't move around, durational magics worn off, permanents still going, not hungry, not tired, not bored. Dispel Magic cast (greater summoning counterspell - perhaps any Entity college), then quick glimpse of other bubbles with people in them, then fall unconscious. Borghoff arrives back in D'arbres forest, next to the dead pixie. Doesn't feel as if he's died. Apparently he was put into limbo, waiting for the Fairy King to pass judgement on him, usually takes a year and a day for him to get around to it.

Demonic Encounter at 'help-place' : 3 big imps, 2 x necro (1 killed), 1 x illusionist, all using rank 15 magics. 3 smaller imps, one with blue glowing sword. Sitting around the camp fire chatting when we arrive, with Father Aubrey. Magics Cast :agony, stream of corruption, nightmares, maze, petit Mort (on Aubrey). Motley dies hence Foras involvement: anyone with dark or light aligned possessions, or people go into maze, then Motley resurrected. Demonic not return, presumably gone back to hell.

Diary

1. **Wans'day:** Portal from Seagate then ride, arrive D'arbres lunchtime, talk villagers afternoon, visit lodge, talk hunters, sleep window & Reeve's house.
 2. **Th'rsday:** Shown around village, find stone in pond, Silverfoam disappear, ride into D'arbres forest, stay night at heart clearing
 3. **Fry'sday:** leave forest, back to D'arbres for breakfast, Meet Hagan, get war warning from the Gracht pixies. Find other war binding stones, Borghoff disappears. Start wearing iron. Lunch. Talk with Priest, summon cats, Borghoff returns, dinner. Ancient Divination on West Field stone, divination on Robert.
 4. **Reapsday:** Breakfast. Chat with Brownie cats. Inquisit Priest. Lunch. Enter D'arbres forest as potential new Fey court. 50-60 pixies raining arrows on us, we offer to help vs. the demons and are taken to the Prince. Return mid afternoon, Father gone. Track him South, poorly trying to hide tracks, goes into stream. At nightfall encounter him in a meeting with 3 Devils, (Necro) & 3 Imps.
 5. **Sunday:** Villagers leave, divinates on Aubrey, Hagan, church. Chat with D'arbres forest, declare going to war on southern court, chat with High woods, ask us to kill hell hound, Ley lines, chat with Field of Dreams.
 6. **Moonday:** Travel to talk with Nixie court, Amelia dies, (Hagan flies her back to guild for resurrection)
 7. **Duesday:** Destroy village church.
 8. **Wansday:** return to High woods awaiting Hellhound. Track Ley Line, set up hellhound warning wards, visit Power Rock.
 9. **Thursday:** Camped in High woods, awaiting Hellhound
 10. **Fry'sday:** 3am Hellhound arrives, we kill it, fairies celebrate.
 11. **Reapsday:** Hagan being healed by dryad in tree. Reeve return, we let villagers return.
- ...
- 21st Full Moon Midnight go to High Woods, and also to meet the Fairy King.
27th return to guild

9 weeks training available (plus 1 week on adventure)

"Clear the area, they're about to rain arrows down on us, I mean you," says Motley, before he flies off to safety.

"Are Nixies fond of elves?" Kathleen asks, thinking of Silverfoam, who may be visiting them. "Are they tasty?" replies the pixie prince.

"Who's face is carved on the stone?" "The stone's."

"There's that hole digger thing there we could use." "A spade? You can call it that you know."

"What's for Dinner?" asks Motley

"You're meant to inveigle a dinner invitation first."

"That's what I was doing!"

"The Prince wants to see you on the full moon."

"How are we going to get there?" asks Borghoff.