

Scribe Notes for: Escort to Countess Kirsten

GM : Jonathan Bean

Time : Winter 800, 1-3 Frost

Area: Seagate and north towards Aladar, Alusia

The Party:

Kern Silvercrest, Baron of Aladar, (associated directly to the Marquisette of Bowcourt) 6'2" male elf, wearing plate Armour. Courtier, warrior, military scientist, Earth mage, Was scribe for the mission returned (2 1/2 months ago) who rescued Countess Kirsten. Has been helping to organise the "wagon train" of the escort we are to be part of. Assigned Military Scientist for the mission.

Amber, Countess Kassonay, 5'9" PB 21 female elf, green eyes, long auburn hair, wearing feather armour. Perched on her shoulder is a Hawk, with silvery feathers, called Greatwing, (did not accompany the party). Amber is a witch, healer and woods ranger.

Rocsinger, Average PB, male elf, E&E beastmaster, with abilities in ranger, healer, courtier, astrologer and merchant (rare books). Pet owl.

Ono, middle aged male hobbit, 3'4" Shadow celestial mage. Wears lots of rings and green dragonskin armour and short sword.

Arthur Pendragon, Baron von Jotenburg, 2'9" (short) male hobbit, very charming manner. Is a thief who dabbles in mind magics.

Amelia, Baroness von Jotenburg, married to Arthur, 3'6" female hobbit, long brown hair tied in plait down back, very muscly appearance wearing armour. Uses many weapons, non colleged, also mil sci, healer.

Sir Christopher Reynard, mid twenties 5'10" male human, PB 21, wearing blue priestly robes (Gabrielite) and ehreleine sword. E&E mage Court and sailing skills.

Lady Kathleen Reynard, mid twenties PB21 female human, wearing generally blues & purples court dress, truesilver estoc. E&E mage, Court skills, including embroidery, shopping and riding. Assigned as official Party Leader.

The Background:

Our employer, Lady Catherine, is the sister to the Countess Kirsten of Aladar, wife to Seagate adventurer, Count Blitzkrieg. We are hired to form part of the escort as they travel across country from Seagate to Aladar. The countess doesn't know (& isn't meant to know) of the part we play in her protection. She has priests/advisors/spies from both Aladar and Aquila in the entourage, of about 150 people. They are currently staying at the Duke of Cazarla's palace, leaving the next morning at 7.

The Politics:

As part of the end of the war between Aladar and Aquila (over acknowledging the heir of the Western Kingdom), the marriage between BK and Kirsten was arranged, to stabilise the situation. Rashak (female Drow necromancer), the leader of the dark circle (& enemy of the Guilds in particular) attempted to undermine this post-war stability by breaking this marriage, by kidnapping the countess, and a minion, Lord O'Ryan, a greater vampire, creating a blood Bind to her. This was broken by her being killed by one who truly loves her, her sister Catherine, see previous party notes. Catherine apparently made sure that the Duke of Cazarla rescued the countess, by stopping any other aid getting to Cazarla and to help Brastor being overrun by the barbarians, until the countess was returned. Hence Blitzkrieg and Lady Dark (Silken, but blessed by the church of Uriel, and a transformed creature), to the rescue. There is strong likelihood of further attempts at the countess being made, hence our employment. Also, we're to be escorting her on behalf of the Count Blitzkrieg, who is taking time to get to know and protect his 4 year old daughter. It was noted that Rashak tends to operate with brute force within the dark circle, but uses espionage, assassins, spies while operating outside the dark circle. Our route is such that we do not intend entering the dark circle.

Our Story:

The Reynards are of the opinion that the party as a whole should travel as nobility, gaining more respect and ability to command the entourage. So, Lord Rocsinger, is married to Amber, something arranged by their parents fifty years ago or so, and he has come to claim her, and take her home, however she has debts to the duke of Cazarla that she is bound to fulfill, hence this adventure. Some mention was made, warning of the heralds of Mordeaux kill imposters, and who make quick thorough checks on any nobility trying to pass itself off in their lands. After our initial meeting with Lady Catherine (who agreed on 70,000 sp payment for the 5 of us), Kern, Arthur and Amelia join the original five.

Our Preparations:

We got mind cloaks sorted out, and regular magics - Kern's Armour ritual (bonus resistance to air, earth, fire, water) and Christopher's reverse-locate spell. Amelia sends word to her uncle in Mittlemarkhauptstadt to soothe the Mordeaux heralds' feathers. Guild security takes extreme efforts that not one of them shall have the whole idea of our preparations, many reacting extremely to Christopher.

Ono gives us readings of the night sky from The Lord of the Bats:

Danger comes from three sources, the first two are not real:

- The Kings Men, wearing hats [either hobbit fighters who have rebelled against the Western Kingdom (characterised by rapiers and tricorne hats), or the new set who have legitimately set up since peace settled. Refer scroll to act against them]
- Swarm of bats, normal and giant horse sized which spit acid, coming from a black cloak held open by two men. [Kern's earlier party encountered one of these cloaks, and brought a specimen back to the guild for slow study. A soul sucker. Necro counterspell helped in resisting its effects. Dark celestial Special counterspell had effect. Perhaps men holding it are soulless, e.g. wraiths. Bats are effected by fire, Silken's holyshield had minimal effect]
- Within at least one house, watch for skeletons in the closet. [Figurative or literal?]

Rocsinger organised astrology readings.

The Astrology Questions were as follows (approximately):

- * From what social class or classes within the Entourage (i.e. the Countess and companions excluding us) are serious threats (such as abduction, harm or death) to the Countess going to come
- * When will the Countess be put into danger (of abduction or serious harm) on the journey
- * Which colleges will seriously threaten (e.g. abduction, harm or death) the Countess on this journey

The Answers (in random order) were:

- * Gibberish
- * 8 symbols as follows:

1st line, 1st symbol: 3 red lines like tears or flames, from large to small, with the smaller ones being contained inside the large.

1st line, 2nd symbol: blue shield like object, with the point at the bottom, and flat at the top, divided into 4 evenly with blue lines, with the right left quadrant coloured blue (horizontal strokes for the colouring). All blue, the colour of blue eyes.

1st line, 3rd symbol: Possibly hill and cave mouth, with the entrance to the left of the centre, with a tree, taller than the hill, brown trunk and green leaves, looks like a conifer/pine of some kind.

1st line, 4th symbol: a shore, with blue sea, red sand/beach/mud to brown cliffs, topped with green grass and 3 trees, brown trunks and green leaves. The right most tree is darker green than the other two, slightly taller. The left most tree is the shortest, and wider, possibly not a pine. The others are similar but not quite the same as the 3rd symbol, probably different species, or maybe just the way they were drawn.

2nd line, 1st symbol: Orange square or rectangle, coloured in with mostly diagonal strokes. The square is smaller than the tear/flame, and would probably fit inside it.

2nd line, 2nd symbol: the word next in green, lower case. Starts to the left of the shield above.

2nd line, 3rd symbol: Green circle, with a segment coloured in green, the rest white. The segment is in the left upper, and is approximately one quarter of the circle. The green is the same as the next and as the third tree.

2nd line, 4th symbol: a crescent moon, perhaps, in brown, with a face of mouth (smiling, one line) and two eyes above the mouth.

- * Text and a triangle or bat in green in the right left, balancing up the words, which start on the top of an A4 and then go down, getting closer to the left each time.

The red winds look for you (but will not find you _ this bit down, and in black)

The hand of fate is hot (on the rocks in the fire _ in red)

The rocks will burn but (not for long when the wind blows _ in black)

Trust your own eyes (as they see others in other lights- in blue)

The wings from the (church may be of help _ in green)

Trust is sometimes (pay in itself _ in blue)

But not all the time, but not all the time & repeating and disappearing into the green triangle. Which has an indentation in the middle of it extending for a third of the longest side.

The Entourage:

Countess Kirsten, an E&E mage, who gives the appearance of complete normality, merely the usual courtly graces and skills appropriate for a Countess. Despite our suspicions, not vampiric as a consequence of her latest escapades. She was apparently missing for only 4 days when kidnapped: a female vampire insinuating into her court, charming those around her until she took control over Kirsten. The guild reassures us that she is "clean" at the moment, but is more susceptible to "getting dirty" again. No mention is to be made of her near death experiences, as that would nullify her marriage, upset the political balance etc Her aspect is death/dark.

Watchers 4, 2 wearing silver dress, 2 wearing blue, invisible of sort sort, but not seen with witchsight. Hold egg timers (when turned stop time for their actions) and fan (to dispell magics effecting them)

Alvina, lady in waiting, who is Kirsten's secret physician.

Lady Catherine short dark hair, wearing white wig and full make up. The organiser of the entourage, with the Captain. Decides which exact route to take - we have a choice of 20 houses/estates to stop over at. Kirsten's sister, who truly loves her, helped remove the bloodbind from Kirsten. Apparently very devoted to her family and doing the correct thing for the family and politics. Perhaps resents being, in effect, Kirsten's servant.

Lady Ward her middle aged chaperone, minder to the young cousins. Highest ranked spell = Bless unborn child, hence wicca college.

Nicole, 16 year old cousin to the countess (paternally) skills include politics and intiruge (turned away 4 wedding offers already), nicely & plainly dressed, not 100% in social skills quite yet. Last spell in effect - innocence, hence illusionist?, or one about somewhere. Has a locket which shows picture of caster, college and aptitude of last 2 magics effecting her, aparently from Herkam, of the guild council.

Jurgen, Nicole's 13 year old brother. Skills include riding, used to going off on adventures, according to the captain, spell last in effect = shadow wings.

Handmaidens 6, also wearing latest court fashions and wigs, makeup; indicating a good show of wealth.

Two of these handmaids are Enoch/warrior women bodyguards.

Captain Geoffrey Howard, captain of the guard, in the employ of Blitzkrieg, and so is used to the machinations of mages and adventurers.

Lieutenants, 2 of whom are namers

Elf Escort, 4 elves lent by Princess Isilith (adventurer), wearing black plate armour & greens. All are Air college, however one has *Damnum Minatum* as highest spell. Hmmm.

Rangers, elves named Uta, wearing red leather,

Aladar Priests 6 from a monastery near Zumalar. An ancestry church, They are unaffected by magic - it does not exist for them. Riding in coach number 1

Father Matheson

?**Anderson**, his brother

X, his cousin who speaks common best.

Western Kingdom Priests 6

2 Michaeline priests, who are replaced after day 1, due to their riotous behaviour

Artisans

Healer, Master Rose

X, her journeyman level apprentice, who joined 3 months ago. Specialises in Eyes and bones. Some very weird method of work, She suggested, taking out eyeballs, to put powder behind them to get rid of bad dreams, and putting the eye back, all in 15 mins. Apparently works miracles like setting broken legs, very quickly, like half an hour to be walking again normally.

Astrologer, Master Roger

Raymond, the ostler's older apprentice, suggested for investigation by Geoffrey, since seems too old and weapon experienced to be a legit apprentice.

The Journey:

The Countess travels in a closed coach number 6, covered with golden fabric which stops scrying. She is closely escorted to it surrounded by ladies in waiting, holding umbrella overhead. Difficult to see her. Lady Catherine travels in coach set number 5.

We are assigned coach (6 horse) and wagon (4 horse) number 4, and supplied with 16 riding horses. We select 6 "wagoneers". Our wagon has iron oven set in it (impinging on half the sitting space) which has cook with it. We move out at 7, still dark. Signal to the captain to come to talk to us is to put some luggage onto the roof of our carriage. Generally the court ladies are unused to travelling, especially in these areas.

Night 1 : Manorhouse of Lord Oscar and Lady Divian Brokenwheel

He is an E&E, she a Wicca, as is her 2 daughters (Lucy & Daisy). The walls and floors of the house are bound, and there are wards on the internal doorways, triggered by "a wearer of sheild in left arm, hand & half in lright"?. Some "old" wards on the roof send people asleep, windwalking away to the "ruined necromancers tower". Manourhouse rumoured to be haunted, gives bad dreams, feafulness, etc. One cook died of fright that night, Ono afflicted by recurrences of fearful dreams (including having skin flayed off by someone in red leather), all the next day.

ruined necromancers tower 6 miles NorthEast from the manourhouse, via swamps around a lake on the direct route. A bear sleeps in the cave below the tower. The tower used to be occupied by a necro, but previous party flushed & trashed the place, thought to be empty by the locals. However, when we found it (around midnightish), the were 2 leaders (an elf, and darkish skinned human) talking *with* a skeleton, 3 skeletons present. Their defenses included 20ish orcs, "Unstone the Gargoyles" and released the Wolgs. Their minions included giant fruit bats who carried goblins, to cut down trees in the swamp area, and then carry them to the town and throw them on the mill, and steal flour. Apparently, not the first time its happened to the town.

Matthew Relic, cast *Damnum Minatum*, Rank 11, the human leader seen.

town inn, where the Lord & Lady Broken wheel, Lady Catherine, Nicole, Jurgen amongst others, stayed the night. Aorund 3 am, an orc dragged off an blonde woman.

Day 2 : Castle ruins

3 1/2 hours hard ride North, in cold snowy weather. Ruins of a castle from earlier civilisations, now has a Urielite sect living next to the tombs of some dead heroes, who the nobles like to give their respects to as they travel through the area. Shield over gate has blue quadrants, as per astrology reading. We arrive before the entourage, to investigate occurrences of the previous night :

Guards heard screams coming from the tunnels under the castles (where some ladies were sleeping), so they went down, on 3rd level down from ground, were blasted with 2 waves (very close together time wise) of black sheet fire, causing burns etc, and fear (Rank 5 Black fire (Dark celestial)) Upon retreating, their way in (door) was blocked and barricaded, so they set off to alternate route out. On 2nd level down, they saw their 6 fallen comrades coming, however shown to be zombies. However they didn't approach within 30' of amulet worn (combined iron, amethyst, jade, hypericum ?). The retreated beyond a portcullis and stayed the night there, with the amulet keeping the zombies away from the doorway.

Party's initial scout of the dungeons indicated large presence of goblins, gnolls, ogres, trolls, and further levels down, lots more chaotic creatures. Generally the dungeons were disused storage facilities, filled with rotting trappings of a previous era. There was fresh air, and passage of a horse recently. The blood/signs of fight from previous night had been tidied up. In the tunnel approaching the fight zones were, say, a dozen cold sleeping minds - gargoyles, which merged in with the wall, holding up helms and rotting ceiling draperies. Within a secret cupboard was two skeletons, (astrology reading alert). Beyond the previous night's fight scene was a large room filled with 20 goblins, 8 orcs, 3 "magic users" (2 humans, one skeleton, recognised as those from the "necromancer's tower" previous night) and a chess board with wolves as pieces. Feelings of hunger indicated a meal was soon to be served, just before sunset, as we attacked. The gargoyles were attacking the ogres as we left.

Their defences included:

- **"skeleton magic user"** seemed to be leader, and all melee and spell damage it took was reflected, or mirrored to its opponent.
- **"Rat catcher"**, swarms (knee deep) of rats were coagulated into a mountain/golem sort of creature, moved by rolling on itself, TMR 8; **WARNING** any dark aspected entity reduced resistance to be ensnared into it. If touched/caught by it, willpower was severely reduced (double effect for non-dark aspected entities) ("until basted in cider at sunrise") meaning can't effectively get out of it; damage was done, about 20 points per pulse, for those within it. Dispersed with fire magics.
- **Demonic creatures**, minimum 5, hard to find, E&E casting mainly wakeable sleeps, area counterspells, possibly triggering the spectral warriors. When killed gave minor death curses, eg gout, arthritis, ringing in ears.
- **Necromancer**, casting Spectral Warriors, 4, each to different party members; Darkness (R20), stream of Corruption
- **Fire efreet**, casting walls of fire, dragonflames
- **Evil Eyeballs**, glass globes scattered across the floor, when trod on, destroyed amulet of elder flowers first, then each subsequent ball crushed had effect of adding to dice rolls, cumulatively.
- **Trolls**, 2, with one who turned up in a 20' cube of moving evil eyeballs as above.
- **Magic sucking scarab**, worn by one (then later another) magic user, absorbed spells (fire balls) targeted at him/his area, until he had to release the spells in one fell swoop, presumably before it "exploded".
- **Pit trap**
- **skeletons**

WARNING summoned elementals (earth & ethereal shadow), turned up extra strong, extra fast, not quite in control, perhaps something peculiar to the area. Zorbo, the earth Elemental said there was some strange presence having effect over it and the gargoyles.

WARNING Investigation leads to a insectoid glowing with white light in a 4'x2'x2' "coffin" surrounded by an appearance of 6 mindless Gabrielites (from Mordeaux, specialists in unholy relics/items). These nuns were facing entranced into the coffin and were being spun in a white web, fountaining out from the coffin, and ensnaring them from the feet up. Upon looking in the direction of the insectoid, the observer (effects thru wiz-eye) will also be ensnared, and charmed by it/3 entities, especially if the observer understands any dark tongues. Within half a minute of being ensnared, solid white web tendrils were starting to form around feet, even at distance when seen thru wiz-eye. Resistance is based on magical aptitude, not willpower, possibly reduced with repeated exposure. Necro special counterspell possibly removes the effect. The room they are based in is to the right of the portcullis entrance, in a large chamber filled with sheets of webs. Large spiders (12' wide across the legs, 6' long from mandibles to tail) live on the ceiling, with webs to drop onto intruders. Fire magics seemed to clear the webs, however molten iron filings were cast down in response. Later explained by Captain Geoffrey as a known "adventurer trap" - spiders sleeping for years between feedings.

WARNING in the main courtyard of the castle ruins, "Souls of cowards" joins with person's shadow and leap on back to attack, and take possession of one's body, trying to move arm to attack with sword, for example. When hit by someone else, they run away.

WARNING potions that have been in the circle of darkness, especially near it's centre, or close contact with one of it's leader creatures, and especially stream of corruption, the potions may be turned, causing a magic poison of sorts, which

effects the eyes especially, and further damage to the brain etc, leading to death within a couple of days. The magical bit is an illusion/soothe pain manifests itself so that to all observers, and the afflicted one, everything is normal, and feels fine (apparently until the last stages of dying occur). Unless healers had felt they had stuffed up their empathy (failed roll of dice, esp 99, 00) when they received the true health state, however generally decided it couldn't be true. Illusion Special counterspell, revealed the left eye as being bloodshot, E&E special counterspell removed the invisibility hiding the damage to the eye/face, and Necro Special counterspell removed the rigor mortis/Necrosis also in effect. (Wicca counterspells had no effect). Once these counterspells revealed the true state of affairs, the healer journeyman did a 2 hour operation removing the eyeball and regeneration of some sort to fix this ailment on Ono & Kern.

Dismissal :

Captain Geoffrey assured us the we had dealt to the dangers of the mission as per his own astrology reading, and so we were dismissed from service after 3 days work. Countess Kirsten was informed of our employment and services that had occurred, granted a favour to each of us, and the court outfit as per employment agreement. Most of us travelled to MittleMarkHalpstead for fittings etc of this outfit (Kern carries on with the entourage).