

Escorting a Lord

Adventure by **Bernard Hoggins**
Duration 65 days (1st Frost '03 - 5th Ice)

Adventurers

Imelio de Juran	Mind	Male	Elf	Mil Sci
Bonnie McWee Lass	Binder	Female	Elf	Leader
Michael	Solar	Male	Human	
Hamish McLeod	Wiccan	Male	Human	
Mira Stuart	Earth	Female	Human	
Rowan	Binder	Female	Elf	
Ben	Non-mage	Male	Human	
Aurora Steelwind	Air	Female	Elf	Scribe

Employer

Marvin - Lord Argant's advisor and jester

Plane

(Currently unknown)

Places visited

The Empire
Partridge
Petrenco
Gamlin
Lewbech
Cryde
Biltadox
Ashe

People met

Lord Argant
Lord Argant's bodyguard
Lord Argant's scribe
The local King
Alexandre - an Earth mage assassin

Mission

To protect Lord Argant from assassins as he journeyed to see the King about a dukedom

Escorting A Lord

Aurora

I finally got a chance to go on an adventure again. This one was announced by a person, named Marvin, who was dressed like a jester - minus bells - who wanted some mercenaries to guard a local Baron, Lord Argant, who was going to become a Duke. To do this, he had to travel to the capital city to have an audience with the King. The trouble was, someone was trying to kill him and he was running out of bodyguards. He was going to be travelling with an entourage of seven people, including his wife, her maid, his scribe, and the last surviving bodyguard.

When I turned up in the meeting room I discovered the following present:

Imelio De Juran - Military Scientist and Mind mage. Claimed to be an unlanded Baron. An elf
Bonnie McWee Lass - Female elf Binder who was being followed by a golem.

Michael - Celestial mage merchant prince

Hamish - Human male wiccan accompanied by a spider monkey

Mira - Female human earth mage

Rowan - another female elven binder

Ben - a warrior with axe and bow.

And me, Aurora, female elf, beginning air mage, archer, and Seagate Times reporter.

Bonnie was 'volunteered' as party leader, Imelio was the obvious military scientist, and I was the obvious scribe. After the meeting, I chipped in 100sp for Mira's lesser enchantment and she cast two week lessers on us all. Mine doubled.

3rd Frost '03

After some preparation we finally went through the portal, an archway filled with a black void. We emerged in an underground room with a ladder going up. Unknown pictograms were on the wall. We climbed up into a back alley which was a dead end alley located in the town of Partridge. Marvin checked the date and discovered that it had taken us two days to go through the portal. Apparently the transit time is very irregular. For some reason, it was decided we would check out a tavern. We later found out that this town was called Partridge located in the land known only as The Empire.

In the tavern, we were listening to rumours. I heard that the old Duke either died by an evil mage or by slipping in the bath. The latter was more believable. A couple of men turned up and tried to interest us in a dice game. While that was going on, someone tried to grab Imelio's pouch. Michael and Imelio gave chase and eventually caught him. It transpired that he was a novice thief and was going to get into trouble from the Guild for interfering in someone else's mark.

Finally we headed up to the manor house.

4th Frost

We headed out to the marketplace to purchase some horses. I nearly got my fingers bitten off. Finally, after some negotiation, we got some horses. The idea was to ride off to the Baron's summer house where he currently was. It took us the whole day to get there.

The house was three levels, plus an attic, with a skylight in the roof. All the windows were small. We were accommodated on the third floor with the baron and his entourage on the second. So we sealed the skylight and made new one way transparent windows so we could keep a discrete watch. Also, specially programmed Bound Speeches were placed on the top of each set of stairs.

Thank goodness we had two Binders.

Watches were set up, in such a way that there was someone who could see in the dark on each watch. Basically it was four watches with a pair on. It was Imelio/Ben, Bonnie/Hamish, Aurora/Mira, Rowan/Michael

5th Frost

During the last watch, one of the Bound Speeches went off and the person who triggered it fell back down the stairs. Michael went unseen to sneak around and, on the ground floor, bumped into someone who was also unseen. He tried to sap the unknown assailant but failed. Meanwhile the rest of us were woken up. Hamish and I were assigned to guard the lord's door.

Imelio detected three extra minds and the others went down to deal to them. Meanwhile Michael was shot at by two massive poisoned crossbow bolts and went down with a shattered pelvis. He was charged, just as the others charged down. Seeing them, the three assassins decided to bolt. One went through the door, the other two through windows. The rest of the team went for the one fleeing through the door and brought him down quickly, Bonnie getting in some good hits. Meanwhile Imelio attempted to Control Person and everything went dark.

.2.

The list of loot was:

- One set of soft leather (rank 4 +1 protection)
- One morningstar (rank 4 +1 SC)
- One crossbow (rank 4 +1 SC)
- One normal round shield
- Assorted normal crossbow bolts - some poisoned
- One unconscious assassin

Someone recognised the assassin as one of the suspicious characters seen at the marketplace. Meanwhile Michael was trying to get Bonnie to make him a mechanical pelvis so he could walk.

We were ready to go at 8am. Michael cast coruscades all around. Fortunately it was an uneventful day and we arrived back in town. Michael and Imelio headed back to the Guild to get fixed while the rest of us continued on. They were going to get Wings and Locates and rejoin us on the road.

7th Frost

They finally caught up to us early that morning. The assassin had been kept tied up and unconscious for the duration. Hamish tried hypnotising the assassin then torturing him for information. When that proved futile, they found a crossroads, killed him by hanging then buried the body. I think they intended to come back for it later. Mira and I decided not to watch the proceedings.

I was going to fly point but managed to get a severe migraine. Mira Daed me for duration of last magic to impact and received the answer - indefinite. So I was hypnotised by Imelio to ignore the pain. However, for some reason, I was being very agreeable today and even spent most of the night helping the maids with their chores. As a consequence I was very tired and irritable when the hypnotism wore off.

8th Frost

During the day we saw wolf prints belonging to three animals. However, given the spacing, they had to be pony sized. However, I didn't see much of the day. For some reason I had the desire to sleep on top of the carriage.

13th Frost

Finally we reached the capital city of the local dukedom, called Petrenco. I had memories of Imelio being very brave and heroic as we fought off assassins but I also don't remember any fights. Probably because of all those hypnotisms. We were taken to the lord's guesthouse for the night. We also found someone who would remove my curse but he wanted extra 'favours'. I'd rather have the headache. So Michael convinced him to do the job overnight for 1800sp and no funny business.

14th Frost

Headed off. On the way I topped up my silver arrow collection from Bonnie's large supply - in case we were dealing with werewolves. About midmorning we ran into an ambush - a volley of crossbow fire and three very large wolves. All the horses panicked. Bonne and I were trying to shoot the onrushing wolves while Hamish bravely charged forward. Unfortunately the next volley of crossbow bolts felled him. Rowan popped up walls between us and the shooters while Michael charged forward to help deal with the wolves. With Mira's help he was laying into them while Imelio got the lord's horse drawn carriage under control.

One of the giant wolves had attacked Hamish's horse, killed it, and succeeded in dragging it away.

"I think I'm scared of them now" - Michael

The other wolves were dispatched and immediately shrank to normal size as the animal growth spell went off. The crossbow men had already fled by the time we got to their position.

.3.

Michael went Unseen and poked around behind the walls. However, no crossbowmen were found as they had fled. So we carried on.

That evening we arrived at a small village, just as it started to rain. We spent the night in an in, inside an open plan common room. Michael used a Wall of Light to remove the insects from us and the mattresses. The golems were placed on the rafters, alarms were set up and other precautions taken. The only thing that happened all night was a touch of rowdiness in the bar at midnight.

15th Frost

Mira renewed the Lessers on those who needed them before we set off. Michael also provided Coruscades all around. It was a miserable damp day for travelling and I could see it wasn't going to get any better for a while. Imelio was riding on top off the carriage and fell off once.

For some reason a betting pool started to see how long Lord Argant would last, everyone chipping in 10sp into the pot. The bets were (in order: Marvin - 3 days, Hamish - 4 & a half, Michael - 7, Imelio - 8, Me - 10 (was feeling rather pessimistic at the time), Bonnie- 14, Mira - 16, Ben - 21, Rowan - 26, and the local bodyguard - indefinitely.

The day passed without incident and by evening, we reached a village in the borderlands of the

local Dukedom.

18th Frost

Last three days more of the same - no action, wet and miserable. That afternoon we rode into Gamlin. Lord Argant wanted to visit the local Baron and we were given the night off. Many of the party decided to have a night on the town but some of us stayed with the Baron. Big mistake.

19th Frost

We were escorted out of town by a bunch of grim faced guards and Lord Argant was not very happy. I had no memory of what had happened but, apparently someone in the party had managed to over indulge and say something rather insulting to the local Baron's wife. I also had the horrible feeling that it was my fault. Sigh! No more drinking for me - can't handle it.

22nd Frost

We reached the next major town, Lenbeck, where the local Duke lived. It was decided to spend a few days here so that Lord Argant could talk to the local Duke to sort out certain 'issues' in order to prevent a 'diplomatic incident'.

23rd Frost

Still staying here. Lord Argant insisted that we take some actions about these assassins, in no uncertain terms, so Michael went to talk to someone. That night, we had set up all the usual precautions and he told us not to worry if any of the alarms went off unless it was someone heading for our principle.

Sure enough, one of the alarms did go off and we went on alert. Michael and I went to investigate and he told me to discretely check out a vase by the window. I did so, handing him a folded piece of paper without anyone seeing. It turned out to be a map to where the assassins were. We also discovered later, that someone had robbed the treasury. Not our problem.

24th Frost

So next morning we went to deal some payback. The plan was to throw in a gas grenade into the indicated room then attack. So I cast Vapour Breathings all around. One Restorative later, they were all done.

Bonnie, Rowan, and I were watching windows on the outside while the rest charged in. Sure enough, someone bailed out the window. Immediately Bonnie and I both shot at him, Bonnie's arrow lodging in his thigh. Michael also bailed out and gave chase. Unfortunately he got in the way of the firebolt from Rowan's staff. Meanwhile, inside, the rest of the party were dealing to the other two assassins. Michael did manage to catch the runaway and drag him back unconscious. Turned out he was an Earth mage - best spell Animal Growth.

.4.

They had left one survivor and both assassins were placed in separate cells for questioning. The Earth mage was basically promised his life if he'd teach Mira a spell. He agreed, so Rowan petrified, then miniaturised him.

The other one was hypnotised and asked the following questions:

Where do you keep your loot - No answer

What is the most painful part of your anatomy - No answer

Who hired you - Alexandre
Where do we find them - They were with me.
Where were you hired - Ashe
Where is the babe hidden - Total confusion
How many associates do you have - Three
Who are you pacted to - No answer
How is the Baron being tracked - A whole lot of horses
Are there any other mages - No
Who is the third associate - Francious
Where is he. - He's dead and you killed him.
How much were you paid - 100 gold

We also got a description of Alexandre. Turned out he was the Earth mage.

Michael believed their Guild would seek restitution so he suggested a life boon. I was wondering how much he could be ransomed for. Finally Rowan turned him into another lawn ornament.

26th Frost

Finally left Lembeck and headed off to Cryde. It took as two weeks to get there and basically, no more attacks. I was sure there would be more assassins. We spent another week there talking to the local Duke then headed off to the capital city of Biltadox where the King was. On the way, Mira renewed all the lessers.

17th Snow

Arrived in Biltadox. Our lord had to attend to minor functionaries first before he could see the King. Mira also had to renew the Lessers. She ended up with insomnia and one that worked in reverse.

21st Snow

Lord Argant finally got to see the King - which meant his bodyguard won the pot. So he was buying the drinks that night. We also got the Royal Invitation to attend the investiture. Of course this meant proper clothing. I paid out 700sp to have a proper court gown made - sky blue of course with cloud and bird motifs.

22nd Snow

It was an all day long ceremony - full of speeches, pomp, music and a banquet at the end. We were at the back for much of it. We did find out that Ashe was run by the King's cousin. Probably wasn't significant though.

23rd Snow

Well now that we had delivered our principle we were sort of at a loose end. We were discussing what we should do and it was suggested we go to Ashe and see if we could get any more information out of them. We wanted to get there quickly so it was decided to fly. Rowan could fly one other so it was up to me to fly the others, Marvin included.

25th Snow

Two hops of flying later, (one per day as I felt completely drained after casting all the spells - especially the ones that didn't work) we landed outside Ashe. The guards obviously hadn't heard of tourism or casual drop-in visitors as they demanded to know our business. However, careful negotiation and application of suitable gratuities got us waved through the gate.

We found an inn near the gate then had a look around the bustling market. Our next stop was the local mercenaries guild but the only job offers were either guarding a caravan or guarding a warehouse. They didn't seem to have the concept of going out and finding your own adventures. However he did mention Waldo the Bard. From the description I suspected he was a bardic mage/illusionist with a great stage act. I made a note to check him out later.

Michael decided to search for Alexandre's mistress and found her in the first place he looked - a rather high class establishment. So he left a message 'The ducks feet are always wet.' before leaving. It didn't take long for us to notice that we were being followed after that.

So, after a while, we accosted the guy. Turned out he's the local assassin's guild contact and we told him that we had the two surviving members of their team. They weren't going to have a go at us, since the job was now over so we agreed to let them go.

Hamish - "He's lying. His lips are moving".

Outside town, we set up a camp and unshrunk and unpetrified Rowan's two lawn ornaments. The other guy bolted but Alexandre negotiated with Mira to learn a spell and which one. She said she may return later.

27th Snow

I discovered I had got an insomnia curse so we waited two days until that passed before attempting to fly everyone back to Partridge and hence through the portal to the Guild. It would take eight days to make the trip. I ended up itching, deaf, and lost my sense of taste and smell during the trip. *Sigh*

5th Ice

That wasn't all I had lost. When we got back I was literally thrown at the Namers for curse removal. Turned out I had also picked up three Creeping Senilities and had already forgotten four of my spells - two of which I had spent money for but hadn't practised yet. No wonder it was getting more difficult to cast. So I was not happy. Even less happy when I saw the bill. On a reporter's pay that's going to take a long time to pay off *sigh* Basically I lost my two avian spells, Arrow Flight and Gliding. At least the Guild have no interest loans - but Michael is paid back.