

## The Silverfox

(Alzam Karlom arrives in Rardes the twenty sixth of Elvenleap, forty days after the thirteenth day of Taclyseem. He must rest the entire month of Silvermoon. He's hunting a powerful artifact called the Crystal of Power which is said to have been seen in Rardes...)

This story is about Jadeshea, a werefox elf, who wants back the magic pearls that was stolen from her, as they can be used to enslave her. It is also about Count Etwaldes, who wants to use the pearls to cure him for lycanthropy. The story also include a case of espionage against the Kings Army by a Dao and his henchman.

The Town of Rardes has about 21000 inhabitants, it is part of the Kingdom of Wellard, not far from the border of Lord Enndes Realm.

The major deities are Sapphire, Larrhd, Boccob, and Pelor.

Present here are the knight orders of Rohr, Shield, and Hanfield.

At the time of the setting, The Largest Orc Horde Ever Seen (well, maybe not – but such are rumors) stands on one side of the town. The Allied Forces of Wellard (The Kings Army) on the other. The Allied Forces are on return. It is as if the armies of the orcs knows the moves the allies makes.

Among inns and taverns are these: The Wandering Horse, The Dusty Road, The Ugly Orc, The Dead Hobgoblin, The Fierce Dragon, The Immense Inn, A Day of War, The Whispering Snail, The First Victory, The Lousy Wolf.

The adventure is set so it should be completed within Silvermoon as a main event must take place during that month.

### The First Day

As the party walks down the main street they spot a black coach with four horses standing outside an inn named The Dusty Road. A few city guards are pushing and pulling a very beautiful elven girl (Jadeshea) out of the door of the inn. The girl is screaming and resisting.

One of the guards says loudly, *“This is just what the Count wants!”*, however in all of this commotion she suddenly manages to grab hold to a sword of the guards and stabs him down. The other guards draws their swords...

If the party will make acts to intervene, the guards will release the hold of the girl and call for more guards. These guards are the Counts palace guards and significantly tougher than ordinary city guards. But before any fight starts a short an unpleasant man will appear from the wagon. This is the Count himself. He's impressed by the courage of the party members - the Count has need for heroes like that. The elven girl has vanished in all this commotion and excitement.

The Count will present himself and invite the party to lunch at his castle the day after tomorrow at noon.

The Count will put two of his hirelings (Hans and Gerald which the party encountered on an earlier adventure – they're also looking for the Crystal of Power) to keep an eye on the party.

Later that evening they will meet the elven girl again at their own inn (for this reason, it will be a good idea to lead the party back to the inn somehow). Hans and Gerald will enter the inn disguised, hooded and cloaked. Because of all the noise and distractions of a busy inn, the party will be required to make a rather difficult spot check to notice. Jadeshea will act very charming and friendly - even if self centered – she will probably not mind to keep an attractive man or elf of the party company in his room that night. However, if she senses silver, of coins or weapons, she will likely panic and hence run away.

(Jadeshea has a Charming Aura: Any man (human or half-elf male) within 10ft. must make a will DC 14 or be as if affected by Charm Person. The effect will last for 1d4 hours.) She dislikes dwarves so much that she would ask any in vicinity to leave. Anyone succeeding the will save is allowed a Sense Motive DC 13, to realize she might be up to something uncanny...

At the inn the party can hear a story about a knight of dread dressed in black (Alzam Karlom) entering the city slaying all the guards at the gate.

### **The Second Day**

This day the party will hear that they can buy spells, potions, and scrolls at Sycrumistios' Tower.

They will also see or hear about a wagon load of dead warriors from the battle is brought to The Temple of The Holy Sapphire. A cleric is throwing holy water at the dead – for good measure. The temple porters is carrying the passed heroes into the temple so they can be buried in the tombs safely away from the ghouls and grave robbers.

### **The Third Day**

At the dinner table of the Count all of the guests are dressed in expensive clothes – these guests are some of the Counts advisors and friends.

The party will on a successful spot DC 12 notice a little statue of a fox made of silver, standing on a little table next to the Count.

He can tell the story about the fox which a group of adventurers brought in from the forest outside of Rardes. They also brought with them four green pearls. The pearls vanished after the sudden death of the adventurers. Luckily the fox-statue didn't disappear and was brought hither. Now all the children of the City of Rardes will be able enjoy the sight of the magnificent work of art (provided they can get access to the castle).

The pearls should be about 1000gp worth each. But since the Count is a collector he'd like to pay twice their value, 8000gp total - should the party happen come by them.

The lunch will take all day and several dishes of food will be served. The Count will talk a lot and inquire the party about their past adventures and whereabouts. In the evening there will be served dinner - beef or chicken - not pork. Entertainment is provided by young dancing maidens and bards playing musical instruments.

Later that night, after they have left the castle the party will encounter the charming elven girl again. This time she's more reluctant to speaking with them and doesn't seem interested in chatting, and she will disappear in the shadows as soon as she gets the

opportunity.

This night after bedtime, Ali Acktor has assigned an assassin to take care of the party. He was at the lunch table with the Count and decided that Rardes is better without the party nosing around. The assassin will strike at the inn where the party is staying.  
(Assassin, see Appendix)

### **The Fourth Day and later...**

If the PC's ask around or gather information they discover that the wizard Sycrumistios might know something about the pearls. But otherwise the PC's should not expect regular folk to reveal anything about the pearls – given they actually know something about it – as the pearls would be very nice for anyone to find for himself.

The door of Sycrumistios' tower has a sign reading "Sycrumistios the Splendidious". If the door is knocked, nobody will open it, for Sycrumistios has been murdered by Ali Acktor as he was afraid Sycrumistios knew too much about the pearls and that the wizard could provide some investigators with information that would lead them to uncover Acktors work for the enemy.

The party will discover the dead wizard if they enter the tower. He appears to have been beaten to death. If the party search the tower they discover a beautiful mask on the table next to a vial (Elixir of Love), and three scroll cases. The mask is a Mask of Charisma, and grants the wearer +4 to charisma. When the mask is examined a roll of paper is found inside.

The paper is a letter addressed to someone called Feechleng and is signed by Sycrumistios. The letter says that, “...*the Count requires the pearls and this particular matter must be meticulously investigated at once*”.

Up in one of the tower windows to pigeons are cooing. They can be heard by making Listen check DC 10.

But all of sudden city guards are rushing in. They tell the party to get out as they have received orders to guard the tower since the wizard has just been reported dead. If asked by who's orders, the city guards will say they're acting by direct order of the Count's counselor, Ali Acktor.

When the Count hears the news of the fall of Sycrumistios, he realize that he needs another wizard at his disposal. The Count knows he needs the items and tools of Sycrumistios so that the new wizard will be able to continue the work, therefore he orders the possessions of the deceased wizard be brought to him.

At the same day as the party arrived to Rardes a wizard named Niton also came to town in fellowship with his associate, the infamous highwayman Hegelbart Hesro. They had followed the players at a safe distance.

At the inn (The Wandering Horse) no one knows who Feechleng is. Hans and Gerald will sneak into the inn hooded and cloaked (difficult spot check to notice them...) to spy upon the party and provide any useful information for the Count.

However, a suspicious looking person at the bar can, if offered the mere token of twenty gold pieces, supply the knowledge of the whereabouts of Feechleng: Feechleng now

resides at The Graveyard. The suspicious looking man says that Feechleng passed off after being bitten in the throat by a wolf or large dog – or that's at least what he has heard (The suspicious man does not know that it was actually the work of Jadeshea). After telling this, he will bid the party farewell and leave the inn and disappear in the shadows.

In the marketplace a crowd is congregating around two men with a cage on a wagon. The men caught a large fox with silvery fur which was sneaking around in their backyard! They say it is for sale to the highest bidder, but if no acceptable amount is reached they will turn it into a rather nice fur coat. No one in the crowd is willing to pay their high price. The day after there will be news about the fox gone missing and the two lads found bitten to death.

If the party should decide to return to Sycrumistios' tower the guards will be gone. Everything will be removed and the tower will be empty, except for a few pieces of furniture like chairs and tables and the pair of pigeons in the window. If one of the pigeons is given a message they will fly to the house of Feechleng. It will be possible to keep track of the pigeon by making a few average spot checks. The pigeon will lead the party into an alley of a rough neighborhood. In this alley all of sudden four men clad in leather armor and armed with longsword will step out in front of them. One of them says, *“We don't like you people nosing around here.”* and then they attack. A fifth man appears at the back of the party 40 feet away. He shoots arrows with his shortbow.

Five thugs encounter (See appendix)

### **Feechleng's House**

If the party makes a successful spot DC 12 they notice the pigeon sitting in a window of a house a bit further down the road.

If the door is knocked nobody will open, the door is not locked, and the knocking will cause it to open, as the lock is damaged and broken. Almost the whole house is cleared only a few pieces of furniture is left. Behind a chest of drawers is a message scroll (Search DC 16) from a person named The Dog and is addressed to Feechleng:

*“I've obtained three green pearls. You have to come over and look at the goods. I got an offer from Hander.”*

The Dog is a very nervous and greedy person. He can be found at a tavern called The Lousy Wolf. But he's known in several shabby taverns. His eyes are shifty and he's constantly alert and ready to run for his life.

Shortly after the party enters The Lousy Wolf, two hooded and cloaked persons will enter too (Hans and Gerald).

If bargained with (diplomacy) or intimidated The Dog will provide the following information. He can't help himself trying to use his *Slight of Hand* while talking to the party:

*“Hander is a Priest of the Temple of Sapphire who said he was willing to pay ten thousand gold for one green pearl. But when we met Hander instead brought some temple guards and insisted on only paying fifty gold for the pearl. Feechleng also took home a pearl himself. The last one I haven't the slightest idea where went, it's gone missing totally, I have no idea where it is... I promise, can I go now?.”*

The last pearl he still got. It's hidden in a secret pocket in his cloak. The Dog also obtained the gold chain with the Crystal of Power. But he sold it to a merchant from Lancore for a hundred gold pieces. The party can get +1 to their diplomacy roll for each gold they offer if they ask for the name of the merchant.

*“Her name was Slores Dandan she didn't carry much, only this golden necklace. As far as I know she sold a load of grain to the army and she was pretty upset and everything about the insulting price they gave her. She'll probably be off to Lancore by now... at some point in time there was a man with her...”*

The party should be able to convince The Dog to give up his pearl.

The Dog (Rog3) (See appendix)

### **Alley ambush**

After they leave the tavern someone in the shadows of an alley is trying to lure them over *“Psssst! Oy! Over here!”*

When the party enters the alley no one is apparently there if they venture further into the alley. Four hobgoblins comes forth behind them with drawn battle axes.

Four hobgoblins (Ftr2) (See appendix)

### **At the Temple of Sapphire**

A graceful priestess, Sister Mintemoon of Sapphire, will receive the visitors. Eldest Brother Hander is busy with his important studies. She will not hesitate to call for the temple guards in event of trouble.

She will tell how the dead heroes of war will be put into the catacombs to protect them against the evil curses of the enemies. And that there is only access to the catacombs through the temple. Also only the three eldest priests is allowed access to the catacombs, Brother Hander (Clr14), Brother Fillande (Clr10), and Brother Callo (Clr8).

(See Catacomb map – unfortunately I lost this map at some point)

Fillande and Callo does not know about the secret chambers of the catacomb.

In the catacombs the following events takes place. Documents in Handers office reveals research being done about the older catacomb (the secret chambers)

In the secret chambers Hander is experimenting with necromancy – which is way out of his league. Hander keeps the results of his experiments as minions in the Catacombs – mummies and zombies – but also hobgoblin and minotaur mercenaries. Ratmen rogues are Handers workers. Eventually the deity of Sapphire appears himself and makes Hander blind – Sapphire will tell Hander he was already blind towards his gods will and this Hander will be blind and unable to use his clerical abilities until he has undone his wrongness and atoned his crimes.

Hopefully the party now have obtained a pearl from Hander.

### **After the Incident of the Sapphire Temple**

As the party is sitting by the table of their favorite inn or tavern, Jadeshea enters and sits in a corner. Shortly after a captain of the third Triforian Cavalry with two lieutenants enters too.

The captain makes a pass on Jadeshea. She dismisses him but he insists and eventually she slaps him in his face with her nails first and with a bleeding cheek the officer gets angry. The party is encouraged to intervene as should obtain a pearl from the captain in this encounter.

This officer is Qerdron Karlsvognan, he is the spy that causes problems for the Allied Forces of the King. He brings the information to Ali Acktor whom uses his abilities to sneak over to the enemy and pass on the information. Qerdron came by one of the pearls shortly after the adventurers that brought them to town passed away.

Qerdron Karlsvognan, Captain in the Third Triforian Cavalry, The Spy. (see appendix)  
Eurun, Lieutenant of the Third Triforian Cavalry  
Weande, Lieutenant of the Third Triforian Cavalry

### **A While After the Three Pearls Has Been Obtained...**

Jadeshea can be found at The Dusty Road, where she's having a glass of wine... or two. She smiles and is happy. If she's gotten drunk with wine or the party spikes her drink with the Elixir of Love (from Sycrumistios tower) the intoxicated elf maid will lose her self control for a brief moment. She moves her right hand across her face and from her graceful hand slides shiny pearl with the same color as her beautiful green eyes. Jadeshea took the pearl from Feechleungs body.

The intoxication will also make her tell the story about the Silverfox. Some adventurers stole the Silverfox from her. During the theft they were bestowed with a curse which later slew them.

She can also provide the information that the pearls can be used to gain the attention of the gods and make them increase your power and make you Master of Lycanthropy. Jadeshea says she did not herself become the Mistress of Lycanthropy because she does not know the spells, and Sycrumistios was the last one who knew the rituals and now he's dead. But rumors has it that a young mage from Midway has arrived in town and the Count has provided him with access to Sycrumistios possessions. The mage goes by the name of Niton.

The Master of Lycanthropy is able to Control Lycanthropes three times a day as a 14<sup>th</sup> level sorcerer. The ability functions as the spell Control Undead except with lycanthropes instead of undead. Once per day the Master is also able to Bestow Lycanthropy and Remove Lycanthropy.

The secret work of Sycrumistios describes the ritual of how to become the Master of Lycanthropy. In the woods outside Rardes there is a stone altar. Into this altar must be inserted the four green pearls. The little silverfox statue must be placed on top of the altar. This will function as the arcane focus object of the Master of Lycanthropy (4<sup>th</sup> level Divination) spell, which Sycrumistios himself researched.

A wizard or sorcerer must stand in front of the altar and cast the spell. Casting the spell will take some rounds. When the casting starts, a yellow flame will appear above the altar. After a few rounds it will turn green, and then finally red.

It is possible to take the spellcasters place to become the Master. The spellcaster has to step aside or be pushed out of the way after the flame has turned green but before it has turned red. Otherwise the spell will go wrong.

The ritual must be completed once every Silvermoon to maintain the power. The wizard Niton has discovered all of this by studying the work of Sycrumistios.

### **The Spies of the Count Are Omnipresent...**

When the party has gained fourth and last pearl, a couple of the castle guards arrives informs them that the Count wishes to see them at once.

The Count sits in his main hall eating dinner. Four guards are placed by the two doors to the room. A tall and broad man, Ali Acktor the Counts advisor, stands by the wall mute. He will not speak but only wave any approaching party members off with his hand.

However, he will fight if the party decides to make trouble.

The Count will offer the party two thousand gold for the pearls. If this is unacceptable to the party, the Count will snap his fingers and say that he's afraid he must insist.

At that moment twenty tough looking guards carrying halberds will enter the hall.

It would be a good idea for the party to comply with the Count.

### **Leaving the castle...**

On their way out of the Counts castle they will find a scroll. This is an unsigned letter describing the next tactical moves of the Kings Army together with a list of the current supply levels. In addition there's also a note saying that the dragons will be deployed in Hanfield to protect that city.

The spy dropped the note by misfortune.

A successful Spot DC18 will let the party notice a peculiar figure in a midnight blue wizards cloak walking towards the hall of the Count together with a tall red haired man donned in breastplate. This is the wizard Niton and his team colleague, Hegelbart Hesro the Infamous Villain.

In the game I played, Hegelbart Hesro was actually their ever-reoccurring foe. In my game they only saw the back of him at this time, so they could not be sure who he actually was.

The fighter and the wizard enters the Counts hall and the doors are shut. Two tough looking guards with halberds stand guard at the door.

### **Back at the Inn**

One late evening the innkeeper has a message for the party. A tall and broad man in a nobleman's clothing wishes to speak with them. He's waiting outside in the backyard. Ali Acktor is trying to clean up the mess and cover his tracks. He has to get hold of the letter the party discovered on their way out of the castle.

In the backyard the party may recognize Ali Acktor from the hall at the castle. He's waiting them, saying *You know too much for your own good, if you give me the message from Q, I might spare some of your lives.* But at the same time Ali Acktor's hirelings of six wererats will enter the backyard from the alley in human shape. They carry loaded crossbows. A smell of sewers surrounds them. The wererats will summon 12d6 dire rats which they will order to attack. Themselves they'll stand back and support with their crossbows.

They might draw their short swords if they believe their quarry has been softened enough. But they dare not enter melee and will flee if the opposition seems too hard.

After 5 rounds of combat the innkeeper will be aware of the battle and he will call for the cityguards. They will arrive 5d4 rounds later.

Ali Acktor, 6 human wererat (See appendix) Ali Acktor carries 2000 gold in this encounter.  
Dire rats (See MM.)

### **Some time later...**

After the dinner the Count should now be in possession of the four green pearls and the fox statue and it will thus be possible for the wizard Niton to form the arcane focus object in the forest.

The party will notice that three persons, the Count, and a wizard in a midnight blue robe is leaving town in one of the Counts coaches. The third person, a red haired man wearing breastplate (Hegelbart), is the coach driver.

If the coach is followed, they will be lead into the forest.

### **In the forest**

The coach stops by a stone altar in a clearing of the trees. The Count and his two hirelings starts out their preparations. From a distance it can be observed on a successful spot DC12 that Niton inserts the pearls in the holes of the stone altar and places the Silverfox statuette on top.

Neither the Count nor Hegelbart is aware of Niton's real plan, to become the Master of Lycanthropy. The Count and Hegelbart stands watching Niton performing his actions when Niton suddenly says, "We are not alone!". He then orders Hegelbart to tend to the matter, and Hegelbart will start to move towards the party – even though he may or may not have noticed the party yet (Spot).

Niton steps up on the large stone before the altar and starts to chant his magic... instinctively the Count steps back as if struck by sudden dread of the outcome.

All of sudden the party spots a creature dressed in a wind-fluttering white robe silently darting out of the forest towards the Count. A keen eyed adventurer with a successful spot DC 17 would say it looks like a hybrid between a fox and a humanoid.

At this same moment a yellow flame appears above the altar.



The Count spots the fox too late but he manages to assume his own hybrid form of a wereboar and draw his sword and slash the fox-creature before it bites his throat. Hegelbart hears the Counts rattle and runs back towards the Count – the fox-creature is gone and before him is the dead Count and a beautiful elf maid draped in blood and robes. She appears to be unarmed but she chants and a magic missile shoots at Hegelbart as he leaps toward her and runs his longsword straight through her – she slaps him leaving bleeding scratch marks on his face, then she coughs throwing up blood, and sinks to the ground.

Hegelbart kicks her body about to make sure she's gone and then realizes the Count is dead. Then he looks at Niton – now the flame changes to green.

If the party attacks Hegelbart will seek out the arcane spell casters first. He will only fight until he has lost half of his hitpoints or Niton is taken down – then he will run away into the forest. (As mentioned above, Hegelbart is a reoccurring villain in my game so I had to let him get away here.)

If the party does not take care of Niton he will become the Master of Lycanthropy and then he will be able to control Jadeshea and other lycanthropes.

In my game I was not interested in anyone becoming Master of Lycanthropy so I came up with the following:

If a player character pushes Niton away and steps onto the stone, the ritual will be completed in the same instant as the flame turns red – so the ritual did not complete – and the character will see himself engulfed in a ball of light and then be paralyzed and fall over to the ground.

The other party members will see him being shot with eleven bolts of lightning and the sparks are flying through the air forming a ring of fire.

Five cackling mephits suddenly appears from the ring which then collapses and disappears.

5 mephits (See MM.)

The paralyzed character is cursed. He's lying face down after he falling over and when turned around he looks like a gnoll (his size and stats doesn't change). Even though he did not become the Master of Lycanthropy, he is able to cast arcane spells one level above his own level. If the character was not able to cast spells before he is now able to cast Disguise Self once per day as a 1<sup>st</sup> level sorcerer. The curse can be removed by Remove Curse, but the magic improvements will disappear as well as the wolf looks.

A scout patrol of fifteen orcs from the orc army has heard the noise and decides to investigate further... (these orcs could arrive earlier in order create a diversion for the villains to escape)

After the encounters the silverfox statue and the green pearls is still on the altar. Though they are stuck and can only be removed by a lycanthrope.

Both Jadeshea and Niton are laying lifeless on the grass but suddenly, as if by magic, Niton vanishes without a trace (Niton was also a reoccurring villain). Jadeshea will assume hybrid form and run for the forest and disappear among the trees.

### **Ending**

After the spy (Captain Karlsvognan) has been removed, the tide of the battle turns around and the Allied Forces of Wellard was victorious and routed the orc army (though the final victory over the orcs doesn't happen until the month of Sylladym).

There may be rumors that the adventurers neutralized an enemy spy – in which case they might be given a medal by the army general.

In my adventure, the party then set out to look for a merchant named Slores Dandan. An old man said she left for Lancore with a caravan, “Funny that you should ask.... two warriors were asking about her too... maybe they're friends of yours...? I believe their names was Hans and Gerald...”

As the party leaves the City of Rardes, one of the player characters notices a silvery fox sitting at the edge of the forest watching them. Shortly after it disappears amongst the trees...