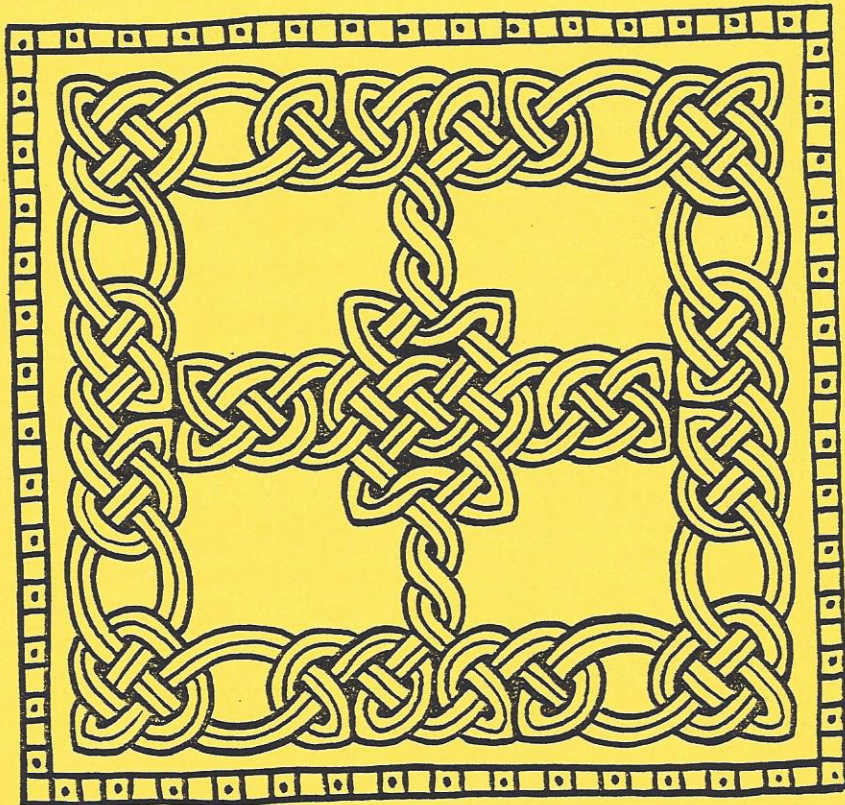




January XXII



A somber tale of a Christmas morn...

by Gwynedd Maeve of Falconguard

"Rand!" Alfwin hissed from beneath the cowl over his head, a tremor in his breath. "I...I don't want to be here...Oh!"

He gasped as torchlight glittered brightly on something to his near left; it was the eyes of a dead warrior, his crushed helm laying near on the turf. Teeth rattling, Alfwin quickly crossed himself, then clutched his older friend's cloak.

"Peace!" Rand muttered, brushing away the grasp. "'Tis an ill task, indeed, but must be done. And on such a day," his voice trailed softly into the dark, moist air.

Alfwin refused to let go of the cloak. "But there are devils here among the dead! Come!" He begged with urgency. "Please! Let us leave this place! At least until the Sun rides high in the sky!"

"No! We cannot," Rand insisted, "until we have found our King. And if we wait for the sun, then we will have to deal with the robbers and witches and Saxons likewise!"

Alfwin paused, a frightened-animal look in his eyes.

With a gentler voice, Rand added, "As for devils, I will fear none on this day. Devils and demons will cover today, as the bells peal and the Masses proclaim the birth of our Saviour. Aye, 'tis an evil way to spend Christmas Day, but what must be done, must be done."

Mollified, Alfwin dropped the portion of Rand's cloak which he still clutched.

"Look," Rand continued, pointing eastwards. "The Sun will rise soon, and the day will be cold and clear. We will search quickly, and hopefully be done before it appears."

Sir Colin of the Oaktower awoke, shivering with cold and in pain. It was dark, but he wasn't sure whether or not it was night, or if his eyes were closed. A damp breeze chilled his face, no longer protected by his helm.

Where am I? he pondered for uncounted minutes. Sharp stones, or perhaps a dropped weapon or other equipment, dug hard into his back as he lay in an uncomfortable sprawl. Full consciousness was long in coming, and he endured the throbbing in his head and body for what seemed like an eternity as he struggled to find any strength.

A warm, increasing light told him that his eyes were indeed closed and that the rays of a morning sun touched them. Outside, he thought; I'm outside, lying on a meadow. The meadow between the rivers--the meadow of the battle. Memories of the battle flooded slowly into Colin's mind. He was the banner-carrier, riding next to the King himself. Their party had been forced away from the main host, and were hemmed in by a swarm of opponents. Sir Gareth, the King's guardsman, had fallen first with a lightning thrust of an enemy's sword, then all was chaos. He had glimpsed the King falling from his steed, but remembered nothing thereafter. Had the King prevailed? His hope fell as Colin recalled the host of the enemy upon them. Alas, he thought sadly, the King more likely lies near here; may God take his noble soul.

If no one else survived, Colin decided, I must go and bring the news to the lords. He tried to get up, but halted abruptly as a wave of pain surged over him; wincing and gasping painfully, Colin struggled to keep from

blackening out. He could feel broken ends of his ribs gnashing against each other with each breath.

As he waited for the pain to subside, Colin heard the sound of rushing wind, like a flock of swans or other large birds passing closely overhead. The noise ceased, and a peaceful calm settled over him. His pain finally lessened to bearable levels, and he cracked open his eyes.

Very near to him, almost close enough for him to reach out and touch it, was a small siege machine, broken and partially turned over; it lay in the midst of several fallen knights and their horses. But upon the machine was something that held his gaze in amazement.

Seated upon a cracked wheel, in a most out-of-place fashion, was a woman. She was dressed in a robe of rich blue brocade of silk, patterned with stars of gold; lilac and rosy silk ribbons edged the bottom and framed her thin, white hands and delicate neck. Her hair was short and free, not at all like the fashion of Colin's daughters and other maidens of like age, and was made up of many curls of soft, shining gold, radiant as the setting sun upon the Sea. The curls framed a fair and comely countenance, neither young nor old, in which were set deep sapphire eyes whose gaze met Colin's wide eyes with no change of expression. In her hands she held a flower; it was a rose, white as a cloud.

Colin closed his eyes. I am dreaming, he thought, and opened them again; the woman was still there. He shuddered slightly, not all with cold.

The blue-robed woman watched him silently.

After a long pause, Colin struggled to speak. "Who---who are you?" he rasped through dry lips.

Her calm expression did not change. "Patience is one of my names." She continued to watch him for a moment, then turned away towards the cold, bitter panorama surrounding her, now unveiled by the morning sun's light.

A great pity welled up in Colin's heart as he pondered her presence. Surely this is the lady of one of the high lords who accompanied the King to this doom, he thought, recalling a memory of his own dear wife and children; they must be weeping in spite of the joyous day. They will find comfort from the priests, he added to console himself. Still, a strained tear rose in his eyes as he thought of his fair and gentle Audelet.

Pain still lanced threateningly in his side, and Colin breathed a shallow sigh.

The strange woman turned quickly towards him, her glance passing swiftly over his wounds. For a moment, her thin, arched brows knitted in sympathy.

"Milady," Colin whispered, his strength to speak lessening.

Her cerulean eyes met his own in reply.

"Is your lord here?"

The young woman smiled gently. "Not upon this field of loss, but near." Her eyes looked far away. "His suffering passed many years ago."

Dear child, Colin thought with sad amazement, you shouldn't be here. You should leave here, and return to your safe home and hall decked with greenery, singing with your maidservants as the Yule goose roasts. "Then---"

Suddenly a fit of coughing seized Colin; when it subsided, he wheezed, trembling with pain.

Compassion flooded the woman's blue eyes. Her hand twitched, as though she fought an urge to lay a comforting hand on the wounded knight. "Then, why am I here?" she queried.

Colin barely nodded.

"I am waiting for you."

For me? Colin thought, puzzled and unable to speak. His breathing

became difficult, and he had to wait several minutes before attempting speech again. "Milady," he breathed, mouthing the words as his strength failed, "if you are here for me, then assist me, for I am sore hurt--"

But the lady appeared not to be listening; it seemed to Colin that something else held her attention, and he stopped and watched her through curious but failing eyes.

At once, as by a hidden signal, she smiled in acknowledgement. "It is time," she stated, relief and joy in her voice. "Come with me!"

As she got up, she unfolded her great silver-white wings, rosy as appleblossoms in the morning sunlight. Too pain-wracked to move, Colin watched speechlessly as she approached with her hands extended. She bent over him and took his hand, and Colin gasped with surprise at the strength that seemed to flow into him from her touch. At her gesture, he picked himself up and followed her, unspeakable joy welling in his heart.

The two figures, moving furtively among the dead, suddenly came to a halt and stood in silence as the new-risen sun slipped into the last shroud of mist over the meadow. Both looked down at the grass, where lay the body of the man who had been their ruler for nearly fourteen years.

"Our task comes here to an end," sighed Rand, his face haggard and his eyes moist. "Be gentle to him, though his soul's since gone. At least it is all in one piece, which we cannot say for many of the others we have encountered!"

Alfwin nodded blankly as he stooped to take the King's body, the horrors of the morning heavy in his thoughts.

Overwhelmed with despair, Rand turned away from the King and surveyed the scene around him, hoping to learn something of the manner in which the King fell. His glance caught the purple and white of the royal banner, torn and muddy as it lay trampled on the ground. Averting his eyes from the bodies nearby, he stooped to pick it up, but it would not move easily. He looked up and saw that a body lay across the banner-pole.

It is Sir Colin of the Oaktower, Rand thought as he saw the body's face; the banner-bearer of the King. Observing the rent armor and the pool of blood, Rand surmised that the knight put forth a fierce but vain defense. Sickened at the sight, he wanted to turn away, but something caught his eye, something other than the eerie fact that the knight smiled peacefully as he lay in the grass. Rand approached cautiously, frowning at first, then widening his eyes in amazement.

In the hand of the dead knight was a flower; it was a white rose, unmarred by the frosty December morn, its petals as fresh as if it were cut within the hour.

Rosemary

Lady Renate Koven

Rosemary is a small evergreen shrub of the mint family native to the Mediterranean region. Rosemary is derived from the Latin words "ros" meaning dew and "marinus" meaning sea. It probably was spawned by the fact that the herb is so closely identified with the coastline surrounding the Mediterranean. It is popular in warm and temperate gardens because it is hardy and attractive with its spiky leaves and white or pale blue flowers. It is commercially cultivated in France, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, and North Africa where its full flavor can develop.

There is an unverified legend on how Rosemary got its name and the little blossom its pale blue color. The story is that back in Biblical times, Rosemary had a white flower at the time of the flight into Egypt, the Virgin Mary, hung her garment on a Rosemary bush one night. The next morning the flower had become as blue as Mary's gown so inevitably the herb was thenceforth known as the "rose of Mary".

In the first century A.D. Pliny ascribed numerous medicinal properties to rosemary. It was cultivated on the Imperial farms in central Europe by order of Charlemagne in the ninth century.

It was recommended for use as a medicinal herb in an Anglo-Saxon herbal of the eleventh century. In medieval times, a "posset" made from hot, curdled milk, and ale, honey and rosemary was considered a great comfort for the heart and a nerve tonic.

In the Middle Ages rosemary was the customary condiment for European salted meats. Oil of rosemary was one of the first essential oils distilled, having been produced by vaporization and condensation about 1330 by Raymundus Lullus.

Much superstition surrounded rosemary in medieval times. There is a saying "when rosemary flourishes in the garden the woman will be master of the house." Legend has it that rosemary is a feminine herb and is best grown by women. It was used to clear vision, to sharpen the senses, and to help weak memory and to alleviate nervous ailments. Hungary water (or Eau de la Reine de Hongrie) was a famous medieval cosmetic consisting of oil of rosemary, mint, and roses mixed in vodka and used externally on sores, lame and gangrenous joints and also taken internally a spoonful at a time, was a delightful taste treat. It was believed to ward off everything from evil spirits to the bubonic plague. More pragmatically, the burning twigs, were used at banquets as incense or in courtrooms in England to protect the judges from the pestilences and jail fevers of the prisoners brought from them.

Continued on Page 2



GRAND RUSSIAN WEDDING

On March 5, A.S. XXII (1988), we, Dmitri Nikolaivych Petrovoskyj and Anastazia Winogrodzka, will celebrate our SCA wedding. We wish to invite all to come and witness this union. The ceremony will take place at Fort Collins' City Park. (The bad weather site will be the same as the reception site - the V.F.W. Post 1781, 603 Lesser Drive, Fort Collins, CO. THIS IS A STRICTLY DRY SITE. ANYONE NOT COMPLYING WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE!!!) The tentative schedule of events

- is:
- 12:00 Noon - Preliminary Hall Set-up
 - 2:30 PM - Congregational Gathering at City Park (Dress appropriately and bring your own seating.)
 - 3:00 PM - Start of the Ceremony
 - 6:00 PM - Start of the Feast
 - 11:00 PM - Site Closure and Clean-up

The fees, menu and additional information will follow as they are confirmed. For details before then, please contact the Autocrat:

Anastazia Winogrodzka,
Patricia Mustain
121 North Whitcomb
Fort Collins, CO 80521
(303) 484-4970

Windkeep's Twelfth Night

SATURDAY January 9, 1988 5:00 P.M. to Midnight
 ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH 712 STOREY BLVD. CHEYENNE, WYOMING

Our Epiphany Feast is centered around the food of Northern France and will consist of the following:

On the Table: Des Petits Pain
 Whipped Butter
 Vegetable Fantasies with Dressing
 Remove # 1 Soupe au Fromage
 Couronne de Prommes de Terre
 Roast Beef with two sauces
 Remove # 2 Spinach Quiche
 Broccoli with Cheese Sauce
 Wild Rice
 Coq au Vin or Coq a`l'Orange
 Remove # 3 Varied Tarts
 Galette Des Rois

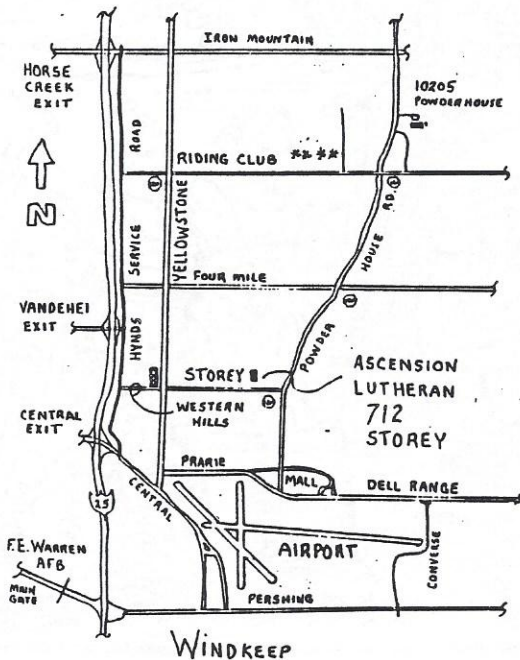
Site is a DRY SITE

Epiphany in France is known as a time to exchange gifts.- in continuance of this tradition-PLEASE BRING a one person serving Period Dessert to Exchange. Penalty for forgetting is having to exchange a Mundane dessert.

EVENT FEE:

\$7.50 per adult until January 2
 \$5.00 per child 5-12 years until January 2
 \$12.00 per adult January 3-8
 \$6.00 per child January 3-8

Availability and cost on day of event is at the discretion of the Event Autocrat.



Banners would be appreciated to help decorate the open spaces of the church! Dancing, Singing, and Entertainment is planned. Please join the fun!
 Sleeping space is available if prearranged!

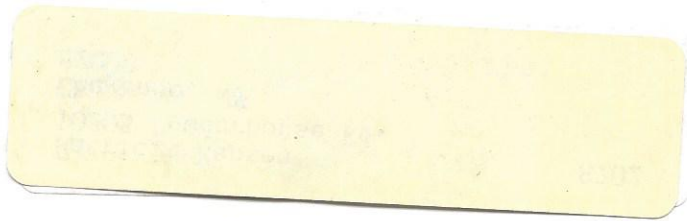
Event Autocrat & Crash Space
 Lady Renate Koven
 Patricia Hansen
 10205 Powderhouse Road
 Cheyenne, WY 82009
 Phone (307)-637-8168

Feastocrat
 Laural de la Chouette d'Oree
 Laura Wade
 4617 East 6th Street
 Cheyenne, WY 82001
 Phone (307)-632-9018

Entertainmentocrat
 Maeve the Hither-dweller
 Betty Creegan
 4301 Hayes Street
 Cheyenne, WY 82001
 Phone (307)-632-8938

Exit I-25 at Vandehei, Turn right on Hynds Service Rd.,
 Turn left at Western Hills which becomes Storey at Yellowstone,
 Site is seven blocks on the left.

WINDSWEPT
c/o Fred Hansen
10205 Powder House Road
Cheyenne, Wyoming
82009



Time value - do not delay



Holinsbed's chronicles were used by Shakespeare as source material for some of his plays—this is the meeting of Macbeth with the three weird sisters.