The Secrets of Sotland

By Mr. K.

Chapter I – A Letter from Someone

Up and down. Up and down.
The sun's heat coming through the ship's small cabin (Kabine) window is tickling (kitzeln) your arm. It feels nice.
Up and down. Up and – “LAND AHEAD!” you hear someone roar from above. “Only five more minutes…” you think to yourself. Just like every morning.

But this is different. Finally! Sotland!
You've been riding these soft waves with your friends, a group of adventurers who were called to Sotland by Sam Wan, a powerful wizard. You are here to help, of course. Help with what? It seems to be a secret.
You've been on this boat, the Explorer, for over a year it feels, though you know that it has only been a few weeks. The trip was rather (eher) safe. You only had to fight off pirates three times. Oh, and a giant Kraken (großes Oktopusmonster). But that's nothing difficult for adventurers like you. In truth, you even enjoyed the excitement! Just that thing with the dragon though. Wow, you already feel cold again just thinking about that. Better not think about it then...
As you get up along with your adventurous companions, you notice the one thing that has gotten worse and worse in the last few weeks. Nobody has taken a shower for weeks, including you. And it smells awful. Somehow, it smells a lot like cow... ahem...you know what.

You received a letter from the Supreme Wizard Sam Wan. You want to read it one more time, before you put it safely away into your pocket. Now you know what you have to do. You cannot wait to help the mystical Sotland!

You decide to get up on deck right away. The ship shakes once or twice as you climb up the ladder. A few weeks ago you still were seasick (seekrank). “Yes”, you think, “it's time to feel the earth under my feet once more.”
"LAND RATS, ON DECK!", the same loud and annoying voice shouts. “PREPARE THE ANCHOR! CLIMB UP AND PULL IN THE SAILS!”

You notice the small village of Tain on the horizon. The town with its blue and white rooftops looks so pretty, you just want to stare at it until you arrive. Somehow though, you feel like something is missing here.
The Captain angrily looks at you and your group. Oh, you have to get to work again. What were you supposed to do again? Ah, that's right: The adventurers climb up the mast, pull in the sails, pull up the anchor and lock them into the difficult to open chests. The most intelligent of you know how to do this.

Finally, you put your feet down onto land again. You expected to feel better, easy, relieved (erleichtert)... but you don't. Just as you enter the land of Sotland, you feel heavy, slow, and you do not know why, but you also feel a little bit sad... Like you are missing something that should be with you, but is not. Maybe you are just homesick, you think...
“Onward (weiter geht’s)”, one of your companions says while looking at you. You can see that your companions feel the same way. Heavy. Heavy with burden (Last). The tasks (Aufgaben) ahead of you, the tasks you have to do will be difficult. “Something is wrong in the state of Sotland”, you think. Now that you are here, you can see it clearly in the eyes of the villagers of Tain. They look tired, lost, confused, and above all, weak.

You speak to some of the villagers. You get to know the following: Everyone is getting ill and feeling weak. Monsters are attacking the towns and villages, goblins and gnolls. The monsters have become stronger. Much stronger than they once were. They can fight against many of their knights, archers and wizards at the same time.

“Oh no, they are attacking again”, one of the younger villagers shouts and starts to run away. Another villager, an old man with long, grey hair, walks up to you and falls down onto his knees: “Please, please, I beg you (ich flehe dich an)! Whoever you are, help us!”

You start to run quickly. As fast as you can you race up the dirty street towards the gate (Tor). There are many scared villagers, some horses and dogs in your way.

All of the adventurers fight against the ugly gnolls and bad smelling goblins. Swords crash down, Arrows fly and fireballs are flung (geschleudert) from wands. You manage to win against them and only one adventurer got hurt, but not any of the villagers. You saved Tain!

Happy and relieved faces walk past you as the villagers tidy up the area and get back to their everyday work. It seems that you have given them a little bit of hope. Some of the villagers stop to nod at you. You hear them whispering some words: “Thanks”, “Saviors”, “Hope”. You get the feeling that you have come to the right place. That here you can do good things for the people of Sotland. Here, you can give help to those who really need it.

The villagers tell you about a lot of gnolls who steal from traders (Händler) and people who go for a walk there. They attack a lot of innocent (k) people there.

And so you decide to leave the village of Tain. It feels like a good decision, because you are focused on the task ahead of you: Finding Supreme Wizard Sam Wan.

Some time passes and although you could already see Aldie Burn Forest on the horizon when you left the village, the road there seemed to go on forever. You knew the forest was coming closer, but it seriously felt like it didn’t. How exhausting!

You are still walking now, and the sky is grey. From time to time, you feel a few drops of rain on your shoulders. You just know something has to be wrong: Rain...under a clear sky? There is not a single cloud flying above you! You also miss the famous House Sparrows, a bird of Sotland, that usually flies through the skies. A bad sign. A sign of magic, which some of you like, but still... a bad sign. In the distance, you see a beautiful oak tree (Eichenbaum) at the side of the road. Is that a sign as well?

Signs... huh... You ask yourself: What were the actual signs that Sam Wan told you to look out for? What was the correct path to the forest? You decide to look into your letter to find some clues.

The journey makes you feel tired yet again, and as you just cross the last small hill, you see that a group of gnoll bandits are camping near the path. In the middle of their camp is a second oak tree. From their
reaction you can tell that they can also see you. There are a lot of them and you decide to attack in groups. Let’s fight!

After the fight, you find a lot of treasure. Potions which heal you, make you stronger, more agile or more intelligent and also some new weapons. Awesome!

You do not waste any time celebrating your victory against the gnolls. Instead, you continue on your journey and enter Aldie Burn Forest. The sun is going down already, but it does not matter. The trees of Aldie Burn Forest grow high and thick, blocking all light from coming through. As you make your first steps into the forest, darkness closes in around you. Sam Wan does not seem to be waiting for you just here.

Without fear you follow the path. After a while, your torches seem to spend no more light... the darkness (k) of Aldie Burn Forest seems to eat up all the light around you. Some of you decide to cast a spell with their wands to create some light. Others build torches. One group cannot manage anything, so they ask to join other groups.

You go on and on, and you fear to have lost the path. You have reached (erreichen) a crossroads (Kreuzung) and you do not know where to go. Just as the torches burn out, just in that very moment, you see something really tiny, glowing green and red, flying towards you through the air. It is a small firefly! It races through you and your companions (Mitstreiter), then, just as one of you tries to catch it, it flies above your heads and dances around crazily. It is weird, you think, but somehow it seems to want you to take the path to the right.

Just as you decide to follow it, the firefly’s light shines brighter and brighter. It lights up your path and spends warmth. You seem to have made a good decision.
It took just a few minutes – the firefly showed you the right path – and now you are standing in front of a large gate. Left and right of the gate, there are huge walls. Behind it: Probably Sam Wan’s house. There is a small sign: “Thane of Cawdor – old residence”.
Your new friend the firefly flies right into the gate and vanishes (verschwindet). It is dark around you once again. Black smoke – or dark mist (Nebel) – is rising around the gate. “What magic is this?” you ask yourself. Suddenly, runes and ancient letters around the gate start to glow (leuchten) in different, beautiful colors. You can see that it is some kind of writing, maybe a riddle. You quickly try to translate, hopefully to gain entry.

You solved the riddles easily. Although only some wizards are part of your adventurous group, they were no match for your intelligence. Now the gate is open right in front of you, the black mist and smoke is gone. You follow a path towards a big, old, scary-looking house. Already from the outside you can tell that once you enter it, the old wooden floor will make those annoying, squeaky (quietschige) noises...
But in you go anyways, because what else should you do? Sotland needs help, and supreme wizard Sam Wan can tell you how!
Your new friend, the red and green glowing firefly, is back and helps you find the way. As you enter the house, one of your shouts “Hello, anyone there?”, but there is no answer. The firefly wooshes and buzzes through the air, pointing towards a room with a desk and an empty chair.

Once you are close enough, you see a note on the floor: “I, the butler of this mansion (Anwesen), have hidden the second letter of Mr. Wan. Look for it and find it!”
You decide to look through the house in groups. After all, this is much faster than all looking together. But all the groups are attacked by ghosts, zombies, and walking skeletons! Yet, although these monsters are immune to either (jeweils) arrows, swords, or magic, you manage to beat them easily.

After you’ve vanquished (besiegen) the monsters, you find some more treasures for your groups. Potions and weapons are there for some of you! You are happy to have found so many helpful items (Gegenstände) that you didn’t really notice the great golden chest, which sits in the middle of a big hall.

You try to open it, but it’s locked! You can see writing in an ancient language and only the smartest of you figure out (herausfinden) the secret word to open it. It is the word “uralt” in the language of Sotland. After one of you speaks the word, the lock clicks. It is open!

Again, you try to open it, but it is not moving. The hinges (Scharniere) are rusty (rostig) and only the strongest of you can open the chest. Three of your strongest adventurers use all of their muscles to open the chest. It opens with a loud “boom”.

Out flies a little golden wisp, a small and golden-glowing ball with wings. It cries out “Catch me! Catch me!” as it zips (schwirren) through your group. It is fast and quickly changes direction when you try to grab it. But one of you is agile enough and grabs it. It disappears (verschwindet)... and a ghost appears in front of you. It also shines golden and has a big moustache. Unlike the ghosts from before, it doesn’t seem to be dangerous. The ghost looks at you with a warm smile and says:

“You are strong, quick, and also smart,
I would choose you as my guard!
And see here, I have a letter for you,
To get it, this is what you have to do:
Ask for it nicely, but only in rhymes,
but not too short, you need four lines!”

A poem with four lines? That is not a problem for you! With your group, you quickly invent a beautiful poem. After hearing each poem, the butler ghost chuckles (glucksen, eine Art Lachen die “hohoho
macht, eher von Männern) and gives you the second Letter of Sam Wan, which he seems to have stolen.
You read the letter, look at the big map and try to find where you need to go. Ah, there it is. Let’s go to Loch Ness!

Chapter II – The Depths of Loch Ness

Your journey to Loch Ness was hard and sometimes you still got that tiring feeling that has been annoying you ever since you arrived in Sotland. Somehow you are getting used to it and after just four days on foot you and your companions arrive. You did not meet a lot of people on the road, and the ones you did meet were very unhappy. Although some of you have lived in Sotland before, it felt like a different place entirely. From time to time you got a feeling that was hard to describe. It felt like something was just... missing. Sotland used to be so colorful and full of life and happy people all around. It even felt like there should be more villages and towns, just something more.
Just before you finally arrive at Uruqhart castle, hear a loud roar in the distance. You immediately remember the thing with the dragon on the boat... oh oh... better not think about it and hope there’s nothing wrong at Uruqhart. You continue, brave as you are, and climb up the last hill. Once up there, you spot the great Loch Ness in the distance.
The water is not as quiet as it used to be... lots of waves crash onto the shores and hills all around. In front of the lake, right at the end of your path: Uruqhart Castle, but... it's not a castle. It's a ruin!

You climb up your way to the castle and move a big rock out of the way. Again, only the strongest of you can manage to do that. However, the rock is not the only problem. You need to climb up some roots (Wurzeln), because the way is blocked. For some of you it is no problem at all. Others slip and fall painfully (schmerzhaft) on their butts. Ouch! They can manage it on the second try. The others who still are bad at climbing get lifted up with a rope (Seil). Thankfully, you have some strong people in the group.

You can spot some people here and there. It looks like they are some of the Shamans from the local Highland Clan. They notice you as well, but are not sure what to think about your group of adventurers. One of you tries to speak to the shamans and she suddenly feels a pain in her chest. They signal you to not speak. They show you to look around.

As you search the castle for clues (Hinweise) on what to do, you find some old stones with writing on them. It turns out that the Highland Clan and their Shamans have indeed summoned Loch Ness monsters, but it all happened as a part of their own plan to save Sotland themselves. They can't really be bad people. You also know now that the monsters are water dragons and really strong! They only come out of the water after you disturb the water with something unnatural. The monsters are cursed (verflucht) and to lift (aufheben) the curse, you have to beat them.

You walk towards the lake and one of you signals the others to do the following: throw some magic at the lake. One of the wizards does exactly that and suddenly the water seems to boil (kochen). Out come two huge dragons! They bite at you or breathe blue fire. A lot of you get hurt, but you are stronger! A lot of well-aimed (gut gezielt) arrows, powerful magic and strongly swung (geschwungen) swords hit them and as you beat them, a powerful magic flows from them. The curse is lifted and you get healed! Finally! But your adventure is not over yet...