

To Be a Royal Scribe

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As you mature in your efforts of being a scribe for this Kingdom, it is probable that you will eventually be noticed and asked to serve as a *Royal Scribe*. The Royal Scribe serves for the length of one Reign (including the preparatory time prior to Coronation), working closely with the Crown to produce the scrolls that are to be given out.

Before agreeing to be a Royal Scribe there are several things you need to ask yourself.

1. What exactly does a Royal Scribe do?
2. How much time do I have to devote to being the Royal Scribe?
3. Do I have the resources available that will allow me to do the job?
4. Am I able/willing to set some limits on myself, and if need be, the Crown?

I will attempt to address these questions here.

First off, let me tell you that, depending on the experience of the couple who just won Crown Tourney, the job of Royal Scribe can be a rocky/very difficult one, or can just be busy but run very smoothly. You can pretty much count on it always being busy, and you can count on very few people actually knowing just how much work you will be doing.

Each new Prince and Princess (Coronet) is given a packet the day They win Crown Tourney. In this packet is, among other things, a letter from the Falcon Signet entitled "About Scribes and Seals." It was written primarily for those new to the experience of being Royalty in the hopes of making both Their Reign and Their relationship with the scribes of the Kingdom go smoothly. They are encouraged to choose a Royal Scribe early in Their time as Prince and Princess and are given a lot of the same information/advice I will be giving you here. Hopefully, this will keep both the Crown and the Royal Scribe on the same sheet of music, and allow for a smoother working relationship.

Ok, let's get on to question number one . . . **"What exactly does a Royal Scribe do?"**

Every Crown has different ideas of what it is They wish to accomplish during Their Reign, as well as how much They want to take upon themselves to do. As such the Royal Scribe can be responsible for all or any portion, of the following:

1. Designing preprint masters of all AOA, and sometimes GOA, level scrolls.
2. Painting, and/or coordinating the painting, of the scrolls mentioned above.
3. Adding in the names of the award recipients, reasons for awards, and dates and places the awards are given on the preprint.
4. Creating, and/or coordinating the painting and calligraphy of, all GOA and POA level scrolls. This includes any specialty scrolls the Crown wishes to give out (Baronages, QED's, King's Favor, etc.).
5. Getting the scrolls to the Crown in plenty of time for Them to sign and seal them before court. This is something to be worked out between the Crown and Scribe. Decisions need to be made whether the Crown or the Scribe does the actual sealing of

the scrolls. Depending on the seal being used this may be a process that should be done before the event.

6. Maintaining the confidentiality of the information that has been entrusted to them.

Number two . . . **“How much time do I have to devote to being the Royal Scribe?”**

As you can see from the description of what the Royal Scribe (RS) actually does, it takes a lot of time to do this job. Depending on how eager the other scribes of the Kingdom are to help out, and how generous the Crown wishes to be in bestowing awards upon Their populace, the RS could be devoting a considerable amount of their time to scribing each week, for up to 9 months (including preparation time). There have been some Reigns where the scribe literally spent every spare minute of time they had outside of their mundane work (and some sick days from their mundane work) preparing scrolls.

Number three . . . **“Do I have the resources available which will allow me to do the job?”**

By this I mean:

1. Do I have enough reliable people I can call on to help with the production of scrolls?
2. Do I have access to printing and materials needed for making the scrolls (ink, paper, paint, etc.)?
3. Do I have an efficient, confidential way of communicating with the Crown so that names and texts can be received in a timely manner (a secure e-mail account is wonderful for this)?
4. Can I get the scrolls to the Crown easily and in an adequate amount of time before events (this is easier if you happen to live in the same area as the Crown)?
5. Do I have an area of my home that I can devote to the job of RS (privacy from curious passersby, adequate lighting, table, file cabinet, etc.)?

You do not need to worry whether you have enough money. There is a budget set aside for the Crown to use in reimbursing Their scribe(s) for material and postage costs (if needed). All the RS needs to do is hand these receipts to the Kingdom Exchequer for reimbursement.

And finally, number four . . . **“Am I able/willing to set some limits on myself, and if need be, the Crown?”**

Obviously, by this I don't mean the RS should tell the Crown what to do. What I mean is, the RS can only do so much. Only you can know how much that is for yourself. It is very easy for the Crown to see something that They want to do at the last minute and ask the RS to take care of it. It is also very easy for the overburdened RS to say “No problem” and then be unable to make it happen. This can be embarrassing and disappointing not only for the people who were to be the recipient of the honor, but also the Crown and the RS.

What I advise is that the Royal Scribe and the Coronet sit down and discuss exactly what they expect of one another. It is not just the issue of confidentiality, or style and substance of the scrolls, but also, how much time will be needed for the scribe to complete the scrolls. How much lead-time will you, as RS, need from the Crown in order to complete scrolls for specific events and get them signed and sealed. How much lead-time would you need to make sure that GOA and POA scrolls get done for the occasions they are needed. Once the Coronet and RS have agreed on these things, can you stick to it? Will you be able to say, “I’m sorry Your Majesty, but I really can’t get that done by next week.” Or, “Your Majesty, there are only two more weeks before ***** event, and I don’t have any names yet. I can’t wait any longer.” Finally, can you keep a secret?

The giving out of awards and scrolls is one of the most important and difficult things the Crown has to do during Their Reign. It is very important that the Royal Scribe has a good, honest and trustworthy working relationship with the Crown they serve.

SO, YOU’VE AGREED TO BE THE ROYAL SCRIBE . . . WHAT DO YOU DO NOW?

1. **Schedule a meeting with the Prince and Princess**, also known as the Coronet (you might want to include the Falcon Signet, but that is not a requirement). There are several things you will want to discuss and decide upon:
 - a. *Time period.* What time period are the Coronet planning to use during Their Reign. Do they want the scrolls done in that period exclusively, or do they want a mixture of styles?
 - b. *Calligraphic hand.* Is there a preference? Are you able to do the hand they request? You may want to offer suggestions of hands you feel most comfortable with, keeping within the requested time period, of course.
 - c. *Type of paper.* I recommend a white, parchment-style card stock. [The Kingdom has been using Skytone white cover stock (manufactured by Georgia-Pacific); it’s a special-order paper, but well worth it.]
 - d. *Size of the scrolls.* What size do the Coronet envision the scrolls being? I recommend that AOA level scrolls be no larger than 8-1/2 by 11 inches. This allows for ease of copying, obtaining paper and eventual framing.
 - e. *Type of seal.* Which kind of seal does the Coronet wish to use? There are several options available. Decisions will need to be made as to whether you, They or Their Chamberlain will be sealing the scrolls.
 - f. *Signatures.* How much space they will want left at the bottom of the scrolls for seals and signatures, or do they have an idea of a different method of signing and sealing the scrolls? Will they need assistance learning to sign Their names?
 - g. *When will texts be available?* What is the last possible minute that you will need the texts in your hand? Remember that you will need all of the preprints drawn and printed by one month prior to Coronation. This will allow you time to get a beginning stock painted, and leave you enough time not to feel rushed.

- h. Duty expectations. What expectations do the Coronet have of you/how much are you willing or able to do/organize? For this there are several options:
1. RS is responsible for designing and production of AOA level scrolls only. This leaves the Crown to arrange for (or find someone else to arrange for) the GOA and above scrolls to be done.
 2. RS is responsible for designing, implementing and/or delegating production of AOA and GOA scrolls. This leaves the Crown or Peer sponsors to arrange for the POA scrolls.
 3. RS is responsible for designing, implementing and/or delegating production of all scrolls for the Reign. For this (and #2) you will need to obtain a list of the Scribes of Calontir from the Falcon Signet. I also strongly suggest you subscribe to the Calontir Scribe's list. It is a great way to get in touch with other scribes.
- i. Original vs. Preprint vs. pre-made. Which scrolls will the Crown expect to be original and persona specific? Are They willing to have a scroll done in the time period of the Crown when recipient's persona is unknown? Are They willing to use borders or pre-painted designs, which allow the texts to be added later by the RS, or designee? Are They going to want original texts for each GOA, POA and/or specialty award? If so, are They prepared to obtain them?
- j. Time tables. How much time do you need to prepare the scrolls for upcoming events? I recommend that names be sent to you at least 2 weeks ahead of time for AOA level preprints and 1 to 2 months ahead of time for GOA and above. Remember, if you are delegating the scrolls you may need a bit more leeway.
- k. Lists of names. How do you want to go about exchanging names for the awards to be given out? Remember, this has to be a secure/private way of doing so. It is very important the Royal Scribe be able to keep these things a secret, even from your family.
- l. Scroll exchange. How are the scrolls to be delivered to the Crown? At events? (This makes signing and sealing the scrolls more difficult, but it can be done if the Crown is willing.) By hand? (Either the week before each event when traveling, or when you live in the same town.) By mail? (This is the most frequent method, but it can get expensive, esp. if you tend to send them priority mail—be sure to save receipts for reimbursement.)
- m. Last-minute scrolls. An agreement should be reached as to whether it will be expected for the RS to do last minute scrolls at events or at least have them available should such a need arrive. If you agree to this you will need to keep a certain number of scrolls with you at all times, pre-painted and ready to add names to. This also means you will need to do a fair bit of traveling. If you don't agree to this you will need to stick by it. It's not much fun spending your whole week preparing scrolls and then your whole weekend in the privy chamber making more.

2. **Research.** Find examples of the styles of artwork/calligraphy that the Coronet has requested. Develop your ideas as to layout and which pictures you would like to use. You may want to run your ideas by the Coronet before doing the actual layout and design of the preprint masters. You will find, however, that most of the time the decisions will be left entirely up to you. Remember to design pretty, yet simple, AOA-level scrolls. The more complicated the design (shading, whitework, multiple levels of painting, etc.) the longer they take to paint.

3. **Make the Masters.** By this I mean design what the scroll will look like. The original copy of any preprint is called a “Master.” One to two will be made for each AOA-level award given out during the next Reign. There are a few ways of going about making a master, but I am going to tell you the way I prefer to do it.
 - a. Decide on a graph paper that fits your pen’s nib size. This paper is already ruled and makes the alignment of your text and artwork much easier.
 - b. The calligraphy and the artwork can be done separately and then cut and pasted together or done all at the same time. The cut-and-paste method will allow you to make more mistakes, or change your mind, in the initial drawing stage without having to redo everything. This also allows you to have someone help you with the artwork or calligraphy. (I advise that you remember—a preprint will seem more like an original if the person who did the calligraphy on the “master” is also the one who fills in the names as the Reign progresses). If a cut-and-paste method is chosen, remember to leave the appropriate space on your paper, when doing your calligraphy, for the artwork to be added in later. For example: I’ve been asked to do Celtic Knotwork on the scrolls this reign. I can do the hand just fine but designing knotwork makes me crazy. I give a rough size estimate to my buddy Tatiana and ask her to draw up some designs for me, which she agrees to do. After I have received the drawings, I then block out the necessary space on my graph paper and proceed to do my calligraphy around it. Ok, so maybe I had to do it a couple of times to get it right, but that is no problem; I haven’t actually added the drawing yet. When I have the calligraphy to my satisfaction, I then cut out the drawing (or a copy of the drawing if I want to use it in another scroll) and tape it onto my graph paper in the appropriate place. I make another copy of that and now I have a “master” from which to make the preprint.
 - c. When doing the calligraphy on your master you may want to spend some time before hand writing down some of the more common reasons for awards and some long and short names that you know. Measure how much space these names take up and leave that much space on your “master.” For example: do one “master” for the Torse scroll with enough space for a short name and a short reason, and another with enough space for a long name and reason. It is also helpful if you can arrange for one or the other to be at the end of a line. If you do that you can use a “filler,” if the name/reason is not long enough, to complete the line and flesh out the scroll.

- d. Your preprint will not have graph lines on it after the copies are made. At least it shouldn't if you have been using the correct graph paper and your copy center knows what it is doing. You will need to pencil in some lines in the open areas to serve as guides when adding in the names, reasons, dates and places. (BTW, I like to leave the date and place area completely blank if they come at the end of the text. It is easier for me to callig in a complete sentence than to fill the awkward spaces left for days, months and groups. In case you haven't noticed, none of these things need the same exact amount of room and the scroll starts to look sloppy when you try to make the words fit in the wrong sized spaces.) Here's a hint on how to get your penciled-in lines straight and even: leave a small mark (more like a dot) on your "master" at the end of each graphed line. (You know, the ones you will be adding the pencil line to after the copies are made.) These marks will show on your preprints, but that is all right. They will act as a guide to line up your ruler. After you have no further need for them, scrape them lightly with an exacto knife, to loosen them, and then simply erase them away.
- e. You can actually make a "master" of artwork only for some of the GOA level scrolls if you like. These pictures can be painted by anyone and then you can callig in the text later. This is a technique best used when you have willing painters who can't draw, or when you want to have a larger picture available to add a last minute text to, for the last minute award. If colored ink is used for part of the text no one will know that the entire thing was not an original scroll, made just for them.

4. **Get yourself organized.**

- a. Get the paper you will be using to copy the preprints. You will most likely have to buy your own ream of paper and supply it to the copy center. As stated earlier I recommend a card stock (the paint doesn't cause it to warp and it doesn't get destroyed easily in transport home from the event). My favorite is the white parchment style. Check with the Royal Scribe who preceded you; they may have some left over paper they can give you.
- b. Make sure you have a private work area set aside, complete with adequate lighting, and the appropriate paints, pens, inks, pencils and rulers.
- c. Get a file box or cabinet to keep the painted preprints/scrolls and the lists of names given to you by the Crown. I strongly discourage leaving these things lying out on your desk. It is much too easy for the casual passerby to see, and let's face it, most people love knowing what is going to happen before it actually does. I like to arrange my file box with separate folders for each award. I place a brightly colored piece of paper between each different style of preprint to differentiate them but leave them in the same folder. You should find a system that works for you.
- d. Contact the Falcon Signet for a list of the scribes of the Kingdom.
- e. Join the Calontir Scribe's list, if you haven't already. This is an invaluable way to get to know which scribes are active and willing to help out. (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/CalontirScribes>)

- f. Assemble a group in your local area to help paint preprints. You may even want to make an example sheet with the colors that should be used for the style of artwork you've chosen, as well as some pictures from period pieces to use as reference.
- g. Think about taking your show on the road. You will find that there are a lot of people who would love to help out but don't know how to start. These people will flock to your table at events if only you set one up. You may want to work with the Falcon Signet or the Scribe's Guilds in other groups to help facilitate this at events. You will need to pack up some supplies to share with those wishing to help out at events as well as some extra preprints to hand out. Remember that all of this does not need to come out of your pocket. There is money budgeted each reign for reimbursement of the scribes. Consult with your Crown and They may be able to help defray some of your expenses using this fund. The Falcon Signet may be able to help out with this as well.

Being the Royal Scribe is a lot of work. On that I am sure we can all agree. The Royal Scribe works behind the scenes, and is, at times, unrecognized (although that is changing). Being the Royal Scribe is also, however, a wonderful chance to give to your Kingdom, to hone your skills as an artist and calligrapher and a way to make an awful lot of people very happy. It can also be very rewarding. I can't adequately describe the feeling I get when I travel to the homes of many of the people of this Kingdom and there I see scrolls, that I did, proudly displayed on their walls. It's wonderful!