

The Seagate Times



Issue 46 - Spring 804

Please note: the editors have been unable to verify any of the factoids in the following article, although they have confirmed that a very large, alcoholic expense claim has also been lodged. Whilst not averring to the truth of the following sensational story, they have confirmed that the reporter was seen conversing to some charming lady-merchants* and *exotic dancers*** who have recently claimed to have visited that distant Eastern port. However, regardless of the so-called “truth”, the editors feel it is their duty to inform their faithful, ever-increasing readership.

New Regime in Spice Isles

“We didn’t Break Law...” Party Claims, “It was the Bleeding Dragon.”

From the SGT correspondent on Moskadan affairs:

Making the most of that fatal First day of Chaos an unspecified Guild party was proactively present at a *coup d’état*. Thanks to these as-yet-unknown nefarious nihilists, where once Nutmeg was king, Anarchy now reigns.

It is understood that when the Prince Regent Yajima (also called Sguru by his faithful followers) was flying back from an unnamed place where he had been recuperating, he was assaulted by assassins. Those assassins are known to have been associated with, if not actually comprised of, Guild-members. The various villains include an archer assassin, an unsound mind mage, and an enchantress with a *penchant* for seducing monks, possibly also an airmage, since a trained flock of larks was also in the caper.. Unfortunately these excoriating executioners were cloaked by illusions, masquerading as local Erelhaine gentry. Authorities are also looking for five albino dragons and their trained giants (possibly triplets). Indeed one of the dragons bled inconsiderately, destroying in the process, a revered ancient charter that also regulated

Visions of Moskada



Moskadan Noble House

foreign involvement in the spice trade. Readers are warned against buying genuine mace or uncut cinnamon from unregistered dealers (although this does not apply to the inferior products from Destiny).

Following the perfidious principicide, a profane temple was raised the party’s patron DEMON at the site of a theatre that was previously dedicated to the Arts and Kabuki.

* It is possible that the sources were ladies who happened to be merchants, rather than sellers of ladies.

** The editors believe that their highly intelligent readership will know what is meant by dances. Unfortunately our woodcut amply revealing the highpoint of the “entertainment” offered by Sisters Brindisi & Rhapsody has been seized by the Ducal censor (for His Grace’s private collection, we understand).

Elsewhere in This Issue

News in Brief

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...



News in Brief

Petrenco at peace once more.

Peace has been restored in The Empire on Far Away. This winter though his advisor and jester Marvin his Grace Duke Argent of Petrenco hired a party to find out why The Empire's King had declared war on his Duchy. At that time only troops from the neighboring duchies were involved, and he wanted an end the war before the spring and any real fighting could start. The only information they had on the reason for the war was that it had something to do with a message sent by an earlier party hired by one of his vassals, Baron Bertram of Zargora.

We started our investigation by crossing through the war zone into Lembach one of the neighboring duchies and listening to the gossip of the locals while traveling to the city of Pircha. However the locals' could add nothing to what we already knew. We did however notice we had picked up a tail. At night many small animated winged creatures called Blight, would circle high over the party's camp. The previous party had encountered Blight far to the north beyond the Empires borders. These tiny monsters were in the service of someone called Wuffa a mage who had fled the empire a mere five hundred or so years ago and whose power had been slowly growing since.

When we arrived in Pircha we split up to gather information. Within hours of our arrival, agents working for a then still unknown enemy captured three members of the party including our leader Saurus, and began torturing them for information. That night a rescue was staged. Several golems, a guarded, warded city gate, and two party deaths later we were free of the city. Hamish's death was due to the added hurt the death of his monkey familiar caused him in his already weak state, mine to an unlucky arrow in the eye.

From information gathered in Pircha we knew the Blight tailing us were based to the south, deeper into the Empire, and as we needed to get Hamish resurrected we went south, to the Duchy of Ashe. More precisely the seat of power for that Duchy, the city of the same name, where we had reason to believe we might find some aid restoring Hamish. There we learned that the King had a new adviser, but other than they favored black and gray clothing, very little was known about this adviser, not even their race or sex. Items taken from captured party members were now located in the direction of the capital, the Blight too appeared to come from the same direction. So with everyone alive again we set out for Biltadox the capital city of The Empire.

In Biltadox we made contacts and mingled with the in crowds, got invites to the right parties, and learned what we could of the Kings new Adviser. When we got a death threat delivered to our Inn room by Blight, I knew we were on the right track. A Demonic Curse failed to frighten the party away, but did lead us to some more information. By the night of Anniversary Ball to commemorate the defeat of Waffa and the founding of the Empire, we had learned that the Adviser had ties to Waffa who in turn, had ties to the Duke of Thrones. The Adviser was not a living being. That he had only been around since last summer, before that he

was unknown. And that he was or had a Summoner among his agents. Summoners are illegal in the Empire. We now had good reason to suspect that the Adviser had had the war declared to keep the news of Waffa's growing power from the King. For the Adviser to rise to prominence so quickly hinted at the use of some dark power and the party determined to free the court from his sway. So when we learned he would be at the Ball we got ourselves invited.

At the ball Theodonna was unable to read the Adviser's Aura, but did read that of his companion Karl a pacted namer who had been there for the torture of the party members in Pircha. With less than quarter of an hour to go until midnight the party retired to a broom closet to prepare for any resistance the Advisor might give. I had my doubts that the "prosperous new era" the midnight hour heralded would be good for our plans or the Empire in it present form. I will state for the record most of the three hundred or so guests at the ball were safely in the garden when we made our move on the Advisor. Faith did demand surrender, and we did not put the hole in the palace roof. Both sides used fire and I used brooms not the expensive tables as golems, that too was their doing.

The Advisor called in about fifty Blight, which panicked the crowd in the garden, and a minute or so later when the smoke cleared only Shizane was left standing. During that time all of the Blight and five golems were destroyed, and the Human minions of the Advisor killed, at a cost of only three dead and one unconscious to the party. It was only after the death of all of his minions that the Advisor showed his true form, a human sized version of the tiny winged Blight. Wielding a large black sword he took on the remaining three party members. Faith and I held him long enough, though only barely, for Shizane to cast the spell that destroyed this monstrous undead.

The King and his court are now free of the influence of the advisor who it turned out was called Matthias, an Elder blight and one of Waffa's original minions. When the party left Biltadox with documents ending the war for Duke Argent, the King was investigating just how much of his government he was going to have to replace.

Rowan



The Blight

Vanderhand:

"These guys are intelligent."

Neroli:

"They're clearly not guild members."

Chizane:

"I just ravish the city"

Rest of party "What !?"

Dragon King's Sceptre Returned

A party led by Flamis (yes, really THAT Flamis) were employed on mysterious terms to go a LONG way off plane... Towards the centre, she explained to our reporter. A high mana zone that seemed to create an individualised place of power around each of the mages in the party. Which would have been nice if it wasn't for the heat, she added. Anyhow after the party were tested, involving a journey to yet another plane, they learned that their real job was to retrieve the Dragon King's sceptre from a place their people could not go... The stronghold of the Dragon Kings evil opposite.

After working their way through and around dead and wild magic zones, and managing to avoid an amazing amount of bad stuff by simply being in the right place at the right time, the party snuck into the volcanic stronghold of evil, hunted down the sceptre, and defeated the guards. We won't mention how the wrong person tried to grab the sceptre so it tossed him across the room... Or how Aquilina defeated an incoming wave of enemies with a towering wave of water... Or how Flamis herself saved most of the party by removing them from being surrounded by the enemy with a Fire Arc spell...



Aryan is All Right!!!

One of the Times crack reporters spent last week trailing Aryan, leader of the newly formed 'Carzarlan Rights Party'. The week ended with a interview with Aryan at the exclusive hobbit restaurant Alfonses. There have been some that don't believe that the CRP are sticking up for the indigenous people of the Barony, but we now know better.

A record number of elves and dwarves are entering the city and Aryan is standing up for the rights of common folk. "Many people do misunderstand. I don't dislike elves and dwarves, many of them even work at my residence", Aryan tells us "but they must learn our ways if they are to enter the city. Why, last week after attending the latest Dwarven ball league game I tried to spend my hard earned silver at one of the conveniently located elven restaurants but, no matter how loudly I spoke, they didn't understand me."

If we truly believe in free speech, how can the Duke crack down on the CRP, and legislate against what is in the hearts of untold thousands? To many people in the city, the CRP have one terrific selling point: they claim to be sticking up for Carzala at a time when no other group seem to care. In our recent poll the CRP collected substantial support, a historic high for a far-right concern group. The vast majority of CRP members are ordinary humans that feel afraid, disenfranchised and angry. When I see this Barony acting like the softest touch in the world I feel angry too. If you pass through Carzala, you can be certain that the City guard will be ready to harass you, as part of the war on undead. Consider the guild membership - necromancers are welcome, happily settled in Seagate by the largest graveyards. Hard in their words, soft in their deeds. Soft on elven Necromancers, tough on hard working humans.

Little wonder the CRP is thriving. As Aryan told us "If Carzala really wants to fight the Far Right, then now and again it has to stop acting like a bunch of weak, lily-livered liberals who wouldn't say 'Boo' to an dwarven berzerker."

And if Duke Leto can't manage that, then sooner or later all Carzala will suffer.

Pot from Hell...

Bedeviled Broth Burner Brands Beelzebub Boss on Every Bowl! Local Adventurer Dawn (aka Mary Jane aka Thistlefoot), is convinced that a recently purchased cooking pot she purchased is possessed - because every time she cooks the image of a demon appears in the contents. "No matter how much broth I make or how long I heat it, the Demon turns up in every bowl," the youthful Dawn told reporters. "My servants won't eat anything cooked in the pot."

Dawn, having returned from South Prevada, says she bought the old silver plated pot while on Adventure — but, oddly enough, she can't remember the exact location. In fact, she begins to pace and wring her hands just thinking about it because, as she puts it, "It's like what happens when you fall off a ladder and get amnesia — my memories of that day are hazy. I do recall that the people at the store were strange, and the man I bought it from had weird eyes, kind of green and strange looking. The day after I got the pot home it was still in my pack because I didn't even remember buying it. Dawn says she took the pot into her house and began cooking with it immediately. And the soups started to steam, though not overcooked, "was smoking like crazy — and there were wicked faces with horns floating on the top."

"But I was more concerned with the face. I kept thinking, 'That's really strange it looks like a Demon. Then I tried again and the same thing happened. So I racked my brain to figure out why and decided that it must be some sort of 'novelty pot' or something. And even though the only bad thing to happen to the family since Dawn bought the pot is that a tree limb fell on her house and ripped off a rain gutter, they fear that the pot may bring them serious trouble if they keep it around much longer.

"I'm hoping maybe the Demons will leave the pot so we can start using it and get on with our lives," she says. "My friends think I'm stupid and they say they'd throw it away so fast my head would spin, but I just can't bear to think to part with it. But I'm not taking chances - I keep an invested right beside it on the kitchen counter. Demons might be evil, but he's no match for lightning bolts. Sure, they might burn my food but that's all he's going to do. I'm sure of that."



Cosmetic surgery Attention Hobbits!

Self conscious because your feet aren't hairy enough?
Embarrassed to walk in public without shoes?



Foot surgery is for you!
For only a small fee our skilled healers can give you the hairiest feet around. You will be the hobbit's hobbit!

Flamis the Fire Mage:

"So's playing with fire but I don't make a habit of it."

Woman Struck By Lightning Files Lawsuit Against Gods!

After being zapped by lightning three times in two years, Yvette Le Claire is striking back by throwing legal lightning bolts at the Almighty!

"I'm suing for a million true silver, and I know the Gods can afford it," says Yvette, a mind mage who recently filed a lawsuit against the Powers of Light. She alleges harassment, physical and mental injuries as well as distress due to her close calls with death from above. "My attorney says the Gods are recognised entities. And after the third time I said, 'I've had enough! Now I'm mad. This is harassment, pure and simple.'"

Yvette's troubles began two years ago when she was struck while organising trade deals with Ebolo. A sudden storm caught her and before they knew it, she'd been hit by a bolt that killed her horse and sent her flying about 25 feet, knocking her senseless. "I recovered and except for some scarring, I was fine," says Yvette. "Then I got hit again in recently, prior to departing for Newcourt. That one left me with some minor scarring. Then last week - bam! - I got hit while training. I still can't taste anything after that one."

What she'd like is a taste of justice and says her lawsuit isn't frivolous. "I don't know anyone else I can blame for this," she says. "The odds of getting hit are remote." Yvette says she's done nothing to incur this kind of cosmic wrath. "I'm a law-abiding woman. I can't imagine why the Gods has singled me out for this kind of harassment. Sure, I've broken a couple of laws in my day. I've told a few white lies, but all for a good reason. But this punishment is way out of line for those actions, the deities are going to have to settle with me on this one."

Her lawyer, Lloyd Starbuck, says he's prepared to take the suit all the way to the gates of heaven and isn't worried about the Supreme Beings not showing up in court. "We know they're out there, one of them will be there even if we have to have them summoned." vows Starbuck.

Water College Potions for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 12 - 500 sp
Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 1000 sp
Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.



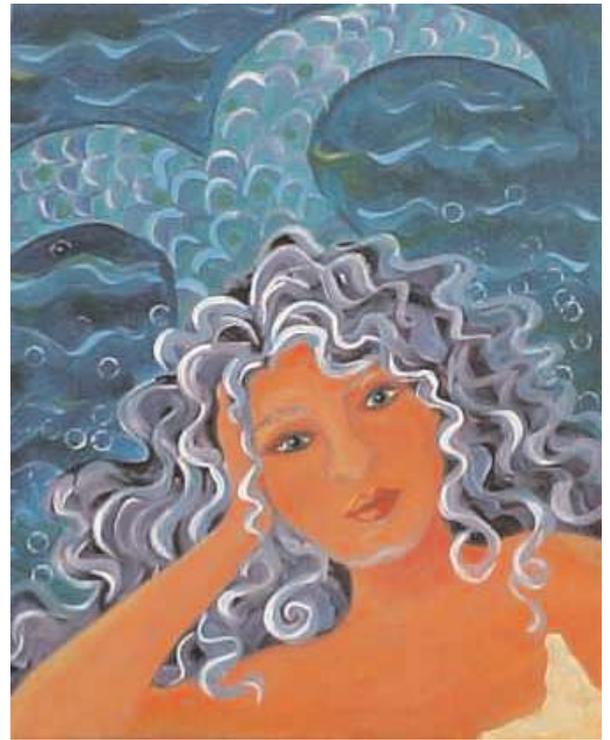
Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

Particular Afflictions:

Spider - ogre - giant club - crushed testicles
Prickle - lizardmen - spear - gut wound
Silverfire - pixie - icicle - broken ribs
Beowulf - treant - tree branch - concussion
Sir Cecil - vampire - bastard sword - broken arm

Riddles:

First: A game (or pack) of cards
Second: They were musicians
Third: nothing



Who is Aqualina?

This season we had the opportunity to chat with the watermage Aqualina in her apartment on the Sea Goddess Haven. Despite her short stature (5'1") Aqualina is a distinctive human with chocolate coloured skin, waist length black hair and sea green eyes. Typically clad in merely a two piece swimsuit and a sash, after taking off her skirt, she fully lived up to her reputation.

SGT: There is something distinctive in your appearance Aqualina. Is it a magical effect, or does it mean you come from somewhere other than Seagate?

Aqualina: Well I'm actually from Pasifika, which is an island group to the south and west of here. The natives there have brown skin, darker than mine as I'm actually a half-caste. My father is a 'palangi', meaning pale skin, who was shipwrecked sailor from the Alusian continent.

SGT: When and why did you join the Seagate Adventurers' Guild?

Aqualina: About fourteen years ago, I was paddling between the islands at home, when I got caught in a storm which swamped and sank my canoe. Fortunately a pod of dolphins saved me and guided me to a merchant ship which was heading for Seagate. I was suffering from amnesia at the time, so the captain gave me the name Aqualina, which is elvish for 'Daughter of the Sea'. It turned out to be close to a direct translation of my island name, Hinemoana. Anyway, upon arrival at the Guild, I was healed and, once I found out about the Water College, decided to stay.

SGT: What have you specialised in with your time at the guild?

Aqualina: Underwater magics basically. Waterbreathing is my best spell. Anything that allows survival in the aquatic

Aqualina:

"I'm a watermage. I'm not allowed to drown people."

Flamis:

"You're not female and therefore not acquainted with female anatomy."

Talon:

"Only with certain aspects of it."

environment. Trident is my favourite weapon, and is also the primary weapon of the local merfolk. Apart from that there's my Water Bolt spell which was taught to me by the Arch Mage Lawfakir on Greyhawk. I'm also doing a decent trade in Waters of Healing at the moment.

SGT: Is it true you are a shapechanger Mer-Orc, or did the nickname Orqualina come from something else?

Aqualina: Errr ... yeah well, it's a bit more complicated than that. Technically, the body I'm currently in isn't the one I was actually born with. It's in that urn over there. I got ashed on one of my earlier adventures after following Bozo, the party leader, through a ward which I was sure was safe ... it wasn't. The only body available that the Priestesses of Zigmar could find to put my soul in was a male orc body. So I had to make do with that. They said they would be able to put me in a new female body but I had to do penance as an orc for a while. However, on the next mission we encountered a dragon that was able to transmogrify the male orc body into an exact replica of the original. So, that's where the Orqualina bit came from.

As for the mer part, that was from a subsequent mission. I'm currently wearing a Belt of Merform that was presented to me by King Kierl of the Pasifikan Merfolk, in return for rescuing his daughter. It allows me to transform into a mermaid and back again.... Come this way .. I'll show you how it works ... [At this point we were led into a room which was full of water up to the level of the door. Under the surface of the water, (about 8 foot deep), is what looks like ordinary furniture, bed, table, chairs etc. Aqualina pulled off her skirt so she's only clad in the swimsuit and dives in, but we did catch a glimpse of strange silvery blue band of scales fused to the skin at her waist. As we watched Aqualina's legs fuse together, a tailfin formed where her feet were, and the scales spread to cover the entire tail from the waist down. In five minutes, Aqualina had transformed into a mermaid. At this stage we regrouped our thoughts to continue the interview.]

SGT: Didn't you used to be married to another adventurer? What happened with that?

Aqualina: [with a frown] Yeah. Kryan. I've sort of forgiven him for what happened ... I guess it just didn't work out. There was a time I wanted to rip him to pieces and feed him to the sharks for kidnapping our daughter, but I'm truly over that now. I just sometimes wonder how she's doing and even if she knows who her mother really was.

SGT: Kidnapping? Was that before or after Kryan got religious and changed his name?

Aqualina: I'm fairly sure that was before. When he changed his name, as you put it, I was unaware that he had done so ... I even adventured with him on a trip to the Ellenic Isles and didn't realise it. It explains a few things though - confounded illusionists!

SGT: How do you feel about his new wife?

Aqualina: Assuming it's who I think it is, namely Lady Kathleen Reynard, I wish her the best of luck. She might need it. [ED: Apparently she's turned religious too and calling herself Sir Frances now. SGT is unsure whether she might need luck for dealing with Kryan or Aqualina's daughter.]

SGT: Please describe a highlight of your career so far.

Aqualina: Sure you don't want to hear the silly stories? I got lots of those. A few of them got me nominated for Stupidest. I never really had a Best Death ... I always try to avoid that. Mind you, I had an almost Best Death, except I was revived in time. I was a mermaid and we were taking on these Sahuagan priests. One of them had a spell which nullified my ability to breathe water. So there I was, deep in the water as a mermaid, and having to hold what breath I had. No way could I reach the surface in time so I figured, if I'm going to drown, then I'm taking this priest to the afterlife with me. It didn't quite work out that way, and the next thing I remembered was being revived on our boat.

As for highlights, anything that gets me in the water is a highlight I guess ... Being put in a play as a 'Hero of Seagate' was interesting. That was when a bunch of us defeated this huge child-eating troll chef, by leading him into the F&F inn, before the place burnt down. Apparently this bunch of troubadours witnessed the whole thing.

SGT: Which places would you recommend visiting?

Aqualina: Lorgos definitely. Me and the Lord of Lorgos, Lord Shaygin had something going for a while. I was actually tempted to retire and become his Lady, however I decided not to. We're still very close friends though. The Faerie Planes are also interesting as is another plane I just returned from which is a High Mana Zone full of shapeshifters. I guess I like visiting unusual places and experiencing new things. That's why I like adventuring.

SGT: Anything else you want to say to the guild populace?

Aqualina: Act as a team. Get to know your party's strengths and weaknesses. That way you have a better chance of survival. I know I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for the actions of my fellow adventurers. Sure there are going to be differences of opinions but please, don't let them get in the way of the mission. The idiot next to you may turn out to be the key to your survival.

The Adventurer's Guide

The following two articles have been extracted from a recent set of Scribe notes:

Lessons From the Real Adventurers #11 Why working for a government can be useful

We just let Weasel [Councillor Wassail] know what we needed & he immediately drafted an instruction for the appropriate merchants in the City saying that...

1. This years taxes are to be paid now, in kind,
2. Now thank you;
3. Possibly with a slight discount and "health benefits" for paying next year's taxes in advance as well;
4. Don't worry about the safety of the taxes" the squad of *very* dangerous men currently stationed outside your worthy establishment will look after that; [that took care of about half a million SP worth of investment ingredients & myrrh .. but there was more to come]
5. Furthermore the erelhaine presenting this Order-in-Council, as a close friend of the Court, would appreciate a

Flamis:

"I'll polish your weapons – it's my job."

Talon:

"That's one HOT woman."

Flamis:

"I have difficulty concealing stuff cause I'm so HOT."

Axis:

“...failing that, sulk and pout. (That's where Isil Eth comes in)”

Isil Eth:

“You can come 'sulk' with me Axis, as I prefer to purr than pout.”

Vanderhand:

“Flamis is a complete innocent.”

Neroli the dwarven eunuch:

“I can't DO anything and I'm not.”

generous discount on some private purchase coincidentally would he like to make at the same time.

[We used the “expenses money” already forwarded to the party, which equated to over 200 tons of rice.]

Lessons From the Real Adventurers #12 Why You Should Always Have A Plan (and why it is sometimes hard to get one)

The highly experienced Party were discussing how to deal with a Big Bad, that was due to rise, after 666 years, from a swamp (*the place that is not named*) between the City and Mt Fate. His undead army were also expected.

I- E-: “It seems that one reasonable suggestion is to leave. We have identified the big baddy and, quite reasonably, have notified the relevant civic authority (which is more than some parties would have done). Are we obliged to do more? I think we are, but want the party to be sure about it -ie I wish an active decision rather than a passive indecision.”

K*n: “Let’s meet with or otherwise view (I mean DA) the princelings to see if either of them are a/ pacted b/ suitable prince material c/ suitable general material.”

I- E-: “Other than that we can allay suspicion by shopping and partying. Some of those guards were cute and so eager to please...”

M*tl*y [party-leader]: “So far it sounds like our plan will be to divinate/DA everything, interrogate the Katos, and raid the succubus warehouse...”

K*n: “More research always appeals.”

I- E-: So is that the plan? We sit (DA/divinating all in sight) and wait, and battle what ever arrives in the form it is in... I don't recall GoK coming on this adventure but he would be PROUD of that plan. What are we planning on doing to weaken the baddy. Come on, you guys are supposed to be the intelligent ones (well, ignoring the giant anyway). I am just here for decoration...

K*n: “Why is Mt Fate called Mt Fate, anyway?”

Ax*s: “I want to make a hoard of invested items. Specifically Rank 20 bolts of force. (No, I am not thinking passive solution here.) If you can't reason with it, can't ignore it, can't get it drunk and it's not nice then blast it. A lot, for a long as possible.”

K*n: “Sooooooooo - would Mt Fate be a volcanic cone by any chance? A small targeted eruption should remove the Bad Thing if our efforts fail (and provide the ‘cost’ element in one easy hit, as well, should one be standing too close (on the same island, say).”

I- E-: “Oh yes, a volcano. We gets a hobbit to make the wish, and if that fails we throw the hobbit into the volcano. After all, everyone knows that throwing a virgin into an active volcano calms it down. Well obviously the opposite will work in reverse! And hobbits are the most distilled essence of anti-virgin that I know of...”

K*n: “The skill would be in phrasing the wish to ensure minimal damage to Moskada/Moskadans (excluding succubi if one wanted to be finicky), and then coming up with a plan to make it work **without** paying the price ...”

Ax*s: Failing that, get the doubles to order a breach in the causeway and find some flash flood fans and wash that swamp. Failing that, get the pixie/giant/useful party leader/oddfellow to summon an earth elemental to do the job. Failing that, go for a swim in the caldera and find something worse for the bad guy to wake up next to. Wait

and clean up the mess afterwards. Failing that, sulk and pout. (That's where Isil Eth comes in)

M*tl*y: “I think that ordering the removal of the sea wall, then a flash flood, is a real goer”

I- E-: “An earthquake which swallows the swamp sounds a little less shall we say messy. Lava is just so difficult to get out of your hair darlings. If we are talking in terms of cataclysmic events, cities tend to survive earth quakes (not well) but rarely survive volcanic eruptions.”

Ax*s: “I thought a nice cup of tea would be just the thing an entity would like after an undisclosed amount of time without one.”

Know Your Enemy

The guild Council has decreed that we publish profiles of known guild enemies to ensure members are informed of the threats that they may face while adventuring. This seasons issue will detail Prince Orion.

Name Prince Orion
Known Allies Necromancer of Masada
 The Black Dragon Bune
 A Red Dragon
 Another black dragon
 Drow living near Argon’s Watch
Abilities Vampire, Greater Summoner, may know some Mind Magics

Located His fortress is in the Dark Circle on the edge of the Gatar Depression on a high pinnacle of rock surrounded by swamp. The fortress contains a Ring of Souls which gives Orion much of his power. A magical effect causes a Noxious Vapours to envelop the fortress and the surrounding countryside. This causes nausea, reduces vision to around 20-30 feet and suppresses the effect of Mind, Fire and Necromantic magics. Undead can see through the mist.

Warnings In the past, attempting any form of precognition, astrology, locate, divination in activities involving Prince Orion has resulted in the instantaneous death of the investigator.

Activities And Interactions Was discovered wandering around in the Guild grounds a few months before the kidnapping of guild council. Believe to be directly involved. Evidence points to Orion being one of the instigators of the Dark Circle. High level Guild Party rescued council member Wegan from the Price Orions fortress - scribe notes available.

Threat Assessment *Extremely High.*

Looking For Love?

Caring female interested in companionship, conversation, long walks, summoning and blood.

Contact: Vychan Adam Jones, Druid



Encounter with an Earth Elemental

As an air mage, I didn't think I'd have much in common with an earth elemental, but having met quite a few on the last adventure with the earth mages Kern and Vychan, I now know we do. The range in amiability and intelligence of these elementals was quite considerable, but they all had one thing in common, which can be summed up by the quote. "We Elementals don't have friends, just loose associations forming warbands for hunting earth mages."



We had one really helpful master carver elemental at one stage, who not only dug out some bed spaces in the walls of the cave we were in, but wanted to carve our names in the sides "Sabrina, Silverfoam, Silken, Braegon, Engalton and Jade" we said. And as a special favour, the elemental carved runnels in the beds for the two earth mages - just like they would use on their own altars - to catch the blood.

How to tell your parents you're pacted

Coming out to your parents can be one of life's most painful experiences for an apprentice to the powers of darkness. Or it can be an opportunity to build an even stronger bond with your folks, one based on honesty. Here, from top experts, are nine tips for telling your parents you're pacted:

CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE TIME AND PLACE

— While you may feel you're sharing wonderful news, a joyful event such as your siblings wedding may not be the best time to spring the truth on your family. Your parents may blame you for "ruining" the occasion, and your sibling may resent you for grabbing attention on her special day.

PLANT CLUES BEFOREHAND — If you brag about your collection of desiccated hearts, gab about how odd fresh blood tastes and buy a sacrificial dagger, your parents will be 75% sure you're pacted before you calmly state the obvious.

TELL SIBLINGS FIRST — Let a sibling or grandparent in on your little secret first. That way, when you make your announcement, they won't freak out. Instead, they'll act as your allies, telling your folks while munching a drumstick, 'What's the big deal?'

ATTEND A "COMING OUT" EVENT — Visit a demon-friendly place; the local cult meeting. After a few tankards, you can note casually, "You know, I'm pacted, too."

LET THEM DOWN EASY — You might try initially telling your parents that you're a member of the 'Adventurers Guild', that doesn't sound "as bad" to many folks.

DON'T BRING ALONG YOUR FAMILIAR — There will be plenty of opportunities down the line to introduce your significant other. A "double-whammy" approach will only open up your familiar to hostility.

BE PREPARED FOR BONFIRES — Don't expect your parents to jump for joy when they learn their child is pacted. Building of bonfires are normal reactions. Just sit quietly and let them blow off steam.

DO YOUR HOMEWORK — Come prepared with a list of successful demon worshipers of the past, also explain how much power the pacted can accumulate - this will pique your parents' curiosity.

STAND YOUR GROUND — Don't knuckle under and admit what you're going through may only be a phase. And never agree to any shriving to straighten you out.

Astrology Corner

Lady Fiona Randles, guild astrologer at the Seagate College of Astrology answers letters from guild members.

I have had a recurrent nightmare for almost a year. It always follows the same pattern where I have starved or killed rabbits. When I find them in their hutches I feel the urge to fest on their bodies I had rabbits as a child but they lived happy and healthy lives. This dream occurs on a regular basis and leaves me feeling on edge all day afterwards Sam the Orc

Fiona says... I don't need to look to the stars to answer this question, I believe the answer to this is obvious - you are an orc, O-R-C. Orcs aren't pacifists, it's not in their nature. Stop resisting and embrace your true self. I recommend regular visits to Orc taverns, buy yourself a great axe and chase down a few hobbits. - this will resolve your inner turmoil.

What does it mean when you dream you can see demon eyes in the corner of a dark room - but you know that they are more afraid of you and they are being cautious?

Grendel Beetleknox

Fiona says... This is an interesting dream. You may think that this is quite a common dream but I have not heard of anything quite like this before. Dreams of eyes watching are pretty common though - and in these cases such dreams are usually to do with being watched, being found out, somebody knowing a secret about you. The stars tell me the secret you are hiding is the fact you are pacted. You have hidden your alignment with the powers of darkness from your friends and the guild and, over time, have gathered much power. Pacting is a dangerous path to tread, particularly now that people know what you are hiding, but the danger is that you have been attracting the attention of other evil powers. I recommend you become fully pacted before getting a late night visit from a succubus.

Hi Fiona I wonder if you can help me.

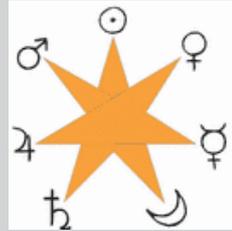
I keep dreaming about colourful rainbows. My dreams are often vivid and full of bright colours.

Can you tell me what this means?

Sau Rus

Your not really cut out to be a necromancer, have you thought about joining a less taxing college? Consider becoming an Illusionist, or perhaps a Solar Celestial. Maybe a complete career change is in order - you'll find knitting very relaxing...

Earth Elemental
"Trolls can't be earth mages, only stinking scum can be."



Party finds a one-dose potion that cures just about everything.

Isil Eth:

"I can just see it now - No you can't have it yet, that is a minor critical, I expect at least three more before I administer it..."

Starflower's Bestiary

A Lesson on Lycanthropes

There are times when one must wonder if our Guild is becoming a menagerie given the number of species various guild members are able to turn themselves into - and I am not discussing illusions or illusionists here. Traditionally shapechanging is often confused with lycanthropy, but we shall reserve that term for one of the three means by which a sentient being may change shape. These are as follows:

1. Infection. This form is a magical disease, generally passed on through the bite of an infected individual. The most common alternate forms for a true lycanthrope are the wolf, bear, tiger, boar or snake, and a were may be of any humanoid species. A lycanthrope with wolf form is known as a werewolf, a bear form is a werebear and so on. In their beast form, lycanthropes are superior specimens of their kind, but are mindless beasts, with all the drives and instincts of their kind. While infected a lycanthrope is lunar-pected, and will invariably change into beast form when the moon is full. On changing back the lycanthrope will be enfeebled and only wish to sleep. Of course, on waking they will remember their actions, and often wish that they hadn't. The only known cure for lycanthropy is the ritual of removing a major curse.

2. Innate. Some shapechangers are born that way. This appears to be a trait which at some point entered the human race, and is known to be passed along through certain bloodlines. It is apparently fairly well-known in some families in the Western Marches. Innate shapechanging is not



A Shapechanger Tiger

known among other species, but that might be only a matter of time. Unlike a true lycanthrope, a shapechanger retains control over the shapechange process, and is not mindless when in beast form, although bestial instincts will have a strong influence on behaviour. Like a lycanthrope, a shapechanger is always lunar-pected and may change form more readily as the lunar phase approaches full.

3. Arcane. Most of the guild members who have this ability acquired it in the usual fashion of guild members - they poked something magical or bothered a power and it bit them back. I must confess that this is my own story. We had entered a chaos plane on quest, and the plane had worked its wild magic on us, altering our form. I began to grow bat-like wings, and disliking the demonic look, essayed to make them more draconic in form. I succeeded, but when the other party members resumed their normal form, I did not. I remained in the form of a small, silvery dragon. When we left the plane I discovered I could now change from elf to drake and back again, with growing control as I practised the talent. The important thing to remember with arcane shapechangers is that they may adopt unusual forms - who ever heard of a weresparrow? They usually do not have the same immunities and weaknesses as true lycanthropes, and are not necessarily lunar-pected.

Both shapechangers and lycanthropes have certain known immunities. In their animal forms they cannot be harmed by normal weapons, but are vulnerable to silvered and magical weapons and to magic generally. They are said to be discomforted not just by silver, but also by garlic, for which allergy I have no explanation. However, if a humanoid refuses your roasted garlic soup served in your best silver tureen it is perhaps time to think about ranking that curse removal ritual.

A werewolf

Isil Eth:

“Hobbits are the most distilled Essence of Anti-virgin that I know of...”

- Not the most refined anti-virgin that moi is aware of.

Motley, party-leader:

“So far the plan is: DA & divinate everything; get the sub-Katos busy on civil engineering the hell out of the swamp sea wall; busting up the succubus ring to get their secret magic weapon; shopping.”

The Puzzle Column

The Dragon's Boxes

It is known to all that red dragons adore games, puzzles and riddles. The great red dragon Calcophrax presented a party of adventurers with the following conundrum, with the choice of solving the puzzle and gaining the gems in the chests, or becoming his dinner. Your challenge is to discover from the clues exactly how many gems of each colour are in each of the seven chests.



1. There are more gems in chest 2 than there are in chest 7, but not as many as there are rubies.
2. Chest 4 contains sapphires; it contains half as many gems as there are emeralds, which are in the chest two positions to the left of the chest containing diamonds.
3. The chest containing just one gem is the immediate left-hand neighbour of the one containing 64.
4. There are 8 gems in chest 3.
5. There are not 4 topazes.
6. There are 32 pearls
7. There are less than ten gems in chest 6.
8. One chest contains opals.
9. The chests contain 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, or 64 gems.

Riddles

Deep, dark, underground,
That is the place where I'll be found.
Yet brought into the light of day,
I sprinkle sunlight every-which-a-way.
I sprinkle sunlight every-which-a-way.
Though dulled with oil I will be found,
I am remarkably well and throughly sound.
Cut me quick and it will be seen,
That I instantly have a marvelous sheen.

What am I?

One tooth to bite,
he's the forests foe.
One tooth to fight,
as all dwarves know.

What is it?

Are you really a necromancer?

You get 1 point for each true answer

1. Can you name every cemetery in the city.
2. You believe vampires are misunderstood.
3. The smell of Orcs no longer bothers you.
4. You know grave diggers on a first name basis.
5. You have abused or taunted the church knights.
6. You enjoy long walks during the night.
7. You enjoy the company of quiet, lumbering friend.
8. You try to convince people The Dark Circle is not such a bad place.
9. You believe raising the dead isnt evil.
10. Ghouls have right too!

How did you do?

- 0: You're a hobbit arent you.
 1-3 You're an orc
 4-6: You're a confused Dark celestial or an inexperienced necromancer. Try spending more time in cemeteries.
 7-9: Congratulations you are a necromancer. Prince Orion would be proud of you.
 10: Your the perfect necromancer.
 11+: This is an impossible score. But duplicity is an admirable trait in Necromancers.

Restoratives for Sale

Up to Rk 8 now available.
Limited supply every three months.

Please contact Quorash at the Guild.



Pennlucien's Pleasure Parlour

To satisfy *all* your Celestial needs.

Opening Soon.

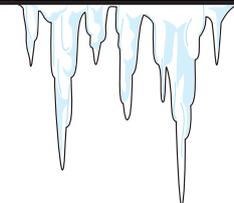
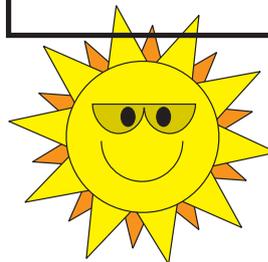


What's Hot

Talking to daemons
Full frontal assaults
Fire arcs
Fire elementals who are just as keen to take on the bad things as you are.
Rank 10 Healers.
Planning.

What's Not

Prices daemons charge
The death toll resulting from full frontal assaults
Illusions
Earth elementals who want to eat you.
Necromancers.
Too much planning.



"I don't recall GoK coming on this adventure, but he would be PROUD of that plan."

Several party-members at once:

"Axis, put down the goat"

Sash: "You can get a young maiden into quite a small box"

-We didn't think she could remember what a maiden was, let alone what to do with one!

The Rumour Mill

Silken's (on her) Back

Well loved Silken has returned to our shores following an extended leave of absence. Her return will end the dearth of salacious, sultry gossip about our fellow guild members. Give the expected demand by 'old friends' to welcome her home we advise member queue early at Silken's establishment to ensure they have a chance to greet her.

Sash darling — a word of warning, those Erelheine have long pointy ears all the better to hear you with. It seems, gentle reader, that Sash whispered a derogatory comment about what lies beneath a monk's robe while the party were seeking shelter at a monastery after two long days in the rain. Net result: only **Kin & Isil Eth** are given beds in a comfortable room. Sash and the other animals (**Axis, Erzsebet, & party-leader Motley**) were given space in the barn. We understand that not all the roof leaked, and I'm sure all those goats would have made the place warm — added a certain ambience. Still, **Axis** knows what to do with a goat, so we hear.

Sex Scandal Charity Boss Quits

Charity chief Sir Douglas Walin quit last night after revelations of a "dirty trick" plot to stitch up Phaeton over the orphanage sex scandal. The plan to denounce Phaeton, proposed to the Times, was to reveal details on Phaeton's relationship with newly hired assistant Amaranth Vale, in return for silence over Sir Douglas fling with her.

It now looks like Phaeton could be the only senior figure to survive the Amaranth scandal. He was praised today by many, who described Phaeton as "one of the outstanding healers in the city, that's why so many people want to hire him." Sir Douglas added: "Personally, I do not accept that I have been guilty of any wrongdoing. But it has become clear to me that my action tonight is essential to enable the Orphanage to begin to return to normality." He had held the 20,000 sp a year job for 13 months.

Letters to the Editor

Sirs,

A young member of our flock has being taken advantage by a man I believe is known to many of you, Arnaud de Montfort Esq. He plied her with cheap baubles and empty promises and abandoned her once she became in the motherly way. Her father is offering his prize ox as a reward to anyone that can return Arnaud to our village, having being thrashed to within an inch of his life, where he will join this mistreated young woman in wedlock. If you have knowledge of the whereabouts of this scoundrel and

philanderer forward this information to myself at the village monastery.

Father Rembrant, Village of Raft-Haven

Attention Mercenaries,

By the grace of you Duke we are opening a permanent stronghold in your fair city of Seagate to further protect against the scourge of the Dark Circle. If has come to our attention that your mercenary guild is populated by filthy, dirty, corrupt worshipers of demons and undead.

We intend to cleanse your city of such filth, and have conducted interviews with citizens of Seagate, seeking the following member of your guild for confession of their demonic and undead affiliations:

Bainbridge the Undertaker, Balode, Blackrod, Doroin, Dramus, Faith, Ned Tanner, Neroc, Retsum, Sabbath, Sau Rus, Scorpion

If the above listed believe they have been misrepresented as corrupt worshipers they should immediately approach us to clarify their situation.

We offer a plenary indulgence in addition to a reward of 100sp to any individuals that capture and deliver us these corrupt, foul beings. We seek them alive, if possible, so they can confess and repent prior to their mortal coil expiring.

Any information about the above individuals, or any other depraved demon or undead worshipers of your guild, are welcome. All informants will be treated with complete anonymity. We will have a detachment of knights station outside your mercenary premises at your next meeting so we may take the corrupt worshipers into custody and bring them to the light.

Francis de Sales

Gabrielite Commander, Redemption Calvary

The Last Word

The editors would like to express their grateful thanks to all contributors to this season's issue of the Seagate Times, especially to new writers. We remind you that we reserve the right to edit all contributions and to determine what shall and shall not appear in print. Please note that opinions appearing in this document are not necessarily those of the editors or staff of the Seagate Times.

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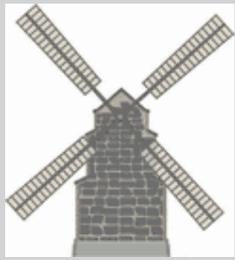
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Isil Eth to **Sash** (& baffled Party): "Well why don't you just seduce 'em ... Naberius's staff"

Party carefully explains to the Mind-mage, the nexus of their mind speech **WHAT**, not who the **Sceptre** of Naberius was (and just how big it was).

- Honestly Izy dear, Mind Speech is like gossip. It's no fun if you just pass it on without listening to what is being said.

While the party encounters Number-One-Swordsman (a famous local, but disguised, hero) **Erzsebet** thinks to herself very loudly: "Oooh, oooh, I know who he really is. I mean, how many blind but powerful mind-mages can there be? Damn! Mind-mage!"

She mentions what she has just though to the rest of the party - while still with Telepathy range. Kin blurts out "Oh, of course, the son of the acceptable princeling."