

The Seagate Times



Issue 67 – Winter 810

Slow Portal Working

The slow portal to Elfenburg isn't quite fixed yet, but at least we now know what's wrong with it. Our reporter was on the adventuring party that investigated the problem and this report was filed.

We were employed to find out what was going on with the slow portal and to investigate the disappearance of two elven travellers that had used it. When we used the portal, we noticed that the interior looked different. Before, on my first trip through, it was just a path surrounded by mists. This time, beyond the path, we could see wetlands through the mists, a marshy plain on one side and a forested bog on the other. Our first trip through was uneventful, but when we got to Elfenburg, we discovered that the two elves had entered the portal, but had not come out the other. Given that, and the stories we had heard of travellers falling off the path and landing in swamps, we concluded that the portal was 'leaking'.

We consulted with the experts, including those from the Guild's own Rune College. The following conclusions were made:

- The portal was old, very old, dating back to the confusing years after the War of Tears and the influx of refugees into Alfheim.
- There is a suspicion that the maker used the Fae abilities to travel the Fae Ethereal as inspiration.
- Travellers lost from out of the portal ended up in swamps, usually those associated with magic.

While the experts debated how to fix it, we went looking for the missing scholars, beginning in swamps known to contain High Mana zones. So, with the help of the locals, we instigated a search for the elves. As luck would have it, we found one of them. Together with his friend, he had been attacked by an unknown creature whilst in the portal, and he had stepped off the path and found himself in deep in the Ffenargh. There was no sign of the other elf.

We returned the elf to Seagate then traversed the portal again, in an attempt to find out what creature was causing the attacks. The elf's description indicated that it was a fossegrim, an Unseelie water fae. This was confirmed when we were attacked by a fossegrim that had entered the portal from a Unseelie

Realm through a 'leak'. We followed the fossegrim back through the portal to its home waterways but there was no sign of the other elf. So we found our way back to Alusia and returned to the Guild.

The consulting experts had concluded that there wasn't any way to restore the portal back to its original condition but it may be possible to take action to alleviate the problem as follows:

- Anchor one end of the portal. This meant that one end would have to stay fixed in Elfenburg. The other end could move, but had to do so under controlled conditions.
- A material called 'warpstone' would be to be employed at strategic points to 'guide' the portal path from one end to the other and avoid leaks areas of high risk.
- Until the risk is reduced groups without the resources to rescue themselves would be escorted through in caravans. Individuals would be advised to stay on board the carts at all times.

We were charged to go find some warpstone. A possible source was in the Dragonspine Mountains so that was where we went. Our first stop was the village of D'Arbes, the location of five fae courts, and where some mining had taken place. It was there we found the second missing elf. He had fallen out nearby and had stopped to investigate some interesting architecture in the nearby forest – completely losing track of time. We returned him to Seagate as well.

Back to the Dragonspines where we surveyed the area near Newcourt. What we were looking for was a old dwarven mine that had warpstone and was also the location of the Tomb of Ahriman. It took a few days, but we did locate an old dwarven complex where we discovered a tribe of "crabdwarves".

Evidence did indicate that this was the place we were looking for. So we returned to Seagate. Maybe we hadn't been able to fix it, but at least we were able to determine ways to make the slow portal safer to use.

*Elsewhere
in this
Issue:*

News in Brief

Puzzle
Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

*Pierre the
Halfling:
"You can tell
evil, they
don't have a
kitchen."*



Merco:
"I got this scroll from Isil Eth ... she said it was a party invite!"

Basalic:
"Yes, to an adventuring party!"

Clementine:
"If I tried to pour invisible water on the burning people, that would cause no end of trouble."

Kakuro,
having returned from scouting fort full of undead, describes a forge with a skeletal blacksmith.

Telamar:
"What was it making?"

Burnhilda:
"Not much. It's only got a skeleton staff."

News in Brief

Who will be Belled at the Ball?

The gilt-edged invitations winging their way around Alusia may not be quite that blatant, but everyone understands their implications as the year chills down and the ball season heats up. Followed by a number of elegant but lesser occasions the Regent's Winter Debutante Ball and festival is scheduled to start in Königsberg, capital of the Western Kingdom, on the 17th of Snow 810.

The ball is sure to be attended by a veritable bevy of beautiful hand-picked ladies from the Western Kingdom and other realms chosen for their high birth and matrimonial potential. Competition to be the "Belle of the Ball" is expected to be particularly 'fierce' as the tantalizing prize is a lofty one that comes about once in a lifetime. Herzog Albrecht of Aquila, one of the Regents and the King's much older half-brother, is even understood have been seeking urgent dispensation from the Western Church to propose a match between the young King Ulric and his own daughter Engeltrud.

Court observers who have agreed to comment only on condition of anonymity have told the Times that even more rumours than usual are already bouncing around the Kingdom, ranging from the obvious -- that the Regents are hoping to find King Ulric a wife of their choosing before he reaches his majority -- to the far less likely -- that young Ulric has tired of his current mistresses and the Ball is an opportunity to select anew.

While we will leave it to the scurrilous rumours section of this fine broadsheet to publish the more scandalous offerings, this writer would like to share some personal favourites. One nervous and breathless courtier informed me that the entire Ball is but a ruse to gather hostages so that the aggression of the Western Kingdom won't be immediately challenged when they war upon their neighbours, while another is convinced that the Marquessa's famously beautiful Lady-in-Waiting, Elsbeth Celene Nadasdy is seeking new virgin blood so that she may retain her youth. Propriety forbids us from speculating how few suitable sacrificial candidates she may find amongst the debutante set. Several sources have claimed that a secret society, allegedly named

the "Knights of the Temple of Sigismund" wish to obtain samples of each noble bloodline within the Kingdom in order to discover Sigismund's true heir, and finally one crusty scholar loftily informed us that Ulric must marry and produce an heir before his 20th birthday else he will be replaced as King by the Herzog of Aquila due to some obscure codicil from the Succession Act of 705... despite the fact that 705 was during the Interregnum and that no evidence for any such Act has been found.

Less Chaos on Chaos?

A Guild Party was sent to investigate events on the Planes of Chaos. They learned that the problem was that certain entities were attempting to increase the level of certainty in the Planes of Chaos. One of these was the Lord of Similarities. On encountering a Basilisk—a servant of the Lord of Serpents, they were able to conclude that he was also involved. On discovering the House Artifact of Tintagel, the Klepsydra, had been stolen, they tracked down the thief, killed her, and retrieved the Klepsydra and the Calculus of Change.

They were told that they could not return to the Chaos Lands through House Tintagel because a Trackless Waste now blocked the way, so they had to go back the long way. Under the Midnight Sea, they found a portal which led to a Middlemarch (a miniature plane) called Oubliette, where they freed an Immortal named Mark, Death's Champion. At House Kerberoth they learned that the Trackless Waste surrounded House Tintagel, and that the House was now under siege. They broke the siege by summoning Mark. They returned the Klepsydra to the Castellan. He feared that there a traitor in the House, and asked them to protect the Klepsydra. It was attacked, but they defeated the attackers, in the process learning that the third Demon involved was Berith, the Savage Duke. They also learned that the Lord of Similarities had been cloning demons of the Abyss, resulting in genera of demons and therefore less uncertainty in the Abyss.



Emmitsburg announces Emperor

Ishamael, the spokesman for the shady La Croix Enterprises, made a recent announcement in the Brastor Tribune that the Emperor of Emmitsburg will be crowned during the upcoming Half Decade Anniversary.

Emmitsburg was annexed from the County of Brastor following the fall of the Dark Circle by La Croix Enterprises. Ishamael explaining that the name of the Emperor would be withheld as it was a matter of Empire security. The dictatorship of Emmitsburg is headed by Ishamael but run by Mr. Eddie

The Burning Heretic, the local Inn, has be announcing the release of a special beer and whisky for the occasion. A week long crowning ceremony festival will be held in town, with entertainers and local produce to available to all attendees.

The Brastor Council have not yet responded to the announcement.

What They're NOT Saying about the Winter Ball...

- Is a function called for by Ulric to meet possible future wives!
- Is a function called for by the regents for Ulric to meet eligible women!
- It was organised by mistake and the invitations sent out before anyone realised. The perpetrator of the mistake is missing and a reward offered.
- The intertwined families of the WK court have become too close and new blood is being bought in to freshen the bloodlines
- The Marquessa is looking to choose a replacement and wants to see the calibre of the ladies the WK and close neighbours can put up
- A number of high court positions are coming up and discussions of who is best for what slots will be undertaken in this relaxed, social atmosphere.
- Ulric is looking for a number of female companions to discuss beauty tips and how to meet eligible bachelors
- This is a regular event but the invitation list is somewhat wider this year in the spirit of cooperation across close realms
- The Aquilan Secret Service wishes to know more about the royal families of close neighbours and will mind ream the attendees for state secrets while they are here.
- It's a cover for the return of King Sigismund back to the world and where he will find new wives and mistresses
- If Ulric fails to produce a heir (legitimate or not) by Winter 812 he is fated to die
- Ulric is stalling for time from the Regents until he can find legal codicils to allow him to become king before his majority
- Ulric has an allowance—and he is wont to spend.

Brastor Art Display

An exhibition is to be held at Hugler's Ferry on to celebrate the rebuilding of Brastor. All artists are invited to submit paintings or sculptures to the exhibition with the theme of growth and renewal.

The mayor, Sabastian Silverfoot, will be judging the event and offering a position in the local studio, The Muse, for exhibition winners.



The exhibition will coincide with a week long festival, with local troubadours and cooks displaying their finest talents.

Scab exiled from Tribe – Secret life revealed

Scab, a guild Orc, has been exiled from his tribe in the Ffenargh swamp following the exposure of his secret life by our crack reporters. Investigations revealed Scab is has become a vegetarian and master flower arranger.

“Spending many years in the form of a Sasquatch has made him go soft,” our sources told us. Apparently Scab is known to wash on a regular basis, and even don perfume on occasion. “No right thinking orc would give up meat”, our Healer told us. “He’s turned away from his upbringing”.



“His flower addition was the last straw,” a member of his tribe explained. “He was the laughing stock of the tribe, and for people that live in a swamp that’s saying a lot.”

And in a surprising turn of events word has reached us that Scab is also banned from the infamous Seagate Orc tavern, the Fight ‘n Fuk, as a consequence of his shameful behaviour. It’s a surprise to many, as the tavern is not known for having any standards at all.

For Sale: Elf Cloak

Style this season begins with a sophisticated Elf coat from Sanctuary. These stunning creations keep many Courtiers warm in winter - and you can enjoy the same comfort.



It's crafted from the skin of open range, hand fed elves giving it a luxurious look and feel. Following the seasonal trend, it boasts a hood for added warmth and long sleeves which can be folded back to create cuffs.

Basalic to Merco (of the Horse of Death's Champion):

“It’s a special seahorse, don’t worry about it”.

Eric to Basalic: “You can stop casting now.... “

(after tunneling nearly half a mile).

Starflower: “This isn’t quite what I expected to find.”

Eric: “It never is.”

Eric:
"It's a magic mushroom!"

Love Rat Blitzkrieg in Hot Succubi Romp!

It has been revealed that Count Blitzkrieg, one of the many do-gooders and wearer of hessian underwear, is known to partake in hot romps with succubi deep within the castle walls. By day he preaches the smiting of the dead and demonic kinds, but at night he mixes with these very types.



Our reliable sources penetrated the castle and observed these activities first hand, watching as Blitzkrieg had his summoner start the party with a dozen succubi. Blitzkrieg would kill every succubus, often mid way through his fornicating acts with the foul creature.

Source also confirm he frequent makes use of ladies from the oldest profession. "He asks us to dress in rotting clothing and stagger around the room like zombies," we were told by one anonymous source. "Then he like to uses, what he makes us call, his 'mighty weapon' on us. Sometimes he has trouble with his weapon, if you know what I mean, but we just have to stagger round a little more. It's all a bit odd if you ask me, he really likes the ladies with the rotting teeth, he says it adds authenticity, but the pay is good."

Now the lid is lifted on Blitzkrieg's sordid activities, our reporter questions his suitability as a Count. We believe a grass roots campaign of right-minded people has formed with this very question in mind. The leader of the 'The Truth About Blitzkrieg' is asking for him to be stripped of both his County and his position within the church.

Toymaker:
"These fairies discovered you could blackmail people for sweets..."

Basalic:
"So, they got a sweet deal..."

Eric:
"He's a seraph, you've got to put the seraph to the sword."

If you have a problem, if no one else can help, and if you can find them, maybe you can hire the Hobbit Revenge Squad...



Wanted: Orphan Children

Belladonna, your friendly death - aspected firemage, has opened an orphanage for lost waifs and strays. "I want to make sure those youths have a purpose in life" she was quoted as saying, "I'm sure I can send them to a better place than they are now, and ensure their lives are of use". We hear Belladonna is very successful at placing her charges, and the orphans disappear from her Orphanage almost as quickly as they arrive.



A wagon will regularly tour the poor parts of Seagate to pick up Orphans. Any humanitarians turning in orphans will be paid a small stipend.

Ty Trident – the Hobbit Fancier

Reliable sources have confirmed that Ty Trident, HUMAN knight of Ormond, has a disturbing hobbit fetish. Ty is known to dress in hobbits clothing, glue hair to his feet, and hire hobbits to attend cream bun parties with him. One attendee said, "It's a bit odd seeing a human dressing and acting like a hobbit, I mean he's almost six feet tall. But he pays us good money to eat cream buns with him."

Ty, when dressed in his hobbit finery, prefers to be called 'Cotten Fluffyfeet' and consume an inordinate amount of cream buns. Talk at the castle explain away Tys behaviour, 'Hes a very busy man' explained the castle seneschal 'he spend all that time smiting evil, so he needs a way to relax. Most of would get themselves a good woman or cask of ale, but each to their own.'

Uzi's Cooking Corner

Uzi, the culinary master, has offered to share with us the cooking secrets. This issue Uzi is sharing with us one of his personal favourites: 'Fairy Cakes'.

Ingredients:

- Cage of fresh Fairies
- Helmet
- A barrel of whisky

Instructions:

- Soak fairies in barrel of whiskey for a week.
- Pull wings off fairies and dry overnight in cellar.
- Crush the fairies with your fist and scoop into helmets, add any available leftovers
- Placing dried wings on top
- Place helmet in firepit to cook
- Drink the entire barrel of whisky.

NEXT ISSUE: Dwarf Bread

~ Astrology Guide Winter 810 ~

As everyone knows, since we are only mortals living at the humour of the old gods, astrology helps guide our lives. Most people live with the combination of the seasons and the elements pointing to a clear combination of events. Only a weak minority seek the guidance of the Boundaries.

The Seasons: Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn



Winter

As Alusia slows towards your Solstice, success is almost guaranteed in the days and weeks leading up to it on the 15th of Snow, if you are of the elements of Water or Air (-2 on percentile dice rolls), and even more likely if you are Fire or Earth (-4 on percentile dice rolls).



Spring

If you give gifts to someone you feel avarice towards, on each of the eleven days until Twelfth Night, steamy romance *WILL* result, but be aware if you receive gifts on only six days you will fall in love with the giver of the gifts on the sixth day.



Summer

A dear friend will turn away from you this season, but not all hope is lost. Try to resolve this by the 8th of Snow. Avoid seeing this friend during the Days of Chaos.



Autumn

Within the Days of Chaos on the trailing end of Snow it would be wise to not to eat fish or fowl of any type. You will become happier with each passing day from Yuletide onwards.

The Elements: Air, Water, Fire, Earth



Air

Birds from the South in the months of Frost or Ice may give you helpful information in some form, such as leading you to a nest, or to treasure. Parrots speak wise words to you.



Water

Fresh fish with a hard shell, in the months of Frost, will heal a single grievous wound. Within Snow, fresh fish with scales will heal a single grievous wound, and within Ice, fresh fish with tentacles will heal all grievous wound—all of these but once within the month.



Fire

As fire is your strength and friend, while under the night sky and within ~15 feet of a fire you are able to see twice as far as normal.



Earth

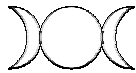
When standing almost perfectly still doing nothing, other than pressing your chin with both thumbs, most elemental creatures being that of Earth, Fire and Air, will ignore you doing no harm to you, and instead simply pass by.

The Boundaries: Solar, Lunar, Life, Death



Solar

All four-legged creatures, upon detecting your scent, will not seek to hunt and eat you this season, as instinctively they know your flesh is spoiled. Do not overlook the elegance and power of the Winter Solstice.



Lunar

When the moon is in the sky, you are able to run, becoming far less tired (two steps easier on the Rate of Exercise table) than those who are not Lunar aspected. Creatures of the night favour you.



Life

Within the colder months of winter and with life being further apart, you are able to move more quickly this season (gaining +1 TMR). Cold meals also taste better in winter.



Death

You know that something you have forgotten may be of significance in assisting others. Within the month of Snow you will awake with pain in your limbs & extremities becoming ever more painful the closer you get to the first Days of Chaos and slowly subsiding in the days after. At its height and extremes; stigmata, confusion and blood loss. Seldom does this result in Death.

Get the Power of Fire and Light!

Fire College Invested Items:

Dragonflames Rk 10

Weapon of Flames Rk 10

Also Rank 8 Weaponry.

New Dragonsmite!!!

(ask for details)

Prices negotiable.

Please contact Flamis at the Guild.



Aurora on eating fish:
"Um. It's all those little bones, I'd rather have someone else take them out."

Jay: "That sounds more like laziness than vegetarianism."

Clementine to Starflower:
"Can't you just turn that stone into bread?"

Eric:
"It gets a bit heavy in the stomach after a while..."

Clementine:

"Never leave home without your Celestial".

Jay to Rowan:
"I'll believe you, you're an elf, you know about bugs."

Who is....

Grendel

At time of interview Grendel is to be found exercising his personal war rhino on his modest farm near the Guild. He is dressed in heavy leathers and has a large jagged sword at his side.

1) When, and why, did you join the Seagate Adventurers Guild.

I was taken off of the streets of Seagate and brought into the Guild as a child servant at the age of 6. Growing up in the Guild I got to see some of what it was the Guild was about (for better or worse). It was from this I was able to receive an education and eventually joined the Guild as a student of magic.

2) What areas/weapons do you specialize in?

I am known around the Guild as a Mind Mage with some of the Water College as well. A master Military Scientist and Warrior, I also work in the fields of Beastmastery, Navigation and Alchemy.

3) What do you do when not adventuring? Any hobbies?

Time away from adventuring is spent breeding and training my war rhinos, spending time with my young son and trying to keep on the right side of my wife. I have responsibilities in Tuscana and on the plane of Rue where my wife and I are working on a number of projects. As such I am always busy and my time is split between Rue and Alusia.

4) Please describe a highlight of your career so far. Amongst the many life experiences I have, calling upon my goddess to help me defeat a Balrog as certainly been a significant one, life altering for me in any case. Helping with dealing to a certain C___ was of significance to my life and killing Sahuagin is always an enjoyable pastime. Just don't have bunny binders get into conversations with intelligent rag and string golems... that shouldn't be. The Dark Circle was an amusing experience, well it was for me, I don't know about the young nobles we were escorting at the time, especially the ones that did not make it back. Personal combat to help wrestle control of the Sea of grass tribes away from influence by the forces of the dark circle was also a highlight.

Eric:
"If we have a problem, we kill it. Then it's not a problem."



5) Which places would you recommend visiting, and conversely, any places you would recommend avoiding?

A personal what's hot and not hmmm? Pasifika is great if you like to get away for some rustic sun and sand. But for me at the end of the day, home is where my family is. As for places to avoid? Are we talking holidaying or for employment?

6) Why are you still an adventurer and what motivates you to join, or form a party?

I still remain interested in seeing new sights and experiencing new things so that allure for me still remains. However what motivates me more is what can be acquired for my family through such means.

7) There's a rumour that your intent was to be a Water Mage but you became a Mind Mage instead. In your own words... what happened?

That is a matter between myself and the Head of the Mind College at the time. At the end of the day, while not the start I intended it has certainly lead to an interesting life and alternate direction there of.

Artisan Cooks' Corner

Home Made Apple Cake



This is the apple cake which worked!

Ingredients:

3 medium apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
(I used two Granny Smith and one Pacific Rose)
250g butter, softened
1 cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla essence
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 cups plain flour
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Method:

1. Beat the butter, sugar and vanilla with a spoon in a large bowl, until creamy.
2. Add the eggs, one at a time, and beat until just combined.
3. Stir in the sifted dry ingredients. Do not forget the baking soda!
4. Mix in the apple (and nuts).
5. Put into a prepared tin (I like my 25 cm square tin for this—and baking paper is a good thing).
6. Bake in a 180°C oven for 1 hour.
7. Allow to cool for 10 minutes, remove from tin. Dust with icing sugar, slice and eat!

(You'd better hide it from halflings if you don't want it to vanish prematurely...)

The Adventurers' Guide

Tips for Success

Stay away from dodgy ancient walls, lest they fall down on top of you...

When all else fails, then play with the magic artifact—it might just contain the solution to your problem.

When you have to guard an object, containing it in bound ice is a very good plan.

And if said object vanishes from sight—it might not have gone away, it might just be invisible.

A Spotter's Guide to Elves

The elves of Alusia are a varied and diverse lot and it pays to know what sort of elf you're dealing with. This Guide will assist you in responding appropriately. Just answer the following questions:

1. The elf is dressed in:
 - a) Bright shiny stuff that's hard to look at.
 - b) I have no idea—I can't see them.
 - c) Green and white armour.
 - d) Blacks and reds with writhing symbols.
 - e) Something so elegant and tasteful that I feel like a worm.
 - f) Normal clothing, only the ears give it away.
2. They are equipped with:
 - a) Wondrous artifacts of dazzling power
 - b) Bows and arrows I guess, Jim just went down. We can't see them.
 - c) Swords, spears, daggers. Sharp and well used.
 - d) Staves, snakes and curvy daggers.
 - e) A musical instrument, fan or hairbrush.
 - f) Some kind of agricultural torture device.
3. They are speaking:
 - a) Mystical words of power and my ITN.
 - b) Laughter, because Jeff was shot in the throat
 - c) Maniacal battle-cries that chill the blood
 - d) Something hideous I'm glad I can't translate
 - e) Slowly and loudly in unintelligible language
 - f) Common, not well, but they've worked out I don't speak Elvish.
4. They want:
 - a) Nothing I have, I'm too primitive
 - b) Who knows, we can't see them. Tom's down too, now.
 - c) Victory in some conflict that's being going on since before we discovered fire.
 - d) My soul for their demonic masters
 - e) For us to leave, or bathe. Not too sure.
 - f) Money, for their stuff.

5. They give us:
 - a) Some shiny beads.
 - b) Arrows, poisoned—my leg's going numb.
 - c) A short sharp lesson in warfare.
 - d) Eternal pain and suffering.
 - e) Fashion advice and some soap.
 - f) Stuff, well made too.
6. As they leave they:
 - a) Barely acknowledge our existence.
 - b) Leave? We never saw the bastards.
 - c) Heal the dead and dying and charge off.
 - d) Slay us, death is the only true release
 - e) Hold their noses
 - f) Thank us and hope we meet again.

Mostly a: Ancient Elves: These elves hark back to a time of legends and wonders and really have been locked in a vault, cave, underground city in the intervening time. They have not interacted with other sapients except for gods and dragons and are a bit behind in world events. Most of the time they're greeting translates as 'By the gods, a talking monkey'. They are not very helpful unless you want a banana or some pats on the head.

Mostly b: Wild Elves: These elves believe in harmony with the wild outdoors and as such are unparalleled outdoors-elves. They also intensely dislike outsiders which is probably why your companions have come down with a bad case of arrows. Would it help to know they have a rich and varied culture with many fine traditions? Maybe not.

Mostly c: Beltan Elves: These elves have been fighting someone or something since the ancient ones were locked up. While this makes them fine warriors they can be a little odd. Well, okay they're obsessed. Some would say that after a few thousand years of unending conflict you'd be willing to sit down and talk. Not these loonies. War, war and more war is what the Beltan are about.

Mostly d: Dark Elves: Occasionally known as Drow, the dark elves are servants of the dark powers and their principal agents on Alusia. Their main aims involve advancing as far up the demonic heirarchy as they can. Insofar as they regard others it is only with regards to fulfilling their own dark aims. Mostly this will be as slaves, sacrifice fodder or both.

Mostly e: High Elves: These are the cream of elven society. And indeed, they are thick, rich clods. While their taste, manners and company are amazing and perfect they are little use for anything remotely practical. Unless you want endless, pointless idle chatter that is.

Mostly f: New Elves: The main common feature of these elves is that they're not uptight xenophobes. They only associate with the others because they have to. While a little boring and unexciting they make surprisingly good neighbours. Just don't joke about their leader. Gardener is a respected profession. So is career soldier.



Starflower:
“I tower over
you guys...”

Eric:
“That’s why
you’re the
military
scientist, you
can see them
coming...”

Clementine:
“Enough
about bees!”

Starflower:
“Because
you’ll start
on the birds
next, and
that’ll really
confuse her.”

Starflower:
“Is it a
question of
out of the
frying pan
and into the
witchfire?”

Starflower’s Bestiary

Murderous Manticores

Having spent the last three months on the Planes of Chaos, killing a broad variety of monsters, most of them because they insisted on trying to kill us, I must admit that I have accumulated enough material for several articles!

It’s probably best to approach this in chronological order, starting with the first major battle—which involved manticores (among other monsters). It’s been a long time since I last ran into those nasty spiky things, so I’ll share my experiences of them with you.

The manticore was most likely created in ancient times by the same deviant beast-shaping magic that gave us the griffin and the minotaur. It seems that the maker of the manticore began an existing species, probably one of the great cats, quite possibly the lion, giving it flight, a ranged attack, a more or less humanoid face, and multiple rows of rather shark-like teeth. And an even worse case of bad attitude... We can only be thankful that this type of magic appears to be have been thoroughly lost!

The sages tell me that the name “Manticore” means “man-eater” in one of the tongues of ancient Araby. This suggests that it may well have originated in that part of Alusia. It may have been designed by a non-human in both mockery and hate for that species—but that is just speculation. Perhaps so, yet the manticore is said to have a taste for human flesh above all others...

The manticore is most likely to be found away from habitation, generally in hotter, drier environments, such as wasteland or savannah. A fierce predator, it will patrol and defend a wide territorial range. Normally, manticores will be encountered as solitary animals, occasionally as mated pairs, possibly with young (these are basically mammals, after all). It is rare to encounter them as a pack, but if they have come under the control of some external force, then that is quite possible (and that is exactly what had happened in my most recent encounter).

Identifying the manticore is easy enough. Imagine a creature with the body of a large lion, a vaguely human head, filled with shark-like teeth, and broad leathery draconic wings. Its tail ends in long, sharp spikes. It can grow up to ten feet in length, and weigh as much as a



thousand pounds. It will most likely begin by strafing the party from the air, with the spines it launches from its tail. Which are known to sometimes be poisonous. Once it has exhausted its ammunition, it is liable to pounce from mid-air onto a party member, most likely a human, and attack with enthusiasm... and its claws and teeth.

When dealing with Manticores, it is important to realise that this is essentially a big nasty flying carnivorous beast. It doesn’t do magic, and it doesn’t have skills. I’m not certain that one could control it as a mind mage does an animal—it’s not an experiment I’ve tried. However, I have tried mental attack with good results. The manticore has remarkably tough hide, so don’t be surprised if your arrows bounce. I would recommend ranged weapons or magic if hunting for manticore, however, since they are going to attack you from range. If you can bring them down with something like mental a sleep spell, so the ground hits them nice and hard, that’s all to the good. As for loot, if you can find their lair, there’s liable to be some gear there from previous kills—these beasties like human, remember. Failing that, those tail spines are somewhat magical, and may be of value to an alchemist.



The Puzzle Column

Square Castle

A square castle on a square island is under siege. All around the castle there is a square moat 10 meters wide. Due to a regrettable miscalculation the raiders have brought footbridges which are only 9.5 meters long. The invaders cannot abandon their campaign and return empty-handed.

How can the assailants resolve their predicament?

Seagate's Best Baker

On Lughnasad, the Bakers of Seagate held their first Annual Bun Fight. The town's aspiring bakers brought in their best-ever bun recipes, and the official Bun Fight was held, and prizes awarded to the winners. Dozens of buns were made from the ten finalist recipes and were made available to all for judging. The final four place-winners were determined by the official judges, and a fifth prize was awarded to the Best Bun as chosen by the attending townspeople. Surprisingly, the favorite bun was not one of the four contest winners. Determine the baker and bakery represented for each Bun Fight winner as well as the placing and type of bun.



Bakers: Cherry, Edmond, Hinny, Patty, Sally.
 Bakeries: Bake Shop, Cookie Crumble, Duke's Oven, Good Loaf Kitchen, Pastry Palace.
 Buns: Apple & spice, Cinnamon scroll, Rich currant, Spicy sultana, Sticky honey.
 Placings: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, Best Bun

1. Patty's bun, which wasn't full of currants, didn't win first place. The Good Loaf Kitchen submitted the recipe for the apple & spice bun.
2. Cherry Lightfoot of the Bake Shop didn't submit a cinnamon scroll recipe.
3. The Best Bun wasn't Edmond's recipe. The fourth place winner wasn't the sticky honey bun.
4. The rich currant bun beat Hinny's bun by one place. The Duke's Oven's offering, which wasn't a cinnamon scroll, was voted the Best Bun.
5. The Cookie Crumble won second place, but not with a sticky honey bun. The spicy sultana bun wasn't the first place winner.
6. The rich currant bun, which wasn't Edmonds' recipe, was made by the Pastry Palace. Sally's bun, which wasn't the apple & spice, won third place.

Riddles

First:

Always wax, yet always wane:
 I melt, succumb and bow to the flame.
 Lighting darkness, with fate unblessed,
 I soon devolve to shapeless mess.

Second:

I welcome the day with a show of light,
 I silently came here in the night.
 I bathe the earthy stuff at dawn,
 But by the noon, alas! I'm gone.

Third:

I look down on you,
 but I notice not if you look back.
 Though no shame befalls those I gaze upon,
 still all become flushed when I do.



Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

Princess Paintings

Three Wishes—the girl's third wish was to ask the genie to grab a nearby stick and beat her half to death...

Lock and Key—The noble sends the box with the object inside and a lock attached and locked. The friend attaches his own lock and sends the box back to the noble. The noble remove his lock and sends it back to his friend. The friend may then remove the lock he put on and open the box.

Riddles:

First: fire
 Second: snake
 Third: a quartet of musicians

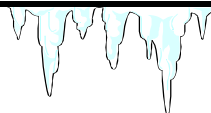
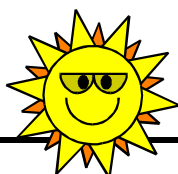
Merco:
 "You have a spell for curing mental disorders? Man, there's a lot of Guild adventurers you should be talking to..."

What's Hot

- Magic Artwork
- Mental Attack
- Giving someone the eye
- Instant Petrification
- Tunneling
- Time-twisting artifacts
- Toy-makers
- Death's Champion

What's Not

- Evil Binders
- Having to get the eye back when they wander into the area of a Falling Star spell.
- A baby for a familiar
- Flammable people
- Trackless wastes
- Basilisks
- Lord of Similarities



Jay:
 "You can't spell elemental without mental."



The Rumour Mill

He's Back!

Lock up you virgins and hide your magic rings! Pierre the Halfling is back in Seagate and word is he is still into Sacrificing! Having seemingly reformed since the winter of 808 when he played his part in turning an entire forest Evil, Pierre was observed this past summer feeding Buns and Water Sentients to a flame dedicated to the Fire Duke. Sources say that the next day he went into battle followed by a hellhound, wielding a flaming rock, and calling on the Demonic Duke as he smote the Enemy. Having had a taste from this Dark Power how long will it be until he is again looking for something or someone else to trade to the Fire?

"He's going to a-pierre!" as Pierre became visible.

Lesson for adventurers

It sucks to be a bound-pacted-geased Dwarf in a life-mana sucky thing. Friends don't let friends get pactted or geased! Or let them get tattoos of their mistress on their arse, but that's a whole other story.

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.

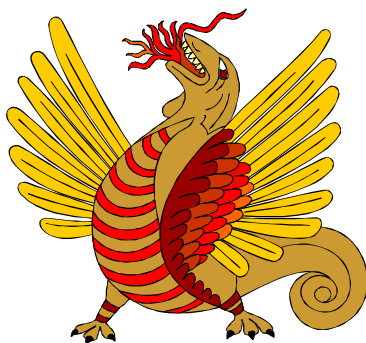
T'ana Silverwind, Editor in Chief, Seagate Times
Ariel Glitterwing-Stargazer, Chief Reporter and Astrologer

Kern: "The plants and animals won't grow."

Mortimer: "You're not supposed to plant the animals."

Kern: "It's ok—I have people for that."

Aryan: "You're not supposed to plant the people, either."



Lucius' Greater Enchantment

Are you feeling outdated and under powered? What you need is a Greater Enchantment!

Only 200sp per cast rank plus the materials cost. Contact Lucius in the guild kitchens for a Rank 19 greater.

You decide what you want!

Restoratives for Sale

Honey-flavoured!
Up to Rk 6 currently available. Please contact Grizelda at the Guild, or at the village of Thorn's Landing. Only 800sp.



Holy Water for Sale

Many uses, principally administering pain and hurt to those nasty Undead. 100 sp per 1/2 pint.



Also available to select clients:
Alchemical potions—you provide the talent, he'll put it in a bottle.
Consecration of appropriate locations to the healer god Dianchect. Expensive, but worthwhile for your sickroom.

Please contact Phaeton at the Guild.

Water College Potions for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 14 - 400 sp
Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 1000 sp
Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.



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Or check the dqwiki at:
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