

The Seagate Times



Issue 30 - Spring 800

Apocalypse Imminent?

Has Leviathan risen from the Deep?

Several astrologers have reported to the Times that they now believe that a reading pertaining to the end of the world has come to pass. The prophecy in question reads as follows:

There he has lain for ages and will lie
Spawning foul and curs'd seaworms in his sleep
Until chthonic light shall pierce the deep
Then once again by mortals to be seen
His kith and kid shall rise and to the surface hie.

The sequence of events that may indicate this prophecy has been fulfilled were as follows:

1st Frost: A strange glow was visible on the Western horizon for a couple of hours after sunset. Over the next two weeks, the same glow was observed again. Reports from around the continent seemed to indicate that it was originating from somewhere in the northern part of the Western Ocean and may have had something to do with the Spawn cityship.

As time progressed, the glow became brighter and more obvious. A party adventuring in Pasifika reported that an intense glow was seen on their northern horizon.

15th Snow. At three pm a second sun suddenly appeared on the Western horizon as though it was setting, though the real sun was still high in the sky. This effect lasted until sunset when the two suns appeared to merge and disappear below the horizon. That night, no glow was observed, but a rolling thunderclap was heard coming from the west.

18th Snow. A minor earthquake was felt along the Alusian coast causing houses to rattle, livestock to panic, and objects to fall off shelves.

Over the course of the next few days several more small shocks were felt then everything went ominously quiet.

26th Snow. Around noon, a serious earthquake struck the coastline. Houses shook and several buildings collapsed as the earth itself writhed and twisted. In some places the earth ripped apart, leaving several yawning crevasses. Panic and fires resulted in many small towns with some loss of life. It is deduced that the quake was centred somewhere in the Western Ocean.

Later on that afternoon a huge swell raced up Confederation Bay, and twenty foot waves pounded the coast causing damage to docks. Boats were either swept out to sea or broken on the shore. Some low lying areas were flooded causing considerable destruction in the Ffenargh swamp and 'civic improvements' to Sanctuary. These waves echoed during the night and in the morning the waters receded leaving many dead fish on the shores. Some of the dead creatures were monsters the like of which had only been told of in stories.

For the next several weeks a chill wind blew onto the Alusian coast while people cleaned up the mess. However, we at the Times fear that we have not heard the last of this. Rumours that the Spawn have succeeded in raising an ancient menace from the deep are rife in the city, adding to the unrest caused by the Dark Circle. What this menace is, we cannot be certain, but our philosophers suggest that the Spawn may have set free the ancient daemon called Leviathan. If this is so, the Guild must surely be prepared for the worst.

Elsewhere in This Issue

News in Brief

Terranova

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

Leviathan Rising - our artist's conception.



News in Brief

New Land Discovered

A party of adventurers, travelling in the southern area of the Western Ocean have discovered what may be part of the hypothesised Terra Australis continent far to the south.

The astrology reading called it 'the land of the long white cloud' but the local inhabitants called it Zeyland, which has been officially ratified as it's name. The inhabitants appear to be an offshoot of the Pasifikan people but were more ornately tattooed. The climate here is cooler than the island group and the people habitually wear clothes made of feathers and furs. Their settlement consisted of several buildings, made out of wood, and decorated with ornate carvings. The entire settlement was surrounded by a large log palisade.

Most of the land area is covered in dense vegetation, trees, and ferns. Not much is known about the animal life but there were reports of large flightless birds inhabiting the area.

Near the settlement, around thirty miles inland was a large mountain. Near the summit a flat area was encountered which was highly magical. This was discovered to be an area that was displaced slightly out of time and contained the living quarters of an Adept of the College of Chronomancy as well as a Time Gate. The Adept appeared to be a young woman but her aura was of avatar strength and indicated extreme longevity. The Time Gate looked like a doughnut shaped rock and it allowed trips to the past.

Ancient Pasifika Rises from the Depths - Guild Party helps Prevent Disaster

At the 26th of Snow, during a total solar eclipse, the original landmass of Pasifika rose from the ocean, accompanied by an earth tremor and associated tidal wave. Fortunately the actions of two groups of adventurers, one from the Pasifika Guild, and the other from our own Seagate Guild, resulted in the damage from the earthquake and wave being far less than it could have been. Our party sought and collected a number of Firestones which when triggered, created a huge Wall of Fire surrounding the earthquake epicentre, thus containing the tidal wave.

The resulting landmass is roughly circular, about 150 miles across, with the ancient city of Pasifika near the southern coast. The nearby mercy of the same name was badly damaged, but with no loss of life since the inhabitants had evacuated to the new capital, Atlantica. At present no work has been done to restore both Pasifikas, thanks to the skirmishes against the sahuagin, but plans are being made. Because the two cities are very close to each other, the original on the land is now known as 'Old Pasifika' and the mercy as 'New Pasifika'.

The new island has been called Gwydion's Isle, or Gwydonia, and both names have been ratified by the cartographer's guild. It is currently bare rock and devoid of life but this may change in the near future as several groups have expressed interest in claiming portions of it for their own use. Already Destiny has established several outposts as they feel that they will assist in their explorations of Terra Nova and act as staging posts for traders to the nearby islands.



Light Comes to the Dark - Church Established Inside Dark Circle

A party of Seagate Adventurers have been instrumental in re-establishing the Church of Chantris that had lain forgotten and contaminated by evil in Gorlion Hill, located in the Brasta Holdings. They had succeeded in installing the Light of Truth on the central altar with the result that the hill has been cleansed of undead and other evil creatures and an area of ten miles in radius around the hill has been freed of the effects of the Circle.

Within this radius, Undead suffer penalties, even at night, as if the sun was shining. This burns most Undead and prevents any corpses from being animated.

Within a mile of the hill, it is always spring and the ground is always moist and fertile. Inside the hill, all the rooms are lit as if by sunlight, even at night.

According to divinations, the effects around the hill will cease if the Dark Circle retreats from the area around this spot of Light, but they will reappear if the Darkness returns. The Light of Truth also grants a single rank increase in divination spells, writing skills, abilities, languages or talents to those people pacted to the forces of Light. The same applies to all spells aimed specifically at the Unholy or those pacted to them.



It is suggested by the warrior Vanhan and agreed on by the rest of the party that we become the Bunnies for Hire.

Our motto? "We're going to die!"

Guild Party Battles "Adventurer Trap"

Dark Circle Implicated

After three and a half hours hard ride north in cold snowy weather we found the ruins of a castle from earlier civilisations. It now has a Urielite sect living next to the tombs of some dead heroes, to whom the nobles like to give their respects to as they travel through the area. The shield over gate has blue quadrants, as per astrology reading. We arrived before the entourage, to investigate occurrences of the previous night.

The guards had heard screams coming from the tunnels under the castles (where some ladies were sleeping), so they went down, to the third level down from ground. There they were blasted with two waves (very close together in time w) of black sheeting fire, causing burns and fear (this proved to be Rank 5 Black fire (Dark celestial)). Upon retreating, they found the door was blocked and barricaded, so they set off to alternate route out. On the second level down, they saw their six fallen comrades coming towards them, however these proved to be zombies. The undead couldn't approach within 30' of amulet worn (combined iron, amethyst, jade, hypericum?). The guards retreated beyond a portcullis and stayed the night there, with the amulet keeping the zombies away from the doorway.

The party's initial scout of the dungeons indicated large presence of goblins, knolls, ogres, trolls, and further levels down, even more chaotic creatures. The dungeons appeared to be disused storage facilities, filled with rotting trappings of a previous era. There was fresh air, and signs of the passage of a horse recently. The signs of fighting from the previous night had been tidied up. In the tunnel approaching the fight zones were perhaps a dozen cold sleeping gargoyle minds, which merged into the wall, holding up helms and rotting ceiling draperies. Within a secret cupboard were two skeletons (astrology reading alert). Beyond the previous night's fight scene was a large room filled with twenty goblins, eight orcs, three "magic users" (two humans, one skeleton, recognised as those from the "necromancer's tower" previous night), and a chess board with wolves as pieces. Feelings of hunger indicated a meal was soon to be served, just before sunset, as we attacked. The "skeleton magic user" seemed to be the leader. The gargoyles were attacking the ogres as we left.

Their defences included:

- "Rat catcher" Swarms (knee deep) of rats were coagulated into a mountain golem sort of creature, moved by rolling on itself rapidly. **WARNING:** Dark aspected entities had reduced resistance against being ensnared by it. If touched by it, an entities' willpower was severely reduced (double effect for non-dark aspected entities) ("until basted in cider at sunrise") and draining damage was done. This monstrosity was dispersed with fire magic.

- Demonic creatures. There were at least five of these. They were hard to find, casting enchantments, mainly wakeable sleeps, area counterspells, possibly triggering the spectral warriors. When killed gave minor death curses, e.g. gout, arthritis, ringing in ears.

- Necromancer. Casting Spectral Warriors, four each to different party members, and Darkness at rank 20

- Fire efreet. It was casting walls of fire, and dragonflames

- Evil Eyeballs. These were glass globes scattered across the floor, which when trod on, destroyed amulet of elder flowers first, then each subsequent ball crushed had effect as per Wiccan evil eye.

- Trolls. Two, one of whom turned up in a 20' cube of moving evil eyeballs as above.

- Magic-absorbing Scarab. This was worn by one (then later another) magic user, absorbed spells (fire balls) targeted at him, until he had to release the spells in one fell swoop, presumably before it "exploded".

WARNING: The elemental we had summoned, turned up extra strong, extra fast, not quite under control, perhaps something peculiar to the area. Zorbo, the earth Elemental said there was some strange presence having effect over it and the gargoyles.



Watch out for Giant Spiders dropping molten metal on unsuspecting adventurers!

WARNING: Investigation led to an insectoid glowing with white light in a 4'x2'x2' "coffin" surrounded by an appearance of six mindless Gabrielites (from Mordeaux, specialists in unholy relics/items). These nuns were facing entranced into the coffin and were being spun in a white web, fountaining out from the coffin, and ensnaring them from the feet up. Upon looking in the direction of the insectoid, the observer (effected through wizard-eye) will also be ensnared, and charmed by it, especially if the observer understands any dark tongues. Within half a minute of being ensnared, solid white web tendrils were starting to form around feet, even at distance when seen through wizard-eye. Resistance was based on magical aptitude, not willpower, possibly reduced with repeated exposure. Necromancy special counterspell may remove the effect. The room they were based in is to the right of the portcullis entrance, in a large chamber filled with sheets of webs. Large spiders live on the ceiling, with webs to drop onto intruders. Fire magic seemed to clear the webs, but molten iron filings were cast down in response.

This was later explained by Captain Geoffrey to be a known "adventurer trap". The spiders could sleep for years between feedings.

From the Scribe Notes

Following a backfire by Shar that leaves her stripped of some endurance, Sarah Angela is heard to make the comment: "That's not a backfire, that's a kick in the groin..."

The Adventurer's Guide

Tips for Success

If you're on top of the hill and the undead are coming up at you, try bogging them down. Saturated Earth is a great spell for this.

But it's not so wonderful when the cliff-face turns to mud, and nearly buries the hostages.

Indetectability is good for confusing the enemy - and your own party.

A little diplomacy can go a long way.

But wearing heavy black armour with nasty spikes and slime all over isn't exactly diplomatic.

Slave collars are a bad idea.

A good thick Wall of Smoke can hide a multitude of sins - and prisoners, hostages etc.

Kill Necromancers - but compel Earth Mages!

Fire elementals are great - when they're on your side.

Casting a namer counterspell on your elemental will make it harder to banish. Which may or may not be a good thing.

Always try attack the enemy from the unexpected direction. Earth elementals are good for this.

And always remember the six P's. Proper Planning Prevents Piss-Poor Performance!

Daniel Elderson's Top Ten List of Things to Remember When in Lyonesse!

10/ Make sure you know as much as possible about where you are going!

9/ Animals can, and do, talk.

8/ If you meet a tigger, feed it crumpets and jam.

7/ Take a tent, it rains EVERY morning!

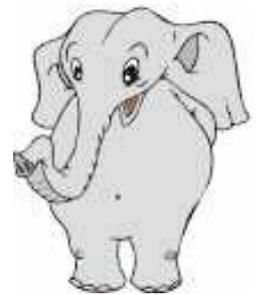
6/ Try asking what you are about to kill a question if you intend to eat it. If it answers you, tell the cook to change the menu.

5/ Show respect to the land.

4/ Swamp beasts can often be friendly and just plain lonely.

3/ Backfires are more amusing to other people than normal.

2/ Elephants are SCARED OF MICE!!!



And the number one thing to remember while in Lyonesse is: Ok. So it is a fairy tale land. Just remember that even fairy tales have their dark side...



"Dragons always have right of way, you know!"

Twenty Tips Especially for Aspiring Female Adventurers



1. I will not wear clothes that are more revealing than what suits the occasion. There is no need for me to wear tight leather armour or a chain mail bikini for a walk to the market.

2. I will not stand within the enemy's grasping range when they are cornered.

3. If there is a risk that the enemy will be in the area, I will not venture out alone so that I am kidnapped, captured or killed. Rather I will use the buddy system.

4. I will try to avoid romantic distractions and get on with the mission.

5. I will not go out alone against an entire army to free my father, mother, brother, sister, pet, third cousin twice removed, etc. Rather, I will realise that I need assistance or another strategy.

6. If I am in a situation where I am being forced to marry someone who is either rich or powerful, I will not put up a fuss. Instead I will marry him and then proceed to kill him or stage a coup at the earliest opportunity.

7. If I engage in a sword fight with someone, I will ensure that he cannot cut my clothes off with a few thrusts of his sword. In fact, I will wear armour.

8. I will compare myself with an average 12-year-old. If I find that the average 12-year-old has more common sense than I, then I will resolve to stay at home and not embark on an adventuring career until I can improve my knowledge.

9. If I run into someone on the trail of a villain, and I have absolutely nothing to do with this person, his cause or if I feel that he is capable of doing the job himself, then I will go along my merry way and not interfere since I will be little more than a distraction.

10. I will not become a nosy goody-two shoes reporter.

11. If I find that I am in a situation where the dumbest heroes are given the largest and most powerful weapons, the men are given the next most powerful, and I am given the least powerful weapon (like a non-magical short sword or dagger), then I will demand a more powerful weapon against hordes of the enemy.

12. If I must be mysterious and attempt to make sure that my identity is unknown, then I will take pains to ensure that I remain unknown. I.e: I will not leave quasi-romantic things

behind like a flower (especially not a rose or a lotus blossom). As well, I will take pains to ensure that I am not followed.

13. I will take lessons in unarmed combat so that I am not constantly kidnapped, captured, beat up or otherwise.

14. If I do happen to be caught then I will maintain my dignity and not yell cheesy lines like "Help me, Kreeeeeeee!", "You will never get away with this! Never!" or "Just wait until my friends get here! They'll save me."

15. I will not under any circumstances take it upon myself to try and reform the enemy. Such attempts will always result in death or capture.

16. If a wise and unimpeachably loyal friend tells me that something is wrong, I will listen to him.

17. I will not trust any vizier, counsellor, or official, with a goatee, who is bald or combination of the two, that practices necromancy or alchemy in a lab that I am not allowed into, wears only black, has a seemingly too powerful sway over my parents, laughs maniacally, constantly suggests that the best way to solve the problem is our marriage, that is from another country or plane that somehow one of my ancestors offended.

18. I will do my best to avoid obvious trap situations such as: walking down a dark alley alone; meeting someone, likely associated with the villain, alone at night in a deserted area; investigating a dark and seemingly deserted house by myself.

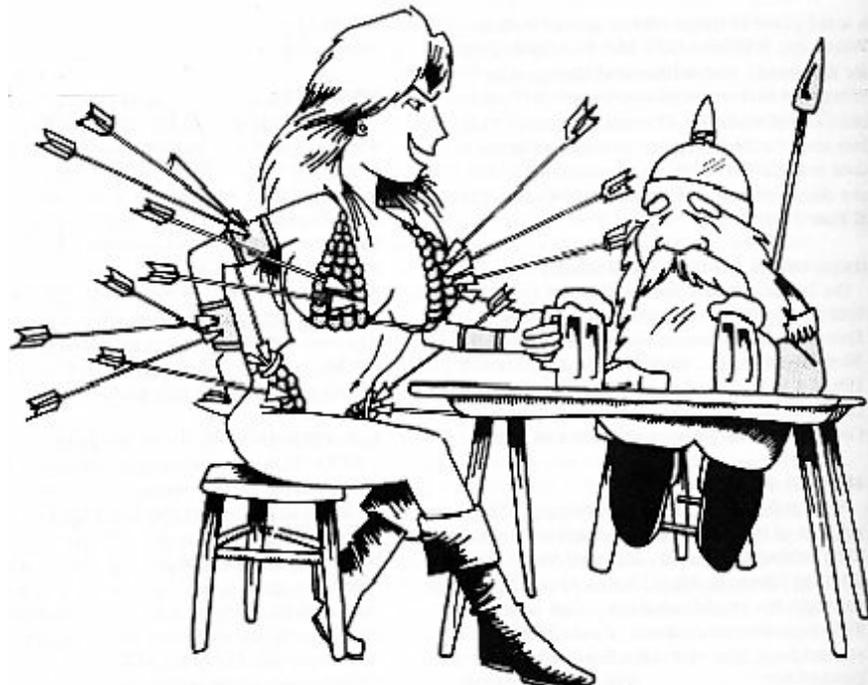
19. I will wear sensible clothing that will not distract my co-workers. A full suit of plate armour is more professional and conveys a better message than a chain-mail bikini.

20. If I am the daughter of a great noble, I will make sure that I have competent security and stay as far away from my parents as possible so that I will not be the inevitable hostage.

Following the 46th backfire made by the party in their 30th day of travelling,

J'sinth tell the group "If anyone casts any magic outside of combat, without telling me first what you are about to do, I will leave you behind on this plane."

And who said that bunnies couldn't lead properly?



"It's a good thing I was wearing my armour!"

Starflower's Bestiary

The Sea Devils - by Flamis

I honestly don't know if anyone in the Guild has previously meet up with these nasty scaly undersea humanoids. All I can say is that there seems to an entire civilisation of them down there, under the Western Ocean not far north of Pasifika. It's surprising that the merfolk hadn't told us about them. Perhaps they assumed we'd already know all about these Sahuagin. After all, they've been there as long as any of the merfolk can remember. You could call them racial enemies.

One thing about Sahuagin is certain. They sure are ugly critters. It's not for nothing that they're also called sea devils, because that's basically what they look like. They have these fins sticking up on the sides of their heads that look almost like horns, a long fin down the back like a dragon's spine, more fins on their elbows, webbed hands and feet, and a long muscular finned tail. With all those fins of course, they're mighty good at swimming. They have two rows of teeth, one set almost on the lips, and another further back resembling the teeth of a great cat. Sahuagin are obvious carnivores. They have eight gills, four on each side of the neck, which must be able to function in air as well as water since Sahuagin have been occasionally sighted on land, raiding coastal villages. Their skin is scaly, varying from deep green to black, giving them natural armour as good as thick leather. Perhaps their most noticeable feature however, is their great bulbous, glassy eyes. While they must give the sea devils good vision in the darkness of the deeps, they do suggest that they would be light sensitive, although we never actually got to test this.

The Sahuagin live in large undersea colonies, preferring warm coastal seas in the tropics. It's probably too cold for them off the shores of the Baronies. They are reptilian and may be distantly related to lizardmen. They're egg-layers, and we suspect they encourage cannibalism in their young to keep numbers manageable and ensure that only the most aggressive survive. Given that kind of upbringing it's not surprising that the adult Sahuagin are among the most malicious, bellicose creatures you could ever wish not to meet. Furthermore, they are known to consume sentient flesh, taking prisoners primarily for the larder. An unprepared encounter with Sea Devils could well be permanently fatal.

They're undoubtedly intelligent. We encountered Sahuagin mages, a Dark Celestial, a Wiccan and a Necromancer. They probably have access to other Colleges, although I'd be very surprised to find a Sahuagin Fire Mage! They use metal spears, tridents, and daggers in melee combat, and have developed a form of crossbow which functions underwater. We retrieved some of these weapons for study, and I am currently attempting to replicate the Sahuagin crossbow for use by Guild members on aquatic adventures.

The sea devils are clever opponents, but we caught them flat finned, surprising them by attacking the outpost where they held a Pasifikan adventurer captive from under ground using an Earth Elemental. We saw the elemental trigger a number of wards and traps, including a Hellfire ward, as it rampaged through the outpost. The Sahuagin didn't have much of a chance. Our planned strategy also included using Flash of Light and Pyrotechnics spells, but the elemental was so effective that we had no need to use them. If anyone wants to examine a Sahuagin, we have placed a preserved specimen on display in the Water College at the Guild.



Two Sea Devils

The Puzzle Column

by Brigetta the Bard

A Monster Riddle

My first is in women and also in men

My second's in ink, but isn't in pen

My third is in nothing and also in nought

My fourth's in opinion and also in thought

My fifth's in attrition, but isn't in war

My sixth is in failure and also in flaw

My seventh's in ugly, but isn't in pith

My eighth is in monster, but isn't in myth.

Lunar Logic

The first five shops to be opened in a new street near the Forum in the capital of the Lunar Empire adopted gimmicks to attract customers. From the information given below, can you discover the name of each shopkeeper, the type and number of his shop, and the sales gimmick he used?



Clues:

Asparagus was neither the greengrocer, nor the proprietor of number III.

The fish shop was between the general store and the shop where raffle tickets were given away; the latter shop was not number II.

The talkative Garrulus introduced a system of trading stamps at his shop, which was next to the butcher's.

Protinus, who was not at number III, was sandwiched between the shop where a star gladiator was in attendance on the opening day, and Asparagus's shop.

The shop at number IV gave away coupons offering a discount on the next purchase. The hardware store was at number V.

Miscellaneous kept the general store, which was next to the one giving free gifts to high spenders.

I II III IV V



Can you suggest a suitable caption for this would-be lady adventurer....?

What's Hot

Travelling around the countryside with 198 servants.

Wildfires.

Water Magic.

Mice.

Combs of Disentanglement.

Amulets of Jasper.

What's Not

Travelling by shadow-wings across enemy territory.

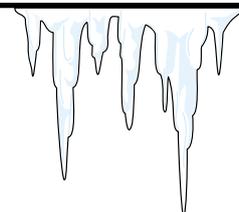
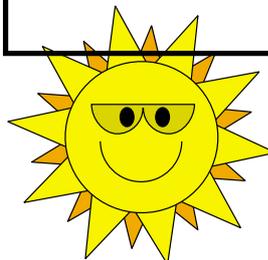
The Dark Circle.

Necromancy.

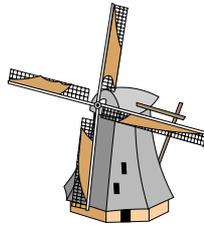
Elephants.

Really bad hair days.

Amulets of Jade.



The Rumour Mill



Elven Wedding Bells

The elves Lord Rocsinger and Countess Amber Kassonay have married.

The Battle of the Super Freds

Kern's is bigger and faster than any others. Earth Elemental, that is.

Maybe he should have a word with Flamis. Hers are faster and stronger than any others. Fire Elemental, that is.

Reporter Recovering from Ordeal

The Chief Reporter for the Seagate Times, Ariel Glitterwing, bravely took upon herself to attempt an investigation of conditions inside the Dark Circle, aiming to bring back a report for our readers. She left ten weeks ago and when she did not return a Guild party was been hired to seek her out. They returned successfully last week.

Glitterwing tells us she escaped from the Undead through a planar gate to another world where she was captured by an evil magic-user and imprisoned. She ensures us that she will provide us with full details when she is fully recovered. We pray that that will be soon.

The Last Word

The editors would like to express their grateful thanks to all contributors to this season's issue of the Seagate Times. 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

Glitterwing Stargazer, Chief Reporter and Astrologer

Fire Investeds for Sale

Self Immolation Rk 10
Dragonflames Rk 10
Weapon of Flames Rk 10



Prices negotiable. Please contact Flamis at the Guild.

Water Magics for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 10 - 400 sp
Waters of Strength Rk 10 - 800 sp



Please contact Aqualina at the Guild.

Available for Hire

Belt of Maidenhood

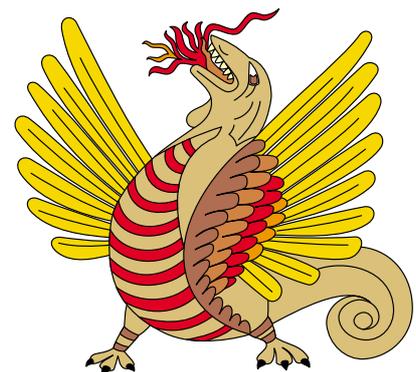
Restores a lady's virginity,
prevents conception.



Codpiece of Virility

Increases a gentleman's chance of success.

Contact Caine at the Guild.



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