

The Seagate Times



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The Wheel of Things Doth Never Cease!

Duke Killed in Botched Kidnapping

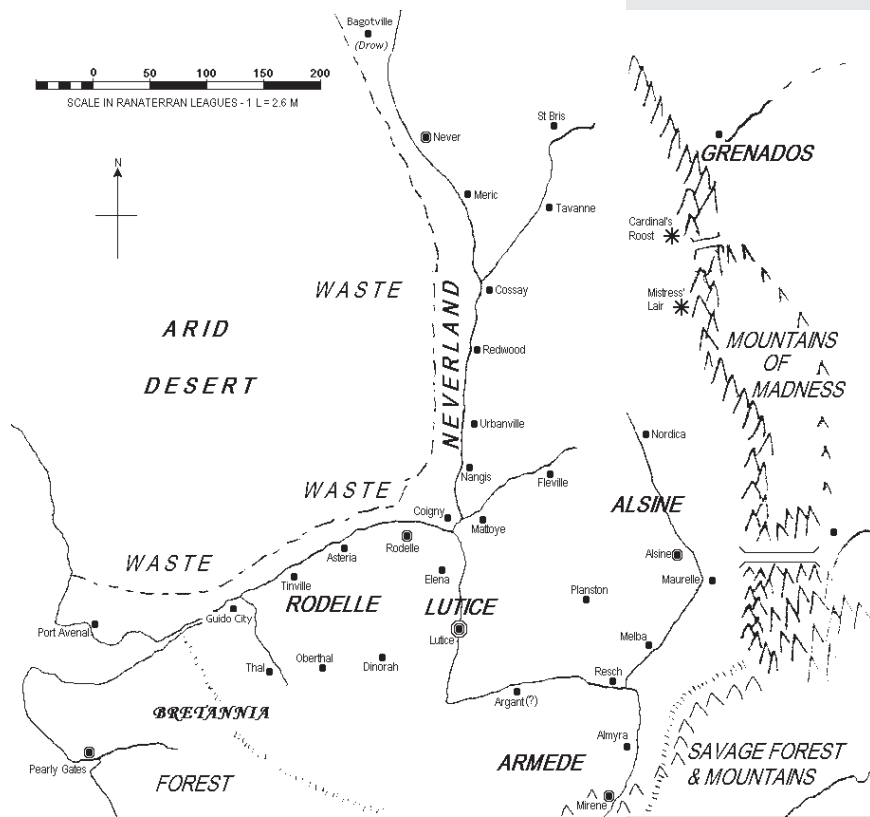
His Dread Grace the Duke of Neverre has been killed during a botched kidnapping attempt on his political rival, the Duchess of Armede, in a complex Antipodean plot. To make sense of the events of this summer, a little background is needed.

Until recently, the vast southern nation of Raniterre was divided into five duchies, Neverre, Armede, Avenal, Rodelle, and Lutice, nominally ruled over by a King. The approximately 30 million citizens were active demon worshippers, and almost all nobles were pacted. The real powers behind the throne were: The Cardinal, the vampiric head of the Raniterran church; La Raniterre, the mistress of the King and interdimensional time-travelling bio-alchemist; and His Dread Grace of Neverre, the most ruthless and powerful noble in the kingdom.

In the last four years, La Raniterre has been killed by the guild; The Cardinal probably killed by His Dread Grace; and most recently the Destinian Royalists have bought Avenal and turned it into the Michaeline stronghold of Britannia. The local



The late Duke of Neverre



Drow royalty has married into the House of Armede, and Armede has been pressuring His Dread Duke and his hunters to stop killing Drow. Britannia is now baying at the borders of Neverre, waiting for a single slip to unleash thousands of Church knights to rampage and purify.

In this heated atmosphere, the Duke of Neverre ambushed the Drow King while he was visiting Ranke, and killed his entire court. A guild party was hired to protect the King and return him to his city. Both sides got an astrology reading including the phrase "The Wheel of Things [the Drow King] doth Never cease", and everyone thought it was fated that the Drow King would be killed by Neverre, having failed to clarify the subject/object distinction. After various travails, the Drow King made a triumphant return to his homeland, slipping past Neverre's blockade. The Duke, in his rage, kidnapped the King's cousin - the new Duchess of Armede.

A brief battle broke out between the guild party and the hundred elite guard and ten pacted mages. The four survivors surrendered, and the relief column of Neverre nobility led by the Duke's brother and heir decided not to press the issue with the hot and dusty adventurers. The new Duke of Neverre is now hastily arranging alliances with anyone he can find to defend him from Britannia or his brother's demon overlord Beleth "the Mad King".

Guild members are no longer welcome in Neverre.

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and more...

Rodrigo:

“I’ve got more sense than to loot a grave in front of a hundred and fifty pilgrims.”

News in Brief

On the Ice

Two powerful E&Es were recently overheard having a private conversation in a corner of the pub, so naturally I wrote it all down and passed it on to the SGT. - Sibilius, The Spy Master.

“Our employer, the court binder guy, hired us to go kill the five agents of the demons that froze Flugelheim. So we flew up to the moon lake and went through the impenetrable barrier, beat up a few of their snakes, explored and damaged one of their towers that were moving out and making the circle bigger, killed the agent who came out to investigate, flew up to their main keep, broke through all their defences, killed the other four agents, and then bam! We're in this demon dimension and this ice demon guy was saying a bit early but thanks for killing my agents, now you've got twenty-four hours to get out otherwise you die and become my new agents. Then we're standing on this huge chunk of ice where time is different and it's not Alusia.

So we fly up to the edge and get out. We did our job and most of Flugelheim is no longer iced up, but now there's this bit of demonic ice plane sitting over the lake of the moon and thirty miles radius around it, and that can't be good. And you know how most of their population went missing during the winter, I think that all of those people are trapped in the demonic ice bit. We had the best of intentions, we thought we were doing the right thing...”

The Game's Afoot

Recently a guild party was hired to aid an elderly mage called Curtains who was having problems with creatures invading his universe. This party found out that he really did create universes, with some pretty strange rules and effects on the people visiting them. He lived in a very strange pub called the Black Rose which had magically appeared in Seagate shortly before the Guild meeting.

The party was transported into the mage's current universe that was being invaded by undead and dwarves and various other creatures, which were coming from other universes created by Curtains' brothers. Taking his advice, they took on a quest involving pookas (think unicorns), a virgin (possibly the only one in the Seagate Guild), and many other creatures, which we mostly avoided in a long trip to the oracle. This creature was awoken by a key we had retrieved as part of our quest, and started some strange events in another universe.

The party travelled to this universe by committing suicide at the right time and place, only to find that this universe was about to be destroyed, and the cause was the pub, which was now resident on this plane. They quickly found and investigated this pub, only to find that Curtains and his two brothers had merged together into a single very powerful mage, and he was deliberately destroying the universe as it was made by another universe maker which he hated.

Despite being offered a number of magical items and a free trip back to Alusia, the party felt they could not let this person destroy the universe, as Alusia might well be next. They bravely attacked, and through luck and the careful use of a few magical items picked up in their travels, the mage was split back into three individuals, and are happy to report that in this form they are relatively harmless. Curtains then returned the pub to Alusia to allow the adventurers to return home.



Freetaun Instigates Gold Rush

Freetaun, the infamous pirate haven in the Isles of Adventure, has 'found' a sunken city just to its north. Combat archaeologists from many countries are flocking to the islands to stake out their ground and gather antiquities.

Unrest in Azuria

The equatorial empire of Azuria is in the throes of revolution. Two bastard daughters of the previous Emperor, whom the guild claims they didn't kill, are having a major domestic. The insular satrapies are picking sides based on whose flying army turns up first, and woe-betide anyone who picks wrong. This region is dangerous for adventurers, and cash poor. However, the princesses have plenty of magic loot.

Unusual Weather in Kin Lu

The unseasonal flooding and typhoons have cost the southern provinces most of their summer crops. The ruling house of T'ajin may need to call upon their deep pockets and international favours or lose their rice monopoly.

Upset in Northern Baronies

Borovia has been making friendly overtures to Syborite, putting all armies in the northern baronies on high alert over summer. Syborite has hired over a thousand mercenaries to assist in politely turning down Count Kree's offer.

Pilgrims find Paradise

With the help of a Guild adventuring party, a group of pilgrims fleeing persecution by a magic-hating society have managed to reach the Paradise they were seeking. The journey took them through barren landscapes, expansive grassy savannahs, ice covered wastelands (complete with glaciers), sweltering deserts, and fertile plains. It is hoped that they will prosper in their new home.



The Bad Lieutenant

Once again the See of Wizards on the plane of Kahessire required the services of a Guild Party. Queen Nereth, having taken over from her recently declared-ill father, faced a rebellion from Tarn, a misguided Captain of the Kingdom's forces. He had been sent to the Temple of Murrur by the former King to deal with the unspeakable evil let forth by a Guild party a couple of years ago. Unfortunately he, and the four companies of mercenaries with him, have combined with forces from the Temple, taken over the nearest town, and declared for the former King.

I, Darien, was made Party Leader on the strength of a successful mission for the then Lady Nereth a year ago. We soon realise that the party is strong on Firepower, flying and illusion magics, but somewhat short in the areas of banishing and not dying. However we resolve to use guile, as well as whatever of the Kingdom's forces were available to us.

After travelling through the portal to the See, we received fuller explanations. Besides delivering Tarn's head, additional missions are to disrupt the supplies travelling to the Warlord of the empire to the West, and identifying disloyal elements of her priesthood.

We spend a few days gathering information in a variety of settings in the central and Northern parts of the See. Particular highlights were the duel Sir Wojer fought with Lady Gwendoline (a favourite of the Queen) over a matter of honour, and the lovely dance held a couple of days later. Discussions are also held with the Ghoul Master (criminals are thrown into the ghoulish pits) and various members of the priesthood - note that the compulsory religion in the See is to worship a piece of rock. We fly to a site one set of Wings away from the three towns of interest, and cache supplies.

In Greyford (upriver of the rebel town), we are shocked to find that the two mercenary companies hired to protect the town are brawling in the streets, with their Captains swearing at each other in the council chambers. We gather intelligence from the head priest and decide to bang the Captain's heads together. However an ambush is sprung by demonic forces as we walk through the town. After they are dealt with, we issue our invitations, and have a discussion with the town's Ghoul Master. Finishing this task triggers the Ghoul Master's attempt to depart, and his possession by a demonic spirit, apparently offended by the pure and strong beliefs of some party members. We promote the head Ghoul apprentice, and leave the Mercenaries and townsfolk to repair the damage.

After a brief nap, we wake to barrels of Greek Fire being flung into the town - GoK catches one, to the detriment of his hip. Disrupting the fire base of trolls with salamanders causes the enemy forces to charge the wall. We delay them, and gather up the Namer priests, who assist us (at some cost) in seeing off the ogre archers, demonic angel, uber-dogs, and trolls.

Come breakfast time, we establish that the Captains have been cursed to hate each other. Confident that the town can now resist any further attack by anything other than the rebel's main body, we fly to the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy, hopeful they can resurrect GoK and Shizane. They can, after we assist in the cleanup from an attack by a part of the rebel forces.

Interrogation of their prisoner reveals that the rebel main body is heading north, towards the Queen's citadel. Some of the Sisters are encouraged to assist in the Citadel's defence - their magics will be useful, and they are proven to be loyal.

Next day, we use Crystals of Vision to find the encampment - they are using magic to help them travel faster. We capture a patrol, and confirm that assistance from inside the Citadel is expected when the small force attacks. The patrol is ransomed, we fly back to the Citadel to keep them informed, and go back to Greyford to make sure everything is OK. We discover that a new mercenary company is staying in town, lead by Samantha. She is barely civil, due to various injustices suffered as consequences of the actions of multiple Guild parties - most of her complaints are justified. We sleep at our campsite.

A precognitive Flame Sight reveals Tarn's location as deep under the Citadel. After flying back, a number of the Queen's subjects are recruited to complement the party, notably Lady Gwendolin to provide an Earth Elemental, Father Rama to banish, and two Sisters to help power us up with Earth and E&E spells. Our Elemental digs a tunnel from next to the castle's doorway to Hell, about 130 feet below ground level, in the direction of the tunnel being dug by Tarn's force.

We break out to ground level some distance from the Citadel, the barrel of Naphtha we teleport into their tunnel is quickly extinguished, so the party takes to an Air Mage's cloud to avoid the clumps of earth being hurled by their Elemental.

A few imps are spotted near a peasant's hut, so we power up as the cloud descends towards a nearby hillock. Unfortunately the opposing MilSci had come to the same conclusion about the benefits of high ground. Tarn, an Earth Elemental, a Baron in Demon armour, various dwarven mages and sundry spawn of the underworld erupt from the hillock as we step on to it - the fight begins as a melee.

Tarn's opening swing removes Grendal's left arm, but he immediately retaliates in kind! Shizane's fiery mount grapples with the enemy while Gerald looses a spray of arrows. Gerrard and Sir Wojer wade in, and our Fire mages ply their trade at close range. Lady Gwendoline removes Tarn's head, and the Namers banish those nasties still left. Everyone was quickened, so the vicious scrap took less than half a minute. Interrogating the survivors and examining the loot, it seems that they were nearly as surprised as we were, and were also set up for a ranged battle. There is quite a haul of items and investeds, mainly demonic and Necro.

The Queen is well pleased, and even more so when we spy out the supply line from the far west to Lord Goren in Asula. Several weeks worth of supplies (huge quantities of coal, and a strange goo called 'rubber') are destroyed, apparently by locals opposed to the plans of Goren. Gwendoline is hiring a Guild party this season.

Phaeton:

"I'm assuming Sooty is doing the correct thing."

Earth Elemental



Who are Borghoff & Dellith?

Over summer we had the pleasure of interviewing a unique pair of adventurers: Borghoff son-of-Praghurst, and his daughter Dellith daughter-of-Gwenda (or daughter-of-Borghoff as she prefers to be known). We visited them at the house adjacent to the shop "Candles and Toys" in Seacroft, 30 miles West of Seagate.

At 6'8", and very solidly built, the handsome Borghoff seems to tower over one, no doubt giving weight to his utterances at the town council meetings (he was elected councillor several years ago, though not yet following in his father-in-law's mayoral footsteps). His famed blue dragonskin armour is nowhere to be seen.

Dellith takes after her mother, a very attractive 5'9", slim athletic build, with short blond hair. She dresses in plain but well made clothing. She is often seen with a hawk on her wrist, and a battle axe with blades shaped as a hawk's head.

SGT: Borghoff would you care to explain how you and your wife look younger than Dellith? Is it really because you consort with demons?

Borghoff: (chuckles) No. On the contrary, it is because we have each supped from the Holy Grail.

SGT: And do you now have to eat twice as much as hobbits?

Borghoff: No, not at all. You must be thinking of a different Holy Grail.

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

Borghoff: I was adventuring with a small group of fellow adventurers when the area we were in was involved in a planar collision. Very messy. Through the actions of one of the party (who, unbeknownst to us, had a demonic connection) we ended up on Alusia not far from Brastor holdings. At Castle Brastor, we learned of the Guild and, along with Carsec and Marcus the Restorer, I journeyed to Seagate and signed up. That was 1981 AP (781WK).

SGT: So you're not originally from around these parts. I suppose that would explain the peculiar naming conventions your family has, and your height too?

Borghoff: No, I just grew taller after being blessed with strength.

SGT: And you Dellith, when and why did you join the Seagate Adventurers' Guild?

Dellith: When? As soon as I could - sooner in fact. I snuck out on an adventure when I was 17 against my father's wishes. Why? There are many layers of reasons as to why. To follow in my father's footsteps. To join the good fight against Demons. To have an exciting life. To make my fortune.

Borghoff: All good reasons!



SGT: Borghoff, how did you and your wife feel about your daughter becoming an adventurer too?

Borghoff: One of the hardest things that I have ever done in my life, was letting Dellith join the Guild and allowing her to go off adventuring on her own. There is a part of me which would much rather she stayed safely at home, where I can watch over and protect her. But every person must live their own life, and, with my love for Dellith, I had to let her go, so that she could find her own way in the world.

SGT: I understand you are both Namers. What was it like being taught magic by your own father? Did it put a strain on your relationship at all?

Dellith: We certainly had our moments. There were some days when I wasn't speaking to him. In the end though I gained a great respect for him and his abilities.

Borghoff: (smiles) She certainly takes after her mother! She can be particularly stubborn. I was glad of my Military training with the Castellan Borderers, through which I knew that being hard on Dellith would strengthen her, and better prepare her for the big, bad world out there. I was glad of Gwenda's support as well, as she was often able to talk Dellith around when she was being overly childish.

SGT: Would you still want to teach your other children too?

Borghoff: Child. My son Rondulf is not interested in Naming.

SGT: Are there other things Borghoff has taught you?

Dellith: My father has taught me many things. Some of them I didn't really come to appreciate until long afterwards. He taught me that the fight against evil is carried out on many fronts. I have come to find that some

Sera:

"Want to make sure i's are crossed and t's are dotted,"

Phaeton:

"Don't you mean t's crossed and i's dotted?"

Sera:

"Not in Elvish."

of those fronts are in unexpected places, such as within a group of adventurers.

SGT: What else do you wish she had learned?

Borghoff: The way of the world is such that although one can be taught some very important things, one does not truly learn them until they are experienced first hand. A very useful rule of thumb for all adventurers - "Never trust a demon".

SGT: Are you independent of him now?

Dellith: Well I still spend a fair bit of time at home, and he hasn't turned my bedroom into a workshop yet, but I am financially independent now, although I still have a main gauche he lent me.

Borghoff: She's been independent ever since she could walk.

SGT: Did you let Dellith start her adventuring career with many of your own magical items Borghoff?

Borghoff: No. As I mentioned earlier, I think it is very important for a person to find their own way in the world. I lent her a Main Gauche for her first few adventures, in case she ran up against undead or demons, but she offered it back to me as soon as she acquired a magical weapon of her own.

SGT: What do you do requiring a workshop Borghoff? How do you spend your time now you are retired?

Borghoff: My wife and I make Candles and Toys which we sell through our small shop in Seacroft. I also dabble with putting spells into small mechanical items.

SGT: Why are you still an adventurer - what motivates you to join a party?

Dellith: I feel I am really doing some good in the world as an adventurer. It is a very thrilling way of life. How many jobs allow a few weeks of intense excitement and then a couple of months to recoup.

SGT: And you Borghoff? What made you decide it was time to retire - and what would make you change your mind to join in the fray once more?

Borghoff: My family became too precious to me. I did not want to lose them, nor cause them anguish should I not return from an adventure. If anything endangered any of my family I would do what I could to ensure their safety.

SGT: Please describe a highlight of your career.

Dellith: I have only died once and it had a profound effect on me. I died fighting a foul knight in the Dark Circle, so it was in a good cause at least. To die and be alive again - that is a wondrous thing.

Borghoff: One of my highlights also involves my death. I was compelled to kill myself, and succeeded in doing so, although the entire rest of the party was trying to stop me. Odd really... that that was what came to mind as a highlight. Oh, here's another. Fighting on with Neroc and Lysander, when those cowards Aus Kranger and Kree ran away.

SGT: Which places would you recommend visiting, and conversely, any places you would recommend avoiding.

Dellith : I would definitely recommend avoiding Hell. The Dark Circle is not a place which is enjoyable to visit for that matter. I recommend visiting the Guild Vaults - now that was a lot of fun.

Borghoff: What about a pyramid dedicated to a Necromantic Demon on the night of La Mass ?

Dellith : They don't need to know about that...

Borghoff: I was really annoyed with her doing such a seemingly stupid thing as to willingly enter this Necromantic pyramid on the night of La Mass, when the Necromantic power is at its zenith. However, when she explained that the party had been hired to save a kidnapped princess who had been taken into the pyramid presumably to be used in some foul ritual, she actively talked the others of the party into going in. I was extremely proud of her actions (but she does need to use more caution in choosing her adventuring companions !).

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

Dellith: Be true to yourself. The Guild is a tool, and not a philosophy.

Borghoff: Never trust a demon !

Cities & their Coins #2:

Destiny

For those avid readers of this occasional column, here is the second in the series. If you didn't appreciate the first article, go read it again until you do. If you'd rather we researched an article on some other city's coins, please send us as many examples as you can c/- Seagate Times.

History

Unfortunately, to understand the currency you have to know a little Destinian history - even the official history should suffice. The first ship sailed into Strait Juan de Fuca some 5 centuries ago and sought refuge on the islands of that strait. No-one knows from whom or what they were seeking refuge, but tradition has it that they had a lot of gold in their vessel. With a few years they had bought off or wiped out most of the longboat raiders wintering in the region & had interbred with a matriarchal Alman human tribe. By the Reign of Albert Frederick II (W.K.), they had established themselves as an independent company of traders plying the coast, thanks to their innovative ship designs (naturally buoyant!) that could carry much more freight than the spell-driven boxes and coracles of the indigenous orcs & humans. The traders discovered gold on Alba Longa the year that Freddie II was coincidentally assassinated and their leader was acknowledged as Margrave.

Gold

A heavy gold coin was minted to commemorate a treaty with the Western Kingdom, the Doble-Real, bearing the heads of Marquis Diego I & King Albert Achilles (called the Mad, for some reason). This coin was oval, pressed, and had only one face: so that the underside was an indented reverse of the official side, a bit like a cheaply hammered medallion of copper - although, since the DR was worth a thousand Kingdom Groats and weighed over a pound, the analogy is imperfect. This coin was not used as loose change but to settle debts with townships & major lords who supplied goods to Destiny on a national scale. About this time "diego"

"Kali the Nameless is paying us far too little, it's taken us far too long to find you, and we'd like to go home".

Jay, when asked to prove we are guild members.

entered the common language as slang for an arrogant person who throws their weight around.

Even when almost pure (22 or 23 karats), Destinian gold has a distinctive reddish hue. Speaking of which, as King A.A. got madder, he disappeared off the Double Royal and was replaced by the Marchioness of Destiny. The coin quickly became much smaller, but retained its distinctive oval shape & pressed nature; at the height of Destiny's power last century, a well-to-do Don was undressed if he didn't carry his coin box - a velvet lined oval bejewelled container just the right shape to stack Double-Royals in. The DR was standardised at ten Dragóns by Diego's son-in-law, Francisco the Black who was a fan of both decimalisation and decimation. He established the Four centuries later, to the month, a guild party enable Don Carlos to crown himself first Duke and then King of Destiny. To celebrate a new gold coin was cast, the Carlo; besides D.C. had no wife and a "Single Royal" would be silly. The Carlo showed D.C. on one side & St Michael on the other. This coin, the "Charlie", is still used in the Far East, but most have been melted down or turned into religious medallions - of one sort or another. The Serene Republic was established 4 years ago when D.C. was cashiered, as rumour has it, by several of the guild members who put him on the throne in the first place.

Foreign gold coins do surface in Destiny, but should be officially assayed & exchanged: the alien coins are then over stamped with their equivalent value, usually undervalued, and distributed as state charity. So it is demeaning for a Destinian to have any gold other than a DR. The Serene Republic has no official gold coinage: secret gold mines, dark sphere, "unorthodox economic revenge" ... it's not a pretty tale, but worth telling if you want to know how pale a dwarf can go.

Destinian Gold Coin



Jewels

Historically, Destinians seldom wore coloured stones. Diamonds are always acceptable; but the gem of choice is the pearl. When Don Francisco the Peaceful was installed, Lotho Lightfoot estimated that if all the pearls in the capital were lined up, they would be over a mile long; but all the sapphires & rubies could be cupped in a single small hand. Unfortunately he was detained before completing his proof of this latter thesis.

Truesilver

The DR is still the theoretical unit of accounting, but the quotidian coin for Destinian merchants has been the Dragón (dr), one five-hundredth of a pound of Truesilver (about 2/3 of a pennyweight), punched in the shape of a dragon's

head viewed from above with a hole punched through for easy threading. This light coin is almost impossible to counterfeit because of the distinctive pitch & clarity of its ring when dropped. This may also explain why so many Destinians have perfect pitch.

Silver

For small change, the Destinians use a large florid silver coin, worth a tenth of a Dragon, officially designated the plata (Silver), but also called an escudo (shield) weighs about 8½ pennyweights - hence the common nickname "pieces of eight".

Thus 10p = 1 dr; 100dr = 1 DR

Destinian Silver Coin



Iron

Destinians do buy & sell things worth less than a silver. Officially they use Virtues, large Iron tokens (some as heavy 10 penny weight, hence the nickname peso, or weight) stamped with a nominal value (1/5, 1/10, 1/20, etc) and labelled with a particularly Destinian virtue: Intransigence, Self-worth, Audacity, Bravery, ... depending upon the political message of the day. However, in practice, Destinians pay small sums using foreign silver and the Seagate penny is accepted, in very small quantities, to be worth 1/8 of a silver.

Trivia

- Copper is a useful metal from which brass and other naval metals are made, but of little monetary use. Rumours that it was used to make the Destinian DR redder are 96% false.

- The only crime technically punishable by death in the old marquisate was "Tampering with Official Weights & Measures", which includes counterfeiting; although some of the Church's chastisement of unlicensed mages could get a mite fatal.



King Carlos first and last had a peculiar sense of humour; he set the official exchange rate with Seagate at 10DR = 666 GS.

The Adventurer's Guide

Tips for success

When in a cloud of methane, always check for fire traps on the door you're about to open... Before opening it!

Actually, checking doors for traps is a good idea on principle... As is silencing alarms before you set them ringing.

Do not hesitate to throw gold bricks at the enemy if it will save your lives. Just try not to run out...

Whenever possible, break down the enemy into small groups. He who said "divide and conquer" was right.

Conversely, dividing the party is a good way to get yourselves killed. Avoid splitting your group unless it's absolutely essential.

Always remember... He who fights and runs away, lives to fight another day. The strategic retreat is sometimes a very necessary tactic.

Military Science in 10 Easy Steps

Rk 0: *The Basics*

When drawing battle plans in the dirt, the circles are us the crosses are them, the lines of the arrows are where we're moving and the pointy bit is where we end up. Charge means go towards them and attack. Retreat means stop attacking and run away from them faster than the guy next to you.

Rk 1: *Winning Initiative*
Shout Charge before they do!

Rk 2: *Preparation*
Form a line, then charge!

Rk 3: *Formations*
Form a wedge then charge!

Rk 4: *Appropriate use of troops*
Don't put the specialist archers and casters in the wedge, put them behind it.

Rk 5: *Higher Ground*

If you are on better ground, don't charge them, let them charge you.

Rk 6: *Adjust to the tactics of the enemy*

If they have lots of archers and you don't then they're not going to charge you so you'd better charge them.

Rk 7: *Protect your offence*

And when you're charging the archers put the guys with the big shields and armour at the front so that your troops all survive the charge.

Rk 8: *Mastery*

You're a master now, let the opposition know how good you are, then while they're worrying about what amazing tactics you are going to use on them, shout charge and run straight into the middle of them.

Rk 9: *Teaching*

Naturally you could win by amazing tactics, but it's a much better learning experience for the troops to see for themselves what happens if you don't use good tactics.

Rk 10: *Delegation*

You've done the hard work, you're a grand master, delegate the battle to your juniors and return to your field tent for some more drinking. If they are worthy of following you then your casual confidence will inspire the troops to win, if not then their screams will warn you it's time to slip out the back of the tent and beat a tactical retreat.

- Aryan

Charge!!!



Starflower's Bestiary

An Orgy of Ogres

Ogres are creatures with which to compose tales to frighten human infants. Supremely ugly in a more-or-less humanoid fashion, they are noted for their physical strength and sheer brutality. Taller than elves and shorter than giants, ogres average eight feet in height. They have large flattened noses, small yellowish eyes, pointed ears, and large, sharp, protruding teeth. Their hide is generally a grey to earthy colour, and being thicker than that of orcs and hill giants, affords them somewhat more protection against weapons.

Ogres are renowned for their taste for human flesh, the younger and more tender the better. Not to speak of their other personal habits, which are, shall we say, less than savoury. One can generally tell when an ogre is nearby by the sheer stink. The only time an ogre takes a bath is when it trips and falls into a stream! Ogres never ever clean or tidy their living space and the interior of an ogre cave closely resembles a castle midden.

Not surprisingly, in view of their enormous strength, but limited dexterity, the weapon of choice for the ogre is the giant club. They rarely use ranged weapons more sophisticated than rocks, bows and crossbows involving a level of complexity well beyond the skills of the average ogre. Against smaller, weak-looking opponents, ogres may attempt to close and grapple, and then will bite. Not only are those teeth sharp, but you really don't know where they've been, so my advice as a healer is to avoid close combat with ogres. They do occasionally use magic. Ogre mages are usually druidic adepts of the College of Earth magics. In their role as tribal shamen they encourage the practise of bloody rituals involving the sacrifice of sentients.

Ogres wear little in the way of clothing, having considerably less fashion sense than a hobgoblin necromancer. They do wear armour, most often heavy leather or chain, and like spiky bits. Typically their armour is filthy and corroded, and worth little as treasure. However, if the adventurer puts aside her distaste and searches the ogre's corpus, she may well find items of value, such as coins and gems, for ogres seem to accumulate these things.



The typical habitat of the ogre is a remote area, most often rough and mountainous, although swamp-dwelling ogres are also known. Ogres rarely build and instead inhabit natural caves or ruins. They may be encountered singly, in small bands or as entire tribes. The latter will almost certainly have one or more shamen and, of course, a chief, an unusually strong and tough individual who may even have a few thoughts to rub together.

And there lies the weakness of the ogre. Ogres are not noted for their intelligence or their tactical insight. They are strong, they are brutal, they have thick hides, and they are very, very straightforward. The ogre idea of military tactics tends to be limited to "first throw rocks, then charge, and pummel the enemy until they squished". It's remarkably easy to confuse an ogre simply by not being where he expects you to be. Tactics against ogres are simple enough - engage at range if possible, using missile weapons and magic. Use terrain to keep them at bay - quickness can be very useful to help keep distance between you and an ogre. Strength enhancing magics have to be good for you, if you must get into melee against an ogre. Make him drop that devastating club, and grapple an opponent who's unexpectedly stronger than he is.

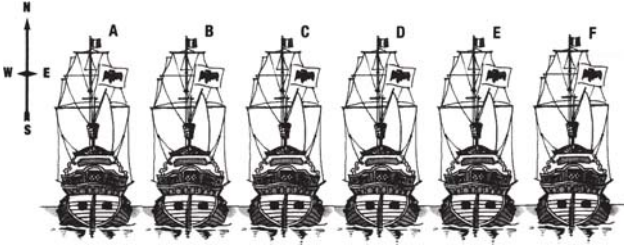
Curiously, a party returning from off plane described encountering an ogre-like species named ogrons. These creatures shared the ogrish taste for human flesh, some of the physical appearance, but appeared to be much more intelligent. They displayed clever military tactics, to the point of retreating when they were outclassed by the adventurers. They also had mages of at least three known Colleges - Ice, Earth and Namer. They clearly understood the portal system in operation on that plane, and were able to survive in a frigid environment. These creatures are not something one would enjoy meeting - and speculation is that they were deliberately left behind. Are you surprised?



The Puzzle Column

Seagate Harbour

The picture below shows the docks at Seagate on one fine summer's day in 803. From the clues below, can you work out the name of each of the ships tied at anchor, what kind of vessel it is, and the name of its captain?



1 Captain Bower's ship is a privateer, a privately-owned ship with a licence from the Destinians to attack ships owned by their enemies; it is anchored next to the Mermaid Jane.

2 Ship C is commanded by Captain Nathaniel Lee.

3 The Gentlemen's Exploratory Society caravel, preparing to depart for Pasifika with Californian Smith on board, is anchored immediately east of the Carzalan Navy brig, whose captain is not named Hatch.

4 The Sceptre is anchored next west of Captain Moor's vessel; the merchantman is anchored next west of the Merlin.

5 Ship D is a Carzalan Navy frigate, resupplying with ballista bolts and provisions after a raid on a slaver convoy heading for the Empire of Five Sisters.

6 Captain Fay's Rainbow is anchored two places west of the coastal trading vessel, which is awaiting the arrival of goods from Ranke before commencing another voyage.

7 Ship B is the Pole Star.

8 Captain Wake's vessel, which has a one-word name, is anchored next to the Dolphin.

Ships: Dolphin; Mermaid Jane; Merlin; Pole Star; Rainbow; Sceptre

Types: brig; caravel, frigate; coastal trader; merchantman; privateer

Captains: Bower; Fay; Hatch; Lee; Moor; Waķe

Riddles

I know a word of letters three.
 Add two, and fewer there will be.
 I give you a group of three.
 One is sitting down, and will never get up.
 The second eats as much as is given to him, yet is always hungry.
 The third goes away and never returns.

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 Dragonflames Rk 10
 Weapon of Flames Rk 10
 Also Rank 8 Weaponry.

Now with added Radiance for
 Positive effect on Dark Creatures.

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 Flamis at the Guild.



I am, in truth, a yellow fork
 From tables in the sky
 By inadvertent fingers dropped
 The awful cutlery.
 Of mansions never quite disclosed
 And never quite concealed
 The apparatus of the dark
 To ignorance revealed.

Question:

How do you sneak up on an island in a swamp? Assume saltwater crocodiles will attack you in the water, air elementals if you fly, and the grass will inform the enemy if you walk on it. You have to cross forty miles in two hours.

Answer:

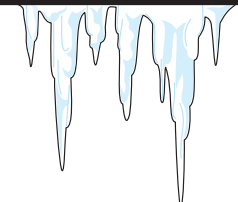
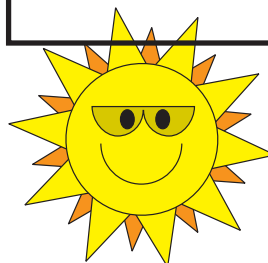
Turn the party into three goblins, two weasels, and a pixie. Balance the party pyramid-fashion on a unicycle. Ride the unicycle on the water at twenty mph, and hold on tight when you dodge the crocs. Wave to any observers. No scout or picket is going to report this occurrence to their sergeant, nor any astrologer to their boss.

What's Hot

Sol
 Weapon of Flames vs Ice
 Creatures
 Maces That Remove
 Enemy Magics
 Rank 4 Rangers
 Dragonflames invested
 Warehouses of Coal and
 Rubber
 Unicycles
 Talking to Animals

What's Not

Frigidia
 Ice Demons
 Maces That Destroy Magic
 Items and Remove Our
 Magics
 Air Mages that Sleep on
 the Job
 Fear rats
 Previous Guild Parties
 Drow waiters
 Talking to Gods



"So we have to wander into this underworld and pick up some lonely chicks?"

Sam clarifying the mission

"Name of substance that renders this person 'easy'"

Sam's standard DA question

The Rumour Mill

You heard it here first...

We hear that one Ashalon suffered an unfortunate... accident involving a backfire, a succubus, an eighty-foot drop and a sharp stake... And is now wearing some very unusual earrings...

If you happen to be looking for unicorn horns - have a word with Theodona. Apparently, she qualifies.

Weirdness of the Week

The humble tea towel, with sharp disks sewn into the edges, can prove a deadly weapon when used by a professional. A bevy of wait-staff demonstrated their use to a bemused and impressed guild party. The tea towel can be used as a whip, or to slice like a dagger, or as a garrotte in close. However, experiments prove that they are not so good at parrying large swords.

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

Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

Amazons

- A: Ryssa, red hair, battleaxe
- B: Mina, blue hair, spear
- C: Xenta, black hair, sword
- D: Varnia, blonde hair, mace

Riddles:

- First: Pearl
- Second: Stable
- Third: Nothing



Wiccan Amulets for Sale

- Amulets of Luck
 - increase defence and magic resistance.
- Amulets of Jade
 - hold undead at bay.
- Amulets of Carbuncle
 - reduce damage from poison



Please contact Grizelda at the Guild.

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.

Restoratives for Sale

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



Please contact Quorash at the Guild.

Salvage and Retrieval

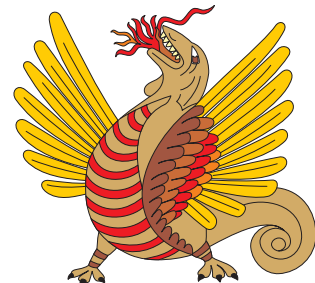
- Has there been a terrible mistake?
- Is there something that is YOURS, but buried in someone else's grave?



We offer

- Discrete Services
- Reasonable rates.
- Necromancers & Wiccans catered for

Contact: Goodman Roderick (Halfling) at the Guild.



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- | | |
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