



The Seagate Times

Issue 56 – Winter 807

Calamar Invasion Imminent?

Repeated sightings create cause for concern

The Times has been receiving multiple reports of Calamar sightings during the past season, from correspondents all over Alusia. Our contacts in places as widely separated as Alfheim, Pasifika and Kinlu have all described seeing unidentified flying objects, fitting the description of Calamar voidships, in their skies. Combined with the recent “Diplomatic” visit of a Calamar representative from the Sword-Worlds it looks like the Calamar may be hatching nefarious and unpleasant plans for Alusia.

A guild representative today would not comment on the implications of the increased Calamar presence on Alusia and simply responded that the agreements made between Guild members and the Calamar were still in effect. Reporters from the Times have yet to confirm the exact nature and details of these negotiations, but the essential deal appears to be that the Calamar have agreed not to invade Alusia. What, if any, conditions were placed on this agreement, the Times was unable to ascertain.

Guild members we spoke to about the Calamar had mixed views on the recent events, but most felt something would need to be done about these incursions and soon. Few Guild members have any fondness for the Calamar, describing them as gods-forsaken brain-sucking, squid-faced slavers.

The city councillors of St Petersburg in Ruska, where several of the mystical Voidcruisers have berthed have welcomed the bizarre travellers as the human retainers and soldiery of the Calamar spend good money, don't cause trouble and in fact reduce crime.

The High Council of Eidolon have announced the formation of a committee to discuss the formation of a sub-group to choose the working party to design the calligraphy for the minutes of future deliberations.



Guild Update

A representative of the Calamar will meet with Senior Guild officials (on neutral ground) to lay a complaint of premeditated attack on one of its researchers working in Eastern Alusia by a Guild Party. While the Calamar are still happy to maintain the verbally agreed to truce between the two groups, continued attacks upon defenceless researchers will result in a diplomatic incident.

*Elsewhere
in this
Issue:*

News in Brief

Bestiary

Puzzle
Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

*Aolus:
“There’s
something
I’ve
forgotten...”*

*Grizelda:
“How much
are you going
to pay us?”*

*Aolus:
“Standard
Guild Rates.”*

*Grizelda:
“That’s
peanuts!”*

*Aolus:
“I can pay
you in those if
you like.”*

"He's hoping a bandit will attack and try to rape him, and then he'll have lunch..."

Ath-bo of Tehee who was wearing the illusion of an attractive woman.

Silverfoam: "We should assemble the boat."

Kryan: "I would prefer that we didn't get it wet."

"It's a stunned mullet.... No, it's a stunned mallard..." Grizelda, while duck-hunting.

News in Brief

Calamar Raids in Ruska!

Guild members report that the tyrannical forces of the Calamar Sword-worlds have been invading Alusia since last Spring. The noble Empire of Ruska, deep in the heart of our continent, has been overrun by the foul off-worlders.

In Autumn, the Guild sent Morgan, Sabrina and Aryan to raise an army and defeat the invaders, along with Aladar's famous General Belisarius. These mighty heroes have retaken eight provinces of western Ruska, defeated four and a half thousand crack Sword-world troops, and liberated many grateful townsfolk.

Count Aryan di Ebola has confirmed that, while he has not seen any of the 'squid' himself, the core of the invading army is from the Sword-worlds.

"They are doing some powerful magic stuff, with giant rune poles and sucking in all the mana. We would have flown up to deal with them except they are sucking up all the flying magic too.

"The Ruskans are fighting well and we've convinced the Elves to hold off cleansing the plane of the human plague until after the squids are defeated. But we could use another couple of able commanders to lead them in battle."

However, the major incursion has been to the north and east of their operations, and estimates of Ruskan casualties are in the hundreds of thousands, as the brainwashed minions of the squids march south towards the Imperial Capital.

In addition, preparations for a gigantic portal are underway in the far north, with indications that it will open at Beltane, unleashing an invasion of void



cruisers and unprecedented destruction. In the six months before then, our champions will need to push the atheists and god-haters back another five hundred miles, driving them from the burrows they are hiding in, and putting them to the torch.

Sabrina has already returned, citing post-traumatic stress syndrome – it seems that enemy goop got into her hair as she trampled a pike block. We are sending in replacements, and ask that every Guild Member donate their spare woolly hats and gloves to the cause, as we gear up to fight the Winter War to end all Wars.

Calamar Up To No Good

A Calamar Nautiloid has been intercepted and possibly destroyed by the Guild while engaged in an act of high piracy over Alusian waters. This could indicate the start of a new, more active phase in the ongoing "cold" war between the Guild and the Calamar.

The Nautiloid was acquiring demon-tainted crystals (used to curse thousands of people so they could be used as power sources for evil blood-magic rituals), when it erupted into a fireball, followed by a rain of kippers. The explosion was observed over 1,500 miles away, but it is possible that the vessel survived; examination of possible debris has only uncovered red herrings.

A follow-up visit to the Calamar's secret pirate base island resulted in the conversion of the atoll into a volcano – again, it is believed that some of the Calamar escaped. Three dimension splinges were left behind, and three volunteers are requested to follow the surviving Calamar back to their mothership and wreak further havoc – the party involved were, um, washing their hair that day.



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!



Guildensterns Not Guilty

Halley the Huntress (an outstanding beastmaster) desired that her former employers be taught a lesson for incidentally selling her into slavery. The first kidnap attempt occurred before she even reached the meeting room, and the repetition became tedious.

A direct approach was made to the Guildensterns, who proved to be neither knowing slavers, or kidnappers. Time-travelling dog-priests of the God she had trained were trying to prevent her accidentally preventing the God being constructed.

Once everyone worked out what was/had been going on, things eventually sorted themselves out. The main pay came from taking on a side-job for the people who had been hired to do the kidnapping.

Portals Re-Opened

It is with pleasure that we announce that the Pasifikan Portal System is now open for travel. Currently a toll is in effect to recoup the costs of establishing a permanent Rune Portal between New Seagate and the BethSalem Portal Nexus in the Sea of Grass. From there it is possible to travel on to the Pasifikan Nexus, and thence to Paleolithica and the Portals there which lead to diverse planes including the Plane of Khoras (known for the production of Glowstones and Emerald Moss Potions).

The Guild Party responsible reported that there had been an infestation of undead in the vicinity of the Bethsalem nexus. "They came at us from the lake. Guess it's dark down there, and it's not as if they have to worry about little things like breathing. Anyhow, we dealt to them."

Then they travelled to Khoras to secure the services of a Rune Mage. "Of course he wasn't where he was supposed to be. He was investigating this manavore-infested ruin in the middle of a swamp full of giant spiders. We dealt to them too. And then we went hunting the Torgat."

Apparently the Torgat is some kind of giant reptilian creature, whose hide makes excellent armour (though not as fine as dragonhide of course).

The Rune Mage, a grum (a Khorasanian species of halfling) named Hendrick, is currently at the Guild, and has made his services available—at a price. The military implications of the re-opened Pasifikan portal network with regard to the current situation with respect to the Calamar are still being debated.

The Adventurer's Guide

Tips for success

Don't PANIC! Ever.

In a situation where panicking seems appropriate, retreating in good order makes much more sense.

Mind you, odds are that the enemy is panicking too. Remember that you are Seagate Guild Adventurers, the scariest thing in a dozen universes.

Always check that somebody really is dead before cremating the body.

And always put your lives before your loot.

The Artisan Cook's Corner

Spicy Crumbed Calamari

- * 400g squid tubes, cleaned
- * 2 eggs
- * 1/4 cup plain flour
- * 2 1/2 cups stale breadcrumbs
- * 3 teaspoons cumin powder
- * 3 teaspoons coriander powder
- * 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- * 1 tablespoon sesame seeds
- * extra light olive oil, for cooking



1. Cut squid tubes in half, then into 5cm pieces. Place eggs in a shallow bowl and whisk. Place flour and breadcrumbs on separate plates. Add spices and sesame seeds to breadcrumbs and mix well.

2. Carefully coat squid with flour, shake off excess. Dip squid into egg, then coat well in breadcrumbs.

3. Pour oil into a medium heavy-based saucepan until it is about one-third of the way up the side of the pan. Heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook squid, in batches, for 2 minutes or until golden. Drain on a paper towel and serve.

*Ath Bo:
"Battlefields
are a
resource
these days...
a renewable
one at that."*

*Librarian:
"There is a
portal which
leads to
hell."*

*Grizelda:
"Let's not go
into that."*



The Bethsalem Portal Nexus

Aryan: "Have you already done it?"

Amelia: "If I did, I haven't done it yet."

WordSmith: "Damn time travel, my head hurts!"

Loxi: "It was that fire mage that DF'd their own party."

Motley: "You'll have to narrow it down more than that."

Starflower's Bestiary

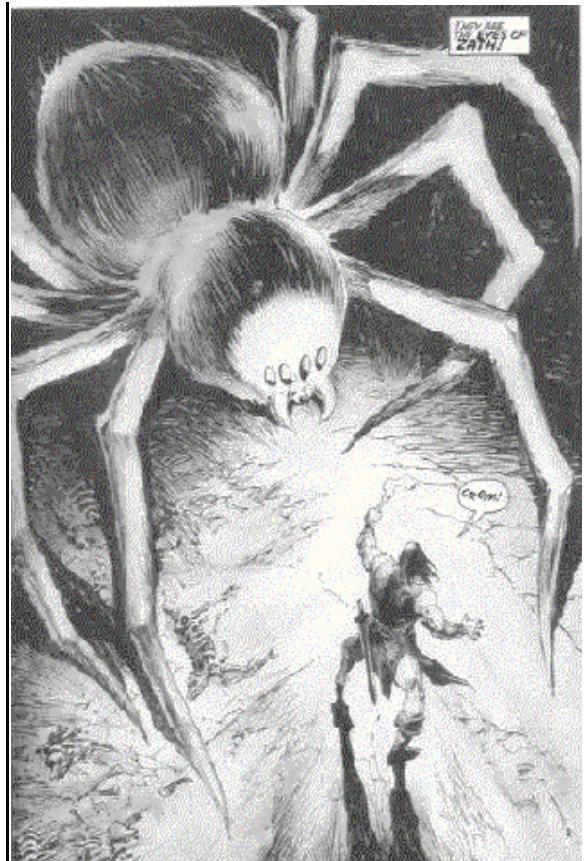
Along came a Spider...

Bugs are not something that bother the average adventurer much as a rule. Either they don't care, they're immune, or they cantrip them somewhere else. Even poisonous spiders (of normal proportions) don't seem much of a problem. But there are bugs that can be more of a problem. I refer to those which either by chance or by magic have mutated to gigantic proportions. Most encounters are with arachnids measuring perhaps five feet across, though I have heard of specimens as large as fifteen feet.

Typically the giant bug encountered will be an arachnid of some sort. I can only speculate as to why spiders and their ilk are so vulnerable to this time of transformation. Perhaps it is the influence of the spider goddess rumoured to be worshipped by the elves on certain planes.

In any case, giant spiders have even been reported by Guild Parties on Alusia, so some guidelines on combating them may be of use to adventurers. Typically the giant arachnid is found in the depths of dark forests among dense undergrowth, in bleak swamps, and underground, in caves or dungeons. Of course, being a living creature the spider has to eat, and needless to say, it is something of a carnivore. So, when it can't get adventurer, it will generally consume small mammals, rats, mice and birds which blunder into its webs.

Those webs, are of course, a certain sign that giant spiders are in the vicinity. They generally consist of long sticky strings, sometimes much like strands of wool, and sometimes as thick as your finger. The web is a both a sensory organ, and weapon in its own right. Movement in the web alerts the spider to the presence of prey, even as the stickiness of the web entraps its victims. There isn't much that will deal with a giant spider's web except a good keen blade,



or, in some cases, fire. It is said that the thicker the strands the thicker the spider that wove them, but I would not bet my second-best sword on it! For one thing, giant spiders, like their smaller counterparts, do not always build webs. Some are more like hunting spiders. I have yet to hear of a giant trapdoor spider, but I suspect it is only a matter of time.

A giant spider's web is only one of its weapons . Some have the ability to fire a spray of instant web at their victims. Some have claws on the front legs, or even on all eight. Most can bite, with varying degrees of viciousness. And when they bite, they nearly always have poison. Which is why, if you even begin to suspect you might be facing giant arachnids, you must ensure that you have some means to deal with poison (for the moderately experienced party this is likely to be a necessity anyhow). Spider poison is normally natural in origin so Waters of Healing will be efficacious, and are readily available. Other options include taking along a Healer of at least the fourth rank of skill, alchemical or herbal antidote potions, or a fire mage with the cleansing flame spell.

Alternatively, you can plan to take down the spiders at range, using spells and missile weapons. While this is a recommended tactic, you might not always have the luxury of engaging giant spiders at a distance. They have a nasty habit of jumping on their intended dinner from a height, they're good at hiding, especially in their webs, and they are surprisingly fast. There are even stories of so-called "phase spiders" which teleport across the battlefield—and I can tell you from experience just how useful that ability is.



The Puzzle Column

Golly Green Giants

Adventuring in Giantland, the group of foolish adventurers we met last issue found a packet of five seeds. This time they did remember to detect the aura of each seed, identifying the species. Finding them to be quite ordinary, they each planted a seed, with unexpectedly superior results. Can you match the adventurer with the species of their plant, how high it grew, and how many months it took?

Adventurers: Sir Harold, Sir Roderick, Lady Hester, Sir Nestor and Lord Grok

Species: Asparagus, Beans, Corn, Peas, Tomatoes

Height: 25', 50', 100', 150', 200'

Time (in months): 2, 3, 4, 6, 9

1. Sir Roderick's beanstalk grew twice as high as Lady Hester's plant.
2. Lady Hester's vegetable took exactly twice as long as the peas to each full height, but not as long as the vegetable that grew to a height of 150 feet.
3. Lord Grok and the adventurer who grew a tomato plant are, in some order, the one whose crop only took two months to grow, and the one whose vegetable reached 100 ft.
4. The plants that took two and four months to grow are, in some order, the tomato plant and the one which reached 50 feet.
5. The plants that took two and four months to grow are, in some order, Sir Nestor's, the cornstalk, and the one that grew to a height of 100 feet.



"WELL MASTER JACK! WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE YOU'RE GROWING A GM CROP WITHOUT A LICENCE!"

Get the Power of Fire and Light!

Fire College Invested Items:
Dragonflames Rk 10
Weapon of Flames Rk 10
Also Rank 8 Weaponry.
Now with added Radiance for Positive effect on Dark Creatures.
Prices negotiable.
Please contact Flamis at the Guild.



Riddles

A cloud was my mother,
the wind is my father,
my son is the cool stream,
and my daughter is the fruit of the land.
A rainbow is my bed,
the earth my final
resting place,
and I'm the torment of man.

What goes round the house
and in the house
but never touches the house?

It's been around for
millions of years,
but it's never more than a month old.
What is it?

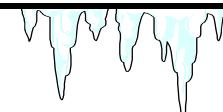


What's Hot

Dwarves
Impressive hair
Fried calamari
Giants of all kinds
Hunting for armour
Portals
Walls of light
Teleportation
Eating al fresco

What's Not

Goblins
Slimed hair
Live Calamar
Lost halflings
Wearing metal
Time travel
Walls of darkness
Telekinetic rage
Eating al inferior innkeeper with pretensions to fine cuisine



Grizelda:
"I would say 'Good morning' but I not sure whether it is morning or afternoon here."

Portal Guard:
"Well, we just had lunch."

Grizelda:
"Oh dear, I think I'm going to have portal lag."

Kern: "How many legs do those bipedal things have?"

Kit,
(of Isil Eth, to Amelia): "If you hit her here, you'll be faster than her."

Isil Eth: "If you hit my hair, I stop!"



The Rumour Mill

You heard it here first...

Blacker than Black

Guild security might have new threads, nobody can say for sure as nobody seems to want to look closely or even care.

A strong willed mind mage claims she can confirm this rumour, it is simply a matter of being sufficiently focussed on fashion. The new outfits seem to redefine black, missing the light in a way that normal cloth doesn't. While black always has style, they're hardly the height of fashion. Just as well nobody notices them, otherwise every guild member would start wearing black.

The Slime of the Season

We'd like to issue a warning to all you adventurers out there who plan on taking on the Calamar. We have it on no less an authority than Isil Eth that slime does not constitute any part of a fashion statement.

The Adventurer formerly known as Kryan...

Is currently in something of an identity crisis. Enquiring minds want to know... Do we call him Sir Kit, Sir Christopher, or Kryan or perhaps even Crayon. Maybe it's an Illusionist thing....

Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors,

Why do we pay our taxes? This very season, guild security (a) were fooled by a badger into sending us on a dummy mission; (b) handed over a dangerous shape-shifting prisoner to a skin-changed snake-cultist and 4 illusions; and (c) allowed free inter-dimensional access via our kitchens to anyone who "looked like a hobbit". There is no accountability - our complaints have led only to frequent body-cavity searches of the complainants, and no corrective action or apology. Someone's head must roll.
Ibrahim Al Khalid

Kit: "Trust me, tie me to the mast!"

Loxi (to Kit): "That makes sense."

Kit: "Loxi's losing it. Tie her to the mast!"

Amelia: "I like Aryan's plan."

WordSmith: "Quick, tie Amelia to the mast!"

Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

The Every Flavour Beans:

Sir Harold-red-vomit-levitation
Sir Roderick-green-cardboard-ventriloquism
Lady Hester-blue-snot-growth
Sir Nestor-orange-earwax-invisibility
Lord Grok-purple-mud-light

Riddles:

First: Lion
Second: Soap
Third: Books

Water College Potions for Sale

Waters of Healing Rk 12 - 400 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.



Wiccan Amulets for Sale

Amulets of Luck

- increase defence & magic resistance.

Amulets of Jade

- hold undead at bay.

Amulets of Carbuncle

- reduce damage from poison



Please contact Grizelda at the Guild.

The Last Word

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

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