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Issue 43 - Summer 803

Flugelheim in Deep Freeze!

Inhabitants Feared Lost as Ice Demons Roam Countryside

A Guild party was recently hired by a merchant to investigate the extremely cold winter being experienced in Flugelheim this year. Reports had been received of pack ice up to fifty miles offshore from Port Artz. Records show that this harbour is normally free of ice all winter. The merchant was concerned as to his businesses in the country. He had heard no reports come out of the country for some months.

After braving the pack ice, blizzards, huge wolves, polar bears and winds that change direction to always be a head wind, the party arrived in Port Artz to find the city all but abandoned, and iced in. The few remaining citizens said people had started disappearing about five weeks before. Anyone who had ventured out of their homes after dark since then had vanished, not to be seen again. The party eventually encountered a mage in Flugelheim City who was able to confirm most of the details they had already gathered. He added that his divinations showed that the missing people were probably not deceased, but appeared to have been placed in some kind of storage, although the reason for this was unknown.

Since the party had completed its contract to retrieve the account ledgers for the merchant, they gratefully accepted the mage's kind offer of the use of a rune portal back to Seagate. Rumours are now spreading that this mage is likely to appear at a future Guild meeting with a request for a Guild party to help in returning the country to its normal weather conditions.

Speculation is rife at the Guild as to the cause of the calamity in Flugelheim. Fingers have been pointed at the members of an earlier Guild party who "put Flugelheim back on the map". Whether or not their actions accidentally triggered the removal of some form of protection from the country or whether the Destinian royalists they countered somehow brought this curse down on the land is unknown to us at the Times, and we prefer not to theorise. All comment we are prepared to make is that this situation most certainly warrants further investigation, or the Guild will not only have lost a valuable source of employment, but should the fimbelwinter spread, we may come directly under its icy grasp.



and discussions with the remaining city militia and the Mages Guild revealed that it was believed that five ice demons had moved in and taken up residence in the country. Each demon chose one day in five to produce its favourite version of winter weather. including everything from blizzards, to cold winds, or ice haze. Once the party ventured out into the countryside, they found that each demon also appeared to have influence over particular areas as well. The City of Flugelheim, for example, was completely covered in snow and ice.

Further investigations

The Frozen City of Flugelheim

News in Brief

Duke's Kidnapped Son Restored to Family in Good Health

A Guild party returning from the Plane of Mystara reports that Velin second son of the Grand Duke of Karameikos and his companion, Valerious Hiracos, who were kidnapped earlier this spring, have been returned to their family safe and well.

Velin and five companions were on their Shearing, a local custom in which the child leaves home and has to earn a living without family support for several years (to prove themselves adult), when he was kidnapped.

The party which was hired to protect Velin from kidnap or assassination by rebels during his first few months away from home, tell us that the kidnappers, identified as the "Iron Society", suffered heavy losses. Only one member of their strike team is known to have survived to make the prearranged pick up with one of the Societies Flying Ships.

"The discretion required to protect local customs, the week's head start Velin and company had on the party, and the advantage the enemy had in having a spy already in place among Velin's friends, meant we were on the back foot right from the start", said Thorn the party leader.

"We had just identified and located the kidnappers and were about to move in on them when they gave us the slip, and took the boys. We chased them though a burning inn, across half the city in through its sewers, and down the Streel River out beyond the city walls."

"We would have probably recovered all the boys if not for that flying ship. We couldn't follow it quickly enough, nor were we prepared for a prolonged chase at that point. We spent the rest of the season helping search for the boys, before his Highness finally gave in and paid the ransom."



And so they burned down the Inn...

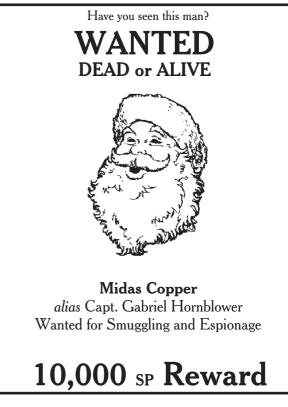
Shipwrecked and Confused!

We were hired to act as 'security consultants' for an Emperor who was concerned about his daughter being assassinated. A summer castle had been built, and we were to check out the defences.

On the way to the castle we were shipwrecked, finding ourselves on a deserted island minus much of our equipment, and surviving largely on the contents of Sooty's handbag. As we explored the isle we found what we initially thought was an underground living complex, and later concluded to be the home of a coven of insane wizards. We found at least three of them, one definitely senile and two others unreachable, along an assortment of kobolds, lizardmen, golems, leprechauns, and weirder creatures, all of whom appeared to have stumbled into the place, much as we did, or summoned by one of the bizarre devices inside. We never did find the fellow who shot at us...

Our mistake was to divine the enchantment on the wrong side of the door, and spent several days trying to find a way out. There were some eighteen suites of rooms, on two levels, all linked by black-filled doorways which acted as portals. What rapidly confounded us was the way that when you walked through a doorway and back, you would not return to the same room, but to another. Mapping the complex was a challenge! The two levels were linked only by a hole in the ceiling of one room, only accessible by flight, and covered by illusions. A map of the complex has been deposited in the library, along with the scribe notes, and a stack of mysterious tomes in some indecipherable language. If any other party should find themselves in this place, we suggest they take a Namer - and a Rune mage.

It took us several days to think and fight our way out. Then we proceeded on to the mission only to find that the summer palace had been blown up by overeager alchemists. Go figure! - by Aurora Steelwind



Princess Karyanne: "Whatever is done in the name of Greater Nobility is not a crime."

(while committing several felonies).

A Seagate Times Exclusive Docks Corruption

Investigative Reporter Exposes Fraud & Immorality

by A. Glitterwing Stargazer

Seagate Docks, the bustling gateway to our fair City through which her Commerce (our Nation's life-blood) flows, picturesque arms stretching into Confederation Bay to offer shelter to storm-driven barques bearing exotic goods from faraway places, beautiful but deceptive. Fishy business was afoot; it was here that I trapped my quarry.

By day he calls himself Capt. Gabriel Hornblower, Harbourmaster, but the true story lies much deeper. Pretending to be doing a "human interest" piece for the Seagate Standard (I must explain, gentle reader, that is an alleged weekly, a tabloid of dubious integrity, that has recently begun publication in the Town. To judge by its content, its intended readership are gullible advertisement-hungry burgesses and maiden aunts house-training kittens). Looking into his bluff bearded face, little did this so-called captain realise that I had seen the monstrous criminal that lay beneath. Although married to the handsome daughter of a Merchant Syndic (nee Gertrude Handelbinder), this corpulent monster has corruptly extorted Millions of SP, just to squander most of it in immoral practices so disgusting that we dare not publish the details. Indeed his degeneracy was so great that he ceased patronising the usual commercial outlets for such behaviour, and last year built his own establishment, the Hermitage for his private depravity and to accommodate his "friends" of assorted species.

In fact his real identity is the pseudonym Midas Copper of Sanctuary, a notorious forger and swindler, whose drowned body purportedly washed up there twelve years ago. He turned up in Seagate, using a false name, as a spy in the pay of the late Don Carlos, tyrant of Destiny. I understand that he used blackmail to obtain the position of Deputy Harbourmaster, but the official records relating to his appointment have been "misplaced". And so began a Career of Crime.

Who knows what military and commercial secrets he sent winging to Destiny. He also controlled the illicit trade in this region of black-market supplies, primarily expensive dyes and unguents originally intended for the exclusive use of the Elvish Royal Court. However, none of these precious items were discovered when excise-men raided his premises, and it is understood that the supply "dried up" with the disappearance of their maker Count Aurelius several years ago, thanks to involvement by the Seagate Adventurers Guild. But some gold was uncovered. It seems that the wily forger melted and refined the gold he received into Angels [see article on MMHS coinage, ED], and inferred to merchants & craftsmen that he was acting as the front man for a religious order. However you can't help wondering why, in previous years, nobody noticed the flood of Michaeline coins flowing through the city's bordellos.

The disgracefully wronged Mistress Handelbinder retains the harbour-view house & contents that was her dowry, and the bigamous marriage has been annulled. Copper himself has fled (we're investigating possible corruption or incompetence by the Town guard), but the rest of his property, estimated to be more than half a million SP, has been seized and is forfeit to the crown.

It is understood that the Duke is grateful to the Seagate Times for exposing this depraved smuggler, although unnamed officials said that it was too soon to advise how the Ducal Gratitude would be manifested. A reward of 10,000 SP (Dead or Alive) has been posted for Copper.



Who is Mortimer Graves?

We recently had tea and scones with long-time adventurer Mortimer Graves at his home of "Gravesend" a few miles outside of New Seagate. The main building is a fortified manor house sitting amongst dozen acres of woodland. There were quite a number of barn-sized workshop outbuildings, most containing enormous machinery, and experimental Graves Steam Engines, that Mortimer later explained to us in (too) much detail.

We were met by Mortimer and a scene of domestic activity bordering on chaos, consisting in part of a gaggle of children, various domesticated animals and innumerable cats. For those of you who have not encountered the reknown mechanicianphilosopher, Mortimer is a very youthful looking male halfling, unusually tall and slender for his race, with straight, shoulder length, centre parted hair in light brown (the undiplomatic might say "mousy"), framing thin and undistinguished features, hazel eyes and a long nose. All up, features that if more finely cast might look good on an elf, but do little to improve a halfling's comeliness. He was well clad in knee length soft boots, trews, shirt and doublet in pearl and dove greys, with a full cloak of white samite.

It seems our guild is populated by nobilty of all ranks. In your case, is there more to the mister in Mr Mortimer Graves?

Indeed, "Sir Mortimer" is correct as I have the honour to remain a vassal of the Elven Queen, holding a Knighthood from Her Majesty for services rendered some years ago in Thewar to Aurora:

"Oh, you're an elf. That explains the ears."

The Graves Coat of Arms

While dangling another party member down a cliff:

Te'He: "What are we doing?"

Algarloth: "Trolling for ghouls."

Mister Mortimer Graves at work



aiding the prevention of a coup in Alfheim. Fortunately the associated military position in the elite guard of Prince Eoren's Bowmen is entirely honourary, as I must confess that while I am conversant with all of the principles behind missile weapons, and build siege bows, I myself have never used one.

When and why did you join the Seagate adventurers Guild?

I first came to Seagate nearly twenty years ago following the advice of my mentor. He told me that the Seagate Guild was an association of high minded and honourable folk who sought to right wrongs and further the cause of justice, and that it was a fine place for a young man to make a name and fortune for himself. Some of his description proved to be correct... I can only surmise that the Guild had changed somewhat. I was fortunate enough to find some worthy adventurers to emulate; two of my major influences being the dwarven merchant Von Kroft, who engendered in me an interest in machinery, and Baron Silverfoam, from whom I gained a great thirst for knowledge, and an enduring love of the elven Ianguage and culture. I do rather shudder however to think what my old teacher would have made of much of the Guild's current membership.

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

Certainly over the years my adventuring has declined, with much more time being taken with family, books and experimental machinery, but there is still so much more to learn; mysteries of the ancients to uncover... and there are still wrongs to be righted, and the chance to work for change for better in the world.

Please describe a highlight of your career so far.

There have been many highlights, and no doubt I could bore you for hours recounting them, but I will restrict myself to saying that recently I feel I was offered a second chance, an opportunity to cast off shackles wrought in a naive and callow youth and seek a new path. I speak of the demonic pact that was a matter of public and Guild record, and that was, some short while ago "inverted"; a change that I am still exploring. Suffice to say, my motto "nec albus, nec aber"... "Neither black nor white" now needs some revision.

I understand you are an adept of the wiccan college, do you call yourself a witch?

No. I am an Adept of the College of "Witchcraft". For myself, I prefer the professional title of "Warlock"... although almost any term is more acceptable than "Black Mage"... a term which I might add would now be both insulting and factually groundless.

Whatever happened to your pet toad? Why did you get him in the first place?

Flytrap is not a pet. He is a familiar, and indeed a friend; our association dating back now two decades. Before my elderly mentor died he called upon his demon master, Marchiosias, Marquis of the Seventh Throne and had me make a pact with him -- I was young and perhaps foolish. Flytrap was part of that arrangement. Some years later when I was "traded" to Buer, the Star President, whose ethics (though still deeply tainted with self interest) fitted rather better with my own, Flytrap came with me. I am uncertain what Marchiosias received in return for us, perhaps a more martial follower of Buer's... or a small house-plant. Flytrap is having some difficulties coming to terms with his most recent changes in affiliation... if truth be told he is embarassed to be seen in his new form... with the fluffy wings and all, and is currently on... sabbatical.

Which places would you recommend visitng, and conversely, are there any places you would recommend avoiding.?

Explore widely and explore often. There are many fascinating and exciting places that we get to see as adventurers; places the like of which most people never even dream. However, I would advise, based on recent experience, if potential employers begin to orate at one, or astrology readings arrive as songs; run away.

Anything else you want to say to the guild populace?

I would say to those of long standing in the Guild that we have a duty to train the novices and to give them figures of respect to emulate, as we looked up to those who went before us. To the novices, I would say that in but a few years there will be people looking up to you and that you need to be ready for that task. And to those, hopefully few, who see little value in honour and respect, I appeal to your enlightened self-interest; you never know when you'll need a fellow guild member to guard your back.

Keesha:

"Being an Elf I have to hang around and do the idea thing."

Cities & their Coins.

#1: MittelMarkHauptStadt

No doubt you've heard the phrase "If it's a Joachimsthaler, we must be in Jáchymov." Or perhaps you're on an undercover mission and you suspect that having a purseful of Seagate coinage might be a tad indiscreet. Maybe you just collect coins as one of those ingrained adventurer habits that's hard to break.

This is the first article is an occasional series describing the odd coinage that they use in foreign places and to help you tell your Laks from your Zloties.

There are two monetary standards in MMHS. Most currency is minted in the Marquis' name but, by ancient Royal charter, the Michaelines also issue gold coins.

Gold

The legal unit of most official documents is the **Mark**, a small strip of good quality gold worth two-thirds of a TS guinea, about 14 Seagate Gold shillings (as you may be aware mark & schill have an almost identical meaning). However such a lump of gold is awkward to carry and far too easily shaved. Therfore the State mints the round **Krone** (or Crown) which has a quarter the weight & value, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ Seagate GS. It is a little larger than the Seagate SP, and much thicker.

The **Engel** (or Angel) shows Michael trampling a wyrm. These coins are thrice-refined gold, much purer than Seagate currency, so they are widely used, even though (officially) the currency is only used to settle the orders debts. In MMHS the Engel is commercially accepted as worth two Krone exactly.



Silver

The only silver coin is the **Grot** (or Groat, as we would call it), which is a hard thick silver coin the size of the Krone.

Bronze

In general, bronze money only circulates in the slums of Southgate or the poorer farming districts. The **Pfennig** is "worth" 1 Seagate copper farthing. MMHS's entertainers are world-famous for their quality ... perhaps because of the local custom of throwing Pfennigs at bad performers.

We also take...

The Truesilver Guinea is readily accepted as being a mark & a half (6 Kr). The Elvish Orlini & Diamond Notes are also accepted in the better-class establishments. All other currency should be exchanged (expect to loose 4-10% of it's bullion value).

The Adventurer's Guide

Tips for success

Semi-dead Necromancers don't swim very well.

Learning to swim is a good idea, even for semi-deceased Necromancers, and hydrophobic Air mages.

As is learning to fly properly - especially if you're an Air mage with the flying spell.

When people start dropping unconsciousness at unpredicatable intervals, now is a good time to leave the room. And don't come back.

Always take along a few spare sacks. An extradimensional carrying space is one of the most useful magic items an adventurer could possibly wish for.

Always remember to look up.

Always remember to look down.

Messing with dead bodies can make you very, very sick.

Never put too must trust in astrology readings, tarot readings, and such like. Especially Hamish's.

Telekinesis is a remarkably useful spell, especially when you want to get at something inside a ward. Just be careful that it isn't warded against telekinesis.

Be very careful removing covers from objects - exposure to light can trigger all sorts of things you really don't want to trigger - including golems.

If you can shoot them, and they can't shoot you, why then you have the advantage. Make good use of holes and arrow slits, and if they aren't provided, feel free to make some...

And when the monster who is big enough to squish you with one blow turns on you, why then you run and you hide.

Trying to talk to the thing before it attacks you can save your life - trying to talk to it after it attacks you can get you dead. Unless, of course, you're demanding its surrender and it's capable of understanding the concept.

Dragons are particularly keen on talking, the only trouble is they're also very, very good at it. On a good day, a dragon can talk you into doing most anything you'd rather not do, and out of most anything you'd rather keep. The best, safest, and sanest policy is to avoid dragons altogether.



Aurora the elf to Bainbridge the dwarf: "Rock, Scissors, Paper?"

Bainbridge: "But you know dwarves <u>always</u> choose rock."

Grizelda:

"Can I have another elf, please. Zis one is broken..."

Starflower's Bestiary

A Knowledge of Nagas...

Most adventurers have a healthy respect for snakes. After all, unless you happen to be immune to poison, a viper in the grass can be more deadly than a Church Knight! Thus facing a creature with a humanoid torso, the bite of a cobra, and the body of an anaconda is enough to give many parties second thoughts. Given that the majority of nagas are also magic-users you'd want to be very careful taking one on, especially with the usual collection of ophidian pets.

The good news is that nagas are intelligent, and generally willing to talk. They are frequently sages and guardians of occult lore, protecting secret knowledge from those who would abuse it. A naga might even employ a party to seek out some hidden tome to add to their hoard of knowledge.

If you approach a naga with a good reason she might be persuaded to divulge the information your party requires without a fight. Do not try to lie to a naga - even if the naga isn't actually a Mind Mage, they have a uncanny sense for what you're thinking. And don't try telepathy on a naga - by all accounts, it won't work.

Nagas are, like snakes, primarily creatures of warm climates, most often found in tropical jungles, deserts and swamps. They will likely be the guardians of respositories of ancient knowledge, greatly respected as sages and mentors by the peoples of the local area. The naga is a carnivore, and offerings of fresh, preferably live, meat are appreciated.

If you absolutely must take on a naga, make sure you can handle its bite. Naga poison is vicious stuff, and they have been known to spit the poison onto their blades. Investing in amulets of carbuncle to protect against poison would be a sensible precaution. Nagas are as strong as hill giants and competent with edged weapons, favouring the tulwar. They seem to be multidextrous, able to use two or more swords



An enraged Guardian Naga.

simultaneously. Sightings have been reported of four and even six-armed nagas, so be warned. Don't forget they are magic users, often illusionists, enchanters or mentalists, and sometimes all three.

Be aware that much of a naga's hoard of knowledge is stored inside his head, and killing him may therefore be counter-productive. Unless you brought along a necromancer and are really fond of fifty questions. Under most circumstances you really are better off attempting to charm the naga with your magics, or better still, honest words and good intentions.

On rare occasions, especially off-plane, other species of naga may be encountered. I have heard of water nagas, defenders of tropical lakes and streams, sometimes casters of water magics, more primal, more venomous than their more erudite counterparts. These water nagas have only the head of a human and a snake's body, and are fully aquatic. Armless they may be, but hardly harmless. There are also rumours of dark nagas, resembling giant eels, with a sting in the tail, a dark attitude, and darker magics. Avoid their eyes, lest you be compelled to turn on your companions, or run in fear.

Lastly there are tales of bone nagas, having the form of a skeletal snake and a humanoid skull, haunting ruins deep in the jungle or tropical swamp. Deeply evil, these creatures are believed to have been cursed by the powers for perverting the knowledge they were entrusted with for dark purposes. They use necromancy and other unpleasant magics and are accompanied by skeletal guardians. You really don't want to know what the poison of a bone naga can do to you! Take on these vile creatures at your peril!

A Dark Naga

Thoric, upon meeting the Fairy Queen: "Now there's a zero keg dwarf"

Then, explaining how kegs of beer change what is attractive to a lustful dwarf :

"Any woman is beautiful after one keg." Thoric stated matter-offactly.

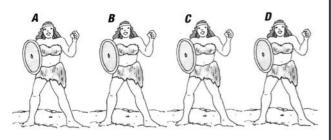
"Any Dwarf after two kegs." Thoric muttered into his beard.

"And any goat after three kegs" a wit from the party replied.

The Puzzle Column

Amazons

The picture below shows four new Guild recruits, all of them female warriors from an Amazonian culture, posing for Brother Phaeton's sketchbook. From the clues below, can you fill in the name of each warrior and the colour of her hair and work out the weapon in the use of which she specializes? (Feel free to sketch in the weapon if you like!)



Clues:

Amazon: Mina; Ryssa; Varnia; Xenta Hair colour: black; blonde; blue; red Weapon: battleaxe; broadsword; mace; spear

Ryssa, whose favourite weapon is her magically enhanced battleaxe, is standing at one end of the line.

The blonde Varnia is not standing next to the red-haired Amazon.

The Amazon with flowing, black hair is standing between Mina and the mace-wielder.

Amazon B is not Xenta.

The moon elf Amazon with blue hair and slanted purple eyes, who isn't figure A in the drawing, isn't the one who uses a black steel broadsword she calls 'Nightblade'.

Riddles

Lovely and round, I shine with pale light, grown in the darkness, Aqualina's delight.

As a whole, I am both safe and secure. Behead me, and I become a place of eating. Behead me again, and I am the partner of ready. Restore me, and I become the domain of beasts. What am I?

What does man love more than life Fear more than death or mortal strife What the poor have, the rich require, and what contented men desire, What the miser spends and the spendthrift saves And all men carry to their graves?

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.



"... SMELLS LIKE A DWARF ... BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE A KNIGHT!"

What's Hot

Pasifika

Giant-class gods weapons Holy water down the Dragon Duke's throat Cannibal Litigants The Way Out! Really big crossbows Quickness Burning Inns Chasing Kidnappers Hill Giants Grilled Snake

What's Not

Flugelheim

Dying to get them Scrolls enabling multiplanar destruction Undead Drow chaos beings More Black Doorways Looney wizards Petit Mort Inns Burning Kidnappers Getting Away Ogres Shellfish Stew

Grizelda:

"Definition of necromancer - a dead weight!"

(as Bainbridge succumbs to yet another petit mort, and Grizelda gets to drag the body around again).



The Rumour Mill

You heard it here first...

We, at the Times, are coming rapidly to the conclusion that telling the sex of dwarves is harder than telling the sex of fish! Take Bainbridge, for instance...

Mind you, dwarves and sex? One supposes that little dwarves are not hewn out of the rock, or are they?

Of course, elves on the other hand.... Randy tall skinny things aren't they? The taller, the randier. Which explains a thing or to about Dramus.

Mind you, Princess Isil'Eth would rather go shopping.

Then there's halflings. And giants. No, not in the same bed, please. Though I did hear of a half-orc, half-halfling once. Weird fellow, was awfully confused about rings, and whether they belonged on noses or toes. And wanted red meat, eight times a day. "Ug, thump... Sorry... Pardon"

Mind you, orcs will breed with anything... Which does explain a few Guild members.

But we musn't mention that person. We're not allowed to mention him. We promised. And we will be good.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Ed,

Big dogs bad very bad bad bad bad glowing vials hot but not good The receiving end of an ambush not good Being the party healer at rank 0

Ben Gaul (Tigger)

PS Ben knows the battle is over when he wakes up and his face is wet.

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

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 evey three months.



Please contact Quorash at the Guild.

Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

The Case of the Archaeological Dig:

California would naturally fire someone who thought coins marked BP (Before Penjarre) could possibly be real since the coiner would have to have known in advance when Penjarre would occur.

The Case of the Gold Digger

California realised the man was lying because he could not have sun-tanned cheeks and a bronzed chin if his face had been covered by seven months of whiskers

Riddles:

First: Stars Second: Shoes Third: The letter "e"



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Bainbridge: "Remember the last time you died?"

Thewar: "No"

Sooty: "Of course not, he was dead!"