

The Seagate Times



Issue 45 - Winter 804

Waterford to hold Vampire Haven

Sir Christopher Ensures the Safety of a Community of Undead

It took just one week for Sir Kit and his pack of loonies to entrench an insidious 'family' of vampires into the already war-torn region of Pevensey in Waterford.

The team were hired to rid the forest of an infestation of vampires troubling the forest of Hormikleton, and they failed!

"We are being butchered", quoth a local woodsman "while nobility stand around building grand forts".

Readers may remember that this picturesque forest was savaged two seasons back by agents of the dark circle, with no help forthcoming from the local lord and his hirelings. This irredeemable brutality and ambivalence gave the Earl of Pevensey an excuse to set his youngest son Oswald of Pevensey as overlord of the area. Lord Oswald has begun constructing a fortress overlooking the once serene beauty of the Hormikleton forest. He is said to rule with a miniature iron fist.

As if this insult to the people was not enough - Oswald brought in his father's court magicians to raise terrible monsters against the peaceful forest dwellers when they sat in protest of the vampire threat.

"It's disgraceful", says our steadfast woodsman "using unnatural powers against common folk".

The lycanthropic woodsman and his kin had no comment about the allegation that their 'peaceful sit-in' involved earth elementals throwing vampires into sunlight during a truce, nor about the legions of faerie folk trapped in eternal torment to create a link to magical planes from which the werewolves gained power.

When interviewed, members of Sir Christopher's party denied the charge of lunacy, stating that allowing the vampires to remain in the forest was part of the only sane solution to the problem they were confronted with.

"We had vampires, werewolves and fey, all in this doomed forest which was by human law part of the Earl's domain," said a spokesman. "We had just managed to arrange for a conference between the Earl and the leader of the vampire colony, when some reactionary werewolves attacked us, the

vampires, and even their own rightful head of clan, using these pixie-controlled earth elementals. Tough bitches those things were too."

He went on to explain that these vampires had been ousted from their home by Dark Circle undead, and that it appeared that the doom on the forest somehow acted to conceal them from the Dark Circle. Removing them from their sanctuary would only serve to attract a horde of Dark Circle minions - the last thing the Earl of Pevensey wanted. Of course, the lycanthrope community - which had been established in the forest for some time previously - weren't keen on sharing their turf with vampires.

"Seems to be some kind of racial hatred there," he said, shaking his head. "Can't understand it really. Worse than elves and dwarves."

Having attempted to get to the bottom of the situation, literally, locating the circle of buried trees whose dryads in an endless ritual maintained the doom on the forest, the party were able to bring the various factions together for what they hope will be a lasting settlement.



Elsewhere in This Issue

News in Brief

Guide to Coins

Bestiary

Puzzle Column

Rumour Mill

and more...

The Enchanted Forest of Hormikleton

News in Brief

Flugelheim Thaws

Rumours of incursion by a Demonic Ice Plane into Flugelheim are no longer correct.

The ice has melted just in time for Winter, the demons are fired, and the locals are restored to their homes.

The allegations of senior guild members involvement in this matter are undoubtedly true.

Portal Found; New Trade Route Established

A party, hired by California Smith to find and investigate portals believed to exist on the plane called Paleolithica, reported that they only found one portal, but their investigations there were very fruitful.

“We found a portal to a plane called Khoras, went through and then the portal deactivated. Not our fault, though. Something called the Drellis effect, makes mana levels fluctuate in a cycle. When it dropped to low mana, the portal switched off, and we couldn’t get back. Could have been worse though, we killed some orcs and ogres, and made friends with a bunch of human folk.”



It transpired that the portal exited in an ancient ruined city in the war-torn Sentinel Mountains. The Coalition - a loose community of orcs and ogres - is in constant warfare with the predominately human city of Garrison, and their allies. The knights of Garrison have constructed rune portals from their city to the ruins where the

Paleolithica portal is located, and thence across Paleolithica to the Alusia portal which exits on Rangiwhero in Pasifika, which already has regular trade via ship with Seagate. The party believe it likely that further offers of employment will come from Garrison, but suggest that guild members of the orcish persuasion need not apply.

Temple Closed; Curse Removed

A party went off-plane to what is believed to be yet another “Erth” analogue in order to rescue their employer’s daughter from demons holding her in a temple on the “Dark Continent”, and hopefully liberate them from the curse. The plane did feature the use of “airships” and “guns” but these were by no means the most sophisticated seen by guild

members. Magic was possible, but its use was liable to get the user burned at the stake.

The party were successful in travelling by airship to the Dark Continent, returning the statues stolen from the temple, and performing the ritual which sealed up the temple. This in spite of interference from various demonic annoyances, spiders, monkeys, rats, carnivorous vines, and multiple death curses.

Goran Gone

That troublesome Binder on the plane of Kahessire, Lord Goran, has been returned to his place of origin. The Cthonic Spirit has been reunited with the stelae that it was released from some 12,000 years ago. Hopefully it will return to performing it's protective duties for its nexus of ley lines - there certainly was a spectacular light show as the stelae repaired itself and sunk back into the ground. The local Empire showed their appreciation for the nearby rift to Hell being closed, and the party employer in the Se of Wizards was also well pleased. However some of Goran's minions continue to produce large numbers of weapons on two continents.

Available - Treasure Map

Provides accurate location of Unicorn Herd - Think of it as Cash on the Hoof!!



Virgins (lure) can be supplied if required.

Discrete & genuine enquires only to Ricardo (Esquire) c/- the Guild. No Bleeding Hearts or Do-Gooders please.

For Sale: High Class Travel Rations

Sick of stale bread, beef jerky and mouldy cheese?

Adventure with a touch of class

- Brioche fresh out of the oven for breakfast
 - Savoury breads filled with delicacies and freshly baked for lunch
 - Dinner is a choice of Venison or Game Pie, Glazed Ham on the Bone, Roast Eye Fillet or Succulent Lamb all fresh from the oven.
- Includes 2 bottles of the finest Aquilan wine.

All of this prepared by the finest chefs in Seagate, packaged in a convenient travel case and kept fresh for 7 weeks. 1,000sp for meals for 2 for a week.

You deserve to eat well!
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- *Thaeuss*

The Free City of Garrison

Who is Clarissa D'Ornay?

This autumn we had the pleasure of talking with the delightfully graceful Clarissa D'Ornay. While at 5'8" she may not be the tallest elf, she is memorable for her complex and beautiful tattoos. We met her at the studio of Lazlo the Limner (Lazlo and Son: commissioned Portraits, Murals, Discrete Copies A Speciality) as he worked on the accompanying portrait.

SGT: I've been dying to ask, as I'm sure are many of our readers, about the significance of all those tattoos you have. When and why did you get them?

Clarissa: My, you journalists are forward! Can you not let a lady have her little mysteries? Sorry, I should not tease, as even I do not know why I was made a living... .."objet d'art"?

The sad truth is that I am a foundling of sorts. A tribe of nomads found me on the Sea of Grass, an amnesiac, and determined that I was some sort of ill omen. They escorted me to a city; places they already believe cursed, and abandoned me there.

SGT: Is it true that the tattoos change colour depending on what mood you're in?

Clarissa: When other adventurers claimed that they saw one move or change, I thought that they were quaintly prurient, or just a little highly strung. But I suspect drinking from the Truth Pond on OZ and nearly drowning in mana in the Guild's vaults has caused them to behave this way. I've even retained the very hard-working Lazlo here to record their "moods". A few now reflect events that have happened to me since I joined the Guild, happily replacing the rather morbid little fables that were there.

SGT: And that they cover all your body?

Clarissa: I refer you to my earlier reply about a lady's mysteries. I'm afraid that is one I must insist on keeping.

SGT: You aren't usually known by any particular title, but surely there must be one for such a fine lady?

Clarissa: Despite being repeatedly taken as nobility, I cannot claim that felicity. Even the name "D'Ornay" is a fiction. I've no family or lineage and haven't acquired vast tracts of land or titles, but I'm content to be my own woman and call no-one master.

SGT: [Take note boys!] When and why did you join the Seagate adventurers Guild?

Clarissa: A mere twenty years ago, I arrived on this coast with little more than the ink on my skin and a few words of common. I had to become very resourceful and rather less than squeamish to survive, but swiftly came to understand that alone I would only rise so far, regardless of what I sacrificed. When I heard of the Guild's diversity and accomplishments, the promise of independence and power was a beacon to me. About eight years ago I'd managed to acquire enough money to join and was surprised to discover that I could also become an Adept. One



day I hope to determine what happened to me and redress any wrongs that I find. I suppose it's a bit old fashioned, but it does to get one out of bed in the morning.

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

Clarissa: I try and select a venture that I will be most effective on. Of course, I take into account how motivated I will be to complete the mission, either financially or personally, as this all has bearing. Why do I still adventure? Simply put, I'm not yet ready to accomplish that which I set out to do when I arrived at Seagate.

SGT: I understand you are an air mage and a warrior.

Clarissa: Yes, I appreciate having a college magic to add the breadth of abilities in a party, but I've never really shone at the scrivening and studying and I really do enjoy the physicality of the training grounds. While I love the freedom and power of my college, I've done my best to become a trustworthy user of magic, after I discovered that the some irresponsible Air mages had tarnished the name of the college.

SGT: What areas do you specialise in?

Clarissa :
"Follow that
book... "

Morgan: "What
kind of book
was it?"

Clarissa : "A
fast one."

“Light sounds good” - Serendipity (Dark Mage)

Clarissa: I prefer to resolve things in a non-adversarial manner, as corpses are rarely useful allies. If a little flattery and banter aren't enough, I favour a Hand & a Half sword.

SGT: What do you do whilst not adventuring?

Clarissa: Much of my spare time for years has been spent as a governess to Dramus' adopted human daughter. She is a precocious child and has just started her first term away at a prestigious academy for girls. I hope that she will apply all I've taught her to her studies.

If I wish to relax, I dance. A lively salterello or piva can invigorate one and loosen the knots of a day's training or study.

SGT: Please describe a highlight of your career so far.

Clarissa: The occasion of surviving two days in the Guild vaults, which were dissolving with liquid mana at the time, certainly springs to mind. And while I found it vaguely rude at the time, I do appreciate the concern of the party who "rescued" me from having dinner with the Governor of Sanctuary.

SGT: Which places would you recommend visiting or avoiding?

Clarissa: If there is one place I didn't enjoy visiting, even briefly, was the Void. It was stifling and chillingly empty at the same time. The absence of a horizon and any sense of orientation made me feel I was losing my mind. OZ is beautiful any time of year, if you can get there.

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

Clarissa: I feel that the tolerance and cooperation that a Guild party displays, either determining a watch order, or in planning and executing a difficult mission, is the core of our strength. Without it, our diversity would be a weakness.



A Mouse's Tale

(by Erasmus, a passing church mouse)

I was pausing to munch on a nice bit of cheddar left in a doorjamb when I noticed a commotion outside the residence I was passing so I took my cheddar to the front mouse hole, watched and this is what I saw!

Apparently a few adventurers were visiting a warlock late at night in order to procure some Skin Changes. They turned up and were talking with the warlock when his cat-familiar Mikha, after a bit of sniffing around uttered these fateful words to a shadowy Elf who seemed to drip power and danger. "Come on little tease, you know you want to!";

Amazingly the Elf woman seemed to understand what the cat was saying and took up his offer thereby changing into a sleek, lithe and lustrous black cat.

Once the cat-Elf was in this form Mikha started coming up, behaving like a normal cat would and getting to know this new black cat. They started sniffing and prowling around each other. This seemed harmless enough and cat-Elf mewed to the cat Mikha that he shouldn't get too close as she might hurt him.

Now being the dangerous woman that she appeared this would have been enough to put off the wisest of animals but Mikha was a special cat, being a warlocks familiar. It deterred Mikha not a moment and after a bit more sniffing enquired if she had ever bred with another cat before. She answered in the negative and this seemed to peak his already raised fur.

"Well how about it then".

"I'll hurt you if you touch me" she replied in a slightly quivering voice

"Yes I know so how about it?" he replied in a more insistent purr

At this point the rest of the big people who were mid-transaction stopped and watched the unfolding events in front of them with some interest. If she hadn't been a black cat they wouldn't have noticed the slight whitening of the cat-Elf's fur and her voice when it replied had a slightly worried quiver to it.

cat-Elf: "No I Don't want to hurt you"

The sounds of a cogitating cat emanated from Mikha while he took his time in replying. The scent of musk was heavy in the air, even from my distant mouse hole!! Mikha: "Yes, I know so lets do this"

Now apparently the cat-Elf got scared at this and caused her fur to grow sharp black armour spikes (designed to deter close combat no doubt). I'm constantly amazed at the weird feline mating rituals I sometimes see in strange places!

"Ummm, interesting" was the next challenging reply from Mikha, "So you ready now?" Mikha asked after a brief pause spent sniffing around the cat-Elf, her spikes and eyeing her fine form with some 'anticipation'!

At this time the cat-Elf showed something no-one ever thought to see - her tail.

She turned and she fled for fear of her!! Then quickly changed back to her Elven form with a very white complexion and slightly shaky appearance to the astonished stares of the rest of them big people.

Well it was the first time I've seen a cat running off with her tail between her legs. *squeek squeek* Oh well back to the cheddar!

“See, it was a simple plan, and it worked. Throw the mouse in the hole, and run away!” - Jade

The Adventurer's Guide

Tips for success

When battling over-large Earth Elementals try Transmuting them into aquatics, then attacking them with a high-ranked weapon of flame spell.

If you can't get to the door because they've magicked the ground, try dropping in through the roof.

Especially for Eltan - Ways to get out of Close Combat:

1. Rank your primary weapon to the point where it's hard for anything to close on without risking a nasty injury.
2. Get some strength - Waters of Strength aren't expensive. And get other party members to jump in so together you out-strength your opponent.
3. Get magic - there are spells out there which deter anything from getting too close with you. Try Self-Immolation potions.

Battle axe for delicate surgery on party members - Robert and Dirk manage to do open heart surgery on Raidon, before he dies on them, with a battle axe to the chest.

Affecting strike chance - Raidon got impaled on the cold iron trident and it affected the hits Cambion tries to inflict on some of the other members.

Things that go boom - There were also a couple of containers that are packed with ice that hold a flask with some what they say is Nitroglycerin, used for blasting rock. Trigger words are "stand well clear".

Experiments Which Should Not Be Tried....

1. Opening an extradimensional space (such as a Bag of Holding) inside an interdimensional portal.
2. Infecting a magically induced Shape-changer with Lycanthropy.
3. Placing an extradimensional space inside another extradimensional space (we have reason to believe that the vampires who made off with Mabh's equipment met their fate with this one).
4. Turning a Geyser into Ice... (That hurt, it really did.)
5. Mindreading an entity which has been locked up in a ritual for a hundred years (yes, Starflower, it was silly, wasn't it?)
6. Telling an Earth Elemental to keep digging - vertically, down.
7. Triggering a Weapon of Flame in a water-filled chamber, underground.

Lost and Found

Missing: One pair of Elven feet, wearing blood-stained black boots with wisps of darkness trailing from the top of them.



If found, please return to the safe keeping of Axis who will look after them until Seren is ready to take them back.

Self-flagellation not enough any more?

Father Broc is here to help you now!



Special youth rates and group discounts.

Wanted: A Means of Getting Out of Close Combat

Must be non-fatal to use, not weighing more than three pounds, useable by an earthmage and not involve sacrifices in any way. Willing to pay reasonable monies for this.

Contact Eltan, stupid stupid rat creature.

Mordavia

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- Enjoy breathtaking views of misty mountains and noisome swamps
- Intrigue with friend and enemy
- Gain healthful exercise, battling for your life
- Share a tankard of ale with elves and orcs, fairies and vampires, or things even stranger from your Granny's fireside tales

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"I choose to ignore the party, I usually do, it's better that way." - Starflower (Mind Mage)

Cher : "Necromancers make people beautiful. "

Morgan : "How?"

Clarrissa : "It ain't pretty."

Starflower's Bestiary

A Variety of Vampires

I still find it hard to believe, but one must always admit the truth, however strange. On adventure this season I had a civilised conversation with a vampire. Now, given that my usual level of communication with the undead involves more in the way of swords than words, one has to wonder what was going on here...

It occurred some hundreds of miles away in one of the baronies bordering on the Dark Circle. Of course, one has to ask how much longer we intend to put up with that particular excrescence on the face of Alusia, but I digress. Though not entirely, because it seemed that these vampiri were on the run from Dark Circle undead. It seems that their ancestral land had been within the area now covered by the Dark Circle, and that the entities controlling the Dark Circle had also wished to control them. To which suggestion they objected, so they fled. Eventually they found a sanctuary, a forest whose enchantment sufficed to conceal their presence from the Dark Circle. Which is where we found them, and had our civilised chat.

I learned quite a lot about what it is to be a vampire that day. The vampire we spoke with, whose name was Gregor admitted that he had become a vampire voluntarily. When questioned as to why he chose to become undead he explained that he had sought longevity. Understandable, since he had been human, though I think there are better paths to long life, ones which do not lead so far away from the sun. His people fed from their human servants, and did not kill. Those servants seemed more than happy with the arrangement and I have seen servants far worse treated.

It was apparent to us that whatever means they had used to become vampiri need not alter a mage's existing college, since there were Earth mages, Enchanters and Namers among their people. Clearly they gained the powers of a vampire to change shape to mist, to bat, to rat and wolf, for we observed them using their mist shape to escape their enemies. They have a hypnotic talent allowing them to influence the behaviour of living sentients. They are also said to be able to speak with and summon beasts. And they are certainly both handsome and charming individuals. I would not have thought them vampires but for their powers and their lack of any shadow.

So, in some cases, it is indeed possible to avoid conflict with vampires through communication. One, must be careful however. Vampires do have the power to influence your attitudes towards them, and thus to shift your opinions in their favour. Whether or not this occurred on this occasion, I cannot say. I prefer to think that we were swayed more by the necessities of the situation, and by the sanity and eloquence of their arguments.

But if you cannot avoid fighting vampires, be aware that they are formidable opponents. They cannot be harmed by other than silvered weapons or magic. And harming them alone will not kill them. If hurt, a vampire will generally turn to mist and then return to its coffin to regenerate. Certainly

sunlight harms vampiri in any form - we were witness to this, when Mabh had the winds bring Gregor to us, before sundown. They can be killed by being staked through the heart in their coffin. Carrying a supply of wooden stakes when hunting vampiri is highly recommended. You should also carry garlic, and holy items blessed by the powers of light if you have them, because these things are repellant to vampiri. A vampire will eventually die if it cannot feed - and for food it requires the fresh blood of a sentient. It need not kill its victim when it feeds, of course, and in extremity vampires have been known to feed on the blood of beasts.

The best way to kill vampiri is to destroy them during the day, while the creature is confined to its coffin. Exposure to sunlight, by rendering the coffin transparent, is one method. Another is to repeatedly target the coffin with area effect spells, and then, when you are fairly certain it ought to be dead, stake it through the heart. You could try sealing the coffin in solid rock or metal so the vampire cannot escape and then simply waiting for it to expire from hunger.

Of course, finding the vampire's coffin then becomes the difficult part of the exercise, and I cannot help you there, except to cite the principle of the purloined letter - the best place to hide a coffin is among other coffins, thus in a cemetery or in a crypt or catacombs. Underground vaults are generally favoured for obvious reasons, and at this point, tunnelling and other earth-moving magics become very useful. Let the sun shine in, and the pain begin...



Gregor

"Whew - it's only a vampire"
- Sir Kit

The Puzzle Column

Particular Afflictions

Five Guild members suffered grievous injuries while on adventures last session, requiring the attention of the Guild Healers. Can you identify which injury was inflicted on whom, by what creature wielding which weapon?

- The disreputable Spider was punished by a ogre for his insolence; Prickle was wounded by a bone-tipped spear.
- Silverfire spent some considerable ignoring the pain of broken ribs; it wasn't Beowulf who suffered a gut wound.
- Sir Cecil wasn't struck by a giant icicle, and isn't recovering from a concussion.
- The gut wound wasn't inflicted by a bastard sword or a treant; a vampire caused the broken arm.
- The crushed testicles were were the result of a roundhouse swing with a giant club; the forename of the person who suffered this injury is one letter shorter than that of the person attacked by the lizardman.
- Neither Silverfire nor Sir Cecil was injured by a tree branch; it was a pixie who dropped the icicle.



Riddles

A dozen Royals gathered round,
Entertained by two who clowned.
Each King there had servants ten,
Though none of them were also men.
The lowest servant sometimes might,
Defeat the King in a fair fight.
A weapon stout, a priceless jewel,
The beat of life, a farmer's tool.

What are we talking about here?

Four men sat down to play,
They played all night 'till break of day.
They played for gold and not for fun
With separate scores for everyone.
When they came to square accounts,
They all had made quite fair amounts.
Can you the paradox explain,

If no one lost, how could all gain?

A headless man had a letter to write;
It was read by a man who had lost his sight.
The dumb repeated it word for word;
And deaf was he who listened and heard.

Solve this riddle.

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.
Contact Flamis at the Guild.



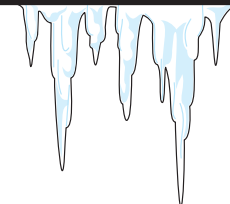
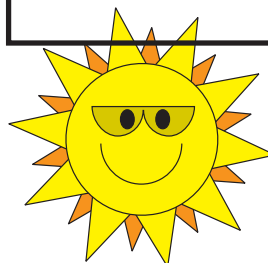
What do you say to a new vampire?
Count Draculations!

What's Hot

- Old style D-Flames
- Super intelligent Earth Elementals
- Vampires
- Tranmutation
- Enchanted forests
- Shamen
- Cat-people
- Flugelheim
- Dwarves
- High-ranked Weapon of Flames

What's Not

- Giant icicles
- Earth Elementals being stolen by Fae
- Ogres
- Ice magic
- Inaccessible ruins
- Multi-coloured demons
- Rat-people
- Ice Demons
- Orcs
- Low-ranked Mind Magics



Morgan the Orc: "You're an Elf, yet I hold the secrets of life and death."

The Rumour Mill

You heard it here first...

We, at the Times hear that the illustrious Mabh planned to use the handsome Sir Kit as Dryad Bait...

Apparently Starflower now thinks that vampires are a decent sort of chaps - mind control or life changing experience - go figure.

Following an unlikely fusion of elements where he used powerful earth magics to heal a water power of the damage inflicted by ice demons, Braegon has renounced his earth bound ways to become a Fire Mage!

He says "Fire has often been the poor cousin of the elemental branch, this recent event where fire was specifically excluded is a case in point. It's time for me to help the Fire college bleyze its way into the pages of history!" When asked his opinion about this sudden change, a notable Sage categorically stated "It's impossible! Earth magics could never be used to heal water in that way, they're diametrically opposed!"

And then we're told of the staunch Dwarven fighter Dirk. While quietly looking around at the books on the desk one party member sneezed. Instant reaction from Dirk, who leapt away emitting a girly scream and ended up quivering behind Tannis skirt.

Free to good home: slightly used soul, two careful demon owners. Has prior adventuring experience and knowledge of Necromancy, answers to the name of...

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 every three months.



Please contact Quorash at the Guild.

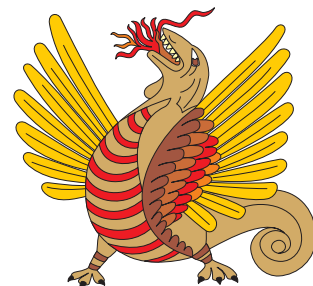
Answers to Last Issue's Puzzles:

Seagate

A	Rainbow	Fay	navy brig
B	PoleStar	Hatch	caravel
C	Dolphin	Lee	coastal trader
D	Sceptre	Wake	navy frigate
E	Mermaid Jane	Moor	merchanter
F	Merlin	Bowers	privateer

Riddles:

- First: few
- Second: stove, smoke, fire
- Third: lightning



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