

The Daily Craptonian

16 FEB 2018

Non Omnis Moriar

By FAE VIDERE

— MELBOURNE

An alchemical recipe, kept secret for 1400 years, hangs on a wall in the Halls of Stoneborough. The message is hidden within a picture of a large and muscular dragon. On a hill behind the creature, three animals tussle in a mortal battle. A rooster pecks at the back of a fox, as if to eat it, while the fox is devouring another rooster.

This is an Alchemist's way of describing a chemical reaction. Understand it, and you will begin to understand how to create the Elixir of Life.

To complete your education, you must enter into the tutelage of Albertus Magnus to complete his studies in Advanced Alchemy. Magnus, 817, is the world's foremost expert in Alchemy. Albertus Magnus D.E., also known as Albertus Teutonicus, Albertus Coloniensis and Albert the Great, is the esteemed author of *De Mineralibus*.

Magnus can usually be found in his small chambers. Dimly lit, there is all manner of magical ingredients on his shelves and an emblazoned representation of the sun and moon through its various phases glistens overhead. A revered wizard and alchemist, Magnus is also a skilled astrologist. Over his long life, he has become an expert in divining and predicting probable futures through the patterns and cycles of celestial bodies.

In his chambers, Magnus can be found poring over old treatises, then pours what he learns into his various tinctures and tonics. His work shows powerful wizards such as Magnus protect the power of alchemy, which continues to be an arm of magic still, enshrouded in great mystery; the power of the *Magnum Opus*, the *Philosopher's Stone*. Magnus' work also con-

tinues to create new elixirs, powerful beyond what sceptics and non-magical mundus ever thought possible.

He continues to produce mythical and unusual materials; his work will be celebrated for centuries.

In his alchemy chamber, a short walk from his astrology atrium, the cabinets are full of alembics, retorts and other bulbous glass devices. On the counter sits a large jar labeled "Tears of the Manticore". The Manticore, or Manticora, is the fierce and legendary creature. It has four feet, a head that resembles that of a man and is in size comparable to a lion with a tail that has hairs a cubit long and sharp as thorns which it shoots like arrows to any who may cross its path.

The alchemical practice began about 1,500 years ago in Hellenistic Greece. It came to Europe by way of the Middle East. Like the word algebra, alchemy wears its Arabic influences in its name.

Alchemy flourished in Europe between the 13th and 18th centuries upon Magnus' initial discovery of the *Philosopher's Stone*. What begins in the Middle Ages is that alchemy begins to be celebrated and it might be one of the first disciplines that is celebrated this way as the ultimate power it gives to possessor to control nature.

Magnus first discovered the *Philosopher's Stone* in 1226 and created a cipher to protect the powerful substance. Now, only the most deserving Alchemist's are admitted under his tutelage and of them, only the most talented will discover the *Magnum Opus*, the *Philosopher's Stone*.

A student of Magnus, Basilius Valentinus, created the picture hanging in the Halls of Stoneborough. During his studies, he designed 12 keys, or *clavis*, describing the steps required in creating the *Philosopher's Stone*. Valentinus did not complete his studies and although his early keys can be replicated, the later

keys are conjecture.

Valentinus' third key depicts how to turn gold into a large red crystal, which he called the *Flying Red Dragon*. The rooster represents gold, as the rooster crows at sunrise and the sun represents gold as in all traditional Chymistry. The fox is a particular kind of highly acidic liquid. If you add gold to the acid, it dissolves: The fox eats the rooster. Distill the liquid, and the gold reappears. The rooster eats the fox. As you repeat this process, you create a gold salt that, under the right conditions, will begin to sublime. It will rise in red crystals to the top of the distilling vessel, thus creating the *Red Dragon*.

The next challenge for the Alchemist is to turn gold into a vapour, which remains an unusual feat successfully completed by few witches and wizards. To successfully create the *Philosopher's Stone*, the Alchemist requires rare raw materials,

Magnus said. Such ingredients include the elusive *Bologna stone*, a rare stone which, when exposed to light will glow in the dark for several minutes. Other famous alchemical pursuits beyond the *Magnum Opus* include the creation of the substance, the *Black Dragon*.

This morning, up to ten upcoming and talented alchemists will have received invitations to this year's intake of Magnus' *Advanced Alchemy*.

They begin the journey to follow in the great Alchemists' footsteps, and though they now face their greatest test, they are in the line of succession for the most prestigious and exclusive society of witches and wizards; the possessors of the *Philosopher's Stone*.

