



## THE GEODUCK LEGEND

Once upon a time when there was peace and tranquility in the land of the great Spirit Geoduck a small group of wise, learned men gathered together in the forest by the great waters. These men gathered to see if they could create a place where people could come and reflect and learn and grow in wisdom, perhaps to become like themselves, but more importantly to be able to live at peace with themselves and the world around them. It soon became apparent however that these men brought themselves--their world--along with them to this forest meeting place in the land of tranquility, of green forests and blue waters. There was argument, contention, misunderstanding--no progress was being made. It disturbed Spirit Geoduck to see this. One night as one of these learned men slept, comforted by the gentle drumming of rain on his rooftop, there appeared in a vision to him a strange looking creature. It was sort of oval shaped, large, with a short, thick protuberance or extension of what appeared to be the body at one end. When he awoke and thought of it briefly, it seemed to remind him of some sort of grotesque clam. But he thought nothing more of it. The vision returned the next night, and the next, and the next, and finally he felt compelled to say something to his learned colleagues about this. He had no sooner begun to speak, when another interrupted, so excited that his learned pipe fell to the floor. He had seen much the same thing, and as they alternately interrupted each other (as is the fashion among the learned) to describe what they had seen, they all suddenly became aware of a peculiar sound outside. It was different from the gentle drumming of the rain on the rooftops they had become so accustomed to. First it seemed to sound like gentle rolling thunder, but that could hardly be, not here, in this land of peace and tranquility! It seemed to come from over the great waters and soon they thought they could distinguish words, but what words...they sounded like...like...omnia extares...omnia extares...omnia extares... As the learned men scribbled down the words they suddenly became aware of a shifting in the layers and density of the perpetual cloud of smoke that hung in their place of deliberation. Sitting in learned awe, they watched the smoke take on the form of the creature two of their number had been seeing in visions in the night. Suddenly there was an enormous clap of thunder that upset all the learned dignity onto the floor. As the noise faded, there was dead silence. The chanting had stopped, the rain could not be heard, even the smoke was gone. Said one in a small voice, "That was a geoduck!" Said another, "Huh?" Said another, "Omnia extares." Said another, "Huh?" Said another, "We have been given a message!" So they gathered themselves up to consider this. One talked at length about the animal called the geoduck. Others discussed at length about what was meant by what they thought was a latin expression and decided that it probably meant something like "Let it all hang out". Considering all this they became aware of what they had been doing and what had been wrong and forthwith they would change--they would become honest and open and gentle with each other. So their deliberations prospered and the place of their dreams began to form. Most, in their preoccupation with their dream, gave little further thought to what had brought about their prosperity. But some did not. Some felt that this sender of visions and chants, this keeper of tranquility, should be honored, perhaps recognized as the spirit of this place, of this dream that was building. This suggestion was greeted both by happy

enthusiasm and learned dismay. What, said those of the latter...that ugly creature...no grace...no charm...no beauty...no drive...lives in mud—stuck in it! Repulsive to touch. And look at its shape...what would people think? What would they think about us? What kind of men would they think we were? After all.....But, countered the others, should not the spirit of a place reflect that place? Is grace and beauty and cunning and aggression what we are about? Is appearance all-important? What does our geoduck represent? Look at it. Accessible to all...not easily, but it's there...a little work, a little determination. Isn't that us? Sure it's stuck in the mud... stable, not shifting with every flow of the currents, with every bit of pressure exerted on it. Yet flexible...see how it can reach, even as we should reach, reach out to all. And as we claim to be flexible internally in the way we work, so is geoduck...that ultimate flexibility, being able to switch sexes, female now, then male, then back again. And its appearance? Let that concern be a reflection of your own problems, learned people. But even that has parallel. So might our appearance appall others someday, and they would have difficulty understanding our substance and being. Moreover, geoduck represents in its body the essence of this land. Living in mud, feeding from water nourished by the forests of the land around. So the arguments went, but eventually many recognized the Spirit Geoduck. As this place of learning and wisdom grew and many came to it, there were many problems and much confusion. But it prospered and Spirit Geoduck was content. However, as is frequently the case when people and places prosper and become busy, beginnings are forgotten, spirits neglected, and Geoduck soon sensed this happening in this place in the forest by the great waters. Dissension and mistrust appeared. People were forgetting the message of Geoduck. Is it time again for the visions, the rumbling chant, the thunderclap? Or has peace and tranquility gone from the land. Geoduck waits, and watches.

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