



November 1602

Steamy Ink Press^{5c}

Lifestyle news to share over tea
Now that our sister paper exists, we can be more uninged.

**Arcturus:
Maplewood's
Champion of Self- Love**

Page 8

**Haelga's Swamp Water:
An Exercise in Critical
Thinking Skills**

Page 6

**Evangelista Wedding
and Event Planning:
0/10**

Page 3

A Lifestyle Paper for the Townsfolk of Maplewood

Pitohui Chased Through Town by Angry Chihuahua

Saved by Assistance from an Unexpected Source

Steamy Ink Press™ is a division of Steamy Ink Publishing©. Our mission is to provide in-depth news to the people of Maplewood about the most entertaining topic: the People of Interest that flit through town. What are they doing? Why are they here? Are they single? We aim to answer these questions for you!

It is our goal to provide you a perfect conversation piece to share that pairs well with tea and great friends!

Please submit all articles, tips, short stories, and comments via courier to: Poppy Katullin, CEO

Advertising Inquiries: Lorelei Levanestra, CFO/Glitter Extraordinaire

Legal Inquiries to: J. Titus Marianus, Consul to the Freelands



Maplewood is abuzz with rumors surrounding the disappearance of Pitohui Van'Ironsbane, the infamous leader of the now defunct House Van'Ironsbane. Pitohui was nearly brought to justice by a group of adventurers who included the Lights worn, Fellowship of Stone, and numerous others in a dramatic showdown last month along the side of the field. However a last-minute bit of irony saw him rescued by a horde of undead, seemingly summoned to his aid.

The exact reasons for the adventurers'



pursuit remain a topic of some debate. The prevailing claim is that Pitohui was involved in a gruesome incident with Van'Ironsbane, a gruesome incident that Pitohui hadn't been killed yet because the other adventurers are just too soft". What is certain is that following a town-wide chase reminiscent of a pack of angry kazvaks chasing a meal, [redacted] and Arcturus were able to finally put him down and began performing a Final Rest ritual. Several minutes in, a large undead army appeared claiming to champion Pitohui and that they would not allow him to be laid to rest. In the ensuing battle, Pitohui's associates

adventurer community and House Van'Ironsbane, stating that Pitohui hadn't been killed yet because "The other adventurers are just too soft". What is certain is that following a town-wide chase reminiscent of a pack of angry kazvaks chasing a meal, [redacted] and Arcturus were able to finally put him down and began performing a Final Rest ritual. Several minutes in, a large undead army appeared claiming to champion Pitohui and that they would not allow him to be laid to rest. In the ensuing battle, Pitohui's associates

(con't page 4)

How to Find Runesnails

If this is the first time you've heard of runesnails, you either didn't read my previous article or don't get involved with rare zoological findings. Either way, I am still desperately in need of some more specimens. My research into runesnail's ability to purify magic will be a boon for a variety of problems, including areas previously thought too corrupted. I write this article to once again seek help and answer some common questions I received.



- *Where are they?* Runesnails are typically found in the Freelands as they are attracted to areas where magic has been cast or is particularly seeping into the ground. Because adventurers don't practice safe spell casting, runesnails might converge on an area of a failed ritual or other magical idiocy.
- *Can I make a lure?* Yes! A runesnail lure usually involves a small magical item, such as a ring. Place the ring on a tree stump and arrange a circle around it (with pebbles or other objects). This combination tends to make magic more appealing to them. If you're worried about theft, you can cover everything in leaves. The runesnail will still sense it.
- *Did I find a runesnail?* If it is roughly the size of your thumb or as large as half a human male's hand, you likely found a runesnail. Other hints are that they are blue, possibly glowing if they just fed, and have rune-like markings on their shell.

Please report any found runesnails immediately to me, Chelby Wright, via courier.

-Scholar Chelby Wright

Additional note: Painting normal snails blue and drawing symbols is animal cruelty. All attempts will be reported to local druids.

Chainbreakers Verbally Accosted on Peaceful Hike

While Sigos was trying to take Cordon on a stroll through nature to "Help sweat the veilwalker infection out of him", a group of Inquisitors was seen circling around them as they attempted to just simply walk through the woods.

"Some Vleanoans were looking for someone but they weren't able to tell me a name or description about who they were looking for, which seemed suspicious" Chainbreaker leader Makhno commented to SIP reporters. "We were just trying to take Cordon for a walk, he hasn't been sleeping much and we thought it might tire him out".

Following several accusations of the Chainbreakers harboring a fugitive, which Makhno informed SIP "We don't harbor or port or even dock, in fact we didn't see any boats on the lake while we were walking by it", the Chainbreakers and the Inquisitors verbally clashed at Mercy House. While the details of the argument are unknown, the Inquisitors were seen leaving town shortly after the altercation.

It is rumored that both the Chainbreakers and the Inquisitors eventually realized the futility of their conflict, agreed to a truce, and Cordon was allowed to continue his recovery effort in peace. Cordon commented "I think one of them thought I was cute, 'cuse he offered to eat my dick." Regarding what to do if you run into an Inquisitor on a nature walk, "Just ignore them, this is the Freelands. They don't have any power here."

Love and Danger: An Attack on Lorelaz

A surprising incident befell SIP last month when a visiting wedding planner was revealed to be a hired assassin. The planner Evangelista, who was hired personally by Poppy from a well-vetted planning company in Civen, was caught attempting to murder the bride Lorelei during their first planning session. Ironically, Evangelista revealed at that time that "We also plan funerals".

It is their belief that Lorelei's investigation into a mysterious treatise, "The Treatise of Durongol," may have led to her being targeted. The treatise, which is rumored to contain powerful secrets related to a Picean group, has been the subject of intense interest among certain individuals and groups.



Evangelista, who was known for his impeccable service and attention to detail, was under a compulsion spell at the time of the attack. The identity of the person who hired him remains a mystery, but it is believed to be connected to the ongoing search for the Treatise of Durongol.

The incident has caused a change in atmosphere among members of SIP, who have begun closing ranks and talking much quieter than normal in their bazaar stall. Shelaz has been seen on high alert, constantly watching anyone that comes near the stall until they are a far distance away and occasionally following them out of town. While Poppy has not been seen in Maplewood this month, reports state that she was also very upset about the incident and "sent a message to my Grandfather about this".

The veilwalker Curse: What We Know So Far

News of a threat brought to Novitas by the Varganiens has spread throughout the Freelands: the Veilwalker curse. This affliction causes individuals to transform into monstrous creatures known as Veilwalkers. There is a lot of rumor and scrutiny regarding this new contagion, and research into how to find a cure is still ongoing. Here are the facts so far:

How the Infection Spreads:

- **Only Veilwalkers Spread the**

Infection: The infection can only be transmitted by those who have already transformed into Veilwalkers or are in the advanced stages of infection.

- **Initial Infection:** Individuals with the initial signs of infection, known as having a "blemish", are not contagious. This "blemish" appears differently on each infected individual. While most seem to develop a very disgusting boil, one faekin's hair color changed.

continued page 7

van'Ironsbane Continued

dragged him away into the woods.

It is possible that this is related to the sermon a member of our reporting team witnessed in August, in which Pitohui summoned a Wraith Lord. In a letter to the editor earlier this month, Dulzun stated "Psy has convinced me [...] you will need [this staff] for the fights ahead with Pitohui. Personally I hope you all rot, but being consumed by Nox will be too good for you." Perhaps this is a warning, as Pitohui now has a much stronger power on his side.

After some searching, Dulzun and Psy were spotted far to the west slaughtering Darkness cultists that had invaded a small community. When approached for comment, they had colorful language advising us to not pursue them further, but did state that they have in fact denounced their association with Pitohui. They refused to elaborate further on anything involving a potential Wraith Lord.

With Dulzun and Psy gone, the question remains of what will happen to Pitohui. Is he hiding in the shadows, plotting his revenge? What else has he done that could cause an entire undead army to come to his rescue? These questions and more remain, but one thing is for certain; Pitohui is currently public enemy number one in many adventurers' eyes, and it is almost certain that they will not rest until he finally does.

In the aftermath of the Avatar of Grak's attack, the Freelands continue to rebuild stronger than

ever. One example of that is the Maplewood Bazaar. Previously known as a trading hub, it fell into disrepair and even became a display for dead bodies at one point. Merchant Sigos Brasnakov has dedicated his efforts to changing that.

Undeterred by the devastation following the attack, Brasnakov rallied locals and travelers alike to donate time and coin to rebuilding the stalls and providing

Freelands Rebuilding: The Maplewood Bazaar

again with vendors, and the temple provides a place for some respite when one is in need of a break from shopping.

Brasnakov was blown away by the help and generosity of the locals who assisted. "I would just like to say 'thank you' to everyone who helped make this dream a reality, and helps it keep going every month with their hard work and dedication." *-Special Investigative Press*

Supportive Listening

Provided by
Shandeen Maris,
Chosen of the
Stranger

**Specializing in Ghost Problems
and Grief Resolution**

Free and Available by Appointment

Confidentiality Guaranteed

Apparently SIP imports weapons and crafted goods now. Is it legal? No idea. Lorelei told me to put an Ad in the paper about it.

This is that Ad. See her or Titus for details.

Also we are a PUBLISHING HOUSE, we mainly sell scrolls and writing goods. And apparently now Civen imports. I'm not bitter.

better lighting to showcase wares. The stalls have recently started to fill back up

Dearest Reader,

What kind of person would I be if I did not divulge all of the information I know about the recent trouble P got himself into?

He was spotted running all over town, avoiding most of the local adventurers on both Friday and Saturday night, with Saturday night culminating in him dying and almost being final rested. Fortunately for him and unfortunately for the rest of the town, he was able to escape- with no little thanks to the Wraith Lord that he summoned to assist him. Prior to actually being caught, he was seen taking down a group of aspiring healers Friday night right outside the temple. Does he have no care for any of the gods but his own? Clearly not, as he was seen torturing a septon in an attempt to learn the language of Darkness. One would think he could have just asked them to learn it while he was in the Sacred Tabernacle. Or maybe it just didn't occur to him.

Everyone's favorite mercenary group has been doing a great job keeping the streets clear of monsters, which isn't really news, we just want to brag about how awesome they are. They did, however, let H perform experiments on corpses in the Bazaar. Maybe if more people joined up with the company, they would be available for guard duty at all hours.

Moms are gonna mom - O recently seen threatening her children with removal of their allowances. What exactly it was that was so bad as to incur her wrath is unknown, but clearly this was J or M's doing, as we all know E would never do anything untoward. Maybe parenthood is a little too hard to do on your own, as O was also seen around town proposing marriage to anyone who could fit her offered ring onto their finger. We here at Steamy Ink hope that she is able to find someone, and find happiness, and keep her children under control and well funded.

As Ordeals have been getting completed, It has been getting more and more frustrated and angry. We recommend keeping an eye on all of your infected friends for strange behavior. Also if someone could come up with an alchemical that makes food taste less like Veilwalker goo it would be greatly appreciated.

A certain mercenary company under the employ of P and L's family has been spotted around town recently. They were seen acting like they owned the Jenny, stealing drinks and tables from paying customers. This writer wonders what they are doing out here in the freelands, and assumes it's nothing good. Please be on the lookout for this inferior mercenary group, and make sure your purse strings are tight less it suddenly becomes lighter.

H was seen recently using M as a cadaver in the bazaar. As a reminder, the Master of the Bazaar requests that all activities involving potential bodily fluid be performed outside of it.

E was recently seen performing a marriage ceremony for an elf- again. It does appear that it may be true love this time, though the elf was heard saying "We thought about getting married at Harvest Fest- but it's just so tacky, you know? Everyone does it."

Speaking of wedding bells, a certain Chosen of the Soldier and Follower of Grak were seen playing cards together in the inn. M was clearly letting C "win" at solitaire, allowing illegal moves in an attempt at flirting. Here's hoping that we can provide some solid proof on them in next month's semi-annual relationship update!

Yours truly,

Madam Mapleleaf

Shocking News: Drinking Lake Water Makes You Hallucinate

Haelga, the bushy-haired elf with a strange fashion sense and a penchant for gathering organs, left a jug of lake water in the Spinning Jenny last month with a sign advising people to drink it. For some reason, people actually partook in this obvious health risk.

"I keep hearing whispers when I sleep now," local haberdasher Barneby remarked. "But who would have known lake water would have a nice minty aftertaste?"

Barneby's claim of hearing whispers was just one of many strange side effects following the consumption of Haelga's lake water. Several other townsfolk reported experiencing bizarre hallucinations,

ranging from visions of dancing trees to encounters with long-forgotten acquaintances.

Local healer Elara examined several affected individuals, and then concluded that their symptoms were consistent with a mild form of spore poisoning. "It happens sometimes, they just need to drink some clean water and sleep it off" Elara advised SIP when asked what the remedy was.

Haelga, when confronted about the incident, simply shrugged and claimed that she was trying to "Help people connect with nature." She denied any knowledge of the strange effects the water had caused.

Hopefully, this will help people start to question the wisdom of blindly following the advice of unconventional characters like Haelga. This incident serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of following your intrusive thoughts and the importance of critical thinking.

This is a doozy folks and if I hadn't heard it from a trusted source I'd say it was malarkey, but the frogs are out there reviving people. Friend of mine, we go way back, was vacationing from Vlean, saw a frog hop on a dead body down near Mercy house. Next thing you know the dead body giggled!

It chuckled! The dead don't laugh. Well the undead do, the smarter ones at least, a nosferatu's laugh will chill you, but even they rarely do it. No, the frog temporarily revived it, just for a moment. Makes sense though when you think about it. All the adventurers in town are drinking potions of healing like they were refreshing Barnes Apothecary Watermelon Mint Switchel. It passes through them, heals them up and then, and I don't

want to get too lewd since children read this article, it comes out of them. It gets into the groundwater and the lake. But there's still that healing magic in it and as with Barnes Apothecary Homeopathic Colloidal Silver Kombucha, even in a diluted form it's still working. The frogs lay their eggs in the lake

Battle Tidings With Emeric Barnes

sucking up all the magic, the tadpoles live in the lake eating the lake plants absorbing the trace magic, then the frogs swim around. It gets all in their guts and skin! Now we got enchanted healing frogs hopping around doing who knows what. Wake up! They're putting chemicals in the water that turn the frigging frogs magical. It is why when I need healing I reach for all natural alchemical solutions made by Barnes Apothecary.

Curse Continued

Treatment and Prevention:

- **Drink a Tonic:** The only known remedy to slow the infection is a Blightfyre Tonic, only obtainable through trade with Varganien. The exact mechanism, potential side effects, and how the tonic is made remain unclear.
- **Avoid Adventuring:** Many of the infected individuals are adventurers. Not becoming an Adventurer seems to be the best method of avoiding infection.
- **Stay Away from Maplewood:** The southern region surrounding Maplewood is currently the epicenter of the infection. Staying away from that area will also lessen your chances of infection.
- **Find God:** Draconus is currently offering a cure to

anyone who will complete an ordeal for him. Any of his chosen are able to give you this ordeal.

Encountering a Veilwalker:

- **Run Away:** Veilwalkers are capable of short bursts of speed but quickly tire. It is in your best interests to run far away to somewhere they cannot find you.
- **Seek Sanctuary:** Magical barriers can protect against Veilwalkers. If you are able to find a Sanctuary, this is your best chance of waiting them out.
- **Dissipate:** If you know how to dissipate, you should do this as fast as possible to avoid contact. Carrying a potion of dissipate is highly recommended for those that are unable to do so on their own.



Path Walkers: at your service.

A new local organization, called The Path Walkers, have begun making a name for themselves! When asked what they stand for, one replied:

"We are here to help guide and counsel those of good intent on their paths in life, be they physical or metaphorical, until they discover their natural place in life and, or after, death."

Recently this has included counseling ghosts, helping people with relationship matters, and helping lost travelers find their way through the local woods.

"Depending on which Path Walker you talk to, you will find different levels of help that can be provided. More experienced Path Walkers might be able to assist with the most aid, while a newer Path Walker might seek help, or handle less-complicated matters."

Don't expect them to fight for you though- their goals lie in shedding the least amount of blood possible.

If you are in need of counsel, aid, or guidance, seek them out! You'll know them by the spiral they wear and their introduction to you.

Why Didn't Lapis Invite The Lightsworn to Breakfast?

Because Arcturus's Armor is Too Shiny 7

Because Eoin Wasn't in Town 56

Because Ym'Gol Would Have Eaten all the Bacon 21

Because the Lightsworn are Afraid of Daylight 49

Local Druid Presumed Dead After Grove Burns Down for the Dozenth Time

Tragedy has struck Maplewood as one of the residents, a druid named Zylrie, is presumed dead following a mysterious fire that ravaged the ancient grove she and other druids tended. The incident occurred late last night, sending plumes of smoke into the sky and drawing the attention of worried townsfolk. According to eyewitness accounts, Zylrie was seen rushing toward the blaze just moments before the grove was completely engulfed in flames. Despite efforts from a few brave villagers to follow, the heat and intensity of the fire proved too great, forcing them to retreat. "She went in

there without a second thought, like the grove was calling her," said a local farmer. "She's probably dead, but that's Maplewood for you," one resident stated, reflecting a sentiment of resignation in a town that has seen its share of misfortune. The cause of the fire remains unknown. -Thaddeus Roth, Local Reporter



In a beautiful show of inclusivity and understanding, or perhaps desperation for coin, Arcturus was spotted preaching about the value of self-love in exchange for a donation to the Temple.

Aurelius Magnusus, known around town for being a certain kind of special, sought someone to marry him to himself last week. After being turned down by several Septons and chosen, Aurelius found himself at the Temple asking Arcturus to perform the ceremony. While Arc initially was resistant, the draw of payment was too much and he proceeded to give possibly his quickest sermon on the beauty of love and marriage. Aurelius thanked him profusely for his wisdom and walked off, happily married to himself.

"Well, that happened" Arcturus was heard saying. Shortly after the ceremony, he was overheard talking to [redacted] about his plans to summon a Sky

Beast, which is actually much more interesting than the Aurelius story. Apparently, Arcturus

Arcturus Marries a Man to Himself

believes that by summoning a Sky Beast he can get parts from it to do- something? The reasoning was not made clear in the conversation that we absolutely did not eavesdrop on, but could hear quite clearly while eating potatoes in our office.

Perhaps this is related to Arcturus being out of town when the Hallowed Chantry appeared; while he initially seemed disappointed, maybe this is actually a ploy to draw it out of hiding again by causing danger to the town and those around it? Perhaps he misunderstood what information was shared between the Illuminated and those that entered the Chantry, thinking that he can somehow help with the Veilwalker threat by risking having a Sky Beast turn into one? No matter the thought process it is sure interesting to hear Arc preach about how it is important to love oneself one minute, and then plot to bring about possible mass hysteria the next. Perhaps someone should give him a hug.

