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A Lifestyle Paper for the Townsfolk of Maplewood

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!

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Opposites Attract

Town-wide Manhunt Revealed as Lover's Spat

Who would have thought that the noble and chivalrous Arcturus, a Chosen of the Knight, would find himself entangled in a love affair with the enigmatic, oft-misunderstood Pitohui, a Chosen of Darkness? It's a tale as old as time itself and yet somehow, it's entirely new.

A recent encounter at the Jenny between Arcturus and Pitohui was charged with sexual tension as onlookers goosenecked, curious to see what they were talking about. Eyewitnesses report a palpable spark between the two that transcended their alignments, but lacked any answers as to what could be causing the sudden ceasefire. It is rumored that there could perhaps be an

Enthrallment enchantment at play.

Their romance has been fraught with drama. A recent lover's quarrel escalated to a town-wide chase just a couple months ago, with Pitohui narrowly escaping a deserved death at [redacted]'s hand. Despite the near-miss, the adventurers seem surprisingly willing to extend an olive branch to the villain who recently slaughtered healers in front of Arcturus' own temple.

Public opinion on the budding romance is mixed. While some townsfolk are cautiously optimistic, others remain skeptical.

"It's a strange time to be alive," mused local bard Thaddeus Roth. "I never thought I'd see the day when Arcturus and Pitohui were an item."

Another nearby townsfolk added, "I just hope they don't accidentally interrupt my sleep again. Their love story is certainly dramatic, but it's getting a bit too real."



Pitohui also engaged in a lengthy conversation with Titus who promptly promised to protect him from [redacted], a development that seems to be causing friction in his own relationship with Poppy. She has not been seen around him much the past month and though Titus seems unbothered, rumors state that Poppy has been spotted laughing and disappearing with Lapis in the woods for hours at a time to "discuss druid stuff".



As the story unfolds, one thing is certain: the unlikely pairing of Arcturus and Pitohui is a force to be reckoned with. Will their love conquer all? Or will it lead to their mutual demise? Only time will tell.

Dear Readers,

I am writing to provide you with up-to-date information regarding the veilwalker infection. As many of you may know, I performed a large ritual on the lake, polluting it. This was intended to accomplish two things:

First, to slow down the veilwalker infection. Both the speed at which it moves, and the rate of infection itself.

Second, to force the veilwalker ichor to (slowly) come out of the lake and onto the shore where we can attempt to get rid of it using rituals and blightfyre.

The former seems to have been accomplished. No veilwalkers have attacked since the pollution occurred. The latter remains to be seen.

Before I took action, I met with the Constables, the Maplewood Militia, Vargainen contacts, and several adventuring parties to discuss my plan. All provided me with the utmost support, and it was only with their support that I made this choice.

I know many of you may not agree with what I've done. I get it. The lake is the heart of our home. This is why I had to do what was done. This was a hard choice to make, and I did not take it lightly. Ultimately, this seemed like it was our only shot at taking back our lake from the veilwalker infection. Polluting the lake may have been the thing that saved it, and I know that together we can begin to restore the lake to its former glory.

Supportive Listening

Provided by
Shandeen Maris,
Chosen of the
Stranger

**Specializing in Ghost Problems and
Grief Resolution**

*Free and Available by Appointment
Confidentiality Guaranteed*

To make things explicitly clear:

DO NOT DRINK THE LAKE WATER!!!

Please use independent wells and water sources! The lake will POISON you and there is still a risk of infection from veilwalker ichor.

Thank you,

Lucky of the Harbingers



Dearest Reader,

Buckle in bitches, you want the hot goss? You got it. Madam L here, two glasses of Vlean's finest wine (courtesy of E) in and ready to go.

Last month there was a costume contest in the Bazaar. This writer did not really pay much attention to it, beyond seeing P enter a Poppleganger in it as E, but apparently M won while dressed as P. C was disqualified for late entry, even though she did a great job dressing up as E by switching clothing with him in the middle of the field. C later got even, beating M in an archery contest. The sexual tension between these two could be cut with a spoon.

Speaking of sexual tension, can we talk about A and P who have apparently decided they are going to work together- does anyone else think this is a terrible idea? I mean, when has A ever had a good idea, and why is joining up with P, who just tried to stab M last month, a smart plan? Someone needs to have a conversation with this former septon, maybe they can get through to him better than the Knight did, who knows.

Veilwalkers - they suck, but we haven't seen them around nearly as much ever since L polluted the lake. You probably all already know about that, but like, that's awesome. Who would think that making something worse could actually help it? We all know Dragon Daddy is offering to cure people who are afflicted by this disease, but like, does anyone know how or why? We have thoughts and theories but would like to discuss.

M and A - are they actually divorced? Like, I know there was paperwork and everything, but from M's actions it doesn't seem like he was entirely serious about it because he's still treating her like they're married. Maybe he forgot. Has anyone attempted diagnosing him recently?

There was apparently some confusion last month as several people claim to have seen L lurking in the darkness and believing she was not dressed in pink, but was actually channeling her inner C dressed as a wraith. She seems to have survived even though she was brought down several times, because for some reason people must like her. We will note she was nowhere to be seen late Saturday night when a young lady came into the Jenny needing help getting a scorned wannabe-lover out of her home. Thank you, however, to all the ladies who did show up to help us handle that!

Also, like, this world is so huge and we are just a small part of it. *sips wine* Like, all of you adventurers have so much going on in your lives and that's great and all but has anyone like, left Maplewood recently? What in the seven hells is going on with Civen right now? Why are their Generals showing up and killing people over magical items? Not cool. Someone should have a job to look into that or something.

Though regarding Civinites, we have noticed that the Poppy Population is Popping off with an apparent ARMY of "Poppelgangers" that have been seen around lately. Recently one was even spotted with P and they can fool people for a short amount of time, but anyone who actually knows P catches on pretty quickly- they are usually nicer than the real thing.

Also regarding P, her and L have been seen sneaking off into the woods discussing "Druid Shit"™ per P. I personally, as P's BFFL, do not believe her, as she has never shown interest in anything to do with being outside or touching dirt. That's why she has gardeners. So, what are they really up to? Does T know about it? Only one way to find out... pester P incessantly until she relents and explains herself.

Last month there was a High Fae around town. Many adventurers were seen going in to chat with it, some coming out speaking different languages; some even finished talking with it and then immediately started trying to kill their friends. Some smarter adventurers, like A, just stood by as moral support (read: learning everyone's fears). Remember people, don't fuck with the fae or something like that per my entire group, but eh, do as I say not as I do I guess.

Yours truly,

Madam Mapleleaf

SEMI ANNUAL ADVENTURING COUPLE UPDATE

Daitasha- With the return of Asha to town, it appears that these two are actually a real item! They were seen wandering the town together or at least Asha was seen, as Daitoro just kind of blends into the night.

hanging out with Lapis more. It appears that he takes his duty as a Firekeeper very seriously, though it's unsure how exactly he does that when he disappears at the first strike against him.

Drarieon- I mean, there isn't really much to say about these two. Thaerion is...Thaerion. Draug is an ever-devoted husband who threatened to kill a Civen citizen if they left Maplewood. Just your average ordinary elf couple.

Lorelaz- Although Lorelei has multiple assassination attempts this year, it appears that their wedding is still on! It is rumored that Lorelei is planning on having a blue wedding dress, and the couple will be tying the knot by Lover's Rock soon. Hopefully they don't actually tie themselves together.

Evil[dacted]- It's unclear if these two even like each other due to the significant lack of public affection, though that could be a Vleanoan thing. Either way, they appeared to have no significant falling outs and fans are hopeful that they will have something to draw art about soon.

Micaptain- Despite the paperwork, it doesn't appear that Micah remembers that he divorced Arbor- or he's choosing to ignore the fact entirely. It's still unclear why this happened. Arbor, on the other hand, is proving that she is a strong independent woman who doesn't need a man.

Gercky- There have been no updates on this couple, and Gerard has not worked the inn in quite some time. Fans of murder mysteries are currently theorizing that Lucky actually had TWO reasons for poisoning the lake, one of which was body disposal...

Pitorus- Maplewood's newest good-boy meets bad-boy couple, spawning a new wave of fanfiction from the younger crowd. Some of our favorite titles are "Good is Sometimes Evil", "Bad Romance and Good Murder", "Light's Heros, Dark's Hunters", and of course the critically-acclaimed and extra spicy "Darkness in the (K)night".

Kytnar- Once again the least dramatic couple on the planet. We wish there was something more to say, but there isn't. According to Kyth, "I could give you some rambling bit about how relationships take hard work etc.etc., but honestly we just got incredibly lucky that we found each other and match so well."

Sablecule- Continuing to strive and thrive with their contract-bound love, though it appears that Abacus has found some new friends to hang out with on her off hours. It remains to be seen if they will also join the polycule.

Mahktori- People around town are starting to whisper about this couple, all saying the same thing: these two are the perfect rivals-to-lovers trope. First date: dinner and cards, second date: costume contest and archery competition, third date: stabbing Grak and a wedding?

Tippy- Titus has been heard confirming that these two are official, to the surprise of nobody in town at all. Not everyone seems to be supportive, however; someone claiming to be one of Poppy's closest friends was heard saying

Lapzo- After his breakup with X'Nor this spring, Enzo has rebounded and has been seen

"[she] really deserves so much better".

From the southern region- It's rumored that a very unusual occurrence was witnessed involving a well-known Chosen of the Knight and some Skybeasts. These celestial beings, usually thought of as forerunners to the Dark Three, have been the cause of much chatter and fear over the past few weeks.

The exact circumstances of the resulting battle remain vague, but eyewitness accounts indicate it was an apocalyptic event occurring somewhere between Maplewood and the Civen border. From the few accounts received, a blinding flash was followed by a deafening crash at about 11 PM on November 1st.

Reporters claim that Arcturus, ever the reckless charismatic adventurer, summoned or otherwise brought about these powerful entities. The motive behind such an action remains shrouded in mystery, with some theorizing he may have been seeking a way to harness their immense power in combat against the growing threat of the Veilwalkers.

While this incident has driven panic and raised concern in the Freelands for their southern neighbors, the general opinion in the area is rather cynical. Local celebrity Thaddeus Roth stated, "Arcturus is well-known as a hellion. This is really just another ill-conceived escapade to have some respite from his temple. Have you talked to people lately? They are all scared... he's probably offering so much therapy he just needed to unwind."

Fortunately, no sightings of Skybeasts have been confirmed in the wide adjacent regions, which means the immediate threat can be considered neutralized. Yet, all this does is raise more pressing questions: if a bored Chosen of the Knight can just summon them at will, how many others have been brought to this plane? As more evidence underpinning the facts slowly surfaces, it is expected that a clearer picture of what really happened in each case will come to view, and SIP will be there to report on all of it.

-From the reporters at Special Investigative Press

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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.

Two years have flown by and with each passing day, Steamy Ink Publishing continues to chronicle the lives of our vibrant community. We've shared tales of adventure, intrigue, and the everyday struggles of our neighbors. From the heroic deeds of local adventurers to the heartwarming stories of the people who call Maplewood home, we have always aimed to keep our readers informed and entertained.

This year has been challenging on that front. The Veilwalker threat looms larger every day. Despite the best efforts of our heroes they persist, leaving us to wonder if there is any hope for the future. With their ability to infect and corrupt, they forced us to confront the darker side of existence. It says everything is hard- give into the void and be happy. Become one with them and find peace. Make all of your anxiety and worries disappear.

As the editor-in-chief, I find myself grappling with these thoughts daily. I sit at my desk, surrounded by the creeping tendrils of the Entity's influence, and I wonder: What will become of me? Will I succumb to the void and free myself of my burdens, or will I find a way to overcome this? How can I keep my readers informed if I myself cannot piece together what is happening to my own mind?

Despite the growing darkness, we remain committed to our mission here at SIP. We will continue to document the events unfolding around us and share stories of hope and resilience. Somewhere, a medium has helped another wayward spark move onto the well. Somewhere, an investigative journalist is wandering the woods looking for answers that will bring a glimmer of light in the dark. Somewhere, a Septa has found an unlikely friendship. Somewhere, a Chosen of the Knight is calling down beings of incredible power at risk to their own life just to see if they can find a way to help.

Somewhere, someone is reading this message safe and surrounded by their loved ones, their peace a testament to the sacrifices of others.

As the future unfolds, we can only pray that good will triumph over evil and that our community will emerge stronger than ever.

Because that's what we do in Maplewood. We persevere.

Best Wishes,

Poppy Katullin

CEO and Editor-in-Chief, Steamy Ink Publishing