

Special Investigative Press™

Ogres:
Expert Describes
How to Outsmart
These Foes

Half a page of Dots:
If you know what it is for, have
fun!
If you don't, it isn't for your
enjoyment.

LOCAL:
Avatar of the
Craftsman Leaves
Book in
Spinning Jenny

**The Freelands
News You Care
About**

Special Investigative Press™ is a division of Steamy Ink Publishing® dedicated to delivering timely, accurate, and accessible information to the Freelands community. We strive to empower individuals with knowledge that can impact their lives, by providing in-depth investigations into global events with potential local consequences. Through our commitment to journalistic integrity and community engagement, we aim to foster a more informed and knowledgeable citizenry in the Freelands.

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The Sable Company Threat: Armstrong Admits to Entity Dealings

A stunning and deeply unsettling development has emerged concerning the Sable Company, a mercenary group previously known for its esteemed reputation. Their own Armsmaster, known as 'Pretty Boy', has openly admitted to dealings with the Entity – a malevolent force believed to crave the world's destruction.

Eyewitness accounts from Maplewood describe Pretty Boy discussing the Entity speaking directly into his mind. This follows months of his obsessive pursuit of so-called "Veilwalker Books," texts rumored to transform readers into Veilwalkers upon reading them. While the existence of such texts remains unconfirmed, it appears Pretty Boy's fascination with otherworldly matters has culminated in what he believes is direct contact with this destructive source.



Adding a horrifying dimension to this bizarre situation is Pretty Boy's critical role as Sable's Armsmaster. Entrusted with the company's formidable arsenal, his alleged communication with the Veilwalker hivemind raises serious concerns. One must question what influence these purported conversations might have on Sable's weapon stockpiles, their deployment strategies, and the safety of those who engage with or oppose them. Even if Pretty Boy is not actually having communication with the Entity, his delusions and obsessions make his position a liability for the company.

Ultimately, this revelation casts Sable in a terrifying new light, transforming them from a respected mercenary company into a potential conduit for unimaginable calamity. The stability of their leadership and the very real danger they now pose are concerns that demand immediate attention.

Forge Your Foe: Understanding the Craftsman's Unsettling Gift

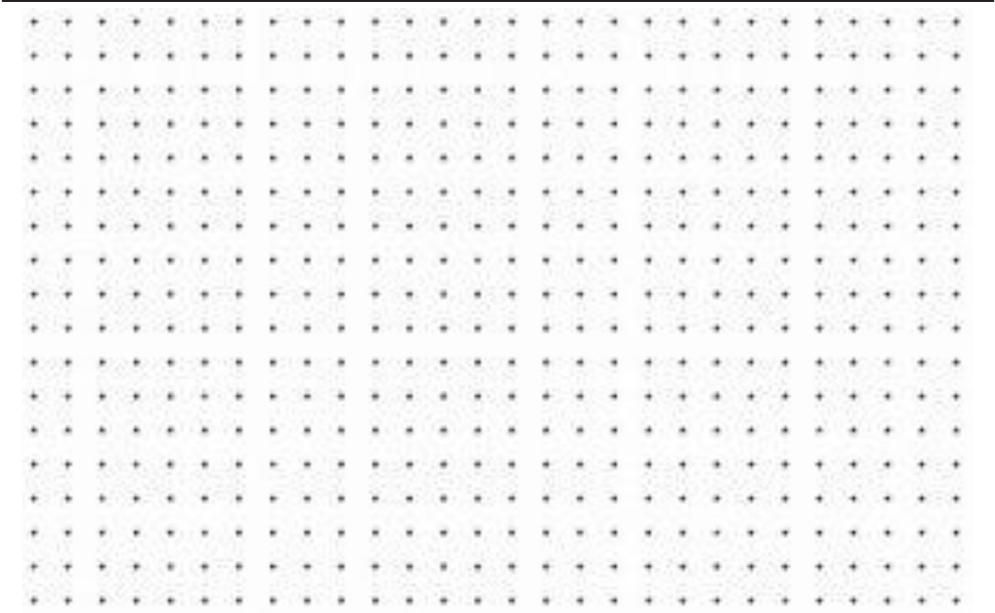
Maplewood is now at the center of a troubling development concerning the Veilwalkers. Last month, an Avatar of the Craftsman, Maudry – known to some as “Cordon's Foreman” – left a significant book at the Spinning Jenny. All residents and adventurers are urged to examine this text carefully.

Intelligence reveals that the Veilwalkers are constructing structures identified as shrines across the region. These are not simple edifices; they are believed to be the cornerstone as they prepare for a substantial increase in their power. Access to these shrines will be heavily guarded, and multiple Veilwalkers are expected to be present at the shrines at once. Each shrine will display three distinct symbols, copies of which can be found in Maudry's book. A method exists to eliminate one of these symbols each time a shrine is encountered. Once this method is used and a symbol is destroyed, its influence is permanently negated.

Sources suggest that these shrines are directly

linked to the evolution of the Veilwalker threat. The symbols present on the shrines, and the decisions made regarding their destruction, will directly shape the characteristics and abilities of new, more formidable Veilwalker variants. Disturbingly, Maudry indicated that there will not be sufficient resources to destroy every symbol on these shrines. This means that a complete prevention of the Veilwalker evolution appears impossible; those who undertake the task of destroying shrine symbols must carefully consider the long-term implications of their choices.

Collaborative discussion and strategic planning regarding these symbols is very important. The decisions made during encounters with these shrines will have a direct and lasting impact on the nature of the challenges Maplewood and its protectors will face in the future. Collaborative discussion and strategic planning regarding these symbols is very important, considering the limited resources. It is not recommended for anyone to approach these shrines or undertake the task of destroying a symbol alone.



Maplewood Bazaar: 15?? - 1603

It is with heavy hearts (and heavier snow) that we announce the tragic collapse of the Maplewood Bazaar.

At approximately 8:45 PM on February 26th, 1603, the roof gave way under the weight of the snow atop the building. The sudden collapse came as a shock to many, as the old building had survived through orc hordes, ratfolk infestations, high winds, and brawls over morning coffee. Witnesses say the collapse was loud, dramatic, and partially blamed on a wandering chosen of the Elemental, who "may have prayed for a minor tremor."

In the fall, many businesses were lost, including but not limited to: The SIP printing press, The Pheasant Plucker, Sable Company's business headquarters, The Craftsman's Guild, and the entirety of the Temple of the Sept. Please keep those who have suffered greatest in this loss in your prayers, and consider passing them a spare coin to aid in a speedy recovery and relocation.

The bazaar is survived by a single support beam, a pile of wet banners, and at least one ghost who refuses to relocate.

Thank you to those of the community that could attend the funeral rites and memorial speeches held in April. A most impacted mourner said: "I didn't even know this thing came down. I just heard there was going to be cheesecake at the funeral." Individuals unable to attend the funeral who are still needing to grieve are advised to seek out Silor Sterling for any additional memorial needs.

In lieu of flowers, mourners are asked to please send support beams.

-Silor Sterling, Funeral Director and Amateur Necrologist

Who is the ACTUAL Mayor
of Maplewood?

Lucky

100

Gharr

160

Thaddeus Roth



120

No More Guesswork: Master Veilwalker Symbols Now!

Sick of marathon sprints back to the inn for that one blessed book the esteemed Sept so generously bequeathed? Eyes glazed over trying to decipher scribbles that look suspiciously written by a squirrel high on rosemary? Is your symbol recall slower than a snail in molasses?

Fear not, intrepid adventurer! For a few paltry coin, SIP will give you the key to unlocking every Veilwalker Shrine Symbol. Finally, a portable resource that won't leave you feeling like you need a inebriated rodent and a linguistics degree! Get yours today!

Veilwalker Symbol Field Guide

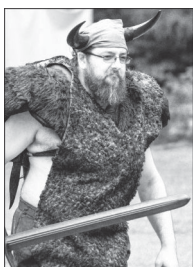
	<i>Can cast Anti-Magic Aura</i>
	<i>Can add 'Humorless' at the end of Compulsion spells</i> <i>Can now cast 'Divine Silence and Memory' spells</i>
	<i>Spells do not need incantations</i>

*Please reach out to
any member of SIP
to purchase*

OOG: Shifts 1&2, sorry that we're sleeping- complete the form found in the inn and send it back via courier and we will send it to you with a bill (or find Shauna/Poppy between shifts)

Normal orcs are enough of a problem to the passing traveler, but there are other creatures on the roads that present a slightly different trouble. One of these to be aware of is Ogres. Bigger and less intelligent than orcs they possess an incredible strength that can quickly overwhelm the unprepared. They are brute force incarnate, throwing giant stones capable of crushing a being flat and wielding massive weapons in both hands.

They can look like orcs, but with much more massive shoulders and horns sprouting out of their heads. Typically they will be wielding a big, massive sword, a big massive rock, or both the sword and the rock at the same time. If you see the horns, you know this is an ogre.



Ogres are not creatures of subtlety and not particularly great at paying attention. Any normal traveler might have a decent chance of just walking around them, provided they don't make threatening gestures or the

Ogres: What Every Traveler Should Know

ogre isn't hungry. If there are other orcs about though... they will just follow them into combat. Apparently they can speak some kind of language somehow, but it always seems to be filled with a lot of hand gestures filled with fists smacking open hands. DO NOT try to explain rock, paper, scissors to them. They will always choose rock and it WILL kill you.

Spells can be frustrating against ogres as they seem to just shrug some of them off. This writer has never definitively proven that they have any kind of immunity to compulsion, but sometimes that first spell that hits them just doesn't register. Pin never works, and weakening never works, but sometimes disengage will after the first hit of magic. Perhaps it's the lack of intelligence or the raw bloodlust when they are finally riled. If you are going to cast spells at an angry ogre, make sure it's curse and make sure you have a big weapon to knock them down before they crush you into paste.

-Shelaz Snowpike, Danger Expert

Tired of Tomorrow Being a Total Mystery?

Ever wonder what chaos (or destiny) awaits you just around the corner?

Then prepare to have your curiosity piqued by the one, the only... **THE CRIMSON EYE!** This enigmatic individual claims to possess the uncanny ability to glimpse the threads of time and unravel the secrets of your future.

Is It Genuine Foresight? A Connection to the Gods? Or Just a Really, Really Good Guess?

The townsfolk are divided! Some scoff, calling it smoke and mirrors. Others swear by his cryptic pronouncements, claiming he knew about their deepest secret, found their dog, and identified their true love's initials so quickly they were able to marry the next day!

Dare to Flirt With Fate:

Come witness the spectacle and hear the pronouncements that will send shivers down your spine and raise your eyebrows sky-high! Will **The Crimson Eye** reveal your hidden talents, predict your fate, or offer an actually accurate weather forecast? Whether you're a wide-eyed believer or a hardened cynic, a visit with **The Crimson Eye** is guaranteed to be an experience.



The Future Is Calling... are You Brave Enough to Answer?

**Results may vary. May or may not involve actual future-telling. Side effects may include intense curiosity, uncontrollable giggling, and a sudden urge to gamble life savings.*