

# Special Investigative Press™

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a Specimen

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.

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

Poppy Katullin, CEO  
Servius Katullin, COO

Advertising Inquiries:  
Lorelei Levanestra,  
CFO/Glitter Extraordinaire

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



## The Fall of the House of Van'Ironsbane

*Dulzun and Psy Seen Leaving Maplewood; Pitohui Still at Large*

House Van'Ironsbane, Van'Ironsbane. Still others known for championing the term "Freelands for Freelanders", is no more. Following a town-wide chase at the end of September, the Adventurers who frequent Maplewood brought Pitohui Van'Ironsbane and his associates to his knees, almost completing a final rest ritual on Van'Ironsbane before a horde of undead attacked those performing it and he was carried off by his comrades in the ensuing confusion.



So what exactly happened that a group of 20+ adventurers chased down three men specifically to send their sparks to the well? Nobody appears to be able to give a concise answer for that. While some claim Van'Ironsbane was involved in the torture of a Septon, others allege a long-standing feud between the adventuring community and

although SIP has been able to independently verify that former house members Dulzun and Psy were spotted along the western Freelands border, seemingly turning a new leaf by battling Darkness cultists who had invaded a small community. They have declined to speak to any reporters that have managed to find them, but have stated that they no longer associate with Van'Ironsbane.

No matter the reason, several minutes into a Final Rest ritual on Van'Ironsbane a large horde of undead, seemingly sent to save him, marched down upon the adventures and caused a diversion. This provided time for his associate Dulzun to jump in and drag him away. What became of them after that is a mystery to most, speculation.

The future of Pitohui Van'Ironsbane, then, is uncertain. How will he show his face with nobody to back him up? Has he built an undead army that will keep him safe? Will he be able to stay hidden, with so many adventurers looking to end his life? The Freelands anxiously await answers to these questions as the absence of Van'Ironsbane continues to stir controversy and speculation.

With the upcoming wedding planning season, there is often confusion on whether one is looking for a Septon or a Chosen. The truth is, this is the Freelands. Anyone can marry you. But if you're insisting on being fancy, here's a quick reference sheet.

**Septon/Septa:**

- Titles given by mortals to religious leaders, associated with temples or congregations
- In Vlean, all nobles must be Septons
- Represent the Sept as a whole, and not individual Gods.

**Chosen:**

- Individuals favored by a specific God
- Dedicated to a single deity
- Act in the interest of their patron deity

**Relationship between Septons and Chosen:**

- Some individuals are both Septons and Chosen, some are only one or the other.
- When acting as a Chosen, an individual follows the specific ideals of their patron deity
- When acting as a Septon, they represent the broader ideals of the Sept

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# 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.

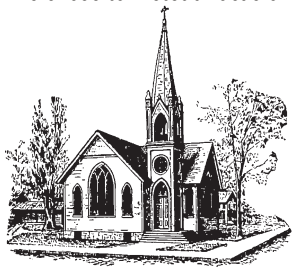
-Scholar Chelby Wright

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

Evangelista Wedding and Event Planning, a Civen business renowned for its impeccable service to brides and attention to detail, has been rocked by a horrifying incident. While personally assisting in planning the wedding of Lorelei Levanestra and Shelaz Snowpike, the owner Evangelista suddenly stood up and said "We also plan funerals" before stabbing Levanestra in the chest. Diagnosis showed that Evangelista was under a form of compulsion and was in fact an assassin sent to "dispose" of Levanestra; why or who put out the hit is still in question.

Before the incident, Evangelista was very professional in his planning. He had picked out several places in the town that he felt had "good vibes and less blood on the ground" as a spot to tie the knot. While he did raise his eyebrows at a high elf and a Dellin Chieftain getting married he chose to instead focus on the things the two

had in common, like their shared inability to not be in each others presence without having a mental breakdown.



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

# Evangelista Planning: Where Romance Meets Homicide

Evangelista Wedding and Event Planning offers several different packages at affordable prices, ranging from a simple hand fasting to elaborate floral arrangements and arbors with a Septon straight from Epidaurus. They also have an add-on security package which is "just for the wedding and not for the planning sessions", as was explained by Evangelista after the incident.

"That guy sucked, he fucking stabbed me" Levanestra stated in comment. "I just wanted to have a nice wedding without any murder or bloodshed, and I couldn't even get that with my first planning session".

Overall, Evangelista Wedding and Event Planning seems to be a wonderful business with inclusive and well-rounded professionals, but maybe diagnose your planner before you begin talking to them. 4/10 stars.

## Freelands Rebuilding: The Maplewood Bazaar

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

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."



## Path Walkers: at your service.

A new 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.

# The Veilwalker Curse: What We Know

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.

## 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.