



banana (GM): *grabs those elf queen 5s* gimme gimme



Skeleton: test



banana (GM): the Conqueror, however, floats. an advantage from the emperor of all west and east, roland i liberator, is yours to at some point realise



VoxPVoxD: [in terminator voice] Your fives. Give them to me.



Crion: are we rolling lcon today



banana (GM): in fact, yes. although we can't fit plotting rolls in EVERY session i'm aiming for Many so before we get properly started, everyone including ferrinus please add to the melange



Crion: rolling 2d6 ELF QUEEN, CONFLICTED

(6 + 1)

= 7



banana (GM): she's back



Crion: rolling 1d6 ORC LORD, CONFLICTED

(5)

= 5

lol



Xarvrax: rolling 3d6 The Five Positive.

(4 + 6 + 5)

= 15

Dagrons.



Placidus: channeling The Wizard King




banana (GM): it appears dragons will continue to f- oh.
oh.
well, okay




Zarick: rolling 2d6 the five positive

(5 + 5)

= 10

 **Crion:** Imao

 **Zarick:** rolling 1d6 conqueror conflicted


(2)


= 2

rolling 1d6 wizard king negative

(4)

= 4

 **banana (GM):** jesus christ; noted

 **Skeleton:** rolling 2d6 the one-eyed king

(1 + 2)


= 3


rolling 1d6 the diabolist


(5)


= 5

hrm.


 **Placidus:** dragons are so fail


 **Crion:** yes!!!


 **Placidus:** d i a b o l i s t


 **banana (GM):** i'm not sure what 3x the five conflicted means off the top of my head but it's likely to be out of the ordinary


in general i'm going to treat paired/sets of rolls like that, as events of Greater Power rather than greater number

 **Crion:** this is probably good, for sanity reasons

 **banana (GM):** well, that's enough plotting rolls for a while

 **Crion:** are you doing that with previous Elf Queen Dual 5s

 **Placidus:** wouldn't it be better to just excise all dragons from the game, though

 **banana (GM):** yes.

are you aware of the Drill, ferrinus?

slash the deal



Skeleton: which one



banana (GM): with how these work. basically, when there's a plotting roll - or rollset - i will sometimes take them and make stuff out of them, or, if a player wants to, they can call upon one at a point that seems relevant



Skeleton: oh yeah, yes



banana (GM): to be like ok, due to my advantage here, we can deal with that thing or w/e
i think i might immediately take over these King and Diabolist ones and leave the rest hanging for now.
okay, so



Ghol, Going East: *hordes all Elf Queen 6s to get a date when we finally get to the Court of Stars*



Skeleton: well, enjoy



Kon: *disapproves, wargly*



Skeleton: didn't realize kon was a warhammer fan, but really it makes sense



Placidus: warghammer



banana (GM): It's midday in San Meat, and the race is on to recover your appetites.

Kon's Men have been reunited at the Gut & Bowel, or just outside it- Travis' beacon is currently sending a plume into the clouds and the wizard himself has been unceremoniously dumped onto the whiteslate roof.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol's irrepressible teen spirit (and stomach) are back in top form in no time, which is good, because he's the group's first contestant.



banana (GM): There are a number of outstanding issues. Ghol's returned unable to track down the green-capped necromancer - which means he's still loose in the town! Someone ought to do something about that *immediately*. Also, there are only one-and-a-half days to the Opening Barbeque.

Speaking of Ghol's stomach, he's definitely feeling that head cold now- a recurrence of the swamp fever, like Master Ingher suggested? It's very similar to the ailments that went around and around the camp like the droning mosquitos. But it *hasn't* affected his appetite.



Placidus: Rather than think about food or how anything smells or look at anything or generally acknowledge any empirical particular of this state of affairs, Placidus is doing math. He seems to be working with ratios or fractions. He keeps crossing them out and writing smaller ones, until eventually the equation reduces wholly out of existence leaving him with nothing to reduce but the equal sign. A slash mark cuts through the symbol vertically, and then he puts a little box around the four-armed cross he's drawn and calls it good.



banana (GM): When the beacon winks out as the last of you arrive, Travis doesn't seem inclined to have anyone else help. Presumably he's sworn a personal revenge on the orb, because he takes it back inside to Investigate.



Vraknaar: Wizards. There's just no understanding them.



Placidus: Makes perfect sense, really. Orbs are deeply personal.



Ghol, Going East: Yeah, that sucks. But on the other hand: new bow! Well, old bow. But new to him, now, at this point in time. It's a big, imposing black thing, much like the one this handsome fellow and

credit to his kind is drawing back: http://img4.wikia.nocookie.net/__cb20130123122220/zo-rdziemia/pl/images/a/a9/Lurtzes.jpg



Placidus: Orcs, however, are deeply personally revolting.



banana (GM): There are plenty of bows hung above the mantels in San Meat, but most of them don't look like they were hammered out of sheet metal...

The afternoon is yours, but you probably want to focus it. I mean, you COULD just take the rest of the day off- it was a pretty nasty mess in that abattoir.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol, of course, is playing it cool -- just casually wearing this bow, you know, like you do. Just casually taking it off his back every couple minutes and testing the draw weight. Just casually mentioning to Kon that he REALLY needs to find a good fletcher to get some arrows.

This? Oh, you know. Just a bow. Just a bow used by hard, serious men, for hard serious business. No biggie.



banana (GM): Did you know that you can feed an entire troop with this thing and a few hours a day..? Well, now you do.



Placidus: Oh, Ghol got a bow. That's nice. It was kind of odd that he didn't have one to begin with, honestly.



Xarvrax: As usual, Xarvrax doesn't care about weaponry, who needs them when you've got claws and can bend reality to your will?



Vraknaar: Vraknaar might laugh at or tease Ghol at some other time, but he mostly seems to be going through alternating fits of brooding or anger. "We need to track down that necromancer. Before the Games start."



Ghol, Going East: He's also found his shirt, at some point, but he's not wearing it again. Especially not when flexing the bow. Mid-day heat and all that.



banana (GM): The streets which you're apparently just hanging out on are subdued. There are more tourists than ever, but they're all discussing bad news - the orcish invasion, the necroterrorist attack. Are these things aberrations, a new phase in the war? Or as the priests claim, omens of Games so powerful that although you paid for the whole seat, you'll only need the edge?



Xarvrax: "Well, if you've got a better idea than punching people until we punch the right one, I'd love to hear it. Otherwise, that's all we've got right now."



banana (GM): The only other competitors visible around town this afternoon are a bunch of gnomes (and their Shambling Thing), who're apparently preparing for unexpected culinary surprises with a tour of the city's spiciest ethnic restaurants.



Ghol, Going East: "I agree," Ghol says, sighting down the bow for like, the fifth time since they got back to the inn. He's picked up a couple arrows somewhere, but he's smart enough not to just, tense a bowstring with an arrow for kicks in the middle of a crowd.



Placidus: Placidus, finally having reached a point where his formulae were more uncomfortable to think about than all this meat, has started wandering around looking for gamblers. Gamblers are the closest thing to honest mathematicians you can find in most corners of the world. If we can find out what the commonly accepted odds are on all the various teams in this year's Games, we can figure out who our greatest threat is.



banana (GM): To find the necromancer, you COULD punch people until information falls out, though it might not help your rep. Or you could look for clues and leads, or cast magic spells, or get lucky...



Xarvrax: We're already the "fight eaters" I feel if anything, it would help our rep to punch people.



banana (GM): There's also the option of just beginning the competition with this hanging over everyone's heads, at which point horrific tragedy is literally inevitable.

Now, gamblers you **can** find. Remember the man who Xarvrax pointlessly beat up and stole the room of?



Placidus: They're all sort of blurring together.



Kon: That wouldn't do at all. Kon is still sniffing here or there, annoyed he couldn't track the scent from the abattoir.



banana (GM): Among the other irrelevancies Capel got out of this one was a description of the city's shadiest corner and the 'password' required to access its dice rooms. You're supposed to seek "a kiss in the shadows".



Kon: He's also keeping one eye on Ghol's bow antics. Being proud is one thing, but he's getting close to drawing too much attention to himself. The Movement might no longer be searching for them officially, but Kon doesn't quite trust Estella to give up so easily.

He's seen how she treats wargs.



Placidus: "A kiss in the shadows" sounds suspiciously like the suspicious thing that suspicious businessman said to us (suspiciously) before the mess with the meat monsters.



Kon: Kon will fetch the cats, then--



Placidus: NO!



Kon: *warg laugh*



banana (GM): That was "The promise of a kiss is as good as silver". The two secret underworld phrases might be totally unrelated.



Placidus: Placidus was raised to think that if people were kissing in the shadows it was impolite to stare. Sometimes there's a higher calling than social graces, though, like assigning numbers to the values of things and people.



Ghol, Going East: Kissing? Hell yeah!



Kon: Down, boy.



banana (GM): So I'm hearing two ideas here: go find bookies, and track down the necroterrorist (somehow). Are you splitting up, or deciding?



Placidus: "If there's no lead on the necromancer we ought to not waste this time failing to prepare for the Games," Placidus says to the group.



Vraknaar: The latter seems more important, but the former we have leads for...



Ghol, Going East: Ghol has no real interest in the bookies; he's kind of avoided talking about it with the rest of the group because honestly he finds the whole thing unseemly.

I mean, if they want to do it, and it's useful, and they don't screw it up, well, it'd be helpful to have money down the line. But that whole racket is one of the things the Movement is right about. The rot in civilization.

Xarvrax: Necromancers or gamblers, both are punchable, and thus, Xarvrax is cool with either option.



banana (GM): I'll give you the tip that channeling the One-Eyed King while a necromancer is skulking around is likely to prevent you from avoiding the guy even if you wanted to.



Placidus: Placidus knows this, but actually saying so would require him to admit that he did that, and then explain what that meant.



Vraknaar: "If you say so. But if we find one, we're going to follow it. We can't let necromancy go unpunished."



Placidus: "I am confident that an opportunity may arise. Gambling and necromancy have a lot in common. It always comes back to bones, see."
He **does** sound confident.



Xarvrax: "That was awful, and you should feel awful."



Ghol, Going East: Necromancy and gambling DO both involve bones: you gotta know when to hold them; know when to fold them; know when to walk away; know when to run--



banana (GM): Bones: roll them. **Finding** the shadow quarter of town, which is considerably less than a quarter its size, is easy. You just go behind the crystal towers and the whitestone butchers, through the places where they drag the offal, to the roads near the forest where low shacks house those who sweep the floors of the priests, and the places they drink. I'd like a charisma check, however, to avoid Trouble in the area.



Kon: Kon finally rouses himself from idle sniffing and nudges Ghol until he puts away the bow.



Placidus: Does anyone have any Charisma to roll, possibly whilst being a scary dragon?



Xarvrax: I do!
I have nothing but Charisma to roll!



Placidus: Does anyone else...? No? Ugh.



Xarvrax: Can I use being a scary dragon to add 5?



banana (GM): As long as you describe it intimidatingly. DC 15



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 9

(13)+9

= 22



Ghol, Going East: Reluctantly, Ghol straps the bow back across his back after putting on his shirt. Annoying swamp-fever giving him some slight chills.



banana (GM): Write up scaring off some thugs, then!



Placidus: Ghol put his shirt back on? Placidus looks up at him while Xarvrax stomps around making godzilla noises. "Are you feeling well?"



banana (GM): The shadow quarter of San Meat is two blocks by three, and small ones. It's kind of cordoned off with washing lines, forming an unofficial boundary on the narrow streets - they're decorated with festive Games banners, however. Even crime here is meatcrime. The white elves of the

area have dulled, barely-luminescent eyes, and their clothes are drab, but from within squat buildings there's the muffled sound of revelry; even luxury. If you're into certain sorts of things.



Xarvrax: Leading the group through the town, it's easy to spot the people looking for trouble as they go, luckily it's fairly easy to intimidate people when you're a seven foot tall blue dragon, learning from one of the scariest beings in existence doesn't hurt either.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs and sniffs a little bit. "Think I might've gotten a cold from...someone."



banana (GM): Loiterers follow you with their eyes and feet. A woman runs her eyes up and down Vraknaar's scales, appraisingly; some wit tosses a tomato juuuust above Placidus' head to go thump on the other side of the street. Crowds threaten to gather, but Xarvrax just threatens, and they don't.



Vraknaar: Vraknaar knows his brother is terrible at avoiding trouble. Fortunately, he's pretty good at making trouble avoid him.



Placidus: Placidus: "Make sure to eat some fruit. Don't just fill up on meat." Kon doesn't seem worried about Ghol more than usual, does he? If not Ghol's probably fine.



Xarvrax: The Blue doesn't really have to try to scare normal people, and Xarvrax learned that most of it's in the attitude, if you act and look like you'll brutally murder someone for the slightest incident, they tend to back down.



banana (GM): Ghol's definitely developing the cough Ingher had. Funny thing is he was feeling scratchy *before* meeting the Scoutmaster.



Xarvrax: brutally*



Kon: Kon seems somewhat concerned, actually, though it's hard to tell if it's the cough or the bow, or both.

Something's been agitating him sense the two returned from their wander after the abattoir, and Ghol came back with that bow.

*since



Placidus: Ugh. Maybe this was a bad time to test out the null set. But with the recent spat of necromancy the terms weren't likely to be as favorable again for a long time... "Where'd you get that bow, anyway, Ghol?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol sort of hesitates. "Oh, y'know. Places."



Kon: Kon makes a single, low "harrumphing" sound in his throat.



Ghol, Going East: Which gets him a kind of guilty glare from the elf-orc teen, but he continues: "My old master tracked me down."



Placidus: Placidus wrinkles his nose, but he'll wait for Ghol to finish talking.



banana (GM): Here's an.. establishment, with rose banners above the many doors. The scent of beer spills into the street. A fat human is leaning on a sign saying P--TING - various possible interpretations come to mind. Inside the dark wood building are shadows and light, dancing and signing, rooms for rent - and that's just the part which isn't past heavy looking doors.



Ghol, Going East: "He was in one of the empty houses, across from the van Sammens. He came to give me my bow back...and get me to come back to the Movement." Ghol sighs. "I told him to shove it, basically. I have work to do."



banana (GM): Ghol's old master would be... an orc, presumably??



Placidus: "Weren't you expecting your old superiors to hunt you down and assassinate you?"



Ghol, Going East: "He respected that, and said the next time we met he'd probably have to kill me." It sounds cooler that way.



Vraknaar: "Guess you'll have to kill him first, then."



Ghol, Going East: "I was. The Orc Lord -- or at least Master Ingher -- is showing some leniency here." He pauses. "Kinda don't trust it."

To Vraknaar, a bit glumly: "That's how it works."



Xarvrax: "I could murder him instead if you like?"

"I am very good at murder."



Placidus: "Ah. Well, these things happen. It'll all sort out in the end." Placidus pops one of his little notebooks open and makes a tiny tickmark, muttering to himself that "a reckoning cannot be postponed indefinitely".



banana (GM): The fat man shifts a little across the street from the Establishment. Is it PUNTING? The safer PAINTING? But the little shop he's outside is entirely blocked in and you couldn't fit a canvas through that door. Maybe it's PANTING???



Ghol, Going East: Ghol laughs and shakes his head. "Thanks for the offer, Xarvrax, but it's my responsibility. It's an orc thing." Ghol's startled. That's the first time he's genuinely laughed in awhile. Maybe having friends you trust and can talk to about the things that are bothering you is a healthy, essential part of growing up, and he should do it more often...?

...Nah.



Placidus: "Right now our responsibility is to get into that establishment, so we can benefit from the insight and commitment to truth that only the morally bankrupt have to offer."



Vraknaar: "Well, you know what they say. Kill for a man, solve his problems for a day. Teach a man to kill..."



banana (GM): The big building with many doors continues to loom. This one doesn't have an ambiguously worded sign of a fat man. It just has Life going on inside.

*or a fat man



Kon: Kon wanders over towards the sign and the fat man, which for a warg means completely redirecting foot traffic in the area.



banana (GM): Big guy to very big wolf: "I'm in line."



Placidus: Placidus, as usual, follows in Kon's undertow, which neatly keeps him from getting stepped on.



Kon: Kon looks left, and then right, and then back at the fat man. Is there any evidence to corroborate his statement.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax enjoys redirecting foot traffic, though for him, it generally involves kicking someone.



banana (GM): Well, he IS waiting outside a screen door. It's closed and the inside is covered with paper, so you can't see inside.

 **Vraknaar:** That's redirecting traffic with your foot.

Fat man: Waving a sheaf of parchments.. how come he's not scared of Kon? Oh, right: "The Men, right? You're here for another ad run? Great work, but I'm first."


 **Placidus:** "Printing."

"The sign says printing."


Fat man: He moves aside a little to look. "Yes."

 **Vraknaar:** "What's printing?"

Fat man: "Isn't it supposed to say that? What's going on here."


 **Kon:** Mission accomplished. Kon yawns and plops down behind the fat man in line.


 **banana (GM):** rolling d20 let's see


()

= **9**


Printing, as I'm sure **some** of you will know, is the reproduction of manuscripts into copies - sometimes many - by trained scribes using specialised tools. New instruments and assistive devices are being created for the burgeoning industry rapidly, as the written word spreads in the Conqueror's wake - while the Federation thought of it as a task for priests, the Empire wants its soldiers and citizens to be more independent.


 **Placidus:** Monks still do it by hand in some places. Placidus learned to draw by painstakingly copying road maps and illustrations over and over again.

 **banana (GM):** Why Kon's waiting outside the print shop instead of the Shady Establishment I do not know however.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is still loitering about, taking in the sights -- he's never been to the Bad Side of Town before.


Eventually he scoots over to join the others.


 **Placidus:** Kon just wanted to put some fear in the heart of that fat man.


 **banana (GM):** It would've worked normally, but he's seen the flyers. Kon's portrayed as almost cuddly by Douz's magical renderings.

 **Kon:** Unfortunate.

 **Placidus:** Well, Kon **is** quite cute.

 **Kon:** The warg has no interest in Shady Establishments. He does, however, have an interest in how printing works. So he's here, and not there.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax is looking at the shady building, considering if it cause more trouble than it'd be worth to go kick the door in. Last time he did it, it was profitable... probably not so much this time.

 **Placidus:** Why not just... enter like a normal person?



banana (GM): Most of the doors are open! You can see quite a crowd gathered inside, drinking at low tables and throwing things into dartboards.

Also, soliciting.



Xarvrax: I'm a seven foot tall blue dragonman, since when am I normal?



Placidus: There's no excuse for poor effort.

Anyway, with Kon sticking around to see another instance of mechanization obsoleting a fine religious tradition, Placidus will just stroll into the saloon without warg protection.

He's so brave...



Kon: He is, perhaps, not doing himself any favors in the public image department by immediately curling up behind the fat man in line and dozing off. Or appearing to, at least.



Xarvrax: If the doors are open, I guess Xarvrax will just walk in, instead of breaking things.

He's not happy about it though.



banana (GM): OK. You all look unusual enough to draw stares and attention, but none of it's dangerous right now. There are, like, three bars, one for food+beer and two for beer+beer.



Vraknaar: The fine dwarven tradition of Doublebeer.



banana (GM): Low ceilings and big pairs of very shut doors indicate that there's more to the building than this outer bar, but it's got plenty of patrons.



Ghol, Going East: Kon can take care of himself. Ghol will wander in after the others. The grand sin of civilization...!



banana (GM): Yeah, there's plenty of that going on. It seems to be as much a meeting place as anything. Not a single whiterobed priest to be seen.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax never really understood beer, but I guess being a dragon makes it hard to get drunk.



Placidus: Are there guards posted at the shut doors? Any traffic in or out?



banana (GM): Bustling out from the bars and kitchen doors are waitstaff - a couple of dozen, some quite well armed. They keep an eye on things. If you wait a few minutes, a dwarf in spectacles followed by a huge war-painted man stroll up to one door and just, go through.

They're definitely watched, but not stopped.



Xarvrax: Time to go through that door.



Placidus: Let's follow that dwarf!



Vraknaar: Always follow dwarves.



Ghol, Going East: Going after dwarves has gotten people into a lot of trouble in the past. See: black elves.

But yeah let's go!!



Xarvrax: Pfft, trouble.



banana (GM): A number of servers drift in your direction, hard-eyed elves in leather with scabbards. Just before Xarvrax makes it to the doors, three of them blink out of existence and reappear between

you and it, teleporting.

Waiter: "Excuse me, sir. Staff area."



Ghol, Going East: Whoa.



Xarvrax: "What do I look like, a wizard? Of course I don't have a staff."



Vraknaar: "That is a neat trick."

"Bet it must come in handy for bouncing."



banana (GM): A lot of white elves can do that sort of thing with the elfpower, if they work at it. The suddenness of the way these ones move says that what they practice is: surprising people. Waiter: "nice joke, guy."

Waiter: "if you'd like some couscous or lamburger, please try that way. otherwise, leave."



Ghol, Going East: This is probably NOT the time when a hard, streetwise elf-orc of the world would pepper them with questions about that totally badass thing they just did.



Xarvrax: "I could always choose option three!"



Ghol, Going East: Man, what's this guy doing. Don't hit the bouncers...



Vraknaar: "You always choose option three. I don't know what you're going to do if someone gives you an ultimatum with more than two options."



banana (GM): You've definitely got the attention of the room, now. A score of staff and five times that many patrons are watching - will this be the evening's entertainment? It's a liiittle too early for a brawl, traditionally, but then again..



Xarvrax: Xarvrax looks at his brother, a brow raised, "Clearly I'll choose option four. It's a lot like three, but it involves even more fun!"



banana (GM): Waiter: "not sure your metaphor holds up, friend."

A couple more of them have drifted over. You could probably take a lot of these guys, but, should you?



Xarvrax: "I feel you're severely underestimating my ability to choose options."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol steps in. "Wow, that was super cool!" To the others: "You guys should get a table, I wanna talk to the teleporting dudes."

Meaningful look at cool dragon Xarvrax here. Please don't murder my elf bros, cool dragon dude.



Vraknaar: Vraknaar abruptly shoves his brother. "Knock it off."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax glares at everyone, "What? I wasn't going to hurt them."



banana (GM): The waiters look at Ghol, then at each other. Then at each other again with a kind of Hang On, Wait A Sec look.




Ghol, Going East: Yeah, I get that a lot.




Placidus: Placidus is rapidly developing a tune-out reflex whenever Xarvrax starts threatening people. It's like that old druids' tale, 'The Wolf Who Cried Boy'.

banana (GM): Most of them shrug and go back to serving tables. A guy that remains is like, "well shit.


 gotta do our part for brotherhood and unity."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Nice!


Waiter: "what can- What can I do for you, green star?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Green Star? I'm Ghol, Going East."


Kicephales: "Yeah, I can imagine. Kicephales Rhux, head barkeep."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax grumbles, "Why don't I ever get recognized except by evil people and stupid copper dragons?"


 **banana (GM):** To be fair, if Xarvrax comes *back* here, people would then recognise him.


 **Vraknaar:** kicephales rhux, brewing yeast


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Nice to meet ya, Kicephales." Ghol will shake hands here, if it's appropriate...? It is with humans. He's still new at the elf stuff.


 **Vraknaar:** elves fist bump, obviously

 **Ghol, Going East:** Orcs definitely fist-bump.


 **Vraknaar:** no, orcs do the jumping chest bump thing
when you have huge muscles it's the only real form of greeting

 **Ghol, Going East:** They do both. Sometimes simultaneously.

 **banana (GM):** Rhux smirks, but doesn't object. "We've got lager, mager, spidermead, applejack, pig trough spirit and the good stuff. This really does lead to a private area. What can I get anyone?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** Hrm. Alcohols...


rolling 1d20+2

() +2


= **12**


Ghol isn't too familiar with the alcohols.


 **banana (GM):** In recent years he might have been introduced to swamp stills. Swamp wine is a race between getting drunk and throwing up, and the warm glow rarely wins.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Applejack...apples are good. He'll have applejack, and everyone else can have what everyone else wants.


Besides, Placidus said something about getting more fruit in his diet, right? Ghol nods to himself. He's being healthy!


 **banana (GM):** Everyone ignored the idea of "go find a table", right, since in theory you aren't even here for a meal? Anyone else going to order?


 **Placidus:** Placidus doesn't want to drink on an empty and upset stomach. That slaughterhouse was so gross. "We actually didn't come to drink, we're looking for action on the Games."


 **Xarvrax:** Some kind of juice would be nice.

Kicephales: "Action and excitement there will be. Praise the name of Alabastien and whatever." He makes hand signals to one of the bars to pass on your order(s).


 **Placidus:** There was a drifter who came through the hostel the friars of Megistus ran up in the Glitterwood. Twitchy guy, always broke, always looking for and talking about 'action'. He and Placidus struck up quite a friendship until Placidus realized the man wasn't talking about physics, and that 'action' was a euphemism for 'gambling'.
Still, he learned a new word.


 **banana (GM):** It got a twitch, in fact, out of the headwaiter, but he didn't budge.
To Ghol, deliberately: "Are they with you? Am I meant to let you into the club? That's what the goddamn dreams are about now?"
"It feels like kind of a cutback on.. majesty."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol represses the urge to bristle at any slight on Her forbearance. Dude's got a point, and more importantly, they need his help. "She wouldn't ask if it wasn't important. We're looking for someone." Well, Ghol is at any rate. The way he says the second sentence makes it clear that someone is not a friend.
It's unlikely he's just going to be kicking around in the gambling halls...but maybe someone there would know where people like him go to ground.
Haha. Necromancy. Going to ground.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax makes no promises about kicking around. Kicking is his favorite activity after all.


Kicephales: Rhux seems to think this makes perfect sense. "Ah, well. Green star or no, you'll have to take that up with the VIPs." He steps aside and opens the big grey doors, bowing a little.


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Thanks, Kicephales." Considers shortening it to Kice, but that's a bit too familiar...? Anyway, he downs his applejack and--
--WHOA.
That's not very apple at all!


 **banana (GM):** It tastes sweet, though. It's *like* juice.


 **Vraknaar:** It's what an apple tastes like after you leave it alone for a few weeks!


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol thanks Kicephales again, and they'll be on their way -- too bad about not having time to chat about teleporting...

 **Xarvrax:** Ah yes, VIPs, the best people to kick.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Or, Ghol will realize soon after they've gone, what Kice meant by "Green Star." Was that a skin color joke??

 **Xarvrax:** Or the worst, since one is usually enough.

 **Placidus:** Who cares, we're finally inside.

 **banana (GM):** Down the corridor the wood is sheathed. Old velvet, ratty but still good for muffling sound.. there's a baffling series of inner rooms, but a line of gaslights down the ceiling leads you to a kind of foyer where, again, people sit around at tables drinking. The difference is that this time they're mostly not elves, and they're playing cards or wheel-spinning games, and the bar is heavily fortified

because of the cash kept behind it...

You can immediately recognise several members of the Steak Whisperers. Maury looks up, nods at you, then nods at the rest of the room.. nothing good or bad happens.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nods back.



banana (GM): From other parts of the huge building, above and around, come quiet noises. You get the sense of a lot of different enterprises going on in a shared space.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax looks around the room, shaking his head. Now he's not sure if he left Drakkenhall in the first place.



banana (GM): He's the only dragon in the room, though- no wait, Vraknaar just came in too.



Vraknaar: Dragon opinion on gambling is pretty evenly divided. It's a good way to acquire gold, but a better way to lose it. And dragon cunning doesn't help when you're playing cards against other dragons.



Placidus: What we're looking for is someone taking notes, someone with people around them who might not be running an actual game.



Vraknaar: Picking the odd man out should be easy. Who doesn't have any stakes visible? Who's more interested in games other than their own?



banana (GM): There's one of those in a niche just by the bar, and, it's Jenny. "Placidus! Kon!"



Ghol, Going East: I'm Ghol!!



banana (GM): Apparently these guys live in town after all. Their 'manager' is nowhere to be seen, though.



Placidus: "Oh, hello Jenny." Kon's not here, sadly.

Placidus goes over there to talk to her without shouting some distance away.



Ghol, Going East: Kon could of course wander in at any moment, as is his wont. Who knows how long tours of printing presses go these days, especially for wargs.



Placidus: Kon probably could've gotten us into the gambling den with no trouble.



banana (GM): whoops!!

Looks like Jenny forgot which of Ghol and Kon were which, just at the same instant that I did.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol, as official Kon rep, will wander over with Placidus.



Placidus: It's easy: one of them is the story's protagonist, and the other has a new bow.



banana (GM): The Steak Whisperer and apparent bookie has a little lamp in her alcove and a table covered in slips and, well, books. She's adding up columns of numbers, or at least looking at them and then writing down more numbers.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax has wandered off from the rest of the group, looking for someone taking bets for the games.



Placidus: Tallying and writing down numbers...! Be still Placidus's heart. "Oooh, that looks like fun. What are you caclulating?"

calculating

Jenny: "Takings, mate. Some of the guests are having a little side pool against the residents - who's the best judge of eaters? Townies or tourists? That sort of thing."



Placidus: "Are you giving odds on individual teams?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol's lost interest in this already. Instead, he's scanning the room. He's not expecting to see a frantic, whiny little green-clad elf guy...but it would be cool if he did.



Vraknaar: Vraknaar also thinks that would be 'cool', but then he might burn the building down or something, so maybe it's for the best if he doesn't.



banana (GM): Neither sees any candidates throughout the gaming room, but they might as well listen for interesting conversations. Wis checks?



Ghol, Going East: rolling 1d20+6

(17)+6

= 23

Jenny: "Are we ever. It's a good thing Ghol ain't with you or people would be changing some of their minds right now."



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 4

(11)+4

= 15



Placidus: It'd be rude to correct Jenny, Placidus is pretty sure. "I bet the Army leaving has shaken the field up a bit. Who are the favorites? Who's giving the best odds?"



banana (GM): "You'd like a run, would you? House odds right now.. we don't do breakdowns.. but here's the top line:"

Xarvrax hears random conversations, picks up the nature of the place. This is an antechamber to various other activities, mostly illegal, but there's one section of the room where the serious gamblers are in it - they're mostly here to play their card games, *not* to bet on the Hungry Games, which they don't care about. That's for the tourists.

Speaking of the tourists..



Placidus: Placidus nods. "Given how much our backers are taking us for, it's only good sense to work the margins."



banana (GM): Ghol's ear lights on this: "..pricey for the rooms, but they're secure. Guaranteed warning of any raids, not that we have to worry about that anymore. The complaint I want to take to Phil is the *stink*. Next door to me and it never goes away."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol tries to turn casually to figure out who said that. Probably wheels around in place more than he meant to.

Phil...

Seems like a good idea never to trust a man who puts "Legitimate" in front of his name on purpose.

Jenny: Jenny summarises the house odds to Placidus as follows:

Improv Sandwich - 3:2 Sam Chatwick of the "Barbarians", 4:1 Derivius of the Snakebelly Stretchers, Wash-It-Down favoured to win the doubles at 2:1.



Xarvrax: "No one is giving good odds for us, are they?"

Jenny: For Jawsculpting they've got particularly short odds for Aftershock and Thaumaturgustators, and have already paid out some to cover Team Army's withdrawal - Anthony was apparently experienced.



Vraknaar: "We're new here."



banana (GM): (Ghol, meanwhile, sees: It's the tattooed guy. Wasn't he one of the "Barbarians"? He's getting up from his table..)



Ghol, Going East: Is Legitimate Phil in the room...? A plan is beginning to form in Ghol's mind...

Jenny: Salubriot is 2:1 favourite for the 100-foot-sausage. Kon's at 5:1 there, with only Dull Nono of the whisperers also ahead (4.5:1). Gnome Team has particularly hilarious odds here - 90:1 odds for their candidate, Srea.



Placidus: Wow. Gno respect.



banana (GM): (Phil is not around, which appears to irk the barbarian. He's glancing back and forth and looks on the verge of leaving.)

Jenny: The Steak Whisperers are betting on *themselves* to win Taste Against Time, albeit at 4:1; only Far-archer of the "Barbarians" has decent odds at 6:1. They've given Travis 20:1, there.



Ghol, Going East: Then Ghol won't even bother with the first half of his plan. Instead he'll grab Vraknaar: "You remember that guy's name?" He discreetly indicates the dude.



banana (GM): Vraknaar's research will dredge up the name: Dog Hater.

*will have dredged up



Ghol, Going East: Ugh. Good thing Kon's not here.



Vraknaar: "Dog Hater. Could be trouble for you. Why?"



Xarvrax: "I'd like to make a bet for the Taste."

Jenny: That just leaves Night Steaks. They won't take bets for the Heartsblood Gorgers to win Night Steaks at *any* odds. You guys get 2.5:1, though, after the news of what happened at the abattoir.



Ghol, Going East: "Follow my lead." Ghol walks over to the table and, with some disdain: "You Dog Hater? Phil said you have issues with your accommodations."

Jenny: To Xarvrax: "Yeah, who's your poison?"



banana (GM): Maury: "Language."



Xarvrax: How much gold do I have?



banana (GM): Ghol's lucky, here, that Dog Hater hasn't been following the news. He hates, in fact,

wargs as well as dogs, and is not interested in Kon's Men. So he isn't immediately aware of who you are... "Our rooms are too small, el- halforc, and too smelly. My horse's stables stink less than this."

How much gold DO you have? Please keep track.



Vraknaar: we should each have 45, minus one i gave to the innkeeper
(25 starting + 100 divided by 5 that we got in axis)



Ghol, Going East: Idiot fucker. "Can't do anything about the room size. Can do something about the room smell. Which property are you at again?"



banana (GM): sounds right



Xarvrax: Is that including what I got from that guy in the inn?
Which was another 50?



banana (GM): "One floor up, number.. the one next to the stair." Dog Hater blusters. "Tell your boss Wastelanders and the Prince go way back! We won't be disrespected!"
That's right, Xarvrax is richer due to extortion - but you'd better write it down, because I will forget



Xarvrax: "I'll bet 50 gold on Travis to win the taste."
Now I'm not.



banana (GM): Jenny: "Friendship is wonderful."



Ghol, Going East: Did this jerkoff actually specify what place he's talking about, or leave it up to Ghol to assume like it was understood?
Or does he mean: this literal building?



banana (GM): The interpretation is up to Ghol.



Placidus: "Betting against your teammates is a perverse incentive anyhow. I want to put 25 on myself to win the Improv Sandwich singles."

Jenny: "Really? We haven't got you in the book. Hang on a sec."

She opens a drawer of her desk and starts leafing through something, moving her lips.



banana (GM): Xarvrax, meanwhile, gets a little ticket slip with a stamp on it.



Xarvrax: Good good.



Placidus: Placidus makes conversation as Jenny works. "So who *is* Salubriot, anyhow? I haven't seen them around."



Vraknaar: "So do we go check it out? If the stench means necromancy, maybe we'd better wait for the others..." Vraknaar mutters to Ghol



Xarvrax: When Travis wins, I'll be rich!
Xarvrax wanders over to his brother, "What are you two mumbling about over here?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol half-grunts, half-harrumphs. "So Phil's got you set up HERE?" He gives Dog Hater another once over, then shakes his head like he's dismissing something. "We'll be back. Stick around down here until we do in case there's trouble."

banana (GM): The brilliant conversational gambit is a success, in that Dog Hater doesn't say



something like what? no, down the street-- he just snorts and sits down with the bespectacled dwarf.



Ghol, Going East: Jackass.

Ghol will wait until they're out of earshot before letting Xarvrax in on what just went down.

Jenny: "I'm not an information dealer, mate. For that you'll need to establish a bond of trust with the boss.. ok, wow. I had *not* had time to process all this."

She: makes an entry on a little bit of paper and slips it into the main book, the one that's displayed in a rack for people to browse: PL. FXLMNLR, SINGLES SANDWICH - 3:1



banana (GM): Apparently whatever she was reading was about you, and impressed.



Placidus: Placidus looks slightly crestfallen at this. Now the odds will be less favorable...!



Ghol, Going East: To the dragons: "Okay, so Dog Hater back there has a problem with his room. Says next door, there's a real, real bad stink coming through the wall.

"Upstairs, the one next to the stairs, he says. I presume we'll be able to smell our way there from the landing."



Xarvrax: "Time to go kick some doors in?"



Vraknaar: "Grab Placidus, maybe?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nods. "I'll let Kicephales know what's up so the elves don't freak out. We should wait for Placidus, too."



Placidus: Placidus is just waiting for his slip at this point.

Jenny: He gets it. "I dunno if you can beat the barbarian guy, but good luck."



Placidus: "Thank you! I would wish you luck but 'luck' is just a catchall for 'factors I'm too lazy to think about'. Instead I'll just wish you the ability to keep getting the math right. Good day, Jenny."

Then the others call him over. "What's going on?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol gives him the brief on the Dog Hater/room situation.



Placidus: "Ooh! That was keenly spotted. Like I said, sometimes these things have a way of following you around. Luck, probably."

"Shall we?"



Vraknaar: what the



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nods.

"I'll ask Kon to watch the doors. Make sure he doesn't slip out the back way, or something...assuming he's not too involved with his field trip.

"Should also get the bouncers in on this." Ghol heads back to the front of the building to do just that. It's only polite to let them know there might be a fight in their establishment.



banana (GM): Is Ghol literally going to ask permission for this?



Placidus: It's important to respect authority figures and always do everything the right way.



Vraknaar: NEEEEERRRRDDDD



banana (GM): Right, sorry. I forgot



Xarvrax: "Hurry up, I want to kick in this door already."



Ghol, Going East: Of course he is. Kicephales helped him out earlier by getting them into the club, per Her orders. And besides: it's either we do this, or the priests descend on this place.

That will be the general gist of his argument, anyway.

After the attack earlier today, this is going to get handled -- it can either get handled quietly, by us, or loudly, by the watch and the priests and who knows who else.



Placidus: Probably still us, honestly.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol hasn't been here long, but long enough to know that's not the sort of attention this place needs.



Placidus: Just with less reason not to set everything on fire.



Vraknaar: What watch? They're all off fighting orcs.



banana (GM): Ghol, Quietly but Insistently making the headwaiter aware that he's probably harbouring a raiser of the dead... it goes well, sort of.



Ghol, Going East: That sort of conversation tends not to go perfectly.



banana (GM): Kicephales Rhux begins kicking everyone out of the front bar and shutting up shop early. He calls you "green star" again and protests that he has nothing to do with it, that The Boss (Legitimate Phil, apparently) handles this sort of thing- but he's not going to interfere.

Essentially you're getting no support and no opposition. He doesn't send anyone inside to 'the club' because, in his words "if i do that you'll have them down on you faster. go for the fait accompli if i was you. bye"



Ghol, Going East: "That's fine, no one's saying you're involved and no one will." He pauses. "What's with the 'Green Star' stuff?"



banana (GM): "'s what you look like to the rest of us." After that, he refuses to say any more, hurrying to stall the vast engine of foodcommerce.



Ghol, Going East: That's...racist...?

Whatever.

Did Kon have time to tour the PRINTER'S?



banana (GM): Inside the Establishment, you've got a short window before anyone realises that nobody's coming in from out any longer - or until someone tries to leave. There are weirdly velveteed stairs leading up one corner of the building, which must be your route...



Placidus: Velveteed stairs make less noise if you throw someone down them for nonpayment of debt, I bet.



Kon: If so, he'll have been informed of Events and will be actively watching the exits from a vantage point, merely appearing lazy. If not, he will still be line in front of the PRINTER, watching the front entrance, merely appearing lazy.


Not the best maneuverability for him inside anyway.





Ghol, Going East: Since they're on a bit of a time budget, Ghol's ready to get to work.


 **Placidus:** Placidus seems a bit disappointed Kon's not coming, but he doesn't complain.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax stretches out his legs, getting ready to kick some doors in.


 **banana (GM):** The door next to the top of the stairs is firmly shut. Judging by the building layout, it leads to a large suite with multiple rooms - perhaps where the barbarians are staying. And one beyond that... also firmly shut; very narrow, with less space behind it; and you can smell, again. rotting meat.


 **Placidus:** Augh.

 **banana (GM):** It's hard to not feel that this holy city is being *defiled*. What right does the King have to disrupt this celebration? This is the sort of thing that got him violently overthrown, to be frank.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol steps aside to let Xarvrax do the honors.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax pulls his foot back, and violently and quickly brings it forward into the door.

 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar doesn't give a shit about this holy city or its celebrations. This is Personal. Maybe multi-personal. Generational? Either way, he's got beef.

 **Placidus:** This is San Meat, guy.
EVERYONE'S got beef.


 **Ghol, Going East:** High steaks.


 **banana (GM):** There's just a bedroom inside. One window overlooking the Shadow Quarter, a desk, bed, bath and chamberpots, some cupboards.. it's actually quite nice, better than your hotel rooms for sure.


At the desk, however: A short and wiry white elf, eyes brown-yellow, well past middle age. He's wearing nondescript maroon clothing... and a green cap.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Guy from the van Sammens?


 **banana (GM):** The same. You didn't get a good look at him back then, but now he's staring right at Xarvrax... "Excuse me?"

 **Placidus:** Are his eyes visibly glowing golden or is that just an effect from his driver's license photo?


 **banana (GM):** They glow, yeah. Guy's got a bunch of magic inside of him probably.

 **Placidus:** White elves...!

 **Vraknaar:** Does the voice sound like the one that accepted parameters of his necroterrorism?


 **Xarvrax:** "You're really bad at hiding, let's find out if you're better at burning corpsemonger."

 **banana (GM):** Doesn't sound like the same voice.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will step past Xarvrax here. "What's up."

 **banana (GM):** "Take another step into my room and you'll face Bonanda. This place is duly rented."


Bonanda: "...I see! No doubt you possess the basic faculties to render deception moot."

 **Vraknaar:** "Good." Vraknaar snarls. "Straight to it, then."

Bonanda: "Allow me to seize the initiative."



banana (GM): rolling d20+10

() + 10

= **28**




Vraknaar: wow wtf

stop it




Ghol, Going East: rolling d20+1

() + 1

= **17**



Placidus: rolling d20+1

() + 1

= **10**



banana (GM): Having seized it, the presumed necromancer proceeds to distribute several more mysterious initiatives to.. *something* or things..



Vraknaar: rolling 1d20+5 bastard!!

() + 5

= **6**

ah yes.



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 3

() + 3

= **13**



Vraknaar: within standard parameters




Placidus: Those look like horrifyingly indistinct lumps of flesh.




banana (GM): sadly, they're just placeholders

rolling d20+5

() + 5


= **7**

rolling d20+5

() + 5


= **13**

rolling d20+6

() + 6

= **17**

rolling d20+4

() + 4

= **10**

whoops



Kon: Outside, Kon straightens. There's dark wizardry afoot.


Bonanda: "I am Bonanda Limetop, subBurgobursar of Rake. How you've discovered my plans I do not know. Who you are I do not care."



Kon: Assuming a warg did have to launch himself through a second floor window and directly into a battle with a necromancer, does the room in question feature such a view?



banana (GM): rolling d20+2

() + 2

= **10**

I'm afraid not - it's not looking out over the entrances to the Establishment.

Bonanda: "Let's see if I can simply wrench free your souls without calling upon a single minion."
"You, the elf in borrowed muscle."



banana (GM): rolling d20+8 vs will

() + 8

= **25**



Kon: hit



Ghol, Going East: er, hit



banana (GM): If Kon wants to be a window_bursta, perhaps he could use strength to leap up onto rooftops and climb around to the right side?

I mean MD.



Vraknaar: gul banana, dm md



Kon: Kon FEELS the discharge of negative energy and is up and moving past the fat man, lithely up onto the rooftops, hopping and charging towards the Establishment...



banana (GM): The world in front of Ghol blurs - it feels like he's being moved forward at the same time as remaining still. His viewpoint zooms in on Bonanda dizzily even as he braces himself.. take 9 damage, and you're Confused until the end of your turn.

Bonanda: "Yes. It comes."



banana (GM): The elf's voice is raspy with the smoke of strange incenses. It batters at Ghol's head like a noise that comes from inside his own heart.

in case anyone doesn't know off the top of their head what Confused does, it's this: oh wait i see people are discussing in #perfectcircle so you do know

Ghol's turn, within certain parameters.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol fights, and fights, and fights, and RAGES, and SWINGS -- at Xarvrax?!

rolling 1d20+5

(3)+5

= 8

rolling 1d6+4

(1)+4

= 5

ON MISS: 1 DAMAGE



Xarvrax: Oh no, one damageeeee



Ghol, Going East: But it's a stumbling, half-hearted swing, with his off-weapon -- an oldish machete -- and not the dangerous Rune of Peace.



banana (GM): You can move as normal if you like (although there's nothing unusual about Ghol's position, he's just hanging around the room. Xarvrax, for example, is blocking the narrow door).



Kon: That's when Kon bursts through the window.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax swats at the sword, nicking himself on the blade.

sword*



Kon: He's not slaving even now, covered in glass as he is and eyes burning with fury -- but he is MAD.

[A] Animal Companion (1/Day)

- Kon may attack 2/Round with a standard action.

rolling 1d20+5

() + 5

= **8**

rolling 1d8

()

= **6**

rolling 1d20+5

() + 5

= **22**



Kon: rolling 1d8

()

= **6**

Bonanda: "What's this?"



banana (GM): The necromancer hops off his chair, dodging Kon's first charge - it doesn't save him from a followup swipe.



Kon: That, idiot necromancer, is a warg.



Placidus: From in the hallway, Placidus tries to make sense of what's going on, but he can't see past Xarvrax. He thinks he hears Kon, though! Hooray.



banana (GM): "Alright, beastcaller. Consider this, my least of minions."

At a flickered hand from Limetop, the cupboard door bursts open. It's full of filth and the top half of a dead pig.

The creature positions itself to block the cupboard door - only one person can engage it at a time! - and with its animated trotters, hurls rot.


Probably at Xarvrax, *again*.



Xarvrax: "These again? I'm going to murder you for making me fight these damned things again."



banana (GM): rolling d20+5 vs pd

() + 5

= **9**

No problem, though.



Xarvrax: If I stay where I am, no one can get in, can they?



banana (GM): Correct.



Xarvrax: Then I guess I have to disengage.
just a d20, right?



banana (GM): you can try!!
yes
11 or higher does it



Xarvrax: rolling d20

(14)

= 14

Bonanda: "I doubt your murderous intent has altered in scope, wyrm. Nor capacity."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax rushes by the pig, getting to a nice spot in the center of the room, allowing him access to everything.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol stumbles around, unwilling and likely unable to keep the sorcerer from moving past him.



banana (GM): For once, Vraknaar experiences the benefits of NOT being first into the room.



Xarvrax: But first, he begins crackling with unstable energies.

rolling d6

(6)

= 6

Necrodancer man takes one damage.



banana (GM): It earths itself in his hat, he doesn't seem to notice.



Xarvrax: Echoing with the fury of a raging storm, Xarvrax looks down at the necromancer, "You're right, my capacity for murder hasn't changed, unfortunately for you."
I'm done, by the way.




banana (GM): oh!

Bonanda: "Mm. They all say something like that, the young ones. Shades of filth and desperation, to me! Arise, creatures of night soil! Strip this dog and dragon of their smug fanged grins!"




banana (GM): From the tub and Assorted Containers by the window, black spirits pour into the air. They move through it like an invading gas, waves of unpleasantness rolling before them, and set upon Kon.

rolling d20+7 vs ac

() + 7


= **17**

rolling d20+7 vs ac

() + 7

= **21**

rolling d20+7 vs ac

() + 7

= **19**



Kon: hits



Placidus: crikey



Kon: all three

Kon howls in pain and rage...



banana (GM): each deals 6 damage + the escalation die, so, 18



Kon: uh



Skeleton: ...

Bonanda: "I'm not merciful. If you surrender now, you won't have to endure the worst I can do, but you'll still die."



Kon: Kon roars in the little shit's face as the tendrils of horror flay him.



banana (GM): The dark magic that's starting to pour out of the room sets Placidus and Vraknaar's teeth on edge; neither man has much arcane talent Per Se, but this is present and wrong. They say that the Federation is at least, with its vast labour force, clean; Bonanda's necromancy is not that.



Placidus: "Kon!!" Placidus stumbles into the room, counting, shades and wounds and dead glowing eyes. Something is amiss, here...

move focus go

Bonanda: "No surrender yet? Then you'll face my second most powerful creature."



banana (GM): "This minion was granted to me for extraordinary purposes. I see the fates that bind you, and severing them will well serve."


Bonanda: "This minion was granted to me for extraordinary purposes. I see the fates that bind you, and severing them will well serve."

Dodging Xarvrax again, the necromancer reaches for a little wooden box on his desk. It's inlaid on the


top with a gilt oval shape.

He flips the catch and pulls from the thing a handfull of bones that expand, somehow, as they come out - by the time the pile of white ossuary stuff clatters to the ground it's full adult size.

 **banana (GM):** The creature formed from the skeleton begins to rise into the air, crackling with energy...


 **Skeleton:** The skeleton animates in a fountain of netherworld colors, spilling upward into humanoid shape on a geyser of toxic green mist, surrounded by rattling blood-red chains, glinting with gleaming, cobalt ice and generally haloed with a sinister indigo radiance. It throws its phalanges wide as generalized magical power beats within its ribcage, and yells "Hah. Hah! HAH! It worked! Immortal at last!" even as the energies it's bathed in pour out from between its bones and either sink into the floor, evaporate into the ceiling, or bleed out through the walls.

There's just a faint silvery glow left as the skeleton looks around. "Wait, who are all of you?"


 **Placidus:** Placidus watches the skeleton carefully.

Bonanda: "No, skeleton. Post-mortal, and you're *mine*."


 **Skeleton:** "What?"

 **banana (GM):** There's a.. necromancer. Skeleton can tell that: ske's receiving a blizzare of impressions right now, power born, fading, lost, ideas, thoughts, *faces* and voices - it's hard to make sense of it all but this guy right here? Necromancer. The magic is *clear* to you, at least.


He's got one metaphorical hand up the metaphorical puppet ass of your soul, but those groping fingers aren't finding purchase.


 **Skeleton:** "What do you think you're- Don't give me that nonsense. Where's my- my... it'll come to me. Anyway, I don't have time for this." The skeleton snaps its fingers, and Bonanda fails to melt, explode, or be devoured by a tear in the air itself.


Bonanda: "They don't usually talk this much."


 **Skeleton:** Puzzled, the skeleton waves its phalanges vaguely at the green-capped elf, but with the uncertain motions of someone who's clearly coming to grips with the fact that they're faking it. "Uh..."


 **Xarvrax:** "Who cares?"

 **Kon:** Meanwhile, Jon continues to howl in pain, and Ghol continues to stumble about.
er

 **banana (GM):** "True enough, wyrm. Let's to combat, not prevarication."


 **Kon:** Meanwhile, Kon continues to howl in pain, and Ghol continues to stumble about.

 **banana (GM):** The necromancer mentally commands skeleton to destroy Kon's Men - so that must be who these guys are - with arcane energies.

 **Skeleton:** It's as the gravity of the situation makes itself clear that the skeleton screams in what sounds like six voices, wrenches itself away from Bonanda without actually moving from the spot it's standing in, and simply mimicking with its own internal energies the exact knots and vices that the elf's attempted to tie in the ether.

Cold mist spills down from the skeleton's ribcage and eye-sockets, and blood-slick bones pick themselves up to crawl and tumble out of Bonanda's body-boxes across the floor, assembling themselves around the wayward servant!

rolling 1d4+1 this many Crumbling Skeletons

()+1

= **4**

oh hell yeah.



banana (GM): Suddenly the room is fucking full of bones.



Placidus: "One, two, three-"



Skeleton: but yeah i'm using cackling soliloquist to spend my entire turn casting Summon Undead (1st. level)



Placidus: "It always comes back to bones..." Placidus mutters.



Skeleton: shoot i forget, let me check if they act immediately

Bonanda: "....."

"....."

".....Your King will hear of this, skeleton."



Xarvrax: "I'm confused, are we murdering the skeleton, or is it murdering him?"



Skeleton: oh nice, they do



Ghol, Going East: "Rrrhhh...rrraaargh!!!!" Ghol, flailing weirdly.



Skeleton: attacking pig, bonanda, bonanda, and wraith, vs. ac

rolling 1d20+6

()+6

= **17**

rolling 1d20+6

()+6

= **9**


rolling 1d20+6


()+6


= **17**

rolling 1d20+6


()+6


 **banana (GM):** hit, miss, miss, miss

 **Xarvrax:** Wow, way to suck skeletons.


 **Skeleton:** 3 damage to anyone hit, aaaand turn


 **banana (GM):** Well, they *are* crumbling.

 **Vraknaar:** dang, 17 misses ac? this is not going to be a good day for vraknaar


 **Xarvrax:** Hopefully his PD isn't super high.


Bonanda: "I see a fine copper hand in this. Bonanda Limetop won't be so easily turned about."


 **Placidus:** I agree, I hope his lowest defense is very low indeed.
Whatever it may be.


 **Xarvrax:** Well you can get out with your cheat attacks.

Bonanda: "My most powerful minion, then. This one brought to the hood by my own will, without any surprises in boxes."

 **Skeleton:** The moldering, half-complete approximations of the ghost-wreathed skeleton creak and moan and cackle to themselves, falling head over heels to mostly not hurt the rest of Bonanda's retinue but certainly to get in the way.


 **banana (GM):** Yeah, it's basically impossible to move around the room without running into them now.


 **Skeleton:** "Wait, I'm not even-"


 **banana (GM):** A spray of freezing foam takes the other closet door from the inside; it shatters into ice.
There's a white dragon inside.


Much like the skeleton, it's wreathed in crackling lightning, holding its body together, because like the skeleton, it's dead. Rather more flesh remains on those bones, and scales.. but this was a baby when it died. A whelp.

 **Skeleton:** "Welp."


 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar hasn't crossed the threshold yet, but his bones ache with the sheer force of the fury, and he barely knows why. The roar that echoes from the hallway shakes the walls of the building.

 **Xarvrax:** The lightning around Xarvrax surges as his eyes flare white with rage, "No more quips, no more games. You die today."


 **banana (GM):** The dead whelp strives.. to exit its cupboard. Are those skeletons attackable?

 **Skeleton:** yeah, they're creatures

Bonanda: "Who's playing games?"

 **Skeleton:** and in fact will OA that thing if it tries to slide by


Vraknaar: the dragon's health is exploding out of its healthbar


 **banana (GM):** The whelp attacks the group of skeletons, including


rolling d6


(2)

= 2

 **Skeleton:** though they are technically engaged and can't just disengage to intercept, this theater of the mspaint demonstrates that there's no room for the dragon to just glide past

 **banana (GM):** 2 of them in its blast of electric ice.

 **Skeleton:** uh oh.

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+5 vs pd

(11)+5


= 16


rolling d20+5 vs pd


(19)+5

= 24


5 damage to each, it seems

 **Skeleton:** CRUMBLING SKELETON MOOK: HP 6, AC 16, PD 14, MD 10; Vuln. Holy; Sword: +6 vs. AC for 3 damage; Resist weapons 16+


 **banana (GM):** did you say.. mook


 **Skeleton:** yes.

does that just mean 10 to the group, killing one and a bit?

 **banana (GM):** yeah, it's relatively unimpressive


but hey it achieves the dracolich's goal

 **Vraknaar:** does it kill the one in front of it then

 **banana (GM):** yep

The press of bodies lets up! Vraknaar can see into the room.. holy shit

what is even


 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar's heart pulses with the instinct, the command of his blood. DESTROY IT.


rolling 1d20+5 vs PD, faerie fire

(6)+5

= **11**


fucking hell


 **banana (GM):** :(

 **Vraknaar:** rolling 3d6+4 fire damage, presumably half of this for a miss


(**3** + **4** + **6**)+4

= **17**

 **banana (GM):** i mean, i should ask WHAT you're faerie firing here. the shades, for example, have pd 11


 **Vraknaar:** and it's vulnerable until the end of my next turn
the dracolich


 **banana (GM):** right, it has 13

 **Skeleton:** "...there are as many as three dragons in here!"


 **Vraknaar:** that's my turn


Bonanda: "What a mess of melee. Let me through." This command is to a shade, who actually obeys him.


 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar moves in front of the cabinet and opens wide, breathing an intense torrent of flame at the abomination. The dragonfire burns away at it, weakening its whole skeletal structure. Now he's got to finish the job...!


 **banana (GM):** Xarvrax and Kon are eligible to make opportunity attacks.. if they dare. As the necromancer moves, he snaps his fingers, and a strange image is overlaid on his skin: his own bones, like he was a walking x-ray. The first person to damage him will be injured in turn.


 **Kon:** Kon will.


 **Vraknaar:** xarvrax take one for the team

 **Xarvrax:** Can I use my ranged one?


 **banana (GM):** i'm not sure if 13a allows ranged oa


 **Skeleton:** hey, what about my skeleton mook that was engaged with him


 **Xarvrax:** Since my melee one is terrible.


 **Vraknaar:** i don't think you can. also that would expend your gathered power


 **Xarvrax:** Oh.

 **Vraknaar:** oh you meant your RBA, no, you can't use that either. get owned

 **banana (GM):** oh, the mook can attack too if it was
yeah that's right, it attacked him


 **Xarvrax:** I'm not using gather power on that.

 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+6 vs. ac for three damage


() + 6


= **16**

come on.

 **banana (GM):** nope


Kon, then, if he really wants..


 **Kon:** Kon tries, but the strain is too much given his wounds -- he turtles, trying to bat off the wraiths.

 **Skeleton:** kon repeatedly casts WED


Bonanda: Limetop hops up onto the desk, crouching slightly.. he's mysteriously lithe for his apparent age. "Well," he mutters. "The creatures should have them in hand.. but this is too many of the dead and the drake for anyone's taste. I'll leave a parting pleasure."


Pointing at Xarvrax: "Fair warning. Once the wolf is torn apart, you will be next."

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+8 vs pd


() + 8


= **16**

 **Skeleton:** "...wait! Where did you even find me?"

 **Xarvrax:** "You're not leaving. You die today."


 **Skeleton:** "That too?"


 **banana (GM):** If that hits: 10 damage as a shock of force goes through Xarvrax's body. Ropes of brown light, fibreglass-textured, bind his arms and legs - it's a cousin of the cage spell Capel the Bold used. Xarvrax is held in place and dazed, save ends.

 **Kon:** That's a hit if it's against Kon...?


Ah.


 **Vraknaar:** well, crap


 **Xarvrax:** dazed is?

 **banana (GM):** -4 to defenses.

 **Xarvrax:** Ah.

 **banana (GM):** The shades of the chamberpot hiss and howl around Kon. But the warg spent all those months in the Cairn Marsh with Ghol: he's smelt worse. More of a problem is the freezing chill, cold consuming his flesh and fur and ripping it out in frozen chunks.


 **Ghol, Going East:** The confusion lifts from Ghol's eyes and mind -- he's back in the necromancer's room, who he's going to -- KON!!
move to kon, use potion as a standard action
8 plus this many


 **banana (GM):** In less than a minute, the righteous attack has gone wrong(?). The necromancer, only bruised, is behind a shield of shades and skeletons, and his dark creatures are assaulting your friends..!


 **Ghol, Going East:** rolling d8


(5)

= 5


 **banana (GM):** Although the skeletons don't attack or intercept you, so they can't be all bad (Recall, all, please: the chamber shades add the escalation die to their damage)


 **Skeleton:** The skeletons (where'd they get those helmets?) are indeed menacing the assorted shades and zombies using broken swords, rusty hatchets, or spare and particularly-pointy bones.

 **Kon:** The flung potion thrums and glows over Kon's ravaged fur and flesh in sharp contrast to the whispering hissing and crackling of magic. It heals Kon enough to get him back in the fight -- against the wraiths who attacked him.
#kon1

 **banana (GM):** #warg

 **Kon:** sigh

 **Skeleton:** Well, most of them. One's standing in the middle of the room with both hands clasped to its jaw, filled from heels to skull with a soft, silvery flicker.

 **Kon:** rolling 1d20+7

(12)+7

= 19


rolling 1d8

(3)

= 3

there

done

 **Placidus:** is that a hit

Bonanda: The necromancer didn't actually ignore his wayward skeleton mage. When ske asked where he found sker, his glance fell to the box on the ground... unfortunately for Bonanda, Xarvrax is standing on top of it.




banana (GM): yep



Placidus: trigger
Better Yet, Here

rolling d20+6 vs the lower of the wraith's pd or md

() + 6

= **8**

no!!



banana (GM): dang, that actually misses



Placidus: well, focus is retained at any rate



banana (GM): pd 10 md 13



Placidus: nice



banana (GM): they're basically made of magic, also chamberpot matter



Placidus: Gross.



Xarvrax: What's Bony's PD, for reference?



Placidus: Is there anything about necromancy that isn't utterly disgusting?



banana (GM): bonanda's pd is 20
it.. might just be this guy



Placidus: I get the feeling this guy is maybe too high level for us, right now



banana (GM): although his ATTITUDE is pretty cold-necromancer, all his powers are like, awful



Xarvrax: What the actual fuck.



Placidus: And that perhaps we should face him again some other time.



Xarvrax: I'd have to roll 14 to hit that, jeez.



Vraknaar: well then why don't you just do that




Placidus: Placidus is trying to concentrate, but there are so many confounding factors he can't isolate the hanging term. Just a bit longer...





banana (GM): Is Ghol done? If so, the pig pile thing tries to free itself of the attacking zombie.


rolling d20+5 vs ac Trotter Flail - 4 damage, on natural odd, 4 ongoing poison

() + 5

= **17**


 **Skeleton:** CRUMBLING SKELETON MOOK: HP 6, AC 16, PD 14, MD 10; Vuln. Holy; Sword: +6 vs. AC for 3 damage; Resist weapons 16+
looks like that's 2 damag


 **banana (GM):** technically, a hoof is not a weapon


 **Skeleton:** actually it technically is!!!


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax points at the Dracolich, a lance of lightning forming at the tip of his finger.

 **Vraknaar:** wait hang on

 **Xarvrax:** What.

 **Vraknaar:** just hang on a sec before you blast any dracoliches


 **banana (GM):** i know it doesn't come naturally


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax decides against it, it's made out of lightning anyway.
Pointing at the closest wraith, the lance reforms.


rolling d20 + 6 vs PD


(18)+6


= 24

 **banana (GM):** yep!

 **Xarvrax:** Aha! Natural even!


 **Vraknaar:** guess you should have targetted the bad guy after all


 **banana (GM):** well, these guys are also bad


 **Xarvrax:** rolling 3d6 + 4 lightning damage


(4 + 3 + 1)+4

= 12

 **Vraknaar:** but they're not guys

 **Xarvrax:** So 24 damage.
Does that obliterate all of them?
good.

 **banana (GM):** completely

 **Xarvrax:** Now for bonermancy man.
rolling d20 + 6

$$(\text{8})+6$$

$$= 14$$

fffff.

At least it's even.

rolling 3d6 +4

$$(\text{6} + \text{6} + \text{3})+4$$

$$= 19$$

half of that doubled?



Xarvrax: So... 19?



Skeleton: this thinks me.



Xarvrax: Or does gather power not work for the forks?



Skeleton: i'm pretty sure it affects the whole power



Vraknaar: it does. gather power is bonkers



Xarvrax: Well, fork number three then!

Bonanda: "Shades down. This would be easier if the skeleton mage would do as it was told."



Xarvrax: rolling d20 +6 pig.

$$(\text{19})+6$$

$$= 25$$



banana (GM): yeop



Xarvrax: rolling 3d6 + 4

$$(\text{3} + \text{4} + \text{1})+4$$

$$= 12$$

doubled.

wait.

wait.




banana (GM): *waits





Xarvrax: Can I fork it back to him?





Vraknaar: i don't think so but i'm not 100%


 **Kon:** I don't think you can repeat
but I think you can fork back
if you're thinking about surprising here


 **Xarvrax:** It looks like it.


 **banana (GM):** *looks up power*


 **Xarvrax:** Yeah, I'm going to fork back to him with surprising.
Chain Spell: Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you
can attack a different target with the spell.
So, he's a different target from the pig.


 **Kon:** it's true


 **banana (GM):** "Each time you make a natural even attack roll, you can attack a different target with the
spell."
that's interpretable, for sure


 **Skeleton:** i don't think lightning fork can bounce between the same two guys repeatedly or something


 **banana (GM):** my call: he isn't different to *himself*
and he's already been targetted, so


 **Vraknaar:** yeah i think it's a "different target" as in someone it hasn't targetted already

 **banana (GM):** i could see an argument for the other way round, but we can look it up for errata later

 **Xarvrax:** I dunno, either way makes sense to me.

 **banana (GM):** 24 pig damage, yes?

 **Xarvrax:** Yeah.

 **banana (GM):** save against being forcebound, then
(unless you prefer to remain that way)


 **Xarvrax:** rolling d20


(8)

= 8

Ffff.

The lance explodes off of his finger, tearing through not just the closest shade, but the others too,
glancing Bonanda, before bouncing off the wall, and ramming home into the pig.


 **banana (GM):** The destructive bolt is all the more impressive for being guided without freely moving
limbs.


 **Placidus:** AS I WAS SAYING Placidus is going to target the pigzombie with his rebuke attack


rolling d20+6 vs pd/md

(15)+6

= 21


 **banana (GM):** yep


 **Placidus:** which is lower

 **Xarvrax:** Hey, that actually hit!

 **Vraknaar:** shut it you


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton leans skittishly away from the stream of lightning.


 **banana (GM):** Maybe ignoring Bonanda's attempts at command was a good decision, rather than just an obvious decision.

 **Placidus:** rolling d6+3 this much psychic damage if md is lower, or force damage if pd is lower


(1)+3


= 4


 **banana (GM):** The pig creature squeals - and collapses into its own turd pile. Bonanda makes a face like, are you kidding me, what was that noise, what is this.


 **Placidus:** was its md or pd lower


 **banana (GM):** md


 **Placidus:** Then as it squeals its eyes burst in its sockets and its meaty corpse-face runs with gooey red molasses-thick vitreous fluid.

 **banana (GM):** wow.


 **Placidus:** There's that hum again...
focus go


 **Xarvrax:** Somebody needs to block that window before his turn.


 **Vraknaar:** good thing we have so many skeletons

 **Skeleton:** is the drake still active? should i use powers on it?

 **Xarvrax:** No.


 **banana (GM):** by which i think you mean yes but no

 **Kon:** Vraknaar's got the drake covered, I think?

 **Skeleton:** all right, then i'll use Chant Of Endings

Skeleton looks around wildly - presumably, it hasn't got an expression - and pays particularly close attention to the way that necrotic energy escapes into the air through the ruined corpses of the pig and the corpses of the wraiths. Then it waves its hand and whispers something-

rolling 1d20+6 vs. MD of lowest hp nearby enemy, 1d10+4 negative energy damage

() + 6

= **7**

well, never you mind



banana (GM): Skeleton grins, but of course, skeleton has no choice.



Skeleton: "Well, that- I think I know what went wrong-"

skeletal warriors

that one takes the long way around the drake, or tries to? maybe it intercepts



banana (GM): In fact the dracolich does lash out with a long tail, turning on a dime to make the slap..!



Skeleton: rolling 1d20+6 vs. bonanda's ac on the south skeleton

() + 6


= **17**



Xarvrax: It's engaged currently?



banana (GM): rolling d20+6 vs ac

() + 6

= **8**

interception failure.




Xarvrax: Not that it seems to matter.



Skeleton: well, it's a miss either way

rolling 1d20+6 vs bonanda's ac

() + 6

= **8**

wow.

thaaat's my turn



Placidus: for pete's sake



banana (GM): it's a good dice day.

The white dragon swings back to face Vraknaar.



Vraknaar: a good day to die



Kon: A fitting fight for a room full of shit



banana (GM): It's just a child. Can't have been hatched a year before it was taken. There's no mind behind those eyes any longer, no pride.

There's no fire.



Skeleton: The skeleton's conjured servants are largely helpless to even leave a mark on the retreating Bonanda. Presumably disheartened, the insubordinate mage retreats to crouch on the bed.



banana (GM): It advances in a cloud of lightnings, levitating rather than flying through the air. Shortly, its muscles will jerk into a mockery of life, flail dangerously...

Bonanda: "For Blamer's sake. These bone imitations can't hurt me. This minion is *still* enough to take the rest of you down."



Vraknaar: Vraknaar's eyes have fire. So do his lungs, his bones, his soul. The primal power and rage of his forebear, the mightiest of his kind, surges through him, and he opens his mouth soundlessly.

The torrent of flame that issues forth is not nearly so massive as The Red's, but it is so hot only Vraknaar's standing between the others and it saves those behind him from incineration. He turns away from what was the dracolich and is now a smoldering pile of ash, and says in a voice not his own, "YOU WISH TO DELIVER MESSAGES TO YOUR KING, WRETCH? DELIVER ONE FOR ME, AS WELL. WE WILL BURN HIS KINGDOM TO ASH, AND EVEN HIS MASTERY OF LIFE AFTER DEATH WILL NOT SAVE HIM. THE DRAGON ASCENDS, AND HIS PETTY MINIONS ARE FLAMMABLE."

Then Vraknaar's done delivering verbal messages and tries the more direct approach.

rolling 1d20+6 vs AC

(6)+6

= 12

1 damage.

fuck.



Skeleton: Skeleton's lit golden-orange as they cower on the bed, casting extremely spooky shadows on the wall behind them. They've got their arm bones crossed over their skull and their knees level with their eye sockets.



banana (GM): so it goes.

FLAMES OF THE RED





banana (GM): There's a little pause where the only noise is the stones, burning.


Bonanda: "I can see that I've underestimated you, and that's fine. What's left of the town is yours."
The elf glances at the window...





banana (GM): "Yeah, okay. If we meet in Rake or formerly, don't expect a pleasant welcome."
Fire is spreading rapidly across the wooden floors, engulfing everything- furniture begins to pop..


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol just snarls, preparing to pounce...


 **banana (GM):** blink

 **Ghol, Going East:** ...of course.


 **banana (GM):** He's gone. Vanished out the window in a swirl of crystal energy.


 **Xarvrax:** You think I won't jump out a second story window to chase him? You think wrong.


 **banana (GM):** roll constitution, please

 **Placidus:** everyone or just xarvrax

 **banana (GM):** xarvrax

 **Xarvrax:** With dragonforged, or without?


 **banana (GM):** with! scales are definitely applicable


 **Kon:** Kon is already refreshed -- and focused on the fire.

 **Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 9


(14)+9


= 23


 **Kon:** We need to put out the fire.


 **banana (GM):** Here's the good news: Moving to the thick fog of the window, already engulfed by spreading flame, Xarvrax remains conscious.


Still, I'm not sure I could recommend actually leaping out. There are a shitload of cries, screams, etc coming from around the rest of the place, and you don't have Kon's muscle.

 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar exults in the flames for a moment... then his higher reasoning switches back on and he realizes that this is bad. Really bad.


 **Xarvrax:** Will I be able to catch him if I jump out? Or am I just going to do it for nothing.


 **banana (GM):** There's no elf visible down there.

 **Kon:** Kon is moving towards the inside of the building -- is it possible to go in and get anyone who is trapped?

 **banana (GM):** He might have gone into the street, or across to another building, or to a rooftop.. you're not clear on the range of that ability they have.

Some rescue ops would definitely go well, yeah, if you want people to be non- or less-mad at you.

 **Kon:** Kon and Ghol are already moving.

 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar definitely has to help, after all, this is his fault... sort of. He's after the boy and his warg.

banana (GM): The skeleton mage follows you, because why not?

Remaining here isn't a good idea for anyone.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax makes it to the window, but can't see the damned elf anywhere, the magic building inside of him, he roars out the smoke covered window, the sound echoing well louder than normal volume, before turning and following the rest.



Placidus: Placidus makes the skeleton wrap itself in one of the bedsheets before stepping out.



banana (GM): They say the Age will end in fire; this is a good start.



Xandrah: Almost forgot.

rolling d20

(13)

= 13

Damn.



Kon: Full rest anyway



Xandrah: Oh



Vraknaar: we're levelling up so



Xandrah: Perfect!



banana (GM): That night, Ghol does not feel at all well.



Ghol, Going East: Understandable, given circumstances.



banana (GM): The prospect of sausages and so on is just as appealing as ever - the Gut and Bowel did a rather good korma. But his *head*, and his muscles.. sorer than they have any right to be, given Kon's intercession.

There's no doubt about it. This is the swamp fever, again. Will any of you who were on that cursed march be free of it?

For most of a year half the Movement fought their way across the marsh. It was a fight, at times - there were strange insular communities of gnomes and men living there, and odder beings. Also, large monstrous things.

Mostly, it was a fight against the elements. The Movement's allies guided you and kept the floating lights far out in the darkness- but that didn't help with the damp, the quicksand, the strangling vines, and the fevers.

Ghol sleeps eventually and late, and at first, he dreams of alligators who open their mouths to breathe a torrent of biting insects.





Ghol, Going East: They called 'em "dragonflies" because it was like dragon's breath, and didn't care when some of the human half-orcs pointed out that name was taken...



banana (GM): The insect storm does not abate, but their bites become nothing to worry about - just brushes of sensation, then of light. The creatures light up in a spectrum of colour, white to black glows, sleeting across the water of the marsh, which is the sky.


Ghol is walking knee deep in the void and the spectrum illuminates him. He sees her face and her green eyes, and he hears her voice.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's startled. Well, as startled as anyone gets in a dream. Is this the first time She's come to him while he's been dreaming about something else?


 **banana (GM):** It is the first. The dreams don't usually change, and morph.. that absolute certainty that this is the Queen's Dream, he usually 'wakes' with it into lucidity.

To think that thought, somehow, brings into view the other face. Her.. friend. The blonde girl with the cute horns like tusks and the curl of hair down her neck, where the skin continues..

The Elf Queen, suddenly: "It can be really hard, to have Hope."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ooh. Erm. "Oh." Ghol meant "oh."


Ghol just...nods here. He hasn't ever tried speaking to Her, not that he can remember; just nodding.


 **banana (GM):** The Elf Queen: "The world's gone rotten or been rotten for a long time. Most people can't- they don't *see* that there's more than tradition, or revolution, or the clash of armies. Elves are no different, though we should be."


Her face.. it's rarely been this clear. Serious, fair, a little pointed; her skin is tinged in different colours from different angles, and on her brow there's a crown-shaped nothing.

(The *other* face withdraws, with a wink.)

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol nods again, eyes tracking the blonde face briefly before flicking back to his Queen.


 **banana (GM):** The Elf Queen: "Sometimes I find it hard, really hard to believe. That things will be okay."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol opens his mouth to say something -- can he speak? Is this a one way vision or...?


 **banana (GM):** "Please help. Please continue to bring together what you've been.. everyone who can see a better way." There's a constellation, Ghol is aware, being addressed here.


She's speaking to *him*, directly; he is the focus. But there are others. Stars, all points of the greyscale spectrum, whorled and whirled somehow to face the Queen... though they are a small minority among the greater galaxies, which do not.

The Elf Queen: "I know you can find them. The crown of leaves isn't far away. *That* gives me Hope; your determination."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will speak any way: "I will. We will."


He's got enough determination to send THAT message, at least.


 **banana (GM):** There's no way to know if she heard. If she could. But: "We need the Change. The Movement. A Conquest can't be the same thing as a liberation."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Damn right.

Even if the Movement has its own issues...

 **banana (GM):** More of the stars are fleeing now, grey and black in particular.. Ghol burns green among those that remain. Some take on his hue.

 **Ghol, Going East:** ...surely they can fix it, too. Standing here, communing with Her, Ghol feels like he can do pretty much anything.

 **banana (GM):** The void *roils* as his head pounds again, fever following even into a dream. Like an arrowhead on an anvil. Clang.

Stars jangle and settle again into new patterns, and the Queen is still speaking. "..between stability and

tyranny, the way of the trees and the way of ." She uses here an elf word which includes elves, humans, halflings, even dragons - all sentient beings. Most races don't even attempt to encompass those in their speech.



Ghol, Going East: What IS that? This pounding -- even when he had the swamp fever before, it wasn't like this while he was sleeping, was it...?



banana (GM): No. This is worse.

Clang. The stars are marching now in a contrapuntal rhythm, following the Queen's commands like a miniature army. The shaking of the space has swept Her eyes and face away, though the voice continues. "What I know to be right isn't enough. You have to show the world."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nods through the pain.

Again, into the darkness and the stars: "I WILL."



banana (GM): Clang. "I'll trust you. Does either of us have any choice? I know you'll find" Clang. "the egg."

The stars wheel now, not forming constellations but moving onward, marching forward, by the tens of thousands.. like a movement, or at least a horde.



Ghol, Going East: Even half-distracted by the forge in his temples, Ghol understands the imagery there.



banana (GM): Ghol is marching with them, of course; up hill and down dale, through the pounding swamp and with his own feet pounding on the mountaintops. He came this way, ahead of the others, and kept going. East.

"It's so close and you don't even know it. You only have to reach out your hand."



Ghol, Going East: The egg? The crown? What -- aaagh --

On instinct, he does literally that: he reaches out his hand...



banana (GM): "It's the egg" Clang "that's in your palm" Clang "but how can I blame you? Who can hear over this noise?"

Ghol's at the vanguard and he's left the stars behind. He pulses with the pain, and they throb.. less, further, slower. It will come, of course, but it came to him too soon, too far East.



Ghol, Going East: Who -- she can hear the noise too? Who's talking, now?



banana (GM): "You don't deserve this."



Ghol, Going East: Does she say that with scorn, or sorrow? Both? Neither?



banana (GM): Sympathetic, concerned. The other stars..! They're yellow to red and every colour inbetween. But Ghol is green. Why should he burn?



Ghol, Going East: The Green Star...why...



banana (GM): "It won't do."

Where's the noise?

Her speech is no longer audible, and nor is the forge. The water-void washes away the sweat of Ghol's skin, and swamp fevers *do* pass. They did.



Ghol, Going East: Here, in silence, Ghol wonders to himself: does She really want the egg? Or is he

only really helping that other one, the pretty one with demon's horns, by searching for it as hard as he searches for Her crowns?



banana (GM): Ghol wakes completely healthy and free of illness, on the floor where they've put the skeleton mage, one hand reaching for its bone box.



Ghol, Going East: Aah!



banana (GM): He must have slept in his own bed as well, though; there's a red stain across much of the sheet, roughly Ghol-shaped, like he sweated out the fever as dye.



Ghol, Going East: His first reaction: is that blood?? His second reaction: NICE.



VoxPVoxD: ^^^^^^^^^ nerds ^^^^^^^^^



Crion: VoxPVoxD: ^^^^^^^^^ nerds ^^^^^^^^^
A Nerd Approaches



VoxPVoxD: how do we want to do this



Ferrinus: is a nerdlinger more or less powerful than a nerd



VoxPVoxD: a nerdlinger is like one of the tokens that gets generated when nerd enters the battlefield like deranged hermit but with a neckbeard



Ferrinus: that was my thinking



VoxPVoxD: so we've got ghol, kon, placidus, and skeleton-wrapped-in-bedsheets fleeing a burning building



Crion: we can leave ghol out of this, he will come home with fever and fall asleep in the room to have his dream



VoxPVoxD: dream a little dream of me



Ferrinus: that leaves vraarvnr



Crion: ghol likely has less to add than this conversation than kon does, and kon doesn't formally speak *in this



VoxPVoxD: okay, one moment
MAN I wish you could do empty lines in this



















Crion: you can
how the heck did i do it...
it was like, html comment?





VoxPVoxD: The Gut & Bowel is a respectable establishment which, in recent days, has seen far less than its share of respect. The tyranny of wizards and dragons, the indignity of beacons and wizards again, and now the clandestine smuggling of a big wobbly rattling bundle through the door by a little man in a green cap.


Somehow the least obtrusive figure to darken its threshold right now is the bear-sized Kon.

Skeleton: Is xylophone smuggling a crime...? That guy and that dog sure act and sound like it is.

	<p>Placidus: "Come on," Placidus hisses. "There's stairs here. One food after the other." Bony feet stick out from under the sheets now and then.</p> <p>*one foot</p>
	<p>Crion:</p> <p>ehehehe</p>
	<p>Kon: Erm. Woof.</p>
	<p>Skeleton: "Huh? All right, I-" (thump) "Wait-" (thump, thump, clink) "Ah, there. I-" (thump) "These are pretty shallow-"</p>
	<p>banana (GM): Skeleton, if compressed, is essentially a pile of fairly clean bones and the little wooden box in which they were kept. The box is locked somehow - you didn't really have time to check - and anyway, it's too small to carry the skeleton in anymore.</p>
	<p>Skeleton: Skeleton doesn't walk like a toddler so much as like a newly-awakened coma patient. They clearly know how it's supposed to go, but lack muscle memory for obvious reasons.</p>
	<p>Kon: Ghol ran ahead to scout the inn with Kon; make sure it wasn't swarming with their that horrid little man's monsters or with priests. Seeing that it wasn't, Kon had sent the boy straight to bed. He'd looked awful.</p> <p>Now there was just the question of what to do with...this.</p>
	<p>Placidus: "They're plenty steep," says Placidus, who leads Skeleton into his room. These steps are quite high for a gnome! In any case, Placidus's room is human-sized, with a human-sized bed and a human-sized desk (whose chair is stacked high with books) and a nice rug in the corner, with the afternoon sun slowly dragging the pattern of the windowpanes across it.</p> <p>Placidus will shut the door after Kon and this skeleton get inside.</p>
	<p>Skeleton: The bundle of scorched bedsheets stumbles into the room, then tilts precipitously this way and that as it struggles to remain standing without ongoing support. "Now where?"</p>
	<p>Kon: Kon has become quite adept at moving his bulk around the inn without breaking things; he ran interference -- under protest, if registered only with himself -- for the undead thing they were now harboring, blocking him from view of most of the common room as he made his way through the lower floor.</p>
	<p>Placidus: "You can stop now," says Placidus. "Let's get these off you."</p>
	<p>Skeleton: "Ah. Yes, let me-" It's a struggle, because the sheets get caught and torn on the edges of ribs, eerily floating kneecaps, and on random sharp-edged other bones that don't even seem to be formally part of the skeleton but just caught within its structure in the chaos of the fight.</p>
	<p>Kon: Kon settles into a corner of the room, curled into a soft, watchful ball.</p>
	<p>Skeleton: Once the sheets have finally been stripped away there's still about twelve and a half percent of a skeleton extra to be brushed clear, but finally the failed skeleton mage is standing there on a pile of cloth, soot, and bone chips, looking around the room curiously. Frightenedly? Evilly? Who can tell?</p>
	<p>Placidus: "So the very first thing we need to establish is this: you are a skeleton."</p>
	<p>banana (GM): That's generally not allowed, either legally or physically.</p>
	<p>Skeleton: It's got its knees knocked together and its arms crossed over its ribcage, hands kind of</p>

 limply curling at around chin level, so it's probably the middle one. "I..." says the skeleton.


 **Kon:** Kon growls softly at the revealed form, but cuts it out after a few seconds, remaining in his settled position.


 **Skeleton:** It looks down at itself, then in particular at its hands. It tapes one foot, then the other against the floor. "Well..."


It's another minute at the least before the skeleton speaks without prompting, because it carefully and thoroughly looks itself over. Having no tendons actually makes you quite flexible, and so the undead creature's able to sort of twist, snakelike, to run its eye sockets up and down its own spine, down past its shins, and so on. It experimentally pokes its phalanges through its own ribcage, between its upper and lower leg bones, even through an eye socket, before finally knocking with its knuckles against its own skull. The sound is, of course, hollow.

"...you might be right."


 **Kon:** Kon chuffs.


 **Skeleton:** There's still a ghostly, silver-blue glow clinging to the thing, shining softly out of its eye sockets and ribcage. The ether or ectoplasm or whatever it is - the technical term is probably 'animus' - seems most focused around the head and heart, but if one pays attention they'll notice it snaking down each limb and extremity, binding the whole arrangement together.


 **Placidus:** Placidus is sitting on the stack of books on the desk chair, now, with a big notebook full of formulae and diagrams open in his lap. There are lots of numbers and letters, and prominently circled and boxed on one side is the four-armed cross of the One-Eyed King. "Right, that's the main thing. You're a conscious and mobile collection of..." the little man glances up at Skeleton again briefly "Some two hundred and forty-two bones, which seems to contain, at a glance, all of the constituent parts of a person's body and some, ah, detritus. What's your name?"


 **Skeleton:** "I'm..." There's a long pause.
"...well. I'm certainly a skeleton. We figured that one out."

Thock, thock, thock, the creature checks to see if there's anyone at home in its skull again. It tilts its head back and forth, then turns halfway away from gnome and warg both, curling one hand around its chin with a clacking sound. "This is annoying."


 **Placidus:** "The amnesia or the rattling?"


 **Skeleton:** "The- ..oh. Oh, that's just great. Now I'm going to notice it."
"You know what. You know what. You're breathing AND blinking."

 **Placidus:** "I-" Placidus hesitates, suddenly breathing audibly. He stops, his eyes winched shut, for about ten seconds before "That- that's beside the point. Let's move on. I might be making a mistake here. Possibly you haven't forgotten anything. Possibly you-" Another conscious exhalation and dry-eyed blink. "-possibly you have no memories because you didn't exist until just now. Do you remember ever not being a skeleton?"

 **Skeleton:** "Of course I do! I-... well."

The skeleton scrapes at the rags it's standing on with one foot. "I certainly remember... remembering... I think there are only two degrees of separation, here. Three, tops."

 **banana (GM):** Skeleton can recall that there is a thing skeleton does *not* recall. Something important. An obligation.

 **Kon:** Now Kon gets up and pads over to where Placidus is sitting, very carefully, to look over his shoulder at the notes. It's not clear if the warg can read, or what, if anything, he can pick up from

Placidus's scribbblings -- he just looks at it intently for awhile.



Skeleton: "I was... I was..." It paces a bit, now tilting its skull back and waving its arms expansively. "I definitely... I was certainly... probably... well, I had to be a mage, right? I don't think you can make one of those out of anybody."

The skeleton pauses here, tilting its head. You can't, can you? (int check...?)



Kon: The warg moves from the book to the skeleton. He's decided, for the moment, to hypothetically proceed as if the talking undead creature isn't a threat. Well, isn't hostile, at any rate. So he's going to do what he usually does in these situations -- sniff him.

From a respectful distance, of course.

...Respectfulish.



Skeleton: The skeleton draws back from the wolf immediately, seemingly noticing him for the first time. "Wwwhhh hey, hello, is he or she safe?"



Kon: Kon's head flicks up in annoyance.



Placidus: Placidus continues making weird algebraic notes at the bottom corner of a page with his left hand. There's a little skull in with the numbers, Kon'll see before he sniffs, as well as something that looks like waves lapping at some undrawn shore. "Kon's perfectly safe, assuming you are."



Kon: Imagine that, the SKELETON asking if the leader of Kon's Men is safe.



Placidus: "The fact that he hasn't mauled you into dust yet speaks very highly of your character."



Skeleton: "I don't FEEL safe--"



Kon: Kon will withdraw, seemingly satisfied...what DOES Skeleton smell like?



Skeleton: "...I don't feel much of anything, actually. Sort of..." The skeleton grinds a heel into the bone chips and rags, now. "...mmm..."



Kon: One assumes a bit cleaner than most recently dead.



Placidus: "Well, you shouldn't feel safe, because your very existence is a crime against both nature and, presumably, the law. But that's not important right now. Do you feel pain? Are you hot or cold? Are you hungry? Can you see me? Can you see colors?"



Skeleton: The undead creature smells mostly of bone and ash, of course, but there's whatever wood and resin was in the box that the skeleton was held in. If Kon's particularly magical, of course, there's more to pick up whiffs of - stray souls, bound ones, black magic, regular magic...

"Let's see." The skeleton knocks on their own skull again, then harder, then harder still, then loudly enough for it to echo around the room. "Well, I know that SHOULD'VE been painful."


"I know it's cooler here than it was back there... you're in green, yes?"





Kon: He very much does not smell like a CORPSE, then. Which is interesting, given the rather messy brand of necromancy at work in the city -- no rot, no flesh, no excrement....Kon looks over at Placidus. A completely different STYLE at work...





Placidus: Placidus looks up at Kon. "Hmm?" Then he looks at Skeleton and sees Kon's nostrils twitching. "Oh! Yes, that's a good point. This skeleton doesn't bear any resemblance to the magic of the necromancer who tried to kill us twice now. So we can confidently say that he's not a creation of that necromancer's, and nor is he secretly that necromancer himself."


 **Skeleton:** "It'd certainly be a secret to me."


 **Placidus:** Placidus looks at Skeleton here. "I'm sorry, is 'he' right?" Does Skeleton's spooky voice sound particularly masculine or feminine?


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton's voice echoes strangely, as though the constituent sounds weren't all released at the same time and only have an approximation of this room to bounce around inside. At times, there seems to be an accent of sorts, but it's a faint and inconsistent one. The voice itself is a highish one; it's almost certainly coming from an adult, but otherwise age, sex, and species are a crapshoot.


 **banana (GM):** Bonanda Limetop claimed that he'd been "granted" skeleton, to use as a minion.. which corroborates the idea that someone else's magic is at work here (skeleton's own??).


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton looks down at itself, here. It twiddles the fingers of a hand. "I... don't know."


 **Kon:** Well, there is one person very likely to be directly involved, in any event. They know that much.
One uses "person," and not "human," because it is hard to tell what applies to the Wizard King besides an abiding, sentient malice.
The wargs have their own term for the Wizard King -- it is the same set of cues and vocal turns used for "ruin" and "forest fire."


 **Placidus:** Placidus is making more notes. "Name: Unknown. Age: Unknown. Sex: Unknown. Peopleage: Unknown. Origin: Unknown. These are all the known unknowns. What is known is that you are a skeleton, and you have some capacity for necromancy of your own."


 **Kon:** A great, vague, uncompromising Disaster.


 **Placidus:** "Let's try something more immediate. Do you know where you are right now?"


 **Skeleton:** The skeleton flexes its phalanges. "I'm not sure that makes sense. It... makes sense to me that you'd need to be living to push the dead. Privilege. Leverage. It shouldn't... it DID happen, though, didn't it?"

 **Placidus:** "It did happen. We saw it."

 **Kon:** Here Kon settles into a more comfortable laze again, sometimes looking over at Placidus's notations if one seems especially interesting -- otherwise keeping an eye on the Skeleton.

 **Skeleton:** "And I felt it..." Skeleton reaches an arm out experimentally, waves it around a bit, and watches little happen. Then they rock on their feet a bit, tilting their skull back and spreading their arms. Their internal glow begins to thrum and pulse, its white core peeling open to reveal a black core even deeper inside, and a malign, exhausting chill begins to grip the room. Of Placidus and Kon, the gnome's vitality has the less tenuous hold on its material frame, and so it's Placidus who begins to feel a strange pressure before Skeleton notices what's going on and reels back, arms crossed defensively.
"Ack, erm, well. Right, I'll just, I'll not do that."

 **Kon:** That gets Kon right back on his feet, growling.

 **Skeleton:** The good news is that a few gnats have dropped right out of the air, but the bad news is that several decorative plants have up and wilted, having had the misfortune of being closer to Skeleton than even Placidus was.

rolling 1d20+10 int four necromancer four level two

(14)+10



Placidus: Placidus sort of swoons in his seat, briefly looking like he's about to faint. He stabilizes after Skeleton retracts his dark soul, and (after blinking three times and taking a long deep breath) he stares at Skeleton, who can feel their bones vibrating very slightly as the room fills with a sub-audible bass hum.

Then he blinks, and the vibration ebbs away.

"Right, that was- right."

"Please don't do that."



Kon: Kon settles again into a lounging posture -- but this time, BETWEEN the skeleton and the gnome.



Skeleton: "N-n-n-n-n-g-g-g-" The vibrato in Skeleton's voice is accompanied by a literal chattering and clacking as the undead creature quivers. "...I won't, I won't! I don't even think I d-d-d-did it right, just listen t-t-t-to this."



Kon: He's about the right height that Placidus could balance his book on Kon's back for stability if he wanted.

Though it would be rude to do so, without asking.



Placidus: Placidus can manage fine on his lap. "No, that was me, sorry. I was trying to clear my head. You should be fine now."

"Do you know where you are right now?" the gnome repeats.



Skeleton: "What, really? What kind of- oh, no."

"Unless you want something like 'a room'. An inn?"



Placidus: "No, I'm thinking a little bigger-picture than that. Do you know what the city of San Meat is?"

"How about the Dragon Empire?"

"How about the Federation?"

"Do any of these mean anything to you?"



Skeleton: Skeleton puts some knuckles to a temple, thinking carefully or pretending to.



Placidus: Placidus probably couldn't tell which even if Skeleton had a face.



Skeleton: "Those... ye-e-e-s? That's the Five and Conqueror at work, isn't it, and then the King's land...?"



Placidus: Placidus nods. "That's right, so you're familiar enough for that. Can you name any places within those dominions?"



Skeleton: "Ahh... the King's in Omen, isn't he? That sounds right."




Placidus: "Well, *on* Omen. Omen is an island. But yes, that's the seat of the Wizard King's power and the heart of his dominion."

"So one assumes then that you're *from* the Federation."




Kon: Kon makes an odd, soft noise here at the mention of the Wizard King. It's an old Western forestdweller invocation: fire pass over me.


Skeleton: "Maybe? That's not... all I know. I mean, I don't know, Drakkenhall. Horizon. The star court..."

 these are places, right? Or things?"


"They seem reasonable..."


 **Placidus:** "Well,the other thing that suggests you're a Fed is all the necromancy."


"We don't even bury our dead in the Empire."


 **Skeleton:** "Hey, ahh. 'All the' is overstating it, isn't it?"


"I just copied what that elf was doing. It was all I could think of!"


 **Placidus:** "Well, there's the necromancy you do and then the necromancy you comprise."


 **Skeleton:** "Well, that's not my fault." Skeleton almost immediately turns to gaze at a wall, here, lost in thought.


 **Placidus:** "I'm not... sure that that's important."

 **Kon:** Point of order: those with no memories but definite previous actions cannot lay claim to what is or is not their fault.


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton's shoulders fall with a clack. "Maybe not."

 **Placidus:** "I'm pretty sure that you'd be eradicated on sight by any faithful servant of the gods of light or the Dragon Throne regardless of whether you could blame your existence on someone else."


 **Skeleton:** "Neither of you are those things, I hope."


 **Placidus:** Placidus clears his throat loudly. "Honestly the fact that you can talk at all is strange. I didn't... think the undead did that."

"I thought mostly they were either silent, or moaned piteously."


 **Skeleton:** "I don't remember what I thought the undead did. ...well, I mean, logically, though. They'd mostly not be allowed to."

"You'd definitely let them talk if you wanted to find where someone buried the silver, or. That kind of thing. Make them."


 **banana (GM):** Is it even illegal to BE undead? How do you have a crime without a criminal?

 **Placidus:** You don't need a criminal for a crime. All you need is a judge.


Placidus glances at Kon. "Have you ever seen an undead just... make conversation before?"

 **Kon:** Kon shakes his head emphatically.


It looks almost like he's shaking water out of his fur, just localized up past the shoulders.


 **Placidus:** Placidus frowns. "It doesn't seem to be within conventional parameters..." To Skeleton:

"What does it feel like you're doing when you perform necromancy?"

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton leans back a bit, tenses their fingers again, then appears to think better of it.

"Well... erm, I've only got a few examples to go off, obviously."

 **Placidus:** "Do you mean as references or as referents?"

 **Skeleton:** "But it's sort of... I can see the shapes and signs I need, and concentrate on making them? Maybe with my body - bones - or with, er. Like clenching muscles, or holding breath."

"But, you know. Magic. I'm SURE I did magic once... if you're the right thing, or know the right thing,

you make things move."



Placidus: "Does your necromancy not feel like magic, then? Does it feel like - as you put it - exercising a muscle?"



Skeleton: "I don't really know. Maybe it's both. I don't know if I could've gotten those other bones running around if I hadn't just copied what the elf - the one without swords - was doing to me. Maybe I could?"



Kon: Hh. So he reads Ghol as an elf, not an orc. Interesting.
Usually only elves do that...



Placidus: Placidus has by now filled up another page with notes, these largely being very abstract line and circle drawings with hardly any writing. "Oh, you mean Ghol. Yes. He's definitely not a necromancer. But I have five points to make." He checks his last couple pages of notes. "Yes. Five."



Skeleton: "Just five?"



Placidus: "The first is that you don't really seem to **be** a necromancer. Or at least, you don't seem to be **doing** necromancy, any more than Kon is doing physics when he jumps very high or throws a cat at the Prince of Shadows."

"Necromancy seems to be a byproduct of your existence, one you can affect consciously."



Skeleton: Skeleton is looking down at the bone fragments they're standing in, and twiddling their fingers at them occasionally. The corpse-detritus doesn't seem to be responding. Then again, ske's not trying very hard. "Maybe."



Placidus: "Think of it as a medium, I suppose. A mode of operation."
"An idiom for action, if you like."

"The second is that you were, at one point, **not** a skeleton, and have since become one for unclear reasons. You have some continuity of consciousness. You're aware enough to remember things and yet also aware that there are things you don't remember. You are, or were, one contiguous soul which might've since accumulated extra bits like you've accumulated extra bones."

"Now, the next three are significantly more troublesome."



Skeleton: "What? Extra-" The skeleton looks down, and then looks down further. "Oh, no, you're right."



Placidus: Ticking off on his fingers: "Three, the Dragon Empire has inquisitors whose vocation is to destroy all necromancy and purge all undead. You can't be seen in public in the Dragon Empire, which is where we are right now. The good news is that Roland's armies aren't infinite, and the light of virtue can shine only so far. If you're careful, you should be able to get by."



Skeleton: Now Skeleton looks down further at the bedsheet they're standing on. Then they turn an appraising eye to the still-intact bed of this room at the inn, then at whatever passes for a wardrobe.












Placidus: "Four, there are other necromancers active in this city and elsewhere in the world, and being that you're some kind of escaped slave and that half the world is still ruled by a single necromantic tyrant, I'm going to theorize that you would be hunted and enslaved or destroyed in the Federation as well. It's possible even that that necromancer is an agent of the Wizard King himself, and that he or more of his agents might want to track you down."












Kon: Kon is missing some moments of the fight due to the insane, unholy pain inflicted by the chamberpot wraiths, but he is fairly certain context bears this reading out.


Placidus: "Five, I'm certain you need to travel with us."


- **Skeleton:** Skeleton is scraping phalanges nervously across neckbones. "I do?"
- **Kon:** Kon whips his head around to stare levelly at the gnome for a moment. The warg doesn't seem overly surprised -- just, searching for something in Placidus's expression, though the gnome isn't normally one to joke. After a brief, intense moment, Kon looks back at the Skeleton and gives it the same. Then he settles back down on the floor.
- **Placidus:** Placidus is making kind of a 'would that it could be any other way' face when Kon looks in his direction. For both his and Skeleton's benefit he holds up his notes. There's a bunch of circles and scribbles spread out across two pages, along with two long, graceful freehand curves bobbing up and down across the top halves of both pages. "See? Our interval has been erratic, which indicates an incomplete term. Notice also our oscillation is so short - this period is about three and a third."
- **Skeleton:** "What?"
- **Kon:** Kon considers the page briefly, but has no other visible reaction to it.
- **Placidus:** "When we factor in our, ah, new friend... Mr. Skeleton... we refactor our interval and it reduces entirely, leaving an interval of 1. A single, coherent, irreducible term. What's more, our period increases substantially, from just under three and a third to just under three and a half. Now, these numbers don't mean much at a glance, but they multiply with themselves to produce two cleaner numbers. The three and a third multiplies with itself to result in the number 11. The three and a half multiplies to 12."


"You see?"
- **Skeleton:** Skeleton looks at Kon, here. "Is this a thing I don't remember because I'm a skeleton? Do people just say these things now?"
- **Kon:** Kon sort of shrugs his warg shrug.
- **Skeleton:** Skeleton looks back at the gnome. "None of that made sense. It sounded like math... except you didn't say what any of the numbers meant."


"Why's twelve better, anyway? More factors?"
- **Placidus:** "Twelve is better because it's not eleven anymore. So, too, will this-" Placidus gestures vaguely around at the hotel walls and, presumably, the world beyond them. "Cease to be eleven. The period of our oscillation corresponding to the next Series indicates our term will be a factor."
- **Skeleton:** "I SERIOUSLY think there are words in there I'm unable to hear or something-"
- **Kon:** Kon gets it. Most of it.
- **Placidus:** "I am a philosopher. This, here, this is philosophy."
- **Skeleton:** "I mean... four... I feel like four's pretty good for necromancy? In some places? I'd have to read up on it. Otherwise I- I mean, I don't even think I was bad at math. Am bad."
- **Placidus:** "Mathematics is just one small part of what I do. Here, let me explain this as simply as I can."
- **Skeleton:** Skeleton leans forward slightly, expectant.
- **Placidus:** "Philosophy is the science of estimating values. The value of one substance or state over another can be determined by philosophy."
- **Skeleton:** "Is it philosophy if you put two things on either end of a scale?"


 **Placidus:** "Weight is not value, my dear skeleton."


 **Skeleton:** "Oh. Then, er, what's value."


 **Placidus:** "I'll get to that."


 **Skeleton:** "I thought philosophy figured out that truth was beauty and then basically dusted its hands off-"

 **Kon:** The wargs, of course, understand all things as cycles. Not lunar cycles -- those are useful for planning when one can see at night, and little more -- nor seasonal cycles, which determine reality, not morality, but emotional cycles, relationship cycles; the child becoming the parent becoming the infirm elder, who is again the child; the unknown becoming the friend becoming the lover becoming the rival becoming the unknown -- the world operates in an omnipresent give and take, and to both the warg and to his or her moot. And these cycles have been speeding up. Things are happening faster, changing faster, around and around, and the cycles -- the identifiable progressions -- are splintering. That is what it means for an age to end, to the wargs.


 **Placidus:** "We take these substances, these states, and we isolate them. In isolation they are magnitudes. A handshake, a birth, an apple, a song, a feeling. These are magnitudes. But it does little good to evaluate them in isolation, yes? So each locus of interrelated magnitudes - a religion, a nation, a family, a story - can be combined and treated with as one entity, which we call a 'term'."

 **Skeleton:** "Well, at least you've defined your, heh... no, sorry, keep going."


 **Placidus:** "But! There is a bigger picture to consider. What about, for instance, a war? What about music, or a literary tradition? What about the entire sweep of history itself? Can we account for this? We can."


 **Kon:** If the addition of this Skeleton rebalances -- helps complete -- this cycle, then a companion this Skeleton shall be. And in this matter, Kon trusts Placidus's judgment, as it does not especially conflict with his own.


Kon contemplates this while yawning and stretching out, half-doing on the floor, as the conversation cycles above -- back and forth, back and forth, going and returning. The world working as it does.


 **Placidus:** "We consider this totality of substances and states - these terms and magnitudes - in two ways, in Sum and in Series. We consider the totality in aggregate as the Sum, you see? And we affect the Sum through the conservation and oscillation of magnitudes."


"An example." Placidus reaches and grabs a little glass jar off the table. "You see this? This is a jar, colored glass, it's got a magnitude of oh-four-three-three-one and it's oscillating at just a hair under half five. It's completely inert, right?"

 **Skeleton:** "I don't g-... no, wait. No, actually, go on. Except... oscillating?"

 **Placidus:** "So, two principles here. Conservation - you can't add or subtract to the, er, magnitude of a magnitude. A thing can't be made more or less than it is, it can only be multiplied - aggregating into a proper term - or divided - which looks a little something like..." Placidus stares at the glass. There's that hum again, right there in your sternum.

 **Skeleton:** "Hey, you're doing th-"

 **Placidus:** He doesn't... seem to be doing anything, exactly. But a moment later (after Placidus has grabbed a little tray from the desk and positioned it on his lap beneath his outstretched hand) the jar falls apart, and violet sand is running between the gnome's little fingers and pooling on that tray.

 **Skeleton:** "Whaaaaaat?"

"Was - was that a transmutation? No, but, you'd have to be good, wouldn't you? REALLY good. To just, without gestures or lights or..."



Kon: He doesn't get it.
It?



Placidus: "So that's conservation. The other property of magnitudes is oscillation. Oscillation is a rate of change, in essence, and *as* a rate of change it also maps to a value's, ah, I suppose 'intensity' is the best word. Every term and magnitude oscillates at a given period, and this period has all sorts of other applications and implications and any other plication you care to name. Now before it was oscillating at just about two and a half. Now that its magnitude has been divided, its oscillation has spiked. There is, in effect, a sharper vector at work. Which we can see here-"

Placidus tips the tray over onto the floor, and the sand spills out, spreading across the floorboards in elaborate fractal shapes, never overlapping or blurring.

"There's a... mediating force here. It looks quite nice when you do it with glass. Less so if you do it with, say, a pig's head."



Skeleton: Skeleton takes a step closer to better see, touching all ten fingers gingerly to their mouth as they lean over.

"...oh, that was you! I wondered how it got like that."

"The animus was all... all... well, a bit like this, here."



Placidus: "Mmm. It's difficult to anticipate which way the forces bend. Sometimes, paradoxically it seems to happen most with the *un*intelligent, the terms produce a psychic symptom, where the mind attempts to adjust on the fly to its recontextualization and it... goes poorly."

"Other times the forces act directly on the body, sort of... physically oscillating it."

"I haven't quite worked out why that is."

"I suppose it's likely just seeking the path of least resistance."



Skeleton: "So... everything has a number, and you can't add to or subtract from it, but you can multiply or divide it, but if you do then it changes."



Placidus: "When considering the Sum, yes. I used to think of it as Summing but it rapidly became clear I wasn't actually adding anything. In any case, there is also the Series."



Skeleton: "What would the jar do if you multiplied it? Can you... multiply the sand back into a jar?"



Placidus: "I've- I've never tried to multiply anything before." This gnome might be insane but he is a very poor liar.




Skeleton: "Huh? I would. It's right there."




Kon: Kon has dozed off a bit by this point. While the overall language resonates highly with the warg, the minutiae muddy the metaphor for him.




Placidus: There's a glass of water on the desk. Placidus goes to take a sip before he continues but it's fuller than he expected and some of it slops onto his chest. Or rather, it slops onto his chest and then vanishes. It's a couple seconds later that a dark wet stain spreads where the water hit. "Oh, bother. In any event, We have these terms, yes? These magnitudes assembled into terms and then considered as one totality. We can consider this totality in aggregate as a Sum, as I said, but this is a very limited idea, as you can trivially see. If I asked Kon how many wargs there were, that knowledge would not avail me of command of all the wargs in the world, because each warg is a distinct magnitude even when wargs aggregate into a single term."


**Skeleton:** "I'm still not sure what oscillation is. Or how you give an entire... oh, a warg? ...right, yes, that makes sense. But how you give an entire one one number."


"Is it... does it just have a lot of digits?"

**Kon:** Were Placidus to pose that question to Kon, the answer might be less than helpful -- he'd get the gesture and tone for the greatest example of uncountable individuals coming together into a greater whole, considered singular and powerful in their own right: 'rain.'

**Placidus:** Yeah, like Placidus couldn't count raindrops.

"You can annotate a given term within the Sum as a matrix of individual magnitudes or you can reduce the term to a single value by taking the ratio of a term's aggregate magnitude to its aggregate oscillation. In any case, we can further consider the totality of terms in relation to one another. That is, we can consider them in Series. The Series evaluates terms as co-ordinate, and generally considers them as a waveform or, more fully, as a topological manifold. Which is what we see here."


**Kon:** Yawn.


**Placidus:** "The Series, as a model of all terms in co-ordinate relation, preserving their individual magnitudes and individual oscillations, describes the position and momentum of all its constituent terms. It is, in effect, the world itself."

"This is what we see here," Placidus adds, pointing to the wavy lines. "This is our term, and our projected term, in the Series."


"Now my experiments with the Series have proven a little more abstract. There's only so far I can or am willing to push and pull on the tide of history itself, you see. And I don't have an analytical framework that can isolate terms and manipulate them in Series as I could in Sum... with one exception."


"There are a handful of terms which, despite their magnitude, are very clear and straightforward to work with. As simple to oscillate in Series as a jar is in Sum. I've found twelve of them, and I've been pushing and pulling at them to see what happens."


**Skeleton:** "Are they... them?"


**Placidus:** "I've got the variables right here..." Placidus flips rapidly through the books until Skeleton (and Kon) can see columns rows of four symbols. At the top of the left column is the four-armed cross of the Wizard King, at the top of the center column is the watchful hand of the Diabolist, and at the top of the right column is the crest of Roland I Liberator.


There's also a question mark beneath the center column, though it's not clear what that's for.


**Kon:** The Diabolist...


**Skeleton:** "It is. It IS! I know those."

**Kon:** Kon doesn't approve of that woman.

**Skeleton:** "But, I mean, basically everyone does. It's like knowing trees."

**Kon:** That's mainly a Ghol thing, though.

**Skeleton:** "...right?"

**Placidus:** "How much do you think the average person knows about trees? I bet most people wouldn't know the difference between a Giantwalk Fir and a HYDRA Fir if it smacked them upside the head. But I digress."

"So lately I've been oscillating these terms. On our first day out of Axis, I oscillated the term corresponding, I think, to the Archmage. We discovered the Via Arcana is degraded or malfunctioning.

A while later? The Orc Lord. We were immediately beset by a band chasing spies away from a southerly wing of the, uh, Movement, was it? I think he said Movement."



Kon: Kon nods.



Placidus: "After an incident with an orb and some really nasty araras we made it here, to San Meat, and I oscillated the Dwarf King. Some friendly dwarves gave me this, here," Placidus taps a pile of weird, misshapen metal junk with his foot. It's under the desk. "They retrieved it from beneath Forge, which is itself beneath the former Kingswood, from some mad cave gnome. It's magnetically keyed to a location not far from Santa Cora."

"The next day I oscillated the Prince of Shadows, and he offered Kon a job. Kon counter-offered a stray cat."

"Today... today I oscillated the Wizard King."

"And today we met you."



Skeleton: Skeleton stares a little while. "Let me... so I still don't know what oscillation is supposed to be, here. But you're saying you can... hmm."

"You can call things out of the world? Things of the twelve?"



Placidus: "Well... the thing is..."

"It *might* be thirteen."

"There's this other term, here, see. I don't know what it is, or what it corresponds to."

"It's just, I don't know. The Other."



Kon: Kon makes a mental note to keep Ghol from learning this. He'll never leave the poor gnome be.



Skeleton: "...and you didn't try that one yet?"



Kon: Besides, the Queen of the Elves has been quite capable of exercising her will without any gnomish meddling to date.



Placidus: Placidus: "No, we've been on the move or in danger. I want a little stability before I test that one. Or, at least, I want to try all the other ones first."



Skeleton: "...so what's my magnitude?"



Placidus: Placidus looks a little mortified. "What? You don't just- that's like asking- that is most improper, Mr. Skeleton."



Ferrinus: "Is it more than a jar's?"



Skeleton: "Is it more than a jar's?"



Placidus: "Yes. It would be significantly more complicated to reduce you to dust."



Skeleton: "How about a living person's?"



Kon: Kon stretches then stands, padding off to check on Ghol. This bit of the conversation is less than interesting to him.

He's back a moment later, though.



Placidus: "More than a lot of people's, but less than, say, mine. Your oscillation's extremely high, though. Oscillation corresponds to a lot of things you don't need to explain to people from first principles - it corresponds to ambition, to drive, to destiny, to intentionality. A high rate of change

signifies significance.



Skeleton: "...I didn't expect that. That's something."



Placidus: "You expected that you were a completely ordinary free-willed talking skeleton necromancer?"



Skeleton: "I thought I'd be less. Missing value."



Placidus: "I bet your magnitude would be higher if you weren't an exposed and loosely-held-together accretion of bones, but it might just get higher anyway if you can understand your nature better."



Skeleton: "Well, I didn't actually know what 'magnitude' and 'oscillation' were actually supposed to mean, either. I guess, er... complexity and significance? What I want to know is how you know all this."
"And, hell, how you change them around."



Kon: When Kon returns, he decides to settle down out of the way again. If anything, the Skeleton's the one in over its head here.



Placidus: "Diligence, Mr. Skeleton! I didn't benefit from any moment of oracular insight or religious ecstasy. It started in the garden one day. I was picking pea pods and taking notes about their characteristics. I want to write a monograph on how to breed them, you see, because we didn't have one at the abbey. And I did! But circumstances conspired such that I didn't get to make any copies. Maybe after the Games I can visit that printer..."

*wanted to write



Kon: PRINTER...



Skeleton: "But... to melt a bottle, or whichever. You just concentrate?"



Placidus: "I consider the Sum and the Series, yes."



Skeleton: "That's... well. I think we're missing a step there somewhere."



Placidus: "I believe I've been quite thorough..."

"It's possible I haven't. I haven't really had to explain any of this before."



Skeleton: "I'd try to figure out why just, uh, understanding this? Holding it in your head? Lets you change it. That's not how sums usually work."
"Maybe your notebook is magic?"



Placidus: "You are SUCH a wizard."



Skeleton: "If only."

"Then again, maybe not. Skeletal wizards do as they're told, I think..."



Kon: It's fairly simple from where Kon's sitting. In the chaos at the end of an age, the gnome has found a way to muckle directly with the very stuff of the world -- it's, well, the wargs here have a term very close in meaning to "narrative politics." Everything flows from that, and is in accordance with that, or is after the fact hedging.

Placidus might very well disagree...were Kon doing anything but dozing in the corner about it.

He is a pleasant gnome, anyway, and it is enjoyable to listen to his funny words.



Placidus: "It's a defect of your thinking, the same one wizards have. Everything has to be a process, a

linear process. That's such a limited understanding of the Series. Terms are nonlinear and more importantly they are *multiplicative*. Not more or less, Mr. Skeleton: more or fewer. To look at the Series and demand a chain of cause and effect is to look at the rain and conclude that each drop was pushed out of a cloud by the one above."

"It's complete twaddle."



Skeleton: "Then why doesn't everyone know this and do it already?"



banana (GM): Perhaps most people are stupid.



Kon: Evidence does abound.



Placidus: Placidus shrugs. "The stars turned in the heavens before the first constellation was drawn. The angles of a hexagon added up to seven hundred and twenty degrees before the first bee built the first hive. Things are or are not. We can only observe, and there is so much more to see than any one pair of eyes could take in."

"There is always a first. But there need not be a last."

"The strongest force there is is repetition. The most potent truth is this: there is more than one of everything."



Kon: No one tell Ghol.

He'll be so put out.



Skeleton: "Well, maybe you'll figure it out. But there's got to be something, or else someone else you've explained this to would have to start doing it themselves."



Placidus: "I haven't explained it to anyone else."

"I'm sitting in a room right now with, probably, the two smartest people I know."



Skeleton: "Oh. Wow. Well, I'll tell you if I start summoning the world's great powers...?"

"...but, no. I shouldn't joke. This is a real thing... I don't know. It's just a lot to take in."



banana (GM): Good distraction from being dead, though.



Placidus: "The important thing is figuring out how to convince the others to keep you on... I doubt they would accept the mathematical proof as sufficient."



Kon: No. They're dragons.



Skeleton: "The others are... the one with swords, the two dragon-men? Are there dragon-men? I don't remember any dragon-men."



Placidus: "There are two man-dragons. We're travelling with both of them. Vraknaar is the elder, the red one. He's as sensible as you can be while still very obviously being a dragon. The blue one is Xarvrax. He's... well." Placidus clears his throat loudly. "There's also Ghol, Kon's companion. I think Kon's support should be sufficient there. But there's also Travis, the wizard, who you haven't met. He's got a good head on his shoulders, but he's a bit of a wastrel."



Skeleton: "How old is the wizard?"



Placidus: "If he weren't obviously no longer in school, I would probably have assumed that he was still finishing school."



Skeleton: "I can't imagine he'd care much, then. The dragons, though... dragon-men... what do actual dragons think of that?"

 **Placidus:** "He'll be easy enough to convince, too. I think he's mostly just very bored and the fact of your existence is very not boring."

"Well, there are two perspectives here. The former will be their default position and the latter I hope will be what I can convince them of."

"As you know, the Five are sworn enemies of the Wizard King and his undead legions. Vraknaar and Xarvrax destroy necromancers and the products of necromancy quickly and brutally."

"So, the first perspective is this: that you're a necromancer, and a product of necromancy, and ought in all likelihood to be destroyed twice over, or perhaps four times."

"However: if we can explain to them that for as long as you travel with us, they can be assured of an unbounded number of necromantic adversaries who will use their darkest powers and most potent minions to enslave or destroy you, while you yourself are both helpless in your condition and benign in the practice of it... they can be made to come around."

"I simply have to demonstrate that the dead necromancer equity will be much much greater for them if they simply keep this one particular dead necromancer around."

 **Skeleton:** "Travel with you... to where? What, um. Well, what's the deal?"

 **Placidus:** "We don't... have one, exactly."

"We just all happened to leave Axis at the same time and we haven't synchronized our oscillation for more than one period."

"We'll decide where we're going when we leave San Meat, when we leave San Meat."

 **Kon:** Ghol has probably been asking some questions of Placidus he thought were circumspect, but were fairly obviously to the tune of "what's in the Wildwood, who runs the Wildwood, we should check it out."

He's certainly been ruminating about it around Kon.

 **Placidus:** "Right now we have to win the Hungry Games or else be massively indebted to dragons."

 **Skeleton:** "The what?"

 **Placidus:** "The Hungry Games! It's a large religious ceremony and sporting event, held by the priesthood of Alabastien Meat, the elf goddess of meat, here in her temple city, San Meat."

"It's a variety of food-based contests."

"Eating an enormous sausage, hunting and cooking an animal from a contested ground overnight, making sandwiches... things of that nature."

 **Skeleton:** "I was more willing to believe you that everything's cosmic importance could be expressed as a decimal."

 **Placidus:** Placidus: "You didn't see it, because there was a sheet over your head, but this hotel is called the Gut and Bowel."

"We had to put down a necromantic outbreak in a giant abattoir. Dead pigs and cows assaulted us."

"Their high temple is literally a restaurant."

"These people take meat very, very seriously."

"Can you... smell? Can you smell things? Can you not smell how the streets of this city reek of frying meat?"

 **Skeleton:** "Oh, good."

"I thought that was just, you know. A relative impression given that I had no flesh."

