



banana (GM): hi vox, something happened to placidus's character sheet and his hp are gone. it was my fault i expect
please put them back



VoxPVoxD: I GUESS



banana (GM): ty



VoxPVoxD: the blessings of meat haven't yet been lifted, right



banana (GM): yep! you're STILL tough
more than a match for anyone without a similar divine aura



VoxPVoxD: there, my values are input. idk if you can make health bars visible



banana (GM): it is visible



VoxPVoxD: huzzah



banana (GM): who's in the mood for.....
denouement



VoxPVoxD: I enjoy when things denou



banana (GM): of course you might have to denoum, to some extent
the gang's all here



Riidi WW: technically.



banana (GM): Nine and a half glasses of the morning. Halfway through...

The Taste Against Time!



banana (GM): Kon's Men have all but won the Hungry Games. Fame and fortune await. There are some technicalities about ceremonies and religion before they can receive any fabulous prizes - but still, what a start to a career of.
Of. Hmm.



Placidus: What a way to start off a career, thinks Placidus.



banana (GM): One of them's Going East. Others are going Away from Axis, or from Anvil.. or on a journey to find out why ske's still even in existence.
Dragons don't need careers.



Riidi WW: of ADVENTURING.



banana (GM): Anyway, you've found this piece of golden offal and regrouped in the husk of the Shadow Quarter. That's one of three. If you want to set a real precedent for being really fucking cool, here, you're going to need another electroplated organ.



Travis Meacham: Travis is ADVENTURING. not fleeing.



banana (GM): I knew there had to be some unifying theme!



Xarvrax: I have a career, it's just burning things happens to also be my hobby.



Placidus: If you do what you love you'll never work a day in your life.



Ghol, Going East: "If you love your job, you'll never work a day in your life." - A man, the Orc Lord killed.



banana (GM): Obviously each of the teams' progress along various lines of clues-to-offal is recorded on the left of the map, there. You're not the only ones still in this - the remarkable return of Team Army, for example, indicates that there might be shared honours after all. Maybe.

But Kon's Men have clues of their own.

You know about this betting slip.. liquor points you to arara.. and if only you had a password, you could give it to girl with a pig.



Xarvrax: Also Salubriot was digging things, and immense was playing with plants.

Janes Mason, who is following you for some reason: "When you lot mentioned going to the Games, you never mentioned *playing*. How's it going?"



Xarvrax: "We won."



Placidus: "It could have gone worse."

Janes: "You're shitting me."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will have taken point on this, at least for the time being, since it was he who saw the clue: said betting slip.

They're heading for that burnt-out inn/betting parlor, right?



Skeleton: "No, it's true. This here is just for high score."



banana (GM): Yeah, you can poke around the ruins of the Establishment. Certainly Jenny was giving out identical-looking slips in there at one point...



Xarvrax: "Literally the only way we could lose an event here is if someone got the other two gold things."



Ghol, Going East: Hopefully they haven't set up shop somewhere else that they're expected to know about...



Travis Meacham: Didn't one of the cluex xarvrax dug up say that they were reworking it?



Xarvrax: That was for the abattoir.

Because of our fun meat murder episode.



banana (GM): It was- but it makes sense that they might have had to work other parts, too..

In fact, gimme int checks. This is a pure memory thing.




Placidus: Can we tell who the betting slip is for? Or what it says at all?



banana (GM): The wreck isn't boarded up or guarded - what with that problem about the city guard having all gone off to war. It is, however, salvaged. All the valuables are burnt or stolen.



Placidus: rolling d20+6 pure intelligence

() + 6

= **9**

Placidus is so tired.



banana (GM): Ghol saw a number on the slip- 4096. There was no name.




Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 9

() + 9

= **26**



Skeleton: rolling d20 +6 skeleton's int

() + 6

= **22**



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is a dragon, and dragons never forget... to kill.



Zarick: rolling 1d20+3

() + 3

= **4**

ah yes




Xarvrax: Or just... in general.

Unless they're stupid and red.



Travis Meacham: rolling 1d20+6

() + 6

= **9**



Placidus: let's all be hugely stupid... together



Zarick: what if they were just stupid or red?



Xarvrax: I've outsmarted you all, think about that for a second.



Ghol, Going East: Not Ghol. The only way to win...is not to play.



Placidus: I can't, I've rolled too low to think about it for a second.



Skeleton: how was xarvrax's bonus +9



Xarvrax: I have int now, and took the advance bonus to skills.



Skeleton: but this was a raw ability check!!!



banana (GM): Putting their heads together, Skeleton and Xarvrax piece together this: what remained of the Steak Whisperers, who are presumably now just a bunch of thugs who are friends, had a stall set up in the main square, and Jenny was there with all her books and gizmos, Nono guarding the safe.

In retrospect, this is odd: There weren't any odds displayed, so they weren't actually taking bets on anything? Just waiting to pay out old deals, perhaps.

oh, sorry

i didn't mean to imply that it was pure int

just that only backgrounds relating to memory would apply

which it occurs to me 'being a dragon' does not.



banana (GM): but you still passed



Placidus: Xarvrax's constant cheating.



Xarvrax: I mean, I still got 25 then.



banana (GM): So, if there's anywhere to turn in a Clue Slip it's probably back at the grill, rather than here.



Ghol, Going East: Well. To the main square, then?



banana (GM): Anything else you want to do in the cramped and burned-wood quarter of the city before heading onward?



Xarvrax: Well, we need to head that way anyway.



Placidus: It'd only be a diversion to go to the Grill if we had a direct line to the Hunting Grounds clue, and we don't.

Mason: "So. The games keep going even if you've already won? Because it's not hard to devise tournament rules accountin for that."



Skeleton: "I think... every event has to be held for religious reasons? Or something."



banana (GM): You're not the only team returning to the centre of town. The Wastelanders are here, all of them together for once - both Chatwicks, Far-archer, Dog Hater, Immense. Most of them hate you.



Xarvrax: "Also as a chance for us to win more prizes."



banana (GM): All the tattooed and barely-shirted men (plus the one armoured knight) seem disinclined to make conversation. They're even trying to dodge past crowds so you don't see which way they leave.



Placidus: "The actual prize medals for each event are worth money."



Ghol, Going East: Oh cool, it's Dog Hater! Ghol and Kon remember that guy. They fucked up his day and made him look stupid, once.

Mason: "Can't be much cash in a podunk town like this, but I getcha. Given the place will be locked down soon, I'm staying to see."



Placidus: "Locked down?"



banana (GM): The square before the Grill is much emptier than usual, though there's bustle up on the temple-ziggurat itself. What would normally be a brunch rush is replaced by crowds wandering about, watching the hunt.

Mason: "Yeah, comin down the road behind me were about four companies. Think they'll be reducing any walls? That way, anyone here needs to buy stone in bulk.."



Ghol, Going East: Hopefully they can make it through to the booth without any distraction.
Ghol would LOVE to kick Dog Hater's ass, when not on the clock.



banana (GM): Nobody's getting in your way - even the citizen-patrollers cheer you on and keep crowds back.



Kon: Kon won't dignify the "Barbarians'" presence with a glance.



banana (GM): This suits everyone.

In the shadow of the Grill, then, black-armoured thugs lounge about, gambling illegally. Well, you assume it's illegal.

They've got cards and dice and whatnot, money changing hands rapidly, in front of a holy place.. maybe that's okay?



Zarick: Let 'em. It's not our problem, and we've got work to do.

Sid: "Four in."



Vraknaar: oops

Maury: "Bones wild, orbs up."



Xarvrax: I love money rapidly changing hands, but only when it's changing into my hands.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will have surreptitiously handed off the slip to Placidus before they got here. He's sweet on the thief girl, if Ghol recalls correctly, and she seems to like him.

Jenny: "A samaritan on blue fives."



Placidus: Nice. Is the safe visible from the front of the booth? Is it still guarded?



banana (GM): Yes; in fact, what most of them are REALLY doing here is guarding it. Everyone keeps glancing in that direction.



Placidus: What kind of mechanism does the safe have?



banana (GM): A bicoloured rune set in steel, mandala-pattern.

Phil: "..."

Sid: "Flop or fudge, Phil."



Xarvrax: Now the question is, could I explode it without hurting the inside, and would doing so even open it.



Placidus: That is not actually the question.

Legitimate Phil: ".....four."



Vraknaar: Runes. Ugh.



Xarvrax: Because honestly, I'm the expert on stealing things here.

Maury: "Sard's balls."

Legitimate Phil: "I said four."



Skeleton: Skeleton leans over and whispers. "So what do those say."



Travis Meacham: "I have no idea."

Jenny: "Fur pelt."

Sid: "One to Phil. Next at fifty?"



Xarvrax: "I'm pretty sure they say pain and suffering."



Vraknaar: "So could we get it out of them, somehow?"

Maury: "Orbs are wild. Zero, One, Other is the flop."



Placidus: Placidus shrugs at Skeleton. "Do you have a plan?" Here's a question - are these guys actually playing a game or are they just taking gibberish actions?



banana (GM): Oh yeah, that's just Monkey.

Placidus has probably seen or played it with the travelling circus - maybe even back at the monastery.



Placidus: Oh, right, of course.



banana (GM): MUCH simpler than gnome games like the one Travis described.



Travis Meacham: Dice poker.

Phil: "Black, under-ten."



Vraknaar: Vraknaar's never been one for gambling. His luck is terrible.



Skeleton: In terms of sightlines and things, is there a way Kon's Men can take up station in the area such that they appear to be conferring or preparing or something but in reality one or two of them are uninterruptedly staring at and studying the safe?



Xarvrax: Xarvrax isn't a fan, because losing is something he doesn't like leaving to chance.



Skeleton: Of course, if Placidus knows what they're playing it seems like he might just be able to walk up, sit down, and win?





banana (GM): There is one way that occurs: gimme a charisma check to surreptitiously arrange your crowd of followers for this.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol looks at the wizards grumpily. Can't they just, redeem the slip and be on their way? These guys annoy him.

Jenny: "Ffffuud... no, seven."


 **Placidus:** A game just can't properly hold a gnome's attention if you can explain the rules to someone in less than an hour. Placidus is going to be direct here. "I've come to collect! Hello."


 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+5 here's skeleton's charisma


() +5


= **19**


Sid, or possibly Maury: "Shit!" They're scrambling.. away? And one's going for a weapon.


 **banana (GM):** Relevant question: where is Ghol and how does he look right now.


 **Ghol, Going East:** One presumes while we're doing this the wizards can like. Look at their silly safe graffiti.

 **Placidus:** He's walking across the square at a pace which would seem confident on longer legs but can only be described here as 'scurrying'.

 **Xarvrax:** Would Wyrmtongue apply here?


 **Skeleton:** Nervously leaning this way and that, asking nearby people inane things about the scenery, and occasionally appearing to remember something such that ske must immediately grab on someone's sleeve and tugs them over fill Skeleton's next few minutes.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Standing a bit back from Placidus but following him. Kon's with him.


 **banana (GM):** wyrmtongue would apply, you could get your worshippers to direct people about


 **Xarvrax:** For charismas?


 **banana (GM):** but, skeleton has already set this one up


 **Travis Meacham:** I'm liking the 'to collect' veiled threat Placidus is layin down.

 **Xarvrax:** Aww.


 **banana (GM):** Then yeah, Sid and Maury are looking kind of threatened by Ghol's presence.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Oh, for real?


 **banana (GM):** From their point of view, he's like.. a nightmare ghost. Who they've wronged.

 **Placidus:** Probably on account of the time he savagely beat them up?

 **Travis Meacham:** yeah

 **Xarvrax:** I mean, you did almost murder them, in the process of being attacked.

 **banana (GM):** , with a warg.
Jenny is completely ignoring this. "Collect what? We're out of cats, now."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Maury feels threatened by the guy who gave him a healing potion when he needed it most. There's gratitude for you.
And fuck you, Sid.



Placidus: Placidus holds up the slip, not close enough to grab but close enough to read if Jenny doesn't secretly need glasses.

Jenny: "Oh, nice. Given to you by a bone grinder..?" The human places one hand on the safe front and begins moving her fingers through the rune etching in elaborate patterns.



Placidus: Who did give it to us?



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nicked it.



Placidus: From the graveyard?



banana (GM): From Team Army. Who knows where they got it.



Placidus: Or hunting ground, or whatever. With the digging.

Right, those guys. At the place.

"Maybe!" says Placidus.



Vraknaar: People dig more than graves. Not lately, though.



Placidus: People actually DON'T dig graves, owing to the necrowar.



banana (GM): Jenny gives you a scrunched-up-nose look of suspicion, but ultimately it doesn't matter HOW you got the ticket... something in the safe goes Click. Placidus is handed, what looks like a salt shaker.

*is handed what



Placidus: Is it... actually a salt shaker?



banana (GM): Well, yes.



Ghol, Going East: Great. Cool. Let's get out of here before Ghol decks someone.

Phil: Off to the side: "Calm down, boys."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax nods his head, "Phil."

Nono: "That's the good shit. Whitcrystal salt- big reason to live in this weird town."



Placidus: "Thank you!" Does Placidus know what that is?



banana (GM): Probably not. It's int rather than wis to find out, because it's a weird magic elf spice.



Placidus: rolling d20+6 here's a naked int roll, add +1 if it's relevant to folk medicine or the theatre

(11)+6

= 17



Vraknaar: "Really? A seasoning? I mean, I know this town's all about food, but come on."

Janes: To Travis and whoever else is hanging back: "This is not the kind of eating competition I

envisaged."



banana (GM): Jenny: "You can't eat whitcrystal at *all* without it. This breaks down the lattice structure into its component jelly. Suddenly city architecture is dessert!"



Xarvrax: "You missed the actual eating part, but it wasn't too much better, honestly."



Placidus: Are all the local buildings made of whitcrystal, or is it just specifically the Old Garrison?

Nono: "And due to how we donated this dose to the Games, nobody gets to ask how come we got any."



banana (GM): Whitcrystal is used for accents, spires, flying buttresses all over town... but the crystal arena is the only thing made entirely of the stuff, that you've seen.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is trying to distract himself from present company while this all wraps up by thinking ahead. He wants to at least see Arielbeth one more time before he leaves town, but doesn't know if that's wise, or even something she wants, given what his presence has inflicted upon her family so far.



Placidus: "That sounds delicious! But also, like an engineering disaster waiting to happen. Thank you very much."



Ghol, Going East: ...he wouldn't mind seeing the dwarf girls again either. For reasons.

Okay, Ghol. Let's not get too distracted now.



Placidus: Ghol's mind is on the shorties as always.



Travis Meacham: "Actually, the COOKING part of the competition was amazing. You missed out on my revolution in sandwich technology."

"And, to be fair, Placidus's revolution."



Xarvrax: To be fair, pretty much everyone is shorter than him.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol isn't THAT tall.



Xarvrax: I mean, us two dragons are taller, but you're part orc part elf, being tall is part of you.

Janes: "Y'all should probably try out the produce of a deli back home " (he's from Horizon, you'll recall) "before declaring sandwich victory."



Vraknaar: So this 'salt' or whatever it is, it dissolves the crystals in that arena?

Jenny: "Very welcome."



Placidus: At this point unless one of the disgraced thugs has something more to say, Placidus will return to the others. "I believe this stuff is pointing us in the direction of the Old Garrison."

Phil: "Who was dealer?"



Skeleton: "Well, unless anyone can think of a reason to sprint for the eyrie immediately.."



Travis Meacham: "Does the deli back home have meat, cheese, rice, and beans wrapped in flatbread?"



Placidus: "It's a spice which when applied to the whitcrystal the garrison is made of will render it

edible. Apparently it's something between a light meringue and rock candy."



Vraknaar: "It's on the way, isn't it, and one clue's as good as another, I think?"

Janes: "..three of five maybe. But we've got magic mustard."



Placidus: "Vraknaar is right, it's on the way."



Ghol, Going East: Indeed.



Xarvrax: "I've got magic bacon, so."



Placidus: To Janes: "I see Travis is regaling you with his sandwich genius."



Xarvrax: "Hey! I helped!"



Placidus: "It was really quite a marvel. The sheer physics of it."

"It's true. Xarvrax was also there!"



Travis Meacham: "He really made the bacon happen."



Placidus: "And now it is all of us who will bring it home."



banana (GM): The stone-seller is fascinated by your tales of culinary prowess. It's a pleasant half-glass to the Garrison, with a captive audience who you suspect is starting to regret not having become a player character in the first session.

The main garrison building is not, itself, made of whitocrystal; anyway, Meggs's crew have left ostentatious explosive-laden chains all over the doors and signs reading "OURS" with an implicit GO AWAY.



Skeleton: "Hmm."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax looks back and forth, "I've got this."



banana (GM): The arena, larger than the barracks itself, towers and gleams, translucent unlike the alabaster, brighter than the polished wood in the other parts of the city... white elf construction.



Xarvrax: "No one out explosions me!"



banana (GM): Everyone can roll a noticing-things check as they look around or do whatever you're about to do.




Travis Meacham: "They put up signs, guys."



Xarvrax: What would a noticing things check be? Int?



Skeleton: rolling d20+2 add four to this check if death or bones are relevant

()+2

= **7**



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will use Wis. Would Scout apply...?

banana (GM): wis is the usual one for perception, yeah

alas, scout applies



Vraknaar: Vraknaar's definitely a good spotter, even if explosions are more his brother's thing.




Placidus: rolling d20+9 what does a developing understanding of the oscillating nature of reality itself reveal about these circumstances

() + 9

= **14**



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 2 add 4 if being a dragon would help?

() + 2

= **5**



Vraknaar: rolling 1d20+7 plus five if Keen Dragon Eyes help here

() + 7

= **22**




banana (GM): what i'm actually looking for here is up to two separate successes, as there are a couple of different things going on..



Placidus: It reveals that Placidus is still very tired.




Travis Meacham: rolling 1d20+3

() + 3

= **13**



Ghol, Going East: rolling d20+10

() + 10

= **28**

Nice.



Xarvrax: Well, I think we got that.



banana (GM): dang, ok



Xarvrax: Xarvrax isn't really paying attention, ready to out explosion some dwarves.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol, meanwhile, takes to a nearby tower of...some purpose...to reconnoiter the

area. Sort of like a big, questionably-purposed tree.



banana (GM): Well, in the east of the city they do have some literal treehouses, so why not.



Ghol, Going East: He's back a moment later, face serious: "Captain Manson and the Army team are here. Knocking on doors, briefly asking residents a question, moving on."

"Looks like just the one question. Very short conversations."



Vraknaar: "They're keeping an eye out for us, too. Or someone, anyway."



Skeleton: "Could you tell if they had any crystal salt?"



Vraknaar: "So either we commit to this and go in hard, we try to sneak in, or we leave and chase other leads."



Xarvrax: "Did you hear the question?"



Ghol, Going East: Was Ghol able to make it out?



Xarvrax: "We could go the Arara's, but our clues lead here too."



Travis Meacham: Maybe the question is "What's the magic word"



banana (GM): The ones Ghol saw did not have any salt. The group Vraknaar saw *are* doing something mysterious in the arena, but you'd have to go in to find out what...



Skeleton: oh, they're already in the arena? that's a hrm



Xarvrax: "To hell with this sneaking, we're going in!"



banana (GM): 28 is a really high number so, why not.. Captain Manson is asking each resident whether they had eggs for breakfast.



Skeleton: "We've surely got to look in the arena first for a chunk of wall that's got the entrails suspended in it, or something..."



Ghol, Going East: Do NOT let him just walk up to the ostentatious explosive chains and--!!!



Placidus: Eggs are a perfect food. One hopes they did.



banana (GM): The explosive chains aren't on the arena, they're on the barracks building that wash-it-down are living in.



Xarvrax: Oh.
Hmm.



Ghol, Going East: See???



Xarvrax: Well then.



Placidus: There's almost certainly no reason to break into their sleeping area and go through their stuff. It'd be petty, frankly.



Ghol, Going East: Yeah.

banana (GM): It's not like any of you would have left any socks there.



Ghol, Going East: ...Yeah.



Placidus: Are we really to believe that Ghol wears socks and no shirt?



Ghol, Going East: There are tactical reasons.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is a Chaos Mage, he doesn't lose socks, he finds the lost socks.



Placidus: Placidus loses socks sometimes, like normal people do.
Because he is normal.



Xarvrax: Strongly Disagree.



Skeleton: Skeleton probably lost some socks once, but hasn't put any on since sker reanimation.



banana (GM): Losing only matched pairs of socks is NOT NORMAL



Travis Meacham: i havent decided how casual a steez travis rocks



banana (GM): Janes is enjoying the tour. "Green Morco's bones, this place is weird. Have they heard of bricks?"



Ghol, Going East: It is Ghol's opinion that standing around here and dwelling on who might have left what clothing outside which bathtub is unproductive, and they should move on.



Skeleton: So yeah, unfortunately, Skeleton basically agrees that the group needs the run of the crystal arena, and if the other team's already in there, well, tough.



Vraknaar: Socks? Vraknaar doesn't even wear a shirt. They don't make talon socks, and if they did they'd be ridiculous.



Xarvrax: Now Xarvrax is eyeing the explosives curiously.



banana (GM): Looks like several red boomstick things tied together along the ropes on the doors, like a particularly deadly necklace. Dwarven blasting materials.



Skeleton: Talon socks would basically have to be the fingerless gloves of socks.



Xarvrax: He shrugs, probably best to not fight explosions when we might have to fight people.



Ghol, Going East: To the arena, then.



banana (GM): So if you're going into the arena.. are you approaching openly or what?
As Vraknaar saw, they've got someone on watch.



Placidus: Can they seal the entrance with notice?



Ghol, Going East: Who is it, could he tell?




Skeleton: Is sneaking in practical? ...we could just melt our way through a wall, couldn't we? How much salt would that cost relative to our supply?





Vraknaar: We could try sneaking in, but I don't think many of us were sneaky.




Xarvrax: I'm pretty sure I already said to hell with sneaking?

**banana (GM):** It'd take a lot of materiel to seal that entrance up, so it's unlikely to happen on short notice.


**Xarvrax:** We got this, so what if they're legendary contest winners, so are we.




Placidus: Let's just march in, then. It's not like we're doing anything illegal or wrong.




Ghol, Going East: Different group, I think.




Skeleton: Onwards, then.




Xarvrax: And in fact, I think we've won more than they did.




Travis Meacham: Agreed with placidus here.
Except, morally, we might be doing something wrong by trying to spike the whole tournament.




Wraknaar: March on, then.




Ghol, Going East: We SHOULD keep the idea of eggs for breakfast in mind, however...
...and people who might have had them.




Wraknaar: What kind of barbarian eats eggs for breakfast?




banana (GM): OK! With no particular attempt at stealth, you march into the arena where Xarvrax's chaospotheosis took place. There are three soldiers here - as you enter, one of them calls out to the others, who hurry over to her, away from whatever they were doing by one spiral-spired wall.




Placidus: If we weren't supposed to win the whole tournament we wouldn't have been vastly better, smarter, and luckier than everyone else.




Ghol, Going East: Now, note: Ghol, Placidus, and perhaps some of the others had eggs for breakfast.
Among other things.
Likely not relevant, but who knows...?




banana (GM): They're all members of Team Army - imperials, and wyrmridders at that. They all have the same dragonsergeant rank, and apparently you've impressed someone, because they salute.




Ghol, Going East: Ghol's put his shirt on since seeing Team Army's in the district.
That's his attempt at 'disguise.'




banana (GM): The scout: "Petra Brassfriend. You'd be the new champions... noice."




Placidus: Placidus puffs up a bit at this, and deflates right away. Oh right, it's the dragons.




Xarvrax: Xarvrax nods, "That would be us, I'm Xarvrax, the new Scion of Chaos."




banana (GM): Only Manson got a good look at Ghol during the mad chase, fortunately(?).



Placidus: "Pleasure to meet you. Glad to see you could rejoin the competition."



Ghol, Going East: Phew.



banana (GM): Petra introduces the other soldiers. "Anthony Bronzefriend. Comic Silverfriend. Yeah, thanks for keeping it warmed over for us.."

 **Vraknaar:** "Seems odd to try and duck in at the end, though."

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton scans the arena as the others talk, searching for differences between its current construction and the shape it was in back in the sparring match.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Haha. 'Comic.'

 **banana (GM):** Anthony: "We look forward to the ceremony. In a bit of a rush here, though. Would you mind hunting somewhere else in the district."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol: "Yep."

 **banana (GM):** Petra, to Vraknaar: "Duty called."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax frowns, "We're not leaving here. Got things to do, contests to win."

 **banana (GM):** Dragonsergeant Anthony: "Yep, you.. WOULD mind..?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol looks at him dead-on. "That's what I said."

 **Xarvrax:** "Or well, at least one contest to win, you know, since we've already one the rest."

 **Placidus:** What WERE they doing over by the wall there?

 **banana (GM):** vOv

 **Ghol, Going East:** The wizards should probably get to work.

 **Placidus:** Does the wall look damaged at all?

 **banana (GM):** Not a bit.

 **Placidus:** Is it whitcrystal?

 **Travis Meacham:** Seasoned?
Egged?

 **banana (GM):** Yes. It's one of those huge crystal spires, intersecting with others in dangerous jagged ways - but it's fully intact.
Neither broken, cooked or eaten.

 **Placidus:** Yet.

 **Xarvrax:** Guess we'll have to get a closer look at it then.

 **banana (GM):** Petra: "We appear to be at an impasse, citizens."

 **Skeleton:** It's translucent, right? What's in it? Skeleton's sockets are metaphorically peeled for suspicious shapes visible within the material.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol: "It's a big arena. We're only at an impasse if you stand in our way."

 **Xarvrax:** "Which I would advise against doing."

 **banana (GM):** Yeah, the stuff is barely-less-than-opaque. You could search the whole place, laboriously peering into each crystal - it'd take ~an action~, but hopefully you'd turn up a hidden offal?? Or, if

you're very unlucky, a chain clue.

A faster way to manage it would be nice.

Anthony: "Do what you like with the arena, but we need to conduct an inspection."



Ghol, Going East: Besides trying to bully the soldiers into helping them instead of their own team, Ghol can't think of a way to speed things up. And Ghol's not particularly keen on that kind of bullying. Goes against the spirit of competition.



Xarvrax: Oh!



Vraknaar: "For the games, or for duty?"



Xarvrax: Separate existence! I could phase through the walls to check!



banana (GM): Comic: "The former." The silver dragonrider has a really weird voice - sort of fluting, accented in a way you haven't heard.



Ghol, Going East: In the interests of mutual peace, Ghol won't mention to Anthony that at no point did they ask for, or require, his permission to do anything.



banana (GM): That sounds interesting, what does separate existence do?



Xarvrax: "You are ever-so-slightly detached from normal physical reality."

Mechanically it means I can cast in melee without opportunities, but it also mentions: "Play the story side of that as you like"



Vraknaar: that sounds like more than slightly



banana (GM): Give me a strength check to see if you can push through the (dense, latticed) crystal stuff fast enough for it to be a way to find things.



Vraknaar: maybe you could reach through a solid object briefly, ghostwalking seems a bit of a stretch but if banana's okay with it then ghost away



Placidus: It should be possible but in a way that makes Xarvrax look really stupid and lame.



banana (GM): i reckon it's a good way to try and get at stuff buried in crystal, though not necessarily very efficient



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 2

(12)+2

= 14

Add 4 to that if dragon strength helps?



Travis Meacham: Definitely with Placidus on this one.

Travis needs everyone else to spend time looking stupid and lame so it isn't so noticeable when he does.



banana (GM): Xarvrax starts melding with crystal, struggling through the material, drifting in and out of the stuff to test for abnormalities.. it feels very tingly.

It's also kind of slow. Sadly, no faster than just looking closely with unaided eyes.

Petra: "You're here for similar reasons, friends."

Anthony and Comic have gone off to the other side of the arena and are doing something...



Xarvrax: Xarvrax shakes his head, clearing out the static trying that shoved into his head, "I'm pretty sure this crystal stuff hates me."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol starts taking a look around the arena by himself. Now that he really looks at them, something about these crystals feels...familiar...



banana (GM): Well, considering what you did to it.



Xarvrax: "That may have something to do with tearing chunks off and using them as lighting prisms." lightning*



Ghol, Going East: ...Ghol begins...to sing.
It starts as humming.



Skeleton: Skeleton turns and peers.



banana (GM): Dragonsergeant Petra's trying to distract most of you - albeit in a fairly friendly way. The soldiers seem like they're in a really good mood, even though they've got bruises and scrapes - on a post-battle high, maybe?



Ghol, Going East: But then the words come; words he doesn't actually know, per se: they're not in any language anyone here has ever heard.



Travis Meacham: "So how did the battle go, Sergeant?"



Ghol, Going East: Probably.



Travis Meacham: "Obviously you weren't all massacred by an orc horde, but,"



banana (GM): What's she distracting FROM? Well, the other two have some sort of weird goggles that they're using to look through crystal rapidly. This becomes irrelevant.



Placidus: Placidus just smiles at the soldiers, endeavoring to act like this is totally normal, what's happening.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax knows a good number of languages, but none of them elf related.

Petra: "By Elandrat! I don't know if I should give you details, as we're here early on special dispensation.. but don't worry. Nobody in the Empire is getting massacred by orcs."

"It was incredible. Terrible, in a way, but- we took them. The Emperor stands."



Travis Meacham: "We like to think that we helped with that. I don't know if you knew that we saved that scouting party."

Petra: Re: Ghol: "What's he-"



Placidus: "Oh, don't mind him."



banana (GM): The crystal structure begins to pulse. Xarvrax has to withdraw a limb suddenly, to prevent it being vibrated apart..



Placidus: Raising his voice slightly to be heard over the vibrations: "This is all totally natural!"



Ghol, Going East: One presumes one of the wizards might be able to make an Int check at some high difficulty threshold to translate, at the GM's discretion.



banana (GM): Green light swells. Ghol's voice is low, but his song has in it the same melodic key as the prayers of the priests - harmonies upon harmonies, swelling and driving the light. It's something he heard in a dream.

The song is not in a language anyone in the city would know, let alone anyone in the group. At its height, the soldiers drop what they're doing to listen, and the entire arena is lit-
- revealing a dull golden distortion near the recently-grown peak of a crystal.



Placidus: "I wonder what that is."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax drops everything and begins sprinting that way.



Skeleton: Skeleton hurries over. Ske's probably not tall enough to actually obscure it, so ske'll contrive to have seen it first, instead.



Vraknaar: Yeah, pretenses are probably dropped here.



banana (GM): There are hurrying footsteps outside. You'd lost most of the crowd, but some of them are being drawn back by this- as are the other two of Team Army.

Dragonsergeant Petra: "Huh."



Skeleton: "Dibs."



Vraknaar: Vraknaar's ready to get in the way if shit goes down. Dibs indeed.



banana (GM): Anthony and Comic are having a brief muttered conversation, glancing at the hidden offal. The light begins to fade. Ghol knows, somehow, that the song is about a place- a different place, where crystal like this grew into far more shapes, living and moving, as much as an inhabitant as a bulwark of.. wherever.



Placidus: When dibs are invoked, bloodshed is soon to follow.

Petra: "You can't call arbalest on that. We got to the arena before you!"



Vraknaar: "But you didn't find it before us."



Skeleton: "Also, I bet we were physically present in this arena before you, generally speaking."



Xarvrax: "Also, dibs, so suck it."



Placidus: "Let's just take the offal and go without getting into an argument over property rights, shall we? I'm not a legal scholar but I'm sure that possession amounts to some large fraction of the law."



banana (GM): The three dragonsergeants have now come to stand side by side, sort of nebulously towards-ish the key crystal. Petra: "I don't know what the rules are if you've got two teams present at a finding..."

Glory Manson: "I do."



banana (GM): The captain is framed in the arched entrance by his sapper lieutenant and half a dozen random spectators.

Placidus: "Wow, that is really dramatic."



Travis Meacham: "They are very cool."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol has stopped singing. His hands are now resting on his weapons.



Placidus: "Maybe we should just let them win."



banana (GM): Anthony: "Thank you. Meacham, wasn't it?"



Vraknaar: "Strongly disagreed."



Placidus: "Well, you've convinced me."



Xarvrax: "Don't make me hurl you at the explosion door."



Ghol, Going East: No one is hurling anyone at the explosion door.



Travis Meacham: "Yes provisionally."

Manson: "The rules are implicit: anything goes. We're expected to fight to the death, should we care enough for meat. How long since these Games were a series of blood sacrifices?"



Travis Meacham: That's a good question. HOW long



Ghol, Going East: "The rules are implicit" sounds convincing, but really isn't very.

Petra: The talkative dragonsergeant is looking back and forth at Ghol, at the captain, at Ghol.. she's twigged at last where she saw the two of them together, albeit shirted.



Placidus: "I would really prefer that we not fight to the death."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol looks back at her and grins.



Placidus: Speaking of fighting-to-the-death... does the arena's subdual magic still stand?



Vraknaar: "I could go either way."



Xarvrax: "I mean, I'd rather not kill you, but if you insist."



Skeleton: "I don't think anything with blood needs to be sacrificed, here. I know where you can borrow some nonlethal acid, for starters,"



banana (GM): The magic of the arena is still real, so it WOULD be a good place for a battle to the death. But:

Manson: "You jest. A changing of the guard, then."

Anthony: "Come on, commander. We could take them."

Manson: "Why should we?"




Placidus: "It makes so much more sense *not* to fight."


Petra: To Anthony "Dude, if you want a sapphire so bad I'll get you one from the Erskine hoard."


Manson: To Placidus: "Yep." The ray of sunlight has faded, as did Ghol's green starlight. Nobody's dramatically haloed at all.

 **Vraknaar:** "What does it mean to you to win this event? You get a little prize, and play spoiler to the victory of your nominal allies. If we win? A grand event. Think about who wants it more."

 **Skeleton:** "Yeah, what do you even care?"

Manson: "I'm kind of obliged to care for Glory. But not enough, you're right."


 **Xarvrax:** "I'd rather not be the Dragon Emperor who killed the Empire's game winning team."


 **Placidus:** What's the relation of the Free Copper Companies to these dragonriders, organizationally?

Manson: "OK, boys and girls. Form up on Meckie while I give your apologies."


 **banana (GM):** Manson, an imperial captain, is the commander of a company - each of the Free Copper Companies **are** a company, and are considered captains themselves. Their leader, Subcommander Vovhko, would outrank him.

Comic: "Cripes, we were minutes from the find."


 **banana (GM):** **is* the captain of a company
Commander is two ranks above Captain, so that would be confusing

 **Xarvrax:** Ugh, Vovhko.

 **banana (GM):** Glory Manson is making agreement noises to Vraknaar, but walking over to.. Ghol?!


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's still got his hands on his weapons.

 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar's tensed up. They agreed, sure, but maybe they're after an orc here?


 **Travis Meacham:** You guys are paranoid as hell. Travis is taking it easy.


Petra: "I don't suppose any of you have leads about a password?"

 **Placidus:** "I don't recall hearing anything about a password."


 **Travis Meacham:** "There's a little girl in a field."

Manson: Studying Ghol. "Like I said to my team- I owe you an apology, boy."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol relaxes a bit.
Not much, though. "Boy?"
er
'Boy?'

 **Placidus:** Well, to be fair. Ghol is actually-

 **Travis Meacham:** "She has a pig, and has something for someone who can tell her the magic word."
"Which, maybe, is 'did you eat eggs for breakfast'? We heard you asking around."

 **Skeleton:** "Hey, that'd make sense."

Manson: "You look.. different to most halfords, and we mistook you for a fullblood - but that also wouldn't make you a monster. I regret the unpleasant ten minutes." He holds out a hand to shake.



Placidus: "Oh, that's clever." Placidus is quite satisfied with this turn of events, and everything's imminent, peaceful resolution.



Vraknaar: Surprised is the word Vraknaar would use.

Petra: "What, eggs? No, that's a different thing I think. I... think. Hmmmm. Captain!"



Placidus: What does this bit of the Golden Offal look like, anyway?

Anthony: "Wasn't the egg thing about the steinvogel?"



Skeleton: We'll be salting it out, natch.



Ghol, Going East: Argh. Hrm.



Xarvrax: "The Arara's have a clue there too, something about dragon blood."



Ghol, Going East: rolling d20

(14)

= 14

ok
Ghol's eyes narrow. But he shakes.



banana (GM): As Skeleton shakes the 'salt' onto the crystal's tip, it becomes wavery, then wobbly, then a sweet scent begins to rise from an entire chunk of whitcrystal. This is ruined somewhat by the realistic gilded statuette of something's lower intestinal mass which slips through the jelly and goes blorp into sker hands.



Skeleton: "Eww! But great."



Placidus: "I bet you could suspend bits of fruit in that. It'd be lovely."



Travis Meacham: Travis tries a bite. Is it actually any good?



Skeleton: Skeleton pauses to wonder whether ske should've swapped the exclamation and period around, but shrugs it off. Soon ske's returned the prize to the party.



banana (GM): Obviously Manson has a really firm handshake and a clear-eyed look. "We'd better get back to the temple for the real show. Enjoy your part in.. what?"
Petra is practically shaking him. "Sir. Sir. Let's give the hunting grounds one more try."
The whitcrystal gelatin is pretty odd. It's the consistency of dessert jelly, but tastes more like blood pudding.. prepared, you could imagine it being a delicacy.



Skeleton: "Should we check the eyrie?"



Xarvrax: "Do we even care about trying to get all three? We've already won."



Travis Meacham: Travis does not take a second bite. "It's like meat jelly, and NOT very good."



Placidus: "We've got two of three now. We could try for a clean sweep, but what if we get up there and someone's already found the last piece?"

"My feet hurt."



Skeleton: "Well... it'd be neat. But my feet don't hurt as such so I'm a bit biased."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will nod to the captain -- maybe wink at Petra, who seems to be the only one other than he to notice they've already met today -- and watch them leave, presumably with haste.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax snickers, "Does the big baby need to be carried?"



banana (GM): The soldiers are departing, so only one of them hears you mention already having two golden entrails... that's Meckie, the lieutenant with the beard and strange mechanical hat. He gives you the finger on the way out, but apparently doesn't mention it to the others.



Travis Meacham: that was definitely a bit of a rub-in bvy placidus



banana (GM): yep
or at least it's taken as one



Placidus: "I will soldier on."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol returns it with an extremely rude gesture of his own involving a fist.



Placidus: Placidus waves at Meckie.



banana (GM): so
Is it just me, or did you just Win Everything,



Placidus: It's, at minimum, not JUST you.



banana (GM): seems like in that case all there is left to do is bask in the praise forever, since nothing can possibly go wrong??



Placidus: Agreed!



Travis Meacham: Yep.

At any rate, collect a fabulous loot hoard beyond our wildest dreams, the admiration of all, et cetera.



Placidus: "Plus, if we go to the eyrie, it'll take us an hour to get back to the grill. We could be sitting down in twenty minutes instead of ninety!"



banana (GM): Man, it's really beginning to sink in.



Ghol, Going East: Well.



banana (GM): Not yet the eleventh glass of the morning - and this city is *yours*. Unless it's the Conqueror's. Or the Citizens' Council.



Skeleton: "It's just... you know. Imagine if we DID get all three. It'd be pretty great."



Travis Meacham: Travis has a suspicion on that.



Vraknaar: "Sounds like we'd have to fight them over it."



Placidus: Placidus still hasn't quite internalized the connection between the event they just crushed and the Hungry Games he read and heard about in his youth. It just seems different somehow. Maybe because the entire world is reorienting itself along axes cut perpendicular to fate itself.



Xarvrax: Probably.



Travis Meacham: That suspicion goes soemthing like "The Emperor just won a major battle against an orc army" + "The temple city of san meat just declared itself to have undergone ac itizen's revolution" - > What do you think



Ghol, Going East: Ghol has no objection to getting all three, but he doesn't particularly want to fight anyone over this event.
And that's likely what that would entail.



Placidus: That's a very valid suspicion. Luckily, all that stuff will be happening after we leave.



Xarvrax: "I have an idea."



Ghol, Going East: Uh oh.



banana (GM): News doesn't travel fast, in this war-torn era- but the Games are a big deal! People *still* remember the Thunder. They remember the Army domination, the rise of the empire. They remember the 'Black Bastards', the black elves who famously came within one sausage of victory as their race tore itself apart.. the popular consciousness, once it learns, reveres these tales of superhumanoid endurance and piety. You're really going to be Someone.



Xarvrax: "Let's get the hell out of this dump before the army shows up and hurls everyone in jail for rebelling."



Vraknaar: "We could try the arara nest. At least if we fight something there it's not people, probably."



Travis Meacham: "Why take the chance? What if somebody sneaks up behind us and steals one of the pieces?"



Placidus: "Think of it like this, Vraknaar. Whether or not we fight araras will have no bearing on if we have to fight people later."
"Personally I would rather be rested for some future time when things attack us, than go pick a fight on purpose."



Vraknaar: "I guess not. In fact we could get weakened by fighting them and then someone else shows up. Bad idea, you're right."



Skeleton: "Ahhh, fine."



Placidus: "Were you planning to wear the entrails?"
"Where yours should be, I mean?"



Xarvrax: "We win, hurray... Now let's get out of this dump."



Skeleton: "What? Would that help?"




banana (GM): Sounds like 'relaxing triumphantly' is winning the conversational battle over 'deliberately battling araras'...?





Placidus: "I... don't know."




Vraknaar: "I guess it would keep them safe, unless someone can... scry them or something."
"However it'd be hard to take them out again without arousing suspicion."


 **Placidus:** "When would you need to?"


 **Skeleton:** "That's a clever way to hide them... ...but why the hell would you even ask that? That sounds really presumptuously rude, now I think about it."


 **Placidus:** "Is it?" This question doesn't sound rhetorical.


 **Skeleton:** "I don't know."


 **Placidus:** "...let's consider the issue tabled, then."

 **Skeleton:** "Anyway, back to base?"


 **Xarvrax:** "Also, I need to go talk to Jenny about a wager anyway, so back to the Grill."

 **banana (GM):** ..awkward, but anyway:
You've somehow lost Janes. Presumably he'll show up at the ceremony, or not. The walk back to the Grill is direct, clear, unhindered, and unsettling. This is a march of destiny.
Once you return to the central districts, people accrete around you once again - tens then hundreds of spectators following down the main way and side streets. Are you going to let them know why it is that you're returning a glass early to the Alabaster Grill?

 **Placidus:** Placidus turns to Kon. "I believe the honor is yours, captain."

 **Kon:** Kon howls. Loudly. And his Men hold the Entrails high.


 **Travis Meacham:** "Yeah!!!!"


 **banana (GM):** You can see the end of the boulevard from here, and bureaucracy starting to form up in the square.. acolytes and patrollers working together, setting up the team stages and the crowd area and the seating and the buffets. That place has been through a LOT of cleaning sessions recently.

Crowd GASP


Crowd CHEER


Crowd ROAR


 **banana (GM):** ...then they boil inward and you haven't got a lot of personal space for a while.


 **Placidus:** Placidus is led to wonder: was this really easy, or did we just make it look so?
And then he's smothered.

 **Kon:** Kon will quickly rescue Placidus and haul him up on his back.

 **Placidus:** "Oof! Thank you."
"This is so many people."

 **Skeleton:** "Ack, hey, ack-" Skeleton conspires to be pressed in the middle of the party such that few crowd members manage to actually reach skem.

 **banana (GM):** It's tough to self-evaluate, of course. Are you different to other people? Better? Xarvrax might know that it is so. Kon might be less sure. Are these, perhaps, strange times?

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol greets his public, such as they are.

Being in the middle of this many elves is...a bit overwhelming?

Fan: "Ohmygoddess ohmygoddess ohmygoddess you're the BEST"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax simply starts whirling around like a top, a claw on each hand extended.



Placidus: "That is demonstrably true, yes."



Ghol, Going East: But...it's cool.

Fan: "Watch out, he's- it cuts, owww"



Ghol, Going East: Real cool!!!!



Travis Meacham: Hell yeah!

Being a winner ftw!

Fan: "This is like magic! A miracle!"



Xarvrax: Winning ftw?



Placidus: An apt tautology.



Skeleton: #winning

Fan: "The city is saved!" From what?



Placidus: "Saved?"

Same Fan: "Uh"

"You know, in general.. like, because you're heroes.."



Placidus: "Oh! You're very kind."



banana (GM): Looks like Father Vealsgravy is in charge of receiving at the end of the boulevard.



Vraknaar: i just realized. right now we're on nickelodeon's GUTS



Skeleton: no gluts, no gory



banana (GM): With the noise the people are making, it's pretty obvious what's happened when you parade into the square before the high temple of Alabastien Meat. The priest waves in, you assume, celebration.



Placidus: It's such a safe assumption.



Travis Meacham: Travis waves back.

Fans: "eeeeee can we have another falafel eee"

Father Vealsgravy: "Competitors. It seems you're here to report a result."



Placidus: Oh, that reminds Placidus: he's going to want to write that recipe up so it can be distributed. There's a printer in town he can stop by at some point.

Kon: Kon barks deeply in the affirmative.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax slows his spinning before nodding.



Placidus: "Indeed we are!"



Xarvrax: "We kicked their asses, yes."

Father Vealsgravy: "Incredible. For most of the treasures to be found before the deadline is usual, but your overall accomplishments.." He's motioning acolytes and city bureaucrats forward, separating out the crowd, drawing you over to one of the stages - the most central and heavily roped-off.



banana (GM): The 'Barbarians' are already here, you see, sulking - for the first time, they haven't even placed. None of the other teams are back yet, but the temple is already getting bedecked as people busy it for the ceremony.

Father Vealsgravy: "Would you mind coming over here.. yes, by the stair.. it's very important."



Placidus: "Who do you think's going to find the last piece?"



Travis Meacham: So what is the rule if the guts are found 1-1-1? Equal points awarded?



Vraknaar: "Maybe it'll be our surprise competitors. They seemed pretty determined."



Placidus: "Could be the Army, but I like Salubriot for it."



Xarvrax: "Not the gnomes, can tell you that much."

"I might have disheartened them."

Vealsgravy: "Right, equal points." He seems distracted, watching the upper terraces for something.. where's the fawning-over?



Vraknaar: "Salubriot also seemed really determined. Hard to dislike him, even if he really wants us to."



banana (GM): Actually, here come a couple of old friends hurrying over to congratulate you. It's Arielbeth van Sammen, and.. a dark priest.



Travis Meacham: "Hang on, what's going on here? What are you looking for, Father?"

Vealsgravy: "Sides."



Ghol, Going East: "Arry!" And then: "...and...this guy."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at the dark priest, "I thought we killed all of you at some point or another?"



banana (GM): Arielbeth arrives first. "Hi, Ghol! Hi, guys! Have you won *again*?"



Travis Meacham: Travis walks over to the victory area. He is, after all, the victor.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol grins. "That's what we do."

Vealsgravy: "No, could you.. goddess. Travis, do what you like but please get back over here by twelfth glass.."



Placidus: So it's not the dark priest who tried to stab Placidus, or the other one who turned into a monster until we invaded their psyche, right?

banana (GM): Nobody actually *stops* you from ascending the first tier of the Grill. There are a couple



of priests there, watched over by the now ever present citizen-patrollers in their brown coats.
One of them's the Elector's guy, actually - Coppora.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax glares at him.



banana (GM): This dark priest is neither of those, nor the one who you made throw up during the Sausage, nor the one who Ghol and the wizards doubly killed during the Night Steaks. It's the last one.



Placidus: Well, okay. "Hello."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax continues pointing at the priest, "Are you here to avenge your buddies? Because if so, get in line."

Arielbeth: "Damn, it's impressive. You know.. my family don't believe, but most people here think you *can't* win the games unless you seriously, truly have Alabastien's blessing. Like if she is Into you straight up."



Travis Meacham: "Maybe she is."

Priest of Blamer: The dark priest approaches Placidus and Xarvrax, by default. "No, you already did that."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs, still grinning. "It happens."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax puffs out his chest, "I mean, I knew I was awesome already, but being favored by a goddess is always a good confidence boost."



banana (GM): He's(?) got a sonorous voice, resonant in a way that chills your spine, speaks of age-old malice, etc etc- but it doesn't sound hostile PER SE.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax adds quietly, "Especially one okay with petty theft."



Placidus: "What can we do for you?" says Placidus, who suddenly looks very cold.



Vraknaar: "We... avenged your buddies?"

Arielbeth: "What are you gonna do with the prizes?"

Priest of Blamer: "You can accept my thanks. For the avenging."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol hasn't...really thought about that. "Uh. We should probably buy a wagon."

Priest of Blamer: "All four of my fellows, replaced by spies and impersonators one by one. It was shocking, let me tell you."



Ghol, Going East: "I dunno. I mean, we're headed east, still."



Placidus: "Oh! Yes! That is very likely what happened."



Kon: Kon, who is up at the stand with Placidus, makes an odd, high-pitched chuffing sound.



Travis Meacham: "The forces of evil and chaos have so many schemes to entrap hard-working priests."



Kon: After a moment you realize this is what it sounds like when a warg laughs.

Priest of Blamer: "I'm quite serious." The darkness beneath the hood moves just enough to make out

a smile.

"Originally, our delegation were warrior-clerics. Visitors of the Demigod, who is Chosen. Politics, alas, intervened."



Travis Meacham: "Whose politics? The King's?"

Priest of Blamer: "Something like that. We ended up a group dedicated to sowing discord, when this whole thing was meant to bring the Army of Darkness and the Army of Dragons closer together. United in the common spirit of destroying orcs."

"However, everything has worked out in the end. So I thank you. Santa Cora won't."



Kon: Kon isn't really laughing anymore.



Placidus: "That's inconvenient, considering where we're headed."

Arielbeth: "You've got a long way left to go."



banana (GM): Did Travis come back to the waiting stage, or what?



Ghol, Going East: The grin fades into more of a lighter, sadder smile. "Yeah..."



Travis Meacham: Yeah, he did.



banana (GM): If so, Father Vealsgravy - who is still hovering around, directing acolytes to organisational ends - looks relieved.



Travis Meacham: After father vealsgray had a panny.



banana (GM): like some sort of huge elf baby, yes



Placidus: Maybe the waiting stage is wired to explode like a sausage popping out of its casing, and he was worried Travis would be caught in the blast.



Vraknaar: is there any other kind of elf

Priest of Blamer: "Condolences, then." The robed figure turns to sinisterly leave.



Ghol, Going East: To Arry: "We're heading south and east along the coast from here, I think. I..." He hesitates. "I'm not sure how safe San Meat is going to be, in the coming weeks."



Vraknaar: "Any advice you can give us? In thanks for... helping you, I guess?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax lowers his arm, "So, you have any idea how cool your god is with me? I figure I'd probably be okay in his book."

Priest of Blamer: "Mmm." Pausing briefly. He hasn't actually turned to face you, but the words are still clearly audible, which is creepy. "The best cafe in the city is Mont-Serpico. The true roads are marked with spritefire, not on the maps. The most trustworthy of the Gods is Blamer."


And unless you're going to make him come back, that's all you get.




Ghol, Going East: Ask a priest of darkness for advice...


(priest of dorkness)


Arielbeth: "Can it actually be *less* safe? Than recently?"


 **Placidus:** "Do you think he follows Blamer because Blamer is the most trustworthy, or do you think he thinks Blamer is the most trustworthy because he worships Blamer?"


 **banana (GM):** Blamer IS known for, uh, holding people accountable for things. That's a kind of trustworthiness.


 **Travis Meacham:** "Blamer never lets you slide."


 **banana (GM):** (The square is filling up - nearly the deadline. Nearly the ceremony.)


 **Vraknaar:** "Maybe both. Or maybe he just told us that and doesn't believe any of it. Who can say." Vraknaar shrugs philosophically.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol hesitates again. "The Emperor's forces annihilated the orcs. Eighty-eight thousand of them, dead. There's no more threat there. This...citizen's uprising...I like it in, in theory. In spirit. In practice, the window they thought they had just slammed shut."

 **banana (GM):** Father Vealsgravy: "Oh, you know about that already."

 **Placidus:** Has anyone come back with the third piece of offal yet?


 **banana (GM):** Wis check, Placidus!

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+5 here is one of those


()+5

= **14**


Placidus yawns loudly.


 **banana (GM):** There's something to the north, in the sky. But you can't see what it is. Just, you know. A thing.

Small eyes low down.

 **Placidus:** "Can any of you see what that thing in the northern sky is?"


"I can't."


 **Travis Meacham:** rolling 1d20+3

()+3

= **5**

I probably can't.

 **Ghol, Going East:** rolling d20+10

()+10

= **25**

with scout

-5 if not applicable




Skeleton: Skeleton looks up, arguably squinting.



banana (GM): Father Vealsgravy: "Why have we been playing this damn game if you've got your own sources?"



Skeleton: rolling 1d20+2

() + 2

= **3**



Placidus: all of ghol's backgrounds should be called scout, champ, buster, sport, etc



Ghol, Going East: Is Vealsgravy talking to Ghol here?



banana (GM): To the group of you, following on from his earlier comment.

Certainly Ghol in particular, since he mentioned the Death Of Orcs.

The consensus here is 'what thing in the sky'. Ghol, however: while he half-expected a dragon, it's not. It's a flock of birds with something much large at their centre, moving oddly slowly and jerkily.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs, then\. "Dunno."



banana (GM): *much larger



Ghol, Going East: Then: "...Oh my god."

Nah.

That's not--



banana (GM): But it is.



Travis Meacham: "So what you're saying is that you want us to be sure to appear to be on the side of the loyalists priests of San Meat?"

"I mean, done. Easy." Travis says this quietly, of course.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax looks up where Ghol is looking.



Ghol, Going East: "Up above. Look alive."



banana (GM): a r a r



Xarvrax: Before slowly patting him on the shoulder, and crying a little.



Vraknaar: "Well. That promises to make things... complicated."

Vealsgravy: "I don't have any agenda but that of the goddess Alabastien Meat. You're Her champions. What I'm doing is putting you in a position to choose--"



banana (GM): A R A R A R



Placidus: "Oh, for--"

"We SPECIFICALLY didn't--"



banana (GM): The flock blots out part of the sky - as does the net between them.

It's on fire. All the araras are also on fire. It takes hundreds and hundreds of them, straining, desperate, to carry the ire giant's vast form.

Salubriot is descending on the other side of the grill - a little further away than would have made a TRULY good entrance - in cacophany. He had something golden clenched in one gnarled fist.



Ghol, Going East: Maybe the city should find a way to keep this guy on staff. He could probably take a dragon or two.

Arielbeth: "He tamed the ARARA?"



Travis Meacham: You know, Travis definitely does NOT say out loud, father vealsgravy JUST asked why we were playing a game.



Placidus: Placidus claps when he realizes the araras haven't come to attack them. "I told you!"



Travis Meacham: I guess its because you cant stop playing games, father!

"He is cool, too.

"



Placidus: "That is a very impressive entrance."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol: "That guy's pretty cool, considering he's literally on fire."



Vraknaar: "Damn. That giant's got style."



banana (GM): Some portion of the crowd milling about is rushing past the temple to the north. There is SOME attraction to second place.



Xarvrax: "I mean, they're both giant angry fire monsters."

Vealsgravy: "I guess that's how it works, yeah."



Ghol, Going East: It would be good for the Movement if San Meat were in turmoil...but his duty right now is not to the Movement. It is to the Elf Queen. That was made explicit in his meeting with Master Ingher. And if the Movement was unable to win the field, they're hardly deserving of any sort of backdoor victory.

Vealsgravy: "Look, we don't have a lot of time. The Fisher's people will see the roster in a moment and realise Manson's back, what that means. You've saved us all, like, three times. What comes next - it's in your hands, whatever the High Father thinks."



Placidus: That sounds ominous.



Xarvrax: "Gee thanks."




banana (GM): Salubriot's marching around the Grill, to cheers, to his place. Everyone else is returning in drabs and dribs. Gnome Team look super sad.

Arielbeth: "Uh"


"I'm not completely certain what you're talking about, but it sounds like something that should involve the people of the city, not just a group of admittedly cool guys.."





Ghol, Going East: Ghol: "I agree entirely."


 **Placidus:** "I suspect it will involve everyone."


 **Travis Meacham:** "Yes."


 **Ghol, Going East:** He might have said this regardless.


 **banana (GM):** The sun is high in the sky, and the crowd of dignitaries is coming out onto the dais.

 **Xarvrax:** "I disagree, everything should be decided by the coolest guys."
"That being us in this case."

 **Vraknaar:** "I don't know. A compelling case could be made for our friend the ire giant."

 **banana (GM):** Half the city's priests are there, and the 'Council' - on a stage near you, the Thunder watch them, smiling and hoping.


 **Vraknaar:** "And you probably don't want him to decide things."

 **banana (GM):** Banners and tapestries, cleaned of grease, are being run down the side of the temple. They're putting up poles with flags, portraits.. of you! It's Doulz's stuff.

Arielbeth: "I'm going to go and talk to a few people."

Vealsgravy: "A moment, my daughter."

Arielbeth: "No."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax holds up his hand for a high five for Arielbeth.


 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+6 elven grace

(17)+6

= 23

UP HIGH DOWN LOW
AIN'T NO-ONE TOO SLOW


 **Xarvrax:** Awww yeah.


 **Placidus:** If this is Doulz's stuff, does that mean these banners all show Ghol on fire?


 **banana (GM):** Yes.

 **Travis Meacham:** Now that's paper.

Vealsgravy: "Tamen haereticus tenere Dea."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol watches her go with worry, then turns back to the crazy mess gearing up in the plaza.

 **banana (GM):** But she doesn't go. Arielbeth sits down, watching, head resting on her folded fists.

 **Vraknaar:** "This isn't going to be pretty."



banana (GM): Seconds later, it turns out Vraknaar is wrong.

The choir starts, and their voices are beautiful.



Vraknaar: vraknaar hurtles into the choir to maintain the correctness of his assertion



banana (GM): noo



Xarvrax: Xarvrax approves.



Placidus: Oh, that's quite nice. It's only now sinking in the extent of their collective achivement. This feels good.



banana (GM): The crowd cheers and eats burgers. The losers, I mean other teams take their stages.



Placidus: Winning feels good. Much better than losing.

"This is nice. We should try to always win, and never lose."



banana (GM): And then the megaphone comes out, of course.



Vraknaar: "I think everyone tries that. How long can we keep it up?"



Travis Meacham: "I totally agree, Placidus."

High Father Burgersear: "CHAMPIONS OF THE GODDESS! Masters of mind, soul and stomach!"



Xarvrax: "I'm here, we'll win everything easy."

High Father Burgersear: "What you've accomplished.... HUMBLES us! People of San Meat - I hereby announce that Kon's Men have won, also, the Taste Against Time!"

Crowd: yaaaayyyyy



Kon: Kon howls again.



Xarvrax: I agree, yaaaayyyyy.



Travis Meacham: "Yeah!"



Placidus: "Huzzah!"

High Father Burgersear: "The chalice and the sapphire medallions are yours. The favour of the Goddess is yours. Her prosperity and joy is celebrated, once again, putting the lie to Ages' ends."

Commissioner van Fop: ehem

High Father Burgersear: "..and yes, a special word on that topic." He hands the megaphone over without complaint or expression.



Placidus: Welllll, about that.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax holds a bread cube at the commissioner menacingly.



Vraknaar: Has he been saving that?

Vealsgravy: "Here we go."

Arielbeth: ...



Xarvrax: He has.
Several in fact.



Placidus: Surely they're stale by now.



Xarvrax: Even better!

van Fop: "This is an unprecedented victory, but a good omen. The new champions of the Hungry Games have shown us more than one way forward. Indeed, this is not a time of ending but progression, renewal."



Xarvrax: Means they'll hurt more.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is keeping his attention split between Arielbeth and the speech. He's tense. There's something brewing.

van Fop: "It's a time of improvement. As promised, the Workers' Council has produced a blueprint for prosperity..."

People are quiet, not cheering. There's something really serious about what the shorter elf is saying - a dire meaning to his words. "Under the Goddess, our prosperity comes from two things.. the agricultural labour of our fields, and the craftsmanship of our town.."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax blows a raspberry at that.



Ghol, Going East: He's right, though.

van Fop: People are quiet, not cheering. There's something really serious about what the shorter elf is saying - a dire meaning to his words. "The mastercrafters and the landowners, then, are most prosperous.. did you know that twenty families between them control nine tenths of the wealth in San Meat?"



Xarvrax: Well, it was mainly on the first part.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol casually positions himself to intercept any bread throw.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax remains unimpressed.

van Fop: "Stop me if you've heard these names. Kryl-beria. Silesias. van Ardin. Glyssalia."



Ghol, Going East: Silesias!



Placidus: Placidus doesn't stop him, because he hasn't.



Travis Meacham: Same w/ Travis.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax raises an eyebrow at Ghol, motioning to the bread cube.

van Fop: "Upstanding members of the community, yes? But do they do nine times as much work for the Goddess as every other one of us combined? No."




Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs. "He said to stop him."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax hurls the cube at the commissioner... stealthily.
stealthily*


van Fop: "Relatively speaking, most of us work for gristle. We work for the glory of Alabastien Meat, but when has Alabastien Meat said that the temple and the oldest families should control the entire beef trade to Upper Marrow..?" There are movements in the square. A commotion.

 **banana (GM):** You can see two groups of people, pushing their way forward to the grill. Other teams, of course, who have the position and the celebrity to get through the crowd.

van Fop: "The committee system will be allocating the trade wealth from now on. Appointment to the councils will be by-"

Manson: "TRAITOR!"


B.B.: "Yeah, I thought it looked like them. Crap."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax groans.

Burgersear: megaphone for a moment, commisioner..?

van Fop: what? oh, i


Burgersear: "MY CHILDREN! THE EMPIRE LIVES! THE GODDESS OF MEAT REIGNS, NOT THESE FISHERMEN!"

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax groans harder.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Oh boy.
He looks around to see what Arry's doing.

Manson: It's hard to hear the yelling of the unaided man on the stairs, but.. "Your garrison is a day's march away. Don't do this damn fool thing, citizens."

Barry: "It doesn't matter now, priests, soldiers- whatever you say, this IS a new age! It's too late to stop it!"


 **Placidus:** "He's right, or will be soon enough that it's pointless to quibble."


van Fop: "Give me that. A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL OF YOU IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER. Roland's men won't undo what we've done here- we're not quitting his empire, we're just making it fairer!"


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs, before inhaling and yelling, "That's not how an empire works you moron!"

Manson: "All of you would be dead of orc swords in your bellies next week if not for the Empire's sacrifice! FIVE DAYS away to save the world and you become rebels?"

Barry: "Xarvrax is right!"

 **Xarvrax:** "I wasn't agreeing with you either, you other moron!"
"You're all morons!"

 **Vraknaar:** "I'm forced to agree with my brother here."

 **Placidus:** Placidus does the only thing he can do in situations like this: he counts. Who does it seem has an advantage here?


Barry: Pointing out into the crowd. "Champions of San Meat - you've beaten out these has-beens


already. Will you step up to help the city become a vanguard of something greater? A world beyond meat?"


Vealsgravy: "Will you?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol...says nothing.


Manson: "**We're* aging? We're winning! You're ancient!"


 **Xarvrax:** "If you don't have people to rule over, you're not an empire, and if you don't follow the empire, the 'King' will kill us all! You're both terrible idiots!"


 **banana (GM):** Placidus counts..
The crowd is, largely, confused and scared.


 **Travis Meacham:** The moral question here is complicated. They're right to be confused.


 **banana (GM):** There are many thousands of people packed into the square- much of the population of San Meat, and a good chunk of tourists. Many of them are impressed by one side or the other.. but the thing is, this is a templecity. They're largely pious.


 **Travis Meacham:** However, the Thunder TOTALLY tried to jerk us around.


 **banana (GM):** Every time High Father says, you see more of the people agreeing.
Not coincidentally, the Thunder are running for the High Father
*Every time the High Father speaks


 **Travis Meacham:** where are WE located btw


 **Placidus:** So left to its own resolution, this would probably resolve in the status quo's favor.
The right course of action here is obvious.
To Kon: "Orders?"


 **banana (GM):** Your stage is very central, and near the base of the grill
You could easily reach the stairs on either side of it, which was probably intentional.

 **Travis Meacham:** Unless Travis gets waved off IMMEDIATELY, he's going to throw in with the army and head up to protect Burgersear.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax begins to walk up to the center of the stage, between both groups of people, and unless otherwise blocked, stands in between the two groups.


 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar's with Travis, here. The people have rights... but they won't live to exorcise them without the Empire's protection.

 **Placidus:** Placidus waves Travis off. "Whatever we do, we should do it together. Just a second."


 **Skeleton:** "I mean... they're kind of right, aren't they?"


van Fop: "I hadn't finished- we have an organisation. A plan. Allies. There is room for a whole new world, without all our resources dedicated to ceremony and war, where people don't have to break their backs for-"


Burgersear: "You FOOL. It's by the grace of the Gods that we have what we do."


 **Placidus:** "Everybody's kind of right. This is how politics works. Nobody's ever wrong enough to be able to just concede the point."


Burgersear: "Alabastien and her brothers and sisters and their annointed Emperor. We stand on the shoulders of giants, nobody's cracking a whip."


 **Travis Meacham:** "They're gonna fight, Placidus. Look at the Thunder."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax yanks the megaphone out of the hands of whichever one of them has it.


 **banana (GM):** Yeah, if you leave it even a little bit longer...


 **Placidus:** "They are."


 **banana (GM):** The bards, the soldiers, both groups are willing to fight for this whether or not you are.

 **Skeleton:** "It DOESN'T seem fair, put it like that. And they're just talking about moving money around, not... getting rid of Albastien, or anything."

 **Vraknaar:** As crazy as it is, though, Vraknaar senses his brother has the right of it, and goes to join him. They're both being ridiculous.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax holds the megaphone up, takes in a huge breath, and then yells as loud as it's possible to yell into it, "Enough!"


 **banana (GM):** That silences the Commissioner and the High Father. It doesn't silence any of the warriors running up onto the dais, though.


 **Kon:** Kon pads up to stand beside the dragons. You know, to lend them some legitimacy.


King Magician: "Yo, help us get the white haired ass away before he can do any more harm."


Manson: "Don't make this mistake, Blue. You'd set yourself against everything."


 **banana (GM):** (Manson doesn't seem to know about Kon.)
Captain Manson points at van Fop. "Rebel! Surrender, and you'll be arraigned rather than slaughtered!"


 **Placidus:** Placidus sighs.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax hurls the megaphone at the first person up on the dais, and a bread cube at the second. "Look what you fools have done! You've made me! The craziest person in this town look sane in comparison! I'm the voice of reason here! Do you understand what you've done?!"

 **banana (GM):** (have i got right who's going up there and who isn't?)

 **Travis Meacham:** Yes.

 **Vraknaar:** "You're set against each other, but my brother's right! You need each other! We all need each other!"

 **Travis Meacham:** Sorry placidus.

 **Placidus:** Sigh.

Dragonsergeant Petra: "We need each other united, not overthrowing order in the middle of a fuckin war!"



Vraknaar: "This city needs the Empire's protection! But without allowing any dissent from its people, will the Empire become worse than its predecessor? You would kill them for forming a militia while you were gone? They were terrified!"



Travis Meacham: Quietly, "The Thunder need to go back into retirement."



banana (GM): Manson does NOT yell this out to the crowd, he just says it quietly: "What? We're not going to kill anyone if we don't have to."



Vraknaar: Vraknaar turns to the Imperial soldiers. "Do you trust your dragon, Sergeant?"

Petra: "It's more like I'm her human. So yes."



Vraknaar: "And she you, I'd imagine? Imagine how difficult a fight would be, if you were constantly at each others' throats, trying to overrule the other."

L: 'Angelo "It's no use, BB. We'll have to kill the conmen as well."

L'Angelo: "It's no use, BB. We'll have to kill the conmen as well."



Xarvrax: "You all left this city empty, and then you come back surprised that it's fallen into chaos? Did you not hear how many atrocities we personally had to stop in order to keep this city from becoming a giant bloodbath."

Barry: "Just a fucking second, LA."

Manson: "..there were eighty-eight THOUSAND orcs.."



Vraknaar: "The people here do not wish to overthrow the Empire. The Empire doesn't wish to harm its subjects. But you want control, and they want safety and happiness. There's surely a way that like you and your flight, you can work together to make this happen."



Xarvrax: "And there could have been eighty-eight thousand undead monstrosities by the time you got back if we hadn't intervened."

Vealsgravy: "Vox dimittere, Dea"



Vraknaar: "What my brother has the right of is that if you fight here, physically or otherwise, you both lose."

Arielbeth: Coughs. "You bastard. You don't even know what I was going to do."

Vealsgravy: "I know who you were going to do it for. This is not a time of peace."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol's eyes narrow.



Placidus: "We were so close to leaving."



Vraknaar: "It is clear to me that you need some help with all of these things, and there are few people that both your people and the Imperial Army can trust."



Xarvrax: "Both of you need to calm down, and work something out, because I'm tired of listening to your petty arguments trying to force us into helping you."

Manson: "With your help- have you got that speaker thing?- WITH YOUR HELP, we can avoid a fight. The Fisher's people can't take all of us on. They don't truly have the people's support. Not in this holy city."



Travis Meacham: "I agree, yes."

Barry: "Storm and wrack, you want to talk about holy? Who were your godsdamn allies? How did you kill so many people?"



Xarvrax: "Okay, fine ignore me. Because I'm about to just figure out a way to get one of the Five to come down here and fix this."



Vraknaar: "Neither do you, Captain. They've got enough to cause some serious damage. So I offer a solution. I offer myself, Firstborn Scion of the Five, Savior of the Shadow Quarter, to help you -- both of you -- bring peace to this city."



Xarvrax: "Or all of them, or none of them."

Burgersear: To Vraknaar: "What?"



banana (GM): The crowd is freaking riveted at this point.



Vraknaar: "I am no ruler, but I am an ambassador for my people. And an ambassador is clearly what you need."



Placidus: "I really don't care for dragons, in general."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax raises an eyebrow at his brother.

Vealsgravy: "He's got the right idea, though."



Placidus: "Anomalous."



Vraknaar: "The Imperial Army will respect my station, as I'm sure you know, Captain. And I think the people will agree that I have their interests in mind, despite that. My actions have prove as much, have they not?" Vraknaar turns to the crowd.

Burgersear: "the champion of" someone passes the megaphone "The champion of the Games! Certainly, having an authority who can speak for the Empire yet accede on behalf of the people-wonderful!"

Crowd: yayyyyyyy
YAYYY

Barry: "Speak for the- whose authority do you actually have?"

van Fop: "there IS no authority greater than the massed voices of the people, actually-"



banana (GM): Nobody pays attention to this. High Father Burgersear, for some reason, gives him the megaphone, but he just glares at it.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at him, "Mine, and by extension, the Five's. In addition to being the Flrstborn, he's also the brother of the Lastborn, and has the most authority of any of you."



banana (GM): In many times and places, Xarvrax's argument wouldn't make sense.
But you know
It's not called the Dragon Empire for no reason.

Manson: "Can I have that a sec?"

van Fop: "yeah, here"

Barry: "For fuck's sake."



Placidus: "I take it back."

Manson: "So say the Five. And so says the Conqueror. (now-)" The captain pulls a baton from his belt and jabs it into the ground, one of the flagpole stands- fortunately, a flagpole is extending both ways from it, with a massive emblazoned banner unfurling at the top.



banana (GM): The three dragonsergeants, in unison, blow whistles. A piercing, dulcet tone that only Vraknaar and Xarvrax can hear...



Placidus: "I'm really going to miss Vraknaar."

"Really, really, really, really going to miss him."



banana (GM): For a moment, nothing happens. The Singer 'speaks' - a single chanted word, sung quietly to her compatriots. "Ruuuuunnn.."

The High Father just freaking, takes van Fop's hand and drags it upward, cheering loudly 'with' him under the unfurling Imperial banner as three dragons crest the horizon. A bronze, a silver and a brass wyrm let out great bugling cries, echoing over the city- through its empty streets, the population having all drained inward at this point.

Burgersear, politically: "Together! Guided by the Ambassador of the Red!"

Vealsgravy: Quietly: "By the Goddess, surely. But everyone knows that."

Arielbeth: Sigh.



Vraknaar: Vraknaar carefully places a talon on a shoulder each of the Captain and van Fop. "My allies and I have glorified your Goddess and your city. Together we will do so still more!"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sighs, and puts a claw to his face.



Travis Meacham: "Look at it this way, Xarvrax."

van Fop: "How serious are you about working with us? We won't give up on change."



Travis Meacham: "Now nobody will ask your brother to get you to settle down."



Vraknaar: "Good. Don't. Just remember that change isn't always for the better, and work towards only wishing for ones that are."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at his brother, "I'd better not come back here once Emperor to find that this city isn't part of it anymore."

van Fop: "Better than nothing." The commissioner of the Workers' Council takes the high priest's hand again and raises it, cheering again, a little more genuinely.



Vraknaar: "Prophecies only mean so much, brother. Don't get yourself killed, and if you must, don't do it over something stupid."

Manson: "I'm worried that there actually might be a miracle going on here."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax smirks, "I promise nothing."

Dragonsergeant Comic: "They're getting away.. well, whatever."



Vraknaar: the thunder: cheese it!

Crowd: yyyyyyyyyyyyyyy



Skeleton: Skeleton's sort of stunned throughout this. On the one hand, Vraknaar was the one most gung ho about straight up destroying sker. On the other hand, he was the one whose decision on that matter could most be depended on to be an honestly just one. "So he's really going to..."



Ghol, Going East: A part of Ghol wants to stay...this is a good city, and he likes meat -- and he likes Vraknaar, he likes Arry, and he likes the other people he's met.

But he's Going East.

And, in the end, he's not much for city life anyway.



Placidus: Placidus cannot wait to be quit of this awful city. He's definitely going to miss Vraknaar, though.

Vealsgravy: "I was right. Wow."



Placidus: "It's strange how things like this just happen."



Travis Meacham: Travis is thinking about shares.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is annoyed that this city is stupid enough to require his brother to stay, but glad that at least he will finally be escaping it.

Vealsgravy: "Got to admit, it felt really terrifying for a moment there.." at which point the priest realises he doesn't got to admit this at all, being a 200 year old authority figure who's technically way more important than you.



Travis Meacham: we saved his life, physically, several times!!!



banana (GM): he already gave you props for that.

On some level, Xarvrax must have realised that Vraknaar had less wanderlust, being in some ways his opposite as well as his equal...



Placidus: Vealsgravy has been here 200 years and the most he could manage is sitting down here and being scared.



Ghol, Going East: It will probably not go unnoticed among the Movement's chief tacticians that now the Five essentially control the Dragon Empire's supply line -- and have a base of operations directly to the south of its capital.

Unless no one tells them.



Placidus: We were here two weeks and became the unquestioned champions of their most sacred festival, and also literally run this town.

Who gives a good god damn what he thinks.



Ghol, Going East: Because everyone they sent south is dead or, well.

Going east.



banana (GM): There will be goodbyes. There will be details.

For example: you have to pick up all your valuable prizes.

For another: the imperial couriers return the next day, with the news that the garrison returns - doubled in number, even - that there was a great victory over the orcs - that negotiations with the Snakesrule are picking up - that the Diabolist has been pardoned and given imperial citizenship.



Ghol, Going East: ...

Oh.



Vraknaar: That's... something.



Xarvrax: She seemed okay.



Placidus: Good for her.



Travis Meacham: "I bet these pieces of news are connected."



banana (GM): The Goddess doesn't come down from Heaven to express Her approval, because the Elect don't *do* that. But the priesthood and the press and even most of the people are incredibly, completely satisfied with the final Hungry Games of the Eleventh Age of the world.



Placidus: Placidus isn't satisfied. He's haranguing the printer into the night to make sure the recipe for his bean orb sandwiches is available to all.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is moody about all of this, as one might imagine. He feels a lot better, though, leaving Arry and her family behind in a city Vraknaar is running. If he hadn't stepped up the way he had, however...

...Ghol doubts this the last time he'll have to make such a choice.

And it bothers him that this time, he chose to do: nothing.



Travis Meacham: Travis is pretty sure that this means he's getting the 20 thousand he counted on instead of the 17 it would have been with SKeleton. Maybe Vraknaar can even buy off the Copper.



Xarvrax: Oh right, Xarvrax still needs to collect on his bet with Jenny about the taste.



Skeleton: Skeleton's last hours in the city are spent anxious; ske retraces sker steps from the place ske was animated, making sure to have neither left nor overlooked no traces of sker origin. The necromancer does sker best to give the newly-authoritative Vraknaar both a goodbye and a thank-you before parting ways with the city.



Vraknaar: Vraknaar says his goodbyes to his friends and travelling companions. This sort of impulse decision making is best left to his brother, but this place needed a leader, not a conqueror, and this was the only way he saw to give them one.



banana (GM): If Vraknaar tells any of the soldiers that - they're hanging around to help until the garrison returns - the response he gets is 'what do you think hisimperialhighness DOES?'.



Vraknaar: He doesn't, of course. His job here is to be diplomatic and that's probably a bad way to start.