



banana (GM): Kon's Men, the champions of the Hungry Games, are up nice and early.

There's not much choice about it - Travis's beacon goes off just before dawn, spilling solid honey-gold light throughout the upper floor of the hotel. You're forced out of your rooms by the building pressure, stumbling barely-armoured out onto the street in time to see the glowing column rise into the sky, piercing toward the overworld.

You have gained:

- 1 adulation of the masses
- 1 fabulous prizes
- 6 hangers-on, people who want to accompany you east for various reasons?? they're literally camping in and around the Gut & Bowel waiting for answers.



banana (GM): You have lost:

- Vraknaar, the red dragonwrought.

Xarvrax's brother turns out to be the model citizen the Five sought after all, taking on his claws the opportunity to settle an unsettled town and prevent a pointless, painful rebellion.



Placidus: It doesn't feel like an equitable trade... but it wasn't ours to make. Placidus is going to miss Vraknaar.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol was up early, anyway...it's been awhile since he had a dream about Her, and it's put him in a bit sulky mood.

Which he, additionally, feels pretty guilty about, because that's pretty selfish and things have been going REALLY good, recently.



Xarvrax: Pfft. He's just tired of getting shown up, so he's escaping.



banana (GM): The last time Ghol dreamt, there were two faces in it, as there have been occasionally before. So how's *that* going to play out, he might wonder, if he were not a teen?

Placidus' compass-gizmo has fallen on its side again, clicking a little, pointing the same way as always. Skeleton's bone box remains sealed. Even the dragon-cultists agree: It's time to get out of this place and go East.

How do you set about going from sportsmen to wanderers? And how are your

relationship rolls!!



Ghol, Going East: rolling 1d6 ORC LORD, CONFLICTED

(4)

= 4

rolling 2d6 ELF QUEEN, CONFLICTED

(2 + 3)

= 5

ah well



Kalira: ahahahahaha

rolling 2d6 demigod conflicted

(6 + 6)

= 12

Auspicious



Xarvrax: rolling 3d6 dargons.

(6 + 3 + 1)

= 10



Kalira: rolling 1d6 elector negative

(1)

= 1



Placidus: Placidus, at least, less less disturbed than perturbed. He skipped breakfast and spoke little. He was up before dawn with his notes and still hasn't fully left the fugue he wrote them in.
channeling ???



Xarvrax: Xarvrax flops out of bed, eating breakfast without saying anything or doing anything really.



Ferrinus: rolling 1d6 diabolist positive

(1)

= 1

rolling 2d6 wizard king negative

(4 + 5)

= 9

that 5 remains a 5



banana (GM): Ske can't hear the bell anymore. But that doesn't mean it's gone. In a way, skeleton's simply perpetrated a trick on skerself, hiding the call; on some level, unnoticed, it remains...




Placidus: What a world of solemn thought their monody compels.





banana (GM): As soon as it's less insanely early, the streets will be filling with people- some of whom will no doubt be begging things of you in particular. You're locally famed, and people don't really expect you to rush from the city so soon (but duties call..).





Ghol, Going East: Yeah...


 **banana (GM):** Already there are six here waiting to ask favours, though it's all the same favour and one of them is an ox.


 **Xarvrax:** I like that one.


 **Placidus:** Duties like 'getting the hell out of here'. "What? Who?"


 **Xarvrax:** Let's do the favor for the ox.


 **Placidus:** He says this querulously to the six potential hangers-on.


 **banana (GM):** Well, let's see.


 **Kon:** Kon eyes the six petitioners closely. Especially the herd prey.


 **banana (GM):** You've got Janes Mason, the stone mason from a mason family, some sort of merchantly big cheeses in Horizon - to which he's returning, and is offering to accompany you, therefore, for part of the way. The ox is with him. It pulls carts.


 **Xarvrax:** Ffffff.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Oh, that's useful. It'll be perfect for their...chair.


 **Xarvrax:** Can we just... push him over and take the ox anyway?


 **Placidus:** "Oh! Oh yes! If not for the non-presence of no carts we wouldn't have to not carry our gold and our goods on our backs. I would unprefer that to this."


 **banana (GM):** Issuriel van Keter and her boyfriend Mirchin Gleriand, Xarvrax's worshippers, are all packed up and ready to follow their "honoured wing" wherever he might go. They're talking their heads off trying to convert the fifth petitioner to the scale-cult.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol frowns, at that.

Mason: "Let me just clarify with you, the nonpresence of no carts is the same as the nonabsence of this one cart here. Right?"

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax raises an eyebrow at Placidus, poking him gently, and backing away like he's a bomb.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Both Placidus's word-jumble, and the proselytizing dragon cultist elves. The latter frown is far more judgmental.


 **Placidus:** "Of course! Glad to have you, as compared to not."

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton looks nervous at the prospect of hangers-on; ske's sort of standing back from the others, wringing gloved hands and hunching back into sker own hood. It could be awkward...

Mason: "I can accept the practice of comparin'."

Samwise: That fifth supplicant is a tall and chubby snake-man in a snappy hat; partner nowhere to be seen. "Skipping town, are you? I'd like a series of words."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Actually, nevermind. Any outcome of the elves trying to convert Samwise is a strict upgrade.

 **banana (GM):** The sixth and last ambusher waiting outside your hotel is nobody you've met before. It's another tall dude, hooded so you can't see their face - but not hunched in the right way to be another

yuan-ti. They're resting in the shade of the hotel porch, watching you, not yet speaking.

(The hood, I should clarify, is that of a traveller's cloak rather than some ominous dark-priest style thing. The mysterious applicant is otherwise normally dressed in leather armour and bits of soldered metal.)



Skeleton: If only skeleton could credibly claim to have first thought of the being facelessly hooded thing.



Placidus: "What do you want, Sam? You were Sam, right?"



banana (GM): There's a reason skeleton's tactics work. These are not times where everyone is willing to reveal their face.

Samwise: Finger-guns of agreement. "I was sure of that until you asked."



Placidus: "Well, what are you now?"

"If you were Sam, then odds are good that you remain so."



banana (GM): From inside the Gut & Bowel come clattering noises - the hoteliers futilely trying to keep the beacon-light from messing up their pots and pans. This is probably going on your final bill.



Placidus: We should give them a big tip for putting up with us.



banana (GM): Yeah ;_;; As it is, having taken over the whole place for two weeks, you owe them 80 silver.



Placidus: Placidus will make sure they get at least 200 silver for their troubles.



Ghol, Going East: If everyone kicks in 3 GP, that should be more than fair.



Placidus: Well, "at least" -- Placidus is going to give them 213 silver pieces exactly.



Ghol, Going East: Well then, look at Mr. Big Spender.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is just laying his head on a table, waiting for everyone to stop talking so they can get out of this dump.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will kick in 4 GP.

Sam, presumably: "I'll cut to the chase, Mac. It's come to the attention of certain parties who are either a, myself, or b, mysteriously not within sight in a way that brings terror to all our hearts, that when it comes to sapphires - the gem you might recall my partner and I need for a convoluted chain of actions which I can no longer recall - you've cornered the market."



Skeleton: Really, reasons Skeleton, the general profusion of sinister hooded strangers can only help Skeleton's own disguise, because everyone'll take seemingly-pointless obscurity as a common and unremarkable affectation. Skeleton's been cagey about asking as to whether they get a formal share of the winnings despite not quite being on the roster, but ske's matching the lowest tip given by anyone else.



Placidus: "What if we sent you on a convoluted chain of actions to earn it?"

Sam: "Sadly, we'd be on it faster than than the moon fell to the earth."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax grumbles, "Don't make me do it. I'll find a way."

Sam: "Tell me. Is there some peculiar or obscure item for which you are presently willing to trade one of

those medallions? Actually, go on to also tell me what it is."



Skeleton: "What's a sapphire worth, anyway? Have we got a mystic use for ours?" Skeleton glances skyward at the pillar of amber glow - if only Travis wasn't busy at the moment!



Placidus: Yeah, because Travis TOTALLY knows what the mystical uses of things are.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax does, but most of them require human sacrifice.
Probably.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol certainly has a number of things he needs found...but it would be wrong to delegate that task to this guy.



Xarvrax: It seemed like a lot of things in Drakkenhall required that.



banana (GM): What IS a sapphire worth? Roll int if you want to do some sort of economic calculation.



Placidus: rolling d20+8 adding my friar of megistus background, megistus is a god of merchants and fortune-seekers

(16)+8

= 24



Skeleton: rolling 1d20+7 this int check is powered by three entire experience levels. add four for the purposes of using a sapphire for necromancy

(20)+7

= 27



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 5 smartness

(18)+5

= 23

Well.

Issuriel: To Samwise: "Well, how about your immortal soul? Like I was saying."



Placidus: We know the FUCK out of this.



Xarvrax: Apparently we're all smart this morning.



Skeleton: goddamn



banana (GM): vertigris' leprechauns, you are plugged IN



Xarvrax: I'm a dragon, sitting on piles of gems and gold is what we do best.
Other than randomly maiming people.



banana (GM): As everyone is perfectly aware, the value of these actual sapphire gems is only about 200 silvers; being part of a Hungry Games prize medallion makes them worth at least ten times as much to some people. But only some people.



Placidus: And we've got how many of these damn things?



banana (GM): Six! Congratulations.



Placidus: Aside, to the others: "We can give him one, surely."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at Samwise, "You're a wizard, what've you got that's magic on you?"



Skeleton: "Yeah, but for SOMETHING. Think he's got any magic items?"

Janes: "You know, these gems aren't all that. If I hadn't unloaded my stock to the priests here, I could hook you up.. got any bulk uses? We supply opals by the ton to the wizards out east."

Samwise: "I am no wizard (except on the dance floor)."
"Anyway, you have to tell me what you want. That's how it works."



Placidus: "He's right, that is how it works."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax grumbles, "You associate with a wizard on a regular basis then, that's close enough."



banana (GM): Is anyone completely uninterested in the sapphire dialogue? Because the sixth (non-oxen) traveller is looking about for someone to address.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol, definitely.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax can't think of magical items, so he's tuned it out.



Ghol, Going East: Hunched-over, hooded figures waiting to speak also trip Ghol's innate quest sense.



Xarvrax: Pointing at this sixth person Xarvrax grumbles, "And what exactly do you want with us?"



banana (GM): Hooded man, raspily: "You are Kon and Ghol. The meat eater and the boy on fire."



Placidus: To Sam: "What do you know of Santa Cora?"



banana (GM): Hooded man: "From the pictures."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax snickers at that.



Skeleton: "Well, I'd really like a magic wand or staff or something. Failing that we could just ask for a thousandish silver pieces...?"



Ghol, Going East: "...Yep." Ghol was originally thinking, 'how does he know about the Green Star?' But no, it's those fucking araras.

Sam: "Owing to an unfortunate coincidence, more than most would want to."




Kon: Kon has padded over, too. He's still and quiet as he considers the hooded man.




banana (GM): Hooded man: "You're travelling, now? Dangerously, together?"


Ghol, Going East: "'Dangerously?'"


 **banana (GM):** He clarifies: "To others."


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Oh. We will be, shortly."
Ghol thinks.


 **Placidus:** "Tell me."


 **Xarvrax:** "Always a danger to others, that's what the people of Drakkenhall told me."


 **banana (GM):** Hooded man: "Perfect. A dragon with a sense of direction."
Hooded man: "I need guides, protectors. Badly. Soon."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol grunts. "And why should that be us?"


 **banana (GM):** Hooded man: "Doesn't have to be. But I can pay. Give you.. things. My need is great. As long as you're travelling toward Ironhenge."

 **Ghol, Going East:** The elf-orc teen frowns. Ironhenge...? He doesn't remember that from the maps...
"I dunno where that is."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax grumbles, "We're going to Horizon, and then probably Erskine, I'm not entirely certain where it is, but that's where we're going."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Sounds...familiar, somehow...

Sam: "Santa Cora. It's a burg with more angles than angels, and the tallest buildings hold the lowest hearts. Specifically?"


 **Placidus:** "Specifically or, at least, clearly, yes."


Hooded man: "But.. you don't know that you *aren't* going to Ironhenge. Since it could be anywhere. Please." His voice is.. cracking? Sort of. It's a combination between an adolescent's puberty and a sort of rattling whine. A tone of alien desperation.


Sam: "I need to know what you need to know!"


 **Xarvrax:** "What kind of things are you saying you'll pay us with?"


Hooded man: "Secrets.. machines.. allegiances."


 **Placidus:** Placidus seems affronted by this, somehow, but not affronted enough not to answer. "What are their laws like? Who's in charge? How closely watched are comings and goings. How far from the city limits does its power reach in earnest?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol shifts his weight to his other foot, uncomfortably. Ironhenge. Ironhenge...

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax pokes Placidus, "I think you should probably talk to this guy."

 **Ghol, Going East:** "You can travel with us, as far as we go."

 **Placidus:** Placidus turns and starts. "What?"

 **Xarvrax:** "He's talking about secrets, that's your job."

 **Skeleton:** "Hang on, hey. I'm not sure we want an entire, like, entourage-"



Ghol, Going East: "Says a...guy recently added to the entourage."



Placidus: Placidus looks at Xarvrax. "Listen to everything that Sam says and remember as much of it as you can."



Xarvrax: "No promises."

Sam: "Cora's a citystate same as any along the southern coast. Temple law has no force outside its walls, other than the force of temples, which is quite a lot. Go anywhere past the Snakesrule, past San Sard, and you'll find the loyalists dominate. Those laws, though.. they're mostly the same as the rest of the south."



Placidus: Placidus pats Xarvrax on the thigh and then swerves around him to see the hooded man. He stops and stares.



Skeleton: "Yes, but.." Skeleton trails off, lamely.



Placidus: Is this...

Sam: "It goes like this: princes beat dukes beat barons beat townsfolk and peasants, and if you don't respect the property or takings of those up the chain, you're in irons."



Xarvrax: "Temple law? I'm guessing that the Elect have something to do with it?"



Placidus: rolling d20+11 rolling unnatural philosophy here. is this guy an extrusion of placidus's

topologies

(4)+11

= 15

hah

Sam: "In Santa Cora itself they have the twist of the temples. All the old families there are also priests, and the cults share power however they feel like it, shifting in.. size but not scope. Each has their fixed areas of influence, and the city's life shifts to reflect who's winning."



Xarvrax: "Oh right, now I remember why I didn't want to go there."

"It's the opposite, it's Dark God central."

Sam: "In theory, the City of the Gods is free to enter and leave. You don't need a reason to be or stay there. Who'd want to, if they weren't a believer?"



Xarvrax: "Who specifically has the highest power there?"

"Or most, if there's not one true leader."



Placidus: Placidus squints. "Do you have skin?"

Sam: "Mottled are the richest, Mailed have the most soldiers. You might be used to High Priests, out here- there's no high priest of either of those gods. Just priests, and the divine figure."

Hooded man: Thanking Ghol in a rusty voice, the traveller is interrupted.

"Skin. No."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol nods absently, lost in thought about where he's heard 'Ironhenge' before -- until that starts him out of it.



Xarvrax: "Anyone specific we should avoid or not avoid if we're there?"



Skeleton: Skeleton's immediately nervous again. What if people start wondering which OTHER hooded figures don't have skin? What then?

Mirchin: "You don't have skin???"

Hooded man: "No."

"..apologies."



Placidus: "And your bearing is what?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol glares at her. No need to tell the whole plaza.

Hooded man: "Toward Ironhenge at any cost."

Added, reassuringly: "I am honest."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax wonders what the big deal about skin is? He has scales and no one asks him.

Mason: "Surprising number of sales opportunities on this trip."



Placidus: "Prove it." Placidus sets down his pack with a clangor, and carefully extracts his gizmo. "If you can tell me what this is, that will be part of your payment to us. The rest can be made when we part ways."



Ghol, Going East: This, Ghol has to see.

Samwise: The yuan-ti is still talking about Santa Cora, hoping for a sapphire. He doesn't care whether people have skin. "Sure. I can recommend the joe at Mont-Serpico, the opium at Lensgrinder's. If you need to deal with authority, tell Commissioner The I sent you, and don't go down any alleyways without glowing lights in 'em."

"And if you see a stage set up in a public square, women with costumes reading out lines- RUN."



banana (GM): He pronounces it 'Commissioner Tay'.



Xarvrax: "I... see."



banana (GM): Meanwhile, the hooded man takes Placidus's compass. You still don't have a name for him, unfortunately for my /as commands.. he lifts it up, examining, nodding.

Reaching into his hood and then down inside his clothing, an odd motion, he makes clacking noises then draws out a few pieces of metal - gears, rods, a dial attached to a valve. Crouching down, the hooded man goes to work, dextrously making little adjustments - his gloved fingers seem as accurate as machine tools!

He straightens after just half a minute. The gizmo is.. more, now. Bits have been added on. He spins part of it and another goes up and down.

"I do not know what this is." It's bigger than before, though.



Placidus: Is Ironhenge farther off than Santa Cora? Meaning, might this fellow still be traveling with us when we reach the place the compass points?

Sam: To himself: "It's times like these I wonder why I only meet people weirder than myself."



Xarvrax: "Let's not get carried away here."

"You're probably weirder than most of the people in here."



banana (GM): Answering that would require knowing the way to Ironhenge.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol wonders if even this man (??) knows where Ironhenge is.



Placidus: "Do you have a name?"

"I don't want to have to call you Mr. Ironhenge. Henge. Ironhenge."



banana (GM): Again, the hooded man shakes his head. "No, I don't." Looks like I was complaining needlessly, then.

"Why not call me Person?"



Placidus: "Is it accurate?"



banana (GM): "Surely, if you read the works of philosophers."



Ghol, Going East: That's not evasive, at all.



Placidus: "We'll call that a 'maybe', then. Alright, fine, yes, yes, you can come."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pokes Placidus again, "Can you talk to the weirdo again now? He hurts my brain in large doses."

Person: "Thank you. I will be little trouble." He (?) sits down, or at least slouches in the corner formed by the wall and the street, and starts.. doing and saying nothing.



Xarvrax: "No promises."

Mason: To Placidus: "How do the rest of them get anything done?"



Placidus: "Sure. Make sure Person doesn't get wet."

To Janes: "I've got no empirical evidence that they ever have."



banana (GM): The stonemason is just kind of chilling with his now-empty cart, waiting until anyone wants to make a move toward the city gates (or anywhere else).



Placidus: To Sam: "So! My understanding is you gave Xarvrax a headache."

Sam: "I'm happy to, if that's what you want in exchange."



Placidus: "You're in luck." Sam is the proud recipient of Placidus's sapphire medal in Improv Sandwich Singles.



Xarvrax: "What."


Samwise: The detective pockets it so quickly you aren't sure where the medallion actually went - though the motion leaves his wand swinging dangerously at one ample hip. "Well, that was a pleasant interaction."

To Xarvrax: "Hey."



Placidus: "Just so!" To the others: "Are we all packed? Yes?"

Xarvrax: Xarvrax raises a claw after him, "I'm not a robot, you can't make my head explode by being


 exceptionally stupid."

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton's got sker box secreted away and is wearing both sker actual robe and the magicked undergarments that project a cooler-looking phantom robe. "I am."

 **Xarvrax:** "Otherwise it would have already in this place."

Samwise: To Xarvrax: "Think about this: if I say that I always lie, am I telling the truth?"


 **banana (GM):** The yuan-ti turns and walks away.


 **Placidus:** "Excellent!" Placidus claps his hands, and then points with both index fingers in the direction of the city gate. "Let's get our things on this cart and get out of here."

 **banana (GM):** Speaking of packing magical boxes - you've got the one Capel the Bold provided, right?


 **Xarvrax:** We also need to go to Horizon and tell the Archmage that Capel is useless and we're going his job now.


 **Placidus:** Yes! The one we're due to deliver to Santa Cora.


 **banana (GM):** Just checking.


 **Placidus:** Unless it turns out in a shocking twist that it's not where we left it.


 **banana (GM):** It IS a kind of strange place. As you watch the figure walk down the street- with perhaps mixed emotions- he passes beneath a sign advertising PORK PULLING, one for GABRIELA, GUTFLORE CULTURE and a public toilet *edifice* made of ostentatious, gleaming stone.


 **Placidus:** "I'll miss this place," lies Placidus. He is in a very good mood.


 **banana (GM):** Issuriel: "I've lived here all my life, and you never get used to it."
Ox: Moo


 **Xarvrax:** Flee in terror.

 **banana (GM):** One last question. Are you going to try and slip out of the city- or will you draw attention to your departure?

 **Kon:** The ox is, likely, not that comfortable being this far inside San Meat. Which is smart of it.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax does make sure to make a stop to punch his brother one last time, before fleeing the city.





 **Placidus:** What are they going to do, hold a parade at us? Placidus isn't going to try and sneak out of town, especially now that we've got an ox, a cart, a mason, a robot, and some idiots.


 **Ghol, Going East:** At this point Ghol will slip away for a bit, actually, before returning with an unreadable expression on his face in time to leave with the rest of the group.

 **Vraknaar:** Vraknaar returns the punch, obviously. "Good luck, you lot. Don't let my brother do anything fatally stupid."


 **banana (GM):** Wait, fatal to whom?


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton agrees that it's not really practical to slip out unnoticed, although hopefully it IS practical for Skeleton to tag along unnoticed or at least unremarked-on. "Interesting use of 'let', there.."


- **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will try. But probably not too hard.
- **Vraknaar:** That's up for interpretation.
- **Placidus:** "We're going to need *astounding* luck to pull that off."
- **Vraknaar:** "Hopefully I'll be able to straighten this city out in less than an eternity, and then who knows." Vraknaar grins at Placidus. "I think you've got it. And his own dumb luck, too."


**banana (GM):** Being put officially in charge of things is keeping Vraknaar very busy, it seems. There are acolytes and patrollers everywhere around these impromptu offices, and a few imperial soldiers keeping the peace between them..

After that farewell, you're hardly keeping a low profile. The western boulevard is lined with cheering crowds.





- **Ghol, Going East:** Good. This is cool, and good.
- Not much help for stealth or circumspection, though...


- **Placidus:** Placidus will wave and smile. As vile as the food and the smells and the religion are, the people have largely been decent and good. Plus, they love us, so even if they were awful they'd still be fine.


**banana (GM):** Farewell to heroes*, they cry; farewell to the good citizens who saved the city from itself, from Omen necroterror (twice), and from the machinations of those who would turn these sacred Games into a farce. Farewell to the champions of the 110th Hungry Games of San Meat.

- **Kon:** Kon howls, triumphant, one last time back into the city from atop the gates. Then they are gone.


Chapter 2: East


- **Vraknaar:** and the going thereof
- **banana (GM):** yes, that's the way you're travelling
- **Ghol, Going East:** This is extremely my shit.
- **Placidus:** I can't wait to overshoot the Elf Court and force Ghol to change his name. We should advance on it in a long spiral forcing him to change his name more and more often until he's finally just "Ghol" when we get there.

- **Zarick:** Ghol, Asking For Directions


**banana (GM):** The waystone roads are smooth and black, running north and south around the Yetanotherwood. Janes Mason argues for taking the road as far as the coast, then turning south to Pocket Bay and the great city of Horizon. The other obvious way to go would be south and more directly east - but right now the whole world is open to you. It's just champions and the road..


I mean, it's just the four champions, a skeleton, two worshippers, Person, a mason and an ox. And Travis on the cart, sleeping something off.

- **Placidus:** And the road.

**banana (GM):** Still: the Realm goes on forever around you. Or west as far as the gently rising foothills, east as far as the forest, north as far as the river and the battlefield.. (!).


- Ghol, Going East:** As the group gets going, Ghol and Kon will slip off the road, scouting well ahead of

 the group, looking for disruptions in the waystones or other reasons for caution -- it wouldn't do for them to be ambushed at any time, but much less when they've got a budding wagon train.

 **banana (GM):** To the south it might well be forever.

Mirchin and Issuriel chat. "These plains are so wide. Farms, really. Look, that's the cattle country, where the honoured wings take their rightful meals..!" "Oh yes, the mighty consumption. Think of what noise it would make.. like the crunching of bone and the spurt of calfblood all at once."


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


() + 10


= **13**


augh


 **Placidus:** "We're going to go through the forest now, to Pocket Bay and then Horizon. Objections?"


 **Skeleton:** "Does it really beat the roads?"


 **Placidus:** The Via Carnis goes through the forest, doesn't it?
Like, the forest surrounds San Meat on 3 sides.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol emerges from the forest a short bit later with Kon, having scouted ahead per Placidus's suggestion. He shakes his head. "There's no way we're getting a wagon through the brush any faster than the road."


 **banana (GM):** Not quite. San Meat is set on the western edge of the forest; Viacarnis runs north and south past it, and then after going north a bit, turns east.


 **Placidus:** "Ugh. Fine. I don't trust the roads, though..."


 **Ghol, Going East:** That said, he will now depart to scout said road.


 **Skeleton:** "Seems simplest to just go up and around... unless there's something about the roads I'm forgetting."


 **banana (GM):** They're generally pretty great. Someone should tell skeleton the story about the time you had a fight on the road and your attackers couldn't even cross it properly.


 **Placidus:** "They weren't wholly stable when we were on them last, and it's not the tendency of degrading things to get better over time."

 **banana (GM):** OK, yes, there was that ominous degradation.


 **Placidus:** "It did take those attacking orcs some effort to push through the roadside."
"But, it's worth noting that they still... attacked us."
"And we had to fight them."


 **banana (GM):** You can complain as you walk. It's a big Realm.


 **Skeleton:** "I mean, well. How spooky is the forest, comparatively?"


 **Placidus:** Don't be ridiculous. Placidus isn't walking, he's perched on the cart. He spent too much of


his life sitting on rickety wagons not to prefer one to his own two feet. He can actually look down at the others.


 **Skeleton:** "And easy to get a wagon through?"


 **banana (GM):** This Empire, this part of Marrow- they're not even all there is to the world. A couple days of travel show you basically the sights you've seen before, no news and few meetings on the road. (There is a bit of smoke on the horizon, to the north, but it always fades rather than growing).


 **Placidus:** "Yes, the wagon complicates matters. The forest was more annoying than spooky, and we found Travis's orb in it."


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton wouldn't have minded sitting, but then ske doesn't mind walking, either.


 **Placidus:** "So, if you wanted to stumble across an ancient relic, the forest is a better bet."
"But we've got the cart, and that'll be a pain to get through the woods and arara corpses."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Surely someone could pass the time by examining the as-of-yet not fully examined Dominant Seat we lifted off the dark priests.


 **Skeleton:** "Hmm. Frankly, I wouldn't mind one. Still, it's not just the six - the five of us."


 **Placidus:** "Well, keep your eyes peeled."


 **banana (GM):** There's nothing eventful about this first part of the journey. You've rounded the wood and are well on your way east, between tangled wood and sparsely settled farms, without anything interesting happening. (Although: are you making camp with watches or anything like that?)


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol would presumably be handling this aspect of the travel, and he would institute watches, yes.


 **Placidus:** Ghol will probably insist we do, even if it doesn't occur to anyone else (it won't occur to Placidus, who was never in charge of things like that when he traveled as a child or younger man).


 **banana (GM):** Janes Mason is good company, good at sensing when an amusing opinion is wanted or otherwise. The ox isn't bad. Both dragon-cultists seem rather overwhelmed with the world, the prairie, the bigness of the sky...


 **Ghol, Going East:** Those would mainly be himself and Kon.

 **banana (GM):** They're probably going to start bugging Xarvrax to fly around a bit actually. It would be soooooo cool.

 **Placidus:** What's Person doing?

 **banana (GM):** Person walks, clanking quietly. He doesn't seem to exert any effort, or speak unless spoken to - except that whenever a group passes on the road, he asks if they know the way to Ironhenge. They don't.

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton can't actually volunteer to just take all-night watches without raising suspicions among a few of the hangers-on as of yet, but ske does sker best to seem an insomniac - or just to "sleep" seated against something and looking out into the night.

 **banana (GM):** It's like being shadowed, although the shadow is solid and inoffensive and one day, when

rolling 1d5

(5)

= 5

-when Skeleton trips on a stone, Person is there, steadying sker. Mysterious hooded figure solidarity, yes?



Skeleton: Skeleton IS interested in Person, though, and after introducing skerself as Kelly (specifically "I'm called Kelly") inquires as to where Person is from, what they're searching for, etc.

Yes, exactly!

"I suppose it's like a henge, but made of iron?" Skeleton says, by way of making conversation.



Placidus: Suddenly something occurs to Placidus. "Ho! Person!"



banana (GM): Over a few days you get a lot of redundant answers, but tease out this much: Person's been all over. From way up north to the west, across the Giantwalk, to the land of the behemoths, searching- and yet has never found a trace of the Way. More people like Person are in this part of the world, searching, which gives him some hope...



Placidus: "Did we cross paths in Axis?"



banana (GM): "We did not." Hence: the others.

Ghol has a dream one night.



Skeleton: "Who'd you meet in Axis?"



banana (GM): Ghol has a number of dreams now that he's not eating quite so much, but this one is a dream of the Elf Queen.



Placidus: "Someone else was asking the way to Ironhenge on our way out of town."



Ghol, Going East: Ooh.



banana (GM): Her face is there amid the starfield, looking down at him and, somehow, up, at the same time, but she doesn't speak. She looks anguished, torn, less certain than ever.



Ghol, Going East: That's...not good.



Placidus: "I didn't give it much thought at the time, they weren't on our wavelength."



banana (GM): Person: "You've gathered it's a topic of some interest."



Ghol, Going East: He wants to hurry east...but he can't, until he has the broken crown.



Placidus: "But it seems there's a multitude of persons, yes."

"Persons of interest."



banana (GM): Rattling laugh. Person has a sense of humour, if rarely deployed.



Placidus: "What does maintenance entail for you, typically?"



banana (GM): Mostly, he seems... driven. Anything that doesn't advance his search is just barely worth

spending effort on; when there's a chance that something might, he's ultra-focused, expending all that pent up energy.



Placidus: "Do you eat?"



Skeleton: "One wonders where they're all from..."



banana (GM): At first, Person was coy on the topic- but after a couple of days on the road it's become clear that he does not eat or (except perhaps discretely) excrete. "People like me need.. little. Mostly each other. And time."



Placidus: "Have you been to Forge?"




banana (GM): Ghol's dream ends with the Queen seeming several times on the verge of speech- then she looks around, as if constantly expecting someone else to be present. But no-one is there. He feels only the faintest of reassurance and renewed purpose, a light touch.. mostly just a reminder of the connection, which is always there.

Gimme a scouting roll, please; people who AREN'T Ghol, roll dex to move subtly.

*to travel subtly



Ghol, Going East: rolling d20+10


() + 10

= **12**

COME ON.



Placidus: rolling d20+4 Placidus was Raised in a Traveling Theatre, he knows how to avoid bandits when he has to


() + 4

= **8**

He was never very good at it, though.



Skeleton: rolling 1d20+4 subtleton

() + 4

= **7**



banana (GM): Person: "Where is Forge?"



Placidus: "Forge is far north of here."



banana (GM): Mason: "The dwarven mountain. He said he'd BEEN north."

Person: "Is it further than the King's Wood?"



Placidus: "It was the Kingswood."



banana (GM): Person: "Then, yes."



Placidus: "Were you underground at all?"



banana (GM): Person: "In part."



Placidus: Placidus, from his high perch on the wagon and his notquiet questioning, is pretty obvious from pretty far off. "Do you mean that you spent part of your time underground or that part of you was underground?"

He's thinking. There were a couple people asking about Ironhenge elsewhere, too. He heard the word when receiving his gift from team Wash-it-Down. Someone was crowded outside their inn asking about it among their fans once...

How did he not notice before?



banana (GM): Ghol doesn't have time to warn them without drawing notice of his own. He sees the pair of stalking figures easy enough, moving down the road- the first armed and armoured travellers there have been. They're trailing your group at just enough of a distance that it hasn't drawn anyone else's attention.



Ghol, Going East: If they've already been seen, there's nothing for it -- Ghol and Kon will break cover and head back to the group as fast as possible, to warn them.

Are they gaining on the group? Or just, following?



Placidus: To Person, as he sees Ghol and Kon advancing hurriedly: "You have a mask, right?"



banana (GM): Person: "Partly so. My recollection is that of a lesser person, at the time.. like a child." Ghol's flight startles the pursuers, but it makes them obvious enough- behind the running orc, there they are: two lightly armoured figures, carrying staves. It's obvious why Ghol is alarmed, because these hoods ARE those of dark priests; identical to those in San Meat.



Ghol, Going East: "Servants of the dark gods on the road! Draw your steel!" Ghol temporarily forgets, here, he's the only one who actually uses that sort of weapon in the little group.



banana (GM): Person moves rapidly but awkwardly behind the cart, hiding himself from their sight. Janes hunkers down, and the cultists rush to Xarvrax..



Ghol, Going East: Maybe the elves have swords...?



banana (GM): You underestimate their uselessness.



Skeleton: Skeleton fidgets with sker robes, turning to eye the two approaching people. Ske hasn't got a weapon to brandish, but when you're in robes that can make you scarier.



Ghol, Going East: Great. Cool.



Placidus: Remember that time when elves weren't useless?

Remember never?



banana (GM): The pair of cult priests are.. the robes are starting to look like a uniform, but these ones have banded armour over the top of it. They're clearly advertising who they are, and they travel right on the road. They're hurrying to catch up with you, but aren't yelling anything like "DIE" or "WE SHALL CONSUME YOUR SOULS" at this point.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol, on the other hand, has both of his weapons drawn and is one aggressive move from yelling something like that. Especially the first one.



banana (GM): The terrain right now: you're clear of the wood, heading for Pocket Bay. North of the road are Axis-area farms, and south is a bit of a wilderness, with a single marked path leading through it to some settlement or another. There are hills that way, with some sort of quarry.



Placidus: Placidus has his wand out. He's counting under his breath. How many Persons has he seen? It could be anywhere from three to seven, depending.



Skeleton: We'll see who dies and who consumes whose souls! Skeleton's battle cry is as follows: "Can we help you?"



banana (GM): Here's one reason why Placidus didn't twig to it earlier: those who ask the way to Ironhenge, they were all different shapes and sizes...



Placidus: Strange...
All he knows is, it's not on the Glittering Coast.

Dark Priest: "Hold, walkers! Stay your feet and scabbards!"



Placidus: "What do you want?"
Placidus is as polite as can be for someone expecting to be attacked.

Dark Priest: "You-" He's out of breath from trying to catch up with Ghol. "The road. No soldiers. Still north fighting the orcs, but some of them have passed us. Excuse me."



Skeleton: "Sorry?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sits up from the back of the wagon, much more likely to murder at being disturbed.

Other Priest: Having caught his breath: "Forgive my colleague, an inadequate servant of Darkness. I, more truly swathed in the Night, shall instruct you."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol just snarls, but he seems a bit less likely to just, viciously fall upon them with murderous intent now.

Other Priest: "The fel ravagers did not all die at Fulcrum. We hunt a remnant, threatening the humans south of here."



Xarvrax: "And?"



Skeleton: Skeleton contrives to look puzzled. Mostly this involves leaning back slightly and curling the fingers of one hand just below sker hood.



banana (GM): Mason: "Are they in the way of the road?"



Placidus: "We aren't the remnant you seek, nor have we seen it."

Dark Priest: "No, but you have weapons and we could use some help. Our agent is protecting the quarry alone right now, while we race for assistance.."



Xarvrax: "Orcs."
"I'm pretty sure he means orcs."

Other Priest: "These Scions of Tusken Earth seek to depredate this 'Empire'. We swore to keep them West if required, and keep them Dead if possible. Are any of you patriots or pious?"

Skeleton: "Sorry, 'fel ravagers'...?"

 **Placidus:** "Where is the quarry?"

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax pokes Ghol, "Well? You're the only one that would possibly be opposed."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is silent throughout this news, eyes very narrow.

 **Xarvrax:** "I am destructive power incarnate yes."

 **Skeleton:** "Oh, yeah. No, I got it, I heard 'fel' and was immediately thinking demons or something crazy like that... anyway, um."

Other Priest: "Two clicks to the south. I sense Arcane Arts upon you- are you wrights of destructive power? You have a chance to assist us in saving lives."

DarkPriest: "Well, not lives. The workers all bit it in the first attack."

 **Placidus:** "What are you defending if everyone already died?"

Other Priest: "Silence- the materiel and gear at the quarry, these are the Tactical Point! To allow the raiders to resupply at this juncture- we would never stop them before they press on to the Southlands!"

 **Ghol, Going East:** To Xarvrax: "Do not poke me again, dragon."

 **banana (GM):** ('Silence' was to the first priest.)

 **Placidus:** "I'm not interested in going so far out of our way to defend an arms stockpile."

 **Xarvrax:** "Well fine, be a grumpy Ghol, I'm going to go have some mindless fun."

 **Skeleton:** "Do we... get anything?"

 **Placidus:** "We aren't soldiers."

 **banana (GM):** Dragon cultist Mirch: "Why can't he poke you, Ghol?"
*Mirchin

 **Ghol, Going East:** At this point, it's obvious Ghol is under control mainly due to the calming influence of the road. "I say we step outside the waystones and deliver a counteroffer."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax turns to him, "I mean, if you want to murder priests, be my guest, but really, I'm going to go stop the 'Fel Ravagers,' from becoming an issue later."

Dark Priest: "Technically, you'd get a quarry. Also, our agent would probably not die, for which service you would have the blessing of (in my estimation) all the Gods simultaneously."

 **Xarvrax:** "Mine things? I mean, what else do you do with a quarry?"

 **Skeleton:** "It doesn't seem like WE'D get a quarry. What would we even do with one?"

 **Placidus:** "I appreciate your honesty. Let me be honest in turn."

Other Priest: "Am I to Curse you for the sin of Apathy?"

 **Placidus:** "This sounds like a lot of effort and danger to no benefit. Also, I personally dislike the dark gods and all their agents, since they've done nothing but try to kill me."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sighs, no one ever wants to mindlessly murder things.



Skeleton: "Hey, don't threaten to curse is! And he's got a point."
curse us*

Dark Priest: "We don't have time for this. If they won't help, we have to press on and find someone else."



Placidus: "It's nothing personal, you understand. Or at least it won't be until you try and curse us."



Ghol, Going East: "What makes you think you get to walk away."

Other Priest: "Understand I do indeed. My colleague lacks almost as many wits as you- there IS nobody else on the road to help.." Looking at Ghol, suddenly unsure.



Skeleton: Skeleton turns to look at Ghol. "Er,"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax blinks, "And I thought I was the agent of chaos and destruction here."



Placidus: "Ghol."



banana (GM): Beneath the hoods, the priests are a human and a dwarf, both kind of pale-skinned (maybe due to their weird rituals, or the hoods themselves).



Xarvrax: Xarvrax blinks again, "Well you heard the man, slow and painful death."



Ghol, Going East: His stance doesn't change, but his eyes do flick over to Placidus.



Placidus: "They're not going east," he says quietly.

Other Priest: More firmly: "We oppose chaos in all forms."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol snarls again, louder this time, and turns, sweeping furiously away from the discussion and towards the front of the wagon train.



Skeleton: "I think let's just move along."



Placidus: "I suggest you leave now," is all Placidus says to the followers of the dark gods.



Ghol, Going East: He'll remain there until the priests are gone...unless he sees them leave the road.



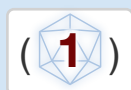
banana (GM): The first priest puts a second hand on his stave, gripping it defensively (or offensively, if it's a spellcasting implement).



Placidus: "For your own sakes, you'll want to stay on the road until you're out of sight."



banana (GM): rolling d20



= 1





Placidus: "And we see very far. Our scout is exceptional."





Xarvrax: Xarvrax nods, "Have fun with that!"

 **Placidus:** that's either very good or very bad


 **banana (GM):** The second priest: "Traitors to civilisation. We'll return and defend the supplies ourselves."


 **Placidus:** or else it is just okay


 **Skeleton:** actually banana rolled a 1 on a "does anything exceptional happen" check. everything remains utterly unremarkable


 **banana (GM):** They turn- though the first one continues to watch you nervously- and walk straight for the edge of the road, the path that heads south.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is already moving.


 **banana (GM):** Is he moving in a way that involves rolling init?

 **Ghol, Going East:** Yes.


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton wastes no time in heading off with the rest of the grohhhh no.


 **Ghol, Going East:** However.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax blinks, before poking Ghol again, slightly harder this time.

 **Ghol, Going East:** If someone wants to physically restrain them, he won't like

 **Placidus:** Where is Kon?


 **Ghol, Going East:** fight through them.

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+3 d.pr i


()+3


= **5**


rolling d20+5 d.pr ii


()+5

= **20**


 **Kon:** Kon's going with him, though not as hastily.


 **Xarvrax:** "What's wrong with all of you lately, do you really want to piss off the Dark Gods when we're on our way to their city?"


 **Placidus:** "Ghol!" Placidus almost falls on his face getting off the wagon. "Ghol. Ghol don't-" He trips again trying to intercede between Ghol and the road, but he makes it in time to at least require Ghol to lift his legs a little higher to get past him.


 **Skeleton:** "Hey wait wait c'mon they were-" Skeleton hasn't got it in sker to actually grab the orc, is the thing here. Ske's much more the stand back and whinge type.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Poking and whinging and Placidus are probably not enough to stop him.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs, flaring with power.

 **Placidus:** sadly, that's all we have

 **Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 4

() + 4


= **16**

rolling d20 + 4


() + 4

= **21**

Going to take that one.


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Join me or leave me. They die." And Ghol breaks through, off the road.


rolling d20+3

() + 3

= **9**

cripes.


 **banana (GM):** Roll inits- these guys might not be hungry games champions, but they're agents of the Army of Darkness, so they can fight.


 **Xarvrax:** rolling d6

()


= **1**

Well, that's not as bad as it could've been.

 **Skeleton:** rolling d20+4 skeleton

() + 4

= **24**

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+7 placidus

() + 7

= **26**



Kalira: lol. all the people holding back roll super high initiative



banana (GM): hahah

ok, the order is: 1) Skeleton, Xarvrax and Placidus; 2) the second priest, who's casting a spell; 3) ghol and kon; 4) the first priest, who's raising staff



Placidus: I will focus and then pass the turn to skeleton, xarvrax



banana (GM): At least one of the dark priests is spreading his hands apart and mumbling all beardy to reveal a stretched pane of shadow, refracting light at odd angles, spitting out clouds of gunk toward you.. time to back Ghol up.



Placidus: Placidus's eyes are glassy, but he's not panting anymore. The wand twitches left-right left-right in his left hand, like a metronome. He's got his eyes on the spellcaster.



Xarvrax: Oh right.



Placidus: "You should have left sooner. You shouldn't have come at all."



Xarvrax: rolling d6

(**4**)

= **4**



Skeleton: Skeleton thinks quickly: ske hasn't stopped Ghol, and ske certainly isn't ABANDONING Ghol, so there's really only one thing left to do. Ske spreads her arms and throws her head back, and a chill, chattering wind blows across the road.

Priest: "Learn some nuance in your politics, wizard(?)!"



Skeleton: rolling 1d20+8 chant of endings against the MD of the nearby enemy with the least

HP

(**12**)+8

= **20**

rolling 4d6+4 negative energy damage

(**4** + **1** + **6** + **5**)+4

= **20**



banana (GM): a hit



Xarvrax: Xarvrax notices the stumble, and points a hand at the priest.

rolling d20 + 7 vs PD

$$(\text{19})+7$$

$$= 26$$



banana (GM): Priest 2 is direly taken by the blast, stumbles- but continues casting his spell.



Xarvrax: rolling 4d6 + 4

$$(\text{6} + \text{6} + \text{1} + \text{5})+4$$

$$= 22$$

As the priest stumbles around, Xarvrax follows him with his hand, before a beam of... something fires out of it.



banana (GM): yep!



Xarvrax: Even Xarvrax isn't sure what it is, but it hurts him to look at it.



Skeleton: The second priest pales further, and chills, and darkens; he's limned in flickering silver which, itself, limns a core of deep black.



Placidus: is the second priest still standing



banana (GM): After Xarvrax's undecipherable powerbeam, he's staggered but alive.



Placidus: md or pd lower



banana (GM): pd lower



Placidus: rolling d20+8 int vs pd

$$(\text{3})+8$$

$$= 11$$

nice

the good news is I retain focus



Xarvrax: rolling d6

$$(\text{3})$$

$$= 3$$



Placidus: I'm assuming that misses though



Xarvrax: Barf.

rolling d100

(94)

= 94



banana (GM): it does!

Alright, that priest is in bad shape- pierced AND limned.



Xarvrax: Useless though.



Placidus: Xarvrax's beam of whatever flares violet for a moment but doesn't seem to be any brighter for it.



Kalira: uh oh

that's a high number



Xarvrax: Mine isn't, but 24 is way too high.



banana (GM): He didn't even make it off the waystone road. But still, he flings his arms wide and bolts of purple goop fly from the stretched shadow. "Guest take your favourite organs!"

Ghol and Kon are spared this attack- it's aimed at the group hanging back and throwing spells at him.



Skeleton: "Aha. Ah ha ha ha."



banana (GM): rolling d20+6 vs pd, xarvrax

(18)+6

= 24

rolling d20+6 vs pd, skeleton

(14)+6

= 20

rolling d20+6 vs pd, placidus

(8)+6

= 14



Skeleton: well, my pd is a fucking joke, so that def. hits



Placidus: aha! I've just leveled up

so now my pd is 13

hit



banana (GM): nice rolls, dark priest 2

All of you take 8 poison damage! And his spell remains active- more bolts coming.

Ghol, then priest 1.



Skeleton: ahaha i have resist 16+ poison, idiot. i take only 4 poison damage



Crion: Ghol and Kon will head straight for the first priest.



Placidus: I HATE taking damage.



banana (GM): well, it's hard to poison a bone.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax hates poison, it's so boring and ... natural.



Crion: rolling 1d20+8

(8)+8

= 16

rolling 3d6+5

(3 + 3 + 3)+5

= 14

ON MISS: 3 DAMAGE



Xarvrax: I think that guy is dead.



Crion: even

rolling 1d20+8

(11)+8

= 19

rolling 3d6+5

(1 + 5 + 5)+5

= 16

ON MISS: 3 DAMAGE



Skeleton: "Ow, my organs."



Placidus: "Very convincing."

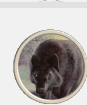


banana (GM): Priest #1 is wielding that quarterstaff, which looks to be enchanted from the way it blurs in his hands.. he's moving to step in front of priest #2, the Capital Letters one, but hasn't made it yet.



Crion: kon feat: attack 2/round (1/day)

Skeleton: "What? That's what people say. Sometimes."



Kon: rolling 1d20+8

(8)+8

= 16

rolling 2d6

(3 + 1)

= 4

rolling 1d20+8

(16)+8

= 24

rolling 2d6

(2 + 2)

= 4



banana (GM): i'm unclear about which attack is which but 16 hits his ac and 14 doesn't
oh, the 14 was a damage roll
so, that's roughly a billion hits



Ghol, Going East: Ghol and Kon go in.



Placidus: Placidus's skin goes mottled and ashy. His wrists are uninterrupted.



Ghol, Going East: 38 damage, I think



Skeleton: that is many damage, yes?



banana (GM): I mean, they DID swear to go off and kill a bunch of orcs, sorry, 'fel ravagers'. That's not a very nice thing to do - if understandable to many. But there must be more to Ghol's rage.

The priest's staggered immediately by the rain of slicing blows- also bloodied, cut up, bruised and other terms that have no game meaning. The assault that drives him back is so furious that it basically demands therapy.

Now it's his turn. Priest #2 looks despairingly at #1- he was relying on being protected by the whirling staff. But #1 is engaged, and has to defend *himself*.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is a scout, not a berserker -- but you'd be hard pressed to tell that, based on that attack.



banana (GM): He IS fast with that thing.

rolling d20+8 vs ghol ac, disarming strike; on hit, 10 damage and drop weapon; miss half

() + 8

= **25**



Ghol, Going East: "I'LL SHOW YOU THE PIETY I HAVE FOR YOUR MURDER"



banana (GM): Priest 1: "Orc! Look at his mouth!"

Priest 2: "They're fucking- working with the Beasts! We have to get out of here and raise the alarm!"



Ghol, Going East: hit; which weapon?



banana (GM): whichever is in the main hand falls to the ground



Placidus: the rune of peace! noo



banana (GM): rolling d20 attempt to disengage

()

= **8**

..but he cannot escape.

Placidus, Skeleton, Xarvrax



Ghol, Going East: The Rune of Peace clatters to the ground...but Ghol still has his knife.



Placidus: okay, first I'm going to use my rebuke attack, expending focus, on priest #2



banana (GM): Priest: "I KNEW there was something wrong, but we didn't see this one on the road.."



Placidus: escalation 1 right



banana (GM): yep!

e s c a l a t i o n




Placidus: rolling d20+9 vs pd

() + 9

= **24**

rolling 3d6+4 force damage

( +  + ) + 4

= **13**

focus, go



banana (GM): rebuked #2? he's barely standing now.

Placidus: yes

is there any ongoing to the poison or is it just the flat 8



Xarvrax: Xarvrax scoffs, "I'm the future Dragon Emperor, I don't work for anyone but myself."



banana (GM): Priest 2: "Gash damn you, imperials- working with the enemy for what, their coin? Their ideology?"
just flat



Placidus: "You can find your answers in whatever afterlife you've earned."



banana (GM): Priest 1, inappropriately: "Well, a lot of people turn to our enemies because they hate *us* so much."
Priest 2: "What the fuck are you on about, Sylus?"



Skeleton: Skeleton isn't answering. Ske's too busy rearing back, arms spread and fingers curled. The sound and shadow rippling around them is getting kind of cthonic now - there's something of lightless caves and subterranean seas in the cast of this sun-dappled road.

rolling 1d20+9 chant of endings vs. MD of lowest health enemy again

(12)+9

= 21



banana (GM): Priest 1: "I'm not saying they're *right* to, but remember how 'fighting them over there' didn't work- ugh!" a blow lands.



Skeleton: rolling 4d6+4 negged

(2 + 3 + 3 + 3)+4

= 15



banana (GM): Priest 2: "eeeeAARRGHHNNNNNNnnnnnnnnnnn"

His life ends in a thin whine, physical form going translucent and meaningless.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at the priest, before sighing, knowing that won't do any good.



banana (GM): Priest 1: "Look, I'll give you this: he was a dick."



Xarvrax: rolling d20

(15)

= 15



banana (GM): Priest 1: "But the Gods do not like cowards." He raises the quarterstaff.
(xarvrax is up)



Skeleton: Skeleton rocks forward and shakes sker hood to themselves. "Whoo! Boy. Doing that to a PERSON's a bit - oh, the other one, right."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at himself, and is suddenly shining like he just polished his scales, and they look even tougher now too.

He also gets +2 PD.

rolling d6

(1)

= 1


rolling d6

(4)

= 4

Barf...

Yeah, I'm done.

 **banana (GM):** Issuriel: "Master! You GLEAM."

Turn over? Ghol is next.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol doesn't try to recover the Rune now. He just strikes with what he has.

rolling 1d20+8

(19)+8

= 27

rolling 3d6+5

(5 + 6 + 1)+5

= 17

ON MISS: 3 DAMAGE; damage caused by the Knife takes twice as long to heal.

er

dammit



Ghol, Going East: that damage roll should be

rolling 3d8+5

(8 + 8 + 2)+5

= 23



Placidus: trigger

 **banana (GM):** By the way, this theology is questionable. Blamer, if not exactly a FAN of cowardice,

claims responsibility for it- and Guest's doctrine emphasises a lack of direct confrontation.



Ghol, Going East: he's my kill!!



Placidus: yes

is priest 1 dead yet



banana (GM): priest 2 is dead, but 1 isn't

23 damage takes him to Very Unhappy zone



Ghol, Going East: argh



Placidus: rolling d20+8 vs md or pd, whichever is lower

(16)+8

= 24



banana (GM): md is lower



Placidus: rolling 4d6+4 ghol's attack deals this much more damage

(1 + 2 + 2 + 1)+4

= 10

nice.



banana (GM): The Sum, again.



Kalira: Nice Ones, Two Bad



banana (GM): Although Ghol can't see the numbers. He can only feel the strength in his arm, behind the suddenly ironic knife.

The first dark priest's smugness and life end here, too.



Ghol, Going East: The priest's mouth is open to say something...when Ghol drives the knife up, through the bottom of his chin, pinning his jaw shut, driving into his brain. "Virtue lives in silence."



Scoutmaster Ingher: AGREED



Placidus: Quiet, you.



Skeleton: "...well. Well."



Placidus: How is the cart doing?




banana (GM): Quiet, everything. The air's gone still, frazzled by magic.





Placidus: Everyone's alright, right?




Ghol, Going East: As soon as that life is gone from the priest's eyes, Ghol snarls and kicks the body backwards, pulling the knife free.


**banana (GM):** The cart is cowering. Janes is spending 100% of his time right now calming an ox.


**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax points at Ghol, "Blame Stabby Mcmurder over there."





banana (GM): Person is just beginning to unbend- face as hidden as ever, but body language.. disappointed? "We didn't ask them the way."


**Xarvrax:** I'm good.


**Skeleton:** Skeleton motions as though wincing. "Ooh, you're right."


**Placidus:** Placidus will put a hand against one of the way stones to steady himself. He retches, but nothing comes up. The poison's already working its way out of his system. "They didn't know it." spending a recovery, taking the average, healing to full


**Skeleton:** same

**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol turns to look at the rest of the group. "Thank you," he says. Then he begins walking towards the front of the wagon train to be alone with his own thoughts for awhile, cleaning the blood from his weapons.

**Placidus:** everyone don't forget that your recoveries are 3 dice now

**Xarvrax:** Well, one is minus a brain, so there's that.

**Ghol, Going East:** doing the same as Placidus

**Skeleton:**

rolling 3d6-1 what if i hadn't taken the average. could i have managed a 2 or a 3

(

2

 +

6

 +


3


)-1


=


10

good job, skeleton.


**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax picks up the staff, looking it over.


**Placidus:** So... what's on their bodies? We can't just leave them on the road.


**Skeleton:** Ooh, yeah. Did they have anything cool?




banana (GM): Well, one of them's got a magic quarterstaff. That's worth taking.


**Placidus:** "Who wants the staff?"

**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax spends time trying to figure out what, if anything is special about this staff.

**Skeleton:** Deffo.



banana (GM): The rest.. you don't know, actually, how they would have wanted to be buried. Nor do you know whether you'd want to give them that.

**Placidus:** It's not about what they want. Nobody should have to see corpses on the road. These roads are supposed to be safe.

banana (GM): The rest of the day is uneventful before you make camp in a crook of the road, so you've



got plenty of time to decide.



Skeleton: "Lemme see." Skeleton also checks for jewelry and coin, magic or otherwise.



Placidus: "We need to burn these bodies."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax raises a brow, "Did I turn red?" Xarvrax looks himself over, "No seriously, I can't tell, I'm not red now am I?"

Mason: "Laugh a minute around here."



Placidus: "No offense, Kelly."



Skeleton: "Why burn? Just curious."



Placidus: "You know why."

Issuriel: "Master's flame should be able to toast them."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will loop back around to laugh at that, at least. And it should only just be the one body -- the other one dissipated, thanks to Necromancy, didn't it?



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sighs with relief, "Oh good, for a second there I was worried."



banana (GM): gimme an int roll for Magicanalysis, xarvrax



Ghol, Going East: er



Skeleton: "Hmm. Well, okay. We can find a spot."



Ghol, Going East: help with that



banana (GM): yeah, there's just one corpse
the other was blown out of existence by negative energy



Placidus: It looks like two from where Placidus is standing.
Certainly pieces enough for two.



Xarvrax: "I disagree, and since I'm the dragon, I would know."



Ghol, Going East: Point taken.

Mirchin: "You mean, master's LIGHTNING."



Xarvrax: "Probably."



Skeleton: skeleton also wants to figure out the staff, at least as to whether it can be cast through to good effect

Issuriel: "Metaphorically, a dragon's breath is 'flame' even if it isn't, like, heat."




banana (GM): Ske can tell easily enough that it's a weapon, not an implement.





Xarvrax: Xarvrax hurls the staff at whoever wants it, he has no need for non-magical weapons.

Issuriel: "Think of the poetry."

 **banana (GM):** How's the rest of the day?

 **Xarvrax:** Oh.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's vigilance is renewed -- now he's looking out for Movement remnants as well as servants of the dark gods.


 **Skeleton:** Hmm... well, if we're in luck it's the kind of weapon you can just hold and passively benefit from. Staves tend to be defensive, don't they?


 **Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 5 int, +4 if it's chaotic in any way?

() + 5

= **14**

Bah.


 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+7 straight intelligence on skeleton's part re: the staff

() + 7


= **11**


 **banana (GM):** The quarterstaff IS magical, just not a casting staff.


 **Skeleton:** rip.


 **banana (GM):** Skeleton can figure out.. that it's probably easier to hit people with this staff than a non-enchanted staff. It moves smoothly through the air. Beyond that, ydk.


 **Placidus:** "Person!"


 **Skeleton:** "This make any sense to you, Placidus?" This asked in the midst of setting up an out-of-the-way place at which to burn the remaining body.

 **Placidus:** 'this' being the staff?


 **banana (GM):** Mason, next time Ghol drops by: "Three days to the coast. Do you think it's worth staying on the roads, if they're letting just anyone use them now?"

 **Skeleton:** the staff, yeah

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+7 let's find out if placidus can deduce anything about the staff with pure unwizardly logic

() + 7

= **16**

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol shakes his head. "I think it hinders our options more than it helps. But you can't take the wagon off road, and it's safer for the hangers-on."

**banana (GM):** Mason: "Fair enough. Let's camp under that overhang tonight, in case of.." You know.

**Placidus:** Rain, obviously.

**Ghol, Going East:** The elf-orc does know, and nods.

**banana (GM):** It doesn't rain, either.

Placidus spends most of the rest of that day figuring it out, but- this staff's movements, the way it tilts slightly when you hold it, it's based on a pattern! A pattern which can be fit to a curve.

If one was to move it just so.. it bounces right out of the pattern and goes for enemy weapons. Great way to defend yourself.

(i'll post about the Disarmament Stave +1 in the loot thread at some point)

**Placidus:** "Person!" he says again, hours later.

**banana (GM):** At the quiet camp, that night, Person: "Yes, Placidus."

Person's learned the way everyone else does that this gnome asks questions.

**Placidus:** He holds the staff up. "Hold onto this. Can you fight at all?"

**banana (GM):** Person: "Oh, yes." He examines the thing from tip to bottom, moving that mask-blank hood up and down it at a slightly inhuman angle. "I'll integrate this."

That night, Skeleton has a dream.

It isn't about the Elf Queen, of course.

**Skeleton:** Thank goodness.

**Placidus:** Placidus doesn't let go of the staff right away. Suddenly, intensely: "How many are you?"

**banana (GM):** It isn't about much at all- incoherent fragments, like any dream. But.. now ske knows.

To be clear: this is the **first** dream skeleton is aware of having, since becoming skeleton.

**Skeleton:** Skeleton wasn't even intending to sleep! Ske'd just let sker mind wander, on watch.

**banana (GM):** Person: "People like me are beyond counting. People like me stretch from dawn to dusk. People like me are all, then few- very few, now. Then.. one."

**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax pokes Placidus, "I know that look, don't do anything crazy, that's my job."

**banana (GM):** Abruptly, he stops talking.

**Placidus:** Placidus stares for a moment and then equally abruptly releases the staff. "Thank you."


**banana (GM):** You don't even get a nod - Person turns away and avoids contact for the rest of the evening.


**Skeleton:** Hang on, ske knows what? Just... that ske's capable of dreaming?


**Placidus:** "Someday, someone is going to teach you the difference between crazy and stupid."

**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax smirks, "I know the difference, I just don't care." At the mention of Ghol, Xarvrax shrugs, "No clue."


**banana (GM):** Yep. Maybe it hadn't occurred to skem to question - but now ske knows.


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton can't decide whether to be relieved or unsettled.


 **Placidus:** "But it's not going to be me. At least not today." Where's Ghol?


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is currently leaning against Kon, who is dozing, while he idly fiddles with the Knife of the Movement.
He's frowning at it, troubled.


 **banana (GM):** , as it now is.


 **Placidus:** "That's fine woodwork," says Placidus as he approaches.


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Thank you. It's still Dark God trash. I thought to reclaim it, but...perhaps I should just throw it away." Then he sighs. "But that would be pure ideology acting. Not me."


 **Placidus:** "You're right. There's no sense discarding useful things because of where they came from."
"It was 88,000, wasn't it?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** "Give or take."
"Mostly take."


 **Placidus:** "How many of them did you avenge today?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** "None."


 **Placidus:** Placidus lets out a sigh he didn't know he was holding. "Yeah."


 **Ghol, Going East:** "The Movement marches ever onward. The sacrifice of Estella's 88,000 will be noted, held up as a moral example of some sort in the Leader's Remarks, examined and argued over in his ever-moving schools of tactics -- their sacrifice, not their loss. All Movement, after all, is forward. The Movement does not retreat. It pivots."


 **Placidus:** "Would you have been there?"

 **banana (GM):** Perhaps a pointed lesson on the 'value' of alliances.

 **Placidus:** "If you weren't here."

 **Ghol, Going East:** "No."
"If I weren't here -- which I take to mean, if I hadn't run -- I'd have been delivered to the Orc Lord for...study, perhaps? He has his own sages. He views politics as a hard science, and employs many hard scientists. He would have tried to exploit my connection to Her. It would have been unpleasant."
Ghol shrugs. "Or perhaps I'd have ended up in Estella's stew pot. She was always looking for new tastes."

 **banana (GM):** The nice thing about the dragon cultists is that they don't try to eavesdrop on conversations like this, because they don't care, because you aren't dragons.

 **Placidus:** "He's right, you know. Politics is a hard science. It's a numbers game. The most important thing is not what or why, or how, it's how many. There were how many thousand people in San Meat, how many in the Empire, how many in the Federation. How many in the Movement. How many in the world. These are the numbers that determine how ages begin and end."

"But the numbers get very small, too. There's about a dozen of us, traveling on the road. There's half that many fighting for the other half. There's you and Kon, who've been together far longer than that."

And then there's just you."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol leans back into Kon and closes his eyes. "I am not alone. I am never alone, anymore."



Placidus: "If you say it, then it's true. And that's my point: you have to decide what multitudes you're part. You have to understand what magnitudes your eyes see."



Ghol, Going East: "Yeah..."



banana (GM): There are about half a million orcs in the Movement. Less now. Somewhere between five and ten million in the western Empire, a few millions more than that in the Federation, with just 50000 living in and around the north Yetanotherwood - but ALL of the orcs fight. These are numbers Roland knows by heart, as does his counterpart somewhere in the northern plains, beyond the dwarven shield wall.

The intangibles: training, faith, destiny. Magic. Single figures that can change the outcome of a battle against 88,000. Can Placidus really reduce it all to numbers?

If so, these really are the last days of the eleventh age of the world.