



banana (GM): Morning finds Kon's Men breaking camp in eastern Marrow, far enough that the gentle mountains have vanished from the horizon.

If following the plan, you're heading southeast, toward the coast - on the edge of vision is the shimmer of sun on salt. Waystone turns north here, but a paved road keeps running straight on. There's another caravan on it, far ahead of you.

Janes: "We could make Northbyron by evening and stay in the motel. I know a guy."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol's been up for an hour or two; he's currently filling in the fire pit. A bit unnerved the mountains are out of sight; he doesn't think he's ever been this far away from them, before.



Xandrah: "Is that guy going to freak out when he sees a dragon, a warg, and a half-orc?"



VoxPVoxD: "Why would he? That sounds like the beginning of a joke."



Xarvrax: "Because that seems to be the case as of late?"



Placidus: "All of you walk into a bar. There are no survivors."



Ghol, Going East: "...What's a motel?"



Xarvrax: "That's just a given."

Janes: "Like a hotel, but for moving people. Mo-Tel, see."



Placidus: To Ghol: "It's an inn on the road."

Janes: "You check in with carts, get your own stable attached to a lil' suite."



Ghol, Going East: "Huh." That's Ghol for 'nah, but I'm not gonna press it.'



Xarvrax: "It's an inn for poor people, basically."



Ghol, Going East: Placidus's explanation makes more sense.
Xarvrax's makes even more sense.

Janes: "'Frugal'."



Xarvrax: "Which means poor."



Ghol, Going East: "That's good. I'm getting used to sleeping outside again. Forgot how much I missed it."



banana (GM): The constant undulating farmland has ended here; you walked past the last line of grain half a glass back. Close to the coast, the earth is less fertile.



Xarvrax: "I'm a dragon, we probably invented all the different words to call someone poor."



Placidus: The order of Megistus customarily maintains motels in gnome-friendly country (and indeed, prior to his de-election, it was customary to seek the blessing of a priest of Megistus when opening a new one). Hard to say how things have changed. It hasn't been that long...

"Well, we're only poor in spirit. It'd be nice to take a bath, though."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol doesn't need a bath. For the first time in awhile, he's gone 24 hours without getting covered in something disgusting and/or on fire.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax waves a hand, "Whatever, we'll figure it out when we need to."



banana (GM): More than 24 hours! You left San Meat behind multiple days ago.. unless there was a firepit mishap I don't know about.



Xarvrax: "Off we go towards Horizon and telling the Archmage he has a less terrible group of people doing his errands."



Ghol, Going East: It's true. Ghol will return to his customary task of scouting ahead for the aspiring wagon train.

Janes: "You're seeking an audience with the big guy, huh? News should arrive about the same time as us, so maybe you'll be famed enough. If not- at least you have a contact for great quality stone."



Kon: Kon's been off all morning, hunting and getting a feel for the land closer to the coast; he puts an appearance here, trotting out of the brush to check in on Ghol and silently chide him for talking with his buddies when he should be doing his job.

Person: The seeker of Ironhenge hasn't said much today. Since Placidus pressed him enough to reveal little bits about 'people like me', he's stayed clear of the gnome- as if afraid of his own inability to dissemble.



Xarvrax: But first, Xarvrax is taking a swing at figuring out what the hell that stupid chair does again, it's been a while, and if it doesn't do anything then there's no point hauling it around.

Person: Person is, however, perking up as you approach the coast, He raises his hood, whirrs a little- seems attracted to the sea air.

"This is the right sort of place."



Placidus: "Ironhenge is on the coast?"



banana (GM): Sure, ok. Next time you break for a moment- the ox appreciates it - Xarvrax can sit down on the chair and try.. something, anything. Gimme a skill roll + an excuse.

Person: "Yes, it is."




banana (GM): He sounds really assured of that.



Placidus: "My compass is pointing at the coast, a ways east of here."



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 9 Int + Magical Anomaly, because really, who enchants a chair?

() + 9

= **11**



Placidus: "Maybe we're headed to the same place after all."



Xarvrax: God damn it.



banana (GM): You haul the Seat off the cart, take a bit of a rest.. it's kind of invigorating, you guess? Does anyone else want to help out by observing Xarvrax closely?



Placidus: Placidus has taken to calling his gizmo a 'compass' because that's the only thing it visibly does.

Person: "Maybe, but maybe not."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax glares at the comfort. One day chair, one day, your secrets will be mine.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will give it a shot when he sees the dragon perched on the chair when looping back around from the road ahead.




Placidus: "True enough," says Placidus. "There's a lot of coast out there."



banana (GM): Kulira's found the local mayor at last; some sort of fisherwoman, holding court in a hut atop the sea-cliffs.



Ghol, Going East: rolling d20+10 wis+scout, because that's what he's doing right now.

() + 10

= **13**

Oh my god.

We're never going to ID this chair.



Xarvrax: Anyone want to go for a 4 too?




banana (GM): Its construction is unusual. The framework of the building is dolmen-like - several huge standing stones, all one piece- and then the gaps are filled by woven reeds, with a tougher set of the same stuff to provide a roof.

The interior of the mayor's home speaks to some level of wealth, though. There's imported furniture here of northern AND southern make, and the nets hanging on her wall don't look recently used.



Placidus: rolling d20+11 Placidus rolling unnatural philosopher. it may not be relevant or provide anything useful but that's the skill he's going to roll in all contexts unless a specific one is called for

() + 11


= **14**

nice



banana (GM): lol

rolling d20+8 janes mason

() + 8

= **27**



Ghol, Going East: Can we just stop the damn procession and Take 20 or something.

Janes: "What in the name of the abyss are yall doing with in that thing?"



Xarvrax: Fuck that guy.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs.

Janes: "Every time bluey sits down, his arms are bulgin'. This is weird."



Placidus: "I was playing musical chairs."

"Do you hear it?"



Ghol, Going East: His arms are bulging...?



Xarvrax: Xarvrax hears something... Oh wait, that's just his teeth grinding.



Placidus: Placidus's fingers are waving back and forth as if marking a beat, but there's no music coming from anywhere.



banana (GM): There's no music audible, unless you're Placidus maybe. Off in the distance, animal noises.. a cat in the undergrowth, eagle high above. No music, though.



Kalira: "You've got to take this seriously. Before, they were a limping patrol trying to avoid notice. Now they're armed and you've got more food than weapons."



banana (GM): Bulging- yeah- now that it's pointed out, you can see that not only does Xarvrax grow visibly more swole in the Dominant Seat, he gets up from it abnormally fast.



Ghol, Going East: Hrm.



Xarvrax: "Welp, time to burn it."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is already headed back out on patrol, or he'd roll his eyes.



Placidus: "That could be useful, in some context."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax raises a claw and points at Janes, "Also, if you call me Bluey again, I will murder you."



Placidus: "I imagine."

Mayor Pendleds: "We're so far away from the war, here. We've never had to deal with anything like this.. what can we do? There are more caravan guards in town than there are Byron folk who can raise a mace."



Placidus: To Janes: "Do you think the chair made him extra aggressive? I can't tell."



banana (GM): Enough experimentation, guided thus, will eventually reveal that the Dominant Seat +2 grants +2 to str, dex and con checks made while sitting in it.



Placidus: let's make ghol sit in it and fire his bow



Ghol, Going East: How...situational.

Turret gunner Ghol.



banana (GM): It's actually a champion-tier item, but arguably niche.



Kalira: "We may well need both. Your options here are to give up your stores of food and supplies -- and thus starve to death once your immediate personal ones run dry -- or fight. And they may not be feeling gracious enough to offer you the former option."



Placidus: "Are there any towns between here and the coast? I've never been on this edge of the Bay before."
This, too, is to Janes.



Kalira: "I can help you organize your defenders, and help you fight. But the losses will be your own, so your men have to find their stomachs, unless they want to find them empty."

Janes: "All the way down the coast road you've got fishing towns. The cliffs make for no good harbour before Horizon, but you can still climb or portage them with a full net.. 's why we merchants always take this pass, lots of last minute trading to do."



Placidus: "Who guards the pass?"

Janes: "Nobody much!"



banana (GM): The area between Axis and Horizon is not exactly a dangerous one.



Placidus: "If the war front ever moves, that pass would be a fine place to set up shop as bandits."



Kalira: What an odd thing to say.

Mayor Pendleds: "I need to think. Maybe we shouldn't provoke them.."

Janes: "Noted."



Xarvrax: Is this where we start actively embracing a life of crime?



Kalira: "What would you do to not provoke them? Offer up your children?"



Ghol, Going East: No/



Xarvrax: Because I'm down with that.



Ghol, Going East: No.



banana (GM): It's past midday by the time you've figured out the chair (if not, necessarily, a use for it). The coast is visible now, turf running all the way up to a sharp drop-off- and south along those cliffs, the paved road.

Just past the turn, you can see a small town of a few dozen buildings. There are camps around it disproportionate to its size- the merchant trains Mason mentioned.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will jog back to let the rest know about this before they come upon it.



Skeleton: Around this time, the skeleton stretches from their spot nestled inside the cart, pulls a curtain aside, and looks up at the position of the sun. "Oh, come on. I had this down."

Mayor Pendleds: "Ser, we're lucky people all haul together. We can afford to pay to avoid conflict. But.."



Placidus: "You've been spending too much time with Travis."



Ghol, Going East: "Town uphead," says Ghol, emerging from...somewhere just off the road.
*up ahead

Mayor Pendleds: "I need to call the leading citizens together. Would you mind abiding here while we discuss- you can have the best room in our inns for free, in thanks for this warning."

	Kalira: "Of course. Do it quickly, or I will be your last guest."
	banana (GM): *in any of our inns
	Skeleton: "Maybe that IS it. I've been using him to calibrate spell recharge... maybe if I... oh, is there?" Skeleton's hopped down and started walking along the others by now.
	Kalira: "Well, not quite. But the one after me will not leave their quarters in good condition, I assure you."
	banana (GM): Tavra Pendleds looks worried for sure, but Kalira can't be certain she's taking this seriously enough. The mayor issues commands to a runner, sending them out to bring people up the cliff for a meeting- but as warned, it will take some time. Meanwhile, she makes good on her promise, and with the amount of trade traffic that comes through here you have access to comfort indeed, with a good meal. It's a nice change from however many weeks on the road. Ghol's right; there is a town. This has been a very unsurprising day.
	Kalira: An advantage of service to the Dark is freedom from abasing yourself to those in need without expecting something in return. Despite her impatience with the town's leader, Kalira does not feel guilty about enjoying her proper accommodations, or as proper as it gets this far from a city.
	banana (GM): "Northbyron," explains Janes. "Think I know the people in that caravan by the road. Hoy!" (They're grey elves with a banner depicting a falcon, and from the ensuing conversation, they seem to buy and sell fabrics. It's not very interesting.)
	Xarvrax: Snorefest.
	Placidus: Placidus counts. How many townsfolk would he estimate there are, vs. how many traders? Is anyone visibly armed?
	banana (GM): The road here is quite good, so it's not really sunset as you enter the little village. It might be possible to just press on, avoid unwanted attention.. to Skeleton by everyone, and to Placidus by a large orange local moggy.
	Kon: Kon resumes walking with the group, here. Less likely to cause wailing/gibbering flight/armed confrontations like that.
	banana (GM): Given the three streets and the shops and the houses, and the rickety scaffolds that lead down to a little bay.. maybe two or three score townsfolk? There are just as many caravaniers of all Imperial races and stripes.
	Orange cat: "Mraw."
	Placidus: San Meat has left him thinking that any group of people larger than fifteen or so poses a potential lethal threat. The question is- why is it getting so hard to count? Why are Placidus's eyes watering? Oh dear.
	Kon: Kon, noted cat-botherer, will bother the cat.
	Skeleton: "Ohhh, look." Skeleton's stooped to scratch behind the cat's ears immediately.
	Placidus: "Agh!"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pets the cat.



banana (GM): Oh, shit. this is cat paradise.
It's going to need to rub against each of your legs once, save those of the oxen.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol will take a look around town, in the meantime.



banana (GM): Anyone got anything that smells good on them?



Ghol, Going East: Doubt it.



Skeleton: Not Skeleton, to Skeleton's regret.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax has tossed the bread cubes, they got stale.



banana (GM): Ghol can get the lay of Northbyron in just a few minutes. There are three separate inns here - one the Shattered Prince Motel of which Janes spoke - and two bait/tackle shops, as well as a general store. Everything else is yards where the travelling merchants haggle, homes of small close knit families, and children running in the streets.



Xarvrax: Better projectiles, but uncomfortable to carry.



banana (GM): They're mostly human, and everyone seems to know each other. Actually, there are people going around between the houses, passing some sort of news.



Placidus: It depends on your definition of 'smells good'. Placidus hasn't had a bath in a couple days but he does have his lunch wrapped up in his pocket - delicious prunes.



Ghol, Going East: He'll try to listen in on that, as unobtrusively as he can.

Orange cat: "Rrrw." Seconds later: "Rrrw."



Skeleton: Skeleton looks to the others, and also the wagon, for some scrap of meat or something to toss over, but is not really within their rights to do this and so probably goes disappointed.



banana (GM): Skeleton hasn't been paying attention to where the food is kept, huh?
That's one of the perks, of course.



Placidus: Placidus is going to put as many people between himself and the cat as he can. Something about this seems strange. Is it normal practice to camp around a village like this?



banana (GM): Ghol can gather this much: a town meeting is being called. Interestingly, the terminology they use is nearly identical to that of the brief uprising in San Meat - 'citizens' council', 'commissioner', 'patrollers'.



Skeleton: Not at all, nope. Part of this is due to forgetfulness, but there's also a subconscious desire to avoid one of those Metallo moments.




Placidus: A violent sneeze interrupts his counting.



Ghol, Going East: Neat.
He'll slide back over to Placidus, the group's de facto adult. "Something's going on."


Orange cat: Well, if Placidus is backing away, he must have the good stuff. The cat follows.


...and leaps! Make an opposed Dex check.

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+6 cat

() + 6

= **23**

 **Placidus:** If the Fisher doesn't hold sway in literal fishing communities, where would sh-GAAH


 **Ghol, Going East:** Can Ghol roll to intercept?

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+5 raised in a traveling theatre +1, placidus does a somersault!


() + 5

= **16**


But the cat jumps farther.


 **banana (GM):** It's batting at the wand at Placidus's belt, which swings appealingly in the breeze. Ghol can intercept that if he really cares.


 **Ghol, Going East:** rolling d20+6 animal ken

() + 6


= **26**


 **banana (GM):** Nice.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax cackles wildly, CHAOS REIGNS!

 **banana (GM):** The cat jumps- and Ghol dives. In the nick of time, he fends off the orange blur from playing with a dangerous weapon, which is probably a good idea, apart from drawing the attention of everyone in the street.

Orange cat: "Rrss."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol casually sweeps in and catches the cat mid-flight, right beneath its outstretched forelegs, and lifts it up like a baby to stare into its eyes. "Greetings."

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton watches in either horror or enthrallment - both involve the same knock-kneed stance and hands clutched right under where the face should be.

 **banana (GM):** Now it's bolting.

..or not!

Ok, it's trying to squirm free. This is kind of hard to keep hold of, although I mean, Ghol is stronger than a cat.

But man those are sharp claws, and you think people are staring.

Placidus: Placidus draws his wand, partly to keep it out of the cat's reach and partly to threaten the cat

 with if it doesn't go away. He doesn't cut a very imposing figure, being three feet tall and change with red, watery eyes.

 **banana (GM):** ..okay, at that, one of the bigger fishermen around is going to jog over. "Hey, stranger. Do you know how to use that?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ow. Claws. Is he asking if Ghol knows how to use a cat?d

 **banana (GM):** He's asking if Placidus knows how to use a magic wand.

 **Placidus:** If Placidus knows how to use a wand.

 **Kalira:** Well. Does he?

 **Ghol, Going East:** Because: clearly not.

Orange cat: "Sst. Fffrrr."

 **Placidus:** "Who's - aCHAH - asking?"


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax grabs the cat from Ghol, and sets it on his shoulder.

 **Placidus:** "Excuse me."
"Allergic to cats."

 **Ghol, Going East:** He will hand the cat off to Kon, who will take thing by its scruff and wander off with it.

Fisherman: "Just a concerned citizen." Janes is nowhere to be seen right now, either distracted or mortified. "It looks dangerous, stranger."

 **Ghol, Going East:** He will specifically not give any animal that has not mortally wronged him to Xarvrax.

 **banana (GM):** I think Xarvrax was actually trying to save the cat from Ghol, as well as vice versa.

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton trails after Kon, watching to see if the two do anything cute together.

 **banana (GM):** Frankly, right now the animal's only concern is to leave as quickly as possible and get under something dark.

 **Placidus:** "I don't mean any harm. We're just passing through, from San Meat."

 **Kon:** Kon will deposit it a few houses over, near an inn with something tasty cooking.

Fisherman: "Oh, yes?" Polite tone, but several villagers are looking you over now..
They look pleased with what they see.

 **Placidus:** "Yes! We were at the Hungry Games."

Fisherman: "Sportsmen, are you? Fighters?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol frowns, looking around the assembled people. "You could say that."

 **Placidus:** "If need be, we are both and more. My trade is philosophy first and fivemost. Placidus Fixlmillner."



banana (GM): A pair of guards from one of the merchant caravans has arrived, drawn by the commotion. "What's up, Altner?"



Skeleton: Skeleton's back a few minutes later, disappointed that the cat just disappeared under something and wouldn't come out. It could probably smell the literally-just-bones thing, in retrospect.



Ghol, Going East: "I'm Ghol. The big dude is Kon."



Placidus: If only Skeleton had body heat enough to impart to sker shoes...



Ghol, Going East: "I'm Ghol, Going East. The big dude is Kon."

Fisherman: To the guard: "You swore at us and said you'd rather we find adventurers to take the risk, merc. Think these guys qualify?"



Placidus: "Risk?"

Another fisherman: "Sers, would you mind meeting with our town commissioner? We've been hoping someone like you might pass through, and it's very important."



Ghol, Going East: What were the odds.



Placidus: 7-to-2 in favor.



Skeleton: Skeleton looks to the others and shrugs.



Placidus: But who's asking.



banana (GM): As well as the meal, Kalira's had time for a nap, or some games in the inn if she prefers... too much time. They weren't that far behind her. Where is the mayor?



Kalira: She definitely intends to find out, especially due to the commotion outside. She's also going to be ready to book it if they show up and these villagers decide they're not going to put up a fight after all.



Placidus: "Does the town commissioner have a cat?"

Caravan guard: "Make sure they pay, friends. Folk here are stingier than West Byron."

Fisherman: "No."



Placidus: "Lead the way, citizen."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pokes Placidus, "Really? Provided there are no cats risks are okay?"



Placidus: "It doesn't cost us anything to hear them out."

"And, you'll notice, unlike the last time someone asked us for help, there are actually people here."

"Come on! It could be fun."



banana (GM): From somewhere around a side street, you hear voices drifting on the wind... Janes discussing linen with an elf, and Person wondering about the provenance of this cloth (could it, perhaps, be from Ironhenge?).

Fisherman: "Just up this road, the house at the highest point of the cliff. The Commissioner's a good person, her offer will be fair."



Placidus: Placidus looks around for the others. Ghol? Kelly?



Skeleton: "Sure, let's hear 'em out."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shrugs. "Can't hurt."



Placidus: "Let's go!"



Kon: Kon, meanwhile, has wandered off to find Janes and Person.



Xarvrax: "Fine, let's go talk to the boring people and hear their boring offer."



banana (GM): This is who Kalira, emerging, sees walking up the road to the mayor's house: a mysterious thin robed figure, a tiny gnome with a brown cap, a dragon on legs, and a really muscled teen. There's only one kind of people they could be.



Placidus: THE WORLD'S GREATEST CIRCUS ACT



banana (GM): I was going to say, competitive eaters...



Placidus: There wasn't much competition.



Ghol, Going East: What's Kalira look like?



Kalira: Well, that ought to tip odds in my favor. Nothing gets common people inspired like Adventurers.



banana (GM): The villagers ARE boring; Xarvrax can have this one for free. The woman who just came out of one of the inns, however...



Xarvrax: Chaos sense, tingling!



Kalira: Kalira looks pretty average for a human, a bit above average in height, dark-haired, dark-eyed. Her arms and armor, however, look decidedly less than average, and the calculating look she's weighing the group with definitely doesn't read with the same awe and wonder of the rest of the village.



Xarvrax: Oh wait, that's just a twig between some scales.



Placidus: Wow, it's not every day you see someone who could easily fit in with either kind of Goth.



Skeleton: Skeleton waves shyly.



Placidus: Placidus isn't shy. "Hello, armored woman!"



Kalira: "Hello, friendly gnome. Do you have business here, or are you just... wandering?" Her eyes are set on Ghol.



Xarvrax: "Always!"



Placidus: "We were told to speak to the Commissioner. Is she inside?"




Xarvrax: "Never."




banana (GM): (Kon finds the others easily enough. Issuriel and Mirchin are asking around about local custom, surprisingly subtle in their proselytising)




Placidus: Placidus is assuming that someone armored up like this isn't in charge of a tiny fishing village.

 **Xarvrax:** "Sometimes at the same time!"


 **Placidus:** Perhaps that's unfair...?


 **Kalira:** "They do go hand in hand, don't they? You're on your way to speak to the mayor, then?"


 **Placidus:** "The Commissioner, yes."


 **banana (GM):** It's a matter of perspective.


 **Placidus:** It seems like a basic courtesy to call people what they ask to be called.


 **banana (GM):** Everything's pretty close together, but her house is set just a few tens of metres apart, right on the cliff's edge.


 **Placidus:** "That's symbolic."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax frowns. That wasn't the answer he was expecting.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's first thought when he sees her: "wow she's pretty." Second, more relevant thought: "She looks like she can handle herself."

 **Kalira:** "I'll accompany you, then. I'm sure she has a request to make of you and it's only fair that I be there, considering it's because of me that she makes it."


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


 **Skeleton:** "Oh? What's going on?"


 **Placidus:** "Is there anything we should know before going in?"


 **banana (GM):** Kalira has all the spoilers. Perhaps fortunately, as the mayor's house is still shut up - there are a number of people talking inside, and the fisherman who went in to announce you hasn't come out yet.


Along the cliff to the north, a young man descends a series of wooden stairs and ropes- going to the small boats to set out to a late shift of work.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax is less bored, and more suspicious now.

 **Kalira:** Kalira's still eyeing Ghol. "You're not quite an orc, then," when she gets closer. "An orcish patrol, wounded and hungry, has been wandering the area. They weren't really trouble until they picked up a good bit of serviceable weapons. Now they're armed, but probably still hungry."

 **Placidus:** "I take it you don't intend to throw them a picnic."

 **Xarvrax:** "I mean, I'm hungry too, what's the problem here?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** She's...direct. He can dig that. "An orcish 'patrol?' What are they patrolling for?" Sounds like those survivors the late servants of the dork gods were trying to snuff out...

 **Kalira:** "I don't want to let them take what they want. But I'm not going to throw myself on their new swords for these people, either." Her eyes settle on Ghol. "I don't think they were, anymore. I think they were fleeing from somewhere, with no real intention of causing mayhem. But things do get out of hand, you know."

Ghol, Going East: "Uh huh."



banana (GM): This place is much smaller than San Meat, and doesn't get imperial couriers. What news they've heard of the abortive invasion is fragmented thus far.



Kalira: "They did leave quite the trail of wreckage even before they were armed, though."



Ghol, Going East: To Placidus: "Should probably find and talk to these guys. At least figure out what they're doing here from someone besides two-bit cultists."



Xarvrax: "And? I leave a pretty large wreckage trail, and half the time I'm not even trying."



Placidus: Placidus nods. "We should be able to find out where they're set up from the Commissioner."



Kalira: "Oh, you spoke to the two-bit cultists then. Did they send you along?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol grins. "Sure."



banana (GM): The door opens. Several older men and women file out- "excuse me, excuse us".



Placidus: Placidus clears his throat very loudly. "SO I notice we haven't yet exchanged names. I'm Placidus Fixlmillner."



banana (GM): They look kind of upset, and one of them motions Kalira into the one-room home.



Skeleton: "Uh, uh- Kelly." Skeleton keeps putting off figuring out an actually smart way to go about this.



Placidus: That's a very delicate way to put it.



Xarvrax: "I'm Xarvrax, Scion of The Blue, Chaos, and Fun."



Kalira: "Kalira. Excuse me."



Ghol, Going East: "Ghol, Going East--" he says into her armored back. Huh.



Placidus: Once she's gone inside, Placidus turns to Ghol. "What do you think they'll want? Just supplies?"



banana (GM): Skeleton's might find it interesting, at least, to see what people assume.. skeleton's voice isn't really identifiable as male or female, and the name could go either way, but so far most people assume ske's a she.
The home is pretty small, so you can all see the conversation that follows if you want- or even break in..



Ghol, Going East: Ghol shakes his head. "No idea. Could just be looking for resupply and a map. Could be looking to start a fight. Worst case scenario? They've decided this land is fat and peaceful, and are looking to set up a permanent camp."

Mayor Pendled: "Ser Kalira. The caravan soldiers won't- they're already employed, and their masters want more than we can afford to pay. Everyone's begun packing. We'll have to pay tribute; do you have any suggestions for negotiating with the creatures?"



Xarvrax: "Do Orcs even do that?"



Placidus: "Do you know any ways to get a company of orcs to move on without fighting? As a matter of protocol, I mean."

Ghol, Going East: "But they're almost certainly splinters from the 88,000 striking down at San Meat.



Even if we have to fight them, I want to hear what happened to the main force before hand."



Kalira: "No. But fortunately, I have an idea for someone who does." Kalira turns to the door and steps out. "Ghol, was it? Would you and your friends mind accompanying me?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at Placidus, "He's actually the one to talk to, he's the adult here."



Ghol, Going East: To Xarvrax: "Orcs do any number of things, for any number of reasons. Just like any other sort of people. More important than them being orcs is them being ex-Movement, and them not heading back to the Movement with all available speed. That says deserters, to me. Probably unwillingly conscripted in the first place. We'll see."

To Kalira. "Uh. Nope. That works for me." Something's bothering him, though...

rolling d20

(6)

= 6



Placidus: "I don't like this." Placidus agrees with Ghol's unspoken thought.



Kalira: Kalira ushers the group in as if she were inviting them to a royal court, not into a dingy shack in a fishing village.



Ghol, Going East: Can't put his finger on what, though.



Skeleton: Skeleton files in despite the general air of misgivings. Truth be told, ske's still not sure if Ghol is rooting for the orcs to kill everyone or what.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sighs, following the chaos inside.



Placidus: Placidus has at least re-belted his wand before stepping inside.

Tavra Pendled: "What..? Excuse me, but are you orcish?"



Ghol, Going East: Ghol grimaces. "Indeed."



Placidus: Placidus frowns. Hell of a greeting.



Kalira: Kalira's brows contract irritably. "You wanted to offer them tribute a moment ago, and this young man is here to help you. Perhaps you should be a bit more polite."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax whistles, "Why don't you just punch him in the face, while you're at it?"



Placidus: "Let's not all rush to insult the Commissioner at once. This village - Northbyron, is it? - seems to be doubly under siege."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol: "Insults, as swords, are best taken directly. Say what you have to say."

Tavra Pendled: "I don't mean it as insult." She looks around - an older woman, somewhere less than 50, with calluses on her hands that have been mostly worn smooth by retirement, sizing you all up.



Kalira: "I thought, Ghol, that you might have some ideas on how the... Commissioner, was it? Would offer tribute to orcs who might be more inclined to take it."

Tavra Pendled: "I- you're an emissary? What I have to say is that we don't want to fight. We can give

you food, send you on to where people want to make contact."



Ghol, Going East: "I was an Emissary of the Movement. I've taken a leave of absence from my office and its duties."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax deadpans, "Yes, we're the scary band of orcs, even those of us who aren't orcs."



Placidus: Placidus offers the Commissioner an apologetic look.



Ghol, Going East: Ghol looks around the room, focusing on the mayor and Kalira specifically. "Has anyone actually made contact with these orcs?"



banana (GM): There's something going on here. Pendled looks *disappointed*. "I've misunderstood. You're with the rest of these adventurers, the ones who were passing through town and fell victim to Prince Salmoncakes."



Kalira: Kalira facepalms. "As this dragonman has astutely noted, if this were the emissary you were to bargain with, he probably would not have come with an entourage of gnomes. But he might know their way of thought."



Placidus: Prince Salmoncakes.

The names people give cats...

it boggles the mind.



Xarvrax: "I'm guessing with how scared they are, the orcs probably contacted them upside the head."

Pendled: "Not everyone has claws and firebreath. Do you have advice or not?"



Ghol, Going East: To the mayor: "Trust me, you prefer the conversation as it is happening. As an Emissary, I would be authorized to offer you one thing: a single opportunity to wholly surrender your arms, your provisions, and most importantly, your ideology."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax buffs a claw against his scales



Skeleton: "Aww, Prince Salmoncakes."



Xarvrax: "Sounds like your problem there, not mine."



banana (GM): So named for the the dominion His Highness claims.



Ghol, Going East: "And then, if the first word out of your mouth wasn't 'yes,' I would turn on my heel, leave, and return to burn this village to the ground and slaughter or enslave everyone in it."



Kalira: "So you see the problem as I put it to you earlier. They have no reason to take gifts from you when they could just -take- gifts from you."



Xarvrax: "At least it's not dragons."



Ghol, Going East: "The question is: are the orcs out there like me, or like I used to be?"



Xarvrax: "Then there wouldn't be 'negotiations,' it would just be straight to the burning part."



Placidus: "We're prepared to negotiate with the orcs on your behalf, to avoid a fight. What are you prepared to offer them?"



Ghol, Going East: "So. Has anyone actually made contact with these orcs?"

This is mostly for Kalira, who seems to know about them.



Kalira: "Contact? Yes. They raided the mine just after sundown. They didn't talk much without swords and arrows. Or at all, really."

Pendled: "This is awful. I **need** to talk to the orcs, but they're just a looming reported threat. We do have things to offer, and could pay you to help.."



Kalira: "It was less a negotiation and more an invasion. I don't think these peace talks will go the way you imagine them, Commissioner."



Ghol, Going East: To Kalira (he's pretty much done with Pendled): "That's...inconclusive. We'll need to find them, then."



Placidus: "How many orcs are there, Kalira? Did you get a count? Where exactly are they positioned?"



Kalira: "I couldn't say how many, and as to where they are now, I'm not sure. I had to withdraw or die with the rest of the people at that quarry, and I've already expressed my distaste for dying over possessions."

"Less than a score though, I'd say. Enough to slow them down, but not enough to be an invasion force. Like I said, a patrol."



Ghol, Going East: "Survivors."

"Possibly deserters. Hard to say."



Kalira: "If they followed me, I might have shaken them off, I might not. Even if they didn't, well, the road comes right here. I'd say from the west."

"Orcs may not use the road usually, but they damned sure know where it goes."



Ghol, Going East: "Of course they do. It's a road. They're not wild dogs. They're soldiers."



Placidus: "Specifically, they're soldiers who survived a massacre."



Kalira: "That is my point exactly, Ghol, of course."

"Whose massacre?"



banana (GM): It's growing dark outside. One of the elders- a councillor?- returns with a couple of children, who move around lighting torches affixed to the big stones in the mayor's house.

A couple of groups are going around the village doing the same thing. Out the door and windows, you can see Northbyron beginning to shine as the stars come out.



Placidus: "Have you not had word? The Movement tried to flank the Empire from the west and was routed. Almost ninety thousand orcs died to the Liberator's Dragon Corps."



banana (GM): Kulira knows this much: a massive force of orcs had crossed into the Empire, and the Conqueror was off to fight them; it was easy enough to assume that this group was related, but you didn't know the incipient war was **over** already. That's implausible.



Placidus: "I know how it sounds."



banana (GM): A good thing, but unlikely.



Placidus: "But, to the best of our knowledge, it's true."

Skeleton: "Did we ever hear how they managed it?"



Placidus: "We did not."
"It was, I assume, neither sweet nor savory."



Kalira: "I assume it involves dragons. Perhaps this band wishes to pick a fight with something less... firebreathing?"

Pendled: "Roland wins again. The trouble is, he's hardly any better."



Placidus: To Xarvrax: "Do you feel lucky?"



Xarvrax: "I'm the Scion of Chaos... So no."



Placidus: "Please excuse my friend Xarvrax. The thing to remember about him is that he's about five years old."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol has remained silent through Placidus's delivery of the news, brooding. "If they're loyal to the Movement, there will be no negotiations. If they're not loyal to the Movement, they may have gone to banditry -- in which case there will be basically no negotiations."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax nods.



Kalira: "Truthfully, ma'am, I don't really care. They can kill each other all they want, if they must. I brought you this warning as a courtesy, you put me up in a nice room as a courtesy."



Ghol, Going East: "But in either case we should take this opportunity to try and learn what happened to that army."

Pendled: "We CAN negotiate. I'm not exactly empowered to- I can direct them to some people who'd really like to talk to orcs of the Movement, people who can help."



Kalira: "So I am here to help you as a continuing relationship. I'm not doing it because I believe in either of their causes."

Pendled: "It's appreciated regardless. We're just people, here."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol doesn't even bother giving the mayor a look this time.



Xarvrax: "You know people who wish to help the movement? That's something the Empire is likely to kill them, and you for."



Placidus: "To be perfectly clear, the orcs haven't reached the village yet?"
"You've just had word of their approach?"



banana (GM): Tavra gives Xarvrax a sharp look at shuts up. Apparently these adventurers have divided allegiances.
*and shuts up



Kalira: It's called the Dragon Empire, lady.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax scoffs, "If I was going to kill you, I would've done it already."



banana (GM): More firelight is flickering in the village below- the wagon trains are moving out, rather than setting up for the night.



Placidus: Placidus strives to be apolitical, which as always simply means that he frequently prefers not

to think about his politics.



Skeleton: Skeleton doesn't quite feel that their continued existence is stable enough to sustain political convictions as yet, although they've got a few ideas.

Pendled: "Ser Kalira here is the word."



Ghol, Going East: "If we're going to do this, let's get to doing it."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax shakes his head, "I think we're done here honestly, we should probably help, if for no reason than that your incompetence is likely to get this village razed."



Placidus: "Ghol's right. We should go and meet them before they get too much closer. Are you coming, Kalira?"



Ghol, Going East: Under his breath, as he's turning to leave: "Hopefully we won't have to slaughter anymore cultists along the way."



Kalira: "Right. Meet them, one way or the other." She smiles charmingly at Ghol. "Slaughter? A shame. They were rather friendly."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol's already out of the room, and lost in his own thoughts.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax laughs, "And that's why they died. Friendly people don't worship dark gods."



Placidus: "Commissioner, we were traveling with a caravan ourselves. Could you have someone make sure they get settled in for the night? One of our companions is a Mason, he mentioned the local motel..."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax gives her a pointed look.

Mayor: To everyone except Xarvrax, using a politician's trick of attention: "Thank you so much. I'll head out to gather up children and bring them up to the cliffs. If the orcs are west.."

"Of course. But we should all find the strongest buildings and wait, I think, for your victory."



Kalira: "Do they not? I suspect many friends you've met on your travels have said prayers to Blamer when arrested, or to Mailer in battle, or Gash at... other times."



Placidus: "Kalira, could I have a word in private, please?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax blanches, "Barf."



Kalira: "They might not admit it, but..." She shrugs, both to set off her comment and to answer the gnome. "Of course."



banana (GM): Ghol was first out the door. Could he roll wis to look around again, please?



Placidus: Placidus will lead Kalira out of the mayor's house and into the umbra past the torches. "So, after describing the causes you don't believe in it's apparent what you *do* believe in."



Ghol, Going East: Scout bonus?




banana (GM): Yep.




Ghol, Going East: rolling d20+10

$$(14)+10$$


$$= 24$$


 **Kalira:** "What was your name again?"


 **Placidus:** "Placidus."


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton doesn't follow the two unless actually beckoned over. Ske looks around between Ghol and Xarvrax. "So, we'll be going to look into these orcs, then?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is not present.


 **Skeleton:** Oops, just Xarvrax then.


 **Xarvrax:** "They'll probably show up here shortly, things will end poorly, and then we'll end up killing them."


 **Kalira:** "Placidus. I believe in myself. I believe in many other things, but that most of all. Does that bother you?"


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shrugs, "Business as usual."


 **Skeleton:** "Should we have... I don't know, asked for pay?"
"Isn't that what you do? I'll do it... for a price."


 **Placidus:** "Not at all. I don't care what you believe in. And if I did, I would be forced to acknowledge that this moment, when the Series is convergent, that broadmindedness is not just a virtue but a survival trait."


 **Xarvrax:** "I mean, if they don't, then I'll just burn down the village myself, everyone knows better than to try to short a dragon."


 **Placidus:** "The problem is, it doesn't matter if *I* care."


 **Xarvrax:** "And if they don't, they will soon enough."


 **Placidus:** "Ghol killed those two cultists more or less on sight. He has had a very bad time of it since he learned what happened to the western orc army."
"So I would ask you, as a courtesy, to avoid theological discussions for the time being."


 **banana (GM):** Ghol: The firelight at the north end of the village. It went up at the same time as all the merchants' torches did, and it's moving in the same slow crawl toward the town center- but the others are well past the town, and there wasn't anyone camped whence this flame sprang.


 **Skeleton:** "Yes, but at present they could say such things as 'but we never promised you anything to start with'. Now, I mean, if we're just sort of saving the place, I suppose that's fine?"

 **Xarvrax:** "Like I said, if they try that, then we go into negotiations."
"And by that, I mean threatening to burn it down for fun and profit."

 **Kon:** Kon slips out of the brush next to Ghol, also looking north. Silently, the two of them slide towards the source of light...


 **Kalira:** "Don't worry, Placidus. I can handle myself. And I won't wound the boy... intentionally. And I can certainly do no more damage than what we are about to do will."


 **Skeleton:** "That's sort of - I mean, we can't actually do THAT."


 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+3 a warband, stealthy- but their main trick, the imitating light, has been discovered


(10)+3


= 13


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax chuckles, a plume of smoke coming out, "Maybe you can't, but I sure can, wouldn't even be hard."


 **Placidus:** "You'd be surprised what does and doesn't wound. In any case, shall we? We shouldn't let Ghol get too far ahead, or leave Xarvrax unsupervised."

 **banana (GM):** Ghol can get quite close. Enough to see more than a dozen orcs, themselves creeping past the westernmost reed-and-stone houses. They're dressed oddly in Imperial armour, carrying mostly stolen weapons.. he sees no shaman among them, but several archers.


 **Kalira:** "I suspect you are more trouble than he, Placidus. But no one sees the strings."


 **Placidus:** "Strings, madam, are for hearing."
"Now, it is time to vibrate."


 **Skeleton:** "Yes, but come on, now. No one else is going to go along with it. I guess it's a useful rhetorical strategy to ratchet up the reward being offered by someone already inclined or on the fence, but..."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax steps outside and looks at the two, "They're actually for cutting." He turns toward the horizon, "Showtime!"


 **Skeleton:** "What?"


 **banana (GM):** ..which horizon? There's the water to the east with just a bit of ruddy sunlight above it, night-darkness in other directions.
Perhaps the most dramatic one?

 **Xarvrax:** That's the one!

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will climb up to the roof of one of the houses they're about to pass by -- Kon moving into position in its shadow -- and with bow drawn, barely still in shadow, give the traditional greeting of his old army, cut through with menace: "Movement forward. Brothers."

 **Xarvrax:** Always that one.

 **Placidus:** With Kalira in tow, Placidus will make it a priority to catch up to Xarvrax and Skeleton. "Did you see which way Ghol went?"

 **banana (GM):** There's an immediate stillness and then a rapid rearrangement in the darkness- the orcs cluster about, their torches going out, forming a wedge with the archers back and just one vanguard stepping forward to peer boldly up. "Targash? Relopes? You don't sound like either, and in any case

you'd be dead. Ex-plain."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at the area where the lights went out, "Probably there, let's let him try it his way first."



Placidus: Placidus is taken aback. "That's... a good idea."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax grins, "I know, scary right?"



Placidus: "Indeed."



Kalira: Kalira's stance is aggressive, with her hand on the sword at her back. "Be ready to cover him, though. This is going to move fast, for good or for ill."



Placidus: Has the sun gone down?



banana (GM): Just now.



Ghol, Going East: "I owe you no explanation. I come of Ingher, and Ingher comes of the Lord." He leans forward a bit; not enough so they can get a great look at him, but enough so they can tell that his bow is, indeed, the bow of a full Movement Scout. "He has questions."



Placidus: Then there's nothing left to do but for Placidus to lift his eyes to the heavens and count the stars.



banana (GM): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. There should be one more this time of night.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pokes him, "Let me know how many there are total, I've been curious but counting them is boring."



Skeleton: Skeleton shuffles closer to the others and wrings sker hands idly.



banana (GM): But he oscillated earlier, did he not? It seems the potential has been multiplied through the Series without measurably affecting the Sum.



Kalira: Can we hear him from here?



Placidus: How peculiar.

Orc: "Not the time or place.. 'brother'. Come down, support our plunder, then we'll talk orders. Any more words risk the alert."



Ghol, Going East: "Clearly you did not hear me. He. Has. Questions." He pauses and looks the group over. "Chief among his questions is why Movement soldiers are dressed in the finery of Imperial civilization, marauding about the woods like common man bandits, instead of making for the camps north of Axis with all available speed. Chief among his questions is whether Estella's army fell to incompetence -- or desertion."



Placidus: 'man bandits'



banana (GM): Ghol, give me a charisma check.




Ghol, Going East: Emissary applies?



banana (GM): Yeah, you know how to talk to these people..

Xarvrax: Mandits.

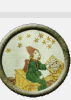
 **Ghol, Going East:** Any kind of situational bonus?

 **banana (GM):** none

 **Ghol, Going East:** rolling d20+5 bleh

() +5


= **19**


 **Placidus:** hooray


Orc: The vanguard turns to his warband. "What does Gruntmaster Goutnakh say about the scouts?"


The answer comes back, muted, rough throats in unison. "Answer their questions and steal their boots. They'll save your lives and your soles."


"Tell Ingher we were betrayed by the swamp witch. Tell him he can find Estella, Riven Wider in puke-pieces where the dragon she poisoned with her corpulence fell. Tell him Helbag's boys haven't eaten in a week, then join or get out of our way as we REC-TIFY the situation."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax looses a bolt of lightning into the sky, tired of waiting.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol thinks about it. "Here is my wisdom, as a scout: this town is not for you. It lies in wait for you. It will end you. If you wish to serve your Lord, turn around, leave, and head north for Axis. If you wish to die, death awaits you in the alleys. Serve your Lord in life, or honor him in death."

 **Kalira:** "Probably not the best entrance, man-dragon."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Then he disappears into the shadows.


 **Placidus:** "Still one star too few."


"Oh, look at that. The green star, too, has winked out until dawn."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs, "Anything more and I'd level half the village probably."


"Lightning is unfortunately not my forte anymore."


 **Kalira:** "I wasn't commenting on its quantity." Sword drawn, now. "If he can't deter them, you just gave away our position, and that's a lot of archers."


 **banana (GM):** When they write about this battle, they'll say Xarvrax had the right of it. The night lights up on the cliffs, above the village - where the orcs see their foes, in the open, away from the town.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax smirks, standing tall, "What, afraid of death, that's boring."

 **banana (GM):** The mass of them dissolves outward in a charge. Unless you fall, Northbyron is safe.

 **Kalira:** "Afraid? No. I like life, and if I give it up, I want more than a paltry fishing village in exchange."

 **Placidus:** Placidus's wand is up, twitching side to side like a metronome.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax laughs, "It'll also probably piss off the dark gods and the Archmage a little too!"

 **Placidus:** He doesn't like fighting. But he doesn't *lose*.



banana (GM): If you ask me, you should roll initiative.




Skeleton: Skeleton's drawing back, flexing gloved fingers and turning their hood from the rightmost orc to the leftmost one. "Oh, nooo-"



Xarvrax: "And the Five might burn the world too!"




Skeleton: rolling 1d20+4 init

() + 4

= **7**




Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 4

() + 4

= **9**



Placidus: rolling d20+7 placidus

() + 7

= **23**




Xarvrax: Let's try that again.



Kalira: "Worry about the ground before you worry about the sky, little dragon."



Xarvrax: rolling d20 + 4


() + 4

= **20**

Much better.




Kalira: rolling 1d20+2

() + 2

= **13**

rolling 1d20+2

() + 2

= **3**

so i've got 13



Xarvrax: Xarvrax stands at his full height, "Little? I'm the tallest of us here!"



Skeleton: "Well, compared to an actual dragon-"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pokes Skeleton, "Hey, I am an actual Dragon, I'm just like this because it means I can do things without a massive ass crushing the countryside like most dragons."



banana (GM): sec



Placidus: NO. ROLL NOW



Skeleton: "But that means 'little' is technically apt!"



Xarvrax: "I'm still bigger than all of you."



Placidus: "The distance that concerns us is not from our heads to the ground."
"Time and orcs alike draw short."



Xarvrax: Oh right.

rolling d6

(6)

= 6

GOOD.

rolling d11

(4)

= 4

Acceptable.

rolling d6

(6)

= 6



Xarvrax: rolling d100

(14)

= 14


Oooh, that's a handy warp.



Placidus: petition to replace xarvrax's chaos mage table with tables out of a warhammer 40k book





banana (GM): give me... 4 minute, here


 **Xarvrax:** Also music begins playing from Xarvrax.

 **banana (GM):** is it any good?


 **Xarvrax:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdgNzhr_tPE


 **Placidus:** "Unceasing novelty."


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax flares with power, "Huh, that's a new one."


 **Kalira:** "That is the weirdest battle power I've seen. Without a doubt."


 **Skeleton:** "Pretty catchy."


 **Placidus:** "You are in for a treat, then."


 **banana (GM):** Ghol's the only one who can see, from his vantage point, the orcs who slip away. This unit has lost a lot of discipline recently, and several soldiers- a couple more aren't noticed immediately. The rest, sadly, have either ignored his pronouncements of doom.. or interpreted them to mean that the village is dangerous BECAUSE of the ambush outside of it.


 **Kalira:** eat a bag of hel


 **Placidus:** That's not very smart


 **banana (GM):** There are two immediate dangers here you can see, here.
#1 is a dozen charging orcs. The other is the ocean.

 **Placidus:** It's a bay.

 **banana (GM):** Sure, but the cliffs are pretty steep.


 **Placidus:** So we should avoid falling down the cliff.

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+6 Herdthinner Helbag

() + 6


= **17**

rolling d20+5 helbag's archers

() + 5

= **23**

rolling d20+3 helbag's crusher's

() + 3

= **15**

Ghol is nowhere to be seen.

The only GOOD news is this: the orcs look.. sick. Particularly the main body of them- they're thin, as if not just undernourished but as if they weren't able to keep food down.

They're vigorous enough right now, until recently they were in the grip of some disease.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax scoffs, "Respecting your race, bah."



Kalira: "Spare as many as you can. For the boy's sake, if for nothing else. But don't hesitate until they stay down, dead or not."

Helbag: "CITY-SOLDIERS! We'll throw you to the rocks and ask forgiveness of the fish!"



Placidus: Is there a spot beneath the cliff where someone could fall and survive, but not be able to get back up?



banana (GM): Actually, there's a series of scaffolds and ropes over to your left which are used to climb the cliff. If you DO fall and survive, climbing up is probably the easy bit.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax lets out a full draconic roar, before the music increases in volume.



Placidus: Ah, pity.
anyway, move focus go



Kalira: "Ask Mailer's forgiveness, swine, and perhaps I will show you mercy."



Placidus: Placidus just paces afield of the others, holding his wand up like a torch.

"This is the wrong place for you. This is the wrong time."

"You could be eleven, ending soon, instead of eighty-eight thousand already dead."

"You should walk away."

Helbag: "Forgiveness for what, bitch? We're the only reason you aren't the enemy, here."



banana (GM): The archers kneel, aim, release..

A coordinated volley at Xarvrax, since he's making a show of being dangerous.

(Looks like they recognised Kalira..)



Kalira: "Are you? I must thank you for that. Unfortunately, the only gratitude I have to hand is bladed."



banana (GM): rolling d20+6 vs PD; 8 damage and pinned in place during your next turn

(8)+6


= 14

rolling d20+6 vs PD; 8 damage and pinned in place during your next turn

(10)+6


= 16

rolling d20+6 vs PD; 8 damage and pinned in place during your next turn

() + 6

= **10**

rolling d20+6 vs PD; 8 damage and pinned in place during your next turn

() + 6

= **7**



Placidus: nice rolls



banana (GM): xarvrax is up. i'm not sure whether he's hurt much ;_;



Xarvrax: One hit, and a fumbles.




banana (GM): One of the arrows narrowly misses Helbag - he has to dance out of the way, any further rejoinder cut short.



Xarvrax: The music emitting from Xarvrax flares loud enough to snap two of the arrows mid flight, the third managing to hit him.

To hell with it.

rolling 3d6 + 3

( +  + ) + 3

= **12**



banana (GM): In the town, people are coming out of their houses, watching anxiously from the firelit street. The climb to the cliff is steep, and you're silhouetted against the stars- they can see everything going on. (But if the orcs turned around...)



Xarvrax: The sound of a hammer hitting an anvil rings out, and the mark the arrow left on him is gone.

rolling d20

()

= **3**

Bah.

rolling d6

()


= **4**

Of course.


That's it for me.

Helbag: To the archers: "Covering fire. Pin the human if you can, and remember the names of those she slew."

"I don't know what you are, but I'll show your head to the Orc Lord and ask."


 **banana (GM):** He's got a sword taken from the supply dump in one hand, and a much cruder axe in the other. Its edge is so rusted as to constitute a tetanus threat.

rolling d20+10 vs xarvrax ac; 12 damage; one reroll on a miss]

() + 10

= **17**


rolling d20+10 if that misses


() + 10


= **24**


 **Xarvrax:** It didn't.


 **Skeleton:** rip in pieces


 **banana (GM):** i should just throw two rolls in there at once from now on
The orcish crushers advance forward.. stolen maces and heavy armour at the ready.

 **Xarvrax:** That's kind of insane, that would have to roll a 4- to miss me >_>


 **Placidus:** he's very scary


 **Kalira:** well, quit being a caster who charges in first then


 **banana (GM):** actually, they aren't really STOLEN, nobody was using them and anyway the property ownership system of the cancer that is civilisation is so inequitable that any FORGED weapon is a tool of oppression -the orc lord

 **Ghol, Going East:** It's true.


 **banana (GM):** ok, their goal is to group up on Placidus and on Skeleton. anyone trying to interfere with it?


 **Xarvrax:** I didn't actually move though! I literally couldn't!

 **Skeleton:** please interfere with it, thank you

 **banana (GM):** it's true that you couldn't
what is the problem?

 **Xarvrax:** Nothing really.

 **Placidus:** are these minions separate groups?

 **Skeleton:** gonna need kalira to intercept for me here.



banana (GM): yep



Placidus: rip



Kalira: can i?



Xarvrax: You are kind of right there.



banana (GM): you can roll to attempt it, at least
since you guys were all talking in a small group i'm assuming you were close by



Kalira: rolling 1d20

()

= **13**



Ghol, Going East: intercepting requires a roll?



Placidus: don't defend skeleton, the undead are an abomination



Kalira: oh. i thought it did for some reason
if not then i will



banana (GM): so did i, maybe for that same reason
anyway you seem to have succeeded



Kalira: i think it's skilled intercept that requires one



Placidus: maybe it requires a roll to get into position to intercept if you aren't there
idk



Skeleton: just intercepting don't, the fighter's "skilled intercept" does because it happens on top of a regular intercept



banana (GM): you can take one of their attacks instead
aha



Placidus: melee mechanics are for idiots




Skeleton: and like, either bounces out at or yanks in other characters moving around while the interceptor is ALREADY engaged



banana (GM): OK, these attacks are vs three people
the LAST attacker on each person is going to use an alternate attack..

rolling d20+6 vs placidus ac, 9 damage

() + 6

= **10**

rolling d20+6 vs placidus ac, 9 damage

(19)+6

= 25



Xarvrax: Xarvrax growls at the Orc, "You'd best hope they deal with you before my power decides to fluctuate into something angry.



Placidus: trigger



banana (GM): rolling d20+4 vs placidus pd, thrown back; on miss, knocked down

(16)+4

= 20

trigger=?



Placidus: md/pd?



banana (GM): md 11, pd 14



Placidus:ahaha



Xarvrax: Whelp.



banana (GM): rolling d20+6 meanwhile, vs skeleton ac, 9 damage

(20)+6

= 26



Xarvrax: Goodbye orc friends.



Placidus: let's see if I can roll something besides a 1 or a 2



Skeleton: mm, haha.



banana (GM): and by 9 i mean 18



Xarvrax: Also Skeleton Friend.



banana (GM): rolling d20+4 meanwhile, vs skeleton pd, thrown back; on miss, knocked down

(1)+4

= 5



Placidus: rolling d20+8 moment of karma

$$(\textcolor{blue}{14})+8$$

$$= \textbf{22}$$



Skeleton: i'm pretty unhappy that kalira didn't intercept the entire passel of three!!!



Ghol, Going East: i think she has to, minions are A Unit



banana (GM): no they aren't?



Skeleton: i'm at 12/30, staggered



Placidus: rolling 5d6+4 this much psychic damage to the passel

$$(\textcolor{blue}{3} + \textcolor{green}{6} + \textcolor{green}{6} + \textcolor{red}{1} + \textcolor{blue}{4})+4$$

$$= \textbf{24}$$



banana (GM): what's moment of karma do to tehse guys



Placidus: rebuke check

rolling d20

$$(\textcolor{blue}{5})$$

$$= \textbf{5}$$



banana (GM): yipe



Placidus: no rebuke



Skeleton: you can't cause me to pop free somehow, can you zarick



Ghol, Going East: i thought minions shared an HP pool in 13a? w/e



Xarvrax: That probably kills at least two of them.



Kalira: not until my turn



Skeleton: it's more that damage always splashes over



Placidus: these two groups of three are separate

banana said

so I can't splash hit skeleton's or w/e



Ghol, Going East: right, but kalira intercepting only ONE of skeleton's 3 is odd because now there's 3 groups?



Placidus: well, to be fair, kalira intercepting any of them was odd because she was behind skeleton

Ghol, Going East: fair



Skeleton: she rushed forward!



banana (GM): i'm calling them still two groups
grouping is about them being close together



Xarvrax: You should probably worry about yourself, since two of those hit you, and one might hurl you off a cliff.



Placidus: it wasn't her initiative



banana (GM): they don't actually all have to have the same engagements
anyway:
Placidus straight up kills two orcs there



Placidus: does he damage the third at all



banana (GM): the one who hit him and, i'm guessing, the one who was about to throw him off the cliff?
no



Placidus: or do they have a clean 12hp each
yes
so they're wearing heavy armor, right
like plate?



banana (GM): Not quite that heavy, but metal armour




Xarvrax: Don't forget about Orc fumble #2 also.



banana (GM): and here's the final attack on kulira:

rolling d20+4 vs pd

()+4

= **9**

i mean kalira.



Xarvrax: I really enjoy that one crit and the other fumbled.



banana (GM): my dice only have two sides.



Ghol, Going East: oh i can't see kalira's hp/recovery bars
idk if that's a Permissions Issue



banana (GM): can you see them now?



Ghol, Going East: yep



Xarvrax: Yep.



banana (GM): Skeleton is up next, albeit surrounded..



Placidus: The orcs rush Placidus. He is ready. He ducks beneath the first mace, though the effort winds him. The third sails clear over his head. But the orc aiming to bull rush him off the cliff is the one who gets touched.



Kalira: Kalira steps forward and manages to intercept its charge, throwing her shoulder into it and stopping him cold, an impressive feat for a human.



Skeleton: hmm, let's see here



Kalira: whoa hang on
it's my turn first



Placidus: The entire field fills with that steady thrumming bass, briefly louder than even Xarvrax's music.



banana (GM): oh! omg



Skeleton: oh yeah, i was wondering about that



Kalira: i think i'm going to attack first



Skeleton: what's the over/under on you getting me free from these jokers, kalira



Kalira: so, slice this orc one

rolling 1d20+8 vs AC

(5)+8

= 13

ah yes



banana (GM): nope



Kalira: actually that's only a 7, even. he takes 3 damage



Placidus: Delicately, the gnome touches his wand to that last orc's scavenged breastplate.



Kalira: a +7 i mean
so i'm going to use Scramble



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is thrown off his groove briefly, but gets back into rhythm quickly.



Kalira: so i and allies can take a move action


rolling 1d3 allies

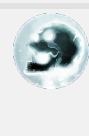
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
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



Placidus: The vibration rattles the plates, rattles the rings and trinkets, rattles the loose and scurried teeth in their heads.


 **Kalira:** skeleton and whoever else wants it. it starts with me unfortunately so i can't just slide into skeleton's place. i'll remain


 **Skeleton:** leave xarvrax in place, since he doesn't provoke OAs anyway
i'll attempt to disengage

 **Xarvrax:** I don't want to move.


 **banana (GM):** good luck, skeleton !


 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20-1 it's minus one per each enemy past the first, right


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
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
no!


 **Placidus:** Only the surviving orc is close enough to hear Placidus say this, as the other two are blown back, smoke rising from the breastplate and blood dripping from their eyes and ears.


 **Xarvrax:** Oh well? You'll get another chance on your turn.


 **Placidus:** "Armor won't help the heart stay sharp."


 **Skeleton:** yeah, but that means i can't really use a daily


 **Xarvrax:** I suppose.
I'll be able to help you out at least.


 **Kalira:** that's it for my turn


 **banana (GM):** Xarvrax: Helbag is turning away for a second, opening his mouth for some reason...




 **Kalira:** on skeleton's turn however, i'll spend a command point to allow sker to rally


 **Skeleton:** oh, cool. that's just "spend a recovery", right


 **Xarvrax:** Or that.

 **Kalira:** Unfortunately, Kalira's blade is pushed aside when she catches the charge of the orc and she can't really bring it to bear. She reaches out and grabs Kelly's arm and doesn't seem bothered by the bone underneath. "You will not fall to these creatures. Mailer protects us."

 **Skeleton:** rolling 3d6-1 hup

( +  + )-1


= 


 **Kon:** Kon has had enough of this.


rolling d20+3


$$(7)+3$$


$$= 10$$


 **banana (GM):** That's nice of Him.


 **Skeleton:** hmm, 21 hp and only two orcs engaging skeleton means i can probably risk a daily in melee

 **Xarvrax:** I do have a defensive power at the ready now.

 **Skeleton:** skeleton's going to use cackling soliloquist, let's see some OAs

 **banana (GM):** Helbag: "New play, boys: Finish the robe."

 **Placidus:** "You won't live to regret that."

 **Skeleton:** (cackling bonus is as in san meat: the spell looks more like generic illusionism/prime phantasms than necromancy)

 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+6 OA vs ac, 9 damage


$$(10)+6$$


$$= 16$$


rolling d20+6 OA vs ac, 9 damage


$$(16)+6$$


$$= 22$$


 **Skeleton:** aw, nuts. i have +2 ac vs OAs but that's not enough in either case here unless anyone's got a bonus to throw at me?


 **Placidus:** if only your initiative was after mine
I could've saved you
but it's not. you went last

 **banana (GM):** The orcs are brutal, and their hunger only drives them further- Skeleton's raised arms and glowing rune-strings are a clear signal to renew their assault, and they do...

 **Xarvrax:** Nope. I can't help until my turn.

 **Skeleton:** all right, let's see how badly i trolled for casting THE BONES BENEATH

 **banana (GM):** it turns out EVERYONE has a skeleton inside of them

 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+8 at the mooks engaged with me and kalira, starting with the slightly wounded one. vs PD

$$(19)+8$$

$$= 27$$



Xarvrax: So close.
To just winning at magic.



Skeleton: rolling 4d12+4 negative energy damage, each mook that drops becomes a skeleton mook under my control

$$(10 + 2 + 11 + 7)+4$$

$$= 34$$



Kalira: i could have helped you with your attack but that would have meant not healing you so



Skeleton: hmm, that guy already took 3 damage, which 'm pretty sure means the entire lot dies



Xarvrax: Nevermind, that's pretty good at magic.



Skeleton: JUST-RIPPED-FREE SKELETAL MOOK: HP 11, AC 18, PD 16, MD 12; Vuln. Holy; Weapon + 8 vs. AC for 5 damage; resist weapons 16+
i'll check real quick if these guys go right now



Placidus: I think you mean PRIME MARIONETTE



Xarvrax: Xarvrax joins Skeleton in cackling wildly as the music reaches a crescendo!



banana (GM): The lightning flares again- but Xarvrax didn't open his mouth, and there are no clouds in the starry sky.



Placidus: "Dry bones, in that valley, got up and took a little walk. The deaf could hear, and the dumb could talk..."



Skeleton: it doesn't actually say. i ASSUME they go now since things you summon always go right on the turn they appear, but these aren't technically "summoned" so i guess it's your call
if they do go, however, i send them to engage the archers



banana (GM): Pure UNASPECTED magic pours forth, NON-NECROMANTICALLY consuming the flesh of the group of orcs. Their own bones ARE IMITATED BY A MAGICAL CONSTRUCT WHICH steps forth, replacing the ravening berserkers with loyal ARCANES ILLUSIONS.



Skeleton: maybe they act on their own former initiatives?



banana (GM): let me look it up




Skeleton: oh actually it DOES say. immediately after my turn




banana (GM): oh.ok




Xarvrax: That would be now.

 **Skeleton:** it's a line right above the paragraph i was reading. rip me! but yeah, down at the archers, each attacks one archer in order to engage as many as possible

 **banana (GM):** you should be able to move them

 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+8 vs archer AC, left to right; 5 damage

() + 8


= **15**

rolling 1d20+8 vs archer AC, left to right; 5 damage

() + 8


= **19**


rolling 1d20+8 vs archer AC, left to right; 5 damage

() + 8


= **25**


 **banana (GM):** hits on two!


 **Skeleton:** anyway, i'm done. thanks all

 **banana (GM):** The archers reel back as the NONDEAD AND NOT UNDEAD charge them, LIMBS rattling!

helbag: "THE ROBE."

 **Skeleton:** Skeleton looks left and right, and takes a risk: ske ignores the orcs assaulting her entirely, silver-blue ether pouring up from sker hands and hood in great gouts as the raging orcs take their orcs to Skeleton's robes and bones.


 **banana (GM):** Kalira is receiving a crash course in just who these people are.


 **Placidus:** disengage


rolling d20

()


= **12**

 **banana (GM):** yep

 **Placidus:** move focus go

 **Skeleton:** The hooded mage shrieks and staggers under the rain of blows, but a combination of unholy power and simple encouragement keep sker standing JUST long enough for both orcs savaging sker, along with the one besides Kalira, to jerk to a stop. Silver vapor pours out of their eyes and mouths as

their bodies twitch violently, rivulets of blood pouring from all over their forms as their spines and shoulders shake but their hands retain iron grips on their ewapons.

 **banana (GM):** OK, each of the engaged archers tries to shake off a fleshless CONSTRUCT:

rolling d20

()

= **1**

rolling d20


()


= **5**

rolling d20


()

= **19**


 **Xarvrax:** Also, did the orcs actually hear him over the music?


 **Skeleton:** Just as the beginnings of a REALLY gruesomely wet tearing sound are heard, a great FTHWOOM of unleashed magic arises from Skeleton and blots out the sound all together. Glowing spectral something or other radiates outward, wrapping itself around dying orcs and hiding their bodies completely from view.


 **banana (GM):** rolling d20+7 helbag's playbook: maintain discipline


() + 7

= **23**


 **Xarvrax:** It's loud enough at this point to literally interfere with bardic magic.

 **Kalira:** "That is a neat trick. Much more useful than the dragon's theme song, if a bit less inspiring."

 **Skeleton:** It's very easy to ignore the three pools of blood and gore left on the cliffs by Skeleton's and Kalira's feet, because there are suddenly three armored knights charging across the field at the quartet of archers! And the armor's made of sort of glowy silver-blue translucent spirit-stuff... but not TOO translucent, you understand.

 **banana (GM):** ..the other two archers take blows from your minions in the process of, too, breaking free.

(roll OA)

 **Skeleton:** rolling d20+8 oa vs ac, 5 damage

$$(\text{1})+8$$

$$= 9$$

rip



banana (GM): rupe



Xarvrax: One more.



Placidus: you are the worst



Xarvrax: He killed more than you did.



Placidus: he didn't kill them, though
he's just mind controlled them, see



Kon: he knighted them



Placidus: they're still totally alive
and not undead



Kon: a fate far worse than death
for a member of the Movement



banana (GM): One more, as xarvrax says!



Skeleton: "Ha-ha! Ha-HA! It worked!"



Kon: roll another OA, skeleton



Xarvrax: You get another OA you bonerclown.



Skeleton: rolling d20+8 sorry, oa vs ac for 5 damage

$$(\text{10})+8$$

$$= 18$$



banana (GM): Pain - the ripping claws of the unALIVE- but these are soldiers of the Orc Lord. They are no deserters. They follow orders.


rolling d20+6 vs skeleton pd

$$(\text{2})+6$$


$$= 8$$

rolling d20+6 vs skeleton pd


$$(\text{15})+6$$


 **Skeleton:** Hey, they've kept a VERY strong grip on their axes. White-knuckled, one might say.
the skeletons resist weapon 16+, so that hit deals half damage

 **banana (GM):** half of 8 is 4


 **Placidus:** wait is skeleton at like 3 hp


 **Skeleton:** yes.

 **Placidus:** jesus


 **Kalira:** is that them shooting you or the minions


 **Placidus:** yeah


 **Skeleton:** 4 damage to which one

 **banana (GM):** actually, skeleton is at -1 hp


 **Placidus:** no
trigger


 **Skeleton:** oh wait, that was at ME?


 **Kon:** you are named skeleton.


 **Placidus:** [] DIVERSION OF PAIN (Recharge 6+ Level 3) Interrupt, Close Quarters, Expend Focus, Retain 1-15
- Trigger: A nearby enemy hits an ally with an attack that could've targeted me or a different ally.
- Redirect the attack to another legal target. Keep the same attack roll.

 **Skeleton:** SO ARE THEY


 **banana (GM):** Yep! Like helbag told 'em


 **Kalira:** actual Skeleton does not have resist weapons

 **Xarvrax:** You are THE Skeleton.


 **banana (GM):** lmao
i see
well, anyway
Who does he hit instead?


 **Kalira:** give it to me


 **Skeleton:** oh thank goodness


 **Placidus:** are the enemies legal targets


Xarvrax: Give it to Helbag?


 **Placidus:** I assume not


 **banana (GM):** Don't thank goodness yet, there are two left to fight..


 **Skeleton:** i think they are
like... you CAN target them


 **banana (GM):** that sounds like a reasonable assumption but i think it's wrong


 **Xarvrax:** He's totally a legal target for that attack.


 **banana (GM):** wait, idk


 **Kalira:** i don't think so. that could have targeted me or a different ally


 **banana (GM):** idk what "legal target" means in 13th age or why the "could've targetted ally" language would be there..


 **Kon:** i mean if that's the rules text, he should be able to send it to anyone but ghol, who is probably Far Away


 **Skeleton:** oh, the way the trigger is worded calls it into question..
but like, this is using your focus, right? it's the equivalent of your own attack


 **Kalira:** it's a "take this arrow for me" power i think not a "whoops you shot your friend"


 **Placidus:** I assume the trigger means it has to hit one of us
yeah
since a 'whoops you shot your friend' would require an attack roll
while this does not


 **Skeleton:** oh, it doesn't? makes sense


 **banana (GM):** ah, i looked it up
turns out 13a has no friendly fire generally
allies are not legal targets


 **Placidus:** anyway, shoot xarvrax


 **Xarvrax:** Uh.

 **banana (GM):** lmao

 **Xarvrax:** How about we shoot the person at full health.

 **Kon:** nah.

 **Skeleton:** "I can't believe it worked! Well, I can, really, I'm just AGH!" Skeleton looks down at an arrow that's sunk itself straight through sker robes, but that's fortunately managed to poke safely and harmlessly between two lower ribs. "...oh. Well, I-" That's when ske notices the second arrow coming.

 **Placidus:** I don't really consider her an ally yet.



Kon: lol



banana (GM): A shot that looked good goes wild...



Xarvrax: And who isn't engaged with the big mean orc.



banana (GM): Unfortunately for skeleton, there are two more archers.

rolling d20+6 vs pd, 8 damage and pin

(18)+6

= 24



Skeleton: kalira seems the safest target for that arrow, being really tough



banana (GM): don't worry: the fourth archer WILL shoot kalira
as that was the original order.



Placidus: the good news is, retain focus 1-15 seems tied to the triggering attack roll



Skeleton: well, down i go



Placidus: which was exactly 15
so I get to rebuke on my next turn



Kalira: if it pins though i'm not a great target



banana (GM): rolling d20+6 vs kalira pd, 8 damage and pin

(17)+6

= 23



Skeleton: -5/30 here



Xarvrax: Well now it doesn't matter.



Kalira: because we'd like me to be able to move. fortunately i can't move anyway



banana (GM): ok: skeleton, kalira, and xarvrax are each hit once
each takes 8 damage and is held in place briefly by the storm of shots...!



Skeleton: The arrow goes straight into Skeleton's hood. There's a loud impact followed by the humorous whizzing sound of a skull spinning really fast on the neck that holds it, and Skeleton crumples.

Helbag: "For the grunts! For the glory!"



Xarvrax: Screw it then.



banana (GM): It does seem semi-screwed.



Xarvrax: rolling d4

(**1**)

= **1**



banana (GM): I mean.. Placidus and Skeleton took out half the orcs already, but the others are still dangerous, and you're down a skeleton!



Skeleton: Actually, we're up two skeletons.



Placidus: We're down a mysterious, robed friend.



banana (GM): oh, true



Xarvrax: Skeleton, you get 10 THP



Placidus: do skeleton's minions stick around



Skeleton: is that BEFORE i get hit?



Xarvrax: And I get a recover.



Kalira: nope



Xarvrax: recovery* and no.



Kon: oh god how do THP work in 13a



Kalira: unfortunately i don't think temp hp get you back up



Xarvrax: Sorry, 20 THP



Skeleton: oh. well that's helpful but i don't think it actually gets me back- yeah



banana (GM): exactly as they do in 4e- so they are not immediately useful here
skeleton has a powerful buffer against Actual Death, though



Kalira: but i can attempt to do so on my turn



Kon: a buffer against triple death



Xarvrax: I'd have done the recovery for you, but that part is random.

rolling 3d6+3

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

= **21**



Placidus: lol



Xarvrax: ChAoS rEiGnS



banana (GM): Oh shit, we all forgot:

*e*SCALATION +1



Placidus: I didn't forget
I just didn't make an attack roll



banana (GM): fair enough
What do Xarvrax's sixes do, here?
oh, right



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at the skeleton, his aura wrapping around him, before exploding in a flash of light himself, reappearing as if none of the attacks had hit him.



banana (GM): it was a recovery
Helbag grunts. Every wound the dragon's suffered is healing...



Xarvrax: rolling d6

(6)

= 6

Damn it.

rolling d6

(4)

= 4

rolling d6

(6)

= 6



Kalira: lol
welp



Xarvrax: rolling d6

(3)

= 3

Fucking hell.
That's it for me.



Kon: I have no idea what any of this means.



Placidus: what on earth is all this



Xarvrax: It means the dice hate me, and don't want me to be able to attack things.



Kalira: his chaos mage decision
"decision"

Helbag: "Alright, enough of you."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax growls in Helbag's face, "Your execution has been staved off again, but not much longer now."



banana (GM): The orc vanguard puts his head down and tries to grab Xarvrax by main force, bull-rushing him off his feet- using weapons only fend off claws..!

rolling d20+5 vs pd, Shove

(18)+5

= 23

if that hits, you're thrown backward; you can make a normal save to avoid falling off the cliff.



Xarvrax: That hits.

rolling d20

(5)

= 5

Ah yes.

I must go, the bay needs me!



banana (GM): hell yes, falling damage
Xarvrax... takes flight.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax does a belly flop.



banana (GM): rolling 3d6

(3 + 3 + 3)

= 9



Kalira: confluences



banana (GM): The water below is calm, and deep; there are no rocks to pierce you, and fishing boats to break your fall.

Frankly though- it's not a pleasant seven seconds. There's too much of the human in you for that.



Xarvrax: As he's falling, Xarvrax yells out, "Looks like Xarvrax is blasting off again!"



banana (GM): Helbag stalks toward Placidus engagingly.

Helbag: "A.. gnome?"



Placidus: "Hello."

Crusher: "Vibrating gnome, vanguard! My teeth are practically ash!"

Helbag: "..."



Xarvrax: Don't bite Gnomes.
They don't taste good anyway.

Helbag: "Give up the black gods' bitch and you can run away."



Placidus: "What about the others?"

Helbag: "I don't SEE any others."



banana (GM): The orc behind Placidus hesitates a moment, just in case he's persuaded.



Xarvrax: It's at this moment the music reaches it's Climax, drawing everyone's attention to the cliff.



Kalira: Kalira isn't pleading her case. She's trying to find a way to get out of the line of fire here.



Xarvrax: At first, nothing happens, but then the lightning coalescing in the air in the form of two huge blue wings, carrying Xarvrax back up the cliff.



banana (GM): <http://youtu.be/4YzTXxt9oOY?t=1m2s>



Kalira: But then she looks at Placidus. "In your place I'd take it. But remember what your friend told the mayor."



Xarvrax: As he sets down on the ground, he turns to Helbag, "Did you really think that pushing The Scion of the Blue, Master of Chaos, and Last of the Dragonwrought would be ended by a cliff?"
"I've been hit by full grown elder dragons and I'm here, no pathetic excuse for an orc is going to end me."
"Now let me give you some options."

Crusher: "I actually did think he would be ended by the cliff."



Xarvrax: "Run now, as fast and far as you can, with your tails between your legs, or I won't leave you legs to run on."



Placidus: Meanwhile, Placidus gives Kalira a long look, and seems to consider what she says. He's cognizant of the fact that two orcs have ganged up on him now. He's not even visible behind Helbag from the place where Ghol and Kon are lurking.
"I'm sorry, I have to stay. Please understand that I had hoped it wouldn't come to this."



Skeleton: Skeleton's a jumbled pile of robe, at the moment.


Vanguard Helbag: "Little man- I do understand, somehow. We were a long time in the swamp, and I saw things..."



banana (GM): The other orc raises his mace.

It's unwise to ignore Xarvrax, but that guy seems to be invulnerable, so..

rolling d20+6 vs ac for 9


()+6

= **26**



Placidus: trigger

rolling d20+9 vs md

()+9






= **23**



banana (GM): yep



Placidus: rolling 5d6+4 damage

( +  +  +  + )+4

= **24**

this is an at-will.



banana (GM): this prevents him from dealing 18 damage to you,y es?



Placidus: it's an interrupt that triggers on hit



banana (GM): yes.



Placidus: I've never been clear on the timing rules here, but I have just been taking the damage on moment of karma triggers

oh sweet



banana (GM): hit is before damage, i believe



Xarvrax: If it's an interrupt then it stop the attack.



banana (GM): please correct me if i'm wrong, unless you'd rather keep that interpretation since it's favourable to you, owning me



Placidus: I'd gladly correct you if I knew and cared to look it up



banana (GM): Looks like Kalira's turn by default of death.



Xarvrax: I'm pretty sure that it goes, attack -> Interrupt -> Damage.



Placidus: hang on




Kalira: well, i'm pinned here unfortunately


 **Placidus:** rolling d20 rebuke check


()


= **18**


aha


 **banana (GM):** phew
(phew @ pinning)

 **Placidus:** I get a free rebuke here
gonna target helbag

 **Kon:** lol




 **Placidus:** md/pd?
md 13, pd 16

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+9 vs md


() + 9


= **22**

rolling 3d6+4 this much psychic damage, and he can't attack me as long as there's someone
else to target around

( +  + ) + 4

= **14**


 **Kon:** occultist seems pretty ftw.


 **Kalira:** so i'm going to use Weigh the Odds, since i'm pinned


rolling 1d4 i get this many command points as a standard action

()


= **3**


 **banana (GM):** Flinching under the strain, for some reason, Helbag says: "The alleys, my ass."
points gotten

 **Placidus:** Placidus doesn't break eye contact with Helbag. The vibration- everyone can hear it now,
can feel it. It reaches from the road stones to the council house, from the bones to the bayside.
He doesn't even look at the orc who crumples behind him without landing a blow. All he says is,
"Movement forward."

 **Kalira:** that's my turn, but at the beginning of skeleton's turn, i spend two command points (1 base + 1 extra) to Rally Now again


 **Skeleton:** oh, nice


 **Kalira:** you have to roll a save but if you succeed you can rally


 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20 save


(12)


= 12

 **banana (GM):** then the next actor is..... kon the warg

 **Skeleton:** yeah!
i'll wait for kon

 **Kon:** Kon has had enough of this sideline business. Ghol won't fight the orcs...but he is not Ghol.

 **Kalira:** Kalira kneels down, hand on the crumpled robes. "Get up. There is no reason to fall here. You are meant for greater things."

 **Kon:** And the closest archer isn't paying close attention.
move, engage, attack

rolling 1d20+8

(4)+8


= 12


rolling 2d6


(5 + 1)

= 6

Archer: "It's a warg, brothers! Here! Kin- we'll-"

 **Kon:** * [] Animal Companion (1/Day)
- Kon may attack 2/Round with a standard action.

 **banana (GM):** But, they won't.

 **Kon:** rolling 1d20+8

(13)+8

= 21

rolling 2d6

(4 + 4)

= 8

better.

done

Kon leaps on the archer, trying more to keep him out of the fight than anything -- not because he has any particular interest in the orc living. No. But because he'd rather him not keep firing those arrows.


Helbag: "I KNEW that scout was a rat. We've got few plays here."


 **Skeleton:** rolling 3d6-1 skeleton's recovery

(6 + 6 + 4)-1


= 15


oh hell yes.


 **Placidus:** "The only winning move was not to play at all."
don't you have to roll a save first


 **Skeleton:** i did before kon's turn bc i forgot it was coming


 **banana (GM):** yeah

 **Placidus:** ah
hell yeah then

 **banana (GM):** i mean, yeah i saw you roll earlier

 **Kalira:** "Rat? He's not a scavenger, like you lot."

 **Skeleton:** anyway, skeleton uses a move action to stand up. i don't think i even have the option to give my mooks the escalation die because they aren't technically summoned creatures..?
so, i'll just use chant of endings, which targets the nearby enemy with the least hp


 **Xarvrax:** Now jam a skeletal foot up their asses.

 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+9 vs MD

(15)+9

= 24

Helbag: "WE ARE *LIBERATORS*. ..with the robe down, take out the black- what-"

 **Skeleton:** rolling 4d6+4 negative energy damage

$$(\boxed{4} + \boxed{6} + \boxed{5} + \boxed{3}) + 4$$

$$= \boxed{22}$$

dang



Placidus: I assume that kills one of the archerS?



banana (GM): yep, one of them had 18 hp



Skeleton: Kalira hears a clacking, jumbling sound as the skeleton fountains upward, not so much standing to full height as rebuilding herself from feet up. Maybe she doesn't notice how strange it is for a robe to fill itself out like that? "You're right. You're right! Hey, you orcs - DIE!!!" One of them is convinced.

the archers aren't mooks, eh? np

after skeleton's turn, the just-ripped-free skeletal mooks engage the other archers. are they close enough that they could just be engaged all together by the three mooks, in fact?



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sways with the music, even as it slowly changes.



Skeleton: either way, here are their attacks; if i have to engage separately, assume it's two on the damaged archer and one on the healthy one. otherwise all three focus on the damaged archer

rolling 1d20+8 vs. ac for 5 damage

$$(\boxed{17}) + 8$$

$$= \boxed{25}$$

rolling 1d20+8 vs. ac for 5 damage

$$(\boxed{16}) + 8$$

$$= \boxed{24}$$

rolling 1d20+8 vs. ac for 5 damage

$$(\boxed{8}) + 8$$

$$= \boxed{16}$$



banana (GM): you have to attack separately, yes
those all hit, however



Skeleton: nice
anyway, that's my turn. quick action goes to naught



banana (GM): The ANYTHING BUT skeletal assault is more effective with an actual master to command it.

At skeleton's renewed direction, they batter away at the orcs, tireless, deathless...

ESCALATION



Placidus: Placidus's focus is broken. It's with a heavy, sad voice that he says, "Let me make the offer you made me. If the last of you throw down your arms, you can leave. We can get you food and medicine from the town."

Helbag: "We were winning this fight. We were winning the damn war."



Skeleton: These mysterious spectral knights sure do clack loudly. And why do they keep giggling and/or making "nyyyEEEaaaggh" noises?



Placidus: "It's the end of the Age, sir. Everybody loses."

Helbag: "Fine."



Placidus: "Give the order."



banana (GM): "Call off your wizard. Call off your dragon. THE GAME IS *OVER*, BOYS!"



Placidus: Placidus holds up his hands. "Everyone stop fighting!"
"We're going to let them go."

Orc: "Rraraghhh."



Skeleton: Skeleton's in the middle of casting another Chant of Endings: "...die, die, die, die, D- ...eh?"



Kalira: Kalira doesn't put her sword away, but she does lower it a fraction.



banana (GM): That's the only kind of ending Skeleton knows about, huh?



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at Helbag shouting as the music cuts out, "You're lucky I respect his decisions! Minutes longer and I would've made good on my promise!"

Helbag: "Goutnakh forgive us. Six good men and women dead in seconds and they hadn't had a meal since we were betrayed."



banana (GM): The remaining archers are reluctant, but if the skeletons give them a breather- they throw down their stolen bows.



Kalira: "He tried to help you," Kalira says unexpectedly. "You turned him down."



Placidus: Placidus looks past Helbag and sees his warg friend. "KON!"
"Go get Ghol!"



Skeleton: The skeletons do - Skeleton crooks sker fingers and sort of draws sker hand back, and the three 'knights' go staggering backwards several steps, precisely as if pulled by strings.

Vanguard Helbag: "Yeah, well we're trying to help fucking everyone in the world, only most of you don't see it that way."



Kalira: "Most people think they're trying to help everyone. Most of those people are lying, either to themselves or others."



Ghol, Going East: "Shut your mouth, blackguard." Ghol slips out of the nearby houses.
He overheard the conversation earlier. He's put together who Kalira is.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax growls, "The world doesn't want your help, and that means you're lucky I'm not scorching the ground where you stand."



Ghol, Going East: To Helbag: "You were given a choice. You chose poorly. Somehow you live to see the consequences of it."



Kalira: "You would stand with them, against me? Even now, after they tried to kill your friends, and I tried to help them?"



Ghol, Going East: "Do now what I cannot, and return to the Movement and SHUT YOUR MOUTH, BLACKGUARD."



Placidus: "Ghol!" Placidus scurries between the skeletons, past the bickering dark knight and the defeated vanguard. "Are you alright?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax points at Ghol, "You be quiet!"



Placidus: "Ghol, help me carry things. Commissioner, we're going to need food, supplies. Do you have a doctor? I think the orcs have swamp fever."



Kalira: Kalira holds an open-palmed hand out to the dragonman. "I will hold my peace for now. Everyone needs their family."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax glowers at him, "I don't care if they're orcs or not, you left us to die! Dark gods or no, at least she made sure we weren't torn apart!"

Helbag: "Boys, we've been trounced by idiots who hate each other."



Skeleton: Skeleton wrings sker hands and kinds of leans back away from all of this, drawing sker minions closer at the same moment. Ske fusses over them while everyone else's attention is elsewhere, leaning in to peer and occasionally simply reaching sker hand through the ghostly armor.

Commissioner Pendled: "Can I make a suggestion, ser orc? You're without allies due to this massacre-first questions-later policy."



Placidus: "Commissioner, due respect, this is not the time to discuss policy. These people are sick and hungry."



banana (GM): The three injured orcs that loom up to the mayor incredulously are now sans weapons, but they could probably tear her in half, if necessary.



Ghol, Going East: "They don't deserve supplies. They don't deserve a doctor." Ghol pauses. "But if it will get them out of these lands and back to where they belong more quickly, it is acceptable."



Skeleton: Skeleton turns to the blackguard as the others negotiate, lowering sker voice a bit as ske says: "Whooof! Gosh, though, that got really hairy. Listen, thanks."



Kalira: "She wishes to use them, to promote her ideology. A net cast over fish, man, and orc. Even though she would only commit us to it, and not any of her resources."

Commissioner Pendled: "It's going to be difficult to convince my people to help men of the Movement, Mr. Fixlmilner, but you saved us, so we'll do it on only one condition."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax holds up a hand.

Helbag: "Humans are surprisingly brave and stupid."



Placidus: "What's the condition?"



Xarvrax: "If you try to bully us into things, I will not only encourage these idiots to burn this place down, I will lead them in doing so."

Pendled: Lowering her voice in the vain hope that Xarvrax won't hear: "You're going south? Take one of them with you, past the Byrons, to the Hot Pocket. Take him-" all the surviving orcs are men- "to the 'Put Aside...' marina."



Placidus: "Why?"



Kalira: "And there the cards are turned face up, aren't they?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax growls, loud enough that all of them can hear him, "I'm a dragon, lady. Whispering a few feet from me isn't going to make me not hear you."

Pendled: Re: Kalira: "She knows why."



Placidus: "I'm not asking her."



Ghol, Going East: "Helbag should go. His surrender shows he at least understands the rudiments of negotiation."

This is said in not an entirely complimentary tone.



Placidus: "Nobody is going anywhere until someone speaks plainly."

"This is not a time for vaguery."

Helbag: "I do not like to be BARTERED for the lives of my men, false scout."

"Or were you real, once?"

Orc: "Ughhh."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is literally fuming at this point, "I've had enough of this." Pointing at Kalira, "What the hell is she talking about?"



Ghol, Going East: "Then I can kill you plain right now and moot the issue."

Pendled: "Khethera's ass, this is impossible."



Kalira: "Did you not listen? She wants to make some kind of political point or offer to the orc and by association, his people. She wants to use you to do it."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax looks at Pendled, "No."



Kalira: "I do not think this is a decision you should make, blue."



Xarvrax: "Everyone else is making rash decisions with none of the facts, why shouldn't I?"



Placidus: Not everyone.



Kalira: "The lives of these orcs and those that value them are more important your temperament."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol approves of political ties between the Fisher and the Orc Lord -- more than approves, he welcomes them. He does not particularly approve of Helbag.

But you don't always get to choose your ambassadors. One supposes.



Xarvrax: "I'm the one wielding the powers of chaos, yet I'm the only one who seems to have any reliability here."



Placidus: Oh my god.

Pendled: "I've done all I can of my duty. Kill me for it if you have to, but listen: in the Hot Pocket are people who want to talk to orcs. So that we can all stop killing. I don't care if you want- I care that you saved us, and we'll help these.. people. But if we could just establish.. contact."



Ghol, Going East: The...what?



Placidus: Placidus looks back at the orcs. "Helbag?"

Helbag: "I'm not an Emissary, but I've.. met Emissaries? I know how to use long words which humans enjoy."



Kalira: "Some honesty at last. Was that so hard?" Kalira looks to Ghol. "I suspect this is not the first hand that has tried to move you to affect your people. Think carefully on it, despite your distaste for me."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax throws his arms in the air, "Yes, talking! That'll end all of these wars! Here's a novel idea, let's go march up to the Wizard King and demand that he stop fighting!"

Orc: "That was our plan, yeah."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol sighs. "I am an Emissary. Was an Emissary. We'll talk on the way."



Xarvrax: Xarvrax throws a hand at Helbag, "I don't know if you noticed, but we tried talking with them already, and they responded with violence!"



Placidus: "If Helbag agrees to go then we'll agree to take him."

"All of this is contingent on your helping them."

Pendled: "That's granted no matter what."

"I mean, right now everyone is hiding in terror. But they saw what happened here, and I have the.. I can convince people."



Placidus: "Prove it."



Ghol, Going East: As far as Ghol knows, this is the first recorded instance of a Movement war band stopping, mid-combat, to engage in diplomacy.

It's no wonder no one really knows how to respond.



banana (GM): You still don't know exactly what happened at Fulcrum.

But the looks in these orcs' eyes... they're not broken, exactly. But it must have been bad.



Placidus: Placidus knows. It's strange, but stranger things have happened, and the strangest is yet to come before the end of the Age.

Pendled: "If nobody will kill anyone else.. I'll find the cleric, the restaurateur, a vintner."



Placidus: "Good heavens, that's brilliant."

"I need so much wine right now."

Xarvrax: "I could use a god to pray to that will stop this stupidity."



Placidus: "Ask Kalira."



Kalira: "I can't imagine anyone who doesn't."
Who Kalira was answering is open to debate.



Xarvrax: "This stupidity specifically, not in general."

Pendled: The local Council Commissioner looks at the orcs again, aware that literally nobody here trusts her per se. "You would have killed us all and called it just for reasons that are only partly wrong. Let's try and close that gap."

Orc: "Vanguard. Is this real life? Is it the waking dreams again?"



Xarvrax: Xarvrax pokes Kalira, "Do you have a god that makes stupid things go away?"



Placidus: Placidus just sort of sinks down on the ground.



Kalira: "That's what they have us for."



Placidus: This is his life, now. This is what is happening.
He wanted to breed pea pods. He wanted to brew beer.



Xarvrax: Xarvrax sighs, "Of course, what would lead me to believe gods would be useful to me."



Ghol, Going East: Ghol is generally going to spend the next little while away from the group, supervising the orcs closely to make sure more violence doesn't break out...and avoiding Kalira.



Placidus: He is maybe the only person in this field right now who doesn't consider himself cut out for heroism.

Helbag: "I don't see the swamp witch anywhere this time, soldier. You can be assured that this heinous shit is actual."



Placidus: And he really, really wants a drink.



banana (GM): There are a number of bodies to throw into the sea, of course, and then you'll have to sort out a new marching order with two extra people in the train. Should Helbag be.. cuffed or something? He wouldn't like that, you bet.



Placidus: If he wants to run, let him.

If he wants to fight... well. He made that mistake already. And he had the advantage of numbers that time.



Skeleton: Skeleton doesn't believe skerself cut out for heroism, but also doesn't want a drink. The eleventh is an age of contrasts.



Kalira: Kalira is checking up on Kelly. "You alright? Took quite a few hits there."



Skeleton: "Ah, better than a few moments ago. I think I'll mend - mostly, you know, I had the wind knocked out of me as various defenses failed."



Ghol, Going East: If he wants to run, Ghol is faster. Kon is faster still. It will be a short run.



Skeleton: Strangely, the spooky-looking black robe Skeleton has on doesn't look any worse for wear, although the gray-green robe ske's wearing over it is fairly cut up.



Kalira: rolling 1d20

(6)

= 6



Xarvrax: Xarvrax is still up on the whole leg taking thing.



Zarick: rolling 1d20 for scramble

(11)

= 11



Skeleton: rolling 1d20 recharge 18+ on bones beneath

(2)

= 2

:(



Zarick: rolling 1d20

(5)

= 5

rolling 1d20

(11)

= 11

rolling 1d20

(18)

= 18