


 **banana (GM):** good morning, relationship rollers  
i said-


 **Xarvrax:** rolling 3d6 dargon  
(  +  +  )  
=


 **Zarick:** owned


 **Xarvrax:** Ugh.


 **banana (GM):** no more dragons YET


 **VoxPVoxD:** channelling the archmage

 **Zarick:** rolling 2d6 demigod conflicted  
(  +  )  
=

 **Crion:** rolling 2d6 ELF QUEEN, CONFLICTED  
(  +  )  
=

 **Zarick:** rolling 1d6 elector negative  
(  )  
=   
wow.

 **Crion:** rolling 1d6 ORC LORD, CONFLICTED  
(  )  
=   
teh

 **banana (GM):** well, it's a good thing we had some rolls outstanding  
so there are still 4 on the board

 **VoxPVoxD:** this is a good opportunity to work through the backlog

are we in a position to reconvene fully or are there still outstanding scatterplots



**Crion:** ghol is, literally, detained



**banana (GM):** i think we might be, with some creative timeskipping  
let's see



**Xarvrax:** I have meetings to get to.



**VoxPVoxD:** please obey the law



**Kalira:** person and i were shaking down some bar thugs for info, who might also be Persons  
i think that was more or less concluded though



**banana (GM):** ghol is obviously in the middle of a Segue already. xarvrax rescued his worshippers and went to bed anticipating dominating the empire in the morning. travis and skeleton are in bed or at work, so don't matter. had kalira got anything important to finish off Yesterday with the small persons? and, had placidus finished scaring a wizard



**Placidus:** I wasn't that scary...



**banana (GM):** Pfeiffer was specifically trying to expand their worldview beyond the arcane, but, has just learned what that \*means\*.



**Kalira:** they didn't seem forthcoming, rather, they seemed like they wanted me to give them information, rather than the other way around



**banana (GM):** Right, they were willing to hire you but not to chat.

Ok, I'm going to begin with an epilogue

Over time, the straggling adventurers (Eathletes? Greencap-hunters? Friends..?) make their way back to the nondescript inn. Night in Horizon is exciting, but you're going to want to sleep given the day ahead.

Kalira comes in almost last - just Ghol to go. Person's been worrying in a cryptic mode the whole way home...

"Have you ever been an ideal, boss" he asks. "An attainable ideal?"

Xarvrax, Placidus and the others are there already, with their treasures and troves of information and captives/rescuees - still out like lights. But they'll wake eventually. Speaking of which:



**banana (GM):** Xarvrax, gain a situational background: "Now genuinely worshipped +3"

Of course, Ghol never does come back, and Kon leaves some time in the night to find him...

(what name does he give when asked to sign a receipt for his weapons?)



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



**banana (GM):** In the aftermath of the parade, there are wizardly constructs out cleaning the streets of Horizon, big whirring things that squirt water all over the cobbles and brush it away again. Your hotel barely merits the name - no room service, but at least the beds are clean. So what are everyone's last thoughts, chatter, plans or fears before checking out of consciousness?



**Placidus:** Placidus dreams of cats. Black cats, gray cats, tawny cats and striped cats. Big cats, little cats, fluffy cats and sleek cats. They dissolve into shapes and silhouettes as his mind's eye waters against them. It's not the feeling of itching and dryness that might attend a burst of pollen in the sensitive. Rather it is the particular sensation of staring at a bright light for far too long. The impressions

of cats throb against his eyelids when he rises periodically in his uneasy sleep.



**Kalira:** "Maybe some day I will be." Kalira looks at Person. "But for now, I try to just be me."

sorry i saw that line and then the xarvrax worshippers line and for some reason thought they were related



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's are of the Diabolist...and then, of prison breaks.



**banana (GM):** Person thinks about that for a while, and leaves you with: "But it's not really up to you, is it?"

np!



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax grumbles before tossing the cultists into his bed, still tied up, before passing out next to them.



**Kalira:** "No, I suppose it isn't. You can try, but it doesn't mean you'll succeed. That's... life, I guess."



**banana (GM):** Whatever kind Person is, he too sleeps, unassured.

The morning dawns multihued, with auras flaring from fifty towers, lighting the sky in duelling refractions. Anyone who neglected to close their heavy shutters learns why the windows in Horizon have them at about sixth glass.



**Placidus:** "Gah!"



**Ghol, Going East:** Or don't, as cells are likely concerned.



**banana (GM):** No need for shutters when you've got no window.

Many of the tower lights are shaped like weathervanes and cockerel, but some are just beams of energy, soundless explosions, runes hanging in the air - more and more runes, building up to an alphabet that covers the rooftops, posturing at each other and coming together into gangs of words.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax has slept through literal explosions, no sun will beat him.



**banana (GM):** Does anyone - anyone with a choice, thus excluding Ghol - NOT want to meet the Emperor?



**Placidus:** Placidus, who slept poorly, responds in kind, slamming the shutters with such a force that the clatter together and then drift back open on the rebound. The gnome stands there in the spill of prismatic light, rubbing his eyes and grumbling.



**banana (GM):** You can see a balcony across the way, with a middle aged couple bringing out their laundry and watching the show. They seem to enjoy it, at least.



**Placidus:** What do we know of Mara Half-Giantish and her connection to the Emperor? Would it be more likely to find her by oscillating the Archmage in the Emperor's presence, one wonders?



**banana (GM):** Well, you could compare notes from yesterday's separated peregrinations...



**Xarvrax:** When Xarvrax does wake up, however, he pushes the cultists off the bed, awake or not.



**Placidus:** That would be practical and solve the issue in a trice. There's a downside, though... "You saw the Emperor, you say?" Placidus says to Xarvrax that morning.



**Kalira:** Kalira knows very little of wizards and emperors, but wouldn't be averse to meeting some. Never know when magic might come in handy.

Kalira glances at Xarvrax a little worriedly. "You didn't... do anything to him, did you?"



**Xarvrax:** Cutting the rope, Xarvrax grunts at the cultists, "Don't go bothering other dragons, or they'll eat you. And if they eat you then I have to kill them."

"Yes, I saw the Emperor. All I did was wave at him, He totally waved back though."



**Placidus:** "Was there anyone with him?"

"Anyone enormous and magically puissant?"

A pause. "Meaning powerful."

**Issuriel:** "Oh my god." She's been lying there gagged but awake, it seems. Clarifying: "You are our god, who is above all other dragons. We'll be good."



**Kalira:** "Sounds like you're looking for someone specific."



**Xarvrax:** "I'm meeting him today, and yes there was in fact a huge magic lady."

**Issuriel:** Also, she unties but doesn't un-gag Mirchin. No sense letting him go off script as usual.



**Placidus:** Placidus perks up a bit over his porridge. "Oh, splendid! When is this?"



**Xarvrax:** "Later today, all I had to do was tell the gate guy that the blue wanted to warn him of attack."



**Placidus:** Placidus finds himself looking askance at Xarvrax's cultists when he sees them now. Something about them seems off... and not in the obvious way.

"Is that... true...?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax smirks, "I didn't say which blue, so technically?"

"Also most people listen to me regardless when I bring Her up."



**Kalira:** "Do you have an attack to warn him of?"

"If you don't, I suggest you think of a good one, unless you want to end up in a dungeon. Presumably your forebear's name only goes so far."



**Xarvrax:** "We've see several places around here getting attacked, and Bonanda is around here too."



**Placidus:** "I don't know if those merit the Emperor's attention..."



**Xarvrax:** "He's a stupid necromancer who got away, which I will be personally, and brutally murdering."



**banana (GM):** They don't let Ghol wake up in the cell he went to sleep in; that would be too orienting. By the time the relevant spell's removed and his eyes open, he's bound to a kind of ornate chair in a weird brightly lit room. The shape of the walls is odd, and there are people moving around. ..his head hurts, and there's no food.



**Ghol, Going East:** Just another day in the Movement, then.



**Xarvrax:** "Also, he brought San Meat to its knees, who's to say he won't attack him while he's on the move?"



**Ghol, Going East:** Well. They were usually better about the food.



**Placidus:** "The question is, how confident are you that you can convince His Majesty that it's a threat worth his time?"



**Kalira:** "I imagine his giant wizard, probably." Kalira looks over at Person, to see if he's still... sleeping? If that's what he does. Inactive.



**banana (GM):** Most of the silhouettes against the bright light are moving away from Ghol, leaving through what he supposes must be doors and arches. One big figure looms, still, watching him from some kind of shape he can't parse as furniture - a jagged diagonal line.



**Xarvrax:** "It doesn't really matter at this point, I'm going to go see him, and if he doesn't think it's worth listening to, then that's his loss."



**Ghol, Going East:** He remains silent.



**Placidus:** Placidus glances at Kalira.



**Kalira:** "Could be your loss as well, if he chucks you in a cell."



**Xarvrax:** "He clearly is at least a little afraid of what I represent, so I doubt it."



**Placidus:** "Are we... going to have to fight our way out of Imperial prisons?"  
"Is that where this is going?"



**Ghol, Going East:** Now why would you assume that.



**Xarvrax:** " 'Dragon Emperor' or not, The Five wouldn't stand for him harming me."



**Kalira:** "I'd rather not. I suggest you be very careful what you say, little dragon. Even if your mommy comes to save you, it won't be quick."



**banana (GM):** Person's curled up, or possibly bent, in a corner pile of blankets - you've never seem him use a bed properly. He's totally still, perhaps unaffected by the early light.



**Kalira:** Kalira turns to Placidus and says in a low voice, "I went with Person last night, of course looking for Ironhenge still. And two shorter... persons? They tried to hire me to find it."



**Placidus:** "How did Person react?"



**banana (GM):** Ghol's captor hops down (?) from the wall or whatever it is, comes around a desk that glares too much to look at.. they've done something to his eyes. Shapes and colours won't resolve even though he's well conscious now.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax stands up to his full height in front of Kalira, "I'd watch what you say, human. The Gold would love to rend you apart in his claws."  
"And if he didn't, I could."



**Kalira:** "I thought they were dwarves at first, but I didn't see any of their actual bodies." She shakes her head. "Didn't. He went away, thankfully. I'm not sure what they were, but I didn't want them 'testing themselves' in the middle of a crowded bar."

**Captor:** "Scout. From the Orcish Movement? Or are you a thief and that's your name?"

**Person:** Abruptly: "The problem is I'm their ideal."



**Kalira:** Kalira looks Xarvrax up and down. "Bigger lizards than you have tried. Calm down. Start thinking of what to say to the Emperor, and try to skimp on the arrogance. You don't have an army. He does."





**Placidus:** "Traditionally, the pronouncements of dire threats mean that breakfast is over."

**Person:** Abruptly: "So, please don't let them near me unless you're okay with helping out."  
Actually, the second one wasn't abrupt.



**Placidus:** "Of course, Person. We're not going to let anything happen to you. What do you think of cats?"



**Kalira:** Kalira's head jerks over to look at Person. "I told you I'd help out. But if you're their ideal, what do they want with you?"

**Person:** "Cats seem pretty good. They're fast as well as accurate, and much more clever than you'd think for their size. They can't read or write, but they don't mind."



**Ghol, Going East:** To the posed questions: "I am."



**Placidus:** Kon's not around, is he?  
"If Person is their ideal, then they want to surpass him."

**Captor:** "Well, scout. You've managed to breach security here in a big way - big enough that I'm handling it. Things would go better for you if I weren't."



**banana (GM):** Kon is nowhere to be found.



**Ghol, Going East:** "This will suffice. I will not wish for you to have better security."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax goes back to the cultists, tending to any of the wounds he missed on the way back last night.



**Placidus:** "Did Ghol tell you where he'd be going today?" Placidus doesn't think much of his absence, since Ghol doesn't like cities and has been spending more and more time away from the group as it's grown. He would like to see Kon, though.

**Captor:** "Indeed, our responsibilities vary. Mine is to find out how you did what you did."



**Kalira:** Kalira shakes her head. "I can't see why he would, however."



**Xarvrax:** Turning his head around, "I saw him at the parade, but he left early."

**Captor:** "Yours includes preventing me. I'll allow any suggestions you have on reconciliation."



**Placidus:** "Well, he'll turn up soon enough."  
"Shall we be going?"



**Ghol, Going East:** "...You want a security consultation?"

**Person:** "I'm starting to work these things out. If we visit the important emperor, that doesn't mean we have to fight and defeat him, right?"



**Placidus:** "That is factual."

**Person:** "Sounds good!"



**Placidus:** "You see?" Placidus says to Xarvrax. "Even \*he\* knows."

**Xarvrax:** "I'm not going to fight him."



**Placidus:** "That's the spirit!"



**Xarvrax:** "Even if he is wounded and vulnerable."



**Placidus:** "How long do we have until the meeting?"

**Captor:** "I want to know how you got into two rooms of the Shattered Palace, one entirely interior, without alerting a sentry-spell or a human eye. I want to know how you unpicked a web of foretellings like someone playing cats cradle with Destiny."



**Xarvrax:** "We may as well head up there now, who knows how long it'll take to actually get inside."



**Kalira:** "I swear, if you attack the Emperor, I will kill you myself."

"Not because of any loyalty to him, just to save the world from your insanity."



**banana (GM):** It takes some time to actually get inside.



**Placidus:** "Let's all agree \*not\* to threaten each other with mortal combat until dinnertime, shall we?"



**Kalira:** "But dear Placidus. However else shall we pass the time?"



**banana (GM):** There's a whole bevy of petitioners outside the palace's ground floor visiting chambers, and it's concomitantly thick with soldiers- you get passed from one group to the next on the strength of your claimed appointment and unusual appearances, but you still end up in a line.



**Placidus:** "It's a big city, Kalira. I'm sure we'll find somebody to kill."



**Xarvrax:** "And you were telling me to watch what I say."



**Placidus:** "It's not threatening when I say it."



**banana (GM):** The antechamber to the temporary throne room is a relic from the Princedom days - unvaulted marble, impossibly thin sheets held in place by spell-pillars as a show of potential force. It's currently bustling with aides-de-camp and messengers, going back and forth from other parts of the palace and the city.



**Placidus:** Showy or not, this place must have been a sight back when it was in one piece.



**banana (GM):** Kon's Men (sans Kon) get to wait at a folding desk set up beneath a glorious inlaid mosaic under the eye of a watchgnome, waiting their turn after a few dignitaries, potentates and personages.



**Placidus:** Also we aren't all men anymore.



**banana (GM):** The hall is lacking the furniture it must have once had, but at least the walls are intact...



**Xarvrax:** Yes, but Kon's People doesn't have the same ring to it.




**Placidus:** Konrades





**Xarvrax:** Fair enough.

**Captor:** From what Ghol is starting to make out, the walls of his current accomodation are not doing so well; that bright blue must be the sky and the sea. He's high up in the Palace, in the broken parts, seated overlooking ruin.

 **Ghol, Going East:** "An hour after sunset, your guards in the gatehouse on the western city approach and on the walls change shift at the same time, undoubtedly due to laziness on the part of your garrison commander. The far left tower of the gatehouse butts right up against a tavern -- which your outgoing guards flocked to, unable to see me climb the wall bracing myself between the two structures, as their sightlines were blocked and they were, for all real purposes, already drunk. At that point it was a simple matter of running down the outer wall until it came close to the inner wall at the northern guardhouse, jumping the gap, then following the inner wall around to the main structure, where a short climb and a longer leap was required to enter the open window of what I am told was the commander's room."


**Captor:** The tall human takes notes intently.


 **Ghol, Going East:** "As for your divinations, I know little and care less. Sort your own guts and bones."


 **banana (GM):** What Ghol says is true up to a point, right? E.g. halfway through his infiltration he met the demon, and is omitting events from there on?


**Dignitary/potentate/personage:** "Horris has been ages inside. Ages, even. Are the rest of us being ignored by a conqueror too arrogant to pay attention to his conquests?"

**Watchgnome:** "No."


 **Ghol, Going East:** The story is entirely true -- he made the last leap on his own, and did not require demonic assistance until the transition to the Diabolist's chambers. He is omitting the demon, however.

 **banana (GM):** Right, or true as far as he knows at least. The demon was doing some odd prancing en route.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs loudly, "This is why I prefer Drakkenhall."


 **Placidus:** Placidus doesn't mind waiting on line like this. There's so many people to count! Speaking of which, how many are there milling about?


**Captor:** "I appreciate the cooperation. I *\*really\** like it when people are reasonable, so keep that up and you'll do fine."

 **Xarvrax:** "Stuck up nobles don't exist there, and the ones that do rarely leave alive."

**Captor:** "Another question- how many of you are there in the city?"

 **Kalira:** "What about the dragons? Those don't fit your definition?"


 **banana (GM):** There are only a few people in this queue to meet the Conqueror with you, but dozens in the hall itself - it's a central place on the ground floor of the palace.

 **Xarvrax:** "We're not nobles, we just make sure the city doesn't collapse on it self."

**Potentate:** /personage/dignitary "My people have been to Drakkenhall, drak- dragon. It's an impressive city in its own right, but too.. chaotic. Your rulers pull too many ways to be good for business."

 **Xarvrax:** "Good."

 **Ghol, Going East:** "Define your pronouns."

 **Placidus:** Placidus considers intervening on this schmuck's behalf, but decides that talking to Xarvrax is more or less exactly what he deserves.





**Xarvrax:** "The Five don't watch over Drakkenhall for business purposes, they watch over it, because if most of Drakkenhall got out into the world, it would be on fire."

**Captor:** "I'm asking how many scouts or people otherwise affiliated with the Movement are in and around Horizon. Notice that I'm not asking you to give away individuals and positions. Just how seriously should we take you?"



**Xarvrax:** "Not to mention, that literally anyone can go to Drakkenhall, but very few will ever get anywhere with anything there."



**Kalira:** "So why would they go? Why go to a place that sounds like it actively hates you?"



**Xarvrax:** "Where we don't look at someone different from us like they just finished murdering children because they have scales or different ears."

Children\*



**Ghol, Going East:** "One more than there was yesterday morning. You should take the Movement exactly as seriously as you did in the moment before we started having this conversation."

**Schmuck:** "Diversity's all very well and good, but your people want to rule half the world. They're going to have to compromise on methods that work for people without wings."



**Xarvrax:** "Uh-huh. Please, by all means go tell that to The Five."

"In fact, tell them that I sent you with my regards."

**Watchgnome:** "Next."



**Kalira:** Quietly: "You're sort of proving his point. 'Do what we say or we'll eat you.'"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax whispering back, "Yes, but it doesn't matter, because they never listen anyway."

**Arrogant Schmuck:** "Don't worry, soldier(?)- both races are having our day. The dragonflights fight for a human lord, don't they? Not the other way around. Look who's riding whom."



**Placidus:** Are we next or is this guy?



**banana (GM):** It's not clear.



**Placidus:** Placidus steps up then. "Hello!"

"Good morning."

**Dignitatage:** "Ah, shit-"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax smirks, "Is that what this was about? You want a dragon to ride you? Sorry but Humans aren't my type. Also, I'm busy about to meet the Emperor you see."



**banana (GM):** The bureaucrat and a couple of guards nod at Placidus, turn, and march, leading the way to a pair of big shiny doors...





**Placidus:** "I represent Xarvrax, Scion of the Blue and Last of the Dragonwrought, Champion of the Hungry Games. He bears an urgent message for His Imperial Majesty Roland I Liberator. If we could get in at the earliest convenience..." And away we go.




**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax follows them through the doors, leading the group since it's technically his audience.


**banana (GM):** Bureaucrat: "Herald, over here. Don't bother with the trumpets. They've got ten

 minutes." To you: "You've got ten minutes."


 **Xarvrax:** "That's enough for me." Xarvrax nods.


 **Placidus:** We'd better hope.

**Captor:** "That's less helpful. Tell you what, scout... do you know where you are right now?"


 **banana (GM):** The big shiny doors open - yet more spellwork - and reveal a smaller hall within, containing about three times as many guards and a high dais. There's a velvet carpet leading up to it, silk curtains surrounding most of it, and the ruler of somewhere between a fifth and a half of the world depending on how you measure sits within.


**Herald:** : "XARVRAX, SCION OF THE BLUE, LAST DRAGONWROUGHT, AND FELLOW HUNGRY GAMES CHAMPIONS". Looks like the bureaucracy's vetted you...

 **Ghol, Going East:** "No. Should I assume you will now be asking and answering the questions?"

 **Placidus:** Is there anyone with him?

**Captor:** "I'll avoid rhetorical questioning and give you the facts, scout."


 **Kalira:** Kalira strolls in with the others. She's not a Hungry Games Champion, but she's with them, obviously.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax walks in, at his full height and head straight forward, taking stock of the room as he continues down the carpet.


**Captor:** "You are in the old ducal study of the Chancellor of Horizon, an office which no longer exists. I executed Prince Whadlescu Horiz in this room, a symbolic act which broke the arcane tie of his line to the city and split the building apart." He does something with his hands, and your vision sharpens - the back lack-of-wall of the room becomes clear, bookcases standing bare against a lowercase horizon. Beyond it is just the sea.


"At the back of the palace here are the sea-cliffs. You've committed a crime against the Empire and the Palace, and I have the authority to simply throw you off them. That is what I will do if you do not answer to my satisfaction."

"With the cliffs in mind- how many of you are there in the city?"


 **banana (GM):** He's a wizard, of course.


 **Ghol, Going East:** "You're a wizard."

 **banana (GM):** Big and tough for a wizard, wearing armour and a sword belt, but there's the telltale glowing coronet, an inverted ankh at his throat, symbols of the lost moon stitched into his robe-like jacket.

 **Ghol, Going East:** "And you're threatening to throw me off a cliff."

**Captor:** "Am I to be asking and answering the questions again?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** "Those weren't questions."

 **banana (GM):** In the throne room - Placidus is looking for the Apprentice, but nobody like that is obviously present. Almost everyone in the room is an imperial soldier, with just a couple of nobles and clerks; Roland I himself is even dressed in full uniform. The lack of bars or stripes set him apart, and the dressiness of it (also, the throne).



**Ghol, Going East:** "This is: how long have you known the Movement, that you think a grain of sand knows the size and shape of the beach?"

"I have been told wizards respond well to metaphor."



**banana (GM):** A whole potential conga-line of guardsmen and women, every one human, watch Xarvrax's advance and that of the others. The Conqueror is no more impressive than he was in the parade yesterday, which is to say somewhat impressive; he's got the air of authority you get when your orders are absolute. Reminds Xarvrax of the Black, Kalira of the Demigod, and Placidus of a scriptwriter-director.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax reaches the end of the carpet, before bowing, "Roland, it's a pleasure to finally meet you."

**Captor:** "I've told you that I prefer it when people are reasonable. Clarify: you're claiming not to know?"



**Ghol, Going East:** "I am. I am further claiming not to care."



**banana (GM):** "I am always interested to meet notable citizens. More than one of you are in that category."



**Kalira:** Kalira's fist clenches when Xarvrax refers to the Emperor crassly by his name.



**Placidus:** Placidus is holding his breath.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods.



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror's voice is dry, like his throat is burned on the inside - perhaps the rumours of the Battle of Kingswood are true. "At a social occasion I'd have questions for your group. Such as whether you constitute one. Today, my time is limited."



**Xarvrax:** "I'm sure, you're an important man with important things to do, believe me I understand."

**Captor:** "Alright. Here's a more general question. Do you have any other intelligence that you're willing to provide in mitigation of your crime?"



**Xarvrax:** "Part of the reason I'm here today is in fact the warning I am here to give. The Necromancer Bonanda Greencap fled this way from San Meat after bringing it to its knees. I'm not sure of your travel plans, but I'd make sure to keep an eye out just to be safe."

"There were also a group of Orcs attacking various areas on the way here from San Meat that we took care of, but where there's one Orc, there could be more waiting in the woods."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "I'll pass you on, if you don't mind, to one of my people who's well placed to deal with that kind of news. I and the city appreciate your warnings."

The Conqueror: "Perhaps the whole Empire, in the case of necromancy." Roland I runs an eye over the group of you.



**Ghol, Going East:** "Only this: you are a wizard. You no doubt have magic to ward against demons. Use it better."



**banana (GM):** Person appears to be slowly raising a hand.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods once again, "The other reason I'm here today is a matter related to the journey I'm on."

**Ghol's Captor:** "A palpable hint." He doesn't look entirely content, but- "Excuse me a moment."



**banana (GM):** The wizard moves away from what you can now see is a big desk sitting incongruously among the rubble of this broken room to one of the doors, where a soldier hands him a satchel full of papers.

To turn his attention away from Ghol, he must be overconfident, rightly confident, or both.



**Ghol, Going East:** Wizards.



**Kalira:** Kalira puts a hand on Person's arm. "Careful. Friends are not often found in Imperial Courts."



**Ghol, Going East:** How is he bound?



**Xarvrax:** "Not long ago The Blue sent me from Drakkenhall with not much more than, 'Go be useful out in the world.' As one of the most important people in the world, I'm sure there are things you need done that you don't quite have the time to attend to personally, and as I'm on my way to Santa Cora, if any of them are in that direction I'd be willing to lend my services."



**banana (GM):** Each of Ghol's arms is tied to one of the chair with an odd rubbery cord, and his ankles bound together. The chair itself is sturdy, a little like the Dominant Seat in design but with none of the actual power.

**Person:** Whispering to Kalira "If anyone knows the way..."



**Ghol, Going East:** How high up are they?



**Kalira:** Kalira manages to not groan at Xarvrax's pronouncement, but only just. To Person: "If anyone knows the way, they will know that you seek it. If you must, then do so, but be ready."



**banana (GM):** Ghol would have to get close to either the north or the south wall of the room to be sure - both are shattered remnants which run right up to the edge of the building. From memory, though, the Palace perched above Horizon like a sort of broken hand... the cityward side is probably 60, 70 feet up. If you recall correctly. It'd be much less if you were above the intact west or east wings..



**Ghol, Going East:** Hrm.



**Placidus:** Placidus exhales. This could be going far, far worse.



**banana (GM):** Could it?

I'd like each of you to roll cha and wis, please. Let's evaluate the heck out of this situation.



**Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 11 CHA

( 20 )+11

= 31

Uh.

Do I need to keep going with the Wis one?



**banana (GM):** not bad



**Placidus:** rolling d20+2 cha

( 10 )+2

= **12**



**Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 2 WIS

(**11**)+2

= **13**



**Placidus:** rolling d20+10 wisdom, plus unnatural philosophy

(**19**)+10

= **29**

(that's just 25 if I can't invoke unnatural philosophy)



**Kalira:** rolling 1d20+9 with dark majesty

(**16**)+9

= **25**



**Xarvrax:** Aw yeah. Stat spread party.



**Kalira:** rolling 1d20+4 wisdom unmodified

(**18**)+4

= **22**



**Placidus:** good rolls, team



**banana (GM):** dang

ok, first the interpersonal Cha stuff

Picked up mostly by Xarvrax in this case: The Conqueror is not unhappy with how this has gone, but fundamentally pretty disinterested in it. He knows, or thinks he knows, who you are; he's about to politely dismiss you and presumably pawn you off on some underling. He doesn't think you're worth his time.. but doesn't think you're worthless enough to let you KNOW you're not worth his time.

More generally, examining the situation and everything around you: there are people in the audience to your audience taking all of this down, making sketches of your faces, notes of your words... one of them's just dispatched a runner, cued by something Xarvrax said. Another is pointing at Kalira and saying something to a lieutenant. The Conqueror's presence is greater than it first appears, drowning much of this out until you take a mental step backward - he focuses attention on him.

In fact, the magnitude of that effect is such that it could be an actual magical Thing.



**Xarvrax:** Hmm.



**Kalira:** Maybe he's got a More Dominant Seat +3.





**Xarvrax:** Can I do another CHA check with Magical Anomaly to check?



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "If travelling to Santa Cora, I'd charge you primarily to survive - and to act as good ambassadors of the Empire. The Snakesrule may be a nearly settled question, but it never hurts to have powerful and diplomatic representatives passing through its towns and lands. It's possible that Cenbara here may have interests in the east, so I'll send you to him - you could work almost as an adventurer, which I'm sure work toward your dam's goals somehow."

"Everything seems to in the end, for Her."

Sure

actually, that'd be int + magical anomaly

for examining magic



**Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 9 Int + MA

(17)+9

= 26



**Placidus:** let's all agree to roll 17 or better for the rest of the game



**banana (GM):** Actually, Xarvrax doesn't think the Conqueror is enchanted at all- if anything, he might be blessed.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods, about to let it go before thinking of one last thing.

**Person:** Whispering to Placidus and Kalira. "I'll let you decide, because they're your heads and necks."



**Xarvrax:** "I just have two final questions for you, one of behalf of a companion: Do you know the way to Ironhenge?"

**Person:** :O



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax's ears twitch back towards them, trying to remind them that he is in fact good at hearing things.

And that they are standing pretty close.

**Ghol's Captor:** Returning, the wizard pulls a stool from somewhere out of Ghol's range of vision and perches on it to face him. "This could have gone worse for either of us. It would have been better, of course, if you didn't break into the palace at all, but I suppose we got you in the end."

"The issue of disposal, then."



**Ghol, Going East:** Is that what he thinks happened.

"Disposal."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror stands up, quickly. Two score pairs of eyes turn to the dais. "Oh, no. We won't be having any more of \*this\*."



**Placidus:** you didn't give us our wis checks yet! you can't kick us out without giving us our wis checks!!



**banana (GM):** I did give you them! Didn't I??

At that tone of voice, like twenty soldiers raise pikes and gladii, but he waves them back. "No, no. These citizens will leave peacefully in a moment and be escorted to Cenbara, but first I shall address

them."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs, nothing is ever simple.



**Placidus:** that stuff looks like it's all xarvrax's cha check



**Ghol, Going East:** I assumed noticing the runners and whispering guards and etc



**banana (GM):** the wis stuff was "More generally, examining the situation and everything around you"



**Ghol, Going East:** was the Wis  
as opposed to the Wiz



**Placidus:** oh. that's disappointing



**banana (GM):** incidentally, this audience is a fairly volatile situation in which Many Things Could Happen so feel free to invoke dice in it if you want some more interesting or horrible thing



**Ghol, Going East:** which is this jerkoff



**Placidus:** I'm gonna wait and see what roland says before pulling out the archmage 5



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "Do not go to Ironhenge. Do not seek or find it. Forget you have heard that name and shun the person who spoke it to you."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax frowns, "I see."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "It's necessary that you do."



**Xarvrax:** "Before you have us thrown out for a slight I wasn't aware of, the other question is much more important, as it comes directly from The Blue."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "You haven't \*slighted\* me, dragonwrought, you've- do tell."



**Xarvrax:** "How many of MY kin, the blue dragons that she has sent out have been slain in these battles?"



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "Is that a trick question, or ignorance?"  
At least he's engaged, now.



**Kalira:** There is some weird shit going on here, and not all of it can be traced back to Xarvrax. Kalira's definitely even more interested in Person's quest now.

**Ghol's Captor:** "Yes, your disposal. I've the discretion to give you a choice of justice - military or civil. As a spy from the enemy they hate, I suspect the Dragon Army will just execute you at sunset, but it's possible you prefer that."



**Placidus:** Placidus was already maximally interested in that; now he's interested in not being attacked.



**Xarvrax:** "Ah sorry, I've forgotten that it wasn't a question she sent me with, but a message, my own curiosity got the better of me. She wanted me to ensure that the Dragon Emperor was properly taking care of our Kin, not just the blue, but all of us Dragons."

**Person:** is trying to make himself very small, retreating into his hood.



**Ghol, Going East:** "Under certain conditions. But it would be improper to seek military justice without a

military mission."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror smiles. It does not look particularly sincere. "I can answer you, Xarvrax. No paint-hued member of your honoured kind will fight for an Empire, or take the yoke of a partner in war. No blue or red or green or black dragon has fought for us in the West, let alone died for a human's freedom. Indeed, the heroism of the metallic dragonflights is so singular that many say we have alliance with the Great Gold Wyrms, not with the whole Golden City."

"This is not true. All of the Five are partners in this empire, this liberation of the world from necrotyranny. The burning and gouging that your chromatic kin do in the East is as important in its own way as the civilising mission we bring to this side of the sea."

"Still, it's hard for any human citizen of the Empire not to know that it is the gold and the silver and the bronze and the brass and the copper wyrms who keep us safe from orcs and from yuan-ti, to know the tales of their flights and their partnerships with riders privileged by the mighty creatures' presence. Four hundred and thirteen metallic dragons have died in the last twenty years under the banner of the Empire, and every one was a great loss."

A lot of courtiers at the edges of the throne hall are HELLA murmuring and muttering right now.



**Kalira:** This is how I got thrown in Imperial Prison, says Kalira to herself.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax looks shocked at the mention of the lack of chromatic dragons in the west before putting a claw to his chin, "I see... Well that explains why I've been sent this way, clearly. And ensures that I will be able to send a favorable report back to Her, not that I truly doubted the treatment."



**banana (GM):** The Conqueror: "Frankly..."

The Conqueror: "Frankly, the fact that you ask at all gives me hope. The processes by which yourself and your brother were created have clearly given rise to a level of thoughtfulness which the unkind would dissociate from the stereotypes of flame and storm."

He sits down. "Is there anything else?"

(A few chuckles from the edges of the room, nervous and otherwise)



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax turns to Placidus and Kalira and raises an eyebrow, "You two didn't have anything specific you needed to tell him right? Just to make sure I didn't get thrown in jail or otherwise executed?"



**Kalira:** "That's the plan. You're trying really hard, too."



**banana (GM):** Courtiers titter.

**Ghol's Captor:** "Conditions which haven't been met?"



**Placidus:** Placidus pats Xarvrax on the thigh. He looks like he's about to say something, and then he does. "If you could forgive my friend Xarvrax's brashness, and also convey my regards to the Apprentice. Truthfully, either one of those on its own would be wonderful."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shrugs before turn back to face the Emperor and bowing, "I suppose that's it, sorry for taking up more of your time than I intended."  
turning\*



**banana (GM):** "No harm done, dragonwrought."


Roland I's eyebrows make themselves visible, though, at Placidus's casual mention. "You have regards for the Apprentice?"




**Ghol, Going East:** "...how many times have you come face to face with the Movement, wizard?"


**Ghol's Captor:** Cheerfully: "Never before. I'm more of an internal-affairs person, and they wouldn't trust me on the battlefield, you know? Most hated man in Lower Marrow."


 **Placidus:** "I do! Regarding the Apprentice, that is."


 **banana (GM):** Roland I: "You may have to deliver them yourself, champion. I believe she's left town."

 **Placidus:** "Ah. Pity."


 **banana (GM):** The Conqueror raises a hand to gesture to the heralds and wave you away. Then he rotates in unseen dimensions, changing posture just by a fraction, unnoticeable if you aren't watching for it - and his arm is down, reaching into a uniform pocket.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol nods. "Some context, then, freely given: when the Movement breaches your walls, defeats your wards, and enters your home, it does not toss your bedroom and dally with your witch. It does not sign for its weapons. The Movement spills blood. Draw your conclusions on my business here as you will."


 **Placidus:** What has he got in that pocket...? Placidus attempts to watch discreetly at he's ushered out, though if forced to choose between fidelity and discretion, fidelity will win out.


 **banana (GM):** Roland I: "You might as well return this signet to her if you'll be in the vicinity." He tosses something to Placidus, and THEN the guards come over to firmly usher you towards the door...


Not, incidentally, the big shiny doors; they want to escort you into another part of the palace, if nobody has objections. Person certainly has none, because they might remind people he exists.

 **Placidus:** Placidus tries to catch it, but it's arcing away from him... there's the briefest \*hummm\* and it spins toward his torso, allowing him to catch it gracelessly.


 **banana (GM):** Did Roland I Liberator look surprised at that, or surprised at himself for throwing the ring in the first place? It's out of mind now, anyway, as a group of potentates dignitaries AND personages just came in the big shiny doors.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax follows them, clearly Roland knows who he is, so he probably wouldn't try anything.

 **Kalira:** "Well. That was... troubling," Kalira says when they're out of earshot of listeners. "For all sorts of reasons."


 **Placidus:** We're not being led to dungeons, right? Or a large public gallows, or something?

**Ghol's Captor:** "You're being cryptic again, now. I'll have to indicate to the magistrate that once found guilty, your sentence should include mind-reading. Blameric discourse is all very well and good for students, but the Palace and the Tower have authority that won't brook your teachable moment."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax chuckles, "Don't like someone who the gods who aren't objectively evil like?"

 **banana (GM):** Nope, you're being led up some stairs and through some half-inhabited galleries by a small escort. They don't mind if you drop back a little to chat privately.

 **Placidus:** "I feel nauseous."

 **Kalira:** "Don't talk to me about evil, little dragon, or I'll show you some." Her face twists in a snarl, quickly corrected before she turns to Person. "Any thoughts?"

**Person:** "I guess the important emperor is my enemy."

**banana (GM):** He does not sound happy about this.





**Placidus:** "Well, you had to expect that, didn't you?"

"A quest to surpass everyone and everything won't leave you with a lot of friends among the people already at the top."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax laughs harder now, "I know all about evil, half of my powers are well more evil than the necromancy the world is waging war against."

**Person:** "I didn't really expect it at all."



**Placidus:** "But in hindsight, though."



**Kalira:** Kalira ignores Xarvrax. "Maybe not, but you have to be prepared for it. That leaves us with only really one lead."



**Placidus:** "Other Persons?"



**Xarvrax:** Once finished laughing Xarvrax looks between them, "It's extra funny, we should make sure to ask any of the important people we meet that question."



**Placidus:** "No we shouldn't!"  
"We should not do that!"



**banana (GM):** As you climb, the palace empties out. The ground floor is pretty well staffed, particularly with the extra soldiers temporarily quartered here, but the upper levels.. the stone is stretched and torn, the rooms long ago looted. High above in the leaning wings, scale-smells drift downward - but you're headed up the central tower, not in those directions.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax tilts his head, "Really? Because we've learned way more about it from that conversation than literally anything else."



**banana (GM):** You pass a brief guard post, and then your escort raps on a twisted leather door.

**Ghol's Captor:** "Excuse me."



**Xarvrax:** "We know it's real, and so important it scares the Emperor himself."



**Placidus:** "We already knew it was real."



**banana (GM):** Person: "It's very important, yeah."



**Kalira:** "The buffoon is right, I think. It was enlightning. Not safe, maybe, but it seems unlikely to be."



**Xarvrax:** "I mean real as in a physical or magical thing that can be used to some purpose."  
"Or it probably wouldn't bother him that much."



**banana (GM):** The escort raps on the door again. "Paramystocrypt Cenbara?"



**Placidus:** "Perhaps next time we could seek enlightenment in some more discreet way."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax gags at that insane title.



**Placidus:** "It wouldn't be hard, since every other conceivable way would be more discreet."



**banana (GM):** The door opens; sunlight floods through from an entirely open part of the broken palace, mostly blocked by a rather large wizard. He's both tall and broad, wearing something more like armour



than robes, and already carrying some other paperwork.



**Xarvrax:** "If you want to get anywhere, you have to stop being afraid of the Emperor having you executed for asking him a question."



**Placidus:** "No I don't."



**banana (GM):** Honestly, the Conqueror was pretty polite and stuff.  
A little impatient maybe, but he wasn't \*mean\*, mostly.



**Placidus:** This time.

**Cenbara, presumably:** "I'm not done with the orc, yet."



**Ghol, Going East:** "Yes you are."

**Guard:** "These adventurers have news about other orcs, and a necromancer as well. Direct from the throne room."



**Kalira:** "It turns out, you can get lots of places without risking death. If there's a bridge over shark infested waters, you probably shouldn't try to swim to get to the other side."



**Placidus:** "The one thing we actually learned from that conversation is that the Emperor would be delighted to forsake all the chromatics if he had the pretext."

"So. Keep that in-" Wait hang on.

Can they hear Ghol?



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol tenses. He's got nothing left to--



**banana (GM):** Hang On, That Was-



**Ghol, Going East:** --wait.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax yells, "Hi Ghol! We're here to pick you up!"

**Cenbara:** "If it's relevant, mmwhat."



**Ghol, Going East:** "Then tell the wizard to let me up before I ruin his chair."



**Placidus:** Is this door locked?



**banana (GM):** The wizard steps back and yes, that is Ghol in some sort of jumpsuit and tied to a chair.  
It might have been, but it's open.



**Placidus:** "What on earth?"

"Untie him."



**Ghol, Going East:** Glaring at the wizard: "Because I am about to ruin his chair."



**Xarvrax:** "Did you have fun at the parade?"

"It looks like you had fun at the parade."

**Paramystocrypt Cenbara:** "Explain yourselves immediately. Surround them."

**Kalira:** "Maybe a little too much. But I'm afraid I must agree with my colleagues."



**banana (GM):** There's only a few soldiers escorting you, but they try their best to surround you.  
It's honestly more like.. a semicirclement.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax raises a hand, "If I was here to start trouble, I probably would've done it in the throne room with someone much more important.



**Placidus:** "You are being ridiculous, paramystocrypt. Let him go."



**Xarvrax:** "As it stands, I think I might just forget what I came here for in the first place."

**Cenbara:** "There is nobody more important to the city of Horizon than me." He glances at Placidus, then moves over to Ghol, to make sure of whether he's, like, breaking free or something.  
"Who are you people and how do you relate to the scout?"



**Kalira:** Kalira chuckles, glancing at Xarvrax. "Man, and I thought you were full of yourself."



**Xarvrax:** "Oh? So you outrank the Archmage and Emperor? Good to know."  
"I guess I didn't need to waste my time downstairs talking to that Roland guy then."



**Placidus:** "Why would you think you had the right to ask us questions? We won't speak while he is bound. Untie him or I will."

**Cenbara:** To guards: "Fetch a couple of dozen men, some dragons and any court wizard you can wake sober."  
"They seem uncooperative."



**Placidus:** I want the conqueror 5 here



**banana (GM):** lol ok



**Xarvrax:** "Please do! Make sure you tell the Dragons that the Scion of the Blue is here."  
"I'm sure we have time to sign an autograph or two, right guys?"



**Placidus:** Is Ghol hurt?



**banana (GM):** So: your escort aren't actually part of the Palace hierarchy, or even Horizoners. Their squad leader is just a regular, a member of the Dragon Army- and they're only slightly more sure of who this wizard is than you are. "Sir? \*The Emperor\* sent them to speak with you. I think you'd better listen."

**Cenbara:** "Is this seriously happening again."



**banana (GM):** \*Is\* Ghol hurt?\



**Xarvrax:** "Statistics indicate that yes, this is in fact happening again."



**Placidus:** Placidus is going to go over to Ghol.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol has a full health track, last time he checked.  
Unless something was done to him while he was unconscious, he should be fine.

**Cenbara:** "The Emperor left me in charge of this gods damn city, you idiots. I'm happy to attend to his errands but there is something going ON here, this is a prisoner-

**Soldier:** "Private, go ask someone and get to the bottom of this."



**Xarvrax:** "Ghol, what exactly did you do to piss this jack-ass off so much?"

**Cenbara:** "I could turn you into frogs right now if I had less respect for the rule of law!"



**Ghol, Going East:** "Visited the Diabolist in her bedchamber."



**Placidus:** Is Ghol just tied up with, like, ropes?  
Placidus has a knife.



**banana (GM):** At this point you've all crowded 'inside', I assume, into the shattered study - it has no roof, and two of its walls are mostly gone, open to the world.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax walks over to Ghol, cuts a hand free with his claw, grabs it in his other one, and high fives him.



**banana (GM):** They seem like.. magic ropes of some sort? The material's weird. Turns out a knife works, though.  
Or a claw.



**Zarick:** "You -have- been having a good time, then."



**Kalira:** "You -have- been having a good time, then."



**Placidus:** Placidus and Xarvrax cut Ghol free. "Not another word until we're out of here."



**banana (GM):** One of the soldiers has walked slowly off, to Ask. The paramystocrypt is incredulous.  
"I don't think so. Messengers or no, you will stop and identify yourselves or I will detain you by force."



**Xarvrax:** "I'm really glad we decided to come here on Capel's business now, I got to meet the Emperor, and you did that."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol remains silent, as Placidus directed.



**banana (GM):** The way this guy acts, as if he had an incredibly high rank, is strangely at odds with how little attended he is. The earlier bureaucrats Ghol saw, too, didn't seem to want to deal with him much.



**Kalira:** "We're... what is it the Emperor called us to be? Adventurers. That's it."

**Cenbara:** "Shuman Sard, that explains your attitudes."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax scoffs, "I'm the Scion of the Blue, Last of the Dragonwrought, and Insanity Incarnate. That's where I get mine from."

**Cenbara:** "So we'll take it as written that you're insane adventurers. None of this explains why you are taking away a prisoner I was about to remand to trial by jury or combat."



**banana (GM):** The three remaining imperial soldiers are just outside the door you came in. Technically they're blocking it off, which is inconvenient, but they're also laughing, which is funny.



**Kalira:** Shuman Sard? Is that an invocation?



**banana (GM):** One of the elf gods.  
(This guy's a human, but Sard is of the Elect)



**Xarvrax:** "Sure it does, we don't really care about your fancy title, and also THE EMPEROR SENT US."



**Ghol, Going East:** Give Ghol his weapons back, and trial by combat is fine.



**Kalira:** Kalira spits when he says it, then. "He's with us. Or we're with him. Either way you feel like looking at it."



**banana (GM):** The big wizard jabs a finger at Xarvrax's even bigger chest. "Did he send you to take away a thief who's been impersonating, I'm pretty sure at this point, an orcish spy out of the bizarre conviction that this would be a more reasonable explanation for his-" He gets talked over.



**Placidus:** "I had tea with an actual mystocrypt yesterday and sent him to bed with nightmares." To the guards. "Where are his weapons? Is there a central impound for them?"



**Ghol, Going East:** He is also...surprised to see the dark godhaver standing with him. Pleasantly so, he thinks.



**Xarvrax:** "Thief? What did you steal The Diabolist's heart?"

**Imperial Sergeant:** "Palace guard will have them sir. Not us."



**Placidus:** "What is he accused of stealing, Cenbara?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax mutters, "Not that I could blame you, she was pretty cool."

**Cenbara:** "He broke into the Shattered Palace and stole notes of troop movements and communiques in the South. Have you gone dumb, man?" This last to Ghol.



**Xarvrax:** "Do you actually have any of those things on you?"

"I mean, I don't really care if you did it or not, I just want to know if you got caught red-handed here."



**Placidus:** "Now is not the time."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol has spoken to this wizard all he cares to.



**Kalira:** "The dragon's right, though. Did he have them? If not, how can you be sure he stole them? It seems like your buildings are fairly easy to infiltrate..."

**Cenbara:** "Your gnome is right. This is not the time for a presentation of evidence, and I am not a judge."

"Merely an executioner."



**Placidus:** "If you have charges, wizard, bring them in earnest. If you don't, if you've been keeping him here without cause, then we are going to leave with him and you can take it up with someone who cares what you have to say."

**Cenbara:** "Unless one of you is championing him in a combat trial right now on the spot, we are not talking about the law. We will resume the normal processes of justice. The thief or scout or whatever will be imprisoned according to procedure. The Palace will not justify itself to adventurers."



**Ghol, Going East:** Fine.





**Placidus:** "Done."





**Xarvrax:** "Okay, let's get the beatings over with."

**Cenbara:** He holds out a hand as if expecting you to pass Ghol over to him or something.


 **Kalira:** "Any or all of us will. Bring it on."

 **Placidus:** How high up are we?


 **Xarvrax:** "If he says he didn't do it, then I'm going to side with the guy who isn't always a stuck up ass."


 **banana (GM):** Off the south edge of the study, about 70 feet above a courtyard. Off the north edge, ~350 to the ocean and some rocks in the swell.

One of the soldiers inside the hallway leans out over the stairwell, looking for his returning colleague. They're all getting kind of nervous at this talk of, you know, beatings and justice and so on.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will walk over to the wizard to get this started, unless Placidus has other designs.

**Cenbara:** "You're surrendering at last?"


 **Placidus:** Placidus has completely forgotten why they were sent here. Ghol was imprisoned, and he has spent his entire day navigating people who were invincibly certain of their own importance. "This is not the right time for you to pick a fight. We're going to leave, now." He's looking \*through\* Cenbara, as if staring at the shadow the wizard casts on the opposite wall without his body being in the way.


 **banana (GM):** If you want to intimidate the guy, you could make some skill check he's pretty confident though:


rolling d20+12 unlikely to be scared


() + 12


= **29**


 **Ghol, Going East:** I see.

 **Placidus:** Placidus doesn't care what he thinks. He can resist or not.

 **Xarvrax:** That include me?


 **banana (GM):** whoever wants!

 **Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 11 Scary Dragonmans

() + 11

= **27**

So close.

 **Ghol, Going East:** I don't think Ghol can get a mod on this roll that will push him past +9.

 **Kalira:** rolling 1d20+9 perhaps a much quieter menace?



(13)+9

= 22



**Ghol, Going East:** So.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax's power flares for a moment, before going out with a noise not unlike a raspberry, "Huh, guess not even Chaos gives a damn about you."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will just do his trial by combat.  
If the alternative is murdering the leader of the city.

**Paramystocrypt Cenbara:** "This is Horizon, you complete douchebags. Trial by combat is a one-on-one duel of arcane might, proving the defendant's guilt or innocence by right of Power. I doubt any one of you could incant the wings off a fly."



**Placidus:** He's really obviously not the leader of the city.



**Ghol, Going East:** Oh, so trial by combat isn't actually trial by combat.



**Xarvrax:** "Pfft, Wizards and their frail little arms couldn't hold an actual trial by combat, of course."  
Note, this was in fact said out loud.



**Placidus:** Placidus takes his wand out. "Fine. Let's get this over with."



**Kalira:** "For once I agree. Why call it a trial by combat and then make it about magic?"

**Paramystocrypt Cenbara:** "You call that a wand, do you?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax chuckles, "I could show you a wand, but I don't think anyone else would appreciate it."

**Paramystocrypt Cenbara:** The wizard holds out a hand, crooked - with a rush of air, a long and twisted staff materialises in it; it's almost as long as his body and glows in polygonal patches, as if covered in stained-glass windows.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax falls over laughing now, "That's still not a want you pompous moron!"



**banana (GM):** Is that the noise of feet on the stairwell..? You might be running out of time for sudden action, here. Although if what you want is a duel, he seems to be incensed enough to participate.



**Xarvrax:** wand\*

It would undermine any actual authority he likely has left at this point.  
Being goaded into fighting.



**Placidus:** Placidus is definitely in the mood to wring this guy's brain out on the floor. But he's not quite mad enough not to wait when he hears people coming.



**Kalira:** Kalira seems like she'd rather just stab him, but Placidus seems intent, so she leaves it to him. Is he a wizard? She's not sure.



**Placidus:** One way or another this will resolve itself.

**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax is just waiting for the climax of this insanity to really weigh in.



**banana (GM):** If nobody makes particular haste, then.. steps become huffs of breath and people running up stairs; the Dragon Soldiers at the door step hastily aside as a considerably larger number of soldiers in the livery of the Shattered Palace pour out of the stairwell, filling the hallway and shouldering their ways outside.

**Sergeant:** "Well, shit."



**Xarvrex:** Xarvrex blinks, "That's a lot of guys."

**Cenbara:** "Men, hold the door. These allegedly insane adventurers wish to rescue their fellow, a sneak thief. The only one among them who seems to realise the stupidity of the situation has agreed to stand as champion in trial by combat."



**Xarvrex:** "Allegedly insane? I believe we're past alleged insanity at this point."



**banana (GM):** Among the soldiers - half a score so far, and more coming - there are a couple of apprentice wizards. One of them: "Yes, sir. Shall we?"

**Cenbara:** "Square the Circle."



**Xarvrex:** "Triangle the Octagon too."



**Kalira:** What does that even mean?



**banana (GM):** The apprentices, squeezing past soldiers who do not really know what the hell is going on, jog to the corners of the room furthest from any of the alarming-looking adventurers.



**Xarvrex:** "And don't you dare forget to parallelogram the rectangle."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol sidles up next to Kalira. "If this goes sideways, grab Placidus and head back over the south wall. It's 70 feet down to the courtyard." Pause. "I'll take this asshole out the north."

**Person:** "If we jump, I have a plan."

**Apprentice 1:** "Amor Unus"

**Apprentice 2:** "Somnium Unus"



**Xarvrex:** Xarvrex hums a little, "Wizards need to concentrate while casting things right?"



**Kalira:** "I'm a little worried about what will happen to you after you do that."

**Apprentice 1:** "Loco Stantum"

**Apprentices 1 and 2:** "Simul Coniunct"



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol just grins.



**Xarvrex:** Xarvrex moves over to the chair Ghol was tied to and puts a hand on it.



**banana (GM):** Cenbara is pacing toward the center of the study. The desk is in his way so he puts one leg up and just, jumps on top of it. Papers and an inkwell go flying.



**Xarvrex:** Xarvrex puts both hands on the chair.



**Ghol, Going East:** Meanwhile, Ghol looks around. Anything he can use as makeshift weapons?



**banana (GM):** Lines of white light inscribe themselves on the ground, sprouting runes and curlicues; an impossible geometric figure springs up, thinly shining walls of light inscribing a ring with corners, fencing off the central part of the floor where Placidus and Cenbara are - though it doesn't look very solid. The noonday sun beats down upon the Shattered Palace.

Ghol sees: a filing cabinet with heavy metal drawers, a couple of vases with plants growing from the soil within, a number of soldiers with ACTUAL weapons you could grab...

At Minimum Placidus: roll initiative



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax decides to take this moment to lift the chair, and hurl it at the ceiling as hard as he can.



**banana (GM):** Unfortunately for him, there is literally no ceiling.



**Placidus:** rolling d20+8 placidus initiative

() + 8

= **27**



**Xarvrax:** Oh.  
Well.



**banana (GM):** Due to the thing where the building is broken apart and this is the centre and it's open to the sky etc  
whoa




**Xarvrax:** I guess he just checked a chair into the sky then?  
chucked\*



**banana (GM):** sure, it's going to go pretty high up


rolling d20+10 the palace paramystocrypt

() + 10

= **24**




**Xarvrax:** rolling d20 + 4

() + 4


= **11**


rolling d20 + 4


() + 4


= **10**


Wow, that's some terrible initiative.


 **Ghol, Going East:** I think this is a 1v1  
magically enforced


 **banana (GM):** it might or might not be enforced  
presumably, xarvrax is contemplating finding out


 **Placidus:** yeah I don't think you guys step in until this guy beats placidus, at least by the rules


 **banana (GM):** yeah, if you want to follow The Law then don't step in, but it's up to you

 **Placidus:** but, it LOOKS like this guy is significantly higher-level than placidus


 **Xarvrax:** He didn't say that it was one on one?


 **Ghol, Going East:** Yeah he did


 **Xarvrax:** Or did he?


 **Placidus:** do you know what the word 'duel' means


 **Xarvrax:** I mean...

 **banana (GM):** he did say it, yes


 **Xarvrax:** I could also duel him, once that chair returns from low orbit.


 **Ghol, Going East:** let's just let this play out for now.


 **Xarvrax:** I guess...

 **banana (GM):** Cenbara slams the butt of his staff on the desk. "I endure enough disrespect from traitors of the College and panderers of the Tower. I will not have miscellaneous adventurers who caught Emperor Roland's favour thinking they can spit in the eye of the civil law which has outlasted princes and kings alike. He begins to spin a hand in the air, his chinchairs visibly lengthening-  
But it's Placidus's turn.

Cenbara slams the butt of his staff on the desk. "I endure enough disrespect from traitors of the College and panderers of the Tower. I will not have miscellaneous adventurers who caught Emperor Roland's favour thinking they can spit in the eye of the civil law which has outlasted princes and kings alike." He begins to spin a hand in the air, his chinchairs visibly lengthening-


 **Placidus:** Placidus just stands there.  
focus go

 **banana (GM):** Behind Xarvrax, the original soldiers and the new ones are talking. Your escorts are kind of chastened.. seems they did the Wrong Thing in kind of letting you guys have free reign. However, the palace guards have no actual authority to report them or anything.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax looks at the apprentices, "Man, he just said that the towers and college suck."

**Apprentice:** "They REALLY suck. You don't even know."

**Apprentice 2:** "Quiet, John."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods, "Just checking."



**Kalira:** the real issue is that i think most of placidus's things trigger off of allied attacks




**Xarvrax:** Or being attacked.



**banana (GM):** Cenbara waves his hand in rapid circles; something invisible passes from the staff to what he's drawing in the air, and then flashes. A spray of sparks seems to come from all around Placidus, burning through cloth to numb the skin.

rolling d20+11 vs MD

() + 11

= **18**



**Placidus:** exact hit  
trigger



**banana (GM):** \*awaits trigger\*




**Placidus:** md or pd lower



**banana (GM):** pd



**Placidus:** rolling d20+9 moment of karma vs pd

() + 9




= **19**



**banana (GM):** hit

After the trigger, the Glitterperil deals 5d6+8 nonlethal damage:

rolling 5d6+8






(  +  +  +  +  ) + 8

= **21**



**Placidus:** rolling 5d6+5 force damage, and he can't attack me unless I'm the only legal target.

so we'll find out soon enough if this squared circle is binding

(  +  +  +  +  ) + 5

= **19**



**Xarvrax:** Okay yeah, I'd like to also find that out.




**banana (GM):** The shower of numbing sparks descends on Placidus, making his muscles weak and his mind sluggish.. his own retaliation strikes Cenbara, but the paramystocrypt only staggers a little before standing straight again..!




escalation +1


**Cenbara:** "What have you done."


 **banana (GM):** He lowers the staff, looks around.


 **Placidus:** 14/35 btw

 **banana (GM):** Placidus looks far more poorly off after the salvo, but.. Cenbara isn't even making a move to cast another spell. Like he doesn't even want to, or.. he screws up his face in concentration, not understanding.

**Cenbara:** "I"


 **Placidus:** Placidus giggles. His laugh is like a woodpecker's, a harsh staccato. "Where will you be, little man, when the ground splits open and hell pours out. Where will you be when the sea rises up and swallows Omen whole."


 **Ghol, Going East:** rolling d20+4 init for ref

(  )+4

= **24**


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods solemnly.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol will, at first opportunity, quietly attempt to cast Heal on Placidus.  
Unless Placidus doesn't want help.


 **banana (GM):** Cenbara does not attack. He spends a minor action, conjuring some sort of orb that rotates around his body - pictured on it in miniature are lands and seas, part of which correspond to the maps of the Realm you've seen.


Placidus's turn


**Cenbara:** "I will be keeping the city safe for when the soldiers come home."


 **Kalira:** Kalira crosses her arms. What is going on here? Are they both going mad?

 **banana (GM):** wait, i mean  
it's not cenbara's turn yet  
so he doesn't even use that minor yet  
it's placidus first

 **Placidus:** "Where will you BE when the riddle of steel solves itself and we all stand in Ironhenge's shadow. You'll be here, watching, standing still. Helpless. Worthless."

 **Xarvrax:** "Safe for who?"

 **Placidus:** "The Age is ending, and you're just standing there."  
focus go

 **banana (GM):** summon orb, go

## ESCALATION



**Placidus:** well, it seems I've retained focus through my turn  
time for a rebuke attack  
escalation +2, right

**Cenbara:** "Fool. I brought about the beginning of the end, in part." But he does nothing.



**banana (GM):** yep



**Placidus:** rolling d20+11 vs pd

(18)+11

= 29



**banana (GM):** hit



**Placidus:** first,  
[ ] BITTER REVELATION (1/Battle Racial Power) No Action  
- Trigger: I roll a natural 16+ on an attack  
- The target is dazed until the end of my next turn.



**banana (GM):** So, Ghol's trying to cast a spell - dex check, please



**Ghol, Going East:** lol



**Placidus:** next,



**Ghol, Going East:** no, his init would have made that possible on the end of last turn  
he has to wait until end of this one  
so let's let this play out



**Placidus:** rolling 3d6+5 this much force damage, and brain-melting secrets procs again. he still  
can't attack me

(4 + 4 + 6)+5

= 19



**Xarvrax:** At the mention of the end of the age Xarvrax growls lowly, "You ignorant fool, no mortal has that power alone."

**Cenbara:** The high wizard slumps. "But I AM alone. They cast me out to the conquering wolf."  
He does not - cannot - attack.

## ESCALATION +3



**Placidus:** rebuke again

rolling d20+12 vs pd

(12)+12

= 24



**banana (GM):** hit

at least the daze wears off



**Placidus:** rolling 3d6+5 force

(6 + 4 + 1)+5

= 16

focus go



**banana (GM):** not psychic damage, then?

oh wait, you have the feat to make it any damage



**Placidus:** no, it's psychic when I attack md

yes

brain-melting secrets procs off all my attacks

because of the feat

feat



**banana (GM):** The noise rises to a pitch, a whine - the stones rumble. The soldiers, almost a score of them in all, shift about and look to the wizards, worried. The apprentices' eyes just roll up in their heads.

**Cenbara:** "I did what had to be done. Nobody can dispute that."

"Even now I'm just trying to do the right thing."

He doesn't do anything.

### ESCALATION +4



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax continues growling at him.



**Placidus:** rebuke



**Xarvrax:** I'd like to throw my 11 init in the ring for this turn.



**Ghol, Going East:** please do not interrupt this

unless placidus asks you to



**Placidus:** rolling d20+13 I wonder how many more times I can go without flubbing a roll

(13)+13

= 26



**Xarvrax:** I won't be.



**Placidus:** rolling 3d6+5 more bore wants more force

( 3 + 5 + 5 )+5

= 18

**Cenbara:** "Ggh!"



**Placidus:** "I am not your confessor. Surrender or die, wizard."



**banana (GM):** He's shrinking now beneath the noise. None of you can hear it, technically; it has no amplitude, only frequency. There is a vibration nonetheless, and you don't know how else to describe it than 'sound'.



**Placidus:** "I will divide every atom of your being before you keep my brothers in chains another moment."

**Cenbara:** Making one last attempt to rise - though he does not even attempt to raise his staff. "What is the orc to you?"

"Who- who are your brothers?"



**banana (GM):** End turn

**ESCALATION +5**



**Placidus:** rolling d20+14 fallen london has taught me to fear the 98% check

( 17 )+14

= 31

rolling 3d6+5

( 1 + 3 + 6 )+5

= 15



**banana (GM):** The question is: are you dealing nonlethal damage?



**Placidus:** is this his last hp



**banana (GM):** yes



**Placidus:** if someone says something he will. otherwise no. he's in a zone



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol remains silent.

**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax growls, "He needs to answer questions. No mortal should be able to alter the course



of the ages."



**Kalira:** Kalira says nothing. After all, this man is certainly getting what he would have given.



**banana (GM):** technically that's completely false, as he intended to harmlessly incapacitate placidus and then deliver ghol to a court, but, nobody's keeping score  
also he would have done it in a really annoying smug way  
Below and around you, the Palace \*creaks\*.



**Placidus:** "Wayward children. Happy wastrels and incomplete machines and the vengeful damned. I am kin to \*heroes\*, wizard, and you are nothing." Placidus moves for the first time all fight. With a flick of his wrist the sound breaks and there's a massive violet flash that spills out the side of the palace - the remainder of an undirected oscillation. Everyone's ears are ringing, but if that had gone where it was calculated then they'd be cleaning up Cenbara with a mop.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol permits himself a private teen moment:  
THAT WAS INSANELY BADASS!!!!!!



**banana (GM):** Everything stops for a moment as the tide of colour dissipates into an unoccupied wing. Gently, gracefully, the walls and floor to the east shift and topple and then with a noise so loud that you cannot even hear it, a chunk of the Twice Shattered Palace slides into the ocean.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods.



**Kalira:** "Well. I suppose that settles that, then."



**banana (GM):** Cenbara drops his staff as his eyes begin to slide closed. With an immense effort of will, the paramystocrypt grips the corners of the furnished wood, levers himself down it into the chair - the one which Xarvrax did not throw, the one for prisoners - and loses consciousness at his desk.



**Placidus:** Placidus's hands are numb. His head is pounding. It takes him a couple tries to stow his wand again.



**banana (GM):** The light of the squared circle rises from the stones, gathers to a point, and all flies at Ghol's forehead.

A rune forms, glowing and then fading to the consistency of a tattoo or brand. The arcane symbol for innocence.

About a dozen Palace soldiers draw their swords, but the sergeant from the regular army - the one who saw you in the throne room - calms them down. Something about not fucking with people who've just proven themselves un-with-fuckable, and anyway, this is the law, right? In your weird wizard city?



**Placidus:** Placidus turns, slowly, to look at the guards. "May we leave now, please?"



**banana (GM):** Someone: "I think you'd better."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax points at the unconscious Wizard, "And one of you tell the Emperor that this one is a treasonous monster trying to end the world."



**Kalira:** "I think that might warrant a little extra research."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is either going to help Placidus out physically if he needs help -- where's Kon? Kon should be around somewhere -- and if not, try to find some way to get his weapons back before they go.

**Xarvrax:** "If even half of what he said is true, I should be throwing him off the tower now. That's why I





want him in jail, with his magic sealed off."



**Placidus:** Placidus isn't quite steady on his feet, but he's not at risk of falling over.



**Kon:** Kon, it turns out, is right outside -- it's unclear how he's gotten in this far, but the Hungry Games banner draped across his back likely has something to do with it.



**banana (GM):** Sergeant: "We'll just escort you out of the palace, without anyone getting in the way or anything, so that you can immediately leave.."



**Xarvrax:** rolling d6

( 2 )

= 2



**Kon:** He's more than willing to give Placidus a ride out if he'd like.



**Xarvrax:** No luck there.



**Kalira:** "That is a smart dog."



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



**Placidus:** "He's a warg," mumbles Placidus.



**banana (GM):** The way through is full of running feet and yelling, mind you, because people on the lower levels are trying to find out what the fuck happened, but none of it has to involve you further.



**Kalira:** "Warg. Let's go, before we break any more palaces."



**Placidus:** "It was already broken."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shrugs, "I dunno, I'm just surprised I didn't break it this time."



**Kon:** Kon will stalk a swath through soldiers, head held high, with Placidus on his back.



**Kalira:** "As are we all."



**Kon:** He'll probably brush past any who get in his way, but probably they won't.



**Placidus:** Placidus didn't even realize he got up on Kon's back. But it seems he did.



**banana (GM):** :3



**Placidus:** I'm assuming recovery-spending is as normal  
w/r/t nonlethal damage

**Person:** Person trots to keep up. "People often underestimate each other, right."



**Placidus:** rolling d6+1 triple this

( 5 )+1

**Person:** This is addressed to the group generally.



**Kalira:** "They do."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods, "It's funny, yeah."



**Placidus:** 32/35 hp, 6/7 recoveries

**Person:** "Part of it makes sense. If you're not as strong as someone else, you won't be able to accurately judge how strong you are; even if you're stronger, you might be strong in a non-uniform distribution such that your analytical ability is worse than your domination."



**Kalira:** "I'll take your word for it, I guess."



**banana (GM):** The streets of Horizon are as they were.

Sure, a few people point and gawp at the slightly altered skyline, but this is not San Meat; your outrageous exploits aren't enough to affect EVERYONE's lives.

Might want to work on that.



**Xarvrax:** I mean, I could have, but several people threatened to murder me for doing so.  
He was weak and everything.



**banana (GM):** City of Towers: played out?



**Placidus:** Perhaps we should leave sooner rather than later.



**Ghol, Going East:** Was Ghol able to reclaim his weapons, or does he have to go back?



**Xarvrax:** We didn't technically break any laws.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol might have.



**banana (GM):** Good point: when you went down through the main level with the brand of innocence still faintly glowing, they were happy to give your stuff back.



**Ghol, Going East:** But: he's been cleared of all charges, legally!



**Xarvrax:** Ah ah! The magic symbol thingy says otherwise.



**Kalira:** This place might be played out, but there's still one loose end. Persons of Interest.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol takes them back with a slight incline of the head in what might be thanks, then he's on his way.



**Xarvrax:** If the Gnome blows your head off, you must... do something I guess?



**Placidus:** Also, Placidus wants to go shopping still.



**Xarvrax:** I suppose we'll wrap up next time before booking it?



**banana (GM):** Sure. And don't worry: the shops are open until the Eleventh Hour of the Day.  
i mean glass. i mean afternoon. the eleventh glass of the evening,