



**banana (GM):** Horizon!?



**Placidus:** Horizon.



**Kalira:** Horizon...



**banana (GM):** Superlative of Adjectives! The City variously of Walls, of Towers and of putting behind you.



**Travis Meacham:** Chorizo



**banana (GM):** Wizards of Tower and the Palace, of the seven Orders, of the ten Lower Arcana, of the Empire and of the Sea, the great and the powerful and the left behind- right now many of these people want to harm you. It's been an interesting stop, but your dreams of what are your dreams of.  
roll relationship dice and let's find out!



**Kalira:** rolling 2d6 demigod conflicted

( 1 + 6 )

= 7



**Crion:** rolling 1d6 ORC LORD, CONFLICTED

( 3 )

= 3



**Skeleton:** before i go, though:



**Crion:** rolling 2d6 ELF QUEEN, CONFLICTED

( 4 + 2 )

= 6



**Skeleton:** rolling 1d6 positive diabolist

( 4 )


= 4



**Kalira:** rolling 1d6 elector negative


( 5 )

= 5

 **Skeleton:** rolling 2d6 negative wizard king

( 4 + 2 )

= 6

 **Travis Meacham:** rolling 2d6 conjqueror pos


( 6 + 2 )


= 8


rolling 1d6 archmage conflict


( 6 )

= 6


 **banana (GM):** seems like having been nonpresent for recent events has INCREDIBLY endeared the powers that be to travis, as opposed to everyone else  
or rather, endeared travis to them

 **Placidus:** channelling the other

 **banana (GM):** Anyway, what are your dreams of. Th- oh no


 **Xarvrax:** guessing it's relationship time?

 **banana (GM):** yep

 **Xarvrax:** rolling 3d6 dragons

( 6 + 3 + 1 )


= 10


 **banana (GM):** They're back at last.


And then: those dreams may have to be your guide. The loose collection of eathletes and travellers formed as an eating team and pejoratively assumed to be 'adventurers' by the Emperor himself are.. turned loose. This city can't hold you.

It'd like to, but the walls all came down.

Person really, wants to leave. The Palace really wants Placidus and Ghol to leave. No word yet of whether the Archmage wants Travis and Skeleton to leave, but presumably he \*would\*, if he knew what they'd been up to.

 **Kalira:** Kalira also wants Person to leave, before it gets ugly otherwise.

 **banana (GM):** Horizon surely holds more adventure for others' taking. You've got a compass direction to Go.

 **Placidus:** Placidus would like to leave even more than the Palace wants him to. He rises before dawn. He dreamt of cats again.

 **Xarvrax:** I just realized that we never actually found out what the Emperor wanted us to do.


 **banana (GM):** You found out what he wanted you to \*not\* do, at least.

 **Ghol, Going East:** The feeling is mutual.

 **Kalira:** Not mention Ironhenge, that's for sure.


 **Travis Meacham:** it was ersatz we needed to stop by to pick up the princess's loot, right?

 **banana (GM):** That's right. You've got a variety of possible questful destinations!

 **Kalira:** We also need to kill a necromancer, Kalira's pretty sure. She doesn't know the guy, but necromancers are usually assholes anyway.

 **Placidus:** Sometimes they're entirely gutless.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Argh. No clues as to the locations of the shards OR the eggs gained. What a wasted trip.

 **banana (GM):** To the southeast, the heart of the Snakesrule beckons; not only has the Princess Annamiranda promised a couple of you a reward for your earlier skullduggeries, the necromancer Bonanda wants to fight in the capital Erewhile.

 **Xarvrax:** Literally, in our case.


 **Ghol, Going East:** At least he got to meet the Diabolist...

 **Xarvrax:** Also, technically, Xarvrax scared an Emperor.


 **Ghol, Going East:** ...for what good it did him.


 **banana (GM):** Further east are the mountains and the woods - claimed by some elf. That elf has an appointment.  
And north of those, Santa Cora, the coast again, and the rough location Placidus's compass points..


 **Placidus:** Are those same mountains the ones Pfeiffer directed Placidus to?

 **banana (GM):** Broadly, yeah- there are lot of mountains, but it's at least the right \*range\*.

 **Placidus:** This is a theatre of the mind world. If all the mountains are in range, they're effectively the same mountain.

 **banana (GM):** (For anyone who isn't aware: in the snow-capped peaks live the Realm's most dangerous cats.)

 **Ghol, Going East:** Pfah.

 **banana (GM):** All of this is very far away, but you've got waystone as far as Chorizon and a peaceful villagescape through which to meander afterward. You've even lost half of your hangers on. How do you go about departing the city of Horizon?

 **Ghol, Going East:** Do we still have a wagon?



**banana (GM):** Nope. Unless you seek him out, the stonemason Janes hasn't made contact.



**Travis Meacham:** To great acclaim and the lamentation of the barkeeps and restaurateurs who won't be feeding Travis any longer, I assume.




**banana (GM):** Roll cha, Travis, to back up your claims of extravagant relaxation.



**Ghol, Going East:** We should acquire a wagon, then. Unless we want to haul 3,000 gold and a magical chair about by hand.



**Travis Meacham:** rolling 1d20+2

() + 2

= **11**

I ... kind of relaxed.



**banana (GM):** You didn't make any particularly impressive and valuable contacts, but, you DID get to try several new wines.

Who's in for plan wagon? You'd move faster without it...



**Kalira:** Unfortunately Kalira didn't have time to hobnob because she was busy helping Person out. A shame.



**banana (GM):** He's grateful, at least; this gratitude takes the form of marching behind you and acting kind of like a cross between a soldier following orders and a child imitating its parent.



**Kalira:** If we're keeping the chair it does seem like we need one.



**Placidus:** Placidus will see to a wagon if we haven't spontaneously manifested some other way to carry like... hundreds of pounds of silver at least.



**Kalira:** Kalira or Ghol could surely manage sacks of coin if they were strapped across their shoulders, but a chair's too awkward.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax could, but he'd whine the whole way, and no one wants that.



**banana (GM):** Well, it's not spontaneous exactly.. but pick one of those 6es, please



**Skeleton:** Skeleton's been busy with private matters here in the big city - this has mostly meant shopping, along with some furtive research and rumor-chasing. Are we ALREADY leaving, though? Because ske was really, really hoping to get a hold of the Diabolist somehow.



**Ghol, Going East:** Conqueror seems reasonable



**Travis Meacham:** lets cash in the demigod 6 so we can get an epic black metal wagon



**Placidus:** could be the five 6, for nascent dragon god xarvrax, or the conqueror/archmage 6, for "please get us the fuck out of here"  
demigod 6 obviously gets us the batmobile



**Kalira:** batmobile. let's do it



**banana (GM):** You're halfway down Mollification Street toward the Gate of Numpties, debating whether

to give Skeleton a shot at re-interrogating a powerful frenemy, when they catch up with you.



**Kalira:** please. let it be them



**banana (GM):** The streets are noisy, so it's the lack of it you notice first- the crowds are parting, voices dropping off, as the thing moves toward you- gracefully if insanely past all the other pedestrians, but slowing to a stop beside your group.



**Kalira:** please, based dark gods



**banana (GM):** It's the other them.

A weedy cultist in black armour leans down from the deck swaying crazily above the cobbles, nearly hits his head on a beam - it's one of the two from Westbyron, now alone. He's piloting something that doesn't make any sense.



**Ghol, Going East:** What the--



**Placidus:** Oh. Them.

**Cultist:** "Destiny calls, children of Mottle."

It's like.. a boat. It *is* a boat, wooden and tarred, with a large sail and a small one, taking up half the street as it slides impossibly through the earth. The tack flutters and he pulls at the wheel to keep the vessel in place.



**Skeleton:** "Oh, that's kind of neat."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol crosses arms and gives Kalira the "they're YOUR gods" look.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax looks at the rest of the group, "None of you get to call Dragons weird anymore."



**Ghol, Going East:** \*his arms



**Placidus:** "I suppose we deserve this."



**banana (GM):** It's not a very big boat, but, and this is probably its most unusual aspect, it is not in the water. The keel, just three yards long, *ripples* as it cuts through the earth, somehow.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton leans around. Does the street behind the boat look disturbed at all?



**banana (GM):** It's fine.



**Kalira:** "We do deserve this. Fine work, gentlemen. Do we not need such an impressive conveyance?"

**Cultist:** "Indeed you do, in payment for future service. Mottle claims an obligation. Here is its reward."



**Xarvrax:** Which one is Mottle again?



**Ghol, Going East:** The gross one.



**Kalira:** "As ever. I give Mottle my thanks."



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











































**Kalira:** They're all gross. Grossly powerful.



**Xarvrax:** Mottle isn't murder god, right?



	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Hooo, hey, hang on. If we accept the boat is that tacitly accepting the obligation? Or are we considered obligated either way?"
	<b>Kalira:</b> that's mailer
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Not particularly murderous for a Dark God, no.
	<b>Kalira:</b> well i mean really it's all of them, at least a little bit. but mostly mailer
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> Then I am wholly uninterested.
	<b>Placidus:</b> No, Mottle is the god of garbage and wealth.
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> Guest is the coolest evil god. Everyone likes a surprise.
	<b>Placidus:</b> AS WE CAN PLAINLY SEE
	<b>banana (GM):</b> It's hard to know why the spirit boat has been granted to you <i>*exactly*</i> ; last you heard it was an escape plan by the local agents of the Army of Darkness. Kalira knows, however, that it doesn't matter; the machinations of the gods are obscure and always self-serving.
	<b>Kalira:</b> "Don't worry, I'm sure that all I'll have to do is punish an oathbreaker or something. Maybe take out the trash, so to speak." Kalira picks up the Dominant Seat, assuming we have it nearby, and places it in a prominent position. Then she sits in it. "Anchors aweigh, so to speak!"
	<b>banana (GM):</b> The cultist.. was he brother w-something..? The uninteresting soldier is disembarking, gathering up a small pack that he had on a bench at the stern.
	<b>Kalira:</b> wow so to speak forever
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Well, if it's just YOU who'll have to. But seriously though can any of you think of a way to find her?"
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Yes."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> If you wanted to all actually ride in the spirit vessel, you'd need to really cram in there - it's bigger than a dinghy, but it only has a single deck and a couple of seats/places to lash down cargo. If necessity calls, though, you could e.g. carry each other..
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Assuming it's at all feasible, Ghol and Kon will walk alongside the boat rather than ride it.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "I mean that won't give her reason to incinerate us. Wasn't she really annoyed last time?"
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> as long as we're on the wayhighway, travis is definitelyt doing the same
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Yes."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Oh. Well, what?"
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Yeah, there's enough room to walk on the broader streets beside it, and easily enough if you get out of the city.
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> Xarvrax herds cultists on board.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Issuriel: "We're to learn to sail, honoured wing?"

	<b>Placidus:</b> "She didn't threaten *you*."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> Skeleton takes up very little space when they need to, of course, and has no problem squeezing onto the boat.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Skeleton also doesn't weigh it down much, so can feel free to do sker best figureskull imitation.
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "If you want? Just stay on the boat unless informed otherwise."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> You're drawing kind of a lot of attention as you move around with this thing, by the way.
	<b>Placidus:</b> Weird.
	<b>Kalira:</b> Kalira holds out a hand. "You're going to dirty up this gift with your mewling 'worshippers', dragon?"
	<b>Placidus:</b> "What if they get seasick?"
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "Shut up, and they'll walk if that happens."
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Who is Skeleton trying to find?
	<b>Skeleton:</b> the diabolist
	<b>Placidus:</b> "If we're going to let them tag along I don't much see the point in making them walk."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> The way the landboat moves through or *past* the ground, like it wasn't there, but still bobbing slightly in the currents of the earth.. you could see that making someone queasy, if they were a huge chump dope.
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Ghol can give him the precise location of her room in the Palace, but it's possible she's moved on.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> i'm fine if we're leaving in too much of a hurry or if she's already disappeared in a cloud of brimstone or something though
	<b>Kalira:</b> "I'm sure Mottle won't mind their sickness, only their faithlessness. Tread carefully, little dragon followers."
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "We'd make them walk to punish them spitefully and/or toughen them up draconically."
	<b>Placidus:</b> "That does sound draconic."
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "Not really."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "The PALace? Aggh."
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "Dragons are already tough, so we don't have to do those things."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> I think it's more the former than the latter (re: diabolist). There's no reason to think she's left, but the question is whether Skeleton dare delay departure.. question: what's sker main interest in talking to the woman?  Maybe your dark goals can be achieved by alternate dark means.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton would like her to explain the egg box, Skeleton's actual predicament, etc.  
To be honest, ske hasn't got high hopes, here, but it'd be something.



**banana (GM):** Mirchin to Kalira: "Your gods don't actually \*mind\* dragons, right?"



**Placidus:** "One of the Five is one of their high priests, isn't it?"



**banana (GM):** Mirchin: "Right. They say the Great Black Wyrm is favoured of Guest. Counts for something in my book. Counts in Guest's favour, I mean."



**Kalira:** "Not by name, but they tend to be arrogant and unwilling to show the proper respect. To anything, much less a higher power."



**Xarvrax:** "That sounds like The Black, yeah."



**Kalira:** "There are exceptions, and those exceptions are rewarded. But as a rule they tend to turn up their nose at anything they don't directly control."



**Placidus:** Placidus doesn't say it out loud, but he does think it reflects poorly on a god if a \*dragon\* sees fit to worship them.



**banana (GM):** What Ghol \*can\* do is describe to Skeleton how the Diabolist's demons looked and acted. They hang around her in great numbers, it's said - let's see if you can find one.  
One or both of you roll.. demon hunting??



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax could help, he's got both demon hunting, and demon related powers.



**Ghol, Going East:** I have no idea what that pool would be. WIS?  
Would Scout apply?



**Skeleton:** The soul and life-force of a demon are dramatically distinct from a human's, right? So if Skeleton were to cast out necromantically, looking for disturbances in local animi or fucked-up or absent potential deaths, or something...?



**banana (GM):** Well, Wis is for physically noticing things. The goal here is to establish an actual correspondence, though, so int for trying to, like, magically manipulate the thing would make sense. One of each, please.  
The nature of chaos and its relationship to the abyss is an interesting point..



**Skeleton:** rolling 1d20 at worst, this is an unskilled wisdom check with +4. at best, it's an int plus necromancy check with +12

(10)

= 10



**banana (GM):** Then could I get wis (no scout) from Ghol, and in a sec something from Xarvrax  
Impromptu skill challenge time.



**Xarvrax:** Int for me?



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



(12)+5

= 17



**banana (GM):** ok, and i'd like one more followup roll from ghol which IS a scout roll, dc 10



**Ghol, Going East:** That's a +10 roll, so

rolling d20+10

(2)+10

= 12



**Placidus:** almost



**Travis Meacham:** Ghol Kon, da.



**Ghol, Going East:** Indeed.



**banana (GM):** You're leaving Horizon behind. Passing beneath the arch of the eponymous numpty are a group of pedestrians and about the smallest feasible sailing vessel - but wouldn't it be a shame if you didn't watch out for followers to take advantage of? It's worked so well before.

So Ghol goes on the alert even earlier than usual, looking for unusual movement to point out to Skeleton. The good news is that there *are* demons following you. The other news is that they're not alone.

Skeleton can 'call' to one of the implike beings trying to hide in gutters and on walls if ske wants, but might first want to be aware of this:

When you set out into the fields, Ghol spots the following entities tailing you pretty obviously:



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's been frowning a bit more than usual, but when Kon slinks back over from one of his mysterious side-trips, that's when he goes over to Skeleton: "You've been looking for demons, right?"



**Skeleton:** Skeleton's crouching in the back of the boat, sker gloves twisted together complicatedly and subtle wisps of silver fog occasionally escaping out of sker sleeves. "What? Um, maybe."



**Ghol, Going East:** "Behind us. There."



**Placidus:** Placidus's gaze keeps drifting back up to the Palace, whose silhouette against the sky is different than it was when he saw it the morning before. It was a long night.



**Skeleton:** Ske twists around, and sees....



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax doesn't know what everyone is frowning for, Horizon was fun.



**banana (GM):** - an scout on the city's rooftops, moving like that orc you saw signs of last week

- a pair of swirling blacknesses with tiny red claws - demonic imps

- a flock of grey geese that alight all at once from heather beside the side of the road, climbing into the sky above you to resume their tracking

- two short robed beings that Kalira recognises from the bar - persons

- a kitten which keeps tripping over paving stones until it gets to the black waystone of the highway

and proceeds to trip over its own feet

- a number of Imperial soldiers



**banana (GM):** If this keeps up for more than a few minutes they're going to start running into each other.

Behind you, there- and there, and there, and there, and there...



**Kon:** Kon wanders over to inspect the kitten.

And, if necessary and possible, get it out of the way of any oncoming Imperial boots.



**banana (GM):** It's less far back than most of your tails, due to having tiny short legs, but it rears up and tries to hiss when an enormous warg approaches.



**Kon:** Kon barks once, loudly.



**banana (GM):** Still, the baby cat has definitely been intentionally following you at least since a few intersections back.



**Kalira:** The kitten might be the most ominous of all of our tails. Maybe it's because it has a literal tail.



**banana (GM):** It bolts!



**Kon:** Manners.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax keeps an eye on the soldiers.



**Skeleton:** "Wow, what? What's with all that stuff?"



**banana (GM):** They probably mistook you for someone more interesting and important.



**Xarvrax:** Regardless of what Roland said, he probably was more pissed off than he let on.



**Kon:** Kon could easily outpace it and snatch it up by its scruff, but has no reason to.



**Kalira:** "We are making quite an exit, you know. And as far as I can tell, each one of us individually pissed off someone powerful or dangerous while we were in Horizon. Hopefully they don't get the idea to join forces."



**banana (GM):** The city walls aren't far behind yet; countryside is only just beginning to open up. There's a spiderweb of farms and roads ahead, small outbuildings, and eventually a misty moor... but the insane crowd of people following you is becoming incredibly noticeable.



**Skeleton:** "I mean, hmm, the birds are those fisherpeople having some sort of joke, right? And THAT'S why I was catching TWO hollows. And THAT'S - ...awwww!"



**Travis Meacham:** "I would argue that Kelly and I only pissed off the Archmage IF he was paying careful attention and responding like a normal person."




**Placidus:** "Which is far from a safe assumption."





**Skeleton:** "I didn't piss anyone off at all! Maybe the cryophoenix was a little annoyed, but only for a minute or two."





**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shakes his head, "Or is crazy and paranoid looking for the slightest mention of himself."


 **Ghol, Going East:** Meanwhile, Ghol wonders if that scout can see him rolling his eyes from here. Rooftops? During the day? It's a wonder that wizard even had to ask about the Movement in the city.


 **banana (GM):** Unless.. he \*wants\* to be seen,


 **Ghol, Going East:** Indeed. What if, instead of being incompetent, he is instead merely stupid?


 **banana (GM):** Person: "Are we going to start a caravan again?"


 **Skeleton:** "...so how do I get in touch with an imp, d'you figure?"


 **Kalira:** "It seems so."


 **Ghol, Going East:** "I went up to one and ordered it to take me to its mistress. Your results may vary."


 **banana (GM):** Oh, that's what skeleton's necromancing check was for - if you want to send out a 'ping' of magic to the little demons who are, right now, scampering through gorse, you can. It'd let them know that oyu know.


 **Skeleton:** "What, like out there? I'd get trampled. I've got this, though." Ske hunches over, focusing...


 **banana (GM):** The soldiers are the most obvious- a squad of six, just, marching down the highway. They're staying about twenty minutes' walk back from you.


 **Skeleton:** A ways away, nearby one of the imps, a ghostly, phantasmal skull coheres out of thin air, joined by a similarly gaseous skeletal hand. It waves hello/hey-notice-me, then holds one of its phalanges up in front of its teeth as though shushing someone, then beckons, then points at the landboat.


 **banana (GM):** Oddly, some of the geese overhead have split off to form a separate and smaller V, above the soldiers (the main one is still above your walking and sailing group).


 **Skeleton:** The whole display is very small, imp-scaled, and should be as hidden from onlookers as the little lurking demons themselves.


 **banana (GM):** Surely it's not that poorly concealed.


 **Travis Meacham:** What's with these geese?  
Travis looks closely at them, but he doesn't have any spells that can augment his sight.


 **banana (GM):** They're the sort that live on the coast west of here, you can tell that much.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax stops, and turns to look at the soldiers directly before waving at them.

 **Skeleton:** If you're not right there you'd maybe see a little puff of pale gas go off next to one of the lurking blots of darkness for a few moments.

 **banana (GM):** Almost-concealed by tall grass, the demons blob and wave at each other for a moment- then one of them comes scampering onward, rushing much faster than the other down the side of the road toward you openly. Despite its size, it's actually going faster than any of you but Kon could run.  
This is the first time Xarvrax has come into close contact with a creature of the Abyss, right?

 **Skeleton:** "Oh, I was hoping it could... sort of warp invisibly here or something. Hmm."

 **banana (GM):** It definitely can't do that. 'Hidden' among a group of shepherds moving along the road, the two short persons are pointing at and watching it.



**Xarvrax:** Not really?

He met the Diabolist, remember?



**banana (GM):** Wait, yeah, he was there for that.



**Xarvrax:** He was the one who saw her showing up, even.



**Kalira:** "Well, if you wanted attention, you got it."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol grimaces. These things are so annoying.



**Skeleton:** "Well, I didn't want EVERYONE'S! Whichever, though."



**banana (GM):** In retrospect, maybe it even had a hand in helping catalyse his transformation to a wellspring OF chaos, because: yep. This is exactly the same wild surging power that flows through and around him. The thing's nimbus is like a blot of darkness, within which lurk.. limbs, heads, tails, in varying quantity. Most of the visible flesh is a sooty red, but sometimes the black blobby bits themselves cohere into the form of something like a very tiny fat man.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton gets up from sker seat, kneels on the side of the boat, braces sker hands on the railing or rim or whatever you call it 'round the edge, and just peers down over the side at the furrow in the grass. "Hello, yes!"



**banana (GM):** Also, it's audibly huffing and puffing from running to catch up with you.



**Skeleton:** Ske turns her hood to the rest of the passengers. "Should I invite him up or what? He looks tired."

**Imp:** "Ohhh boy. Unholy crap."

"lemme tell you I was NOT expecting an invite to this particular rodeo."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax likes this one already.



**Placidus:** Placidus looks down from up on the boat. "Sure, why not?"



**banana (GM):** The voice that issues forth is high pitched rather than majestic, tyrannous, etc. It goes some way toward dispelling the exuding sense of evil.



**Travis Meacham:** A little way.



**Skeleton:** "Oh, I just wanted a word. Listen, um, the Diabolist - you're affiliated, right? I don't know how many of you are... freelancers or something." Skeleton looks around as ske speaks until ske finds a robe or something, which'll be held down so that the little demon can grab on and climb up to perch on the rim.



**banana (GM):** It obligingly hooks a number of miniature claws into the robe and hauls itself upward - must be quite strong for its size.

**Imp:** "Clearing up a point of confusion, even though that is so totally the opposite of the job description. Um The Diabolist is what you call the mistress?"



**Skeleton:** "Yeah, the lady with the horns."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is reasonably certain any and all demonic complaining -- which is constant from these things -- is an affectation. He doubts it can actually get tired.


**Imp:** "Yeah, then yeah! Every one of us serves the dark mistress, by whose power we will one day have dominion over ALL THE WORLD." It manifests a grinning little face from its upper part and winks. "So she'd have me say."

**Person:** "All of you at the same time?"


**Imp:** "What? Yes, and maybe."

**Person:** "So demons like sharing?"


**Imp:** "NOT THIS GUY"


 **Skeleton:** "Oh, good. Listen... I was hoping to-" Actually Skeleton is more interested to see how this exchange resolves itself first.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Demons are the WORST.

 **banana (GM):** Ensconced in the landboat, the imp is just hopping back and forth from one interlocutor to the next.


**Person:** "If you don't want to share the world, then why are you forming an army to take it?"

 **Kalira:** Kalira is just sitting in the Seat, observing.


 **Skeleton:** "-yes, anyway, hoping to talk to her? Is that arrangeable? I've just got a few questions basically."

**Imp:** "Can you BELIEVE this guy. Literal as the shallow draw of land on a coastline where you'd sail this kind of boat if it was a normal boat." It turns to Skeleton.


"Ok, hey. If you scratch my back that I don't have I'll do the same for yours, stipulation carrying on."


 **Skeleton:** "Well, what'd'you need?"

**Imp:** "Supposed to follow you secretly and report back."  
"Obviously."


 **Skeleton:** "Oh, gosh, you could just report that I was hoping for a word, then. That's even true!"

**Imp:** "Yeah, right. I'll do that, all you gotta do is.. not notice my buddy back there, so he can be secret. That's part #2."


 **Skeleton:** "Uhh... how, long, do we not notice him?"

 **Travis Meacham:** do NOT make this deal. instead, boot him in the ass.


 **Skeleton:** "

 **Placidus:** "Can't he just lie?"

**Imp:** "Lie to the dark mistress wow. Wow. That's real loyal of you."

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods, "He's got a point you know."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Dork mistress.

 **Placidus:** "You're \*demons\*."





**banana (GM):** "So yeah, not noticing doesn't have.. a duration.. because it's NOT noticing. If you don't know the dude is there you can't just, find out."



**Kalira:** "Presumably he doesn't want to lie because she'll know and then do something awful."



**Placidus:** "She was going to do something awful anyway."  
"I'm fair certain."



**Skeleton:** "Yes but are you proposing that we're just to be tailed and spied on forever, or what? What's it your job to find out, specifically?"



**Xarvrax:** "Everything, probably."



**Travis Meacham:** Travis pipes up from the ground: "Can you just make it fuck off, please?"

**Imp:** "Easy one. I let her know if you lose any fights and need help.. or if the one with the egg box opens it.. or if the one with the swords writes anything down.. easy, easy."



**Ghol, Going East:** "If they absolutely must tag along, maybe they can bother the orcs that insist on tracking us too."



**banana (GM):** This last is directed vaguely toward Travis.



**Kalira:** "I'm agreed with Travis a bit, here. We should be on our way, because we have other... fans."



**banana (GM):** You're still walking/sailing, right?



**Skeleton:** "I feel like being reconnoitered into perpetuity is a bit much in exchange for just passing on something that, frankly, you'd probably have had to pass on anyway."



**Xarvrax:** I assumed as much?



**banana (GM):** No need to hold up the journey just to talk to this thing.



**Travis Meacham:** Yes



**Skeleton:** Yeah, I assumed we were still in transit



**Placidus:** There's still a line of spies we need to meet with here.

**Imp:** "So you are saying that you're NOT going to help me, and you DO expect me to help you, even though you're not helping me, right. That's what you're saying."




**Placidus:** We don't have all day.  
"You have to tell her Skeleton wants a word anyway. What are you going to do, lie?"



**Travis Meacham:** I can't decide if this imp is speaking in a boston accent or a new york accent.  
Maybe Jersey.





**Skeleton:** "Look, I don't MIND your mistress learning if we need help or something, it's just hardly practical for us to pretend forever we don't know we're being followed especially if it turns out we decide to do something we actually want to keep secret!"  
"And I let you up here and everything."


 **Placidus:** new york/north jersey is the home of demons  
new england is the home of DEVILS


 **Skeleton:** he's right

**Imp:** "Lie? Definitely never."


 **banana (GM):** "Well... just so we're clear. I go do what you want and that's the extent, of the deal?"


 **Ghol, Going East:** someone isn't a hockey fan


 **Skeleton:** "C- th- ...is there like a terrible repercussion for saying yes here? Like I don't mind helping you in principle, I just don't think I can commit to something like that."


 **Placidus:** virtually all someones aren't hockey fans


**Imp:** "There's a fricking sweet repercussion. Just lemme know whether we have a deal."


 **Xarvrax:** "Technically, this only applies to you."


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton turns to look, or at least face sker hood, helplessly at the rest of the boat's passengers.


 **Placidus:** "Well, are you going to make a deal with a demon or not?"


 **Xarvrax:** "So technically, I could figure out where his buddy is."


 **Ghol, Going East:** From over the side of the boat: "YOU wanted to talk to demons."


 **Kalira:** "You are getting exactly what you bargained for here."

 **Skeleton:** "I didn't bargain for anything!"

 **Placidus:** "Rather the point, isn't it."  
"If you're not going to make a deal throw it off the boat. I don't know what else you're going to do here."


 **banana (GM):** Somewhere on the north horizon, Ghol spots the probable orc again, this time by their disturbing a group of nesting.. geese, again. There's a LOT of geese now.


 **Xarvrax:** "Oh forget it, tell your mistress that I'm also looking to talk to her again, and I personally will ignore your friend, I probably was going to anyway."








 **Skeleton:** "You're right. Sorry, um... imp? Like I said, I don't think I can commit to MORE weird obligations right now."

**Imp:** The creature shakes its upper body sorrowfully, then turns to Xarvrax. "Deal." From the imp's blobby form grows a tiny arm, red-shelled like the claw of a lobster- then another, then another, which all merge and fuse into one relatively huge fat arm and a gross shell-y hand on the end. "SHAKE!"

 **Skeleton:** "...oh. That's nice."

 **Ghol, Going East:** Now everyone wants to talk to the Diabolist. Well, Ghol did it before it was cool.

 **Skeleton:** "Hey, I mean, you don't have to do that on my account, though-"

	<b>Placidus:</b> Placidus did it back before it was uncool, and is therefore cool as a result.
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> Xarvrax reaches out with a tentacle of force, combat grossness with grossness.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> A complicated handshake occurs, technically desecrating the sacred vessel. The imp turns around slowly, beaming at everyone as it retracts the metalimb, then hops up onto the edge to jump off. Turns back. "Just a sec. Ond."
	<b>Imo:</b> To Skeleton: "What do you actually wanna talk about?? It's not like YOU'RE a demon."
	<b>Imp:</b> To Skeleton: "What do you actually wanna talk about?? It's not like YOU'RE a demon."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "She'll probably know."  "But, basically, to clarify some stuff about the last time she and I met. Or indeed to clarify that we even did, it's a bit hazy."
	<b>Imp:</b> "Sure, sure, easy. I'm pretty sure you're just a, you know, mindless pawn in her dark schemes though. Probably don't need any more active manipulation at this point."  "BANZAI". The ground is just a few feet down, but it's short.
	<b>Kalira:</b> "At least you're... honest? About it."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Well, heck, maybe. Still, I might as well ask."  Shouted at the retreating blur: "Thanks!"
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> Xarvrax shakes his head, "Okay, now you all find that thing that I don't know about at some point."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> Then Skeleton turns back to the boat's other passengers. Possibly the cultists weren't even listening, but to Kalira ske says: 'It's not what it sounds like.'
	<b>banana (GM):</b> It <i>is</i> going kind of fast- passes where you (except Xarvrax) think the other imp is and keeps on running.
	<b>Placidus:</b> "What if it is, though?"
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Well, that's what I've got to find out, right?"
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Time to rest and eat on the road poses a weird problem now. The groups on your trail have to kind of pull to a series of halts without making it obvious to each other that they're doing it <i>because</i> you halted, except they have varying notions of just who and where the other spies actually are.
	<b>Placidus:</b> That sounds like a weird problem... for them.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> It's like a really drawn out cart crash, spread over miles and miles of road and moor, with none of the participants actually making contact, but wheels dented nonetheless.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> Skeleton doesn't eat, of course, although if anyone looks to pay attention ske'll pretend to nibble on some hardtack or something. "So what DO we do about the rest of them?"
	<b>Kalira:</b> "Well, we could turn around and charge them. I don't think they'd be expecting that."
	<b>Placidus:</b> "This is a farce."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Also, someone give me a str check to haul in sail, so that the landboat doesn't just keep



going. (It's representative, pass it and i'll assume you're good to run it in normal circumstances from now on)



**Travis Meacham:** "Well, we're obviously going to Chhorizon, right? And, we actually want to go there, right? So ... I guess it's fine."



**Kalira:** "Everything's a farce if you look hard enough, Placidus."



**Ghol, Going East:** rolling d20+8

( 8 )+8

= 16



**Kalira:** can i do it from my chair



**Placidus:** "I'm not even looking in that direction and I can tell it's a farce."



**Skeleton:** "Is it a PROBLEM, though."



**Kalira:** rolling 1d20+10 +2 if so

( 3 )+10+2

= 15

ah yes



**Xarvrax:** "You really should watch it sometime, it's kind of hilarious."



**Kalira:** that included the +2 so i guess subtract it if not. but ghol beat it in any case



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol isn't a sailor, and he doesn't like this ship, but stuff like hauling in the sail does generally fall under his purview.



**Placidus:** "Is there something we're trying to hide?"



**banana (GM):** You.. literally can do it from the chair



**Placidus:** "If not, I don't see any particular reason to care."



**Kalira:** well, ghol did it anyway. time to continue sitting imperiously



**banana (GM):** OK, Ghol and Kalira are both good enough at general athletic behaviour to manage the small boat. You drop an anchor, which just sort of lands on the ground, but it catches on a stump and the whole thing drags to a halt..



**Placidus:** "I mean... we did leave one of the largest cities in the world riding a ghost boat."



**Kalira:** "Thank you, Ghol. Do you work with boats much?"



**Ghol, Going East:** "No."



**Placidus:** "We weren't going to keep a low profile."



**Skeleton:** "Well, fair enough, then."



**Travis Meacham:** "We might be trying to hide that Xarvrax has literally made a deal with a demon, but, I guess we aren't."



**Skeleton:** "It's not a big deal. I mean, the deal, it's not big."



**Ghol, Going East:** Who do we have on our trail? A foolish orc scout, the demons, some birds, perhaps that kitten...?



**Placidus:** What did Kon end up doing with that cat anyway?



**banana (GM):** Those and a couple of small groups of humanoids.



**Travis Meacham:** Troops.



**Ghol, Going East:** He scared it off.



**Travis Meacham:** (support our)



**banana (GM):** He scared it off- but it might well be trotting valiantly on trying to catch up.



**Placidus:** Cats...!



**Ghol, Going East:** I doubt it, though. Cats have never once done a single action 'valiantly.'



**Kalira:** "Those other Persons are following us as well, it seems. We might need to do something about that, before they decide to."



**Ghol, Going East:** "We could always take the boat out onto actual water."



**banana (GM):** Tonight's rest area, unless you were looking for something specific, is a clearing in the sparse tree cover that dots this part of the land. It's got a decent view of the road west and of a little betowered hill further on to the east.



**Skeleton:** "Oh, yeah, are they likely to actually attack us or what?"

**Person:** "Yes."



**Placidus:** "What else would they do?"

**Person:** "Exactly."



**Placidus:** "Can you beat them?"



**Travis Meacham:** "They might just attack Person."

**Person:** "I can. It might be dangerous."



**Skeleton:** "We can't let them do that! Are they very powerful?"

**Person:** Person looks at Skeleton appraisingly.



**Kalira:** "Dangerous to who?"

**Person:** "Could you remove your hood and scarf, Miss Stone, so I can work out how powerful you are?"





**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol chortles.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton looks appraisingly back. "Ummm. I'd prefer not to at present. Sorry."  
"Are they very powerful... relative to Travis, say, or Ghol or someone?"

**Person:** He... apparently hasn't figured it out. "Oh, yes. They're the only survivors of a dawn pack, so they're nearly actually good at things. They wouldn't hesitate to fight all of you at once, although I think they might underestimate Travis, because he doesn't dress for a fight."



**Skeleton:** "Do they dress like that to make it harder for you to gauge their strength?"



**Travis Meacham:** Travis nods as if he's somehow been vindicated. That's RIGHT. He's concealing his power. Drawing people off their guard.



**Placidus:** No one will suspect.



**Skeleton:** "Also, 'dawn pack'?"

**Person:** "It's just because they don't look like other people."



**Skeleton:** "Right. How do you expect them to fight? Just... swords and spears? Magic?"



**banana (GM):** Assuming you plan to spend the night out in the open-ish here, given the threats you're discussing.. I'd literally like to know whether you're standing watches.



**Kalira:** "Do you think they'd attack us during the night?"



**Travis Meacham:** does skeleton need to sleep?



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol and Kon will scout around for a more defensible campsite.

rolling d20+10

( 3 )+10

= 13

dice.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton doesn't, though ske's not particularly perceptive.



**Placidus:** Placidus will be up.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol always institutes watch shifts when they're out and about, though.

**Person:** "They fight..." He hesitates, searching for a word.



**Kalira:** Kalira will definitely keep watch. She's not too perceptive either though...

**Person:** "They fight like clockwork."



**Travis Meacham:** Travis gladly lets everyone else take watch shifts.





**Placidus:** Placidus has like a +7 WIS check.

**Skeleton:** skeleton's is like +4, but it can serve as a backup to anyone else's!

	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Ghol would presumably get his +10
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Skeleton's perpetual, baleful gaze.
	<b>Placidus:</b> *failful
	<b>Skeleton:</b> no!!
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> my thought was skeleton would be a great watchman because ske could just slump over and look like ske was asleep and Draw Out The Ambushesr
	<b>Skeleton:</b> Skeleton DOES see out of sker eye sockets, of course, so while feigning death ske'd have problems seeing people who weren't approaching from a specific angle, etc. Of course.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> OK, between them Kalira+Skeleton, Placidus+Skeleton and Ghol+Skeleton can keep a good lookout throughout the night. They're all pretty young and/or healthy, except possibly Skeleton, and missing a bit of sleep won't hurt.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> That "of course" was going to be part of a second sentence but I deleted the sentence but not the of course for some reason.
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> Actually I'm going to pretend that Travis and Skeleton actually talked about that in character.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Let it be so pretended,
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "Wait ... you see out of your eye sockets? How is that an of course! There's nothing in there!"  Quietly, of course.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Quiet, quiet! She could've just stepped out for only a moment!" Skeleton checks that Kalira's still out gathering firewood or whatever people do before continuing in a hush.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Person *does* sleep, or something like it, but before turning in he'll ask watchman Placidus for clarification on a minor point. His new fixation on Kalira does not seem to extend to considering her an authority on words like the gnome is.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Anyway, I don't know. That's where my perspective is, up here-" Tok, tok, Skeleton taps against sker hood. "-same as yours, presumably."
	<b>Person:</b> "I'm not totally certain I used the right word there. What would you call an instrument- a system that measures the passage of time?"
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "I'm not willing to, er, knock some holes into the back of my skull to see if it gives me 360 degree vision, at present."
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "Huh. Well, if you want to try it out, I bet we could drill a small one or something."
	<b>Placidus:</b> "That could describe a clock or a calendar."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "I can't actually see out of my mouth or down my neck, either, so I don't think we'd get good results. As to WHY it works like this at all... habit? I'm not sure."
	<b>Person:</b> "But, some only measure one specific year. Their seasons are misaligned, and they're numbered by important emperors- you can't reuse them. Which is the one that goes round and round


and round at the same speed?"

 **Skeleton:** "I mean, I'm still new at this."


 **Placidus:** "That could describe a clock or the stars. So by common factor you are describing a clock."


 **Travis Meacham:** or an ORRERY

**Person:** "Okay. So like I said, they fight like a clock."

 **Travis Meacham:** which is definitely the coolest kind of clock


 **banana (GM):** I'd like wis checks from Placidus and Skeleton, please


 **Skeleton:** Elsewhen, Skeleton still is/was/will be listening to Person about the group's potential future opponents. "Very... precisely? Predictably? Noisily?"

 **Placidus:** rolling d20+7


() + 7


= **25**


 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+4 failful gaze

() + 4

= **13**


 **banana (GM):** Placidus is assured enough of the lack of danger that he doesn't even need to correct Skeleton's relative inattention.

 **Placidus:** "They fight like there's only one fight, and they have to have it again and again."


 **Skeleton:** "I just meant, do they crush you or hex you or what."


 **banana (GM):** Later, in the dead of night: Ghol and Skeleton

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

() + 10

= **27**

 **Skeleton:** rolling 1d20+4 f.g.

() + 4

= **5**

Imao



**banana (GM):** Ghol, and solely Ghol, observes a happening:  
Out on the road, a tiny little figure comes creeping. It's moving toward the camp, nearly close enough that you'll have to think about alerting people.



**Ghol, Going East:** Two legs? Four legs?



**banana (GM):** Just before that happens, a second tiny figure comes leaping from the far side of the road and sets upon it...!  
Well, you did get a 25+  
One of them has two, and the other four.



**Ghol, Going East:** Hrm.



**banana (GM):** The imp and the kitten stagger back and forth as they clash, rolling out of sight again into the distance. It looked like a pretty vicious battle.



**Ghol, Going East:** Interesting.



**banana (GM):** And in the early hours of the morning, after handover: Kalira and Skeleton.



**Skeleton:** Ghol doesn't even say anything? You monster.

rolling 1d20+4 gazeful fail

( 9 )+4

= 13



**Kalira:** rolling 1d20+4 perception is not kalira's strong suit

( 16 )+4

= 20



**Skeleton:** i'm really, REALLY glad that having a completely tireless night watchman has proven to be totally useless



**banana (GM):** Kalira - but not Skeleton, initially - observes a beautiful sunrise. You've gone some way from the coast but there's still a little salt in the air, and the light from the east is shot through with pink.  
The day comes unassaulted. Ahead of your rambling journey are a tower on a hill, a trail left by a cougar in the night and a distant reflective something glinting darkly.



**Skeleton:** Hmm. Towers and mysterious dark glintings both catch Skeleton's fancy.  
"That was pretty uneventful, wasn't it?" Ske asks the group the following morning, while people are getting ready to get back into transit.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol and Kon will at least feel out this cougar trail.




**Kalira:** Ghol is all about cougars.



**Placidus:** Let's please be mature.

 **Skeleton:** haha

 **Ghol, Going East:** "Some of our pursuers got into a spat up the road, about halfway through the night."

 **Skeleton:** "...what?"

 **Placidus:** "Which ones?"

 **banana (GM):** Seems to have been left by a genuine mountain lion, not e.g. a kitten transformed somehow into a much larger beast - it's well off the road and heading in a useless direction.

 **Ghol, Going East:** "Looked like the kitten and the imp."

 **Skeleton:** "I mean, aherm, yes, besides- WHAT?!"  
"Oh my gods, is it okay?"


 **Placidus:** "Did the cat win?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** "I neither know nor care, and we'll find out soon enough, respectively."

 **Skeleton:** "But - where was it?"

 **banana (GM):** It was like 60 feet away from Skeleton.

 **Travis Meacham:** "What a beautiful morning. Should we make a hot breakfast or just eat some biscuit and keep moving?"

 **Ghol, Going East:** "Back down the road on the side of camp I was watching."

 **Kalira:** "I'd say we should keep moving given our pursuers, but they seem more tied up with each other than us."

 **Skeleton:** Unless we've already left, Skeleton is going to look for skerself and try to figure out if there's an injured survivor or anything.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol didn't mention it then, of course, because then Skeleton would have tried to-- yes, do that.

 **banana (GM):** Skeleton hunts around the area a little - and, already attuned to the thing's arcane scent, finds a mangled body.

 **Ghol, Going East:** Getting involved in the squabbles of their pursuers is foolish. Let them pick each other off.

 **banana (GM):** Without its suffusing chaotic inkiness, it seems that imps are spindly little things - like a stick insect, and not much larger, but nearly bright red. Its head is - was - enormous proportionate to the rest of its body, and the one intact eye still burns coal-hot.

 **Skeleton:** ...hmm. Well, alright. "Um, say! Travis or someone!"

 **Travis Meacham:** Travis moseys over.

 **banana (GM):** Xarvrax ignores this.

 **Skeleton:** "Imp hearts or whatever aren't valuable, are they?"





**Travis Meacham:** rolling 1d20+5 This is a roll to represent whether Travis is lying or telling the truth when he says

( 8 )+5

= 13



**Skeleton:** That's a general question, but Skeleton's also trying to work out if anything here might be relevant to sker particular brand of black magic.



**Travis Meacham:** "No, they aren't."



**Kalira:** Kalira hops off the Ghost Ship and follows Skeleton. What is ske getting into now?



**Ghol, Going East:** As Kalira goes: "Don't let that thing adopt the cat."



**banana (GM):** It's not really related to necromancy at all. Diablerie and chaos magic are somewhat akin, and both very rare - rooted in the unpredictable power of the hell-dimension the Archmage keeps sealed away from the Realm. Death magic is just, ghosts and bones and stuff



**Skeleton:** Well, good. "All right, then. Thank goodness it was the demon - and hey, that's one of our problems taken care of!"

Skeleton's quite cheerful as ske helps with the rest of the morning's preparations.



**Placidus:** "Was it the demon that made a deal with Xarvrax or the other one?"



**Travis Meacham:** "I guess some chaos mages might be able to find a use for it, but I'm not letting Xarvrax get his claws on it."

**Person:** "Good morning, everybody."



**Skeleton:** "I think it was the other one - the one Xarvrax agreed not to notice or whatever."



**Travis Meacham:** "The other one, the secret one. The one that, as far as I can tell, Xarvrax literally can't perceive."



**Skeleton:** "Good morning!"



**Kalira:** Kalira waves to Person if she's in earshot for his greeting.

**Xarvrax:** "I can see it easily, you idiot. I only promised not to think about it, so I won't."



**Placidus:** "Well. A deal's a deal, I suppose. Good morning, Person."



**Kalira:** "At least now not noticing it will be easy."



**Placidus:** "Time for a fight yet, do you think?"


**Mirchin:** "What are they doing, Issuriel? That's a horrid little thing."





**Skeleton:** pizza box cat  
oops, this isn't irc!


**Issuriel:** His girlfriend is not happy to be back on the road after a few days of spa resorts and big cities,


particularly given the bruising they sustained, so she just grumbles.


 **banana (GM):** Speaking of- the road, then?


 **Travis Meacham:** Let's roll. Or rather, glide smoothly through earth.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Yeah, well, maybe the princess should have thought about that before signing on with a dragon cult.


 **banana (GM):** The landboat's mechanism of action is odd. As claimed, it seems to be powered by spirits - NOT ghosts, technically, though it might take an expert to tell the difference. Whatever they are for legal purposes, they coat its hull like caulk and insulate it from the mundane realm.


 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol and Kon are already out and about, poking around. Presumably they'll be heading to the tower and/or Mysterious Glint next.


 **banana (GM):** Well, the tower IS just down the road if you want to stay on it.


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton's going to take some time and work out what the difference is.

 **banana (GM):** There's a hill that rises to your right as you walk, and the cairn-like thing at its peak - a hump of stone, not a cylinder really. Though the construction of the tower itself is poor, there are a number of statues set around it which appear much better made, depicting various people and animals.


 **Skeleton:** "Should we take a look?"


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

 **Placidus:** Does it look occupied? Is the ground trod on around the tower? Any signs of a well?

 **banana (GM):** There's a little fence to one side of the tower containing a chicken coop, and from the very top a bit of smoke curls. Someone's home.


 **Travis Meacham:** A hermit!

 **Placidus:** "We could ask for tea, but I don't think they'll have enough for all our spies."

 **banana (GM):** When you start up the hill in curiosity, in fact, you're observed from a window and shortly Met; the squat door opens and a blonde-furred halfling bustles out.


**hobbit:** "Blessings of Morco, travellers."

 **Skeleton:** "Hello."

 **Placidus:** Placidus's mouth stiffens. "Good morning."

 **Travis Meacham:** Who's Morco?

**hobbit:** "You've come on a lovely morning. Trade's resuming and the road stones are thrumming, right?"

 **banana (GM):** int check, travis  
yes, i'm making you roll int for a routine setting fact, not DESPITE but BECAUSE It doesn't matter much

 **Travis Meacham:**

(15)+7

= 22



**banana (GM):** Green Morco is the halfling god of stone and sculptors!



**Placidus:** "That's what they say."



**Travis Meacham:** "I'd expect so."

**hobbit:** "Yes, it's a pretty damn big problem all told."



**Skeleton:** "It's a problem?"



**Placidus:** How far is the tower from the road?



**banana (GM):** The hill rises about 20' up, and the path isn't long. A minute's walk.



**Placidus:** "Don't like the traffic?"

**hobbit:** "Oh yes. All those poor merchants and guards and.. oxen, I guess."  
"Huh?"



**Placidus:** "What seems to be the problem here?"

**hobbit:** "Are you.. NOT adventurers here to destroy the Thing on the Road?"



**Ghol, Going East:** The One Thing.



**Skeleton:** "Uh, if we are, we're not as yet aware. What thing?"

**hobbit:** "By god, I withdraw Morco's blessings if you aren't. There's only so much stonicism to go around, and we need that thing cleared."



**Kalira:** "We might be. I do like destroying annoying things, roads optional."

**Person:** "Why?"



**Placidus:** "We're adventurers. We're here. What's the thing on the road?"



**Kalira:** Kalira sneers. "As if we need your paltry god's blessing. I suspect it has done little for you and would do less for us."



**Xandrah:** "No need to be a jerk, that's my job."

**hobbit:** "The might of Morco is not in question. The lesser yet still concerning might of the Thing on the Road, however.. there was a company out here to take care of it, I asked for a whole company and I got 'em! That's some pull in church circles."

"HOWEVER, they all had to go west very quickly and haven't come back."

"So if any of you *\*are\** able to take care of it, well, you're good people."



**Skeleton:** "You still haven't told us what the Thing on the Road is !!"



**Placidus:** Placidus snorts. "What is it?"

"Have you seen it?"

**hobbit:** "In what sense... seen?"



**Placidus:** "How do you know there is a thing on the road?"

**hobbit:** "I've Seen in the earth-visions that the Thing's presence means ruin for this, a major trade artery. And I haven't seen \*anyone\* come from the east since it took up residence. The waystone roads are meant to be safe."



**Placidus:** Is that giant darkly glinting thing visible from up here?



**banana (GM):** It was just a shine in the morning light. Actually, the road east still sparkles a little. It's fading as the sun moves, though.



**Placidus:** Is that the road to Chhorizon?



**banana (GM):** Yep!



**Placidus:** "Well."



**Travis Meacham:** "Well, we're headed east."



**Placidus:** "We're going to be passing it anyway."  
"We might as well."

**hobbit:** "Oh! We're potentially \*saved\*!"



**Xarvrax:** "Hey! We're totally saviors here."



**Skeleton:** "Seriously though do you know anything specific at all?"



**Xarvrax:** "Or Heralds of the End, I can never quite decide..." Xarvrax trails off, a far off look in his eyes.

**hobbit:** "Sure. The great Morco has revealed to me that the Thing is on the Road.. no, no, don't hurt mean, I mean literally. It is only on the road, it can't leave it. Some sort of... road warrior."



**banana (GM):** \*don't hurt me



**Skeleton:** "I see. Maybe we could, like... stand off to the side a little ways and shoot it."

**hobbit:** "Whatever works for you. This thing is.. profane. Destructive to the stone, an enemy of god."



**Placidus:** If this turns out to be a pothole Placidus is coming back here.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax will help.



**Skeleton:** "Well, what the heck, let's check it out. ...do we get anything if we manage it though."

**hobbit:** "Um."  
"Hang on, yes!"



**Xarvrax:** "Not dying, probably?"



**Kalira:** Our ghost boat is probably profane and/or destructive to the stone too.

**hobbit:** "Just a moment." He stoops and goes back inside his tower.



**Skeleton:** Our SPIRIT boat.



**Travis Meacham:** What if it's an evil, corrupt, diabolical pothole.

**Person:** "So, boss. Why do you like destroying things?"



**Kalira:** "Because sometimes the people who make them deserve the pain. And sometimes I have to, to get my own things."

**Person:** "That's not unreasonable."



**Xarvrax:** "It's also fun!"

**Person:** "What's fun about it?"

"Actually, what IS fun?"



**Placidus:** "Let's have this conversation on the road, shall we?"

**hobbit:** The door opens up again. "I, Cleric Dorco, will grant you the favour of Morco."



**Placidus:** Placidus hates halfings so much.



**Xarvrax:** "I feel Placidus is the best person to explain what fun is, as he is the one who prevents it most often."



**Travis Meacham:** As far as Travis can tell, Dorco is a lot like Placidus.



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol is going to try to avoid this guy's tedious introspection carousel as long as possible. "What IS fun?" C'mon.



**Skeleton:** Skeleton's about to try to answer Person when the door opens up again. It's the same guy, right? "What's that entail?"



**Kalira:** "Keep it. No, scratch that." Kalira puts her hand on her sword. "If you even attempt to grant me the favour of Morco, it will be the last thing you ever do."

**Dorco:** The halfling is holding out a rock in one gold-furred palm. "This stone-charm has the power to summon the servants of Morco to your aid - to confound and indeed physically destroy your enemies."



**Travis Meacham:** "Fun is like synthetic joy."

**Dorco:** "Only works once, but it's very powerful, and the all-stone-knowing god will send them after just whoever you want."



**Skeleton:** "Wait wait wait. A summoning rock could be nice. Can you reuse it?"

"Oh."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax reaches out a claw and grabs the rock, "I like rocks, I'll hold onto it."

**Dorco:** "No, you have to break the enchantment to release it. Or rather, break the stone to release the enchantment."



**Skeleton:** Skeleton glances over at and nudges Travis while looking at the rock. It... IS actually magic, right?





**banana (GM):** Actually, yes. Though it's locked up in some weird way... as if some other was binding it. It looks inert \*overall\* despite having a lot of power within.

\*some other magic



**Skeleton:** Does it look like 'spirits' in there?



**banana (GM):** You don't recognise the kind of magic. Kalira might, if someone gave her arcane senses.

**Dorco:** "With the power of the stone-charm, there's no way you'll lose to that Thing. I'm looking forward to when this road is all hustle and bustle again, the good times rock and rolling..."



**Placidus:** "Good day."



**Skeleton:** Well, alright. "But yeah, that thing looks good. And if we can manage without it, hey, on-demand elementals!"

**Dorco:** "Oh, you'll have to manage without it."

"The Thing's power is binding that of my god, locally speaking. But you asked for a reward, right?"



**Skeleton:** "You just said 'with the power of the stone-charm'. Or did you mean, like, the incentive."

"I mean, it doesn't matter, I guess. I'm willing to give it a shot."

**Dorco:** "Faith will presumably course through your veins."



**Skeleton:** "Oh, yeah, we've got those. I mean, that."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shrugs, "I'll be back for the rock later then I guess. Let's go kill a Thing!"



**Kalira:** he gave it to us



**banana (GM):** He's given you the rock, it just doesn't \*do\* anything yet, supposedly.



**Kalira:** we just can't use it



**Skeleton:** ah, okay. i figured he'd hold onto it until after



**Xarvrax:** Oh.

Well then.



**Skeleton:** since what if we just fucked off



**Travis Meacham:** He's being considerate, and making us not have to come back



**Xarvrax:** Let's go kill a thing anyway!



**Travis Meacham:** Well then we can't use the rock, can we



**Placidus:** well, crucially























it doesn't do anything if we DON'T beat the thing



**Skeleton:** we could if we just got far enough away, according to him



**Travis Meacham:** not if the local binding on morco's power means that the stone, having been created in the binding, is bound everywhere

	<b>Placidus:</b> considering the thing is on the road it'd probably be more effort to avoid fighting it than not anyway
	<b>banana (GM):</b> The halfling priest(?) nods in satisfaction. Bickering like that they're DEFINITELY an adventuring party. He retreats into his cairn.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Alright, I guess let's go?"
	<b>Placidus:</b> "See? Not even lunch yet and we've got something to kill. It's the adventuring life for us."
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "I didn't choose this life." In some senses.
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "I did!"
	<b>banana (GM):</b> It's certainly not what the dragonwrights intended.
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Ghol's been waiting at the bottom of the hill down near the road, keeping supplemental lookout while they conversed with the hermit.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Well... he hasn't seen any imps.  There are dozens of geese describing wide circles across the sky from south to north and back again, a squad of soldiers casually camped in *your* old camp of last night, making a fire, the two semi-persons some way ahead of you on the road, having passed in their group of sheep-herders... no imp, though.
	<b>Kalira:</b> "If there's anyone you don't want to make a deal with, it's the Gods of Light. When your rock is just a rock, don't look at me. Even if it does turn out to be something, you're better off without it."
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Smooth, fellas.
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "I'm a Chaos Mage, I make deals with everyone and no one."
	<b>Placidus:</b> There must be some way to extract profit from this. Could we establish a press corps?
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Well.. why, though. It's not like Albastien played us for fools or anything."
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> "Because she worships the Dark Gods. You seriously have to ask?"
	<b>banana (GM):</b> You pretty much got what was promised, there (meat).
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> Boy did we get meat.
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Somewhere, a goose honks thrice.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "I'm just checking if there's something besides their being on the other team. It's not like I worship the dark gods!"
	<b>Kalira:</b> "You don't see the difference? My patrons gave us an immediately useful gift in exchange for service later. His god gave him a rock. A rock that might or might not prove useful after someone accomplishes a presumably difficult and dangerous task."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "That's just a practical difference, though. And it's not like we even know exactly what the boat'll cost us, yet."
	<b>Ghol, Going East:</b> Ghol waves her off and starts walking ahead of the boat again. He's avoided a Religious Talk up until now and he'll continue to do so.
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "To me this sounds like the difference between borrowing from a loan shark and



lending to a cousin."

"I generally avoid either, when possible."



**Kalira:** "At least the former is honest. You know what you're getting, and you know it'll cost you. Maybe it'll cost you more than you thought if you don't pay it back like you're asked. But unlike the latter, they won't spend all their time playing on your emotions to get you to move their shit for them in exchange for nothing."



**banana (GM):** Ghol's joined by van Keter - or is it Gleria? One of them, anyway. The dragon cultist is watching him recently; presumably he should be flattered.

Except maybe not, as she keeps looking at his ears.



**Placidus:** "Person?"

**Person:** "Hi!"



**Placidus:** "How many fights have you been in?"

**Person:** "Hmm. Let me ask your question a question."



**Skeleton:** "But we DON'T know what it'll cost us, in point of fact. Unless I missed something."

**Person:** "So let's say someone asks 'how many fights have you been in', something like that - to describe your own history- but you don't even understand it, the idea of recording yourself like that hasn't occurred to you while you've been doing it. You haven't invented remembering."



**Kalira:** "I didn't say you'd know what it'd cost you. I said you know it will cost you."

**Person:** "Later on you get asked the same question again. Now you're starting to get an idea about this stuff, and you could put together an estimate of the right answer. But you know it's a wrong answer; it's not the sort of answer someone would expect. It would upset people, even though at the time it didn't even seem like a memory."

"Finally,"



**Skeleton:** "Knowing it'll cost me doesn't sound like an upside."

**Person:** "In the end, you're being asked a question again about how much stuff you've done and what you are, and maybe things have changed again. Maybe you know enough now and you know people enough - and they know you, a person - and you could safely answer something and give enough meaning to the answer."

"So my question is,"

"How do you know when you go from the second time to the third time?"



**banana (GM):** That's.. probably the most words he's said in one day so far.



**Kalira:** "Doesn't it? The point you're missing is that both of them will cost you, probably about the same amount. At least the Dark is up front about it."



**Placidus:** Placidus is silent for a moment.



**Travis Meacham:** "Surely the opposite is true. Morco is requiring a specified service, up front."

"it's what the REWARD will be that we don't, properly, know."



**banana (GM):** Your group has nearly caught up on the road to the animal herders (and spies) ahead. Want to circumvent them somehow, or drop back..?



**Travis Meacham:** I was trthinking we'd kind of just, you know, pass on the left.



**banana (GM):** I guess.



**Kalira:** "There's always that sort of thing with the Light, though. Just one more service and your reward will be eternal and fulfilling."



**Placidus:** "I suppose... you'd only know in retrospect. When it happened the third way, or when you just weren't afraid of it happening the second way again."



**banana (GM):** Really, the landboat needs some sort of horn or something. Once it's going at a good clip, it's slow to turn and hard to slow, unless the wind dies down.

**Person:** "I know I *\*am\** afraid."



**Skeleton:** "Yeah, we know what the cost is with this Morco thing too, more or less. And we've literally got the reward."



**Kalira:** "But for now, what you've got is a rock."



**Travis Meacham:** "The answer is very, very, very, very large, isn't it?"



**Skeleton:** "A rock that's a pocket summoning spell as soon as we either beat this or get out of its zone of influence! That's pretty handy."



**Kalira:** "Are you sure it does that, though?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax has decided to hang off of the main mast, after testing that it can support his weight at least, keeping an eye ahead of them.



**Placidus:** "Well, you've communicated adequately so far."

**Person:** "Travis is right. But also, my oldest memories aren't right even to me. They don't.. make sense. Things can't have happened that way."



**Skeleton:** "It's got something sealed in there, and there's a difference between self-serving and duplicitous."



**banana (GM):** He looks at Xarvrax... fearfully?

Not exactly a cringe, but a shrug like the warding away of an imagined blow.



**Kalira:** "Hell, you're talking about a circus of supposed deities that just get voted out by some idiot in a dress. And yet people die and kill for them every day in the vain hope of some reward."



**Skeleton:** "They actually do get the reward, though. I mean, I've seen clerics."



**banana (GM):** rolling d20+5 as you pass the shepherds and sheep

( 8 )+5

= 13

i see

**Kalira:** "As long as they continue to serve. And as long as their god doesn't get kicked off the team."

"As long as they continue to be good little children. The Dark lets you be what you want, as long as you pay what you owe."



**Placidus:** "I really want to know what that number is, now."



**Skeleton:** "Well, you're not going to catch me staking myself to any particular god of light for all time, obviously. But I definitely know which side I'd rather do odd jobs for!"



**Kalira:** "I don't hate their servants because of some rivalry between their patrons and mine. I hate them because they've -earned it-. It's my own personal choice to hate them."

**Person:** "It would be easier to measure the calendars."



**Xarvrax:** "Everyone hates everyone, it's a fact of life."



**Travis Meacham:** "Heck I don't hate many people a' tall," he says, playing it up.



**Skeleton:** "I haven't found anyone to hate, either."



**Placidus:** "Alright. I was only asking you that to ask you this: have you ever won a fight you shouldn't have?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax glances at him, "You're a wizard, you hate everyone extra."  
Glancing at Skeleton, "Bonanda?"



**Skeleton:** "I don't HATE him. I barely know him."

**Person:** "The first one."

"This doesn't make sense to me, but-" again watching to see if Xarvrax is close. "Hundreds of calendars ago, I fought the biggest dragon in the world. We both lost."



**Placidus:** "Did you start the fight?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax's ears perk up.



**Kalira:** "All this talking about hate and fighting gets me hoping whatever this Thing is shows up soon."



**banana (GM):** The sheen on the road ahead is closer now. The noonday sun reflects oddly, jagged- and the waystone markers are beginning to space out. Each pair you pass is set slightly further back from the road. A weaker connection.



**Skeleton:** "...were you also really big?"

**Person:** "Winning and losing the fight is the first thing I remember. Sorry. It was weird."



**Travis Meacham:** "This looks weird. Wonder what's causing it?"



**banana (GM):** Causing?  
Other way around, remember.





**Placidus:** "How did you win? How did you lose?"




**Travis Meacham:** no i mean the sun reflectin





 **banana (GM):** oh. probably it's a surface with a high reflective index


 **Travis Meacham:** Yes, but what IS it. This is a black highway, nominally.


 **banana (GM):** OK, it turns out to be this:


The road is riven. Riven, indeed, in twain. It's cleft, sundered, split, and debauched. The waystones spread out far - too far - and then there's a pair missing entirely, and the road is broken. Three straight lines slash across it, the shape of a stylised lightning bolt; the gap between black stone is filled with a kind of crystalline stuff, nearly a metre across and blindingly reflective.


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


 **Skeleton:** "Gosh."  
"I don't really... anyone?"


 **banana (GM):** You guess this counts as a Thing, but it's not moving or anything.


 **Kalira:** a stylized lightning bolt, or zorro? hard to say

 **banana (GM):** There are a few interesting things in the surrounding environment:  
You're well inland now, beyond the sea and the moors. There's a small dead forest nearby, twisted trunks - and within it is a kind of pagoda, with a trail leading right to it from the road, near the break. The same crystal stuff that's forming the cleft runs in a much thinner line down that ordinary pathway and right into the pagoda, with light shifting along it.  
On the immediate other side of the cleft are a couple of bones. Hard to say whose without getting closer.

 **Kalira:** Definitely need to check out that pagoda.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax hops down from his post, and walks up to the gashes in the ground.


 **banana (GM):** They 'smell' bad. Unsurprisingly, there's inimical magic within. Or.. sort of magic. Something the product of magic, perhaps.


 **Skeleton:** Skeleton peers at the bones from sker perch on the boat. Then, if Xarvrax doesn't cause some sort of explosion upon contact with the road, Skeleton climbs gingerly down and sidles over. Surely sker expertise is of use here.


rolling 1d20+12 intelligence+skeleton


(15)+12


= 27

 **banana (GM):** Oh, yes. Ske can tell there's been far more death here recently than the few bones tell.

 **Skeleton:** that's also my necromancy bonus, so have at

 **Travis Meacham:** "Do you thinkt his is some kind of ... contagion?"

 **Skeleton:** unfortunately, i don't have speak with the dead prepped. i should really start carrying it

 **banana (GM):** It leaps out, to the refined imagination. Murder-suicide, suicide with trappings, plain suicide and accident. People died here by their own and by inexplicable hands, repeatedly, recently.

Unincidentally, everyone let me know your MD please.



**Xarvrax:** 16.



**Placidus:** 18



**Skeleton:** "Looks like... suicides? Of all sorts." Skeleton seems to have figured this out from poking a finger into sker darkened hood and then holding it up to the breeze. Ske's got MD 18.



**Ghol, Going East:** 12



**Travis Meacham:** Great question.



**Ghol, Going East:** the won't make a new charsheet guy



**Travis Meacham:** 16,



**Placidus:** character sheets are for people who use "stats" to take "actions"



**banana (GM):** rolling d20 no particular reason

( 9 )

= 9



**Kalira:** 16



**Ghol, Going East:** phew...?



**Kalira:** Is this some sort of ritual Kalira would recognize?



**banana (GM):** Looking at the blinding jagged light.. it hurts. Also, it shouldn't reflect at all angles like this. Maybe the danger isn't physical.

Nope.



**Skeleton:** stat-tions



**Xarvrax:** It's possibly chaotic, but who can tell, honestly.



**Kalira:** Well, Kalira creeps closer to that pagoda, then, after hopping down from the boat. "It looks like it's coming from over here."



**Placidus:** Since Person's gone quiet, Placidus walks up to stare at the suicide crater.



**banana (GM):** Does it? There's much more of the stuff in the road than the thin, zig-zagging line that goes down the path.



**Skeleton:** Once Skeleton's taken a census of recent deaths and confirmed the presence or absence of magic ske's actually familiar with, ske'll round and make sure to stay near Kalira. "Yeah - let's take a look, I think. It's definitely the worst right here but I don't see a... source or anything."



**banana (GM):** The pagoda is largely open, but from a little closer you can see that it has a central core with a door made of iron bars, chained shut. The crystal line runs right under those bars and descends - inside is a ramp.



**Travis Meacham:** "It's like a trail, diffusing, maybe."



**Placidus:** What's the apparent purpose of the pagoda?



**Skeleton:** "So did it come out of there or hide in there?"



**Kalira:** "Yeah, you're right. Could be coming or going, but either way..."



**banana (GM):** Travelling theatre roll, Placidus.



**Placidus:** rolling d20+9 int+theatre

( 4 )+9

= 13

alas



**banana (GM):** It's an easy enough check, though. He's the only one old enough to have \*been\* through one of these before. Apart from Person, maybe.

This is an entrance to Undermountain, and if any of you knew the secret Words of the dwarves, you could decipher their angular markings that name it. They're all over the walls.



**Ghol, Going East:** Dwarves. Okay.



**Xarvrax:** This isn't like the giant writing, that's all Xarvrax could tell you about it.



**banana (GM):** Cloudhane and the Words have as much to do with each other as the sky and the earth.



**Travis Meacham:** Not, necessarily, dwarves. Maybe it's just whoever or whatever lives undermountain now.



**Placidus:** "That goes Undermountain. This trail is leading in and not out."



**Kalira:** "Doesn't seem wise to follow it, but wisdom isn't always right."  
"If we even can."



**Skeleton:** "...huh. So what could it be?"  
"And, well, what do we do? Is there like a bell or something? Can we call someone up here and ask?"



**Placidus:** "Does anyone have any idea what this stuff is?" Placidus turns to look back at the crystalline stuff. Does he?"



**banana (GM):** Bad stuff, probably.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax slices at a hunk of it with a claw.



**banana (GM):** rolling d20

( 14 )

= 14



**Placidus:** rip ghol



**banana (GM):** There's a little ringing noise as Xarvrax gouges part of the stuff away. He feels.. kind of how he normally feels, but endangered in some vague sense.

The thing \*is\*, it only runs across the road and then, in a thinner vein, south.. but to the north it looks like it delves underground. It might in some sense continue on that way. So if it's not safe to cross, it'd be a hell of a detour.

Maybe it is safe to cross, though.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax shrugs, "It didn't kill me, so it's probably not that dangerous."



**Skeleton:** "How do you know the trail leads in, actually?"



**Placidus:** "There's more out here than there is in there."



**banana (GM):** Several more geese fly over your heads.



**Kalira:** "This would probably be a remarkable way to lose our pursuers, if we were so inclined, if we can get in, and if it doesn't kill us."



**Placidus:** "I think our pursuers are less risky than that."



**banana (GM):** ...and over the cleft. They begin honking all at once, then stop; as one, the birds turn \*upwards\*, flying somehow at an impossible angle toward the sun in the sky.



**Kalira:** "That's... something."



**Placidus:** Are they actually flying? Their wings moving and all?



**Skeleton:** "But... what if whatever this was was increasing in intensity as it traveled rather than running dry?"



**Ghol, Going East:** "What the..."



**banana (GM):** They're beating their wings as if flying, but that isn't how it normally works.. maybe. You aren't a bird.

Slowly, the geese are dwindling into the sky.



**Placidus:** Is there something on the ground that Placidus could try tossing into the chasm?



**banana (GM):** Onto, rather. The gap is all full of the shiny stuff.

But: sure, get a twig or something



**Placidus:** Placidus gets a twig and throws it onto the crystal.



**banana (GM):** The glare is briefly and situationally dimmed.

Briefly, because the surface isn't solid. The stick is slowly sinking.



**Skeleton:** "...hmm."





**banana (GM):** No wonder Xarvrax was able to so easily crack a piece of it- that gap's now filled in too.





**Skeleton:** and the main lightning bolt fracture's like a meter wide, right? a person could fit in?


**banana (GM):** Yep.


 **Placidus:** "This suggests that it is not safe to cross."


 **banana (GM):** Green Morco might be out of His depth, here.


 **Skeleton:** "Okay, how about... a rope. Let's lower one in and pull it out."

 **Kalira:** "So in theory it'd be easy to get in. Whether you survive of course is debatable."

 **Placidus:** Is the twig visible as it sinks down?

 **banana (GM):** yes

 **Placidus:** Is there anything visibly suspended beneath the surface?

 **banana (GM):** Skeleton executes Plan Rope. It's kind of time-consuming, because the stuff is only barely liquid - the stick you lower in next doesn't sink like it would in water, but like it's being slowly consumed, and the rope plays out very slowly, coiling on the surface then sinking down.


Pulling it out is difficult, again- it gives only slightly and slowly, and as ske tugs..


rolling d20


( 5 )


= 5


..well, it's an unpleasant feeling. Like the glare is yelling at you.


 **Skeleton:** There's a rock or something tied to the end, just for the sake of it. After letting the rope down a yard or two, Skeleton - in actuality probably a combination of Kalira, Ghol, and Person - will try to pull the rope back out.


 **banana (GM):** Eventually the stick comes out, a little scraped by viscosity but intact.


 **Skeleton:** The stick was just ejected on its own?

 **Kalira:** "So it won't melt you or anything. Probably hard to breathe though."

 **Placidus:** The rope isn't damaged at all right?

 **banana (GM):** Not ejected, no- you had to slowly pull it out.


 **Placidus:** Placidus touches the rope where it was submerged in the shiny stuff. Is it notably wet or hot or anything?

 **banana (GM):** Like dragging it through mud, maybe.

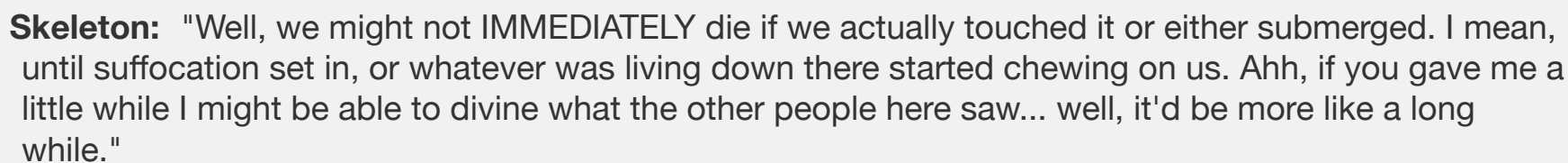
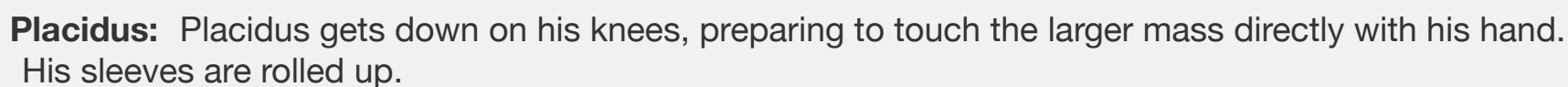
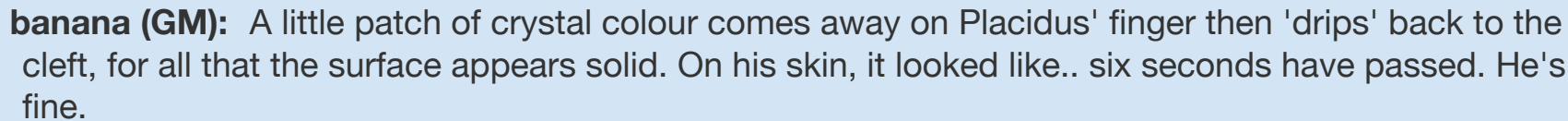
rolling d20

( 7 )

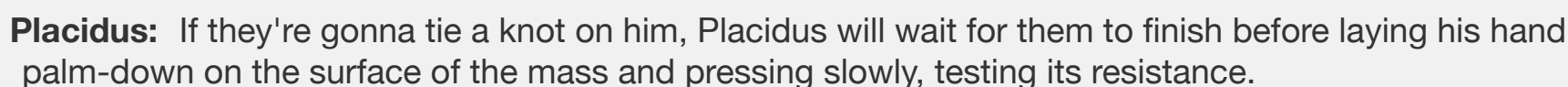
= 7


 **Skeleton:** oh, i wasn't sure if you meant the stick i tied the rope to or placidus's stick, since i hadn't specified i'd attached a stick until just before your message



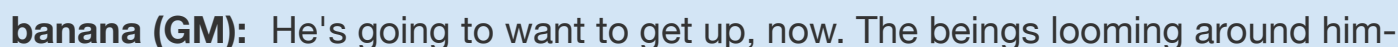


"Woah, woah! Let's, ah-" Skeleton at least, like, gets everyone to help tie the rope 'round Placidus's waist first.



( 8)+10

**= 18**



He's been restrained, but only a little. An orc, an undead being did this to him - a wizard is watching, examining the situation. It's like - it IS a nightmare. Events assuming horrifying proportions because they are horrifying events.

'Madness' in the ridiculous sense that psychologists and arcanists use, it's something you can enforce but not diagnose. Real madness is a perspective that's out of step. It isn't necessarily wrong. Placidus is certain, perhaps, that he's gone mad, because the way he saw the world before was completely the norm.

How could he have been so blind?

The sky contains a burning orb over which gods war.

It \*no longer has a moon\*. That dragon is dead - perhaps the one Person slew.



There's no way- he's sure, rationally, that things will not escape it. This whole insane situation seems to ensure that.


The break is, of course, a made thing. Do men just 'go mad'? So there's a culprit, and, what a coincidence: he's surrounded by people who are demonstrably, verifiably, culprits.




Placidus is waving his hand inside/in front of/in the direction of the sky-stuff. "It's gone."





 **Ghol, Going East:** Ghol turns. Hello, kitten.


 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax moves over and snatches up the kitten that no one else was paying attention to, putting it on his shoulder.

 **banana (GM):** Who said nobody else was paying attention?  
Suddenly, Placidus needs to sneeze.


 **Xarvrax:** Pfft.


 **Kon:** Kon's already trotting over to the kitten. Just to hang out. See what's up.


 **Kalira:** Kalira also turns, keeping the kitten from Placidus. Perhaps the most deadly of all their pursuers?


 **Placidus:** "The dragon is whaCHAAH"


 **Kon:** It's hopped down from a dead tree, a little bit off in the woods.


 **Skeleton:** "What? Where did that-"


 **banana (GM):** The little tabby cat prances on Xarvrax's shoulder as almost everyone pays it sudden attention. Placidus sneezes again and again - a brief fit, and then he's okay.

 **Xarvrax:** Xarvrax softly pokes it in the nose.


 **banana (GM):** Okay apart from having now two distinct segments of memory and recollection in his life: There's the last sixty seconds, and there's everything that came before and after it.


 **Placidus:** Placidus covers his mouth and nose with the hand he pulled from the road. He sees Xarvrax, and he sees- "You. You!"


 **Kalira:** Is Placidus a Person now too?

 **banana (GM):** Reconciling the two- which one does he prefer?  
Person hasn't reacted to the cleft at \*all\*. You'd forgotten he was even here.  
He's just kind of watching, quietly baffled.


 **Placidus:** There is only now. The past doesn't make sense anymore. He suspects it never did.

 **Travis Meacham:** "I haven't the slightest idea what to do about this."

 **Skeleton:** "Neither do I. I was kind of hoping that, I don't know, there's some sort of crystal slug or whatever and this would all evaporate once it died."

 **Placidus:** Placidus is pointing up at the cat on Xarvrax's shoulder. "Where is the moon?"

 **banana (GM):** mew

 **Kon:** That's the answer one would expect.

 **Skeleton:** "Aww!"

 **Placidus:** "WHERE IS THE MOON?!"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax looks at the kitten, "He's got a point you know."



**banana (GM):** When he formulated the question, before the sneeze, it made a lot more sense..  
Not that it doesn't make sense now, actually. It's more a question of whether you'd think to ask.



**Placidus:** Placidus looks exasperated, like he's lost the word for what he wants to say.



**Travis Meacham:** Do I know what a moon is?



**banana (GM):** Yep. There are legends of it: in the days before the Federation, there was a lesser celestial body at night. It even still has a god.



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax pokes the kitten again, "Well? Tell the man where it is."



**Skeleton:** "Why would it know?"



**banana (GM):** "They" say a lot of different things. The main story is that it had something to do with the One-Eyed King, or with the death of the White, or the desert in the west.  
Or, that the moon has only gone away and will return.



**Placidus:** Plus there's, the Moonwreck.



**banana (GM):** Popularly thought to be related, yes.  
The kitten is not really happy about being poked by a clawed guy, so it tries to scramble down Xarvrax's back, using scraps of fabric to avoid falling flat on its face on the ground, and failing.



**Travis Meacham:** "Maybe we can ... set fire to it? Or drown it?"



**Skeleton:** "Right, we haven't really tried, like... physical damage."



**Placidus:** "Why would it know?" Placidus sounds like an echo, small and faraway.



**banana (GM):** He (Placidus) realises: they don't even know. They didn't even notice.



**Skeleton:** Is the crystal goop alive? Does it feel like it's got hitpoints such that it's targetable by Terror or Chant of Endings or similar?



**Placidus:** "Why WOULD it know?"



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax grabs it out of the air, and sets it down, before patting its head.



**Skeleton:** "Huh? Well, that's what I'm saying, it's just a kitty."



**banana (GM):** No, it's not alive.



**Skeleton:** "C'meeere-"



**Xarvrax:** "Why would what know what?"



**banana (GM):** The juvenile cat hides behind Xarvrax, staying away from Skeleton.



**Placidus:** Placidus just shakes his head. And then sneezes again.



**banana (GM):** Frankly, being near this thing (Thing?) is making you all feel kind of odd.

**Skeleton:** "Aw, c'mon - ugh. Okay, but what do we do, though."

"Did you figure out anything ABOUT it, Placidus? Can anyone think of, I dunno, a relevant divination?"



**Xarvrax:** "I could try channeling chaos magic into it?"



**Placidus:** What... is it...?

rolling d20+12 unnatural philosophy

(14)+12

= 26



**Kalira:** "I could jump in. That's the best I've got."



**Xarvrax:** "Or phasing through it."



**banana (GM):** Of course he knows what it is.



**Placidus:** "It's madness."



**Travis Meacham:** "So don't jump in, then."



**Xarvrax:** "So... I guess I do need to deal with it then."



**Placidus:** "The universal solvent."



**Travis Meacham:** "Do you think this is why the archmage ... or is the causality reversed?"



**Skeleton:** "Hold on, if it's the universal solvent how come you've still got hands?"

**Person:** "Not everybody has hands in the first place."



**Placidus:** "The state of the roads is the state of his mind, yeah?"



**Travis Meacham:** "That's what I was thinking, but which came first?"



**Placidus:** The waystones are distorted around here, right?



**Kalira:** "Yeah. Was it caused by this, or is this the cause?"



**banana (GM):** They are. They spread out, too far away from the road, and on either side of the cleft there are no stones at all.

(It's where a pair would be)



**Skeleton:** "Oh, then this - this is the archmage getting worse? And... I don't know, he was thinking about dwarves?"

how far ahead is it until the stones are back? can we even see any far ahead of us?



**Placidus:** Does it look like the stones have moved or been moved recently?

Or does it just look like they were put there on purpose?



**banana (GM):** The stones resume - albeit too far out - immediately on the other side of the cleft. They don't look moved, the earth isn't torn up or tanned.

**Placidus:** "I think it's a change in his mind that causes a change in the road."

"If they're connected at all, that is."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax sighs, "I could try fixing this, but it'd rely on my powers actually working right for once."



**Placidus:** "The magic isn't pulling his mind apart, his mind is distorting the magic."



**Kalira:** "You could just... fix this? I sincerely doubt it."



**Skeleton:** "So, okay, it's not some unique stone-flaying monster. ...which really calls into question our ability to deal with it."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax scowls, "I said I could try, the Archmage caused this, maybe his power could fix it."



**banana (GM):** In theory, if so, you've already done what you can by alerting the hierarchy. In theory.



**Travis Meacham:** "The Empire needs to just, create a detour here. It won't be waystoned but I think it's the only option."



**Skeleton:** "Try how, exactly? Wouldn't you innately make it worse?"

"Unless, like. Craziiness is a conserved substance and you can just scoop it up and take it with you, or..."



**Xarvrax:** "Chaos isn't a bad thing, it's just random."



**Travis Meacham:** '



**Skeleton:** "So you can make this into benign chaos rather than horrible chaos?"



**Xarvrax:** "The right application of power could possibly move or destroy this."



**Placidus:** "What are your chances?"



**Skeleton:** "Well, it can't h- what am I saying of course it can hurt."



**banana (GM):** But, what if it didn't.



**Skeleton:** "It's more immediately satisfying to think about trying to fix it than just ignoring it, though."



**Kalira:** "I'm guessing not great. I'd advise some steps back, in any case."



**Xarvrax:** "Well, it's fairly low that my power will actually cooperate, but it's also fairly high that uncooperative power won't actually do anything to it."



**Skeleton:** "I see."



**Placidus:** "Well... do it or don't. It's going to take a while to get the boat off the road anyway."



**Xarvrax:** "Move back then."

Xarvrax begins the process of channeling.



**Skeleton:** "Right." Skeleton moves back, and makes some attempt to scoop up and pull back the kitten in the process.





**Xarvrax:** rolling d6





( 4 )

= 4

 **banana (GM):** Which one's that?

 **Xarvrex:** That would be defensive, which is fairly useless here.

 **banana (GM):** I'm going to do the only thing reasonable for chaos in this circumstance


 **Skeleton:** well, maybe if you think of it as defending the integrity of reality or healing the problem

 **banana (GM):** rolling 1d3 1 = good thing 2 = nothing 3 = bad thing


( 1 )


= 1


 **Skeleton:** yeah!!


 **Placidus:** hooray!  
we're incredibly skilled


 **Xarvrex:** Good.


 **banana (GM):** Xarvrex concentrates, or perhaps he does the exact opposite of concentrating.  
Power flares - from the abyss, no doubt, but it's still \*his\*. This is the power to protect. Like the road should, like the pagoda gate should, like neither did.


 **Travis Meacham:** i wonder if the madness going undermountain is what made the dwarvers go ham

 **banana (GM):** He reaches out at random. To seal a gap? That would be nice, but that way lies, well (well). Instead, he closes a door and opens another. Literally.

 **Placidus:** we should've asked durco or w/e how long this thing had been here


 **banana (GM):** The rivulet that flows from the cleft dries up at the source. With the extraordinary speed of a spell, the whole mini-crack that runs down the side path slams shut, leaving no trace that it ever was, all the way to the barred door, which falls off its hinges.


 **Travis Meacham:** Dorco. Don't pretend you don't remember cleric Dorco of Morco.






















 **Xarvrex:** Xarvrex blinks.

"That's not the power, nor the result I was expecting."

"Man I love Chaos."

 **Skeleton:** "...woah! Wow. Hey."  
"Did that work perfectly or...?"

 **banana (GM):** Sort of? It affected the right target, and did the right kind of thing. Whether the consequences are what you wanted, who knows.

	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "Well. The road still isn't clear, but now there's an open path into Undermountain that's madness free."
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Free of *this* madness."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> oh wait, the RIVULET, not the whole
	<b>banana (GM):</b> yeah, it's not the twain not the rive it's not the sundering
	<b>Placidus:</b> it's the rive gauche
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "...well, that bit worked perfectly, anyway."
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "Hey! It's better than it was a minute ago!"
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Obviously the way around the sky is to go underground." "Excellent work, Xarvrax."
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "Yes, it was."
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> Xarvrax fist pumps, "Chaos wins again!"
	<b>Placidus:</b> Can we... take the boat through this?
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "You can't just do that again to get rid of the crack itself, though, can you?"
	<b>Xarvrax:</b> "I could try, but who knows if it'll work again, it might reopen what I just sealed up."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Well, it IS a ramp. Sailing a boat underground might not work very well, but.. has anyone *tried*?
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Two good things happening in a row is poor odds. One in nine at best, I'd guess."
	<b>banana (GM):</b> Technically, you've got no need to go to Chorizon.
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> That's true. Really we want to go to Ersatz.
	<b>Placidus:</b> Sailing a boat overground shouldn't work very well either, and yet...
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> Bad luck for Dorco but frankly this is beyond an Adventurer's paygrade. Also, his name is dorko.
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "So what do we do, then, just sail offroad a bit? Doesn't seem right keeping the rock."
	<b>Placidus:</b> "Here's what you do." "Throw it in the madness. It'll hide there, burrow deep inside. No one will find it until the madness is gone." "So then the person who gets rid of it will reap the reward."
	<b>Skeleton:</b> "Oh, that's clever."
	<b>Travis Meacham:</b> "Now that's smart thinking."



**Placidus:** Placidus's eyes go wide. "Fair's fair."



**Travis Meacham:** "It's not going to like, cause Dorco to go mad or anything, right?"



**Placidus:** "He's a halfling, they haven't brains enough to go mad."



**Ghol, Going East:** Ghol's been uncomfortably silent this entire time, attention split between keeping watch and the conversation at hand. This is outside of his experience, anyway.



**Xarvrax:** "Everybody's a little crazy, a little more won't hurt."



**Travis Meacham:** "I'm just saying, we might just as fairly hurl it over the chasm rather than letting it sink in."



**Placidus:** "But then what if someone comes up on the road from the other side?"



**Skeleton:** "Then someone who comes from the other side or walks around- yeah."



**banana (GM):** It'd be a shame to never find out what the rock ("stone-charm") summons, but this would certainly assuage your honour.



**Travis Meacham:** "Everyone who's come up from the other side is dead."



**Skeleton:** Skeleton looks sidelong at the crack again. "It's too bad... I could a- summon something, you know, send it through. ...of course, it might not be able to tell me what it found, even if it does make it back."



**Placidus:** "Honestly, I would just keep the stone."

"If Dorco wants it back he can come and find us. Certainly if we died he wasn't going to get it back."



**Xarvrax:** Xarvrax nods, "I'm keeping my shiny new rock anyway."



**Skeleton:** "Well... alright, I guess. So we'll just go around, then?"



**Travis Meacham:** "Undermountain ho."



**banana (GM):** You could go around, or under, or away. Maybe this road is closed for the foreseeable future, but there are other paths. Newer, deeper roads.

Such is the change at the end of an Age of the world.