

LEGENDS OF LORE SERIES

BOOK #4: IN THE CRYPT CASTLE OF THE BONE KING

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New to Legends of Lore? Start here!

Legends of Lore gamebooks offer the reader a unique experience: a chance to enter into a stunningly well-realized fantasy realm where YOU are the hero of the story! Each book in the series offers a self-contained, exciting adventure, giving YOU the chance to explore a unique world, fight fearsome creatures, and discover ancient treasures.

Legends of Lore gamebooks are *not* designed to be read beginning to end. Instead, you the reader define your own path through the story! At the end of some sections in the book, you will be presented with several options, indicated by **bold** text. Once you have made your choice, simply turn to the indicated section, and watch as your choice plays out before your very eyes! Choose wisely, and you may just make it out alive!

Materials needed: Character sheet (provided), pencil (with eraser), and two six-sided dice.

The Legends of Lore gamebook series is intended to be played in order, beginning with Adventure #1, *The Caves of Torment*, and progressing from there. If you have a character from a previous Legends of Lore gamebook, you may turn to section 1 immediately, and begin your adventure.

Character Creation: It is *highly recommended* that you use a character from a previous gamebook. *The Crypt Castle of the Bone King* is a challenging adventure, and experience with other Legends of Lore gamebooks will be useful. However, it is possible to play through this adventure with a new character.

Name, House: Fill these in with names of your choosing. In the Legends of Lore universe, your House name is equivalent to what we would call your “last name.”

God: Leave this section blank for now. You may find an opportunity to begin worshipping a deity at some point during your adventures.

Ability Scores: In Legends of Lore, your character is represented by three ability scores: physical (PHYS), mental (MENT), and social (SOC). Your PHYS score determines your general strength and stamina. Your MENT score represents your learning capacity, observational talents, and general acuity. The SOC score is a compilation of your ability to influence people, gain their trust, and other various important social skills. Statistics are defined in terms of *modifiers*, that is, their base is zero, and they advance in either negative or positive directions.

Roll 1d6 for each statistic, consult the following table, and note the result in the appropriate column:

1-2: +0

3-5: +1

6: +2

HP: New characters start with 20 HP, representing the character's resistance to physical and mental damage. You will gain and lose HP often during the course of your adventure.

Combat Skill: Your base combat skill is 7. You may become more or less skilled over the course of your journey.

Literacy: Roll 1d6. On a 3-6, your character is literate. Circle the "Y" next to "**Literate?**" on the character sheet.

On a 1-2, your character cannot read or write. Circle the "N" next to "**Literate?**" on your character sheet. However, to compensate for this disadvantage, you may add one (1) to an ability score of your choosing.

Gold: A new character starts with 2d6 X 10 gold pieces. Mark this in the "**Gold**" section on your character sheet.

Items: You have no items at the start of your adventure.

Keywords: Keywords represent important things that have happened on your journey. When you are instructed to gain a keyword, write the word in this box. New characters do not begin with any keywords.

Combat Rules: From time to time, you will find yourself in combat with some of the more violent denizens of the realm. These moments will be clearly indicated. Combat proceeds in turns, beginning with you, and then proceeding to the enemy.

To attack an enemy, roll 2d6. If the result is **equal to or higher than** your combat score, you hit the enemy. All successful attacks do 1 damage, plus the higher modifier of your PHYS or MENT scores.

If the result is **lower than** your combat score, you miss.

After you attack, it is the enemy's turn. Roll 2d6 for the enemy. If the result is **equal to or higher than** the enemy's combat score, it hits you. Successful enemy attacks do 1 damage, subtracted from your HP.

If the result is **lower than** the enemy's combat score, the enemy misses.

Combat concludes when either you or the enemy is out of hit points. If you are out of hit points, you have perished in battle. Create a new character, and try again!

Ability Tests: From time to time, you will be asked to perform an ability test. Roll 2d6, and add the appropriate ability score modifier. If your total is **greater than or equal to** the provided difficulty number, you have succeeded! If the total is **lower**, you have failed.

That's all you need to know to start your adventure. Turn to section 1 on the first page, and begin your quest. Good luck!

CHARACTER SHEET

Name:

House:

God:

Ability scores:

PHYS: _____

MENT: _____

SOC: _____

HP:

Combat Skill:

Literate? Y / N

Gold:

Items:

Keywords:

1. You have been summoned to the king's court. You're not totally sure why, but you suspect you are to be rewarded for the work you did destroying the ghost of the A'ntikan ruins. You ready yourself for the day, strapping your sword onto your hip with a flourish, and donning a stylishly embroidered doublet.

One question remains: what cape should you wear? You are a skilled adventurer, but your reputation as a cape maven is known throughout the realm. Browsing your extensive collection, you note two in particular.

The first is very old, tattered at the bottom and crusted with hard grime. The design on the back is simple: a lion embroidered in gold thread on maroon fabric: the design visible, but severely frayed. As shabby as this piece is, it is the pride of your collection. This cape is an ancient family relic, retrieved during your second adventure in the Forest of Fear. You have reason to believe it was the very cape worn by Cassius the Lion, one of the most legendary members of your family's house. Cassius would have worn this cape on the day he faced the traitor Ramadus in single combat. The grime from the fight is as much a holy relic as the cloth itself. Wearing this cape would acknowledge your family's proud heritage, but there are some who believe such relics should be kept in display cases...

The second item is a new piece, specially commissioned by you from the realm's finest cape-erer, Mansinus Quintestro. It is of the very latest style, featuring barely noticeable ribbing, a tapered cut, and an intricate geometric pattern that, when

closely examined, blurs together to form a three dimensional tableaux of yours truly slaying the Dragon of the Caves of Torment during your first adventure. It is truly a wondrous piece of work, but you can't help but wonder if some of the more austere nobles would look upon such a masterwork as vain frivolity.

Of course, with a collection like yours, there are always more capes to choose from...

Wear Cassius the Lion's legendary mantle: Turn to 13.

Wear Mansinus Quintestro's masterpiece: turn to 8.

Wear something else: turn to 25.

Go cape-less: turn to 50.

2. Before you know it, the soldiers are upon you. They size you up, and the one on the left speaks first: "Greetings, brother. What brings you to the King's castle?"

Say you're looking for work: Turn to 6.

Claim you're a noble, seeking audience with the king: turn to 3.

3. You draw yourself up to your full height. "I am Baron Jasper Ripson, here for an audience with the king!" The two guards look at each other, and shrug. They evidently don't pay these guys to think.

The soldier on the left offers you his hand. You climb up on the horse, and, with a twitch of the reins, you're headed towards the castle... **Turn to 142.**

4. You sigh, and open your eyes. It's about what you expected. You're lying in a field of dirt that stretches as

far as you can see. You think it might've been cropland at one point, but there's no telling for sure. Do Bonemen even need crops? Either way, it's not being used for anything at the moment. The sky overhead is roiling grey clouds, and there's a powerful wind whipping across the field, rustling the branches of barren trees and making you shiver. No wonder Bonemen are so angry all the time.

You stand up, and look around. Nothing, as far as the eye can see. You pick a direction, and head out.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 48.

5. The two soldiers ride up to you, brandishing their spears threateningly. "Halt, human!" the one on the left shouts, "What business have you here?"

If you have a "serpent ring," you may show it to the Bonemen and claim to be a diplomatic envoy. Turn to 7.

If you do not have the ring, or if you do not wish to show it to the soldiers, turn to 75

6. You bow to the soldiers. "I've come to find work. Times are hard in my village, and my family has sent me to the castle in hopes that I may return with some smidgen of wealth to feed us."

The soldiers look at each other. Crap, do Bonemen even eat? You start panicking. **Turn to 73.**

7. You brandish the ring you took from the Slivari corpse. "I come from

the Slivari people, on a diplomatic mission! Take me to the king!"

One of the Bonemen dismounts, walks over, and snatches the ring out of your hand. He gives it a once over, then tosses it to his comrade. "What do you make of this?"

The other Boneman peers at the ring for what feels like ages. Eventually, he shrugs. "Looks real enough to me. May as well do what he says. If he's lying, the king'll be able to tell soon enough."

The first Boneman nods in agreement, and jabs at you with the butt of his spear. "Come on now," he says, "get up on the horse. We don't have all day."

You oblige, and the Boneman clambers up after you. He twitches the reins, and before you know it, you're headed to the castle... **Turn to 131.**

8. Let the ascetics pass judgment all they like. You are a person of means, and a person of fashion. You shall present yourself accordingly. You throw the cape around your neck, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note that you are wearing the Quintestro, and turn to 54.**

9. You walk over to the dirt pile, and with a start, realize it's a Boneman lying in ambush!

Combat!

Ambushing Boneman

Combat Skill: 12

Hitpoints: 5

If you win the combat, turn to 39.

10. You've got no idea what's in that shack, but you bet it'll be something

interesting. As you near the building, you stop, and immediately drop down to the ground. There's a Boneman out there!

Watch the Boneman: Turn to 22.

Get out of there: Turn to 11.

11. You've no desire to mess with some Boneman hermit. You creep back in the opposite direction, and spend a sleepless night huddled shivering under a dead tree. Eventually, "dawn" comes, and the sky returns to a lighter grey.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

12. Slowly, you come to, in a pile of your own organic matter. Your bones have been stripped clean of all traces of flesh and blood, and you stand, naked, in your own skeleton.

You feel as though you should feel queasy, but you don't. You don't really feel anything really. You can still move yourself perfectly fine, and you feel as strong as you were before, but there's no sensation of touch. Your entire body seems to be completely numb. You stick a bony finger into your empty eye sockets. You're a Boneman.

Well.

You don't know what you were expecting, honestly.

Gain the keyword BONES, and roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

13. We must honor our forefather's relics with use. You offer a mild oath to the memory of The Lion, drape the cape around yourself, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note that you are wearing The Lion's relic, and turn to 54.**

14. The next few minutes pass in a blur. The castle is in complete chaos, royal guards locked in deadly combat with Bonemen everywhere you turn. Brandon pulls you forward, heading towards the dungeons. You manage to avoid the worst of the fighting, but Brandon's office, your destination, is blocked by a huge Boneman, nearly 9 feet tall. It fills the corridor, practically bent over double to fit in. It sees the two of you, and readies its great-axe. There'll be no getting around this one.

Combat!

Enemy: Giant Boneman

Combat Skill: 4

HP: 7

Special: Time is of the essence! You must defeat the Giant Boneman in less than 8 rounds!

If you win, turn to 38.

15. You need a break. You've earned one. You're really not ready to deal with whatever terrible future hellscape's outside of your eyelids right now. Your headache's really enough. Yep, just gonna lay here in the dirt and rest up for a minute.

Get up: turn to 4.

Take some more time: turn to 36.

16. Something in your mind snaps. You pass out, and when you awake, you're less...stable than you were

before the ordeal. **LOSE one point of MENT, and turn to 12.**

17. Brandon's office is chock full of talismans, artefacts, and arcane books. You reckon you could spend a month in here and still have things to explore. If only you had that kind of time.

Brandon moves with quick efficiency, flipping between pages of spellbooks, and muttering arcane words under his breath. You think it best not to bother him.

His chanting increases in intensity, and he begins to light a series of candles placed about his office. Before long, a shimmering purple ball appears in the middle of the room. Sweat dripping down his face, Brandon's hands wave and twitch, and, slowly but steadily, the ball begins to expand. **Turn to 66.**

18. You march right through the door into the shack. The Boneman that you saw earlier starts, and shoots a blast of magical energy that whistles by your left ear. Looks like you've wandered into a fight!

Combat!

Elderly Boneman

Combat Skill: 10

Hit Points: 6

Special: This Boneman knows magic! He hits automatically for 3 damage whenever he rolls doubles.

If you defeat the Boneman, turn to 51.

19. You've been spending too much time out here. A tree's a tree, nothing more. You shake your head, and continue on your way.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

20. The parchment is covered in writing, but you can't make heads or tails of it. You take a look at the vial. It's full of some smoky liquid that roils hypnotically when you shake it—it's probably a potion of some kind.

Drink the potion: turn to 32.

Leave the potion be: turn to 29.

21. Why, you've wandered back to Skielman's shack! The old Boneman greets you enthusiastically, and the two of you spend another pleasant evening in each other's company. You head out the next morning.

Roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

22. You lay on the ground for several minutes, observing the Boneman. He seems to be having difficulty getting around—his spine is bent, and he's using a tree bough as a makeshift cane. He putters around outside the shack for a few moments, then heads back inside. You don't see any other Bonemen.

Approach the shack: Turn to 57.

Get out of there: Turn to 11.

23. You smile obsequiously. "Truly you have a discerning eye, my liege. Why, this piece is one of the finest in my collection. It's—"

He cuts you off. "Shut up. Lord knows I'd love to talk capes with you, but we have more pressing matters to

discuss.” **Turn to 33.**

24. He lets out an unsettling cackle. “Ha! You wouldn’t believe me if I told you!”

You think he’s probably right, but you say, “Try me.”

The Boneman pulls himself up to full height, producing a series of worrying cracks from his spine. “I, my young friend, am none other than Count Visgrout Skielman III, rightful heir to the Bony Throne!”

That means nothing to you.

Pretend to be impressed: Turn to 35.

Confess your ignorance: Turn to 41.

25. You choose one of your plainer, though still very fine capes. You throw the cape around your neck, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note the color of the cape you are choosing, and turn to 54.**

26. The itching fades, and you gradually come to your senses. You look down at yourself, and pass out. **Turn to 12.**

27. The king's castle looms above you, towering high in the heart of the city. The white walls gleam, and the king's colors fly proudly from the tops of the numerous towers.

You make your way across the drawbridge without difficulty. The footmen guarding the enormous oak door bow as you pass through. **Turn to 65.**

28. You’ve been in the throne room before, but it’s still a breathtaking sight. Titanic arched ceilings disappear into darkness above your

head. The floor is a gleaming, creamy marble, all one piece. The walls on either side of you are dominated by enormous stained glass windows depicting various moments of import in the kingdom’s history: the slaying of the Minotaur, the Blessed Summit, the Four Day Night, etc. The entire room is an object lesson in the Perrian Empire’s wealth and power.

The King sits on his throne, dressed in finery and with royal scepter in hand. Brandon stands at his right, bald head bobbing in his blue robes as he watches you approach.

You walk the thick carpet leading up to the throne and kneel before the King, but he graciously bids you to rise. His bearded face, normally ruddy with cheer, is today grim and pale. He nods at you. “Nice cape.”

Accept the compliment graciously: Turn to 64.

Attempt to curry favor by showing off your cape expertise: turn to 23.

29. Your momma told you not to drink strange potions, and you listen to momma’s advice. You put the vial back into the knothole, and continue on your way. **Gain the keyword KNOTHOLE, and roll 1d6:**

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

30. Alexander narrows her eyes. “He’s alive. That’s all they pay me to worry about.” Clearly the woman is not in the mood for talk. You nod, and spend a few moments examining the tapestries on the adjacent walls, until the door to the throne room creaks open, and Brandon the sorcerer steps

out. He gives the both of you a suspicious look, then directs his attention in your direction. "You're here. Good. The king will speak to you now." With that, he disappears back behind the door. **Turn to 28.**

31. Skielman nods. "Very well." He lets out that strange sigh again, and starts in on his story.

It's amazingly dull. You were hoping for something like the legends you remember from childhood, full of betrayals, battles, and subtle manipulations.

Instead, you get an hour-long lecture on the byzantine workings of Bonemen parliamentary politics. From what you can understand, Skielman was deposed because he committed a minor gaffe on a state holiday. You're amazed these people are able to get anything done, let alone mount a time-travelling invasion.

At the end of the story, you politely offer your sympathies. **Turn to 62.**

32. You uncork the potion, and gulp it down. It tastes chalky, and your mouth and throat become very dry. You start to cough, softly at first, and then harder and harder, until you're doubled over and wracked with spasms. You begin to sweat profusely, and, when you wipe your forehead, a giant clump of skin sloughs off into your hand! Your skin starts to itch, and, although you try to resist, the sensation becomes more and more insistent, until you can no longer hold back. You begin tearing at yourself, ripping off great chunks of skin and digging deeper, muscle, tissue, veins, and fat falling from your body and onto the ground all around you. The itching gets worse and worse, and you lose your head

entirely, feverishly ripping gobs and gobs of organic matter from your skeleton. You find your mind slipping away...

Make a PHYS check, difficulty 9.

If you succeed, turn to 26.

If you fail, turn to 16.

33. "I'm sure you're wondering why you're here." His voice is gruff, matter-of-fact. "Well, I hardly know myself. But Brandon here," he gestures at the Sorcerer, "is convinced we're in deep trouble."

Brandon nods quickly. "Indeed, Your Majesty. The signs are unmistakable." He looks at you. "We shall be invaded before the day is out." **Turn to 37.**

34. He looks at you closely. "Well, well, well. A human without skin! That's a new one!"

You start, and the Boneman claps, delighted. "Don't you worry, child. Other Bonemen won't be able to tell the difference. But I have my intuitions..." He nods sagely. "Now, what did you want?" **Turn to 62.**

35. You fall to the ground immediately. "My lord! Forgive my impudence!"

Skielman nods magnanimously. "Rise, child. A mistake made in ignorance is easily pardoned. And please, call me Skielman. I've not much use for titles out here in exile." You stand.

Skielman looks you over. "Have you any other questions for me?" **Turn to 62.**

36. You're lying face down in the dirt.

Get up: turn to 4.

Just... wait a minute: Turn to 15.

37. You gape at him, wordless. He

starts in on an explanation, but the King cuts him off. “Here’s the short version:

“Both the Bony Throne and the Perrian Empire have had access to time travel magic for about a decade now. *But*, until recently, there’s been a mutual acknowledgment of the dangers—both our scholars and the Bonemen know that mucking about in time could produce disasters we can’t even fathom. So neither side’s weaponized it.

“Apparently,” he gestures to Brandon, “that’s just changed. Some Numbskull in the future’s sent an army back in time to kill us, and we’re nowhere near prepared to deal with it.”

The King sighs. “Basically, we’ve been caught with our pants down. We don’t have a chance of holding off the invasion with our forces as they stand now, and our temporal magic isn’t developed enough to mount a large-scale counter. So we’re sending you. Brandon believes he has discovered which future Bone King ordered the invasion. You’re to travel forward in time and kill the Bone King. Gods willing, that’ll save us.”

As the King finishes his speech, the stained glass window depicting Eddor Maximus’s triumph in the first Thresher invasion explodes into a cloud of colored shards. Three Bonemen jump through the hole, brandishing curved blades and shaking their bony limbs at the king. Alexander bursts into the throne room, sword drawn, and immediately decapitates one of the Bonemen before it can react. Its skull chatters on the ground, while the rest of its body stumbles around, sword swinging wildly.

The King draws his sword, and yells at you and Brandon. “Get out of here! Me and Alexander will hold them for as long as we can!” You start to argue, but he cuts you off. “We can’t stop this invasion in the present! Get to the future, and kill the Bone King!”

More windows shatter as dozens of Bonemen pour into the throne room. Brandon grabs your arm, and the two of you disappear behind the throne, into the king’s private chambers. The last thing you see before the door shuts is the King and Alexander, standing tall as the hoard of skeletons close in on them. **Turn to 14.**

38. Your final blow smashes the Giant Boneman apart, and the remains of his skeleton scatter in the hallway. Brandon nods. “Impressive. You may stand a chance after all.” He unlocks the door to his office, and enters. **Turn to 17.**

39. You wildly stab the Boneman a few more times before you realize it hasn’t actually moved at all since you’ve found it. Taking a closer look, you realize this isn’t a Boneman at all—It’s just a regular skeleton! You wipe the dirt from your blade and glance around sheepishly.

Loot the corpse!: turn to 67.

Leave it be: turn to 60.

40. It appears you’ve been walking in circles. You shudder at the memory of your transformation, and continue on your way.

Roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

41. You shift awkwardly from foot to

foot. “Ah, sorry, I’m not from around here. That name doesn’t mean much to me.”

Skielman visibly deflates. “Oh. I suppose I can’t be too surprised. It has been several centuries since my exile.” He lets out a rattling hiss that you guess is a Boneman version of a sigh. “Would you like to hear my story?”

Sure: Turn to 31.

Actually, I’ve got something else I’d like to ask you: Turn to 62.

42. Morning dawns, and you tell Skielman you must be on your way. The two of you exchange affectionate goodbyes, and you set off in a new direction.

Roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

43. You walk up to the tree, and take a closer look.

Nestled in one of the knotholes, you discover a small vial, wrapped in a slip of parchment!

If you are literate, turn to 74.

If not, turn to 20.

44. You pick up the paper and unfold it. It’s written in Tardesh, the language of diplomacy. You quickly scan the text. The corpse in front of you is the remains of an envoy from the Slivari people to the Bone King. He was commissioned to negotiate a truce between the two peoples. Evidentially he never made it. There’s a date on the letter—roughly 150 years after the day you fell through the portal! Brandon’s magic worked,

apparently. You realize, however, that the skeleton has been here for at least a year, maybe much longer. There’s no telling what today’s date really is. Hm.

You stash the letter in your pocket. Maybe it’ll come in handy later.

You have acquired a “serpent ring” and a “diplomatic letter.” Mark these possessions on your character sheet, and gain the keyword CORPSE. When you are finished, roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 52.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

45. You walk for what feels like hours, although it’s hard to tell with no sun in the featureless sky to mark the passage of time. Up ahead, something catches your eye: a glint of white amidst the brown dirt.

If you have the keyword CORPSE, immediately turn to 55.

Investigate: turn to 9.

Avoid it: turn to 71.

46. As eccentric as Skielman is, you like him. And it doesn’t seem as though there’s much risk of him communicating your purpose to society at large. You tell him: “I’m here to kill the Bone King.” His eye sockets twinkle, and he cackles. “I knew it! The only humans that come into our lands are envoys or assassins, and you’re clearly not the former.”

You smile, in spite of yourself. “You’re not going to give me up, are you?”

Skielman slaps the table. “Give you up? My friend, I’m going to help you!” He rubs his hands together. “There’s

a resistance group that doesn't like the current king. They keep visiting me out here and telling me they're planning a coup, and bothering me about ruling again. I don't want the job; I like my peace and quiet. But I'm sure they'd be glad to help you out. Now, what was..." He trails off, trying to remember. "Ah, that's right! The members of the rebels all make a small notch on one of their ribs: the third one down on the right. You'll be able to identify any rebels by that mark."

You thank him for the information. The two of you spend another hour or so chatting, and then turn in. You curl up on the floor next to his bed, and quickly fall asleep... **Gain the keywords NOTCH and FOLK, and turn to 42.**

47. The thought of permanently becoming a Boneman is too much to bear. You set the potion back in the knothole, and continue on. **Gain the keyword KNOTHOLE, and roll 1d6:**

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

48. As you walk along, one of the dead trees that dots the landscape catches your eye. It looks somehow different from the others. You stare at it a while, trying to decide what's different about it, and then it hits you: it looks just like the tree that's on the royal seal of Perria! **If you have the keyword BONES, turn to 40 immediately. If you have the keyword KNOTHOLE, turn to 59 immediately.**

To investigate, turn to 43.

To continue on, turn to 19.

49. After what seems like an eternity of walking, you see something on the horizon. You head towards it, and, sure enough, it's a titanic castle! This must be the legendary Crypt Castle of the Bone King! No human has ever seen this structure and returned alive. With grim determination, you resolve to be the first.

As you walk, you see a cloud of dust on the horizon, in the direction of the castle. It appears to be headed your way.

The cloud of dust gets closer, and you realize its two Bonemen, riding skeletal horses! The sight is incredible, almost majestic, and the two soldiers handle their bony steeds with remarkable skill. You see one of them point in your direction, and they head towards you.

If you have the keyword BONES, turn to 2.

Otherwise, turn to 5.

50. You chuckle to yourself at the very notion. Go capeless, indeed! You would be laughed out of the court. **Go back to 1 and choose a cape.**

51. You breathe heavily, and glance around at the shack. The Boneman's magic has blown several holes through the walls, and generally thrown the place into disarray. You spend a few moments rummaging through the possessions that escaped destruction, but don't find anything useful. **Lame!**

You spend the night in the dead Boneman's house, and set out the next morning. **Gain the keyword SENICIDE, and roll 1d6.**

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

52. You walk, and walk, and walk. You take a brief rest, and then you walk some more. Imperceptibly, the sky begins to grow darker. It'll be nighttime soon. You trudge on, until, astonishingly, you see a small shack in the distance! **If you have the keyword FOLK, turn to 21 immediately. If you have the keyword SENICIDE, turn to 63 immediately.**

Head for the shack: Turn to 10.

Get out of there: Turn to 11.

53. You pick up the paper and unfold it, only to realize with dismay that it's some sort of letter. You can't make heads or tails of it, but there's a wax seal at the bottom that matches the emblem on the ring you found. Maybe this was some sort of diplomatic envoy? You shrug, and stash the letter in your pocket. Maybe you'll get someone to read it to you later.

You have acquired a "serpent ring" and a "diplomatic letter." Mark these possessions on your character sheet, and gain the keyword CORPSE. When you are finished, roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 52.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

54. Exiting your lovely home on the shore of the Gravel River, you walk down the cobblestone streets towards the castle. It's a beautiful day: the sun shines down on you as you walk, warming your face in the cool autumn morning. Vendors are setting up stalls along the Royal Road, and you inhale deeply, filling your nose with the fragrant smells flowing from the food

booths. Children run about in the streets, shouting and playing various games.

After a few minutes of walking, you approach the castle. **Turn to 27.**

55. With a groan, you realize it's the remains you found earlier. Have you been walking in circles all this time? You set off in what you hope is a new direction.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 52.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

56. You push aside the blanket, and enter Skielman's house.

It's much nicer than you expected, rustic, to be sure, but cozy, and full of life. Shelves hold trinkets that you assume are mementos from Skielman's days as a noble, and there's a light crystal in one corner emitting a warm glow.

Skielman waves his arms around. "Home sweet home!" He gestures at a table and chairs. "Please, have a seat."

You oblige, and pass an enjoyable evening in Skielman's company. He turns out to be an avid musician, and teaches you a number of traditional Boneman folk songs. As the night winds down, the conversation turns to just what, exactly, you're doing there.

Tell Skielman the truth: Turn to 46.

Lie: Turn to 61.

57. You're not afraid of one lousy Boneman! You get up, brush the dirt off of you, and walk over to the shack. Maybe you can get some information.

As you come up on the shack, you realize it's quite a rundown affair. It seems to be constructed from pieces of dead trees, piled together until they form some semblances of walls. You're astonished the wind doesn't knock it down.

A heavy blanket hangs over one wall. That must be the door.

Call out: Turn to 72.

Barge in: Turn to 18.

58. Alexander looks around, and beckons you to come closer. "Just between you and me? There's cause for concern. He doesn't deign to share his thoughts with me, but it's clear something's bothering him. He's been keeping odd hours, avoiding the Queen, neglecting his royal duties. He spends all his time cooped up in the war room, conspiring with that sorcerer."

You raise your eyebrows. "Brandon?"

Alexander nods. "Aye. Never trusted that one. There's things decent folk weren't meant to know. I can only imagine what--"

As if on cue, the door to the throne room creaks open, and Brandon the Sorcerer steps out. Alexander snaps to attention, and stares straight ahead. Brandon gives you both a suspicious look, then directs his attention towards you. "You're here. Good. The king will speak to you now." With that, he disappears back behind the door. **Turn to 28.**

59. It appears you've been walking in circles. This is the tree where you left the strange potion. Well, if you weren't interested before, you're certainly not interested now. **Roll 1d6.**

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 49.

60. You're pretty sure no one saw you, but you're too embarrassed to stick around here. **Gain the keyword CORPSE, and roll 1d6:**

1-2: turn to 52.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

61. As much as you like Skielman, you can't risk compromising your mission. "Just passing through," you tell him. He nods, but seems suddenly sad, and soon proposes turning in. You curl up on the floor next to his bed, and quickly fall asleep... **Gain the keyword FOLK, and turn to 42.**

62. The Boneman looks at you expectantly.

Ask him who he is: turn to 24.

Ask him where you are: Turn to 70.

Ask him if you can come in: Turn to 69.

63. Why, it's the shack of that Boneman you killed! With the light dying, you spend another night in the ruins of the dead man's house, then head out the next morning.

Roll 1d6:

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

64. You bow, and thank his Highness. **Turn to 33.**

65. You make your way through the castle, greeting various nobles on

your way to the throne room. The head knight of the royal guard, Alexander, stands sentinel outside the closed doors of the throne room. She nods to you. "Greetings, friend."

You make a bow. "How fares the king?"

Make a SOC check, difficulty 7. If you succeed, go to 58. If you fail, go to 30.

66. The ball stabilizes, and you see an image within it: a barren field under a grey sky, one lone dead tree breaking up the landscape. Brandon, still gesturing wildly, croaks at you: "Get to it!" Taking a deep breath, you back up a few paces, dash forward, and...jump! **Turn to 68.**

67. Bending down, you dig more of the skeleton out from dirt. It's remarkably well preserved, save for the damage you inflicted with your sword.

A glint of gold catches your eye: a ring! You carefully pull the gold band off the skeleton's hand and examine it. It's a fine piece of work, thick gold inlaid with a number of precious stones. The head appears to bear some sort of royal emblem: a serpent, bearing its fangs and preparing to strike. Curious.

Looking at the skeleton again, you realize it's also holding a folded piece of paper. You missed it in your greedy scrabbling at the ring.

If you are literate, turn to 44.

If not, turn to 53.

68. Time and space cease to exist. You experience everything and nothing, all at once, then over the course of an eternity. You achieve enlightenment, then, and instant

later, go mad. You want to throw up. Suddenly, you pass out. **Turn to 36.**

69. He considers for a moment, then nods. "Certainly. I could use the company." He looks back at you as you head in. "Did I mention my name is Skielman?" **Turn to 56.**

70. "Why, you're at my shack!" He giggles to himself, and refuses to elaborate further. **Turn to 62.**

71. You don't know what that is, but you're convinced it's not anything good. You give the dirt pile a wide berth, and continue on your way.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 52.

3-4: turn to 48.

5-6: turn to 49.

72. "Hello?"

The blanket flaps in the wind. You call out again, a little louder: "Hello?"

Suddenly, the Boneman that you saw earlier pops out from behind the blanket! His soulless eye pits look you up and down. "What? What do you want?" **If you have the keyword BONES, turn to 34 immediately. Otherwise, turn to 62.**

73. After a few tense moments, the one on the left nods gravely. "I'm sorry to hear of your troubles, brother. These times are hard."

The one on the right breaks in. "I believe the artist, Banus, is looking for musicians to accompany him. Do you play, brother?"

You're not sure if your rusty skills will be up to the task, but it's a way into the castle. You nod, and the soldier on the left offers you his hand. You climb up on the horse, and, with a

twitch of the reins, you're headed towards the castle... **Turn to 79.**

74. You examine the parchment, and discover, with a shock, that it's addressed to you! Hands shaking, you read on:

"I hope this finds you well. I am writing this letter twenty years after your departure, the king's death, and Perria's fall. Things are very bad. The Bonemen are brutal tyrants. I have managed to elude them these long years, but I have seen, and done, many horrible things. This reality must not come to pass. You must succeed.

"I have spent the last twenty years studying the Bonemen. Much of my findings will not be useful to you, but this might: it is a potion that will turn you into a Boneman. Take heed: the transformation is permanent, and deeply unpleasant. Still, I can assure you whatever pain it will bring you will pale in comparison to the horrors that have befallen our people.

"If you believe you can complete your mission without its use, by all means do so. But you must not fail.

"-Brandon"

A note from Brandon, from the past? You find yourself with a newfound respect for the sorcerer. You examine the potion. It's a smoky, white liquid that roils hypnotically when you shake it. It feels heavy in your hand

Drink the potion: Turn to 32.

Leave the potion: Turn to 47.

75. You stammer. It probably would've been a good idea to come up with some sort of plan before you got to the castle. The Bonemen look impatient.

"Ah, um, I'm a student! Yeah! I'm here to study Bonemen culture!"

The soldiers glare at you. "That's a mighty fine cape you've got for a student," the one on the left remarks. Hrm. You hadn't thought of that.

"Well, yes, you know, I do well for myself."

The soldiers chuckle. "That's about to change."

They ride at you, and the one on the right clocks you in the head with his spear. Everything goes black... **Turn to 136.**

76. “Go, Go-oh!/ Go, Johnny go go!/ Go Johnny go go go!/ Go Johnny go, go!/ Go Johnny go, go, go!/ Johnny B. Goode!” The crowd is going wild! Everyone’s up and dancing around! This is amazing! **Turn to 86.**

77. The bodies of the guards crumple onto the floor. The bookkeeper backs away from you, hands outstretched. “Please!” His voice is reedy, quavering. “Please, don’t hurt me!”

Kill him: turn to 104.

Spare him: turn to 134.

78. We must honor our forefather’s relics with use. You offer a mild oath to the memory of The Lion, drape the cape around yourself, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note that you are wearing The Lion’s relic, and turn to 150.**

79. You ride along with the guards, and before long, the castle is looming high above you. It’s a massive structure, two or three times the size of the royal castle back in Perria. The surrounding wasteland makes it seem all the more imposing, and you find it hard to take in.

Upon arrival, the Bonemen march you through the castle. You’re a little unnerved by the sheer number of Bonemen milling about—your transformation seems to be flawless, but you’re acutely aware of just how little you know about Bonemen social norms.

Before you know it, the guards have deposited you in Banus’s office. Strange instruments litter the room. They appear to be mainly percussion and string instruments, which you suppose makes sense—you don’t really know how a Boneman would

produce any airflow.

Banus spots you, and jumps up. “Where have you been? The show is about to start! Here, there’s no time to talk, you need to get out there!” He shoves what looks like an oddly shaped guitar into your hands. Before you can say a word in protest, he pushes you through a door, onto a darkened stage. **Turn to 126.**

80. You’re no match for the horde. Beaten down almost immediately, a spear pierces your gut, leaving a gaping hole where your appendix should be. Blood pours out of you and slicks the stone floor. You fall to your knees.

Before long, everything goes black... **END.**

81. You make your way through the castle, greeting various nobles on your way to the throne room. The head knight of the royal guard, Alexander, stands sentinel outside the closed doors of the throne room. She nods to you. “Greetings, friend. The King awaits you.” You nod, and step into the throne room. **Turn to 138.**

82. You’re lying face-down in the dirt. **Turn to 94.**

83. Your F- pun flies through the air. The King starts to groan, but is cut off when his head is. **Turn to 128.**

84. You have been summoned to the king’s court. You’re not sure why, but you suspect you are to be rewarded for the work you did destroying the ghost of the A’ntikan ruins. You ready yourself for the day, strapping your sword onto your hip with a flourish, and donning a stylishly embroidered doublet.

One question remains: what cape

should you wear? You are a skilled adventurer, but your reputation as a cape maven is known throughout the realm. Browsing your extensive collection, you note two in particular.

The first is very old, tattered at the bottom and crusted with hard grime. The design on the back is simple: a lion embroidered in gold thread on maroon fabric, the design visible, but severely frayed. As shabby as this piece is, it is the pride of your collection. This cape is an ancient family relic, retrieved during your second adventure in the Forest of Fear. You have reason to believe it was the very cape worn by Cassius the Lion, one of the most legendary members of your family's house. Cassius would have worn this cape on the day he faced the traitor Ramadus in single combat. The dirt gained in that fight is as much a holy relic as the cloth itself. Wearing this cape would acknowledge your family's proud heritage, but there are some who believe such relics should be kept in display cases...

The second item is a new piece, specially commissioned by you from the realm's finest cape-erer, Mansinus Quintestro. It is of the very latest style, featuring barely noticeable ribbing, a tapered cut, and an intricate geometric pattern that, when closely examined, blurs together to form a three dimensional tableau of yours truly slaying the Dragon of the Caves of Torment during your first adventure. It is truly a wondrous piece of work, but you can't help but wonder if some of the more austere nobles would look upon such a masterwork as vain frivolity.

Of course, with a collection like yours, there are always more capes to

choose from...

Wear Cassius the Lion's legendary mantle: Turn to 89.

Wear Mansinus Quintestro's masterpiece: turn to 78.

Wear something else: turn to 108.

Go cape-less: turn to 154.

85. After a moment, he stands and applauds, then speaks in a thin, quavering voice. "Well done young one, well done! I haven't seen the Nineteen Honorable Steps in... oh, probably at least a hundred years! It's a delight to meet a noble who still knows how to keep the old traditions alive." He seems beside himself with cheer. "Now, my child, I'm sure you have matters of your own you'd like to discuss, but I'd like to offer you a position as an advisor." He pauses for a moment. "I'm aware of the oddity of my offer, but it's just so hard to find those that still keep to the old ways. You would be compensated graciously, of course."

You can't think of a reason you'd decline. **Turn to 135.**

86. "Go, Johnny go go!/ Go Johnny go go go!/ Go Johnny go, go!/ Go Johnny go, go, go!/ Johnny B. Goode!" The dance fever just keeps building! You spy a Boneman on the telephone in the corner. "Chuck, Chuck," he says, "It's Marvin!" There's a brief pause. "Your great, great, great, great, great grandson, Marvin Berry! You know that new sound you were looking for? Well, listen to this!" He holds out the telephone so that it picks up your now unstoppable jamming. You're a little confused by the logic there, but you push it into the back of your mind, and put all your energy into your

totally killer performance. **Turn to 149.**

87. You take a deep breath. You can do this.

Confidently pulling the letter from your pouch, you hold it towards the king. "I am on official business from the Slivari. This letter contains all you need to know."

With the same ponderous movements, the king reaches down and pinches the document from your hand. He considers it for a moment, then begins to laugh, long, ponderous bellows that shake the stones of the throne room. **Turn to 120.**

88. You're marched up onto the platform, next to a hooded Boneman, and one wearing a number of pieces of gaudy jewelry. The latter seems to be an announcer of some sort; his voice is magically amplified and he's whipping the crowd into a frenzy. Even with the magic, you can barely hear him over the din.

As you step up onto the platform, his ravings reach a fever pitch. "And now, beautiful citizens of the Bonelands, our main! E! vent! You've heard of humans, some of you may have even *seen* them before, but you've never seen one quite! Like! This!" The crowd's cheering intensifies.

"In just a few short moments, you most honored of guests, you most beautiful people, will witness an event most Bonemen can only *dream* of!" The guards force your head down into the guillotine's cool wooden collar.

"You, my wonderful, wonderful friends, will see a human *die!*" The announcer is shaking and seems barely able to hold himself together. He continues: "And now! Aaaaand

now!" You can't stop shivering. "The blood of a human! Will! Be! Spilled!"

The crowd goes quiet.

A drum builds.

You say a brief prayer, and think of home.

The blade bites into your neck.

THE END.

89. Let the ascetics pass judgment all they like. You are a person of means, and a person of fashion. You shall present yourself accordingly. You throw the cape around your neck, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note that you are wearing the Quintestro, and turn to 150.**

90. Days pass, or perhaps weeks. In the absence of external stimulation, your mind gradually clouds over. **LOSE one point of MENT.** Your captors bring you stale bread and water, seemingly at random: sometimes a feeding will come before you've finished the last, sometimes the gaps are so long you are convinced you will die of thirst. Your dreams are fitful, and filled with colorful fantasies of escape, each more elaborate than the last. When you awake, however, nothing has changed. There is only the cell and the slow, monotonous dripping. **Turn to 129.**

91. You take a deep breath. "I'm a friend of the rebellion," you get out. "I seek the death of the Bone King."

The Bomeman standing above you relaxes a little. "Good answer. How do you know about the mark? And where do you come from?"

"A Boneman in the wastes gave it to me: Skielman. I come from one of the

northern villages—the King’s antiquated policies have worked us into the ground. Our petitions have gone unanswered, and so we decided: change must come by force.”

The skeletal hand removes the chisel. “Skielman is a friend of the rebellion. And your story rings true.” He offers you a hand. “Come with me, friend. I have much to show you.” **Turn to 113.**

92. Something snaps. You feel as though time has slowed, or perhaps you have just sped up. You lose yourself to the rhythm of the combat, feel yourself become smoke as you effortlessly dodge thrust after thrust. The spear is you, and you are the spear. Dozens of Bonemen burst into shards as you kill and kill and kill.

Eventually the flow of soldiers stops, and the blood haze clears a little. You’re standing in the office, shards and splinters of ivory all around you. **Turn to 151.**

93. There is a moment of silence in the room. Then, one of the Bonemen at the table speaks: “Greetings.” He is staring at you intently. “I see you bear the mark of the rebellion. You shall soon have opportunity to show yourself worthy of that scratch.”

The Boneman sitting to his right shakes his head. “Your lack of tact never ceases to amaze me, Themurius.” He stands, walks over, and extends his hand. “Warm welcome to you, stranger. I am Ribben. My prickly companion and I have found ourselves in charge of this little group. We feel that you might be of great value to the cause.” He pauses for a moment. “Would you like to hear how?”

You nod. **Turn to 153.**

94. Your head’s throbbing, but you manage to pull yourself together and stand up. When you see your surroundings, you groan: you’re back out in the wasteland outside the castle. Even having made it to the castle once, you have no idea which way to go given the featureless surroundings. Ugh.

Roll 1d6.

1-2: turn to 45.

3-4: turn to 52.

5-6: turn to 48.

95. Without looking up, he waves you over. You see that his eyes are fixed on the scabbard in front of him.

He stands, and launches into a long speech about how the sword in front of you is a great artefact of better days. There is a lot of talk of legendary rulers of the past, but, in all honesty, you kind of zone out.

Anyways, he ends up presenting you with the sword. **Note that you have the “Heirloom Sword.” The sword is magic and deals three damage instead of one when you make a successful attack.**

What do you yell as you attack him with it?

“Sic Semper Tyranis!” Turn to 110.

“You’ve just made a real ‘bone-headed’ move” Turn to 83.

“This is for Perria!” turn to 132.

Don’t yell anything. Turn to 111.

96. You and the mystery Boneman draw closer to the voices, until you reach their source: a crowd stands before a crude platform made of old

boxes, listening to someone on the podium.

You move closer, and listen. **Turn to 119.**

97. You shake your head. You don't like the sound of this Mercy business. The guards shrug, and leave without another word. **Turn to 99.**

98. You arrive at the base of the throne, and the Bonemen to the left and right of you kneel reverently. The Bone King shifts in his chair, and your skin crawls as his massive bulk scrapes against the Bony Throne. He speaks with a deep rumbling that you feel in your own bones. "WHO IS THIS HUMAN?"

The soldier on the left quavers, and keeps his eyes on the ground. "He claims to be an emissary, my Liege, from the Slivari people. He has a royal ring."

The Bony Throne creaks and shifts as the King stands. You realize you barely come up to his kneecaps. He stoops, and holds out a hand the size of a small table. "GIVE ME THE RING."

Still shaking, the guard drops the tiny piece of jewelry onto the massive slab of the King's palm. Fingers the size of your forearm close around it, and the King settles back into his throne. He delicately retrieves the ring from his palm, and holds it close to a gaping eye socket.

"THIS RING IS TRUE. BUT THE APPROACH RINGS FALSE." His massive skull turns on you. "WHY ARE YOU HERE, FLESHBAG?"

Make a SOC check, difficulty 9.

If you succeed, go to 123.

If you fail, go to 87.

99. Years(?) go by. You wonder if the appearance of the Bonemen guards was just another dream, back from when you still dreamt. You pray for their return, raving through the food slot, beginning for someone, anyone to hear you and end the monotony. No one ever comes. **Turn to 146.**

100. You do a sort of half-hearted little jig, praying that it's some sort of courtly introduction.

It's not. The King sees through your ruse immediately, and orders you thrown in prison.

You spend the rest of your days staring at grey walls, cursing your failures, and waiting for death.

THE END.

101. The guards let go of you to converse with the bookkeeper, and you notice that one of them has leaned his spear on the desk, within your reach. This could be your chance to escape... but you'd have to overpower three Bonemen to do it, and there's no telling what sort of attention the ruckus would bring upon you. Perhaps it'd be better to wait for the King's Mercy, or a better chance to get away?

Make a move: turn to 125.

Play it cool: turn to 143.

102. Try as you might, you can't come up with anything to say. So you keep up the circumlocutions, staying in a verbal holding pattern as you desperately hope for an idea to come to you.

Unfortunately, the Bone King is not a patient man. After a few more minutes of this he stands, and roars at you: "ENOUGH! WHY. ARE. YOU. HERE?"

You feel the bottom drop out of your stomach. All you can do is make a sort of whimpering “haaaaaaarm,” and try your best not to faint.

The Bone King lets out a titanic shout, and grabs you in one of his massive fists. You struggle, but before you know it, you’re hurtling through the air, tossed across the throne room.

You hit cold stone, and, with a sickening crunch, black out. **Lose 5 HP. If you survive, turn to 136.**

103. “Way down in Louisiana down in New Orleans,/way back up in the woods among the evergreens/there stood a log cabin made of earth and wood,/where lived a country boy named Johnny B. Goode!” Man, you’re really rockin’! **Turn to 127.**

104. You plant your feet, and, with a single spear thrust, shatter his skull. **Turn to 75.**

105. You know exactly what to play. You adjust the odd guitar on your neck, and address the crowd. “OK folks. This is an oldie—a real oldie, I guess.” You turn to your back-up band. “Okay guys, this is a blues riff in B, watch me for the changes. And try and keep up, ok?” The Bonemen musicians shrug.

You turn back towards the crowd, and launch into a smoking rendition of 50’s rock and roll classic “Johnny B. Goode!” **Turn to 103.**

106. You find the king. He’s a hulking monster, 20 feet tall, and wielding a greatsword twice your height. No problem. As he thunders towards you, you concentrate, and he simply... disappears. **Turn to 141.**

107. The servant brings you to a small office, where the Bone King sits, tending to some business. You were

expecting someone a little more impressive, but the skeleton who looks up when you approach is completely unremarkable. He’s a little shorter than you, and his crown is a fairly plain gold circlet.

He stands as you approach, and vigorously shakes your hand. “Well done young one, well done!” he says, “I haven’t heard those songs performed in... oh, probably at least a hundred years! It’s a delight to meet someone who still knows how to keep the old traditions alive.” He seems almost beside himself with cheer. “I’d like to make you an offer.” He pauses for a moment. “I’m aware of how unorthodox this must seem, but, if you’ll take it, I’d like to offer you a position as my advisor.” Sensing your surprise, he presses on. “It’s just so hard to find those that still keep to the old ways. Of course, you’d be compensated handsomely.”

You can’t think of a reason you’d decline. **Turn to 135.**

108. You choose one of your plainer, though still very fine capes. You throw the cape around your neck, and fasten it with a bejeweled pin. Time to start the day. **Note the color of the cape you are choosing, and turn to 150.**

109. The more you think about it, the more you start to believe that your current life is pretty dang good. Sure, Perria’s been conquered, but what do you care—you’re a Boneman! Besides, all that happened like, hundreds of years ago. And, you tell yourself, killing the Bone King would alter the timeline of the *entire universe!* Who are you to be making such wild changes?

No, you decide, you’d better just let

things play out. You spend the rest of your days in idle opulence, indulging the King's whims and enjoying his favors.

THE END.

110. You shout some gibberish at the King, and cut off his head before he can react. **Turn to 128.**

111. You can't come up with anything to say, but you tell yourself that the best killers are the strong, silent type anyway. You channel your childish frustration over your wordlessness into cutting off the king's head. **Turn to 130.**

112. One day, something changes. You're napping in your cot when two Bonemen slam open the door, and kick you awake.

"Get up, scum!" one of them growls. "The King has granted you Mercy. Do you wish to accept this generous offer?"

You can barely think straight. But... mercy? There's something in their tone that puts you on edge. Still, whatever it is, it has to be better than this... right?

One of the guards clacks his teeth together. "Well? Make up your mind, fleshbag!"

Accept the "Mercy:" Turn to 124.

Refuse: Turn to 97.

113. You leave your lavish chambers with the Boneman, and make your way through the castle by torchlight. Deep, deep in an abandoned corner of the dungeons, you hear voices in the distance... some kind of meeting! **Turn to 96.**

114. You keep playing, but things have turned ugly! The dancing has

become into a giant melee! Bones are flying everywhere! It's a madhouse! Something hits you in the head! You pass out! **Turn to 82.**

115. You slink out of the room. It doesn't take long for Ribben and Themurius to get wind of the King's death, and their forces quickly overwhelm the local guards in the confusion of the next few hours. Before long, Ribben and Themurius are putting their utopian schemes into practice. As a hero of the revolution, you're made into a propaganda icon, and given all sorts of luxuries.

With your mission complete, you have little else to do. You live out the rest of your days in contented opulence.

THE END.

116. The King clears his throat and blinks a few times. "Well, we'd better get down to business. I wanted to personally thank you for destroying the ghost of the A'ntikan ruins. You've done a great service to the Perrian Empire, and I'd like you to know that you have our gratitude."

He seems a bit at a loss for words. "Ahem. There's..." He squints at you, and pauses for a long moment.

When he speaks again, his voice is full of emotion. "Thank you."

There's a feeling in the air, something that you can't put your finger on, almost a sort of... pressure. You and the king stand in silence for a moment. Golden sun streams through the windows, and you let it wash over you.

It feels nice.

THE END.

117. You're not sure if the lucid

periods are better than the insanity. When you're lucid, you feel the pain of your self-inflicted injuries, and reflect on how much your body has wasted away. You've realized that they feed you enough to just barely keep you from starving to death. The lucid periods allow you to remember all that you've left behind, and all the people you've failed. The lucid periods are when you realize there's no way out. **Turn to 146.**

118. You bow, and thank his Highness. **Turn to 116.**

119. You have to admit, the Boneman's rhetoric is quite powerful. He rails against the tyranny of the King, and claims that the ruler is living in the past. Bonemen in the crowd stamp their feet, and murmur in agreement. Even you feel yourself beginning to be swayed a bit.

Eventually the Boneman's speech ends, and the meeting seems to be over. The speaker steps down from the platform, and goes into an unadorned door beside the stage.

The crowd mills about, chatting, and the Boneman that summoned you appears by your side. "Come," he says, "There are two you should meet."

You go through the door, and enter a small room dominated by a circular table in the center. A fire is crackling in a hearth, lighting the room in a low orange light. Two Bonemen sit with your backs to you, musing over some sort of document, and conversing in low voices. They turn as you come in, and your guide bows. "I have brought the advisor. He can be trusted." **Turn to 93.**

120. The king's groaning laughter intensifies. "HERE FOR A TRUCE?"

WHAT A SHAME, ENVOY, THAT YOU ARE FIFTY YEARS TOO LATE!" The creature stands, and rips the parchment in two. His eye sockets seem almost to glow. "YOU SEEM MORE PERRIAN THAN SLIVARI TO ME, FLESHBAG. IS THIS THE BEST YOUR PITIFUL EMPIRE CAN DO: A TREMBLING FOOL WITH AN ANCIENT DOCUMENT?" The King's voice has somehow risen in volume, and you fight the urge to cover your ears. "YOUR EMPIRE IS DOOMED. AND SO ARE YOU!" His massive hand swings down with astonishing speed, and, before you can react, it slams into you with unimaginable force, sending you flying through the air, and into a wall. Your head slams against the hard stone, and you pass out... **Lose 5 HP. If you survive, turn to 136.**

121. As you make your way through the castle, it seems oddly deserted. You proceed through room after room, all devoid of Bonemen, and all eerily quiet, except for a distant roaring which grows louder as you go on. After a while, you come to a set of grand double doors.

The guardsmen throw the doors open, and march you out into a massive arena. The base, where you are, is floored with sand, and is surrounded on all sides by circular stands, filled with Bonemen waving flags and cheering wildly.

There's also a guillotine set up in the center.

Uh oh.

Turn to 88.

122. You start bluffing, hard. At a loss for what to say, you start into a long preface to your speech, praising the Bonemen, the Bony Throne, and making reference to accomplishments

you hope are vague enough to be believable. After a few minutes of this, the king waves his hand in a dismissive gesture. "ENOUGH. COME TO YOUR POINT." **Make a MENT check, difficulty 10.**

If you succeed, turn to 144.

If you fail, turn to 102.

123. You gulp, and bow to the king. "I recognize that my approach is highly unorthodox, my Liege. However, it was needed. There are urgent matters that need discussion..." you shoot a pointed glance at the guards, "matters that would best be addressed in private."

The king considers a moment, then makes a slow nod. "I AM INTRUIGED." He gestures to his guards. "LEAVE US." The guards rise, and, with a bow, depart. The Bone King looks at you expectantly. **Turn to 122.**

124. You can't bear being locked up any longer. You nod, and croak out a hoarse: "Mercy."

The guards exchange a look, then grab you by the arms. You're hardly in a state to resist.

They carry you through the dungeons. You make turn after turn, passing hundreds of identical doors. How many of these cells are occupied?

Eventually you climb a long set of stairs, and arrive at what seems to be the administrative office for the prison. Torches illuminate a small room, where a diminutive Boneman sits behind a wooden desk, holding a quill and making considered scratches on a piece of parchment. He looks up when the guards bring you in. "One for the King's Mercy, eh?" **Turn to 101.**

125. You don't know when you're going to get another chance, and this Mercy doesn't sound too appealing. It's now or never. You lunge for the spear, and assume a combat stance. The two guards shout in surprise, and round on you, while the bookkeeper shrieks, and cowers in the corner. Here goes nothing.

Combat!

Enemy: Bonemen Guards

Combat Skill: 4

HP: 10

If you win, turn to 77.

126. You're incredibly disoriented, a fact that isn't helped when the curtain goes up, and you find yourself center stage in front of a long dining table where some sort of royal feast is being held. All eyes are on you. You glance over your shoulder. Well, at least you've got a back-up band.

If you have the keyword FOLK, and would like to play a Boneman traditional, turn to 139.

If you don't have that keyword, or would prefer to play something else, you can plagiarize Chuck Berry. Turn to 105.

127. "He never ever learned to read or write so well,/ but he could play the guitar just like he's ringing a bell!" The crowd's really starting to get into it! A few of the nobles are even getting up from their seats and dancing! **Turn to 76.**

128. Unfortunately, your wild yelling attracted the guards outside the royal chambers. They quickly assess the situation, and charge forward.

Combat!

Enemy: Bonemen Guards

Combat Skill: 4

HP: 10

If you defeat the guards, turn to 130.

129. Days turn into weeks, weeks into months. Sometimes you wonder if your life outside the cell, your mission, was all just an illusion. The food comes less frequently, and hunger scratches your insides raw. You become listless, able to do nothing but lay in bed and sleep.

LOSE one point of PHYS.

You no longer dream of escape. Instead, your “nights” are dominated by images of cackling Bonemen marching through Perria. Sometimes you’re there, and you try to fight them, only to find that you can barely hold your sword. Other times, you’re just a ghost, watching impotently as the skeletal armies march on, burning and killing everything in the way.

Turn to 112.

130. The king lies dead before you. **If you have the keyword PLOT, turn to 115.**

Otherwise, turn to 137.

131. You ride along with the guards, and before long, the castle is looming high above you. It’s a massive structure, two or three times the size of the royal castle back in Perria. The surrounding wasteland makes it seem all the more imposing; and you find it hard to take in.

Upon arrival, the Bonemen march you through the castle, and you draw stares and murmurs from the various nobles milling about. Apparently a human is a rare sight.

Before long you’ve arrived at the

throne room. If the Perrian throne is a testament to wealth, the Bony Throne is a paean to austerity. The room is massive, but the cold grey stone is completely undecorated, and there are no windows—the only light comes from the rows of torches on both walls. You wonder if Bonemen need less light than humans do.

At first, you can’t even make out the throne in the gloom. As you draw closer, it emerges from the smoky darkness, and you can’t help but gasp. The thing is enormous: the base rises slightly over your head, and the back simply stretched up into the gloom. Even more notable than the size, however, is the construction: it’s made entirely out of bone!

Femurs, kneecaps, skulls, and gods know what else have been painstakingly arranged into this massive structure, which is covered in complex and entrancing geometric designs. The craftsmanship boggles the mind, you have a feeling you could stare at the thing for hours and not lose interest. You’re simultaneously revolted and amazed.

One further surprise remains: the Bone King himself. The King is a skeletal colossus, six or seven times higher than any Boneman you’ve ever seen. His bulk is not natural. Rather, his body seems to be a hodge-podge of other skeletal fragments grafted to what was once presumably an ordinary Boneman. His skull is as tall as you are, perhaps borrowed from a giant. His hips have been constructed out of thresher talons, and his arms and legs are tight bundles of bones of indeterminate origin.

As if that wasn’t enough, many of the scavenged pieces have been ornately decorated, covered in gold and

jewels, or carved with delicate and colorful swirls. It's almost impossible to imagine how this creature came to be. It's almost as difficult to divine how to kill him. **Turn to 98.**

132. You want to come up with some badass phrase to yell as you kill the Bone King, but the best you can come up with is, "This is for Perria!" You decapitate him with ease, but you're pretty sure you'll regret not saying something cooler if you survive too much longer. **Turn to 128.**

133. Of course, none of that happened.

But, as you bleed out on the cold stone in the prison offices, alone and surrounded by jeering Bonemen, isn't it a comforting thought? **END.**

134. This man imprisoned you. This man had light and heat and food while you had nothing. This man left you to rot in a dungeon, while your mind and body melted away. You feel a rage build inside of you. You will not spare him. **Turn to 104.**

135. Several weeks go by, and you settle into your position as the King's advisor. You were nervous, initially, that you wouldn't have the political chops to do the job, but it doesn't require much. The King seems to have less power than he'd like to admit, thanks to the parliamentary system, and you mainly just tell him that whatever he wants to do is the best course of action. Whenever you feel his valuation of you waning, you simply throw out some tidbit of (apparently now archaic) Boneman culture you've learned, and he's delighted. It's a pretty sweet gig, honestly. But of course, you've still got your mission...

If you have the keyword NOTCH,

and would like to make a notch on the proper rib, turn to 155.

If you would like to kill the King stealthily, turn to 145.

If you decide that you would like to abandon your mission, and live out the rest of your days as a Boneman aristocrat, turn to 109.

136. When you wake up, you're in prison. The cell is small, barely wide enough for you to pace in, and much of the space is dominated by an uncomfortable cot. The air is cool and dank, and moisture is constantly dripping from the ceiling, leaving small puddles on the ground—presumably the dungeons are underground. An ominously colored mold oozes out of cracks between the rough stone. The door is firmly locked, and featureless—save for a small food slot. You examine the room thoroughly, but find nothing of note. It seems there is nothing to do but wait. **Turn to 90.**

137. As you contemplate the dead body in front of you, something changes. It feels almost as if a veil of some kind had dropped, and you feel distant from your surroundings.

You sit down to try and clear your head, but things only get worse. Your vision starts to blur, and, with a start, you see that your body is fading away! You have little time to consider the implications before you black out entirely...

Restore your character sheet to the state it was in before you began this adventure. After you have done so, turn to 84.

138. You've been in the throne room before, but it's still a breathtaking sight. Titanic arched ceilings

disappear into darkness above your head. The floor is a gleaming, creamy marble, all one piece. The walls on either side of you are dominated by enormous stained glass windows depicting various moments of import in the kingdom's history: the slaying of the Minotaur, the Blessed Summit, the Four Day Night, etc. The entire room is an object lesson in the Perrian Empire's wealth and power.

The King sits on his throne, dressed in finery and with royal scepter in hand. Brandon stands at his right, bald head bobbing in his blue robes as he watches you approach.

You walk the thick carpet leading up to the throne and kneel before the King, but he graciously bids you to rise. His bearded face, normally ruddy with cheer, is today grim and pale. He nods at you. "Nice cape."

Accept the compliment graciously: Turn to 118.

Attempt to curry favor by showing off your cape expertise: turn to 156.

139. A Boneman traditional seems like it would fit the setting. You take a moment to compose yourself, then begin the delicate "Reflections in an Ebony Pond." It's a slow paced song, featuring delicate, layered runs played in harmony by the several string instruments. When Skielman played it for you, it nearly brought you in tears, and you're not even a real Boneman! The lyrics are romantic, and appear to tell the story of a young Boneman bidding goodbye to a lover. It's terribly sad, with a twist ending: the singer has been singing to his own reflection all along, because he is about to die. It's a bit maudlin, but there's something about

it that just speaks to you.

Anyway, the song goes over well. You play a few more, then gracefully take your leave. Before you manage to sneak off, however, a servant approaches you. "The King was pleased by your performance," he says. "He would like a word." **Turn to 107.**

140. Luckily, you studied Boneman royal etiquette a little back in your school days. With trepidation, you start into the "Nineteen Honorable Steps," the most formal and respectful ritual greeting you can remember.

First, you step perfectly sideways to the right with your right foot. Soon after, your left foot follows, and lands beyond your right foot, so your legs are crossed. Luckily, the next thing you do is step over to the right with your right foot again, leaving your legs uncrossed. To finish off the first section of the greeting, you bring your left foot over so that it is right next to your right, and do a little bow.

Next, you do the same thing, only in the leftward-direction.

After that, things get a little easier. You take four simple steps backward, beginning with your right foot and alternating left and right. On the fourth step, you bring your left foot so that its right next to your right again.

The last bit is by far the trickiest. You step forward with your left, then your right, but then step *back* with your *right* again, then back with the left. To finish everything off, you step forward with your right foot, balance on your left, and hop in a full circle, counterclockwise.

After you've finished, the King looks

at you in silence. **Turn to 85.**

141. Before you realize what has happened, you're back home, surrounded by your loved ones. Your mother embraces you, weeping, and your father gives you a proud nod.

In the middle of the throne room, the King beckons, and golden sunlight pours through the windows as you kneel before him.

You feel something on your head—and look up. The King is smiling down on you, and bids you to rise. With a trembling hand, you slowly feel at the object on your head. A crown! The King, tears in his eyes, nods at you. "Welcome home... Son." **Turn to 133.**

142. You ride along with the guards, and before long, the castle is looming high above you. It's a massive structure, two or three times the size of the royal castle back in Perria. The surrounding wasteland makes it seem all the more imposing, and you find it hard to take in.

Upon arrival, the Bonemen march you through the castle. You're a little unnerved by the sheer number of Bonemen milling about—your transformation seems to be flawless, but you're acutely aware of just how little you know about Bonemen social norms.

Before long you've arrived at the throne room. If the Perrian throne is a testament to wealth, the Bony Throne is a paean to austerity. The room is massive, but the cold grey stone is completely undecorated, and there are no windows—the only light comes from the rows of torches on both walls. It should be dim, but you can make everything out fairly clearly. Perhaps Bonemen need less light

than humans do.

The Spartan theme continues as you approach the throne. It's one unadorned piece of stone, seemingly made of the same material as the walls. You're surprised at the lack of ceremony.

You're also mildly surprised by the Boneman sitting in the throne. You were expecting someone a little more impressive, but the skeleton in the throne is completely unremarkable. He's a little shorter than you, and his crown is a fairly plain gold circlet.

The guards approach, and introduce you as "Baron Jasper Ripson," here for an audience. The king nods, and they bow and depart.

After a few moments of awkward silence, it seems clear that the king expects you to make the first move.

Make a MENT check, difficulty 6. If you succeed, turn to 140.

If you fail, turn to 100.

143. You sincerely doubt your ability to take down three Bonemen, two of whom are armed soldiers. You calmly wait for them to finish their business, upon which they roughly grab you again, and march you out of the office. **Turn to 121.**

144. Suddenly, it hits you. There's no way you can take on this hulking monster by yourself, but you might be able to trick him into attacking somewhere other than Perria.

You draw yourself up to your full height. "Actually, forget everything I just said. The Slivari have grown tired of your pompous peacocking and tyrannical rule! Your soldiers have claimed many of our people's lives, but no longer! You see, we have

learned the secrets of time travel! Even now, elite Slivari strike teams are preparing attacks at dozens of key moments in the history of the Bony Empire. Any one of these teams has the power to eradicate your kingdom from the very face of time. Unless you surrender at once, you will be destroyed!" You stand, breathing hard, watching the Bone King's response. He seems wary, but not as much as you'd hoped. "I THINK YOU ARE BLUFFING, FLESHBAG. YOUR MAGES CANNOT HOPE TO UNDERSTAND THE INTRICACIES OF TEMPORAL MAGIC."

Time to think fast. "We are not so stupid as you think, monster. Slivari deep-cover operatives have been conducting surveillance on you empire for months now. For example, we know that, even as we speak, you are gathering your forces to make your pivotal attack on the Perrian Empire." The King looks surprised. "How do you think your soldiers would fare if the Perrian armies were supported by a Slivari Strike Team?"

At your words, the King pounds his massive fists onto the Bony Throne, sending shards flying. "ENOUGH! YOUR PEOPLE MAY HAVE DELAYED THE INEVITABLE, BUT YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR OUR MIGHT. THE PERRIANS CAN WAIT. YOU, SLIVARI, WILL BE ANNIHILATED."

At these words, you begin to feel... immaterial, as if some sort of veil had fallen. The Bone King reaches for you with massive hands, but it doesn't seem too terribly pressing. The veil darkens, and even as the King's hands close around your body, you feel as though you are slipping away... **Restore your character sheet to the state it was in before**

you began this adventure. After you have done so, turn to 84.

145. You begin to look for opportunities to kill the King with relative discretion. One day, you receive a summons to the royal chambers.

Upon arrival, a servant lets you in, and you enter to see the King sitting at a small table, looking at a jewel-encrusted scabbard. **Turn to 95.**

146. You lie in your cot and dream of killing yourself. Sometimes food comes and you try to ignore it but you are always weak and give in even when you rip the bread into little crumbs and pour it into the puddles and smash it into the horrible mold but you always eat it, even from the mold, and it makes you retch and your head hurts and you press it between your hands and try to squeeze hard and throw your body at the walls and open wounds which turn yellow and ooze and never heal and you try to break yourself over and over again until cannot any longer, and collapse into a broken, oozing, shamble. **Turn to 117.**

147. The king's castle looms above you, towering high in the heart of the city. The white walls gleam, and the king's colors fly proudly from the tops of the numerous towers.

You make your way across the drawbridge without difficulty. The footmen guarding the enormous oak door bow as you pass through. **Turn to 81.**

148. You try to splutter out an explanation about how you're a friend of Skielman, and how you're an ally to the rebel cause, but the words just don't seem to come. Maybe it's the late hour, or the terror of the chisel

on your forehead, but even to your own ears, everything that comes out of your mouth sounds completely fabricated.

“Sorry,” the Boneman rasps, “I don’t believe you.” He brings the hammer down, and your skull cracks like an egg. You are dead.

THE END.

149. Guitar solo time! You go wild! The Bonemen in the audience are going wild too! Chairs and plates of food are flying everywhere! Things are getting wild! **Turn to 114.**

150. Exiting your lovely home on the shore of the Gravel River, you walk down the cobblestone streets towards the castle. It’s a beautiful day: the sun shines down on you as you walk, warming your face in the cool autumn morning. Vendors are setting up stalls along the Royal Road, and you inhale deeply, filling your nose with the fragrant smells flowing from the food booths. Children run about in the streets, shouting and playing various games.

After a few minutes of walking, you approach the castle. **Turn to 147.**

151. You’re not done. The king still lives. You run through the castle, and you feel enchanted, tireless, unstoppable. Bonemen rush you, but all it takes now is a look to send them flying back, to break apart against a wall, or fall screaming out a window. You are invincible. **Turn to 106.**

152. Sure enough, after a few days, you are awoken by a shadowy figure standing over you, resting a chisel on your head. He speaks in a low, raspy voice: “Why do you wear the mark?” Time to think fast.

Make a SOC check, difficulty 4. If

you succeed, turn to 91.

If you fail, turn to 148.

153. Ribben bows to your mysterious guide, who quietly exists. The former then makes his way back over to the table. You sit down across from the pair.

“You see,” Ribben begins, “our ‘little group’ has grown to be really quite large. I won’t trouble you with the details, but Themurius and I believe that, should the opportunity present itself, we would be more than capable of seizing the reins of power.” Themurius nods. “However...,” Ribben searches for the words, “we have had difficulty creating such an opportunity.”

Themurius makes a noise that sounds vaguely like a snort. “My colleague is prone to understatement. To ‘seize the reins,’ as he so delicately puts it, we need the reins to be dropped.” He pauses for a moment. “Or, to put it blunt, we need to kill the King.”

You nod. “Of course. What can I do?”

Themurius lets off a rattling Boneman laugh. “We need you to do it!”

Ribben quickly breaks in, leaning in over the table. “Elites rarely crave Revolution. Our numbers are great, our resolves steel—but we have no nobles in our ranks.”

Themurius nods. “That’s where you come in. You’ve got access to the king, more so than anyone else in the castle. You can kill him no problem.” He sits back in his chair. “And then the Revolution begins.”

Ribben fixes you with his empty sockets. “That is our request, friend. Although you are strange to us, I trust Brother Tibert’s assessment, and, by

extension, I trust you.”

You think over the situation. It seems to be a perfect opportunity to carry out your mission, and be backed up after it is complete. You nod. “It shall be done. The king will die at the earliest opportunity. Be ready to make your move.”

The two thank you, and you all rise. The Boneman who tested you (presumably Brother Tibert) is waiting outside, and he leads you back to your chambers. You return to your bed, and sleep fitfully, dreaming of conspiracies and murder... **Gain the keyword PLOT, and turn to 145**

154. You chuckle to yourself at the very notion. Go capeless, indeed! You would be laughed out of the court. **Go back to 84 and choose a cape.**

155. Remembering what Skielman told you, you make a small notch on your rib; the third down on the right. Hopefully one of the other rebels will notice, and contact you. **Turn to 152.**

156. You smile obsequiously, and launch into a long-winded explanation of the merits of your cape. The King nods attentively, and the conversation turns to the art of capery in general. The two of you end up having a *very* pleasant discussion. **Gain the keyword CAPE-BUDDIES, and turn to 116.**

157. As pieces of the scribe’s head skitter across the room, more Bonemen swarm through the outer door. It seems your skirmish has attracted some attention.

Combat!

Enemy: Horde of Bonemen

Combat Skill: 1

HP: 20

Special: Death by a thousand cuts: whenever this enemy lands a hit, take damage equal to (their remaining HP) X (1/5), rounded down.

If you lose, turn to 80.

If you win, turn to 92.