

Reading the Bones

A house rule for the Norgardian campaign setting in Nemmryl



Reading the bones is a special ability available to a special class of holy man or woman called a Seer. A Seer is normally a cleric or shaman of any culture that relies on ancient magic. Seers are normally chosen by the gods. A player may elect to begin their character as a Seer as part of their origin. They may not choose to be a Seer after first level, but the gods may choose them at some point. The designated Seer of a group is allowed to roll the bones once per day to divine some kind of information about future events.

The Sacred Bones are a special collection of bones hand-picked by the Seer as having special meaning when they begin their career. Lost or damaged bones can only be replaced by fulfilling a quest or receiving a vision from the Seer's deity or deities. New bones may be added through the course of an adventure as the gods reveal them. The DM reserves the discretion to offer special bonuses or penalties on specific bones based on story developments. The Seer may choose to replace a specific bone with a new one that is superior. This decision is permanent until a new bone is introduced into the bag of bones.

How to read the Bones

Take six six-sided dice and pick which bone each die represents. Each die represents one aspect of foresight. Roll the dice. The higher the roll, the better the chance of receiving insight into that aspect of the future. A roll of six means success and the Seer has insight into the aspect of the future tied to that bone. Any roll less than six means that aspect of the future remains a mystery.

Improving the rolls

The Seer may increase the values of the rolls. Each point of the character's Wisdom ability modifier counts as one point, as does each level they have in the Cleric class. These points form a pool of points that can be used on the rolls to increase them in any combination the player wishes. The Seer must declare ahead of time which die or dice to add their character's points to. This reflects that the Seer has some kind of agenda in reading the future.

Example: Geirbera has a Wisdom of 14, giving her an ability modifier of +2. She is a 3rd level Cleric. Her ability modifier plus her level give her five points to use in improving her insight. She can increase any one of the bones' results by five, five different dice by one each, or any combination of dice bonuses adding up to five. Geirbera is keen to know enemy strength and isn't quite as interested in the rest so she puts all of her five points into the first die to maximize her chances reading the Bone of Bane. The dice are cast and give the following results:

(1, 4, 3, 6, 2, 2)

Geirbera's five points are added to the Bone of Bane, the first die roll, and so the result is '6'. This is a success, so she can divine the enemy strength and is entitled to the bonus Idea Roll for more information. Her other rolls are unsuccessful except for the fifth die, which is the Bone of Valor. She succeeds on that one without assistance. She may also make the bonus roll for Inspiration and potentially gain even more from it. The failed dice do not result in any insight and none of the bonus rolls.

Die 1 - The Bone of Bane

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can predict the strength of the enemy or of some form of opposition.
- **Idea Roll:** Roll d100, a roll less than 3x the Seer's Intelligence reveals insight into a specific weakness of the enemy.

Die 2 - The Bone of Boon

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can locate a source of support for the group.
- This opens up to DM's discretion what that source may be and how to gain it.

Die 3 - The Bone of the Path

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can find a more favorable path to the destination, either faster or less prone to risk.
- **Pathfinder Roll:** Roll d100. A roll of 91-00 the Seer has such clear vision regarding the path that they possess Darkvision as an ability until the destination is reached.

Die 4 - The Bone of Fortune

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can ascertain the general level of wealth or reward to be gained.
- **Luck Roll:** Roll d100. A roll of 91-00 means the Seer has such a clear vision that the fortune, when found, will have extra value. Perhaps there are treasures concealed or discarded in the area that the vision allows the party to find that would otherwise not be a part of the find.

Die 5 - The Bone of Valor

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can determine the degree of effectiveness the party has in combat.
- **Inspiration Roll:** Roll d100, a roll less than 3x the Seer's Charisma score grants +1 to all ATK rolls and Saving Throws for the party. This effect lasts for one day and can stack with other bonuses.
 - Addendum: a roll of 01-05 means +2 to ATK rolls and Saving Throws. A roll of 96-00 means -1 to all ATK rolls and Saving Throws.

Die 6 - The Bone of Favor

- A roll of a 6 means the Seer can measure the favor of the gods. This can be the DM's discretion to comment whether the gods smile or frown on actions by the party.
- **Faith Roll:** Roll d100, a roll less than 3x the Seer's Wisdom score means a special gift (DM's discretion) is given to one character chosen randomly from the group. The gods have smiled on this person for a single day, ending at midnight.
 - A roll of 01-05 means the gods have smiled on the entire party! DM assigns some special bonus to the entire party.
 - A roll of 96-00 means the gods are either angry or want to challenge the party. DM assigns some temporary hindrance to the party.