



A ROLL OF THE BONES

Divination is a Tricky Thing

Who holds the key to the future? Is it the fates? Or do we make our own fate... do we create our own future regardless of what fate demands?

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I remember the old man who taught me to read the bones. The lessons were always taught at night as if the darkness was a metaphor for my understanding. We'd sit beside the fire together, the coarse red glow bleeding over the ghostly ivory of the bones. The smell of the obscuring smoke thick in the air. I'd struggle with the interpretation. "You're not looking," he'd admonish me.

"Of course I'm looking," I'd protest loudly. "I'm staring right at them."

"You're just looking at the bones," he insisted. "You need to look at the face of the thrower. You must use their eyes to interpret the story the bones are trying to tell you."

I'd always thought his eyes were the most unfathomable and darkest I'd ever seen. They had a mystery to them. I could never tell anything from looking into those murky orbs. I couldn't see any story in them... except perhaps his deep disappointment at my failure to learn his lessons. I struggled with reality and illusion. He had insisted my mind could influence the results. The visions always came slowly, glowing for a moment and then dissipating. They'd waver and dance before me, consuming themselves as they released their story. I knew I was supposed to be able to direct them in revealing the truth or the future. But they always laughed at me, rebuffing my commands. I would be nothing until I could control and read them. But there was as much darkness in my visions as there was in the night sky.

"Let's try it again." The old man rerolled the glittering bones.

This time there was no laughter. "This can't be right," I protested. "If the bones speak truly than you never existed," I informed my mentor.

I glanced up and found myself alone before the fire.