

## LotB Episode 58

This Podcast is intended for a mature audience. Listener discretion is advised

Welcome back to Legend of the Bones.

Following in the footsteps of giants, Legend of the Bones is a chimaera, a mix of old school Tabletop RPG, and dark fantasy storytelling.

I'm

As its name might suggest, in Legend of the Bones the dice rule. There will be no rerolls, no fudging the dice, no-metacurrency. The roll of the Bones will determine the characters' destiny, and no-one will be spared their fate.

None shall escape the destiny of bone...

Last time on Legend of the Bones...Led by their guide, Hedrek, the companions made their way into the Dragon's Spine Mountains, seeking to reach a place called Penmelkeyn, in the hope of finding the Keeper of the Eye of Crevyk, the mage, Demelza.

The journey through the wilderness was surprisingly uneventful, until dawn on the 3rd day, when a Brown Bear, with its cubs wandered near the companion's camp. Protective of its young, the Bear charged to attack, but fortunately, Vaylan, who had been on watch, had just learnt the spell, Charm Animal, and was able to use it to calm the beast.

Later that day, the companions came across evidence of a rockfall, and here they found the desiccated corpse of Lowen, the man who had been hired by Demelza as a guide, a few months earlier.

After covering Lowen's body, the companions continued up and along a mountain path which eventually emerged at a wide, lake-filled valley, where, nestled at its furthest point was an ancient building, cut into the rock of the mountain, which Hedrek declared was the place known as Penmelkeyn.

Meanwhile, Canute and his crew have made their way back to the open sea, and it is time now to catch-up on the Northman's journey to find Beric's father, Jarl Einar...

[Music Transition]

### Chapter 58, Part 1, Day 61, Late Afternoon

Party Status

Canute 36 out of 36 hit points

A warm south-easterly breeze swelled the Uverjdraca's great square sail, filling it with the breath of the wind, and urging the ship forward with the rhythm of the sea. The ship's bow cleaved through the undulating waves, the water parting in white curls as the ship surged onward. The sun, beginning to descend in the western sky, cast its golden light across the

horizon, shimmering and sparkling off the surface of the water, as if the ocean itself were alive with a million reflections.

Canute stood atop the prow, his right hand firmly gripping the intricately carved Dragon's head, its formidable aspect standing watchful over the ship's journey. The northman's blond hair whipped wildly around his face in the wind, strands of it catching the sunlight, creating a halo around his features. His gaze was distant, locked on the horizon, yet his thoughts drifted far from the sea's beauty. His heart weighed heavy for the friends he had left behind, especially his cousin, Beric, whom he had come to see as a brother in such a brief time. The bond they had forged in blood and battle had been quick but deep, and now, with the distance growing between them, the sorrow was palpable.

But Canute knew, deep down, there was no other path for him to follow. He had to find Einar. The prospect of an impending war loomed ever closer, and without allies, their forces would be far too small to withstand the coming storm.

At first, he had been driven by his oath to answer Lord Conwyn's call, yet not lead his men into a hopeless fight. But having spent a few weeks with Beric and the others, he had come to realise that far more was at stake.

If the rebels triumphed, their victory would not just be a political one; it would be the dawn of a dark era. The Brethren's fanatical ideology would spread like wildfire, consuming everything in its path. Thousands would fall, and those who clung to the old ways—the old beliefs—would be slaughtered or forced to bow to the new gods.

What then?

Canute considered the implications of a world ruled by the Brethren. With Pow a'n Mor already in their iron grip, the fire of fanaticism would not be satisfied with a mere conquest of one kingdom. Emboldened by their success, they would inevitably turn their sights on neighboring lands—Wessas, Bernica, Llanrhys—each a prize to be claimed in their unholy crusade. And even though it might take a generation, eventually their eyes would fall upon Skanvia, his homeland. They would come for his people, for his way of life, for everything he had ever known.

And all the while, the Salian Empire would be watching, waiting. They had long coveted the northern realms, and a war framed as a holy crusade against the pagans, and those that harboured them, would provide them with all the justification they needed to march north and claim the territories as their own.

No... this was far bigger than his oath to Lord Conwyn.

He inhaled deeply, the salt of the sea air filling his lungs. The scent was both comforting and invigorating, a reminder of everything he had fought for, everything he still hoped to protect. The open sea was in his blood - raw, untamed, and vast beyond comprehension. The freedom it promised, and the sense of endless possibility was the very core of his being, a part of him since childhood. Skane children were raised to sail, not only because the northern seas were rich with bounty, but because the ocean held an undeniable power over

the people of his homeland. They revered it, and from a young age, they were taught that the sea was both a cradle of life and a force that demanded respect.

A flicker of movement suddenly caught his eye. He turned, his gaze falling to the water beside the ship. A pod of dolphins, sleek and silver in the sun, were racing alongside the Uverjdraca, their bodies slicing through the waves in perfect harmony, breaking the surface with fluid, rhythmic grace.

It was a brief moment of beauty and wonder, yet Canute could only smile with irony at the omen, for Dolphins following a ship, heralded one thing - the oncoming of a terrible storm.

Eventually, the Dolphins tired of their game and disappeared beneath the waves, leaving the Uverjdraca to plow forward in solitude.

Canute returned to the steering platform, taking the helm from Ravn. His second was a grizzled old warrior and blind in one eye - lost in fight when Canute was but a boy. A man who had served his father loyally for many years, and Harald had often said that there was no finer seaman. After his father's death, Ravn, like a few of Harald's oathmen, had given their allegiance to Canute. The rest had taken Harald's ship, The Saehrafn, and sailed away to offer their oath to Einar. He was a Jarl of great renown after all, and had not bound himself, as Canute had, to a foreign lord.

Canute had known Ravn all his life; the old warrior had only been a summer or two younger than his father, and had been tasked with teaching his Lord's sons shipcraft. Canute had learnt quickly to trust Ravn's judgement; the man had an uncanny knack for finding his way at sea, even in fog, or on a starless night. He knew a man with such a sense should be listened to and trusted.

**CANUTE: What think you Ravn?**

Canute asked.

**CANUTE: Where would Einar sail this season?**

Ravn raised his head, squinting his good eye against the sun.

RAVN: The fog has not yet cleared, Lord

He replied, cryptically.

RAVN: But I shall cast the runes

**CANUTE: Do that.**

Canute agreed, knowing that the older man had some skill in foresight, for it was said that Ravn's mother had been a seer.

**CANUTE: With luck, the ancestors may guide us.**

Just then, they rounded another headland along the rugged coastline, and as they did so, their destination came into view. There, perched high on a rocky promontory, like a silent sentinel overlooking the sea, stood the fortress of Penglannow.

[Music Transition]

Back in episode 55, we established that Canute would carry a message from Lord Tueoc, to the Thane's liege, Lord Petroc, whose stronghold is the fortress of Penglannow.

Now as far back as episode 32 we heard that Conwyn and Petroc are allies, and that both are loyal to the king, and it also stands to reason that news of Lord Polmear's rebellion will have reached the two Ealdorman.

I think there is a possibility therefore, that Conwyn may have come to Penglannow to share counsel. Let's ask the Oracle, is Conwyn also at stronghold?.....[a 5]

Ok then...

[Music Transition]

## **Chapter 58, Part 2, Day 61, Evening**

### **Party Status**

The party status is unchanged.

It was still light by the time the Uverjdraca was docked. At this time of year, the sun did not dip below the horizon until long after the ninth bell, and there remained a few hours of daylight before the skies darkened into night,

A river inlet lay between two rugged headlands, which, upon the northernmost sat the formidable fortress of Penglannow. The inlet provided natural shelter from the unpredictable sea, and a harbour had been built there to accommodate at least a dozen vessels. A large village had also developed around the harbour, which flourished alongside the fortress; one providing vital goods and services, the other offering protection in times of strife.

Canute had ordered the raising of Conwyn's banner as the Uverjdraca approached, the white stag on a green field flapping vigorously in the breeze. Its display had prompted their arrival to be greeted by half a dozen of Petroc's housecarls, who offered to escort them up to the stronghold.

Taking Arne with him, Canute followed the warriors up steep, uneven stairs, their edges cut into the judged cliffside. His oathman was in fact Ravn's nephew, and the two men had been companions since childhood. Whilst the Skane Warlord valued every one of his oathmen, Arne had distinguished himself in recent weeks. Canute had, as any good lord should, rewarded Arne with silver and gold, yet being chosen to accompany his Lord, in matters of diplomacy was also a great honour that would not have been lost on any of the crew.

The stairs soon terminated at a stout iron-bound door set into a weathered, timber gatehouse, which the Housecarl leader explained was not the main entrance of the fortress, but rather was 'the sea gate', used for quick access to the harbour.

Two sentries permitted the group to pass, and they found themselves in a wide courtyard. Numerous buildings encircled the space; a barracks, a stable, a forge, and many more besides, there was even a chapel. The space though was dominated by an impressive, great hall; the only structure built in stone within the palisade. A few folk busied themselves in finishing work for the day, and the general hum of daily life in an Ealdorman's stronghold was winding down, as folk returned to the village below; else headed for the Petroc's hall.

As they climbed the steps into the hall, the welcoming aroma of cooked meat - rich and savoury - wafted through the entrance, and Canute suddenly realised just how hungry he was. The chamber beyond was a large open space, yet it was filled with the boisterous clamour of a great number of people. Two long tables ran down the length of the hall, their surfaces laden with hearty fare, and between which was an open hearth where two boars were roasting on great spits.

At least ten score men sat, eating, drinking and laughing. Their cheer echoing off the stone walls. Canute's mind briefly flickered to happier times - of feasts in his father's hall...a hall which, Canute thought bitterly, now either stood empty, or more likely had been claimed by another.

A group of warriors nearest to him suddenly called out his name, and Canute was surprised to recognise them as men he knew from Trevenedh. He was about to approach them when a familiar voice rang out..

CONWYN: Lord Canute!

The chatter in the hall quickly died away, and Canute's attention was drawn to the end of the hall where a wide table ran perpendicular to the other two. Several figures were seated at this high table, not least Lord Petroc, but one among them was standing and looking directly at the newcomers; the man that had spoken, the man that held Canute's oath; Lord Conwyn.

[Music Transition]

So providence would have it that Lord Conwyn has travelled to Penglannow to give and take counsel with his ally, Lord Petroc. I don't have any preconception about their host, so I am going to consult UNE, the universal NPC emulator to find out a little about his personality and motivations.

UNE has a verb noun mechanism to describe a character, rolling percentile dice twice.....ok, for the verb I have 48, 'indispensable', and for the noun, 69, 'gunman'...well clearly the latter doesn't work, but rather than roll again, I will take that to mean 'warrior', thus we have an indispensable warrior. I think this means he is an experienced soldier, and therefore likely to be an older man. Petroc's lands are also

extensive, so he probably has the ability to raise a sizable army, which again would make him an important vassal for the king.

Now what about his motivation? I've already determined that he is loyal to the King, so I will discount anything which may suggest otherwise. Again, I need to roll percentile dice twice for a verb and noun.....for verb I rolled 70, which is 'Develop', and for the noun I rolled 43 which is 'Love'. So I have an indispensable warrior who is seeking to develop love. I can work with that.

But back to the matter at hand. Now both Ealdormen have their ears to the ground, and certainly will have spies in the nearby city of Portcullen; ruled over by the mercurial Lord Cullen. As a major port, Canute had planned to go there to try to find news of Skane movements, and specifically of Einar's whereabouts this season, but I think there is a chance that this news may have reached Penglannow. The Oracle will tell us if this is true.....a 6, that's a 'yes and'

This is a stroke of luck, and that definitive 'yes and' result tells that the provenance of this news can be trusted. However, the question remains, where is Einar?

In order to answer that question, I have created a table which has 6 of the northern realms, where the Skane are known to go to trade or to raid, ranging from the furthest, the land of Frisca, to the closest being Pow a'n Mor itself. A simple roll on a D6 will tell us where Einar is, and as I have arranged the results from nearest to furthest order, the higher the result, the better.....a 5.

Well now, the dice are once again on the character side...

Let's find out what all that means.

[music transition]

## **Chapter 58, Part 3, Day 61, Evening**

Party status

The party status is unchanged

Several ornate floor standing candelabras softly illuminated the chamber in which Canute now found himself. The space itself was modest, and sparsely furnished, save for a large table which dominated the room and just like in the Ulfhednar lair, a large map was spread out upon its surface.

After greeting Lords Conwyn and Petroc, Canute had petitioned to speak urgently with the two Ealdormen in private. Having been granted his request, the three men had come to the chamber in which they now stood, and Canute carefully relayed the events of the weeks that had passed since he had left Trevenedh. The two lords already knew much of what had happened at Ynys Gwynn; Branok had brought the disgraced Abbot Wiglaf to Penglannow before returning to Conwyn's fortress. In his wisdom, Petroc had kept Wiglaf under guard in

his stronghold. Rumours of the Brethren's insidious influence had reached his ears, and he had thought better of sending the abbot to Trevance, where the King's justice might be undermined.

When Canute had finished his tale, he handed Lord Petroc the message from Teuoc. The older man unfurled the parchment, and holding it at some distance, began to read it with an intensity that betrayed his concern. Petroc was easily in his early fifties; his once blond hair now almost entirely grey, and his face bore the experience of countless battles, and not all involving the sword. Canute was aware that the alliance between these two noble houses had stood for many years; Petroc having married the sister of Conwyn's father.

PETROC: That damned traitor!

Petroc cursed in a low voice, handing the parchment to Conwyn, who read it in turn.

CONWYN: This is ill news

Conwyn agreed, his expression grim.

CONWYN: The enemy seeks to divide us.

Petroc looked to Canute

PETROC: What think you, Lord Canute? You have been there....can Varfell be held?

CANUTE: Yes, my Lord.

Canute replied confidently

CANUTE: Teuoc is a good man...loyal. He will neither betray you, nor surrender. He also takes steps to strengthen the town's defences. But moreover, I do not believe Polmear will send forces to take Varfell [Pronounced Tue-ock]

PETROC: How so?

Petroc asked, though it seemed this was a test of Canute's wit, rather than because the answer was unclear to the older man, whose expression was one of scrutiny

CANUTE: To do so, would only weaken himself, just as he seeks to weaken you. By paying outlaws to wreak havoc in the outlying settlements; he seeks to deceive you, while he commits his own resources to marching on Trevance. Brigands raiding Four Rivers was one matter, but Elfor Kano has not the strength to take a town as well protected as Varfell.

Petroc nodded his approval, and grunted in acknowledgement

PETROC: You are a wiser man than your father.

Canute bristled inside at the slight cast upon his father, yet knew it to be true.

PETROC: Teuoc must fend for himself. [Pronounced Tue-ock]

The ealdorman declared.

CONWYN: And we cannot tarry.

Conwyn added.

CONWYN: We must gather our forces and march to Trevance...we know not when rebels will strike. [Pronounced Treh-vance]

CANUTE: You speak truth my Lord...

The northman agreed

CANUTE: But I came here as no mere messenger...

CONWYN: Go on

CANUTE: The southern Lords are united...they may well have mercenaries as well. Cullen as we know is unreliable...so as it stands, our numbers will be too few.

Canute hesitated. He knew what he was about to propose would not sit well with either Ealdorman, and it was obvious by his demeanor.

PETROC: Speak plainly, Lord Canute.

The northman looked between the two men before replying

CANUTE: I have learnt, my Lords, that my companion, Beric....is in fact my cousin

CONWYN: Your cousin!?

Conwyn said in surprise.

CANUTE: Aye, Lord...it turns out that he is the bastard son of Jarl Einar.

PETROC: Einar... [pronounced Eye-nar]

Petroc murmured, bitterly

CANUTE: Yes, Lord...but Einar does not know, and as far as I know, he remains otherwise childless.

Canute let this revelation hang for a moment, then looked to Conwyn



CANUTE: You have met Beric, Lord...you *know* him to be a man of honour...he *will* fight for you...and if I can find Einar...then perhaps he will also.

Conwyn nodded, seemingly considering the consequences of what Canute told them

CONWYN: And how will you find Einar? [pronounced Eye-nar]

He said eventually,

CONWYN: He could be anywhere...

PETROC: Not anywhere..

Petroc interrupted

PETROC: Somewhere...and that somewhere...is Llanrhys [Pronounced H Lan-Ris - it's welsh sounding]

[Music Transition]

So in a strange twist of fate, Canute must travel to Vaylan and Taalien's homeland, in search of Einar.

News of this reaching Lord Petroc does make sense. With a shared cultural history, traders would undoubtedly travel between Llanrhys and Pow a'n Mor, and with trade, certainly comes rumours and hearsay; and with Skane reputation as it is; their presence in a particular realm would be important news.

Now, the nearest point of Llanrhis is some 200 miles across the ocean to the North West. This raises several questions meaning it's time once again to consult the Oracle.

Firstly, does Petroc's information include more specifics about where in Llanrhys, Einar is reported to be?.....a 2, that's a 'straight no'. Well that's not a good start.

Next, does the ealdorman have news on whether the Skane are raiding or trading?.....a 3, that's 'no, but'

Hmm, looks like the dice don't want to give up any more secrets.

However, that 'but' may give a clue as to the Skane's purpose in Llanrhys. I have an idea about what that might be, so I'm going to ask a question off-mic, and the result will get revealed in the narrative. [did the Skane ships have their dragons heads showing? 2 - straight no]

We did however hear earlier that Ravn has some skill at reading runes; and I wonder if this can offer Canute any further insight about what Einar is doing and where. Now I have zero knowledge of real Norse runes, however, after a bit of research online, I found information

about a runic system called The Elder Futhark. This is a system of 24 runes originating from around 400AD.

If I divide the runes into 3 equal groups, then roll a D3 followed by a D8, then I can randomly determine which runes have been drawn by Ravn. I'm going to do that off mic, and we will hear the results in the narrative...

[Past - 2 - Urus - Meaning strength, determination and potential.

Present - 22 - Ingwaz - Meaning new beginnings, creation and planting

And Future 24 - Othala - Meaning inheritance, traditions and passed on knowledge]

[Music Transition]

### **Chapter 58, Part 4, Day 61, Night**

Canute looked out from the palisade of Penglannow over a sea as black as the sky. The waning gibbous moon reflected brightly off the rippling water, in a shimmering streak of light, while the countless stars glimmered like diamonds across the dark veil above.

The air was pleasantly cool, and the rhythmic sound of waves on rocks sang from below like a lullaby, soothing the world to sleep.

The Northman wondered, if somewhere, at that moment, Beric was also looking up Mánya's pale face, as she slowly drifted across the night sky.

**CANUTE: Watch over him, Father.**

He murmured, for the Skane prayed as much to their ancestors, as they did their gods.

His thoughts turned to Einar; and the news that his uncle was in Llanrhys. What by all the ancestors was he doing there?

Strictly speaking, Einar was Canute's first cousin, once removed, but given he had been like a brother to Canute's father, he had always considered him to be his uncle.

The Skane had always encountered fierce resistance from the Waela; they were a wild folk, who fearlessly defended their homes. He recalled the first time he had seen the Prittani, the painted ones; frenzied warriors who fought naked - their bodies covered in swirling patterns of woad. Skane had been victorious that day, but even so, many of his kinsmen had fallen to the savage onslaught. Would Einar risk going there to raid? Perhaps; Llanrhys was rich in gold and silver, and the Waela made for strong slaves; but Petroc's source had also said the Skane ships bore no dragons' heads. That would imply that they sailed as traders; at least Canute hoped that was the case; but it was not unheard of for the Northmen to make such a ruse, only to attack when a settlement's guard was down.

His introspection was interrupted by 2 figures approaching along the palisade's platform; they carried no torches; Many's light was bright enough to illuminate the way, and from their gait, Canute recognised the pair as Arne and Ravn.

CANUTE: What news?

Canute said in greeting

ARNE: The crew have been given lodgings in the fortress, My lord...

Arne replied

ARNE: ...and Petroc's steward has arranged supplies for the morrow.

CANUTE: Good.

Arne shifted awkwardly, alerting Canute that there was something troubling his oathman.

CANUTE: What's on your mind, Arne?

ARNE: Lord, we have lost 3 of the crew since we left Trevendh...

Canute suddenly understood Arne's discomfort; one of them had been Yora - his lover.

ARNE: If we are to sail across the open ocean...

CANUTE: Then we will need a full complement.

Canute interrupted, finishing Arne's sentence. The Northman sighed, he knew Arne was right to raise it; but he had little mind in that moment for practical things.

CANUTE: Very well, on the morrow, see if you can find some fools in the village, willing to come on an adventure...if not, I'll petition Lord Conwyn.

Arne nodded, then looked to Ravn, indicating that the older man also wanted to speak.

RAVN: Lord, I have cast the runes and asked the Norns to reveal Einar's fate

He opened his hand to reveal three small stones in his palm, each with a rune carved into its surface.

CANUTE: Tell me.

Canute pressed eagerly.

Ravn picked one of the stones, and showed it to his lord.

RAVN: This is Einar's past; the rune Urus - the Bull. It symbolises strength, power and potential

This did not surprise Canute; Einar's reputation as a warrior was formidable. Ravn showed his lord the second stone

RAVN: This is Einar's present; the rune Ingwaz - The seed. It symbolises new beginnings, creation, and planting

Canute raised an eyebrow.

CANUTE: What could that mean? New trade?

He reasoned, voicing his inner thoughts

ARNE: It's possible, Lord...but you also said that Jarl Einar was otherwise childless.

Arne offered, inferring a different explanation. Canute nodded, there was some sense in Arne's words

CANUTE: Hmm...you could be right. No man wants his bloodline to fail, and Einar has no knowledge of Beric. He could be seeking a bride, and along with it, an alliance.

Canute looked back at Ravn, expectantly.

CANUTE: What of his future, Ravn?

The older man held up the final stone.

RAVN: Jarl Einar's future is told by the rune Othala - Inheritance. It symbolises passing on of traditions, values and knowledge.

Canute nodded, the answer to the riddle revealing itself, like a sea fog, dissipating under the heat of the sun.

CANUTE: That must be it!

He concluded

CANUTE: Einar seeks an heir.

[Music Transition]

Thank you for listening to Legend of the Bones, I hope you've enjoyed the show. If you like what you've heard, then please consider rating and reviewing the show in your podcatcher of choice; not only do I love seeing the feedback, but it really does help the show to reach new listeners.

As always, where would I be without my amazing cast of voice talent, and this episode has a veritable smorgasbord of talent...

Returning to the show, but in a new role, playing Lord Petroc is Adam Powell. Adam previously appeared as Father Obsert, way back in episode 19, and is the host of the excellent, Snyder's return podcast.

Also returning to the show in the role of Arne is Brian c. Rideout. Brian is a game designer, podcaster, and producer, whose shows Trans-Real News and Swords Against Madness are two of my favourites.

After a long absence, returning to the show the role of Lord Conwyn is Che Webster; Che is the host of Roleplay Rescue, an essential listen for anyone looking to rediscover or reinvigorate their roleplaying games hobby. Incidentally, I have been interviewed by Che on a number of occasions about various subjects, not least, solo play and my experience of creating Legend of the Bones.

And finally, returning once again the role of Canute, is my comrade in arms, Jon Cohen, creator of Tale of the Manticore.

My sincere thanks to you all for your support, I am as always incredibly grateful.

I'll put these wonderful folks' links in the show notes.

You can also help by liking or reposting new episode announcements, or by recommending the show online or to a friend - you really cannot beat the power of word of mouth.

Alternatively, if you would like to show your appreciation by buying me a metaphorical cup of tea, then I have a Kofi page at [ko-fi.com/legendofthebones](https://ko-fi.com/legendofthebones). Any donations will go towards the show's running cost.

If you're interested, I have a range of merchandise which can be found at [www.redbubble.com/people/LegendBones/shop](https://www.redbubble.com/people/LegendBones/shop). To keep the cost to you down, all items are presented at zero mark-up. I make no money from them, it's purely to give something back to fans of the show.

I also would love to know what you think of the show, and I do respond to every message I receive, so with that in mind...

You can contact me on X @LegendBones, Bluesky @legendbones, Mastodon @legendbones@ttrpg-hangout.social, instagram at Legendofthebones, email at [legendofthebones@gmail.com](mailto:legendofthebones@gmail.com) or got to Legendofthebones.blogspot.com for show notes, house rules, character profiles, art, maps and more.

Join me next time to find out what awaits our adventurers, as the Bones decide their fate..

None shall escape the destiny of bone.