

LotB Episode 48

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.

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... following the fight with the Manticore in the shrine at Karrek Uhgel which saw Jenna killed, the companions mourned the death of their friend.

After, while Laana prayed for Canute and then herself to be partly healed, Taalien recounted to Beric that unnatural monsters like Manticores are creatures from The Rift, a tear between the material world and hell, through which dark magic flows, and diabolical beings can escape.

The Bard's explanation was interrupted when Vaylan drew the companions' attention to the stone doors leading to the next chamber. An inscription above the door gave a clue as to how the portal may be opened, and from this, Vaylan was able to solve the method to unbar the ingenious lock.

In the chamber beyond, the companions found a large cavern that contained an underground waterfall, the spray from which had healing properties that further soothed Laana and Canute's wounds.

Laana remembered the words at the entrance to the shrine, and deduced that one must enter the waterfall in order to receive the wisdom it may offer..

Having noticed that the pool into which the waterfall fell contained many objects, Vaylan determined that an offering would need to be made, and so after stripping naked, and casting the enchanted ring he found at Angarak into the water, the mage entered the pool and walked into the cascade....

Chapter 48, Part 1, Day 49, Afternoon

Party Status

Beric 43 out of 43 Hit Points

Laana 25 out of 31 Hit Points

Vaylan 19 out of 19 Hit Points

Taalien 24 out of 24 Hit Points

Canute 31 out of 31 Hit Points

Spells Available

Vaylan has memorised Push, Soothe, Revive and Clairvoyance

Taalien has memorised Resolve, Poetic Prose, Pitch and Imbue

Laana can pray for 1 second level miracle and 1 third level miracle.

The moment Vaylan stepped beneath the torrent, the relentless force of the water threatened to overwhelm him...to pummel him down, not only with its sheer weight, but also with a power that only this his kind could sense. He tried to focus his mind; if Laana was right, and the waterfall was the veil referenced in the inscription at the entrance to this shrine, then he had to find a way beyond it. To what he knew not, but his intuition told him to move forward....Mustering his will, he pushed on, groping his hands. Each step was a tremendous effort, and whilst he felt the energy from Laana's touch fortifying his limbs, he feared it would not be enough.

Suddenly, without warning, he broke free from water, and such was the shift in resistance, that he stumbled forward and nearly fell.

As he regained his balance, he was struck by the abrupt and unnatural silence.

In front of him was pitch black, in fact the only light came from the silvery curtain from which he had emerged, and in the eeriness of his surroundings, he briefly wondered if he was dead. The thought flitted away as he shivered involuntarily in the cool air, goosebumps raising on his wet naked skin.

VAYLAN: Greetings.

He called into the darkness, not knowing what else to do.

VAYLAN: I come seeking wisdom....will you judge me worthy?

Nothing.

He waited in the black silence for a few minutes, and when still nothing happened he began to consider turning back. Vaylan's thoughts turned to his master; since Amos' death, he had desperately missed his master's counsel...what would he advise? Vaylan wondered.

VAYLAN: Amos.

He murmured absently.

Almost as if prompted by the name, tiny lights, maybe the same crystals as before, began to glow, on the walls of a sphere-like chamber which now appeared before Vaylan's eyes.

More curiously still, was that they seemed arranged to mark out constellations which were familiar to the mage.

Opposite from where Vaylan had entered, a second veil of water glistened with silver light, and

Just as Vaylan marvelled at this wonder, the shadow of the figure could be seen within.

Vaylan was momentarily tempted to step back into the waterfall, but something within made him push the fear aside.

The shadow grew bigger as it approached, until a figure emerged into the chamber. The man, for it was a man, was not wet like Vaylan, and instead he wore fine robes of grey and green. His whole being was surrounded by a pale, shimmering aura.

Whilst his visage was old, there was at the same time an agelessness to him, and all the while, from the moment the man had stepped from the veil, Vaylan's mouth hung agape, for he was no stranger; it was his dead master, Amos ap Howen

[Music Transition]

As this location is the result of a positive Stumble Upon it needed it to be something special. Having given it quite some thought, I settled on it as being a place of reverence for the Old Ways. The waterfall is a gateway, where the barrier between the living realm, and the otherworld, that being the realm of the dead, is thin. In turn, if a mortal follows the old ways and is deemed worthy, then they may pass into the chamber where Vaylan now stands; a sort of in-between realm, allowing them to commune with the Ancestors for a short period.

I did not want access to this chamber to be automatic, and you may recall that in the last episode, Vaylan passed a Wisdom check, which represented his will to succeed.

As one of the Ancestors, Amos can only remain outside of the otherworld for 1 game turn, so Vaylan will need to make the most of the time.

The mage will be able to pose questions, or ask advice, but Amos' answers may only reflect what has passed, or what may be known; he cannot foretell the future.

But here's the rub - how do I resolve this without meta-gaming the questions and answers?

I think the simple answer is that I need to ask the oracle. I am also going to rule that only with a result of 'yes and' will Amos give a complete answer. Other 'yes' results will mean that he will direct Vaylan to where the mage can discover the truth.

It makes sense that Vaylan would ask about the Hellstones. I'm not going to roll to see if Amos can reveal more about their power; as the Keeper of the Eye of Mordgren, this is something he would certainly know.

Vaylan knows that when the tyrant warlord Vortigern ruled a thousand years ago, he was vanquished by the hero, Derwan. Given that Vortigern possessed the power of the

Hellstones, does Amos know how Derwan managed to defeat him?.....a 5, that's a straight yes.

Way back in episode 13, we heard a flashback where Vaylan witnessed Amos trying to disenchant the Eye of Mordgren. Can Amos tell him any more about this?.....a 6, that's a 'yes, and'

Now I want to know whether there is a way to destroy the Hellstones?a 5, that's a straight yes.

OK then....

[Music Transition]

Chapter 48, Part 2, Day 49, Afternoon

Party Status

The party status is unchanged.

Vaylan stared in wonder at the apparition before him; his master was just as he remembered; clearly aged, but somehow filled with a youthful vigour, epitomised by a mischievous twinkle in his grey-blue eyes. He stood, his hands clasped by his abdomen, a serene smile upon his face.

VAYLAN: How....How can this be?

AMOS: Do you really need to ask?

Amos said in response. Vaylan shook his head.

VAYLAN: No...But I never thought to see you again...not in this life.

In that moment, the joy that Vaylan felt turned to sorrow.

VAYLAN: I am sorry master. I failed you.

Amos' expression changed to one of earnestness.

AMOS: Failed me?! No, Vaylan...There was nothing you could have done. Do not punish yourself with torment - there are plenty others who will seek that for you...You have many burdens ahead, not least as the keeper of the Eye of Mordgren. It may not be your possession, but you and it are now bound, and you will need to be strong in the days ahead...Now, you came here seeking wisdom, and I have little time in this place. If you have something you would ask, do so now.

Vaylan nodded, collecting his thoughts.

VAYLAN: Vortigern had the power of the Hellstones, yet he was defeated by Derwen at the Battle of Carrollan

He reasoned aloud.

VAYLAN: So there must be a limit to the power they bestow.

AMOS: Indeed. Alone, the power of each is insidious, subtle, and left unguarded will slowly affect those close with their malign influence. Yet the more that are brought together the more their strength grows and bestows the bearer the power to subvert nature and corrupt the hearts of men.

Amos confirmed.

AMOS: But Derwen was able to withstand their influence and defeat Vortigern.

VAYLAN: How?

AMOS: To discover that, you will need to go to Ynys Myghten, Derwan's final resting place.

A spark of a memory flickered in Vaylan's mind.

VAYLAN: I remember you trying to disenchant the Eye of Mordgren.

AMOS: Yes, but at great personal cost...and I was only able to subdue its power, something which, through the spilling of blood, was temporarily undone.

Vaylan looked at Amos with surprise.

VAYLAN: Reynard of Harberg?

Amos nodded.

VAYLAN: That is ill news.

Vaylan considered for a moment.

VAYLAN: Is there no way to destroy them? The Hellstones

A flicker of sadness flashed across Amos' face.

AMOS: In a sense.

The old man said enigmatically.

AMOS: But that is something you will need to discover for yourself; you must trust your instincts. What I can tell you, is that like the dark god after whom it is named, the Eye of Mordgren is chief among the Hellstones...destroy it, and the others will cease to have power.

Vaylan sensed that Amos knew more, but it was clear that his master would not elaborate.

VAYLAN: I understand. Thank you.

Amos' expression softened to one of affection.

AMOS: I fear my time here is done...we shall not meet again Vaylan, but know this...You are the son I never had, and you have made me proud.

With that, Amos turned and walked back through the veil.

[Music Transition]

So the companions have discovered some valuable information, though I'm sure they would not think it was worth the life of Jenna.

They will need to decide what to do with this new knowledge, but for now the party has tarried here long enough, and so it's time for them to continue their journey upriver.

The next settlement is some 30 miles away, and given it is now quite late in the day, I think it makes sense that they will make camp somewhere on a little up river, once they have cleared the Karrek Uhgel gorge.

It is here that the companions give Jenna a proper burial, and Laana commends her soul to Nya's keeping.

The following day, they continue on towards the village of Delyowboll.

Day 50.

Weather.....6, overcast and temperate

Wind direction.....4, south easterly

Stumble upon.....7, Nothing

Wandering Encounter.....5, No encounter

The companions reach the village of Delyowboll by mid-afternoon.

Here they repair and resupply, spending a total of 5 gold, which includes fresh ale and rations for the Uverjdraca's crew for the next stage of the journey.

Morgelyn bids the companions farewell at this point. She knows some folk in the village and can avail herself upon their hospitality.

Day 51

The companions set sail once more, heading for the settlement of Lostwydhyl, 40 miles upstream.

Weather.....4, temperate but wet

Wind direction.....4, Northerly

Stumble upon.....7, Nothing

Wandering Encounter.....a 1, An encounter is indicated.

Time to consult my customer encounter table for river journeys, rolling 2d6.....a 6

Ok then.....

[Music Transition]

Chapter 48, Part 3, Day 51, Morning

Party Status

Beric 43 out of 43 Hit Points
Laana 31 out of 31 Hit Points
Vaylan 19 out of 19 Hit Points
Taalien 24 out of 24 Hit Points
Canute 31 out of 31 Hit Points

Spells Available

Vaylan has memorised Push, Shield, Soothe, Revive, Clairvoyance and Ignite

Taalien has memorised Resolve, Poetic Prose, Pitch and Imbue

Laana can pray for 2 First Level Miracles, 2 second level miracles, 1 third level miracle, and 1 fourth level miracle.

A low mist shrouded the land on either side of the river Nade as the Uverjdraca gilded upstream. Over night, clouds drifted in on a northerly breeze, bringing with them a slight chill, and by dawn, the laden sky had opened, releasing a heavy rain, which now danced and leapt on the river's surface.

In such conditions, there was little cheer among the ship's crew, who sat, heads bowed on the rain soaked benches, and whilst the wind's direction meant the sail could be unfurled, all were keen to row, as the toil warmed the blood.

Shortly after leaving Delyowboll, the river once more passed through dense woodland. It was clearly ancient, for many boughs of Oak, Beech and Yew were thick with the passage of time.

Laana sat near the prow, looking westward into the dark forest, watching the rain pitter patter upon the foliage of the nearest trees. Perhaps it was the inclement weather, but it seemed an ominous and foreboding place, not at all like the birchwood near Angarak through which they had travelled a few days earlier.

The memory of that day, walking beside Jenna came flooding back, and how the two of them talked beneath the dappling sunlight. She pictured the young woman's face; how her hair was raven, her skin clear, and her eyes brighter than she had ever seen them...for in those few days following their battle with the Brethren, it seemed a great weight had been lifted from Jenna's shoulders...but now, Laana thought bitterly, she lay alone in the cold earth.

At that moment, Vaylan came to sit beside her. He too looked troubled, his brow knotted in a frown. He said nothing, but simply put his hand on hers. Laana smiled at him wistfully. She understood his disquiet; he had encouraged that they should explore the shrine at Karrek Uhgel, and knowing the mage, she deduced that he felt a sense of guilt for Jenna's death. That was nonsense of course, but Vaylan was a man who despite his demeanour, felt things deeply.

Still waters run deep, she thought.

She looked back out into the forest

LAANA: I like not this place.

She declared.

LAANA: It feels...

She hesitated, unable to find the right word.

VAYLAN: Wild

Vaylan suggested.

LAANA: Yes...that...but also oppressive, in a savage, untamed way.

VAYLAN: You are not the first to think so.

Vaylan said

LAANA: Oh?

VAYLAN: The people of Pow a'n Mor, originally came from my homeland. That is why their ancient language, Old Morenish, is so close to my native tongue.

The mage explained.

VAYLAN: and it is why some places here on the peninsula have Waelan names.

Vaylan indicated towards the forest

VAYLAN: This place, for example, is called Gwyls Koos...it means Wild Wood.

LAANA: It is certainly that.

VAYLAN: Yes...from the maps I have studied, this river marks its western limit. There is a mountain at the heart forest, and rumour has it that of those that have ventured there, few return, and those that do, are never quite the same.

LAANA: Then I am content we are not.

Laana smiled, looking at the mage, whose brow was less furrowed now, the conversation having clearly distracted Vaylan from his introspection.

The pair's attention was drawn by Beric who was making his way along the ship. As he reached them they could see he held in his hands a wound length of thin rope, to which was attached a lead weight the size of a fist. Canute had been teaching his cousin shipcraft and the big man was clearly in his element.

Grinning, Beric tossed the plumbline over the port side edge of the ship, and waited for it to sink to the riverbed, all the while keeping an eye on the rope's regularly spaced knots as they sank beneath the waterline.

The warrior happened to glance upriver, and immediately a quizzical expression passed across his face.

BERIC: What's that?

He questioned.

Laana and Vaylan both stood and turned to gaze out to see what Beric had spotted.

A way ahead, close to the eastern bank, something was floating down the river. It was large, possibly the carcass of a deer or some other kind of wild animal, and the three of them watched with curiosity as it came closer, bobbing in the river's gentle current.

Whatever it was, it appeared as if something was protruding from the corpse

BERIC: They look like arrows?

Beric commented, and just as he said it, the corpse snagged on a low branch near the bank, causing it to twist, and as it did so, the unmistakable sight of a human hand came into view.

[Music Transition]

On its own, a body in the river may be innocuous enough, after all accidents do happen, but with the body pierced as it is with an arrow, then there is clear evidence of some kind of conflict.

In order to determine some more about this encounter, I need to turn again to the oracle.

Before I do that, a simple high/low roll on a D20 will determine if the body is male or female. A low roll will indicate a female.....a 7, ok so it is a woman.

First question for the Oracle, is the woman dead? Given this is likely, I will add a +1 modifier to the roll to make a yes more likely.....a modified 4, that's a 'yes but'

I'm going to interpret that 'but' there being evidence that the woman has only recently died.

So what about who she is? Does her clothing suggest that she is a peasant or villager?.....a 6, that's a yes and

Ok, so the logical assumption would be that she comes from the next settlement upriver, the village of Lostwydhyl. That being the case, is this the result of an isolated act of violence?.....a 3, that's a 'No, but'

So has the village been attacked?.....a 4, that's a 'yes but'

Well based on that, I need to determine who is responsible. I am going to roll a D6.

On a 1-2 the attack was by Brigands

On a 3-4 it will be Soldiers

And on a 5 or 6, the culprits will be Goblins.....a 1

Right, so one final question....are these brigands in the employ of someone powerful?.....(4)

Ok then.

[Music Transition]

Chapter 48, Part 4, Day 51, Afternoon

Party Status

The party status is unchanged.

Water sloshed on to the Uverjdraca's deck as Beric hauled the woman's body out of the river and into the ship. He laid her down respectfully, more water seeping from her sodden

woollen shift, and it was immediately apparent that any hope that she may be alive, was gone.

Laana knelt down beside the body, and gently brushed aside the matted brown hair which clung to the woman's face. She was young, perhaps only a year or two older than the Cleric, her blue eyes staring lifelessly ahead. Laana instantly thought once again of Jenna.

Closing the woman's eyelids, Laana reached for her holy symbol and fighting the lump in her throat, she quietly spoke the ritual blessing for the dead

Then, gripping hold of the arrow shaft, the Cleric pulled it from the woman's body and handed it to Beric.

By now the others had gathered around, and even Canute had come forward from the steering platform, having given over the helm to his second, Ravn

The Skane looked at the woman's corpse and then to Beric

CANUTE: Goblins?

He suggested.

BERIC: No.

The warrior replied, holding up the arrow to show the fletchings.

BERIC: I've seen goblin arrows, and this is not one.

CANUTE: Brigands then.

BERIC: Most likely.

VAYLAN: Could this woman be one of them?

Vaylan posited

BERIC: I think not

Beric differed

BERIC: Her garb is that of common folk...I think she must hail from Lostwydhyl

LAANA: Then we must make haste

Laana interjected.

LAANA: If the village has been attacked, we must help.

CANUTE: Very well

Canute concurred.

CANUTE: By my reckoning we are close. That wound is fresh....

He indicated to the woman.

CANUTE: ...so she cannot have floated far.

Without another word, the Skane warrior turned and made his way back to the steering platform, giving orders as he went, to which Uverjdraca's crew responded by pulling hard on the oars, propelling the ship forward more quickly.

Beric retrieved his gear from where it had been stored, and pulled on his mail shirt, and seeing him do so the others did likewise.

Once dressed, the companions stood at the prow, gazing anxiously ahead, wondering what they might find.

They did not have to wait long, for as the Uverjdraca rounded a bend in the river, the village of Lostwydhyl came into view.

LAANA: By the Nine!

Laana exclaimed, for while not unexpected the sight which greeted them was chilling.

Many acres of the surrounding forest on the eastern bank had been cleared, making way for a collection of low buildings of timber, numbering no more than a score. Several were ablaze, billowing plumes of thick black smoke into the already dark sky.

The hue and cry of dozens of people in distress could be heard. Several figures, presumably the villagers, desperately tried to combat the flames. Some were wandering aimlessly, bloodied, bruised and clearly in shock, while others were on their knees, wailing over the bodies of the dead.

[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...

Just one person to thank in this episode, returning once again as Canute, is Jon Cohen, creator of Tale of the Manticore. Thank Jon, you always deliver, and I am ever grateful.

I'll put Jon's 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. 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. 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 or go 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.