

Roll the Bones

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“Cleromancy,” or “casting lots,” is the magical Art of tossing small objects onto a surface to obtain Divine guidance or predict future events. Its tools are variously called lots, dice, dibs, five-stones, knucklebones, snobs, *astragaloi* (Greek), and *tali* or *sortes* (Latin), and begat games from corn-hole and horseshoes to jacks.

This Witch skill is based on key Pagan principles: Chance; “cup up/cup down;” deity input; direction; distance; pattern; symbol; timeline; and “Yes/no/later.” It entails selecting or tossing one or a set of components and interpreting an answer according to how it appears or lands (illustrated in our books, see at: oldenwilde.org).

Traditional Methods

1). Bone Rolling: Acquire 3 animal vertebrae. (If fresh, place beneath a bucket addoors until flesh decomposes; wash clean and sun dry.) Store in a pouch. To divine, hold all in your left hand, ask your question, and roll the lot atop an even surface. Your answer is in how they land: In a bunch; widely dispersed; on base (points up); points down (rare & noteworthy); the direction in which the points project; and so forth.

Alternatives: A). Roll 3 human teeth (yours, your child’s, or from the Internet).

B). Clean and toss a turkey wishbone. Hang from a cup-hook between uses.

C). Toss bone dice. “Auspicious” is when the sum is an “odd” number.

2). Cup up: Many seashell ‘bones’ have a curved and a flat side, such as cowrie. Toss one, three, or other odd number: If more land open upward, deities favor your wish.

Alternative: A). Spin with eyes closed and toss a geode or shew-stone. Note how far it lands from you, and in which direction. *North:* Observe events, be patient. *East:* Confront wisely. *South:* Be bold, but not impulsive. *West:* Console, empathize.

B). Toss a bone-colored ceramic saké cup on soft ground. Cup-up’s always goodly!

3). Waste not wood: Split 2 whole black walnut shells to make a set of 3 halves. Draw a 5-line “tree” on paper, sand, or soil—a vertical ‘mast’ with three horizontal lines from smallest to longest in descending order. With tree template in front of you (close or afar), think your question and toss. Interpret the timeline of your desire to reach fruition: Base = now; if on or near bottom long line = 3 months hence; if mid-line = within 6 months; atop small line = 9 months; and on treetop, a year in advance. As ever, “cup-up” landings are the most favorable.

Alternatives: A). Ball a sheet of art paper. Flatten half and follow 3). directives.

B). Get Ancestor aid! Toss 3 playing cards: The Ace of Clubs, Diamonds, and Spades. The card symbol upward closest to you is your answer: Diamond = Yes! Spade = No. And Club means “Yes, but after some delay.” Keep them in or on an Ancestor shrine.

C). Randomly select 1 wood-burned tile Rune from a bag o’ possibilities and toss. Continue tossing one per time until one lands with symbol visible; note its meaning.

D). Amber is fossilized tree sap. Buy a pair and toss: High odd number bodes well!

E). Real rubber is also tree sap: Buy a “jacks”-type ball. Use a permanent black ink marker to randomly emblazon it with magical emblems. Ask a question and toss: What you see it will be. Symbols: A pentagram (protect yourself); lips (love looms); exclamation mark (act); wavy line (relax); circle with mid-dot (sun strength); crescent (be compassionate); question mark (time will tell); teardrop (emote); smile (happiness), etc.

4). Expand: Toss a feather; pebbles; or rough crystal. Make a kit of mini-dibs.