

50 — Mister Popular?

Quest: *'Hippity-hop to the Polls'*

Type: *Democratic Vote*

Required Adventurer Rank: *None*

Duration: *Seven Days*

Reward: *'I Voted' Iron Pin-Badge*

Description: *A King must be selected from the available candidates! Let your voices be heard and vote for the person you deem most fitting to rule all of Toad Town and its territories!*

“Are you aware that there are more than two candidates?” Imu asked.

“What do you mean? Isn't it just my two Lords who can become King?”

“The wording of the Evolution Requirement would suggest that, yes, but in actuality, no. Literally anyone in your territory can become King.”

“Uh oh.”

“Yeah...”

“Who are the candidates then?”

“*Lord Toadskandarr. Lord Toadus. Vagan the Adventurer. Viola the Buffet Wizard. Toadcaller. Él the Jackicorn. Goddard the Fleshcrafter. Requiem for a Frog the Executioner's Scythe. And... erm... Judetta the Toaddom Preacher.*”

“Are you croaking me!?”

“Yeah, so, another thing it seems I'm allowed to reveal now. Once someone is made King, they basically get as much power of governing your settlement as you do, so...”

“That's really bad!”

“Mhmm.”

“We have to antagonise the voters and get the rightful person elected King!”

“I hate to say this, but for once I agree. If Toadus isn't made King, then I don't know what will happen to this place.”

“You mean Toadskandarr. He's clearly the better Lord of the two.”

“Don’t be silly Toady, of course that wimpy Lordling isn’t worthy of actually being King. Toad Town needs a firm ruler and only Toadus can provide that. I mean, he’s already evolved past Toadkin and become a Toadkin Tyrant. He’s basically made for the job. And with all the fighting we’ll need to do, you want someone like that at the helm.”

“I can’t believe what I’m hearing,” I remarked offendedly.

Imu narrowed his eyes.

“I guess we’ll be on opposite sides until a King has been chosen,” he said ominously.

“You’re going down,” I warned him.

“Might makes right,” he replied. “When my Team Toadus wins this election, you’d better kowtow at my feet and tell me how amazing I am!”

“Hah! When my Team Toadskandarr wins, you’ll have to do whatever I say for a week!”

“Deal!”

I narrowed my bulbous eyes.

“Deal!” I replied, before hopping my separate way to find Lord Toadskandarr.

Over the course of the next week, Imu and I fought a proxy war with minions and Adventurers as our soldiers. No lives were actually lost, apart from one guy named Jak, who slipped on a discarded banana peel and brained himself on the lip of my wishing well.

With my minions, I minted wagonfuls of Toakens to bribe voters with so that they would vote for Toadskandarr. As a result of all the newly-minted coins however, the price of bread rose by twenty-thousand percent and one of my clever Merchant minions had to step in to fix the situation, before another riot was caused, though this meant that a new gang of minions had to be sent around to rob all the bribed voters of their coins, so that they could be removed from circulation.

Imu seemed to be going the route of having Toadus’ men intimidate voters by standing around the barrels used for votes to be deposited into, telling voters who to vote for or else they might suddenly become the victim of a very unrelated hyper-violent attack. However, since Imu was in charge of *that* operation, he didn’t actually go through with it, which quickly resulted in people just ignoring the threats.

Some candidates, like Viola and Vagan were actively discouraging people from voting on them, while others, like Goddard the Fleshcrafter and Judetta my new Preacher, were trying to influence voters in their own ways.

Judetta promised voters that, if she was elected to King, they would be showered in Divine love by me, their God. Granted, I was unsure if Judetta even knew that the object of Toaddom worship was me, but it didn't seem to matter to her.

Goddard, who was still under arrest but had turned the Gaol into a new laboratory, was using his newly-crafted puppets and creatures to attempt to blend in amongst the citizens and using them to cast votes. When I discovered this though, I had Cavalry Men stationed around the voting booths, alongside Sharpshooters on overwatch, such that any non-humanoid was quickly dispatched.

I did try to use my command of my minions to sway their votes, but it seemed that an effect of the 'democratic vote' was that it disabled any of my direct interference with how the ballots were cast.

At the end of the seventh day, Imu and I met on neutral ground: Viola's Buffet. We sat on opposite sides of a table: him on a stool and me on the ground 'cause I was too big-and-heavy for a chair.

"So..." Imu started.

"So..." I replied equally tense.

Viola came walking over and noticed us at one of her tables.

"Are you ready to order yet?" she asked, somehow not worried about potentially being elected King of all my lands.

"I can't eat anything, I'm too nervous," I said.

"Me too," Imu concurred.

"About what?" she asked. "Also, why are you here if you're not hungry!?"

"About the election, obviously!" we said in unison.

"Wait, why? The results are already in?"

"WHAT!?"

"Yeah, didn't you see? Toadcaller won, by a landslide too."

Imu and I shared a long look at each other.

"Fuck," he then said.

"At least it wasn't the Executioner's Scythe that won," I replied.

"I guess."

"So? Are you gonna eat or are you gonna get the hell out so the table can be used by actual diners?"

"I suddenly have an appetite again," I announced.

"Me too," Imu said sheepishly.

Viola was kind of terrifying. For some reason, her Buffet felt like it lay outside my jurisdiction over the combined territories of Toad Town, as though an inviolable island in the sea of my essence.

Congratulations! By popular vote, Toadcaller has been elected King of Toad Town! Long live the reign of Toadcaller the First!

After finishing our meal, Imu and I found Toadcaller hiding within his Hermit's Lodge by the roots of the great Weeping Oak.

"Come on, Toadcaller, you were made King, so you have to live in the Castle now. Toadskandarr might not be happy to have a roommate and boss, but he lost, so he doesn't get a say."

Toadcaller was struggling quite a lot, so I had to swallow him to be able to get him out of his dirt hovel. As I left the Lodge, I prepared for a powerful leap from the foot of the castle's outer wall and up to its top, but just as I was about to kick off from the ground, the ground itself became soft and pliable, and I fell through it, emerging within the throne room of the castle, spat out by the ground.

"That was very uncomfortable," I told Imu, who had teleported me using his magic. "Please don't do that again."

"Where's the Toadcaller?" he asked, ignoring my demand.

I quickly spat out the shellshocked man and he quickly crawled away to hide behind the throne.

"Wow, he really doesn't want this," I said.

"I can't believe you swallowed him."

"Alright, don't move," I told the Toadcaller, who of course immediately started running for the gate leading out of the throne room.

I lanced him through with my essence, like lightning from a cloudless sky, and he quickly fell to his knees, as his body grew and took on a different shape, becoming something closer to Toadskandarr in appearance, although he retained his malformed human-like face, still not receiving any of the trademark visual signs of his heritage.

As his evolution finalised, a puff of smoke emerged from his shining golden figure and utterly obscured him from sight. Then a moment later, he strode from the cloud towards the throne at the other end of the room. He had grown to nearly three metres in height and his body was now covered in emerald scales, his very eyes glowing with the same awestriking hue, and hardened keratin having formed on the brow of his face, creating a ridge that looked very much like a crown. From the back of his head fell a curtain of luscious amber-red hair.

As he sat down upon the throne, splaying his sculpted and perfect body across it, I inspected him with a Limited Appraisal, which Imu had taught me to do so that I didn't get lost in reading through everyone's backstory and medical history:

Name: *John Toadcaller the First*

Occupation: *King of Toad Town*

Species: *Toadkin Royalty*

Level: *50/500*

Alignment: *Chaos Incarnate*

Faction: *Toad Town Kingdom*

"His name is John? Seriously?"

"It could have been worse," I replied. "It could have been *Kevin*."

"Yeah, I don't think I could respect a King named Kevin, but John is just so ... bland."

John Toadcaller the First cleared his throat and then said his first declaration as King of Toad Town:

"I want to pet the Hydra-Goose."

"Oh no."

"What?" I asked.

"He somehow has the power to add Evolution Requirements. Look! *This* just appeared!"

[*Evolution Requirements*]

Capital => Nation

- *Find the Honking Calamity Hydra-Goose so that John Toadcaller the First, King of Toad Town, can pet it* -

"That's not good," I said.

"Understatement of the century!"

"I guess we have to find the Hydra-Goose then."

"Fuck..."