

More on Bonekeepers

Bonekeepers (bonekeepers) are volunteers who maintain the bones lining the inner and outer walls of a lighthouse. They are not considered clergy, so the position is open to both men and women, though the position is associated with older men. They also serve as chaplains for the dying, especially those who would otherwise die alone. They learn as much as they can about the lives of the people they help and act as living obituaries, relating the deeds of the otherwise forgotten dead to anyone who will listen. They also recite a litany of the names of the dearly departed that they have helped. Again, with special emphasis placed on those who don't have loved ones to pray for their souls.

In smaller or more rural lighthouses that lack a knight, the bonekeeper fills a similar security role and may also be in charge of the upkeep of the rest of the lighthouse aside from the star hearth. they may have attendants who work under them, usually male pups, as female pups assist the hearthkeeper as acolytes.

A bonekeeper's chain consists of a series of rigid plastic, metal, or wooden tags linked at both ends, either directly or connected by flexible cords. The ends of the chain may be decorated with ornamental tassels. Each tag represents a deceased member of the lighthouse. Written on the tag are the person's name, the dates of their birth and death, and the location of their bones. This information is usually recorded using a tactile writing system such as Commonthroat Tactile.

The bonekeeper wears the chain by wrapping it around his or her tail. The chain thus serves as a badge of office. The chain is also perfumed with a special scent. At certain times of day or when idle, the bonekeeper reads the names from the chain by passing the tags through his or her digits.

Large or ancient lighthouses accumulate many deceased members, and a single chain would be unable to record them all. A bonekeeper will have multiple chains assigned to different days of the week or different times of year. If the lighthouse has multiple bonekeepers, each is responsible for a group of chains. Attendants are also encouraged to wear and pray these chains, especially when out and about, to serve as a *momento mori* for those they encounter.

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