



Blackengorge - The Road Eastwards - The Northward Forest - Chapter #05, Scene #04

Mar 8

...continues from [Chapter #05, Scene #03](#)

Synopsis

The 18th Day of Ches in the Year of the Sudden Journey

With spirits high and adventure on the wind the group have set out eastwards on the old road towards the gate in the gorge wall, with their final destination being a burial site off to the east. Going had been fairly easy as they approached the ruins of the old road gate, but they were attacked by a giant wyrm. They managed to dispatch the creature, but as the rains and darkness fell they had to seek out shelter, spying an abandoned shack in some woods. It had appeared their luck had turned, but unfortunately that was not the case as a pack of wolves descended upon the party. The group managed to fend off the wolves, and their leaders slipped away into the forest - an uneasy night's rest followed and the party awake bleary eyed and tired in the morning.

- [Khâlin Grundokri](#) - 3rd Level Male Dwarven Warlord
- [Kireth Majere](#) - 3rd Level Male Half-Elven Wizard
- [Tradden Aversward](#) - 3rd Level Male Human Fighter
- [Zero Uhlit](#) - 3rd Level Male Human Rogue
- Rindall Blackstout - 3rd Level Male Dwarven Paladin of Moradin (NPC)

Scene Length

This scene starts on Friday 4 March 2011 and is expected to be completed by the end of Wednesday 9 March 2011. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.



Me: *The morning had brought a change in the weather, with the rain giving way to cloud and a low hanging mist. The mist clung to the trees around the shack as the party gathered their things and ate what little rations they could in front of the dying fire. **Khalin, Tradden, and Rindall** had donned their armour and were ensuring it was well fastened; **Zero** had his cloak enveloped around him, getting as close to the embers of the fire as he dare; and **Kireth** sat to one side, contemplating what the day may bring.* Mar 4

"We should make a move," said **Khalin**, once he was sure his dwarven armour was secured. "Rindall, which way to the burial ground from here do you think?"

"I'd continue north from here," replied the paladin. "We can check for the rise in land to the north when we can, and follow that line."

"Very well," agreed **Khalin**. "Onwards and upwards, eh? Let's make the move - we can't stay here and be a wolf's breakfast."

With that the group rose and with a last look around the tumbledown building headed back out and into the chill morning air and the forest beyond.



Me: *The forest was less oppressive in the daylight than it had been the previous night. The weather helped - the clinging mist slowly giving way and dissipating as the sun rose and warmed the air. Spirits of the group rose a little and tired limbs and aching legs appeared to be less of a problem.* Mar 7

Khalin and Rindall kept the team marching onwards, following the gentle rising of the land to the north. Going was steady amongst the trees, the forest canopy often stretching out to hide the sun and not allowing ground scrub to gain a foothold, the forest floor a mixture of pine needles, old branches, and the occasional tree root.

Even though the rise in temperature had increased the cheer in the group they were no less wary. With **Khalin** and Rindall up front, **Tradden** had moved towards the back of the group, keeping a watchful eye to ensure they weren't being followed or tracked as best he could. Plenty of animals darted this way and that in the forest, but most thankfully seemed to be small creatures startled by the group's presence.

Every once in a while, however, a long, low howl echoed around the forest, though from where it was hard to tell. At the sound of these the group stopped in their tracks and made themselves ready, but in each case nothing untoward happened and they continued their march.



Me: *After two or three hours marching the two dwarves indicated that it was time to stop and rest.* Mar 7



"I think we're nearly there," said Rindall to the group. "Probably another half-mile or so. I suggest we have something to eat and refresh ourselves."

"The burial site is within a steep-sided crater," continued **Khalin**, seemingly enjoying his role as master tactician. "I suggest we take some time during the rest to work out how we approach."

The warlord quickly started to clear a patch on the forest floor of needles and pine cones to the dirt beneath and grabbed a couple of sticks. In the centre of the dirt he drew a circle.

"This," he said, pointing with a stick to the circle, "is the crater. Rindall's best guess is that we're probably going to come to it from the southeast. Anyone got any thoughts on how we want to approach?"



Matt: "Hmmm", began Tradden, looking down at the map. It was basically just a circle in the dirt. "What else do we know?" he continued, peering over the Dwarf's shoulder. "Any obvious access points, or places to avoid?" He turned to Rindall "Did you see any nasties or beasties when you were there last?" Mar 8

The young fighter turned away, contemplating the infinite it would seem as he stared into the middle distance with he index finger of each hand steepling up to a point beneath his chin. Holding this pose, which he liked to think looked quite intellectual, he turned back to the group huddled around the circle.

Perhaps Zero should have a sneak about see if he can get us some up to date information?"



The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero looked up at all the eyes focused disquietingly upon him. Mar 8

"Ahhhh," he said, hesitantly. "Well, I suppose I could have a look. Yes."

He stood up and determined north-west like a human signpost.

"OK then. I'll just go and, er, check it out. Check out the burial site. Where people are buried."

He hovered in place and looked at each man in turn, expectantly, hopefully.



Matt: "Yes, thanks Zero." said Kireth curtly, not looking up from the scrawls on the ground. Mar 9

Tradden laughed. "Don't worry - I will come with you as far as I can before my clanking around starts to become an issue! All we need to do is get the lay of the land." He gave the rogue one of his trademark 'just a bit too hard' slaps on the back.



The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero smiled appreciatively and the pair set off. Mar 9
In a few moments, the rogue had disappeared amongst the trees.

Stealth: **1d20+12: 14**



Me and Random: **Zero** headed to the north keeping close to the trees and his senses alert. The trees began to thin a little as he progressed, and he began to take more time to ensure he could not be seen. Mar 10

After a quarter of an hour he had still not found anything, and was preparing to return when he heard shouting in the distance to the north. Carefully, and slowly he crept up towards the noise.

*As the trees thinned right completely **Zero** spotted the depression. It was like a small crater, about seventy five feet across and fifteen or so deep. He ducked down behind some bushes as movement caught his eye.*

[Zero Stealth Check: **1d20+12: 27**]

*A small figure strode around the depression's northern rim, pointing towards the centre of the crater and barking orders in some strange tongue **Zero** did not understand. The figure was smaller than a halfling, probably just over half **Zero's** height, dressed in various shades of greens and browns with a shock of unkempt hair jutting out at all angles.*

*The figure was pointing at a small group of goblinoids - hobgoblins, **Zero** thought - down in the middle of the depression, using crude tools to dig at the ground.*

*Across on the western rim were a couple of orange lizard-like creatures next to a large red mound. They appeared to be very still, watching the scene below with indifference. From their general appearance **Zero** plucked the word from his*

memories of childhood stories - "drakes".

[Zero Perception Check: **1d20+7: 8**]

Zero watched for a few moments as the hobgoblins kept digging, the small figure on the northern rim barking words of 'encouragement' it seemed. Every now and then the hobgoblins would stop digging and drag a huge bone from the ground, toss it to one side, and continue their efforts.

[Zero Nature Check: **1d20+2: 15**]

From his position it looked as though the only sensible route through the trees towards the crater was to where he stood now, at the southeastern side. A low ramp led down from this side into the crater, and the ground around the rim seemed firm and navigable here.

Slowly, he turned his back to the scene and headed back to the group to report - tactics would have to be decided carefully here by **Khalin**.



Matt: Tradden listened to the Rogue described what he had seen.

Mar 10

"Hmmm - what do you think Khalin?" he asked, scratching his head. (His own, not the Dwarf's)



Me: The warlord tugged at his beard thoughtfully, holding his stick above the muddy map. In the short time that **Khalin** had been on these shores he had learnt that simple bravery and a trusted weapon were not enough to survive. In their first few skirmishes they had survived by skill with their weapons and some quick witted actions during the melee, but with some of the more recent incidents it looked as though the group needed more tactical nous right from the start. That should be his responsibility!

Mar 14

Kireth seemed best at controlling groups of enemies - his spells and magics had already proved themselves beyond doubt at slaughtering groups and individuals without mercy. His skills were invaluable at the rear of the party where he could be protected.

Zero seemed to have a knack at appearing from nowhere with a killing shot from range, but seemed to disdain the close quarters of battle. Best for him to remain at range, hidden and covered, picking off any of the enemy that seemed to lead from afar.

Tradden seemed to enjoy the close quarter fighting, and although often let his guard down without a stout shield to protect him, had never failed yet. Best to let him take on the larger of the enemy's front lines - keeping them away from the spellcasting wizard and rogue at their backs.

Khalin himself was no stranger to melee combat, often fighting back to back with **Tradden**, and long may it continue. Keeping a close eye on the whole of the combat, rather than just his own foe, needed to be his watchword now.

And what of their recent companions? **Khalin** had high regard for Rindall - a dependable kinsman who would stand together with himself and **Tradden**. Beltak had proven himself to be a solid companion, providing strength of arms when it was required in the front line, but also defending and healing allies where he could. Caldring had been an aggressive elf maiden in combat, her powers and ways a little strange to the dwarf, but useful nonetheless. Finally, **Celestia** had proven herself a devout subject of her goddess - a front line warrior with a character to match her deity's wildness!

So, where from here, the warlord wondered. What best tactics to employ?

"I suggest we come from the southeast as cautiously as we can," **Khalin** began, continuing to stroke his beard. "Let's keep out of sight, on our bellies if need be. I want to see what they're up to before we confront them. Remember, this burial site may hold the key to our 'spy'.

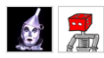
"Make sure you're hidden well, Zero. I want that little creature on the north rim taken out if they have hostile intent."

Khalin prodded with his stick at the northern rim of the crater, drawing a small cross in the dirt and then looking intently at the rogue.

"Keep him busy dodging your bolts and leave the goblinoids in the pit to Kireth," he continued, turning his attention to the wizard and tracing out a cross in the centre of the crater. "Keep them down there if you can, or dispose of them as you see fit, just keep them away from us while we take care of the drakes. Tradden, m'lad, looks like you and me draw drake duty. Rindall, you're going to have to try and provide support to both us and the rest of the team as best you can - be prepared to

protect Kireth should his magics not fire.

"Let's just hope this one goes smoothly, eh?" *he finished, with a warming grin.*

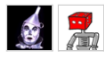


Me and Random: *The group made their way northwards through the trees, following **Khalin's** instruction. They kept as quiet as they could and progressed cautiously until the trees started to thin. **Zero** indicated that the crater wasn't too far up ahead.* Mar 14

Khalin indicated with his palms down for everyone to get closer to the ground, and as one the group moved forward low and silently.

[Khalin Stealth Check: **1d20+2: 17**
 [Kireth Stealth Check: **1d20+3: 20**
 [Tradden Stealth Check: **1d20+2: 18**
 [Zero Stealth Check: **1d20+12: 21**
 [Rindall Stealth Check: **1d20-3: 5**

*For the most part the group kept quiet and low down, but Rindall had difficulty keeping low and quiet with his plate mail and heavy shield. **Zero** turned round to him with a scowl and with his finger on his lips. Rindall shrugged an apology, only causing further noise to **Zero's** annoyance.*



Me and Random: *When the trees thinned and gave way to the crater's edge the party stopped and once again checked the area, getting low onto the ground and peering from behind rocks and scrub at the scene.* Mar 14

*The area was as **Zero** had described, the small figure still gesticulating and appearing to get angrier by the minute with the hobgoblins digging in the crater. **Kireth** whispered across the group the word "Gnome" and **Khalin** nodded in agreement - the little figure certainly looked gnomish, although there were relatively few on the Islands and they kept themselves to themselves for the matter to be placed beyond doubt.*

[Khalin Insight Check: **1d20+1: 14**
 [Kireth Insight Check: **1d20+8: 26**
 [Tradden Insight Check: **1d20+3: 18**
 [Zero Insight Check: **1d20+7: 27**
 [Rindall Insight Check: **1d20+4: 20**

"They're looking for something," *hissed **Kireth** quietly.*

"Something buried in the middle of that crater," *added **Zero** with a whisper. "I wonder if it's gold?"*

Kireth *tutted at the rogue and jerked his head towards the gnome on the northern rim.*

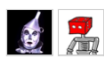
"He wouldn't be that apopleptic looking for gold. No, something else..."

As if on cue, a shout went up from within the crater and one of the hobgoblins motioned to the gnome, pointing furiously at the earthworks.

[Khalin Perception Check: **1d20+1: 3**
 [Kireth Perception Check: **1d20+1: 18**
 [Tradden Perception Check: **1d20+3: 8**
 [Zero Perception Check: **1d20+7: 9**
 [Rindall Perception Check: **1d20+4: 11**

*As much as the group strained, from their position they couldn't see what all of the fuss was about. However, **Kireth** noticed the gnome turning to its right and motioning down into the pit.*

*At first **Kireth** thought it was ordering the drakes to move, but they remained motionless and disinterested. As he strained his eyes to see he saw the faint glimmer of an outline of something and stretched his arcane senses as he felt the magic he had not noticed before.*



Me and Random: *"There's something there," *murmured the wizard, "Over by the drakes."** Mar 14

[Kireth Arcana Check: **1d20+10: 22**

*The half-elf grasped with the thoughts that ran through his head - the magic was strong with virtues of animation, and something else. Something that **Kireth** was very unsure about.*

"It's some sort of apparition," *he continued*. "Insubstantial, but animated."

The party looked over towards the drakes and could start to see the outline of something. Man-sized, probably human, shimmering in the sunlight and motioning for the gnome to retrieve whatever the hobgoblins had found.

As they watched the apparition one of the drakes suddenly moved almost making them jump. It held its snout in the air and appeared to sniff.

[Khalin Nature Check: **1d20+1: 20**]

[Kireth Nature Check: **1d20+1: 19**]

[Tradden Nature Check: **1d20+3: 19**]

[Zero Nature Check: **1d20+2: 18**]

[Rindall Nature Check: **1d20+4: 5**]

"By Clangeddin's beard!" *swore **Khalin***. "It's got our scent! Up and at 'em lads, before they get chance! Remember the plan!"



Me: [...continued in [Chapter #05, Scene #05...](#)]

Mar 14

Tags:

Next wave