



[Blackengorge](#) - The Forest Ruins - Cathedral of Shadow - Chapter #08, Scene #01

Dec 14, 2011

...continues from [Chapter #07, Scene #05](#)

Synopsis

The 20th Day of Ches in the Year of the Sudden Journey

Descending into the gloom of a long forgotten ruin in the northern forest the party have found a tale of kidnap! A dwarf named Rangrim, from the mainland they believe, has joined them before they descend into the depths of the ruins to rescue his friends, and hopefully the missing elf ranger, Gilmorril. The group encountered resistance in the form of well-disciplined hobgoblins, but with the help of Rangrim dispatched them, and headed further into the complex, negotiating traps and another chamber full of undead. They now enter some form of ritual chamber for the second time in but a tenday.

- [Khâlin Grundokri](#) - 5th Level Male Dwarven Marshal (Warlord)
- [Kireth Majere](#) - 5th Level Male Half-Elven Arcanist (Wizard)
- [Tradden Aversward](#) - 5th Level Male Human Weaponmaster (Fighter)
- [Zero Uhlit](#) - 5th Level Male Human Scoundrel (Rogue)
- Rangrim Ironnose - 5th Level Male Dwarven Scoundrel (Rogue)

Scene Length

This scene starts on Wednesday 14 December 2011 and is expected to be completed by the end of Friday 30 December 2011. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.



Me, Random and Matt:

Jan 5

INITIATIVE BLOCK

Round #07

Combat Encounter Completed

- 01) [27] Tradden - **1d20+5+2: 27** - HP 21/51 (**Bloodied**) (+3 damage rolls)
 03) [24] Khalin - **1d20+3+2: 24** - HP 19/46 (**Bloodied**)
 Sp) [De] Rangrim - **1d20+6+2: 24** - HP 24/53 (**Bloodied**) (+3 damage rolls)
 06) [18] Kireth - **1d20+8+2: 18** - HP 35/40 (+3 damage rolls)
 08) [15] Zero - **1d20+5+2: 15** - HP 40/45 (+3 damage rolls)
~~10) [09] Dark Creeper - **1d20+8: 9** - Dmg: 7+10+20+13=50 (Marked by Tradden) (**Bloodied**)~~

Removed from Play:

- 05) [20] "Winged Thing" - **1d20+7: 20**
~~04) [24] Fleshrippers - **1d20+5: 24**
 Fleshripper #01 - Dmg: 12=12
 Fleshripper #02 - Dmg: 11=11
 Fleshripper #03 - Dmg: 7=7
 Fleshripper #04 - Dmg: 29=29~~
 07) [16] Underpriest - ~~**1d20+4: 16** - Dmg: 13+10+15+7+10+29+4=68 (**Bloodied**) (Marked by Tradden)~~
 09) [13] Berserkers - ~~**1d20+3: 13**
 Berserker #01 - Dmg: 12+17+7+21+4+23=84 (Marked by Tradden) (**Bloodied**)
 Berserker #02 - Dmg: 20+15+18+7+15=75 (**Bloodied**)~~
 10) [07] Fleshrippers - ~~**1d20+5: 7**
 Fleshripper #05 - Dmg: 4=4
 Fleshripper #06 - Dmg: 4=4
 Fleshripper #07 - Dmg: 15=15
 Fleshripper #08 - Dmg: 8=8~~



Me, Matt and 3 others:

Jan 4

BATTLE MAP

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

1

Your custom image's URL goes here

Select size

Set Custom Image

Red Polygon

Blue Polygon

Yellow Polygon

Me: FEATURES OF THE AREA

Dec 13, 2011

Illumination: Bright light from the blue-green pillars.

Doors: These are made of wood with banded bronze and are closed (unless otherwise stated).

Walls: The walls (black squares) are smooth stone, and the floors consist of flagstones with mortar between them (unless otherwise stated).

The Pit: Blood runs into the pit in the centre of the chamber and disappears in a waterfall down.

Difficult Terrain: Squares with a small triangle in the bottom right corner are classed as difficult terrain.

Me: *The figures nearest the crystal columns turned to face the group, drawing greataxes from* Dec 15, 2011

https://wave.google.com/wave/?client.type=print&autoprnt=false#restored:wave:googlewave.com!w%2Bdbny05keA

Page 2 of 25

over their shoulders. Dressed in black they were sometimes difficult to see in the fleeting shadows, but the whites of their teeth showed through their grins as they espied easy prey.

Glimpses of movement and the sounds of shuffles and scrapes gave away the fact that there were others in this cathedral of shadows.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Dec 15, 2011

"*Hmm.*" Said Tradden, as the various enemies started to advance. "*Why does no one ever want to surrender?*"

Things actually looked quite grim. This place was straight out of a mad-man's nightmares, and Tradden couldn't look in any particular direction without feeling revulsed about something. In a strange kind of way though, it felt kind of comforting - he knew where he stood here. These felons were wrong - clearly pure evil. That was fine by him, because, well, because it meant he could hit them and that was the right thing to do.

That thought saw the strange battle-calmness come over him as it did from time to time, and right now he felt none could stand against him. [Rain of Steel Stance - Minor Action].

With that, he took a short run up [Move] and then charged at the nearest axe wielding enemy.

[Charge Attack vs Berzerker #01: **1d20+11+1: 22**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d8+7: 12**] and [Marked]

Tradden's victim was one of the axe-wielding humans, who took the young fighter's blow easily with a roll, tightening his grip on his greataxe and readying a stance of his own.

The pair were precariously close to the hole - Tradden could see a fair way down, perhaps fifty feet or so, into another lit chamber. Four vast chains ran all the way down, slick with blood.



Me: *The priest plunged the knife into the halfling's heart, spurts of blood covering the dais.* Dec 15, 2011

The halfling's eyes flickered open for a moment, pain and anguish in his eyes. Then the priest began to tear downwards, tracing the line of the cut he had already made.

Blood started to flow down the halfling's chest, but then it turned, seeping outwards across the horns of the brand and out towards the halfling's outstretched arms, flowing onto the manacles, across the chains, and onto the statue. From there it began its inexorable march to the crimson streams, dripping down the side of the statue and dais in pulsing rhythm.

The halfling screamed once, and then was silent, and still.

The figures next to the dais brought the elf forwards.



Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Dec 15, 2011

"*Ulmo! No!*" shouted Rangrim, breaking into a run, heading for the dais, his face white with shock.

The dwarf sprinted for all he was worth, with only one thought on his mind, to reach that of his friend. [Move x2 - Run]

As he reached the grate he ran across one of the crimson streams, the blood slippy and treacherous underfoot.

[Acrobatics Check: **1d20+6: 14**] - failure!

His legs gave out beneath him as the slick pool cost him his balance. With a racking sob for his friend he fell to the floor in a heap.

[Rangrim Prone]

Mark, me and Random: **Khalin Grundokri**

Dec 20, 2011

Khalin had surveyed the ghastly scene before him. The dwarf was a noble soul, with a well-honed sense of right and wrong. His disgust at the evil in the world around him had been part of what had driven him from the artisan's workshop to the ranks of the dwarven guard. Everything about the macabre scene surrounding him made him sick to the core.

His rage quickly rising, the warlord hurtled towards the nearest enemy, intent on his new hammer *Aecris* delivering vengeance...

[Charge vs Berserker #01: **1d20+9+1: 20**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 13**] plus [1d8: 4 charge damage]

Khalin slammed into the Berserker, just avoiding Tradden's whirling blades. The human in front of them didn't seem to care, and set himself ready for his own assault.



Me: *The blood dripped from the statue, growing in speed as the knife cut down and down and the halfling took his last breath. It joined the streams and started running slowly down the channels towards the grate and the fall down below.*

Dec 16, 2011

Me and Random: **Fleshrippers**

Dec 16, 2011

From out of the shadows, from one of the many recesses of the chamber, flooded a number of new figures.

*Dressed in dark garments, covered by a layer of ragged chainmail, they swooped almost silently towards **Khalin** and **Tradden**, sharp claws glinting in the crystal light. Two veered away at the last minute, wary of the whirling blades of the young fighter, and rounded the eastern side of the grate.*

Closing in, they appeared to be humanoid of some sort, perhaps even human once. But, all traces of their former race were lost, consumed within the dark evil that had transformed them into creatures of horror.

*They closed in on **Khalin** for the kill.*

[Fleshripper #01 Claws: **1d20+11: 18** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - misses!

[Fleshripper #02 Claws: **1d20+11: 14** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - misses!

The dwarf raised his shield, warding off these strange creatures, keeping their sharp claws at bay.

**Me: Winged Creature**

Dec 16, 2011

*The small winged creature kept its path towards **Zero**, or was it towards the hole? It was ungainly in flight, struggling with oddly shaped wings, but kept its bright yellow eyes firmly fixed upon the rogue.*

As it closed on the centre of the chamber it was illuminated by the crystal columns, and all could see that it was not of flesh and bone, but perhaps mud or clay. Whatever the strange creature was, it was no living being, a construct maybe, or some arcane beast.



Me: *The halfling's blood continued to spill towards the hole, running along the crimson path, picking up speed as it neared the grate.*

Dec 16, 2011

Neil, me and Random: **Kireth Majere**

Dec 20, 2011

Kireth's eyes darted around the room, looking at each piece as one might a jigsaw. His eyes widened as possibly his

brain slotted each piece into position. His stomach pithced and his heart skipped a beat, though not for the same reasons it likely revulsed the others.

He broke into a run. "*Stop the Blood!*" he yelled. "*Stop it reaching the hole.*"

As he ran he hurled a spell at the foes around Traddaran and Khalin. He had to try free them up to stop... to stop the "end".

[Force Orb vs Fleshripper #02's Reflex: **1d20+8: 24**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **2d8+5: 11**]

*An orb of force flew from **Kireth's** staff as he moved quickly into the arena. It sped towards one of the dark humaoids, blasting it back with a crackle. As the spell shattered against its body, the ribbons of force sliced into the enemies next to it.*

[Force Orb vs Fleshripper #01's Reflex: **1d20+8: 11**] - *misses!*

[Force Orb vs Berserker #01's Reflex: **1d20+8: 15**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10+5: 7**]

The other dark humanoid managed to get out of the way of the explosion in time, but the berserker did not, the razor-sharp blades of force tearing across his blood-speckled lips, opening further cuts. With a blind roar of rage, the berserker swung out with its greataxe.

[Berserker #01 Battle Fury: **1d20+7+4: 23** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d12+4: 7**] plus [1d6: 2 battle fury damage]

Tradden was caught by surprise, and took the full weight of the blow.

[Fleshripper #02 Dead]

[Berseker #01 Bloodied]



Me: Underpriest

Dec 22, 2011

Satisfied that the halfling's blood had started to make it's journey, the priest tore down the manacles that held the lifeless corpse in position, and cast aside the body with an easy motion.

There was a muffled shout from the centre of the chamber, as Rangrim sobbed and snarled, but the priest did not even flicker, continuing his ritual as though unconcerned at those behind his back.

The priest motioned for the two fleshrippers to move forward with the elf, and began chaining the limp body to the statue, a litany upon his lips.



Me: *The first of the blood from the halfling reached the gate, split into macabre waterfalls glistening in the bluee-green light of the crystal columns. It began to fall to the void below.*

Dec 20, 2011



Me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Dec 20, 2011

Zero followed the rest of the group into the chamber a little tentatively. This horrific scene brought back memories of the mausoleum and how the spirit had entered his mind. However, he must steel himself, and help his friends.

He shuffled forwards, behind Kireth, and took a bead on the berserker attacking Tradden.

[Sly Flourish vs Berserker #01: **1d20+8+2: 26**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d6+6: 9**] plus [**2d8: 12** sneak damage]

The flight of the bolt was true, without any delay, and it thudded into the berserker's shoulder drawing another furious shout.



Me and Random: Berserkers

Dec 20, 2011

The hammer blows, sword cuts, spells and bolts had only enraged the berserker, the fervour instilled in him from the prayers and worship at this despicable altar gave him the strength to do his master's will.

*However, before he could swing his axe, **Tradden** stepped forward with his whirling blades, cutting across his arms.*

[Tradden Rain of Steel Stance: **1d8: 4** damage]

He ignored the sharp bite of steel and brought his axe around in a wide swing.

[Berserker #01 Greataxe: **1d20+7: 10** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - misses!

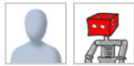
***Tradden's** whirling blades caught the axe in mid-flight, holding it still for a moment as the combatants locked eyes. The berserker snarled, blood-flecked spittle covering the young fighter. **Tradden** returned the compliment with a knowing smile and released the axe, continuing his whirl of blades.*

The second berserker acted on his master's will in an instant, rounding the crystal column and cutting down on the sobbing Rangrim.

[Berserker #02 Greataxe: **1d20+7+2: 24** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits!

[Damage: **1d12+4: 10**]

The axe came down and Rangrim would have had his head decapitated had he not rolled to the side. As it was he took a nasty cut to his scalp. The immediate threat brought the dwarf to his senses, and he snarled at the berserker.



Me and Random: Fleshrippers

Dec 20, 2011

More of the dark humanoids came out of the darkness, one skirting the crystal column and took a swipe at Tradden with its claws.

[Fleshripper #05 Claws: **1d20+11: 21** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits!

[Damage: **5** necrotic]

***Tradden** felt as though something had tugged at his insides when the claws bit into his flesh. A cold numbness tore at his guts.*

The other fleshrippers assisted the priest in trussing up the elf at the statue.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Dec 20, 2011


There was a lot going on and Tradden had heard Kireth's warning. However, as much as the fighter had heard the urgency, near terror in fact, in the mage's voice, working out how to stop a trail of blood pouring down a drainage channel wasn't something he had time to think about now.

[Cleave vs Berzerker #01: **1d20+11: 12**] - critical miss!

[**Marked**]

Just as Tradden was about to apply a sything blow which surely would have beheaded the snarling berzerker, he felt a strange, dark pull in his innards - a remenant of the clawed attack by the other creature now facing him. As a result, the spasm pulled his blade wildly out of line, and he clipped the top of Khalin's helmet!

"Tch - them lad! Not me!" gestured the Dwarf towards the enemy.

 **Me:** *The droplets of halfling's blood fell the distance down into a pool of blood below. Over the noise of the battle it could not be heard, but **Kireth** could sense it fall, a shudder racking through his body as he tried to piece together the puzzle of what would happen next, and where the blood would go.* Dec 20, 2011

  **Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose** Dec 20, 2011

He knew that Ulmo was gone, the life ripped out of him. Above him towered one of the berserkers, axe in hand, ready to stike once more. With slow, watchful care he began to stand, scooping up a handful of his friend's blood in his hand.
[Move: Stand Up]

He scowled at the berserker and threw the blood to one side, drawing the fighter's attention. [Minor Action: Ferret Out Frailty - Rangrim gains CA]

Before the berserker could bring his gaze back to the dwarf Rangrim swept round with the hammer, aiming for the fighter's knee.

[Riposte Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9+2: 12**] - critical miss!

The berserker took a step back, his combat experience outmatching that of the dwarf, and the wild swipe missed.

   **Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri** Dec 22, 2011

Khalin had heard Kireth's warning too, and there was no mistaking the dread in the mage's voice.

"But how in Moradin's name do we stop the blood?" he yelled back. The only thing he could think of right now was perhaps to wedge his shield in the way (Clangeddin knows it had already had plenty of blood on it before). But to get to the blood he's first have to dispatch the Berserker before himself and Tradden, and quickly.

[Warlord's Strike vs Berserker #01: **1d20+9: 14**] - hits!

[Damage: **2d10r2+7: 23**]

[Adjacent allies gain +2 to damage rolls vs target until end of next turn]

*The dwarf seemed somewhat surprised that his poor shot had hit, catching the infuriated berserker in the ribs, a satisfying crack accompanying the swing. The fighter crumpled on the spot, but not before he managed to swing his own axe around at **Khalin**. The dwarf saw the berserker's eyes as he swung, they were blank and lifeless, and **Khalin** could only see death within them.*

[Berserker #01 Death Attack: **1d20+7: 27** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - critical hit!

[Damage: **1d12+16: 27**]

*The blow was intense, even though **Khalin** caught it on his shield, the sheer force crushed him against the crystal pillar, knocking the wind out of him in an instant. As the blow landed, the berserker fell flat on his face in the blood, the final spark of animation left his body. The priest at the altar took a moment to look round and smile.*

"The elf is next!" he warned, still disgusted by the needless death of the halfling. "We've got to stop them!"

The shout was more to steel himself than the others.

[Inspiring Word: Khalin regains **1d6+11: 16** hp]

[Berserker #01 Dead]

  **Me and Random: Fleshrippers** Dec 20, 2011

*The dark humanoids seemed to swoop in like crows at carrion when **Khalin's** blood spilled and mixed with the*

crimson streams on the floor.

[Fleshripper #01 Claws: **1d20+11: 23** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - *hits!*
[Damage: **7** necrotic]

The first fleshripper wasted no time in sinking its claws into the dwarf, chilling his bones and adding to his misery.

Another swooped in, sensing an easy kill.

[Fleshripper #03 Claws: **1d20+11: 12** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - *critical miss!*

*But **Khalin** somehow managed to get his shield in front of him, although his arms felt like lead.*

The other one moved around the grate, heading towards Rangrim at speed.

[Fleshripper #04 Claws: **1d20+11: 14** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - *misses!*

The rogue dwarf had managed to set himself now, and easily dodged the oncoming storm.



Me: Winged Thing

Dec 20, 2011

Clumsily, the strange clay-like winged creature moved above the grate and hole, hovered for a moment, and then darted down and out of sight. It was a strange beast, looking more made than born, but decidedly had intent.



Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

Dec 22, 2011

Halting where he was, Kireth made another attempt to free the warriors up from their immediate foes. Focusing, he tried to enter the creatures mind.

[Nightmare Eruption vs Fleshripper #03's Will: **1d20+8: 20**] - *hits!*
[Damage: **1d8+5: 7**]

Success. The creature halted its attack on Khalin, thrashing and scraping at itself in terror. Whatever nightmare was invading its mind, its comrade seemed to sense it too.

[Fleshripper #05 Damage: **4**]

Both of the creatures fell to the floor, writhing and thrashing until they were still.

[Fleshripper #03 Dead]

[Fleshripper #05 Dead]



Me: Kireth could sense the blood splashing into a pool below. He could feel it stretching out and the power feeding something, something yawning, something pulling... Dec 22, 2011

The mage suddenly felt himself slipping forwards, his mind distracted.

[Kireth is **Pulled 1** square east]



Me: Underpriest

Dec 22, 2011

The priest continued to tie the limp elf to the statue, ordering the fleshrippers away to deal with the intruders. The sounds of battle behind him were intensifying and he was beginning to find it most irritating. Perhaps he would finish off this elf first, and then deal with them personally, or he might finish trussing the elf up and then kill them. Choices, choices. The manacles closed around the elf's wrists, and the priest drew his ceremonial dagger.

**Me and Random: Zero Uhlit**

Dec 23, 2011

Zero shuffled forwards behind the oddly moving Kireth, taking a bead over the mage's shoulder at the dark humanoid next to Rangrim.

[Fleeting Ghost - Stealth Check: **1d20+13: 30**] - *success!*

Confident that the fleshripper couldn't see him, he squeezed the trigger, and the bolt whistled across the chamber.

[Sly Flourish vs Fleshripper #04: **1d20+8+2: 30**] - *critical hit!*
 [Damage: **1d6+6: 12**] plus [2d8: **16** sneak damage] plus [1d6: **1** critical damage]

The bolt caught the thing in the throat, and it fell back into the crimson stream instantly, the body slowly following the current until it stopped on the grate, stopping the waterfall at the southern side.

**Me and Random: Berserkers**

Dec 23, 2011

The remaining fighter seemed to pay little attention to his fellow falling, simply bringing his axe to bear in great wide swipes. Rangrim watched the axe blade weave to and fro in front of his face almost mesmerised, before the swing was reversed and brought right towards his midriff.

[Berserker #02 Greataxe: **1d20+7: 16** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - *misses!*

Rangrim just managed to dodge the swing and dropped into a crouch, further infuriating the berserker.

**Me and Random: Fleshrippers**

Dec 23, 2011

Satisfied that the limp elf was held securely, the fleshrippers moved forwards, their tattered black cloaks billowing out from behind them as they moved with unearthly speed.

*One closed in on **Khalin** and **Tradden's** position, extending its claws towards **Tradden** with an ear-piercing scream.*

[Fleshripper #06 Charge: **1d20+11+1: 22** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - *hits!*
 [Damage: **5** necrotic]

The second charged at Rangrim, its arms wide, claws glittering in the blue-green crystal light.

[Fleshripper #07 Charge: **1d20+11+1: 29** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - *hits!*
 [Damage: **5** necrotic]

*The last swooped in at **Khalin**, enticed by the blood splattered across the dwarf's chest.*

[Fleshripper #08 Claws: **1d20+11: 29** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - *hits!*
 [Damage: **5** necrotic]

The claws raked across the dwarf's cheek, drawing another splatter of blood.

[Khalin Bloodied]

**Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward**

Dec 24, 2011

The waves of creatures kept coming. Tradden stuck grimly to his task...

[Cleave vs Fleshripper #08: **1d20+11: 27**] - *hits!*
 [Damage: **1d8+7: 11**]

[Fleshripper #06 takes 4 splash damage]

The fighter's blade had not finished its deadly cleave through the necks of the two creatures before Tradden was on his way, bolting forward before leaping forwards, over the pool of blood.

[Run as Move Action, including Jump: Athletics Check: **1d20+10: 22**] - *success!*

Tradden's long legs enabled him to leap the stream of blood easily, and he powered forwards, turning the run into a charge as he bolted across the floor.

[Use Action Point]

The Underpriest, somewhat occupied with the Elf in front of him, heard something behind him and turned. He was rewarded with a punch to the face, a human hand wrapped around a shortsword bloodying his lip.

"Hello!" said Tradden, cheerfully.

[Charge vs Underpriest: **1d20+11+1-5: 20**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d8+7: 13**] and [Marked]

The priest looked to be somewhat surprised that someone dared to approach his altar.

"You will be the first to spill their blood in honour of Skauril," *the priest glared at **Tradden**.*



Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Dec 24, 2011

The dwarf rogue had two opponents now, one of the fighters and one of the odd dark humanoids. He wasn't used to fighting alone, preferring to be on the periphery and dart in and stun opponents when he could. Still, he had one or two tricks up his sleeve when he needed them.

[Torturous Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9: 28**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **2d10+9: 20**]

Content with the blow, he poised, ready to see what the enemy would do next.



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Dec 29, 2011

Khalin was still catching his breath from the final desperate strike of the now-fallen Berserker. Tradden had taken point and had managed to interrupt the foul ceremony up ahead. But while the tide on the chamber floor looked to be turning, still four of the enemy remained. The human fighter was a fearsome combatant - when he put his mind to it - but it seemed unlikely he'd stand against the priest for long alone. That simply would not do.

Whirling to face the demon approaching behind him, Khalin let his momentum sweep *Aecris* round toward the beast's midriff...

[Craghammer vs Fleshripper #01: **1d20+9: 26**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 12**]

The beast fell quickly, the hammer ripping across the fleshripper's torso, and the dwarf continued his vicious pirouette to survey the scene behind him. Snarling with triumph he summoned his energies again, hoping to inspire both himself and his comrades...

[Minor Action - Heroic Effort: +3 to allies' damage rolls until Khalin no longer bloodied]

[Khalin gains 8 temporary hp]

With that he sprinted towards the ghastly stream of blood, taking a leap over the macabre flow...

[Athletics Check: **1d20+10: 23**] - *success!*

Vaulting the stream of blood, Khalin laid into the remaining Fleshripper...

[Spends Action Point]

[Craghammer vs Fleshripper #07: **1d20+9+2: 24**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 15**]

As the blow crushed the beast, the warlord pointed his hammer at the remaining Berserker, yelling to Kireth and Zero as he turned to head for the priest: "*Help Rangrim! I'll get after Tradden!*"

[Fleshripper #01 Dead]

[Fleshripper #07 Dead]



Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

Dec 28, 2011

Confident that Rangrim could handle the foe before him, Kireth hurried forward to assist the young fighter in his duel with the priest. If Khalin had a problem with this he could take it up later (for all the good it would do him). No, the priest had now become priority number one. Kireth feared it was already too late, he felt it deep within him, but if there was any chance he could stop what he knew was coming

[Nightmare Eruption vs Undeadpriest's Will: **1d20+8: 9**] - *critical miss!*

Perhaps it was his haste, perhaps his mind was too distracted by what was to come, whatever the reason the words just did not come naturally and the spell failed before it left his lips.



Me and Random: *Kireth* cursed as the words of the spell trickled from his mind, but had no time to berate himself more severely - an involuntary movement took him backwards, something unseen dragging him swiftly towards the hole at the centre of the chamber.

Dec 28, 2011

[Kireth is **Pulled 2** squares]

For a moment the mage tottered on the brink, his arms wheeling, looking down, seeing the pool of blood below, and something, something else...

[Saving Throw vs Pull over Hole: **1d20: 15**] - *success!*

He regained his balance, teetering on the edge, but his composure was gone.



Me, Random and Matt: Underpriest

Dec 29, 2011

The priest looked at the cut in his robes, and snarled at the fighter before him the blades whirling in front of him.

[Tradden Rain of Steel Stance vs Underpriest: **1d8+3: 10** damage]

"You shall pay dearly for interrupting my master's will," *the priest uttered, drawing a blackened mace from his belt.* "A lesson must be served."

*The priest whirled on the fighter, drawing the mace in a crushing arc at **Tradden's** head.*

[Shadow Curse: **1d20+8: 10** vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - *misses!*

***Tradden** easily dodged the clumsy swing, drawing another snarl from the priest.*

"I never was that good at school!" the fighter quipped, looking for an opening.

A low, soft moan issued from the elf, and the fingers on his right hand unclenched slowly.



Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Dec 28, 2011

Zero's eyes went toward the mad berserker, the target he had been given by Khalin. But he could not forget the evil figure atop the stairs, the delight he had seen in the priest's eyes as he viciously slit open his terrified victims. He had to pay.

The rogue stole across the chamber into Kireth's shadow.

[Fleeting Ghost - Stealth Check: **1d20+13: 19**] - *success!*

Then he took careful aim, praying his bolt found its mark.

[Sly Flourish vs Underpriest: **1d20+9+2: 17**] - *misses!*

*The bolt skimmed **Tradden's** shoulder and thudded into the altar near the statue, its shaft quivering.*



Me and Random: Berserkers

Dec 28, 2011

The remaining berserker continued its assault against Rangrim, swinging its greataxe with fury.

[Berserker #01 Greataxe: **1d20+7: 17** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - *misses!*

The dwarf managed to block the swing with the shaft of his hammer. The contest was proving to be quite evenly matched.



Me and Random: Unknown Assailant

Dec 28, 2011

*From out of the darkness from around the side of the dais whistled a small object aimed squarely for **Tradden's** chest.*

[Dagger: **1d20+9+2: 21** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d4+4: 6**] plus [**1d6: 6** sneak damage] plus [**Blinded**] (Save Ends)

*The dagger plunged into **Tradden's** chain shirt, causing an intense pain. The young fighter squinted to shut out the feeling, but then found he couldn't see!*

[Tradden Bloodied]



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Dec 28, 2011

Tradden faught back darkness... and lost.

No, wait a minute! He wasn't dead - it hurt too much for that - but he was blinded. He wasn't deaf, that was for sure - could hear the snickering of the priest, somewhere in front of him. He ground his teeth - that just made him want to lash out even though it would be a wild swing more in hope than expectation.

Instead, he leant back, looking to give himself a precious second to recover, and maybe even work out what the hell had just happened!

[Second Wind]

[Tradden regains 12 hp and +2 to defences until end of next turn]

[Perception Check: Who/What was that?: **1d20+4-10: 11**]

*Amidst **Tradden's** blind panic, he couldn't even begin to speculate what had happened.*

[Save vs Blinded: **1d20+1: 9**] - *failure!*



Me: **Tradden's blood trickled down his chain shirt and dripped into the crimson flow, adding to pool below.** Dec 28, 2011



Me: Rangrim Ironnose

Dec 28, 2011

*The wily dwarf decided discretion at the moment was the better part of valour. He was evenly matched against the berserker, and needed an edge to help him through. It seemed that edge, in the form of **Khalin**, was nearby. If **Khalin** attacked, Rangrim could use the warlord's bulk to distract the berserker.*

[Delay until after Khalin's turn]



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Dec 29, 2011

Khalin could see Tradden was in some sort of major trouble, but in the fog of battle Rangrim had not heard the warlord's shout that he'd head to the human's assistance. Nor for that matter apparently, had Kireth and Zero, who had ignored his order and were assaulting the priest, albeit from a distance.

Rangrim looked to be holding his own against the final Berserker, and Khalin had faith in his kinsman. "*Hang in there! Tradden's in trouble!*" he shouted in encouragement as he sprinted to the hobbled human's aid...

[Charge vs Underpriest: **1d20+9+1: 21**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 10**] plus [1d8: 5 charge damage]

*The charge knocked the wind out of the priest as **Khalin** hurled the warhammer against his ribs with a loud crack. A thin dribble of blood appeared at the corner of the priest's mouth. He licked his lips with a smile.*

"You bring me closer to my master!" he roared, the smile growing into a grin.

As he attacked the priest, Khalin tried to glean all he could about the new mystery assailant who had blinded his friend...

[Perception check: **1d20+2: 20**] - *success!*

There was something off to the northern side of the dais area, lurking in the shadows. Something small, perhaps the size of a halfling, but the warlord couldn't make out what.

[Underpriest Bloodied]



Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Dec 29, 2011

*Rangrim watched **Khalin's** back as he sped away to the dais and mumbled to himself with ire. He spat on the ground next to the berserker's feet and swung his hammer carefully.*

[Riposte Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9: 22**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10+6: 15**]

The hammer crashed against the berserker's mail and left Rangrim ready to strike again if needed be.

It seemed that time was immediate, as the berserker, blood streaming down his torso, swung his greataxe around in retaliation [Battle Fury]. Rangrim had set himself well, though, and his strike got in first.

[Immediate Interrupt]
 [Riposte Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9: 19**] - hits!
 [Damage: **1d10+6: 9**]

The hammer struck the mail once more, drawing a gasp of breath from the berserker, before the greataxe swung around.

[Berserker #02 Battle Fury: **1d20+11: 18** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits!
 [Damage: **1d12+1d6+4: 14**]

The greataxe cut across Rangrim's arm. A cut for a cut. It seemed this battle would wage for ever.

[Berserker #02 Bloodied]
 [Rangrim Bloodied]



Neil and me: **Kireth Majere**

Dec 30, 2011

Regaining his balance and something of his composure, Kireth did the sensible thing. He moved as far away from the hole and whatever was pulling him there as he could. Reaching the pillar he put his hand against it in a brace position, ready for the next unknown pull.

With his free hand he pointed his bony finger at the priest.

[Magic Missile vs Undeadpriest] - *automatic hit!*
 [Damage: **2+4+1: 7**]

The bolt struck the priest in the shoulder, but it elicited nothing more than a snarl.



Me: *Showers of blood - the flow increased by **Tradden's, Khalin's**, and the underpriest's cuts and lacerations - were consumed by the void and fell into a ghastly pool below. There they mixed and swelled and fed... something.*

Dec 30, 2011

*That same something drew upon this crimson river and from words intoned by a nearby scion of nefarious intent. It bulged and widened and the membrane thinned. More blood was needed, more words, and more energy. Yet it would be soon. It spewed forth shadow upon shadow, thin wispy tendrils that searched out **Kireth**, grabbing at his robes and legs and arms, pulling him ever closer to the edge, the mage's fingers unable to get a firm grip on the smooth column.*

[Kireth is **Pulled 3** squares]



Me and Random: **Underpriest**

Dec 30, 2011

*The underpriest laughed as he saw the shadows tug at **Kireth**, drawing the mage closer to the hole and the drop to the blood pool below.*

"My Lord will taste your body, and my master will be rewarded!" *he sniggered.* "You come here to stop us, but you will only aid us, you pitiful Vale creatures."

*As he spoke he raised his arms, summoning the shadows to his aid. The shadows flittered across the chamber, soaking into the priests eyes, and ears, and mouth. The priest's eyes seemed to glow with a strange darkness, and the cuts seemed to close before **Khalin's** eyes.*

[Minor Action - Infuse with Shadow]
 [Underpriest regains hit points, plus attack bonuses]

"The closer you bring me to My Lord, the more powerful I become!" *he laughed.* *With that he swung his mace at the*

groping Tradden.

[Shadow Curse: **1d20+8+2+5+2: 27** vs Tradden's Fortitude (19+2)] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d8+8+3: 19** necrotic damage] plus [-2 AC until end of priest's next turn]

Tradden didn't see, but felt the icy chill of the priest's mace slam into his shoulder, freezing his blood and chilling his heart.

[Tradden Bloodied]



Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Dec 31, 2011

Zero hastily scanned around, looking for the other party that was sneaking around.

[Perception Check: **1d20+10: 14**] vs [Unknown Stealth Check: **1d20+11: 31**] - *failure!*

There was a glimpse of something small, somewhere in the shadows, but even Zero's keen senses couldn't grasp more than that.

He darted to the grappled Kireth and set himself for another shot at the evil priest atop the stairs.

[Fleeting Ghost: **1d20+13: 15**] - *success!*

Then he let another bolt fly, hoping for a better result than last time.

[Sly Flourish vs Underpriest: **1d20+8+2: 24**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d6+6+3: 14**] plus [**2d8: 15** sneak damage]

The bolt took the priest by surprise, slamming into his shoulder, knocking the smile from his lips. The colour of the priest's skin seemed to change to a palid grey. Death was near.

[Use Action Point]

"Hold on there, old man!" he said to Kireth, grabbing him and bracing himself to prevent the wizard from being pulled closer to the ominous, gaping pit.

[Zero grabs Kireth]



Me and Random: Berserkers

Dec 31, 2011

The berserker continued his assault against Rangrim, the two foes circling one another, trading blow for blow.

[Berserker #02 Greataxe: **1d20+7: 17** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - *misses!*

Once again Rangrim caught the blow on the shaft of the warhammer, pushing it away and to the side.



Me: *The elf's eyes flickered open for a moment. Chained to the statue, he could barely move, the tautness of the chains combined with the little strength he had left in his body. His lips moved, but no sound issued. His finger kept pointing off to the north, to the place in the shadows where the unknown attacker lay.*

Dec 31, 2011



Me and Random: Unknown Assailant

Dec 31, 2011

Another dagger flew from the shadows to the north, whistling along the dais, aimed squarely at Khalin's thighs.

[Dagger: **1d20+9+2: 21** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d4+4: 8**] plus [**1d6: 4** sneak damage] plus [**Blinded**] (Save Ends)

The dagger lodged home, hitting a nerve, sending shivers up Khalin's spine and dimming his vision. For a moment the dwarf couldn't move, and then he found he couldn't see!



Me and Random: *Without the ability to see, sometimes other senses come to the fore.* Dec 31, 2011

***Tradden and Khalin**, stood on the steps of the dais, were fighting on instinct, using their growing martial prowess to ward off blows and judge where their opponents stood.*

Yet, there was something else amongst the chaos of battle.

[Khalin Perception Check: **1d20+2: 12**]

[Tradden Perception Check: **1d20+4: 22**]

Yes, there it was again, thought Tradden. A cry, perhaps behind the statue area, a plea for help.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Dec 31, 2011

A certain quality to the gasp and growl from Khalin told Tradden that the Dwarf was now also beset by blindness. *Great up against a magic user and now both of us blind!*" the fighter mumbled to himself.

Something odd was going on. As well as this priest, and his mates, the fighter could hear the cries of someone, or something, nearby it sounded like a cry for help. That was understandable enough in this hellish place.

What I really need to do is to stay alive..." thought Tradden, as he faked a stumble before swiping out with his shortsword.

[Surprising Stab]

[Primary vs Underpriest: **1d20+11-5: 26**] - *critical hit!*

[Damage: **4**]

*The sword thrust through the priest's belly - a fatal wound. The priest dropped his mace, his face a mixture of surprise and a macabre delight. He grabbed hold of **Tradden's** arms, and pulled himself closer, the blade sinking deeper and deeper. The young fighter couldn't see, but could feel the priest's face edging closer, the spittle on his lips splattering against **Tradden's** face as the priest began his final words.*

"My work is done, my blood will flow. My Lord will reward me in the Chaos."

The words felt heavy in Tradden's mind, a numbness crossing him.

[Underpriest Death Attack: **1d20+8+5+2: 34** vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d8+8+3: 14** necrotic damage]

With that the priest slumped off of the sword and tumbled down the dais steps to join the crimson flow.

[Save vs Blindness: **1d20+1: 20**] - *success!*

I am SICK of being blind!" the fighter yelled out in frustration, his Martial focus going right out the window. At that moment, the whole world snapped into focus, as if on cue. *"I can SEE!"* he shouted, joyously.



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Jan 1

Khalin could hear the death throes of the priest - his comrade had won out.

"You got the bastard! Good work my friend!" he yelled, the satisfaction clear in his voice.

[Inspiring Word: Tradden spends a healing surge and regains **1d6+12: 17** hp]

"Tradden, help the elf free" he quickly uttered. Could they have finally found Gilmorril, or was this one of Rangrim's friends?

"Gilmorril?" the dwarf prompted, wondering if the elf could hear him through the daze. "Are there others here in trouble?"

As he waited for a response the dwarf shrugged against the veil of darkness blocking his vision...

[Save vs Blindness: **1d20+1: 18**] - success!

With relief, he saw the chamber slowly fading back into view.

From somewhere upon the dais Khalin could hear a whispery, croaked response, but could not make out the words.



Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Jan 2

The dwarf rogue still didn't have the advantage against the berserker, and knew that this battle would be a tricky one. He set himself once more, ready to counter the berserker if it swung its axe once more.

[Riposte Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9: 17**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+6+3: 18**]

The blow hit home, and Rangrim was ready for the return strike.



Neil and me: Kireth Majere

Jan 2

Despite the death of the priest, Kireth could not assume that whatever was pulling him would stop. An idea flashed into his brain and he quickly started putting it into action.

Running towards Khalin and Tradden he called back over his shoulder "Zero! The halflings chains. Can you unlock them?"

Before the portly thief could respond, Kireth threw some assistance Rangrim's way.

[Magic Missile vs Berserker #02] - automatic hit!

[Damage: **2+4+1: 7**]

The berserker barely seemed to notice the bolt crash into his back, so intent he was on Rangrim.



Me: *No wisps of shadow came this time, no smoky tendrils wrapping themselves around the hem of Kireth's robes. At first it seemed like relief to the mage - the chains holding the elf to the statue did not look particular appealing, if but practical - but then his gut began to gnaw with foreboding. What would be next?*

Jan 2

He could still sense the bulging and thrusting below, but something drew close to an end. Perhaps there was enough blood and energy to satiate it. Perhaps it paused for a moment to build strength for a final push?



Nick, me and Random: Zero followed a step behind Kireth, dashing up the steps to the dais and the elf chained upon it.

Jan 3

He took out his picks and went to work on the lock.

[Thievery Check - Open Locks: **1d20+10+2: 24**] - success!

The manacles clicked open to Zero's skill and the elf fell into his arms, clutching the young rogue with unexpected strength. A raspy voice, cracked and parched, attempted to speak in Zero's ear a couple of times before it grew

stronger, and the words became understandable.

"Below," *the elf* uttered. "Stop them."

The elf coughed and spluttered - a dry bark.

"Others.. behind. Free.. them."

*His eyes sparkled and the chapped lips almost drew a smile. "More than Blackengorge!" he said, almost triumphantly, and then collapsed limply into **Zero's** embrace.*



Me and Random: Berserkers

Jan 3

The pair of combatants still circled each other warily. The dark fighter knew his priest had fallen and that it was only a matter of time before he would join the crimson flow and be of ultimate service to his Lord. However, he could take the dwarf with him, adding another's blood to the pool below.

With a roar, he swung his axe in another great arc.

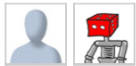
Rangrim was ready, however, having set himself up for the counter. As the axe was drawn back, he punched forwards with his hammer.

[Immediate Interrupt - Riposte Strike vs Berserker #02: **1d20+9: 17**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+6+3: 15**]

The berserker gurgled as the hammer struck his sternum with a crack. There was a moment of stillness, as the fighter tried to catch his breath, couldn't, and then fell to his knees, slumping before the dwarf. With a grunt of victory and a howl of "Ulmo!", Rangrim stepped over the fallen man and started running towards the halfling slumped on the dais.

[Berserker #02 Dead]



Me and Random: Dark Creeper

Jan 3

There was a hiss from the shadows around the northern side of the dais as the priest fell and the berserker's breastbone shattered. There was a swift movement as a small figure darted towards the west heading for the yawning gap in the centre of the chamber, trying to leap the crimson flow.

It was a curious thing - small and almost halfling-like, wrapped in voluminous black robes, a knife in hand. Its grey skin and huge protruding nose were visible in the shimmering light of the crystal columns.

[Dark Creeper Athletics Check: **1d20+4: 16**] - success!

It leapt the blood stream with ease, and paused behind the northwestern column, hiding from the group. With a quick glance and turn it then scampered swiftly across the stonework, heading for the pit in the centre of the room, grabbing ahold of one of the chains leading down through the void, looking back at the group with a scowl.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Jan 3

"Oh no you don't!" yelled Tradden, scampering after the strange creature which had burst out of the shadows and was presumably looking to follow its weird-fly-y-thing friend down into the pit. With Khalin, Kireth and now Zero stood nearby to investigate the sounds coming from behind the dais and look after the Elf, Tradden theorised that he might be the only one capable of getting to the creature in time. That was how he justified it anyway.

After taking a short run up [Standard Move], the fighter charged the thing, coming periously close to the edge of the blood covered pit whilst doing so.

[Athletics Check: **1d20+10: 28**] - *success!*

The deceptively fleetfooted big man had no trouble dancing around the edge of the treacherous hole, and barrelled into the creature.

[Bullrush Charge vs Dark Creeper's Fortitude: **1d20+11+1: 23**] - *hits!*

[Dark Creeper **Pushed 1** NW, Tradden **Slides 1** NW] and [Marked]

*The creature's eyes widened in alarm as **Tradden** bore down on it. It clutched tightly to the thick chain, but the young fighter's strength knocked its hands away, and it staggered back a few feet, looking left and right anxiously for means of escape.*

*So close to the pit's edge, **Tradden** could see down into the depths below. The blood still trickled through the grates, dripping onto the chains and down to a vast pool of blood below. A bright light to the north of the blood pool stung his eyes - a large circle glowing on the floor some fifty feet below. A deep rhythmic chant continued, unconcerned with events above.*

The young fighter shook his head, clearing the sense of vertigo, and tried to focus on the enemy before him. At the back of his mind, though, came a whispering dirge, a call from below, "Tradden! Tradden!" unsettling him.



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Jan 3

Rangrim had won out against the berserker, and one enemy remained - for now. Freeing the presumed prisoners behind the dais would have to wait a few moments longer. Tradden had taken the fight to the elusive creature despite his wounds, but if it was as cunning as it appeared, he would need help in his weakened state.

Khalin hurried across the stone floor to aid his friend again, but he was mindful of the slick bloody surface near the streams, and resisted the urge to sprint flat out lest he go arse over beard.

"Tradden, don't let that little bugger get away!" he shouted, pointing his hammer at the creature for effect.

[Direct the Strike: Tradden gets free standard attack vs Dark Creeper]

[Tradden Longsword vs Dark Creeper: **1d20+11: 14**] - *misses!*

In all of the blood and the growing sense of vertigo, the blade went whistling past the creature's shoulder.



Me: Rangrim Ironnose

Jan 3

Rangrim sprinted across the stone floor, careful to avoid the slippery blood trails. He skidded to a halt near the halfling's body, cradling the lifeless body in his arms, his tears falling onto the white face of the corpse.

"Ulmo!" he sobbed, anger growing in his voice.



Neil and me: Kireth Majere

Jan 4

"Rangrim!" snapped the mage, his harsh tone perhaps doing good for once as the dwarf needed reminding this was not the time for grieving *"you have other comrades that may yet need your aid. Check back there where the elf indicated."* He then turned to the thief at his side *"Zero, time is very much of the essence here. Tradden and Khalin have that creature, you and I must get to that pit and see how we are to descend"*. The irony that Kireth was now suggesting they willingly go down was not lost on either of their faces.

As ever with the quick thinking mage, there was always time for his favoured spell...

[Magic Missile vs Dark Creeper] - *automatic hit!*

[Damage: **2+4+1: 7**]



Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Jan 4

"I'll be there in a sec!" Zero shouted back.

He gently lay the unconscious elf down, then crept around into the chamber at the rear of the dais.

[Stealth Check: **1d20+13: 25**] - success!

***Zero** carefully plucked his way over rubble and into the dark, shadowy recesses behind the dais. His eyes slowly became adjusted to the gloom, so different from the blue-green light of the crystal columns with the reflections scattering from the crimson streams.*

He paused at one point, hearing a small groan, and then realised that the recess was divided into small cells, each with a number of bodies within them. Most were still, a couple moved slowly. His finger was taut behind the trigger of his hand crossbow until he realised that most of the bodies were naked, mostly humanoid, and chained to the walls. Prisoners.

*There were only a few prisoners remaining, maybe half a dozen or so, and a shiver ran up **Zero's** spine as he realised just how many must have been sacrificed to supply so much blood.*

He quickly took in the details, looking for anything to help.

*There were three main cells, the first quite cramped with a bedraggled old dwarf, his beard thin and grey; a halfling, similar to the one that had been on the dais not long ago; and a queer pair - a small humanoid, but with curved horns on top of a bedevilled head, and a larger, scaly creature, somewhat resembling a dragon in facial features, but a man in stature. The dragon-man stared at **Zero** with narrowed, piercing eyes, as if weighing him up - a muzzle, like that on a City Watch hound, was strapped to his face.*

*The second cell held two giants: a huge creature, probably over seven feet, and easily weighing three hundred pounds, with odd blueish-grey skin; and a muscle-bound man with slightly disturbing goblinoid features. Both were unconscious, to **Zero's** relief, slumped against the walls of the cell.*

The third cell held two women, both human, one slender, one more muscular. The slender one had a cloth sack over her head, tied on with a rough rope - she appeared to be conscious, holding her head high, but made no sudden movements. The other was out cold, laid in the corner of the cell.



Nick, me and Random: "It's OK now," Zero said, to no one prisoner in particular.
"Just...just sit tight and I'll get you out of here."

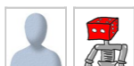
Jan 5

With that, he dashed back out to the dais, hoping that the dead priest had the cell key on him. Time was of the essence. Something was coming, he could feel it.

He quickly started to rifle through the clothes of the dead body, searching for anything that resembled a key.

[Zero Perception Check: **1d20+10: 30**] - critical success!

*The rogue found it quickly, a small steel key secreted in one of the inner pockets of the priest's unholy vestments. The corpse didn't appear to have anything else of value on it - **Zero's** quick hands had gathered that much - but as **Zero** pulled out the key the ceremonial dagger used to draw and quarter the halfling spilled out onto the dais with a hollow clang. It looked to be a foul thing, and **Zero** resolved not to touch it.*



Me and Random: Dark Creeper

Jan 4

*Outnumbered and outmatched in the light, the small humanoid looked down the pit to flee. First it had to dodge **Tradden's** blades, which whirled and swung in intense fury, barely missing the chains snaking down into the pit*

below.

[Tradden Rain of Steel Stance vs Dark Creeper: **1d8+3: 10** damage]

The blades cut across the black robes and the creature winced in pain. As the others closed in, it decided it was time to go regardless of the young fighter's advances.

[Shift: SW]

Tradden reacted quickly, keeping his blades moving, and slashing across the dark creeper's side as it moved away.

[Tradden Combat Challenge vs Dark Creeper: **1d20+11: 31**] - critical hit!

[Damage: **1d8+7+3: 18**] plus [1d6: 2 critical damage]

The creature squealed as the blade bit deep, but it moved quickly, jumping and grabbing hold on one of the chains, attempting to slide down the blood-slickened metal to the chamber below.

[Dark Creeper Bloodied]



Me: Kireth had not felt the pull and insistence of the power below for some moments, and had begun Jan 4 to steady himself. His latest proclamation, spat out with a clear voice, showed he was regaining his usual composure.

As he moved closer to the pit, however, the whispers began to return. Fleeting sounds trickling his name into his ear, beckoning him to come, making him desire to walk open-armed into whatever danger lay below. An incredible power was close, almost close enough to touch, if only he could reach in and gather some for himself. As his thoughts wandered, the whispers rose in intensity, and he found his mind racing, a feeling of vertigo, and the pull once more.

"Come! Come!" they offered. "Give yourself and your wishes will be rewarded!"

He stumbled forwards, closer and closer towards the pit, before he knew what he was doing.

[Kireth **Pulled 1** square]

"No!" he shouted, stopping himself and falling to his knee. Power such as this came at a price, perhaps more than even he was willing to pay. He tried to blank his mind, to keep the whispers away, but they were too strong, and he rose uncontrollably, and staggered forwards once more, right to the edge of the abyss!

[Kireth **Pulled 1** square]

Then a new voice came to his mind.

A familiar voice. Once he had heard and understood before. A woman's voice.

"It is time," it sighed and a peace overcame him.

He could hear death in the gurgles of the berserker as it sank into the blood stream at its knees. He could hear it in the rattling breath slipping out from the elf's spittle-flecked lips. He could spy it in the wide eyes of the fleeing dark creeper and in the glassy stare of the priest on the dais. He could smell it in the tainted air as the crimson streams trickled past, and he could feel it pulsing and bulging below.

The time he'd spent examining Helvec's tome had taught him the power of death - the fringes of necromancy, and the touches of nethermancy. The mad elf had been trying a similar ritual to the one happening below, one opening a smaller portal with the blood and death of innocent children. But here was a greater power at work, fueled by any number of deaths, a larger portal.

Death was the servitor here. Death was the power. Death was opening a doorway, allowing whatever foul horde lay beyond to enter, and then all would be laid to waste. The ritual must be stopped, and this time he knew the price.

*The whispers and the pull on his body stopped. **Kireth** straightened, clutching at his staff with a firm hand, and stood tall. He looked down into the chamber below without the least sense of vertigo.*

"Finish that thing!" *he commanded the others with a nod towards the dark creeper. "We have work to do."*



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Jan 5

Kireth's barked order was not necessary - Tradden strode forwards, focused on not letting the little fiend get away. He rotated into his general swirling blades cloud a large, dangerous looking swing to the smaller ones already causing the little bastard to shy away.

[Sweeping Slash]

[Primary Attack vs Dark Creeper: **1d20+11: 30**] - *hits!*

[Dark Creeper Pushed 1 square W & Tradden Shifts 1 Square W] and [**Marked**]

For a second it looked like the little creep was not going to react, but it was either jump or have it's head cleaved off! It vaulted backwards, just avoiding the sword, which flashed against the chain with sparks both hot and cold.

Tradden tried to stab at it with his shortsword as he stepped up after it. This was a move that he had to give some thought: Forcing an enemy to step back, out of the way, and then trying to hit it with a short sword? It did seem a bit daft. He resolved to speak to Khalin about it.

[Secondary Attack vs Dark Creeper: **1d20+10: 13**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **2d6+7+3: 13**]

In this case however, the move was just enough - the tip of his shortsword pierced the Darkcreeper's throat as it struggled to regain balance, and it slumped backwards, gurgling but certainly dead.

Tradden stepped forwards again, putting a boot into the now deceased sneak, partly because he wanted to make sure it was away from the channels of blood, and also partly because he was just in that kind of mood.

[Dark Creeper Dead]



Me: [...Combat Encounter Completed...]

Jan 5



Me: ***Kireth** studied the grating, the hole in the chamber floor, and the chains, seemingly oblivious to **Tradden's** strike. He didn't even lift his head when **Tradden** put his boot against the dark creeper to draw out his bloody sword. **Khalin** huffed up to the side of the mage.*

Jan 5

"How do we get down?" *asked the dwarf.*

"I'm not sure," *replied **Kireth** softly, but firmly. "I need but a moment."*

***Khalin** nodded, turning back towards the dais. Although the mage had been acting strangely in the past hours he still trusted his insight. Back at the dais, **Zero** was holding aloft a small key in his hand, and Rangrim was still clutching the dead halfling.*

"This is no time for plundering!" *bellowed **Khalin** at the rogue.*

"Huh?" *quizzed **Zero**, a quick frown crossing his face. "No, no. There are prisoners behind here," he implored, and stood ready to return to the cells.*

*The dwarf mumbled an apology and came up behind **Rangrim**.*

"Rangrim," *he spoke reverently.* "We cannot help your friend here, now. But there are others behind the dais - perhaps some of those are your friends, too?"

Rangrim *looked up at **Khalin**, surprising the warlord with the venom in his eyes. He almost seemed to start to say something, but then bit his lip, laid down the halfling carefully and marched silently towards **Zero**. The pair then swiftly swept around the back of the dais.*

Khalin *was lost in thought for a moment before walking back to the pit. He had quickly checked the elf, to see he was resting peacefully. **Gilmorril** or not, they would make sure he got safely back to Blackengorge once they had dealt with whatever lay below.*

Tradden *had joined **Kireth**, eager to offer any assistance. It seemed to **Khalin** that the young lad's continual suggestions and gesticulations down the pit only seemed to irritate the mage.*

"We could just slide down the chains, you know," **Tradden** *was offering **Kireth** advice.* "It would just be like shinning down a rope. I bet we could get down there in seconds."

"And what if we slip?" *replied the mage.* "It is a long way down. There must be a better way - how else would others get down there?"

"There's no time to think of other ways," *said **Khalin** from behind the mage.* "The lad's right - we must scale the chains. I'll wager there are things down there waiting for us, so let's get ourselves ready."



Me: **Zero** *returned to the cells with **Rangrim** in tow, pointing out the prisoners to the dwarf. With a Jan 5 whoop **Rangrim** jumped into the first cell, towards the dragon-man, clasping his arms around him. The dragon-man's eyes seemed to light up with pride, and he began to speak, muffled by the muzzle.*

"Give me that key," *ordered **Rangrim** of **Zero**, who a little reluctantly offered it up.*

The dwarf then began to unlock the manacles holding the dragon-man, and started to rip off the muzzle.

"Rhasgar, you're alive!" **Rangrim** *shouted with glee.* "And the others," *he noticed, looking at the unconscious bedevilled creature and the halfling.* "Are they ok?"

"I think so, my friend," *stated the dragon-man in a clear, authoratative voice in perfect Common.* "We may have been through the Nine Hells and back, but we're all alive."

His eyes narrowed again.

"Ulmo?" *he questioned **Rangrim**.* "He was taken from here not long ago. Have you seen him?"

Rangrim *looked down, and then over to the other halfling slumped in the corner, and then shook his head in sorrow and anger.*

"Can you stand?" *asked **Rangrim**, backing up and offering his arms to help the dragon-man.*

Zero *took a couple of involuntary steps backwards, not sure what to make of this odd creature. It talked and acted like a human, like a noble even, but the resemblance to a dragon was uncanny, and somewhat frightening.*

"I think so," *replied the dragon-man.* "But I don't think I will be of much use - my leg is broken and I have called on divine aid too many times for the others to help us through the suffering, I am exhausted."

The dragon-man's eyes narrowed once more. "There is something going on below. They're opening something. I think they mean to release a horde upon the Vale. We need to stop them. Are there just the two of you?"

"No," said **Rangrim**, almost cheerfully. "There's another warrior, there's a mage, and, uhm, a Grundokri." *At the last word his face became stern.*

"I see," mused the dragon-man after a pause, stroking his scaled chin and staring at **Zero** with a piercing gaze. "We will see what comes of that later. Give me the key, I will free the others, and I will deliver the news to Bekio. The loss of his brother will play hard on him. You must go forwards and defeat whatever lays below. Those of us that can assist will be with you shortly, I need a few moments to ask Bahamut's guidance and revive our fellows."

Rangrim nodded in acceptance, passing the key across to the dragon-man and standing up.

"C'mon, Zero," he said pushing the rogue back out towards the dais. "Rhasgar knows what he's doing. If he says we go down and defeat what's there, then it's good enough for me."

"What's down there?" asked **Zero**, almost politely.

"I dunno," grinned **Rangrim** back, and odd humour crossing him. "Isn't that part of the fun?"



Me: The pair joined the others at the pit where **Tradden** already had wrapped himself around one of the chains. Jan 5

"Like this," he offered, showing the others how best to swing and slide on the chains.

Kireth shook his head mournfully, but knew it was the only way.

"Let us descend, then," the mage stated, and they all drew a breath.



Me: Short Rest

Jan 5

Healing Surges

Healing surges are applied.

Khalin spends 3 healing surges (3 left) to get to 46/46 hp.

Kireth spends 1 healing surge (6 left) to get to 40/40 hp.

Tradden spends 3 healing surges (4 left) to get to 51/51 hp.

Zero spends 1 healing surge (4 left) to get to 45/45 hp.

Rangrim spends 3 healing surges (5 left) to get to 53/53 hp.

Encounter Powers

All encounter powers are recharged.

Milestones

No milestone achieved.

Levelling

No-one is ready to level.



Me: On **Khalin's** signal the group slowly descended the chains, appearing into something out of nightmares. Crimson streams spilled from the grates above, dripping down to form a shallow pool of blood covering the centre of the chamber. A yawning, black portal dominated the northern wall, something straining against the darkness within, as if it were a thin film keeping back a vicious, clawed beast. A patterned circle of blazing runes were inscribed on the floor before the portal, glowing intensely as if bursting with energy, illuminating the room with a vivid blue light. Jan 5

Opposite the portal, facing the pool of blood, was a huge statue of a demon lord, gesturing towards the darkness of the rift with a skull-capped wand. Its curved horns pointed up to the crimson shower above, and flames from braziers surrounding its base licked at its feet. Two humanoid skeletons, longswords held firmly in hand, stood guard, blank

eye sockets looking up at the intruders, waiting for their master's signal.

To the east, steps rose to a platform where a pit was flanked by two smaller statues of the same demon lord, their wands angling into the depths, where glimpses of whitened bone could be seen reflected in the sheen of a silvery mirror. Two further skeletons stood to attention here at the bottom of the steps. Beyond them, near the pit, was a ragged figure, lurching, bedraggled and watching the group descend with pinprick-white eyes in a grey, ashen face.

To the west, another set of steps ascended to a ten-foot high ledge supporting an altar of bone and several wide pillars. A human, oddly familiar, wearing a horned helm and carrying a skull-capped rod stood behind the altar. His eyes were closed, a book resting open before him. He continued to chant a low, droning prayer as the portal bulged and grasped. Guarded by a number of skeletons and illuminated by the eerie glow of oddly coloured flame from the closest braziers, he cast a fearful visage, of one consumed by evil.

Even the stonework around the chamber seemed to be infused with blood, and a tingle of energy seemed to emanate from every scratch and crack within the stone.



Me: [...continued in [Chapter #08, Scene #02...](#)]

Jan 5

Tags:

Next wave