

<u>Blackengorge</u> - The Forest Ruins - The Shadow Rift - Chapter #08, Scene #02

...continues from <u>Chapter #08, Scene #01</u>

<u>Synopsis</u>

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 more undead. Finding Gilmorril in a sinister cathedral underneath the ruins, as well as some of Rangrim's allies, they descend into the bloody depths to thwart the evil menace below.

- <u>Khâlin Grundokri</u> 5th Level Male Dwarven Marshal (Warlord)
- <u>Kireth Majere</u> 5th Level Male Half-Elven Arcanist (Wizard)
- <u>Tradden Aversward</u> 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 Thursday 5 January 2012 and is expected to be completed by the end of Friday 27 January 2012. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.



Round #09

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Combat Encounter Completed
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01) [29] Kireth - **1d20+8+2**: **29** - HP 1/40 (Grabbed) (Weakened) (Prone) 02) [24] Rangrim - **1d20+6+2**: **24** - HP 8/53 04) [14] Tradden - **1d20+5+2**: **14** - HP 13/51 06) [11] Zero - **1d20+5+2**: **11** - HP 29/45 09) [07] Skauril - **1d20+5**: **7** - Dmg: **47+8+8+31+11+15+0+2+13+24+30=217** (Bloodied) (Marked by Tradden) Sp) [Sp] The Thing in the Portal - **1d20+3**: **7** Sp) [Sp] The Arm from the Portal - **1d20+3**: **7** Sp) [Sp] The Arm from the Portal - Dmg: 18+7=25 (Bloodied) (Marked by Tradden) 10) [06] Khalin - **1d20+3+2**: **6** - HP 6/46 (Bloodied)

Removed from Play:

- 03) [17] Shallowgrave Wights 1d20+4: 17 Shallowgrave Wight #01 – Dmg: 22+10+2+23=57 Shallowgrave Wight #02 – Dmg: 9+16+12+12+18=69 (Bloodied) (Marked by Tradden) 05) [14] Skeleton Sentinels – 1d20+6: 14
- Skeleton Sentinel #01 Dmg: 7=7 Skeleton Sentinel #02 Dmg: 3=3 Skeleton Sentinel #03 Dmg: 7=7 Skeleton Sentinel #04 Dmg: 7=7
- 07) [09] Skeleton Sentinels 1d20+6: 9 Skeleton Sentinel #05 - Dmg: 25=25 Skeleton Sentinel #06 - Dmg: 12=12 Skeleton Sentinel #07 - Dmg: 24=24 Skeleton Sentinel #08 - Dmg: 24=24 08) [07] Clay Scout - 1d20+7: 9 - Dmg: 31=31 (Prone)







2:35 am 🔻

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Jan 23 🔻

Me: FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright Light.

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

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

Pillars: The wide pillars are blocking terrain and provide cover. A creature can move around the corner of a pillar diagonally.

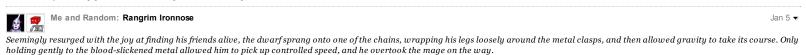
Red Polygon: Squares inside the red polygon are 'difficult terrain' due to the rubble of the statue and cost two squares of movement to enter.



Kireth took hold of the nearest chain, looked down momentarily, then stepped off. Feet wrapped around as best as his robes would allow he slowly moved down, hands moving one over the other.

Carefully and methodically. Kireth's face was blank of expression, showing neither exertion or thought of what lay below. It was as if his mind was elsewhere, resigned to a course of action.

His feet finally touching ground, albeit knee-high in blood, he let go of the chain, turned and faced what awaited him.



[Athletics Check: 1d20+11: 28] - success!

He splashed down into the blood swifly, causing a wave to ripple out across the chamber. With a roar he hefted his hammer and surged out of the pool towards the nearest enemy.

[Charge vs Skeleton Sentinel #06: 1d20+9+1: 11] - critical miss!

He slipped on the blood left on his boots from the pool and almost ended up in the brazier rather than hitting the skeleton.

Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights

As Kireth looked around he could see not only the skeletons guarding the four points of the compass, but a pair of undead, possibly wights, lurking and watching. One of them, up on the dais to the east, seemed to be just watching, but the other, near the southeastern grate appeared to be preparing something with its arms.

The creature outstretched an arm in Rangrim's direction and a blackened shadow swept forwards towards the dwarf.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Grave Bolt: 1d20+6: 17 vs Rangrim's Reflex(18)] - misses!

The shadows swept past Rangrim without harm, but the dwarf could feel their icy touch as they swirled around his face.

🐹 뢾 👩 Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Everone had been somewhat surprised by Kireth's enthusiasm, but both Rangrim and Tradden had more or less started their descents together, both opting for the express route...

[Athletics Check: 1d20+10: 19] - success!

Tradden made it look easy, spining round in a pirouette as he slid down, the chain being de-layered, its detritus of wet and dry blood building on the fighters boots.

Landing with a soft splash Tradden crouched for a second, almost as if he were on one knee - one arm folded in front and one behind, his blades jutting out in perfect symmetry to his body.

With a growl he sprang forward, rushing into one of the smaller skeletons stood nearby.

[Charge vs Skeleton Sentinel #07: 1d20+11+1: 25] - hits! [Damage: 1d8+7: 9]

The skeleton crashed to the floor in a splinter of bone, its ribcage decimated by the young fighter's strike. **Tradden** started to turn towards his next victim, when a keen wailing from the undead wight to his east caught his ear. It had an arm outstretched, pointing towards the pile of bones at **Tradden's** feet.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Immediate Reaction - Reanimate Minion]

With horrifying clicks and scrapes the bones knitted back together, and the skeleton stood once more, its blank eye sockets staring at **Tradden** in mockery and its stained teeth grinning with necrotic pleasure.

"Ah. Right." said Tradden, matter of factly.

Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels

There was a creak of wood and the sharp ruffles of bow strings being drawn from the west. The skeletons over towards the bone altars drew the bows back in unison, and four arrows whistled out over the chamber.

[Skeleton Sentinel #01 Longbow: **1d20+8: 25** vs Kireth's AC(17)] - *hits!* [Damage: **5**] and [**Slowed** until end of skeleton's next turn]

[Skeleton Sentinel #02 Longbow: 1d20+8: 17 vs Kireth's AC(17)] - *hits!* [Damage: 5] and [Slowed until end of skeleton's next turn]

[Skeleton Sentinel #03 Longbow: 1d20+8: 16 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - misses!

[Skeleton Sentinel #04 Longbow: 1d20+8: 26 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 5] and [Slowed until end of skeleton's next turn]

Three of the arrows struck their marks, the touch of the iron tips shocking their victims with a cold numbness, a freezing chill to their bones.



Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Zero shinnied down the chain as quickly as he dared. On the way down, he'd already picked out his target: the pasty ghoulish wight to the southeast. If they didn't take him and his friend down, they were in for a very long night of skeleton-smashing.

He paused briefly on the chain, contemplating a shot from here. However, it would leave him in a precarious position, and if anyone decided to take potshot at him he was done for. He continued the slide down.

His feet splished into the bloody pool. Grimacing, he drew his crossbow and readied himself

Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels

Brought into animation by the heroes' entrance the skeletons began to pick their weapons of choice to defend their masters from harm. Those beset by **Tradden** and **Rangrim** raised their swords, as if saluting the pair, before swinging the blades in a military fashion.

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[Skeleton Sentinel #06 Longsword: 1d20+8: 14 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - misses!
The swipe of the sword was expertly deflected by the rogue dwarf. He seemed to be enjoying the fight!
[Skeleton Sentinel #07 Longsword: 1d20+8: 19 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits! [Damage: 5] and [Shift: SW]
Tradden took a cut on the arm, and the skeleton swiftly moved around.
One of them to the south drew a bow, and fired at the latest entrant, Zero.
[Skeleton Sentinel #05 Longbow: 1d20+8: 27 vs Zero's AC(18)] - critical hit! [Damage: 5] and [Slowed until end of skeletons next turn]
The arrow slammed into Zero's shoulder with some force, almost knocking the rogue back and over into the blood. He wasn't expecting such a strike - it was though the stones the skeleton were standing on were lending their energy and aid, the rogue could almost feel it tingling through the arrowhead!
The final one drew its sword and charged across at the young fighter.
[Skeleton Sentinel #08 Charge: 1d20+8+1+2: 19 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits! [Damage: 5]
Another strike from the skeletons, and Tradden could feel that the battle would not be as easy as first thought.
Me: Clay Scout
The small winged creature flapped ungainly to the side of its supposed master. It whispered words into the priest's ear, but the response was simply a hand thrust into the creature's face, waving it away.
Me: Skauril Jan 6 🗸
The figure near the bone altar continued his low drone, chanting his prayer, the words swimming across the chamber. The claws of shadow in the portal in the northern wall grasped and clutched to the rhythm of the words.
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In chack portai writinea and swirted, buldged and grasped, and all of the time Kireth kept his eyes upon it, surveying it s surface and learning the secrets within.
[Minor Action - Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 19 vs Kireth's Will(15)] - hits!
[Pulled 2: N]
Kireth felt himself splash out of the pool of blood, walking straight for the yawning portal, the shadowy claws almost hypnotic and irresistable.
Kireth felt himself splash out of the pool of blood, walking straight for the yawning portal, the shadowy claws almost hypnotic and irresistable. [Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 10 vs Kireth AC(17)] - misses!
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[Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 10 vs Kireth AC(17)] - misses! At the last moment he broke out of his reverie, and dodged to one side as a claw reached out to grab him. Things were becoming clearer now, the whispers had died down, and he looked from the portal to the altar, to the blood and then back to the portal with awe.
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[Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 10 vs Kireth AC(17)] - misses! At the last moment he broke out of his reverie, and dodged to one side as a claw reached out to grab him. Things were becoming clearer now, the whispers had died down, and he looked from the portal to the altar, to the blood and then back to the portal with awe. Image: Imag
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[Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 10 vs Kireth AC(17)] - misses! At the last moment he broke out of his reverie, and dodged to one side as a claw reached out to grab him. Things were becoming clearer now, the whispers had died down, and he looked from the portal to the altar, to the blood and then back to the portal with awe. Image: Imag
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[Grasping Claws: 1120+82:10 vs Kireth AC(17)] - misses! At the last moment he broke out of his reverie, and dodged to one side as a claw reached out to grab him. Things were becoming clearer now, the whispers had died down, and he looked from the portal to the altar, to the blood and then back to the portal with awe. Image: Image
[Grasping Claws: 10 es Kireth AC(17)] - misses! At the last moment he broke out of his reverie, and dodged to one side as a claw reached out to grab him. Things were becoming clearer now, the whispers had died down, and he looked from the portal to the altar, to the blood and then back to the portal with awe. Image: Internet of the northeast chain, a look of scepticism on his face as he regarded the links, slick with blood. Only one thing for it, he thought, bravado switty overcoming any doubt as he grasped the chain and stated to quickly descend [Athelics check: 102000; 27] - success! The world dropped switty to the foor whits mome aplomb, and wasted no time scanning for an enemy to smite. Spying one of the dangerous wights off to the east he quickly stated in that direction. There was a skeleton in the way, but the dwarf was determined that would not prove a major clostacle [Charge ws Skeleton Sentinel #08. 10200001124) - htts! [Damage: 10100277116] plus [10318 charge damage] Aceris smashed through the bones, shuttering them across the stone floor. The warlord paused for a moment, his eyes straying to the wight up the steps to his west, but there was no rattle of bones, and grattering of the splinters and dust at his feet. [Skeleton Sentinel #08 Destroyed] Image: Internet and Random: Kirch Majere An 12 * There was no ould that a ker more arrows like that would certainly take their toil but right now the mage was paying them no heed. It even looked like he had been about to raise his staff to defend himself but had that the tories. Internet the that the theore is none was no way to explain it all. The dark mage they had defeated earlier, the ancient tombs he had discovered and was slowy reading and that to che, he wild was they? Hewould k

The words came freely to his mind, simple steps to unlock and dispel. It may not be a powerful magic that slipped from his tongue, but as part of a greater whole it may help.

The portal seemed to flinch visibly at the words. The bulging stopped for a moment and the claws seemed to have difficultly stretching through. The priest at the altar's words seemed to trip and he looked round for the first time.

A skeleton near him scraped its bony foot against the floor. Without breaking thought the mage responded instinctively.

[Magic Missile vs Skeleton Sentinel #01] - *automatic hit!* [Damage: 2+4+1: 7]

The bolt left Kireth's staff at speed, dull and and full of shadowy intent. It struck the skeleton in the midriff, and it exploded.

"...and keep your symbols of Bahamut to hand!"

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[Skeleton Sentinel #01 Destroyed]

🙍 鵍	Me	and	Random:	Rangrim	Ironnose	
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The drawf snarled at the skeleton after his last wild effort at an attack. This time he took his time, before swinging down in a great arc over his head.

[Riposte Strike vs Skeleton Sentinel #06: 1d20+9: 11] - failure!

His swing was still ineffective, though, as the skeleton simply stepped to one side.

"By the abyss," he growled. "Stand bloody still!"

He looked over his shoulder. "Well, I know nothing about the Gods, mage. I probably know less about magic. Nor do I have any potions. How in the Nine Hells can I help?"

Kireth thought for a moment, contemplating the alternatives. "You could always give up your own life force," he shouted back over the calm pool of blood. "Just concentrate and channel it, the portal will likely do the rest."

"Concentrate and channel", repeated the rogue softly to himself. "What does the idiot mean by that?" He tried, anyway.

[Minor Action - Heal Check: 1d20+3: 14] - failure!

Maybe he didn't 'concentrate' hard enough, or 'channel' correctly, but Rangrim didn't feel to good, as something took the breath out of him. He felt light-headed and dizzy, but the portal went into a frenzy for a moment, the claws grasping and searching with renewed effort.

[Rangrim loses 1 healing surge]

"Fools!" uttered a voice from the bone altar. "You cannot stop me. It is futile. You only serve to irritate me."

The horn-helmed priest turned his gaze to the wights.

"Destroy them!" he commanded.

Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights

The wights seemed to nod in deference to their master and then turned their spiteful gazes upon the heroes.

The one nearest the bone pit with the mirror to the east looked directly at Tradden, a baleful clawed hand pointing directly at the young fighter.

[Shallowgrave Wight #01 Grave Bolt: 1d20+6: 22 vs Tradden's Reflex(19)] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+4: 5 necrotic damage] and [Immobilised] (Save Ends)

An icy chill overcame **Tradden**, and he felt rooted to the spot.

The other wight raised its hand towards Rangrim.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Grave Bolt: 1d20+6: 26 vs Rangrim's Reflex(18)] - critical hit! [Damage: 1d6+4: 10 necrotic damage] and [Immobilised] (Save Ends)

The stones thrummed with energy once more and the icy chill touched Rangrim's heart.

🗱 🚪 👩 Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Tradden took a step forward to attack the skeleton in front of him. Except he didn't. His body leaned forwards, but his legs remained where they were - frozen in place!

Listening to the urgent tones of Kireth, the fighter looked to a different course of action. Healing eh? Alright, let's try this!

[Minor Action: Retrieve Healing Potion]

Tradden kept the strange, red vial to hand, tucked in his belt. It seemed a strange use for it, but these were strange times. Actually, scratch that - they were plain bonkers times. Using two fingers to wrap around the neck he half-turned and tossed it like a dart. It wasn't a bulls-eye, but it was a big target.

As the fighter turned to throw he left his flank exposed, and the skeleton took no time in attempting to exploit the opportunity.

[Skeleton Sentinel #07 Opportunity Attack: 1d20+8: 15 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - misses!

The swing was short, however, and Tradden escaped unharmed.

[Standard Action: Throw healing potion: 1d20+7-2: 20] - hits!

Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels

It came up short to begin with, a tantilising couple offeet in front of the portal, skittering across the flagstones. Then inch by inch it slowly rolled towards the black bulging gateway and was sucked in with the sound Tradden could swear was the smack of lips. There was a brief moment of stillness from the void, but then its grasps resumed with frenzy.

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

Heartened by his sucess the fighter felt some warmth return to his lower limbs.

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The creak of bowstrings was ominous as the skeletons tooks aim again. Both Zero and Kireth were in exposed areas, and the skeletons seemed to take delight in firing at them.

Two arrows flew across the blood pool at Zero, the skeletons hopinh to add the rogue's blood to the morass already there. Another flew at Kireth, still fascinated by the portal's movements.

[Skeleton Sentinel #02 Longbow: 1d20+8: 17 vs Zero's AC(18)] - misses!

[Skeleton Sentinel #03 Longbow: 1d20+8: 12 vs Kireth's AC(18)] - misses!

[Skeleton Sentinel #02 Longbow: 1d20+8: 12 vs Zero's AC(18)] - misses!

It seemed lady luck Avandra was on the side of the pair, however, as the arrows sailed wide.

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Zero's teeth remained firmly gritted as the skeleton's arrows whistled past his body.

He moved as fast as he could to find a decent spot from which to fire at the wight on the eastern platform

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[i leeting Ghost - Stearth Gheck. Tuzu- 13. 21] - success:

Hiding behind Rangrim, the rogue let off a bolt.

[Sly Flourish vs Shallowgrave Wight #01: 1d20+9+2: 16] - misses!

[ory reduction of challowing the Wight #01. red to 5 2. re] - Intestes.	
The wight was too quick for Zero whilst he was afflicted by the slowness of the numbing cold, and it easily sidestepped the shot.	
Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels	Jan 9 🔻
Whilst Zero turned his attention to the east, one of the skeletons cast down its bow, drew a longsword and charged at him.	
[Skeleton Sentinel #05 Charge: 1d20+8+1: 18 vs Zero's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 5] and [Shift: SE]	
The slash caught Zero off guard, and before he could react the skeleton switched position.	
The skeleton nearest Rangrim continued to attack the dwarf.	
[Skeleton Sentinel #06 Longsword: 1d20+8: 11 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - misses!	
But Rangrim was ready and dodged to the side.	
The last of this remaining trio of skeletons continued to strike at Tradden .	
[Skeleton Sentinel #07 Longsword: 1d20+8: 19 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits! [Damage: 5]	

The blade struck home and Tradden winced.

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The winged creature continued to pester its master, pointing out the adventurers and their various skills. It offered no offensive action, just intelligence for its master.

Me: Skauril

The priest at the altar looked to be irritated but largely unconcerned. These heroes that had descended from the chamber above had offered little in the way of resistance since they had arrived, the skeleton guards had seen well to that.

He did, however, seem to have concerns over the mage stood near the portal. He issued commands to his scout and bade the thing to fly away.

Turning back to his book he began his low droning chant once more, and the portal began to grasp and bulge in rhythm.

Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal	Jan 9 🔻
Kireth may have thought he was reasonably safe on the fringes of the claws, but his over-confidence has cost him once before. As the claws began to stretch and tear at the skin of the port	al in front of
him, the mage started to find it mesmerising. He was beginning to understand the ritual and what bound it together.	

He wasn't expecting the reach of the claws to be so far, as one stretched the membrane thin over a vicious claw and struck at the mage.

[The Thing in the Portal Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 27 vs Kireth's AC(17)] - *critical hit!* [Damage: 1d10+3: 13] and [Kireth Slides 1: N]

The claw grabbed him around the midriff, squeezing with intense pain, and dragged him closer to the portal. Kireth could feel the floor vibrate and surge with power.

[Kireth Bloodied]

Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Options competed for attention in the warlord's mind, calculations quickly reckoned. All this in a couple of heartbeats and then the dwarf sprung into action...

The dwarf took a couple of quick strides northwest towards Kireth, checking on the state of the mage. Kireth had taken a nasty gash from whatever the thing in the portal might be. If the wizard fell the battle might be lost.

Khalin called to the mage, whose will seemed to be teetering on the brink of some invisible precipice - some magical influence no doubt - but probably no less deadly should the elf fall: "*Kireth! Focus! We need you!* ...Blackengorge needs you!" the dwarf finished, laying it on as thick as he could. He hoped it would be enough to shake Kireth into finding some cover where he could weave his magic more safely.

[Minor Action - Inspiring Word: Kireth spends a healing surge and regains 1d6+10: 14 hp]

With that, he wheeled and charged back towards the others. Both wights were out of range, so the dwarf stormed towards the skeleton next to the apparently immobile Tradden...

[Charge vs Skeleton Sentinel #07: 1d20+9+1: 28] - *hits!* [Damage if hits: 1d10r2+7: 17] plus [1d8: 7 charge damage]

Khalin powered into the skeleton before him, shards of bone flying in all directions as he swung through it with his hammer. The shards were scattered across the stonework in a vast arc in front of the dwarf, and to his relief they didn't seem to be moving.

[Skeleton Sentinel #07 Destroyed]

Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

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The pain of the squeezing claw was intense and yet Kireth's desire to escape its grip was not as it should have been. Like in a dream where you know you should flee but for some reason your own feet will not let you.

Then there was that voice "*It is time*". Is it? Perhaps it was. Perhaps this is how it was always going to be. Somewhere deep inside the mage there was a spark. A spark that began to glow and then burn. It was anger. The anger he had carried since a child, resentful of a world that hated him. It had carried him through to adulthood and it was trying to save him again. He would survive, for no other reason than to piss this thing off.

Pulling against invisible strings the mage tore away. Hoping to inflict suffering as he did so, he again called forth Arcane magics.

[Arcana Check: 1d20+11: 18] - success!

The words spilled out of Kireth's mouth drawing wisps of shadow from out of the portal. Its surface undulated and then became calm for a moment before ripples grew from the centre, concetric circles spreading across its surface until the claws came reaching out once more.

There was a groan from the stonework of the chamber itself and the priest at the altar stumbled over his own words.

And that Skeleton, he could go frack himself too

[Magic Missile vs Skeleton Sentinel #03] - automatic hit. [Damage: 2+4+1: 7]

This mage had had enough

The wisps of shadow surrounding Kireth's mouth joined with the arcane bolt of force, and the skeleton was smashed to pieces.

[Skeleton Sentinel #03 Destroyed]

Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose 1

Immobilised and seemingly stuck to the stone floor, the vibrations went right through Rangrim. He hoped that whatever the rumblings signalled it was good. The skeletons were finding it difficult to stand too, and the dwarf took the opportunity to strike at the one closest to Zero, hoping to save the rogue from a sticky end at the end of a longsword. He quite liked the lad, there was something about him. If only he'd stop waving that little pea-shooter about and get on with using a real weapon.

[Clever Strike vs Skeleton Sentinel #05: 1d20+9+2: 26] - hits! [Damage: 1d10+6: 13] plus [2d8+3: 12 sneak damage]

The skeleton crumbled under the blow, shards of bone splashing into the blood pool behind with an evocative sound.

This was more like it, thought the dwarf. Now, only if he could move!

[Save vs Immobilised: 1d20: 17] - success!

His legs began to move once more, and he plotted his next move.

[Skeleton Sentinel #05 Destroyed]

Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights

Upon the dais, next to the white bones reflected in the silvery mirror, the wight hissed. The skeletons protecting it were gone and two fresh, warm bodies, full of vitality were standing there awaiting its call. Its dessicated lips curled back with glee. It opened its palm out against those on the stairs below it and a bolt of dark swirling energy flew towards Tradden.

[Shallowgrave Wight #01 Grave Bolt: 1d20+6: 9 vs Tradden's Reflex(19)] - misses!

The young fighter ducked and the energy flew over his head, dissipating into the ether as it streaked over the pool of blood. The wight hissed once more.

The other, standing to the south near the grate snarled at its cousin. It barked something in an unintelligeble language, and moved forwards towards the pair.

It seemed to crouch, widening its arms and beginning to stretch its mouth and eyes, its face contorting into a mask so terrifying that all that beheld it could not bear its hideous visage

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Death Grimace]

[Death Grimace: 1d20+7: 21 vs Khalin's Will(16)] - hits! [Death Grimace: 1d20+7: 13 vs Tradden's Will(15)] - misses! [Death Grimace: 1d20+7: 8 vs Zero's Will(16)] - critical miss! [Death Grimace: 1d20+7: 17 vs Rangrim's Will(14)] - hits!

The dwarves couldn't bear it - the wight's features seemed to twist and turn instilling so much fear into them that involuntarily they found themselves backpedalling. All they could do was to turn and flee.

[Khalin and Rangrim move 5 squares backwards]

[Khalin and Rangrim are Weakened vs Shallowgrave Wight #02 (Save Ends)]



Matt. me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Tradden dived forward desprately, somehow managing to avoid the tearing air that flew towards him. Out of the corner of his eye he saw Zero manage to avoid it as well, although the Rogue's technique was much calmer - he seemed to simply step aside as if dodging a fellow shopper on a busy Deepingwald market day. The two Dwarves either didn't see it coming or couldn't move fast enough as it caught them full on, with both of them uncharacteristally back-pedalling, as if in fear. Strange

Turning the dive into a barrel-roll, Tradden careered to one side before skipping around to the side of the Wight. These boys needed taking down as a matter of priority. With an ancient dwarven warcry (probably - he had heard it from a young Dwarf in an alleyway once. Quite frankly he didnt understand it, but it was definitely something about Gold, so it probably was, but who knew with the stocky folk?) to try and inspire the two Dwarves, he chopped out with his long sword.

[Surprising Stab vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+11: 14] - misses! [Marked]

The wight was guicker than it looked, and it slipped to the side as Tradden's feint cut across its cheek.

The fighter growled in frustration. At least he had it's attention

Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels 1 1

Two skeletons still stood near the bone altar, both with bows drawn. The nearest, at the bottom of the steps, flung its bow aside as Rangrim backpedalled towards it, drawing its sword, and charging at the dwarf.

The other let off an arrow just as the first made contact.

[Skeleton Sentinel #02 Charge: 1d20+8+1: 24 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 5]

[Skeleton Sentinel #04 Longbow: 1d20+8: 21 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 5] and [Slowed]

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Both weapons struck the dwarf in an instant, knocking the wind out of him. A chill overtook his bones and the familiar sluggish feeling returned.

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Zero didn't like the way the skeleton to the south was eyeballing, or rather eyesocketing, him. Wishing there was a decent place to conceal himself, he hastened northwards over the gaping chamber floor, then aimed and fired at the wight Tradden was engaged with.

[Sly Flourish vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+9: 21] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+6: 9]

The wights' lips curled back as the bolt struck its target.



Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels The remaining skeleton to the south of the chamber followed Zero's movements with its gleaming white skull. As quickly as the roque strode backwards, away from it, the skeleton marched forwards

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its longsword swinging menacingly in its hand. Just after **Zero** let off a bolt at the wight, the skeleton struck

[Skeleton Sentinel #06 Longsword: 1d20+8: 20 vs Zero's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 5]

The sword cut across Zero's leg and the rogue hopped back a step in pain.

Me and Random: Clay Scout

The winged creature clumsily flew southwards, nestling next to the remaining skeleton with a bow, but remaining up on the altar area. Its master need only buy a small amount of time. The mage was coming too close to the altar and that must be stopped. It closed it eyes momentarily.

[Mind Touch: 1d20+5: 12 vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - misses!

Kireth could feel the fleeting intrusion upon his mind, a similar feeling to one he had had in the Ghoul Warrens. This time, however, his mind was strong, his path clear, and he instantly placed a psychic barrier in place. He stole a furious glance at the scout, adding it to his growing list of targets.

Me and Random: Skauril 1

The priest at the altar continued to read from his book, the pages turning themselves without assistance as his droning words continued. The churning portal responded to his words, moving and bulging to the pitch of his voice.

Then, he stopped, turning around, his black cloak swirling around with him like a coat of shadow. A black flame erupted into life at the end of his rod.

"One more!" he uttered, and scanned the chamber, his eyes finally coming to rest on **Kireth** at the bottom of the steps.

"You!" he pointed at the mage with his rod. "Kneel before the might of Orcus."

With that the black flame shot forwards from the rod at Kireth's heart.

[Decaying Ray: 1d20+11: 28 vs Kireth's Fortitude(15)] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+5: 11 necrotic] plus [Weakened (Save Ends)]

Kireth could feel the life and energy being sucked out of him, the black flame icy to the touch. He faltered for a moment, his legs weakening and buckling beneath him. He almost fell to one knee under the instruction of the priest, but by a sheer effort of will kept on his feet.

The priest could see the mage hesitating and grow cold to his touch, and a sneer crossed his face.

[Kireth Bloodied]

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Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal

As the black flame surrounded Kireth the portal's movements increased in intensity as though feeding on the mage's distress. Khalin, closest to the thing, saw it grow darker, and perhaps thinner over the claws that bulged and pushed.

It was almost mesmerising.

Then he heard the voices.

"Khalin, Khalin," they started with a soft whisper. "Khalin."

He found himself distracted, turning towards the portal.

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 15 vs Khalin's Will(16)] - misses!

The dwarf shook his head. No voices were going to distract him from the battle. He growled and wiped his beard. It was time to put Aecris to the test.

Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri 2

Khalin had dropped onto his haunches and shaken his head to try dispell the ... fear ... shame.

The moment passed - in a fashion. Still, the dwarf couldn't bring himself to face the creature again. Not yet.

Kireth was locked in a personal battle with the necromancer, and for now it looked like he would have to face this nemesis alone, but the warlord remembered the mage's urging regarding the portal. The dwarf tried to clear his head and searched for a suitable prayer to Moradin, Clangeddin and the pantheon of dwarven gods...

[Minor Action - Religion Check: 1d20+2: 4] - failure!

It seemed as though Khalin's whispered prayers were having an effect - the portal stilled for a moment. Then, in silence, a gout of shadow poured forth from the centre of the blackness and covered the dwarf.

[Shadow Gout: 1d20+8: 13 vs Khalin's Fortitude(16)] - misses!

The icy touch of the shadow sent shivers up Khalin's spine, but the dwarf was resilient, and did not let the chill and fear overcome him this time.

The whisperings and the ghastly visage had left him unable to focus however. He paused a moment more, steeling himself again and remembered the other wight off to the east. This time the fear and uncertainty fell away. If he couldn't take revenge on the first one yet, perhaps he should break himself back in against this other. Khalin turned to his left, wheeling towards the second wight, the familiar battle snarl returning to his features ...

[Charge vs Shallowgrave Wight #01: 1d20+9+1: 20] - hits! [Damage: 1d10r2+7: 15] plus [1d8: 7 charge damage]

The charge struck home, striking the wight in its midriff, and drawing its icy stare.

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 2] - failure!

Although the flush of success in striking the wight filled his heart with energy, Khalin could not yet bear to turn to face the other creature.

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Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

The pain was excruciating but he could bear it. Whatever this priest dished out upon him he would receive back in tenfold. But for now that would have to wait as Kireth knew the priority here had to be the portal. Pushing against his staff he straightened his body and once again concentrated on his disrupting magic.

[Arcana Check: 1d20+11: 29] - success!

As Kireth continued the arcane mumblings under his breath, shadows pulled themselves from the black yawning portal. Wisps and tendrils reached out to the mage, swirling around his head and entering his nose and mouth, fueling him with the power to disrupt the ceremony. The claws in the portal attempted to grasp these shadows as they left, but they found thin air. In response the bulging at the skin of the portal flared in intensity and the around began to rumble

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Weakened by the priest he was not sure how much strength was in him right now but he would try and assist Rangrim as much as he could.

[Magic Missile vs Skeleton Sentinel #02] - *automatic hit!* [Damage: 2+4+1: 7] halved to [3 damage] due to Weakened State

The dull bolt of force shot across the chamber into the skeleton's skull, exploding outwards and destorying the creature with it. Weakened or not, the skeletons were no match for Kireth's growing powers.

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 2] - failure!

The elation of destorying the skeleton did nothing to lift his weakened state.

He only had the hammer in his hand, not even a dagger to throw.

He moved forwards towards the stairs as quickly as he could, all the time composing himself for the battle ahead.

Whatever foul magics the skeletons had laid on their arrows was making him sluggish and his legs would not act as he wished.

[Minor Action - Dwarven Resilience: Rangrim uses Second Wind]

[Savs vs Weakened: 1d20: 8] - failure!

Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights

The wight at the top of the dais watched the dwarf in front of it carefully. The strike from the creature's weapon had hurt - it was a magical weapon, that was for sure, and the wight did not want to repeat the pain. It crouched warily and then struck out with a vicious claw at the warlord.

[Shallowgrave Wight #01 Claw: 1d20+9: 29 vs Khalin's AC(21)] - critical hit! [Damage: 1d6: 6 necrotic] and [Lose 1 Healing Surge]

The second wight, beset by Tradden, placed its feet warily on the grate beneath, trying to figure a way past the fighter's blades and taunts to circle him.

[Death Grimace - Recharge: 1d6: 3] - failure!

It seemed ready to widen its mouth and shriek at the fighter, but thought better of it, swinging round with its sharp claws at Tradden's neck.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Claw: 1d20+9: 19 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits! [Damage: 1d6: 4 necrotic] and [Lose 1 Healing Surge]

A chill overcame the warrior as the claws struck and he could see the wight's eyes glow with an intense blue light as it began to cackle and sneer at him.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Tradden fought back the nauseous feeling brought on by the scratches of the Wight's claws, and went back on the offensive. He may not be tactically trained as Khalin was, but he could see that their group was being slowly dispersed in the chamber, and they were not really suited to one-on-one battles against such powerful opponents. These Wights were proving more than troublesome – their attacks seemed to hamper and cripple just as much as they did hurt!

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[Sweeping Slash v Shallowgrave Wight #02]

[Primary Attack vs Reflex: 1d20+11: 21] - hits!

[Pushed 1: NW] and [Tradden Shifts 1: NW] and [Marked]

[Secondary Attack: 1d20+10: 23] - hits!

[Damage: 2d6+7: 16]
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Tradden tried to force the Wight back, hoping to get marginally closer to his comrades.

Now getting increasingly desperate, Tradden tried to remember what Kireth had should earlier on about positive energies. His only healing potion had now been consumed by the strange portal, so he didn't have many options left. He didn't know anything really about religion or magic – wine and waltzes were more his thing. Hmmm. Wasn't there a hybrid Mambo/Flemenco dance called the "Dance of Life"? Worth a shot. He pulled out a few slick moves whilst trying to channel as much positive thought as he could towards the blackness on the far side of the chamber, dancing around the Wight to the other side as he did so.

[Minor Action - Heal Check: 1d20+9: 12] - failure!

No matter how quickly the fighter's feet moved, nothing appeared to happen to the portal.

[Pass Forward as Move Action]

[Use Action Point]

As Tradden danced to the other side of the Wight, he lashed out again, hoping to chop its legs around the back as he did so.

[Frost Longsword vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+11: 12] - critical miss!

The attack was a spectactular failure however - he misjudged it completely and the longsword clattered into the floor, causing a judder upthe fighter's arm.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Bloodied]

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The remaining skeleton on the altar area drew back its bow and fired an arrow straight at the dwarf at the bottom of the steps.

[Skeleton Sentinel #04 Longbow: 1d20+8: 13 vs Rangrim's AC(18+2)] - misses!

The arrow clattered onto the stone floor behind the dwarf.

Mick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

"Get away from me, you horrible little bugger!" Zero yelled at the grinning skeleton which swiped wildly at him.

He hopped back and fired from the hip, unsure of what damage a slender bolt would do

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[Damage. 100+0. 12]

The bolt lodged in the skeleton's ribs, sending small slivers of bone cascading to the floor. For a moment, Zero thought his fears were realised and that the shot would do no harm, but then slowly the skeleton crumbled to the floor. The unlife binding it together released by the strike.

[Skeleton Sentinel #06 Destroyed]

Me and Random: Clay Scout

The winged beast kept its distance on the altar area, staying close to the skeleton and its bow. Its intructions from its master were to keep the mage occupied, but it was wary of the dwarf on the steps. The dwarf had seemed sluggish and the mage's power was weak. The scent and thrill of victory were once again in the air.

The skeleton could deal with the dwarf. It would concentrate on the mage. It reached out its mind once more to Kireth's, attempting to stall his path.

[Clay Scout Mind Touch: 1d20+5: 18 vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - hits! [Kireth Immediate Interrupt - Staff of Defence: AC raised to 19]

The scout thought it had him, the mage's defences falling before its psychic onslaught. But then the mage found reserves and the barrier was up once more, beating back against the winged beast.



The priest continued to stare and sneer at **Kireth**.

"You see?" the priest asked. "The power of my Lord flows freely through me. You are but a snivelling urchin to His might. You have not the power to stop me, to stop my Lord's will. The gate will open and I will command a host that will crush this land. You will open that gate. You will feed the ritual. That which you come to stop will consume you!"

The priest extended his rod in the direction of Kireth once more.

"Now, I command. Kneel!" he snarled.

[Skauril Decaying Ray: 1d20+11: 12 vs Kireth's Fortitude(15)] - critical miss!

The black flame extended towards **Kireth's** body, but the mage was ready for it. Even in his weakened state his anger and fury would not let him succumb to this priest. Whatever Lord and master this priest had, **Kireth** would see that he would die in agony, praying for his Lord to help, snivelling and pleading for mercy.

The priest looked incredulously at his rod, and then back to the mage.

"You defy me!" he uttered, almost in shock. "Now you feel the real power of my Lord."

With that, the priest started to intone his wretched magic once more.

Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal

The portal continued to bulge and squirm, the membrane that held whatever lay behind it seemingly thinner and thinner. One could imagine a small tear beginning with one cut of a claw and the whole skin would slice and dissolve and whatever lay behind would surge through.

Zero could feel the movements over his shoulder. He could feel them in the stonework of the floor, throbbing and humming, churning and grasping. The movements were in a rhythm, one that began to sing. Chords of sounds began to flow over the rogue like stolen whispers.

"Uhlit, Uhlit!" they sang, the humming filling his head. "Scion of Eagle, come!"

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 17 vs Zero's Will(16)] - hits! [Zero is Pulled 5 squares]

He found himself stumbling towards the portal, fascinated by its swirling patterns until he stood in front of the blackness in the centre of the glowing circle. The patterns swam in front of him in hypnotic grace before a huge claw reached out with malicious intent.

[Grasping Claws: 1d20+8: 21 vs Zero's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 1d10+3: 4] and [Zero Slides 1: N]

The claw grabbed the rogue's robes and pulled him closer to the blackness before retreating into the maelstrom. Zero could feel and smell the darkness in front of him. It engulfed his vision and his only thoughts were now to flee from its gaping jaws.



Khalin did not like the way the skirnish was going. As a marshal he focused on strategies, tactics, on placing his men on the board in a carefully conceived alignment to most effectively bring about victory, protecting each other like pieces on a chess board. But this time his 'pieces' were scattered across the theatre of battle, without a hope of protecting each other as things stood.

There was only one way forward now, the wights must be defeated, and he could only hope that he and Tradden dispatched the ghastly creatures back to whatever hell they'd sprung from, and quickly. Only then could the duo effectively support their comrades against whatever new nightmare was still to come.

Khalin willed his flame bracers to augment his strike, and swung Aecris forward once more...

[Minor Action: Flame Bracers daily power] [Vanguard Craghammer vs Shallowgrave Wight #01: 1d20+9: 27] - *hits!* [Damage: 1d10r2+7: 10] [Flame Bracers Daily Power: 1d6: 2 fire damage]

[Spends Action Point]

Accris struck true again. Surely the thing must be weakening? thought the dwarf, and wasted no time trying to press home the advantage, his hammer wheeling smoothly round again, picking up speed for a mighty blow...

[Warlord's Strike vs Shallowgrave Wight #01: **1d20+9: 21**] - *hits!* [Damage: **2d10r2+7: 23**] [Allies gain +2 to damage rolls vs Wight #1 until end of Khalin's next turn]

The first strike pushed the wight to one side, the flames making the thing flinch and turn away. The second crashed into its temple and the thing crumpled at the dwarfs feet.

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 11] - success!

"They fall!" shouted Khalin joyously, more to himself than the others. The fear of the other wight slipped from his mind. These things could be killed.

[Shallowgrave Wight #01 Destroyed]



Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

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retreat. Forget all the suffering and pain that priest has caused you. The torture and death he inflicted upon your friends, surely it does not matter

The battle to his back and his head bowed low the mage moved away. Muttering something quietly as he did so.

[Arcana Check: 1d20+11: 27] - success!

As he backed off his words began to grow form, shadows swirling around his mouth and jaw. They oozed down to the stonework and streaked across the chamber to the portal, where they mixed with the blackness within seconds.

Stood in front of the huge statue of the Demon Lord, Kireth realised that he could no longer think of any further incantations that would stop the ritual, and that power of a more divine nature would be needed now.

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 13] - success!

Away from the priest Kireth's power slowly began to return to him.



Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Rangrim scowled as Kireth whimpered and fled the battle. There was no way in the Nine Hells he would forgive this priest for what he had done to Ulmo, and to the rest of his friends.

"Run if you like, mage," *snarled the dwarf.* "But this priest and I have a score to settle."

Ranarim began a cautious ascent of the steps up to the altar, tossing the warhammer from hand to hand.

"Right, you bastard. Looks like it's you and me," he growled at the priest, looking for any advantage.

[Minor Action - Ferret out Frailty: Rangrim gains CA against Skauril]

The horn-helmed figure looked down upon the dwarf with disdain, a sneer upon his lips.

"You pathetic worm," he spat at Rangrim. "You even dare to think you can match my power. The power my Lord bestows in me?"

Rangrim didn't reply with words, he simply sprang into action, using the opening he thought he had seen in the priest's arrogance.

[Deep Cut vs Skauril's Fortitude: 1d20+9+2: 30] - critical hit! [Damage: 2d10+6: 26] plus [2d8+3: 21 sneak damage] plus [8 ongoing damage] (Save Ends)

The hammer smashed into Skauril's side, almost knocking him over. The stones beneath the altar shook with power, humming and reverberating to Rangrim's blow. The priest certainly wasn't expecting such a blow from a worm of a sub-human. Rangrim himself wasn't too sure where the power had come from, he didn't think he had been that accurate!

"Match your power? Aye. You're only human after all!"

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 9] - failure!

Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights 1

The remaining wight, battered and sliced by Tradden's blades, was not used to being pushed and forced around a battlefield. It was more used to directing the flow of battle, channeling its unlife into those around it. and drinking the life of others.

It must be rid of this creature in front of it.

[Death Grimace - Recharge: 1d6: 2] - failure!

It seemed it could not scare this creature away. It must strike him down and feed upon the corpse.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Claw: 1d20+9: 16 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - misses!

After a sluggish start **Tradden** was getting into the rhythm of this battle. He saw the side swipe of the claw and easily dodged back, readying his weapons for another assault even as he felt the throb of power from the stones below and the anguished cry of the priest.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Having sidestepped the wight's clumsy swipe, Tradden carried on his fancy footwork, trying to lure the thing closer to where the battle was now focused - at the other end of the chamber! A quick check over his shoulder had revealed Rangrim taking on the priest on his own - the dwarf was slowly ascending the stairs, hefting his hammer from hand to hand as if it were for carpentry rather than warfare. Well, Tradden resolved to get there if he could, even if it took all day!

[Footwork Lure vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+11: 25] - hits!

[Damage: 1d8+7: 12] and [Tradden Shifts 1: NW and Wight is Pulled 1: NW]

The foul zombie-thing took the bait of an apparently explosed Tradden, only to find the fighter's movements too quick. It lurched forward, moving into the space where the human had been, but now was not. Its growing anger was only furthered as the impudent human struck out, chopping a significant part out of its abdomen.

Tradden was about to say something suitably unappropriate, as was his way (it would probably have been "Have at you - fiend!" or similar) when the whole chamber seemed to shake. This was not the first time that had happened in this battle. It followed a loud crack, a cry of outrage and a very dwarvish sounding "harumph" of pleasure.

"What the ...?" said Tradden, ignoring the angry gurgling from the Wight, whose fearful demeanor was wasted on the human.

[Minor Action - Perception Check: 1d20+4: 22] - success!

The vibrations were from the stonework beneath his feet - he could feel the raw energy surging up into his arms. Whether it was something to do with the blood, that appeared to be set within the stone, or some long-ago enchantment he wasn't sure, but it could certainly help! Or hinder, he then thought.

Either way, there wasn't time to think about it now. There were other, more pressing concerns - notably the Wight in front of him, and the eerie portal behind him. What had Kireth been on about again? Magic meant nothing to Tradden except sparkly lights and occasionally impressive results. He was quite good at first aid and homeopathic remedies, but still felt a dull ache in his stomach from trying to channel some kind of positive healing energy last time.

Tradden was not a religious man - a trait he had inherited from his mother, who had a grudge against all gods as far as he could tell. Tradden took a more balanced view - he knew that they existed and that you couldn't just ignore them - they didnt like it. Now, stuck underground in a hellish chamber, with human, elf, dwarf and halfling sacrifice going on all over, seemed like a good a time as any to see if any of the Gods were watching and fancied getting involved. It was a toss up between Moradin, who he had a lot of time for and was presumably having a right chuckle over the antics of Rangrim and Khalin, or Corellon, who, Tradden understood, was an Elf, but who he had above all others looked at as an inspiration. He closed his eyes for the briefest of seconds (hoping that Correllon would understand that whilst preying was nice, being clawed by a Wight wasn't), and offered up a small prayer in the general direction of the ceiling

[Minor Action in place of movement action: Religion Check: 1d20+2: 5]

Nothing. It appeared Correllon wasn't there at all. Tradden couldn't blame him. Someone, or something, heard though and gouts of shadow swirled in the portal before shooting out in a thin thread to consume the young fighter.

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The shadows swirled, but they could not disturb the fighter, and eventually dissipated.

"That was strange..." said Tradden, kicking away the last of the wispy shadows. Parrying another undead limb, the fighter called out to Khalin. "I could do with your help over here with this one! Also, if you have any personal favours owing from Moradin, now is the time to call them in!" Me and Random: Skeleton Sentinels The last remaning skeleton could not see the dwarf from its position, but knew it had run towards its master. Casting down its bow it drew its sword and moved around the columns and brazier to face the dwarf. It lunged with its longsword in a smooth motion.

[Skeleton Sentinel #04 Longsword: 1d20+8: 10 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - misses!

Rangrim swatted the sword away, anger driving his every move.

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit	Jan 13 🔻

Zero ran for his life away from the bulging portal.

He had no idea what to do and his mind raced for anything that might be of help in this terrifying and, likely, monumental battle.

Suddenly, something came to mind.

"Kireth!" he shouted to the mage. "I've still got that Bahamut statue. Will that do anything?!"

Then, he levelled his crossbow at the priest above him on the opposite dais, and fired.

[Sly Flourish vs Skauril: 1d20+9: 18] - misses!

The bolt flew wide, skittering off the wall behind the priest's pedastal and book.

"Damn!" swore the rogue.



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Me and Random: Clay Scout

The winged creature flew clumsily towards Rangrim. The priest had given it instructions to deal with the mage, but that human had left the altar creeping and bowing. The dwarf had hurt its master. Time for revenge.

It reached out with its mind - surely the dwarf was an easy one to control.

[Clay Scout Mind Touch: 1d20+5: 11 vs Rangrim's Reflex(18)] - misses!

The creature cursed itself. It could not even get hold of a simple dwarf's mind. Its master would not be pleased.



The priest's eyes burned fire at Rangrim. No one touched him, let alone struck him. The dwarf would pay. They all would pay. He could still feel the pain in his side from the dwarf's attack, and it drove him on to shatter these foes completely.

[Deep Cut: Ongoing 8 damage]

"I leave you here to ruin, dwarf," *the priest said haughtily.* "Time is approaching and my host is near."

With that the priest struck Rangrim with his skull-capped rod.

[Rod of Ruin: 1d20+13: 26 vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits! [Damage: 2d6+4: 14 necrotic] plus [Ongoing 5 necrotic] (Save Ends)

The touch of the rod was intense pain to Rangrim. A chilling cold that stiffened his bones.

"You will stand here whilst my servants slice you into pieces!" the priest enthused, his eyes glowing with the thought. "Then we shall feed you to my host."

The priest uttered a simple phrase and Rangrim's vision became blurred.

[Call of the Grave: 1d20+11: 25 vs Rangrim's Fortitude(16)] - hits! [Immobilised] (until end of Skauril's next turn)

Rangrim could feel his legs freeze as though a block of ice had encased his lower body. He couldn't move, he could no longer feel his legs.

The priest laughed, stepping slightly back to avoid wild swings from the dwarf.

"Such insignificant fools," he uttered and withdrew a small golden medallion from his robes. He stroked the outer surface of the round amulet, adorned with two perfect horns, and vanished!

[Skauril Teleports to Magic Circle]

A moment later there was the sound of a pop, and the priest stood calmly in front of the portal in the magic circle.

 ${\it He\ looked\ at\ the\ heroes\ scrambling\ around\ the\ chamber.}$

"You are here to witness the final moments! You should be honoured. The first to die in the Host of Ages. You will feed and strengthen them, and then they will lay waste!"

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20: 2] - failure!

Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal

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In the priest's presence the bulging and pulsing of the portal calmed. It look no less menacing, in fact its change of behaviour made it even more sinister.

Khalin, alone on the dais to the east, next to the bone pit and silvery mirror, had the best view across the chamber of all of the group. He had turned after his victory over the wight and was scanning the battlefield, tactics racing through his mind.

He saw the priest disappear and reappear - a trick that would have astonished him only tendays before, but now something that he took in his stride. But now the calmness of the portal worried him, and he searched out its meaning.

As he stared intently at the portal whispers came to his mind. "Loyalty," they called in a silky voice. "Honour," called another. "Price," called yet a third. He was mesmerised.

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 10 vs Khalin's Will(16)] - failure!

The words rang false somehow, the silky strains turning into dischordant cries. "No!" cried the warlord, and stood his ground.

Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri 😤 👩

Having shook off the whispers, Khalin looked again across the battlefield. Rangrim and Kireth still stood, the mage having wisely retreated, the dwarf having rashly but bravely taken on the necromancer alone. Khalin's chest swelled with pride at his kinsman's efforts - he'd make a fine guardsman. Zero had dealt with the skeleton, only Tradden had his hands full for the moment.

"... If you have any personal favours owing from Moradin, now is the time to call them in!" came the call from the fighter.

"I don't know about Moradin, but I owe that wight... a clobbering!" growled Khalin, his spirit once again strong as he charged to his friend's aid...

[Charge vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+9+1: 13] - misses!

The wight saw the dwarf approaching at the last second but was able to sway away from the hurried blow.

Khalin cursed and glanced across at Tradden. The human's face was contorted in concentration and effort.

"Summon your energies my friend," he called. "This song of battle is reaching its crescendo, and I fear the final verse is approaching!"

[Minor Action - Inspiring Word: Tradden spends a Healing Surge and regains 1d6+12: 18 hp]

Tradden raised an eyebrow at Khalin's convoluted semantics and muddled musical metaphor before breaking into a smile at the gallows humour. The dwarf only shrugged back as he prepared himself for any retaliation from the wight

Reil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

Kireth had just about brought forth every arcane text he had ever read about such things. Though he personally thought little of them, perhaps now was the time to consider the religious knowledege he held.

[Religion Check: 1d20+9: 15] - success!

The few words he knew were to a power he'd only recently encountered. They seemed to work, though, the ripples on the portal were calming and the membrane seemed to be thickening with every word.

Cast an eye behind him the mage threw Rangrim a helping hand, hoping to clear the way for him to the scout.

[Magic Missile vs Skeleton Sentinel #04] - automatic hit! [Damage: 2+4+1: 7]

Shadows wrapped themselves around Kireth's bolt, giving it a baleful glare as it shot across the chamber. The results were the same, though, the skeleton exploded on the bolt's impact.

He then continued towards Khalin

[Skeleton Sentinel #04 Destroyed]

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Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose The dwarf cursed as the bolt broke the skeleton into pieces. He was grateful on one hand, but he still couldn't feel his legs, and couldn't move to strike at the winged creature.

Whatever curse the priest had laid upon him was still driving ice at his heart.

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

Taking a moment to compose himself, he readied for the winged beast's attack

[Total Defence: +2 to defences]

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20: 6] - failure!

Looking over his shoulder, the remaining wight still gave him the shivers.

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20: 16] - success!

But at least now he seemed to be overcoming the chill.

[Rangrim Bloodied]

👩 😤 Me and Random: Shallowgrave Wights

The fighter seemed to be luring the wight closer and closer to the centre of the chamber. It was infuriating for the creature, but a red haze had descended upon it, and it could only think of the ectasy of the kill and the joy of the feed.

[Death Grimace - Recharge: 1d6: 4] - failure!

It continued to swipe at the fighter.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Claw: 1d20+9: 16 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - misses!

The red haze had its downfall though, in that it made the wight clumsy in its frenzy. Its swipe was wild and the dancing fighter sidestepped with a simple move.



Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Remaining ice-calm, the fighter did not hesitate in following up with and attack of his own, but not before moving into a more avantageous position, skipping sideways so that the undead's back was pressed against Khalin's shield, [Pass Forward as Move Action]

Striking out, Tradden tried to lure the wight ever so slightly towards the centre of the room once again. If it worked, it would take it away from Khalin, and nearer to Kireth, which was far from ideal, but perhaps crucially it would mean that Tradden was that little step closer to Zero and the teleporting priest - that may yet prove crucial.

[Footwork Lure vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+11+2: 24] - hits! [Damage: 1d8+7: 12] and [Tradden Shifts 1: N and Wight Pulled 1: W] and [Marked]

"I am not a great singer..."Tradden admitted to Khalin, responding to the dwarf's last warcry as he brought his shortsword up over wight's head, as if to stab down, " ... more of a dancer." He hesitated. It was ever-soslightly comical and it allowed the wight to get it's own weapon up in a blocking position. It was all, however, a ruse, and Tradden was already bringing his longsword around in a horizontal chopping motion at waist hight, which quickly hit home with a 'squeak' of metal on bone. The fighter shrugged. "Can act a bit!"

That done, Tradden took the brief moement available to him to review the situation. If anything the portal seemed to be ... well, dimming wasn't the right word, More ... solidifying? Kireth would know, but Tradden

about how great harmers were. Khalin would approve.

[Religion Check as Minor: 1d20+2: 20] - success!

No apparaition appeared, no light shone down and (dissapointingly - it would have been nice) no spectral army of Dwarves, visiting from the eternal halls, appeared to smite their enemies. However, Tradden could sware that he heard a very faint sound, like a hammer ringing against steel. He met Khalin's gaze a few feet away - the Dwarf had a strange look on his face - had he heard it too? Well, whatever it was it had not had any effect, Tradden thought, until he looked at the portal again.

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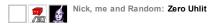
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The portal definitely seemed to be solidifying, turning form a tight undulating membrane into a thicker tar-like exterior.

"Fools!" uttered the priest, stood before the blackness. "You have no concept of the power you are dealing with. Stop this petty interference!"



Zero hopped to the edge of the bloody pool, halting before it could soil his expensive shoes further.

His friends on the other side were giving the wight hell, distracting it nicely.

[Fleeting Ghost - Stealth Check to Hide: 1d20+13: 22] - success!

Dodging behind the others, Zero assumed that the wight could not see him. It was concentrating so much on Tradden, it was likely he could take his time.

He rested his crossbow on the crook of his arm and fired.

[Sly Flourish vs Shallowgrave Wight #02: 1d20+9+2: 25] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+6: 12] plus [2d8: 6 sneak damage]

Away from the portal's edge, Zero's concentration returned, and the bolt struck the wight in the neck. With a gurgle it slowly sank to the floor, its eyes dimming as it fell.

[Shallowgrave Wight #02 Destroyed]

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Me and Random: Clay Scout

The winged beast now faced Rangrim alone. The dwarf looked weak and sluggish as though its legs would not move. A wicked grin crossed the creatures face - the divine magics of its master must have seen to that. It was now time to move in for the kill.

It reached out with its mind.

[Clay Scout Mind Touch: 1d20+5: 13 vs Rangrim's Reflex(18)] - misses!

The thing shrieked. It could not even conquer a dwarf! It backed away, flying clumsily off the edge of the altar area and heading to whatever safe haven it could find.



His forces were decimated. Only himself, his clay scout, and whatever lay beyond the portal remained. The cut from the dwarf still stung, too.

[Ongoing 8 damage]

Yet he still stood haughtily in front of the portal facing his Lord. His arrogance led him to believe those in front were mere specks of dirt in comparison to the power he held.

The human that had destroyed his wight would suffer first.

"You shall submit to the power of Lord Orcus," he commanded strongly, pointing his rod at Zero. "You have no strength here."

A black flame darted out from the rod heading straight for the rogue.

[Decaying Ray: 1d20+11: 15 vs Zero's Fortitude(15)] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+5: 8 necrotic] and [Weakened (Save Ends)]

The flame was cold, numbing Zero to the bone. He felt despair and loss and for a moment almost dropped his crossbow. It felt heavy in his hands as a weakness overcame him.

[Uses Action Point]

The horned helm turned swiftly around to **Tradden** - the priest's eyes fixing him with a steely glare. The young fighter had levelled his blades and was already spinning around to face him as the wight fell.

"You also will feel the strength of chains that my Lord shall lay upon you. You will kneel before his might before this day is over."

The rod flicked across to point at the young fighter, and another gout of black flame spread from its skull cap.

[Decaying Ray: 1d20+11: 15 vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - misses!

Tradden was quick though, and through a combination of his swift feet and the blades at his command he managed to avoid the flame.

Khalin growled with anger seeing one comrade zapped by a spell, one only just avoid a similar fate, one seemingly transfixed by the large portal and another clearly struggling to use his legs due to some kind of magical influence.

"Gah! Bloody priests!" He yelled at the man on the platform. "You always talk too much! As for you! "He leveled Aecris at Skauril, " you talk more than the boy here, and that is a feat in itself. Didn't your mother tell you silence was golden?"

It served only to increase the growing rage in the priest, who began once more to intone words in a booming voice, growing more exultant with every syllable.

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20+2: 13] - success!

[Zero Bloodied]

Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal

Black and oily the portal's membrane ebbed and flowed like a viscous sea, claws and arms spouting at regular intervals to grasp and seize where they could. Before, when thin and bulging, it had had a shimmering radiance but now it drew the darkness in and held it there.

Whatever lay beyond, on the other side, showed no signs of slowing in its attempt to push through, but found it more difficult to thrash and squirm as it had previously.

The priest had obviously noticed this fact and had returned to his prayers - the wild claws responding to his words.

Kireth had been engaged with a test of wills against the priest's incantations for some time. His arcane knowledge now spent on this particular puzzle he had turned to what little he knew of the divine

רפענות, רפעעפגנותן ענע ורטוו נווסצי נווענ שטענע עווצשיר הוא הפעקרי כענוג. זה רפופכנוסה, נהפ סטרוענ עווצשירים המ

"Kireth," they whispered in dark shadows. "Your Queen calls. Come!"

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 21 vs Kireth's Will(15)] - hits! [Kireth moves 6 squares: N]

The mage could not disobey. If the Queen called, then he must come, and he strode forwards towards the portal.

As he came forwards the claws from the portal flicked out, but could not reach.

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Khalin had felt... something... as Tradden had whispered a prayer. And certainly the portal seemed to be changing, was it thickening? The dwarf bowed his head. With the wights gone it seemed easier to concentrate. He muttered words of reverance for Moradin, Clangeddin and even Bahamut - recalling Kireth's words about the tiny figurines they still held.

As he prayed he could feel the figurine throbbing in his pack, aiding his prayers.

[Minor Action - Religion Check: 1d20+2+2: 16] - success!

Khalin's muttered words grew stronger in his throat as he began to advance towards the priest. He could feel the warmth of the idol in his pack fueling and channeling his righteousness. This portal before him, this abomination, should not be. It should be closed and sealed for eternity. The words became strange to Khalin, in a language he did not rightly understand, but they flooded from his mouth growing in strength and spirit.

The portal began to churn, spinning around the centre in a fast flowing action. The others looked on in alarm as it appeared that the portal was opening. The priest cried out in either delight or alarm, it was difficult to tell.

Then, with a crash like the clap of thunder the portal stiffened, flexing once both outwards and inwards. and then became what appeared to be a solid wall, black and foreboding, a sheen upon it like the finest crafted marble. A crack split the floor from the centre of the portal, running through the magic circle, through the pit of blood, and all the way to the feet of the statue that faced it.

A vast black flame erupted upon the altar, lighting the prayer book the priest had been reciting from when the group had entered the chamber.

"No!" cried both the priest and Kireth in unison as the flames consumed the book to ashes.

The shock wave from the portal then hit - a giant wall of wind that tossed blood from the central pit across the chamber and blew the heroes from their feet.

[Portal Shock Wave]

[Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 14 vs Khalin's Fortitude(16)] - misses!

[Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 15 vs Kireth's Fortitude(15)] - hits!

[Kireth is Knocked Prone] [Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 12 vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - misses!

[Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 9 vs Zero's Fortitude(15)] - misses!

[Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 25 vs Rangrim's Fortitude(16+2)] - hits!

[Rangrim Stand Your Ground: 1d20: 15] - success!

[Rangrim avoids being Knocked Prone]

[Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 21 vs Skauril's Fortitude] - misses! [Shock Wave: 1d20+6: 14 vs Clay Scout's Fortitude] - hits!

[Clay Scout is Knocked Prone]

As the dust settled from the impact, the chamber became quiet. Only the trickle of blood seeping through the newly formed crack into the the floor could be heard.

First to break from the reverie, Khalin raised his hammer once more. "Time for this to end," he growled to himself, and pounded his boots as he guickly crossed the ground to the necromancer.

[Charge vs Skauril: 1d20+9+1: 29] - critical hit!

[Damage: 1d10r2+7: 17] plus [1d8: 8 charge damage] plus [2d8: 4 critical damage] plus [1d6: 2 fire damage]

The warlord thundered into the priest, his hammer held high, and as the two met the ground shook. Fire leapt from the dwarf's bracers and surrounded the priest who cried out in agony. The priest's horned helm buckled under the weight of Khalin's swing and one of the horns snapped, gouging the priest's eye and sending a spray of hot blood over the dwarf's mail.

The priest could only scream in agony for a moment as the blood crusted and his face blackened with the magical fire, cauterising the wound in an instant. The pain was intense, but for a moment he seemed to revel in it, until he looked over his shoulder at the closed portal behind him and across the chamber at the smoking remains at the altar.

"You will pay!" he screamed. "My Lord will crush you!"

[Skauril Bloodied]

Neil, me and Random: Kireth Maiere

😤 👩 "No" said Kireth as he pushed against his staff and stood up "No he will not. Not this day'

[Move Action - Stand Up]

"You could surrender to us," the mage muttered something under his breath

[Minor Action: Wizard's Fury]

"But we both know that this will not happen, don't we. And so, shall we finish this?"

[Force Orb vs Skauril's Reflex: 1d20+8: 23] - hits! [Damage: 2d8+5: 11]

The ball of force burst against Skauril's chest, sending slivers of sharp energy spinning into the portal beyond. Although the portal appeared solid and immovable, the shards of energy were consumed in the blackness as through they had slipped through



Weak and bloodied, but at last free from the shackles of whatever magical force had bound him, Rangrim roared. The winged creature was still nearby, but had been cast to the floor by the blast of air from the portal. Rangrim himself had only just managed to stay on his feet.

The rogue decided that the quickest route to the creature was to run directly at it, leaping off the altar, it was only ten feet up.

[Acrobatics Check: 1d20+6: 19] - success!

He took the leap in his stride and with a few steps further found himself standing above the prostrate creature.

There was no pity or mercy shown, Rangrim simply slammed the hammer down onto the beast's exposed belly.

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[Damage: 2d10+9: 18] plus [2d8+3: 13 sneak damage]

There was a satisfying squelch as the hammer struck the creature and flattened it against the stone. It stiffened, then hardened, small cracks appearing all over its surface, and then it shattered into tiny clay pieces.

[Clay Scout Dea	d]
*** 👩 🏹	Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

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With a cracking and a smashing sound Tradden heard more than he saw Rangrim despatch the wierd flappy-thing on the far side of the chamber.

"And then there was one." he said to himself, matter-of-factly under his breath. In other circumstances it might have been a time for jokes, but this man had caused a lot of death, pain and suffering and as such this was neither the time nor the place.

With that, he started stalking forward, slowly at first [Move] before breaking into a howling run and charge.

[Charge vs Skauril: 1d20+11+1: 24] - hits! [Damage: 1d8+7: 15] and [Marked]

Tradden bashed into the priest with a swift cut, but the priest held his ground.

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

"Yes!" Zero said, watching Tradden's success.

Then he picked a spot from which he wouldn't be seen by the priest and hopped to it.

[Fleeting Ghost - Stealth Check to Hide: 1d20+13: 24] - success!

Weakened from the evil magic, he still tried his best to take the last, resilient enemy down.

[Sly Flourish vs Skauril: 1d20+9+2: 28] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+6: 13] plus [2d8: 5 sneak damage] halved to [9 damage]

Weakened as he was, the bolt still flew true, and lodged in the priest's leg.

Zero gritted his teeth, trying to keep his hands steady and foughts the mage's necrotic power.

[Save vs Weakened: 1d20+1: 13] - success!

Gradually the chill left his bones and an odd calmness came across him.

1	Me and Random: Skauril			Jan 17 🔻

Blood trickled down the priest's face, his left eye gored and useless by the dwarf's charge. Driven on by the fervour of his belief and the arrogance that he woud prevail the priest felt no pain. He had come so far and achieved so much, and his Lord would not desert him at this hour. Strength would be his and victory would be at hand.

Somehow, however, those attacking him had managed to slow and maybe even stop the ritual that he had spent tendays preparing. They would pay with their blood and the utmost irony would be that it would be they that finally unlocked the portal.

The blood he had collected from the many sacrifices was slowly draining away in the centre of the chamber, oozing into the cracks that had formed when the portal had shuddered and frozen. The fuel for the ritual slipping away. Even as he contemplated further cracks were forming.

The priest smiled, licking his lips and tasting his own blood. His Lord had not deserted him, he could feel it. There would be revenge. His Lord would act.

There were direct matters at hand, though. He would have some fun with those next to him. The dwarf, like all dwarves, was stupid - a subhuman, barely worthy of his contemplation. The fighter with the blades was a nuisance, but could be neutralised swiftly. He would fall first.

The priest raised his rod, and swung at Tradden.

[Skauril Rod of Ruin: 1d20+13: 32 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - critical hit! [Damage: 2d6+4: 16] plus [Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

The ground shook and swelled as the priest slammed his rod into **Tradden's** chest. The young fighter staggered back, the force of the impact sucking out his breath and the touch of the skull-cap freezing his heart.

The priest did not finish there, quickly pointing the skull-capped rod back at **Tradden's** chest and uttering a plea to his Demon Lord, the chill necrotic energy surrounding the youngster's heart leeching out the warmth of his body.

[Skauril Call of the Grave: 1d20+11: 16 vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - misses!

Somehow Tradden managed to resist the power, gritting his teeth and refusing to succumb to the chill.



Me and Random: The Thing in the Portal

The portal appeared to be sealed, the claws no longer grasping and pushing against a thin membrane. Whatever had lay beyond was fixed behind a wall, unable to penetrate into the chamber, unable to enter the world. It would not serve the priest that had been calling it and its hordes would not follow.

Before it turned its back, however, it would taste the energy of the bright lives laid before it. Shining brightest with arcane power dripping from it was one towards the rear. It sent its messngers out to reel it in.

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 17 vs Kireth's Will(15)] - *hits!* [Kireth is Pulled 6 squares]

The voices came to **Kireth** again and he could not resist, his feet taking him forwards before he could stop. Before he knew what he was doing he found himself staring at the solid black surface, mesmerised by its beauty and magnificence, desperate to reach out and touch it, to drink from its majesty and taste its power.



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

The blows rained in against the Necromancer, but bloodied, burnt and bruised, still he stood. Once again Khalin summoned all his strength, willing his craghammer to put an end to the nightmare and its instigator. With a roar of rage to rekindle the spirits of his comrades, Khalin swung Aecris in a mighty arc down towards the enemy before him...

[Stand the Fallen vs Skauril: 1d20+9: 11] - misses!

[Allies within 10 squares spend a healing surge and regain an additional +3 hp] [Kireth spends a healing surge and regains **10+3: 13** hp] [Tradden spends a healing surge and regains **12+3: 15** hp] [Zero spends a healing surge and regains **11+3: 14** hp] Somehow the necromancer parried the blow, and Khalin regrouped, shaping to better allow Tradden his chance to finish the battle.

[Khalin shifts to square E of Skauril]

Neil and me: Kireth Majere

Standing on the edge of darkness, eternity sprawling before him, it would be such a simple thing to take one more step. Such a sweet simple thing...

Not yet screamed the burning hatred. When the time came to jump into the abyss, and he was prepared for that time, it would be a leap of his own chosing. Not because he was lulled by some unknown siren. Bah, how pitiful.

Focusing himself he backed away from the portal. "One day we may meet," he thougt to himself "but it shall be you who is mesmerised by me!"

Allowing the portal one more defiant stare, he turn his head and fixed his gaze upon Skauril. "You wave your rod like a frightened girl, priest. Know these are you last moments in this realm and wallow in your fear."

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

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

[Action Point]

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

The three missiles slammed into the priest one after another, knocking the priest backwards into the waiting blades of Tradden. The priest could offer no retort, it was surrounded.

🌠 👩 Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Buoyed by his strike on the winged creature Rangrim turned towards the priest. He held the warhammer in both hands and strode towards the horned figure, gradually picking up speed and breaking into a charge.

'You will pay for Ulmo's death," he snarled as he covered the gap between them and swung his hammer with might.

[Charge vs Skauril: 1d20+9+2: 16] - misses!

In his rage the swipe was wide and the priest had no problems with dodging the blow.

"Impudent creature," the priest offered, his arrogance and confidence returning with the move. "You shall all be crushed. My Lord will see to that. I shall live on, whether in death or life. You," he pointed with his rod, "shall suffer for all eternity."

Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

The elation at the boost given by Khalin's last attack gave way to a gut-wrenching feeling that something was badly wrong.

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

Chokeing the eerie feeling back as best he could, Tradden stepped round the newly-arrived Rangrim and arrived in a flanking position opposite Khalin. He was going to say something to their new Dwarf ally, but the Rogue was clearly in another place right now - focused on ending theincreasingly beleagered, arrogant priest.

"Khalin is right - you do talk more than me!"

[Frost Longsword Melee Attack v Skauril: 1d20+11+2: 16] - misses! [Marked]

Tradden chopped out at the man, but it was a poor swipe - the priest easily blocking it with his evil-looking rod.

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20+1: 4] - failure!

Me: Stood beside the pool of blood in the centre of the chamber, Zero could see it was starting to drain quicker now, accompanied by a soft whistling as it seeped into the cracks. Where Jan 18 v it was going was anyone's guess, but every now and then a few thin cracks appeared in the stonework stretching from the portal all of the way across to the statue at the southern side of the chamber, arcing through the centre of the blood pit.

It made **Zero** shiver, but at least the blood would soon be gone and the hideous metallic smell and reddish glow would be gone.

Jan 19 -Zero hoped his comrades didn't mind him using them as cover. If it resulted in the resilient priest dropping with a bolt in his heart, he doubted they would.

[Fleeting Ghost - Stealth Check to Hide: 1d20+13: 17] - failure!

Even past the bodies and blades before him the priest could spot the roque trying to hide. Zero let fly with the bolt anyway.

[Sly Flourish vs Skauril: 1d20+9: 19] - misses!

Zero lost his nerve. The priest, through his one good eye, stared at him as he cast the bolt and the rogue's aim was off. The bolt flew straight at the blackness of the portal and plunged in and through it, with barely a sound nor a ripple.

Me and Random: Skauril

Bloodied and battered the priest did not yet think himself defeated. In his arrogance he believed that his Lord would still save him. He had served Him well and there would be due reward.

His left eye was blinded, the attack from the dwarf had seen to that, the horn on his helm crushing and splitting it. Trickles of blood ran down his face warming his lips. He couldn't see the dwarf properly, the vision to his left hand side now gone, so he decided to move that way.

First, however, he would prevent the fighter from leaping after him.

[Call of the Grave - Recharge: 1d6: 5] - success!

With a call upon his rod a black flame erupted towards the warrior.

[Minor Action - Call of the Grave: 1d20+11: 24 vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - hits! [Immobilised] (Until end of Skauril's next turn)

The priest then quickly followed up with a swinging attack with the skull-capped club.

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[Rod of Ruin: 1d20+13: 23 vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits! [Damage: 2d6+4: 13] plus [Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

Swiflty he then backed away, keeping a little distance between himself and the twin-bladed fighter.

[Shift: NE]

Tradden quickly seized upon the opportunity to strike out at the retreating priest.

[Tradden Combat Challenge vs Skauril: 1d20+11+2: 24] - hits! [Damage: 1d8+7: 13]

The young fighter's feet may have felt leaden, but there was nothing wrong with his sword-arm, his sword cutting another red slash across the priest's chest as he withdrew.

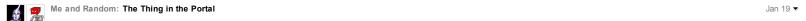
Skauril could see the dwarf more clearly now, his good right eye staring at the warlord with unfettered ire. As annoying as the fighter was, he would turn his attention to the dwarf before him. An eye for an eye - he swung his rod.

[Spends Action Point]

[Rod of Ruin: 1d20+13: 29 vs Khalin's AC(21)] - hits! [Damage: 2d6+4: 12] plus [Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

"Hear me, Lord Orcus," the priest shouted out as the rod struck Khalin in the chest, tightening the dwarfs heart with the chill. "Aid me to rid those that thwart your plans. Strike them down with your might and power."

The priest's good eye grew large as he stared past the dwarf, seemingly lost in the fervour of his prayers.



Still black and foreboding, the stillness of the sheer wall of darkness at the portal was almost as unnerving as the grasping claws had been before. All had noticed Zero's bolt be consumed.

The voices were still there, though. All could hear them whispered in their ears, even above the cacophony of battle. Each heard their name being called and a pull on their hearts. For one, the lure was getting harder to resist.

[Whispering Lure: 1d20+6: 17 vs Kireth's Will(15)] - hits! [Kireth is Pulled 6 squares]

The mage strode forwards without fear of the blackness. The promises of power too much to resist. What lay beyond the black mirror sheen of the portal he was only just beginning to understand, but he seemed to no longer fear it.

He came to his senses at the threshold, inches from the darkness. Although his fear was gone, his instincts for self-preservation were very much alive, and he ensured that he did not touch the blackness

Me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Khalin gritted his teeth against the latest assault from the necromancer, who simply refused to fall. On some level Khalin acknowledged the stubborn tenacity of the enemy, but that was quickly subsumed by hatred at the priest's insane plans and the suffering he'd caused.

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

The warlord slid defly to his left to cover Tradden and Rangrim with his shield [Shift: W] then struck once more...

[Shielded Assault vs Skauril: 1d20+9: 23] - hits! [Damage: 2d10r2+7: 24] plus [Khalin and adjacent Allies gain +2 to AC]

The priest tottered. The latest assault was brutal, catching the priest on his blind side.

"Come to me, now," pleaded the priest, looking at the statue across the chamber imploringly.

Khalin ignored the protestations, gathering his strength for a final onslaught.

[Free Action - Dwarven Scale Armour: Khalin regains 11 hp]

🙍 🕦 🔀 Me, Random and 2 others: Demon Lord

The blood from the pit had seemed to have fully seeped into the ground. Small, thin cracks all of the way from the portal to the statue at the far side of the chamber were growing. They didn't appear to be affecting the structure of the chamber, but perhaps covering the evil that had befallen the site.

Then there was an ear-splitting crack.

All turned round to see the base of the Demon Lord statue crumble beneath it, the stone plinth severing down the middle with a large crack and then crumbling to dust. A spurt of blood gushed up, splattering against the unsteady legs to the statue as it started to topple forwards.

They all stared as the statue appeared to walk forwards, although of course it could not.

"My Lord, you come to save me!" exulted the priest. "Destroy these before you!" he commanded.

The statue wobbled, gaining momentum as it fell past Zero, missing the rogue by inches before the vast weight of stone crashed onto the magic circle and beyond, pulversing those beneath - the skullcapped rod that the Demon Lord held forth aiming directly for the heart of the priest.

[Statue of Orcus: Topple - Burst 5 Centered on Skauril] [Damage: 4d8+6: 27]

[Topple: 1d20+14: 27 vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - hits!

- [Damage: 27] and [Knocked Prone] and [Dazed] (Save Ends) [Topple: 1d20+14: 15 vs Khalin's Reflex(14)] - critical miss!
- [Damage: 13] and [Knocked Prone]
- [Stand Your Ground: **1d20: 17**] *success!* [Avoids Prone] [Topple: **1d20+14: 26** vs Tradden's Reflex(17)] - *hits!*

[Damage: 27] and [Knocked Prone] and [Dazed] (Save Ends) [Topple: 1d20+14: 30 vs Rangrim's Reflex(18)] - hits! [Damage: 27] and [Knocked Prone] and [Dazed] (Save Ends)

[Stand Your Ground: 1d20: 4] - failure!

[Statue of Orcus: Skull-Capped Rod] [Skull-Capped Rod: 1d20+16: 33 vs Skauril's Reflex] - hits! [Damage: 4d6+10: 30] and [Pushed 2 squares]

As the statue fell Khalin could see it would crush those next to him. Both Tradden and Rangrim were already losing a lot of blood and the pair would be crushed by the stonework.

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"Look out!" he shouted, as though the comment may help.

Then with a mumble of "Moradin, forgive me!" and without regard for his own safety the warlord threw the might of his craghammer against the stone that fell over Rangrim, cracking the stone even as it fell.

[Immediate Interrupt - Khalin Fearless Rescue] [Rangrim spends a Healing Surge and regains 13 hp]

Tradden saw it coming a mile off. For him it all happened in slow motion, which was fine - it gave him more time to get out of the way. With a grin he moved to vault backwards, way out of the statue's landing zone. Easy.

And then he realised his legs were frozen - he couldn't move! "Ah..." he said, simply, as the shadow overtook him. He didn't have time to say anything else. Everything went black.

The stone of the statue fell upon the group, crushing them to the floor and knocking the wind out of them. Several pieces of the broken statue were engulfed by the blackness of the portal.

As the dust settled **Zero** looked on in alarm. There were groans and movement from the area, and he could see **Khalin** still standing, but covered in dust. Stood right in front of the portal, above a dazed **Kireth**, was the priest. A look of shock and disbelief was on his face, the carved rod of the Demon Lord embedded like a spear through his chest.

The price of failure.

The priest looked down incredulously at the rod protuding from his chest. He began to mouth some words, whether prayers of mercy or spiteful curses none could tell. Slowly, with his one-eyed gaze firmly fixed on the standing **Zero**, he slipped slowly backwards, silently through the dark glassy portal.

[Tradden Dying]



The grey, ashen, dust settling about them, Kireth's burning glare was directed at Khalin. It had all happened very fast but to a mage for whom time moved slower, he had seen it all. He had seen the statue crumbling and falling, he had seen those in the greatest peril, and he saw Khalin make a conscious decision to save Rangrim over Tradden.

Kireth's stare said one thing "I saw what you did". It should not have come as a surprise to any of them he supposed. Their race was inherently selfish and xenophobic. The decision to save a Kinsman over a trusted comrade who had in turn helped save Khalin's own life many times was probably not really a decision at all. It was what he was always going to do.

Kireth had never been Tradden's greatest fan. He found the fighter's need to be "over the top" and exaggerated at whatever he did to be at best annoying, at worst dangerous. But even the dark mage would have put his comrades above all others. He was well aware the others questioned his ethics at times but no matter what else the mages agenda, he was loval to the party.

And now Tradden lay there, unconscious and bleeding out. Well, now they knew where they stood with the "noble" dwarf.

Brushing rubble from him, on shaky legs, Kireth tried to stand using his staff as support. "Tradden" he shouted hoping that on some level the lad could hear him "Don't you dare die on us you oaf. We're coming". He wasn't sure what he would be able to do but at least he would try.

[Stand]

[Save vs Dazed: 1d20: 14] - success!

Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

Rangrim blinked. He was alive. He was surprised. He'd closed his eyes as the statue had fallen, he knew that it was the end. Then something had pushed him aside and smashed the stone aiming for his head into smaller chunks with a hammer. The dwarf.

His bones hurt and he was in bad shape, but nothing a few salves and herbs wouldn't heal. He tried to move, but a dizziness overcame him and a ringing started in his ears.

In the dust he could see **Khalin** standing above him, breathing hard, and **Tradden** lying next to him, a huge rock on the young fighter's head stained with the lad's blood. Rangrim was not a healer but he could tell the boy was in bad shape, probably dying.

With an effort Rangrim rolled over, ignoring the stabbing pain, and pushed the rock away from Tradden's head. The blood began to flow freely.

"Help, here!" Rangrim coughed and began to see what he could do to assist the young fighter.

[Heal Check - Stabilise the Dying: 1d20+3: 8] - failure!

"I think he's dying," Rangrim cried as his clumsy hands failed to staunch the flow of blood.

[Save vs Dazed: 1d20: 3] - failure!

The dwarf then fell back onto the floor, his head still spinning.

Matt, me and Random: Tradden Aversward

Tradden simply lay in the rubble - oddly serene despite being covered in a mixture of dust and blood. Perhaps it seemed odd to the others because he was literally still - not talking, not moving ... in fact, not even breathing...

Even in death the claws of the necromancer still dug deep.

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

[Save vs Death: 1d20+1: 21] - *critical success!* [Tradden goes to 1 hp and spends a Healing Surge]

Kireth was wading over and Rangrim started to tend to him, but the Dwarf fell back, clearly badly hurt himself and unable to stand, let alone ministrate to the fighter. It didn't look good.

Then, as if a large (well, another one) weight had been been dropped on Tradden's chest, he spluttered heavily, spitting out blood and dust in equal measure. There was another pause followed by a large intake of breath. Against all the odds, Tradden was alive - but still in a very, very bad way.

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20+1: 20] - success!

The coughing subsided, Tradden's eyes closed and he reverted to being motionless. Or at least nearly motionless - now there was a faint rising and falling of his chest where there had not been before, and the blood seemed to pump out of his wounds less ferociously.

Mark: As the dust cleared Khalin quickly dropped to Rangrim and Tradden's side. Khalin's gut was wrenching at the 'choice' he'd taken. He knew from his military training that any commander would Jan 20
have to make difficult decisions - nay, life and death decisions - in the field of battle. But never had he been thrust into the position where he'd had to make one. Not like this.

How could the others understand? Ye gods, how would Tradden understand if he pulled through? That on instinct, his natural urge to preserve a kinsman, perhaps the one remaining relic of the dwarven kingdoms of old, the whole reason he'd made this gods-forsaken journey, had asserted itself. Sure, his mentors in the guardsmen would have praised him for putting the life of a 'civilian' above a 'soldier'. But no training could prepare him for the guilt that would follow.

The dwarf triad to think straight. Pangrim was dated builting on the heathed still. Tradden, the heat looked almost series a Khalin started to fumble for the heating notion stowed in his nack, but then with a solutter

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the lad lurched back to the land of the living. A couple of tears streamed down the warlord's face. Strange, he thought, how a human he had known for such a short time had provoked such a response.

"Easy lad, easy," he counselled softly



Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

Zero hovered on the edge of the debris field, shocked and indecisive at the carnage and chaos that had just ensued. As the dust settled, he scanned his companions. Everyone seemed all right, except for Tradden: pummeled and bloody, motionless. The rogue gasped and was about to rush to his friend's aid, but the fallen swordsman abruptly coughed and groaned.

"Thank the gods," he sighed.

But the moment of relief swiftly vanished

He looked around, puzzled. The priest was dead, the giant statue in pieces, the ominous bloody portal seemingly neutralised and yet...something was not right here.

He retreated up the dais steps to the west and surveyed cautiously, loading a bolt just in case.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I'm not sure it's time to crack open the champagne just yet."

[Perception Check: 1d20+10: 19] - success!

The priests book, smouldering on the bone altar, was not completely charred to ashes, parts of it were still left. A tingling sensation up **Zero's** neck confirmed his suspicions that not everything was alright. He turned back to the group to raise further alarm.

Me and Random: Skauril

Kireth stood at the edge of the portal staring intently at Khalin. It was fortuitous that Tradden had survived the crush of the stones, but the mage had seen how the warlord had ignored his friend and gone to the aid of another dwarf they'd only known for a few hours. The mage also took a cursory glance at the unharmed Zero on the fringes of the battle. He gripped his staff tightly and started to clamber over the stones towards Khalin.

[Skauril Shadow Claws: 1d20+8: 21 vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - hits! [Damage: 1d6+4: 5] and [Grabbed]

As he stepped up onto the first of the stones he suddenly felt a vice-like grip on his leg as something sharp and intensely cold took hold. Turning with a scowl he was horrified to see the bloodied remnants of a hand locked around his ankle - an arm protruded from the portal's surface, blackened and writhing with shadow, clutching on to his leg with unnearthly strength. A broken rod, charred and writhered and skull-capped at one end, lay on the floor next to the arm as though discarded in preference for **Kireth's** leg.

From across the chamber, Zero should the alarm, his keen senses spotting the hideous appendage strike out at the mage.

Slowly and surely the arm started pulling Kireth towards the black face of the portal.

Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

With both Tradden and Rangrim apparently out of the woods for the moment, Khalin's attention was drawn back to the continuing pain he was experiencing from whatever fell spell the nercromancer had cast on him. He grimaced as the pain reasserted itself.

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage]

Zero's shout of alarm shook the dwarf from his reverie, and he looked up to see Kireth being held by an arm reaching from the portal itself.

"Kireth!" yelled the warlord, and immediately hurried to the elfs aid. Aecris had weathered the falling rock well, and the dwarf hefted his hammer ready to bring it down on the nightmarish appendage...

[Charge vs Shadow Claw: 1d20+9+1: 24] - hits!

[Damage: 1d10r2+7: 12] plus [1d8: 6 charge damage]

The mage was in a bad way, and the dwarf was damned if anyone else was going to suffer this day. As he followed through with his swing he recalled the figurine in his pack once more - how Bahamut had apparently helped close the portal moments before. Once more he focused on the dragon god, muttering a prayer for aid for the mage as reverently as he could, augmenting it with a prayer to Berronar, the dwarven goddess of healing.

[Minor Action - Religion Check: 1d20+2+2: 24] - critical success!

Khalin felt the weight in his pack shift and minor cracks and crumbles as the idol shattered within the confines of the leather backpack. Energy flowed through him as he raised a hand to hold Kireth's shoulder and the cuts and bruises on the half-elf's face gradually cleared.

[Khalin loses 1 healing surge and loses 10 hp] [Kireth loses 1 healing surge and regains 10 hp]

[Save vs Ongoing Damage: 1d20: 20] - critical success!

The energy kept flowing through the dwarf, burning the cold clutching sensation on his heart away.

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Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

Kireth remained unflustered. He understood this "If i'm going down, you're coming with me" mentallity of the priest. He just had to make sure he denied Skauril his final wish.

Bracing his staff against the floor he used it to put his weight against before kicking out the captured leg in an effort to break free.

[Athletics Check vs Skauril's Fortitude: 1d20+1: 17] - failure!

The priest's grip was vice like and held fast. He had no spell in his arsenal that would help here. If he survived this, he would have to pay more attention to such situational magic.

He cursed in Elvish and in anger, as much at his own short-comings, threw an outstretched arm downwards.

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

With Tradden down, Kireth looked over to Zero, the only other person the mage could trust.

Me and Random: Rangrim Ironnose

As Tradden coughed and spluttered, Rangrim tried to stand. The world was still spinning and he took a couple of moments to orient himself.

[Save vs Dazed: 1d20: 13] - success!

The chamber snapped back into focus, and with Zero's cries of alarm ringing in his ears he turned to see the sticken Kireth, but was powerless at this moment to help.

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As Zero tried to take a bead on the arm through a gaggle of bodies, there was movement off to his left

Rising from the ashy rubble stood Tradden. [Stand as Move Action]. He swayed, more than a little, from side to side, taking it all in, his blades hanging limply from his bloodied hands. With a couple of "clanks", the shortsword fell from his grasp [Free Action], and from behind his waist he pulled his Hand Crossbow [Minor Action]. His arm, caked with blood and masonry dust, wavered noticably as he took aim, his one good eye (the other already swollen up and black) looking to find "the shot". It probably wouldn't do any good, but if it made Kireth harder to hit he would have acheived something.

That statue should have killed him and the priest. It hadn't - they were both still alive, amazingly. No doubt the Gods would remedy that situation sooner rather than later, but he would be damned if it was going to be him first

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[Hand Crossbow vs The Arm from the Portal: 1d20+7: 11] - misses!

[Marked]

The bolt was wild and it disappeared into the darkness of the portal.

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit Zero had to think quickly. Surprisingly, the gravity of the moment, his comrade's life in the balance, brought a clarity and focus to his mind.

He fished out his necklace of keys and hurled them across the chamber, hoping his aim was decent

"Kireth!" he yelled. "Use these!"

[Throw: 1d20+3+2-5: 5] - failure!

The throw was too hard, the keys sailed over Kireth's head and bounced off the stonework at the top of the portal. They dropped into the rubble, tantalisingly close to Kireth and Khalin. [Necklace of Keys in square 2 squares south of Khalin]

[Spends Action Point]

Then, he dashed toward the charred remnants of the grim book on the altar and cast them into the brazier beside it.

Acrid smoke billowed from the pages of the book, the stench almost overcoing the rogue. The book turned to ash quickly, its writings and promises of power lost forever.

For a moment Kireth thought the arm was going to let go, the grip weakened for an instant, but then its strength returned.

Calm and unfluttered (although mildly annoyed) the mage did notice that the grip was not as strong, as though part of the enchantment binding it together had been unravelled.

"Kill it!" the mage ordered vehemently. Then his gaze cast across the chamber and a thought came to his mind. "Or smash that bloody mirror," he said, staring over to the eastern side.

Me and Random: The Arm from the Portal 1

Wisps of shadow cascaded from the arm in streams. Khalin's strike and Zero's quick thinking with the book were paying its toll on whatever nethermancy held the arm together, but it wasn't enough. The grip was still tight and the pull still strong.

Then Kireth was pulled towards the portal.

[The Arm from the Portal Pull: 1d20+8: 18 vs Kireth's Fortitude(15)] - success!

The arm slowly disappeared into the portal, dragging the helpless Kireth with it, the mage toppling over and being dragged by the legs. Khalin had one last chance to sever the arm.

[Khalin Attack of Opportunity vs The Arm from the Portal: 1d20+9: 12] - misses!

The dwarf's strike missed, fearful of striking the portal and compounding the situation.

Kireth was dragged halfway into the blackness of the portal, the darkness enveloping his legs and torso like the blackest of robes. The pain was excruciating and he could feel his life essence being drained from his body.

[Kireth loses 1 healing surge and 10 hp] and [Weakened] and [Prone]

The lower portion of his body felt as though it were being burned, the flesh running in rivulets down his legs. Whether this was his imagination or reality he could not tell, but he could taste the power of the shadows burning him.

He screamed.



Mark, me and Random: Khalin Grundokri

Things were going from bad to worse. How ironic it would be that the battle had been all but won, the hostages saved, and now some blasted evil magic would snatch it all away from them at the final moment. But Bahamut and Berronar's answer to Khalin's prayers (for an instant the dwarf wondered how he'd suddenly become a religious convert) had for a moment saved Kireth. The elf would no doubt not appreciate it, and clearly Khalin's painful yet dutiful adherence to the dwarven honour codes would lead to much righteous bluster from the ignorant mage, but the warlord was grateful that Kireth might at least still be around to have that conversation

Then the ghastly arm pulled once more, and the portal began to swallow the mage. Khalin's military training reasserted itself, and his self-doubt ebbed away - this was no time for agonising over difficult choices now moot

The warlord scrambled for the keys Zero had hurled towards them...

[Moves two squares and picks up keys as Minor Action]

Then in one movement scooped them up and lobbed them underarm towards the mage, hoping Clangeddin, Moradin and the rest of the dwarven pantheon of gods would bless his aim, shouting to the mage to assure his attention as he propelled them towards him...

[Throw: 1d20+3: 8] - misses!

The necklace appeared to have a life all of its own, bouncing off one of the statue's broken horns and scattering off to the west. Khalin looked incredulously at the cartwheeling item with gaping jaw.



Neil, me and Random: Kireth Majere

A blind Yak could have done better. Khalin could surely not have thrown the necklace further away if he tried... or perhaps that is what he had tried? The mage narrowed his already pain ridden eyes and again stared intently at the dwarf. Yes, the warlord knew that Kireth had seen his transgression against the loyal Tradden and was hoping the portal would swallow up the one person that might call him on it.

"Well, I'm not finished yet, dwarf!" screamed the mage internally. "You'll have to wait a bit longer for your conscience to disappear.

[Acrobatics Check - Escape: 1d20+3: 16] - failure!

Despite his renewed vigour, the mage did naught but slip a little further inside. "GAH!" he yelled in frustration. Then calm.

Closing his eyes the mage forced himself to focus once more. He reached out his left arm. For a moment nothing happened, then, "Puff" a shadowy grey hand appeared above his own. The mage made a gesture and

the hand shot across the room, hovering above the necklace.

[Minor Action - Ghost Hand] [Minor Action - Move Ghost Hand]

Me: Rangrim Ironnose

"By the Nine Hells," Rangrim shouted as his senses returned to him. "Are none of you going to help him?"

The dwarf looked over at the screaming mage, only half his body protruding from the portal, his hands clutched like balls of white around his staff with a deathly grip.

Rangrim took off with speed to get to **Kireth's** side [Run], scrambling across the fallen masonry with grace belying his stature. He grabbed hold of **Kireth's** shoulders and began to hold the mage against the strain. [Aid Another: Kireth gains +2 to escape attempts]

Matt: Tradden Aversward

Tradden stood, a blank expression on his face. He looked at the keys, and then at Kireth, half sucked-in to the bizarre portal thing. Back to the keys. Back to Kireth. He dropped his crossbow. [Free Action]

Somewhat Reminiscent of the zombies they had faced earlier, the fighter shuffled forwards, his long legs navigating the rubble-strewn floor with ease. [Run as move action 3 squares North] He bent down and picked up the keys with his free hand [Minor Action] and then walked over to Kireth. [Move as Standard Action].

"There you go." said Tradden, still with a distant look on his face, passing them to Kireth.



Kireth's desperate cry ringing in his ears, Zero darted forward, took aim at the mirror on the opposite side of the chamber and pulled the trigger of his crossbow.

[Sly Flourish vs Mirror: 1d20+9-2: 26] - critical hit!

[Damage: 1d6+6: 12] plus [1d6: 4 critical damage]

Nick, me and Random: Zero Uhlit

The ground below the rogue throbbed with energy, keeping Zero's arm still and steady as a rock. The bolt whistled across the chamber from the bottom of the steps of the raised platform eastwards towards the dais and struck the strangely familiar mirror dead centre with a dull clatter.

However, instead of the tinkle of broken glass, there was only the noise of the first strike, and as if in slow motion the bolt simply cascaded end over end from the silvery surface and fell into the white bones below.

Zero's arm started to lower - he'd bullseyed it, he was certain. No, this wasn't right.

Me: For a moment the chamber was still and silent, even Kireth's cries of agony paused for a moment. All turned to face the source of the dull strike at the eastern side of the chamber 2:34 am 🔹 as if drawn by some unseen force.

Then, there was an ear-splitting crack and a jagged black line ran down the centre of the mirror.

Where the heroes had seen one image reflected in the silvery plane, now there were two.

Tradden saw himself on the left, his swords outstretched in a lithe combat pose, enemies vanquished at his feet. In the other side his swords broken, his body clothed in rags, sprawled against a crumbling weed-ridden wall.

Zero saw a reflection of his youthful rotundness, a smile upon his lips, a goblet within his hand, and a pair of girls on his arms, jewellery dripping from their pale white bodies. In the other side he was alone, sat on a dais in a high-backed chair, his head in his hands, his face drawn and pale.

Khalin admired the reflection of himself with shield outthrust, blocking a hobgoblin's strike, protecting those behind him and inspiring them onwards. To the right he was running, arms and armour left behind as he fled from some unseen foe across sand and surf.

Kireth, through eyes filled with pain, saw blackness in both sides, shadows swirling in circles. Deiseil to the left, widdershins to the right. Spirals within spirals.

For the mage there was no time to contemplate - the icy grip on his legs simply disappeared. A wave of euphoria fleeted across him but was instantly and harshly replaced by one of vertigo as whatever had been supporting him dissolved, and he fell into the blackness as the mirror broke into a thousand pieces with a crash of thunder.

Me: Rangrim was almost pulled into the void. One of Kireth's hands slipped out of his own as the mage sank into the portal. Khalin, breaking out of his reflection-fed trance by the 2:34 am - 2:34

As Kireth's body, writhed in squirming shadows, cleared the portal, they all felt an icy blast of air cross the chamber and the portal solidified into black stone before their eyes.

The mage lurched to one side suddenly, coughing and retching spasmodically as one who had been lost at sea. But this was not water that the mage spewed forth, but mouthfuls of shadow. The shadows flipped and flapped on the stonework like dying fish before dissipating into the ether.

Kireth groaned and rolled over onto his back, staring at the slowly dripping blood from the chamber above.



Me: Short Rest

Healing Surges

Healing surges are applied. Khalin spends 1 healing surges (0 left) to get to 23/51 hp. Kireth spends 2 healing surge (0 left) to get to 25/44 hp. Tradden spends 0 healing surges (0 left) to get to 19/57 hp. Zero spends 2 healing surge (1 left) to get to 50/50 hp. Rangrim spends 4 healing surges (1 left) to get to 53/53 hp.

Encounter Powers

All encounter powers are recharged.

Milestone s Milestone Achieved: 1 Action Point Awarded.

Levelling Khalin is ready to level up to 6th. Kireth is ready to level up to 6th. Tradden is ready to level up to 6th. Zero is ready to level up to 6th.



Me: [...continued in Chapter #08, Scene #03...]

2:55 am 👻

Jan 23 🚽

Jan 23 🔻

2.33 am 🚽