



Synopsis
The 10th Day of Ches in the Year of the Sudden Journey
After accepting Blackengorge Town Council's request to find their two missing sons the party have headed to the mausoleum on a hill to the north of town. There, they have found a secret door leading down into a crypt where two hobgoblins lay in wait with traps. After overcoming the hobgoblins the party have ventured further into some caverns, where through a devil's head adorned door they have found the missing children within a magic circle. As the group stepped into the circle two stone statues animated and attacked, but the combined efforts of the party quickly dispatched them! With the children in tow, the group explored the remainder of the caverns, finding a ritual chamber and a mad elven sorcerer.

- [Celestia Gaia](#) - 1st Level Female Elven Cleric of Melora
- [Khālin Grundokri](#) - 2nd Level Male Dwarven Warlord
- [Kireth Majere](#) - 2nd Level Male Half-Elven Wizard
- [Tradden Aversward](#) - 2nd Level Male Human Fighter
- [Zero Uhlit](#) - 2nd Level Male Human Rogue

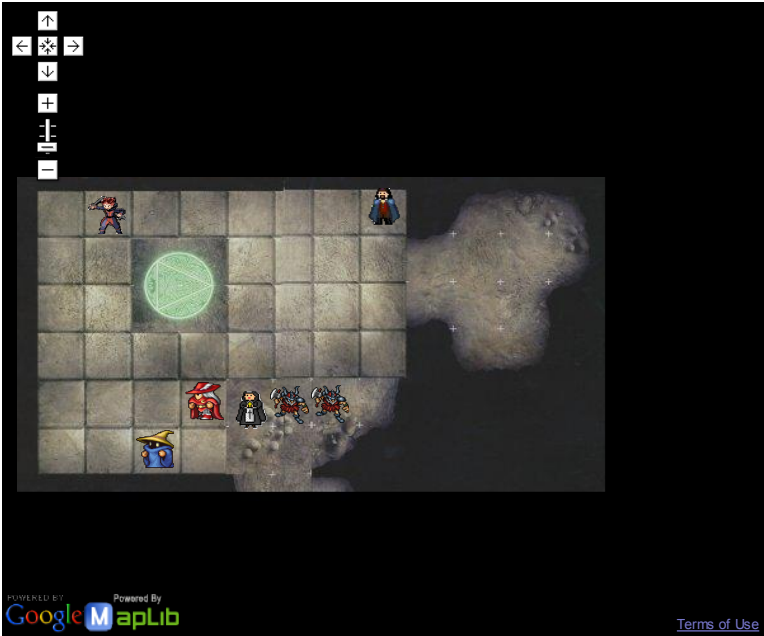
Scene Length
This scene starts on Thursday 14 October 2010 and is expected to be completed by the end of Friday 29 October 2010. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.

INITIATIVE BLOCK

Combat Encounter completed...

- 01) [26] Skeleton Warrior — ~~1d20+6: 25~~ — Dmg: 10+8+13+3+12+13=59
02) [24] Kireth - **1d20+7+2: 24** - HP 1/27 (Bloodied)
03) [21] Skeleton Troopers — ~~1d20+4: 21~~
 Skeleton #1 — Dmg: 10+11+6=31
 Skeleton #2 — Dmg: 9+14+6=29
 Skeleton #3 — Dmg: 9+11=28
 Skeleton #4 — Dmg: 14+4+9+24=51
04) [18] Tradden - **1d20+3+2: 18** - HP 25/32
05) [15] Zero - **1d20+4+2: 15** - HP 17/30
06) [15] Celestia - **1d20+1+2: 15** - HP 5/26
07) [10] Helvec — ~~1d20+2: 10~~ — Dmg: 18+4+18-5-5-5-5+11+11+11=53
08) [06] Khalin - **1d20+2+2: 6** - HP 13/31, plus 5 temp hp (Bloodied)
09) [01] Children
 Offa - HP 10/27 (Bloodied)
 Bailey - HP 10/27 (Bloodied)

BATTLE MAP



Me: *The towering skeleton slowly strode to the edge of the raised platform and simply walked off the edge, striking the floor below with a crash.*

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It raised its blade, frost glittering along the edge in the eerie light, and with a cracking of bones made its way towards the party.

Matt: *Tradden's jaw fell open wide.*

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Moving skeletons? What next?

Realising a lack of confidence was not the best thing to be displaying at this moment he took heart from the fact that Khalin was already at his side and looked completely unfazed. The young fighter therefore steeled

his nerves and drew his swords.

Behind him he could hear a whimper and a gasp from the two boys and also the increasingly familiar sound of Kireth murmuring as he started to prepare a spell. The usually quiet Celestia was also quietly speaking - likely drawing strength from her patron, Melora. Zero was nowhere to be seen, which he knew was actually a good sign.

"Steady everyone.... boys, time to show us exactly how good Sergeant Valino is as an archery teacher..."

 Neil, me and Random: Strike fast and strike hard. Seizing the initiative, Kireth pushed he was through his companions, entered the chamber and darted left.


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"Istar Rutha" he called, his eyes taking on a blueish glow as he finished the words.
[Wizard's Fury invoked - minor action]

Next he channeled his hands into the now familiar ball shape, sparks crackling away "Templa Koron" cried the mage as the ball of energy speed towards it target at incredible speed.

[Force Orb vs Skeleton #2 Reflex : **1d20+4: 5**] - Critical Miss!

The ball fired above the target, striking the wall some feet behind. Kireth cursed loudly and tried to refocus himself


 Me and Random: The first of the smaller skeletal figures marched with unnerving grace towards Kireth, who was stood by the wall of the chamber, cursing.

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It drew back it's longsword and swung with ease at the wizard.

[Longsword: **1d20+6: 11** vs Kireth's AC(16)] - misses!

Kireth still had the wits about him to dodge out of the way.


 Me and Random: Another of the skeletons marched forwards, it's bony feet scratching on the surface of the floor as it moved towards Kireth. Small points of light, barely discernable, stung the wizard with malice.

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[Longsword: **1d20+6: 21** vs Kireth's AC(16)] - hits!

[Damage: **1d8+2: 4**]

This time Kireth could not get out of the way, and the blade bit deep into his leg.

 Me: The other two skeletons began their march from beyond the raised pillar, and could not reach the rest of the party, trying to pick their way, this time with less grace, over the rubble in the entrance.

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 Matt, me and Random: Seeing the mage suddenly swamped by the skeleton figures spurred him into action, he moved forward onto the space in front of him, toe to toe with the first one. Noticing that the awkwardly moving skeletons were lined up nicely, he seized his chance....

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[Tempest Dance – Daily Power]

[First Attack vs Skeleton Trooper #3 with shortsword: **1d20+9: 25**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+7: 9**]

[Shift 1 square west]

[Second Attack vs Skeleton Trooper #2 with shortsword: **1d20+9: 22**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+7: 9**]

[Third Attack vs Skeleton Trooper #1 with shortsword: **1d20+9: 28**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+7: 10**]


In a manouever in many ways more suited to a ballet recital than the dark depths of some underground, undead-infested tomb in a far away land, Tradden pirouetted down the line, one pointed foot always on the floor, the other skipping up and down to help keep balance and to give him momentum.

High in the air his longsword threatened to slice skulls clear from skeletal bodies, but each strike was a feint, the damage being done by the shortsword, cleverly held out at waist height.

Once, twice, three times the blade found rib or spine - splinters and chips of bones flew in every direction.

Suddenly, Kireth did not face the fiends alone.

"Hello." said Tradden, eyes still on the undead forms in front of him. "Thought you might like a bit of company..."


 Me and Random: From out of the darkness in the corner of the room came a soft whistle as a bolt flew up towards the dark robed elf on the pedestal.

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[Unbalancing Shot: **1d20+6+2: 24**] - hits!

[Damage: **2d6+3+2d8: 18**] and [Slowed]

The bolt thudded into the elf's robes, embedding somewhere within their folds. The elf staggered back a little, but held himself on the platform. He looked visibly shaken and turned his withering glance towards the corner of the room where a now visible Zero crouched.

 Me and Random: Celestia strode forwards, the symbol of her diety, Melora, pushed out in front of her, sparks and auroral lights emanating from it in all of the colours of the rainbow. As she moved she chanted under her breath, drawing on her mistress to vanquish the abominations laid out before her.

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[Turn Undead vs Skeleton Trooper #1: **1d20+5: 14** vs Will] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+5: 6** plus **5** extra radiant due to vulnerability] and [Pushed 2] and [Immobilized]

[Turn Undead vs Skeleton Trooper #2: **1d20+5: 21** vs Will] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+5: 9** plus **5** extra radiant due to vulnerability] and [Pushed 2] and [Immobilized]

[Turn Undead vs Skeleton Trooper #3: **1d20+5: 7** vs Will] - misses!

[Half Damage: **1d10+5: 13 = 6** plus **5** extra radiant due to vulnerability]


[Turn Undead vs Skeleton Trooper #4: **1d20+5: 21** vs Will] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+5: 9** plus **5** extra radiant due to vulnerability] and [Pushed 2] and [Immobilized]

[Turn Undead vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+5: 9** vs Will] - misses!

[Half Damage: **1d10+5: 11 = 5** plus **5** extra radiant due to vulnerability]

Three of the skeletons were blasted backwards in a blinding flash of radiant light, with bones cracking and some turning to dust. [All Bloodied]

 Me and Random: The elf on the platform cast his gaze over the scene, looking for those that were trying to control the battlefield. He sought two out, the one with control over the dead and the other one lurking in the shadows and his dreadful gaze fell upon them.

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[Bone-Wearying Glance: **1d20+5: 16** vs Celestia's Fortitude(13)] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+2: 7** necrotic] and [Slowed]

[Bone-Wearying Glance: **1d20+5: 16** vs Zero's Fortitude(13)] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+2: 3** necrotic] and [Slowed]

As the gaze turned to each of them in turn, Celestia and Zero felt their skin tightening, like parchment being stretched across a frame, and blotches broke out on their skin.




Mark, me and Random: "Save some for me!" roared Khalin as he belatedly entered the fray. Gliding past Celestia with as much grace as he could muster while hurtling into battle. The warlord made a beeline for the large skeleton warrior, raising his shield in defence while taking a mighty swipe at the behemoth of bones...

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[Shielded assault vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+5: 24**] - hits!
[+2AC to self and allies while adjacent until end of next turn]
[Damage: **2d10+3: 8**]

The large skeletal warrior brushed away any sting from Khalin's attack and kept moving.




Me and Random: Both Offa and Bailey raised their bows and aimed at the closest enemy.

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[Offa Longbow vs Skeleton #3: **1d20+1: 21**] - critical hit!
[Damage: **1d8: 8**]

[Bailey Longbow vs Skeleton #3: **1d20+1: 4**] - misses!

The younger of the pair flashed an arrow right into the eye socket of the skeleton, which fell and crumbled into separate bones on the floor. Offa and Bailey met it with a whoop and cheer.



Me and Random: The large skeletal warrior advanced on Khalin, towering above the dwarf. As it raised its sword, Khalin noticed the thin film of frost covering the gleaming blade reflecting in the eerie green glow from the platform. The blade came down towards Khalin's head.


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[Longsword: **1d20+12: 31** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - hits!
[Damage: **1d8+2: 8**] and [Marked]

As the blade crushed through Khalin's defences and tore at his skin the dwarf could feel the cold biting into him, gnawing at his bones. As the pain started to strike Khalin noticed the blade come round again, this time with greater force.

[Longsword: **1d20+12: 20** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - misses!

The dwarf managed to get his shield up in time to deflect the blow.



Neil and me: "And Misery does love company" Kireth replied to Tradden in acknowledgement to his assistance. It was as much as a thank you as the young fighter was going to get. "Now, let us see about those that dared strike me"


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The young mage whirled his staff over in his hands "Gurtha da Sinome". The blue bolt had barely left the staff before Kireth was spinning it round again "Grutha da Sinome". A new, second bolt speed towards its target.

[Magic Missile v Skeleton #1: Damage **2+4: 6**] - automatic hit!
[Magic Missile v Skeleton #2: Damage **2+4: 6**] - automatic hit!


The bolts struck the skeletons, the second one exploding in a burst of bone shards accompanied by a screech of rage from the platform above.

Kireth laughed, a laugh that was just a key on the unnerving side for his companions.



Me: The remaining skeletons could not move forwards, held by Celestia's holy symbol still held aloft and emitting blue swirling light. Their eye sockets glared with malice at the cleric, but to no avail.

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Matt, me and Random: "Always a pleasure, never a chore..." Tradden nodded to the mage as he brushed past.

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The young fighter's eyes were now on the larger skeletal warrior who was currently locked in combat with Khalin. His eyes could not help but be drawn to the silvery blue blade, which looked strangely beautiful to the young fighter despite the horrific appearance of its wielder.

Taking a round-about path to keep out of the sight and reach of the skeleton for as long as possible, he then charged in from the side, his left shoulder brushing the raised platform as he entered combat. The skeleton must have seen him coming out of the corner of it's eye as it turned it's baleful glance and repositioned itself to be able to take on both the fighter and the warlord.

Tradden had already raised his longsword high into the air, and the glint of the various light sources along its blade could not fail to distract the skeleton. Tradden took his chance to strike lower down with his shortword, stabbing strongly in the hope it would hit home.

[Surprising Stab vs Skeletal Warrior Reflex: **1d20+8: 10**] - misses!

Tradden's thrust missed the skeleton by some distance.



Me and Random: Zero kept crouched down low. He'd been spotted now, so even in the dim light at the edges of the chamber he would be spotted. He took careful aim at the elf atop the platform, hoping to hit him with a distracting blow.

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[Preparatory Shot vs Helvec: **1d20+6: 19**] - hits!
[Damage: **4**]


The bolt hit the elf on the shoulder, momentarily spinning him.

[Grants Combat Advantage to Zero]

[Spend Action Point]
Zero loaded his crossbow a further time and let fly.

[Crossbow Attack vs Helvec: **1d20+6: 24**] - hits!
[Damage: **1d6+3+2d8: 18**]

The rogue followed up with another bolt thudding into the elf, causing it to scream and curse. [Bloodied]




Me and Random: Celestia kept her symbol raised uttering her deity's name. A sacred beam of blue and green light crashed down onto the skeletal warriors head from above.

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[Sacred Flame vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+5: 20** vs Reflex] - hits!
[Damage: **1d6+5+5: 13**]

The flame flowed all over the skeleton and left it raging.



Me and Random: The elf atop the platform surveyed the scene through bloodied eyes. Two of his constructs were in shards on the floor and of no use to him. The other two minor constructs were free from their bonds now that the cleric had lowered her filthy symbol but looked in bad shape, bones jutting out at odd angles where they had been impacted by the force of will of whatever strange deity the cleric revered.

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His main ally and protector had taken some punishment, but was still standing. All was not lost.

He came to the edge of the platform, raising his staff, and pointing the end directly at Tradden.

[Vampiric Embrace: **1d20+10: 20** vs Tradden's Will(14)] - *hits!*
[Damage: **2d8+2: 10**]

Tradden felt a sudden lurch and a great tugging pain from the centre of his lungs and his heart as if his very life force were being dragged from him

[Ongoing 5 necrotic damage - save ends]

The elf seemed visibly restored by the action and thrust out his hand at the cleric that had given him so much trouble.

[Flesh-Rotting Cloud: **1d20+7: 12** vs Celestia's Will(16)] - *misses!*


The cloud quickly spread out over the corner of the chamber, engulfing all of the party with the exception of the boys in the passageway behind.

[Flesh-Rotting Cloud: **1d20+7: 14** vs Khalin's Will(15)] - *misses!*

[Flesh-Rotting Cloud: **1d20+7: 27** vs Kireth's Will(13)] - *critical hit!*
[Damage: **2d6+3: 15**] and [**Dazed**]

[Flesh-Rotting Cloud: **1d20+7: 11** vs Tradden's Will(14)] - *misses!*

[Flesh-Rotting Cloud: **1d20+7: 14** vs Zero's Will(13)] - *hits!*
[Damage: **2d6+3: 10**] and [**Dazed**]



Mark, me and Random: Khalin stole a glance at his companions, the battle was on a knife edge - quite literally, he was reminded, as the stinging pain from the skeleton's blade fought to grab the warlord's attention.

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"Kireth! KIRETH! Snap out of it! What are you, sir? Mouse or man ...er ...elf?" Khalin shouted, trying to spur the mage out of his daze. *"You're not going to let this trumped up quack get the better of you are you?"*

[Inspiring Word (Minor Action) - Target Kireth: **1d6: 3** hp regained plus healing surge]

The dwarf griitted his teeth again and swung at the towering skeleton warrior. *"Now then skull boy, my hammer will prevail - can you feel it in your BONES?"*

[Furious Smash vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+5: 24**] - *hits!*
[Damage: **3**]

His mighty swipe opened up the monster's stance for Tradden.


[+3 bonus to Tradden on next attack and damage roll]

[Uses Action Point]

Khalin quickly swept the hammer back at his foe.

[Warhammer attack vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+5: 17**] - *misses!*

The skeleton blocked Khalin's hammer with his sword and stared balefully at the warlord.




Me and Random: Both Offa and Bailey raised their bows and aimed at the closest enemy.

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[Offa Longbow vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+1: 19**] - *hits!*
[Damage: **1d8: 4**]

[Bailey Longbow vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+1: 3**] - *misses!*

Offa's shot hit another skeleton!



Me and Random: The skeletal warrior continued his assault against the dwarf striking down hard with his sword.

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[Longsword: **1d20+12+-2+2: 19** vs Khalin's AC(19)] - *hits!*
[Damage: **1d8+2: 10**]

His first attack bit home, the swirling gases of noxious vapour from the elf's cloud almost seeming to guide it to it's target. Then, with a glittering sparkle of frost and ice dripping off the blade, the warrior brought the blade back on a sweep towards the dwarf's midriff.


[Longsword: **1d20+7+-2+2: 25** vs Khalin's AC(19)] - *hits!*
[Damage: **1d8+2+1d6: 14**]

As the blade bit into Khalin, the dwarf felt an intense cold. Colder than that of the tops of the highest peaks near Kel-Morndin back on The Islands. Even from the stout dwarf this drew a shout of anguish and pain, then with a stagger backwards, the dwarf fell, a thin film of frost across his face.

The skeleton hadn't considered Tradden's combat challenge, however, and the young fighter managed to strike out at the behemoth just as it looked victorious against the dwarf.

[Tradden Opportunity Attack vs Skeleton Warrior: **1d20+9+3: 23**] - *hits!*
[Damage: **1d6+7+3: 12**]

Tradden caught the skeleton unawares in its ribs, causing it to turn and focus its attention on the fighter now the dwarf was prone.



Neil, me and Random: The cloud all about him, filling both lungs and mind. The world had become slow and blurry and he just about heard the dwarf calling him. Just to draw breath was an effort but he still had his mind and that was still thinking ahead. There was something he could do that no matter its immediate outcome would be of benefit to them "think ahead of the opponent" he heard the old masters tell him.


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He slowly raised his staff, pointing it's tip at the elf and uttered words inaudible to his colleagues. Fire, as red as any ever seen, leapt from the staff whipping out at the elf.

[Hellish Rebuke vs Helvec: **1d20+2: 5**] - *misses!*

The flames licked harmlessly at the elf but Kireth managed half a smile anyway. All was not lost.

[Save vs Dazed effect: **1d20: 10**] - *success!*




Me and Random: The first of the smaller skeletal troopers, now released from the powers of Melora that was holding them at bay, marched forward and snapped out with a lunge at Tradden.

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[Forward the Line: **1d20+5: 10** vs Tradden's Fortitude(1)] - *misses!*

The youthful warrior noticed the blade swiping at him from the corner of his eye and ducked just in time.



Me and Random: The last of the remaining skeleton troopers marched quickly towards Celestia, now that she was no longer holding them in check, and attempted to strike

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her down.

[Forward the Line: **1d20+5+2: 25** vs Celestia's Fortitude()] - hits!
[Damage: **1d6+2+2: 5** and **Push 1**]

The sword connected, pushing Celestia back towards the passageway.

Me: *Tradden felt a sudden lurch and a great tugging pain from the centre of his lungs and his heart as if his very life force were being dragged from him*

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[Ongoing **5** necrotic damage - save ends]

Matt, me and Random: Tradden found himself struggling to keep up with everything going on in the claustrophobic vault!

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The mage atop the platform was throwing death left and right at will – both Zero and Celestia were clearly dazed and reeling from his attacks, and Kireth, whilst more with it, had clearly been hurt badly. Worse still, Khalin had taken huge chunks out of the larger skeleton, but at some cost – the dwarf was now prostrate on the floor having gone down under a flurry of icy, pale white strikes. The young fighter himself was outwardly untouched, and yet the strange attack from the mage left him feeling increasingly empty inside, and he knew something was horribly wrong, his breaths harder to take with each intake. All in all, although the group still outnumbered the enemy, things were starting to look desperate.

What could he do? As he felt panic start to rise, at the same time a strange new feeling came over him. He could only describe it as a serene calm – everything started to slow down and he suddenly felt he had time to consider the options despite the battle being at its peak.

The two smaller skeletons were a threat, but less so than the two other main players in this sortie. The mage was clearly the biggest threat, but he was a nimble climb away – he would have to wait. Tradden desperately wanted to aid his stricken friend Khalin, and that meant one thing – the larger skeleton had to go down.

It struck him that this was exactly the kind of time for a pithy, inflammatory remark prior to launching at the thing, but his new found coolness in battle didn't stretch that far. Yet. Therefore, he just attacked, putting as much hope as he dared in the shortsword which had done so much damage thus far...

[Cleave with Shortsword vs Skeletal Warrior: **1d20+9: 26**] - hits!

[**Marked**]

[Damage: **1d6+7: 13**]

[Cleave Damage: **4** to Skeleton Trooper #1]

Pirouetting at the same time as stepping forward, Tradden's smaller blade cleaved through the air at head height. The young fighter felt it bite, but was not stopping to watch, crouching down as his turn span through its latter 180 degrees – as he did so his longsword curved round at knee height, catching the skeleton behind him and shattering neatly through kneecaps.

Ending his spinning attack facing the larger skeleton, his blades held out at angles suggesting he was not necessarily finished, he waited to see whether the monstrosity would fall...

The shortsword caught the skeletal warrior in the chest, cracking through rib after rib. For some moments the skeleton continued standing and then it fell, crashing to the floor in a cacophony of splintering bone.

The shorter skeleton fell at the same time, slipping off Tradden's longsword and joining the bone pile on the floor.

Tradden took the chance to gather his wits!

[Use Action Point]

[Second Wind: regain 8 hit points]

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

Tradden felt elated at having dispatched the two skeletons, and felt himself get a second wind. The elation was soon over though, as another pulse of pain clawed at his heart, and he whimpered despite himself. What was going on?

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com, me and Random: Slowly, painfully, slowly, Zero raised his crossbow and aimed at the elven mage's vicious grin.

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[Standard attack: **1d20+6+2: 13**] - misses!

This time, Zero's bolt flew high and wide.

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

Me and Random: Celestia raised her holy symbol one further time building up the energy with her soft prayers and unleashing them with fury at the remaining skeleton.

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[Sacred Flame vs Skeleton #4 Reflex: **1d20+5: 10**] - misses!

[Use Elven Accuracy - re-roll attack: **1d20+5: 14**] - misses!

The skeleton managed to dodge the radiant energy spilling from the holy symbol.

Turning her attention to her fallen comrade she whispered a brief prayer and divine light washed down and across the prone dwarf. [Minor Action]

[Healing Word on Khalin: **1d6+4+7: 14** hp restored]

The dwarf stirred on the floor, the frost on his face melting into pools of liquid as the light washed across him.

Cursing that the skeleton had managed to dodge her attack, Celestia summoned her energies once more with fury.

[Use Action Point]

[Sacred Flame vs Skeleton #4 Reflex: **1d20+5: 11**] - misses!

But the skeleton managed to escape her clutches yet again!

Me and Random: *The elf took stock of its remaining powers, such meddlers had never managed to defeat his servants before.*

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[Vampiric Embrace Recharge: **1d6: 6**] - recharged!

The elf smiled maniacally to himself, the skeletons a loss, but these intruders would make fine new servants. He unleashed his fury on the party once more, picking out those that were a threat with his gaze.

[Bone-Wearying Glance: **1d20+5: 19** vs Tradden's Fortitude(18+2)] - misses!

[Bone-Wearying Glance: **1d20+5: 25** vs Celestia's Fortitude(13)] - critical hit!

[Damage: **1d6+2: 8** necrotic] and [**Slowed**]

His gaze then fell on Kireth and he pointed the end of his staff directly at the wizard. Kireth noticed a faint reddish tendril of arcane energy reach out to him, clutching at his chest.

[Vampiric Embrace: **1d20+10: 18** vs Kireth's Will(13)] - hits!

[Damage: **2d8+2: 10**]

Kireth felt a sudden lurch and a great tugging pain from the centre of his lungs and his heart as if his very life force were being dragged from him. The elf laughed out loud as the cuts on him visibly repaired themselves.

Mark, me and Random: Khalin felt like he was waking from a dream - or a nightmare. The cavern slowly came back into focus, but the towering skeleton warrior had fallen. The dwarf pulled himself up [Move Action] and quickly appraised the situation, his ire quickly rising as he saw the state of the battle.

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The warlord roared with rage, seeking to inspire his comrades...

[Minor action: Heroic Effort: +3 to damage rolls for all allies until no longer bloodied. Khalin +5 temporary hit points]

Khalin whirled on the final skeleton, ready to wreak his wrath on the undead minion...

[Warhammer attack vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+5: 14**] - misses!

The skeleton dodged the irate dwarf's attack.

Me and Random: Both Offa and Bailey raised their bows and aimed at the closest enemy.

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[Offa Longbow vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+1: 10**] - misses!

[Bailey Longbow vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+1: 2**] - critical miss!

This time, neither of the boys hit their mark.

Me: Kireth felt a sudden lurch and a great tugging pain from the centre of his lungs and his heart as if his very life force were being dragged from him

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[Ongoing **5** necrotic damage - save ends]

Neil and me: His chest felt like it was being crushed and his heart yanked from him. He didn't know the particular spell being used against him but he recognised the similar effects. He also knew, as he drew shallow breaths, that he could not take another. And yet, as a small trickle of blood escaped from the side of his mouth, he smiled. He had planned this next move and, it would seem, the elf was oblivious to the hell that was coming.

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From the last wrench at his heart he had half sunk to his knees but with all his remaining strength he pushed against his staff and rose up one final time. Standing, albeit slightly unstable, he threw one hand after the other, as if hurling darts, at the elf.

"Gurtha da Sinome" he called three times

(Action Point Spent)

[Magic Missile v Helvec: Damage **2+4+2+3: 11**] - automatic hit!

[Magic Missile v Helvec: Damage **2+4+2+3: 11**] - automatic hit!

[Magic Missile v Helvec: Damage **2+4+2+3: 11**] - automatic hit!

As the final bolt left him Kireth let out a blood curdling scream of defiance.

All three bolts thudded into the chest of the elf knocking him back over the edge of the platform and out of sight of the group. The eerie light that had been emanating from the top of the platform, illuminating the room started to fade.

Kireth noticed the thin tendril of red attached to his chest disappeared and the pain receded.

Me and Random: The remaining skeleton pushed forwards, heedless of his master's fate.

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[Forward the Line: **1d20+5: 18** vs Celestia's Fortitude(13)] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+2: 7** and **Push 1**]

[Immediate Interrupt: Khalin's Fearless Rescue]

The dwarf, anger rising all the time, saw the skeleton's blade fall on Celestia as she held out her holy symbol against it. Without heed for his own safety he ignored the flashing blade and moved himself between it and Celestia as best he could, striking out with his own warhammer as he did so.

[Warhammer vs Skeleton Trooper #4: **1d20+7: 26**] - hits!

[Damage: **2d10+5: 9**]

[Celestia spends Healing Surge: **6** hp regained]

Khalin's warhammer hit home, glancing the sword upwards slightly and all Celestia received was a small scratch to her cheek. She staggered back a little further into the passageway.

Matt and Mark: Things were still manic, but Tradden was still coolly focused. Things were looking up - Kireth had suddenly sprung into life with a magic show to equal that of anything the Elf mage had done so far. Khalin had ... well, he had literally sprung to life, which was good enough for Tradden. Additionally, the nagging pain in his chest had suddenly disappeared, and he felt lighter on his feet for it.

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The remaining skeleton was still on its feet - but only just. Trusting his companions to finish it off, the young fighter, ahem, rushed off after the Elf.

Khalin, turning on the skeleton saw murder in the young lad's eyes. It was not a look he particularly liked on the youngster, but certainly one he could understand right now.

Tradden careered around the base of the platform, fully expecting to find a dead injured Elven mage. Retribution for the pain inflicted to his friends today would be swift. However, in the near complete darkness around the back of the pillar there was nothing to see - and no sign of the Elf.

"*What the ...*" the others heard as a half-shout from around the corner.

"Oh no you don't..." thought Tradden to himself, quickly sheathing the more cumbersome longsword and reaching into his pack for a torch and his lighting flint. [Standard Action] The "Adventurers" pack he had bought from that dodgy merchant on the corner of Elm and Shortstreet back home had certainly been a worthwhile purchase. Lighting the torch quicker than he ever had been able to before he held it up to illuminate the small, dark space...

Me: The last of the light from the top of the platform spluttered out, leaving the chamber in a dim light illuminated only by the flickering of Tradden's torch and a pale glow from the passageway.

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Me and Random: Zero took aim once more at the remaining skeleton, firing a bolt towards the undead's rib cage.

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[Crossbow vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+6: 13**] - result!

The bolt whistled straight through the ribs and out the other side - without damaging the skeleton at all!

Zero took the opportunity to move away, slinking into the shadows. [Fleeting Ghost]

[Stealth Check: **1d20+12: 26**] - success!

Me and Random: Celestia kept her holy symbol aloft and cursed the final skeleton.

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[Sacred Flame vs Skeleton #4: **1d20+5: 20**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+5+5+2+5: 21**]

The skeleton exploded into dust before the party's eyes.



Me: As the dust from the final skeleton settled on the floor of the chamber a silence flooded the room, broken only by the occasional splutter from Tradden's torch.

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The chaos of battle had seemed like an age but only moments had passed.

The chamber was murky now, the illumination from the top of the platform extinguished and only the smoky torch giving a flickering light. Around the group were the remains of the skeletons, their white bones glittering as torchlight passed over them. Blood, sweat, and skeletal dust covered all of the group.

Since arriving at the mausoleum only a couple of hours previously, the group had fought their way past hobgoblins, negotiated sarcophagi of fire, found artefacts of wonder, met devil's-head doorways, magic circles and animated statues. They had entered ritual chambers where an elven mage had summoned skeletons, thrown clouds of noxious vapour, and sucked the life force from comrades. This had all ended with bolts of energy from the group that would have shattered buildings back in Deepingwald.

Exhaustion, elation, fear, and wonder filled the group. Most of them were shaking with the emotions coursing through their bodies.

They wanted more.

But first they needed to find the missing elf!

[...Combat Encounter Complete...]



Matt and Random: Hearing the sounds of battle culminating in another whoop of triumph from the two boys, Tradden knew that the final skeleton was now just pieces of bone on the floor.

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Seeing no torches to light, he instead held the torch and walked forward, searching the "back" of the raised platform for any sign of the Elf - he had been knocked violently back from the pillar, and there was no way to Tradden's mind that he could have just got up and walked away without any of the group noticing, despite the dark. He fully expected to find a twisted Elven body with charred holes in its chest...

[Perception check 1d20+3: 13]

... but he could neither see, nor find anything...

Starting to worry that the Elf could not be found, Tradden, always thinking, tried to think of a way to cast a better light.

Sheathing his shortsword he tossed the flaming torch up onto the edge of the pillar above him, and with a nimble athleticism belying his tall, gangly frame he quickly climbed up to the top of the pillar. If the carved demons whose heads and legs Tradden were using to as hand and footholds objected, they didn't say anything.

From the point of view of the group, a new mysterious figure appeared atop the pillar, lit from below so as to give him a ghastly look of his own. The ominousness of this new apparition was somewhat diminished when part of its frilly shirt caught fire after having come slightly too close to the torch laying on the floor of the dais whilst climbing up. A slightly comedic moment ensued as the figure tried to put out the flames, and the curse mentioning one of the lesser known gods also helped to reinforce the fact that this was not some new threat, unless one included Tradden in that bracket.

Unclipping the lantern he had been carrying with him from since the sarcophagus crypt, he used his tinder box to light that as well. Picking up the torch with his other hand he now held up both, giving a much stronger luminosity which spilled down from the top of the pillar, giving a circular area of light all around it. Turning around on the spot, he looked around again, including the top of the pillar in his search...

[Perception check 1d20+3: 11]

Maybe it was his eyes, not used to such darkness, but he just couldn't make anything useful out.

"Right, this is daft!" he exclaimed, "everyone get torches out if you have them - lets light this place up!"



Me: As Tradden held the light sources aloft the markings on the top of the platform became clear. A simple circle was drawn in what appeared to be chalk, some eight feet or so wide with small bones placed at specific intervals. Surrounding the circle were drawn intricate runes, again in the same chalk.

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From the centre of the circle were eight channels hewn into the stone, leading from a central bowl over the edge of the platform and onto the heads of the rampaging devils on carved onto the side.

Whatever the elf had planned for the platform, and probably the two boys, did not look pleasant.



Matt: "Hmm." said Tradden, looking down at the bizarre sight on the top of the pillar. "Kireth, this might interest you, but lets find this Elf first. There are a few questions I would dearly like to ask him."

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The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero reappeared from the darkness. He wandered over to the remains of the closest skeleton and nudged it with his boot, frowning in disappointment. Skeletons had little use for money or jewellery.

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Their shady summoner, however, was a different matter.

He marched on over to the fallen corpse. Suddenly, he paused, a prudent thought interrupting him. He drew his crossbow and edged closer, pointing right at the elf's head.

No movement.

He knelt down and examined the body.



Me: It was easy for Zero to understand why Tradden had first missed the corpse, it had fallen and been wrapped in its own black robes, landing in the shadows of the platform. Why Tradden hadn't been able to notice it with the torches held aloft he wasn't sure, but the more he looked at the robes he found his eyes moving away from them. Strange.

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Poking the robes away from the body with the tip of a loaded bolt took only a moment or two and there was an exclamation of surprise from the platform above when the elf's body was revealed.

It wasn't in good shape. Whatever powers Kireth had used had crushed most of the torso and twisted its limbs. It was now a pale shadow of the summoner that had sorely tested them.



Me: Most of the party slowly walked over towards Zero.

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"Is it over?" asked one of the boys, crowding round Zero and taking a look at the elf.

The other had picked up one of the skulls from the skeletons, one with an arrow sticking from its eye, and was tucking it onto his belt as a souvenir.

"Can we go home now?" he asked.

Their distress and shock only half an hour ago had been replaced by a cocky confidence that only teenagers could switch to.



Me: As the party stood around the elf's motionless body a familiar, shadowy form emerged from the floor. It reached an inky claw toward the prostrate elf, hoarsely whispering "Revenge!"

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The shadow then turned towards Zero and before the rogue could act, frozen in fear, the shadow thrust its outstretched arm into Zero's head.

The shadow dissipated, leaving a stunned Zero staring into space. Slowly at first, but then gathering speed, the rogue's lights went out, and he fell to the floor.



Mark: "Well that's not something you see every day," observed Khalin matter-of-factly. The others looked at him as if he'd grown a second head.

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"Well you see all sorts in battle!" he tried to explain, shrugging. "Oh never mind..."


Concerned, the young fighter left the lantern atop the dais and dropped down onto the floor proper, rushing over to the Rogue to see if it was just him being shocked by what had happened, but fearing the worst.

"*Kireth, Celestia!*", he called, on the basis that one was a magic user and the other a healer, "*get over here! Khalin, boys, could you keep watch please?*"

As they came over, Tradden knelt down beside Zero to see if his own basic healing skills, in addition to his natural knowledge, could help, or at least detect anything of note.


[Healing Check **1d20+8: 12**]

[Perception Check: **1d20+3: 14**]





Mark: Khalin now looked more concerned. "*Surely Mister Nothing's just fainted?*" The warlord remembered Zero's startled reaction when the apparition had first appeared in the mausoleum. His chagrin began to rise as Kireth and Celestia quickly stooped down next to the fallen rogue. "...*Hasn't he?*"

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Me: *Zero came to fairly quickly. He looked a little surprised at everyone around him, and managed a "Ungh!" to let everyone know he was still alive. He sat up, and pushed himself back until he was resting against the platform, unknowingly leaning against one of the carved devils.*

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Matt: "*Whoa - worried about you for a second there my friend. Seriously, no more involvements with ghosts for you from now on!*" quipped Tradden, giving Zero one of his nearly traditional 'just a bit too hard' friendly pats on the shoulder.

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He turned round to survey the rest of the room.

"*Right - lets see if there is anything of note to take back to town - I am sure the council will be more than interested in what has gone on here. Everyone have a look around, and then we head back.*"

As the group started to disperse out a little, checking over bodies and looking for anything of interest, Tradden took a moment to go over to the two boys, sadly choosing to use the tone which he thought was spot on, but was in fact slightly on the condescending side. It was hard to tell if the boys picked up on it or not.

"*You lads did really well back there - you should be proud of yourselves. Don't worry, we will have you back to town in no time. Could you do me one more favour? Can you stand just inside the archway where we came in - if you so much as hear or see any little thing, run like the wind back to us and shout as loud as you can!*"

Giving each of the boys a clap on the shoulder each, he went to join in the search, making a bee-line for the remains of the skeletal warrior and the glowing, icy sword that had enthralled him so much earlier...



Me and Random: **Perception Checks**

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[Celestia Perception Check: **1d20+7: 27**] - *critical success!*

[Khalin Perception Check: **1d20+1: 7**]

[Kireth Perception Check: **1d20+1: 21**] - *critical success!*

[Tradden Percption Check: **1d20+3: 9**]

[Zero Perception Check: **1d20+7: 10**]



Me: **Celestia** searched near the small cave-like recess in the north-eastern corner of the chamber and found a *trunk*, hidden towards the back of the recess. She daredn't open it, lest it be trapped, so called Zero and Kireth over.



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Khalin searched around the broken skeleton troopers, kicking their bones over, but only found rusty swords and battered shields.

Kireth focused his search on the elf, finding its *staff* that had rolled towards the rear wall. He was a little suspicious of the elf's black *cloak*, that seemed to make his eyes look past it and put this to one side for further examination. The elf also bore an *amulet* that Kireth removed to study.

Tradden wandered over to the remains of the skeleton warrior and found the *longsword* he was searching for. Frost no longer covered the blade, but Tradden was intrigued nonetheless.

Zero kept still, sat against the pillar, only pulled from his reverie after Celestia's call. Slowly and unsteadily he rose, and lumbered over to the cleric.



Me and Random: Zero looked over the trunk that Celestia had found. It was mainly wooden, with brass fastenings and bound with iron strips for strength. A large, inviting lock sat on the front. Zero stopped shivering as he pulled out his pouch of tools and set to work with steely determination.

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[Thievery - Find Traps: **1d20+9+2+2: 27**] - *success!*



With a satisfying click, Zero turned to smile at Celestia. "Poison gas," he said, matter-of-factly. "See the small holes here?"

He pointed at some barely perceptible holes in the iron strips, and then chose another tool from his pouch.

[Thievery - Open Lock: **1d20+9+2: 29**] - *success!*

With another sharp click Zero flipped open the lid with a flourish, a beaming smile on his face.


"At last!" he whispered, mainly to himself, and grabbed a small open pouch from the top of the contents, gold sparkles reflecting on his face from Celestia's torch.



Matt and me: Tradden held the sword he had found, testing its balance. It seemed OK, but he didn't trust it just yet - worth having a look at later he decided.



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One of the things he had done whilst whiling away the hours on the voyage over to the mainland was to fashion an additional set of small, hardended straps to his pack. Whilst he kept his blades attached to his belt, he had envisaged having them strapped to his back at some point, in a way that seemed fashionable to some of the guards, particularly those of private employ, back in Deepingwald. He used the opportunity to sheath the new sword on his back now.



Me: As Zero withdrew, Celestia took the opportunity to look inside the trunk. Under some simple black robes were an ornate, golden, sacrificial dagger and two tomes. The dagger looked menacing and evil to Celestia and she left it within the trunk. The two tomes she removed and handed to Kireth for inspection.

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Matt: A search having been completed, the group gathered in the main room with the pillar again, and gathered in a circle to see what Kireth could make of all the items. The mage' was portraying his usual calm manner, but the glint in his eyes betrayed his excitement at various magical items, especially the tomes, to look over. The boys, still keeping watch on the door, and wondering whether rescued people always got put on guard duty rather than being taken safely home, looked back furtively from time to time.

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As Kireth did his thing, Tradden remembered the burned letter, and retrieved it from his pack. "*Hmm - Elf ... cave.... I wonder if this was what the good Guard Captain was on about?*" he mused to no one in particular. That also triggered his memory regarding something he had been meaning to mention for a while.


"*Oh, whilst I think on - remember when we were on the Guiding Fire?*" This was understatement of the year from the young fighter - none of them would forget that voyage anytime soon. "*That Kassar chap - in league with those strange creatures which attacked us? He had one of those amulets on - the wooden ones with a swirl. I didnt get chance to grab it, but I saw it after he had been crushed by the mast. Not sure if it is important, but thought I should mention it I wonder if this Elf had one?*"



Mark and Random: While Kireth and Tradden compared notes, and after Khalin had given Zero a nod of concern and reassurance, the dwarf began a careful inspection of the large pedestal at the centre of the room, mindful of the hidden compartment he'd found upstairs, yet also the potential for this troublesome elf to wreak mischief from beyond the grave.

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[Dungeoneering check: **1d20+3: 17**]





Me: *The platform was about ten feet high and ten feet across at its base. It's base was roughly square, with a parade of rampaging devils carved into the sides. The rear of the pedestal had devil's heads lined up in a way that mimicked a very steep set of stairs, and was the obvious route to get to the top.*

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The stonework was excellent - the carvings were detailed and of great quality, regardless of their grotesqueness.

It was impossible to tell who or even what race carved the stone - there were no tell-tale signs nor were there any maker's marks.

The platform appeared to be solid, and without any hidden compartments or sections.

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and me: Zero still looked shaken from his close encounter of the spectral kind. He wandered about in a mild daze, furtively looking at everyone.

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Then, abruptly, he blurted out what had happened, what the ghost had revealed to him.



The Shadow was the last in line of the Kaius Dynasty, a long line of Warlords protecting this location, bound here as a punishment for a crime that it couldn't even remember - years of undeath and solitude stripping the spirit of its memories and sanity, but remaining loyal to the place by guilt and ancient familial loyalties.

Images of a huge carved stone with the names of the warlords being lain over a black entrance, sealing what was within - the warlords striving to hide the evil place even after their own deaths.

Then scenes of the elf, dominating and bending the Shadow to his own will with dread magic and moving the protective slab for his own foul needs.

Words and phrases resounded in Zero's ears even though they made no sense, only one phrase stuck, 'Bael Turath', and it chilled him to the bone.

"...and I'd very much like to leave now," he concluded.

 Neil and me: After much time, likely more than the rest of the party would have liked, Kireth finished his examination of the items they had recovered.

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"*This staff,*" he said, *"will come as no surprise to you is a mage's staff. It has some sort of affinity to light but I will need some time to understand it."* He turned and threw the amulet at Celestia who, although surprised, caught it. *"You may find use of that. It is powered with the energy of life and health."* Offering no further explanation he either didn't know or didn't care.

Tradden, by now chomping at the bit, was almost hoping from one leg onto the other *"What can I tell you that you will not already have surmised?"* He kicked the hilt of the sword in the direction of the young fighter. *"Although plain in appearance it most certainly has been imbued with the element of frost. I would be careful where you wave that,"* he said offering Tradden a word of caution, *"such items are rare and highly desired."* He narrowed his eyes considering the young man's personality, *"Show that off to the wrong types and you may find it taken from you."*

"Zero," turned the mage, giving Tradden one last look to make sure his point had been understood. *"The cloak is well suited to your skills. Perhaps by trickery of light or perhaps by affecting the sight or mind, this cloak does not want to be seen. Wearing it will give you something of an advantage."*

"One of these is the elf's spell book, if I am reading the wordings correctly. I believe I recognise the spells contained to be those used against us. These are not magiks I can use but they are interesting none the less and, unless there are other plans, I would like to read them more." He gave a brief look around the party, it was more a challenge than a look for approval. Continuing, *"The second tomb does not read well, at this point, and I will certainly need more time on it".*

"Finally, this," the mage confirmed holding it by its point, *"is a dagger."* He dropped it ungracefully onto the stone cold floor before walking away. The lecture was apparently over.

 Matt and me: "Right" said Tradden, shaking his head just a little. "Lady, gentlemen - shall we?"


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With that, Tradden scooped up the longsword and resheathed it on his back. He also picked up the dagger, and after throwing it in the air and catching it a couple of times to test its weight and balance (which was poor) he tucked it safely in his belt.

He took a moment to sidle over to Zero, who was holding the cloak in both hands, weighing up his own new addition and trying to work out how light did, or didn't, reflect off it the way it should. The rogue was still visibly pale.

"Come on Z - lets get back to town. I will buy you whatever passed for a good Red in these parts - maybe those lasses that waved us off will be even happier to see us coming back as well eh?" he said softly, giving him a wink.

That done, he stalked off to the cavern entrance to join the boys, ready for the journey back through the catacombs and back to the town.

 Me: Tired legs and bodies turned towards the passageway leading to the exit and the party slowly filed out of the ritual chamber.

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Exhilaration of the combat and joy of victory and spoils had now been replaced by a fatigue most of the group were not used to. Only Khalin, used to the drills and manoeuvres of the Dwarven Border Watch back on The Islands was used to such continuous assault.

Their fatigue did not betray their cautiousness, however, and the group kept their eyes and ears open, ensuring they maintained their vigilance.

With the way now well known, Khalin led the way, with Tradden behind and Zero and Kireth protecting the two boys. Celestia brought up the rear.

Crossing the main cavern, Khalin started to hurry, urging the party to follow - there was something he didn't like. The group responded and reached the other side, with the passageway into the crypt just in time, as large sections of the roof started to fall.


Huge boulders came down, crushing any stalagmites below, and the party fled into the crypt, jumping over the sarcophagi in their rush to get out of the basement before they were trapped. Dust filled the air, and more than one of the group tripped and was dragged up by their comrades before they could get up the flight of stairs and out into the mausoleum through the secret passage they had found.

The rumbling of the cave-in had stopped, and the mausoleum became still. Looking down the stairs all could be seen was rubble - the caverns below now blocked. Celestia took the idols of Bahamut and Pelor from their alcoves, and placed them gently on the furthest sarcophagi, as the central stone ground back into place.

Leaving the mausoleum, Khalin pushed the doors back into place, and everyone turned and squinted in the bright daylight, looking southwards. Vast tracks of earth had sunk away, covering what was the catacomb below.

Once the doors were in place, Zero slumped down on the ground and kissed the grass.

Then, with weary legs, the group started their march of over a league back to Blackengorge.

 Me: The wind was cool and comfortable. The path beneath the party's feet was starting to level off as they came down the hill from the mausoleum. An occasional ancient cobblestone peeked through the dirt, indicating decades, or maybe even centuries of neglect.


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As the group were drawn to such details they also noticed footprints leading up and down the road, fresh footprints, many of which were made by small, clawed feet.

Looking around, the party found themselves in a small gully on the road, with many bushes and large boulders to the side of the road.

"Fool!" hissed Khalin to himself, and drew his hammer. The others moved their hands towards their weapons in response.

Small creatures hiding behind the rocks and boulders sprang into view and began to move towards the group. With a shriek, the small humanoids attacked. Some scaled and rust coloured, with reptilian heads and tails, and some goblinoids with their hideous faces in contorted bellows!

 Me: [...continued in [Scene #06](#)...]

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