

## Blackengorge - An Odd Couple - The Gloom Marshes - Chapter #02, Scene #01

Nov 19, 2010

...continues from [Chapter #01, Scene #07](#)

### Synopsis

*The 12th Day of Ches in the Year of the Sudden Journey*

While Kireth studies, Celestia looks for enlightenment at the temple, and Zero entrenches himself in the inn, Khalin and Tradden have agreed to assist one of the villagers, the elf smith Caldring, in looking for iron ore in the swamps to the southeast beyond the lake.

As the moon rises high on a clear night, the group meet near the east gate and set off towards the marsh.

- [Khálin Grundokri](#) - 2nd Level Male Dwarven Warlord
- [Tradden Aversward](#) - 2nd Level Male Human Fighter
- Caldring Andrezar - NPC

### Scene Length

This scene starts on Friday 19 November 2010 and is expected to be completed by the end of Sunday 28 November 2010. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.

Me: **Tradden's** breath hung in the air in a cloud of vapour, sparkling in the moonlight before him. He had been eager to get out and wait by the east gate of the village even if it meant standing in the chill of the night for a while. **Khalin** had been less eager, the warmth of the inn's fire and the comfort of a pitcher of ale more appealing than skulking around in the night. **Tradden** stamped his feet and rubbed his hands to keep warm his anticipation and excitement growing by the minute.

"She'll be here soon, Khalin, don't worry," he kept repeating. **Khalin** remained still, just raising an eyebrow at the youngster.

Out of the gloom approached a figure. To **Tradden** it was enchanting - the glint of moonlight reflecting from polished steel, the catlike grace of the movement, and the flash of swaying hair as **Caldring** approached and looked up to one of the wooden lookout towers to nod at a guard. **Khalin** saw merely a tall elf, somewhat overweight for a female, desperately trying to get her unkempt hair under control and tie it back.

"Greetings," **Caldring** announced, finally getting her hair into some form of pony tail. She dropped a sack to the floor. "Your crossbow, young man, and your mail is in there too - you should take more care of it."

**Tradden** opened the sack and began to inspect the mail, eventually shrugging the steel over his shoulders and tying down the leather straps. He grabbed the crossbow next, turning it over and over. It was light and quite small, rather unimpressive, but quite functional. He started trying to fix it to his thigh.

**Caldring** wrapped a cloak around her shoulders, preventing the sheen from the moonlight sparkling off her scale mail, but not before **Khalin** noticed the workmanship and decoration of the armour.

"Excellent armour, smith," he nodded. "Your own design? I notice the rune marks."

**Caldring** studied **Khalin** for an instant before she replied, "Yes, I forged the armour myself. A test piece, yet to see the force of battle. Let us hope that we do not have to use it tonight. Let us move on."

**Caldring** headed towards the east gate, signalling once more to the guard on duty in the tower. Near the main gate, one of the guards was waiting, prior arrangements been made, and a small trap door in the wooden palisade was opened to allow the threesome outside the compound.

As the group climbed down and back up the other side of the dried moat, **Caldring** looked around in the darkness. "We follow the trail to the lake, and the boathouse. We can then follow the shoreline of the lake around to the east and into the swamps. The boathouse is about half a league, and then a further league or so around the lake. Gilmorril suggests the marsh is two leagues due east from a huge boulder by the lake edge, we'll have to cut across country from there."

She looked pointedly at **Khalin**, "If we can all keep up, we'll be at the marsh in three hours or so."

"You'll have no problem with me," growled **Khalin**. "Back in the Border Watch we often marched many more leagues than that on manoeuvres. I remember once..." but **Caldring** had set off, with **Tradden** skipping behind to keep up.

Matt and me: "She's great isn't she?" hissed Tradden back in the direction of his Dwarven friend as he sloped off. Nov 19, 2010

Any response the Warlord had was lost in the early morning mist and zephyrs.

Mark: Khalin shrugged once more and quickly caught up with his comrade. It was clear he would have to keep an eye on the young fighter, lest love or lust dull the callow youth's instincts. Nov 19, 2010

The dwarf was pleased to be underway however, and finally heading out for a closer look at the wilderness beyond the small town. The frisson of excitement borne of a coming adventure into the unknown quickly supplanting any lingering pine for a flaggon and a fire.

Matt and me: Happy as a pig in ... well, Tradden didn't know what a pig would be happy in - he had never been near any of the farms outside Deepingwald, although he knew there was some kind of saying about it. 'In a nice cosy farm with some slops' was probably the ending. Made sense. Nov 20, 2010

Anyway, the young fighter was starting to like this adventuring lark - striking out to parts new was exciting, and with a beautiful elven maid in front of him (he kept having to avert his eyes away from certain parts of her form) and the powerful hammer and sturdy shield of his friend behind him, all was well with the world.

He was just thinking about what a pleasant walk this would be when he remembered that last time he was out in the wilds they were attacked by little greenskins and demons. Suddenly a little bit more serious, he pulled out his short sword, and many a branch end and tip of a grass stalk was beheaded as the three continued on...

Me: The trio moved off into the night, initial jollity subsiding into caution and keen observance. **Caldring** led the way, with **Tradden** never too far behind, **Khalin** keeping up the rear. Nov 20, 2010

The trail was lightly worn and slowly rolled downhill to the southeast, here and there polished cobbles sticking up out of the trodden grass and weeds. After half an hour or so, **Khalin** and **Tradden** got their first view of the lake, albeit shrouded in mist that shined against the moonlight. The mists rolled into the shore from somewhere towards the middle of the lake and coiled around and over themselves as the broke against the edge. Jutting out of the mists at the shoreline was a small wooden construction, shutters up and barred, obviously the boathouse.

"Stay close to the shore," instructed **Caldring** to the others. "We've seen large goblins back off from the mists in fear, they won't touch us if we stay near the shore."

**Khalin** got the feeling that the village had seen more goblins than they'd been letting on previously, but mentioned nothing, just raised his eyebrow and stared straight ahead.

Picking their way around the lake's edge was slow going, and it took more than an hour before **Caldring** paused by a large boulder and raised her hand for them to stop. **Tradden** eased his pack from his back and dug around for some sustenance. Breaking some bread and throwing a hunk to **Khalin** he leaned against the boulder to rest. **Khalin** idled up towards him as **Caldring** peered out towards the east. With a start, **Khalin** dropped his bread, and lunged towards **Tradden**.

"Move yer arse, long legs," he growled, and shoved a speechless **Tradden** forcefully to one side. He began tracing something in the stone.

"What the..." **Tradden** finally managed.

**Khalin** didn't turn to answer, simply continuing to run his fingers against the stone.

"Can't ye see it?" he finally asked **Tradden**, almost in disbelief.

"See what?" replied **Tradden**, coming up behind **Khalin** and peering over his shoulder at the blank rock.

"Here, and here," pointed **Khalin**, tracing something in the stone. **Tradden** could only see a few scratches here and there, but slowly, as **Khalin** patiently repeated his movements, he began to see


runes etched into the stone.

"It's Dwarvish," said **Khalin**. "It's a battlemark. Something happened here some time ago - something that needed to be remembered." *The dwarf drew his hammer.*

**Tradden** drew his arm around the dwarf's shoulder. "A long time ago, my friend. No dwarf has been here for centuries. Come, my lady Caldring beckons," he urged, inclining his head towards **Caldring** out in the gloom.

**Khalin** grumbled and eventually followed **Tradden** out to the east, but kept his hammer drawn and his shield ready.

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 Me: *The next couple of hours passed slowly as the trio edged eastwards over broken land patched with thick spiny undergrowth. The cold was starting to gnaw at their bones, particularly at **Tradden**, who's initial enthusiasm for the trip was starting to wane, especially with the thoughts of dragging heavy iron back to the village through the spiky bushes they were now passing.* Nov 20, 2010 ▼

**Tradden** sighed with relief as the thorny undergrowth gave way to more simple grassland, but his relief was short lived as his boot went straight down into a small hollow filled with icy water. His curse rang out into the night and both **Caldring** and **Khalin** hissed their annoyance at the sound.

"We must be at the swamp's edge now," whispered **Caldring**. "We should proceed with caution, but keep your eye out for anything that looks like it has been made, rather than grown."

*It didn't take long for the clean and crisp moonlight night to turn into something more sinister as the group headed deeper into the swamp. The clean air was replaced by a hanging putrid smell, and a fine rolling fog reduced visibility to mere yards. Pockets of water and sludge became more common, and each footstep was greeted by a squelch and a suck. The fog closed in on them and made their calls to each other to watch their step as they each encountered hazards to sound muffled with a strange echo.*

*Then, there was a whoop from up front, and **Caldring** set off with a splash into some water. Fearful for her safety both **Tradden** and **Khalin** hurried up to where they had last seen her. Even through the fog they could see her beaming back at the others, knee-deep in water, holding onto a huge cartwheel rimmed with iron. She caressed it's surface and chortled with joy.*

"Pass me some rope, Tradden," she said. "This beauty's stuck in here, we'll need to pull it out!"

*The young fighter and the solid dwarf exchanged glances - the elf was surely mad. **Tradden** put down his pack and fished out a good coil of rope. He threw one end towards the expectant elf.*

*As **Caldring** moved to one side of the wheel to secure the rope she suddenly disappeared, plunging into the water.*

*Reacting in an instant, **Tradden** shouted "Stay there!" to **Khalin** and plunged in after the elf.*

*The water was freezing, and pulled at **Tradden's** muscles, tightening and weakening them. He thrashed about near where **Caldring** had disappeared, hoping to find a limb or hold so that he could pull her up. After what seemed like an eternity he grabbed something and pulled, and the elf bubbled up to the surface spluttering out grimy water, and coughing up bits of slime. **Tradden** grabbed hold of the rope and **Khalin** pulled them both to more solid ground.*

"A sword," spluttered **Caldring**, "a sword. Down there. Armour too. We need to get it out!"

"She's delirious," muttered **Khalin**, shaking his head. "We need to get her warm."

***Tradden** was about to agree when he noticed a bubbling and frothing from the water near the cartwheel. As all three turned to stare they saw a grey sword rise up out of the water. Gripping it tightly was a bony hand, and to the horror of the group the bony skull of a skeleton, years of hate burning white in dark eye-sockets, started to rise up after it. As the trio watched on, frozen with fear, the rest of the skeleton appeared out of the water, followed by others behind it.*

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 Me: [...Continued in [Scene #02](#)...] Nov 20, 2010 ▼

Tags: 

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