



Blackengorge - The Forest Ruins - The Ghoul Warren - Chapter #07, Scene #05

Dec 12

...continues from [Chapter #07, Scene #04](#)

Synopsis

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

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

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

Scene Length

This scene starts on Monday 5 December 2011 and is expected to be completed by the end of Friday 16 December 2011. Players are expected to be able to post at least once a day.

Me and Random:

Dec 13

INITIATIVE BLOCK

Round #04

Combat Encounter Completed

01) [21] Kireth - **1d20+8+2: 21** - HP 35/40

02) [21] Zero - **1d20+5+2: 21** - HP 40/45

03) [17] Khalin - **1d20+3+2: 17** - HP 35/46

Sp) [13] "Unknown Assailant" - **1d20+7: 13**

05) [11] Tradden - **1d20+5+2: 11** - HP 39/51

06) [09] Rangrim - **1d20+6+2: 9** - HP 43/53

Sp) [04] Zombies - **1d20-4: 4**

Zombie #01 - Dmg: **13+11+5+17=46** (Marked by Tradden) (Bloodied)

Zombie #02 - Dmg: **15+7+15+13=50** (Bloodied)

Removed from Play:

Sp) [21] Ghoul - **1d20+8: 21** - Dmg: **21+9+13=64** (Marked by Tradden) (Slowed) (CA to Tradden) (Bloodied)

04) [15] Branded Zombies - **1d20-4: 15**

Branded Zombie #01 - Dmg: **7=7**

Branded Zombie #02 - Dmg: **13=13**

Branded Zombie #03 - Dmg: **17=17**

Branded Zombie #04 - Dmg: **20=20**

Branded Zombie #05 - Dmg: **10=10**

Branded Zombie #06 - Dmg: **7=7**

Branded Zombie #07 - Dmg: **21=21**

Branded Zombie #08 - Dmg: **14=14**

Branded Zombie #09 - Dmg: **5=5**

Branded Zombie #10 - Dmg: **13=13**

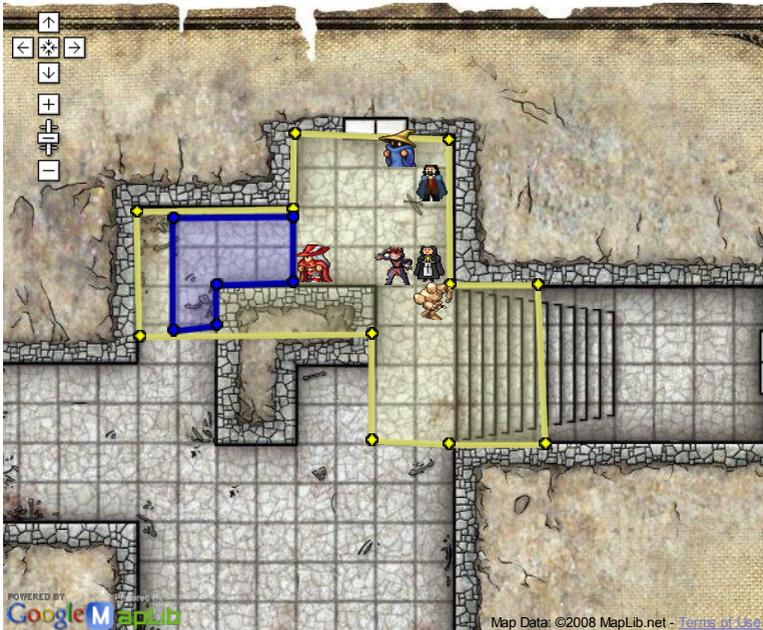
Branded Zombie #11 - Dmg: **5=5**

Branded Zombie #12 - Dmg: **5=5**

Me, Matt and 2 others:

Dec 12

BATTLE MAP



Illumination: Darkness. (Yellow Polygon denotes torchlight)

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).

  Neil and me: **Kireth Majere**

Dec 5 ▼

The poor lighting made it hard to make out both room and assailants, so, erring on the side of caution, Kireth relied on the spell he knew he had most control over.

[Magic Missile vs Branded Zombie #01] - *automatic hit!*

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

The spell exploded on the chest of the nearest figure, the tendrils of force outlining the brand on the thing's chest, before it heaved to one side, and slid down the wall.

[Branded Zombie #01 Destroyed]

   Nick, me and 2 others: **Zero Uhlit**

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"D'aaargh!" Zero blurted in surprise and fear. Zombies were not what he wanted to find behind the door.

He fumbled with his crossbow and fired at one of the lurching figures.

[Sly Flourish vs Branded Zombie #03: **1d20+9+2: 24**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d6+6: 10**] plus [**2d8: 7** sneak damage]

The bolt struck the zombie to the west in the throat, and it fell back clutching the shaft before lying still.

[Branded Zombie #03 Destroyed]

"By the way," he added to his alert friends, "somebody's chanting behind one of the walls."

"Ah - you can hear that too?" whispered Tradden, keeping his eye on the remaining Zombie advancing on them. "Good. I thought I was hearing things. It sounds..." he paused, as if he was not quite convinced himself, "... it sounds like. Well it sounds like ... they have this big dance-off at the Fisher's Prize Inn, which if you have been you will know is basically a little arena." Tradden was blathering now, but on the basis that it appeared he was about to make a point, no one stopped him. "When ever there is a really important dance off the whole crowd is chanting the favourites' name, over and over. It sounds a bit like that."

Everyone was looking at him now. Even the Zombie had slowed its approach slightly and there was nearly complete silence. With that, the others could hear it also, just for a brief second.

"It probably isn't the gang from the Fisher's Prize here though." said Khalin, eyes closed at the surrealness of it all, readying his hammer, and making it clear that the time for talk was over.

 Neil: "Khalin" there was caution in the mages words "do not go forward to attack. We do not know what else is out there. Let them come to us or we move forward as a group"

Dec 6 ▼

  Me and Random: **Khalin Grundokri**

Dec 6 ▼

Khalin had fought beside the mage enough to know his counsel - though often abrupt - was wise. He held his ground, and without taking an eye off the enemy, called over his shoulder.

"Zero, see if you can pick off that rascal!"

[Direct the Strike: Zero]

Almost compulsively Zero let another bolt fly at the shambling figure lurching out of the gloom.

[Hand Crossbow vs Branded Zombie #02: **1d20+8+2: 17**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d6+4: 7**] plus [**2d8: 6** sneak damage]

Another good strike caught the zombie in the neck, and it too toppled over.

[Branded Zombie #02 Destroyed]

  Me and Random: **Branded Zombies**

Dec 6 ▼

More figures lurched out of the darkness, shuffling towards the group. Three came from the south, one from the east, slight moans escaping from their lifeless faces.

*Their actions seemed slow and stilted, but one was upon **Khalin** before he could fully react.*

[Branded Zombie #04 Slam: **1d20+6: 26** vs Khalin's AC(21)] - *critical hit!*

[Damage: **5**]

The figure's thrashing hand caught the dwarf unexpectedly across the cheek, almost sending him reeling.

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

Dec 6 ▼

Tradden was getting sick of the sight of Zombies.

"I am getting sick of the sight of Zombies!" he said, not being the kind of lad to keep his mouth shut.

He advanced on the one coming out of the corridor on the right. [Move]

[Longsword vs Branded Zombie #05: **1d20+11: 18**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d8+7: 10**]

Traddens gleaming longsword, "Amaryllis", punctured the middle of the odd brand dead-centre, and the Zombie slid back, defeated.

Knowing that Zero and Kireth would want room to do "their thing", Tradden stood his ground where he was, ready to confront any new challenge from the right hand corridor.

[Branded Zombie #05 Destroyed]

  Me and Random: **Rangrim Ironnose**

Dec 6 ▼

*Rangrim nodded at Kireth's words, and fell into line besides **Khalin** [Shift: SE] forming a strong defensive wall. He then swung his hammer around at the zombie assaulting the warlord.*

[Clever Strike vs Branded Zombie #04: **1d20+9+2: 21**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10+6: 8**] plus [**2d8+3: 12** sneak damage]

*The creature fell in a crumpled heap at **Khalin**'s feet.*

[Branded Zombie #04 Destroyed]

Two more figures came swaying from the gloom of the chamber, one from the western corridor, the other from the south. They seemed a little larger than the other humanoids, and perhaps more ancient, with bedraggled rags of clothing over dessicating bodies. The menace in their eyes was not dimmed, however.

One closed up on **Tradden** even as the young fighter toppled one of the foul creatures, and swung its arm, trying to get purchase.

[Zombie #01 Slam: **1d20+6: 20** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - hits!
[Damage: **2d6+2: 10**]

The huge fist knocked the wind out of **Tradden**.

[Some Attack: **1d20+5: 21** vs Khalin's Reflex(14)] - hits!
[Damage: **1d6+3: 6**] and [Dazed] (Save Ends)

There was a sudden yelp from **Khalin** and his shield arm went up to his helm. The dwarf felt as though something hard and heavy had just smashed against the side of his head, and for a moment all he could see were stars. He staggered back a little, trying to compose himself.

From Tradden's, limited it had to be said, field of vision it looked for all the world like Khalin had just smacked himself in the face with his own shield.

"Stop messing about!" hissed the fighter, likely riled and stinging from the blow the zombie had just given him.

Who knew how many of these walking corpses might be out there beyond the light, slowly staggering their way forward.

Kireth decided to conserve his magic until he knew the full extent of their peril. He would pick off what he could see for now, trusting the dwarves to take care of anything that wandered too close.

[Magic Missile vs Branded Zombie #06] - automatic hit!
[Damage: **2+4+1: 7**]

Another of the zombies fell to the floor - this one crushed beneath the force bolt from the mage.

[Branded Zombie #06 Destroyed]

Zero hopped aside and took shelter behind Khalin's burly frame. The dwarf looked round, a little insulted at being used as cover, but the rogue's amiable smile compelled him to let it slide.

[Fleeting Ghost: **1d20+13: 24**] - success!

Zero popped up and fired a bolt over Khalin's helm at the branded zombie down the hall.

[Sly Flourish vs Branded Zombie #07: **1d20+9+2: 20**] - hits!
[Damage: **1d6+6: 11**] plus [2d8: 10 sneak damage]

The rogue's aim was true, and another zombie fell to his swift bolt-work.

[Branded Zombie #07 Destroyed]

A rasping cry issued from the darkness to the west and a loathsome figure bounded towards the group. It too, like the zombies, appeared to be naked, but this one bore no brand. Its flesh was a sickly gray and its arms flailed around wildly - sharp claws rending at the air. It flung itself upon **Tradden**, desperate to taste his flesh.

Tradden saw the creature for what it was, a hideous being transformed by the need to satiate its hunger by the living flesh. Himself and **Khalin** had witnessed them before in the marshes to the southwest of Blackengorge. They had barely escaped with their lives.

The ghoul lashed out with a claw, aiming for **Tradden's** throat.

[Ghoul Claws: **1d20+10: 11** vs Tradden's AC(19)] - critical miss!

For once luck was on the young fighter's side and the ghoul tripped over one of the dessicated zombie corpses and missed his throat by inches.

A solitary zombie was visible in the light ahead. Did yet more wait in the gloom beyond? It was hard to tell with his head reeling. The group would find out soon enough. But for now Tradden faced off against a final zombie to the right, and now another terror - a ghoul no less - had entered the theatre of battle.

Khalin's mouth curled into a determined smile. "You fellows take that one," the warlord gesticulated with his hammer at the zombie in front of them, before peeling away from the group to offer support to Tradden. There was a yelp from Zero as his cover was removed, but there was nothing for it - Tradden and Khalin's experience in the marshes showed one sword would not be enough against this new devilry.

With that, Khalin quickly closed the space to the ghoul and launched himself into the fray...

[Craghammer Charge vs Ghoul: **1d20+9+1: 21**] - hits!
[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 14**] plus [1d8: 8 charge damage]

The craghammer pounded the ghoul's shoulder, but the thing appeared to just shrug off the blow with a snarl.

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

Lurching figures continued to swarm out of the darkness, coming mainly from the south. All of them were humanoid of one form or another, an elf, a human female, and another human male, all bearing the brand of the circle with horns across their chests. Their corpses seemed fresh, but shrunken, and they slowly but surely approached the group with grim determination.

[Some Attack: **1d20+5: 6** vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - misses!

Kireth felt something assault the back of his mind - it was like a hammer blow. The mage's resolve was firm, though, and he cast the attack aside as his eyes scanned the gloom to see whom had attacked him.

"Ach - you're as ugly as your freind from the marshes!" put Tradden with his longsword.
"Smell worse too!" he finished, trying to stab round with his short sword as the creature flinched.

[Surprising Stab vs Ghoul]

[Primary Attack vs Reflex: **1d20+11: 28**] - hits!

[Damage: **4**] and [Grants Combat Advantage]

[Secondary Attack vs AC: **1d20+10+2: 18**] - misses!

[Daily Frost Longsword Power: **1d8: 5** cold damage] and [**Slowed**]

A thin film of ice spread across the ghoul's shoulder as **Tradden** caught it with a vicious stab. The ghoul spun to the side, but **Tradden** missed the opportunity to capitalise.

 Me and Random: **Rangrim Ironnose**

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"I'll try to hold a line here," shouted Rangrim, moving forwards to meet one of the zombies. [Move: S] "You just make sure you back me up!" he offered to **Zero** and **Kireth**.

[Warhammer vs Branded Zombie #08: **1d20+9: 13**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+6: 14**]

The hammer crushed the zombie's skull and the flickering glare from its eyes were extinguished.

[Branded Zombie #08 Destroyed]

 Me and Random: **Zombies**

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The grey-skinned zombie adjacent to **Tradden** stretched out an arm in an attempt to grab hold of the young fighter.

[Zombie #01 Grab vs Tradden's Reflex(17): **1d20+4: 13**] - misses!

The putrified hand skirted **Tradden's** collar, but made no purchase.

The other grey figure lurched forwards, stamping on one of the fallen zombies without care, and swung a long arm at Rangrim.

[Zombie #02 Slam vs Rangrim's AC(18): **1d20+6: 11**] - misses!

However, the rogue was wary of the encroaching figure, and easily sidestepped the swipe.

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

Dec 9 ▼

For a moment the thought had occurred to leave the Ghoul alone and concentrate on the southern passageway. However, Tradden and Khalin were providing an effective wall and that western passageway was tight... it was perfect. It would drain him again but... it would hopefully be worth it. He reached down and touched the floor.

The stone floor in the western passage began to steam and hiss and a thin film of green slime materialised. Those caught within its sizzling clutches found their skin to burn, the acid eating into their unholy flesh.

[Acid Mire]

[Damage: **3d6+5: 13**]

[Attack vs Zombie #01's Fortitude: **1d20+8: 13**] - hits!

[Damage: **13**]

[Attack vs Ghoul's Fortitude: **1d20+8: 26**] - hits!

[Damage: **13**]

[Attack vs Branded Zombie #10's Fortitude: **1d20+8: 16**] - hits!

[Damage: **13**]

All three of the victim's felt the full fury of the acid, it bit and stung at their feet and calves. The ghoul hissed in anger, the zombie seemed not to notice, but the branded zombie at the rear succumbed to the acid, falling and melting in a cloud of noxious green.

[Ghoul Bloodied]

[Branded Zombie #10 Destroyed]

 Nick, me and Random: **Zero Uhlit**

Dec 9 ▼

The number of undead shambling towards Rangrim concerned him, but Zero felt there was wisdom in tackling the ghoul first.

He stepped silently into Tradden's shadow, being careful of his whirling blades.

[Fleeting Ghost: **1d20+13: 26**] - success!

Then he took an opportune shot at the greenish, rotten face.

[Sly Flourish vs Ghoul: **1d20+8+2: 21**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d6+6: 8**] plus [**2d8: 13** sneak damage]

The rogue was back to his usual accurate self. This time the bolt whistled over **Tradden's** soldier and caught the ghoul straight in the eye. It tottered for a moment, looking as though it would cast one final strike at the young fighter, before it fell, and fizzed in the acid at its feet, its flesh slowly but surely melting away.

[Ghoul Dead]

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

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More zombies sounded to be approaching from behind him, but one remained before Khalin and Tradden. Still unsure how big the full number of the evil host might be, Khalin looked to finish off this one quickly, while trying to conserve his strength and surprises for whatever else might appear.

[Craghammer vs Zombie #1: **1d20+9: 10**] - critical miss!

The swing was wild, and it was all **Khalin** to do to avoid toppling forwards into the acid.

 Me and Random: **Branded Zombies**

Dec 10 ▼

The zombie on the staircase to the southeast of Rangrim attempted to swing with its arm around the corner of the wall, it's way partially blocked to the dwarf.

[Branded Zombie #09 Slam: **1d20+6-2: 9** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - misses!

It was simple for Rangrim to sidestep and dodge the swipe, but more of the zombies kept on coming. The two to the south continued their lurch forwards, one of them getting close enough to take a long arc of a swing with its arm at the dwarf's head.

[Branded Zombie #11 Slam: **1d20+6: 15** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - misses!

Rangrim did well to avoid the blow, shouting back to his new-found comrades, "I can hold them, but not for long. Shoot the buggers!"

 Me and Random: **Unknown Assailant**

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[Some Attack: **1d20+5: 8** vs Kireth's Reflex(17)] - misses!

Kireth felt another assault on his mind, something trying to dull his senses and darken his vision, but the mage's psyche was strong, and he shrugged the sensation away.

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

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Tradden was not oblivious to the plight of their new Dwarven friend a few feet away.

"Keep at at Rangrim!" he yelled.

"Go if you can!" he then hissed at Khalin. "I will keep this one here. It will be a race to see who defeats it first - me or Kireth's acid!" With that, the fighter chopped down at the zombie.

[Longsword vs Zombie #01: **1d20+11: 21**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d8+7: 11**] and [Marked]

Tradden cut across the monster's chest opening a large wound. Blood slowly oozed out in thick clumps.

[Zombie #01 Bloodied]

 Me and Random: **Rangrim Ironnose**

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The dwarf crouched low, eyeing all of those around him. He was outnumbered, but he was sure he could cope. He'd been in trickier messes before!

He looked closely at the larger zombie, seeing if he could work out the best way to inflict some serious damage.

[Ferret out Frailty: Zombie #02 grants Combat Advantage]

It seemed obvious now. If he could just make the zombie work for him! With his head kept low, he barrelled into the zombie in front of him, hoping to stagger it backwards, with its arms flailing.

[Flailing Shove vs Zombie #02: **1d20+9+2: 13**] - hits!

[Damage: **1d10+6: 9**] plus [2d8+3: 6 sneak damage]

He only just connected, the zombie swinging at the same time almost made him miss. However, it was just what he needed, and the zombie staggered backwards, its arms catching all those around it with wild swings intent on regaining its balance.

[Branded Zombie #09: **2+3: 5** damage]

[Branded Zombie #11: **2+3: 5** damage]

[Branded Zombie #12: **2+3: 5** damage]

Three of the minor zombies fell, the rending arms of Rangrim's target taking one of their heads off with a huge swing.

The rogue let out a bellow of victory.

[Branded Zombie #09 Destroyed]

[Branded Zombie #11 Destroyed]

[Branded Zombie #12 Destroyed]

 Me and Random: **Zombies**

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Although they appeared to be the only two creatures remaining, they showed no signs of stopping their attack - their quest for flesh too strong.

The first zombie was still within the bubbling acid, however, and it suffered the sting and burn of the green pool.

[Acid Mire]

[Zombie #01: **5** damage]

It ignored the searing pain and once again tried to grab **Tradden** with one arm.

[Zombie #01 Grab: **1d20+4: 20** vs Tradden's Reflex(17)] - hits!

[Grabbed]

The zombie tried to pull **Tradden** backwards, into the acid!

[Zombie #01 Pull: **1d20+4: 8** vs Tradden's Fortitude(19)] - misses!

Tradden was too strong and wily to allow that, though!

The other zombie concentrated its efforts on Rangrim, composing itself from the shove, and lurched forwards with a vicious swipe.

[Zombie #02 Slam: **1d20+6: 23** vs Rangrim's AC(18)] - hits!

[Damage: **2d6+2: 10**]

The arm slammed into Rangrim's side, knocking the wind out of the rogue.

 Matt: Tradden had heard Rangrim's triumphant yell, and had looked round to see what the fuss about. The fighter smiled to see zombie bodies strewn around, but that smile was quickly removed as his foolish glance away from the enemy in front of him allowed it to grab him and attempt yank him forward.

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"Ahhhh On second thoughts..." he said to Khalin, all the while looking down at the fetid, rotting arm holding his shirt collars and with a slight panic in his voice, "...maybe you should stay here?"

 Neil and me: **Kireth Majere**

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Kireth held his concentration and the acid remained, bubbling beneath the Zombie's rotten feet. [Minor Action; Sustain Acid Mire]

The dwarf Rangrim was proving to be a hardy companion and had admirably dispatched the foes before him. One remained...

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

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

The missile knocked the zombie back a moment, exploding against its shoulder. A huge chunk of flesh came off, congealed blood oozing out of the gaping wound like brackish slime. The zombie, however, continued to attack.

[Zombie #02 Bloodied]

 Nick, me and Random: **Zero Uhlit**

Zero flattened himself against the eastern wall and crouched like a cat, waiting for a glimpse of the zombie behind Rangrim.

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

The rogue took advantage of the partial cover, darting quickly out to fire off a bolt.

[Sly Flourish vs Zombie #02: **1d20+8+2: 25**] - *hits!*

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

The bolt pierced the zombie's throat, another keen shot from the rogue. However, the zombie still advanced, it's low moan now a gurgling squawk of horror.

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

Khalin was just starting to peel away from Tradden's side when his friend changed his mind. Fortunately a brief glance over his shoulder confirmed that Rangrim's unconventional yet effective tactics had accounted for the lion's share of remaining zombies.

With a smile through gritted teeth, Khalin struck the zombie before him again, this time feinting to draw the creature off guard, and perhaps open its flank for his comrade...

[Brash Assault vs Zombie #01: **1d20+9: 17**] - *hits!*

[Damage: **1d10r2+7: 17**]

***Khalin** allowed plenty of room for the zombie to counter but the creature simply staggered back, relinquishing its hold on **Tradden**, and toppled over into the acid.*

[Zombie #01 Dead]

 Me and Random: **Unknown Assailant**

At the sound of the zombie splashing into the acid and the accompanying sizzle of dessicated flesh something sprang across the edge of the flickering torchlight and down the staircase.

[Khalin Perception Check: **1d20+2: 8**]

[Kireth Perception Check: **1d20+2: 11**]

[Tradden Perception Check: **1d20+4: 24**]

[Zero Perception Check: **1d20+10: 16**]

[Rangrim Perception Check: **1d20+3: 17**]

Whatever it may have been it was small, perhaps with wings, and scampered at a fair rate, a skittering scrape on the stonework as if it ran on some claws.

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

The zombie in front of him having been well and truly smited and smashed down into the fizzing acid by Khalin's hammer, Tradden turned in time to see "something" skittering down the stairs.

Well, whatever it was, it was gone now. There was only one of the zombies left, or so it would seem, so he charged into that.

[Charge v Zombie #02: **1d20+11+1: 30**] - *hits!*

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

***Tradden** hit the zombie with force, the longsword slicing across its body, finally knocking the spirit out of it.*

[Zombie #02 Destroyed]

 Me: **Rangrim Ironnose**

With the zombie before him felled, Rangrim quickly rounded the corner to the top of the stairs to follow the small creature.

He skidded to a halt at the top of the stairs and turned round to the others.

"It's gone through some doors from what I can see," he called.

The stairs led downwards to a pair of large double doors which had been left slightly ajar. From the crack in the doors a soft glow could be seen.

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

 Me: **Short Rest**

Healing Surges

Healing surges are applied.

Khalin spends 1 healing surge (7 left) to get to 46/46 hp.

Kireth spends 0 healing surges (7 left) to get to 35/40 hp.

Tradden spends 1 healing surges (8 left) to get to 51/51 hp.

Zero spends 0 healing surges (5 left) to get to 40/45 hp.

Rangrim spends 1 healing surges (8 left) to get to 53/53 hp.

Encounter Powers

All encounter powers are recharged.

Milestones

Milestone achieved. Action Point awarded.

Levelling

No-one is ready to level.

 Me and Random: **Zero** put his fingers to his lips, urging the others to keep quiet, and quickly melted into the shadows out of the torchlight to the south.

[Zero Stealth Check: **1d20+13: 15**]

As they others waited - composing themselves after the battle and readjusting their straps, robes, and weapons - the rogue padded softly around the chamber, sometimes scrutinising blocks of stone in the darkness, at other times prodding his shortsword into gaps, or into lifeless corpses of the zombies.

Most of the chamber was sparse, save the rotting bodies of the zombies and the occasional discarded piece of flesh on bone, gnawed and chewed. However, one particular region caught his interest. A small passage to the west, at the bottom of the wall, perhaps large enough for someone to squeeze through. Without a light it was difficult to see where it led, but the smells wafting out wrinkled his nose. A charnel, decomposing smell.

He for one wasn't going in there.

Rounding the last corner he came back to the group and let them know what he had found.

 Neil and me: "So, you didn't look in the tunnel then?" asked the mage

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"Heck, no!"

The dwarves looked on blankly and Tradden was rubbing his chin with his best "hmm" face.

"Oh for the love of...." and he marched off towards the small tunnel. Hoiking his robes up about him he got down on hand and knee, cursing as he did so, and began the slow crawl.

 Me and Random: **Khalin** barked out for Rangrim to stand guard near the stairs, telling him to alert them should anything happen. **Zero** seemed happy to stay with the dwarf

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rogue, the strains of the smell still lingering in his nostrils.

"Stay here," the warlord uttered. "Guard in case anything comes through - we'll look to see what's this way."

Rangrim mumbled, with a scowl - presumably about wasting time. The dwarf had quickly scanned the fallen zombies, but not recognised any to be those of his friends, and appeared keen to get further into the complex in his search.

Kireth's light led the way, illuminating brightly in the confines of the small tunnel. After only a few feet **Kireth** dimmed the light - he preferred not to see what he was crawling through. Even the mage's guarded mind couldn't prevent him imagining what the slime and gore used to be, and how he was pressing into it, the filth invading more than just his robes, assaulting his senses of smell and taste.

The mage's slimy journey did not last long, however, the passage opening up into a small chamber, only a few feet across.

The smell was worst in here. The remains of several bodies, in various states of mutilation and decay, greeted the mage. Presumably whatever that ghoulish figure that had attacked them used this small chamber for its lair, dragging victims back here to keep and to eat. Whether it came out and found its own victims, or preyed on those not wary enough that passed through, **Kireth** could not tell, but he did note that there were no hobgoblin remains, or at least none that he could identify.

Not wanting to remain here for long, the mage poked around with his staff, pushing bodies and disgusting cloth matting around.

[Kireth Perception Check: **1d20+2: 15**]

In the trash and detritus of the chamber **Kireth** spied a few coins and trinkets that appeared to have been possessions of those now long eaten or decomposed. The coins and cheap jewellery did not interest him, however, such items interested only those of weak will or small, petty greed.

Disgusted, he turned on his heels, and knelt down ready to traverse the passage once more.

One of his knees scraped against something and he scowled, brushing it to one side. His hand caught around something and he lifted it up from within the grime. After a moment of examination he frowned, pocketing the item within the folds of his robe, and began the unpleasant task of returning through the passage.

 Me: As the mage returned to the party, somewhat bedraggled and foul-smelling, a slow, rhythmic chanting began to emanate from the doors to the east.

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 Me: Slowly the group moved as one down the stairs towards the eastern doors. Poised and ready, with eyes focused on the slightly ajar door, each step down the stairway was taken with effort and care.

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As the group approached the large double doors the chanting began to take form, changing from a monotonous drone into a slightly higher pitch, words becoming audible, although intelligible. There was a single voice leading the chants, with replies in short, sharp words, perhaps closer to the group, at appropriate intervals.

From the crack in the door came a soft blue-green light, as though the chamber beyond were illuminated somehow. Giant bronzed rings on the doors gleamed in **Khalin's** torchlight, the left-hand door drawn back a tiny amount towards them.

 Me: All eyes turned to **Zero** at the same time. A simple nod in the direction of the door from **Khalin** as the dwarf extinguished his torch told the rogue their intentions.

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He frowned.

The intrigue of doors was the beauty and satisfaction of transgressing their locks, a rich foreplay to the prizes beyond that they might contain. These doors were spoiled, deflowered, with the flaunting of illumination from the crack, and the chanting beyond dispelling any illusion of treasure. The thrill of the chase and catch were removed.

Reluctantly he padded softly across to the doors, motioning for **Kireth** to dim his light. The mage doused the group in dimness with only a thought, the only light remaining that of the soft glow from the doors.

Zero steadied himself and lithely squeezed through the gap.

 Me and Random: **Zero** moved softly to his left, keeping his back to the door and looking for any shadows to dart into.

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[Zero Stealth Check: **1d20+13: 18**]

[Zero Perception Check: **1d20+10: 30**]

The rogue found himself in a huge vaulted chamber, a hundred, maybe two hundred feet across. Passages to dim antechambers to the north and south led off from where he stood, and a short arch to his east led into a central chamber.

Blue-green light emanated from four large crystal columns leading up to the ceiling casting their glow across the chamber and the multitude of recesses and corridors leading away. Crimson streams trailed across the floor, flowing down a grate surrounding a hole in the floor. Four large chains stretched from the ceiling and disappeared down the hole.

A dais along the eastern wall appeared to supply the crimson trails, blood seeping down from either side of a statue of a ram-headed demon. The demon's arms held short chains with manacles, and clasped into them was a small halfling, stripped naked, bearing the now familiar circle and horns brand. A long cut stretched from neck to groin, the halfling's lifeblood seeping out and joining the crimson stream.

To the side of the statue stood a human, in dark robes, arms held aloft to the statue continuing the chant in a loud, booming voice. One of his hands held a bloody dagger which he cast downwards in a swift motion barking out the final chords of the chant.

Dark humanoid near the bottom of the dais dragged another victim, an elf, towards the dais.

Zero also saw a pair of humans clad in dark armour near the pillars, blood-flecked lips shouting answers to the chanting in unison, their eyes transfixed on the statue. He was sure others were in the room, lurking somewhere in the shadows.

A flutter near the human with the knife caught his attention, a small winged creature whispering into the priest's ear. The priest whisked round, spotting **Zero** and shouted out a cry in alarm!

"Seize him! He will add to Kalarel's bounty!"

The winged creature headed straight for **Zero** with rather ungainly flight as the others turned slowly around to search him out.

The priest turned and drove the knife straight at the halfling's heart, singing the final note.

 Matt: Suddenly the double doors flew open, a hefty kick causing them to thud against the walls on either side. The noise reverberated around the room for a moment.

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The massed occupants turned as one to see a tall human, dressed in clothes once fine, but now torn and stained, and armour in a similar condition. The impudent interloper strode forwards, whirling his swords in impressive fashion as he did so. Flanking him on either side were Dwarves, both wielding wicked looking hammers. Behind them was evidently a mage, either a human or an elf - it was hard to tell. Either way, he didnt seem quite like the bursting in kind and he hung back slightly.

"No one is seizing anyone." He said, firmly but loudly, nodding his head sideways to the nearly-hidden Zero. "Especially not him. He owes me a drink. Now - who would like to surrender first?"



Me: [...continued in [Chapter #08, Scene #01...](#)]

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Tags: 

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