



**Blackengorge - Prelude - Empty Mansion - Scene #4 - Bats, Rats, and Acrobats!**

Sep 1, 2010

...continues from [Scene #3](#)

**Synopsis**

*The 30th Day of Alturiak in the Year of the Sudden Journey*

Zero and Tradden have successfully infiltrated an old mansion overrun by goblins. Discovering a trapdoor in the floor of the house they have gone underground and found a restrained Dwarf, Khalin in one of the basement rooms. After surviving a swarm of bats, and an attack from savage giant rats, they have found another captive trussed up in an old pit.

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

**Scene Length**

This scene starts on Tuesday 27 July 2010 and is expected to be completed by the end of Sunday 15 August 2010 (as people are away on holiday with limited internet connectivity, including myself). Players are expected to be able to post at least twice a day.

Matt: "Well, well - this place is just full of surprises." Tradden muttered to himself. Jul 27, 2010  
 "You fellows best get over here" he shouted back to Zero and Khalin "And bring some more rope!", he finished with a smile.

Neil: Kireth turned his head away from the light and hissed. Deprived from it for this length of time, the flicker of the flame burned his shallow eyes. The voices, his sharp ears told him, did not sound goblin, yet he tensed in anticipation none the less, the chains pulling tight. "Come down here beast" he thought to himself "I shall show you the meaning of pain."

Me: Khalin checked the ropes near Zero's pit to make sure they were secure, and then slowly headed over to Tradden to take a look at his find. Jul 27, 2010

Matt: "He seems pretty riled. Understandable I guess." Said Tradden to Khalin "You seem to me to be a people person ... well, people Dwarf .. you know what I mean... you want to go down and get him?" Jul 27, 2010

Me and Random: "Well, I think Master Tradden, that this may be a job for our dextrous friend," Khalin said, pointing at the manacles on the man below. "But first, maybe we should go down and dispose of the vermin." Jul 27, 2010

With that, he jumped down into the pit, albeit not too gracefully.

[Acrobatics Check: **1d20+1: 8**]

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero edged his way over the pit into the chamber, using Tradden's ropes. Jul 27, 2010  
 "I take it it's not another creature then," he said, peering at the well in the centre.

Me: Khalin heaved the rat off the prone body with a great shove. "Give me a hand here, long legs!" Jul 27, 2010

Matt: "Go on Zero - I will stand guard and give you light to work by." said Tradden, holding the torch aloft and keeping a careful watch on the shadows. Jul 27, 2010

Neil: The bright light and then the solid thud of a great weight landing just next to his head sent cracks of thunder through his mind. Kireth grimaced and shuddered at the flash of pain. Without looking up he caught a familiar scent "oh that's just great" he muttered incoherently through the dirty gag "a Dwarf! Why did it have to be a dwarf?" Jul 27, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: "Beggars can't be choosers," Zero commented, looking over the raggedy half-elf. "So, ah, what's your story?" Jul 27, 2010

Me: "Don't just stand there, Mister Nothing, get down here and see if you can do something about these chains," chortled Khalin. Jul 28, 2010  
 He removed the gag from the man's mouth and fished around in his pack for water.

Neil: "Much obliged to you" offered Kireth spitting out bits of dirt and cloth. "You fellas just happened to be passing by or do you come here often?". He rattled his chains suggesting that the other, dumpy looking fellow, should hurry up. Jul 29, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero frowned. Jul 28, 2010  
 "Alright," he said, kneeling down and taking out his picks. "Hold still."

He inserted one of his delicate tools into the manacle's lock. His face went through a bizarre range of expressions. He seemed almost like a painter at his easel, in total, oblivious concentration, in search of that perfect image. Or, in his case, that perfect click.

Thievery: **1d20+8: 12**

Me: *The manacles dropped open easily under Zero's control. One by one he went round the man's limbs, freeing them from bondage. Once they were all done, the man sat up, rubbing his wrists and ankles.* Jul 28, 2010

Matt: "Well sir," said Tradden, with a nod towards the recently freed man, "Whoever you are I take it you were not tied up in a pit in a cellar for fun and so wish to join us in escaping this place? If so, I am Tradden, the hearty Dwarf is Khalin, and the whizz with a set of lock picks is Zero." Jul 28, 2010  
 Tradden looked round at the dark corners of the room, half expecting more pairs of red eyes to appear at any second.  
 "Introductions all done - shall we?"

Me: *As the group paused to gather their breath and to reflect on their new found comrade, a familiar \*thunk\* \*thunk\* sound echoed into the chamber from the direction of the stairs. Moments later it was followed by a hollow laugh.* Jul 29, 2010

Neil: Rubbing his thin, slightly reddened wrists, he reconsidered the man just introduced as Zero. Brute force was two-a-penny in Kireth's opinion, any oaf can swing a fist, but the dexterous movements required to pick a lock, and at such speed, that required skill and "Skill" Kireth did have time for. He nodded his approval and very nearly, almost, offered his hand but then he heard the noise "thunk" "thunk". "By the looks of your faces I take it that noise is no companion of yours. Well then.." He bent down to retrieve a staff from the floor "Kireth's the name, let's see what's to be had with the noise then shall well" his thin lips spread into a crooked smile. Jul 29, 2010

Matt: Amazed that the man, now quite obviously a wizard of some kind, could be back on his feet and so ready to go in such a short space of time, Tradden put on his best "take charge" face. Jul 29, 2010  
 "Well then, the stairs seem the obvious option, as does heavy armour going first - I doubt we could stop you if we wanted eh Khalin? It makes sense for myself and Kireth, please to make your acquaintance by the way, to come next as long as you don't mind bringing up the rear again Zero?"  
 That said, Tradden turned to face the stairs, holding up the torch again ready for the Dwarf to move forward.  
 "Lets hope there are no more traps or surprises." he finished, limply, the look on his face betraying his real expectation of such an occurrence.

Me: Khalin climbed ungracefully out of the central pit and started heading towards the stairs. "This way you say, Mister Tradden? Well, let's see what we can find." Jul 29, 2010

With that he brought his wand forward, placed his torch behind his shield and began carefully to climb the stairs

with that he brought his waxhammer ready, placed his torch behind his shield and began trying to climb the stairs.

 Me: As Khalin climbed the stairs and light from his torch danced over the steps he noticed that the flight took a turn to the left and continued rising. At the top of the stairs was a heavy oaken door. Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Me: "Want me to knock?" suggested Khalin, with a twinkle in his eye. Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Matt: "Hmm", thought Tradden. "On one hand, it is perhaps prudent to be quiet and try get out of here without running into anymore trouble." Jul 29, 2010 ▼  
The look on Tradden's face made it clear he was conflicted in thought. However, in a short space of time a broad grin revealed itself, and his sword hand notably tightened on the hilt of the shortsword. "On the other hand, I am sick of sneaking around, and perhaps it is time to cordially acquaint ourselves with whoever else remains in this house. Knock away Masterdwarf!"

 Neil and me: Kireth's eyes widened to the point of nearly popping out of his head "Who are these two clowns?" he thought. "Ahem" he coughed and mustering just about as much politeness as he had offered in the last two years "perhaps bandits that have attacked you and bound me in a pit don't need to be warned of our advance. Might I suggest our dexterous friend see if he can't take a peek first? ". It sickened him to his stomach to "fluff" such obvious idiots but, after so recently being caught offguard himself, it was wise to keep allies right now. Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Matt: Tradden, oblivious to the underlying cynicism in Kireth's statement, shrugged his shoulders. "Or that." Jul 29, 2010 ▼  
"Zero", he continued, motioning towards the Rogue, "the choice is yours I believe - the quiet way, or the loud way."

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero smiled. "I recommend the former," he said, stepping forward to inspect the door. "Now then..." Jul 29, 2010 ▼

Checking for traps: **1d20+8+2: 16**

(I get an extra +2 to find traps)

 Me: The door looked normal, with no traps, no locks, and no bars. Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Matt and Random: Tradden leaned over, half pushing past Zero, and put one ear to the wood of the door, trying to detect if there was anything recognisable to hear. [Perception check: **1d20+2: 10**] Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Me: Tradden strained at the door, but couldn't hear anything at the other side. Jul 29, 2010 ▼

 Neil: "In you go Mr Zero. Steady as you like" Jul 30, 2010 ▼

 Matt: Tradden, still itching for action, decided that it was time just for that. "No, allow me!" he said, pushing past Zero and bursting through the door. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

 Me: Tradden pushed open the door and strode through, his torch held aloft to light the way. As the door opened the group were washed over by a gust of fresh air, welcome relief after the stagnant air from the tunnels. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

The door swung easily, obviously well used, and opened into a rough tunnel, possibly part of a cave system. The floor appeared to be fairly well trodden, smooth and shiny, but with the occasional stalagmite piercing up to be avoided and an undulating path leading away around corners.

Tradden led the way, with Kireth and Zero following, and Khalin muttering at the rear. After a short distance and a few twists and turns, the small tunnel began to open up until the group entered a much larger cavern.

The torchlight flickered with a stronger wind here and almost went out. Fortunately, Tradden guarded the flame well, and when the wind died a little held it further aloft. The cavern was large, about a hundred feet across judging how the light faded into darkness on the roof. Off to the left of the party appeared to be a small camp - tents and what looked like furniture. No figures were to be seen, though.

 Matt and me: Tradden's mouth had fallen open as they had moved from the tunnel into the larger chamber, and it was only now that he thought to shut it. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

"We can't still be below the house" he said aloud, "We have come too far north, Hmm, I recall from when I followed those ruffians upstairs that there was a cliff that side of the house, a way off mind. Could be a way out?"

His arm starting to feel numb from holding the ever dwindling torch up, he looked to see if there were and sconces or other light sources he could use. He could see that along with the furniture there were some standing torches in brackets, around the 'camp' on stands, with the torches about 7-8ft off the ground, not unlike the streetlights used in the better parts of Deepingwald, although none of them were lit.

Taking care to watch around him as he did so, he crept over to the first torch and lit it, and then went around the circle, lighting each one in turn. As the last one flared into a hearty red-orange ball, he and the rest of the group better took in their surroundings.

 Me: As the torches were lit the group noticed the fairly uniform layout of the camp. A central firepit with cauldron above, surrounded to the north by four small tents, to the east by some tables and chairs, and to the west by a single table and writing desk. On the table seemed to be a number of glass vials and other strange looking equipment. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

The cavern was indeed about one hundred foot across, and another wooden door in the north wall barred passageway out of the cavern. High in the ceiling, in amongst the stalactites, a number of tiny tunnels disappeared into darkness - perhaps ways for the bats to come in and go out.

The majority of the cavern floor was uneven, but not rocky or covered with many stalagmites. Where there was a stalagmite they were big ones, with a large base, smooth sides, and a rounded top. On some of them it appeared that candles might have been placed, judging by some waxen residue.

 Neil and Random: Kireth tensed as he watched the youthful Tradden walk around lighting torches, expecting assailants to burst from the unchecked tents. When this did not happen his clenched fist relaxed and opened as he too took in the new surroundings. His eyes were immediately drawn to the desk, he walked towards it purposefully. "Dwarf, Khalin isn't it?" he didn't wait for the response "why don't you check those tents. Tradden, tell me more about this house you refer to. We're below it you say? I know nothing of my current location other than it most certainly is not the inn room I paid for". He examined the desk and the items upon it. "Well go on man" he said without looking up from the desk. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

(Perception Check: **1d20+0: 11**)

 Me: The desk appeared fairly tidy, as though someone took good care. It was a simple wooden affair with a couple of drawers - on casual inspection they both appeared to be locked. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

 Matt and Random: "Erm, alright - well," began Tradden, "To cut a long story short, there is large disused mansion somewhere above us. I was tracking some unsavoury types on behalf of the Deepingwald guard and they lead me out of the town proper onto the outskirts - it's not otherwise an area I am familiar with, so I don't know exactly where. I was outside listening in to see what they were up to when ..... they ... saw me, yes saw, and pulled me through the window. A fight ensued in which Zero here also became involved in, and to escape we came into the basement. We found you and Khalin both tied up in separate rooms. You know the rest." Jul 30, 2010 ▼

As he was speaking Tradden had put down his torch on the floor, up against a crate, and had wandered over to the cauldron and fire. He felt both to see if he could ascertain how long it had been since they had been used.

[Perception check if needed: **1d20+2: 4**]

 Me: The cauldron was fairly cold, and the fire was out. Jul 30, 2010 ▼

Neil: "I see" said Kireth flatly. "Not exactly your normal mansion eh? How interesting, no?"

Jul 30, 2010

Me: Khalin walked slowly over towards the tents, and with the business end of his warhammer pushed the tent flaps aside. Cautiously he went from tent to tent repeating the same procedure until eventually he turned back to Kireth.

Jul 30, 2010

"No one at home it seems," he bellowed.

Neil: Looking up from his task, Kireth nodded his approval at the dwarf.

Jul 30, 2010

Matt: "Hmm - the fire is cold. Doesn't look like anyone has been here in a fair while - a day or so perhaps? Anything useful worth picking up in yonder tents Masterdwarf?" Asked Tradden. "I don't know about you but I wouldn't say no to a few niceties to compensate us for the beatings we have just taken", he said smiling. Then, his face changed and a pained expression came over him as he remembered that virtually his whole back and backside was covered in sewer filth. "Certainly I will be straight to the tailors in any event...", he finished, shivering with disgust as he did so.

Jul 30, 2010

Neil: Kireth finished his inspection of the desk, satisfied that there was nothing of use to them here. He pulled on the draws one last time and paused...letting go of the handle he looked more closely, his eyes narrowing. Lifting his right hand he moved it very slowly from right to left, hovering just above the draws. "and the plot thickens" he mused. "These draws have been sealed by magic. I do not have the power to break this seal, nor does Nero have the skill to circumvent them and yet I am curious to see their contents." He stepped back, hand on his chin considering the situation. "If we want in, the option left to us is to break this desk open but this has obvious downsides. It will be clear we have been here and I cannot say whether the person who has sealed them has also not alarmed them too"

Jul 30, 2010

Matt: "Alright", said Tradden, the effort of concentration clear on his face, "Lets think this through - whoever has sealed those drawers has the power to do so, and to a level where a mage or skilled lock-pick cannot unlock them. That means that there is either something important or valuable inside, or its some kind of joke or trap."

Jul 30, 2010

Tradden folded his arms, which is not easy when one is holding a shortword in one of them. "Obviously we want to get out of here, but from my point of view I can just imagine what Guard-Captain Jerold will say if I report back and say that I found a locked set of drawers in a deserted cavern which may hold the secret to this whole place, but just walked away without at least trying to open them."

He made it clear he had made a decision, and tried to puff out his chest to reflect is imperious mood, although a neutral onlooker would have concluded that he completely failed to achieve the desired effect: "My vote is therefore that Khalin does his smashy-thing with his big, shiny warhammer. Any counter arguments?"

Neil: "or its some kind of joke" Kireth raised a single eyebrow at this remark by Tradden "Why would anyone do that?" he thought to himself "there is no logic to it". As for "Any counter arguments" Kireth folded his arms and remained silent. It really was a flip of a coin situation. The cautious man would simply walk away from the desk but a cautious man never achieved anything great in Kireth's opinion. He looked towards Zero and shrugged.

Jul 30, 2010

Matt: "Right then, I take that as tacit", Tradden pronounced the word fully and roundly, in a blatant attempt to try and match Kireth's intellect or at the very least impress him, "agreement that we should have a crack at the drawers? Khalin, would you care to test thine strength?"

Jul 30, 2010

Neil: "Without destroying the contents inside" he hastily added

Jul 30, 2010

Matt and Neil: "Hold!" said Tradden, holding up one arm just as Khalin was about to reach the pinnacle of the arc of his intended vicious two handed smash. The dwarf looked suitably disappointed, and mumbled something about humans and half-elves making up their minds, as he let the hammer fall limply, and he then leant on the ornate handle, nonchalantly waiting to see if his services were going to be needed after all.

Jul 30, 2010

"If you can suggest a way of breaking into these things without using a large hammer then I agree we should do it, but if they are closed to your magic and Zero's skills, I am assuming that the drawers are fairly sturdy and will suffer some punishment? I agree its a risk, but if the alternative is indeed leaving them alone....?"

[Sorry - I am taking huge liberties with Khalin at this point, hope it all seems in character.]

Mark: [No prob. Sounds spot on to me (I'm back btw!)]

Aug 9, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: "I think you should just give it a nice hard whack," said Zero, from behind a nice, thick, shielding stalagmite some twenty feet away.

Jul 30, 2010

Me and Random: Khalin squared up to the drawers, twirled his hammer and raised it. Ducking behind his shield he brought the hammer down in a large arc, squarely onto the top of the drawers.

Jul 31, 2010

[Damage: 1d10+3: 12]

The drawers splintered apart with a crash that echoed through the cavern. Pieces of wood flew in all directions and contents spilled onto the floor. Then everything was still.

Suddenly, a keening noise from the remaining pieces of wood started up, and a ghostly mouth appeared over the debris.

"Intruders!" it yelled, "Intruders!"

Matt and Random: "Oh ... Corellon!" snapped Tradden. "Kireth - magic is your forte, anything you can do about that mouth?"

Jul 31, 2010

He then bent down to assist Khalin in seeing if anything at all had spilled from the drawers.

[Perception check if needed: 1d20+2: 19]

Neil: "Gah! An alarm spell as I feared" he snarled "It's a simple enough spell but, with regret, not one I can currently dispel. I suggest you search the remains quickly, I think we may have company on the way."

Jul 31, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: "Oh no," Zero gasped. He hurried over to where the debris from the desk was scattered and joined in the search, looking particularly for anything shiny.

Jul 31, 2010

The constant cry of the alarm spell made his ears ring.

"Yes, yes!" he hollered back, grimacing.

Perception: 1d20+6: 7

Me: The ringing of the alarm panicked Zero somewhat, and he made a mess of rifling through the papers - they just seemed to slip through his fingers before he had time to look at them. He gave up with his head spinning and his ears ringing.

Jul 31, 2010

Matt: Tradden agreed with Zero's sentiment in so much that the incessant chatter of the alarm was very nearly painful as well as annoying. The fact that it also represented the very likely possibility of armed unfeindlies appearing at any moment was not lost on him either.

Jul 31, 2010

Still kneeling he pointed his sword directly at the phantom mouth.

"Can it be silenced in non-magical ways?" he asked Kireth.

Neil and Random: "It will eventually run it's duration and stop. Other than that, No. Just bag anything that isn't desk. We can disregard anything useless later".

Jul 31, 2010

Other than the wooden door they had come through, Kireth looked for other likely points of entry, or, as the case may end up being, hasty points of exit.

 **Me:** *Eventually the shrieking stopped, and although some echoes went on for a short while everything soon returned to almost silence. The only exists appeared to be the way the group had come or through the wooden door at the far side which remained firmly shut.* Jul 31, 2010 ▼

*The only noise left was the fluttering of paper near the broken desk where Zero knelt and appeared to be trying to regain his composure.*

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com:** Zero sighed with relief. "By the gods, that was annoying. Very impressive though." Jul 31, 2010 ▼

He returned to the scattered items and had a good look.

 **Me:** *Most of the items on the floor were blank sheets of parchment. A bottle of ink had spilled out when the desk was struck and soiled lots of the papers. One of the papers nearest the remains of the desk had a fair bit of writing on, but most of it was now obscured by dripping ink. Zero had a close look at the writing - it was in Elvish - but the most he could make out due to the ink was about "new recruits" and "mind-washing". The bottom of the sheet had a single piece of text that was not obscured though - "Light must be snuffed, perfection decayed, order dissolved, and minds fragmented." Zero shuddered when he read it.* Aug 1, 2010 ▼

 **Matt:** "Right - unless those tents had anything in worth searching, and unless anyone has any other ideas of course, I suggest we get out of here!" said Tradden, balancing up the desire to search more fully the clearly secret camp and getting back into the open air, away from dank sewers, cellars and caverns. Aug 1, 2010 ▼  
[? - Are we flogging a dead horse here with searches etc...?]

 **Me:** *All of the items in the desk were strewn across the floor. The only piece of interest was the parchment Zero was holding and reading. The tents were empty, apart from basic bedding, and the cauldron and fire were worthless.* Aug 1, 2010 ▼

*Khalin, however, picked up a small amulet - a cheap wooden affair on a leather strap. He turned it over in his hands before tossing it to Tradden.*

*"Worthless tat," he said. "Give me five minutes in a smithy and I'd have something that surpasses that piece."*

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com:** Zero reported to the others about the message he had found. His usually cheery face had noticeably soured. Aug 1, 2010 ▼

"Sounds like some kind of dark mission statement for an army of I don't know what. What do you think? What could they be planning? And who are they?"

 **Matt and Random:** "I don't know, and I don't think I want to - time we were leaving just in case anyone heard that alarm going off", replied Tradden to Zero, looking over at the door in the north wall whilst turning the amulet over and over in his hands to see if he could make anything of it. Aug 2, 2010 ▼

[Perception check if needed: **1d20+2: 12**  
He then tossed it over to the rogue: "Mean anything to you Zero?"

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random:** Zero caught it and wandered closer to one of the torches. He scrutinised it closely. Aug 2, 2010 ▼

Perception, if appropriate: **1d20+6: 7**

 **Me:** *Tradden and Zero took a good look at the amulet. It was plain, wooden, very well used judging by the smooth rounded edges, and practically worthless as Khalin had suggested. It's only distinguishing feature was a small swirl decorated into one side of the wood, filled in with some dark dye. The leather strap was fairly new, but again ten-a-penny.* Aug 2, 2010 ▼

*The cavern remained quiet, and the door remained firmly closed.*

 **Matt:** "Right", said Tradden, "Not the haul of glory we were hoping for - an ink stained sheet and a wooden amulet. Zero, let Kireth have a look, but otherwise lets get out of here. That door looks like a job for you my friend!" he said, slapping Zero on the back, lightly this time, as he strode off towards the north door. Aug 2, 2010 ▼

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random:** Zero nodded. He was starting to like Tradden and the pair seemed to be developing a friendly kind of shorthand. Aug 2, 2010 ▼

He strode over to the door and took a close look for anything suspicious.

Perception: **1d20+6+2: 14**

 **Me:** *Nothing appeared to be suspicious about the door.* Aug 2, 2010 ▼

**Neil:** Kireth rolled the wooden amulet through his fingers, much like a fairground trickster might roll a copper piece (although whoa betide anyone making that comparison). "Hmm, as you say, nothing remarkable about this trinket. Still, it has charm". He placed in his pouch. "While you play with that door, might I take a look at the parchment too? Elvish is my first language. You never know, something might leap out at me" Aug 2, 2010 ▼

Holding it at arms length Kireth glanced at the scroll and immediately lowered it with a slight look of puzzlement on his face. "This... this is not Elvish Zero. I mean it looks Elvish and, and some of the words are Elvish but, well, it just isn't. The grammar and punctuation is all wrong and many of these words are outdated really." He paused for thought "Almost like someone who didn't write Elvish very well wanted you to think it was. That or it's a form of elvish I have never seen... written by retards"

 **Matt:** Tradden shook his head. "That makes no sense - no sense at all. Why would anyone write such a thing?" Aug 2, 2010 ▼

He sighed.  
"Ah - little in this Gods Forsaken place does. I long to escape this damp environment and enjoy the breathing in of the heady mixture of a fine summer breeze, and a fine elven wine that only the Green Turtle Inn, by the docks can provide!"  
He reached up and swept a torch from one of the standing brackets as he continued his journey towards the north door.  
"Khalin - prudence being the order of the day again it seems," he said, once again failing to impress anyone with his attempts at clever words, "would you and your shield care to see what is beyond that door? My blade will, of course, be right at your side!"

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com:** "And I will be right behind you," Zero added, patting the bold dwarf on the back as he passed. Aug 3, 2010 ▼

 **Me:** *Khalin slowly tried the door and to his relief it opened without a sound. Pushing the door away from him he was greeted with another waft of fresher air.* Aug 4, 2010 ▼

*"Certainly this is the way out," he said proudly.*

*Through the door was a rough-hewn passageway, with the occasional wooden strut shoring up the roof, as though this were once a mining passageway. The floor sloped gently upwards, away from the group, and the passageway was windy and low-ceilinged away from the door. Khalin had not problems standing, but some of the others had to stoop to enter.*

*The passageway led away north as before into darkness beyond the torch's reach.*

 **Matt:** Tradden, tallest of the group by a head, had particular difficulty handling a blade, a torch, and his gawky frame through the cramped passageway. Aug 4, 2010 ▼  
He kept a close eye on the path behind them, just in case they were being pursued.

 **The.brainbuster@googlewave.com:** Zero eyed the passage ahead. Seemed nice and quiet. He hoped an exit would soon present itself. He was craving a three course dinner, a hot bath and a queen sized bed something fierce. Aug 4, 2010 ▼

Just to emphasise the point, his stomach grumbled loudly.

"Sorry," he said to the others.

 **Me:** *As the group followed the passageway they slowly felt the incline rise. Khalin commented (successful Dungeoneering check) that they were still about a hundred feet or so* Aug 4 2010 ▼

underground.

The path wound around tight corners, possibly as the tunnel had followed an ore seam through the rock. After a couple of hundred feet the passageway widened up a little, enough to allow two to stand side by side - in the middle of the passageway were some rough tracks as though a cart had trodden the path well.

Off to the sides at this point were four small doors, two on either side, possibly store rooms of one sort or another. One was open, its door badly damaged, splintered wood hanging off rusted hinges. The other three were closed, although one of them didn't look to be in much better condition than the broken one.

The passageway continued north and upwards away from the doors.

 Matt and Random: "What on earth ... or rather, under the earth ... is this place?" mused Tradden as he walked over to the broken door, holding the torch up to see if any information could be gleaned about what was within without actually poking his head inside. Aug 4, 2010  
[Perception check if needed **1d20+2: 12**]

 Me: Beyond the broken door was a small chamber, possibly an old store room either for equipment or ores. With the type of passageway, the shored beams, the cart track, and the rough hewn walls, it had begun to look as though this was an old mine of some sort. Aug 5, 2010

 Matt: "Just a store room. I'm no dwarf", said Tradden, already starting to regret the comment as he noticed Kireth take a deep breath in, ready to comment, "but this looks like a mine", he hurriedly added, not giving the mage time to speak. He continued: "Might be worth checking these other rooms just to see if there is anything else of note here, but I have received enough punishment from hidden traps today..." Aug 5, 2010

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: "Allow me," said Zero, approaching the undamaged door just up from the broken one. Aug 5, 2010  
He looked it over cautiously. This part of the mine seemed less hazardous, but that was no reason to get careless.

Perception: **1d20+6+2: 27**

 Me: There didn't seem to be anything unusual about the door. It was quite sturdy and had obviously stood the test of time, but nothing unusual - no traps. Aug 6, 2010

 Matt: "Well, we had best check all four doors - wherever this place is, it has a reputation for people being tied up behind them!" quipped Tradden. Aug 7, 2010  
Still, he was hesitant to open the two wooden doors on the otherside of the passageway, and could still feel the sting of the lightning trap earlier in the day.  
"I will search this second door Zero, if you could give those two behind us a once over?"

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero nodded obligingly and checked the first of the remaining doors. Aug 6, 2010  
Perception: **1d20+6+2: 23**

 Matt: At the same time, Tradden carefully opened the first door Zero had checked, to see if it was another storeroom or whether more interesting contents lurked inside... Aug 6, 2010  
[Seems to make sense to assume that if Zero finds nothing up with the other two doors, the party go on to search all four.]

 Me: On the right hand side of the passageway Zero checked the half-broken door - nothing seemed unusual with it, and he could even see through into the small room beyond through the many cracks. The room beyond looked to be fairly empty, with remaining barrels and boxes overturned as though it had been ransacked long ago. Aug 7, 2010

The second, and final, door, however was more sturdy, and this time locked.

Tradden opened the first door and was greeted by small chamber that appeared to have been used recently. The room was sparse, but ominously contained a pair of chains connected to the back wall with manacles at the end of them. Scrawled on the stone wall, perhaps with a mixture of fingernails and blood was a single word - "lowfield".

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Finding the last door locked raised a happy smile on Zero's face. Aug 7, 2010  
He cracked his knuckles and went to work with his picks.

Thievery: **1d20+6+2: 24**

 Me: The final door was tricky, but after a couple of minutes Zero heard the noise he wanted as the levers clicked into place. Aug 7, 2010

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero beamed, making sure everyone saw his success. Aug 7, 2010  
"After you, gentlemen," he said.

 Matt: "Very well!" chuckled Tradden, opening the last of the four doors to see what lay behind... Aug 7, 2010

 Me: The final door opened into a storeroom much like the other. This time, however, a single figure lay immobile wrapped in the chains and bound by the manacles. Slight of frame and covered with muck and grime it was still obvious this was an elf, and a female one at that. Aug 8, 2010

 Matt: Still surprised, despite his previous comments, Tradden knelt down by the stricken Elf. As he spoke he turned his head back to Zero. Aug 8, 2010  
"I am so glad you are here - I have seen more traps, locks & manacles to last me a lifetime, and I for one wouldn't have been able to open the first one! Looks like your skills are called for again my friend."

Neil: Kireth looked down at the elf maiden, covered in filth, and turned his nose. "Are we sure we wish to release it before we ascertain who she is and why she is here? I appreciate it is likely she has been trapped and bound much like I was but until we know for sure..." Aug 9, 2010

 Matt and Random: Always gallant with ladies no matter what, Tradden nevertheless took the mages point. He produced a small flask of water from his pack, daubed some on a ripped-off piece of his frilly undershirt and went about dabbing the prone figure's delicate elven face, removing the detritus of grime and filth. Aug 9, 2010  
"Awake my lady - we are here to help you." he said, trying to coax her back into some form of consciousness.  
[Healing/First Aid check if needed: **1d20+7: 22**]

 Me: A small moan issued from the lips of the elf as Tradden cleaned her face, but she didn't wake. Aug 9, 2010

Mark: "Harumph, trust an elf to be suspicious of one of his own kind," muttered Khalin under his breath, before speaking up: "Surely Master Kireth, she has fallen foul of the same mishaps as you and I?" Aug 9, 2010

 Matt: Tradden looked up - he hadn't thought of that. Aug 9, 2010  
"Yes, good point Masterdwarf - here, Zero, could you kindly unshackle this fair maiden from her bindings?"

Neil: His acute hearing picking out Khalin's mutterings, Kireth bit his tongue and tightened his grip on his staff. Usually a sharp response would be forthcoming (and he had many on his mind) but this was not the time or place. "Very well" was all he said. Aug 10, 2010

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero ambled over to the shackled elf and went to work on her restraints. Aug 10, 2010  
"Just a moment..." he murmured as he worked.

 Me: *The chains fell loosely to the ground at Zero's command.* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

Neil: *"Very useful this Zero" Kireth thought to himself as he watched the chains fall away "we shall keep our eyes on this one".* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

He tapped the feet of the prone elf with his staff *"Well I suppose we should pick it up then"* he nodded to Tradden. *"I for one am sick of the stench down here"* he tried not to look at Khalin as he said this *"North and upwards was it not?"*. He stepped back outside of this room and waited for the others to follow.

  Me and Random: *The group slowly left the storeroom, with Tradden carrying the elf maiden. Zero took the lead, fifty feet or so in front of the rest of the group, trying to be quiet and hidden.* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

[Zero Stealth Check: 1d20+11: 27]

 Matt: Tradden lurched along with the unconscious Elf slung, more ungraciously than he would like, but as much as circumstances allowed, over his shoulder. Had they looked carefully, the others might have noticed him struggling slightly - his strength came more from the movement & leverage of his gangly frame than it did from sheer brute muscle, and so the weight of the maiden was taking its toll, and his breaths came as deeply as they did regularly. Aug 10, 2010 ▼

That said, he was quite enjoying being the "dashing hero", and his visible betrayed his attempts to otherwise look serious.

As he walked his glance kept being drawn to the elven features now only inches from him, the flickering torchlight picking out the fey lines and contours of her face.

*"She really is very beautiful"* he thought to himself, *"8 to 9 out of 10 on the Aversword Scale beautiful!"* he added.

He suddenly found himself not being able to draw his gaze away from her angelic, restful face, blackened and bruised as it was.

His thoughts turned to poetry, and he started to compose a sonnet that he could sing to the fair lass when she awoke. He knew that even though ....

*"Snap out of it Aversword! Keep your mind on the job"* He chided himself - what an idiot! If he wasn't careful, he would be walking into the back of someone, still gawping like a lovestruck pre-teen!

 Me: *Zero followed the tracks in the passageway north and up the slight incline. As it came to a tight right-hand bend he noticed a small cart, perhaps used to carry ore, left idle in the centre of the tracks. Beyond the cart, was the end of the passageway, marked by a wooden construction with a shaft above bringing a faint amount of light. A large wheel at the bottom of the shaft, with an axle inset into the stone, had rope around it that disappeared up into the light above. A handle beckoned alluringly, begging to be turned.* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

 Matt: Zero, clearly a sharp dresser, was unlikely to have been pleased when Tradden walked straight into the back of him, the flaming torch catching on the shoulder, blackening the lucious material Aug 10, 2010 ▼

*"Ooops - sorry Zero"*, apologised Tradden, quickly pulling the torch away. Reaching out awkwardly with his free hand, desperately trying to keep the Elf on his shoulder at the same time, he tried to brush down the offended shoulder, hoping that the Rogue would not notice the wisps of smoke rising up towards the ceiling.

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero glared at him and wafted his hand away. Aug 10, 2010 ▼

"Thank you!" he jabbed sarcastically. "This is my favourite cloak too." He shook his head and grumbled something. He couldn't hold it against the swordsman. These things tended to happen in this line of work.

  Me and Random: *As eyes became adjusted to the shafts of light above, the group got a better look at the structure and associated handle.* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

[Khalin Dungeoneering Check: 1d20+2: 3] - critical failure!

[Kireth Dungeoneering Check: 1d20+0: 18] - success!

[Tradden Dungeoneering Check: 1d20+2: 21] - success!

[Zero Dungeoneering Check: 1d20+1: 15] - success!

*Judging by the timbers and the handle with the disappearing rope, the group were stood at the bottom of a mine shaft with a lift controlled by pulleys and wound up and down with the handle. The lift wasn't at the bottom, so only one conclusion could be drawn. The shaft appeared to be a hundred feet or so above.*

 Matt: *"Riiiiighhhhhhtttt...."* exclaimed Tradden, looking up at the tiny circle of faint light, way up in the ceiling. Aug 10, 2010 ▼

*"Sooooo - we wind the lift down, get on & make our way up? Sounds too easy"*

He managed to sidle over to a nearby torch bracket that was mounted on the wall, and plonked the torch he carried down in it. That enabled him to shift the Elf maiden so that she was held in a full-on two-handed carry.

Looking down at her, it occurred to him that her wan colour might be more to do with her unconscious state than it did with her natural apricot complexion.

*"Whatever we are going to do, we should do it fast - this lass needs a temple healer I think..."*

Mark: *"Right, someone will have to go up before the maiden, to drag her out,"* bustled Khalin, looking to get things moving. *"I'm happy for my hammer to guard here while the rest of you make good your ascent. Master Tradden, why don't you go first and we can send the lady up next?"* Aug 10, 2010 ▼

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: As the others chatted, Zero touched the handle and pulled it cautiously, glancing upwards at the towering mine shaft. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

 Me: *The handle was fairly stiff and would require a good old-fashioned heave-ho to get it moving.* Aug 11, 2010 ▼

  Matt and Random: Tradden went to stand next to Zero, and they both stood, necks craning up towards the tight shaft of light streaming down faintly from above. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

*"I wonder how many people the lift can actually hold?"* questioned Tradden to no one in particular as he strained to make out the platform above.

[Perception check: 1d20+2: 8]

 Me: *Tradden couldn't make out the base of the lift platform - not enough light from the torches was filtering up, and the faint shafts of daylight didn't give enough details away to be sure. However, judging by the layout of the wooden beams at the bottom, Tradden estimated that the platform would be about five feet by five feet - enough for half-a-dozen people.* Aug 11, 2010 ▼

  Matt, me and Random: *"Looks like we should all be able to fit on - lets wind it down and get out of here!"* Aug 11, 2010 ▼

Tradden carefully lay down the Elf maiden in a sitting position at the side of the cavern whilst he prepared to wind the handle.

[Tradden Strength Check: 1d20+4: 14]

*He tried his best to turn the handle, but it seemed to be ceased, or the platform was far too heavy to move. Ropes and pulleys creaked and sent echoes up the mine shaft, but the handle didn't move.*

Stepping back from the handle and wiping his brow with his sleeve (which only served to leave a brown smear across his forehead), Tradden took a few deep breaths before he spoke, surprised at the resistance.

*"I have that a good shot as well. I don't think my strength is lacking - its just stuck. Looks like someone might have to climb up the ropes maybe?"*

 Neil and Random: *"Quite".* Kireth moved closer to the mechanism. Bending slightly to get a better look at the handle, where it entered the mechanism and the cogs behind. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

(Dungeoneering Check: 1d20+0: 12)

Cocking his head slightly to one side he considered the situation for a moment. Moving his hand and fingers over the mechanism, as if sprinkling water, he spoke the word *"Kaeri"*.

*"Why not give it another shot"* he suggested, moving away and back to the shadows.

 Liam: Celestia stirred, the light of the torches surrounding her was torment for her eyes initially although the pain eased slowly into a nebulous fuzz. At this stage she remained unnoticed by the group of strangers, but as she adjusted to consciousness she began to take in their features. She tried to speak, slowly and at first incomprehensively, *"Wh... ha... who..."* Aug 11, 2010 ▼

Her memory of the last few days was limited, she remembered only pain and powerlessness, her immediate instinct, however was for water; *"water..."*, she spoke softly, drowsily and at no particular person, *"I need water"...*

  Matt and The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: After Kireth had done what ever arcane magic he had on the wheel, Tradden had carefully tested the lever, and found it to be moving freely. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

Another man regarding across his face he leunched into lowering the lift, and had done a fair few turns when he noticed the Elf stir.

Another grin spreading across his face he launched into lowering the lift, and leaving a surprised Khalin to jump in and carry on lest the hard work done so far be lost, Tradden rushed over to the maiden, the scabbard of his long sword managing in catch Zero a stinging blow across the thigh as he bundled past.

"Ow! Damn it, that's twice!" Zero yelled.

"My Lady!" Tradden exclaimed as he knelt down in front of her. He produced his small canteen and put it to her lips, allowing her to sip, slowly at first, the cool water within. "Fear not - for whilst we are not friends of old we are indeed your freinds and mean you no harm. We have rescued thee from imprisonment in this mine complex and now head towards the surface and back to the safety Deepingwald." Perhaps not showing the bedside manner appropriate to one treating a person just awoken from unconsciousness, Tradden excitedly ploughed on with giving her far too much information for her to really comprehend. "I am Tradden, the Dwarf obtaining our lift to the surface is Khalin Grundokri, Warlord of his stout kin, ... erm ... sorry about that Khalin, didnt mean to leave you with the wheel turning, the man ... holding his leg, are you OK Zero?, is Zero Uhlit master of locks and traps, and the half elf is Kireth ... I don't really know what he does, we have also only just met, but he is a whizz with lift mechanisms I can tell you!"

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: "Indeed," said Zero. He nodded respectfully to the wizard. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

 Me: Khalin continued to turn the handle and gradually it became clear that a platform was slowly and steadily lowering down towards the group. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

 Matt: "Come my lady" said Tradden, offering the Elf a gentlemanly hand to help her to her feet, "Allow me to assist thee - we shall be on yonder lift and at the surface in no time. Er... I think!" Aug 11, 2010 ▼

 Me: As Tradden helped the Elf to her feet the platform slowly descended until it was at the bottom of the shaft. Khalin stood back carefully trying to hide the beads of sweat on his brow from his efforts. Aug 11, 2010 ▼

The platform looked a rickety affair, a little bit smaller than Tradden had anticipated, probably just enough space for the group. At the side of the platform was another handle, presumably for turning and moving the platform up once you were on it. There were no guard rails, just the base.

With the platform now at the bottom of the shaft more light streamed down. It wasn't direct sunlight, so there must be some sort of chamber or cover at the top of the shaft, but it was close to the open air.

 Matt: Tradden moved along with the rest of the group as they shuffled onto the lift platform, supporting the Elf even though her strength was clearly returning and she hardly needed it. Once they were all on Tradden happened to find himself next to the handle. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

"Can thy stand on thine own for a short while whilst I whisk us to the surface?" he said. Clasping the handle with both hands he started to turn. The ropes and pulleys creaked and groaned under the weight of the fully laden lift, but they did their job and soon the party were making their way slowly but steadily to whatever lay at the top of the lift shaft...

 Liam: "I am able" spoke Celestia unwaveringly, for her strength was indeed returning to her now. She stood on the platform amongst what she could only describe as a motley crew; she was unaccustomed to the company of men and dwarves as it was, but this rabble were surely the strangest mixture of creatures her deep blue eyes had ever seen. She had little intention of complaining however, they seemed friendly enough, they had freed her at the very least. She would seek to quiz them more intensively once they reached a suitable juncture. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

Celestia looked towards Tradden, he had aided her thus far and was quite clearly very keen to make a good impression. Kireth on the otherhand had said barely a word and she decided quickly that she would give him a rather wider berth. As she peered at them she realised that her eyes were tired and swollen, the last few days had taken their toll, for now at least she was content to follow.

"Thank you for your aid Master Tradden" said Celestia, thinking at the same time how strange that name sounded as she spoke it.

As they proceeded slowly upwards she saw a glimmer of palid light towards the top of the shaft, distant at first, but slowly it began to become more focussed and the feel of cool air washed through her golden hair...

Neil: Kireth stood uneasy on the platform as it began its slow ascent. Before climbing aboard anything he liked to be sure it was fit for purpose and this old lift, well, who knew? Aug 12, 2010 ▼

To take his mind off the creaking of the wood and the occassional groan of metal he looked over at the young Tradden working away at the mechanism's handle. Barely has he known this elf woman and already he fawns over her like some puppy "Amada" he muttered inaudibly under his breath. Looking from Tradden to the object of his affection he caught the elf woman looking at them all carefully, perhaps sizing them up. Their eyes locked, unflinching for a moment, before Kireth offered half a crooked smile. The elf made what Kireth was sure she felt was a warm smile in return but he knew better. He had borne the scorn and contempt of her kind all his life and was not fooled.

"Yes, that's right woman. I'm watching. Always watching"

 Me, Matt and Random: The creaks and groans of the ropes against the pulleys were quite audible now and the weight on the platform made turning the handle an arduous task. Tradden started to sweat a little as the going became harder the longer he worked. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

[Tradden Endurance Check: **1d20+4: 22**] - success!

 Matt and me: His arms starting to sag under the strain, Tradden was about to suggest someone else take over when he noticed Kireth catch the Elf maiden's eye and throw her a crooked little smile. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

Suddenly it felt like his blood was boiling, and it spurred him to wind harder and faster. Any of the party with particularly good hearing might have been able to hear the grinding of teeth coming from Tradden's direction...

 Me and Random: Tradden continued winding the handle, the light from above growing stronger with each turn. The group were about halfway up the shaft when Tradden suddenly found the handle harder to turn, possibly one of the ropes getting stuck on the pulley system above. A hard jerk on the handle seemed to set the blockage free, but at a cost - the platform swayed and buckled, and it was a hard job just for people to hang on. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

[Celestia Dexterity Check: **1d20+1: 5**] - failure!

[Khalin Dexterity Check: **1d20+1: 6**] - failure!

[Kireth Dexterity Check: **1d20+2: 16**] - success!

[Tradden Dexterity Check: **1d20+2: 16**] - success!

[Zero Dexterity Check: **1d20+3: 16**] - success!

Kireth, Tradden, and Zero managed to hang on, clinging to the ropes or handle mechanism. The Dwarf and Elf were unlucky, however, and the bounce of the platform sent them tumbling precariously toward the edge of the platform and the drop below.

Neil, me and Random: ((odd=Khalin / evens=Celestia roll: **1d20: 19**)) Aug 12, 2010 ▼

His boney left hand clinging tightly to the rope, Kireth wildly swung the staff in his right towards the ailing dwarf "Grab it!" he yelled.

 Matt, me and Random: Instantly seeing the danger to both his new Dwarven friend, and the Elf to whom his heart currently belonged, Tradden's instincts were to try and save .... Both!, and in the space of a heartbeat he decided on a course of action that was both characteristically complex and high risk. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

Grabbing hold of the rope at the corner of the platform with both hands, he shouted violently "Zero, Kireth - DUCK!" and athletically launched himself off the edge of the platform away from the group! However, his hands being tight around the rope this had the effect of the young fighter twisting round horizontally at human chest height (Dwarf head height). He tensed his whole body for the briefest of seconds, meaning that his 6'4" inch frame become a sweeping scythe, his intention being to knock both Khalin and the Elf to the floor of the lift rather than have them stumble off the edge of the platform and to certain death. It only occurred to Tradden as he got the edge of his flighted arc that this plan, as great as it was, would only work if he could hit them both and Zero and Kireth did indeed duck down...

[Athletics check **1d20+8: 21**] - success!

Mark, me and Random: Khalin lunged for Kireth's staff with one arm, while trying to snag the stumbling Celestia with the other, only to see Tradden launching himself an instant later. Aug 12, 2010 ▼

[Athletics check: **1d20+8: 28**] - critical success!

Khalin grabbed onto Kireth's staff with a tight grip and in an instant had struck out his hammer with his other that Celestia grabbed onto. His dwarven instincts threw Celestia around back onto the platform under the swinging Tradden, and he managed to catch himself onto the edge of the lift.

As he lay there on his back, panting, all he could see was Tradden swinging back towards the frozen Kireth, and the handle Tradden had left starting slowly to unwind behind Zero.

 Neil, me and Random: A lot can pass through a man's mind in an instant, a lot more can pass through Kireth Majere's. If Tradden had been able to see what the mage was thinking at 'this moment' he would have quite horrified; as it was, he merely heard the mage snarl as he tried to duck the swinging legs. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

[Athletics check: **1d20+2: 10**] - success!

Kireth dropped to the floor with an ungraceful thud, Tradden's feet missing him by only centimeters

 The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Tradden ended his swing, skidding onto the platform and finally ending up laid on his back near the edge. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

Zero, who had been transfixed by Tradden's daredevil actions, turned and noticed the freely-turning handle.

"Ah," he exclaimed with quiet panic.

He grabbed it and strained to slow it, braking the descent of the lift. After a moment's pause, to let the noise and dust settle, he frowned at the group splayed on their backs across the platform, and put his finger to his lips.

"Sshh!" he ordered, and then motioned upwards to the light above.

 Matt and Random: Tradden, the blood still pounding through his veins and adrenalin running high nevertheless took quick note of Zero's motion upwards, and so checked his heavy, loud breathing. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

Given he was laying on his back anyway, he used the opportunity to look upwards to see what the rogue was pointing at.

[Perception check if needed: **1d20+2: 12**]

 Me: Tradden didn't see anything in particular at the top of the lift shaft. However, judging by the amount of noise the group had made it was a minor miracle that the world and his dog weren't peering over the lip of the shaft to see what the commotion was. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

 Liam: Celestia was ill accustomed to such rough handling, but managed to bring herself back to her feet. She felt quite sure that they would certainly not now be unnoticed by those that she felt sure were awaiting them at the top of the shaft. Elven grace had clearly escaped this group of travellers, clumsy and noisy as they were. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

 Matt: Jumping to his feet Tradden rushed over to where Zero was stood. "Come on - lets get this lift up. I don't like the idea of there being someone at the top who might have ill will against us, but we are like fish in a barrel at Tveggeneezers Bazaar right now!" Aug 13, 2010 ▼

That said, ignoring the slight rope burns on his hands, he once again started to turn the wheel, this time aided by Zero, who added his own strength to the task.

 Me and Random: Trying to keep their noise to a minimum, Tradden and Zero turned the lift handle with gusto, and the lift slowly rose towards the light. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

The rest of the group kept quiet and motionless, scanning the light above.

A few minutes passed as the platform wound its way upwards until at last it broke out into the light, and the group found themselves in a small hut, with a large open door streaming in sunlight.

Zero locked off the handle and the group bathed in the welcome light. Through the open door they could see some woods and the slope of a hill going downwards.

[Celestia Nature Check: **1d20+6: 12**] - failure!  
[Khalin Dungeoneering Check: **1d20+2: 16**] - success!  
[Kireth Nature Check: **1d20+0: 18**] - success!  
[Tradden Nature Check: **1d20+2: 17**] - success!  
[Zero Nature Check: **1d20+1: 4**] - failure!

By the look of the hill and the woods beyond the group realised the passageways and caverns had led them a little further than they had thought, and they were the otherside of the peaks surrounding Deepingwald. If they followed the hill down through the trees to the river at the bottom, they could follow that back to the main city, as it winds its way around the base of the peaks on a caravan route.

 Matt and Random: "Ah! Sunlight! I did wonder at times whether we would see it again. Time to head back into town I think." Aug 13, 2010 ▼  
Suddenly again remembering that he had come to the mansion in the first place on a job for the local guard, Tradden made a mental note of where this mysterious back entrance was in relation to the city. He also remembered the Guard Captain talking all the time about "clues" & "evidence", so he had a quick search around the hut.  
[Perception check if needed: **1d20+2: 8**]

 Me: Nothing seemed to stand out as obvious. Lots of footprints baked into the mud, but nothing else. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

 Matt and Random: Tradden, in detective mode, tried to ascertain if there was anything about the footprints he could report back - man, beast, numbers etc... Aug 13, 2010 ▼  
[Nature check: **1d20+2: 6**]

However, Tradden was no detective, and they meant nothing to him. He stood up and dusted himself down as best a boy can when covered in sewer effluence.

"Right then - shall we? My lady - forgive me, but I am yet to learn your name - can I escort you from this place?" Asked Tradden of the Elven maid.

 Liam: Celestia surveyed Tradden once again, "my name is Celestia Gaia Master Dwarf, I am thankful for your help within the darkness" she spoke plainly and clearly. As the cool air swept across her face another scent entered her body, that of food coming from the nearby woodland. "I believe that we might find food nearby, if we continue into these woodlands" recent events had robbed her of the hunger that now burned within her stomach; as far as she could tell it had been some time since her last meal. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

Celestia began to wander towards the front of the group, following the wafting smell of food, leaving Tradden trailing in her wake.

 Matt: Hurrying after her, Tradden beamed as he carried on the conversation that the Elf had so clearly looked to end. Aug 13, 2010 ▼  
"Celestia! What a beautiful name! So, so ... Elven!"

He pulled up alongside her, matching her stride.

"And, yes, that roast pork does smell particularly attractive after the day's events, and I for one would certainly ...."

His hand suddenly clamped around Celestia's arm and she was pulled to an unceremonious stop as Tradden held her firm. Suddenly his face was all seriousness, and he held up his other hand behind him in a warning to the rest of the group, just as they were about to follow. Just as the Cleric was about to complain to the young fighter, he spoke again.

"My lady - Celestia, all day I have toiled beneath the earth trying to find a way out firstly with Zero and then with the rest of you as we went along. At the same time we have been attacked by all manner of beasts and man and have found evidence of something very odd going on deep within that mine. The point I am making is that there is little around here that is friendly and I cannot imagine that anyone cooking food around the entrance of the mine is likely to offer us an amphora and a leg of boar. I urge caution."

With that, he let go of Celestia's arm and drew both his swords.

"Forgive me for being a pessimist", he added, inspecting the way the sunlight now reflected in tandem from the shaft of the blades and spilled into a complex whiter than white pattern on the grass below, an effect which lifted his spirits after so long in the dark.

 Neil: "The boy's a genius" he muttered to Khalin and Zero, who were both still stood with him just within the door frame of the hut. Aug 13, 2010 ▼

"I might suggest we are in more immediate danger than even that. Let's say you have a house and under that house you have a whole complex, presumably secret. And within that complex you like to keep hostages and desks that shout out warnings. Leading out of that secret prisoner holding complex you have a mine shaft leading to a secondary exit, again, presumably, for emergency exits or secret entrances.

Would you leave the door open?" He tapped the large door with his staff. "My guess is you wouldn't unless you had just heard a bunch of muppets ascending your secret lift and you'd run off to go get your mates quickly."

He looked at the four pair of eyes staring back at him. "Just a thought" Aug 13, 2010  
Mark: "You have a point there, methinks," Khalin responded thoughtfully, still slightly puzzled as to why Celestia had thanked Tradden and called the gallant if unorthodox young fighter "Master Dwarf" instead of himself, before shrugging the thought away, "She's probably still dazed and confused. Elves..." he muttered to himself, before rolling his eyes and refocussing on matters at hand - while hoping Kireth hadn't overheard his rambling. "No offence," he quickly added, realising that the keen-eared mage most probably had.

Neil: Kireth nodded at the dwarf. He took no offence. To elves he was a human, to humans he was an elf. The years of abuse had left him numb. He no longer cared, for he was Kireth and he needed neither. Aug 13, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com and Random: Zero took a look around the hut for anything interesting. Aug 13, 2010  
Perception: 1d20+6: 22

Me: Zero took a good look at the footprints baked into the mud. Looked like a few different individuals, some normally booted, some with heavy boots. Here and there were what looked like the butts of a spear shaft or staff. Nothing else raised attention. Aug 13, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: He reported this to the others, for what it was worth. Aug 13, 2010

Mark and Random: Khalin looked around, trying to figure out their position relative to the dwarf strongholds deep in the hills. He gazed towards the distant mountains, his face betraying pride and some wistfulness. Aug 13, 2010  
"We seem to be about a dozen leagues from the mountains", before turning nearly a half circle towards the south, "but only a brace from Deepingwald. At least a couple of hours' march I'd say."

Matt: Tradden nodded, impressed with the Dwarf's knowledge and positioning skills. Khalin's assesment more or less matched with what he had constructed in his head about them having previously headed north whilst underground. He had no idea where they were now, but was reassured by the Warlord's confidence. Aug 13, 2010

Liam: Celestia was becoming impatient with the apparent indecision expressed by her new fellows, to her mind there was no apparent danger within the immediate vicinity. Aug 13, 2010  
"I would venture to say that it would be unnecessarily inefficient to lure us into the woods towards our doom, when we seem so content to loiter outside the gates from where we have just escaped in the open daylight". The woods had always provided a source of protection to her people and she had lived in harmony with the wild for many years; she had never considered them to be an ideal spot for battle.

Matt: Tradden looked somewhat confused. Aug 13, 2010  
"So, ...you ...think we should go and investigate?" he asked.  
Tradden was certainly convinced that whatever was going on nearby, it wasn't good, and he scanned the treeline constantly for any sign of would be attackers.

Mark: "Sounds good to me!" bustled Khalin, himself growing a little impatient at the collective indecision, albeit apparently oblivious to the fact he was guilty of it too. "I'll take point," he continued, now all business, and briskly started out in the direction Celestia had indicated moments ago. "Come on Mister Nothing, let's see what's afoot!" Aug 13, 2010

The.brainbuster@googlewave.com: Zero followed in the burly dwarfs wake. Aug 13, 2010  
"What's afoot is my stomach's trying to eat itself," he moaned. "Where's that smell of food coming from? Now that's just torment!" he hollered at the sky.

Matt: "Looks like the decision is made!" said Tradden, falling into line behind Zero, Aug 13, 2010  
"You two coming?" he asked over his shoulder to Celestia and Kireth as he walked.

Me: The party head off down the slopes towards the treeline, following Khalin. It's not long before they reach the trees, tall strong oaks, with little underbrush, and start picking their way continually downwards. Aug 13, 2010

The smell of cooking wafts closer, enticing the group onwards. Suddenly, almost without warning they come out into a clearing; Khalin stopping abruptly and the rest bumping into his back.

Across at the other side of the clearing are a group of men, huddled around a campfire. A few commoners by the look of it, but on closer inspection there appear to be a couple of armoured individuals, plus a man wearing a cloak carrying a gnarled staff.

As the group stand gawking, the man with the staff spots them.

"Scapo, we are found. Seize them!", he shouts at one of the armoured men, and all of the men stand, turn, look at the group and draw their weapons.

Me: Continued in [Scene #5](#). Aug 13, 2010

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