

34: Maze and Metal

Now that the spy and the mastermind behind the logging rights problem were discovered, we could start to solve the problem. Reed and Kendalan knew what to do against the magical blight that subdued the growth of the forest. We did however encounter two problems; The first problem was that both Reed and Kendalan knew what needed to be done to restore growth to the forest, but both weren't able to perform the magic. The second problem was the evil druid that had blighted the forest in the first place. How were we to prevent him from simply casting his evil magics again when we've left towards Candlekeep.

The latter problem being the biggest one we decided to take action on the druid or Blighter as he was named. In good Calimhan tradition we reverted back to the direct and usually simplest way, a good old clean "Lure the enemy onto open ground" followed by a ruthless assassination.

Kendalan and Reed knew the most about this nature magic and went for a scouting mission in the blighted forest to set up the "lure the enemy" part of the operation part two, while Felina set the whole ordeal in motion with a quick talk to the mayor, explaining our plans. Off course she made sure that the Zhent spy was overhearing the conversation. He would certainly brief the Zhentarim, who would then inform the blighter of our plans.

This left most of the party out of a job and we filled that void with a quick but worthwhile expedition into the deepest part of the mine. During our attempt to discover the spy we drew astrological readings of certain possible candidates and in the process found a shift boss working in the mines who could be persuaded to grant us access to restricted areas of the mine. This off course for a suitable compensation for him.

It turned out that the deepest parts of the mine were closed off short after the Iron Throne incident around 15 years ago. This part of the mine was rich in precious metals and gems, but very poor in iron ore and in general unsafe. The mayor had concluded that the gains did not outweigh the hard work in actually finding these sparsely found minerals and simply decided to close off that part of the mine and follow the rich iron ore deposits in other parts of the mine.

Cuura bartered with the shift boss and reached an agreement for 200 gold up front and 200 afterwards, only if we found any riches to speak of. The shift boss then gave us a quick map, a key to the closed off part of the mine and the knowledge that the deepest parts of the mine were permanently blocked by man made cave-ins.

After quickly reaching the closed off parts of the mine we started scouting the area. It didn't take us long to see that this place had seen more action in the last year than it should have. Several parts of the mine shafts were dotted with fresh mining activities almost if the miner knew exactly where to find the hidden treasures. After this Felina and me discover the yapping sounds of kobolds in the vicinity. We discovered a hidden passageway into the deepest parts of the mine where the Iron Throne supposedly had been based.

A cramped tunnel led into a huge cavern inhabited by a few dozen of the little critters. In the center of the Cave was a lake with a small peninsula protruding with a ramshackle building on it. The building posed as headquarters of the kobolds mining expedition. Felina and I started to scout the cavern, trying to identify all possible exits. In the meantime we discovered several pit traps hidden at all different passageways out toward the mine. Unfortunately for me, I failed to notice one and fell straight into the spikes six foot lower. This trap also managed to warn the Kobolds of our presence and immediately they killed the torches, trusting on their ability to see in pitch black. Felina helped me out of the trap and we quickly ran toward the

party to regroup. Cuura and Zhae decided it was best to set up a distraction and charged the kobolds and ended up taking most of the beating. Bolts of force fired by two kobold sorcerers blasted the two in their attempt to take the heat from Felina and me. At the time we finally made it to the lake area the kobolds had decided to take a run for their life and regroup in the cramped fortified tunnels were their lack of fighting power was compensated by their intricate knowledge of those tunnels that were specially prepared for just a fight like this.

It was good thing that we were lucky. I must be one of Tymora's favorites because her luck was with me that day. I charged the building when I saw the kobolds hasty retreat. I changed my direction and ran toward one of the two rope bridges that acted as exit ways, then suddenly the kobold leader crossed my path in full flight, leaving his back wide open for a quick thrust. The target appeared out of the blue, my blade went in for the kill and it almost looked like time stood still, the blade entered the little ones back, the tip didn't even hit a rib or vertebrae and slid right into his heart. One lucky shot and the kobolds were without their leader!

Zhae was also lucky in pinning the kobold's most able fighter on the other rope bridge. Together with Felina he defeated the dangerous foe without too much trouble.

We had severed the head from the snake, but we still had to deal with dozens of angry kobolds who were hiding in the fortified tunnel complexes. Before we entered we discovered that they had could sustain themselves because of a lizard pen and a mushroom grove. Even better for us was the discovery of the kobold's treasure chest, filled with gold, gems, mithral and a strange metal called Adamantine. A quick raid into the tunnels granted us the opportunity to kill another dozen of kobolds in a cave. But we decided that the kobolds could easily outrun us and probably beat us in this game of cat and mice. We did however find their point of access to the mines in shape of a closed of tunnel leading deeper in to the bowels of the earth, deep into what Grimwald called the underdark. Since we almost routed the kobolds and removed most of their fighting power, we decided we could rid ourselves of the creatures by killing their food supply. The lizards were killed and the mushroom grove destroyed. The remaining kobold sorcerer would probably lead the remnants of the mining expedition out of the mines. With that problem solved we returned to Nashkel carrying great riches. We had a supply of rare metals for Grimwald to forge powerful items, we found bracers of protection, a magical scimitar and a wand which we could use to locate certain objects or metals. All in all a very good loot for a days work!