"GLENRIDDING!" roared the Viking. "You would dare to interrupt my meeting in such a fashion?"

"I'm sorry, sir. Wouldn't do it in anything less than an emergency, sir. But you see, sir – this *is* an emergency…"

"Emergency, Glenridding?"

Glenridding's face had turned the colour of his doublet. It was a moment or two before he was able to continue.

"It was just after the Ascents, sir. Only a few seconds later, I suppose. I was leaving the Exit Tunnel when I heard this terrible noise behind me, sir. Sort of a tearing, rushing sound. Like – like one of those steam-train things we used to see on the main line above the Exit a hundred or so years back…"

"Spare us the history lesson, Glenridding, and get to the point!"

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. I turned back to see what was going on and it was then … it was then…"

"Yes?"

"It was then that I saw it land, sir."

"*Land?*" echoed Bloodaxe. "What do you mean, *land*? It was then that you saw *what* land?"

Glenridding gathered himself against an outburst of eye-twitching.

"A car, sir."

"A *car*?"

"Prithee, sir, methinks it hath appeared to us in a sorry state…"

"LANGUAGE, GLENRIDDING!"

"Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. I mean it's taken a bit of a knocking, sir. What with falling down the Exit Tunnel and everything. But it's still more or less in one piece, sir. Red Ford Fiesta. One litre engine. Nice little set of wheels, actually."

The Viking's monstrous jaw had dropped several inches.

"And you say it's on the floor of the Exit Tunnel?" he spluttered. "Of *our* Exit Tunnel?"

"Yes, sir. But that's not all. A split second later something else came shooting down the Exit Tunnel. To be precise, some*one* else, sir. Didn't see him coming till he was nearly on top of me. Didn't make much noise, you see…"

"Glenridding?"

"It was a child, sir – a boy…"

The atmosphere in the Red Temple positively crackled as Bloodaxe's eyes bore into Glenridding.

"Are you telling me…?"

Glenridding nodded.

"Yes, sir. It's exactly what I'm telling you. A boy has fallen down Exit 43."