

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 23: Trolled with class (2nd ride of Mirtul 1370)

After the fight we moved further south, out the bogs and pools. Grimwald tried to restore Felina's wracked strength, and, after some long talks by Grimwald about gems, rock, and faith, Felina looked a lot better.

We set up camp, while Zhae was busy breaking rocks with his bare hands. Watches were taken as was our wont and I went to sleep without any premonitions. It must have been a bit after midnight when I was jolted awake by a scream of pain from the sergeant. He was seriously hurt by arrows, which were shot by such force they went right through him. I was a bit groggy from being so rudely awakened, but I spotted some odd large shape a bow shot out, and I called forth a *glitterdust* to find any lurking there. The troll, for that was clearly our attacker, was blinded by my spell and fled. We must take it while it cannot see, so I grabbed my Guan Dao and ran towards it.

Zhae and I closed the gap, and I threw my only remaining offensive spell. The insight in enhancing fire magic I gained during the fight with the Hydra allowed me to make it a serious attack, but it was only a first circle spell - at least the fire should stop the wound from regenerating. Zhae moved aside to take down a large wolf trying to attack us from the rear. I disliked him doing so, but the creature *was* trying to flank him, and likely training just took over.

The sergeant ran in, Nethander arrived to, and Kendalan hit it, but its mail did protect it, and it shouldered its bow to pull a flaming long sword. Now I do lack deep knowledge about these gajin lands, but I had an inkling this was no ordinary troll. Suddenly Kendalan started running back to the camp, even as Grimwald made his way towards us.

Without Cuura – who guarded the book – and Kendalan, we had to hurry before it could see again, we pressed closely, but the blindness wore off, and suddenly we were on the losing side of battle. With great strength, coupled with great precision, it managed to cut down Zhae, grievously wounding the sergeant, and hit Nethander and me. Oddly enough Nethander isn't hurt as bad as we are, the Troll just isn't interested in him, nor in Grimwald. With our might broken, it runs off to save the wolf Zhae had downed, and I realize it is a guardian of the forest. Evil, filled with hatred for humans, but still untainted.

Then I hear the call of Kendalan: the Ninja is here, and we are in no state to oppose him. I need to pull him away from my friends, because Grimwald had healed Zhae enough that he could stand and he would feel duty bound to protect me. I call the assassin horrible names, then flee as I see the wagon rumble through the forest. This will not do. That bow of the Troll will surely kill them all – the wagon is just too slow to create the distance needed. Then the group gets encased by darkness. Nethander's doing no doubt, and I fill the Troll's head with a draconic voice claiming the group as prize. As I leave for the deep forest I can see it looking around and up the night sky for the dragon he thinks is here. My ploy worked! But I need to leave my friends. Will we meet again?