

42: Almost finished

This morning we left Nashkel riding on our horses. The party decided that I should ride Kendalan's warhorse. He could cope with one of the spare riding horses because he had the skill to command it in battle. The fact that he usually fights from long range using that bow of his, will have helped in that decision as well. The decision was taken and how could I decline it?

Riding a proper horse is something I can get used to, fighting from horseback is something else, but the added speed to bring me in combat range is a huge bonus. If I'd been riding this horse in our encounter with the man hunting Troll in the Forest of Sharp Teeth we would have been victorious. From now on I don't have to wait until the enemy gets in range or run like crazy while the enemy gets away. Now I let the horse drop me straight into the fight with lightning speed.

Even Grimwald was riding on a pony Reed bought for him. Talking about Reed, I think there's still hope for her. She sold the wagon for quite a good amount of money. I can clearly remember the poor state it was in when we arrived in town and I'm pretty sure we didn't fix the axle that was near to breaking. Reed has a true gift for trading stuff and I was actually very proud she sold the worn wagon as being in prime condition. That girl, who's so nerve wrecking correct in all she does, still has a little scoundrel in her when she doing business!

Anyway, we left for the dwarven tower to the north of Nashkel to find some adventure and treasure. Just a few miles from we encountered red cloaked wizards with fierce looking, heavy armored fighters. Suddenly they popped out from nowhere, surrounding us with overwhelming odds and demanded that we'd surrender the chest to us. Strangely enough I haven't thought about this chest for a long time but I can vaguely remember the importance of this chest. The fact that such a big display of magics were used to obtain this chest only proves the importance of this mysterious chest and the importance of our quest to Candlekeep.

I was preparing myself for a fight, when the red robed wizards were somehow chased off by a mere crow that later transformed into a dirty woman. This woman told us to hurry. We should race towards the dwarven tower, then towards Beregost and finally in one straight line towards Candlekeep. She spoke about a magical protection that was cast on the chest and it's waning influence to keep us shielded against those trying to find us. This is all very interesting but before she left, she looked at me and smiled, calling me the "Puss in Boots" At first I was rather shaken by this comment, but then I remembered the fairy tale I heard in Calimport when I was young. Somehow word is going around about me. I guess there are worse things to be called, yet I think I like Nethander the Hero a little bit better!

We did not get a lot of time to ponder about our encountered with the Red wizards because Kendalan spotted a fire in the forest we just rescued. He spotted a guy throwing fire balls and several large goblinoids called bugbears plowing through the forest. We charged with our horses towards the enemy, how could we allow the forest to be destroyed after putting such an amount of effort in saving it?

When we closed the gap to about six hundred yards we set up a quick battle plan. Riding horses though is still something the party has to get used to because Reed couldn't get her steed to gallop and Grimwald had fallen off his pony somewhere in our charge.

Still we made a very nice plan to take out the war-mage that was throwing the fireballs. Felina and I were going to sneak up on the mage and kill it in a close quarter melee. Cuura, Zhae and the others were going to attack the bugbears and cover our approach. Felina and I would charge the war-mage from the side and tumble from our galloping horses, I would then cloak

our departure with a globe of darkness cast on the horse, hopefully tricking the mage into believing that we were returning towards the bugbears. Later on Reed decided to come with us to support our attack with much needed magical assistance.

Both Reed, Grimwald and Felina used their magics to protect and enhance us and the attack began. The plan working for the biggest part, Kendalan peppered the mage with his bow and I was able to dodge the first fireball thrown at us. Unfortunately Felina and her horse went down like a brick. Felina however just acted like she had died in the blast. I think the mage was fooled by Felina's acting and she could use the time to stabilize her dying horse and used her magic to render her invisible. The war-mage however didn't like my presence and was searching for me. Too make thing worse, he had taken cover behind a big tree from Kendalan killing arrows and was trying to find my hiding place to blast me to pieces.

Reed however was following us flying through the air. Somehow she had grown wings and was trying to keep up with our fast charge. Seeing the danger, she switched places with Kendalan, giving him a good chance to start shooting again.

This gave me the opportunity to charge the war-mage. I was quickly followed by Felina and while I fought the mage; attack, riposte, feint, opening up his defense followed by a thrust in his abdomen, Felina could stab him in the back! This was too much for the mage and he tried to tumble away. Too bad he was too slow for our blades and another one of the evil three of Nashkel was no more.

In the meantime we had some bugbears to finish. I can't say that this was a proper fight, the poor monsters were behaving like undead skeletons. Their mind was burned away by what we believe to be the Duergar psionist. This was not a fight, this was butchering. The forest had to be saved and these bugbears had to be slaughtered, but I can't say I liked it one bit.

Felina stayed to search the dead war-mage's body for loot, but got attacked by a monk who was hiding in the vicinity. Felina and Cuura did something to aggravate the goddess Shar during the fair and they seem to be on her hit list. Zhae and I were the closest to poor Felina who was taking a beating like no other and charged to her rescue. Zhae was intercepted by a shadow and needed a bit of time to destroy it, leaving me to take the heat from Felina.

The monk however was an awesome fighter with interesting tricks. Somehow it sensed my charge and tried to launch a kick just before my thrust. Luckily for me I was too fast, but I could see this trick again when Zhae arrived. It ruined his charge and send him staggering for air. Fortunately even a foe of his prowess can't hope to hold out against the combined styles of Zhae and me, aided by Felina's sword, Kendalan arrows and Reeds little globes of fire.

What seemed to become a nice fight, turned out to be one of the best fights ever. I fenced with two very able opponents, I won and didn't even got scratched in the process. My prowess with Blade's rapier is growing fast and perhaps soon I will start to be worthy of Blade's legacy.

A small man, who beats the odds.