

Wolf Attack

Thosl created her two circles upon the cold hard ground. The first she drew in the blood of some animal eaten in the Tolkeen market. The second was drawn in owl's blood. She had moved a fair distance away from the others, insisted upon being able to do so. 2nd Lieutenant Walker had been very reluctant to allow it. Max's warning had rung true and it remained with her. Still the Ley Line Walker's disdain seemed to be disproportionate to his knowledge. His ignorance was in fact appalling. She might eventually have to adjust his attitude.

She returned her focus to her summoning. She took the bird she had caught and held it tightly in her claws. She began the chant at the first circle to summon the wolves. At the end of the chant she ripped off the bird's head and shouted, "Acba yin acba yin Agu."

The scarlet light of the circle burned for a moment and seven wolves appeared. Four of them were black and three a dark grey. She had to kill two of them for their mystic essence, doubled at the moment of death. She chose one of each colour. She took the grey one first and called upon her haunting entity. It hovered about her. She picked up the grey wolf and held it aloft by the throat. She told it, "Your life is lost because the Coalition has given us no choice. You die for their wickedness and

evil."

She crushed the wolf's neck, pulverising its spine. As the essence blossomed she ensnared it and added it to the already impressive surge she had taken from the ley line and then the nexus prior to starting her ceremonies. The haunting entity buzzed about erratically. It settled close to the ground and began to make a shape out of its cloud-like spherical base form. It became a pseudo-wolf shape and she could hear the almost inaudible howl that it made. She said to it, "Oh poor thing, killed by the insatiable lust for blood of the C.S."

When the time was right she would tell it to take a more substantial form. It would build a glowing body of pale ectoplasm and it would rush into the battle with the rest of them. She turned to the black wolf that she had bid to come out from the rest. She ripped it open and grabbed its essence. She was ready for the other circle. She stood within its designated space. From a squirming sack she had sat in the centre of the circle she extracted two toads. They immediately began to shiver. She began chanting before they could freeze and ruin the summoning. At the end of the chant she crushed them in her claws and shouted, "Agu yin, netosa!"

A shaft of light raised within the entrance of the circle. Within that light she saw the smoky shadow form of the possessing entity. It raised its arms and raked the air with its ethereal claws. Twisting her neck she looked over to the wolves were they stood obediently in their

circle. She saw the one she wanted, the largest of the grey ones. She bid it to come over to the other circle. It padded over and stood beneath the entity in the glow of the circle. She bid the entity to possess the wolf and it did so gladly. The light of the circle snuffed out. Thosl brought Kleese to her. She pointed out the two carcasses. Kleese settled down to sniff at one. Thosl gathered her wolves and went to join the others.

Chris saw Thosl approaching with five wolves. A big grey one acted different than the others. It snarled and looked about balefully at everything. The others were docile and other than occasionally sniffing the ground were silent and looked only forward. He wondered how he ever convinced himself to let her go ahead with this plan. Sure he had placed himself within the plan and even sort of looked forward to it. However, that did not excuse the more heinous aspects of how Thosl was working things.

His conversation with Max did not sit well with him either. He could see Max's point of view, but that did not mean he had to agree with it. Still, here he was, going through with what might be the first of many undesirable missions. He only hoped that at least the ends might begin to at least compensate for the means.

He spoke to the assembled group. "Okay, as I said, the purpose of this mission is to send the ground forces into chaos. We are going to break their wills if not their

actual sanity. Don't worry about killing every soldier. There probably won't be time. Focus on disabling them and forcing the rest into a messy retreat. Other forces are going to capture or destroy those that flee as necessary. Do not stray from the designated area and especially do not follow the retreaters, we don't need you taken out by friendly fire. Sergeant Majors Bronson and Csryfed are we ready?"

Csryfed piped in, "The enemy troops will be in position momentarily."

Bronson answered, "The first portal is in place."

Chris said, "Now I guess it's time to start the necessary spells. Thosl, if you would, please."

Thosl commanded Bratsy to cast his spells. Everyone except for Csryfed began casting their own spells. As Bratsy went from member to member each gained three duplicates of themselves. An extra ghostly wolf appeared and Bratsy made duplicate images of it. When he was done Csryfed began casting his spells on everyone, the ghost included, giving them the power to be invulnerable to almost all harm. Chris and Thosl transformed themselves into grey wolves. Bratsy changed into a black one as did G'lishi when they asked him to do so.

Bronson donned his Ithan armour over the strange suit that he was wearing instead of his usual robes. Another spell surrounded him in a nimbus of black light that silently crackled over his mystic armour. He told

Chris he was moving to the first position to make the mystic portal for the final location. He cast a spell before leaving and vanished from normal sight.

Shisen cast a spell and a wall of blackness appeared that encircled everybody. Though it was black and they could see that was so they could also somehow see past it as if it wasn't there. Next Shisen pumped some of his essence into his TW device and the phantom mount appeared. He climbed into the saddle and summoned a shield made of glowing blue energy, and then a suit of mystic armour. Csryfed passed right by Shisen and did not enchant him; there was no real need. Shisen cast one last spell and he too was enveloped in a black light that coruscated without a sound. He drew his Battle Fury claymore and waited for Chris' orders.

Once transformed into a wolf Chris cast his Ithan armour and readied a matrix of spells. He and his three wolves watched the last of the casting being done. Csryfed had enchanted the possessed wolf, the ghost wolf, and one of the regular grey ones. Those three same wolves Bratsy had created the multiple images for as well. The remaining three wolves had nothing cast upon them. He watched as Thosl marshalled them to the middle of the pack. Counting the illusions there were thirty one wolves thronged around behind Shisen.

Bronson came over the radio, "Everything is set. I see the enemy. The mechanised units are fully engaged. The air units are just being drawn off. Wait for it. Wait for it.

We are a go."

Chris said, "Shisen, lead us out."

Shisen nudged the horse forward. They walked through the mystic portal. Everyone followed behind him and stopped when he stopped though less than half of them were not through the portal. He moved forward again then stopped, the pattern repeated again. He waited.

The C.S. infantry group was moving forward. Their escort had been stripped away, but their objective was still clear. A spot of darkness appeared only one thousand feet away. It expanded quickly. They readied their weapons. Suddenly a man lifted off of the ground and flew as if he'd been thrown. They started pointing their weapons in every direction, waiting for the next move. The leader watched the black spot stop expanding. A figure on a glowing horse trotted half way out of it. He had a long sword of some kind in one hand and a glowing shield on the other.

The figure pointed with the sword. Wolves began to appear out of the darkness. Some of them were grey but most were black. They fanned out around the mounted figure. The troops were still looking for the intruder in their midst. Some were turning back to face the new enemy when one of those men was picked up and thrown through the air. The mounted figure shouted, "Cry havoc!" and sliced the sword down through the air.

The wolves ran straight for his men. Half of the men began to open fire. Three wolves were misted but the rest were unharmed; shot, but the energy ineffective.

The mounted figure backed into the darkness and the entire black area surged forward at an incredible speed. The wolves were amongst them when the darkness reached them.

Bronson ran through the CS troops. He slammed into one, shoulder first, sending him sprawling. Shots were sprayed wildly around him. He sent a blur of mystical force out from his fist that collided with the chest plate of one of the Deadboys. A fine web of cracks appeared in the armour. The shots around him closed in, but he was moving too fast. He fired off another shot catching a different Deadboy in the faceplate. A stray shot fizzled against Csryfed's enchantment upon him. He ripped a rifle out of one of the grunt's hands and pitched it away. The grunt looked at his hand. Bronson grabbed the extended arm and threw the grunt. The grunt crashed into a second Deadboy knocking him to the ground. Bronson sent another mystical bolt at a Deadboy and missed, but struck another behind the intended target. A volley of laser and plasma fire dissipated around him. Bronson smashed into another grunt knocking him flat. He kicked the man and sent him skidding along the ground.

Chris howled as he entered the melee. He let loose a fire bolt on the first Deadboy he saw, blowing him back

over nine feet to crash on his back. Three laser shots faded out inches from his and the duplicates' fur. They turned in that direction and loosed another small volley of fire bolts. The bolts slammed into a Deadboy burning into the armour. The Deadboy stayed on his feet. Chris ran on and fired another bolt at another grunt as plasma fire turned into mist against the spell Csryfed had cast. The bolts, real and illusion, missed and impacted the ground sending up a single cloud of dirt and steam into the air. A Deadboy stepped right out into Chris's path. Chris leapt landing on the man's chest and driving him to the ground. The illusions landed on his arms. Caught up in the moment he unleashed a bolt of fire right into the Deadboy's faceplate. The flame melted the front of the helmet, ceramics ran down the sides and the point of impact was bubbled and blackened.

G'lishi attacked the first grunt he saw, leaping, only as a wolf would, and clamping onto the man's right arm. The grunt screamed, his rifle falling to the ground. The weight dragged him down even as G'lishi gave a sharp tug that set the armour's elbow joint screeching. The armour snapped and the Deadboys arm gave way with it. Blood splurged out of the ragged stump, more ripped than bitten through. G'lishi turned on another soldier turning his rifle toward him. He landed practically on the weapon and bowled the grunt over. The rifle cartwheeled through the air. G'lishi sank his teeth through the shoulder of the armour. He ran toward his

next target dragging the grunt with him.

The wolf that Thosl had possessed with the summoned entity ran into the midst of the troops with its visual doppelgangers. They stopped in front of one soldier who cowered back from them. The Deadboy raised his rifle to fire on one of them and suddenly dropped it. He raised his gauntleted hands to his helmet and collapsed screaming. Terrified Deadboys turned and ran from them. They took chase after one. He suddenly pitched forward and writhed in agony on the ground. Laser fire sizzled out all around them as shrieking Deadboys opened fire on them uselessly. The wolves ran in between two grunts and one fell over and dragged along the ground after the possessed wolf as it ran. Plasma rained down puffing out on the invulnerability field. The wolves ran toward another soldier and the Deadboy pulled along the ground shot up into the air and collided with his fellow grunt sending them both flying.

Shisen rode into the chaotic throng at full tilt. The battle fury was upon him. He swung the sword at a Deadboy as he passed him. The sword sliced through twice under the spell. The Deadboy split open in a spray of blood and guts. Shots came in through the cloak of darkness surrounding Shisen and the phantom mount and went back out. The horse slowed and sidestepped as two grunts came running into the cloak and spotted them. Shisen's sword arced out twice again and the first

man nearly exploded into pieces. The horse kicked the other Deadboy with its rear legs sending him flying back out of the cloaks large radius. He spurred the horse forward again toward a grouping of Deadboys. They reached them. The grunts tried to scatter as the cloak enveloped them. Shisen cut another one down. The horse reared up nailing a Deadboy in the helmet knocking him down. It took off at a gallop toward a man in heavier armour. Shisen levelled his sword and swung it cutting into the armour twice. The man practically spun around, but looking over his shoulder Shisen saw he did not go down, nor did his armour fall off of him. Shisen pulled on the reigns to go back after him.

The ghostly wolves ran into the fray. The real entity sent one Deadboy running shrieking in terror. The wolves ran after him. When it came close to another soldier firing on it it sent him running and screaming and it took after him. It ran past one of Shisen's kills and it grabbed up a broken plate of armour and flung it at another Deadboy knocking the gun out of his hand. He too turned and ran, but without any empathic prompting.

Thosl and her duplicate black wolves crossed paths with Bratsy's four grey wolves. She barrelled into a Deadboy at full tilt knocking him down and sending thin shards of armour flying. Bratsy ran by one and in an unnatural moved batted his ankle out from under him. The Deadboy tilted over backward and crashed into the

snow sending up a puff of it. There were faint claw marks on the lower shin of the armour. Thosl and the illusory wolves fired eight crimson beams upon a Deadboy and he turned to stone. Laser beams and plasma bolts were flying everywhere. Bratsy leapt through an inadvertent grid of them. As he sailed through the air he clipped a grunt in the helmet. Thosl and her wolves set upon a Deadboy tripping him to the ground. Bratsy did similarly. They both started biting into the softer MD material and lose strips of armour at the neck of the armoured suits.

The regular wolf and its duplicates ran deep into the fighting masses with Thosl's poltergeists flanking them to add to the confusion. The wolf ran up behind a Deadboy and growled at it. The man spun around awkwardly and toppled over stiffly pulled by one of the poltergeists. Part of the Deadboy's armour came undone mysteriously. Tongue lolling the wolf ran straight at another armoured man. Emboldened by the response of the other man-thing it leapt at this one knocking it over. That Deadboy's armour came open on one side. The wolf cowered as laser beams fizzled out nowhere near its fur. Another Deadboy found one of his clasps suddenly coming loose.

G'lishi disarmed another grunt and then heard a single shrieked word out of the cacophony of the battlefield. The word, two stuck together really, he

thought to himself, was "Hellhound!"

He turned toward it, knowing which grunt it came from thanks to the acute hearing of his wolf's ears. He let loose a torrent flame from his mouth that engulfed the target and parts of at least four other grunts partially in the way. They all fell back, one of the collaterally hit falling sideways to the ground, and the target stumbling forward. Having caught site of Thosl do it earlier G'lishi put all his strength into it and launched himself over forty feet to smash into another grunt and drive him to the ground.

Shisen galloped past the borg, sword arcing through the air forward and then back. The borg though had deftly leapt out of the way and rolled across the ground coming to its feet again. Deadboys ran around in utter confusion but the borg was not perturbed in the slightest. It raised its arm, a weapon rising out of its forearm. Shisen reigned the horse around, and ducked the shot from the particle beam weapon as he closed in. The horse closed the distance and Shisen leapt from its back. He skidded across the wet churned up ground and immediately began to grapple with the borg. Their strengths were about equal though the borg seriously outweighed him. The borg wrenched his arms trying to break them.

Shisen slacked off and let his arms be bent. He only appeared to have human musculature. He bent over backward, impossibly for a human and pitched the borg

off of its feet. Turning his arms back, the material twisting in the borg's hands, he raised the borg up and as straight as he could over his head. Then, just like in the holo-video he'd seen he fell over and smashed the borg against the ground. The borg let go and Shisen scrambled to get on top of it. Fists together he began to pound the borg's head with powerful strokes. The borg didn't respond at all.

Shisen began to cast a spell and immediately the borg stopped playing possum. It grabbed for him but suddenly he was hauled up into the air. He hadn't seen Thosl make a couple massive running leaps and then against her own orders drop her transformation. She tossed Shisen aside. The borg leapt straight to its feet and made a grab for her. She gripped its arm and used its own momentum against it. She twisted on those fluid hips and tossed the borg without letting it go. Turning quickly she planted a long clawed foot on its hip and with a mighty tug ripped its arm right out of its socket.

Immediately she did not feel the satisfaction that she thought she would. This one was so much inferior to the one that had almost ended her life. She dropped the severed bionic arm and her eyes flashed. The crimson beams splashed across the spinal effaced back of the borg and he turned to stone.

Shisen got to his feet. He bit back words and putting two fingers in his mouth whistled for the phantom mount instead. Thosl looked at the stone borg then she

whipped around slamming it with her tail sending it tumbling across the ground. It came to a stop pointing toward the sky with its remaining arm.

Thosl stared about her. The Coalition troops were in confused shambles. They ran in all directions, less than half of them even bothering to hold their weapons up let alone aim with them. She turned and then quit the field of battle.