

A Hunt Gone Wrong

First hand verbal report of a corporate failure.

We had one of the best, most experienced hunting teams in North America if not the world. We had brought in a Behemoth for Aztechnology, a pack of Hellhounds for Ares, and demolished a nest of Vampires that was bothering a Horizon lab. We have had no losses, up to this point, and knew how to take down everything short of a great dragon.

Needless to say, we were fraggin good. We always study our targets, reading everything we can find on the creature we are going after. We publish papers for our hunts, and log every hunt that we take. We do leave corporate names out of our papers and reports, but we have an unedited copy of the reports with the corporations names in it that we keep to keep the corporations from retaliating against our team.

Our team is made up of 5 members, 1 cryptozoologists, 1 zoologist, 1 tracker, 1 marksman, and 1 combat mage. We all were proficient at using tranq guns, shock prods, and all of our firearms had the option to use Stick-&-Shock ammo. We did try to bring in our targets alive to whomever hired us.

This hunt started out like any other expedition. We received an offer for capturing and bringing a mating pair of a creature to our employer. Our primary employer is a company named, CH Turner Guides and Hunts named after Mr. C.H. Turner. He was attributed to the finding that insects can hear and change their behavior based on previous experiences. Corporations loved the name, and came to us believing at least one of us was related to the namesake of the company. None were.

C H Turner Guides and Hunts, specializes in taking in protected creatures and delivering them to corporate research divisions worldwide without anyone else finding out about it. Because of our specialization, we had some idea as to what the job would entail.

I got the message to assemble a team for a job. It read:

- >Assemble your normal team.
- >Come into office for briefing.
- >Have team meet NLT(No Later Than) 0700 tomorrow.
- >Urgent request from customer.
- >Bonus for job completion.

Dreck, a rush job. That usually meant one of the big 10 was hiring us for a job. Those jobs always paid well, but came with their own complications.

I sent a message to each of my teammates telling them the info I had so far. They would come packing for Behemoth.

The next morning I arrived early so I could be there when the team arrived. Just so you know, I am a big minotaur. I have large forward facing horns, black and white fur, and I even wear a nose hoop like the cows you see on the trids. I usually wear a business suit, unless I am going out in the field then I wear my hunters armor. I am a zoologist by trade, but I am also an expert marksman with both the tranq gun and an Ares Alpha.

The first to arrive was Sam Spindel, our marksman. To call him that is an understatement. This dwarf never misses. He is an expert at every kind of firearm known to man. He says it is just natural for him, I think he is channeling magic to make it easier. Either way, the man is an amazing asset.

Next was our cryptozoologist, Dr. Dana Sorano. Dr. Sorano is an elf who turned her back on elvish ways and decided to follow her dreams of learning about animals. Her wife was killed on an expedition that the elven nation of Tir Tairngire had planned. Because of this, she fled the nation to join our company. This beautiful woman can tell you about almost anything related to awakened animals, or learn about them in a hurry.

The final two for the team came up together. That shouldn't surprise me as they have been getting closer as of late. Our Tracker Mr. Dundee and our combat mage Dr. Incantation who has a Doctorate in Magic Strategy and Casting from MIT&M. No one but maybe Mr. Dundee knows his real name. He is an orc who loves his magic, casting small spells almost all the time when not in the field. In the field he is always professional, unlike his friend Mr. Dundee.

Mr Dundee is a human who seems to have a knack for finding and tracking even the most obsolete trails. It is joked that he could track one person through a shopping mall at Christmas, three days after they left and still get it 100% correct. I tried to get him to do just that, but he refused. Mr. Dundee is a little off in the field. You can tell he prefers to be alone, but tolerates us. He gets short and snips at everything. He loses his professional attitude and gets a little scary.

I looked them all over, they were all carrying our standard rucksack, duffel bag, and firearms kits along with other items that they each had at their houses. Even before we had the mission, we were already to bring in almost any animal on the planet.

We all filed into the conference room that we always used for mission briefings, the one that had both white noise generators and signal jammers built into the walls. After all we don't want anyone figuring out what our jobs are. Up on the board were two pictures, both were of what looked like a black horse with a white spiraling horn coming out of its forehead. One of the horses had a small white star just above the horn and the other had one just below. It looked like we were going after a pair of Greater Unicorns.

Mr. Dundee stated the obvious that Unicorns are white, what the frag happened to these beasts to make them black. Our employer had no idea and that was why the employer was so interested in them. They have been seen in the jungles in Aztlan just west of Venezuela's capital of Caracas. Of course our employer has no right to work in this territory and will not be able to send any support for the job.

We packed everything we thought we would need into our blacked out and carbon fibered stealth VTOL that we used for getting into places undetected. There were no weapons on our aircraft, but we had extra fuel tanks, higher max speed, and extended flight time from over other VTOLS. We wouldn't have to refuel until we land in Caracas.

From there, we rented two trucks for our drive west. I didn't want to bring the VTOL as it might stand out in the jungle, making us a target for any corporate security force that happened by. We rented a hanger and pushed it inside. I could fly it out remotely if we needed the aircraft to pick us up in a hurry. I may not be the best pilot, but I can fly remotely well enough to bail us out of a bad situation.

We climbed into the trucks after we loaded our gear. One of the trucks was pulling a fully enclosed trailer for loading the beasts into after we catch it. That way we can transport them and not be questioned by local federalies.

Mr. Dundee was able to get us through the borders, around checkpoints, and across the jungle to the last known location of these magnificent creatures in a couple days time. While we were moving, Dana and I were working the matrix, looking for any data on a pair of black unicorns, history of black unicorns, or anything we could find on black unicorns. There wasn't much.

What we did find out was about normal and greater unicorns.

>A unicorn resembles a horse with a single, spiral horn in the middle of its forehead and a flowing mane and tail. It stands 1.5 meters tall at the shoulder and weighs 370 kilograms. Unicorn horns are prized in many parts of the world for medicinal and magical purposes (Critters pg 96).

>The greater unicorn is larger and less delicate-looking than the standard unicorn, with a thick mane and pink-tinged hooves. Its single horn is short and thick, and its eyes have a golden cast. The greater unicorn can grow as tall as a meter and a half at the shoulder. Many shamans consider this creature's horn ideal for making fetishes or spell foci for dealing with poisons and pathogens, which has prompted a sizable poaching industry (Critters Pg. 31).

There was nothing else, worse yet, nothing on black unicorns. Who knows what we are getting ourselves into.

We got to the location and set up a base of operations. I sent out some drones to scour the area for these creatures, silent little spy drones. I sent them out to do grid search of the jungle. It was slow going, even for these smaller drones, but it was the best way of doing things this time. I asked Dr. Incantation if he could see anything. He said the jungle was too full of life and it was making his seeing two creatures in the astral realm next to impossible. Especially with never seeing or asensing them before.

That left drones, cameras, and visual searching. It was going to be a slow go.

A few days into our search, Mr. Dundee found something. It was a trail that looked to be left by a horse. Seeing there shouldn't be any horses in this part of the world, he was guessing that this was our prey.

We set up a few more cameras and followed the tracks. Mr. Dundee led us to a stream that looked to be frequented by the unicorns. This stream had tracks moving off in lots of different directions. It looked like a few of them were as fresh as today. We set up the last of our cameras here and moved a couple of drones into the area to be started upon movement.

Now all we could do was wait.

That night we got our first glimpse of these transcendent creatures, their beauty even above the rest of their kind. Two of our microdrones started following them from a quiet distance so they would not be found. Then four of us started toward the stream. Dr. Sorano stayed at camp with the vehicles just in case we needed one of the trucks. Hopefully we would.

We spread out and started quietly moving toward our prey, they still haven't left the area according to our drones. When we were just a few hundred meters I checked the wind, we didn't want to be coming in upwind of them spooking them to run away from us. The team circled around so we would be coming from downwind, therefore not being found by smell.

We started slipping in silently, the drones still showing them at the creak, drinking and basking in the bright moonlight filtering through the trees. I could hear them now, neying, and prancing around as if they were dancing.

I got down on the ground and started belly crawling in, aiming down the scope of my tranq gun. I slid closer and stopped. There in front of me was an amazing sight, this big black creature with a single gleaming white horn in the center of its head and a white star above the horn. It was so black it shimmered in the moonlight. I could see a rainbow of color pulsating off of the creature.

I took aim and the creature jumped up, running straight at someone from my crew, it was charging Mr. Dundee.

Mr. Dundee stood, taking aim with his Narcojet pistol, but before he could pull the trigger a rainbow colored sludge came out of the nostrils of the creature, bathing Mr. Dundee in it. If the Narcojet was fired, it was lost in the mist of goop flowing out of the creatures nose.

Then I heard a scream coming from Sam. His rifle barking a burst of fire, then there was silence. The creatures were nowhere to be seen. I ran over to Mr. Dundee, he was unhurt by the slime. He started cleaning himself up and I ran to check on the rest of the team.

I ran toward where I had heard Sam scream, and found him on his back, not moving. I ran up to him and pulled some vegetation off of him and realized there was a big hole in his chest. I took his pulse and couldn't find one. I then pulled out a medkit and hooked it up, it was reading no life signs. Dr. Incantation came up and started looking him over, then stopped. He told us, me and Mr. Dundee, that his heart was missing. There was nothing we could do for him.

Mr. Dundee was acting weird, almost like he was high on a hallucinogen. He would laugh, duck down, and jump away from nothing. Dr. Incantation took him by the arm and started dragging him back to camp. I picked up Sam's remains and carried him back. I wouldn't call for the truck for this. It was my burden to carry. I had never lost someone on one of my expeditions before.

When we got back, Dr. Incantation took Mr. Dundee into their tent to get him cleaned up and detoxed. I asked him to take a sample of the slime if he could without touching it. He agreed.

I put Sam in the back of the enclosed trailer and wrapped him in a tarp. I didn't want any animals to try and get him in the night. Then I went to Dana and told her what had happened. She started crying, so I stayed up with her for the rest of the night, just talking about Sam and our team while sitting inside of one of the trucks.

Just before dawn, I saw a fog roll into the camp. It seemed a little odd seeing it was so warm, but it was early enough to where it could happen. Then I felt a little light headed and blackness.

I woke to the morning sun striking the window of the truck, instantly increasing the temperature to almost unbearable levels. I found Dana's head on my shoulder, she had fallen asleep with me after all. I smiled, then I noticed the devastation of the camp.

Smoke was rising from Dr. Incantation and Mr. Dundee's tent. The tent itself was torn and in shambles. There was colorful slime everywhere across the ground. It looked like someone was awake enough to put up a fight.

The auto turret was still smoking, suggesting it had just finished firing a long burst.

I woke Dana up and we got out of the truck. I grabbed my Ares Alpha and handed one to Dana. I told her it was loaded with APDS rounds. I didn't care about catching our prey at this time, just getting the frag out of here. I called the VTOL to start flying toward our direction, I would give it

better instructions later, and started looking for Mr. Dundee and Dr. Incantation. I found them both under a nearby tree. Mr. Dundee's heart was missing. Dr. Incantation was much worse off. He was moaning slightly, several holes in his chest, through both hands, slashes across both legs, and holes through both of his feet. He was bleeding out and there was nothing I could do to help him. The trauma patch wouldn't be enough to stabilize him in this condition.

I ran over to him, gave him a sip of whiskey from my flask, then he died.

I gathered up as much of our gear as I could, I wrapped my teammates in tarps and tents, and prepared to load the VTOL when it arrives. I checked the auto turrets, they were all empty of rounds. Whatever hit us was fraggin fast. I knew what hit us, I just couldn't believe it.

Dana and I loaded the VTOL when it got there. Then we climbed in and headed for home. After landing we were escorted into separate conference rooms to verify our stories, where I am now telling you what happened.

Those unicorns were not normal unicorns. They were something new. Something deadly. They were a pair of nightmares. That is what they should be called, Nightmares.