

## The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

### Chapter 107: A change of plan (3rd ride of Tarsakh 1371)

Everybody I spoke to was unhappy. The soldiers, the officers, the burghers of Llorckh, the Lords Men... the only ones who did not seem unhappy were major Locke and some of our group. This situation was bad and we really needed to change it. It came to no surprise when major Oresund summoned Felina, Nethander, Grimwald, and me to one of the storage tents. Not to talk about our (lack of) provisions, but to order us to do something about the fiend: break his contract, change his orders, banishment, destroy his corporal form, the major did not specify, as long as he was out of the picture. If I understood his orders properly we got a *card blanche* in this matter which showed how desperate things had become. Important was that the army would need to enter the High Moor once more and defeat an opposing army, because if they did not then the armies of Neverwinter and Waterdeep would be damaged in the part that was most important: morale.

Leaving the camp was easy, although I did not quite grasp why we were going to try and talk to the fiend without Cuura and Zhae present. We only had a ride to resolve things, which meant we needed to find some kind of magical transportation as walking there would take at least that amount of time, if not more. Still, it 'felt' good, so I did not object. Perhaps the fiend disliked being under a mere mortal's control, so he might be inclined to tell us if we just asked nicely. Still... I liked to be optimistic, but the odds were that he would just try and kill us, and I wasn't that sure that we actually would manage to hold him off. We had no means of fleeing from his grasp, and he could probably just wear us down with ranged magic. Even the weather wasn't really suitable for *call lightning*.

Visiting the fiend, however, was not our fate, as half an hour later, on the trail towards the hills, we encountered a commoner carrying fire wood and a brace of fish. This was an odd spot for such a man alone. Nethander was distrustful, but except for the fact that he was marginally cleaner than expected and slightly better fed, I could detect nothing that suggested that he was anything else than he seemed. Then Kendalan remarked that the fish he carried were not local, and neither was the wood. I looked closer and had to admit that our elf was right. The differences were very minor, yet true. The man, Wilden, admitted that he had been sent here (and was a former Zhent slave) and allowed us to join him through the portal back. It would open at dusk on a specific spot. This did not feel like an infernal plot at all, but who would send a man alone to scout? In any case we had discovered a quick travel route, but we still lacked the presence of Zhae and Cuura. The portal appeared and we all passed through it.

The question is:

Why seems light weaker than darkness?

Why is lost always re-found?

Why do all gods stay the same?

Why have the planes?

Who cares?

Entering a stone chamber with a 15 foot ceiling, we were welcomed by the elven arch-mage who lived at the western side of the Moor. According to her we had 'left' only a ride before, but she wasn't surprised that we returned this soon. She invited us for a little snack, and walked us to her large living room. Wilden she complimented on a job well done, even if Wilden himself had been fearful of her response in bringing people with him. She cheerfully informed us that the fiend had been bound to the Moor for twenty-five thousand years (give or take a handful of centuries), and that it was on her to solve list. I got the idea that that list was longer than most of us could do in ten life times, but she was an elf, so perhaps... She wore her pregnancy well, but I hoped she would slow down a bit soon, as that would be better for her child... children?

*N*ethander preferred to leave as soon as possible, but Grimwald thought that a gross breach of decorum, so we stayed while the small elf talked about this and that. She seemed very knowledgeable, but she switched so quickly that it was often hard to keep up. She was willing to put us near the castle, but Grimwald did not ask if she was willing to help us in a more direct way, and she did not volunteer. Then a drow entered. Or to be more precise a dark elf. Grimwald managed not to attack him on sight, which was good because he turned out to be the husband of her highness Iliana. He did not take offense either, commending Grimwald that he stopped before actually attacking. He also seemed more practical minded than his wife, helping Grimwald decide if leaving now or after a nights rest would be better. As the signs told us not to leave immediately, she sent somebody to fetch Cuura and Zhae. The world felt suddenly a lot smaller. When they arrived we had some dinner before retiring. Indeed it felt wise to go to sleep early and then rise after midnight to prepare the proper spells. Grimwald noted that that would not work for him, as he could only pray at dawn, but Iliana countered that that would not be a problem because we could just teleport to a place where dawn was just breaking. She thought a bit, and mentioned that the great wall (on the north west of Shou Lung) would be the proper time and place. The way she thought... now I understand how magic can become part of somebody.

*The choice is:*

*Save one not a kill.*

*Save two barely alive.*

*Save three standing still.*

*Save four truly survive.*

*Save five new age hail.*

*W*e were all preparing to leave – it was exactly midnight as far as I could determine – when a shadowy shape appeared in the hall. Droyt and Iliana looked at each other with some apprehension, but no sign that this might be a danger. The thing, a shadow of a rather pretty and tall female, told them that Evermeet was under attack. Evermeet. The famed unreachable, impregnable, elven retreat? Iliana did not seem shocked by the fact, and told the shade she would do whatever she could. 'All gates are closed', the shade informed her, before dissolving. I could almost see her thinking, working through solutions with frightening speed as she she walked with us to the portal mirror. She concentrated, and suddenly we saw the famed dragon wall with early dawn on the eastern horizon. Before the guards could notice she shifted the exit towards a hill a mile or so away and stepped through.

*A*s the sun had not risen yet I could still read the stars. Was it because I was now closer to home, or was it because many cried for help? In any case the reading was clear, clearer than I ever saw the signs. Chaos, all chaos, was working together to make the bastion fall:

*All Chaos is going to war .*

*Anadia (stone/difference) under the foot of the Destroyer,  
Coliar (air/movement) between the Dancer and the Destroyer,  
Kapri (purity/water) in the upper torso of the Killed,  
Chandos (mist/change) in no constellation,  
Glyth (fire/rulers) in the dead center of the Enemy,  
Garden (wood/group) at the spear point of the Hunter,  
H'Catha (mountain/mind) in the Twisted Mirror.*

*Soul mauled except without land  
Shield destroyed except without regret  
Heart trapped except without time  
Sword drowned except without clan  
Mind twisted except without art*

- x Soul -> faith, mauled -> malar?, without land -> Iliana and ...*
- x Shield -> dragons, destroyed -> talos!, without regret -> Kendalan and Felina*
- x Heart -> capitol, trapped -> Lloth!, without time -> Cuura and me have death warrants*
- x Sword -> sumbrar fortress, drowned! -> Umberlee, without clan -> Grimwald and Droyt*
- x Mind -> twin towers, twisted -> Cyric, without art -> Nethander and that wild elf.*
- x so Zhae was without land... odd.*

*R*eality had its own way of making choices. When Iliana asked us to help her we had little choice even though Grimwald had to do some serious soul searching. There was however a little catch, a matter of custom. Iliana could go to Evermeet, but we could not, and my predictions indicated that we would need to split up. So how to gain standing? She had a solution, but it would mean vows. Grimwald, clanless, and Kendalan vowed obedience, the others loyalty. Such a simple few words, and how would they influence our lives.

*Human female Paragon/3, Wu-Jen/1, Naturalist/3, Ancestral Hierophant/2, Heartfanner/1, Sublime Chord/1*