

## *The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed) as told by Draenimaullair*

### *Chapter 131: Saved by the Bear (3rd ride of Mirtul 1371 - Feast of Lanterns)*

**F**amily seemed very important to humans. Wok declared us honorary members of his household. Great, I am now family of a human fisher, however wise. My companion, however, managed to make me feel a bit ashamed of my feelings. She explained that such honor might be only a copper piece in ones treasure, but that she had expected me to understand that every bit counted. My daddy treasured each coin, should I not do the same? Indeed she had a point. So we shared a meal at his place, even as the half elf evaded questions about what happened with a skill that must be bad. I mean how can an honest person lie so well? Quite properly the captain of the guard came by, but he used some word I did not now. We part of the 'Kuo Tan'? It could be, as I have got no idea what it is. Probably some unimportant human group, because I would know them if they were of any consequence.

**I** was a bit worried when we returned to the inn: were we going to let those pirates do their evil thing? No, it turned out we were going to wait until nobody could make us look bad and then act. I had to admit, that sounded quite reasonable. The half-elf, in the mean time, was talking to some rich kid, who turned out to be a secret agent in disguise. Is nobody here what he seems? If words were a thing my companion could build palaces, but the half-elf could build traps and weave silk. I was thoroughly confused who we were. Still we promised to work for the good of the Empire, so for order and goodness, so it can't be all bad. Still it felt like a sort of under-handed way of taking care of things. Must be how humans do it: there were so many of them, and so busy with their ordinary lives that they probably needed these weird ways.

**R**ight after dinner people here started moving towards the waterfront. There they let go of numerous small boats with a small lantern inside and prayers painted on the paper outside. Quite a charming custom I must admit, and that had nothing to do with the fact that many prayers were addressed at the dragon river guardian. Odd. I would have expected to feel the presence of another of my kind, but these were water related dragons, and it was always difficult to feel the element one if opposed to. I listened to the humans talking and my companion explained that each river, mountain, hill, or other major - or sometimes minor - location had a guardian spirit. A major river like the Hungste had one of the greater river dragons as guardian. Clearly it did not object to giant carps, or minor inconveniences like pirates... Was that disappointment? Why would a greater dragon care about some odd pirates? Hmm, why did I care? I did. My companion did... the silence... I would show this dragon how things should be done. We golden dragons were the prime, after all.

**S**neaking out of the city was not my preference, but as most of them couldn't shape-shift, nor fly for any duration (or speed), I could not see another way of teaching those miserable pirates the error of their ways. Yet it seemed like we were not supposed to do anything to them: this time the tainted elf told us he found a trail of people sneaking through the bushes towards the river (and not towards the pirate compound), and my companion seconded this as she found some flower which only smelled in a specific way if it had been trod on less than a few minutes. We had seen the waterfront from the boat this morning, so it wasn't hard to figure out they were angling for the little pagoda structure, clearly belonging to the martial arts school. Who would be there at this time of night? The students were home or at least in the city celebrating, so it could only be the master of the school with his children... child, as only his son lived with him.

**T**he two people most adept at sneaking went first, then my companion and the halfling, and finally the elf with his bear. A number of evil monks was just busy trying to assassinate the master. My companion put herself in a lethal spot to save the poisoned man, so I reciprocated and shielded her. They tried to get to him again, but Bear shielded him, and the elf wrapped himself in lightning as the others started thinning out these miscreants. They fled by diving into the water, but I caught up with one. So much badness, they need me here!