

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 35: Razer's Return (2nd ride of Flamerule)

The others have returned from their underground adventure and Grimwald showed his true strength. The beauty was he didn't really notice he did. With Mithral and Adamant ore in hand he started the preparation for fighting a druid who in no way was a threat to him. We have grown closer together, less discussion, more things 'just happen'. I could see Grimwald loving the structure but I loved the trust. Nobody argued because they trust the other doing what was right – more or less.

I hadn't got the heart to tell Cuura and Grimwald the futility of digging simple earth traps against a druid – even if he followed chaos and destruction. There are spells against that, most dangerous creatures could smell the fresh earth, and our ability to just walk through bushes meant that a druid would like not pass on the path you expected. Still it was good training and Kendalan – who kept his own council in this – helped them to make the traps as good as possible. Nethander asked me to see if the stars had some information and Cuura suggested that direction would help her place the traps. It took a whole night but in the end I got a fairly clear answer: '*From out the darkness, under water, he will come in a straight line.*' With our knowledge of the land, Noob's sorry fate, and a little reasoning we decided that south-south-west was the likely direction.

I got better in reading people, but the results... Felina was at ease in the village, Zhae respected as somebody who studied the art of fighting, but with me... I could see the fear and uncertainty, especially the guards. Not that I was disliked, no it was fear because of uncertainty. Some had witnessed the remains of the human mage, others had seen my spells affecting the dragon. I wasn't deaf: I could hear them discussing. Was I a high level mage? But I played an instrument on professional level. Some countered by stating that the dwarf had told them that I was a Seer – and dwarves do not lie. The fact that I carried my Guan Dao and a Jian confounds them even more. Perhaps Felina could find a solution. I want to help people – not make them afraid.

The day ended with Nethander spotting a clairvoyance sensor. A neat feat: they were supposedly very hard to detect. Nobody else spotted it but I did not doubt his veracity and his description matched what we knew of such things. Somebody knew we were here.

Kendalan and Nethander hid several hundred yards from our camp and would sent back Kendalan's wolf with some color coded threads to tell us what they found out. It was perhaps an hour before dawn when the wolf appeared with 'small group/advancing'. No time even for Cuura's tea even though it smelled rather nice. Cuura brewing acceptable tea, perhaps it's the biggest change of all!

I can describe the battle but like most it was a hectic affair, but one where we helped each other, covered each others weaknesses and showed we had grown. Grimwald's area *protection from evil* was mandatory in keeping out the summoned Worgs, my *protection from lightning* shielded Grimwald before he could succumb to the *lightning storm*, Cuura held her charge until the true enemy became clear: not the large humanoid creature – a flesh golem –, nor the dire wolverine, but a rhinoceros who was the druid – Cuura had known all along. Kendalan punctured them with his arrows and helped me giving aid to Zhae when the golem pummeled him, and Felina quietly assisted us: battle will never be her strong suit, but not even Grimwald could say anything negative about her well timed and well executed attacks. Nethander had taken a position in hiding, but, together with Kendalan's wolf, managed to render the Worgs about useless. My fire magic was deadly as ever, the maximized *combust* instantly killed the dire wolverine, not even it's rage could help, and my empowered orb of fire entered the rhinoceros' maw to burn it from the inside out. From the druid hardly anything but some magic things were left.

The threat to the woods destroyed, but I started to fear myself. The fire – will it become more powerful than me? I want to give people a second chance. Perhaps I should stop using fire.