

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 36: An Unexpected Journey (2nd ride of Flamerule 1370)

As dawn was breaking the others discussed the best path to take, and what they could expect. The medallion with Insanity, elemental destruction, and a broken tree told us that we likely would face two more opponents. The discussion was chaotic, people talking about how and when, where and why. That we would fight them was clear, but wouldn't a little more preparation/knowledge help? Oddly my thoughts were more like Grimwald than he himself voiced. Perhaps it was because my thoughts were on my destiny and how my power was corrupting me, or perhaps because Grimwald now wore that medallion of wisdom.

I had to admit, I hardly spoke, as my thoughts whirled in my head. I had made slow progression with both the Way's teachings about my place in nature to better understand Guan Yin's mercy, and the elements on which we all are based. Now I understand that any specific amount of elements is not 'true'. Life/nature is ever changing so the five of home is no more right or wrong than the four here, or the six components. It was like cutting a tree. The direction of the cut determined what you saw, but what you saw wasn't the tree, it was but a shadow. This all told me that my focus on deadly fire was wrong. Well, not wrong, but it limited my view. And of course it also took away the chance of others to learn from their mistakes in this life, forcing them to use the wheel. I would have to widen my scope, use the four, five, six, all, to see the whole, not the part. I was on the right path, now I should take care not to stray.

Just as the others had decided what to do, a little pixie intervened. The Ghaleb Dhur asked us to visit him again. There wasn't much discussion about that, so we went, taking the magical hide armor and sling from the blighter, picking up the horses in Nashkel and healing our wounds as we traveled. With Kendalan leading I listened in amazement as Nethander of all people explained the logic and structure of the fey controlled forests to our dwarf. There is hope for both of them!

The old one hadn't changed – there is a joke in there somewhere – so it again concentrated on Zhae. It was almost like it had studied the Way. Perhaps it had. Leaving Zhae to ponder the meaning of not fighting, it asked Grimwald a boon, one for which Grimwald had to break a Vow. Poor man, it was almost more than he could take. Necessity might require such move, but the Stone's answers did not help the cause. I was sure that was on purpose, to show that certain things could not be captured by easy answers. Kendalan got a simple request, Nethander a maddening remark about he breaking another vow, and Cuura showed she understood by instinct what we learned could not grasp. Felina interjected some pointed comments. It did not say anything to me, and I was sure there was a lesson in there too. Elder fey seldom interfered with us, and always for some reason. But their sense of time was such that I doubted I would discover why soon.

Did not Grimwald know that Guan Yin always helped those accepting their doom?

Instead of pointing us to the location of the Duergar, the old one directed us to a mountain shoulder several days journeys to the west. Kendalan quickly noted the land in between would be likely teeming with dangerous creatures, so we traveled till we reached the edge of 'fey country' and rested. Then we started the journey, mindful of the dangers. I decided to keep my fire, as protecting us against marauding aberrations isn't bad. I just should not use it against anything which could learn from defeat.

Our vigilance help some of use, but not all, as we were suddenly attacked by a 'land shark', also known as bullette. It mainly attacked the horses, and Nethander did some fancy, but rather pointless, jumping around. Once we got over the surprise we took it down, Grimwald claiming the top 'fin' for a future shield. The lesson learned was that we really should try to protect our horses, although Cuura already managed to evade two blows.