

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 41: Party Forever (midsummer evening 1370)

We came back to a party, the midsummer celebration, that felt as joyous as a half sick dog. Well, not until they saw we returned the kidnapped farmers. Suddenly things changed. Those farmers told great stories of how Zhae had attack hundreds of kobolds singlehandedly, and how Nethander had slaughtered the leaders. Most of the others got an honorable mention, me, well, me they skipped, as they clearly could not understand my interference.

During the festivities I played a lot of tunes I had picked up, although I had to transpose a few because the setting of the Pipa is not suitable to local music. After a bit I switched to the Cithern we had found in the caves. When dusk was falling, I saw both Grimwald and Nethander leave. The first because he clearly had partied enough and was planning to pray and perhaps check on his smithy, the lather because some buxom woman from the other inn rather fancied him. Kendalan enjoyed the scene, Cuura wasn't planning to stop soon, and even Zhae seemed to fit. Felina... well, she was inexhaustible, if she sat down more than half an hour she must have done so sneakingly.

It must have been close to midnight when Kendalan mentioned that some people did not look like locals, and that the party was no longer 'our' party. There was something odd going on and I mingled to see what was going on. Next time I must heed the elf's warning, because it was only after Zhae pulled me out that I felt my mind clearing again. Kendalan had two wolves ready – always a sign of serious problems – and Cuura, Felina, and half a dozen locals looked gripped by a festive spirit that was no longer about joy, but only about revelry. Bacchus.

Zhae seemed immune so he waded in (assisted by Kendalan), first to get Feliana out by just grabbing her, then Cuura by knocking her unconscious. We need to get them out of the village to I walked away playing as best as I could, and they followed. One by one I saw the villagers disappear from the mass: Felina now knew how to shield her mind. A mile outside I stopped playing and hasted back to the now quiet village. They did not return.

It was time we left. Fall was coming. If we would leave the coach behind I could make a trail straight through the bushes and woods. Felina repeated that out burning of the poisons was a good thing. In a way she is right too. Next time I should make sure we are certain of what we have found.