

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

### Chapter 45: Demons and Death (2<sup>nd</sup> ride of Elesias 1370)

*Perhaps I must be passive so I can more easily observe? Perhaps I should use this time for self reflection? Who am I? What do I want to be? What do I need to be? Why am I here? Fundamental questions of life. I think I found a balance between the knowledge of the elements and the insight of nature. Instead of growing one stem, I think I can grow in both at the same time. Yet that isn't a true path. Should I learn more about new fighting styles? I can tell Grimwald is thinking about it, Nethander is practicing, Cuura dreaming, and Zhae... well he is a fighting style (now if he would try to learn how to be human...) But no. Not yet. I have to read that book of the brotherhood, and study more on the thoughts of Guan Yin. Understand yourself before you try to understand others.*

Nature near the village was lush and well organized, but rocks and thorns became more commonplace. Grimwald didn't seem to mind, but to me it felt like we left the quiet life behind. Trouble was waiting for us. And indeed, we spied an abysmal creature in the distance. A Marilith, a general of the infernal horde, deadly and depraved. We stood little chance against it, but it didn't teleport close to us, it just waited. Grimwald wished to remove it from our world and I could easily understand his motives but we lacked the means to do so.

Nethander decided to get close and check things out and he discovered it was caught in a summoning circle – or perhaps a binding circle. I really need to read that book of the Brotherhood. I must admit he played his part well. With true gajin panache he tried to get some information from the creature, but its (her?) anger from being locked in this circle led to few useful results. Not really surprising really, if what I recalled correct: these are generals/champions of the infernal horde, not subtle beguilers. What was clear is that Nethander was less than impressed. I shivered as I felt something change. Somebody is playing... no. Yes? We are like chess pieces, but with free will.

Not that much later several wraiths closed in. Small but still projecting a solid essence. It was the middle of the day, but these seemed still in full power. Cuura charged... without her horse... past the spirits. Did she spot something we did not? That turned out to be the case. The wraiths were dwarven spirits – that much was clear from the start – but she had seen they rose from damaged mounds. Desecrated mounds. Nethander stalked forward, ready for a fight, Zhae flexed his muscles, and Grimwald... Grimwald saw what Cuura had seen.

Invoking the power of Dumathoin and Moradin he pushed them back to their final resting place, and we repaired the damage done. With the mounds restored we offered some dwarven beer, and we were rewarded by a natural quiet. It just was a pity Nethander did not see this as a true victory.