

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

## Chapter 49: Hide and Seek (2<sup>nd</sup> ride of Elesias 1370)

After some deliberation we put the man (sans weapons and armor) in the room next to the kitchen. Even in his current state of mind he could feed himself, so we left ample supplies and water while we checked out the rest of the tower. Three things caught our attention: several doors indicated there were more corridors outside, a circular stairwell going up left even more to check out, and three round depressions at the foot of that stair suggested a key of some kind.

I was praying to Guan Yin for the restoration of the fighter's mind, and missed that Felina and Zhae scouting upstairs. They returned informing us of four doors on the first floor, three hallways on the second, and an open space with something flying on the third. I wasn't quite sure about the structure of the tower, but this layout did not seem to surprise either Grimwald or Felina. The top floor contained some irregular stone structures and it was there we were to go first. They decided to let Felina scout ahead *invisible*, with us nearby for support.

Some plans are good, but still fail. We heard a startled yelp of Felina, and tried to find her, although it felt more like a maze than a proper dwarven structure. Nethander proposed a trail of copper pieces, which might help, but the ceiling turned out to be instable, hitting Cuura.

I was last as we turned a corner and a gleam of a copper piece was odd. I stopped for a moment then something hit me from behind...

I awoke bound, blindfolded, and gagged. A sound of metal screeching through rock. Poor Grimwald, he must abhor the sound. I could just feel Felina nearby – it had to be her as I recognized her perfume, but I had no idea where the walls were, just that they were close. I could faintly here vague sounds, which I supposed were the others. Some time passes – it can't be long even as it feels like an eternity and then I feel a hint of nastiness nearby. Something evil touching me. But wait! This evil feels... friendly? It goes, then returns again, and I hear the shouting of Nethander!

Clever man, he had used his protection from good to find me, allowing him to sense me through solid stone. To use his dark heritage for good, suddenly I was flooded with hope.

I was also grabbed by something, and Felina and I were roughly pulled behind our capturer as it tried to flee with us. The bouncing and lack of knowledge made using my fire impossible, but then we suddenly stop and I hear Kendalan in our front. Our elf must have circled and caught it between himself and Grimwald and Zhae. I could even feel sorry for it.

Not much later we were freed of our bonds. It was a kind of earth elemental, a Grue, for normal elementals are not evil in their ways, even if they're often dangerous to prime life. Even as Felina and I tried to get some feeling back into our limbs, Nethander found a chamber without entries. In it a, trapped, box. With Felina still woozy Nethander was unable to find it, but luckily Grimwald's constitution withstood the gas cloud. He did give Nethander a rather dark look though. Inside a round stone: our first key.

On the second floor we found elemental chambers: cold and fire, as well as a room with a kind of weird apparatus. With the narrowness of the corridors I could see little. My head still hurt. Then the tower shuddered, and, shortly after, a huge bang reverberated through the halls. It looked like they had found the tower's main defenses and had used it to blow up the gate house... I hoped this wasn't going to effect us further.

We saw nothing more of the wounded earth Grue (a Chagrin I was told), so we walked back to the stairs to check the third corridor, only to have Grimwald suddenly tumble down it: something, invisible to our eyes, must have shoved him!