

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 50: Opposing Elements (2nd ride of Elesias 1370)

As Grimwald slid/tumbled down the stairs and out of sight, we sought for an invisible attacker. The was little sound but some wind – in a closed tower! Luckily Felina remembered to use the dust we had found in the kobold cave, and she also put magic power in Cuura's hammer. So equipped we quickly took out the Grue-air elemental. Two odd things happened: one was that Kendalan ran down but found no trace of Grimwald, second was that the destroyed Grue left a description of a *haste* spell. We had heard a kind of 'click', and Grimwald had been carrying the one key. Had one been enough? Interesting, but we still needed at least one ourselves to enter.

As I transcribed the spell, I suddenly discovered it wasn't as difficult as I expected. I was quite sure that I would be able to cast it... If my mind was rested. Alas I fear that we won't have any rest and quiet deep enough for me to learn those spells and to find renewed contact with Guan Yin. The tower is a true training to pace oneself. Except for Zhae, whose technique of fighting has no problems with encounter after encounter. It's odd, but the three who could learn the most, needed it least. Again there is a lesson – perhaps I value certain things to highly.

Felian clearly felt better, so she and Nethander checked out the third corridor. In one chamber the found a crazed sorcerer throwing fireballs. Fireball, one, as Felina had him down before he could do anything else. Wouldn't it been better to talk instead of stab? He wasn't dead, and they healed him showing that they saw that their actions had been rash, but still. It must be that Felina is still groggy from the encounter with the Chagrin.

We had checked the whole second floor and as we walked back to the stairs I deliberated. When we left Nashkel I worried about the problem of how to stay focussed on a spell, even if shaken like a rag doll. I felt that I was close to the solution. The pattern and rhythm of a free form melody should work. I just needed to find a source of music to check if the idea would work. Till then it was probably best if I concentrated on learning the lesson this tower was placing in front of us. There clearly was such a lesson, even if most of my companions did not yet grasp it yet.

The four doors on the floor below were tricky. Two were trapped, two were not. As we checked things out two more of these Grues tried to kill us: a fire and a water variant. It was odd to see opposing elementals working together, but their love for pain and suffering overruled their normal antipathy. We beat them – actually Cuura and Zhae, supported by Nethander – even as Kendalan was in a foul mood because the fire elemental's heat waves ruined his aim. I used many charges of the wand to heal our group. Inside those elementals were the last two keys. We could go down, but for the fact that we weren't ready yet.

Indeed behind those doors we found the last two of that other group. A female bard, in total despair, and a male priest, locked in self doubt. Here Nethander showed why I put faith in him. He probed gently and with care to the reason why the bard seemed lost in sorrow. He managed to have her answer, and she told him of her love for the fighter, whom she was she was dead. True, a *feblemind* is not the easiest spell to reverse, but it is a lot less tricky than trying to recall one from the dead. So we brought the group together, told them to check if they could leave in safety, and otherwise wait until we returned. The ground floor of the tower should be safe for now.

It was time to find Grimwald. I just hoped he did not start exploring on his own.

Human female Paragon/3, Wu-Jen/1, Naturalist/3, **Ancestral Hierophant/2**