

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 53: Changing levels (2nd ride of Elesias 1370)

We first checked the room and the remains of the Medusa. A collapsed corridor was the only other way out, and several dwarf skeletons were visible beneath the rubble. According to Grimwald they had defended the hallway and allowed themselves to be caught to make sure that something else would not enter. Such a deed was considered high honor, and there was no need to rebury them.

Grimwald then proposed to alter Nethander's outer shape. Easily done, but... but... It was wrong. Outside followed inside, not the other way around. Also... there was the earning. I had great hope for Nethander, saw the budding good person inside... he still had to earn it. The hard way. Because that was the only way. Every step he made that was not his own would cost him later.

We went back, Cuura dragging Nethander. We asked the Phasm, after all it was an expert on changing form. It told us to try and check the vault, according to it a solution should be there. Felina had a wand of Knock, so we were able to open the locks. Yet those traps... Grimwald decided to return to the shrine of Mya, and he returned without the stack of first keys, but with a new one. I did not ask how he did that. Dwarven secrets no doubt. He also managed to prove he has the right to enter. Clanless, but still a master. Inside the vault we found some wood splinters and a chest, just opened with a crack.

Felina approached the chest with some care, but she prepared for some trap, not the fact that this chest was a creature! It hit her with a nasty sounding crunch, even as Zhae and Grimwald charged forward. Zhae hit with one of his punishing strikes, but for a moment it looked like his hand was stuck. No matter, because seconds later our dwarf buried his war deep in the creature, releasing all. Could we have reasoned with this thing? Not fought and killed? It chose to ambush us and it was right for us to help a teammate. Still I felt some sorrow. Grimwald is clearly amazed at his sudden power, but with his attunement to his ancestors skill, such is not unexpected.

While Cuura and the dwarf checked if there was anything 'inside' the chest that could help Nethander, Felina used a little magic to put all the splinters into one corner. She stopped, stared at the heap, she fished out one tiny stick. She regarded it for a moment, then that little thing expanded into a staff! A staff of Alteration – it has to be! She immediately tried to restore Nethander, so I hastily added what power I had so his soul would be able to stay with his body. After all, I knew firsthand of the gut wrenching pain that one felt when one's body was restored. Either it helped or he was better at handling it, because he returned to his usual pale self.

After we brought Nethander up to speed, he immediately wants to see what we can do with the three constructs. Grimwald showed that they wouldn't move from that room and refused to use them for any other purpose. We could get access to the weapon rack, and a magical hammer and flail were our rewards. With Grimwald not owning the preferred weapon of Dumathoin, he claimed it, leaving the flail for Cuura who had no magical weapon. Interesting, I could almost feel the 'click'. This was the proper weapon for her!

Nethander then proposed to start checking the collapsed hallway, with Grimwald objecting. I felt kind of light headed and suddenly discovered that the group had fallen silent. I probably said something. They would tell me if it was important. Instead we focused on the machine, and after some experimentation we found a way to get down. That four column thing was a kind of elevator!

We discovered a circular room with four exits. Taking one we entered a gem studded hall with many skeletons in armor. They peppered Grimwald with bolts as he waded for the throne. More important than that was that everybody looked out for each other, assisting, not just going for their own targets. This was worth more than all the gems in these walls!