

The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

Chapter 73: Fighting Purple (1st ride of Eleint 1370)

Nethander woke up again, Oddvar was still frozen. Why did Nethander felt the need to act like this? It felt like he was constantly trying to get me to react. A bit like a small child with its mother... Hmm... In a way that would be logical. A bit late, but understandable. I would have to endure, teach, and give him the opportunity to catch up. Actually it was quite an honor, even if it was a bit tiresome.

One of those Quaggots caught up, to warn us against three different groups on our path. One of those, the purples (Cult of the Dragon, no doubt), managed to talk their way past her. I could taste the after effect of a charm here, even if Grimwald scoffed at the idea. Of course Trinezalisee tried to extract revenge by proxy by getting us to choose the path blocked by them, but the point was that they were the weakest link: both the Black Network and the Red Wizards had backups, and a fight like that would slow us down until they engulfed us. Numbers could win a battle skill could not.

Have I said anything? Grimwald was looking at me oddly. Cult it was.

We followed dark corridors, Nethander and Felina in the van, and Cuura and Grimwald lugging our baggage in the rear, Kendalan, Zhae, and I in the middle. Then some light in the distance, and our scouts move in to investigate. They called us in, a dead man lying on the ground amidst a summoning circle. His equipment told us he was a member of the Cult. Cuura started extinguishing candles, as I used my last flask of blessed water to eradicate marks. Nethander 'explained' the 'necessity' to me. Why did he do so? I could tell the ritual to call a Devil or such like was close to finished, and his actions were not wrong. But they weren't utterly right either and his talk sounded of key. What did he lack? Self reflection? Yes, but how to teach him?

After several hours Felina and Nethander warned us for a cave with two persons – a lightly armored man in a purple cloak and a heavily armored fighter with a massive two-hander – and two drake like creatures. Grimwald recognized them as Redspawn Birthers, a truly horrible dragon aberration, whose innate fire aura was a grave threat for unshielded persons. We used our standard pattern: luring the drakes forward so Felina, Nethander, and I could take out the humans, while Kendalan, Zhae, Grimwald, and Cuura concentrated on the spawn.

Things we learned: draconic senses were a lot more acute than expected, and their skin a lot more resilient to blows and arrows. Most of Kendalan's shafts just bounces off, while one Birther tried to gobble up Felina, and the purple clothed man spotted Nethander and fired of a nasty necromantic dragon head. I warned Nethander to evade it as I used my magnetism to pull Felina from a spawn's maw. We managed to interrupt the man's concentration, and Nethander moved over to attack Felina's Birther while I disarmed the fighter. Foolish me. I should have focused on the purple, but instead I choose to hit the Birther with the two-hander. Another draconic head appeared, but I knew how to evade it. Luckily Grimwald was still listening while Cuura and Zhae were in melee with the second Birther. I kind of ignored the fighter as his morale was broken when I took his weapon from him. Grimwald sent his elemental friend to trip the caster, as Nethander was swallowed – and managed to stay stuck in the creatures gizzard by smart use of an immovable rod.

Pummeled the second Birther swallowed Zhae, and I was worried for a moment, even when the first Birther dropped dead through attacks of an invigorated Felina. I tried to stop the caster from escaping, when Zhae punched his way out killing his opponent. A teleport and we were left with a fighter who we allowed his freedom if a swore not to fight against us. Grimwald was absolutely right by pointing out my initial idea to fully disarm him would leave him defenceless.

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