

20: Identity

We spend a quiet night near the lake and awoke rested. Somehow the powerful dreams that kept interrupting my dreams stayed at bay and we enjoyed a quiet breakfast. Then it was time for Zhae and me to practice our swordplay here on this special place. At first it started normal, soon we fell in the rhythm of feinting, attacking and parrying. Zhae quickly fell into his focussed state of mind but after a while his technique started to change. His manoeuvres were becoming odd, his motion becoming more elaborate than normal. I do not want to speak less of his fighting prowess, but his normal repertoire is not one of long combinations in order to gain the advantage several blows in the future. At first I had some difficulties in following him but I surrendered to the action myself. It almost felt like my blade was directing my actions. Long combinations swept from one side to the other. Parries were being made before I even knew Zhae was starting in that direction. That moment we surpassed ourselves. That moment we fought way above our normal capabilities. It almost felt like we were recreating a combat that took place years ago. We couldn't, now wouldn't stop and when we finally did we were exhausted. The others looked at us in surprise and I just knew that I had just been as close to Blade as I would ever be in my entire life again.

I stopped for a breather and sat down on Blade's stone overlooking the lake to ponder what had just happened. Zhae on the other hand would not stop and started to search the floor for the track we made. Again he recreated the entire fight we just had. Combination after combination, the sight was breathtaking. The fact that the movements were so fluid and matched the imprints left on the dirt floor from our last fight to the inch were again proof that this place was special.

I didn't want to leave but there was nothing here to do. We had to leave and so we did! When we tried to leave the place a feeling of pure horror washed over me. Later I heard that everybody else felt that exact same horror when we entered the place the last morning. Then we were chased by the Ninja, otherwise we might never have found this place. Fortunately for me Reed persuaded me not to flee back to the vale and we were able to travel towards Candlekeep again.

That evening we decided to open the chest we'd found in the master's lake. Felina was unable to safely dismantle the magic traps that were laid on it but we opened it by force. No one was hurt in the process and we could finally see what treasure was taken from the lake.

A few wands, a coin like amulet, a ring, a scroll, a small buckler, huge crossbow and a few potions were the loot. It seemed impossible for Reed, Grimwald or Felina to identify the items so I slipped the ring onto my finger. Nothing felt differently so I started experimenting. It didn't take long to decide that it was a ring of feather fall. Kendalan received that one for he tends to climb to high places. The medallion was next and there I was rewarded for my courage. Somehow this medallion strengthened my life forces to a level I new I could better take a beating in a fight. This was exactly what I needed and I took the medallion for myself. Later on Reed decided to warn me that I was being selfish, but as long as both our leaders didn't complain I was happy. The lady worries too much for my mental health.

The crossbow was given to Grimwald and I managed to obtain the buckler too. This little shield would fit my fighting style perfectly and somehow it comforted me that Blade could help me even from the grave.

The actual travel that day was uneventful besides from spotting a huge skeletal dragon flying past several miles away. It didn't spot us and got the others and especially Kendalan worried quite a bit. But the dragon didn't spot us and we were able to make good mileage that day.

That night the dreams returned with full force. I remember going for the treasure hidden deep within the celestial castle. I remember entering through the sewers. Fierce lights were shining from the entrance above and I closed in under cover of magical darkness. I could see a guard I knew I couldn't pass so I took it out with a good placed crossbow bolts straight into his kidneys. The grating that locked of the actual entrance was closed shut and I started to open it...

Then suddenly I was awake, trying to gain entrance to the cart from the bottom. The others were approaching me with weapons drawn while Reed protected me. She told me I was under the influence of the damn book, just as Cuura and Zhae were. In my dreams I had tried to steal the book and managed to hurt the sergeant badly. In a quick meeting the others decided I had to sleep shackled to the cart in the future. I really didn't have a choice, but fortunately Cuura promised to unlock me at first sign of trouble.

I can only hope we can deliver these damn books to Candlekeep soon.