

33: Who Else

Today my luck changed for the better, or I can better say that Lady Luck saved my life today! I've been reading the book of death for several weeks now and although I can't remember what was in their exactly, I know that the book influenced me more then it did with Reed and the others. Reed had tried to kill herself under the influence of the book, it tried to do the same to me, but in a much more insidious way. It all started with a chapter that described who I could use my precision attacks on undead. Right now I'm an able fighter when confronted with living creatures. When faced with undead, all my battle prowess is reduced to pummelling the undead with brute force. Too bad brute force is the one thing I just don't have! This insidious book lured me deep into it's secrets and was slowly corrupting me.

It all started when I asked Grimwald to look at a small cut I got from the Wyvern almost a week ago. This small wound wasn't healing the way small cuts usually do. I thought this had something to do with possible contamination or poisoning from the wyvern claws but apparently I was turning into an undead! I had already frightened Reed in the past by my creepy knowledge about the way undead functioned. Somehow I could see and understand their ties and bond to the negative plain that forms their "un"life forces. I've lost memory of the specifics, so I have to quote Grimwald and Reed on this one but apparently the book allowed me to understand so much of the undead that I could feel the negative energy strings, their foul remnants of soul or whatever it is that keeps their rotting shells together. While this sounds very interesting the book managed to accomplish that by turning me undead myself.

Besides turning me undead it also managed to lure me into believing it was a good thing! Grimwald and Reed tried to convince me that I would become an undead and I didn't believe them. The one who convinced me to stop reading the book and accept help before it was too late was my new found Goddess, Lady Luck, Tymora. I've only joined her faith for just a fortnight, but already I feel her watching over me.

I prayed for Tymora for guidance, I needed to know whether I should finish the book of death or cast it away like my friends suggested. I finished prayer and tossed a platinum piece into the air. During flight it spun beautifully around it axis. When it struck the ground it didn't bounce but it landed square on the edge. For a minute it remained motionless then it seemed to pivot and roll away into another direction straight for a sewer grating where it disappeared leaving no trace of the coins existence! This sign could bear no mistake, my life would go down the drain if I continued reading it. How could I ignore an omen like this?

Fortunately for me the Alchemist Paul was still in Nashkel and I still had one of the vials of Shar's forget poisons. I don't remember who came up with the idea but it worked, kind off.....

The alchemist brewed a potion based on the forget poison and the idea was that I should read the book of death backwards while sipping that potion. I don't remember anything from reading the book, but my life forces are flowing again and the small cut started healing almost immediately. The only thing is that I fear the potion has removed more then just the book of death from my memory. Sometimes I just know that I should remember something, only to find nothing, a black hole in my memory. Perhaps later on we can study this and solve it properly.

Apart from my adventures with the book of death nothing too important happened.

We encountered some problems with the crowd when Grimwald was studying Noob, the town's fool. Apparently the crazy man was terribly frightened by Grimwald and his fear triggered a frenzy from the inn keepers daughter. We were faced by an angry mob when

Cuura tried to calm her with a gentle slap, just at the exact same time she decided to faint. I could understand that people could misinterpret Cuura's action, but the crowd was quickly assured that we meant no harm and we wisely decided to stop the examination of Noob. The others were all excited about what happened and started talking about Duerger, psionics and possible mind links between Noob and the inn keepers daughter. Perhaps this information will become useful later on, but at the moment I don't see much relevance to our current problems.

We also discussed the problem of the logging rights and the blighted forest, trying to find out who could be the mastermind. Grimwald decided it must be a Zhentarim ploy to increase their monopoly in iron ore throughout the north west of Faerun. This could possibly endanger my alliance with Semmemon and the Black Network. I used my ring of reporting to ask for guidance; should I sabotage the parties efforts to solve the puzzle or not? The following night I'm sure I received a message in my dreams. Somehow I just knew that Semmemon had approved of our efforts in disrupting this Zhent ploy. I guess there are different factions in the Black Network that fight for supremacy.

I guess I'm lucky that up to now I did not really encounter any conflicts of interest between the party and the Black Network. I just hope I can keep it that way and in the near future I should return to Greenest and speak to the Zhent captain that knew Blade. Everything we encounter about the masters and every bit of information I find about Blade shows me an entirely different personality than the Blade I knew. As far as I can tell the last place Blade visited before we met in Calimport was Darkhold Keep. Somehow I feel that part of the mystery lies in that fortress. For now I feel myself strengthened in the presence of my friend, even more important, I feel my capabilities as a warrior rapidly advancing. But in the future I have to return to the Zhentarim. What I've seen from this organisation tells me that it's a ruthless one. I will have to rise quickly in the hierarchy to be able to search for Blades secrets. To accomplish that I must show my worth, eradicate opposition and watch my back in the night. Right now I doubt that I'm that much of a fighter. I will remain with the party the coming time. For what's worth, Zhae is also looking for his missing master and we do stumble over old meeting places of the Masters. Sticking with the party will not thwart my attempt to avenge Blades death.

The next days and nights we spend sifting through the town populace, trying to figure out who was the Zhentarim spy. We tried different tactics, from drawing astrological readings from the stars and a few good well placed bluffs in the vicinity of the targets in order to extract a possible emotional response. All things considered we tried everything we could, to find out that Grimwald identified the spy solely on the way he tucked his pants in his boots.

The spy was positioned perfectly, acting as the head of the mayors household. Since Felina had access to the mayors house she went on a scouting mission to find a ring of reporting that was almost an exact copy of my ring. Of course that was immediately spotted by the party and I had to make up a story how I came in the possession of a Zhentarim spy ring. It's good I'm used to quick talk like this and knew from experience that the best lie is a simple, plausible and as close to the truth as possible. I told them that I pleaded with my life to save the party from the death penalty when we were captured near Greenest. That I had to plead fealty to the mighty wizard and the Black Network just to keep the heads of the party on their necks and allow us to complete our mission to escort the books to Candlekeep. Almost everyone bought this lie, or was it bending the truth?, except for Reed. She approached me later on, telling me that I should NEVER do that again and clearly showed her disappointment in me. What I don't understand is how she's able to see the truth every time!