

Norbert's Notes  
**Flawed Festival (132)**  
*In which a holy festival is disturbed*

As morning dawns over the city, I sit in reflection on the events of the past day.

There are accepted *schemes of scheming*, and from what Reed tells me, in Shou, they are the order of the day. But this doesn't seem to be that. We went from murder to mayhem in a single night. Assassination of a single target, using the Festival of Lights as a distraction: reprehensible, yes, but in its way, a logical, perhaps even predictable criminal act. It would have been a bad day for Master Wang, and I am glad we managed to prevent his death, whoever was out to get him. The School can still depend on its Master, and the son on his father. Yet had the assassins' poison succeeded, the city would have gone on.

But this: possession of the city guard; turning the guardians of the law into random, rampaging killers, desecration of the city cemetery, marring the symbol of the dragon, as a keeper of balance, and setting fires left and right? *This* disturbance of the festival of lights, this violation of the sacred falls beyond those accepted schemes. It is too brazen a display for these careful Shou magistrates and officials. This doesn't seem to be about getting an advantage within the system, but rather about bringing it down completely. Which means either outside factions who have no stake in the order at all have joined in on the game, or Chaos itself is at work here.

I have to admit, the group did a truly commendable job last night. In revealing the trickery of the paper dragon, keeping the guardsmen from killing those they were sworn to protect, and helping to douse the fires, they brought back a trembling semblance of order to the city. Even if we were helped by a fortuitous rainfall, if that is what it was. Unfortunately, while their short-term response was apt, not all of them seem to have a clear longer-term perspective on our presence here. As adventurers are wont, they are drawn to the promise of fame and the thrill of combat. If no occasion presents itself, they will make one; for some reason, they are trying to draw as much attention to themselves as possible.

Nethander even started picking fights with the locals, for no apparent reason. And then, of course, there's the tournament. Oh! How their minds are focused on it, the moment it was mentioned. They may yet register for it, hoping their luck or acrobatics or sheer dumb strength will save them. Regardless, I am quite uninterested in the vagaries of physical combat. And I, for one, have *not* suddenly forgotten everything that happened last night. I have meditated on it, and determined more is to come. I am certain of it, and if we can prevent it, we should.