

## Norbert's Notes **Half in Control (133)**

### *In which I break protocol to offer our services to the Magistrate*

Like my companions, I too, have the tournament on my mind. But for a different reason: it is bound to be disrupted, perhaps as badly as the Festival of Lights itself was. I am told there will actually be two tournaments, one unarmed, one armed, and so, I decide to explore the official tournament grounds with an eye to attempted sabotage.

How could they do it? Where would they strike? I examine the wooden posts supporting the platform of honor, I check every rope and hole and loose flagstone I can find. The Shou know no halflings; in their eyes, I am a child. It is the perfect cover, and with it, I slip in and out and around and about the tournament grounds. And yet, there is little to be found. I do make an inventory of potential threats, and get it relayed, through the contacts we have made so far, to the officials overseeing the tournament. They may beef up security.

When I get back to the group, we are about expected for dinner with Master Wang and his son, as well as the Magistrate, his wife, and the Wu Yen. We ourselves seem to have found some extra dinner companions as well. The dwarf, Grimwald, is accompanied by a savage woman, who came in riding a giant, and admittedly somewhat frightening, lizard.

Fortunately, I managed to avoid the lizard, and speak to Grimwald, who is understandably indignant over us not having already revealed ourselves by offering our services to the authorities directly. He shares his stories on his and Cuura's efforts on the Greenfields, and I make a mental catalogue of the situation there. As we prepare to visit the Magistrate, I reason with him, trying to convince him to just stay his tongue a little while longer. His code and intentions are honourable, I concede, and I fully agree with him that it would *indeed* be the proper cause of action to inform the authorities about our intentions, and that it would *indeed* also be proper to try to work with them, if we are to find out who or what has been causing these terrible things to happen. But we first need to find whether these authorities are *true*. Who truly serves to uphold the Emperor's order here? In theory, it should be the Magistrate; but *if* he himself is somehow corrupted, we would harm our chances of unraveling the whole mess by going to him too soon. Fortunately, though he is unhappy about it, Grimwald can see the reason in this, and we decide to participate in the dinner first and see what we can see.