

The Dragonhorde

By Mark Edgemon

How fearful this prophesied night, laced in shadows pierced with slivers of burnt orange, ripping into the darkness like dragon's fiery claws. The ground begins to shake as thunderous hooves fast approached the township of Velderon; it's people huddled together, gauging the approach of their doom by the graduation of sound, the momentary countdown to a charred oblivion.

Standing at the edge of town was a lone figure, a former wizard known only as Xandulun.

He was once an apprentice to the dark and aged Council of Wizards, until such a time he left the pursuit of the Black Arts and devoted himself entirely to the study of "White Magic" which held for him the knowledge of the secret powers beneath our human existence. Black magic, the wizard's sorcery of choice, worked only through the collaboration of the wizard's council and their demon counterparts. The wizard's black magic in league with the dark principalities of demonic powers removed Xandulun from their council; casting him out of their number. The gift of foresight could not be numbered among the sovereignty of the wizards, for they would not have extricated Xandulun from their midst, if they knew of the holocaustic inferno that would soon engulf them.

Xandulun was often praised as a good man by the townspeople of Velderon, due to his great empathy toward them, for he put others before himself, for he served not the people, but the symmetry of spirituality's counterbalance. The world could be lost or blessed by the slant of its spiritual equilibrium. His life and purpose was in stark contrast to the wizard's insatiable desire for power, who used the dark forces to enslave the good people of the village kingdom, controlling them in every aspect of their lives.

And now as prophesied for thousands of years, the dragons were emerging from their caverns beneath the earth's core, where they had dwelled since the new days of earth's first beginnings. And through their reemergence, it needs be they must scorch the earth to acclimate its outer shell to the volcanic environment they have lived in for many millennia. The abyss from which they flooded the skies was only miles from the village, which now lay directly in their path.

The sweltering heat was already being felt within the village from the dragon's breath still miles away. The grey and aged Council of Wizards had planned to challenge the Dragonhorde at the Silesia River and defeat them through the amalgamation of their combined powers as they had envisaged this moment since the founding of their powerful order thousands of years long past.

The wizards conjured an invisible shield as they awaited the Dragonhorde, which protected them from the heat that was searing forth from the dragon's mouths, hotter than a thousand volcanic eruptions. The moments hastened until the Dragonhorde were upon them, incinerating the rocks, trees, grass and evaporating the river, including a tiny wooden duck decoy that was floating by at the time.

With haste, the wizards implored the authority of their mystical powers, calling upon the demons beneath the earth and the dark principalities of the air to empower their spell and cast the dragons back into the bowels of the earth, sealing the entrance forever.

Unbeknownst to the wizards, the dragons were immune to magic and demonic powers. The host, which withstood the Dragonhorde, was horrified for only an instant before being devoured by the dragon's scalding fire. The approaching speed of the dragons was not impeded as they moved with unstoppable force toward the village.

Xandulun saw the inferno approaching with great speed and prepared quickly, girding himself about with the remembrance of the spiritual knowledge of time fragmentation. He had learned of this spell while peering into a black mirror and communicating with spirits of other planes who taught him of this craft which was yet untried. It was his intent to use this craft to pull the Dragonhorde out of time and then send them back to the formation of the earth when the planet was new and its surface a sea of molten rock.

With velocity the speed of lightning the Dragonhorde swooped downward from the sky, screeching with an ear piercing sound that vibrated the bones and held their victims motionless with fear. Xandulun was unprepared for their descent and let out a mantra cry he often used during meditation and communing with spirits in the outer plane.

Instinctively he held up his hands and cried out in a loud voice, "Exme, Tridulun, Ex-sa-me, Ian Soondulun, Viva-ce, Ekcre, Xunvandelay."

It may have been an open connection with the spirits of the outer plane that added the needed power to the spell for the motion of the Dragonhorde began to slow as they were pulled out of time. Xandulun fervently fought to remember the rest of the spell to cast them into the past of earth's beginning but he could not. The dragon on point still moving at an infinitesimal rate of speed slowed to a halt and a cessation of movement still perched in midair, inches from Xandulun's face.

The Dragonhorde were now living monuments, encased in time, translucent in their physicality, so anyone could walk through their image, being frozen between two ages, unable to move, imprisoned for time without end.

Xandulun was unable to complete the spell, sending the Dragonhorde to time's creation and yet, it seemed better this way, for the townspeople of Velderon seemed hopeful now that the terror had passed and the people had a symbol to epitomize the truth that struggle and faith brings about overcoming. Evil overcame evil and the righteous brave heart of one soul, delivered his fellowman and became a testament to conquering fear, the enemy we all face.

The End