The Return of Astoroth

by L. Giotis

1,000,000 years ago, an evil dragon named Astoroth sought to take over the world, but a sword was forged and a champion found. After a decade of fighting, Astoroth was finally defeated. His followers forged one of his bones into a sword that held the dragon's soul.

1,000,000 years later:

"Sir, they have found it!"

"Good, ready my dragon, we leave immediately."

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A red dragon soars through the sky above the small town of Smeljinverge. The dragon's rider is a tall man wearing fine clothes and wrapped in an elegant black cloak. He touches down near a military camp just outside the town. The man dismounts and is greeted by another man wearing full battle armor. The second man kneels and says, "So nice of you to join us, Lord Xavier."

"So you have found it, Astor," says Lord Xavier.

"Yes, but the locals are keeping it from us," says Astor.

"Find it, kill anyone who is armed, and leave the rest," says Lord Xavier.

"Yes sir."

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The screams in the air started dying down as the sword was brought to me.

"How many casualties?" Lord Xavier asks.

"Only six," Astor answers. "They weren't that tough."

"So let me see the sword," Lord Xavier asks.

"Yes, my lord," says Astor. "It's right here." Astor's son, Avalon, a young but talented soldier approaches with a wooden box.

The Return of Astoroth (cont.)

by Leonidas Giotis

Lord Xavier opens it and the sword he has been looking for for the last five years is finally in his clutches. Lord Xavier attaches its scabbard to his belt and immediately a voice booms in his head, "So my champion is ready," Lord Xavier drops to his knees.

"Are you alright my lord?" Astor asks.

"I'm fine," Lord Xavier respond standing up quickly. "Continue the search for the other one,"

"Yes sir," Astor replies.

Wind rushes past Lord Xavier's face as he flies back to his castle, Loden. Lord Xavier lands just inside the gates. A servant approaches. "So did you find it, sir?"

"Of course I found it, Latin," Lord Xavier says.

"The council will meet with you over dinner," Latin says.

"Wonderful. I have some important news for them," Lord Xavier replies.

"This pie is wonderful, my lord!"

"Thank you, General Shaw. It is straight from the castle's bakery,"

"Delicious!" General Shaw replies.

"Now let's get to business," Lord Xavier says.

"So I heard you found that sword," says General Blazek.

"Yes, General Blazek," Lord Xavier says, "I found *that* sword, but it's not just some sword. It is the sword of Astoroth!"

"The sword of Astoroth!?!" General Shaw practically chokes on his pie as he exclaims.

"Yes, General Shaw, the sword of Astoroth," Lord Xavier says.

"But legend says that the sword of Astoroth held Astoroth's soul. What if it takes over your mind?" says General Shaw.

Before anyone can utter a word, Lord Xavier is across the table with his sword deep in General Shaw's chest. Blood splatters the carpet as General Shaw falls to the ground. Then Lord Xavier hears the same voice in his head, "Yes, blood, more, I need more!"

The Return of Astoroth (cont.)

by Leonidas Giotis

"Does anyone else have any objections? No? Good, have the servants clean that up," Lord Xavier says.

"Sir, I heard what happened at the council," Latin says

"Tell Astor that he will be taking General Shaw's place," Lord Xavier says.

"Yes sir," Latin replies. A soldier hops off a dragon and rushes towards Lord Xavier.

"Sir, Lady Crystal's resistance army has found the Sword of Vengeance," says the soldier.

"I will rendezvous with Astor at Stolark, I leave immediately," Lord Xavier says.

It was a few days later when Astor arrived. "You're late," Lord Xavier says. Lord Xavier half expects Astor to argue, but he answers,

"Sorry my lord, we'll try harder next time."

"Good," Lord Xavier says. "Let us start the invasion, I want your men to surround the city, give them twenty-four hours to surrender, then we draw blood."

"Yes, sir."

"Sir, Lady Crystal's army is refusing to surrender," says Astor.

"Too bad for them. Kill them all," Lord Xavier say.

"Yes, sir," says Astor.

Lord Xavier draws his sword and readies for battle. "Charge!" Lord Xavier screams as they run into battle. Lord Xavier hears screams and war cries and then the enemy is upon them. Lord Xavier sidesteps as a man runs past him, Lord Xavier then jabs his sword into a gap in the man's armor. The man coughs up blood then falls to the ground, unmoving. Lord Xavier pulls his sword out of the man's armor then ducks as an axe of a large man sails over my head.

"Ah, a challenge," Lord Xavier says.

The Return of Astoroth (cont.)

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"So this is who everyone is so afraid of," the man with the axe says, "you don't scare me."

"You'll learn," Lord Xavier replies.

Lord Xavier is finishing cleaning his sword of blood as Astor approaches. "Lady Crystal's army is in full retreat, their army is in tatters."

"Full retreat? I thought we'd surrounded them," Lord Xavier says.

"Some of them slipped through as we stormed the town," Astor replies.

"fine," Lord Xavier says, "where did they go?"

"They went south, we expect to their coastal fort of Rulaurph," replies Astor.

"Ready the battalion, call for water support, I want them trapped in," Lord Xavier says. Astor nods and leaves.

Later that night, as Lord Xavier is going to bed Lord Xavier hears that same voice in his head, "You are right to go after the sword, It is the only thing that can rival you."

"So you *are* Astoroth? Are you not?" Lord Xavier asks.

"Once, a long time ago, I was."