

Warrior

By Levi



The castle was in a sombre mood after the death of Lord Highcastle. The torches lighting the hallways had almost burnt out so there were dark patches everywhere. A door opened and light flooded from it. Princess Anita had been in mourning since the death of her father and now she slowly stepped outside. The guards snapped to attention as she walked past. She continued walking until she reached the gardens where she told the guard she wasn't to be disturbed. As she walked along the path she noticed that the birds had stopped singing. Looking around she saw a dark spot on the horizon. As it started to get bigger she saw that it was either a huge bird or a dragon. She stumbled away but then realised she was backed up against a wall. With a rush she heard it swoop down and clasp her in its powerful claws. As she was carried away she saw the guardsmen start to shout.

Later on at the castle, Xion, Princess Anita's fiancé and Captain of the King's Army, was discussing how to save Princess Anita. William, the Knight-Marshal, suggested to send out his personal fire Drake to track it. Xion agreed.

After getting buffeted by the wind for about half an hour she was dropped onto a strange wooden tower. For a moment she thought that it was painted black, but then with horror she realised that it was stained with centuries of blood. She could see 100's of men and creatures running around getting ready for a siege. A man came out holding onto a woman's arm and Anita recognised him as her old boyfriend, Lord Fiful. She then turned her gaze to the woman and saw that she was Lady Katala, the witch who could summon animals.

Fiful snapped his fingers and 2 men came running. He quickly told them to take Anita to the top of the highest tower and keep her there. As she climbed the stairs Anita could see Trolls, Manticores, Minotaures and a couple of lowland giants assembling in their ranks.

The guards put down some dry bread and water and left, locking the door behind them. She then lay down, hoping to get some rest. A little while

later she heard a whoosh and a small fire Drake swooped through the open window. Anita went over to it and asked where it was from and what it was called.

“Well,” it replied, “Your fiancé sent me and my name is Kythedrom.”
“In that case you should take my necklace and a message,” said Anita. She hurriedly got Kythedrom to memorise where she was and how many defenders there were. She watched him fly away until she could no longer see him.

Back at the castle William and Xion were organising a company of horsemen to rescue Anita. As they rode out of the gate Xion saw Kythedrom fly in to the castle. After riding for about half a day they could see the enemy’s castle on the hill. When they reached the castle it stood deserted. William and Xion rode in and stationed the men near the gate. As they slowly mounted the steps they could hear hushed voices below. Xion and William continued upwards until they reached a heavy wooden door. Xion suddenly kicked it open, ducking as he did so. A crossbow bolt flew through the open door and hit William in the throat, knocking him to the ground. He lay there, twitching on the ground as a pool of crimson blood slowly spread around his neck

“Bugger”, thought Xion, “he was going to be one of my best commanders.”

Xion rolled forward, coming up with his bastard sword drawn. He spun around looking for an opponent. Seeing Fiful he swung high and cut his head off. Feathers burst everywhere and a moment too late he realised his mistake as a sword hacked into his shoulder. Blinking back tears of pain he spun around and saw Lady Katala and Lord Fiful standing with their swords drawn. Realising he was out numbered he turned and fled down the stairs. “Retreat,” he yelled, jumping onto his horse. As he galloped away he swore that he would revenge William.

Returning to his castle, Xion got a healer to fix his shoulder. After a noisy argument with Martin, his best archer and brother-in-law, it was decided that they would gather all their allies and attack. After seeing their friends gather Xion felt his hope return. There were catapults, foot soldiers, knights, centaurs, unicorns, archers, crossbowmen, tunnelers and pikeman. They all set out, but because they had to go as slow as the catapults Xion’s army camped about 2hrs away.

The next morning the army broke camp and lined up outside the castle. The catapults slowly started to fling rocks at the wall while the engineers

made their tunnel to collapse the inside wall. The castle battlements were covered by archers and crossbowmen. As soon as Xion called “Charge”, hundreds of cloth yard arrows and crossbow bolts flew through the air into Xion’s army. Hundreds of Xion’s men fell, only to be replaced with more soldiers. Xion’s archers and crossbowmen were making good work of the enemy archers so in the end there were only a few arrows coming out of little gaps in the walls.

Xion, leading the footman, pikeman and knights, strode ahead, dealing death with every blow. Suddenly a grotesque troll appeared wielding a spiked club. One of Xion’s footmen strode forward but was knocked back before he could get within striking distance. Drawing a huge crossbow from his saddle, Xion knocked a bolt in it and let fly. The bolt flew through the air and landed with a thump in the troll’s chest, pinning it to the wall. With a quick slash Xion cut it’s throat, moving aside as blood spurted everywhere. Xion pushed past the troll followed by Martin and Baru. As they rounded a corner, a sentry opened his mouth to speak, only to swallow one of Martin’s arrows. Pushing past the dead sentry they continued their climb until they reached a heavy wooden door. Xion made sure every one knew when to duck before he kicked it open. Xion ran in followed by Martin and Baru. Before the enemy in the room could draw their swords, Xion and Baru were among them, dealing death with every blow.

Xion spun around with his sword and decapitated one man who then tried to hold his guts in. Next to him Baru was cutting off arms and legs, sending them to splatter onto the wall and ceiling. Martin stood amid a pile of corps with his bloodied sword drawn. Glancing around for more men, Xion then noticed a dark shape behind a curtain. Keeping his sword between him and the curtain Xion slowly crept towards Martin and helped him dispatch the last guard. Keeping his voice down, Xion asked Martin to shoot a cloth yard arrow into the shape by the curtains. Just as Martin had put the arrow on the string a blood-curdling howl came from the curtain and a ferocious looking wyvern called Idiel shot at them. Xion, Martin and Baru just had time to dive to the side before a ball of fire bust past them, setting fire to an ancient tapestry. Martin’s arrow flew through the air and sunk into Idiel's tail. Xion and Baru, strode forward while Martin distracted the wyvern with more arrows. As soon as they reached Idiel they separated to try and confuse the wyvern. Baru lunged in but was nearly decapitated by a claw. Xion quickly lashed out and managed to slice Idiel’s wing open. Now it was Baru’s turn to draw blood and neatly cut Idiel’s arm off. Blinking blood and sweat out of his eyes Xion saw an opening and took it. As the wyvern swung it’s tail to cut

Xion's head off, Xion stepped forward instead of jumping backwards and thrust his sword in Idiel's stomach. A foul stench washed over Xion and he could hear Baru and Martin vomiting behind him. Turning away from the grisly scene before him, Xion motioned for Baru and Martin to follow him back down the stairs.

When he reached the courtyard he could see his men moving the corpses into a mass pit. Choosing 7 of his best warriors, Xion led them into the dungeon. Baru quietly got out his flint and transferred a spark to a torch on the wall. A merry glow forced back the advancing darkness as they crept deeper down. Soon they could hear a pair of hushed voices coming from a cell next to them. Xion motioned for Martin to put out the light and draw swords. After waiting a little while so they could see in the dark they advanced. Seeing a flickering light coming from a cell Xion guessed that was where Anita was kept so he charged. Luckily Flynn, a fast swordsman, was there first so he took the burning pitch in the face and the knives. Xion still got some pitch on his shield but shook it off. He saw Lady Katala and called out his challenge.

"I challenge you to a duel, Katala," he called.
"Prepare to die," she screamed in reply.

He quickly got his remaining men to form a ring of torches around Katala and himself and then he got ready. He stood in his fighters' position while Lady Katala put on her armour and buckled on her sword. Lady Katala parried and blocked and for a moment their swords were blurs as sparks started flying. Xion was breathing heavily and slowly lowered the tip of his sword, goading her to attack. She took the bait and swung with all her might. Xion tried to move aside in time but still felt the cold metal tip sink into his hipbone. He jumped forward and surprised Katala when his sword blade sliced through her armour. Xion gave a vicious yank and watched her shudder on the ground. He then ran towards Anita but was intercepted by Fiful.

"I realise you just killed my wife to be, but for that I really do have to thank you. You see, I just wanted her to do all the dirty jobs, then I was going to kill her myself."

To Be Continued