



The Fall of Argynvost

A nobleman named Lord Argynvost came to the valley centuries ago. He knew of a place called the Amber Temple — a repository of evil power guarded by the forces of good, rare warlocks known as the Orcus who could command and control the void (dark forces). Argynvost wanted to make sure that whatever was trapped inside the Amber Temple would not be allowed to escape, so he built his fortified mansion, Argynvostholt, close by. Argynvost knew he would need help, as dark forces were on the rise and war was on the horizon.

Argynvost was extraordinarily wealthy and reached out to the Order of the Dragon and paid a huge tribute, in order to earn favor of a small contingent of Paladin Knights. They became a chapter of the Order of the Dragon, known as the Order of the Silver Dragon. They were to protect the lands of Barovia in the name of the Order of the Dragon, with Lord Argynvost as their liege lord. The true objective, a secret kept from the Order of the Dragon was to protect the Amber Temple and the Orcus Warlocks. Argynvost knew the Order of the Dragon would never understand that Warlocks could serve for good and protect man, so he kept this a secret.

As the Great War broke out, the dark forces tried to gain access to the Amber Temple and their secret power. The Order of the Silver Dragon drove away the dark forces searching for the Amber Temple, which sheltered the Orcus Warlocks.

The dark forces were no match for the Paladin knights. It was not until the young prince, Zarovich, learned Argynvost's greatest secret, Argynvost was a rare silver dragon disguised as a human.

The young prince fooled Argynvost into exposing his true nature as a silver dragon. The young prince slew the Argynvost the dragon, had his corpse hacked to pieces, and his skull transported to Castle Ravenloft, where a curse was placed on the skull, which weakened the paladin knights of the Silver Dragon. The young prince was rewarded and became the dark prince, commander of the dark forces of Barovia.

The paladin knights returned to Argynvostholt, where the dark prince was waiting for them. The dark prince's forces overwhelmed the knights, who were cursed with weariness and slew them all, placing their heads on pikes around Castle Ravenloft.

The dark prince kept the greatest of the knights, Vladimir Horngaard, alive, torturing him for days in the dungeon of Castle Ravenloft. On the day Vladimir was to die, the dark prince told him how he slew Argynvost, chopped up his body, and used his skull to weaken the knights.

Vladimir Horngaard grew with rage, his dying breath he yelled out he would avenge Lord Argynvost.

Horngaard returned as a revenant and swore to avenge the destruction of the order and the death of Argynvost. His zeal was so great that it also brought back the spirits of several other knights, who rose as revenants under Vladimir's command.

The vengeful revenants killed many of the dark prince's soldiers, and whenever the undead knights were cut down, their spirits found new corpses to inhabit. Though the knights were grossly outnumbered, they waged war for months and slew hundreds of foes.

The dark prince finally fell, and Vladimir's knights should have gone to their everlasting rest, but their spirits couldn't leave Barovia, for the dark prince lived on, now as the undead, a vampire and curse the land and spirits.

After receiving that news, Vladimir ceased his advance and led his knights back to Argynvostholt. He realized the dark prince had already died and been damned to a hell of his own creation. With nowhere else to go and nothing else to do, Vladimir set his knights to killing the dark prince's agents and anyone else who might help to ease the dark prince's torment. Consumed by hatred, the knights have lost their honor and nobility. Their redemption hinges on whether Vladimir can set aside that hatred. It is said the undead knight can be found brooding in the ruins of Argynvostholt.

The spirit of the dragon Argynvost isn't at rest, either. It can sense that the knights have been corrupted, and it reaches out to those worthy in dreams, hoping they will help the knights find peace.

It is said the curse may be lifted if the dragon's skull is returned. The dragon's skull is somewhere in Castle Ravenloft, return the skull and place it in the mausoleum of Argynvostholt, the dragon's spirit ascends to the highest tower of the mansion and transforms into a beacon of light that flashes across Barovia. The light of the beacon reminds Vladimir Horngaard of what he has lost, enabling him and his fellow knights to let go of their hatred and find both redemption and rest.

Since the dragon's death, Argynvostholt has become a haunted ruin, a former bastion of nobility and light turned into a place of desolation and unrest. It is said to be haunted and a dangerous place. Few have ventured there over the centuries.