

Battle at the Gates of Tsolenka

The Legend of the Shield Maidens



When the Great War came to the land, the Ursari, loyal to the Fey and with strong ties to Argynvost, built the Gates of Tsolenka to guard against invaders and potential raiding of the Amber Temple. For the Ursari who built the Amber Temple knew if the darkness was released, the world could be lost.

The bravest of the Ursari people were the female warriors, who were known as the Shield Maidens. When the Ursari males turn to stone masonry, it was the women of the village who took to the role of guardians, protectors, and soldiers.

When the Gates of Tsolenka were completed, the Shield Maidens of Bârgău were assigned to guard the Gates. They defended the Gates of Tsolenka throughout the Great War and The Dark Lord's forces were repeatedly repelled. Some believed the Shield Maidens were granted the power of fortitude by the Mountain Fey, for each sunrise and sunset the Shield Maidens pray to the Mountain Fey.

Curse of Bârgău

The Dark Lord sent his forces to destroy the village of Bârgău, sending the villagers deep into the snowy mountain forest. The Shield Maidens at the Gates of Tsolenka rushed to the aid of their village, but it was too late. The village was destroyed, including the Temple of the Fey. Many of the men and children were killed or enslaved by The Dark Lord's forces.

The Dark Lord cursed the village and the Ursari people with immortality anchored to the village and to be lost to time. Any Ursari who ventured away from the ruins of Bârgău will rapidly age and die. The remaining villagers were trapped in their ruined village, cursed to immortality or death if they left.

The Shield Maidens knew if they returned to the Gates of Tsolenka, they would age and die, but they could not leave the Gates of Tsolenka unguarded.



The Bravest of Them

The Dark Lord's troops marched on the Gates in one final effort, believing it would be unguarded or if the Shield Maidens had returned, they would be easily defeated as they aged.

The Shield Maidens along with Prince Vernon, the son of Lord Hapsburg, and several of the Knights of Argynvost made a last stand at the Gates of Tsolenka.

It was the bloodiest battle of the Great War. The Dark Lord's forces outnumbered the Shield Maiden's forces a hundred-to-one. The Shield Maidens and their allies withstood The Dark Lord's forces for four days. Prince Vernon died in the battle defending the gates and many of the Knights of Argynvost fell. The curse took hold of the Shield Maidens as they aged guarding the Gates and standing their vigilant watch on the ramparts. They prayed at dawn and dusk to the Mountain Fey for the Gates of Tsolenka to hold.

On the fifth day, The Dark Lord sent his forces again to take the gate, it was the final push. The Shield Maidens knew they could not hold out any longer and called upon the elder of their village, an old wizard, to cast a spell to protect the gates with green fire. The old wizard said it would take hours to cast such a powerful spell, he would need time and protection.

The Shield Maidens marched out the Gates of Tsolenka one last time and formed a Shield Wall in front of the gates as The Dark Lord's forces fell upon the Gates in masses.

For six hours the aging Shield Maidens held the gate, giving the old wizard time to cast the green fire spell to guard the gate. They repelled The Dark Lord's forces and on the seventh hour, the few remaining Shield Maidens fell to their knees, no longer having the strength to wield their long swords or hold their shields. They had aged well into their golden years, appearing now as elderly women. One by one each of the elderly Shield Maidens slowly fell into the snow, turning to bone and dust, but the Gates of Tsolenka held and were never broken by The Dark Lord's forces during the Great War.



Shield Maiden's Oath

I will uphold the chivalrous tradition of
the Ursari people and the Natural Law of
the Fey and her allies. I shall pledge my
life in service to these values.

My heart knows only virtue.
My blade defends the helpless.
My might upholds thy weak.
My words speak only truth.
My wrath undoes thy wicked.
My knowledge defeats ignorance.
My skills be taught to thy willing.
My temper be held by patience.
My aid to those who seek it.

