

Banished from Eternia

Castle Grayskull: Home of the legendary Sorceress and center of the universe's power. Whoever controlled the castle controlled all. Eternia: Homeland of King Randor and his brother Keldor. Randor's castle stood mere miles away from Grayskull, and the Sorceress regarded him as a friend. He was a good man. Keldor, on the other hand, coveted his brother's power and mostly kept to himself. It was a day in late spring, at the time when all was usually peaceful in Randor's kingdom, that he called for his brother to join him.

"I wish to have words with thee, dear brother." Randor, king of Eternia eyed his brother, Keldor, strangely.

Keldor recognized this. He was ready for what may come. "And what words would those be, Randor? I am... curious... as to why I was called here."

It was late in the afternoon and Prince Keldor had been alone in his chamber, as he often was, when he was notified by one of the King's servants that he was needed in the throne room. It was there that Keldor met his elder brother, who was oddly alone in the great room.

Randor rose from his throne. "I have received word that a small army has been assembling in the far hills, presumably to attack this very castle."

Keldor seemed uneasy. "And what has this to do with me? Surely no army is a match for yours."

Randor's eyes glared at his brother. "They are **your** soldiers, Keldor... and they have been vanquished."

"You are mistaken, dear sibling. What reason would I have for attacking this kingdom?"

"Because... 'dear' brother..." Randor nearly spat the words, "I am aware of your lust for power and for my throne. You were planning a coup, were you not? You have betrayed me."

Keldor's hand unconsciously brushed against the handle of his sword. He pondered what to say next... "Yes, brother... the soldiers **were** mine... and you were right about the coup... but you are wrong about one thing..." Keldor began to slowly draw his sword, "The soldiers were never meant to attack this castle... they were merely a distraction... and they have served their purpose..."

"Why, Keldor? I love you, brother... the Queen loves you **like** a brother... why would you betray us... our trust?"

Keldor ignored him... "You were unwise to meet me alone... and that shall be your one... final... **failure!**" Keldor drew his sword and attacked but it was quickly met and blocked by Randor's own sword, drawn in an instant.

The chamber echoed with the music of steel clashing with steel. This battle was personal. Blood versus blood. And the battle was furious. Randor was on the receiving end of a fury of attacks from Keldor's sword. He was almost constantly on defense. But the tide soon turned as Keldor's pride, his weakness, got the better of him.

"What ails you brother? You fight like a young stable boy, rather than a king! If you had only been born after me, I would have been king! But with your death, king I shall be!" Keldor knocked his brother to the ground and raised his sword for the final blow... "And now... you di... AHHHHH!!!" Keldor screamed in pain as his brother's sword deeply cut the flesh of his left thigh.

"You should not gloat, Keldor... it does not become you... and it leaves you open to attack." Randor rose from the ground, regaining his breath as well as his posture, while Keldor writhed in pain on the stone floor, holding his thigh trying to stop the blood from flowing. Randor sighed. "GUARDS!"

Several of the King's guards rushed into the room, seeing the sight for the first time and ashamed that they had not heard the battle from outside. One of them spoke. "By the Sorceress! Your Majesty, what has happened!?"

"I have stopped my brother from making a terrible mistake. He has enough to pay for as it is. Take Keldor to the dungeon and attend to his wound..." The King looked upon his brother, now held tightly by two of the guards. In Keldor's weakened state, he was no match for them and fought little. The King sighed again, a slight tear in his eye. "Keldor is no longer my brother. I excommunicate him. The Sorceress will decide his final fate."

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Hours passed by but Keldor had lost track of any real time. It was dark in the dungeon and he did not know that night had already come and gone. It was morning by the time two of the castle's guards came and opened his cell. "You must come with us, Keldor. The King wishes to see you before your trip to Grayskull for your meeting with the Sorceress."

Keldor said nothing, but followed the men. His hands were bound in chains behind his back. He was still wearing his royal attire, the left leg of his trousers ripped and covered with dry blood. His wound had a cloth wrapped around it and tightly tied to prevent bleeding. He was limping badly.

They led him from out of the dungeon to the outside gates of the castle where the King was waiting alone. Randor greeted his former brother with sadness... but strength and pride. "Keldor, I am a merciful man, as you know... and perhaps a bit too proud. I do not wish for this to go any further than it already has. I forgive you of your transgression. Please, Keldor... repent of

your actions and join me again as prince of Eternia and as my brother.” Keldor was silent and Randor was unsure of what to do. “... Please, Keldor.”

Keldor’s eyes narrowed and he glared at his brother, not of mere anger, but a glare of hatred. “I am also a proud man, Randor... but I lack your weak mercy.” Keldor spat at the King, the saliva hitting Randor in the face.

The King would take no more, even from Keldor. He wiped his face and regarded the man opposite of him silently for a moment. He was a mess. Keldor’s royal tunic and clothes were dirty and wet from the dungeon. The wound on his leg was bad but should be no severe problem after it had healed. “So be it, then. Take him to the Sorceress, but do not bring him back. He is banished from this kingdom and shall never set foot in it again lest he forfeit his life. Go.”

The massive gate to the castle opened up before them. It was nearly forty feet high and constructed of strong oak and steel. Merely watching it lower was a sight to behold. When it had settled to the ground, the two guards shoved Keldor toward the outside of the castle. Each guard holding one of his arms tightly led him outside of the gate to two servants waiting with three horses. They commanded Keldor to mount the steed and he did, for even with his pride he would not walk to Grayskull wounded as he was. They tied him to the horse and then mounted their own, on either side of him. Each guard took one side of Keldor’s horse’s reins and, riding closely, they began to make their way to castle Grayskull, the center of the universe’s power, where the Sorceress would be waiting for them. It was there that Keldor would be dealt his final fate. He was sure that even with the mercy and kindness of the Sorceress, that it would be a harsh one.

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Keldor and the guards rode for nearly two hours before Castle Grayskull loomed before them. The structure had been assembled shortly after the dawn of time itself and it looked it. The walls were crumbling and the stones were chipped and some parts had been burned black, all from previous attempts to invade and control it. Despite its rugged and decrepit appearance, the castle still held strong, due mostly due to a centuries old spell that protected it from unwelcome visitors. Only those the Sorceress allowed were deigned to enter its confines. No one would enter on this day. As the three men approached the castle, the Sorceress exited the castle to join them, its massive stone gate closing behind her.

Keldor seemed to feel as if the massive stone skull above the gate were staring down at him in disdain, as if it were death waiting for him. The Sorceress spoke in a soft voice, “Please, dear servants of King Randor, heed my words and obey them. Untie your prisoner from his steed. Ride until you can hear us no longer and rest there. I will tell you when to return by giving you a sign.”

The guards spoke in unison, “Yes, Sorceress.” They did as she commanded and began riding. Only when they had reached the point to where they were out of earshot did the Sorceress speak to Keldor, who was still sitting upon his own horse.

"I greet you, Keldor. Please... join me here on the ground so that we may speak face to face." Keldor, with some struggle due to both his wound and his bound wrists, dismounted and stood before the Sorceress. She eyed his leg and the wound there. The cloth that held it had become loose and his thigh had resumed bleeding slightly. "Does it hurt, dear Keldor? Your wound?"

"Not any more than failure, Sorceress." Keldor, strong that he was, found it difficult to look the Sorceress in the eye, for even with his pride, the power she wielded humbled him.

"Then it shall be no more." The Sorceress raised her staff and pointed it to his wound, which soon healed and disappeared. Keldor managed to find the strength to look up at her. He realized that even with her age, she was quite the beautiful and exotic woman who looked no more than thirty years of age. Her hair was worn long and fell to the small of her back. It was as silver as the lining on his tunic had once been and upon it sat a crown of feathers that although it wielded no power of its own, was beautiful unto itself. She wore a white gown with a silver breastplate covering it. The sorceress then used her magic to remove the chains from his wrists, thus allowing him movement. Any thought of escape he may have had was soon gone as she enclosed him in a field of powerful energy that no mortal with as limited experience in sorcery as he could ever dissolve. "You have much to answer for, dear Keldor, but I shall not ask you to. You have always been a proud yet wanting man. I need not ask you why you have done this deed to know your reasoning."

Keldor stood strong and steadfast still, wondering what her judgement would be. "What will my fate be then, Sorceress? I tire of this prison you have encased me in."

The Sorceress sighed ever so slightly and looked Keldor in the eyes. "If you wish to know your fate so soon, I will give it to you."

Keldor paced within his small confines, no longer humbled, but angry. "Then speak, woman, and be done with it."

"So be it. I curse you, Keldor. You wished your brother a corpse, so shall you be a corpse, but one that lives. You will never die, but live throughout eternity in your shame." With the words spoken she once again aimed her staff at Keldor and it glowed red before showering him in a blue haze which faded moments later. Keldor's skin paled to blue and became cold to the touch. His body wracked with pain and he fell to the ground, dying. Keldor screamed and cursed at the Sorceress, but she turned and walked back into the newly opening gate to castle Grayskull. He laid still, his body dead, but his soul unable to escape. After an unknown amount of time, he rose from the ground and found himself free of his prison of energy. His skin was still blue and was freezing cold, even to himself. He shivered and cried to himself slightly. It was then that he noticed the guards had returned and he quickly regained his composure. The sorceress must have called them during his transformation.

The guards dismounted and looked at him in fright, their jaws slack. After a moment one spoke to him. "Come, Keldor the Cursed. You are to come with us. We take you out of Eternia, never to return."

"No."

The guard stood fast. "Then I draw my sword, sir, and command you!"

"NOOO!!!" Keldor screamed and rushed the guard, but the guard struck, his sword entering Keldor at his waist and seeing the light of day at his back. The guard withdrew his sword. To the amazement of all three men, Keldor's wound healed and he stood as new. He took advantage of the situation and leapt at the guard, breaking his neck. By the time the other guard reacted, Keldor had already taken the sword of the first and made quick work of his new attacker.

Keldor stood over his fallen foes, panting and holding the sword with regaining strength. He looked at the castle and laughed. "Ha! Foolish woman, you thought to curse me?!" Keldor smiled. "You have made me **immortal!!!**" He began to walk away, toward the hills and looked back one last time. "And soon... when the time is right... I will destroy you all."

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As a young boy, Keldor had often heard stories of the wondrous Powersword. The stories say that the sword was a key to Castle Grayskull, and the power the structure held within. It was said that eons ago an evil force had captured the sword and almost won the power of the universe before the Sorceress stopped them. To prevent such a thing from ever happening again, the Sorceress used her magic to split the Powersword top to bottom. Only when the halves were joined would it attain its full power, although each half had power of its own. She hid the halves of the sword in different areas of Eternia. One half was hidden at Eternia's highest point, and the other below its hardest rock. The highest point is where Keldor was headed. He knew where it was for he had heard stories of it, as well. None had dared to climb it for fear and respect of the Sorceress. Of course, he no longer cared about the Sorceress. He had reached the mountain nearly a half-hour ago, and still had yet to find a place to start his ascent. After much searching he found a safe place to climb. His new form may withstand a blade, but he would not risk a bloody fall from a great height. There were enough footholds and the angle was such that he thought he would be able to climb it without much effort. "At last!" Keldor began to climb the mountain.

After several hours of climbing and taking a few times to rest, Keldor had finally reached the summit, where he began his search. It did not take long for his keen eye. One half of the legendary Powersword had been thrust into the hard ground. Keldor tried to pull it out but found it difficult. He pulled with all of his might. "Arrrrrrggghhhh!!!" At last he wrestled the Powersword from its hold... and it was his. He raised it in triumph and laughed the laugh of a man with power.

Keldor looked at the sword with awe. "Soon... I must learn the ways of magic, so that I can wield the full power of the sword. Only then will I have my revenge... and my destiny of power." But for now he would search for the other half, so that after he had become a sorcerer, he

could enter Grayskull. What did the kingdom mean to him now? He could control it all. The entire universe could be his. "If I do not possess all... I possess nothing." With that he began his decent. He wondered to himself why the sword had been so easy to attain. *Perhaps the Sorceress depended on the people's fear to prevent them from retrieving it*, he thought. *Foolish Sorceress... Keldor fears nothing!*

When he reached the bottom of the mountain, the Powersword firmly within his sheath, he heard something that puzzled him. It was the running of water. *Strange that I had not heard it before... perhaps in my search, it did not register...* He walked further around the mountain, to an area he had not yet been when he saw it. "A great river does flow through the mountains... I have heard of such a river, but have never seen it before with my own eyes."

"No Eternian has, stranger."

Keldor turned; shocked to find someone could creep up on him. "Who goes there?" He saw a young woman. Her yellow skin glistened in the sun and she wore blue armor and a matching helmet. In her hands was a staff, the tip holding a blue crystal, which shone brightly of its own power.

"My name is Evilyn, sire. I have been watching you since you arrived here." She walked closer to him and looked at his weapon. "The power sword..." She reached for it, but Keldor's hand protected the sword from her grasp.

"Away, woman. I've no quarrel with you, but I will make one if you do such a thing again." He gazed upon her. She was as beautiful as any woman he had ever seen, but for now, she annoyed him.

"Ease yourself, Stranger. Why do you covet the sword so much that you would ignore your surroundings, even to see if you are being followed?" She eyed him and had a feeling she knew, but would ask, to hear this one's story.

"I need not answer to you, woman. Who are you to command me?" Keldor was becoming angry.

"I am the protector of the sword. Many a man has found it, only to be slain by me. Did you not wonder why it was so easy to wrest the weapon from its hold? Men who wish to rule come here... one every year or so... to find the sword. But they find only death. What makes you different?"

"Because I **should** be ruling. It is my destiny. It is my right. I will not let you prevent me from accomplishing it!" He drew the sword and attacked, but to his surprise, the mysterious woman, Evilyn blocked his attack and she fought against him... strongly.

She fought like no woman he had ever seen. He was almost in awe until she kicked him in the stomach, slowing him. "UGH!" Keldor grunted. Her kick was powerful, but in his new form, the

pain quickly subsided. She stood aghast and he once again took advantage of an opponent's surprise, pushing her to the ground, her staff flying behind her and landing in the grass ten feet away. He lowered the sword to her throat. "You are defeated. I do not wish to kill a woman, though I will if I must. The sword is mine. You will not have it." He looked at her once more... *She may be useful to me if I can persuade her to join me. Even with my power, I will not succeed alone, as much as I would prefer it.* "Do you wish to live as my servant, woman, or die by my hand?"

She smiled. "Long have I waited for one such as you, stranger. I have waited for one who could best me. I have waited for one I could join in overthrowing this wretched place. I am with you."

Keldor did not fully trust her, of course. She had her own goals. He did not like that. His was the only goal, no other. But she was a good fighter and he could use her in his war. "As my first servant, I dub you Evil-Lyn, so that all will know that you are with me, and me alone. Come now, Evil-Lyn, but be wary... if I even **think** you are to betray me... you will die."

"I understand, Lord. I am sure you wish to possess the other half of the sword, do you not?" She stood up without help from Keldor and after she retrieved her staff, she stood beside him as they walked.

"Of course. I have heard stories..."

"Of Snake Mountain?" She asked.

He did not like that she had interrupted him, but ignored it for now. "Yes. That is where we are headed now."

"Please excuse my correcting you, my Lord... but the mountain is this way," she pointed in a direction opposite to that which they were headed.

They began walking in the direction that she had pointed. Keldor was a proud man, and his error embarrassed him, but he would look at the good side of what had happened. "You seem to know much of this area. You may be more useful than I had originally thought."

"Thank you, Master. I live only to serve you."

"See that you do and that you do it wisely." He pondered of her role in his scheme and that of the Sorceress, as well. "You appear well-versed in the legend of this land, Evil-Lyn. Tell me... what do you know of... sorcery?"

Randor's castle was quiet. He had talked to his wife, the Queen Marlana, earlier in the week, about Keldor. She was upset and refused to talk to him. "What of children we may have?"

she had asked him. "What will they know of their uncle?" Randor was still upset over what he had said; what had made her so angry. "Keldor is dead," he said. "We will tell them that he disappeared in a mishap of magic, and that will be the end of it."

He did not like the idea of his future children not knowing their former uncle. *He brought it upon himself*, thought Randor. With that a vast mist entered the room. And suddenly the Sorceress was there, in his presence.

"I'm sorry, King Randor, to enter without your blessing, but I am here under the most grave of circumstances." The Sorceress approached the throne. She did not bow to Randor, nor had she ever in the past. This was the way of things and Randor accepted it. She was of more power and importance than he would ever be.

"You need not apologize, Sorceress. What news do you bring?"

"News of Keldor, your former brother." She seemed calm, despite what she was telling him. The Sorceress was ever in control, though lately she was reaching her own limits.

Randor seemed annoyed. So much for forgetting him. "What of him, Sorceress? I am trying hard to forget his betrayal."

"It seems Keldor does not forget, so easily, Your Majesty. In fact he is even more dangerous than before." She stood still before him, still calm.

"I had thought you had taken care of him." The King was now visibly annoyed and angered, as much as he tried to hide it from the Sorceress, whom he held in high respect.

"I have much to tell you, Randor..."

The King was upset. "Then please tell me, Sorceress. Is he dead?"

"In a way." The Sorceress told him of the curse and its effects. She also told him of her using her magic to see Keldor retrieve one half of the Powersword, and not only that, but recruiting her former servant, Evilyn, now called Evil-Lyn. The King was not happy.

"Then you must do something, Sorceress. We can not let him have the complete sword, or all may be lost." Randor now was not angry... He was worried

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It had taken several days for Keldor and Evil-Lyn to reach Snake Mountain. Finally, they were at the entrance. They had had to enter a cave at the base, and followed the dank and dark tunnels constructed eons ago to reach the structure upon the top of the mountain. Supposedly the same force that had almost conquered Grayskull had built it. It was here that Keldor expected to find the other half of the sword. Evil-Lyn had told him it was here, and she knew of such things.

Evil-Lyn was standing by a large stone. Keldor was walking toward her when She called to him. "Master, this is the place where the sword was supposed to have rested... but it is gone!" She pointed to a hole in the boulder. "Look! This is where it was, I am sure of it!"

Keldor drew his half of the Powersword. "Then it seems someone has beat us to it."

"I have, Cursed one." The Sorceress stood above them, high upon the boulder, the sword in her hand. "I knew of your finding the other half of the sword, and of your converting my servant..." The Sorceress eyed Evil-Lyn with disdain and was met with as equal a glare. "Surely you did not think that you would get this half so easily?"

"Maybe not easily, Sorceress, but I **will** have it... even if I have to destroy you to get it." Keldor began to climb the stone, but Evil-Lyn called to him once again.

"Wait, Lord! Let me have her!" She raised her staff and it burned with her sorcery.

"So be it." Keldor stood down, watching Evil-Lyn with a keen eye.

Evil-Lyn began to chant an ancient spell, unknown to the Sorceress.

The Sorceress shivered as she felt the chill of evil sweep upon her. *She is a sorceress! I did not know! I must try to block her spell!* But it was too late... Her skin began to be covered with... feathers? *What spell is **this**?* The transformation continued for several moments until she was a hawk completely. *Nooo!!!*

"I have done it, Master! Now she can only leave Grayskull in this hawk form! We need not worry of her sorcery now!" Evil-Lyn smiled a smile of victory over her former leader and mistress.

"Shame, Evil-Lyn. I worry of nothing, you know this. Still, I am pleased... not an easy feat to accomplish. Go. Kill the bird and retrieve the sword." Keldor watched Evil-Lyn find her footing and take her first step up the boulder.

But before she could ascend, Zoar, the Sorceress in her hawk form, grasped the sword in her talons and took flight, headed towards an opening in the wall. "Nooo!" Evil-Lyn cried. She used her staff to hurl electric bolts at the Sorceress, but to no avail. She was gone.

Keldor grimaced. "You disappoint me, Evil-Lyn. To think you were doing so well. What will she do with the sword?" Evil-Lyn raised her staff and chanting another spell, opened a veil in the air itself. They saw a man with blond hair holding the sword, with Grayskull behind him. "What does it mean, woman?"

Evil-Lyn gazed deeply into the veil. "It seems... It seems that one day, years in the future... she will find a champion... to defend Eternia with the sword... against an evil force..."

“Years in the future? We need not worry about that now. Forget the sword for the time being. We must talk of magic. I need to be a powerful sorcerer to wield the sword at its full power, as you know.” Keldor knew that with the full power of the sword, he would be able to defeat any meager defense the Sorceress assembled, her half of the Powersword, or no. “Tell me who trained you in the old ways.”

Evil-Lyn was ashamed that she had disappointed her lord, but also angry that the Sorceress, her former leader, had still had the last laugh. She closed the veil and joined Keldor at his side. Upon doing so, she told him who had trained her.

Keldor smiled. “Come then, Evil-Lyn. We will find this dark leader. We will find... Hordak.”

And so it begins....