

## AZRIEL

We finally defeated Julian. Our fight through this deadly fortress was complete. We felled countless servants of the dark lord. Every fight was violent, bloody, *painful*. Blade against bone. Fist against steel. Flame against ice. Light against dark.

Gone are the days where we have to commit these brutal murders. We always told ourselves that "we fight to protect", but no matter what words we use to justify our actions, we are still taking peoples lives. There is no honor in killing. These *soldiers of the dark lord* were not willing servants; they were forced. Those that resisted were killed. They were merely fighting to survive. How then can we say, "we are good, and they are evil?"

But we had to take action. Stopping the dark lord meant destroying all that protected him, even if it meant taking lives, and we only did what was *necessary*.

The battle against the dark lord himself was horrifying. His power came from *souls* - souls that he absorbed from dying humans. Throughout the battle, each time we struck down a soldier, the dark lord would absorb the human's soul and use it to fuel his power.

But we held. We fought fiercely, persistently, ceaselessly, until the dark lord's power started to fail him. Our hope for a chance to end this war grew. It was an illusion that sealed the dark lord's fate. The one with the twin blades conjured images that proved a successful diversion on the dark lord, allowing the swordsman to land a fatal blow.

We finally defeated Julian. That is what we tell the world. But this is just a partial truth. We never revealed the event that happened after the swordsman delivered that fatal blow. This was always kept a secret, but now, while I am still sane, I must record the event that followed the dark lord's death.

As we fought our way through his army, he was made aware of our potential. Even if he defeated us, there would be others that would take our place, and others more to take theirs, and eventually he would expel much of his power destroying those that opposed him. Realizing this, he devised a cruel plan that would outlast his demise.

Unbeknownst to us, just before he died, the dark lord cast a spell, a spell that forces us to remember - to relive the pain, the agony, the heat of every battle that we fought.

Now, each night we are forced into endless nightmares - fighting, wounding, and *re*killing every soldier that we once fought. The very peace that we strove to achieve was taken from us. Even as we spend our waking moments enjoying the glory of victory over the dark lord, every night we suffer, fighting in our minds every life that we have taken.

The dark lord's plan was to break our minds and drive us to insanity. Slowly but surely, we are being drawn into this abyss. We, once the hope of our people, are now being corrupted by the dark lord.

We are cursed.

-- Louis