

The Legend of the Fall of the Ygrolkahn, and the Birth of the Tundra of Frozen Memories

A short story by Ethan Pierce

The sole record of the history of the destruction of the Ygrolkahn and the formation of the Tundra of Frozen Memories, as recorded within the City of Saltmine archives. Transcribed by Chief Scribe Zredein, from the mouth of the last Ygrolkahn.

And now I, Zredein, Chief Scribe of the Whiteclan, write these things as a warning unto all nations, that they may be unified unto themselves, and at peace with one another, that none be completely lost to the mists of time. For such was the fall of the Ygrolkahn, or the Utterly Destroyed.

The Ygrolkahn were more like unto the whispers of men across the sea than to dwarves and elves. A young race, they dwelt solely in the grassy hills betwixt the Dragonridge mountains and the Ruptured Flats, neither needing nor seeking to expand beyond their borders. A mighty people they were, great in knowledge. They swiftly became established in the land, building a massive city as a center of learning.

For a great many years, the hills were filled with peace, but it was not fated to last. Among the royal house there arose two bitter enemies: Emelbrin and Alerona, the son and

daughter of the King. Emelbrin, although the second child, was named heir to the throne, and his elder sister was filled with envy.

As time passed, Alerona's envy became enflamed with hatred. Her heart was hardened against him, even as he grew in popularity with the people of the kingdom. The Princess could not rest while Emelbrin walked upon the earth.

After weeks and weeks of plotting and scheming, Alerona was ready to put her plan into action. All she needed was an accomplice. She called upon the son of Lord Niril, promising him her hand in marriage, so that he would become King. The foolish young man accepted the arrangement. The two were wed that night.

It was in Alerona's heart to strike swiftly, that Emelbrin should have no time to prepare a defense. And yet, careful as she was to conceal her designs, Emelbrin learned of her treachery, and fled. The Princess was filled with bitter fury that her brother had escaped. Before the next day had passed, she declared herself Queen, claiming that Emelbrin had abandoned his post.

Alerona caused that her brother should be hunted down, that he be brought to justice, but to no avail. All her forces were bent upon the finding of Emelbrin, though he remained in hiding. Far and wide she sought, well beyond where the rightful King lay concealed. His cousin, the Lord Ristil, kept Emelbrin secreted away within the very walls of the royal castle. Quietly, the exiled King gathered support amongst his people, until he had amassed an army to rival that of his sister's.

Emerging from hiding, King Emelbrin issued a challenge to Alerona, demanding that she either surrender the throne and enter exile, or else be destroyed. The Queen, refusing his demand, declared war upon her brother.

Each gathered together their armies, and marched to open battle. The conflict raged for years, until the entirety of the city was leveled, and all that people were enlisted to one side or the other. The fields, once bright and green, were stained red with the blood of innumerable people. And still they fought. Neither power could overcome the might of the other, and neither Alerona nor Emelbrin would surrender.

At last, it came to pass that both armies were utterly destroyed, save the two siblings. As they met on the field, Emelbrin begged Alerona to yield.

“Behold,” the King declared, waving to the massacre around them. “All our people have been destroyed, save us alone. Thou art now Queen of nothing but a sight of horror that no grave could ever hope to contain. Wouldst thou not now relent, that ye be not destroyed?”

“Nay!” the Queen snarled. “For while thou dost yet live, thou art mine enemy.”

She lunged forward with raw malice, and Emelbrin met her stroke. Backward and forward they fought, blades appearing to be little more than shining wheels of light as each sought to slay the other.

On and on they struggled, until, utterly exhausted, Alerona fell to the ground. Emelbrin raised his sword, downward it plunged, felling the wicked Queen who had caused such destruction. Yet Emelbrin had received numerous wounds from her blade, which had been poisoned to cause a long and painful death which would last for weeks.

Emelbrin cast his gaze roundabout, perceiving with immeasurable dismay that he was truly the last of his kind. With all his remaining strength, he fled northwest, until he came to the Ruptured Flats. Then, with a weariness few have ever known, he collapsed upon the desolate plains, heedless of the salt that stung his many wounds. All through the night he lay unconscious, dreaming of his days of youth, before such calamity had fallen upon his people.

Slowly, the sun rose, and with it, Emelbrin. Long he stumbled across the bright desert of salt that lay before him, until he came to the City of Saltmine, where live the noble dwarves of the Whiteclan. Seeing his suffering, they brought him in to heal his broken, battered body for they were skilled in alchemy and medicine. Yet for all their arts and knowledge of alchemy, the dwarves were unable to cure the poison that flowed within him.

After a few days, in which the dwarves healed all that they could, Emelbrin awakened. Lacking the strength to stand, Emelbrin was carried before the Lord of Saltmine, whence he would tell his tale of woe. The Lord of Saltmine was desirous that Emelbrin's tale should be preserved, that it may serve as a warning unto future generations. Swiftly, he sent for the Chief Scribe, who was Zredein, that I would write a record to be passed down, that it might withstand the relentless tests of time.

As Emelbrin spake before me, giving an account of his people for the final time, I transcribed all events with utmost exactness, that no details should be lost. After he had finished recounting all that had happened, he asked that he be brought into the light of the sun for one final time. And it came to pass that, with the last of his energy, he gazed once more upon the bright and clear and carefree sky. Then death claimed Emelbrin, the exiled King and the last of the Ygrolkahn, and he passed on to the realms unknown to mortal minds.

Here ends the tale of the destruction of the Ygrolkahn. However, there is much that occurred during the King's wandering which pertains to his people, learned through much study long after his passing, and the passing of Chief Scribe Zredein. The following account was compiled by Chief Scribe Schaffolgr, two thousand years after these events occurred. Much of this information is little more than speculation, as the nature of the Tundra of Frozen Memories makes it nearly impossible to conduct research there.

Near the shores of the Golden Lake, where lies the city of Deephold, there came to pass a gathering of dragons, for they felt that something was amiss. Swiftly, they set out to determine the cause of their unease, searching all through the region. And so it came to pass, that as the Sun rose upon the battlefield, a company of dragons beheld the dead strewn across the land. With much haste, they returned to their abode, reporting that which they had seen.

The Chief of the dragons then called together four of the most magically powerful dragons, and with them, came to the ruined land.

“First,” the old dragon said, “we must give a proper burial, for any flame would die long before the dead are gone, yet they are too numerous to cover in earth. Therefore, we must use ice.”

The dragons gathered together in a ring. Stretching their heads heavenward, they began to sing a mournful chant. High above, the sky began to darken as clouds amassed. Snow began to fall, covering the land in a clean, white blanket. As dragons sang, the Chief wove a mighty spell.

“Let the memory of this calamity be no more. Let it be buried with the dead, that it may be laid to rest alongside them. Let none remember this tragedy, that it may not haunt this land, nor that any shall conceive of such an abomination again.”

Even as he spoke these words, the snow fell faster and heavier than before. Suddenly, the air trembled and shook, and the sky darkened. The Chief dragon had put much magic into his spell, but something fought against it. The dragon struggled to maintain his magic, and the others joined in, working to contain the errant power. Harder and harder they pushed, seeking to dominate the increasing energy. The atmosphere pulsed and throbbed, the snowfall becoming a great blizzard.

The magic exploded outward, having increased beyond the capacity of any mortal being. Like a wave, it shot through the sky, wild and uncontrolled. The dragons were thrown back with a force greater than there has ever been upon this world, and were quickly smothered in the blizzard of their own design. Never more would they be seen in this life.

After many days, the clouds slowly cleared, revealing a white expanse from the mountains to the flats, where the realm of the Ygrolkahn had once thrived. From that day even until this, the snow remains, along with a potent curse: the bitter ice drains and entraps the memories of any who dare to tread through that fell grave, even as it envelops their corpse.

Long have I, Schaffogr, studied this matter, and I believe that it is because of Emelbrin that the spell went awry. For he was one of the Ygrolkahn, and so his memory, his identity and heritage could be erased by no magic, however potent. And so, because he yet lived whilst the dragons performed their spell, their magic was flawed, and broke in a manner which none could foresee.

So ends the legend of Tundra of Frozen Memories.