

Caius Shadowsworn

by Ryan Nemetz

In a small village just outside of the great walls of Barbaros, a lonely inventor known as Soritus made his living inventing new and wondrous things for the village, in hopes of making their poor lives better. He would spend day and night in his little hut, inventing, and dreaming. One day, he heard rumor of a great evil descending onto the land. Knowing eventually that this may happen, he gathered some of his inventions in which he prepared for battle, and wondered onward. A few miles outside of the great gates of Barbaros, he met up with a small battalion of warriors who were fully armed and a look of battle in their eyes. Wondering if they had any connection with trying to repel this rumored attack, he inquired upon them.

“Good day. Might I ask where such brave warriors are heading?” he inquired to who appeared to be the general.

“Stand aside, We have no time for your questions. The Shadow Mages of Knorlak approach.” Intrigued by the sound of Shadow Mages, he followed them, disregarding their warnings. They walked onward for nearly a day, until they stopped.

“Behold, Men! The valley of the Knorlak. These scum wish to destroy our kingdom, in hopes of creating a pure land. But these Mages are not to be trusted, for they practice Dark Magic, and worship the Darkness.” The great General stated. Soritus did not flinch, nor comment. Something happened to catch his eye. He looked onward towards the sky to see a flock of dark shadows come swarming at the small brigade. Quickly thinking, as he usually does, he ran and cowered behind a bush. Fighting every cry of retreat echoing in his head, he stayed to see just what may happen. But to no avail, the warriors were completely slaughtered, by nothing more than shadows. Finally gathering his will to run, he heard a hissing sound, not like a snake, but a more sinister, evil sound. Slowly, as he listened in, they formed audible words.

“Yes, they are all dead. You may proceed, my lord.”

“You have served me well, now, we move on Barbaros. Soon, we will be free of this filth, and the world will be consumed in Shadows!”

Much evil laughter followed. It seems the warriors were wrong, these mages didn't want to purify the world, they just wanted to enslave the world. As slowly and as silently as he could, Soritus backed away. He must return to the village and warn the king of Barbaros about the impending danger. As he turned to run, there was great clamor from behind.

“Look! One survived!”

“Unacceptable! Capture this mortal at once.”

Knowing his time had come, he prepared for battle. Having previously equipped his inventions, he dashed into the shadows. Blasting flames out of a gauntlet on his arm, blocking mighty blows

with a shield of many sizes, and a pair of gloves that seemed to electrify everything he touched, he took down many of the mages, as they were unable to predict this inventor's moves. Finally, the cries ceased.

“ENOUGH!” Screamed the largest of the shadows, “Leave this mortal to me. Such ferocity and determination deserves to be enlightened by the path of shadows.” And as quickly as could be, a large shadow descended over Soritus, engulfing him.

“Now, my young mortal slave, you will fight along side me. Be devoured by the shadows, and learn the ways of the darkness. Together, we will rule this world!”

Unable to act, as Soritus fell to his knees, he slowly felt evil thoughts creep into his head. Such visions of destruction and death were never seen by man before. But strangely, he felt powerful, indestructible. He arose to his feet, under control of the Shadow King.

“Now, you will fight with me. And for such passion and skill in fighting, I give you the name Caius.”

Inside, he felt an overwhelming sensation of triumph, but his mind had kept some of its will, and the battle to regain his body began.

Many years had passed, and Caius had watched as himself, under the control of the Shadow King, destroyed many villages, including his own home, Barbaros. He still tried to fight his way back into control, but was overwhelmed time and time again. Until one fateful night, in the small village of Val' Kindud, he regained control. Only mere inches away from driving a shadowy blade into the small fragile body of a young boy, he noticed a familiar article. A gauntlet upon the boy's arm, capable of shooting flames. This reminded Caius of a time in which he could do such a thing. Fighting the urge to kill the boy, he dropped to his knees and cried to the heavens, “I REFUSE TO KILL HIM!”

“You dare to defy me mortal?” The Shadow King demanded. Caius stood up and faced the Shadow.

“Yes, I do. What good do you hope to accomplish here? How is killing innocent people going to give you a new world? I cannot stand by and watch as you control others to do your bidding and kill those who don't.”

“Then, my failed apprentice, like those who resist, you will perish!” Imbued with the power of the Darkness, Caius prepared to defend himself, as he did years ago. The Shadow King launched spell after shadowy spell at him. Knowing all his spells, he countered each and every one of them. Finally, upon regaining full will and control of his body, Caius used his newfound powers, and slayed the Shadow King. The shadow quickly evaporated into nothingness, and he was left to stand, surrounded by bodies of those he had unwillingly slain. He turned to the boy, only to see fear in his eyes.

“Do not worry, young one. It is over. I will not harm you.” He turned away from the boy and walked into the night. He could not return to his village, as it was no more. Also, cursed forever by the Shadow King, the power of Darkness was forever within him. He stopped, fell to his knees yet again, and cried up to the heavens.

“I have done wrong, I have killed many. The power of Darkness dwells within me. I give my word, upon the remains of those I have hurt and killed, that the Darkness will never harm another

being as long as exist.” And in a flash of light, and a puff of shadowy smoke, Caius disappeared.

Legend goes on to say that Caius, having defeated the Darkness, and using the Dark powers he has, has committed to using these dark powers for exactly the opposite. The power to kill became the power to save. The power to Devour and Defeat came the power to Grow and Love. Having heard many rumors of the ‘Light’ deeds of the darkness, the people of many lands gave him respected names. The Barbarians of the north call him the ‘Shining Darkness’, The nomads of the south call him the ‘Dark God’. Those who survived in the fallen lands respect him as the Keeper of the Darkness. But from one boy, the very one he spared that day, came the name that forever immortalized him and what he did that fateful day.

“I have seen death, and he comes swiftly.” The little boy told, “But the angel controlled by death was able to defeat him. Sworn against the Shadows that once consumed him, I am forever grateful to that man, for sparing my life. I will forever respect this savior of mine. Caius Shadowsworn.”