

Xenon

Tragic Short Story

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Preface

After the quake, word went out about the splendor of treasure unearthed by nature itself within a newly born cave, set upon the western slope of Mount Black.

In the evening light of the setting of the western sun, all could witness the tantalizing glittering prizes of polished gold and silver, gems and jewelry, shining magnificently like a beacon of hope.

It was as if the mountain itself called and beckoned all to come and feast themselves upon the riches within.

It was widely published the cave was uninhabited, for it was newly born and unexplored.

A company of hearty adventurers was quickly assembled and prepared for a glorious excursion, promising rich reward. Before any other could muster a company to take the prizes within, five hearty adventurers eagerly volunteered, impatient to get to the mountain before any other. There were neighboring cities, and so it was only a matter of time before this opportunity would pass them by. If they acted now, the riches of this excursion would not only economically

secure Bryton on the map, but would promise a life of ease for the five who staked claim to the treasure hoard within the cave.

The treasure was free for the taking!

Confidently, five marched forward, confident in the knowledge that no other had taken notice of this glorious unearthing of riches. There seemed to be no enemies present, as if, whatever it was that it stashed all this treasure within, had long since passed away, leaving this mighty treasure unguarded.

As they entered into the cave two robes figures from the group broke off, one making her way to the left, the other to directly forward, a warrior guarding him. Slowly, cautiously, they work their way into the cave.

The last two to enter the cave was a healer of great skill. She was very confident in her stride, and had never let a company down. One in dark leathers trailed quietly behind the healer, keenly eyeing every shadow with suspicion.

This was just too good to be true! And it was!

Soon the two robes were standing upon the top of a mound of gold black, white and yellow gold, holding out their arms to the other three in amazement.

"It looks like we scored without the effort of bleeding for it," the rogue whispered. Laughing, the warrior, clad in polished, forge-tempered steel, suddenly raced forward to the treasure. The healer laughed with joy, bewildered at their stroke of luck; their good fortune. One of the robed mages, pointed at the rogue, grinning.

"I agree. This is a stroke of luck that will increase our power significantly. Look at all the weapons, the shields. This was no Dragon that..." the healer looked around, suddenly worried. "This is the strangest thing I have ever seen. We need to be cautious! Notice the bodies of the fallen. No flies have gotten to them!" The healer abruptly called out to the other four, who were diving into the treasure, opening chests, openly reveling in their find. The rogue looked to the healer and laughed.

"It has been known to happen," he said sheathing his blades and looking to his companions, grinning from ear to ear. The second robed one laughed.

"Agreed. This is a secret out in the wilderness that we shall talk about four years to come," cried out the warrior. "What a stroke of luck!" The Rogue pointed at

the healer, nodding enthusiastically after approval, open greed manifesting in his dark eyes.

They had gotten to the to the treasure first. Now all they had to do was cover the entrance of the cave . . . conceal the wealth they had discovered. The warrior picked up a rune-etched shield and tested it on his arm.

“I like this one. Extremely light, durable, and look at the runes. This one is enchanted or I'm a fool,” he stated, throwing a wink at the magician who had picked up a necklace from the pile of gold on which he was standing. It was a white oval stone, set upon a gold chain of unblemished gold. The healer looked about the cave, her heart darkening within at a sudden warning felt.

“Why would such a treasure hoard, such a large treasure hoard, be unguarded? Does this all seem surreal to you all, or am I dreaming?” Warrior shook his head throwing down his old shield and brandishing the new one.

“No, this is quite real.”

As all but the healer began to pack up treasure, wearing and using what they thought would be an

upgrade for each of them, the healer slowly turned in a circle, eyeing every crevice and shadow within the large cavern, suspicious, deadly suspicious.

“I think we should leave this place and leave the treasure. My gut instinct tells me we should get out of here.” No sooner had she spoken, the front of the cave dimmed as if a golden cloud had settled in to block out the western rays of the setting sun. The healer called out a warning, pointing to the front of the cave; the only exit out from this place.

“Too late. We are trapped!” The others instantly abandoned the treasure they were holding, drawing their weapons, readying themselves for anything. What they saw creeping through the front of the cave chilled them to the bone.

It was at this point in time, they knew their fatal mistake. Pouring in through the front of the cave a yellow gas slowly crept, as if it had all the time in the world. As it did so, it moved unnaturally, groping and fingering its way through the cave, spreading out to cut off all means of escape.

All five abandon their design in taking treasure, the glory of the moment fading like dew within a fiery furnace. Moving to the back of the cave, each desperately sought some way out, but found none.

The golden hue of gas moving unnaturally, as if it had a life of its own, slowly closed in on each adventurer, who found no escape, no way out.

From within the cave, desperate screams filled the air as this golden gas engulfed them, choking away their life, adding to the growing treasure hoard.

This was a dream I had not long ago. The Xenon is a deadly, gaseous creature, encountered by those adventuring within the bound of Utaemia as they play Guardians of Utaemia.

Description:

Shape: 15' x 15' globular mass.

Weight: weightless.

Color: Golden-yellow.

Texture: Gas.

Posture: Gas.

Habitat: Fearmist region.

Immunities: Only gaseous type spells can harm a Xenon.

Life-span: Permanent.

Likes: Inner lining of the lungs.

Needs: Basic instinct creature.

Note: Xenon is a gaseous creature. Nothing more is known about this creature, except that it is deadly to those who have no defense against it. It will position itself in places, cornering the unwary. Like a spider, it will lay doormat for long periods of time in wait for its prey.

Special Abilities: Xenon moves in total silence. It senses its quarry by the breath that invades its gaseous form.

Special defenses: Only attacks that can effect gaseous matter can influence this creature.

Special offenses: Oxygen Strike: When the Xenon successfully strikes its victim damage, in the form of oxygen-point loss will be taken (not flesh or blood damage). NOTE: The Xenon can manipulate its mass to fill exactly 10 spaces of any shape and size (yet must remain connected).

Susceptibilities: Wind has great effect on pattern of travel. If wind is blowing, movement will be hindered by 50%.

Weapon susceptibility: Enchanted Weapon, "Substance Blade" can harm a Xenon.