

Rise of the New King

Contributed by Avaris
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This piece is set in the aftermath of the fall of Mousillon and the disappearance of Jean Marcel, and describes exactly how the western general known as Avaris became the Warden of the Western Coast.

'Mousillon has fallen! Where is Jean Marcel?!'

The angry voice carried through the halls of the Lyonesse citadel, the site of the hastily relocated Western council. The most senior commanders of the now dissolved armies barged into the large room that held Jean Marcel's throne, empty aside from a small wooden box. To the right of the throne stood another, less ornate seat, occupied by a man who appeared to pay no heed to the newcomers.

'We must restore the armies and retake the land taken from us by Jean's moment of madness,' said one tall, handsome knight, 'his mistake can be undone; we can raise new legions of the dead to reconquer our rightful possessions.'

'Yes...' whispered another, old and stooped, 'the world will tremble once again at our names, and we will strike at both the drucchi and the false realms at once. Lord Marcel had a momentary lapse, and was punished by the gods for it, and it is up to us to atone for it...'

A single word cut across the conversation, emanating from the man sat in the smaller seat.

'No.'

The assembled nobles turned to face him, and a thin smile appeared on the face of the tall knight.

'Avaris...' he sneered, 'you seem to believe you have some say in the matter. This may be your keep, but that is not your throne. It is true that by the end Jean Marcel trusted you over many of us, and the honour of taking L'Anguille was a prize indeed, but that gives you no say over us.'

Avaris rose to his feet and began to walk towards the group.

'Indeed. Who here would support Sir Vespian and Sir Dray in their course of action?'

A little over a third of the group nodded their approval, and Avaris looked them each square in the eyes, his cold stare causing several of them to flinch unwittingly.

'Good...' he whispered, and quick as a flash his sword was in his hand, having left a bloody gash across Vespín's throat.

'Jean Marcel always told me that a wise man knew his enemies...'

Another swing of the sword, and Dray had fallen helpless to the ground.

'And now I know them.'

Having realised what was happening, two of the knights who had sided with the necromancers drew their own swords and charged at Avaris, but he skilfully parried their blows and felled them.

'Now I slay them.'

Only two knights now remained from the group that had identified themselves to him, and as they turned to flee they were met by the throne room's guards and cut down, their surprise at the course of actions still evident on their faces. The other nobles stood shocked into silence, and as Avaris turned his back on them a gurgling noise heralded Dray's last words.

'You... you wish the throne for yourself. Coward. Traitor. I am glad I did not bow to you...'

Reaching the throne, Avaris picked up the small chest that sat upon it and opened it. Inside was a crown, a simple thing that carried more significance than it looked worthy of. A single blood red gem glittered upon it, and Avaris saw himself reflected in it. All he had to do was take it, claim it for his own, and the west would be strong again. They needed a decisive ruler, one who was unafraid of the past, and willing to sacrifice all he held dear if necessary.

'I am not that man.'

Placing the crown upon the throne, Avaris raised his sword above his head. A single blow sundered the fragile metal, and the red gem shattered into a million pieces. Returning to his seat, Avaris saw the other nobles looking at him in puzzlement and fear.

'The kingdom of the west is no more!' he shouted, in a voice that carried through the ancient room, 'I recognise one lord, Jean Marcel, and one crown, that of Bretonnia itself. My lord is gone, and Bretonnia is shattered, and so I must lead these lands as far as I am able; not as a king but as the Lord of Lyonesse and the Warden of the Western Coast. The taint upon our land is gone, and we stand ready for redemption!'

A cheer rang out from the remaining commanders, and Avaris sat back in his throne, the throne of Lyonesse. The road would be hard, but he vowed to see it through to the end...

