

# The World in Flames

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This was originally written as flavor text for a campaign being hosted at my local Battle Bunker called 'World in Flames.' My team consisted of myself as Bretonnia, my son as Empire, and 2 of my best friends playing Chaos and Dark Elves. I had to think of a plausible reason why Bretonnia would field armies alongside Chaos and Druchii, so I started a flavor text thread on my message board so that we, as a team, could creatively add our plot elements. What follows is the first post from that thread.

The young damsel made her way through the encampment, careful not to awaken the sleeping knights. They were men of valor and strength, but they needed their sleep if they were to serve Bretonnia well. Finding the tent of the General was easy. His banner was on the highest staff and in the center of the small city of tents. A blue field with the golden dragon marked the tent as that of Guy d'Lyonnesse, trusted commander of this army.

He was awake, as she knew he would be. The Paladin of Lyonnesse was a man of deep conscience, and held his vows and commitments most seriously. He was a man who would keep himself awake all night with his troubles, and this could not be allowed. Only a general who was well rested and alert would be able to accomplish this most unusual assignment from His Majesty, King Louen Leonceur of Bretonnia.

She paused at the entrance to the tent, and the guards moved aside for her. Elaine was relatively new to this army, but she was well respected as a Damsel of the Lady and was trusted implicitly. She called to the general inside, a part of her hoping that he would be asleep already. He was not. His answer was polite but short, and she entered the tent.

Guy d'Lyonnesse was a large man, fully six and one half feet tall. His blonde hair was long and drawn back in a ponytail which fell straight down his back, hunched now as he studied maps of the region. He wore simple white shirt over his barrel chest and soft leather breeches tucked neatly into a pair of heavy riding boots. He stood immediately as she entered, his steel blue eyes set under heavy ridged eyebrows but were, at the moment, held up by blue rings. This man hadn't slept in days. His moustache and goatee were neatly trimmed but it was clear that he was close to breaking.

"My lady," he said, bowing deeply to her. "You honor me." Elaine smiled pleasantly, sitting down in his chair which he turned away from his desk for her. He offered her tea, which she accepted, then seated himself on a heavy wooden trunk that he had dragged out from the foot of his bed.

She sipped her tea delicately, searching for the right words. The General beat her to it. "You're here because of what I said to Lord Silverhammer, aren't you?" Elaine blinked. His bluntness caught her off guard. "In a manner of speaking, yes." She replied, deciding on the direct approach. "He broke no confidence, I assure you, General. He did say that you would benefit greatly from my visit." The General nodded. He trusted Lord Silverhammer completely and had not suspected that his confidence had been violated. A part of him had hoped that his friend would send a Damsel to speak to him, for his faith was weak, and he desperately sought strength.

She was watching him, her unnaturally blue eyes seeming to pierce him to the heart. She, like all damsels touched by the Lady of the Lake, seemed to shimmer in the semi darkness. Her golden hair was nearly a match for the brightness of a candle, and her beauty nearly drove him to distraction. He focused instead on the foot of her long, flowing blue robes, and began to speak.

"I have never questioned an order from either the King or from my Lord. Not once. And yet I cannot reconcile these orders with my heart. Ever since we received word of the civil war in the Empire my heart told me that we would be drawn into conflict. To be truthful, I anticipated it with enthusiasm, for one who was born and bred for battle never fears an opportunity to serve the King." Elaine nodded, listening carefully. The General continued. "I knew that we were to ally with units of the Empire, though they are too far to assist us in the coming battle. What I don't understand is... How can we justify the allies we've made in the meantime?" His hand had drifted to his midsection, where a grievous wound had recently been healed. This wound had been sustained in battle against hideous warriors of Chaos. The very same forces that were encamped nearby as allies.

"My Lord," she began, "I know that this arrangement troubles you greatly. It does trouble me as well, but you should know that the King does not make this alliance lightly. The army that approaches from the east has thrown in its lot with the rebellious Imperial army, and brings with it Skaven allies! The Prophetess led us in prayer, and we received a vision... To approach those foes who had come to our shores and form a pact. We clearly saw a vision of the Mark of Khorne, and were assured that we would not be tainted. You must believe this vision came from the Lady, and that our King only undertook this expedition after the most serious consideration." Guy d'Lyonesse stared at the floor. "We revile the Imperial units that have banded with the Skaven and yet we ourselves have cast our lot with Druchii and warriors of Khorne." He looked up at her, trembling. "Whose is the greater sin? All my life we were taught that the Elves of Ulthuan were the forces of Light against Chaos and the Elves of Naggaroth. That made the Ulthuan Elves our allies. How then, can we truly be pure when we chose our allies this way? How can I go into battle, beside our most reviled enemies, and struggle against those who should be our friends?"

Elaine's heart broke for him. She had never seen a knight so miserable in doubt. "My Lord," She reached out, placing her delicate hand on his massive shoulder, "We live in a world where there is much that is hidden from us. Deceit and war obscure the truth. Is it not said that the truth is the first casualty of war?" He nodded weakly. "We cannot know what forces drive those who struggle against us, but we do know The Lady, and we trust her and we know that she will never lead us astray. She has chosen these former enemies to serve her purposes, and who are we to question her wisdom? Perhaps she means to use them as a hammer against those who would do harm to our home and our people. Perhaps we harness this beast for the greater good. Perhaps this is the reason they are here. We must have faith, my Lord. Perhaps, by seeing our example, our former foes will learn to love the light and forsake their

dark ways. What greater good could there be?"

He looked up at her, and their eyes met. She had gotten through to him. She felt a swell of joy inside her. This General would lead, and he would lead well, and already she could see the doubt drain from his face. She stood. "Thank you for the tea, my General. Now you must rest. If our forces are to take that mine from the enemy, we need the greatest among us to be well rested and alert." She smiled at him, and he stood before her, once again a mighty general of Bretonnia.

As soon as she left the tent he lay down on his cot, and before she'd gone ten steps from the tent he was deeply asleep, dreaming of victory.