

New Sutherlands' Patriot

One nation, one people, one rebellion.

August 658 Edition

The Red Hood Rebellion!

I would not have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. There had to be one thousand of them all gathered in Sovereign Square, in front of the Palace in Marce'. One thousand people from nowhere. But, let me start from the beginning. This disclosure will compromise me, but I feel it is of utmost importance that people know what happened here and that my words are true. So, should a copy of this reach The Returned, The Faithful, and you ever pull a poor wretched soul from some dank and dark dungeon that answers to the name of Alek, well thank you.



From where I observe the Palace everything looked like your run of the mill Tuesday in Sovereign Square. The Grey Keep's merchants came and went, the College Scholars defended their treatise on necromancy, and townsfolk conducted their daily affairs. The Wraith Tower struck noon, and it was then that they came. They appeared from alleyways, from buildings, from everywhere at once: they assembled in the Square. All others gathered in the Square fled, knowing what surely would come next. The one thousand pushed past all of them and assembled in the middle of the Square, and in unison locked arms. Then as one, one thousand people from all vocations and professions began to chant, "The Faithful have Risen and we have Awoken. Your Time is at an End." This mantra began as a whisper and built over several minutes to a crescendo of noise, that was a volume of such greatness, that it echoed throughout the entire Capital. No gathering of this size should have been able to produce such a sound, but nonetheless it did. Then, when I thought the very stone of my perch would crumble, they stopped.

It was at that moment the thing, which is known as the Voice of The Exarch, stepped out from the Palace. It is his badly burned face and what I know to be Darkholme colors, which identify him to any resistance member worth their salt. It cast its gaze over the assembled mob and its eyes flashed with a zealous fire from deep within.

"Return to your homes and live!" it uttered, *"Or, persist in this foolishness and perish!"*

In response, the gathered crowd drew swords, knives, and cudgels in a single motion. In unison, they countered, *"Long live the Sutherlands! Long live the True King! The Faithful have Risen and we are Awake!"*

I knew none of these people. They weren't resistance members. They were hoopers, cobblers, farmers, and blacksmiths. What were they doing? This wasn't supposed to happen. No one sanctioned this. What was going on?

From within the deep palace, deep in the darkness behind the columns and behind the Grim Legion of Augustus that guard the steps, from where His throne is said to be: two red glowing eyes snapped open. It was then that those who had gathered produced the red hood of the Rilkin, and in perfect unison donned them. In one voice they responded, *"We wear the red hood. You cannot destroy us. We are the Rilkin. You cannot destroy Faith."*

It was in that moment the weight of His gaze fell upon them. All one thousand were driven to their bellies. Their weapons clattered to the ground. They gasped for breath and struggled against the overwhelming power of the Gaze of the Sovereign. The Voice of the Exarch stepped forward and in a sad voice said, *"Your funeral pyre awaits. Augustus, unleash them."*



The one hundred Enforcers that guard the Palace descended the grand steps to the Square. It was a quick and brutal business. Though they should have died in agony, there was not a single cry of pain. Each of their faces reflected stone cold resolve, and perhaps a certain understanding. Within minutes, but one of the thousand remained alive.

As the Enforcer's blade pierced her heart she cried,

"Zephania! Zephania lives in our hearts! We hear you!"

All I can relay from this point is that the Mouth slowly raised his hand, his burned flesh came alive and then the fire. Fire as such I hope to never see again. All were consumed, the one thousand Rilkin and several Enforcers posts on the stairs. The Square, within moments, was completely empty and only ash and dust remained.

that had not yet returned to their

What inspired these one thousand? I do not know. What I do know, is that they heard something we did not. The Faithful have Risen and Zephania is not dead. Her youngest son, though slain by the Inquisitor, is a symbol for the people and symbols cannot be destroyed.

Long Live Rilkin the Renegade!

Long Live the Followers of Zephania!

Let the Red Hood Rebellion Begin!

—Alek the Alert

The Black Symphony

The din of the hall was deafening as men and women dressed in their finest apparel shuffled to their seats. The blacks and whites and crimson reds of everyone's gowns and tunics blended together to make a sea of slow moving bodies. The black armored guards at the door stood as still and vigilant as ever as the noble men and women of Absinthium found their places. The usual chatter could be heard among the audience - business deals, quiet arrangements, local gossip, and useless banter.



As the crowd settled and the last of the balconies were filled the torches along the walls were doused, leaving only the faint moonlight of the high windows and magical lights among the stage to illuminate the audience hall. The excited chatter fell to a dead silence. A man garbed in a silken black cape and white formal attire approached the edge of the stage and bowed deeply.

"Ladies and gentlemen! It is a grievous time... One of our own Noble Court was destroyed by the outlaws of the Southern Cities. Our very own Lady Maiden has been saddened by this loss. It is the hope of my compatriots that this very night we may honor our Lady Crope with this tribute and raise the spirits of our Maiden. Tonight I give you a new piece entitled... The Black Symphony."

The crowd clapped and whistled as the man once again bowed and exited the stage. The cheers went on for several minutes before quieting. In the silence that followed the curtain began to raise. A single chair sat center stage. A minute passed by. Suddenly appearing from the shadows of the back of the stage a young elven woman approached the chair. She was dressed in a thin black silk gown, simple and elegant. A black tear adorning her right eye and jet black hair covering the other. As she sat she drew a bow and a black violin from its case and placed it on her shoulder with careful precision.

She began to play. Slowly and with an eerie pitch at first. As the song drew out of the intro it crescendoed into a gloomy lied that filled the hall with a vast sound. The crowd was drawn into

the woman's song with great intrigue. Though her eyes remained on the floor the violinist once again crescendoed to an even louder set and slowed her song for a few short measures before suddenly bursting into an almost mesmerizingly fast, high octave roll. The audience cheered with the exciting change of pace as she pressed on into the song. So enthralled they didn't even notice the bodies that began to slump over in the chairs.

It wasn't until the song hit a long slow note that the first shriek broke the song. The crowd quickly broke into a panic as the minor lords and ladies began to take notice of their dead companions. Men and women flew from their seats as black clad audience members threw back their hoods and went to bloody work with hidden daggers and swords. Panic turned to havoc as the bloody massacre opened. Only the sound of another high pitched roll could be heard over the screams of desperate lords tossing their friends and allies aside to make for the doors. The armored guards only crossed their spears and barred the doors. Death and mayhem filled the air along with the violin's music and blood began to fill the floor. After a few long minutes nothing but the dead filled the symphony hall. Nothing but the corpses and blood of 200 corrupt lords and ladies. Nothing but a single young elven woman, clad in a black silk dress, staring at the floor. She finished her song with a long, deep note and set the black violin on the floor. She stood and silently left the stage.

Engraved in the violin were these words

*"The Heroes' return to bring us' hope,
for we are the children of a true king,
For us' he held his' faith,
for him we stand in revolt.
We will no longer suffer this' plague,
We will cleanse the corrupt of heart.
When the Black Symphony's song is' played,
let all those who do not rise cower."*

