Men Awoke With The Sun

by estelendur

Summary

East of Mirkwood lies a country called simply Rhûn, 'East'. It was in or beyond that country that Elves and Men first were born, and in or beyond that country that the Avari, the Dark Elves who never answered the summons to Valinor, may yet dwell.
Men awoke with the Sun, and we then knew only Eru Ilúvatar, and we loved him.

We were discovered first by Melkor, First among the Valar. He showed us that there were others above us who were not Ilúvatar, and told us how Ilúvatar had cruelly punished and betrayed Him for daring to stand apart from His brethren and sistren. So we no longer loved Eru Ilúvatar, and we paid tribute to Melkor.

Some of us left, then, calling Melkor a liar, and evil, and many other bad things, and went into the West, whence nothing good has come for us. The Avari and the Khazâd aided them in their flight. We called those who left traitors, and spat at their memory, for Melkor fed us and cared for us and made us His pets.

Then Melkor abandoned us, and set dragons to guard us, and the dragons were cruel and stole from us. But the Khazâd came to us, and taught us in secret how to forge weapons, that we might protect ourselves; and the Kinn-lai came to us, and taught us in secret how to write, that we might remember our past; and the Windan came to us, and taught us in secret how to make bows and arrows, that we might hunt; and the Kindi came to us, and taught us in secret how to make beautiful things, that we might have hope; and we saw that we had been wrong to speak against those who fled, and that we had been foolish to trust Melkor, to stay within His reach. But we were no longer helpless pets.

Still we knew we could not drive Him off, so we pretended to remain His loyal slaves, and there were those who yet served Him with love and foolish devotion in their hearts. But the secrets which the Khazâd and the Kinn-lai and the Windan and the Kindi had taught to us were only passed to those who were good and faithful and kind, and we were never betrayed, for betrayal would have spelled our end.

Then Melkor fell, and was gone from the world, and we were free. But we still did not love Eru Ilúvatar, for he had forsaken our friends the Khazâd and the Avari. For one thing only did we thank his Valar: in the very year in which Melkor went from the world, the Windan in their wanderings found and brought to us a tribe of hardy horses.

We took these horses and we bred them to be strong, and fast, and we made them in three kinds: one kind like to the Khazâd, which were short and stout and hardy, and could brave any weather or terrain; one kind like to us, which were fierce and brave and made for war; and one kind like to the Avari, which were sleek and swift and princely, and which could almost understand mortal speech.

So we forged weapons and made bows and wrote our histories and bred horses and everything we made was beautiful. The Kinn-lai we made as priests, worshipping the land, which had never betrayed us or been cruel beyond its nature. The Kindi we raised up as kings of arts and trade. The Khazâd made strongholds in the Red Mountains and we made them our allies. And the Windan we made as kings of war over us. This was in the beginning of the Second Age.
The Khazâd are the Dwarves.
The Kinn-lai, Kindi, and Windan are three of the six known dialect groups of Avari, the Elves who refused the summons to Valinor.
Of Sauron

Chapter Summary

How did the Easterlings come to be on the side of Sauron in the War of the Ring?

These words were given by the Warchief of the Men of Rhûn to King Elessar's envoys the Lord Faramir and the Lady Eowyn in the years at the beginning of the Fourth Age.

--

We write our own destiny. That has been our way since we first began to learn from the Avari. Nobody controls us: not Melkor, not the Valar, not Eru Ilúvatar himself, and certainly not Sauron.

Why, then, did we aid him in his quest for dominion over the so-called Free Peoples of Middle-earth? We did not fear his dominion, nor think it would last over us. You do not know this, you arrogant Men of the West, but we escaped the rule of the greatest power that has walked Middle-earth while Men drew breath on Arda, and we have only grown greater since. We did not fear Sauron.

I will solve another mystery for you. You have seen the barren wastes of Mordor through the eyes of your friends, I hear. You wonder, no doubt, how his vast armies were kept alive. I tell you: he armed his orcs with our ore. He fed his orcs with our land. He built his siege weapons with our lumber. His Wraiths rode stock from our herds. He owed us a vaster debt than any of his kind has ever owed to mortals.

That debt will weigh heavy upon my people, but we will not ask King Elessar to pay the debts of his enemies when he will have enough to do healing his own land. We are not cruel, and we will survive.

So. We did not fear Sauron. But we did not love him. No being greater than Elves, Men, or Dwarves will we ever love. But neither have we ever been given cause to feel kindly towards the peoples of the West. When we tried, long ago, we were rebuffed. Our lands are rich in things to trade, but our merchant scouts were treated with fear and suspicion. There were whispers that we worshipped Sauron. So we turned to the South for trade and friendship, and found it in abundance. The whispers grew to shouts. We ceased to care for whatever friendship you Men of the West could offer, and turned on you with steel and feather, until even that became uninteresting.

When Sauron returned to the Wood, of course we allowed him to bargain with us. We came from a position of strength, he from a place of weakness. He offered us a chance to exercise our mettle in other than petty squabbles between tribes of Southern men and idle attacks on Rhovanion. He offered us that kingdom you called Arnor. He offered us respect, and fear.

But now he is dead, and a King sits on the throne of the West who knows what it is to live by edges and cunning, steel and feather, hoof and hide. The Men of the South are united for a time.

So I say to you, who wished to know why, and who dare to ask for peace: would you trade with us, but not rule us? We will not be ruled. Not by anyone who has touched the West and the light that once lived there. It flows in the veins of your King. He may not sit above us. But he may sit
beside us. I have here some terms. Let us discuss them.
The Coming of the Orcs to Rhun

Chapter Summary

After the so-called Last Alliance cut the Ring from Sauron’s hand, they came, frightened and lost and angry, leaderless and directionless.

There is a lake. There is a city on the edge of the lake. There is no war in or around the city; it is sacrosanct. It is thus; it has always been thus.

In the city on the lake, wars are waged with money, with ruthless trading, never violence. This law is imposed by the coalition who lives there permanently, a mix in equal parts of peoples born of every tribe in the Eastern lands.

---

After the so-called Last Alliance cut the Ring from Sauron’s hand, they came, frightened and lost and angry, leaderless and directionless. The Avari saw them and knew them, and turned their backs in fear and anger. The Khazâd saw them and knew that they were not Children of Ilvatar, and mourned the cruelty of their Father, but wished no dealings with them. The Men saw them, and knew them for fellow mortals, and would almost treat with them fairly, save that they remembered the darkness in Mordor.

But a woman of the Smiths, Master Erwiikee, saw the children huddled under broken shelters, saw the orc men and women with nothing to do, nobody to fight, and resolved that this was an opportunity they should not get again, to bring a race under their influence that was feared across the world.

So she offered to teach them, that they might repair their shelters and make something of themselves, in exchange for unskilled labor. And her fellows saw this and that it was good, and they, too, struck deals. Just as wars of land were fought with money, so too was this war of the heart.

A generation passed; the children Erwiikee had seen playing and fighting under broken roofs grew into tall, strong Orc men and women. Their parents had learned, through hard and harder lessons, the social graces of the rudest Men; they had learned, through harder and nigh-impossible lessons, to reserve violence for desperation. Their children grew up polite and peaceful (for the most part), though through control or nature none would say; they valued beauty and the sublime, though yet disdaining delicacy. A rare few became fierce traders, finding their greatest success with the tribes in the far South, who shared their dark skin.

But though the new generation of Orcs were so much a part of the city that even the Dwarves grudgingly accepted their presence, still the horses shied away, and still the Avari would not come near.

This was at the beginning of the Third Age.
Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!