

AXE RAIDERS

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Current Revisions
1st August 2005

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FADE IN

1 EXT. PROLOGUE NARRATION 1

RODERICH

In 577AD, there was no end to the conflict between the Celtic Christians of Britain and the land hungry Angle immigrants arriving daily on the eastern sea-board. Frequent skirmishes occurred and the losses on both sides continued to impoverish all. Truces were frequent, but they inevitably produced treachery ...

CREDITS, MUSIC.

2 EXT. HIGH MOORLAND - DAY 2

An arrow thuds into the back of a white-shirted warrior.

He falls forward onto marshy ground.

CU of his hand. - A small black statute of the Madonna ...

falls from his hand

into a small stream flowing with blood.

TIME PASSES

The land is frozen and the statue is covered in snow.

SPRING COMES

The stream is a torrent and the statue washes down from the high moorland to the valley below.

3 EXT. VALLEY STREAM - DAY 3

The statue lies half buried in silt and mud.

A girl's hand pulls the statue out of the mud.

The statue is cleaned in the water and held up to the sunlight.

- 3 CONTINUED: 3
- The statue is lowered by the girl and wrapped in a cloth.
- The SOUND of a wolf.
- The girl looks up. It is ETHNE, sixteen year old daughter of Fingal.
- She puts the statue in her basket of washing.
- 4 EXT. OAK WOOD - DUSK 4
- TUDWAL is travelling through the wood with a small band of red-shirted ANGLES led by AERIC.
- SOUND OF SCREECHING.
- The Angles freeze.
- MYDRINN, semi-naked and hairy bursts from the trees like a furious savage.
- Mydrinn raises a staff high above his head and points it at Tudwal.
- Three Angles string their bows.
- Three ARROWS speed towards Mydrinn.
- A blinding white light washes from the staff.
- 5 INT. FINGAL'S CRANNOG - DAY 5
- FINGAL is kneeling before a small cross on prayer.
- Three ANGLES burst in.
- Fingal reaches for his sword.
- AERIC strikes Fingal down with his axe
- ... and kills him.
- 6 EXT. OAK FOREST - DAY 6
- Ethne is hurrying along the track.
- She stops, senses that something is wrong.

- 6 CONTINUED: 6
- CU - A hand covers her mouth and pulls her down into the bracken.
- Her basket tumbles down a slope.
- It is DOMLECH, the family retainer. She stops struggling.
- 7 EXT. OAK FOREST - DAY 7
- A band of twelve ANGLES carrying axes and spears come running furiously along the path from the direction Ethne has been heading.
- They pass.
- 8 EXT. LOCH SHORE - DAY 8
- In the loch is their ship with ten other ANGLES on board.
- The Angles push out a small boat into the loch.
- Some armed CELTS led by Domlech and Ethne arrive on the shore.
- The Angles jeer at them.
- Their leader AERIC stands up ... raises his axe in the air.
- AERIC
I hatch runes on this axe-haft,
those felled spelt with blood,
ken the name notched next on
the wild-ox horn I'll drink from?
- The Angles cheer. Domlech unslings his bow.
- The Angles stop rowing and raise their shields.
- Domlech's arrow flies. Aeric catches it on his shield.
- AERIC (CONT'D)
Let your arrows cut the air!
My axe has split Fingal's scull!
Row, men! Row Aeric to your ship,
Its a fair day's work!
- The Angles all give one final CHEER ... and row out towards their ship.

8

CONTINUED:

8

The Celts are broken spirited. They lower their weapons.

ETHNE

(To Aeric)

I swear I will kill you with your own axe!

Aeric smiles.

AERIC

Hear that, lads. The Celts have only got wenchies left to do their fighting for them!

The Angles burst into laughter.

9

EXT. LOCH SHORE - DAY

9

Ethne takes a dagger from Domlech's belt.

She holds out her arm and draws the knife across her wrist.

ETHNE

You are my father's retainer, Domlech. Swear to me on the bones of Saint Andrew that you will help me avenge him!

DOMLECH

(resigned) I'll get hung for this
...

Domlech holds out his wrist. Ethne draws blood from his wrist and forces the two wounds together.

DOMLECH (CONT'D)

You're a crazy girl, Ethne.

Blood is dripping on to the fern leaves.

ETHNE

Swear, Domlech!

DOMLECH

I swear on our mixed blood.

ETHNE

Thank god for that

She faints.

9

CONTINUED:

9

Domlech catches her and lays her down.

He takes a rag and wraps it around her bleeding wrist.

He looks out to the Angle ship.

The ship is sailing off.

Domlech turns back to Ethne.

Ethne is reviving.

DOMLECH

If you're going to be a warrior,
you better start eating meat.

He hands her a piece of dried jerky.

She takes it, looks at it, then after a pause,
tears off a piece in her teeth and chews.

10

EXT. HILLS - DAY

10

Domlech and Ethne stand on top of hill over a
cross that marks Fingal's burial place.

The sky is brooding and forlorn.

11

EXT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

11

Ethne is standing with her grand-father, Roderich.
He is attended by Tudwal. Domlech is close-by.

ETHNE

Aren't you going to send a ship
after them?

TUDWAL

Fingal killed Aeric's twin brother
Ida. By their law he had the right
to revenge.

ETHNE

We don't live by their laws,
Tudwal! They are our sworn enemies!

RODERICH

Times have changed, Ethne. Your
father lived in the past. We must
make peace with the Angles.
(BEAT)

(MORE)

11

CONTINUED:

11

RODERICH (CONT'D)
 However, this land is no place for
 a young woman to flourish.
 (BEAT)
 I'm sending you away.

ETHNE
 I'm not going anywhere!

TUDWAL
 You know Roderich's agreed to marry
 King Ainmire's daughter. She won't
 want you in her household.

ETHNE
 So you want rid of me?

RODERICH
 No, Ethne. I just don't want you to
 grow up like your aunt Melangall.

12

EXT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

12

MELANGALL, in man-like clothes is near-by
 practising archery with DYFNWAL, Roderich's chief
 retainer.

They appear to be on intimate terms.

13

EXT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

13

Roderich and Ethne are walking. Tudwal lurks
 behind.

RODERICH
 Cadoc has agreed to teach you at
 his school in Gwent.

ETHNE
 What's wrong with Mungo's school in
 Glasgu?

TUDWAL
 He doesn't teach girls

ETHNE
 Why won't you rescue my father?

RODERICH
 (angry))
 I will hear no more about this!
 (BEAT)
 (MORE)

13

CONTINUED:

13

RODERICH (CONT'D)
 Young king Mouric will be a good
 husband for you. Dyfnwal will
 escort you there tomorrow.

Roderich walks off.

ETHNE
 That witch Hennini's son! No way!
 I'm not marrying anyone!

TUDWAL
 He will make you a queen! You will
 bear Coel Hen children, not common
 stock like your father! He cared
 nothing for your mother Morgana!

Tudwal points to the grave.

He leaves Ethne alone.

14

EXT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

14

Ethne broods.

She is joined by Melangall.

MELANGALL
 How's my favorite niece!
 (whispers)
 This is a bad business
 You are being lied to

Dyfnwal pretends not to hear.

15

INT. RODERICH'S HALL - NIGHT

15

The light is low. There is a fire.

Ethne places a candle in front of the black
 Madonna.

Melangall is in a night sark pacing up and down.

MELANGALL
 Fingal was opposed to Roderich
 making himself king. Now he is
 dead.

ETHNE
 Are you saying Roderich had my
 father killed by Aeric?

MELANGALL

He had reason to. Fingal could have challenged him. Now he is out of the way, there is no-one to oppose him except that snake Tudwal Cathenson.

ETHNE

Tudwal is loyal to grand-father.

MELANGALL

Not as loyal as you think.

(BEAT)

Tudwal is scheming to get rid of us both by getting Roderich to marry his Irish cousin.

Melangall draws her hand across her throat.

Ethne is shocked.

ETHNE

That's just plain silly

MELANGALL

Is it? We are the last of the great Cunedda's blood carried through the female line. Whoever marries one of us has the right to be king of Strathclyde. I hope its Dyfnwal.

Ethne is surprised at this information.

ETHNE

Do you love Dyfnwal?

MELANGALL

Yes, but he doesn't seem to love me.

(Beat)

The old fool should relinquish power. Marrying again at his age. And to Langoreth U'Neill! He's losing the plot.

ETHNE

What's wrong with her?

MELANGALL

What's right with her? She's capricious, selfish and an absolute trollop! Her father is glad to be rid of her. She tried to poison him.

ETHNE

Really?

She gets down and takes Ethne by the shoulders.

MELANGALL

Roderich, intends to disinherit us
by having a Milesian child with
Langoreth.

ETHNE

Milesian?

MELANGALL

The royal line of the High Kings of
Tara? We're Britons! Not Irish!

Ethne is out of her depth, but easily influenced.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

Power has gone to his head. I hope
she's captured by the Angles on the
voyage from Erin.
(touches the statue)
Where did you get this?

ETHNE

I found it. Do you know what it is?

MELANGALL

It's the Bride of Christ
don't let a priest catch you with
this. You'll be denounced as a
pagan and walled up in some god-
forsaken chapel.

There is a sound of someone entering.

Ethne wraps the statue in a cloth.

It is Domlech.

DOMLECH

Aeric's camped for ship repairs ...
on a loch two day's march from
here.

Ethne picks up a bundle.

MELANGALL

What are you doing?

ETHNE

I'm not waiting to be sent off to Gwent tomorrow.

MELANGALL

The Angles will kill you!

Ethne looks to Domlech.

DOMLECH

A Celt's worth ten Angles.

MELANGALL

And a Celt's ten times more treacherous. Do you think Roderich is going to let you slip off. He's had guards posted everywhere.

DOMLECH

I've taken care of that.

A cloth is pulled back.

Dyfnwal and two RETAINERS lie unconscious.

MELANGALL

Dyfnwal!

Domlech smiles and indicates how he knocked them out.

He covers the men up again.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

When he wakes up, I don't want to be the focus of his sore head. I'm coming with you.

DOMLECH

Not dressed like that you're not.

MELANGALL

Wait for me at Cunedda's Stone.

DOMLECH

We'll give you until sunrise.

Domlech and Ethne depart.

Melangall fades into the shadows.

18

EXT. ANGLE SHIP - NIGHT

18

The ship is close to shore. There is a bonfire on the sand.

The Angles are dancing wildly in a drunken frenzy around the fire.

Aeric is sitting on the ship cleaning his axe. He is attended by THORSTAN, his most trusted companion, and a dark haired slave girl HRETHA who is performing charades for them.

ALDRIC the owner of the ship is tied to the mast.

THORSTAN

Hag

AERIC

Hag in a shawl

THORSTAN

Drunk old hag

AERIC

Sounds like ... ship ship
under the water ...

THORSTAN

Sunk ship ...? Sunk sounds
like sunk!

AERIC

Munk Monk!

They laugh loudly. Hretha sits down by Thorstan who starts pinching her.

THORSTAN

Old hag

HRETHA

Ship it or I'll lay a curse
on you!

THORSTAN

Come here, you hissing witch!

Thorstan begins kissing Hretha. She resists.

They wrestle.

HRETHA

You need a bath, you big swine.

THORSTAN

So do you, you little pig.

He picks her up

... and throws her overboard.

She SCREAMS as she hits the cold water.

She flaps about in the water.

HRETHA

You animal!

Aeric continues cleaning his axe.

AERIC

Take care, Thorstan. I warrant
Hretha's had enough of your ways.

Aeric drives his axe blade into a timber.

Aldric opens his eyes.

Aeric looks at him.

Aldric pretends he is still unconscious.

Aeric forces up his head.

AERIC (CONT'D)

You, my merchant friend, will
remain there until your bones turn
white in the sun.

(laughs)

Then I will take your skull, smash
it to pieces, and grind it down
into powder to chalk my axe hand.

Aeric throws Aeric's head back against the mast.

There is a loud CRACK.

Aldric passes out.

CUT TO:

Hretha reaches the shore and drags herself out of
the water.

She glares back at the ship, her eyes burning with
a long gathered hate.

19 EXT. CUNEDDAS STONE 19

Ethne and Domlech are huddled by the Cunedda's stone, shivering in the dawn cold.

20 INT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAWN 20

Roderich is in his bed clothes. He is irate.
Dyfnwal and two Boy Retainers stand before him.

RODERICH
You're an imbecile, Dyfnwal!

There is the sound of VOICES.

Melangall is led in on a rope by TUDWAL and his retainer DRUST.

TUDWAL
I caught this shrew on the road.
She tried to steal my sword. My
ears are burning with her curses!

RODERICH
(to Melangall)
You have been a vixen since the day
you were born!

MELANGALL
You're not my father. No father
would treat his children as you do!

TUDWAL
(clouts her)
Don't speak to the Governor like
that!

RODERICH
You will learn humility! I'm
bonding you to one of my tenant
farmers!

MELANGALL
You can't bind me ... I'm royal
born.

RODERICH
That's what you think.

Roderich is upset. He waves at Tudwal to take over and turns away

TUDWAL

Carry out the order, Dyfnwal.

MELANGALL

Don't listen to him, Dyfnwal ...
they're trying to disinherit me!

TUDWAL

Drust ... put her in rough cloth
and have her tenanted with the
ugliest man you can find. She is to
cook and wash for him ... she is to
be in all matters his bond servant.

DRUST

Aye, sir

TUDWAL

And find that runaway girl while
you're at it!
(looks at Dyfnwal)
Now take Roderich's big man here
and clear out ...

MELANGALL

That Langoreth U'Neill is a curse
on us all.

DYFNWAL

Be quiet, Melangall. You're in
enough trouble as it is.

Melangall is led out by Dyfnwal. Drust and the
Retainers follow.

Roderich dips his hands in a bowl of water and
shakes them dry.

The sun is starting to rise over the hills.

Ethne and Domlech are still huddled. He rises.

DOMLECH

She's not coming Lets go.

ETHNE

Can't we wait a while. I'm tired.

Ethne is looking at the cut on her wrist.

21

CONTINUED:

21

DOMLECH

When warriors tire, they usually
die

Ethne looks up from her wrist.

Domlech is glancing across the moor.

DOMLECH (CONT'D)

Dyfnwal!

22

EXT. MOOR - MORNING

22

Eight armed Retainers led by Dyfnwal and Drust are
running uphill towards them.

Domlech and Ethne start to run.

The Retainers begin to pursue the fleeing pair.

Ethne and Domlech run as fast as they can. Their
feet are being torn by the bracken and the rocks.

The retainers pursue headed by Dyfnwal who is
gaining on them.

Domlech is beginning to fall behind Ethne.

Dyfnwal is now well ahead of his own men.

Domlech is falling further and further behind
Ethne.

Domlech is in pain, but he keeps running.

Dyfnwal is gaining on Domlech.

Domlech is exhausted. He clutches at his chest and
falls to his knees.

Ethne turns and runs back towards Domlech. She
reaches him and takes his spear from his hand.

Dyfnwal approaches fast. Ethne runs at him. He is
surprised.

Ethne drives the shaft of the spear into Dyfnwal's
belly. Dyfnwal falls down winded.

Ethne helps Domlech up.

DOMLECH

I'm fine now. Let's go!

22 CONTINUED: 22

He now has his second wind. They run.

The Retainers reach Dyfnwal and stop. Dyfnwal, now on his knees waves them on.

23 EXT. MOOR - MOMENTS LATER 23

Ethne and Domlech are now close to collapse. They reach a rise and trip over each other and roll down the other side.

The Retainers reach the rise. Dyfnwal joins them

Ethne and Domlech slide away on their bellies through the bracken. They hide in a rock crevice.

24 EXT. MOOR - MOMENTS LATER 24

Dyfnwal and Drust stop above them.

DYFNWAL

Its Angles we should be chasing not Fingal's daughter. If she doesn't want to marry Mouric, that should be the end of the matter.

DRUST

Aye, Dyfnwal. The old sod's gone mad. Good luck to her.

The wind howls through the rocks.

DYFNWAL

Let's get back before Melangall chews through her rope.

The Celts retreat over the rise.

25 INT. RODERICH'S HALL - LATER 25

Roderich is entertaining Tudwal.

TUDWAL

I'm glad I've arranged for you to marry my second cousin. It will be good for appearances to have a woman on your arm.

RODERICH

I don't care for appearances, Tudwal. I am what I am.

TUDWAL

And I, Roderich ...
 (touches his hand)
 ... but the world is not so open.
 (opens his arms)
 Come, you are cold with me. Kiss
 me!

Roderich and Tudwal kiss each other's cheek.

RODERICH

What are you so cheerful about?

TUDWAL

In the name of peace, I've sold
 some of my land to those Angle
 raiders.

Roderich is alarmed.

RODERICH

You traitor!

TUDWAL

This country, Roderich, has been
 made penniless by the civil war.
 Your own lands are ruined! Look at
 how you live!

Roderich sinks on to a bench.

TUDWAL (CONT'D)

If we have to sell some land to
 make it whole again, then it is a
 price worth paying.

RODERICH

By trading with Angles?

TUDWAL

Yes otherwise they will
 overrun us.

RODERICH

Killing Fingal maybe wasn't such a
 good idea

TUDWAL

We are rid of him ... lets move on.

Roderich rises again. He ponders the intent of
 Tudwal's statement.

He paces

RODERICH

You're right. Fingal was a thorn in my side.

TUDWAL

Exactly. He had a hand in my father's death, so in law I had some right to revenge just like Aeric.

RODERICH

I can't deny that

Tudwal places his hand on Roderich's shoulder.

TUDWAL

You are about to be made king. You need to think like a king!

(beat)

Besides ... you had no love for Fingal ... he deserted your daughter with a child ... went off to war ... for how many years?

RODERICH

Eight ...

TUDWAL

Came back ... brought another wife with him! There should be a law against that!

Roderich is smarting with the memory. He shrugs Tudwal off.

RODERICH

Shut up, Tudwal. Now, thanks to you, we don't have a champion and the whole country is in fear of Aeric the Axe.

(looks to Tudwal)

TUDWAL

Perhaps ... but if you have Aeric hunted down you will be the saviour of Strathclyde!

RODERICH

I'm not going after that madman!

TUDWAL

I'll organize it ... with the help of that ox Dyfnwal ... but only if the terms are right.

(looks to Roderich)

RODERICH

Are you bargaining with me?

TUDWAL

Aeric's made for the lands I sold him. Knowing where he is ... that's got to be worth something?

RODERICH

What?

TUDWAL

Your daughter?

RODERICH

(laughs) Melangall? You're mad.

TUDWAL

She has a comely form despite her curses

RODERICH

(disbelieving) She's older than you! You find that attractive ..?

TUDWAL

(feigning) Not in that way ... but you are marrying and I feel that I should also marry. Don't you want grand children?

RODERICH

She's a pain in the neck. She has her eye on Dyfnwal.

TUDWAL

(dismissive) Dyfnwal is big ape can you imagine him as your son-in-law?

RODERICH

He's loyal, Tudwal.

TUDWAL

Loyalty comes with a price, Roderich. Mine is the head of Aeric in exchange for Melangall.

RODERICH

(resigned)

You have no idea what she is like. At twelve we sent her to a house for virgins in Erin, but she scaled down the rampart walls and consorted with a fletcher.

(MORE)

25

CONTINUED: (4)

25

RODERICH (CONT'D)

It was a scandal. After that no-one would have her or want her.

TUDWAL

You leave her to me after a week on a serf's farm, she'll be grateful to marry me.

Roderich is appeased.

RODERICH

Deliver Aeric's head and you can have your wedding blessed after mine.

Tudwal kisses Roderich's hand fade.

26

EXT. HIGH MOUNTAIN - EVENING

26

Ethne and Domlech are crossing a high knoll.

ETHNE

Where are we going, Domlech?

DOMLECH

I know a few friendly Picts who might help make up our numbers.

27

EXT. ANGLE CAMP - DAY

27

It is raining heavily. The ship is still anchored.

On shore the Angles shelter in a makeshift camp.

Two older Angles EDGFRITH and WILFRID are apart from the others.

WILFRID

What are we doing stuck here?

EDGFRITH

Aye, Wilfrid, we should be back in Frisia in our own beds.

WILFRID

These sailors don't care for us.

EDGFRITH

Quiet its him.

Aeric approaches and sneers at them.

AERIC

Go check the ship covers are not
letting in water.

WILFRID

Do it yourself.

Edgfrith nods. Aeric smiles.

AERIC

So its a decision by committee is
it?

WILFRID

Aye.

AERIC

Is that so?

EDGFRITH

Aye, we've paid you to buy us land.

WILFRID

So when are we going to get it?

AERIC

Right, now!

Aeric raises his axe ... goes berserk

... hacks down the shelter covering the two men.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Get your arses to the ship, now!

The two men scramble to their feet ... run.

The rest of the Angles laugh.

The two wade out to the ship.

Aeric ransacks the shelter

... uncovers a small chest.

He smashes it open.

It is empty.

Dyfnwal, Drust and two Retainers deliver

... a blindfolded Melangall (now dressed in simple serf clothes) and her chattels before a small hut.

DYFNWAL

Galam! Galam Mor! It is Dyfnwal of Roderich's house.

Dyfnwal removes Melangall's blindfold.

DRUST

Behind you!

Melangall and the Retainers turn to see an ugly giant of a man. Melangall is not pleased.

Galam makes eyes at her.

MELANGALL

You're not leaving me with this cyclo!

DYFNWAL

Be quiet. He won't harm you. He's mute. If he tries anything, slip him this.

Dyfnwal hands her an ampule of liquid.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

Yew-berry poison slow but deadly.

Melangall hides the poison.

Dyfnwal takes Galam aside.

DYFNWAL

You are to have this woman cook and clean for you in return for providing for her.

Galam gives a lecherous grin.

Dyfnwal is angered.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

She will do your cooking, clean your hut, and feed your animals.

Dyfnwal signals Drust.

They take Melangall inside the hut.

Dyfnwal pushes the tip of his index finger up Galam's nose.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

Listen, you Pictish brute. She will sleep in her own bed. If you lay one of your filthy claws on her, I'll personally come back and lop your head off. Got it?

Galam snorts.

Drust cuts the rope binding Melangall's hands.

MELANGALL

Why are you going along with Tudwal Cathenson's plan?

DRUST

I'm just following my master's orders, miss.

Drust goes out through the open door. Dyfnwal enters.

DYFNWAL

Take care, Melangall. If you leave this glen you are to be outlawed.

MELANGALL

And I am just supposed to accept that. So much for being in love with you!

DYFNWAL

One of these days I'm going to tell you what I really think of your silly ideas about love.

Melangall's face falls.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

I will counsel Roderich to change his mind. With luck I will be back in a few days to fetch you home again.

(drives a knife into a table)
Use it if he doesn't behave. He's been warned.

- 30 CONTINUED: 30
 Galam stands shadowed in the doorway.
- 31 EXT. GALAM' FARM - DAY 31
 Dyfnwal, Drust and the Retainers are climbing out of the valley.
 Melangall stands watching. She mutters to herself.
- MELANGALL
 Brutes! You've left me to perish!
- Galam eyes Melangall.
 She catches him staring at her.
 He looks down and stares at his dirty hands.
- 32 EXT. PINE FOREST - LATER 32
 Ethne is trailing Domlech through a dense wood.
 Domlech stops suddenly. Ethne freezes.
 A shadow passes through the trees.
- ETHNE
 What is it?
- DOMLECH
 I don't know.
- Domlech swiftly draws his bow.
- DOMLECH (CONT'D)
 Hold there!
- It is Mydrinn. He slackens his pace.
- DOMLECH (CONT'D)
 Who are you?
- MYDRINN
 Some call me Lailoken ... but I am Mydrinn, the bard of Gwendoleu, though now unworthy of the name.
- DOMLECH
 (to Ethne) The wizard Mydrinn!

ETHNE

(unafraid) Lower your arrow.
 (to Mydrinn)
 We mean no harm ...
 (takes some dry meat from her pack)
 You look hungry ... let's eat.

CUT TO:

A small fire in a clearing. Ethne and Domlech are mesmerized by Mydrinn who has Domlech's cloak over his shoulders.

MYDRINN

I am suffering in this forest the dreadful fate to which I have been appointed on account of my sins.

ETHNE

You are thought to be dead.

MYDRINN

Do I look alive?

DOMLECH

Don't try to spellbind us, druid.

MYDRINN

It would not work. You have no imagination, shorty. Not like the lady.

(To Ethne) Listen carefully to me

...
 - Who cleft the Devil's foot?
 - When did the fifty Danaids come with their sieves to Britain?
 - What secret was woven into the Gordian Knot?
 - Why did Jehovah create trees and grass before he created the Sun, Moon and stars?
 - Where shall Wisdom be found?

Ethne's eyes light up with wonder.

He is spell binding her.

DOMLECH

Cover your ears, Ethne!

MYDRINN

You must find another to babble the answers. I am no longer worthy to furnish the answers because of my injustices among men.

(MORE)

MYDRINN (CONT'D)

I was the cause of the slaughter of
all those killed at that battle so
infamously mourned.

(he pucks the word from the air)
Arthuret!

(he stamps the ground, and puts his
little fingers in his ears)

I hear a mighty voice calling
'Mydrinn! Mydrinn! You alone are
guilty for the blood of the eighty
thousand slain! You have been
condemned to the Otherworld, to
dwell among the beasts until your
hour of death!

Mydrinn rises. He begins to chant. His voice
echoes through the wood.

MYDRINN (CONT'D)

I am a stag of seven ruts,
I am a flood across a plain,
I am a wind on a deep lake,
I am a tear the Sun lets fall.
I am a hawk above the cliff.
I am a thorn beneath the nail,
I am a wonder among flowers,
I am a wizard with many powers.

Mydrinn leaps into a thicket, and vanishes!

ETHNE

Where's he gone?

DOMLECH

Who cares! He's mad!
(kicks the fire dead)
Lets get out of here.

Ethne and Domlech emerge out of the woodland.

ETHNE

Is it true that Mydrinn is the last
master of the Druidic order?

DOMLECH

Those days are done.

ETHNE

But, Domlech, who knows the answers
to the lost wisdom?

DOMLECH

Don't ask me, Ethne. My skills are
in my hands, not my head.

They travel on into a wide open valley beneath
high mountains.

Aldric is still lashed to the mast.

Edgfrith and Wilfrid are checking the covers.

Hretha, in an under-shift, is sheltering under the
rain covers. She listens to the two men talking as
they start to bale.

WILFRID

We're marked men. Look what he's
done to Aldric. Aeric's already
claimed his estate as his own.

EDGFRITH

We won't give him the satisfaction
of being challenged.

WILFRID

How are we going to stop that?

EDGFRITH

Steal the ship.

Wilfred seems uncertain. Hretha knocks against an
oar.

WILFRID

What was that??

They pull back an awning.

The two men stand speechless. They know she has
heard everything.

HRETHA

(whispers) Take me with you.

WILFRID

How do we know we can trust her?

Aldric's eyes open.

Someone stirs under another awning. It is
Thorstan. He has been sleeping.

THORSTAN

What are you three crows staring at!

(turns)

Get me some food, girl.

Thorstan turns over as if to sleep again.

Hretha eyes dart to a spear.

Wilfrid follows her gaze.

She signals him to pick up the spear and drive it into Thorstan's back.

Thorstan turns back and grabs Hretha by the throat.

THORSTAN (CONT'D)

I told you to get me food!

Hretha pulls out a knife and stabs Thorstan in the chest. He bellows in pain.

Wilfrid picks up the spear and drives it into Thorstan's leg.

He takes hold of the haft and pulls it out.

Hretha and the two Angles stand terrified.

Thorstan lets out a roar.

Aldric's eyes close.

35

EXT. ANGLE CAMP - DAY

35

Aeric springs up in alarm.

36

EXT. ANGLE SHIP - DAY

36

Wilfrid and Hretha rush at Thorstan and push him over board.

Thorstan hits the water.

Wilfrid pulls off Aldric's gag.

ALDRIC

Cut the anchor!

37 EXT. ANGLE CAMP - DAY 37

The Angles led by Aeric rush knee-deep into the water towards the ship.

THORSTAN
The merchants are stealing the ship!

38 EXT. ANGLE SHIP - DAY 38

Wilfred cuts the anchor rope.

Edgfrith is hauling on the mast ropes.

ALDRIC
Faster! Faster!
(beat)
Take the helm!

Hretha grabs the helm. She looks back.

Aeric is almost at the ship, but too late, it glides slowly out into deeper water.

Aeric raises his axe and aims it at Hretha. It whistles over her head

... and pins Edgfrith to the mast. He dies instantly.

His hand lets go of the mast rope.

Wilfred rushes to the rope and stops the sail from crashing down

... on Aldric.

CUT TO:

The ship drifts out into deep water.

Aeric and his men are aghast as they watch the ship drift with the wind.

Aeric helps Thorstan out of the water.

39 EXT. HILLS - DAY 39

Domlech and Ethne are sitting in a rock. Ethne is bored.

Above them, the Picts BETH, LUIS and NION are watching them, grinning at one another.

ETHNE

What are we waiting on, Domlech?

DOMLECH

The Picts.

ETHNE

Don't you know where to find them?

DOMLECH

They've found us. They've been watching us for the last hour.

ETHNE

Where?

DOMLECH

You'll never spot them. But they are there.

ETHNE

Are we not going to meet them?

DOMLECH

All we have to do is stay on this road.

Melangall, pours a small amount of yew-berry juice from the ampule.

She throws down a bowl of gruel in front of Galam.

He grunts - What's this?

MELANGALL

You're dinner

He grunts again - Its cold.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

You never asked for it to be hot.

Galam stares at the bowl. He tries some of the food.

He spits it out.

Galam gives her a look - What is this?

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

Its good for you, eat it up.

Galam picks up the bowl and throws it at the wall.

Melangall looks at him disappointedly.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

So you don't want extras?

Galam pushes back his chair in anger. He glares at her.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

Keep your temper no-one else wants it.

Galam feels the nostril Dyfnwal pushed his finger up.

He rushes out of the hut.

Melangall goes to the window.

41 EXT. GALAM'S FARM - DAY

41

Galam is pacing up and down

... kicking the dirt

... and throwing whatever is in his way.

42 INT. GALAM' HUT - DAY

42

Melangall pulls back from the window.

She realizes she is in a dangerous situation.

43 EXT. PICT CAMP - DAY

43

Ethne and Domlech are tied to a pole.

Nion the Pict is dancing around them gleefully

Beth and Luis are rifling through the packs.

Beth uncovers the black Madonna.

She holds it up to examine it.

Domlech gives Ethne a look - Where did you get that?

Ethne rolls her eyes.

BETH
How much is this worth, Luis?

Luis looks at it and backs away.

LUIS
That thing gives me the heevie-jeevies, man!

Beth turns to the captives.

She eyes each of them slowly. She hovers over Ethne.

BETH
She looks familiar, Luis.

LUIS
Aye, she does

BETH
She's that Fingalsdottir ...

Luis looks at Ethne more closely, then stands back.

LUIS
No way, Beth, Fingalsdottir was a little lassie.

BETH
True ... her teeth were all crooked.

LUIS
She was a cheeky wee so and so ...

BETH
Aye. (laughs) Remember she used to be dressed like a sheep ...

ETHNE
Shut up the pair of you! I am Fingal's daughter!
(struggles)
Now let me free!

LUIS
Why should we do that, man?

BETH

Fingal still owes me a new dress
...

DOMLECH

Fingal's dead.

The Picts are stunned.

CUT TO:

.... it is now evening.

Ethne, Domlech and the three Picts are sitting at a fire.

LUIS

So Roderich paid the Angles to kill Fingal?

BETH

That's what it sounds like to me, Luis.

Ethne and Domlech exchange looks. The fire crackles.

LUIS

How else would they have got away so easy?

BETH

With Fingal dead, Roderich makes himself king and gives lands to any Tud, Dyf or Wally.

LUIS

Including Angle settlers, man

ETHNE

(upset) Grandfather wouldn't do that?

Ethne withdraws into the dark.

LUIS

Sensitive

BETH

It goes with her age, Luis

Beth looks at the statue. She knocks it on a stone.

BETH (CONT'D)
Its made of wood

LUIS
Is it a man, Beth?

BETH
She's got a dress, Luis!

LUIS
I've got a dress, man ... so has
Nion.

BETH
You've got skirts!
(to Domlech)
How do I get a dress like this?

DOMLECH
From a monk.

BETH
A monk?

DOMLECH
You know ... a Christian teacher.

BETH
Here that, Luis.
(springs up)
Maybe we can help them revenge
Fingal, if they help us find a
monk!

DOMLECH
Heh, not so fast ...
(signals Beth to sit down)
We'll need to work out some tactics
before we go chasing Angles.

LUIS
No problem, man us Picts are
pure brilliant when it comes to
fighting.

44 EXT. SHORELINE - MORNING

44

Aeric has his men lined up in full armor with
spears.

There are twelve - Thorstan, Yoric, Celwin,
Cuthwin, Alfrid, Cissa plus six others.

AERIC

We are far from home and we cannot
risk a winter in this hostile land.
We have to find a new ship.
Yoric!

YORIC steps forward.

AERIC (CONT'D)

You will be my second until
Thorstan regains our favour.

Thorstan, bandaged, sulks in the line.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Celwin!

CELWIN steps forward.

AERIC (CONT'D)

You will guard the rear. With
twelve men, we'll put to flight any
twenty who turn up to stage a
fight!

The Angles all cheer.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Line them up, Yoric! Let's see the
drill.

YORIC

Double file!

The Angles line up in two files of six.

Aeric takes position in the centre between the two
rows.

YORIC (CONT'D)

Phalanx front!

The two lines file out into a V shape.

YORIC (CONT'D)

Phalanx rear!

The two lines reverse their movements into a
backward V

... then swing round to face the rear.

YORIC (CONT'D)

Phalanx front and rear!

They form a diamond shape - Aeric in the centre.

YORIC (CONT'D)

Palisade!

The men form a square

... thrust their spear hafts into the ground at an angle

... and draw their hand weapons.

YORIC (CONT'D)

Reform double file!

The Angles return to double lines.

AERIC

Work on it, Yoric. Our lives may depend on it.
Break camp.

YORIC

Break camp, you flunkies! We've a long march!

Melangall is milking a goat into a wooden bucket.

Her skirt is pulled up to reveal her thighs.

Galam is watching from the other side of a stone wall.

... his eyes are on her legs.

Melangall senses something and spins around

... he is gone.

She pulls her skirt down and returns to the milking.

MELANGALL

I'll kill that Tudwal! I'll kill that father of mine!

The goat kicks.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

And I'll kill you as well, if you do that again!

45 CONTINUED: 45
The goat looks away.

46 EXT. PICT CAMP - DAY 46
Nion is standing with two shields.
Luis, Beth, Domlech and Ethne are standing with axes in their hands.

BETH
You show her first, Luis.

Luis spits into his hands
... yells and charges forward on Nion with his axe raised.
Nion runs away.

CUT TO:

Nion is standing with a sword.

LUIS
Go on, Beth, show them how a Pict does it!

Beth rushes at Nion,
... rips and falls into a ditch.

CUT TO:

Domlech is standing with a dagger in his hand.
He gestures to Nion to attack him with the axe.
Nion rushes at him
... but Domlech disarms him and puts the knife to his throat.

BETH
How'd he do that?

CUT TO:

Domlech is instructing Ethne in how to use a knife.
The Picts watch interested as

... Ethne throws Domlech.

BETH (CONT'D)
Do it again!

Domlech and Ethne repeat the action.

BETH (CONT'D)
I'm too old for this, Luis.

LUIS
We can still do it, Beth.
(spits into his hands)
Try it on me.

Beth spits into her hands.

She tries to throw Luis and ... succeeds.

BETH
I can't wait to meet a monk!

Everyone laughs.

LANGORETH O'Neill, assisted by monk ORAN, clambers ashore from a small boat

... rowed by two SEAMEN.

In the distance is a much larger ship.

A trunk is roughly thrown ashore by one of the Seamen.

LANGORETH
This is an utterly disgraceful way
to treat a lady!

ORAN
They say they can't bring the big
ship any closer to shore.

LANGORETH
That's utter tripe, Oran, and you
know it. They couldn't wait to be
rid of me!

ORAN
That's not true, mam.

LANGORETH

They haven't even the decency to escort me to Roderich's court.

ORAN

I don't think Roderich has a court in the sense we know, mam.

The dress is snagged on a rock

... Oran tries to untangle it.

LANGORETH

Oh, will you stop fidgeting around me like an old woman!

The dress rips.

She is near tears, but remains dignified.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

Now, Oran ... run at the double to that smelly peasant and ask the way to Roderich's castle.

ORAN

Yes, mam ... right away.

Oran goes running up the beach towards a local SERF.

The Serf sees Oran and runs off. Oran chases after him.

Langoreth, in despair, throws herself down on to her trunk.

LANGORETH

My god! What have I got myself into!

A wooden bowl of water.

Melangall is washing the farm muck off her upper body with a sea-sponge and some water.

Galam leers through the window slit.

Melangall pulls a cloth in front of the window.

She continues to wash.

48 CONTINUED:

The door rattles (Galam trying to get in).

There is a bench wedged across it.

Melangall smiles.

49 EXT. GALAM'S FARM - EVENING

49

Galam rushes at the door of the hut

... with all his strength.

He bounces off the door.

50 INT. GALAM'S HUT - EVENING

50

Melangall finishes washing

... and smooths down her clothes.

She peeks through the window.

51 EXT. GALAM'S FARM - EVENING

51

Galam picks up a six foot tree log.

He tries to balance the log to use it as a ram.

Galam backs away from the door

... and starts his run at the door.

52 INT. GALAM'S HUT - EVENING

52

Melangall throws open the door.

Galam comes rushing through the door

... trips

... and ends in a heap on the floor.

Melangall throws her washing water over him.

MELANGALL

Its time you learned how to behave
around a lady.

She throws him a rag to dry off with.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

Now, get up and take that log with you. We need kindling for the fire!

She hands him his axe.

Galam does as he is told.

Aldric, now unbound, is at the helm.

Wilfrid is using a sounding line.

Aldric reaches under a thwart and pulls out a small weighty nap-sack. He smiles to himself.

The water is getting shallow.

WILFRID

One and half fathoms.

Aldric rises to his feet and looks ahead. He is frustrated.

ALDRIC

There must be a way out of this fiord, Wilfrid

WILFRID

It was dark when he sailed up it.

Hretha looks overboard.

HRETHA

I see rocks! Drop the sail!

WILFRID

Rocks! Steer right!

HRETHA

Its not a rock! Its a monster!

Aldric pushes the helm hard to the left and takes Aeric's axe and cuts the sail ropes.

The sail comes fluttering down.

There is a SOUND of tearing at the hull and the bellowing of an ANIMAL IN PAIN.

Wilfrid is thrown overboard by the impact.

Aldric frees himself from the sail, looks down.

Water is rushing into the ship.

HRETHA (CONT'D)
Save yourselves!

Hretha takes a skin ... places her chattels in it.

ALDRIC
Where's Wilfrid??
(Looks overboard)
Wilfrid!!!

Wilfrid is gone.

A look of fear fills Aldric.

ALDRIC (CONT'D)
(turns to Hretha)
I can't swim!

She is unsympathetic.

HRETHA
You better learn quick before the
monster eats you!

She seizes Aeric's axe and prepares to jump
overboard.

ALDRIC
You bitch! You're leaving me to
die!

HRETHA
Free me from bondage, and I'll save
you.

Aldric takes hold of his heavy nap sack.

ALDRIC
What about my gold?

HRETHA
That's extra

Aldric nods.

Hretha wrenches up a bench plank.

HRETHA (CONT'D)
Stick your arms out!

53 CONTINUED: (2)

53

ALDRIC

What!

HRETHA

Out!

He starts to bind the plank to Aldric's wrist.

54 INT. RODERICH'S HALL - NIGHT

54

Roderich is pacing anxiously.

Dyfnwal enters followed by Tudwal.

DYFNWAL

We have found the bride, governor.

RODERICH

How many men at arms has she with her?

TUDWAL

None but an Irish monk.

Roderich holds his head in disbelief.

RODERICH

Show her in.

TUDWAL

(amused)

She doesn't want to see you

RODERICH

What ???

DYFNWAL

(diplomatic)

She expected to have a maid servant help her present herself.

Roderich shakes his head.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

This would be a good time to fetch Melangall back to your house? She could arrange all that?

RODERICH

Where have you lodged her?

DYFNWAL

With a farmer at Tarbert.

Tudwal visible blanches.

TUDWAL
You moron, Dyfnwal! Tell Drust to
get a band of men to arms!

DYFNWAL
For what purpose?

TUDWAL
Do as you are ordered, Dyfnwal!

Dyfnwal unhappily exits.

Tudwal is agitated.

TUDWAL (CONT'D)
Aeric had instructions from me to
put ashore at Tarbert and run the
farmers off. If he discovers
Melangall, he'll hold her for
ransom!

RODERICH
What a mess.
(thinks)
You have to march with a large
force of men there at first light!

TUDWAL
Keep it down, Roderich! A small
force should be adequate ...
otherwise you'll alarm everyone.

RODERICH
I am alarmed, Tudwal!

TUDWAL
I told you to keep it down! Leave
this to me.
(quietly)
Will you manage to woo your wife to
be while I'm gone?

RODERICH
I'll deal with Langoreth O'Neill.

TUDWAL
That monk of hers is a loose arrow.

RODERICH
Take her monk with you. Call it
spiritual guidance. The last thing
I want is him lecturing me about
how to run our affairs.

54 CONTINUED: (2)

54

Tudwal bows and leaves.

55 EXT. MIDDLE OF LOCH - EVENING

55

Aldric, arms tied to the plank, is being pulled on a sail rope through the water by Hretha.

ALDRIC

Now I know what its like to be a Christian.

HRETHA

(cynical) Sure

ALDRIC

I mean, I'm originally from Fresia, and there, we don't treat Christians well at all. We tie them to a stake on the beach, and when the tide comes in, they drown.

HRETHA

Shut up, or I'll let you drown.

ALDRIC

You wouldn't do that?

HRETHA

If you go down, who will ever know.

ALDRIC

I get your point. You shall hear no more from me until we reach land.

HRETHA

You've said too much already.

Hretha starts cutting the rope tying Aldric to the plank.

ALDRIC

(panics) I apologize. I owe you my life!

Aldric falls free of the plank. He immediately sinks.

Hretha pulls his head up out of the water.

FINGAL

Put your feet down. We've reached land.

Hretha steps out of the water which is waist deep.

Aldric stands up.

Attached to him on a rope around his neck is his bag of gold. He looks at himself.

ALDRIC

This was a very expensive garment.

Hretha snatches the nap-sack and tugs on it.

Aldric buckles.

HRETHA

You're lucky the monsters didn't eat you.

She yanks on the nap-sack

... and pulls Aldric who is looking back.

ALDRIC

How many of them were there?

HRETHA

Enough hungry ones

Langoreth is sitting on a small bed.

Oran is down on his knees praying.

LANGORETH

Get up!
(hands him a bottle of oil)
Here, rub this into my thighs. They are sore from walking.

Langoreth hikes up her dress and lies back on the bed.

Oran is resigned to his task. He pours the oil into his hands.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

And don't start any of that mother of Jesus stuff

Oran places his hands on Langoreth's thighs.

He begins to rub in the oil.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

This is a hell hole. These Britons or whatever they call themselves are a bunch of ignoramuses.

Oran is concentrating on the rubbing.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

That Roderich must be an eggit. Any real man would have been down to have a look at me by now.

Oran nods in agreement.

His hands are moving up her thighs.

Langoreth gives him a slap.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

Behave yourself.
(she turns over on to her front and hikes her dress up higher)
Do my haunches. They're sore from that stupid donkey they stuck me on to get here ...

Oran's hands move under the dress and begin to massage.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

Given half a chance, Oran, we'll be off in a flash to see the Pope to tell him about this sorry land.

Langoreth closes her eyes and smiles in pleasure.

Nion comes running. He gabbers with Luis and Beth. They become excited.

BETH

The Angle ship has wrecked on the Rocks of Woe.

Ethne gathers up her weapons.

LUIS

Aw, Beth, I told you not to say anything. There'll be no stopping her until we find them.

57 CONTINUED:

57

BETH
As long as I get my dress this
time, Luis

Luis and Domlech exchange frustrated looks, then start to arm themselves.

Nion watches them go.

58 EXT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAWN

58

Tudwal, Dyfnwal and Oran

... and an armed band of young RETAINERS

... march towards the hills.

59 EXT. GALAM'S HUT - DAY

59

Galam is chopping wood. The sound rings through the valley.

Melangall is laying out the washing to dry on the grass.

The SOUND of the chopping stops.

Melangall bent over, straightens up. She turns round.

Galam is standing within a few feet of her.

MELANGALL
What do you want?

He stares down at the white skin of her exposed breast bone.

He slowly raises a paw to touch her skin.

Melangall knocks his hand away.

He smiles slyly and tries to touch her again.

Melangall slaps him across the face.

Galam's stands dazed for moment. His expression turns cruel.

Melangall starts to back away.

59

CONTINUED:

59

He advances towards her.

She starts to run.

He chases after her.

She runs around behind the hut

... he catches her and pulls her to the ground.

She struggles free and

... runs around the other side of the hut.

Galam gets up and swiftly follows after her.

60

EXT. GALAM'S HUT - DAY

60

Melangall turns the corner of the hut

... and runs into Aeric.

He seizes her by the throat.

Behind him stand the other Angles.

Galam comes round the corner.

The Angles see him.

Galam sees the Angles and instantly runs back around the hut.

Aeric throws Melangall off.

He signals his men to fan out around the hut.

61

EXT. GALAM'S HUT - DAY

61

Galam pulls his axe from the wood block.

Aeric's shadow falls on him.

AERIC

That's a fine axe, friend. I'll
fight you for it.

Galam grunts - I don't want any trouble.

AERIC (CONT'D)

You're a big man. If you beat me,
you can have my sword.

Galam's eyes covet the sword

... then he looks at the other Angles, and
realizes his chances of survival are none.

Galam grunts - points - What's your name?

AERIC (CONT'D)

Aeric Eoppason.

Galam starts to sweat profusely as he mouths the
name - Aeric the Axe.

AERIC (CONT'D)

My fame precedes me.

(cynically)

I'm a fair man. Let's set out a
field and do it right.

(loud to his men)

If he beats me, men, you'll leave
him and his wife in peace!

(to Galam)

If you lose, I win your farm and
she becomes my bond servant.

(arms outstretched)

What's fairer than that?

Aeric offers his hand.

Galam looks to Melangall.

Melangall knows Galam has no choice. She feels
sorry for him.

Galam shakes Aeric's hand and the duel is set.

The Angles have cleared a field and bound it with
stones a spear's throw in length.

Aeric stands with helmet on his head, shield in
front of him, a spear in his hand, and his sword
fastened to his right wrist.

Melangall hands Galam his helmet.

Galam has his own shield, a spear, but his axe
tied to his wrist.

Melangall backs off

The two men advance on each other.

They throw their spears at one another

... they bed harmlessly in the earth.

They take to their hand weapons

... and go at each other fiercely.

They clash!

Their shields take the blows.

Soon the shields

... are battered and useless.

Galam throws his shield away.

Galam takes his axe in both hands and strikes at Aeric with all his might.

Aeric strikes Galam on the shoulder

... it does not draw blood.

He strikes Galam a second

... and third time,

It is easy to find places to strike Galam, but Aeric's sword does not bite.

Aeric lets go his sword and shield

... and leaps on Galam.

He seizes his throat with his hands.

Galam's falls back to the ground.

Aeric wrestles with Galam.

Aeric is too strong for him.

Aeric bends and bites through Galam's windpipe and kills him.

Melangall looks away.

62

CONTINUED: (2)

62

The Angles cheer.

They pat Aeric heartily on the back.

Yoric shouts to Melangall.

YORIC

Wife! Bring Aeric beer! Your
husband gave him quite a thirst.

63

EXT. BIRCH WOOD - DAY

63

Hretha and Aldric are travelling along a forest
path. Hretha is cradling Aeric's axe.

HRETHA

You're not English, are you?

ALDRIC

My father was a tailor from the
Daneland, my mother a cloth girl
from Fresia.

HRETHA

(looks at his clothes) So you can
sow?

ALDRIC

(boasting) The finest sower this
side of the Germanic sea
built my merchant business from
nothing.

HRETHA

You got rich by sowing?

ALDRIC

Flax farming ... I own two dozen
wetland farms that grow flax for
cloth making. I employ fifty
weavers in Northumbria and twenty
stitchers in Yorvik.
(catching up with Hretha)
Do you know anybody looking for
work?

HRETHA

Are you for real?

ALDRIC

I'm a business man ... Why else
would I be in this beautiful land
.....?

HRETHA

To rob it?

ALDRIC

Come now, lass, I'm here to invest,
not to steal.

HRETHA

Same thing isn't it?

Aldric laughs.

ALDRIC

I like you. How would you like to
work for me full-time?

HRETHA

I only do short contracts. What did
you have in mind?

ALDRIC

Find that Aeric and help me kill
him.

HRETHA

The finding will cost you half that
bag of gold

ALDRIC

And the killing?

HRETHA

I'll do that for free.

64

EXT. GALAM'S FARM - DAY

64

Two Angles stand watch on the perimeter of the
farm while the others rest.

65

INT. GALAM'S HUT - DAY

65

Aeric is getting roaringly drunk with Yoric and
Thorstan. He thrusts his drinking horn out at
Melangall.

AERIC

Fill it up!

Melangall pours. Aeric raises his horn and boasts.

AERIC (CONT'D)

No matter how hard I hacked,
My blade would not bite.
Curse him, he'd blunted it,
And near smashed my shield.

(drinks)

So I used all my might
On that axe arching oaf
And bated his breath before
Breaking that horned cow's back!

Aeric, Yoric and Thorstan drain their horns.

MELANGALL

Braggard

Aeric appears to sober. He smiles.

AERIC

Here that, lads, she thinks I'm a
braggard.

YORIC

You are!

AERIC

I'm proud of it!
(looks slyly at Melangall)
Where'd you learn English like
that, girl.

He grabs her by the wrists.

He notices the recent rope marks.

He looks at her thumb ring, turns her palms out.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Well, lads, these are not the hands
of a Pictish farm wife, are they?

Yoric and Thorstan push in to look at Melangall's
hands.

MELANGALL

You all smell of fish!

She pulls her hands away.

Yoric and Thorstan throw down their horns.

Aeric laughs.

AERIC

We're men of the sea. Salty but well cured.

Aeric grabs Melangall by the hair and pulls her to him.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Now, my bonny lass, who are you?

MELANGALL

Who do you want me to be?

Aeric twists his arm and pins Melangall's head to the table.

He takes his drinking horn and pushes the tip of it into Melangall's cheek just below her eye.

AERIC

One little slip and I'll push this through your skull?

Melangall blinks.

Aeric slowly draws the horn towards her eye. Yoric stays his hand.

YORIC

Aeric. We've a ship to find.

Aeric's temper cools.

He throws the horn away.

He lets her up.

AERIC

Pick two men to stay here and get the rest ready.

Yoric gathers his weapons and leaves the hut.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Pack the valuables and throw the farmer into a ditch!

Thorstan nods. His eyes then dart to Melangall.

AERIC (CONT'D)

She must know the way across the hills to Roderich's hall. Bring her with you!

65 CONTINUED: (3)

65

Aeric leaves the hut.

Thorstan pushes Melangall to pack some cooking utensils.

66 EXT. GALAM'S FARM - DAY

66

Hretha and Aldric are looking down
... on the farm.

Aldric takes a battered map out of his shirt.

HRETHA
What's that?

ALDRIC
A map of all the farms sold to me.

Hretha grabs the map and looks at it. She puts her nose to the map, smells it.

HRETHA
I smell treachery here

Aldric snatches the map back from her.

ALDRIC
Don't be daft

HRETHA
You reap what you sow

Hretha gets up, picks up her belongings.

ALDRIC
Where are you going? I thought we had a bargain?

HRETHA
I'm a good liar

She hands Aldric his gold back.

HRETHA (CONT'D)
I have my freedom now ... I want to keep it.

ALDRIC
Suit yourself, luv

Hretha smiles and swings Aeric's axe on to her shoulder.

HRETHA

I still intend to find that Aeric
...

ALDRIC

I think I'll stick to growing flax
....

They shake hands.

Aldric starts towards Galam's hut.

Hretha turns and goes in the opposite direction.

Langoreth is nibbling on a crust of weevil-ridden bread that she throws down in disgust.

Roderich sizes her up.

RODERICH

Let's get down to it. Are you going to give me an heir?

LANGORETH

No. I hate children.
(smiles)
I don't want to marry you any more than you want to marry me. But it is a solution to our problems.
(diplomatic)
You need to legitimize your claim to be the king of this god-forsaken country.
(selfish)
I need to get marriage out of the way so I can get on with my life.

RODERICH

You want a sham marriage?

LANGORETH

Is that not your plan? Tudwal told me.
(Roderich shrugs his shoulders)
I am happy to go along with it ... on one condition.

RODERICH

I don't sleep with you?

LANGORETH

That's not even imaginable. No, once we marry, I am allowed to go on a long pilgrimage to Rome.

RODERICH

To Rome? For how long?

LANGORETH

The rest of my life.

RODERICH

That won't be cheap. How much is it going to cost me???

LANGORETH

Five hundred gold pieces a year.

RODERICH

You'd be robbing me blind!

LANGORETH

Now you get it.

Roderich is troubled. He turns his back on her.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

Come, Roderich ... kingship always comes with a price. You can legitimately steal from your subjects to pay me.

Roderich ponders this.

Langoreth is impatient.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

I'll count to three, then I'm off back to Ulster

(BEAT)

One

(BEAT)

Two

(BEAT)

RODERICH

I'll give you your gold.

LANGORETH

I'll have Oran draw up a charter

RODERICH

What

LANGORETH

We'll put it all in writing. If you stop the payments, I can get the Pope to excommunicate you.

Roderich eyes dull.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

Can I have my deposit now, please?

RODERICH

You want a deposit?

LANGORETH

A hundred will do for now. I'm sure you hide your money somewhere in his cow shed.

Roderich gets up and pulls out a chest from under a cloth.

He throws down a purse of coins in front of Langoreth.

She picks it up and shakes it. She smiles.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

As soon as Oran returns, we'll sign the charter, marry, and proclaim ourselves king and queen. Are we cool?

RODERICH

(resigned)
We're cool

LANGORETH

Then I'll leave for Rome the same day.

RODERICH

The same day

LANGORETH

Do we rock?

RODERICH

(weary)
We rock.

Langoreth dips her hands in Roderich's finger bowl and shakes her hands dry.

RODERICH (CONT'D)

Women were never like you in my day.

LANGORETH

I am a princess, Roderich. Be glad that I'm not hanging around to be a Queen.

Langoreth leaves the chamber.

Roderich slumps in his chair.

EXT. BIRCH WOOD - DAY

Hretha is struggling along a forest path with her bundle of utensils and Aeric's axe.

She is wild eyed and wary.

INT. GALAM'S HUT - DAY

Aldric bursts through the door of the hut.

Two ANGLES are bound and gagged on the floor.

Tudwal is sitting at the table.

Aldric is stunned at seeing him.

ALDRIC

Cathenson!

TUDWAL

(contemptuous)

Aldric Aethelson. I thought Aeric would have drowned you by now. Aeric's going soft.

ALDRIC

You double-crosser. You never meant to sell these lands to me.

Tudwal snatches the bag of gold coins ... and empties the coins out on to table.

He looks up ... his eyes darting quickly across the room.

Three Retainers seize Aldric

69

CONTINUED:

69

TUDWAL

Take this Angle out!

Tudwal gathers the gold.

70

EXT. HILLTOP - DAY

70

Hretha is exhausted.

LUIS O.S

Heh, Angle!

Hretha spins round to find herself

... face to face with the Picts' spears.

Domlech raises his sword to strike at Hretha's neck.

She falls to her knees.

HRETHA

Mercy for a slave! I'm not an Angle! I'm a druid's daughter!

BETH

Druid's don't have daughters. They don't have wives! She's a goblin!

HRETHA

My name's Hretha Maelgwn! I was captured by the Angles when I was a child.

ETHNE

That's Aeric's axe!!

The Picts exchange glances. They draw back their weapons to strike.

HRETHA

I'm no Angle!!!

Hretha cowers.

ETHNE

If you are a druid's daughter then answer me the riddle

(recalls)

Who cleft the Devil's foot?

HRETHA

The prophet Ezekiel. His Jehovah charged archangel Michael to collect Adam's dust and create man. It was a Wednesday, Mercury's day, and he fought with The Devil, the serpent of Menorah, in the form of Nabu the winged goat. Hence the cleft foot.

Luis and Beth look bewildered.

ETHNE

When did the fifty Danaids come with their sieves to Britain?

HRETHA

A hundred generations ago. The eldest was Albina the barley goddess with her moon-shaped sickle for cutting the mistletoe. Her tree is the hawthorn ...

Domlech is agitated.

Hretha is casting a spell on Ethne.

ETHNE

What secret was woven into the Gordian Knot?

HRETHA

That learning, patience and ingenuity are needed to perform a task decently. When Alexander cut the knot, he set a precedent for placing the sword above religion, justice and honour.

Luis and Beth are spellbound.

ETHNE

Why did Jehovah create trees and grass before he created the Sun, Moon and stars?

HRETHA

Jehovah's name hides the seven pillars of wisdom, wrapping the five vowels of knowledge. A tree for every letter of the alphabet, and each pillar a tree makes each of the seven days one of the seven heavenly bodies.

Domlech throws down his shield. He grabs Hretha by her hair.

DOMLECH
We've had enough of this rubbish,
you witch!

BETH
Aye, she's not a goblin! She's a
druid witch! Lets burn her!

ETHNE
(petulant)
I'm trying to learn about the Tree
of Knowledge here!

Domlech is dragging Hretha towards a tree.

Luis and Beth are gathering brushwood.

ETHNE (CONT'D)
I've one more question
Where shall Wisdom be found?

HRETHA
In a virgin

LUIS
(laughting) A virgin! Out here!
What do you think of that, Beth?

BETH
Its as likely as coming across a
monk, Luis

Hretha is bound to the tree.

Luis and Beth pile the brushwood around her.

ETHNE
Let her go!

They all turn to stare at Ethne.

Hretha takes Ethne's hand and places it on her own
breast-bone.

HRETHA
Beware the unicorn. If it snuggles
up to you here, lead it to its
hunters.

DOMLECH

Right, that's enough! She's a sorceress! Gag her!

ETHNE

No, Domlech

DOMLECH

(snatches up Aeric's axe)
She's bad luck!

Beth gags Hretha.

Beth is sitting trying to strike two stones together to make fire.

Luis is birling on a stick trying to achieve the same thing.

LUIS

Its no happening, man.

ETHNE

God has spoken, Domlech. She is to be spared.

Domlech nods, and unties Hretha from the tree.

BETH

That's not fair, Luis. I love a good burning.

Domlech removes Hretha's gag.

HRETHA

Protect me from these heathens and I will use my powers to lead you to Aeric.

Ethne and Domlech look at one another.

BETH

I've got fire!

Smoke rises from a clod of moss.

Hretha is scared.

Domlech stamps the fire out.

71 CONTINUED:

71

DOMLECH
We've got a job to do.

72 EXT. OAK WOOD - DAY

72

Three nooses hang from an oak tree.

Aldric is dragged from behind the hut by Tudwal's Retainers. Dyfnwal is uneasy.

Two Angle soldiers stand bound below the nooses.

Oran is chastising them.

ORAN
You Woden worshiping wallies! Would
Woden want you wallowing in your
present woe?

Tudwal turns to Aldric.

TUDWAL
Have you got any more gold hidden
away?

ALDRIC
I wouldn't give it to you if I had.

TUDWAL
That's such a pity

He drives his knife into Aldric's belly ...

TUDWAL (CONT'D)
.... it might have saved your life.

Aldric's knees buckle.

Tudwal reaches into Aldric's tunic and pulls out a small bag of coins

... as Aldric sinks slowly to the ground.

DYFNWAL
You didn't have to do that, Tudwal.

TUDWAL
He's an Angle.
(approaches Dyfnwal)
Isn't that right, love? We all know
how much you hate Angles.

DYFNWAL

I'm not the one who killed him ...

TUDWAL

I've a good mind to be getting on
with this hanging

The two Angles necks are put in the nooses.

DYFNWAL

So you can keep that gold for
yourself?

TUDWAL

I'm going to marry Roderich's
daughter

Dyfnwal does not like what he is hearing.

DYFNWAL

Over my dead body

TUDWAL

Is that so?
(waves to his Retainers)
We've a spare rope. String the big
ape up too!

Dyfnwal is seized and a noose put round his neck.

ORAN

In the name of God, what are you
doing?

Oran is pushed out of the way.

TUDWAL

You should have a little more faith
in my abilities, Dyfnwal.

Tudwal raises his arm.

Dyfnwal is stoic. The two Angles are terrified.

They all wince as the ropes tighten.

Tudwal lowers his arm swiftly.

There is the SOUND of strangulation.

The two men's legs dangle in the air. Dyfnwal's
toes are barely off the ground.

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

TUDWAL (CONT'D)

Higher!

The Retainers pull the ropes tighter.

73 EXT. OAK WOOD - DAY

73

Domlech appears ... raises Aeric's axe
 ... the axe thuds into one of the ropes, cuts it.
 Dyfnwal falls to the ground.
 Tudwal swings round.

TUDWAL

Picts!

Luis goes one way, Beth another.
 The Retainers chase the Picts.
 Oran grabs the gold and hides behind the tree.
 Ethne races to Dyfnwal with a sword.
 She cuts his bonds.
 Domlech pulls Aeric's axe from the tree.
 He looks at the hanging Angles. He cuts the two
 ropes.
 The Angles fall to the ground gurgling.
 Tudwal turns ... sees ... draws his sword
 ... advances on him.

DYFNWAL

(points) Ethne!

74 EXT. OAK WOOD - DAY

74

Tudwal reaches out to grab Ethne.
 An arrow THUDS into his thigh. He drops down on to
 one knee.
 Hretha lowers Domlech's bow.

DYFNWAL
Get out of here!

Ethne runs towards the scrub. Domlech guards her rear.

Dyfnwal advances on Tudwal.

Tudwal breaks off the arrow and gets back on his feet.

TUDWAL
Come on, big man. Let's see who'll win the girl.

DYFNWAL
Prepare to meet your maker.

They CLASH!

Oran, gripping the gold, watches

.... the two warriors clash with broad swords.

It is an even match.

Dyfnwal groggy from his hanging. Tudwal hampered by the arrow.

The Retainers start to return.

Dyfnwal takes his moment.

He thrusts his sword through Tudwal.

Tudwal's eyes glaze. He drops his sword.

Dyfnwal let's go.

Tudwal falls backwards, the sword still in him.

Tudwal crumples to the ground, dead.

Oran crosses himself.

Dyfnwal advances to take the gold from him.

ORAN
Lay not a finger on me, my son, I am appointed by God.

Dyfnwal hesitates.

The Retainers are running fast towards him.

DYFNWAL
Hold yourself!

The Retainers stop dead. Drust steps forward.

DRUST
We are with you, Dyfnwal! Tudwal
was a swine!

Dyfnwal snatches the gold from Oran.

DYFNWAL
Make his a big cross, priest. All
warriors deserve a decent burial.

Aeric leads the Angles through the forest.
Melangall is being pulled along on a rope by
Thorstan.

There is a shadow.

Aeric silently signals his men to halt.

He indicates with his hands

... three of his men go off right. Three men go
off left.

CUT TO:

Aeric is resting by a tree. Yoric thrusts Mydrinn
before him.

AERIC
Frig and Woden! What this?

MYDRINN
The enemy!

The Angles laugh at him.

AERIC
What should we do with him, Yoric?

YORIC
Throw him over a cliff, Aeric.

Aeric stares into Mydrinn's eyes.

AERIC
Too quick. Lets have some sport.

Mydrinn is bound to a stake.

The Angles are collecting stones from a stream.

Melangall goes to Mydrinn and gives him a sip of water.

MELANGALL
What's your name?

MYDRINN
A name you dare not speak. What's your name, darling?

MELANGALL
A name they must not hear.

Melangall pulls out the ampule of liquid.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)
Let me spare you this end. I have yew-berry poison.

MYDRINN
I'd rather have mistletoe juice.

Mydrinn rears forwards and licks Melangall's face. She drops the ampule and recoils in disgust.

He wiggles and rolls his tongue at her.

Melangall backs away.

MYDRINN (CONT'D)
You sweet daughter of Alban.
(sings)
How many merry months be in the year? There are thirteen I say.
The mid-summer moon is the merriest of all, next to the merry month of May.

The Angles start throwing stones at Mydrinn.

77 CONTINUED:

77

MYDRINN (CONT'D)

How many sacred trees be in the
wood? There are thirteen, I say.
The oak, not the holly is the king,
evergreen in every way

78 EXT. PINE FOREST - DAY

78

The Angles carry a near dead blood soaked Mydrinn
to a cliff's edge.

Mydrinn is still singing.

MYDRINN

How many gods be ruling this land?
There is one I say.
She's dressed in white, riding on a
horse,
Queen of the merry month of May.

YORIC

The madman just won't die.

THORSTAN

Throw him over!

The Angles throw Mydrinn over the cliff.

MYDRINN

Arthuret!!!!!! (voice echoes)

The ECHO dies.

The Angles shiver.

CELWIN

Tough old geezer ...

ALFRID

He gave me the willies

Mydrinn's body lies lifeless at the bottom of the
cliff.

79 EXT. GALAM'S FARM - DAY

79

Dyfnwal has regrouped his Retainers at the farm.

DYFNWAL

Our duty is to rescue Melangall
from the Angles.

ORAN
(zealous) This land is full of
heathens.

DYFNWAL
It just seems that way.

ORAN
Seems that way!
(stresses)
... The king's daughter has been
kidnapped by Angle Wodenites
... The king's grand-daughter is in
league with an outlaw and Pictish
bandits
... And your men ... they are
useless boys!

DYFNWAL
They don't have the heart for it.
Nor do I ... but we shall do our
duty.

ORAN
And I will do my duty! In the name
of god, I'm taking over this
Christian mission.

DYFNWAL
We're not on a mission. This land
has been Christian for two hundred
years.

ORAN
I can't see it! God is our
commander! I am his lieutenant!
(points)
You two. Make me a cross.

The two Retainers look to Dyfnwal.

He nods reluctantly.

Oran, carrying a large cross, is marching ahead of
Dyfnwal, Drust and his Boy Retainers.

An enormous prehistoric beast pushes its head out
of the loch.

Oran is oblivious to the beast.

Dyfnwal's men and the two Angle prisoners freeze.

80

CONTINUED:

80

One by one they take flight away from the water.

The beast sinks back under water.

Oran, still walking, disappears into the forest.

81

EXT. CLEARING - DUSK

81

The Angles are camped for the night.

Melangall is bound to a tree.

Aeric is making advances on her. She is wary but coy.

MELANGALL

Are you going to untie me?

AERIC

Maybe. If you're nice to me.

MELANGALL

I'm being as nice to you as I can be in the situation.

AERIC

I want you to be really nice to me.

He is preparing to kiss her. She halts him.

MELANGALL

I don't have a problem with this ... but wouldn't it be better if I led you to Roderich's hall?

Melangall holds her hands out.

Aeric looks at her intently.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

I mean it ...

She leans forward and kisses him.

AERIC

Now you're talking, girl

He starts to untie her.

MELANGALL

Would you kill him for me?

AERIC

(laughs) Kill the governor? Of course! But I'd ask him for a ship home first.

MELANGALL

Do you think he'd give you one ... looking the way you do?

Domlech draws up behind one of the Angle sentries ... slits his throat.

Thorstan hears the scuffle, and rises quickly.

Aeric is fingering Melangall's neck.

AERIC

The hair ... that's me just being one of the boys. At home, I let it grow and everyone says I'm quite attractive in a manly way.

MELANGALL

They're probably too scared of you to tell you the truth.

AERIC

You're probably right.
(looks at her breasts)
They know what I'm capable of.
(suggestive)
I'm very good with my hands.

MELANGALL

I believe you.
(Takes hold of Aeric's hands)
I wage you've snapped many necks with them?

AERIC

I've lost count

MELANGALL

Don't you get tired of killing?

AERIC

It's a job someone's got to do it.

MELANGALL

Why don't you settle down ... get a wife, have little Aeric's?

AERIC

My wife's fat and ugly. I'm going to give her to Thorstan. She was my brother's wife. He was killed by Fingal four winters ago.

MELANGALL

(pretending ignorance)
Roderich's champion?

AERIC

The nobles here are rotten with jealousy. Fingal was betrayed to us without a fight. You Celts are so single minded.

Luis cuts the throat of another Angle sentry.

Aeric curls back her lip and looks at her teeth.

AERIC (CONT'D)

You're too fair to be a Pict?
Everything about you is noble born.
The way you walk ... hold your head
... your manner.
Who are you, girl?

Thorstan is standing over the Angle sentry's body.

THORSTAN

Celts!

The Angles rise in an instant and arm themselves.

Yoric is standing over the other body.

YORIC

Form ranks!

The Angles form a phalanx. There are now only nine of them including Aeric.

He has hold of Melangall in the circle.

MELANGALL

I don't fancy your chances.

AERIC

Nor yours if they attack.
(shouts)
Who's out there! Name yourself!

83

EXT. CLEARING - SIMULTANEOUSLY

83

Domlech and Luis join with Ethne and Beth.

LUIS
There's nine of them.

DOMLECH
Too many for us. We'll pick them
off on the high pass tomorrow.

ETHNE
What about Melangall?

DOMLECH
She'll have to fend for herself.
She's survived up to now.

Domlech gets up and fades into the dark.

Ethne bites her lip and follows.

Luis curses to Beth.

LUIS
Lowlanders

84

EXT. LOCHSIDE - NIGHT

84

Dyfnwal has regrouped his men ... they are bedding
down for the night.

Drust appears carrying a brand.

DYFNWAL
You've searched everywhere?

Drust nods.

DRUST
What was that thing?

DYFNWAL
The beastie. Its harmless.

The two Angle prisoners are happy to hear it.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)
(to Drust)
Forget the monk. In the morning
we'll pursue the Angles.
(holds a piece of her dress)
(MORE)

AERIC
(smiles) You Celts still sending
girls to do men's work?

ETHNE
That's all we think of you Angles.

AERIC
What do you want? The hostage?

ETHNE
Give yourselves up.

AERIC
So you can convene an assembly and
I can plead for my men's lives
before you hang me?

Aeric laughs loudly.

AERIC (CONT'D)
Why don't I just come and break
your scrawny little neck.

ETHNE
(holds the axe up)
Why don't you come and try it!

Aeric sees the axe. He tries to fathom how she has
come to possess it.

AERIC
I'll fight you for that axe, girl.
Let's set out a field and duel.
I'll tie one hand behind my back,
wear a blindfold, hop on one leg,
and still kill you!

Ethne is angered by his taunting. She advances
towards him.

Domlech with broadsword and shield springs up
behind Aeric.

DOMLECH
If it's a Celt you seek, I'm that
man!

Aeric turns to face Domlech.

AERIC
What quarrel do you have with me,
lad?

DOMLECH

That you are a bragging bad poet
that needs his tongue cut out!

AERIC

Thorstan! We have a loudmouth here
says I am a bad poet?

Thorstan rises out of the long grass flanked by
Yoric, Celwin, Alfrid, Cuthwin and Cissa.

THORSTAN

Aye, Aeric that's you! But you are
also a skull crusher and a bone
smasher!

Thorstan advances with a spear, shield, and sword
dangling from his wrist.

AERIC

No, Thorstan, you liar! I am a
blood spurter and a throat slicer.
I cleave heads off!

Domlech is caught between the two Angles.

THORSTAN

He's mine, Aeric!

(BEAT)

I'm going to skewer him like a
rabbit.

Thorstan thrusts at Domlech with his spear.

Domlech parries the blows with his shield and
strikes at Thorstan with his broadsword.

Thorstan's shield flies from his grip. He thrusts
with his spear and pierces Domlech's thigh.

Domlech goes down on one knee.

Thorstan throws away his spear and advances with a
downward blow of his sword.

Domlech parries with his shield and swipes at
Thorstan's legs with his broadsword.

Thorstan goes down. Domlech drops his sword,
springs up, takes a dagger from his leggings and
thrusts it into Thorstan's heart and twists.

Thorstan gurgles.

88

CONTINUED: (3)

88

Domlech rises. Behind him is Aeric. He turns. Too late!

Aeric lops his head off with his own broadsword.

ETHNE

Domlech!

Aeric turns his attention on Ethne.

AERIC

Get the girl!

Celwin, Alfrid and Cissa give chase.

89

EXT. HILLS - SOME MOMENTS LATER

89

Ethne reaches the crest of the hill. Celwin is not far behind her.

Luis and Beth appear on the crest with their spears.

Hretha, holding Domlech's bow, draws an arrow.

Celwin freezes. Hretha warns him.

HRETHA

Go back, Celwin!

CELWIN

You traitor, Hretha! This is all your doing!

HRETHA

Aeric has done wrong, Celwin. You are a good man. Quit this country, now. Before Aeric ruins you all!

Celwin falters. He thinks about what Hretha has said. He turns back.

He reaches the other two Angles

... makes them turn back too.

90

EXT. HILLS - LATER

90

Ethne is sitting on a rock with her head in her hands.

ETHNE

I got Domlech killed!
 (looks to Picts)
 What do you say?

They all look sheepishly away. Ethne rises.

ETHNE (CONT'D)

Lets finish this in the high hills

She starts up the hill, the others follow.

Aeric pushes Celwin to the ground.

AERIC

You, coward

CELWIN

I am not a coward!

AERIC

(cups hand to his ear) Here that,
 lads? He's bleeting! Celwin wants
 to go home to Northumbria. What do
 you say we send him there by
 Vahalla.

Aeric raise his axe.

YORIC

No, Aeric

He brings it down on Celwin.

Celwin parries the blow and strikes at Aeric

... and misses.

Aeric catches Celwin off-guard with a blow to the
 head.

The other Angles groan.

AERIC

Any other cowards here? (looks
 about) Alfrid? Cuthwin? Cissa?

The Angles all shake their heads.

92

EXT. ANGLE CAMP - DAY

92

Aeric seizes Melangall roughly.

AERIC

Whoever you are, its you they want!
 (Shouts)
 Yoric! Form a file! We're going to
 march over these hills til we come
 to Roderich's hall!

The remaining Angles are dispirited.

ALFRID

(whispers) Aeric's gone berserk,
 Cuthwin.

CUTHWIN

We have to follow orders, Alfrid.

YORIC

Quit whinging there! Get in line!
 Cissa ... Take the rear!

The Angles form a line.

Aeric pulls roughly on Melangall's rope and hands
 it to Cissa.

AERIC

(to Melangall)
 Soon we're going to find out just
 who you are and how much you're
 worth.
 Yoric!

Yoric raises his spear against his shield.

YORIC

We are Northumbrians! Praise to
 Woden!

He starts to BEAT his spear against his shield.
 The other Angles do the same.

ALL

(howl) Woden!

They all begin to BEAT their shields in quick
 time.

Aeric smiles proudly.

Aeric begins to run

92

CONTINUED:

92

... the rest follow, Cissa bringing up the rear with Melangall.

93

INT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

93

Preparations are being made for the wedding. WORKERS are hammering away.

LANGORETH

Why are there no women in your house?

RODERICH

My wife Mongfind died giving birth to my last child Melangall.

(wistful)

Morgana was my favorite child. She eloped with Fingal who went off to war and left her pregnant. His brother married her and brought up my grand-child Ethne as his own.

(BEAT)

After eight years Fingal came back with a Roman wife called Lillian. She brought the plague with her. Morgana died of it.

LANGORETH

Did the children die too?

RODERICH

(angry)

No. I love Ethne, but my own daughter Melangall has been a constant disappointment to me.

LANGORETH

There must be good in her somewhere? You can't all be heathens.

RODERICH

She is a whining child, nothing pleases her. Nothing.

LANGORETH

(looks about) Maybe if you fixed the place up a bit ... they'd like it.

So where are they?

Roderich holds his hands up.

93 CONTINUED:

93

RODERICH

Women these days ... they just
don't want to stay at home.

94 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - DAY

94

The Angles are trotting in formation.

Melangall is being pulled along very roughly by
Cissa.

95 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - DAY

95

Ethne, the Picts, and Hretha watch

.... as the Angles progress up the pass.

96 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - DAY

96

Oran is marching. He is carrying his cross on his
shoulders.

He is unconcerned that he is lost.

97 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - DAY

97

Dyfnwal and Drust lead their band of Boys up into
the high hills.

98 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - DAY

98

The Angles are ill-prepared for the climb.

They stop to rest.

Aeric scans the mountain tops with a wry
expression.

AERIC

We're being watched, lads ...

The Angles exchange concerned looks.

AERIC (CONT'D)

... by Picts!

There is dissent.

ALFRID

This madman is leading us to our deaths!

CUTHWIN

Thorstan, Celwin ... how many more of us?

CISSA

We should take the girl and trade her with the Celts for safe passage.

CUTHWIN

Aeric won't stand for that

ALFRID

Let's kill him

Yoric turns and sees the men conspiring against Aeric. He whispers in Aeric's ear.

AERIC

Alfrid!
(smiles)
I want you to scout the pass

ALFRID

Why me???

AERIC

I trust you not to run away.

Alfrid picks up his shield and spear.

CUTHWIN

He's sending him to his death, Yoric.

YORIC

If his time has come, then it has come. It is Woden's doing.

Alfrid spits at the ground close to Aeric's feet.

ALFRID

This land has bewitched you!

Alfrid moves off.

The Angles are continuing to climb.

AERIC

You know nothing of our ways,
priest!

YORIC

Where did he come from Aeric?

ORAN

I am guided by God and I have in
time saved the chastity of
Roderich's daughter!

The Angles stare opened mouthed at Melangall.

AERIC

(relieved)

She is Roderichsdottir, lads. She
is our passage home!

The Angles are all greatly relieved.

ALFRID O.S

Aeric!

Aeric spins around. Alfrid, staggers up to him

... and falls down near dead.

Aeric lets go of Oran and bends down to Alfrid.

An arrow kills one of the two Angles closest to
Melangall

... a spear another.

Melangall seizes her chance, takes a knife

... stabs Cuthwin dead.

Ethne appears, shouts.

ETHNE

This way!

Melangall runs towards Ethne.

Beth pops up and plucks Oran away into the
heather.

101 EXT. HIGH HILL PASS - MOMENTS LATER

101

The Angles are running.

Aeric is at a loss. There is only himself, Yoric, and Cissa left.

AERIC

Where are you cowards! Come out and fight like men!

CISSA

Aeric!

Dyfnwal and Drust appear behind them, followed by their Retainers.

Dyfnwal steps forward and strikes at Cissa.

Cissa crumples under the force of Dyfnwal's blow. He is badly wounded.

Dyfnwal advances on Yoric.

Dyfnwal disarms Yoric with a single blow.

Yoric drops to his knees.

DYFNWAL

Drop your arms!

Aeric prepares to die.

DYFNWAL (CONT'D)

Lower your axe, Aeric, and I will spare your wounded!

Aeric looks about him at his deleted force

... Yoric, Alfrid and Cissa.

AERIC

I have the right to die like a warrior!

Aeric is surrounded on all sides.

Oran, Luis, Beth, Hretha, Ethne, and Melangall show themselves.

Melangall intercedes.

MELANGALL

Let him run the arrow!

101 CONTINUED: 101
 Aeric weighs the odds
 ... lowers his axe.

102 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY 102
 The surviving Angles are bound and guarded by the
 Boy Retainers.
 Aeric, barefooted and stripped of his armor,
 stands before the gathering of Celts
 ... Dyfnwal, Drust and Retainers.

DYFNWAL
 Yonder beyond that hill is the
 sanctuary stone where the priest
 waits. If you reach it before your
 pursuers catch you, you will be
 granted free passage back to
 Northumbria for yourself and your
 men.

AERIC
 Who are to be my pursuers?

He looks to Dyfnwal and Drust.

DYFNWAL
 Those who you have wronged most.
 ... Melangall armed with a spear
 ... Ethne with an axe
 ... Hretha with a long knife.

AERIC
 Women!

MELANGALL
 You have mocked us and ridiculed
 us. You have killed innocents. You
 are no respecter of life, so we
 have no respect for you.

AERIC
 You too, Hretha.

HRETHA
 You are destined to rot in the
 black ground of this mountain.

102 CONTINUED:

102

AERIC
 (laughs) Fire that arrow short,
 Celt, so I can break their necks
 sooner than later.

Fingal draws back his bow
 ... fires the arrow into the air.

CUT TO:

The arrow imbeds in the boggy soil.

CUT BACK TO:

Aeric starts to run. The Celts jeer.

CUT TO:

Aeric reaches the arrow and pulls it from the
 ground. He looks back.

Dyfnwal's arm drops.

103 EXT. HILLS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

103

... Melangall, Ethne and Hretha begin to pursue
 Aeric.

Aeric runs. His bare feet are being torn by the
 bracken and the rocks.

The Women pursue led by Hretha.

Aeric is in pain, but he keeps running.

Hretha is gaining on Aeric.

Aeric is deliberately slowing. He pretends to
 clutch his chest and falls to his knees.

Hretha comes running up on him, and as she
 advances raises her knife to strike him a blow.

At the last moment, Aeric springs up and grabs her
 knife hand and twists. He pulls her arm back with
 such force, he breaks it.

Hretha is in great pain.

... Aeric takes her knife and cuts her throat. She
 falls dead.

Aeric laughs and commences running again.

Melangall and Ethne come upon Hretha.

They are momentarily stalled, but they encourage each other on.

Aeric is breathing heavily. He reaches a rise and trips and rolls down the other side.

Melangall reaches the rise ahead of Ethne.

Aeric is lying in the bracken.

... his hand wraps around Melangall's ankle and he pulls her down.

He stabs her in the shoulder.

Melangall rolls away, and still gripping her spear manages to thrust it into Aeric's eye.

He roars with pain ... staggers to his feet.

Melangall jabs him again - in his side.

He bellows again.

Ethne appears with axe in hand.

He takes flight.

... he is now within sight of the sanctuary stone.

Melangall is too hurt to continue the chase. She waves Ethne on.

Aeric is close to the stone.

Ethne appears too far behind to catch him.

Oran, his hood up, waits at the stone.

Aeric gleeful ... is almost at the stone.

Oran throws off his hood ... and steps forward.

It is Beth!

Behind the stone ... Luis has Oran bound and gagged.

Beth draws out Aeric's axe.

Aeric freezes on seeing the axe. He has been outwitted.

Ethne draws up close behind him.

Aeric is badly wounded ... but still game to reach the stone.

AERIC

What is it with you women? Come on then?

Beth holds her ground.

Aeric charges at her.

She throws him in the manner practised with Luis.

Aeric is splayed on the ground, a few feet from the stone.

He tries to touch it

... but Ethne stands over him.

She picks up his axe.

AERIC (CONT'D)

Who are you?

ETHNE

Does it matter who we are. We are women, our history is never written.

Aeric is half on his feet and reaching for the stone.

AERIC

Then write it now

She brings the axe down on him and kills him with the single blow.

Aeric's hand trails down the stone.

105 EXT. HILLS - MOMENTS LATER

105

Luis appears with Oran. He gives him a kick towards the distant Celts.

LUIS
Tell them to set the rest of the
Angles free ...

ORAN
You heathens! I will be back to
teach you the ways of God!

Oran makes his way back towards the Celts.

BETH
Look, Luis ... I got the dress just
like the statue.

Beth is prancing around in Oran's robe with the
Madonna in her arms.

106 EXT. HILLS - DAY

106

Melangall appears ... sees Aeric is dead.

MELANGALL
Get out of here before Dyfnwal
catches you.

Beth gives Ethne the Madonna.

BETH
Take care, little princess.

LUIS
Aye, if you ever need to get away
from these Lowlanders, you can stay
with us.

The Picts fade into the wilderness.

Ethne helps Melangall towards the Celts who are
running towards them.

107 INT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

107

The thrones are built and the hall is decorated
and full of CELTS.

Roderich and Langoreth are being married by Oran.

Dyfnwal puts down a small strongbox containing Aldric's gold..

Roderich hands Langoreth the key to the strongbox. She smiles.

LANGORETH

Five years up front ... I should have mentioned that earlier.

She nods to Oran to commence. Oran is jealous.

ORAN

Are you, Langoreth U'Neill, free of all disease?

LANGORETH

I should think so!

ORAN

Are you with any other man's child?

LANGORETH

Everyone knows I am a virgin.

The crowd laugh disbelievingly.

Langoreth roughly takes Roderich's hand.

LANGORETH (CONT'D)

(to Oran)

Let's get this marriage done, Oran so we can be off to Rome and away from these eggits!

Oran continues swiftly.

ORAN

Are you, Roderich of Strathclyde, free of all sickness of the mind?

RODERICH

I am.

Langoreth nods to Oran.

ORAN

Henceforth, Langoreth U'Neill, daughter of Ainmire of Ulster, will be known as queen of Roderich Coel Hen, king of Strathclyde, prince of Britain, defender of the Wall.

Dyfnwal watches coldly.

107 CONTINUED: (2)

107

ORAN (CONT'D)

In custom, all here assembled are
bid to witness this declaration,
and say aye.

ALL

(low murmur) Aye!

108 INT. RODERICH'S HALL - DAY

108

There is SHOUTING.

Melangall, bandaged, breaks into the hall, with
Aeric's axe in her hand.

Ethne trails behind her.

Dyfnwal steps forward and stands between her and
Roderich.

MELANGALL

Out of my way, Dyfnwal.

DYFNWAL

I am sworn to serve the king,
Melangall.

MELANGALL

If he is a king, then I am an
angel!

Dyfnwal restrains Melangall.

RODERICH

You are bold, Melangall, daring to
disrupt my wedding! I should have
you hung instantly!

Dyfnwal's loyalties are divided.

DYFNWAL

Go back to bed, Melangall, rest
that wound.

MELANGALL

He betrayed Fingal, Dyfnwal. You
are the last to know.

Dyfnwal turns to stare at Roderich.

RODERICH

The needs of the country came
first.

MELANGALL

I put a curse on this hall, and on
your kingship! You can rot in hell!

She throws the black Madonna onto the floor!

There is a GASP.

Melangall breaks the shaft of Aeric's axe over her
knee and throws the pieces at the Madonna.

RODERICH

Melangall!

MELANGALL

Your rule is at an end!
(turns to Dyfnwal)
One of these days I'm going to tell
you what I really think of your
silly ideas about duty.

She turns and leaves the hall. Ethne turns to
follow.

RODERICH

Ethne

Ethne pauses and looks at Roderich ... takes a
knife from her belt and throws it down on the
Madonna

... walks out.

Dyfnwal is stunned.

RODERICH (CONT'D)

Do something, Dyfnwal

Dyfnwal removes his own sword and adds it to the
pile, and leaves.

One by one the Celts throw their weapons on to the
pile and leave.

Langoreth flicks her eyes at Oran.

LANGORETH

Well, we'll be off now!

RODERICH

You can't leave me like this
you're my wife.

Langoreth picks up her scroll.

LANGORETH

Jesus, we had a bargain and I have fulfilled my part of it. Its not my fault they don't like you.

(unhappy) It looks as though you won't be paying me my annual upkeep.

(waves) The Pope will know of it. I'll kiss his ring and he'll send archbishops and bishops and monks to collect it for me. Oran!

Oran hands Roderich a business card.

ORAN

If you have any more trouble with the heathens, send for me.

Oran, carrying the strongbox shuffles after Langoreth. Roderich crashes down on to his throne deflated.

110 EXT. VALLEY - DAY

110

Langoreth, riding a donkey

... accompanied by Oran and two Retainers.

111 EXT. VALLEY - DAY

111

Melangall and Ethne watch them from a distance.

ETHNE

Do you think they'll make it to Rome?

MELANGALL

She could charm her way to China
....

Dyfnwal is surrounded by Retainers offering him the kingship.

ETHNE

What happens now?

111

CONTINUED:

111

MELANGALL

I could marry Dyfnwal ... have children and continue the royal line of Cunedda.

They both stare at one another, laugh.

MELANGALL (CONT'D)

No

ETHNE

No

Melangall and Ethne start to walk into the distance.

ETHNE

What about grandfather?

MELANGALL

He needs to be retired. Remember that Culdee island ... we could send him there.

ETHNE

What about that old castle they walled the nun up in

MELANGALL

Or the loch with the beastie

ETHNE

No, I think we should send him to live with the Picts

MELANGALL

That's an excellent idea ... I can just see it now

112

EXT. PICT CAMP - DAY

112

Roderich is in a pen feeding pigs.

Luis and Beth are taunting him.

CUT BACK TO:

113

EXT. HILLS - DAY

113

Melangall and Ethne are high in the hills.

ETHNE

One last thing ... the Black Madonna? Who was she?

MELANGALL

Well ... some people say that she
was Jesus's woman friend

ETHNE

You mean Missus Jesus?

MELANGALL

Yes

ETHNE

Really?

MELANGALL

Definitely

ETHNE

Did he love her?

MELANGALL

Jesus loved everybody

ETHNE

Did she love him with all her heart
...?

MELANGALL

Oh yes, there's no doubt about it.

Melangall puts her arm around Ethne's shoulders.

They continue to walk high into the hills.

Higher and higher until the pale mountain tops
merge with the blue sky.

CUT TO BLACK:

END CREDITS