



**Tir Nan Beo – Cursed Lands**  
**Tales of a Bard**

**Tir Nan Beo – The beginning**

Part of Dumnonni Chronicles

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## **Tir Nan Beo – The beginning**

Shadows break before a great Forest. Their dark fingers touching dead fish, floating on poisoned rivers. A land cursed for many generations, where the earth has lost its fertility and its people have turned to strange allies and dark rituals. Here the Fae whisper songs of dread and the seasons bring only death. But now a sun arises from the south. A blazing light of a new Ard-Ri, chosen by the lands, witnessed by those who fought Balor of the evil eye. And from this light emerges a King, born in battle and given a curse not by his making. A curse also made by the lands, a curse that teaches, a curse that kills, but above all, a curse waiting for a new King to slay.

Footsteps sink deep in the ground as warriors with heavy armour walk slowly towards the encampment the clans have been given. From above the crows look down upon strings of people. People with different clan colours, coming from different ways and different lands. They see the glitter of metal reflected on iron weapons, the faces of warriors, of leaders and of champions. Spears that rise above the bushes, as spikes in a deep mote. They see bards telling stories to rise spirits and see priests inspiring others, for the days to come. The crows see all, even the upcoming death in some of their eyes. It is a silent call that they have grown use to here, in these cursed and sickened lands.

The Menapii have chosen the place for this muster, a gift from them to the coming King. A place where the river is clean and some wildlife still remains. They have seen the clans approaching, heard of their names. Warriors, Champions, eager to make name for themselves. They have heard the tales around the campfires at night, have heard the hope, where there must be fear, for these lands do not give hope, do not bestow champions thrones of dead enemies, but will do anything to kill you. The curse runs through the grass as a poisoned snake, waiting in ambush, ready to lash out





to anyone passing by. It is the death that finds the fallen, the sickness in a cup of water, the last breath of a dying child. It is everywhere and has no patience.

Still the scouts report of hero's, of man in great armour and shields in bright colours. It has been so long since last the Menapii saw another clan and with them a prospect of trade. It would be a gift indeed if the coming King would do only that. But the Menapii have seen the others as well. Other clans native to these lands, followers of dark Gods and mislead rituals. They have seen the melted ice and the strange Fomor emerging from it. They have heard tales of strange beings awakening from their ice sleep, vengeful and full of hatred. From times long past, when the first humans were just arriving from the gateways, finding nothing but snow and ice. Is this the curse as well, or a sick coincidence coming forward as if it were the champion of the curse itself. Non know, yet the Menapii have read the signs and all signs are coming to this place.

The Ovates have spoken. The ancestors are clear. The days to come will be of blood, of honour, of broken shields and blooded spears. Champions will rise and fall and the land will drink their blood indiscriminately. The land will scream and scream some more and when it is done, when this muster is over, the land will be silent once more, awaiting the next gathering of clans. For if anything, this is what the Shamans see. This is what emerges from the fires they dance around. This is what the eyes of their animals speak of. The Lands will witness and from it, there will come a new dawn. A dawn of blood, or a dawn of life, either way these gathered clans are bound to this one curse and with or without each other they will witness it, or die trying.

