



Tir Nan Beo – Cursed Lands

Tales of a Bard

Unspoken Words

Part of Dumnonni Chronicles

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Unspoken words

There are many dangerous enemies in these lands, Formorians, Semnones, Saxons. There is one, however, more terrifying than all others combined. Their name may not be named, they are the curse in the flesh at night, but nowhere to be found during the day. Some stories tell of how the moon cried white stones when she saw the sorrows of people in these lands. Corrupted by the curse, these stones turned into the wreathed creatures that we now call palefaces. In truth, no one knew anything about them - until recently. Because I've heard a story that will change everything.

Word has spread that the Valeda, famous oracle of the Bructerii, has died again. She prophesied to the Fomor champion named Nabrach Sword-Wielder that whoever found the Semnones shaman Sealgwin could tip the scales of war. The Valeda passed away shortly after, hopefully another will soon take her place. This prophecy also reached king Oswald and his generals, who devised a plan in secret.

A war band was sent to a remote Menapa Menapii settlement. Here they would find this shaman, although the warriors at this time knew nothing of this. The king sent them to aid the villagers against Semnones raiders. They were small in numbers, but great in honour and name. Theoderic, the voice of king Oswald was their leader. As always the beautiful healer Hildegard was at his side. He had put command of the warriors in the capable hands of Isengrim, the craftsman who has sacrificed his profession at Five Stones.

The Menapii had been fighting for days, many were wounded, more were dead. The men of Oswald stood beside them and fought the Semnones hard. During the battle a Morini Menapii came from between the Semnones, exhausted from a lone journey through the entire Semnones lands. He had seen a massive force of Semnones come their way. This warrior is known as Ambiok, and is often seen at the side of Theoderic of the Batavii.

The Semnones attacks finally ceased at dusk. At last the warriors could sit down, but soon were on their feet again when the Norse warleader Osaric, with his shieldmaiden and healer, came into the camp. King Oswald had trusted him to inform the war band of his plan, and a Menapii guide would help them find Sealgwin.

Then, as the sun left the sky and stars were lighting up, as a small voice spoke at the edge of the firepit. "Are you the warriors who want to go into the lands of the Semnones?" A Menapii woman stepped into the light. "I will show you the way". So the war band set out into the woods. They found a Semnone dancing between flames, sacrificing one of his own. He was in trance, and did not see them coming. However, his brothers around him did, and attacked. That night the ferocity of Catamunda of the Nervii and Jarl Ulf-Magnar proved fatal to many Semnones. The other warriors formed a protective circle, while Oddert, calm veteran of the Frissi, forced the Semnone down and Una, Whisperwell, made him speak of Sealgwin - only the ancestors know what the wist did to make him spill his secrets. Many Semnones were butchered that night, as the pigs they are.





The group found their way to the shaman, but weren't the only ones looking for him that night. Nabrach Sword-Wielder had gathered a group of stone hard Fomori to capture Sealwin of the Semnones. The two parties met in darkness. Thoderic did not give the Semnones up, but took him under his protection. A bloody battle ensued, so gruesome that Finn the bard took up arms and in the end all healers had their arms covered in blood. As Jarl Ulf-Magnar fought the last remaining Fomor in an honour duel, the sons of Mill saw they all had taken wounds that would be scars to last a lifetime.

Tjerk the giant, voice of Saxnot, found the shaman sitting by the fire, the light playing on his unreliable clay covered face. The camp was filled with the shaman's concubines, who's agonizing screams tormented the hearts of all. Sealgwin shared with Tjerk a vision, it's said you could see the fear in the Frisian's eyes, though he will deny this. The priest stood up solemnly and informed Theoderic of the impossible task that lay before them. The voice of the king gathered his battle brothers and sisters and told them they would go into the lands of the palefaces.

A great secret of the land of tears had been revealed to them. In the paleface lands live some other accursed form, the white crows. They are the source of the moon's sorrow. Killing them will give us her blessing, so we can win our wars on the Fomor; and all other enemies the sons of Mill face.

At first the warriors saw few palefaces, even though they knew they had entered their lands. But as the woods grew thicker, and a thick mist came up, more and more of them where seen. Soon there were three for every son of Mill. All of a sudden they attacked, throwing themselves on spears in the hope of reaching the wyrdweavers.

Then from the woods appeared the white crow. It cannot be killed by warrior's steel, thus the wyrdusers stepped forward to confront him. Tjerk called out to Saxnot, in the hope the God would reach out through the accursed mists. Una asked for the help of the spirits who also shun these lands. In the end it was Finn, Stone Killer, named so by Caddog the bard of Culhaven, who promised this to be his last kill and slew the terrible white crow, shaman of the palefaces, curse to the moon, lord of white stones. With his last breath the crow lashed out with power, tearing Finn's chest in two.

The palefaces stopped for a moment, like they were holding their breath, but then exhaled, and attacked like never before. The warriors were barely holding up. Finn lay over the corpse of the white crow, Ulf Magnar's throat was a fountain of blood, and neither Hildegard, nor Jitske, wise Frissi woman, could help them. Theoderic decided to withdraw, a hard but wise decision, though some whisper they could have done more.

If it wasn't for Frigur, son of Oskur, now known as the True Friend, you wouldn't be able to hear Finn sing at Oswald's court. The Nervii warrior stayed behind as his fellow warriors retreated. He fought off many, and as most of the palefaces went after the group, Frigur was able to carry the body of Finn to safety. I do not know what price he paid for this, but Finn called him the True Friend in return.





As the warriors gathered around a small Menapii campfire they counted their losses. Ulf-Magnar, Jarl of the Norse, wielder of Breaker, had died a hero's death. Only the ovates know if he has won a seat at Odin's table, but hopefully these bardic tales will carry into the halls of the all-father. No one has seen Una since. If you seek her, you should ask Finn Stone Killer, because if anyone knows her, it's him. As for Finn himself, that night has changed him. He has made his last kill, a worthy one, the first white crow, the creature that holds the cure to the wyrdcurse.

But let this tale be one of hope. A solution for the curse which keeps us weavers of the wyrd awake at night has been found. No longer will we be tormented by horrible pains, nor cough up blood, nor be haunted, nor fly into mindless rage. Seek your salvation, brave wyrdusers, seek out a white crow and slay him!

