

Ordo Draconis "Deirdre Of The Sorrows"

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'Twas amidst such festive cheer,
When Fedlime worth a noble peer
Attended in his vaulted hall
A banquet twixt the golden walls
And known the gleesome son of Dall
Danced the guests and bade the ball,
As harp he touched this sumptuous night,
Till from the lap his daughter cried.

In a richly attired chair sat the crowned guest of honour, Conor Mac Nessa. Among-st his retinue was the grey Cathbad, a druid very much skilled in the lore of divination, whom he sent for and bade foretell the infant's prospects. The welkin was cloudless and strewn with twinkling cressets. The Druid's lips began to tighten in his lenten face, as upon the glaring stars he gazed intently. O how unduly did the minstrel rejoice at a prosperous future; yet all hope was bound to relapse, when the seer heaved one deep sigh, and at length foretold the woe to come:

"As the moon gleams on the wave,
So shall be her sheen,
Bright and distant alike.
She shall wed a king, yet in her name
Shall bale come 'pon Ulster,
Ere Connacht shall make their strike."

The outcome compelled the fuddled guests to suffocate the infant until the king restrained them from their attempts:

"Halt! By my troth, that doom I shall avert. I decree that she will live her infancy hidden from the sight of man and grow into my very consort, lest she be touched by the foul, covetous hands of some foreign king."

And so winters passed e'er in solitude;
Save syrens' descants the grove seemed mute,
In the heart of which she dwelt unseen,
As was, I trow, her wintry sheen.

In her eyes a sombrous gloom
Did gleam that wintry day,
When bare trees in silver wrought
Were but a shroud of grey.
A final glimpse she had besought
And ventured o'er the rampart
And came to see a raven reap his prey.

While deep crimson stains and imbues
The unbroken drape of unspurred white,
Which the dark of eb'ny wings grimly contrasts with,
Her heart was throbbing high at the sight.

The image had stirred long. One day, after their
fruitless hunt through the forest, Naisi and his
brethren, the sons of Usnach, left the forest's lap and
strolled alongside the glade. Out from the tower's
window that made her visor, her voice beckoned thrice
and so having answered to her yearning call
and yearned themselves, they released her to steal
into the night together.

Naisi at the voyage:
"Fare thee well Ulster, that I may see you once more.
Already the tang of the sea I can
respire; we set sail to Caledon! Our 'scape has startled
the king and thwarted his plans,
thence-- the vasts of the sea we cross -as in full career
our ship reeves the wintry waters,

driven by pursuit. Naught can be seen beyond the
sheets of rain. O, have the afreets
forgathered at our course or has some foul curse been
lain upon us?...Now our ship comes nigh
succumbing to the vagaries of the gales, when fuscous
forms of searing cliffs loom from the
hovering mists. Will the shores bid us welcome, in
either soft or rugged embrace? Landfall at
last!...A-nd so to Glen Etive we make our repair..."

In Glen Etive a living was built devoid of the king's
wrath, save of his eyes. No voice whatsoever was
raised from Ulster that reached their ears, until the
paces of a rufous steed had swept their ways to the
secret lodge: on the steed sat Fergus, who had, in
good faith himself, appeared on the stage again.

A pledge of peace he pleads that very morn
-In spite of all the qualms she utters so in vain.
This fatal rede had dreams put to scorn,

As the days of the Branch could live again.

Lo, nectar drops hover o'erhead
And on auburn wings glide yonder,
But don't these drops glow damask-red
In the sun on their path hither
Like grumes of blood?

How calm the sea was in that line,
So calm, o'er waves they skim,
Lightly 'pon light feathers swim
With sorrow's swan in frothing brine.

"...Ulster's cliffs were frowning ahead already. Indeed,
days of war were back again and it
would not last long, ere din smote their ears..."

Was it but geiss that bade him stay
With Baruch and not the twain convey
Safely to where the arms weren't there
Open to welcome, but forgã" d to tear?

Or was it the nerves war has within
Though tailward turns war for those (that are) to win
Or ambitions tangled, like when one is raked
Within the garment the threads all break?

And so bale did brew,
As was thus foretold
By what the fixed stars for the Druid drew,
What's fixed to unfold.

The king did not welcome, yet sent a spy,
Whom they behind the window did descry
And, when dismantled, with the chess-king smite;
Struck blind -if he wasn't before- of sight.

Caught in the summoned slough of slime
-Like as before-, the gallant trine
Were shorn off their heads in the burden of time.
Deep crimson stained the unbroken drape of white

And into the sea,
Where she e'er was, will e'er be,
Deirdre did merge
With the glee of her dirge
Of deed and dream asunder.

The Two Trees
Perchance did blight after loss of life
Give rise to a yew 'pon either shrine

Their tops to join and to entwine
So as to bear the fruits of strife.

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