RAVEN'S SONG: AN ORIGINAL MUSICAL

THESIS

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MASTER OF ARTS

By

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*Raven's Song* is an original musical dramatizing the conflict between paganism and Christianity. The play revolves around a woman who has become disillusioned by her people and her gods. The only gods she has ever known were blood-thirsty, appeased only by the blood and entrails of human sacrifice. Therefore, Raven resists all religion. Through providential circumstances, she is married into a Christian family and is overwhelmed by their love, and the kindness of their God. In search for truth, Raven begins to question her disbelief.

All men search for truth in their own way, and all, at one time, will question the existence and nature of God. The play does not presume to answer these questions, but allows each participant to decide for himself, as Raven must decide for herself.
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INTRODUCTION

Man creates because he is inspired, and his creation is a direct reflection of that which inspired him. Inspiration can come from many areas, but one of the strongest is his religion. Man desires to please his creator by either honoring or portraying his god. He seeks to communicate the attributes of his religion through the medium of art, the main voice of his culture.

Earliest records show us that man used various art forms to express his religious views and to glorify his god: for example, the primitive drawings on cave walls; the intricate hieroglyphics of the Egyptians; the music and poetry of the ancient Hebrew psalmist; the dramatic story telling of the shaman; and the religious drama of the ancient Greeks and Romans. These events were not viewed only as mere entertainment but as religious spectacle as well, and were used both to admonish and exhort the participants (Brockett 17-19, 60).
RELATED LITERATURE

_Raven's Song_ is set in Celtic Britain, around A.D. 200. Therefore, to ensure authenticity, it was necessary to indulge in an extensive historical research of this time period. Several books were found extremely helpful.

_The Rise of the Celts_, by Henri Hubert, was quite helpful especially in terms of language. The author has incorporated some of the original Celtic words into the script. She chose to do this to enhance the feel for the period and to draw the audience into another time and culture. Archeological evidence was also quite helpful for the authenticity of props such as pottery, tools and weapons.

_Raven's Song_ is set in a very turbulent time period in European history. There were many battles, skirmishes and wars. Several characters in _Raven's Song_ are warriors and, consequently, carry weapons.

_Stonehenge Complete_, by Christopher Chippendale, was extremely interesting and helpful for religious references. The lead character in _Raven's Song_ is a Druid; therefore, the druidic religion and rights needed to be studied. Though there is no concrete evidence that proves that Stonehenge was once a site of druidic worship, there are several theories which highly indicate that possibility. The author chose to
follow the theories that indicated Stonehenge was a place of Druidic worship and referred to this in the script.

The History of Medieval Civilization by Joseph H. Dahmus, as well as A History of England by David Harris Wilson, were both helpful in giving the researcher a broader perspective of Western Europe and Britain. The migration and battles between the Saxons and the Celts, and the Celts among themselves, proved very important to one character, a Saxon war lord who invades Britain and marries the main character. These books were also helpful in identifying the differences in the cultures and religions of the people of this period. Information related to the migration of Saxons to Britain, the roads used, and the towns and villages named along the way all proved helpful in the preparation of the journey scene.

The Origin of England 410-600 by Martin J. Whittock proved to be a very important resource in terms of giving an explanation and brief history of this period. This proved invaluable in setting up the previous action for the play. This book also explained the conflicts of language, tribal disputes and problems of the forced mixing of cultures. It gave a useful account of the turbulence of the age while it also discussed the social, religious, economic and political behavior of each of the various cultures.

The Druids by Stuart Piggott, and Pagan Celtic Britain by Anne Ross, were both important resources in terms of examining
the religious aspects of not only the Druids, but other Celtic religions as well. *Raven's Song* hinges on the religious as well as cultural conflicts of the people of this period. Therefore, understanding religious practices and histories was necessary to establish credibility.

All of these works cited were helpful in the conception and organization of *Raven's Song*. The author, though not attempting to write about an actual historical event, desires it to be as historically accurate as possible within the realm of fiction.
The author has chosen to set the play, *Raven's Song*, in ancient Britain at the dawn of the Middle Ages. This was a turbulent period in Western history. Every phase of human life was touched with conflicts over religion, customs, language, heritage and land. The play revolves around the people of this era. Therefore, the author has found it necessary to discuss groups of persons related to her topic: Celts, Druids, Belgae, and Saxons.

The Celts were not a race: they were an aggregate of anthropological types (Dahmus 94; Hubert xiii). This group seemed to originate in Gaul, and at its maximum expansion stretched from the British Isles to the Galatian settlements of Asia Minor (Hubert 9; Piggott 24). According to archeological, historical and philological findings, the Island Celts were concentrated in western Britain, Ireland and Scotland (Hubert 24; Piggott 9). However, it should be noted that although these Celtic tribes were sprinkled throughout Britain, *Raven's Song* is set near Salisbury Plain which is located in south central Britain (Hubert 8).

The Druids, a religious order of some of the Celts, also were not a race. They are most noted for their practice of human sacrifice, specifically with the use of blood and
entrails cut out of the victims and burned on an altar to their gods. They were also noted for the burning of live victims. After a group of captives was burned alive in a huge hollow tree which resembled a man, they also became noted for the burning of live victims (Hardick 121; Piggott 110). The Druids were more than dark magicians or priests; they actually had a structured political society (Piggott 108; Ross 54). It was they who judged and decided all public and private disputes. They determined all rewards or penalties. If any person or persons did not abide by their decision, or challenged the Druids in any way, they were banned from sacrificial rites, which was the heaviest penalty known to Druidism (Kendrick 77; Ross 55).

Those so banned were reckoned as impious or criminal: all men move out of their path and shun their approach and conversation, for fear they may get some harm from this contact, and no justice is done if they seek it, no distinction falls to their share. (Kendrick 77)

This punishment is the premise for the banishment of the character, Raven, in Raven's Song.

Until the year A.D. 43 when Claudius completely abolished the barbarous and inhuman religion of the Druids in Gaul, the Druids remained a powerful structure. The British Druids were not affected by the Roman campaign until the year A.D. 61 (Kendrick 99; Piggott 119). The Druidic order began to lose its exalted status with the outside
world around the end of the first century. However, it was possible that "Druidism was still to some extent a current faith and capable of revival whenever Roman power was temporarily weakened" or eluded (Kendrick 99). Raven's Song is set at the beginning of the third century, so it is plausible that Druidism and the sacrifice of humans was still being practiced.

The Belgae were the last of the Celts who began invading Britain around the year 75 B.C. (Hubert 190-193; Willson 9). Under pressure from Roman invasion and other war-like Germanic tribes, they came to Britain in droves. Their religion was dark and superstitious, encompassing a belief in such phenomena as goblins, elves and spirits that dwelt in springs, rocks and sacred groves. "Many of these spirits were malignant and had to be propitiated by sacrifices, even of human beings" (Wilson 9). They also used the Druids as their priestly fathers, teachers and magistrates. The Belgae were the only tribe of Celts that had a specific physicality; they were tall and fair-haired. The Belgae were very hostile and constantly at war among their various tribes. This perpetual war caused hatreds and divisions among the early inhabitants of Britain (Whittock 5; Wilson 10).

The exact migration of the Saxons is made up of much more conjecture than the aforementioned cultures.

A major omission from the text The Germanica, is the whereabouts of the tribe known to later Roman
writers as the Saxons (This excepting that Tacitus' Eudoses were the same as the Jutes who were mentioned by Bede). Tacitus clearly had not heard of them by that name. (Whittock 6)

Ptolemy rectified this in the second century A.D. "He described the Saxons as a Germanic people who lived on the neck of the Cimbriic peninsula in modern Holstein" (Whittock 6). It is possible that the people he called Saxons, and those Tacitus previously called Reudigni, were one and the same (Whittock 6). This is the same area where the previously mentioned Reudini lived, perhaps further evidence that the Reudini and the Saxons were in fact the same.

The Saxons, rather than being a clearly recognized tribe, were more of a confederacy. Between A.D. 250 and 450 the Saxons began to move southwestward toward the Rhine. Villages began to emerge there and along the northwest coast of Europe. "The next move was into the Roman land of Gaul or that of Gaul or that of Britain" (Whittock 6). From the third century onwards the Saxons began to raid both coasts of the Roman provinces. "The name became synonymous for piracy and barbarism" (Whittock 6). Though the Saxons were made up of many tribes, the victims were not concerned with minor cultural differences. They had one enemy--the Saxon. Every enemy was a Saxon and every Saxon was an enemy. Though the Saxons were commonly known as pirates, it is plausible that through the Roman-Christian influence some might adopt
Christianity as their religion.

In the year A.D. 200 the occupants of Britian were in a state of metamorphosis, fusion and confusion. The Romans brought Christianity with a primary objective to stamp out Druidism and the horrific practice of human sacrifice. The Druid religion continued in secrecy, eluding the Roman soldiers. The Belgae, as well as other Celtic tribes, were at war among themselves. The Saxons were beginning to move westward, plundering and pirating as they went. Christianity was continuing to sweep across the continent. Surely this was a time when man questioned his heritage, his destiny and his gods.
CAST OF CHARACTERS

RAVEN, a young woman, small framed, graceful yet courageous; a Celt—daughter of the High Priest of the Druids. She is bitter and suspicious.

HIGH PRIEST, an elderly man, father of Raven, regal and ominous, attaining the highest honor of the Druidic religion. His religious duties come before everything else, including his family.

AUCTIONEER, a Celt. Dynamic, persuasive and sly.

HYWEL, an older man, unclean and unkempt—a Saxon merchant and bounty hunter for the Romans.

FERRON, a young man, strong, committed, compassionate but compulsive. A Saxon Christian.

GABRAN, a young man nearing thirty. One time Belgae warrior, now Christian. Best friend to Ferron.

FYNON, a man nearing thirty, loves to joke, laugh and eat, yet is not fat. He is also a Saxon Christian and brother to Ferron.

NALLA, a woman in her mid-forties. A Roman Christian. Slender, and has an air of wisdom and grace. Strong-willed yet shows great integrity.

KATIMA, a young woman. She is small, frail and around eight months pregnant. She has never been able to
carry a baby to term.

TILLA, a kitchen maid, young, lower class, but caring and courageous.

GUNAR, an older man, large-framed, angry and vengeful. A Belgae and hater of Roman Christians and Celts.
He is a committed father and leader of his people.

EELIR, a young man. A world traveler of German descent.
He is gentle yet very frank and honest. He is solid in his Christian convictions.

BODEN, an older man, very generous and loving. A Saxon Christian, cousin to Nalla and father to Eelir and Delanna.

DELANNA, a young girl, energetic, slightly mischievous.

YOUNG MAIDEN, the sacrificial maiden of the Druids.
Younger sister of Raven and daughter to the High Priest.

VILLAGERS AND MERCHANTS: THE CHORUS

Six men
Six women
SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1 - Outside a Celtic village near Stonehenge. Evening.
Scene 2 - In the prison. The same night.
Scene 3 - At the auction. The next morning.
Scene 4 - In the woods. The same evening.
Scene 5 - In the woods. Morning.
Scene 6 - The house. The same afternoon.
Scene 7 - The house. The same evening.
Scene 8 - The house. Two days later. Dusk.
Scene 9 - The house. Moments later.

ACT II

Scene 1 - At the house of Fabian. Seven months later. Afternoon.
Scene 2 - At the house. The same night.
Scene 3 - At the house. Morning.
Scene 4 - At the house. Later the same day.
Scene 5 - At the house. That evening.
Scene 6 - In a cave. Just after dawn of the next day.
Scene 7 - At the camp of the Caravan. Moments later.
Scene 8 - At the camp. That evening.
Scene 9 - At the camp. Two months later. Evening.
Scene 10 - At the camp. The next morning.
Act I--Scene 1

(The play is set in a Celtic village somewhere near Stonehenge. The year is 200 A.D.. The people are more advanced than their primitive ancestors, yet less progressive in thought and education than the medieval. There are many battles and skirmishes among the various cultures such as the Celts, Anglos and Saxons. The various tribes of the Celts even feuded among themselves. The people were superstitious of other cultures and religions. They were also suspicious of everyone outside their particular tribe or sect).

OVERTURE

MARCH

(The curtain rises as a young maiden and the High Priest of the Druids are leading a procesional. Another maiden, Ralian, pushes her way through the crowd and tries to free the young maiden. In the process she tears the robe of the High Priest. She is then seized and beaten as the young maiden is being carried off. This scene should have a feeling of highly choreographed dance and pantomime, creating an impressionistic feeling. The lights change and the woman is found cowering on the floor as the High Council of the Druids circle around her. Her hands are tied with ropes).

High Priest

(Music continues). We find you guilty! You have greatly shamed your people and angered your gods.

Priest #2

You dared to interfere with the sacrifice of the winter sun...the most sacred of our Druidic rituals.

Priest#3

This would have angered the gods by depriving them of the blood of the chosen virgin.

High Priest

You are sentenced to prison then you will be sold as a slave! From this day forward you shall be called Raven! You are cursed, you are friendless, you are nothing. Guards take her away!

Raven

But Father! (The guards grab her, she struggles).
High priest
I have made my decision!

Raven
Father, don’t let them take me! I’m your daughter!

High Priest
I have no daughters; one died as chosen sacrifice, the other...(He pauses and looks at her as if to say "you"). As a traitor! From this moment on, you are dead to me! Guards take her! (Guards grab Raven and exit as the villagers spit at her and curse her).

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 2

(Raven is alone in a small prison chamber. Her hands are tied with ropes).

Guard
Stand back! (She backs up a few steps. He enters with some bread and water). Here is some bread and water for you. (He leaves).

Raven
Food? Food! They expect me to eat! (She kicks over the plate). How can I eat? How can I live? I have nothing, no home, no people, not even my name, and tomorrow I will lose my freedom. (She cries). Why...why? (As the music begins there is a procession following the young maiden and the High Priest. It is far up-stage either behind a scrim or in very dark lights. Dream like).

ALL I DID

RAVEN

ALL I DID WAS TRY AND SAVE MY SISTER.
SHE WAS TO BE THE SACRIFICE OF THE WINTER SUN.
CHOSEN AS THE SACRED MAIDEN FOR THE GODS OF THE CIRCLE OF STONES.
ALL I DID WAS TRY AND STOP HER MURDER,
TO SAVE HER FROM THE WRETCHED BEAST.
(Raven runs toward Young Maiden. Lights out on Maiden).

AND FOR THIS I AM BEING PUNISHED,
BANISHED FROM MY PEOPLE BY THE PRIEST.
(She falls to her knees).

TO BE CALLED RAVEN, THE BIRD OF EVIL.
RAVEN, THE BIRD OF THE NIGHT.
TO BE CALLED RAVEN, THE BIRD OF THE DEVIL.
CURSED LIKE A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT.
(She stands).

NEVER AGAIN TO BE RALIAN, DAUGHTER OF LAUGHTER.
NEVER AGAIN TO BE RALIAN, THE FRIEND.
NEVER TO MARRY, NEVER A MOTHER.
THIS HAPPINESS FROM ME THE GODS HAVE TAKEN!
WHAT KIND OF GODS DO WE SERVE?
DEMANDING BLOOD OF THE YOUTH!
WHAT KIND OF GODS DO WE TRUST?
THEY MUST BE EVIL,
FOR THE LIFE OF YOUNG VIRGINS THEY LUST.
CAN THIS BE RIGHT?
ALL I DID WAS TO LOVE HER TOO MUCH.
(Spoken). I hate you! I will never serve you or trust you
or call on you again!
GO AHEAD AND STRIKE ME DEAD IF YOU ARE THERE.
IF YOU HEAR MY PRAYER.
NO, FOR THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO CARE.
(Spoken). Go ahead and strike me dead I say! For you will
never hear me pray. I will find another way.
THERE IS NOTHING WORSE,
THAN TO LIVE A LIFE SO CURSED.
THE LIFE OF RAVEN THE EVIL BIRD.
(She cries).

Guard
(Enter guards). It is near sunrise, we must go!

Raven
No! (She struggles with them. One strikes her).

Guard
Do you want more of the same?

Raven
(Holding her jaw). No.

Guard
Then give us no more trouble! (He binds one of her hands
to his with the rope).
(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 3

(At the market in Salisbury Plain. It is just before the auction begins).

Gabran
Ferron and Fynon! My dear friends, it is good to see you!

Ferron
(They embrace). Yes, you son of a dog! (They laugh). It has been ages since we have seen you!

Fynon
(Embracing him). Son of a dog? More like son of a bear!

Gabran
At least I'm not the son of a Saxon, you old pirate! (They laugh).

Fynon
And where is that bear of a father of yours?

Gabran
Impatiently waiting for the slave auction.

Ferron
How I hate those auctions...people being bought and sold like animals!

Gabran
I, too, hate them, but you know father. He will never change his ways, I fear.

Ferron
Never give up...I won't.

Gunar
(Entering and seeing them). Gabran, come away from them! Have I not told you to stay clear of these Christian dogs!

Gabran
Father! I am now a man...and have the right to choose my friends! No! More than friends, they are my brothers!

Gunar
They spread the Christian poison of their Roman Christian mother! Now, come away from them!
Gabran
(Hugging them). Goodbye dear brothers... I will meet you later! (They exit. Raven is being lead to the auction block. Gabran and Gunar are arguing, Gabran exits angrily).

AUCTION SONG

AUCTIONEER, RAVEN AND BIDDERS

AUCTIONEER
AND NEXT WE HAVE A FINE,
YOUNG MAIDEN ON THE BLOCK.
QUITE A PRIZE AS YOU CAN
SEE AND SHE SHOULD BRING
THE HIGHEST PRICE.
IT'S BEEN QUITE SOMETIME
SINCE I HAVE SEEN A WOMAN
OF SUCH QUALITY, YES QUALITY.

SHE IS YOUNG AND STRONG
AND A BEAUTY OF BEAUTIES.

SHE IS EVERYTHING YOU NEED
AND A BEAUTY OF BEAUTIES.

SHE HAS GOOD STRONG LIMBS
AND IF DESIRED WOULD BE
EXCELLENT FOR CHILD BEARING,
giving many more good strong
SERVANTS.
SHE CAN WORK IN THE FIELDS OR
IN THE KITCHEN, SHE CAN NURSE
YOUR CHILDREN OR TEND
YOUR ANIMALS.
SHE WILL BE THE BEST OF
SERVANTS.
AND NOW FOR THE BIDDING...

WE WILL BEGIN AT TWENTY
BRASS TOKENS, DO I HEAR
TWENTY?

RAVEN
WHAT AM I? AN ANIMAL?
PUT ON DISPLAY AT THE
MARKETPLACE TO BE BOUGHT
AND SOLD AS SOMETHING
LESS THAN HUMAN.
I AM A WOMAN, A CELT,
DAUGHTER OF RATH, LORD
OF OUR VILLAGE AND LEADER
OF MY PEOPLE,
NOT A PETTY THIEF.
WHAT AM I? AN ANIMAL?
PUT ON DISPLAY AT THE
MARKETPLACE TO BE BOUGHT
AND SOLD AS SOMETHING
LESS THAN HUMAN.
I AM A WOMAN, A CELT,
DAUGHTER OF RATH, LORD
OF OUR VILLAGE AND LEADER
OF MY PEOPLE,
NOT A PETTY THIEF.
I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO
HUMILIATED, TO BE
PEDDLED LIKE A COW.

I WILL BE NO MAN'S SERVANT
OR HIS WHORE! I WOULD
RATHER RUN AWAY AND DIE!
(Sarcastically). I
WONDER WHAT PRICE I WILL
BRING?

TWENTY BRASS TOKENS FOR
A HUMAN LIFE, I COULD
I COULD BUY A VASE FOR THAT!

I HAVE NEVER SO HELPLESS, SO WORTHLESS.

I MUST STAND SILENT AS MY DESTINY IS BEING DECIDED FOR ME.

THIS FEELS AS IF IT WILL NEVER, NEVER END.

I AM FORCED TO LIVE

A LIFE OF HUMILIATION AND DISGRACE.

AH! SILVER!
IT IS GOOD TO SEE A MAN WHO KNOWS QUALITY MERCHANDISE.
DO I HEAR TWENTY-FIVE? SILVER COINS?

I HAVE NEVER FELT SO
MAN #1
THIRTY!

MAN #2
THIRTY-FIVE!

AUCTIONEER
DO I HEAR FORTY FOR THE
MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN ALL
OF SALISBURY PLAIN?

MAN #1
FORTY!

MAN #3
FORTY-FIVE!

MAN #4 (HYWEL)
THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD!
(CROWD REACTS).

AUCTIONEER
THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD!
WILL YOU LET THIS SAXON
OUTBID YOU? (CROWD
REACTS).

AUCTIONEER
WILL YOU ALLOW ONE OF OUR
WOMEN, A CELT, TO BE SOLD
TO A SAXON, A PIRATE,
A BARBARIAN?

MAN #2
THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD,
THREE BARRELS OF OIL AND
A FINE HORSE!

MAN #4 (HYWEL)
FORTY PIECES OF GOLD!
(CROWD REACTS).

AUCTIONEER
FORTY PIECES OF GOLD.
AGAIN THE SAXON OUTBIDS YOU.
WHO WILL BETTER THAT OFFER?

HELPLESS, SO
WORTHLESS.

I MUST STAND SILENT
AS MY DESTINY IS BEING
DECIDED FOR ME.

WHAT WILL BECOME OF ME?
THE MAN IN THE BLUE
HAS A KIND FACE, PERHAPS
HE WILL TREAT ME WELL.

HE LOOKS CRUEL I HOPE
IT IS NOT HIM.

OH PLEASE, SOMEONE BID
HIGHER.
WHAT KIND OF A HORRID FATE
IS IN STORE FOR ME?
I HAVE CURSED THE GODS AND
NOW THEY TRULY PUNISH ME.

SOMEONE PLEASE!
AUCTIONEER
GOING ONCE...  I HAVE ANGERED THE GODS!

AUCTIONEER
GOING TWICE...  I AM CURSED!

AUCTIONEER
GOING THREE TIMES...  I HAVE NO HOPE!

AUCTIONEER
SOLD!

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 4

(Later that evening along the road).

Hywel
(Looking at her). You puzzle me...such a fine lady to be
sold as a slave. Why...I wonder? (She looks at him).
Do you ever speak?

Raven
Yes, my Lord Hywel.

Hywel
Well, then, speak!

Raven
I know little of your language.

Hywel
Do you mock me? (He strikes her).

Raven
No, my lord!

Hywel
That is better! (He stares at her, then walks to her and
starts stroking her hair). What pretty hair. (Raven
wincres). Do I disgust you? (He grabs her neck but not so
tight as to choke her).

Raven
No, my lord.
Hywel
(Caressing her neck). Such a lovely neck. (He notices her necklace). What is this? It is a god of the Druids! (He rips it off her neck).

Raven
No!

Hywel
Yes it is! You were the one...I had heard rumors.

Raven
(Grabbing for it). That is mine. It is all that I have left!

Hywel
You dare to defy me? (He strikes her).

Raven
Oh, no, my lord, it is just the only memory of my family left to me!

Hywel
Then your family were Druids! And you were banished for interfering with some sort of sacrifice...were you not?

Raven
No!

Hywel
Yes, they were, you liar! (He strikes her). Why do you think that I would pay so much money for a woman! Only for the bounty that you and your people will bring me. Where are they?

Raven
Dead, my lord!

Hywel
(He strikes her). You dare to lie to me? You worthless whore!

Raven
I may be your slave, but I am no man's whore!

Hywel
Never speak that way to me again! (He strikes her). You will be what I say you are, you worthless whore! You are nothing...nothing but my slave, and, if I choose, my whore! I said tell me where they are! The Romans will pay a good price for information concerning Druids! Now where are they? (He strikes her again).
Raven
(Through her tears). They are dead my lord, killed by the Romans! (Enter Gabran).

Hywel
(Striking her). We will see! If you lie to me, I will kill you!

Gabran
Do not strike her again!

Hywel
She is my slave, I will do as I please! (He strikes her again).

Gabran
Do not strike her again!

Hywel
Draw your sword. (He does. They fight. Gabran pins him down but does not kill him).

Hywel
Do not stay your sword...kill me. Kill me coward.

Gabran
(He presses his sword into Hywel's neck, then lifts it up). No. My God does not permit me to kill anyone. Nor does he allow me to watch a young girl being beaten.

Hywel
She is my property. I paid good money for her.

Gabran
(Tossing him a bag of money). Here, this should more than cover what you paid for her. Come with me, girl. I won't hurt you. (She pauses and looks at Hywel). He will never hurt you again, now come with me. (She does). Now go!

Hywel
(Sardonically). Yes, of course my lord...(muttering) for the time. (Exit Hywel).

Raven
Why did you let him live...you could have killed him.

Gabran
Yes, I could have. A few years ago I would have, but I have found a better way to live. I have found God. (Raven grimaces).
Raven
The gods would have been honored by his death. It would have been a great heroic deed and given you favor with them.

Gabran
I suppose that the pagan gods would have. But I do not believe in the pagan gods; to me they are all false. I believe in the Christian God who teaches us to love our enemies.

Raven
You love the man who beat me?

Gabran
Yes, but I did not like how he treated you.

Raven
I do not understand.

Gabran
Neither does my father, Lord Gunar. He thinks that the Christian God is weak. He will soon learn that this Christian God will change the thinking of the world. It is late and we must rest. (They lie down and the lights dim. Then Hywel is seen entering. He creeps up on Gabran and stabs him. Raven grabs a large rock and strikes Hywel on the head; he falls to the ground).

Raven
He is dead! Gabran is dead!

Ferron and Fynon
(Calling from off-stage). Gabran...Gabran you old son of a dog! Where are you? (Hearing them Raven exits).
(Enter Ferron and Fynon).

Ferron
Gabran wake up and greet your friends properly!

Fynon
Gabran wake up! (He nudges him). Gabran! (They roll him over and see his wound).

Ferron
He is dead! (Holding Gabran). Oh, my friend...my dear friend! (He cries).

Fynon
(Crossing toward Hywel). This must have been his murderer. He is dead too.
Ferron
We must take him to his father.

Fynon
Yes. (Ferron picks up Gabran. Ferron and Fynon exit).

Raven
(Entering. Dazed, she goes to Hywel and takes the necklace back from him).

THESE GENTLE HANDS
RAVEN

WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I'VE KILLED A MAN.
WITH THESE TWO HANDS I'VE KILLED A MAN.
MY FATHER...HE USED TO SAY, I HAD SUCH GENTLE HANDS.
WHAT WOULD HE SAY NOW THAT THEY'VE KILLED A MAN.

THESE SAME GENTLE HANDS TORE THE ROBES OF THE PRIEST.
THESE SAME GENTLE HANDS TOOK ME FROM MY HOME AND FAMILY.
WITH A STONE THEY GAVE A BLOW TO HYWEL'S HEAD.
NOW BECAUSE OF THESE CURSED HANDS HE LIES THERE DEAD.
(Lights fade on Raven and up on Gunar. Ferron and Fynon enter with Gabran.

Gunar
What has happened? (Walking toward them). Gabran!
(Seeing that he is dead). Oh Gabran, why? Didn't I teach you how to be a good soldier? Why...I know.... (Looking at Ferron and Fynon). Because of you and the poison of your Roman Christian mother! You have made him soft! You have cost him his life! Get out...get out! (Ferron and Fynon exit).

WHAT HAS HE DONE?

GUNAR

WHAT HAS HE DONE?
WHO HAS KILLED MY SON?
HE STAYED HIS HAND AND WAS MURDERED BY THIS MAN.
AS HIS FATHER I DO SAY
THE REASON THAT HE DIED THIS DAY WAS BECAUSE HE HE BELIEVED IN THIS NEW CHRISTIAN WAY.
(Lights up on Raven. The songs occur simultaneously).
RAVEN
WHAT HAVE I DONE?
I'VE KILLED A MAN.
WITH THESE TWO HANDS,
I'VE KILLED A MAN.
MY FATHER HE USED TO SAY,
I HAD SUCH GENTLE HANDS.
WHAT WOULD HE SAY NOW
THAT THEY'VE KILLED A MAN.

GUNAR
WHAT HAS HE DONE?
WHO HAS KILLED MY SON?
HE STAYED HIS HAND AND WAS
MURDERED BY THIS MAN.
AS HIS FATHER I DO SAY
THE REASON THAT HE DIED THIS
DAY WAS BECAUSE HE BELIEVED
IN THIS NEW CHRISTIAN WAY.

THERE IS NOTHING WORSE,
THAN TO LIVE A LIFE SO CURSED.
THE LIFE OF RAVEN, THE EVIL BIRD!

I SWEAR THAT I WILL PURGE
THIS LAND OF EVERY WEAK AND SHEEPISH CHRISTIAN. I WILL
SEND THIS NEW GOD BACK TO ROME
NEVER AGAIN WILL HE PLAGUE MY HOME.

I am nothing. I am worthless and now I am a murderess.

I will find the murderers of my son. Then I will purge the land of all Christians!

(RBLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 5
(The next morning, in the woods).

Ferron
Something moved...over there in the bushes.

Fynon
This one's mine. (He draws his bow).

Ferron
Hold, brother! It's a girl! (They go to her. She screams and strikes at them).

Raven
Go away! Or better, kill me!

Ferron
We will not hurt you!

Raven
You lie!
Ferron
No, we do not! We will not touch you. A peace offering...are you thirsty? (He tosses her a water skin. She looks at him as she drinks).

Ferron
Come with us and you will be treated with the same kindness.

Fynon
We will give you food, clothes and a warm place to sleep.

Raven
No! I will be no man's slave or his whore! I would rather die in these woods!

Ferron
You will not be our slave or our whore! We do not believe in such things. Our God does not permit it.

Raven
You lie! All Saxons lie!

Ferron
Not if they are Christians first!

Raven
Christians? The same as lord Gabran?

Ferron
Yes!

Raven
I do not believe you! Leave me here in these woods, I can take care of myself.

Fynon
We can't leave you! What do you think will happen to you here?

Raven
The same thing that will happen to me with you! Now go!

Ferron
She will not cooperate.

Fynon
No, she won't, little brother!
Ferron
I suppose we will have to take her against her will!

Fynon
Yes, we will. Maybe mother and Katima can talk some sense into her!

Ferron
Yes. If you will not come with us then we will have to take you by force. We can not just leave you here alone in these woods! (He goes over to her and picks her up. She struggles as they exit).

Raven
If you lie, I will take my own life! (Still striking at him).

Ferron
We do not lie, good lady.

Raven
We shall see. (She studies Ferron). Since you force me to go, you must know that I am cursed by the gods. Do you still desire to help me?

Ferron
Yes.

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 6

(Later that afternoon at the house of Fabian).

Ferron
(Entering with Raven and Fynon). Mother, Katima come quickly. (They do).

Nalla
It is a girl.

Ferron
Yes, mother, we found her in the woods.

Fynon
She still fears us. We thought that she would trust you...you being a woman.

Nalla
Oh, child you need not fear us. We will help you. Come,
let me wash and mend your clothes as you clean yourself. Then we will all sit down to a nice meal. (They exit).

Ferron
I wonder what kind of wife that maiden would make a man?

Fynon
What are you thinking of? Remember the turmoil that we faced deciding what to believe in...his ways or hers? Do you want all of that again?

Ferron
No brother. She told us that her family was dead. She's been through great trials of recent, and if she is treated poorly, if she finds no compassion, she will take her life. I have been looking for a wife for many months. No woman from this region will have me. The Saxons will not marry a Christian and the Celts will not marry a pirate. She has nothing, she does not deserve to be a slave or a whore...then what is left but to be a wife? Besides all that, I like her and I admire her spirit.

Fynon
She is a pagan.

Ferron
So were we, and father, but through mother's prayers and kindness, we found the Christ--and she will, also.

Fynon
Oh little brother...you are begging for trouble.

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 7

(Raven is sitting alone by the fire. Ferron enters).

Ferron
Raven.

Raven
Yes, my lord. (She looks frightened).

Ferron
Let us talk. Raven...it is the name of a bird?

Raven
Yes, my lord.
Ferron
A bird...a gentle bird, your name suits you well, good lady.

Raven
(Pausing, not knowing what to say). Yes, it suits me better than you know, my lord. (He looks at her intensely. She becomes uncomfortable and tries to change the subject). Thank you for the gown...it must be of great guerth.

Ferron
Guerth, what is guerth?

Raven
Um... cost? it must be of great cost.

Ferron
Oh, value. Guerth is your word for value.

Raven
Val-u. I see, value.

Ferron
Yes, I suppose it has value. Its greatest...guerth? (She nods yes.)..is that it becomes you.

Raven
Oh...thank you, my lord. (She is embarrassed. She tries to change the subject). The huan is beautiful.

Ferron
That means sun, does it not?

Raven
Yes! But how did you know?

Ferron
Just as you know some of my language, I also know some of yours. After all I have lived among the Celts for a few years. But I see we have much to learn from one another. Would you care for a drink?

Raven
Drink? I feel so foolish...now I must ask you the meaning of a word. What is drink? (Ferron holds up a goblet and pours the wine into it and offers it to her). Oh, ibim! Yes I would. (Ferron laughs). Why do you laugh at me?
Ferron
I'm not laughing at you I'm laughing at ibim... ib-im, ibim! Such a funny sounding word.

Raven
Ibim... ibim, yes it is! (She laughs). But so is your word dr-rink.

Ferron
Drink...dr-ink, drink! (He laughs). Yes, I admit it! It is also funny. (They laugh then pause. Then they realize there has been silence for a long period of time. Again they become a little uncomfortable). How your eyes sparkle when you laugh. (Raven looks away). Are you afraid of me?

Raven
No...yes...I do not know you. I do not know your customs, your gods, your language...and I find myself here in your home, sitting alone talking to you. You are kind and gentle I know that now... but what I truly fear is the future. What will become of me? I do not know, I suppose I am just confused. Tell me, my lord, why did you help me, and give me food and clothes? I am a stranger. What do you truly want from me? I do not understand.

Ferron
I want nothing from you...my God commands me to help those in need. You were in need, so I helped you.

Raven
This God of yours is very different from the gods of my people.

Ferron
Yes, He is.

Raven
Thank you for your kindness. You are not a Saxon dog...and you have spoken the truth to me.

Ferron
(Smiling at her). You are most welcome, good lady.

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 8
(Several days later, the women are cooking and cleaning).

_Ferron_

(Entering). Hello mother...Raven, Katima! Mother I need to speak to you. It is a matter of urgent business.

_Nalla_

What, my son?

_Ferron_

Privately, mother!

_Nalla_

Raven, Katima...leave us for a moment, please. (They do).

_I want Raven, mother._

_Nalla_

_Ferron_

I want her for my wife!

_Nalla_

I had a feeling that this would happen. It will be difficult living with an unbeliever. Remember the struggles that father and I had.

_Ferron_

Yes, but you loved each other.

_Nalla_

Yes, finally after many years of hatred and misunderstandings. Are you ready for that if it should come?

_Ferron_

Yes, mother!

_Nalla_

You say it...I hope you mean it.

_Ferron_

I do, mother! Mother, will you give your blessings to us?

_Nalla_

To us? Have you asked Raven of her feelings?

_Ferron_

No...but I am certain she will say yes. What else does
she have?

Nalla
She has her pride...and her freedom...for what it's worth.
A woman alone, she does not have much to look forward to.

Ferron
I agree, mother. We are the only family she has now!
Mother...I love her...I think she feels the same for me.

Nalla
Yes, I believe she does. There is something uniquely beautiful about a woman in love...and I see it in her, my son. Ferron, hold on to that love and pray for her daily. Do not expect sudden change...and someday hopefully she will seek the Christian ways. Can you do this, my son?

Ferron
Yes mother!

Nalla
Then I will bless you. (He picks her up and twirls her around). Ferron! Ferron! Put me down!

Ferron
Yes mother! (He kisses her, then puts her down). Not a word mother...let me be the one!

Nalla
Of course, my son! (She laughs). Raven, Katima...come and help me prepare the evening meal. (They do).

(BLACKOUT)

(Later that evening, the women are just finishing up their cleaning; the men are sitting by the fire).

Fynon
What I need is a nice walk in the cool of the evening.
(He exits).

Nalla
Katima...come let me show you the new fabric I bought at market today! (They smile and exit).

Ferron
Raven, please come and sit with me.
Raven
Yes, my lord. (She sits).

Ferron
(Pausing, it is very difficult for him to ask the question). Raven...will you be my wife?

Raven
(Staring at him with disbelief). What?

Will you marry me?

Ferron
No.

Why Raven?

Raven
I cannot marry you. I will be leaving here soon.

Ferron
Then what will you do? Where will you go? You do not deserve to be a slave or a whore, and if you leave here...well, not all men will be as kind to you as we were. Who knows what will become of you? Raven, I just cannot bear the thought of something happening to you.

Raven
What you say is true, but I will let no man marry me out of pity!

Ferron
Is that what you think I feel, pity? I want a wife and children.

Raven
Why have you not married before?

Ferron
No Celt would have me for fear of being disowned by her family and her gods. After all, I am a Saxon, an enemy, as well a Christian. Besides all of that, I have never loved another before you. When I found you, I of course noticed your beauty...but beyond that I saw strength, loyalty and courage. I admired you and knew I could grow to love you. I thought that I noticed your love for me...but I see that I was wrong.
Raven
It is for your protection that I say no! I will only bring sorrow to you and your family!

Ferron
Raven, I love you. You will only bring happiness to me!

Raven
How can you love me knowing that I am a curse... (She clutches her necklace). Knowing of my past?

Ferron
Your past means nothing to me! Just as mine should mean nothing to you. From this moment on we shall look only to the future. I love you, Raven. I want you for my wife. (She looks at him for a long time).

Raven
I am honored my, lord, I will serve you well. (She drops her eyes to the floor).

Ferron
(He walks to her and takes her chin in his hands and lifts her eyes to meet his). Raven... I want more than your service, I want your love. If you give me service without love than you are not my wife but my slave... do you understand what I am saying?

Raven
Yes, my lord. (He starts to kiss her but Fynon enters).

Fynon
Oh, go on and kiss her. Let it never be said that Fynon interrupted your first kiss. (He does).

Raven
(Surprised). Ferron! (He kisses her again).

Ferron
Mother, Katima, come here! (They enter). Raven and I are to be married! Tomorrow!

Nalla
Ferron, it is too soon.

Katima
We could not possibly be ready.

Ferron
Two days... no more!
Two days it is!

(BLACKOUT)

Act I--Scene 9
(Two days later. It is dusk).

I AM TO BE MARRIED

RAVEN
I AM TO BE MARRIED TO A MAN I DO NOT KNOW.
WILL HE ALWAYS LOVE ME OR WILL HE TURN COLD?
THOUGH HE IS HANDSOME, THAT DOES NOT MEAN SO MUCH.
WILL HE TREAT ME KINDLY?
DOES HE HAVE A GENTLE TOUCH?

NALLA
(Enters with jewels and veil to adorn Raven).
MY SON IS TO BE MARRIED TO A STRANGER FROM THIS LAND.
WILL SHE RESIST HIS LOVE OR FOLLOW HIS COMMAND?
THOUGH SHE IS PRETTY, THAT DOES NOT MEAN SO MUCH.
WILL SHE TREAT HIM TENDERLY?
AND HAVE A GENTLE TOUCH?

KATIMA
(Enters and starts combing her hair).
TWO STRANGERS TO BE MARRIED FROM TWO DIFFERENT LANDS.
WILL THEY LOVE EACH OTHER AS THEY'RE JOINED HAND IN HAND?
TWO DIFFERENT STRANGERS WITH TWO DIFFERENT TONGUES.
THE DIFFERENCES ARE MANY, CAN THEY BECOME ONE?

NALLA
CAN THEY BECOME ONE?

RAVEN
CAN WE BECOME ONE?

KATIMA
I WONDER.

NALLA
I WORRY.

RAVEN
I’M AFRAID.
ALL THREE
TWO STRANGERS WILL BE MARRIED TO SOMEONE THEY DO NOT KNOW.
CAN THEY LOVE EACH OTHER AS THEY'RE BOUND BY RINGS OF GOLD?
IT IS ALMOST TIME FOR THE WEDDING; THE MEN WILL BE HERE SOON.
WILL THIS MARRIAGE RESULT IN HAPPIESS OR WILL IT END IN RUIN?

KATIMA
I WONDER?

NALLA
I WORRY.

RAVEN
I'M AFRAID.

Fynon
(Off-stage). Has she been prepared?

Nalla
She is prepared! (Men rush in and carry her away, women follow. Lights dim and the wedding music begins. Ferron enters and stands center stage. Then Raven and the others enter as Nalla leads her to Ferron).

Fynon
Since there is no Christian priest in our village, and since our beloved father, Fabian, is now dead, the responsibility of the marriage lies upon me. Who speaks for this woman, Raven?

Nalla
I do.

Fynon
And who gives their blessing upon her and this marriage?

Nalla
I do.

Fynon
And who speaks for this man Ferron?

Nalla
I do.

Fynon
And who gives their blessing upon him and this marriage?
Nalla
I do. (She then takes Raven's hand and places it in Ferron's. Raven and Ferron kneel).

SONG OF VOWS

Fynon
Raven, though you are a stranger to our customs and religion, will you agree to repeat the sacred vows of marriage after me?

Yes.

Raven

FYNON

AS THE CHURCH,

RAVEN

AS THE CHURCH,

FYNON

IS SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST,

RAVEN

IS SUBJECT UNTO CHRIST,

FYNON

I VOW TO SUBMIT MYSELF TO YOU.

RAVEN

I VOW TO SUBMIT MYSELF TO YOU.

FYNON

AND TO BE THAT SPECIAL HELPMATE

RAVEN

THAT SPECIAL HELPMATE

FYNON

THAT GOD

RAVEN

THAT GOD

BOTH

HAS CALLED ME TO BE.

FYNON

Ferron repeat after me.

AS CHRIST
FERRON

AS CHRIST

LOVED THE CHURCH,

FYNON

LOVED THE CHURCH,

FERRON

I VOW TO BE YOUR SPIRITUAL COVERING.

FYNON

AND TO SEEK GOD ON YOUR BEHALF,

FERRON

ON YOUR BEHALF,

FYNON

FOR GOD

FERRON

FOR GOD

BOTH

DESIRES THIS OF ME.

RAVEN AND FERRON

FERRON

I VOW

RAVEN

I VOW

BOTH

to give my self to you, that together we might share the
blessings of God's Son.

FERRON

I VOW

RAVEN

I VOW

FERRON

TO COVER
RAVEN

TO FOLLOW

YOU.

FERRON

SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE.

RAVEN

SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE.

FERRON

SO LONG AS WE BOTH SHALL LIVE!

Fynon

As long as you wear this ring, let it remind you of two things:

CIRCLE OF GOLD
(As Fynon sings, chorus repeats in a round).

FYNON

IT HAS NO BEGINNING AND NO END.

CHORUS

IT HAS NO BEGINNING AND NO END.

FYNON

THE CIRCLE MUST NEVER BE BROKEN.

CHORUS

THE CIRCLE MUST NEVER BE BROKEN.

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED

RAVEN AND FERRON

WHAT GOD HAS JOINED

ALL

LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER.

FYNON

JUST AS THE RINGS OF GOLD

ALL

JUST AS THE RINGS OF GOLD

FYNON

CIRCLE ON FOREVER,
CIRCLE ON FOREVER,

ALL

LET THIS MARRIAGE

FYNON

RAVEN AND FERRON

LET THIS MARRIAGE

ALL

CONTINUE THUS, FOREVER.

CONTINUE THUS, FOREVER.

FYNON

(Chorus repeats him).

THE RINGS ARE MADE OF PURE GOLD.

CHORUS

THE RINGS ARE MADE OF PURE GOLD.

FYNON

THEIR ANCIENT VALUE BEHOLD.

CHORUS

THEIR ANCIENT VALUE BEHOLD.

FYNON

PURIFIED BY THE HEAT OF THE FIRE.

ALL

PURIFIED BY THE HEAT OF THE FIRE.

AS THEY DRINK

FROM THE CUP OF PURE FIRE.

LET THEM BE FORGED

AS ONE IN THE HEAT OF DESIRE.

(As the chorus sings, Raven and Ferron exchange rings and take communion).

CHORUS

GOLDEN RING, GOLDEN CIRCLE, WILL JOIN THESE TWO LIVES.

GOLDEN RING, GOLDEN CIRCLE, HUSBAND TO WIFE.

GOLDEN RING, GOLDEN CIRCLE, THESE TWO BECOME ONE.

GOLDEN RING, GOLDEN CIRCLE, JOINED BY GOD'S SON.

(At the end of the song Raven and Ferron kiss. All rejoice. The two then dance. It should be slow and then accelerate as all join in laughing and dancing).

(BLACKOUT)
Act II, scene 1

(Nearly seven months have passed. Nalla and Raven are working in the house cooking a meal over a small clay oven).

Nalla
Raven, will you place the cups and bowls on the table? Katima is not feeling well today.

Raven
Yes, mother. It is to be expected.

Nalla
Yes, it is. (She sets a large bowl of food on the table).

Raven
The baby will be coming soon...she tires easily.

Nalla
Yes, in less than two full moons I shall have a grandchild! (She is beaming).

Raven
(She drops her head). Yes mother...I am happy for her.

Nalla
But happier if it was yours?

Raven
I am ashamed.

Nalla
Do not be ashamed, do you think that you are the only woman who has felt that way? Let me tell you, my dear, we all feel that way. Although I am to be the grandmother, I wish it could be mine. (She smiles and holds her arms out to Raven. Raven runs to her).

Raven
Oh, mother, I want a baby. Katima has been pregnant twice since she has been married. Even though she has lost her babies...at least she knows that she can bear children. Mother...do you think...do you think that....

Nalla
That you are barren? No my dear, it just takes some women longer. You are young and have many years left for bearing children. The worst thing you could possibly do is worry.
Raven
But, mother, I was cursed...maybe....

MUST YOU ALWAYS BE CALLING YOURSELF CURSED

NALLA
OH RAVEN! MUST YOU ALWAYS BE CALLING YOURSELF CURSED?
OH RAVEN! MUST YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS?
YOU CLING TO THE WORDS OF AN EVIL PRIEST.
AND THROUGH THIS YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS!
THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU, THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU,
IS THE ONE YOU YOURSELF ALLOW.

RAVEN
OH MOTHER, I HEAR YOUR WORDS EACH TIME.
OH MOTHER, I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE IN THEM.
OH MOTHER, I ALWAYS FEAR THE WORST.
FOR MOTHER, I KNOW THAT I AM A CURSE!

NALLA
OH RAVEN, MUST YOU ALWAYS BE CALLING YOURSELF CURSED?
OH RAVEN, MUST YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS?
YOU CLING TO THE WORD OF AN EVIL GOD.
AND THROUGH THIS YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS!
THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU, THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU,
IS THE ONE YOU YOURSELF ALLOW.

RAVEN
OH MOTHER, I HEAR YOUR WORDS EACH TIME.
OH MOTHER, I WANT TO BELIEVE IN THEM.
OH MOTHER, I AM TIRED OF FEARING THE WORST.
OH MOTHER, I AM TIRED OF BEING CURSED.

NALLA
OH RAVEN! YOU MUST NOT LOOK TO THE PAST!
OH RAVEN! STOP SEEING UGLINESS IN YOUR LOOKING GLASS.
YOU HAVE A NEW HOME HERE WITH US,
SO PLEASE FORGET THE PAST.
YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE HERE WITH US,
AND OUR LOVE FOR YOU WILL LAST.

RAVEN
OH MOTHER, PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND,
BUT OUR WAYS ARE SO DIFFERENT HERE IN THIS LAND.

NALLA
OH DAUGHTER, I DO TRY TO UNDERSTAND,
I KNOW THAT TIME IS THE BEST HEALER IN ANY LAND.
DAUGHTER, COME AND TAKE MY HAND,
AND WITH TIME, AND GOD, WE'LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND.
BOTH

WE'LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND.

Nalla

(Changing the subject). Did you know that there was a woman named Sarah that prayed for a child and God granted her this child, but not until she was ninety years old? (Raven gasps). Ofttimes God's timing is not our timing. (Raven gives a very subtle grimace at the mention of God). We must wait and pray for His will. Do you understand?

Raven

Yes...but mother ninety years...I want a baby now! (She pauses). I would not like to have to wait ninety years.

Nalla

(Laughing). I assure you that Sarah was a very rare exception. Do not be impatient. Your time will come.

Raven

Yes, mother. (They return to work) Mother?

Nalla

Yes.

Raven

You are very wise. (Nalla smiles and turns away as Raven mutters). Except when you speak of God. (Fynon enters).

Fynon

Hello mother! Raven! (He bellows). Now where is that fat wife of mine? (Katima enters, she is very pregnant).

Katima

And who has made me so fat?

Fynon

Me...and all that roast chicken you ate last night! (They all laugh).

Katima

Well maybe I shouldn't eat so much...and give you a skinny son.

Fynon

No wife, I will have no skinny son. Eat, eat, eat! And speaking of eating, I am hungry and the food smells delicious. (He goes over and snatches a bite of food).
Nalla
(Continuing her work, without looking at him). Stay out of there!

Fynon
What a hard day! It is not easy to maintain the greatest house of weaponry in all of Salisbury Plain. Overseeing so many weapons is often tiring...and the forge is so hot...and the smiths are so lazy, and smell of horse and sweat. Mother, I am glad that father and grandfather were reconciled but why did grandfather have to give him his house of weapons?

Nalla
That was your inheritance from your grandfather and your father, the result of their reconciliation. (Almost to herself). So many years of prayer after my abduction...to see them embrace was glorious.

Raven
(Surprised). You were abducted mother?

Nalla
Yes. There was a huge gap between my husband and my father for many years. When Ferron’s father accepted Christ, he went to my father to ask forgiveness and be reconciled. My father was so touched that he gave him his entire inheritance, for he had no sons, only one daughter, me. That is why. It is part of our story, our heritage, remember it Raven and tell your sons and daughters.

Katima
And we shall tell our son, too! (She rubs her stomach).

Fynon
Yes, mother!

Nalla
Fynon, sometimes I think that you are the greatest complainer in all of the world!

Fynon
Not so mother! How about this? It is good to be home with the best wife and family in all of the world.

Nalla
How you exaggerate...the finest family in all of the world, indeed! I wonder how you learned to exaggerate so...your father didn’t, and I never do.
Fynon
(With a touch of sarcasm). No, mother. You never exaggerate.

Nalla
Of course not.

Fynon
(Trying to change the subject). Tomorrow will be a better day for tomorrow we hunt. (There is a knock at the door. Nalla opens the door and Gunar bursts in, carrying the body of his dead son).

Gunar
(Holding his younger son, Giric, in his arms. The women gasp). I wanted you to see this!

Fynon
This is uncalled for, Gunar! Why do you bring death into our home?

Gunar
Because you have brought death into mine!

Fynon
How so?

Gunar
You have spread your Christian poison into my boys. First Gabran and now, Giric. Because of you and your weak, sheepish god, my sons stayed their swords when they could have struck. They showed cowardice, so called mercy, and both were murdered. First Gabran at the hand of a stranger over a girl, who I am told looks very much like her. (He points to Raven). The other at the hand of my oldest enemy, Lord Erwin. Had they not been softened by this religion of yours...they would be alive...therefore, it is as if you killed them! (He picks up his dead son and leaves).

Katima
(Katima runs to him). Oh, Fynon! I fear for you!

Nalla
I too, my son. Today...I heard rumors in the market place. It is said, he plans to take vengeance on all those involved in the death of his sons.

Fynon
Mother, we had nothing to do with it!
Nalla
I know! But he blames you and all Christians. It was bad enough when Gabran was killed...and now this! What if he....

Fynon
No more talk mother! I have said all that I care to say! Now let me have my evening in peace. (He sits down and begins to eat).

Nalla
What manners! Have I raised you to be a heathen? (She then stops abruptly realizing what she has said in front of Raven. It becomes very quiet and uncomfortable). We shall wait for your brother. Then together we shall bless the food as always...then we shall eat. You might be the lord of this house but I am still your mother!

Fynon
Yes, mother, you are right; we shall wait. Where is that brother of mine, anyway? (Ferron enters).

Ferron
Here! (The mood is very tense). What is the matter with all of you? (Raven runs to him and embraces him).

Raven
Oh, Ferron! I fear for you!

Ferron
Why, Raven?

Nalla
Gunar came and he threatened to....

Fynon
Mother, Ferron and I will discuss this later. There is no need to stir up the entire household again. Now, tell us Ferron, what took you so long?

Ferron
I was delayed because I had to tend not only to my horse, but to my brother's as well.

Fynon
(A little embarrassed). Yes, sometimes I am ruled by my stomach. (They all laugh).

Ferron
And so am I! Let's eat.

Nalla
(Trying to make up for the remark about the heathen).
Raven, you have never blessed the food...my daughter, will you bless the food?

Raven

No, mother.

Nalla

Raven, why?

Raven

Mother...Ferron...I have obeyed you in all things...but this I cannot, I will not, do. Not now, not ever. I will not pray...never ask this of me again. (The mood is very tense, Ferron tries to change it).

Ferron

I will bless the food, mother. Raven, will you take my hand?

Raven

Yes, my lord. (She does and then they all bow their heads except for Raven who stares straight out).

Lord, bless this food... and the gentle hands that have prepared it. (Raven looks at her hands and shakes her head). We thank you, Lord, for Your many blessings... I thank You for my wife and family... and that though we may not always understand each other (Nalla looks up at Raven who continues to stare out), we may live together in harmony. Amen.

All

Amen. (They then sit down to eat. It is uncomfortably quiet).

(BLACKOUT)

Act II, scene 2

(The cottage is dark and very quiet, Ferron is sitting alone and the light of the fire illuminates his face).

Nalla

(Entering) I know why you are here and I know what you are feeling.

Ferron

Yes, mother... I suppose you do.
Nalla
I spent many hours alone with God on behalf of your father. Remember what I told you before you were married. Just love her and pray. Do not expect sudden change and your marriage will last.

Ferron
I do not want it to just last! I want her to be happy!

Nalla
I know...I know. I will leave you now. (As she is leaving).

Ferron
Thank you, mother. (She smiles and leaves).

UNEQUALLY BOUND

LORD, NOW I UNDERSTAND ONE OF YOUR SIMPLE COMMANDS. I HAVE MARRIED A WOMAN FROM THIS STRANGE LAND. A CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN JOINED HAND IN HAND.

WHEN I SPEAK OF YOU, SHE TURNS HER HEART AWAY. NO MATTER WHAT I DO, NO MATTER WHAT I SAY. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US IS LIKE NIGHT AND DAY.

I THOUGHT IF I LOVED HER, SHE WOULD SEE THE TRUE LIGHT. I THOUGHT IF I LOVED HER, SHE WOULD CHANGE HER PAGAN LIFE. I THOUGHT I COULD MAKE HER MY GOOD CHRISTIAN WIFE.

I SEE NOW THAT I WAS WRONG. OUR HEARTS SING TWO DIFFERENT SONGS. WE'RE UNEQUALLY BOUND TOGETHER AS ONE. UNEQUALLY BOUND, AS THE MOON AND THE SUN.

WHEN I SPEAK OF YOU SHE TURNS HER HEART AWAY. NO MATTER WHAT I DO, NO MATTER WHAT I SAY. OH GOD, ONLY YOU CAN SHOW HER THE WAY.

Oh God! Break through to her... and help me to endure all of this... until you do. (Raven enters).

Raven
My Lord, you are still awake?

Ferron
Yes, I couldn’t sleep. Did I wake you?
I was restless. I noticed you were gone and then I heard you talking...I thought it was you and Fynon. I see he is not here. Who were you talking to?

God.

I see.

No, you don't.

What, my lord?

Oh, nothing. Come here my gentle bird.

Not so gentle, my lord.

How so?

You would not understand.

You wrong me, Raven.

How so, my lord?

You assume I will not understand what troubles you. You have never given me a chance to try.

Forgive me, my lord. It is not easy for me to share.

I know...but if you would, perhaps together we could battle the deep anger that lies within your heart.

Does it show my lord? I thought I had hidden it from the eyes of all men. I never meant for you to suffer because of me.
Ferron
I only suffer because I want for you to be happy. Now tell me, what so troubles you?

Raven
My past, my lord. (She clutches her necklace).

Ferron
I know of your past...but you have a new life here.

Raven
You know of some of my past. You know that I was cursed. Even my name is a curse...not the gentle bird that you call me. A raven is an evil omen...a symbol of death. I evil. (Almost incoherently) I destroyed my family...and Lord Gabran who tried to help me...and now I fear that I am barren...because I killed a man! (She cries).

Ferron
You killed a man?

Raven
Yes...first he beat me, then he attacked Gabran and I struck him with a rock...and he fell and I ran away. I should have told you...but I just couldn't, my Lord.

Ferron
Oh Raven...I did not know. Little bird you have had a hard time of it...haven't you? (She cries. Ferron holds her close). You did not mean to kill him did you?

Raven
I do not know...when I saw him stab Gabran...I just...I just wanted to stop him. (She cries).

Ferron
You did not mean to kill him...you struck out fear. you were trying to protect yourself and help Gabran.

Raven
(Pause. She needs a moment to take it in). All this time I thought I was a murderess.

Ferron
Raven, I too have killed...just as you did. I was attacked. It was either kill or be killed. I was a Christian but I responded out of fear and not love. I felt so guilty...for a long time I ran from the face of God. He pursued me...and when I surrendered...I expected punishment but He showed me mercy and forgiveness instead.
I couldn't believe his love for me. It can be the same for you. (She shakes her head no).

Raven

(Angrily). But I killed a man! (Showing him her hands). With these!

Ferron

(Taking her hands and kissing them). I love these hands...they are so delicate and gentle...and I love you. Raven I forgive you, but you must forgive yourself.

Raven

How can I forgive myself! I am evil, there is nothing good in me! I broke the most sacred laws of our people. I murdered...I lied to you and your family. I hate myself. I wish I had never been born...and now that you know the truth you must too! (She gets up and starts to run off. Ferron follows her and grabs her wrist, angrily). Oh! my wrist.

Ferron

I'm sorry...I did not mean to hurt you.

Raven

But I hid the truth from you...you should be angry! I am angry! (Pausing) I am sorry my lord. I thought that you would send me away!

Ferron

Oh, Raven when will you truly understand my love for you! No matter what you have done...or ever could do...I love you! Look at me. (She does). I love you. (There is a long pause). I knew that you were banished, I did not know that your name was a curse. Who cursed you, and changed your name?

Raven

The High Priest of the Druids, my father.

Your father?

Ferron

Yes.

Raven

You family were Druids?

Ferron

I am ashamed my lord...I should have told you sooner. Are
you going to turn me over to the Romans?

Ferron

Of course not! Raven, you anger me like no other!

Raven

Why, my lord? What have I done to anger you?

Ferron

How many times must I tell you that I love you? You are my wife and I want to share the rest of my life with you! (He starts to leave).

Raven

Ferron...do not go...please stay with me.

Ferron

(He then stops and returns to her). Now, at least, I truly understand your sorrow. It must be a hard thing to bear...to feel that you are a curse. To believe that the words of one man, your own father, have altered your entire life. He has made you feel worthless, I am even more angered by him! How could he...how could he treat his own daughter in such a way? (Looking at her). Raven do not fear the truth...for it has caused me to love you even more. (He pauses). Raven, do you love me?

Raven

Yes, my lord! Life would be unbearable without you. You have loved me when I deserved punishment...even death. I can no longer flee from that kind of love.

Ferron

It is because of God in me. Without Him it would be impossible...only in Him and through Him is that kind of love possible. (He looks at her warmly). Raven, you have never been a curse to me but a blessing, instead. To me, you have always been my gentle bird, but, if it is a curse to you, shall I call you by another name?

Raven

No, my lord. Perhaps one day...but not yet. It is something that I must bear. If I am a gentle bird to you, my lord, then I will be content.

Ferron

Will you truly be content? (She nods her head yes). Are you unhappy here?

Raven

No, only sometimes lonely. I feel as though I am
sometimes still a stranger...even though I live here as your wife.

Ferron
When, Raven? When do we make you feel as though you were a stranger?

Raven
When you pray and when you speak of god. I have no god. I trust only in what I can see and feel and hear. I do trust you Ferron...but most of all, I trust me.

Ferron
Raven, you will never be shunned in this home for what you believe or disbelieve. I married you, I love you and I accept you...as you are. The only thing I ask is that you accept me and my family...just as we are.

Raven
Oh, I do Ferron...you have all been so kind to me. I could not hope for a better life. I was without hope until you found me. My lord, I never meant to do anything to hurt you or shame you. (She pauses). I have shamed you haven't I? I am sorry about the way I behaved when mother asked me to pray. It wasn't just the prayer, it was everything...I felt as if my whole life was crushing me. I spoke out too quickly and too harshly. Ferron, I have never shared this with another...but I vowed...I vowed that I would never pray again. I hate the gods...all gods! Everything I ever held dear to me was taken from me. All I had left for me...was me, until you found me. I do accept you, Ferron, and I have grown to love you. Can you still love me knowing the way I feel? Knowing that everything that you hold dear and count as truth...your religion...your very reason for existence...I do not?

Ferron
(Pauses for a while taking in all that she has said). Raven, if you truly hated god as much as you protest, then the fact that you were cursed would not plague you as much as it does. (Raven is overwhelmed that Ferron knows her so well). Raven you search for God more than any other person I have ever known.

Raven
You know me very well, my lord.

Ferron
Yes, and know this...I have no right to judge you. My God loves me and accepts me the way I am. Can I do less for you? I am secure in my beliefs, so knowing that you feel
differently is no threat to me or my God. Raven, God
loves you even though you hate him. Could I do less?
When I married you, I committed myself to all of you, just
as you were...and I love you now, just as you are.

Raven
Ferron...I have never...known such love. I always expect
to be chastised and yet you always give me love instead.
(She can no longer speak but begins to cry).

Ferron
(Ferron walks toward her and holds her). Do not even try
to speak, I know just what you are feeling, for my God did
the same for me. He loved me and pardoned me when He had
every right to punish me. Come, it is late and time for
sleep. (They start toward the door).

Raven
(Music begins). You go on Ferron, I will join you soon.
As for now, let me sit in the light of the moon. (He
kisses her and exits).

RAVEN'S SONG

ARE YOU THERE?
DO YOU REALLY CARE?
ARE YOU FAR AWAY BEYOND THE CLOUDS SOMEWHERE?
I NEED TO HEAR,
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT DIRECTION I SHOULD GO.

COULD I EVER LOVE YOU?
COULD I EVER TRUST IN YOU?
ARE YOU AS A DREAM BEYOND THE SKY SO BLUE?
I NEED TO SEE,
I NEED TO KNOW IF I COULD EVER LOVE YOU SO.

WHAT A LONELY STATE I'M IN.
WHAT A PEACEFUL PLACE I'M IN.
WHY CAN'T I FEEL PEACE INSIDE?
WHAT A LONELY PLACE THIS IS.
WHAT A PEACEFUL PLACE THIS IS.
YET, WHY HAVE I A RAGING STORM INSIDE?
I FEEL AS IF YOU ARE WATCHING ME AND THERE IS NO PLACE TO
HIDE.

YOU MAY BE THERE.
YOU MAY EVEN CARE.
YOU MAY BE FAR AWAY BEYOND THE CLOUDS SOMEWHERE.
I NEED TO FEEL,
I NEED TO SEE
IF YOU'LL EVER CARE FOR ME.
FIRST, I MUST SEE THAT YOU CARE FOR ME.

Ferron
(He calls from the other room). Raven, it is very late; come to bed.

Raven
Yes, my lord. (She exits).

(BLACKOUT)

Act II, scene 3
(It is the morning of the next day).

Fynon
Did you pack enough food to last for the entire day?

Katima
Yes, of course! Don't you think I know you and your appetite well enough by now?

Nalla
(Laughing). As do we all!

Fynon
Hunting is strenuous work. So a man will always work up a great appetite while he is hunting!

Katima
(Teasing). Yes, of course! Bring us back a big deer; I have a craving for venison.

Fynon
You have a craving for everything!

Katima
Must you always tease me so?

Fynon
Come here to me wife. (She does). God says that I should treat you as a tender vessel. But I prefer to think of you as a tender morsel! (He laughs and pretends to bite her hand).

Ferron
(Grabbing Raven pretending to bite her). But mine is the most tender! (They laugh).

Fynon
But mine is the most plump!
Katima
Again, you are ruled by your stomach! Are you never serious?
Though you are a brute, I shall pray for your safe return.

Raven
I have packed your favorite cakes of hazelnuts and raisins.

Ferron
You are a good wife... I grow to love you more each day.
(He kisses her). Do not look for us to be back too early,
for the herd has moved farther to the south.

Fynon
Yes. Winter will not be upon us for nearly two full moons,
and already the herd moves to the south.

Ferron
All the signs show us that it will be a long, hard winter.
It also looks as if it will strike early this year. We must
all prepare... and soon.

Nalla
Yes. We will begin tomorrow... today we have already planned
for sewing.

Fynon
Sewing, indeed! I am glad that I am not a woman!

Katima
So am I! (She pats her stomach). And so is your son!

Ferron
Come, Fynon, it is time to go. Goodbye mother, Raven,
Katima. We will bring back the greatest buck ever... and
when I carve its horns, you will have new needles and
knives. You can all sew to your hearts' content.

Nalla
Good! For we have only a few good needles left, and the
knives grow duller each day.

Raven
Goodbye... your God be with you.

Ferron
(He looks at her for a long time, then smiles tenderly).
You honor me... God be with you until I return. (Ferron and
Fynon exit).

Nalla
Well now, daughters, first we clean, then we sew. (They
begin cleaning as the lights dim). My grandson must be kept warm his first winter! (Raven and Katima look at her, she becomes embarrassed and laughs). Oh! My sons and daughters, as well! (They laugh).

(BLACKOUT)

Act II, scene 4

(It is late afternoon of the same day. The woman are sitting, sewing, on stage left. The men are walking on stage right. The two scenes happen simultaneously).

Fynon
The shadows show us that it will soon be evening, we have walked for a long time since we tied the horses.

Ferron
Yes, this part of the forest is much too thick to ride in.

Fynon
I worry about them...with all of the recent theivery.

Ferron
They will be fine. No one knows of that clearing, it is our secret.

Fynon
Yes, I suppose you are right. Let us sit a moment and quench our thirst. (They do).

Nalla
Oh, these aging eyes...the sun is setting and it grows dark. It is so difficult to see these tiny stitches.

Katima
I will light the lamps, mother.

Raven
No, let me. (She lights the lamps).

Nalla
It grows dark...where could my sons be?

Fynon
Where could that herd of deer be?

Ferron and Raven
Well...it is time to look for them. (Ferron stands and Raven goes to the door).
Fynon and Nalla
You are so impatient; there is still yet time.

Raven and Ferron
Not much, I'm afraid. (Ferron stands and Raven goes to the door).

Ferron
There is a sudden gust of cold air.

Raven
(She looks out of the door). I feel a sudden chill in the air.

Fynon and Nalla
There must be a storm coming.

Ferron
Not a deer in sight.

Raven
(Looking out the door). There is no one in sight.

Fynon and Nalla
They must have traveled farther than we thought.

Ferron and Raven
It is strangely quiet...and the air is so still.

Nalla and Fynon
Yes, the calm before the storm.

Fynon
Except for over there. (He looks intensely).

Nalla
(They hear the cry of a wolf). Except for the cry of a lonely...

Fynon
Look a...

Nalla and Fynon
Wolf!

Katima
Oh! The baby jumped! (At the same time Katima says "jumped" four men jump out of the bushes near Ferron and Fynon).
Fynon
It is no wolf, it is Gunar and his servants!

Lord Gunar
I am worse than any angry wolf! I am an angry father that has come to avenge my sons!

Ferron
We did not kill either of them! We were as brothers!

Gunar
But your Christian God did! You converted my sons. You Christians turned my boys into weak cowards! You are the ones that led them to their untimely death!

Fynon
We can not be blamed for these deaths! (Gunar strikes at him).

Gunnar
I will have this day of vengeance! I will glory in tasting your blood! (He and another man fight with Fynon, as two others fight with Ferron. The fighting of this period was not like fencing; it was far more primitive. The swords were very large and heavy, so the fighting looks more like hacking than graceful fencing).

Fynon
We will not kill you! (He puts down his sword).

Gunnar
But I will kill you! For I do not serve this weak Christian God!

Fynon
(Putting down his sword). Then you must kill an unarmed man! (Gunnar stabs him as Katima pricks her finger).

Fynon and Katima
Oh! (She sucks her finger and Fynon grabs his side).

Katima
I have carelessly pricked my finger!

Fynon
I've been stabbed!

Ferron and Nalla
I'll help you! (He begins to fight more aggressively as Nalla goes to Katima).
Raven
I’m going to look for them.

Fynon and Nalla
It is no use! You will never make it...darkness is upon (Nalla) us (Fynon) me.

Ferron and Nalla
You are not so very wounded.

Ferron
(Seeing his wounds). It was not until now that I see your wounds, my brother! (He begins to fight fiercely, but it is now four against one). I will not kill you, either; let me go to my brother and tend to his wounds!

Raven
I think I see something.

Nalla
Is it them?

Raven
I think so...I can’t be certain! I’ll keep watch.

Fynon
Watch out!

Raven
(CALLING OUT). Is that you my lord?

Raven and Fynon
(Ferron is stabbed). Ferron!

(BLACKOUT)

Act II, scene 5
(See the women are sitting by the fire. It is now dark. Nalla and Katima are praying. Raven is pacing impatiently. There is a knock at the door. It is Tilla, a kitchen maid).

Tilla
(Enters). I bring news of Lord Fynon and Ferron. (She is obviously upset).

Nalla
Who is it?
Raven
Tilla...she brings us news.

Nalla
(Worried). Why does a maid of Lord Gunar bring news?

Tilla
I risk everything by coming here...to tell you that...(She can not continue).

Nalla
Go on, girl! Tell us what?

Tilla
(Crying). Your men...your men are dead!

Nalla
No! Oh, Father God, No! (Katima begins to have labor pains and Nalla drops to the floor on her knees, stunned).

Raven
What? How do you know?

Tilla
My lord and his men became drunk with mead, and began to brag about how they ambushed and murdered your men. What is worse is that they plan to return at dawn to destroy the rest of the house of Fabian. To purge this land of the influence of the Christian God!

Nalla
I tried to warn him. He wouldn't listen to me. Oh, Father God, why? (She wails and rips her clothes).

Raven
(Walks over to the table and slams down her fist). I am a curse! I have caused this! (Very sarcastic). I see that his God has gone with him!

Nalla
Raven! Quiet! I will have no blasphemy on top of everything else! Do you spurn God when you should be calling Him as never before? He is all that we have now in our greatest hour of need! He will hear us and He will help us! (Raven scowls).

Tilla
You must all leave quickly!

Nalla
(Still in shock). Leave?
Tilla

Didn’t you hear me?

Katima

(Cries out). The baby! The baby is coming!

Raven

No, it couldn’t! The time is not for two moons!

Nalla

Oh, God, in Heaven help us! It’s the shock! Help me get her into her room. (They do).

Tilla

(Enters and sits on a stool. Katima begins screaming from labor pains. She sings trying to drown out the screams. She claws the table with her fingers in rhythm with the song).

TILLA’S SONG

My lord and his men are drunk with mead,
In celebration of this bloody deed!
What’s worse they plan to take you away,
After burning this house at the break of day!

(She repeats the song three times, each time getting faster and louder as Katima’s cries grow louder. Katima screams in agony and all is silent).

Nalla

(From the other room). It was too soon...the baby is dead. Death...death...death! It swallows me. Everywhere I look...there is death! (Raven enters then Tilla runs into the room with Nalla).

THESE GENTLE HANDS
REPRISE

RAVEN

What have I done marrying this man?
The blessed the cursed joined hand in hand!
My Ferron used to say I had such gentle hands.
I wonder if he knows that they’ve caused death again.

These gentle hands were cursed by the priest.
These gentle hands have again destroyed my family.
The curse on me fell onto Ferron’s head.
Now because of these cursed hands he lies somewhere out there dead!
OH, THERE IS NOTHING WORSE,  
THAN TO LIVE A LIFE SO CURSED!  
THE LIFE OF RAVEN THE EVIL BIRD.

Tilla  
(Entering). You must go! Gunar will be here at daybreak to finish his revenge on the house of Fabian. I will help you pack a few things...and take you to a secret cave in the woods. In a few days, I will return to you and help you to escape. But you must take me with you. I hate Gunar and have wanted to leave him. If he discovers that I helped the house of Fabian...he will kill me. (The two begin packing food in pieces of cloth. Nalla enters).

Nalla  
What are you doing? (She knocks the packs of food from the table). You will not touch anything in my lord's house. It must be just as it was!

Raven  
Mother, it can never be just as it was! They are dead! (She cries and holds Nalla). Oh mother...they are dead! We must leave...quickly.

Nalla  
Leave? No! No! I will not leave my home! I will not leave the house of Fabian!

Raven  
(Gently). Listen, mother. Gunar is going to come here at daybreak to finish out his revenge on the house of Fabian...that is us. We must gather what we need and leave as quickly as possible. Tilla knows of a cave that we can hide in for a few days, until she returns to lead us out of the village.

Nalla  
Go? Where?

Raven  
We have nowhere to go? I thought you might have friends or relatives that could help us.

Nalla  
No one...there is no one. Ferron and Fyon were all that I had, now they are gone. What are we to do...three widows alone?

Raven  
We will go to the cave where we will be safe. From there we will think of something.
**Nalla**

What of Katima? She has lost her baby and is still bleeding badly...she can not walk!

**Raven**

Do not worry mother...Tilla and I will carry her. Now you gather your things...and...and say your last farewells to the house of Fabian. (She walks over to the entrance and looks out at her home, then she packs).

**Tilla**

It is good that you are going with them. They both need your strength. (They start to pack).

(BLACKOUT)

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**Act II, scene 6**

(It is just after dawn of the same day. The women are hiding in a cave. Nalla holds Katima. Raven stands alone. Gunar enters the house and is looking for the women and destroying their belongings).  

**MOURNING SONG**

**WOMEN**

OH! SING A MOURNING SONG.
OH! OUR MEN ARE GONE.
WE HAVE NO PRIDE,
NO PLACE TO BELONG.
WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT
BUT THIS SAD, SAD, SONG.

**RAVEN**

(Lights up on Gunar).
OH! MY MAN IS GONE AWAY!

**NALLA**

OH! GOD COMFORT US I PRAY!

**KATIMA**

OH! WHY DID YOU TAKE MY
MAN AND SONS AWAY!

**ALL**

THERE WILL BE NO JOY FOUND IN THIS NEW DAY!

**WOMEN**

OH! SING A MOURNING SONG.
OH! OUR MEN ARE GONE.

**GUNAR**

OH! WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?
WE HAVE NO PRIDE,
NO PLACE TO BELONG.
WE HAVE NOTHING LEFT
BUT THIS SAD, SAD, SONG.
RAVEN
OH! WHY AM I A CURSE!

NALLA
OH! WHAT HAS LIFE BEEN WORTH?

KATIMA
OH! WHAT GOOD IS MILK,
WITH NO CHILD TO NURSE!

ALL
OH! NOTHING COULD BE WORSE!

WOMEN
OH! SING A MOURNING SONG!
OH! OUR MEN ARE GONE!

GUNAR
OH! SING A VENGEFUL SONG!
OH! WHERE HAVE THESE WOMEN GONE?

WE HAVE NO PRIDE,
NO PLACE TO BELONG.
WE ARE THREE LONELY WIDOWS,
WITH A SAD, SAD, SONG.

I’LL HUNT THEM DOWN,
AND KILL THEM EVERY ONE!
I’LL KILL THESE LONELY
WIDOWS AND AVENGE MY SONS!

Gunar
Burn it! (Others enter with torches, lights out on Gunar).

Raven
There is a fire! Over there is the distance.

Nalla
Does it lie to the west?

Raven
Yes, mother.

Nalla
(She cries). Tilla was right... Gunar has finally destroyed
the house of Fabian! Say your last farewells to your
husbands and your home. As the smoke lifts to the sky,
the memories of your husbands go with it.

Raven
No, mother. Gunar may kill our men and destroy our
home...but he cannot take our memories. We still have
those and I will cherish the precious memories of my lord
Ferron until I die. He gave me love and compassion when I deserved to be a slave. I will never forget him or his kindness!

Tilla
(Calling from outside). Raven...Nalla...it is me Tilla.

Raven
Come in. (Tilla enters).

Tilla
I bring news! There is a group of merchants from the East, traveling to The Isle of Sky, to continue trading with the Picts. One of the merchants asked of lord Fabian...the man is a servant of his cousin Boden.

Nalla
Oh yes, Boden! I had forgotten of Boden. He is a Christian...I lead him to the lord just after Fabian received God! We have a strong bond between us! He will help us I know he will!

Tilla
Yes he will! I told his servant of the death of Fabian and of your sons...I also told him of Gunar and his plot against your lives. He said that he is sure that Boden would want you to come with him!

Nalla
But we have little money. Not enough for three to travel on!

Tilla
Do not worry...I told him that already. He said that money would be no problem. The master of the caravan was looking for two cooks...so you can travel for free and make a small wage as well.

Nalla
Oh! How wonderful! God still smiles on us after all! He has heard our desperate prayers!

Raven
God indeed! I asked for His protection for Ferron, and now he lies out there somewhere...dead and alone!

Nalla
Not alone! He is with God!

Raven
(Starts to speak but does not).
Tilla
We must go... the caravan will be leaving soon and Katima moves very slowly. (They start to leave. Raven stops and looks at Nalla).

Raven
Mother, Katima, I am not going.

Nalla and Katima
Why?

Raven
Because I am cursed... I will only cause you more pain and sorrow!

Nalla
Raven, do not say such things, the only pain you will ever cause me is if you do not go with us!

Katima
Yes, Raven. Nalla is wise and speaks the truth. You are our family... all we have is each other... and God! Please Raven you must go.

Raven
(She pauses). I will go... but if more tragedy befalls us I am not to be blamed for I warned you.

(BLACKOUT)

Act II--Scene 7

(Later that morning. The four women enter the camp. There are a few tents and several men sitting around the camp fire).

Tilla
(She points to one of the men). There He is! That is Eelir, servant of Boden. He is sent all over the world to buy and sell his master's goods.

Eelir
(Seeing them, stands up and crosses over to them). Nalla... wife of Fabian. My master sends his greeting to you and your family. (Nalla looks pained). I am sorry to hear of your recent tragedy. But do not worry... I know my master... he is a good man and he will surely help the widow of his cousin.
Thank you.

You speak very boldly...for a servant, especially on behalf of your master. Are you certain that he will not resent us and turn us away?

Nalla

Raven, that will be enough!

Yes, mother.

My lord sends me all over the world to speak on his behalf...I know him and I am certain what his reaction will be. He will open his arms to you and treat you kindly. He has no wife, only a daughter, and a few distant relatives...I am sure he would enjoy the company of such lovely women.

(With a very sly look on her face). He has no wife you say?

No. She died of a sickness.

Was she a good woman?

Yes. The house seems somehow empty without my Lady.

And Boden...he pines for her?

He did...but no longer. It has been nearly two years. We all miss her...but are getting accustomed to her absence.

I see.

(Seeing Raven and Katima). And who travels with you?

This is Katima, widow of Fynon. This is Raven, widow of Ferron.
Eelir
It is an honor to be in the presence of such lovely and graceful women.

Nalla
Thank you. Now...we must get to work. Where shall we put our belongings...and where shall we cook our meals?

Eelir
I will be honored to show you. Follow me.

(BLACKOUT)

Act II--Scene 8

(It is the evening of the same day. Raven and Nalla are cooking and serving food).

Eelir
We have all eaten well. Now, you two must eat. It has been a long hot day and we have traveled a great distance. (Nalla gets her food and sits down by Katima. Raven sits down alone. Eelir walks over to her). Why do you sit alone?

Raven
I do not know...I suppose I take comfort in being by myself.

Would you like me to go?

Eelir

Raven
No. I'm sorry...I suppose I sounded rude.

May I sit beside you?

Eelir

Raven
Of course. (He sits).

Eelir
You are a native of this country?

Raven
Yes. I am a Celt.

Eelir
Then...are you a Druid?
Raven
I was.

Eelir
Why no longer?

Raven
You ask many questions.

Eelir
Yes. Do I offend you?

Raven
No... that is, not yet.

Eelir
Do you think I might?

Raven
Yes... you might. (They smile).

Eelir
Then I will ask you no more questions. (He leaves).

Nalla
(Bringing Raven some food). Raven, I brought you some food.

I am not hungry.

Raven
You must eat to keep up your strength.

Nalla
(Snapping at her). I am too hot and tired to eat! Now, go away. (Nalla looks hurt, she starts to leave). Mother... I am sorry... I am really not hungry, only very thirsty. Please leave me the food... I will try to eat.

Nalla
Yes, daughter. (She does).

Raven
We have all been under such a strain... I should not take it out on you. I do love you, mother.

Nalla
I know. Katima is feeling much better... I think she will soon be well... I was worried for a while.
Raven
And I, also, mother. (Nalla and Katima go and kneel by their tent). If she would have died that would have been yet another sorrow for me to bear. (She gets up and walks over toward the tent). Mother!

Nalla
Hold daughter...until we have finished praying.

Raven
Of course! I would not want to disturb your precious prayers! (She walks away angrily).

Katima
Oh, mother, she is so angry.

Nalla
Yes, we must love her no matter how she responds.

Katima
Yes, but it is so hard when she is so filled with hate!

Nalla
Yes, but that is why we must even love her more. Love and prayers are all we have to offer her. Remember she does not have God to comfort her. Only our love, through Him, can reach her. (They start to pray).

NIGHT PSALM
NALLA, KATIMA AND RAVEN

NALLA
THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION.

KATIMA
WHOM SHALL I FEAR?

RAVEN
IS THERE NO ONE TO COMFORT MY SORROW?
I KNOW NOTHING BUT FEAR!

NALLA
THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH IN TIME OF SORROW.

KATIMA
WHOM SHALL I FEAR?

NALLA
THOUGH ALL WAS TAKEN FROM ME,
RAVEN
WHY WAS EVERYTHING TAKEN FROM ME?

KATIMA
THOUGH ALL WAS TAKEN FROM ME,

KATIMA AND NALLA
I SHALL NOT FEAR.

RAVEN
I PRAYED AND YOU DID NOT HEAR!

NALLA
THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY REFUGE.

KATIMA AND NALLA
THEREFORE WE SHALL NOT FEAR.

RAVEN
I HAVE NO HOPE NO REFUGE.
THERE'S NOTHING BUT SHADOWS OF FEAR.

KATIMA AND NALLA
WE SHALL HIDE IN THE WINGS OF YOUR LOVE.
WE SHALL REST IN THE WARMTH OF THE DOVE.
AS OUR PRAYERS ASCEND TO YOU ABOVE,
YOUR SPIRIT SHALL DESCEND ON US IN LOVE.
OUR HEARTS TOUCH YOURS AS YOU COMFORT US WITH YOUR LOVE.

(Lights up on Gunar).

RAVEN
THERE IS NOTHING WORSE,
 THAN TO LIVE A LIFE SO CURSED.

GUNAR
I SWEAR THAT I WILL PURGE THIS LAND OF EVERY WEAK WEAK AND SHEEPISH CHRISTIAN.

THE LIFE OF RAVEN, THE EVIL BIRD.

I WILL SEND THIS NEW GOD BACK TO ROME; NEVER AGAIN WILL HE PLAGUE MY HOME.

NO ONE WILL EVER HEAR ME UTTER...

UTTER THESE LONELY LONELY WORDS.

(Lights out on Gunar).

KATIMA AND NALLA
THANK YOU GOD FOR ALWAYS HEARING OUR WORDS.
THANK YOU GOD FOR ANSWERING OUR PRAYERS.

Nalla
(Music continues). Father God, we could not go on without your love. Oh, God, Raven suffers so, for without You she
has nothing. I know she is angry and bitter...she's been so wounded by evil words and false gods that thirst for blood. There is truly nothing I can do for her...I place her in Your hands. Oh, God, I place her in Your hands. (End music).

(BLACKOUT)

Act II--Scene 9

(Two months have past and the Caravan is nearing its destination. It is evening and Nalla and Raven have just finished cooking and serving the others. Nalla gets her food and sits down by Katima. Raven goes to get a drink of water. She then goes far up-stage right, gently stretching and rubbing her sore back. She then sits alone. As she does, Eelir calls out to one of the men around the camp fire).

Eelir
You have all eaten heartily of the food prepared by the gentle hands of your good cooks, Raven and Nalla. (Crowd responds). I know you will miss them...and we shall miss all of you. Tomorrow we shall leave the caravan and travel to the house of Boden. We desire to leave you all with the happiest of memories...so tonight, we celebrate. We shall dance and rejoice with the many friends we have made here on this long journey. Let the dance begin.

CELEBRATION DANCE

(After the dance, the camp begins to quiet down and everyone goes into their tents to sleep. Eelir is seen speaking to Collin).

Eelir
Collin! Tomorrow we leave the caravan to travel to the house of Boden. I want you to journey to his house this evening and tell him of our arrival. Tell him of Nalla and her daughters. I know that he will want to prepare a feast in honor of their arrival.

Collin
Yes, Eelir. I will gather my things and leave immediately. (He exits. Raven leaves her tent and, after a few minutes, Eelir walks from his tent and crosses toward Raven).

Eelir
It was good to see you laugh.
It was good to laugh! It seems an eternity since I have laughed. It felt so very good...I had almost forgotten the joy of laughter.

Let me look at you. (He looks at her). Yes I thought so...I thought I noticed a glow in your eyes and color in your cheeks. It becomes you, good lady. May I sit by you?

For nearly two full moons it has been a ritual between us...and still you always ask for my permission. Of course, sit. I do so enjoy your company. (He does).

You amaze me.

How so?

You look young, but yet you are very old.

Much tragedy brings...brings age, too quickly.

Yes, it does. (very probing). It also brings either wisdom and forgiveness...or bitterness and anger.

(Sharply). Yes, I can see how it might easily bring bitterness and anger.

You are not as hard as you pretend to be. (He looks at her). It has come to me who you remind me of. You are very much like my lady, my adopted mother.

How am I so like her?

You have a similar face...no not similar...you both have delicate features, and striking eyes. You are most alike in spirit, I would say.

Tell me...what was her name?
Ruth.

Why Ruth, what does it mean?

Why Raven... what does that mean?

(Pauses). First you tell me... then I will tell you of my name and the story behind it.

All right! It is a bargain. Ruth means friend.

Ralian, too, means friend.

What is Ralian?

Ralian is a name among my people. It means, the friend, daughter of laughter. Oh, but forgive me my outburst. Please continue, what you say truly interests me.

My mistress was named after a woman whose story was told by the children of God, the Hebrews, in one of their books.

Yes. I know of the Hebrews and many of their stories. My lord Ferron and his family often spoke of them. The old woman who had the baby was mentioned in one of their books.

Yes. That was Sarah...Ruth, too, has a story. It is much like yours...shall I tell you?

Yes.

My Lady was named after Ruth, for they both were foreign to the family they lived with. My Lady was the baby of some peasants, the Picts, that live to the north. She was abandoned as a baby. The only parents she ever knew found her lying in the woods, left to die. She
was such a friendly baby, and as well a foreigner, that her Roman Christian parents called her Ruth after the woman in the Hebrew writings.

Raven
It seems that her name suited her well. And what of this woman told of by the Hebrew? What is her story?

Eelir
She was a Moabite. Her people served a wicked god that required the sacrifice of infants. (Raven gasps). I know it is horrible, isn't it? The children were cut with the sacrificial knife and thrown into the fire. Ruth hated the cruelty of her god and married a Hebrew. She was overwhelmed that this God was full of love and compassion. She so hated the sacrifice of humans that, when her husband died, she decided to stay with her mother-in-law. Her name was Naomi. Ruth vowed that she would follow her wherever she went and that Naomi's people and God would be hers. So if God can show love to a Moabite, that at one time served a wicked god, He can and will do the same for you.

Raven
(She stands). No! He cannot. I am cursed! This Ruth is very different from me. She was no curse; I am! (She clutches her necklace). No longer Ralian but Raven, the friendless, an evil omen. (She starts to cry).

Eelir
(He starts to touch her but stops himself). So you were this Ralian? (She nods yes). And your name was changed as punishment, and you were banished too...very sad. That explains why you so desperately search for God. (She looks at him intensely). What do you clutch so tightly in your hand.

Raven
My past...I suppose my very soul.

Eelir
No...no man owns his soul, that belongs to God alone.

Raven
God...God...God! Everywhere I look, everything I hear, is about God. I have no God! I have nothing but this necklace and a curse!

Eelir
No one binds you to this curse but yourself! You are the one that will not believe...that will not trust...that
will not forgive!

Raven
I will listen to you no longer! (She runs off; he runs after her and grabs her arm).

Eelir
Raven, you must learn to forgive or this anger and hatred will consume you.

Raven
How dare you. (She slaps him).

Eelir
You may strike me as often as you like...but I will still care enough for you to tell you the truth. Raven, I know you search for peace, but until you learn to forgive all of the past that has so hurt you...you will never find it.

Raven
Yes...you do speak the truth...but you do not understand.

Eelir
I may understand more than you know.

Raven
How could you possibly understand when you were never a curse!

Eelir
(As he sings, the other actors pantomime the scene behind a scrim, or in very dark lights. They should appear to be dream like).

A CURSE ON MY HEAD

WHEN I WAS STILL JUST A BOY,
AND MY PARENTS WERE GONE.
I WENT OUT TO PLAY,
WITH A WONDERFUL HEAP OF RUNES.

Raven
(Spoken). What are runes?

Eelir
(Spoken). They are magic bonds of the dead that the prophetess of my people used to foretell the future. (Song continues). TO ME THEY WERE LIKE A NEW TOY, THOSE ENCHANTING RUNES. AND BY THE END OF THE DAY,
I had lost them all at play.
The prophetess was on her way.
Returning to Thor to pray.
Suddenly I heard her say...
"Someone's taken my runes away"!
Then how she screamed, and screamed, and screamed!
"Someone's taken my runes away!"

(Raven spoken). Oh, Eelir! Were you frightened.

Eelir (spoken). Yes, I was terrified!

Raven (spoken). Then what happened?

EELIR

(Song continues).
Then she turned to me,
The hatred in her I could see.
With a presence ominously grand.
She pointed at me with her hand.
Her finger started to shake,
I swear, I could feel the earth quake.
"You have defiled the bones of the dead.
A curse be upon your head"!
Then suddenly I heard the vilest words come pouring out of her.
I thought she was finished until she said...
"A curse, a curse, a curse on your head"!
I fell to my knees to plea.
She quickly silenced me.
Filled with panic and dread,
From my people I fled.
Though I was just a child,
Like an animal I lived in the wild.
Until I followed a caravan,
And singled out one man.
He offered me his hand.
The name of the man was Boden.

(Raven spoken). Boden...the very man we seek. He must truly be as kind as you said he was.

Eelir (spoken). Yes, he is.
(Song continues).
He smiled and patted my head,
Then he offered me his bread.
The kindest words to me he said,
THEN HE GAVE ME A COIN,
AND HE GAVE ME HIS BED.
THEN HE TOLD ME OF GOD,
AS HE STROKED MY HEAD.
I'LL NEVER FORGET, I'LL NEVER FORGET,
HOW HE STAYED WITH ME STROKING MY HEAD.

(Spoken). And I have been with him ever since that day.
First as apprentice, then as son.

Raven
His son? Tilla said you were his servant. I thought you were his servant.

Eelir
Many others have made the same mistake. I travel and trade for him...so in a sense, I am both son and servant.

Raven
You must really love him.

Eelir
Yes. Boden is the kindest, most giving man I have ever known. He often spoke of his God...but at first I would have nothing to do with any god. His words began to sear my heart. But most of all it was the way he lived his life, not in words but in deeds. Soon...I began to listen and trust in his God. Then, after many years, his God became mine. Now I walk free from the curse. Now I have found peace. (He pauses and looks at Raven). Raven...I want you to know that I have found a friend in you. We are much alike, you and I, and much like Ruth, too. (As he is leaving).

Raven
Yes. We are...I, too, have found a friend. (They smile).

Eelir
You see, you are not friendless, but are surrounded by those that care for you. Good night...Ralian.

Raven
Why do you call me Ralian?

Eelir
Because to me you are no curse. I have seen you laugh, and your eyes sparkle like the river. I have told you my deepest secrets...secrets one only shares with a true friend. Your name suits you well, good lady. (He leaves).
Raven
Are you there? Do you really care? Show me...if you could only somehow show me. I suppose I have just prayed. Soon I will know whether the God of Ferron, Nalla and Eelir is what they say He is. (Gunar enters the camp and starts toward Nalla and Katima's tent).

Gunar
Now to find these three Christian women and finish my revenge on the house of Fabian!

Raven
It is Gunar; he has followed us...he will kill them. (She picks up a rock and strikes him on the back of the head. He falls to the ground. She grabs his sword and holds it to his throat). You killed my husband, Gunar. (The others enter). What punishment do you deserve? I say death! (She pushes the sword deeper in his neck).

Gunar
Go ahead and kill me, Christian dog!

Raven
I am no Christian...and I, unlike my husband, will kill you!

Eelir
Raven, No!

Raven
He killed my husband!

Eelir
We all deserve death! But God spared us! If you do this you are no better than those you hate! Those that murdered your sister!

Raven
(She grabs her necklace and throws it to the ground). Take him away before I regret my decision! (They do, as she drops the sword).

Eelir
(Goes to her). You did what was right, Raven. (The rest of the camp begin to go back to their tents).

Nalla
Yes, you did what was right...Raven, you are loved, no matter what you do...you are loved.

Katima
Yes, Raven, you saved our lives. (They exit).
Raven
(Crying). I hate him! I hate him so much that I hate myself for the way I hate him! And...and I hate my father too...he is the one...(she hugs Eelir)...that banished me and cursed me! My own father, for trying to save my sister! That is why it is so hard to forgive, and why I can’t let go of this curse!

Eelir
Oh Raven, I am so sorry!

Raven
Help me, I am tired of being a curse.

MUST YOU ALWAYS BE CALLING YOURSELF CURSED

RAVEN AND EELIR

EELIR
OH RAVEN, MUST YOU ALWAYS BE CALLING YOURSELF CURSED?
OH RAVEN, MUST YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS?
YOU CLING TO THE WORD OF AN EVIL GOD.
AND THROUGH THIS YOU BIND YOURSELF TO DARKNESS!
THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU, THE ONLY CURSE ON YOU,
IS THE ONE YOU YOURSELF ALLOW.

RAVEN
OH EELIR, I HEAR YOUR WORDS EACH TIME.
OH EELIR, I WANT TO BELIEVE IN THEM.
OH EELIR, I AM TIRED OF FEARING THE WORST.
OH EELIR, I AM TIRED OF BEING CURSED.

EELIR
OH RAVEN! YOU MUST NOT LOOK TO THE PAST!
OH RAVEN! STOP SEEING UGLINESS IN YOUR LOOKING GLASS.
YOU HAVE A NEW HOME HERE WITH US,
SO PLEASE FORGET THE PAST.
YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE HERE WITH US,
AND OUR LOVE FOR YOU WILL LAST.

RAVEN
OH EELIR, PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND,
BUT OUR WAYS ARE SO DIFFERENT HERE IN THIS LAND.

EELIR
OH RAVEN, I DO UNDERSTAND,
I KNOW THAT TIME IS THE BEST HEALER IN ANY LAND.
RAVEN, COME AND TAKE MY HAND,
AND WITH TIME, AND GOD, WE’LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND.
WE’LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND.

Eelir

Raven, when the Son of God died on the cross...He became the curse for all men. If we live in Him, we are no longer cursed...His resurrection dispelled all curses. Whether you believe it or not, it is true. I know.

Raven

Eelir, do you truly walk free from this curse?

Eelir

Yes, due to the kindness of one man, and the mercy of his God...my God. And yours, if you will trust him.

Raven

Have you truly found peace?

Yes.

Eelir

(Looking at him). Yes, I believe you have found peace...and love.

Eelir

Yes...the love of a God, a father, and now a woman.

Raven

(Startled). Eelir!

Eelir

Yes, Raven...I do love you. And when you are ready to marry again...I will be there.

Raven

No! I could never marry again.

Eelir

Will you not even give me a chance?

You know the answer.

Raven

Eelir

Yes. When you are freed from this supposed curse.

You know me so very well.
Eelir
Yes I do...and still I love you. (Taking her hand).

YOUR GENTLE HANDS

EELIR

(Taking her hand).
YOUR GENTLE HANDS I HOLD IN MINE.
SUCH SPECIAL HANDS SHOULD BE JOINED TO MINE.

RAVEN
MY FATHER USED TO SAY I HAD SUCH GENTLE HANDS.
HOW DO I KNOW THEY WOULD NOT CAUSE DEATH AGAIN?

EELIR
THESE GENTLE HANDS COULD KILL NO MAN!
THESE GENTLE HANDS THEY HAVE STOLEN MY HEART.
OH JOIN YOUR HANDS TO MINE, SO THAT WE WILL NEVER PART
OH JOIN YOUR HANDS TO MINE AND SHARE MY HEART.

Raven
If I am ever freed, if I find peace...then I will consider
your offer. (They smile).

Eelir
Then I will pray for you all the more...and I will wait.
(He leaves).

RAVEN’S SONG AND NIGHT PRAYER

RAVEN

ARE YOU THERE?

NALLA

OH GOD, SHOW HER THAT YOU’RE THERE.

RAVEN

DO YOU REALLY CARE?

KATIMA

OH GOD, SHOW HER THAT YOU CARE.

RAVEN

ARE YOU FAR AWAY BEYOND THE CLOUDS SOMEWHERE?
I NEED TO HEAR.

EELIR

OH GOD, LET HER HEAR.
RAVEN
I NEED TO KNOW.

OTHERS
OH GOD, LET HER KNOW.

RAVEN
IF THIS CURSE, I AM TO LET GO.

OTHERS
LET GO OF THE CURSE, RAVEN, LET GO.

RAVEN
COULD I EVER BE FREE?
COULD IT EVER BE,
THAT THERE'S A GOD WHO SETS MEN FREE?

OTHERS
ONLY YOU, OH GOD, CAN SET HER FREE!

RAVEN
I NEED TO SEE.
I NEED TO KNOW, IF YOU COULD EVER LOVE ME SO.

WHAT A QUIET PLACE I'M IN.
YET, WHAT A HOPEFUL STATE I'M IN.
COULD I EVER FEEL PEACE INSIDE?

OTHERS
GRANT HER PEACE, MY GOD.

RAVEN
WHAT A LOVELY NIGHT THIS IS.
WHAT A PEACEFUL NIGHT THIS IS.
WHAT WILL CALM THIS RAGING STORM INSIDE?
I FEEL AS IF YOU ARE WATCHING ME, AND I DO NOT WANT TO HIDE.
I FEEL THAT I MIGHT TRUST IN YOU AND IN YOUR WINGS ABIDE.

OTHERS
OH, SON OF GOD, CALL HER TO YOUR SIDE!

RAVEN
I KNOW YOU ARE THERE.

OTHERS
OH GOD, YOU ARE ALWAYS THERE!

RAVEN
YOU MAY EVEN CARE.
OTHERS

OH GOD, YOU ALWAYS CARE.

RAVEN AND OTHERS

NO LONGER ARE YOU FAR AWAY BEYOND THE CLOUDS SOMEWHERE.

RAVEN

I NEED TO FEEL.
I NEED TO SEE.
IF YOU COULD TRULY SET ME FREE.

OTHERS

OH GOD! SET HER FREE!

RAVEN

COULD YOU REALLY SHOW ME, THAT YOU CARE FOR ME.
COULD YOU GIVE ME PEACE, AND TRULY SET ME FREE.

Eelir

(Spoken). Oh, Father God, give her peace and set her free.

Nalla

My God, show her that you love her.

Katima

Oh, God, break this curse...that she might walk in joy and peace.

Raven

Oh, God, help me to forgive--show me how to love You and give me peace.

(BLACKOUT)

Act II--Scene 10

(It is the morning of the next day. The camp is busy packing and preparing to leave. A man and a girl enter).

Eelir

(Seeing them). Father...and Delanna! How good it is to see you! (He greets them).

Boden

It is good to see you also, my son!

Eelir

But why are you here? We had planned to leave the camp today and travel to your home.
Boden
You know the impatience of my daughter; when it comes to seeing her brother. We left long before sunrise and now that we are here, we will journey home with you.

Delanna
I couldn't wait! The servants are preparing a great celebration in honor of the arrival of our cousins! I kept getting in the way of the preparations...so the cooks and I persuaded father to bring me here to meet you!

Boden
And where are the wife and daughters of my cousin, Fabian?

Eelir
I will get them, my Lord. (He goes over to their tent and calls for them). Nalla...Raven...Katima! There is someone to see you...hurry!

Nalla
We have more packing to do, then we will join you! (She calls from within).

Boden
And how is the best son in all of the world?

Eelir
Wonderful father! Wait until you see the bargains that I found for you! And Delanna! Look at this! (He pulls a necklace out of his pocket).

Delanna
(Rushing to him). Oh! Let me see! (She takes it). It is beautiful! Eelir, you are the best brother in the world! (She hugs and then puts it on as Raven, Nalla and Katima enter from the tent).

Eelir
Come here! Lord Boden, cousin to your Lord Fabian, wishes to greet you. (Nalla starts to bow).

Boden
(Goes to her). I will have none of that! You are my relative and not my servant! Stand and kiss me cousin. (She does). Oh, even more than cousin...sister, the one who pointed me toward God! I have often prayed that I might be able to repay you for just a portion of what you have given me! I will be honored to help you...all of you! Oh, good ladies, you must forgive me my zeal...and who travels with you dear Nalla?
Nalla
This is Katima...widow of my eldest son Fynon. (He kisses her). And this is....

Eelir
Ralian! (Boden and Delanna fix their eyes on her. Nalla and Katima are puzzled, Raven smiles knowingly at Eelir).

Delanna
(She whispers). Father...she is very pretty!

Boden
(Smiling warmly). Yes...she is.

Delanna
(Seeing something on the ground she picks it up. It is Raven's necklace). What is this?

Ralian (Raven)
It is a god of the Druids.

Delanna
Such an ugly face. (She hands it to Raven).

Yes, it is.

Ralian (Raven)
I like mine much better, Ralian!

Delanna
So do I!

Ralian...what a pretty name! I have never heard it before. What does it mean?

Eelir
It means friend, Delanna. To the Celts, it is the same name that we have for Ruth! (Nalla and Katima smile).

Delanna
(Goes to Raven). Ruth was my mother's name!

Ralian
I have heard. (Gently). Some day you must tell me of your mother.

Delanna
Oh, I will! (Running back to her father). I like her father.
Eelir
(Whispers). I like her too, father.

Boden
Oh, I see. (He laughs). Ralian...it is a fine name. Your name suits you well, good lady.

Ralian
Thank you, my lord.

Eelir
Yes it does...I think it suits her very well. Don't you Nalla? (They smile).

Nalla
Yes...very well.

Ralian
(Drops the necklace to the ground).

Eelir
(To Raven). Will you take my arm, good lady?

Raven
Yes, my lord. (They smile as she takes his arm).

(BLACKOUT)

THE END
MUSICAL SCORE

Lyrics by Angela Brannon Tarleton

Music by Rod Schumacher

Arrangements by Joel Blair
MARCH

[Sheet music notation]

ALL I SEE

LYRICS: Angela Tarleton
MUSIC: Rod Schmpacher

RAVEN: All I did was try and save my sister. She was to be the sacrifice of the winter sun, chosen as the maiden for the gods of the circle of the stones. All I did was try and save her from the cursed beast, and for this I'm being punished!

RAVEN, the bird of evil, cursed like a creature of the night!
Auction Song

Lyrics: A. Freedman
Music: R. Schumann

Waltz: Ami

[Music notation]

(FREELY) Ami

Auctioneer: And next we have a fair young maid-en on the block, and a price-

As you can see and she should bring the highest price-

And I will give the time since I've seen

A woman of such quality-

To be bought and sold as something less than

She is young and strong and a

I am a woman, a Celt, daughter of

Rath, Lord of the village and leader of my people, not a petty thief!
Am I what am I - AN AN - i - mal - D - 2 - PAT ON DIS - PLAY AT THE

G

26 what am I - AN AN - i - mal - D - 2 - PAT ON DIS - PLAY AT THE

G

30 MARKET PLACE - AM I!

G

34 HUMAN.

G

38 RATH, LORD - of MY VILLAGE AND LEADER OF MY PEOPLE - NOT A PETTY THING!

G

42 IF I HAYE NE - VER BEEN SO HUM - ILI - ATED - TO BE PEDIGREE - CON

G

44 I WILL BE NO MAN'S SERVANT OR HIS WIFE, - WOULD RATHER RUN AWAY AND
Auctioneer: Twenty-five. Do I hear twenty-five? Twenty-five.

I have never felt so worthless. So help me, I must...

Do I hear thirty? Stand silent as my destiny is being decided for me.

Thyrrr, thyrrr and two barrels of oil.
CMI

G

(ANCTION SONG)

Do I hear

I have never felt so worthless, so helpless I must

Five!

Thirty!

Thirty-Five!

Forty!

Forty-Five!

What will become of me? The man in blue has这片 perhaps he will treat me well.

Thirty Pieces of Gold! Will you let a saxon outbid you?

He looked close; I hope it is not him; oh, please someone bid higher.
WILL YOU ALLOW ONE OF OUR WOMEN A CELT TO BE SOLD TO A SAVVY? A BARBARIAN?

WHAT KIND OF HORRID FATE IS IN STORE FOR ME? I HAVE CURSED THE GODS THAT THEY TRULY AWASH ME!

FORTY PIECES OF GOLD!

FORTY PIECES OF GOLD!

THIRTY PIECES OF GOLD, THREE BARRELS OF OIL + ONE FINE HORSE!

Who will best that offer? Going once,

If someone please — I have angered the

Gods — If I am cursed — I have no hope —!
These Gentle Hands

Lyrics: A. Lerner
Music: R. Sherman

My hands I've killed a man. My father used to say I had such gentle hands. What would he say now that they've killed a man? These gentle hands took me from my home and family. Stone you gave a blow to Balak's head. Why have I done? I've killed a man with these two hands I've killed a man. My father used to say...
(These Gentle Hands)

Say I had such gentle hands—what would He say now that They've

Father, I do say the reason that He died was because He did believe in this

New Christian way

Man, if there is nothing worse than to live a life so cursed, the life of

I swear that I will forge this kind of ev'ry week & worship: Christian, I will

Raven—the ev'IL bird

Send this new go back to Rome and never again will He please our home—!
I AM TO BE MARRIED

LYRICS: A. RAYEDEN
MUSIC: A. SCHWANBERG

AB

3. If I am to be married to a man I do not know, will he really love me or to

Fin G A B Fin

6. Why he be cold? Tho' he is handsome, that does not mean so

B Fin

9. B Fin Much will he treat me kindly will he have a gentle

B A B Fin

13. Son is to be married to a stranger? on this land, will she resist his love or

G A B Fin

16. Follow his command? Tho' she is pretty, that does not mean so

C

19. G Fin Much will the treat him tenderly and

B Fin

22. Have a gentle

B Fin

25. Two strangers to be married from

F

28. Two different lands will they love each other as they're

E Fin

32. Join hand in hand? Two different strangers with
(Married)

Two different tongues—The differences are many.

Can they be come one?

I wonder—

I'm afraid.

Strangers will be married to someone they do not know

The song of gold—It is almost time for the wedding.

Men will be made soon—Will this marriage end in happiness or

Will it end in ruin?

I wonder—

I'm afraid.
SONG OF VOWS

LYRICS: A. TACKETT

MUSIC: R. SCHUMACHER

Moderato

F  Gmi  Bb  C

F  Gmi  Bb  F  Gmi  F

I vow to commit myself to you.

That special helpmate That God has called me to be.

F>F  Gmi  F  Bb  C

I vow to be your spiritual covering.

I vow to be your spiritual covering.
CIRCLE OF GOLD

LYRICS: A. THRELKELD
MUSIC: J. STAFFANGER

Andante

Dm | Gm | Dm | Gm | Dm | C

Has no beginning and no end

The circle is

Fla

Never to be broken, what God has joined, what

God has joined—let no man put asunder

Just as the rings of gold
A   Bb  F/A  Gmi

ER   LET THIS MARRIAGE   LET THIS MARRIAGE CONT-

30  ON   FOR-EV-ER   ON   FOR-EV-ER  CONTIN-UE

C   Dmi  Gmi  Dmi  A

IN-HE   ON   FOR-EV-ER

Dmi  Gmi  Dmi  Gmi  Dmi

RINGS ARE MADE OF PURE GOLD  ITS AN-CIENT

45  THE RINGS ARE MADE OF PURE GOLD  THE

Gmi  F   A  F/A

VALUE BE-HOLD    PURIFIED BY THE

50  ITS AN-CIENT VALUE BE-HOLD  PURIFIED BY THE

Gmi  Dmi  Gmi  C  Dmi

HEAT OF THE FIRE  PURIFIED BY THE HEAT OF THE
(Circle of Gold)

Fire as they drink from the cup of pure fire.

Let them be forged as one in the heat of desire.

Ring Golden Circle will join these two lives, Golden Ring Golden Circle these two become one Golden Ring Golden Circle joined by God's own Son.

Am

A

D

G

Am

A

D

Em

A7

D
"Callin' Yourself Cursed" - Lyrics and Music

STANZA 1:

Raven, must you always be calling yourself cursed?

On the walls, oh, Raven, must you always be calling yourself cursed?

On the only curse on you. Oh, mother, I hear your words each day.

Mother, I just can't believe in them. Oh, mother, I always fear the worst.

Raven, you must not believe that you are cursed, oh, Raven, do not bind yourself to darkness.

On the only curse on you. The only curse on you is the one that you yourself allow.

STANZA 2:

Raven, must you bind yourself to darkness?

This you bind yourself to darkness.

The only curse on you is the one that you yourself allow.
(CALL ME YOURS CURSED)

TIME, OH MOTHER, I WANT TO BELIEVE IN THY, OH

MOTHER, I'M TIRED OF HEARING THE WORST, OH MOTHER, I'M TIRED OF BEING CURSED.

RAVEN, YOU MUST NOT LOOK TO THE PAST.

RAVEN STOP SEEING UGLINESS IN YOUR LOOKING GLASS, YOU HAVE A NEW HOME HERE WITH US, SO PLEASE FORGET THE PAST, YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE HERE WITH US, AND OUR LOVE FOR YOU WILL LAST...

MOTHER, I DO TRY TO UNDERSTAND, BUT OUR WAYS ARE SO DIFFERENT.

IN THIS LAND, OH DAUGHTER, I DO TRY TO UNDERSTAND, IN A LAND, DAUGHTER, COME AND TAKE MY HAND AND WITH TIME IS THE BEST HEALER, IN A LAND, DAUGHTER, COME AND TAKE MY HAND AND WITH TIME AND GOD, WE'LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND...

TIME... WE'LL GROW TO UNDERSTAND...
LYRICS: A TRADITION
MUSIC: A. SETHAMONGA

1. INNERVALLY Bound

Andante Dm c/E F Bb Cmaj C7

7. may land, now I understand—One of your

Simple commands—

12. I have marred a woman from

This strange land,

17. A Christian and pagan joined

Hard in F/A

22. When I speak of you—She turns her heart away—

No


So

30. The difference between us is like night and day—

34. I thought if I loved her she would see the true light—

39. I thought if I loved her she would change her pagan life—

44. I thought I could make her Bb A good Christian

Go—Wife—

I see now that I was wrong, our

HAL LEONARD PUBLISHING CORPORATION
Hearts sing two different songs—
If we're un-e-qual-ly bound to each other as one un-e-qual-ly bound
As the moon and the sun
When I speak of you—she turns her heart away—
No matter what I do—no matter what I say—oh
God-only you can show her the way.
RAVEN'S SONG

Music & Lyrics

AFAR

Someday may be there

You may even care

You may be far away beyond the clouds

Some -
(Verse 1)

If you'll ever care for me
First I must see
That you care for me

(Chorus)

Lord and His men are drunk with meed in
Celebration of this bloody deed.
What's worse, they plan to take you away after
Raiding this house at the break of day.

(Verse 2)

Lord and His men are drunk with meed in
Celebration of this bloody deed.
What's worse, they plan to take you away after
Raiding this house at the break of day.

(Chorus)

Lord and His men are drunk with meed in
Celebration of this bloody deed.
What's worse, they plan to take you away after
Raiding this house at the break of day.

(Outro)
GENTLE HANDS - REPRISE

LYRICS: S. FREEMAN

MUSIC: B. SCHWARTZ

E♭ B♭ Cm A♭

DONE MAKING THIS MAN? THE BLESSED CURSED HAND IN

HAND MY FERRON USED TO SAY I HAD SUCH GENTLE HANDS I WONDER IF HE

KNOW THAT CURSED DEATH AGAIN?

THESE GENTLE HANDS WERE BY THE PRIEST, THESE GENTLE

HANDS HAVE AGAIN DECEIVED MY FAMILY THE CURSE ON ME FELL ONTO FERRON'S

HEAR NOW BECAUSE OF THESE HANDS LYNCE'S DEAD CURSED

THERE IS NOTHING WORSE THAN TO LIVE A LIFE SO CURSED THE LIFE OF RAVEN THE

E-VIL BIRD!
MOURNING SONG

SLow

Ami Emi Ami Emi Ami Emi

Oh, sing a

mourning song

Our men are gone—we

Oh, sing a

mourn ing song

We have no pride—no place to ae long

Sad—sad—song

Ami Emi Ami Emi Ami Emi

Oh, man is gone away—oh, God—

Come to me, I pray—why did you take my man—saw them—

There will be no joy going in this new day—oh, sing a

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Oh why am I a curse oh what has life been worth? What good is milk with no child to nurse?
Oh nothing could be worse.

Oh singing a mourning song.
Oh our men are gone we have no pride, no place to belong, we are three lonely widows with a song.

Sad sad song.
Night's Away

I the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?
I know nothing but fear.

The Lord is my strength in the time of sorrow, whom shall I fear?

All was taken from me, why was everything taken from me?

"The Lord is my light and my refuge, therefore we shall not fear."

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(NIGHT SONG)

G

57

A

I HAVE NO HOPE; NO REFUGE; THERE'S NOTHING BUT SHADOWS OF

G

57

WE SHALL HIDE IN THE WINGS OF YOUR LOVE

G

57

WE SHALL REST IN THE WINGS OF THE DOVE

(FREELY)

G

61

AS OUR PRAYERS AS CENO TO YOU IN LOVE—OUR

G

61

MY SPIRIT SHALL DESCEND ON US IN LOVE—OUR

G

73

CONSENT US WITH YOUR LOVE—FEAR THERE IS NOTHING WORSE THAN IT

G

77

LIVE A LIFE SO CLEANS THE LIFE OF RAVEN THE EVIL BIRD. NO ONE WILL EVER

G

82

Hear me with those lonely, lonely WORDS, THANK YOU GOD FOR ALWAYS HEARING OUR WORDS

G

82

THANK YOU GOD FOR ANSWERING OUR PRAYERS—

E

Etc.

INSTRUMENT

HL00210000
HAL LEONARD PUBLISHING CORPORATION
A LURSE ON MY HEART

LYRICS: A TOLKVIN
MUSIC: A. FILMMAKER

When I was just still a boy and my parents were gone
I went out to play in a wonderful heat of rune, to me they were

Like a new toy these enchanted runes — and by

END OF THE DAY I had lost them all at play —

THE PROPHETESS was on her way returning to their for pray — suddenly I

HEARD her say — "Some one’s taken my runes — a —

WAY! Then how she screamed and screamed and screamed" I...some —

ONE’S TAKEN — my runes away! —

Then she turned to me —

Her hatred in her eyes I could see —

Oh! — oh! — grand — she pointed at me with her hand —
(A Curse on My Head)

So her finger started to shake
I swear I could not shake

Earthquake!

My tongue did file the sacred bones of the dead,

Curse be upon your head!

If then suddenly I heard the vilest

Words coming pouring out of her

Then the words she was finished until she said

Curse a curse a curse upon your head.

Plea she quickly silenced me—filled withrank and shame from my people I

Fled!—Tho' I was just a child—like an animal I

Lived in the wild

Sank out one man who offered me his hand.

Boden.

The kindest words to me.

Gave me his bed then he told me of God as he stroked my head and I'll
(CHAGE ON MY HEAD)

I

NEVER forget, I'll never forget how he stood with me striking my

HEAD
GENTLE HANDS - REFRAIN

LYRIC: P. J. AYLING
MUSIC: A. B.LEE

Moderato Cm1 Ab Em Cm1 Em7/G Ab

CHORUS:

Mine, such special hands should be joined to mine,
Father used to say I had such gentle hands,
How do I know they could not cause death again?
These gentle hands could kill no man!
These gentle hands they have stolen my heart!

Join your hands to mine so that we will never part!
Oh, join your hands to mine and claim my heart.
RAVEN'S SONG/NIGHT PRAYER

Music: A. TALBOT
Lyric: A. TALBOT

Oh God, show her that you care—

Reply: care?
Are you far away be—

Oh God, show her that you care—

And the clouds somewhere,

Need to hear I need to know

Oh God, let her hear I am to let

If this curse I am to let

Let her know—

Let go of the curse—

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(RAVEN/NIGHT/RAYE)

19 Could I ever be free

22 Could it ever be at

Ther's a God who sets men free?

25 EV/G Am Bb

Cresc., mp I

31 Need to see I need to know

34 If you could ever love me

So what a shabby place I'm in

40 Yet what a hopeful state I'm in
Could I ever feel peace inside...

What a lovely night this is...

Peace out, God...

What a peaceful night this is...

What will calm this raging storm inside?

I feel as if you're watching me... and I do not want to...

Here... I feel that I might trust in you... and...

In your wings a... abide...

God... call her to... her side...
KNOW YOU ARE THERE

OH GOD YOU ARE ALWAYS THERE,

NO LONGER ARE YOU FAR AWAY BEYOND THE CLOUDS SOME WHERE

I NEED TO SEE IF YOU COULD TRULY SET ME FREE

GOD SET HER FREE —

THAT YOU CARE FOR ME — COULD YOU GIVE ME PEACE & TRULY SET ME FREE —?
WORKS CITED


BIBLIOGRAPHY


