

RING OF DECISIONS

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Banshees scream as a horseman races across a stone bridge under full moonlight.

He passes over several dead bodies.

A goblin leaps from one at the horseman who cleaves it midair with sword.

EXT. COUNTRY VILLAGE - NIGHT

Sentry shouts out before the horseman gallops to a stop at the fifth century village temple.

Alarmed elders and robed priests approach as MIACH, 40s, big, black haired warrior, dismounts.

ELDER

Captain, what news have you from--

MIACH

The beasts of Palladius have slain our goddess, Macha.

A banshee shrieks in the forest. The crowd gasps in horror.

MIACH

Their army marches on Armagh to drive out not just the fair folk but all Tuatha to the Otherworld.

ELDER

But what of the treaty?

MIACH

Don't be foolish, old man. Men betray spirits only half as often as they betray each other. But we've more immediate matters.

He pulls his sword, the gathering crowd views its corrosion by black goblin blood and murmurs in fear.

MIACH

The advancing army is driving goblins across the countryside into the mountains. Tonight I gather the last of our able men, young and

MIACH
old, to join forces at Armagh and
end this madness.

ELDER
But with goblins running the
countryside who will protect us?

Miach tosses his sword to him, the elder fumbles it.

MIACH
Arm our womenfolk to protect you.

Villagers panic and run in all directions.

PRIEST
An offering of purity to Dagda
would ensure the safety of your
people.

Priest looks over Miach's shoulder toward DANU, 20s,
beautiful and very pregnant, holds by the hand LEANAN, 9, a
black haired girl, inside the doorway of their home.

Miach turns to look at them, swallows hard.

He watches villagers continue to run amok in great alarm.

Miach motions for Danu to send Leanan to him.

He takes knee to hug her tiny body, holds her head to his
chest, his great fingers in her black hair as he holds back
tears, then he looks her straight into her obedient eyes.

MIACH
Many are scared, little heart. Show
them how brave our family is.

LEANAN
Yes, father.

Miach stands, hands her to a very calm Priest.

PRIEST
Come, child. Help us prepare the
altar.

Miach looks at Priest as if he would gut him like fish.

MIACH
After I've left.

Priest nods, then scurries away into the temple with Leanan.

Tears run down Danu's stoic face as Miach steps up to her.

DANU

I curse you for what you've done to
this family.

MIACH

You curse the decisions this war
has forced upon me.

He passes by her into their home. She winces, grabs her large belly and bends in pain.

Miach passes back out the door with another sword, storms away, rounds boys and old men. Danu turns, enters the house.

EXT. BACK DOOR OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Danu's hand knocks.

EREMON, 40s, more lean than Miach and with long red hair, opens the door, resumes fastening his battle gear.

DANU

Miach has given Leanan as sacri--

Eremon hushes her lips with a finger, nods he knows.

He takes knee, places his hand on Danu's round belly and listens with a sad smile. Kisses it.

Danu winces but smiles as tears run from her green eyes.

DANU

I think he wishes to come out to
kiss his father.

Danu strokes a lock of red hair from Eremon's forehead.

MIACH (O.S.)

Eremon?! Eremon?! Where are you?!

EREMON

I wish to stay with you an
eternity. By our gods, keep him
safe.

DANU

Fear not. He'll not suffer his
sister's fate, my love.

MIACH (O.S.)
Eremon?! Where are you, Brother?!

EREMON
I should have married you.

DANU
Yes. You should have.

Eremon rises, they kiss then he bolts back into the house.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Eremon dashes out as he shoulders shield and sword to join Miach with a small troop of boys and old men marching away.

Miach welcomes him, they exchange talk, Miach looks back over his shoulder at the village then his home.

They pass the sentry tower where the elder holds Miach's damaged sword as a dead snake.

Danu peers around the house corner to watch them leave, winces with pain, bends over.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Attended by handmaids, Danu screams with labor in bed.

Priests and Leanan cast a white sheet over the altar.

Miach and Eremon goad the boys and old men to march on.

Bendith Y Mamau women creep into the delivery room.

A peaceful Leanan pours water into a great alter bowl.

Danu strains in immense labor, delivers red haired baby.

Priest steps up behind Leanan then slits her throat.

Banshee shrieks halt the boys and men in their tracks.

Swords, spears and torches out, the troop take guard.

Danu hands her beautiful baby to the Bendith Y Mamau

DANU
Keep him safe. Far from here.

The Bendith Y Mamau nod, exchange their hideous crimbil baby then leave with Danu's.

Priests chant as they hold the struggling Leanan bleeding out on the altar sheet.

Danu winces, midwife looks alarmed, sheets flow bright red.

Miach and Eremon shout at the troop to keep moving down the road, wave torches and swords at them.

Handmaids rush about as the midwife pushes handfuls of white linen at Danu's groin.

Priests offer cups of Leanan's blood to image of Dagda, then drink.

Midwife holds a wadded, red sheet to a ghastly Danu as her respirations slow to a stop.

Leanan's pupils blow out to black circles, her red blood pools through her black hair.

Priests wash their bloody hands in the water Leanan poured.

Miach and Eremon march the troop over a mountain pass.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST ROAD - DAY

In the blue light of dawn a URISK, small biped with fur jacket, pokes MIACH in the shoulder with a knotty shillelagh.

Repeatedly.

URISK

Wake! Wake, smelly dead men! Get
your nighe out of my stream!

Thirty paces behind the angry creature an old woman washes a bloody garment in the mountain stream.

The fog of Miach's sleep lifts as the fog of the mountain remains. He looks about, red eyed and drunk.

MIACH

Dead? What? There's no one there.
Lay off the fermented acorns and
leave us be, little one.

Miach rolls over, clutches sword and wine flask.

Urisk pokes his shoulder again.

URISK

My stream. It's my stream! And
she's filthing it up with your man
stench!

MIACH

Poke me again and you'll shite
splinters a fortnight.

Eremon rolls over as the angry beast stamps his bare feet.

EREMON

What is your ruckus? Oh.

URISK

Get your nighe out of my stream!

Miach remains curled over in self-forced sleep.

MIACH

Do it yourself.

URISK

Stupid man! Urisk cannot rid the
bean nighe! To make her leave a man
must sneak upon her as a thief,
suckle her teat, then tell her 'I
am your lost babe. Help me.'

Urisk mocks a baby's plea.

EREMON

Then what?

URISK AND MIACH

She'll grant you a wish.

EREMON

A wish for what?

URISK

I don't care?! To die a great
warrior in battle! Just wish!

EREMON

How about to not die in battle at
all?

MIACH

Selfish children. Did you not hear
the banshee cries all night? We're
already dead men. Ask for the
safety of our village.

Urisk and Eremon nod in sage approval.

EREMON
And my wish will be granted?

URISK
Yes!

MIACH
And then you'll leave?

URISK
Like I was never here.

MIACH
Wonderful. Eremon, since you can see her and I cannot go suckle the ghost tit so your captain may sleep.

Eremon scowls at his curled brother. Urisk waggles the shillelagh at him then to her.

Eremon sneers as he rises.

EREMON
Go dtachta an diabhal thú.

MIACH
Is cuma liom sa diabhal.

Eremon creeps the thirty paces over to the old washer woman.

She takes no notice of him while she works.

Closer.

Closer.

Miach rolls over in stupor, watches from behind Urisk.

Like a fox at hunt Eremon moves to the old woman's side.

Still, she takes no notice of him as she continues her work.

Eremon reaches out, pulls back her dingy gray robe to reveal long, thin breasts, they sway like empty socks.

Eremon gags. Urisk grins. Miach's grimace bleeds into grin.

Slow as winter's pitch, Eremon leans beneath her shoulder, reaches a hand out and pulls a breast over to his lips.

Eremon closes his eyes. Urisk grimaces. Miach laughs without noise. The bean nighe continues to wash the bloody garment.

His lips clamp down and he nurses.

Both Urisk and Miach stick out their tongues in repulsion.

The bean nighe pauses her washing, then continues.

Eremon turns away, lets green mucus drain from his mouth, he scrapes his tongue against his shoulder then looks at Urisk and Miach with a silent emphatic gesture of 'Now what?!'

Urisk points at the woman with his cudgel and wags to continue. Miach wags his finger in support.

Eremon glares at them, turns with closed eyes and resumes.

The bean nighe stops her washing, looks down at him with her one green eye.

BEAN NIGHE

Are you mine?

The boys and old men peer with smiles over Miach as Eremon swallows hard. Green mucus bubbles at his lips.

EREMON

I am your lost babe. Help me.

BEAN NIGHE

What is your wish, my love.

EREMON

Upon my death I wish...

Eremon pauses, looks with hate at the others who pip laughs.

EREMON

To be returned as Danu's husband.

BEAN NIGHE

Ask not that of me.

He glares at Miach in delighted suspense behind Urisk.

EREMON

Yes. Upon my death I wish to be returned as Danu's husband.

She drops the garment.

BEAN NIGHE

So be it.

She gives an ear piercing shriek, then fades into the mountain fog.

Eremon stomps over to Miach whom laughs with the others.

EREMON

Fell beast! You could see her all along, couldn't you?!

Miach can't stop laughing. The boys and old men also grin and chuckle.

Miach can only nod 'yes' as he rolls on the ground then all laugh aloud at Eremon as he wipes his mouth.

EREMON

Cac ar oineach.

Just then the foggy sky darkens.

All become silent and alert as they bring their swords and spears to the ready.

Urisk grabs his fur jacket close to his body, his eyes dart around in alarm as he hefts his shillelagh in defense.

URISK

Fear Liath, the Grey Man has come. The advancing army of Palladius has driven him here.

MIACH

No. The bean nighe sent him for my brother to ask protection of our village.

Miach sees... something in Eremon's glance to him.

Attentions turn to a great shadow figure as it coalesces at the forest edge across the field.

It pulls a huge boulder from the ground and stacks it on another.

URISK

It's building a home. Go tell it to build a home near your village and live there. Go!

MIACH

It's your wish, brother. For your
captain, go. Go!

With measured fear, Eremon approaches the great shadow.

Another huge boulder is pulled from the ground and set.

EREMON

Grey man of the mountain, good
morning. Beyond yon stream...

Beyond earshot, Miach slumbers on bent elbow and palm, troop
behind him, Urisk in front.

Eremon takes displeased note.

EREMON

Beside yon stream slumbers the man
whom summoned the beasts of
Palladius that chase you from home.

A third boulder is pulled but stops midair.

EREMON

He has betrayed his people, our
protector Mancha and all Tuatha.

Everyone waits in mixed fear and suspense as the great
shadow figure looks between Eremon and the others.

FEAR LIATH

Man's betrayal... dangers all.

Eremon nods in reserved agreement, looks at his brethren.

The suspended boulder is hurled across the field, crushes
Miach and the troop. Urisk disappears into the forest fog.

As he looks on in horror at his brother's red smear another
huge boulder rises above Eremon and slams down.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

A horseman races across a stone bridge under full moonlight.

He cleaves a leaping goblin in midair with sword.

Sentry calls out as horseman stops at the village temple.

Alarmed elders and priests approach as Eremon, lean with
long red hair, dismounts.

ELDER

Captain, what news have you from--

EREMON

The beasts of Palladius have slain
our goddess, Macha.

A banshee shrieks in the forest. The crowd gasps in horror.

Inside the doorway of their home a very pregnant Danu holds
by the hand Leanan, a red haired little girl.

FADE TO BLACK: