

~~One DRAUGR grabs her wrist, another her neck.~~

~~FLASH: A fist, white-knuckled against a handful of straw.~~

~~FLASH: Bare feet digging great furrows through the dirt.~~

~~Wherever they grab her, RIOGHAIN's skin is blistered and blue. Soon, she is covered with corruption - on her arms and legs and neck and head and face.~~

~~FLASH: That face - RIOGHAIN's face - creased with agony.~~

~~As she is buried beneath mounting DRAUGAR, her screaming and thrashing grow worse and worse. The flashes mount until they flicker and eventually burst into the next scene.~~

~~FLASH: Her hand clapped over her mouth to stifle a scream.~~

~~FLASH: Her frantic breathes. Scream through skin. Tear tracks.~~

~~FLASH: Pressure mounts. Skin, red as blood. A wet sound.~~

~~FLASH: The pressure eases. More wet sounds. She gasps.~~

53

EXT. GRAYSCAPE

53

In a gray blankness, mist swirls around RIOGHAIN. All sign of corruption is gone from her flesh. She does not appear alarmed or frightened to be here, in this otherworldly place. Instead, she is supernaturally calm.

To either side of RIOGHAIN stretches a neat row of pews. She walks numbly between them and gazes about, as though remembering this impossible place.

She eventually comes to stop in the middle of it all. Then the mists sweep away and reveal a silhouette before her - a nine-year-old GIRL.

She wears simple peasant's clothing and looks up at RIOGHAIN with an utterly blank expression. RIOGHAIN doesn't flee or scream, she simply drops to her knees.

HEL

Do you know her face?

From the altar comes this voice - a thousand voices and one.

RIOGHAIN shakes her head.

(CONTINUED)

HEL
 How could you?
 (beat)
 You did not wish to.

RIOGHAIN
 I know you.
 (beat)
 The Enemy. The Beast.
 (beat)
 Morningstar.

HEL
 You hid from her.
 (beat)
 Here. In the house of your false
 god.

RIOGHAIN
 The true God.

HEL
 There is no god here.
 (beat)
 Only a goddess.

At this, the mists sweep away to reveal HEL where she stands at the altar.

HEL
 And you gave her to me.
 (beat)
 Do you not remember?

54 EXT. GRAYSCAPE (FLASHBACK) 54

A baby, smeared in afterbirth, wails and wails. RIOGHAIN - younger, sweat-slicked, with a full head of hair - cradles her. RIOGHAIN is exhausted but terrified, looking at this squirming child she's made.

55 INT. GRAYSCAPE 55

As RIOGHAIN remembers, one side of the GIRL's face begins to rot away. A ghastly skull now glowers at RIOGHAIN, skin peeling away in strips.

56 EXT. GRAYSCAPE (FLASHBACK) 56

The child - cleaned and sleeping - is placed atop a stone. RIOGHAIN walks away, tears cascading down her cheeks.

57 INT. GRAYSCAPE 57

HEL

You do.

Tears cascade down the kneeling RIOGHAIN's cheeks. She clutches her balled fist to her lips.

RIOGHAIN

Father.

(beat)

Forgive me.

HEL

You found none in life.

(beat)

You will find none in death.

RIOGHAIN

Father.

(beat)

Forgive me. I am unworthy of your love. Do not abandon me-

GIRL

Mother.

RIOGHAIN freezes in terror.

GIRL

Forgive me. I am unworthy of your love.

(beat)

Do not abandon me.

This is too much for RIOGHAIN. She scrambles away, aghast at the specter of this child and attempts to run from the church.

HEL stops her, appearing suddenly between the pews. RIOGHAIN stumbles and falls, slamming to the ground. At HEL's feet, there spans a great puddle of water, still as a mirror. As RIOGHAIN collects herself, she gazes into the puddle.

At first, RIOGHAIN sees nothing - not even her own reflection. The longer she stares, however, the more her reflection does come into focus but it's wrong.

(CONTINUED)

RIOGHAIN's become a DRAUGR. Her skin is blue, her eyes empty pits and black bile leaks from her open mouth.

The scenery behind her ghastly reflection shifts. Now the undead RIOGHAIN is ranked among hundreds of other DRAUGAR, shambling along in an endless river of walking corpses.

She watches them shamble onto a ship of nails. She watches fire and giants and slaving wolves. She watches an ash tree, grand as creation, aflame.

The puddle goes dark. RIOGHAIN stares into its dark water.

HEL

Come.

HEL turns and begins to walk away, down between the pews, leading RIOGHAIN deeper into the mist.

RIOGHAIN doesn't watch her go. Instead, she slowly opens her fist. Inside, she clutches her makeshift crucifix, snapped in two. She stares at it for a long moment.

RIOGHAIN

This place has no claim on me.

HEL stops. RIOGHAIN looks up at her.

RIOGHAIN

I am captive no longer. I will not go quietly. I reject your doom.

With a sudden swell, RIOGHAIN rises to her feet. The moment she does, there's a blinding flash of light.

58

~~INT. HALL - EVENING~~

~~58~~

~~The stone doors swing open.~~

~~RIOGHAIN is slumped on the earthen floor of the hall, bathed in the gray light beyond. She gasps and gazes about, alarmed. The corruption has returned, patches of smoldering blue all over her body.~~

~~The hall is empty. No HROLF, no DRAUGAR, no HEL. Only empty trestle tables, an empty throne and the way out.~~

~~The rune-sword lies abandoned on the ground before her.~~