

~~RIOGHAIN's screaming has given way to terrified mutterings and clutching her crucifix. HROLF is undeterred and steps further into the hall. RIOGHAIN looks desperately behind, at the doorway's shrinking square of light, but is powerless to resist as she's drawn deeper.~~

~~They approach the high seat. Torchlight plays across the empty throne.~~

~~————— HROLF
 ————— (shouted)
 ————— Thorunn!
 ————— (beat)
 ————— Thorunn!~~

~~He spins a circle, sweeping his torch back across the tables.~~

~~Both tables are empty. The corpses are gone. Far behind him, at the entrance to the doors, we see a brief silhouette standing there, almost precisely as we saw the WOMAN before.~~

~~In a sudden rush, the stone doors at the end of the hall slam shut, plunging them into darkness. RIOGHAIN screams but her scream is cut short when she sees what crowds behind her.~~

~~Without warning, the pair of them are surrounded by DRAUGAR. The corpses once strewn along the tables now encircle them. They are completely still.~~

~~HROLF spins, sword in hand, expecting attack but none comes. The DRAUGAR watch them with slack jaws and lifeless eyes but do not make a move. Save one.~~

~~THORUNN steps forward from the crowd. She is no corpse, but HROLF's living wife. She stares at him sightlessly and he gapes.~~

~~HROLF
 You are not Thorunn.~~

~~HEL
 Perhaps not.~~

~~The throne is no longer empty. There sits HEL. When she speaks, it is with a thousand voices and one.~~

~~HROLF advances a step.~~

~~HROLF
 You stole her from me.~~

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

THORUNN places a hand on HROLF's cheek.

FLASH: Flies. Screams. Dried blood.

Where she touches him, she leaves a blistering blue mark.

HROLF
 No.

FLASH: An axe falls. Skin splits. A body thuds the ground.

HEL
 You do.

FLASH: The body crawls away, her lips trembling. It's RIOGHAIN.

HROLF
 I killed this one.

In a fit of fury, he snatches RIOGHAIN by the chain and rattles her at the goddess. She scrambles away, as far as she can, as far as the chain allows.

HROLF
 A thrall and a Christ witch
 besides.

HEL
 First.

THORUNN plants another hand on his cheek.

36 EXT. GRAYSCAPE (FLASHBACK)

36

In a gray nothingness, HROLF remembers.

A hunched figure stands over the slumped body of RIOGHAIN. It huffs like a dragon, its teeth chatter, foam collects at the corners of its mouth.

HROLF'S gone berserk.

The air is filled with the screams of children. HROLF stalks towards the sound.

(CONTINUED)

A pair of GIRLS run through the grayscape and into the waiting arms of THORUNN. They scream again as HROLF closes on them. The GIRLS scream and clutch at their mother's dress.

She shields them with her body and, from nowhere, produces a woodcutter's axe. She's saying something to him as HROLF approaches but we hear nothing. He comes on, unstoppable as an avalanche and, in response, a weeping THORUNN drops her axe and tries, in vain, to plead with him.

37

INT. BARROW - EVENING

37

THORUNN takes her hand away from his cheek and it smolders.

HEL
You remember.

HROLF
I do.

Before him, half of THORUNN'S face melts. The flesh sags and peels, revealing a bare skull beneath. HEL smiles.

HEL
From death shall none escape.

Sword and torch fall from nerveless fingers to clatter on the ground.

HROLF
I failed.

He is transformed into a DRAUGR. His skin is ice blue. Blue mist leaks from between his teeth. His eyes are sightless and unblinking.

His teeth grit together. Foam collects at the corners of his mouth. His hands clench.

HEL
Foolish of One Eye.
(beat)
To send me a berserker of mine own.