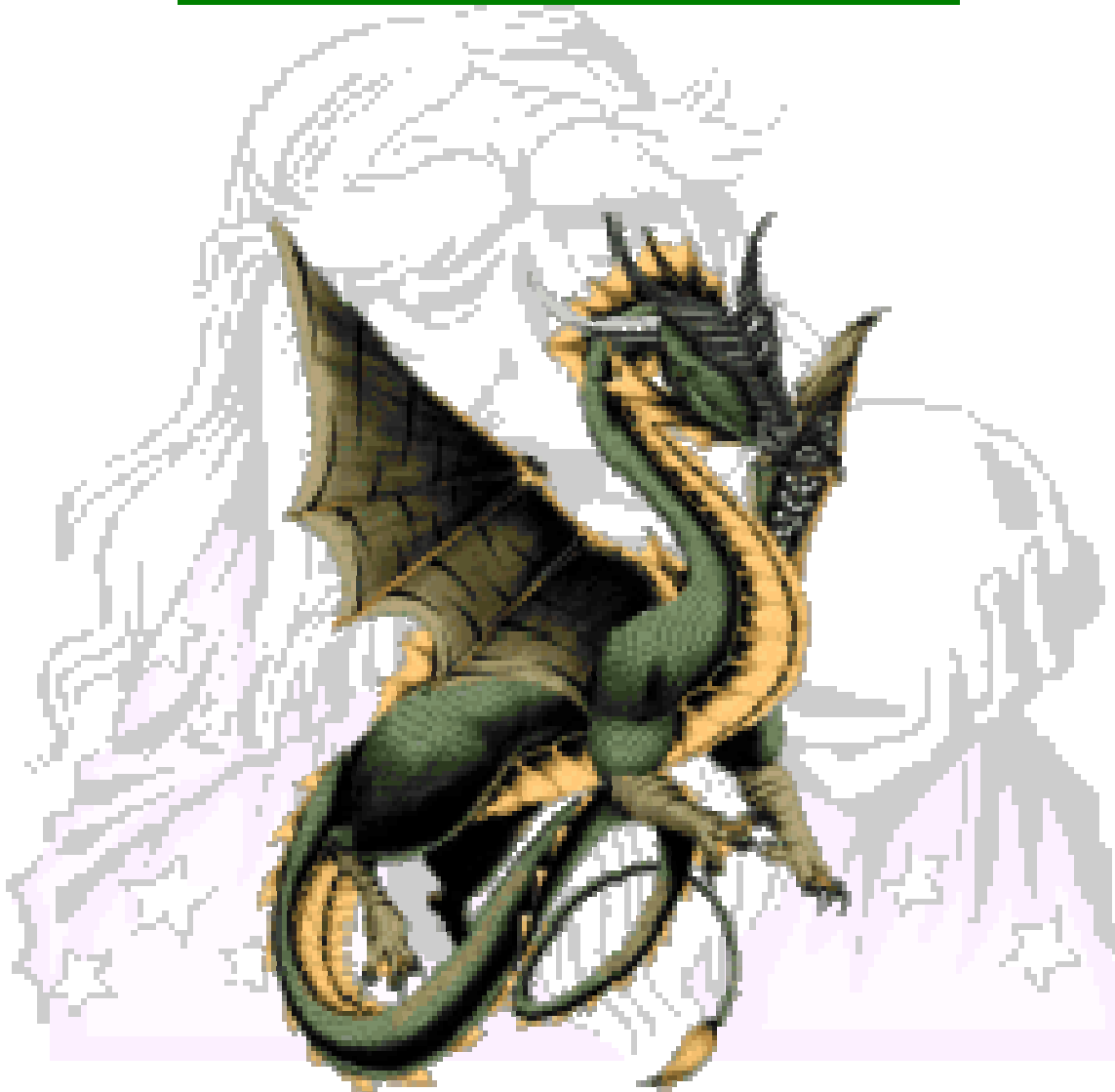


The Fenian Cycle



Sources: O' Grady, Standish, Haehyes, ed., trans., *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, (Dublin), III (1855/57), 40-211. Ni Sh'eaghda, Nessa, Ed., trans., *T'oruigheacht Dhiarmada agus Ghr'ainne*, Irish Texts Society. XLVIII (Dublin, 1967). Best, Richard I. *Bibliography of Irish Philology*, I 102-103 (Dublin 1913). Cross, Tom Peete, and Clark Harris Slover *Ancient Irish Tales*, Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1969

INTRODUCTION

A large selection of the best-loved Irish legends are enjoyed by children from generation to generation. They have been told for hundreds of years and are part of Irish history. With stories of great giants, clever warriors. Jealous queens, leprechauns, fairies and magical and mystical creatures, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

My fascination with Ireland, the Irish people and - well everything Irish has been with me for a lifetime, and so shall be and has been passed on to my own children, my son having 'half' his roots in Ireland. Ireland is a land of myth and fantasy and a subject I will ne'er become weary of. Enjoy this adaptation. For easier uploading, I have excluded pictures. I extend my thanks to all my sources, known and unknown and all those who made possible the research.

Donnette

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RECREATIONAL PURPOSES

The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part One- The Flight

In this the first part of the famous tale we learn much about the nature of the court of a celtic chief. We can follow Grainne for example from grassy area to the house of the women and into the court. We learn of wattle gates and of the arrangement of the hall. We also explore the central aspect of this tale- the relationship of loyalties- will one be loyal to the promises of love or the promises to one's chief and patron. We also take a look at feats of bravery- perhaps those practiced for entertainment and or training at court- Diarmuid leaping on the tips of his spears for example. As you read this story listen as it demonstrates and describes the nature of Celtic society. This is the latest of the ancient cycles. It is a cumulative effort - a layer cake if you will, of all of the traditions which have crossed the island of Ireland from earliest times. Can you pick out the layers? They are it seems all there at least in part as lenses which color the tale.

On a certain day when Finn mac Cumail rose at early morn in Almu, in Leinster, and sat upon the grass-green plain, having neither servant nor attendant with him, there followed him two of his people; that is, Oisin the son of Minn, and Diorrying the son of Dobar O' Baoiscne. Oisin Spoke, and what he said was:

"What is the cause of this early rising of thine, O Finn?" said he.

"Not without cause have I made this early rising," said Finn "for I am without a wife since Maignes the daughter of Garad Glundub Mac Moirne

died; for he is not wont to have slumber nor sweet sleep who happens to be without a fitting wife, and that is the cause of my early rising O Oisín."

"What forceth thee to be thus?" said Oisín; "for there is not a wife nor a mate in the green-landed island of Erin upon whom thou mightest turn the light of thine eyes or of thy sight, whom we would not bring by fair means or by foul to thee."

And then spoke Diórúing, and what he said was: "I myself could discover for thee a wife and a mate befitting thee."

"Who is she?" said Finn,

"She is Grainne the daughter of Cormac the son of Art the son of Conn the Hundred-Fighter," said Diórúing, "that is, the woman that is fairest of feature and form and speech of the women of the world together."

"By my hand, O Diórúing," said Finn, "there has been strife and variance between Cormac and myself for a long time, and I think it not good nor seemly that he should give me a refusal of marriage; and I had rather that ye should both go to ask the marriage of his daughter for me of Cormac, for I could better endure a refusal of marriage to be given to you than to myself."

"We will go there," said Oisín, "though there be no profit for us there, and let no man know of our journey until we come back again."

After that, those two good warriors went their way, and they took farewell of Finn, and it is not told how they fared until they reached Tara. The king of Erin chanced to be holding a gathering and a muster before them upon the plain of Tara, and the chiefs and the great nobles of his people were with him. A friendly welcome was given to Oisín and Diórúing, and the gathering was then put off until another day, for the king was certain that it was upon some pressing matter that those two had come to him. Afterwards Oisín called the king of Erin to one side, and told him that it was to ask of him the marriage of his daughter for Finn Mac Cumail that they themselves were then come. Cormac spoke, and what he said was:

"There is not a son of a king or of a great prince, a hero a battle-champion in Erin, to whom my daughter has not given refuse of marriage, and it is on me

that all and every one lays the blame for that; so I will not give you any formal decision until ye betake yourselves before my daughter, for it is better that ye hear her own words than that ye be displeased with me."

After that they went their way to the dwelling of the women, and Cormac sat him upon the side of the couch and of the high bed by Grainne; and he said:"Here, O Grainne," said he, "are two of the people of Finn mac Cumail coming to ask thee as wife and mate for him, and what answer wouldst thou give them?"

(editor's note: Notice that the dwelling of the women is mentioned- it is noted that in many tribal societies and in particular those of North America there are set aside special places for women to live during special times of the month- could this be a reference to a celtic version of the "menstrual hut"? In any case the setting apart of a special woman's house is significant)

Grainne answered, and what she said was: "If he be a fitting son-in-law for thee, why should he not be a fitting husband and mate for me?"

Then they were satisfied; and after that a feast and banquet was made for them in the bower with Grainne and the women, so that they became exhilarated and mirthful; and Cormac made a tryst with them and with Finn a fortnight from that night at Tara.

(editor's note: Note the celtic practice of joining divergent tribes and lineages with arranged marriages. It was very important for isolated groups to link up with one another not only for safety and prevention of warfare but also for common assistance. Fosterage and hostage taking also helped in the sharing of technology and training. These social arrangements were lifelines linking delicate cultural outposts across the uninhabited lands)

Thereafter Oisín and Diarmuid arrived again at Almu, where they found Finn and the Fian, and they told them their news from beginning to end. Now as every thing wears away, so also did that space of time; and then Finn collected and assembled the seven battalions of the standing Fian, from every quarter where they were, and they came where Finn was, in Almu the great and broad of Leinster; and on the last day of that period of time they went forth in great bands, in troops, and in impetuous fierce impenetrable companies, and we are not told how they fared until they reached Tara.

Cormac was before them upon the plain with the chiefs and the great nobles of the men of Erin about him, and they made a gentle welcome for Finn and all the Fian, and after that they went to the king's mirthful house called Midcuart. The king of Erin sat down to enjoy drinking and pleasure, with his wife at his left shoulder, that is, Eitche, the daughter of Atan of Corcaig, and Grainne at her shoulder, and Finn mac Cumall at the king's right hand' and Cairbre Liffecair the son of Cormac sat at one side of the same royal house, and Oisín the son of Finn at the other side, and each one of them sat according to his rank and to his patrimony from that down.

(editor's note: Note how social status is defined spatially by arrangement of seating. The story has as one of its functions the preservation of the history of lineage and relationship- infact the entertainment value is perhaps simply coloring for what would be a dull and boring recitation of these important facts. The same is true of place names. The stories are very careful to name places and landmarks. Another important function is the preservation of maps. For an oral society with no written maps that we know of the common reference would be the tale which would link places, names and geography together. Today many of these place names are still attached to the land.)

There sat there a druid and a skillful man of knowledge of the people of Finn before Grainne the daughter of Cormac; that is, Daire Duanach Mac Morna; and it was not long before there arose gentle talking and mutual discourse between himself and Grainne. Then Daire Duanach mac Morna arose and stood before Grainne, and sang her the songs and the verses and the sweet poems of her fathers and of her ancestors; and then Grainne spoke and asked the druid,

"What is the reason where fore Finn is come to this place tonight?"

"If thou knowest not that," said the druid, "it is no wonder that I know it not."

"I desire to learn it of thee," said Grainne.

"Well then," said the druid, " it is to ask thee as wife and as mate that Finn is come to this place to-night."

"It is a great marvel to me," said Grainne, "that it is not for Oisín that Finn asks me, for it were fitter to give me such as he, than a man that is older than my father."

"Say not that," said the druid, "for were Finn to hear thee he himself would not have thee, neither would Oisín dare to take thee."

"Tell me know," said Grainne, "who is that warrior at the right shoulder of Oisín the son of Finn?"

"Yonder," said the druid, "is Goll mac Morna, the active, the warlike."

"Who is that warrior at the shoulder of Goll?" said Grainne.

"Oscar the son of Oisín," said the druid.

"Who is that graceful-legged man at the shoulder of Oscar?" said Grainne.

"Cailte mac Ronain," said the druid.

"What haughty impetuous warrior is that yonder at the shoulder of Cailte?" said Grainne.

"The son of Lugaid of the mighty hand, and that man is sister's son to Finn mac Cumall," said the druid.

"Who is that freckled sweet-worded man upon whom is the curling dusky-black hair and the two red ruddy cheeks, upon the left hand of Oisín the son of Finn?"

"That man is Diarmuid the grandson of Dubne, the white-toothed, of the light-some countenance; that is, the best lover of women and of maidens that is in the whole world."

"Who is that at the shoulder of Diarmuid?" said Grainne.

"Diorruing the son of Dobar Damad O' Baoiscne, and that man is a druid and a skillful man of science," said Daire Duanach.

(editor's note: It is a convention of celtic tales to at some point generally early in the tale to in effect go around the room making introductions of a

wide range of personalities. This is often very theatrical and gives a hint at some form of production where the characters are presented. Again here is an opportunity for the author to include the all important social information of lineage and the history and deeds of the characters. From these descriptions it is possible to learn of the professions represented at court- druids, warriors....lovers...men of science)

"That is a goodly company," said Grainne; and she called her attendant handmaid to her, and told her to bring to her the jeweled golden-chased goblet which was in the bower behind her. The handmaid brought the goblet, and Grainne filled the goblet forthwith, and it contained the drink of nine times nine men. Grainne said,

"Take the goblet to Finn first, and bid him drink a draught out of it, and disclose to him that it is I that sent it to him."

The handmaid took the goblet to Finn, and told him everything that Grainne had bidden her say to him. Finn took the goblet, and no sooner had he drunk a draught out of it than there fell upon him a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber. Cormac took the draught and the same sleep fell upon him, and Eitche, the wife of Cormac, took the goblet and drank a draught out of it, and the same sleep fell upon her as upon all the others. Then Grainne called the attendant handmaid to her, and said to her:

"Take this goblet to Cairbre Liffecair and tell him to drink a draught out of it, and give the goblet to those sons of king by him"

The handmaid took the goblet to Cairbre, and he was not well able to give it to him that was next to him, before a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber fell upon him too, and each one that took the goblet, one after another, fell into a stupor of sleep and of deep slumber.

When Grainne saw that they were in a state of drunkenness and of trance, she rose fairly and softly from the seat on which she was, and spoke to Oisin, and what she said was:

"I marvel at Finn mac Cumail that he should seek such a wife as I , for it were fitter for him to give me my own equal to marry than a man older than my father."

"Say not that, O Grainne," said Oisín, "for if Finn were to hear thee he would not have thee, neither would I dare to take thee."

"Wilt thou receive courtship from me, O Oisín?" said Grainne.

"I will not," said Oisín. "For whatsoever woman is betrothed to Finn, I would not meddle with her."

Then Grainne turned her face to Diarmuid O' Duibne, and what she said to him was: "Wilt thou receive courtship from me, O O'Duibne, since Oisín received it not from me?"

"I will not," said Diarmuid, "for whatever woman is betrothed to Oisín I may not take her, even were she not betrothed to Finn."

"Then," said Grainne, "I put thee under taboos of danger and destruction, O Diarmuid, that is, under the

taboos of mighty druidism, if thou take me not with thee out of this household to-night, ere Finn and the king of Erin arise out of that sleep."

(editor's note: Celtic society regarded spoken curses and taboos highly. In an oral society where there were no written facts that which was said about you was infact the highest fact. Therefore it is not surprising that taboo and satire were of such great importance- again these stories helped the Fili classes remember - without being too boring and statistical about it - who was placed under what ban or taboo or satire by whom when. This was important as often such pronouncements lasted throughout the generations and needed to be remembered within the oral tradition)

"Evil bonds are those under which thou hast laid me, O woman," said Diarmuid; "and wherefore hast thou laid those taboos upon me before all the sons of kings and of high princes in the king's mirthful house called Midcuart this night, seeing that there is not of all those one less worthy to be loved by a woman than myself?"

"By thy hand, O O'Duibne, it is not without cause that I have laid those taboos on thee, as I will tell thee now.

"One day when the king of Erin was presiding over a gathering and muster on the plain of Tara, Finn and the seven battalions of the standing Fian chanced to be there that day; and there arose a great goaling match between Cairbre Liffecair the son of Cormac, and the son of Lugaid, and the men of Mag Breg, and of Cerna, and the stout champions of Tara arose on the side of Cairbre, and the Fian of Erin on the other side of the son of Lugaid; and there were none sitting in the gathering that day but the king, and Finn, and thyself, O Diarmuid. It happened that the game was going against the son of Lugaid, and thou didst rise and stand, and tookest his hurly-stick from the next man to thee, and didst throw him to the ground and to the earth, and thou wentest into the game, and didst with the goal three times upon Caribre and upon the warriors of Tara. I was at that time in my bower of the clear view, of the blue windows of glass, gazing upon thee; and I turned the light of mine eyes and of my sight upon thee that day, and I never gave that love to any other man from that time to this, and will not for ever." *(editor's note: Observe here the reference to the ancient celtic game of hurling. This game comes up frequently in ancient Irish tales and is still played today. Players use a hurling stick almost like a hockey stick to hit a hard wooden ball across a field and into a hole under the far goal. It is a very fast and rough game-the game was associated with boys training to be warriors and was instrumental in the settling of disputes)*

"It is a wonder that though shouldest give me that love instead of Finn," said Diarmuid, "seeing that there is not in Erin a man that is fonder of a woman than he; and knowest thou, O Grainne, on the night that Finn is in Tara that he it is that has the keys of Tara, and that so we cannot leave the stronghold?"

"There is a wicket-gate to my bower," said Grainne, "and we will pass out through it."

"It is a prohibited thing for me to pass through any wicket gate whatsoever," said Diarmuid.

"Howbeit, I hear," said Grainne, "that every warrior and battle champion can pass by the shafts of his javelins and by the staves of his spears, in or out over the rampart of every fort and of every stronghold and I will pass out by the wicker gate, and do thou follow me so."

Grainne went her way out, and Diarmuid spoke to his people, and what he said was: "O Oisín, son of Finn, what shall I do with this taboo that has been laid on me?"

"Thou art not guilty of the taboo which has been laid upon thee," said Oisín, "and I tell thee to follow Grainne, and keep thyself well against the wiles of Finn."

"O Oscar, son of Oisín, what is good for me to do as to those bonds which have been laid upon me?"

"I tell thee to follow Grainne," said Oscar, "for he is a sorry wretch that fails to keep his taboos."

"What counsel dost thou give me, O Cailte?" said Diarmuid.

"I say said Cailte, "that I have a fitting wife, and yet I had rather than the wealth of the world that it had been to me that Grainne gave that love."

"What counsel givest thou me, O Diórruing?"

"I tell thee to follow Grainne, though thy death will come of it, and I grieve for it."

"Is that the counsel of you all to me?" said Diarmuid.

"It is," said Oisín, and said all the others together.

After that Diarmuid arose and stood, and stretched forth his active warrior hand over his broad weapons, and took leave and farewell of Oisín and of the chiefs of the Fian; and not bigger is a smooth-crimson whortleberry than was each tear that Diarmuid shed from his eyes at parting with his people. Diarmuid went to the top of the stronghold, and put the shafts of his two javelins under him, and rose with an airy, very light, exceeding high, birdlike leap, until he attained the breadth of his two soles of the beautiful grass-green earth on the plain without, and Grainne met him. Then Diarmuid spoke, and what he said was: "I believe, O Grainne, that this is an evil course upon which thou art come; for it were better for thee to have Finn mac Cumail for a lover than myself, seeing that I know not what nook or corner, or

remote part of Erin I can take thee to now, and return again home, without Fin's learning what thou hast done."

(editor's note: It is important to notice the use of characteristics of nature to describe human attributes. It is suggested by scholars that along with the concepts of romantic love advanced in this cycle the use of these natural traits indicates the development of the literature from a dry official mechanism for recording facts to the impressionistic creativity which we see here. Many believe that this is an effect of Irish monasticism which has provided written records which have liberated the authors to provide more color and human interest to their accounts which are no longer valued only for their informational content)

"It is certain that I will not go back," said Grainne, " and that I will not part from thee until death part me from thee."

"Then go forward, O Grainne," said Diarmuid.

Diarmuid and Grainne went their way after that, and they had not gone beyond a mile from Tara when Grainne said, "I indeed am wearying, O O' Duibne."

"It is a good time to weary, O Grainne," said Diarmuid, " and return now to thine old household again, for I plight the word of a true warrior that I will never carry thee, nor any other woman, to all eternity."

"So needst thou not do," said Grainne, "for my father's horses are in a fenced meadow by themselves, and they have chariots; and return thou to them, and yoke two horses of them to a chariot, and I will wait for thee on this spot till thou overtake me again." Diarmuid returned to the horses, and he yoked two horses of them to a chariot. It is not told how Diarmuid and Grainne fared until they reached Beul Atha Luain.

And Diarmuid spoke to Grainne, and said: " it is all the easier for Finn to follow our track, O Grainne, that we have the horses." " Then," said Grainne, "leave the horses upon this spot, and I will journey on foot by thee henceforth." Diarmuid got down at the edge of the ford, and took a horse with him over across the ford, and thus left one of them upon each side of the stream, and he and Grainne went a mile with the stream westward, and

reached land at the side of the province of Connacht. It is not told how they fared until they arrived at Doire Da Both, in the midst of Clan Ricard; and Diarmuid cut down the grove around him, and made to it seven doors of wattles, and he settled a bed of soft rushes and of the tops of the birch under Grainne in the very midst of that wood. *(editor's note: The seven door structure is a primary image in the ancient tales. Note the wattle construction technique and the use of rushes- one can also see here a description which would serve as instruction for stage setting. The scene is described so as to almost refer to a stage-it is very set graphic- having doors open and characters appear is very visually dramatic)*

As for Finn mac Cumail, I will tell his tidings clearly . All that were in Tara rose at early morn on the morrow, and they found Diarmuid and Grainne wanting from among them and a burning jealousy and rage seized upon Finn. He found his trackers before him on the plain, that is the Clan Neamuin, and he bade them follow Diarmuid and Grainne. Then they carried the track as far as Beul Atha Luain, and Finn and the Fian of Erin followed them; but they could not follow the track over across the ford so that Finn pledged his word that if they followed not the track out speedily, he would hang them on either side of the ford.

Then the Clan Neamuin went up to the stream, and found a horse on either side of the stream; and they went a mile with the stream westward, and found the track by the side of the province of Connacht, and Finn and the Fian of Erin followed them. Then spoke Finn, and what he said was. "Well I know where Diarmuid and Grainne shall be found now, that is in Doire Da Both." Oisin, and Oscar, and Cailte, and Diorrying son of Dobar Damad O' Baoiscene, were listening to Finn speaking these words, and Oisin spoke, and what he said was:"We are in danger lest Diarmuid and Grainne be yonder, and we must needs send him some warning. And look where Bran is, that is, the hound of Finn mac Cumail, that we may send him to him, for Finn himself is not dearer to him than Diarmuid is; and O Oscar, tell Bran to go with a warning to Diarmuid, who is in Doire Da Both" and Oscar told that to Bran. Bran understood that without knowledge and wisdom, and went back to the hinder part of the host where Finn might not see him, and followed Diarmuid and Grainne by their track until he reached Doire Da Both, and thrust his head into Diarmuid's bosom, and he asleep.

Then Diarmuid sprang out of his sleep, and awoke Grainne also and said to her: "There is Bran, the hound of Finn mac Cumall, coming with a warning to us before Finn himself"

"Take that warning, " said Grainne, " and fly."

"I will not take it," said Diarmuid, "for I would not that Finn caught me at any other time rather than now, since I cannot escape from him." When Grainne heard this, dread and great fear seized her; and Bran departed from them.

Then Oisín the son of Finn spoke and said: "We are in danger lest Bran have not gotten opportunity to go to Diarmuid, and we must needs give him some other warning; and look for Feargoir the henchman of Cailte."

" He is with me, " said Cailte. Now Feargoir was so, that every shout he gave used to be heard in the three nearest districts to him. Then they made him give three shouts, in order that Diarmuid might hear him. Diarmuid heard Feargoir, and awoke Grainne out of her sleep, and what he said was: "I hear the henchman of Cailte mac Ronain, and it is with Cailte he is, and it is with Finn that Cailte is, and this is a warning they are sending me."

"Take that warning," said Grainne.

"I will not," said Diarmuid, "for we shall not leave this wood until Finn and the Fian of Erin overtake us";

and fear and great dread seized Grainne when she heard that.....

The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 2 Doire Da Both

(editor's note: As Nagy writes in The Wisdom of the outlaw. Finn and the Fian are in their element when in the natural no-man's realm of the spaces. Here we are introduced to Angus. Note his other worldly powers- he seems in a distinct dimension from that of most of the characters- perhaps from another layer of the evolution of the tales.)

Upon hearing the warning of the hounds Grainne said:

"Take that warning," said Grainne.

"I will not," said Diarmuid, " for we shall not leave this wood until Finn and the Fian of Erin overtake us"; and fear and great dread seized Grainne when she heard that.

As for Finn, I will tell his tidings clearly. He did not abandon the chase until he reached Doire Da Both, and he sent the tribe of Emain to search out the wood, and they saw Diarmuid and a woman by him. They returned back again where were Finn and the Fian of Erin, and Finn asked of them whether Diarmuid or Grainne were in the wood. "Diarmuid is there," they said, " and there is some woman by him; who she is we know not for we know Diarmuid's track, and we know not the track of Grainne."

"Foul fall the friends of Daiarmuid O'Duibne for his sake," said Finn, "and he shall not leave the wood until he give me satisfaction for every thing he has done to me'

"It is a great token of jealousy in thee, O Finn," said Oisin, " to think that Diarmuid would stay upon the plain of Maenmag, seeing that there is there no stronghold but Doire Da Both, and thou too awaiting him,"

"That shall profit thee nothing, O Oisín," said Finn," and well I knew the three shouts that Cailte's servant gave, that it was ye that sent my own hound, that is Bran, with another warning to him: but it shall profit you nothing to have sent him any of those warnings; for he shall not leave Doire Da Both until he give me compensation for everything that he hath done to me, and for every slight that he hath put on me."

"Great foolishness it is for thee, O Finn," said Oscar the son of Oisín, " to suppose that Diarmuid would stay in the midst of this plain, and thou waiting to take his head from him."

"Who else cut the wood thus, and made a close warm enclosure thereof, with seven tight slender-narrow doors to it? And with which of us, O Diarmuid, is the truth, with myself or with Oscar?" said Finn.

"Thou didst never err in thy good judgment, O Finn," said Diarmuid," and I indeed and Grainne are here." Then Finn bade the fian of Erin come round Diarmuid and take him for himself. Thereupon Diarmuid rose up and gave Grainne three kisses in the presence of Finn and of the fian, so that a burning of jealousy and rage seized Finn upon seeing that, and he said that Diarmuid should give his head for those kisses.

As for Angus of the Brug, that is the tutor in learning of Diarmuid O'Duibne, who was a in the Brug upon the Boyne, he saw the extremity in which his foster-son Diarmuid, then was; and he proceeded accompanying the pure-cold wind, and he halted not till he reached Doire Da Both Then he went unknown to Finn or to the fian of Erin to the place wherein were Diarmuid and Grainne, and he greeted Diarmuid and what he said was: " What is this thing that thou hast done, O O'Duibne?"

"This it is," said Diarmuid; " the daughter of the king of Erin has fled secretly with me from her father and from Finn, and it is not of my will that she has come with me.."

"Then let one of you come under either border of my mantle,"

said Angus, " and I will take you out of the place where ye are without the knowledge of Finn or of the fian of Erin."

"Take thou Grainne with the," said Diarmuid, "but as for me, I will never go with the; howbeit, if I be alive presently I will follow thee, and if I do not, do thou send Grainne to her father, and let him treat her well or ill."

After that Angus put Grainne under the border of her mantle, and went his way without knowledge of Finn or of the fian of Erin, and no tale is told of them until they reached Ros Da Soileach which is now called Luimneach.

After Angus and Grainne had departed from Diarmuid he arose as a straight pillar and stood upright, and girded his arms and his armor and his various sharp weapons about him. After that he drew near to one of the seven wattled doors that there were in the enclosure and asked who was at it. "No foe to thee is any man who is at it," said they who were without, "for here are Oisín the son of Finn, and Oscar the son of Oisín, and the chieftains of the Clan Baoiscne together with us; and come out to us, and none will dare to do thee harm, hurt, or damage."

"I will not go to you," said Diarmuid, "until I see at which door Finn himself is." He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it.

"Cailte the son of Crannacar mac Ronain, and the Clan Ronain together with him; and come out to us and we will fight and die for thy sake.."

"I will not go to you," said Diarmuid, "for I will not cause Finn to be angry with you for well doing to myself." He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it.

"Here are Conan the son of Finn of Liathluacra, and the Clan Morna together with him; and we are enemies to Finn and thou art far dearer to us than he, and for that reason come out to us, and none will dare meddle with thee."

"Surely I will not go," said Diarmuid, "for Finn had rather the death of every man of you should come to pass, than that I should be let out." He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was there.

"A friend and a dear comrade of thine is here, that is , Finn the son of Cuadan mac Murchada, the royal a chief of the fian of Munster, and the Munster fian together with him; and we are of one land and one country with

thee, O Diarmuid, and we will give our bodies and our lives for thee and for thy sake."

"I will not go out to you," said Diarmuid, "for I will not cause Finn to be displeased with you for well doing to myself." He drew near to another wattled door and asked who was at it.

"It is Finn the son of Glor, the royal chief of the fian of Ulster, and the Ulster fian along with him; and come out to us, and none will dare cut or wound thee."

"I will not go out to you," said Diarmuid, "for thou art a friend to me, and thy father; and I would not that he should bear the enmity of Finn for my sake." He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it.

"No friend to thee is any that is here," said they, " for here are Aed Beg of Emain, and Aed Fada of Emain, and Caol Croda of Emain, and Goineacch of Emain, and Gothan Gilmeurach of Emain, and Aife the daughter of Gothan Gilmeurach of Emain, and Cuadan Lorrnaire of Emain; and we bear thee no love, and if thou wouldst come out to us we would wound thee till thou shouldst be like a stone, without respite."

"Evil the company that is there," Said Diarmuid, "O ye of the lie, and of the tracking, and of the one brogue; and it is not the fear of your hand that is upon me, but from enmity to you I will not go out to you." He drew near to another wattled door, and asked who was at it.

"Here are Finn mac Cumail, the son of Art, the son of Trenmor O' Baoiscne, and four hundred hirelings with him; and we bear thee no love, and if thou shouldst come out to us we would cleave thy bones asunder."

"I pledge my word," said Diarmuid, "That the door at which thou art, O Finn, is the very door by which I will pass of all the doors."

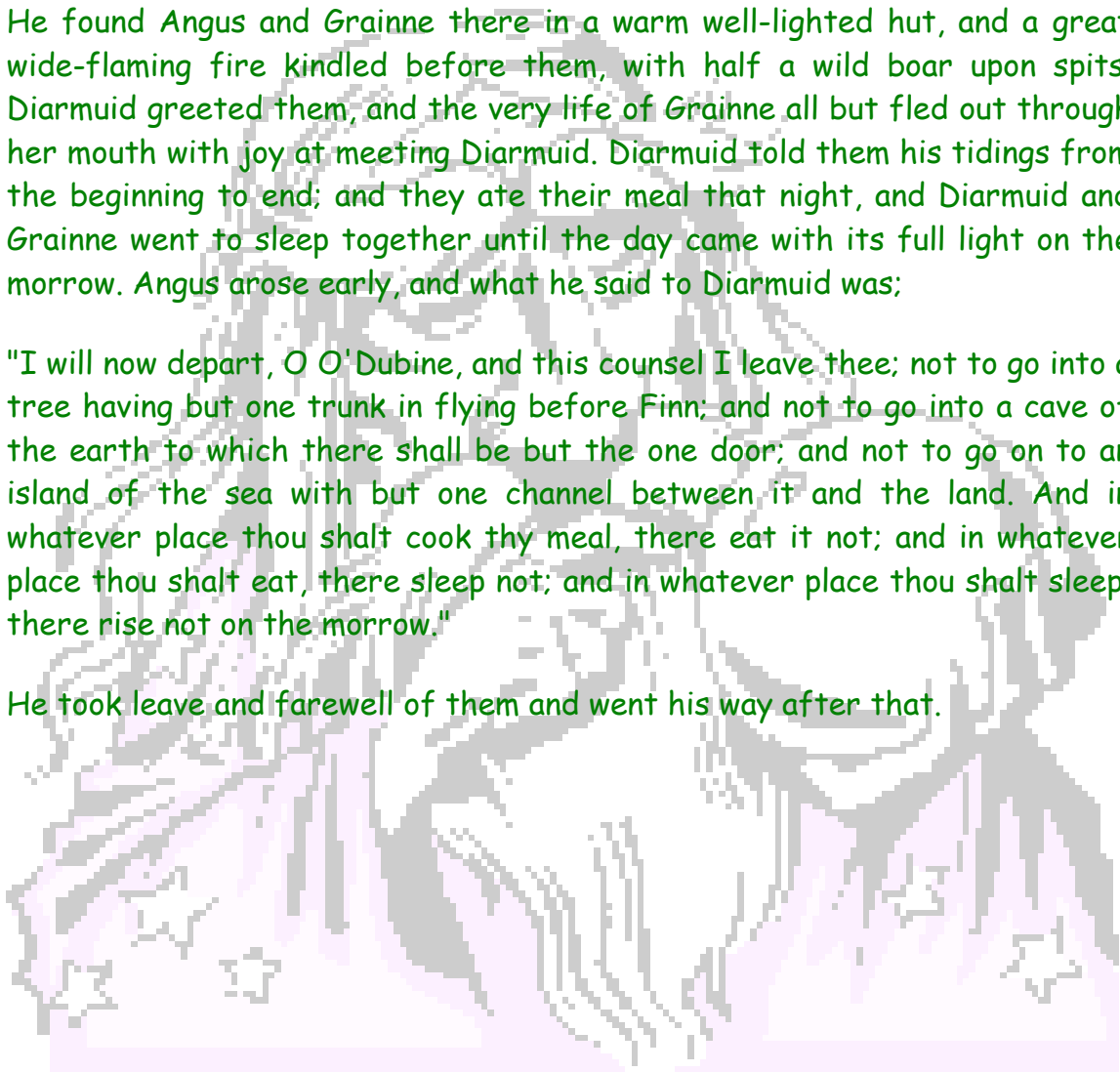
Having heard that, Finn charged his battalions on pain of death and instant destruction not to let Diarmuid pass with them without their knowledge. Diarmuid having heard that arose with an airy, high, exceeding light bound, by the shafts of his javelins and by the staves of his spears, and went a great way out beyond Finn and beyond his people without their knowledge or perception. He looked back upon them and proclaimed to them that he had

passed them, and slung his shield upon the broad arched expanse of his back, and so went straight westward; and he was not long in going out of the sight of Finn and of the fian. Then when he saw that they followed him not, he turned back where he had seen Angus and Grainne departing out of the wood, and he followed them by their track, holding a straight course, until he reached Ros Da Soileach.

He found Angus and Grainne there in a warm well-lighted hut, and a great wide-flaming fire kindled before them, with half a wild boar upon spits. Diarmuid greeted them, and the very life of Grainne all but fled out through her mouth with joy at meeting Diarmuid. Diarmuid told them his tidings from the beginning to end; and they ate their meal that night, and Diarmuid and Grainne went to sleep together until the day came with its full light on the morrow. Angus arose early, and what he said to Diarmuid was;

"I will now depart, O O'Dubine, and this counsel I leave thee; not to go into a tree having but one trunk in flying before Finn; and not to go into a cave of the earth to which there shall be but the one door; and not to go on to an island of the sea with but one channel between it and the land. And in whatever place thou shalt cook thy meal, there eat it not; and in whatever place thou shalt eat, there sleep not; and in whatever place thou shalt sleep, there rise not on the morrow."

He took leave and farewell of them and went his way after that.



The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 3 The Three royal chiefs of the Sea of Wight

After Angus had left them giving his warning....

Diarmuid and Grainne journeyed with the Shannon on their right hand westward until they reached Garb Alba of the Fian, which is now called Leaman; and Diarmuid killed a salmon on the bank of the Leaman, and put it on a spit to broil. Then he himself and Grainne went over across the stream to eat it, as Angus had told them; and they went thence westward to sleep. Diarmuid and Grainne rose early on the morrow, and journeyed straight westward until they reached the marshy moor of Finnliath, and they met a youth upon the moor, and the feature and form of that youth were good, but he had not fitting arms nor armor. Then Diarmuid greeted that youth, and asked tidings of him. "I am a young warrior seeking a lord," said he, "and Muadan is my name."

"What wilt thou do for me, O youth?" said Diarmuid.

"I will do thee service by day, and I will watch thee by night," said Muadan.

"I tell thee to retain that youth." Said Grainne, "for thou canst not always remain without followers." Then they made bonds of compact and agreement one with the other, and journeyed forth westward until they reached the Carrthach; and when they had reached the stream, Muadan asked Diarmuid and Grainne to go upon his back so that he might bear them across over the stream. "That were a great burden for thee," said Grainne. Then he nevertheless took Diarmuid and Grainne upon his back and bore them over across the stream. They journeyed forth westward until they reached the Beith, and when they had reached the stream Muadan did likewise with them, and they went into a cave of the earth at the side of Currach Cinn Admuid, over Tonn Toime; and Muadan dressed a bed of soft rushes and of birch-tops for Diarmuid and Grainne in the further part of that cave. He himself went into the next wood to him and plucked in it a straight long rod of a quicken tree; and he put a hair and a hook upon the rod, and put a holly

berry upon the hook and wen and stood over the stream, and caught a fish that cast. He put on a second berry, and caught a second fish; and he put up a third berry, and caught a third fish. He then put the hook and the hair under his girdle, and the rod into the earth, and took his three fish with him to where Diarmuid and Grainne were, and put the fish upon spits. When they were broiled Muadan said: "I give the dividing of these fish to thee, Diarmuid."

"I had rather that thou shouldst divide them thyself," said Diarmuid.

"Then." Said Muadan, "I give the dividing of these fish to thee, O Grainne."

"It suffices me that thou divide them." Said Grainne.

"Now hadst thou divided the fish, O Diarmuid," said Muadan, "thou wouldst have given the largest share to Grainne; and had it been Grainne that divided them, it is to thee she would have given the largest share; and since it is I that am dividing it, have thou the largest fish, O Diarmuid, and let Grainne have the second largest fish, and let me have the smallest fish." Know o reader that Diarmuid kept himself from Grainne, and that he left a spit of flesh uncooked in Doire Da Both as a token to Finn and to the Fian that he had not sinned with Grainne, and know also that he left the second times seven salmon uncooked upon the bank of the Leaman, wherefore it was that Finn hastened eagerly after him. They ate their meal that night, and Diarmuid and Grainne went to sleep in the further part of the cave, and Muadan kept watch and ward for them until the day arose with its full light on the morrow.

Diarmuid arose early, and made Grainne sit up; and told her to keep watch for Muadan, and that he himself would go to walk the country. Diarmuid went his way and went upon the top of the nearest hill to him, and he stood gazing upon the four quarters around him; that is, eastward and westward, southward and northward. He had not been a long time there before he saw a great swift fleet, and a fearful company of ships, coming towards the land straight from the west; and the course of that the people of the fleet took in coming to land was to the foot of the hill upon which was Diarmuid. Nine times nine of the chieftains of that fleet came ashore, and Diarmuid went to ask tidings of them; and he greeted them and inquired of them news, of what land or what country they were.

"We are the three royal chiefs of the Sea of Wight," said they, "and Finn mac Cumail hath sent for us because of a forest marauder and a rebellious enemy and his that he has outlawed, who is called Diarmuid O' Duibne; and to curb him are we now come. Also we have three savage hounds, and we will loose them upon his track, and it will be but a short time before we get tidings of him; fire burns them not, water drowns them not, and weapons do not wound them; and we ourselves number twenty hundreds of stout stalwart men, and each man of us is a man commanding a hundred. Moreover, tell us who thou thyself art, or hast thou any word of the tidings of O' Duibne?"

"saw him yesterday." Said Diarmuid, "and I myself am but a warrior who am walking the world by the strength of my hand and the temper of my sword; and I vow that ye will have to deal with no ordinary man if Fiarmuid meets you."

"Well no one has been found yet," said they.

"What are ye called yourselves?" said Diarmuid.

"Dub-cosach, Finn-cosach, and Tren-cosach are our names," said they.

"Is there wine in your ships?" asked Diarmuid.

"There is," they said.
(editors note: The following feats also add a theatrical note to the presentation and suggest a dramatic performance. It is believed that the feats represent examples of games and feats performed at court for entertainment or perhaps for the testing of heroes)

"If ye were pleased to bring out a tun of wine," said Diarmuid, "I would perform a feat for you." Certain men were sent to seek the tun, and when it was come Diarmuid raised It between his two arms and drank a draught out of it, and the others drank the rest of it. After that Diarmuid lifted the tun and took it to the top of the hill, and he himself mounted upon it, and rolled it down the steep of the hill until it reached the lower part of it. And he rolled the tun up the hill again, and he did that fat three times in the presence of the strangers, and reminded himself upon the tun as it both came and went. The said that he was one that seen a good feat, seeing that he called that a feat; and with that one of them got upon the tun. Diarmuid

gave the tun a kick, and the stranger fell to the ground before even the tun began to roll; and the tun rolled over that young warrior, so that it caused his bowels and his entrails to come out about his feet. Thereupon Diarmuid followed the tun and brought it up again, and a second man mounted upon it. When Diarmuid saw that, he gave it a kick, and the first man had not been more speedily slain than was the second. Diarmuid urged the tun up again and the third man mounted upon it; and he too was slain like the others. Thus were slain fifty of their people by Diarmuid's trick that day, and as many as were not slain of them went to their ships that night. Diarmuid went to his own people, and Muadan put his hair and his hook upon his rod, and caught three salmon. He stuck the rod into the ground and the hair under his girdle, and took the fish to Diarmuid and Grainne, and they ate their meal that night; and Muadan dressed a bed under Diarmuid and under Grainne in the further part of the cave, and he went himself to the door of the cave to keep watch and ward for them until the clear bright day arose on the morrow.

Diarmuid arose at early day and beaming dawn on the morrow, and roused Grainne, and told her to watch while Murdan slept. He went himself to the top of the same hill, and he had not been there long before the three chiefs came towards him, and he inquired of them whether they would like to perform any more feats. They said that they had rather find tidings of Diarmuid O'Duibne. "I have seen a man who saw him to-day," said Diarmuid; and thereupon Diarmuid put from him his weapons and his armor upon the hill, every thing but the shirt that was next his skin, and he stuck his javelin, the Crann Buide of Manannan mac Lir, upright with its point uppermost. Then Diarmuid rose with a light, bird-like bound, so that he descended from above upon the javelin, and came down fairly and cunningly off it, having neither wound nor cut upon him.

A young warrior of the people of the foreigners said, "Thou art one that never hast seen a good feat since thou wouldst call that a feat"; and with that he put his weapons and his armor from him, and he rose in like manner lightly over the javelin, and descended upon it full heavily and helplessly, so that the point of the javelin went up through his heart and he fell down dead to the earth. Dairmuid drew the javelin out and placed it standing the second time; and the second man of them arose to do the feat, and he too was slain like the other. Likewise, fifty of the people of the foreigners fell by Diarmuid's feat on that day; and they bade him take away the javelin, saying

that he should slay no more of their people with that feat. And they went to their ships.

And Diarmuid went to Muadan and Grainne and Muadan brought them the fish of that night, and Diarmuid and Grainne slept by each other that night, and Muadan kept watch and ward for them until morning.

Diarmuid rose on the morrow, and took with him to the aforesaid hill two forked poles out of the next wood, and placed them upright; and the Moralltach, that is the sword of Angus of the Brug, between the two forked poles upon its edge. Then he himself rose exceedingly lightly over it, and thrice measured the sword by paces from the hilt to its point, and he came down and asked if there was a man of them who could perform that feat.

"That is a bad question", said a man of them, "for there never was done in Erin any feat which some one of us would not do." He then rose and went over the sword, and as he was descending from above it happened to him one of his legs slipped down on either side of the sword, so that there was made of him two halves to the crown of his head. Then a second man rose, and as he descended from above he chanced to fall crossways upon the sword, so that there were two portions made of him. In like manner, there had not fallen more of the people of the foreigners of the Sea of Wight on the two days before that, than there fell upon that day. Then they told him to take away his sword, saying that already too many of their people had fallen by him; and they asked him whether he had gotten any word of the tidings of Diarmuid O'Duibne. "I have seen them that saw him today," said Diarmuid, "and I will go to seek tidings to-night"

Diarmuid went where were Grainne and Muadan, and Muadan caught three fish for them that night; so they ate their meal, and Diarmuid and Grainne went to sleep in the hinder part of the cave, and Muadan kept watch and ward for them.

Diarmuid rose at early dawn of the morning, and girt about him his suit of battle and of conflict; under which, through which, or over which, it was not possible to wound him; and he took the Moralltach, that is, the sword of Angus of the Brug, at his left side; which sword left no stroke nor blow unfinished at the first trial.

(editor's note: in the Celtic world and perhaps earlier weapons were thought of as having a soul and a being- they were wonders- and infact swords and arms were things derived from the highest technologies of the time. Swords had special character and could accomplish specific feats- weapons talked and communicated and as we shall see some weapons must be used for certain tasks or all will be in vain)

He took likewise his tow thick-shafted javelins of battle, that is, the Gae Buide ("Yellow Javelin"), and the Gae Derg ("Red javelin"), from which none recovered, or man or woman, that had ever been wounded by them After that Diarmuid roused Grainne, and bade her keep watch and ward for Muadan, saying that he himself would go to view the four quarters around him. When Grainne beheld Diarmuid, brave and daring, clothed in his suit of anger and of battle, fear and great dread seized her, for she knew that it was for a combat and an encounter that he was so equipped; and she asked of him what he intended to do. "Thou seest me thus for fear lest my foes should beet me." That soothed Grainne, and then Diarmuid went in that array to meet the foreigners.

They came to land forthwith ,and inquired of him tidings of O'Duibne.

"I saw him not long ago," said Diarmuid.

"Then show us where he is," said they, " that we may take his head before Finn mac Cumail."

"I should be keeping him but ill," said Diarmuid, "if I did as ye say; for the body and life of Diarmuid are under the protection of my prowess and of my valor, and therefore I will do him no treachery."

"Is that true?" said they.

"It is true, indeed," said Diarmuid.

"Then shat thou thyself not quit his spot," said they, "and we will take thy head before Finn, since thou art a foe to him."

"I should doubtless be bound," said Diarmuid, "should I let my head go with you"; and as he thus spoke, he drew the sword Moralltach from its sheath, and dealt a furious stroke of destruction at the head of him that was next

to him, so that he made two halves of it. Then he drew near to the host of the foreigners, and began to slaughter and to attack them heroically and with swift valor. He rushed under them, through them, and over them as a hawk would go through small birds, or a wolf through a large flock of small sheep; even thus it was that Diarmuid hewed crossways the glittering very beautiful mail of his opponents, so that there went not from them that spot a man to tell tidings or to boast of great deeds, without having the grievousness of death and the final end of life executed upon him, except the three chiefs and a small number of their people that fled to their ship.

Diarmuid returned back having no cut nor wound, and went his way till he reached Muadan and Grainne. They gave him welcome, and Grainne asked him whether he had received any word of the tidings of Finn mac Cumail and of the Fian of Erin. He said that he had not, and they ate their food and their meat that night.

Diarmuid rose at early day and beaming down on the morrow, and halted not until he had reached the aforesaid hill, and having gotten there he struck his shield mightily and soundingly, so that he caused the shore to tremble with the noise around him. Then said he foreign chief Dub-cosach that he would himself go to fight with Diarmuid, and straightway went ashore. Then he and Diarmuid rushed upon one another like wrestlers, making mighty and ferocious efforts, straining their arms and their swollen sinews, as it were two savage oxen, or two frenzied bulls, or two raging lions, or two fearless hawks on the edge of a cliff. And this is the form and fashion of the hot, sore, fearful strife that took place betwixt them.

They both threw their weapons out of their hands, and ran to encounter each other, and locked their knotty hands across one another's graceful backs. Then each gave the other a violent mighty twist; but Diarmuid hove Dub-cosach upon his shoulder, and hurled his body to the earth, and bound him firm and fast upon the spot. Afterwards came Finn-cosach and Tren-cosach to combat with him, one after the other; and he bound them with the same binding, and said that he would take their heads from them, were it not that he had rather leave them in those bonds to increase their torments: "for none can loosen you," said he; and he left them there weary and in heavy grief.

As for Diarmuid, he went to look for Muadan and for Grainne; and they ate their meal and their meat that night, and Diarmuid and Grainne went to sleep, and Muadan kept watch and ward for them until morning.

Diarmuid rose and told Grainne that their enemies were near them; and he told her the tale of the strangers from beginning to end, how three fifties of their people had fallen three days one after the other by his feats, and how fifteen hundred of their host had fallen on the fourth day by the fury of his hand, and how he had bound the three chiefs on the fifth day. "And they have three deadly hounds by a chain to do me evil," said he," and no weapon can wound them."

"Hast thou taken their heads from those three chiefs?" said Grainne. *(editor's notes- the taking of the heads of enemies was an important practice in the world of the Celts- heads held special powers and were the only aspect of the human being not abstracted in art. It was thought that by keeping heads or brains of enemies you could derive knowledge from them- in one tale we learn of how brains were mixed with lime and allowed to harden and then were passed around by the chief/king and advisors so that they might obtain knowledge...)*

"I have not" said Diarmuid. "For I had rather give them long torment than short; for it is not in the power of any warrior nor hero in Erin to loose the binding with which they are bound, but only four; that is, Oisín the son of Finn, and Oscar the son of Oisín, and Lugaid of the Mighty Hand, and Conan mac Morna; and I know that none of those four will loose them. Nevertheless Finn will shortly get tidings of them, and that will sting his heart in his bosom; and we must depart out of this cave lest Finn and the deadly hounds overtake us."

The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 4 Deirdru of Dub Silab -And the Hounds

Diarmuid had finished telling of the defeat of the kings and of the dogs and the three prepared to move on....

After this, Diarmuid and Grainne and Muadan came forth out of the cave, and went their way westward until they reached the moor of Finnlaith. Grainne began to weary then, and Muadan took her upon his back until they reached the great Silab Luchra. Then Diarmuid sat him down on the brink of the stream which wound through the heart of the mountain; and Grainne washing her hands, and she asked Diarmuid for his dagger to cut her nails.

As for the strangers, as many of them were alive, they came upon the hill where the three chiefs were bound and thought to loose them speedily, but those bonds were such that they only drew the tighter upon them.

They had not been long thus before they saw the woman messenger of Finn mac Cumail coming with the speed of a swallow, or weasel, or like a blast of a sharp pure-swift wind , over the top of every high hill and bare mountain towards them; and she inquired of them who it was that had made that great, fearful, destroying slaughter of them.

"Who art thou that askest?" said they.

"I am the female messenger of Finn mac Cumail," said she; "and Deirdru of Dub Silab (Black Mountain) is my name, and it is to look for you that Finn has sent me."

(editor's note- this hag like female invokes another ancient dimension of the Irish tradition she is related to the other female multi powered "deities" closely associated with places and aspects of the environment- woods, and battles. Could this dimension reflect back to a time before the warriors to a time when control over dimensions of the environment - of sounds and qualities was more important than control over men?)

"Well then, we know not who he was," said they, "but we will inform thee of his appearance; that is, he was a warrior having curling dusky-black hair, and two red ruddy cheeks, and he it is that hath made this great slaughter of us; and we are yet more sorely grieved that our three chiefs are bound, and that we cannot loose them; he was likewise three days one after the other fighting with us."

"Which way went that man from you?" said Deirdru.

"He parted from us late last night," said they; "therefore we cannot tell."

"I swear," said Deirdru, "that it was Diarmuid O'Duibne himself that was there, and do ye bring your hounds with you and loose them on his track, and I will send Finn and the fian of Erin to you."

Then they brought their hounds with them out of their ship, and loosed them upon the track of Diarmuid; but they left a druid attending upon the three chiefs that were bound. As for them they followed the hounds upon the track of Diarmuid until they reached the door of the cave, and they went into the hinder part of the cave, and found the bed of Diarmuid and Grainne there. Afterwards they went their way towards the west till they reached Carrthach, and thence to the moor of Finnliath, and to Garb Alba of the Fian, which is called Leaman now, and to the fair plain of Concon, and to the vast and high Sliab Luachra.

(editor's note: note how here again a great attention is placed upon geographic detail- the tales served in an oral society as maps and ways to remember placenames. The author also wishes to impress us that these stories are real. They do not have to be set far far away in a foreign land. The function of the tales is to address and inform the real world of its political and social order its precedents of history and its values.)

Howbeit, Diarmuid did not perceive them coming after him in that pursuit until he beheld the banners of soft silk, and the threatening standards, and three mighty warriors in the foreground of the hosts, full fierce, and bold, and dauntless, having their three hounds by three chains in their hands. When Diarmuid saw them coming towards him in that manner, he became filled with hatred and great abhorrence of them. An there was a green well-dyed mantle upon him that was in the forefront of the company, and he was

out far beyond the others: then Grainne reached the dagger to Diarmuid, and Diarmuid thrust it upon his thigh, and said: "I suspect thou bearest the youth of the green mantle no love, Grainne."

(editor's note: a word here on numerology- we have already seen how the number 7- an important number in the celtic world has been used in the number of hut doors here again we see the use of the number three another important number in the celtic world. Numbers used in tales adds emphasis upon the descriptions. The practice focuses the listener upon the scene-dropping the names of numbers would attract attention.)

'Truly I do not," quoth Grainne, "and I would I never to this day had borne love to any." Diarmuid drew his dagger and thrust it into its sheath and went his way after that, and then Muadan put Grainne upon his back and carried her a mile up the length of the mountain.

(editor's note- Muadan represents perhaps another layer of the celtic legacy derived from earlier times. Unlike Angus Angus who clearly has warrior god characteristics Muadan possesses many special powers but is simply a bit more skillful and stronger than the average person. He is a kind helper. It has been proposed that such super individuals represent protectors of tribal groups multi-valent individuals who do many things to help out. It may be proposed that such individuals are derived from a time when rather than defense against people or against the environment group identity was for the people of primary importance. They could rely upon their own multi-valent diety to perform a multitude of skills to help out the group)

It was not long before one of the three deadly hounds was loosed after Diarmuid, and Muadan told Diarmuid to follow Grainne, saying that he would ward off the hound from him. Then Muadan went back and took a hound's welp from beneath his girdle, and set him upon his palm. When the whelp saw the hound rushing towards him, having his jaws and throat open, he rose from Muadan's palm and sprang into the gullet of the hound, so that he reached the heart and rent it out through his side; and then he sprang back again upon Muadan's palm, leaving the hound dead after him.

(editor's note: here we have the typical celtic way of dog killing! One always reaches down the throat of the animal and either turns them inside out or does something else as here, to kill them. In any case quite the mess!)

Muadan departed after Diarmuid and Grainne, and took up Grainne again, and bore her another mile up the mountain. Then was loosed the second hound after them, and Diarmuid spoke to Muadan, and what he said was: "I indeed hear that there can no spells be laid upon weapons that wound by magic, nor upon the throat of any beast whatever, and will ye stand until I put the Gae Derg through the body, the chest, and the heart of yonder hound?" and Muadan and Grainne stood to see that cast. Then Diarmuid aimed a cast at the hound, and put the javelin through his navel, so that he let out his bowels, and having drawn out the javelin he followed his own companions.

They had not been long after that before the third hound was loosed upon them; Grainne spoke, and what she said was: "That is the fiercest of them all, and I greatly fear him, and keep thyself well against him, O Diarmuid." It was not long before the hound reached them, and the place where he overtook them was Lic Dubain on Sliab Luchra. He rose with an airy light bond over Diarmuid, and would fain have siezed Grainne, but Diarmuid caught his two hind legs, and struck a blow of his carcass against the nearest rock, so that he let out his brains through the openings of his head and of his ears. Thereupon Diarmuid took his arms and armor, and put his tapering finger into the silken string of the Gae Derg, and aimed a triumphant cast at the youth of the green mantle that was in the forefront of the host, so that he slew him with that cast; he made also a second cast at the second man, and slew him; and the third man he slew likewise. Then since it is not usual for defense to be made after the fall of lords, when the strangers saw that their chiefs and their lords were fallen they suffered defeat, and betook themselves to utter flight; and Diarmuid pursued them, violently scattering them and slaughtering them, so that unless some one fled over the tops of the forests or under the green earth, or under the water, there escaped not even a messenger nor a man to tell tidings. The gloom of death and instant destruction was executed upon every one of them except Deirdriu of Dub Sliab, that is , the woman messenger of Finn mac Cumail, who went wheeling and hovering around whilst Diarmuid was making slaughter of the strangers. As for Finn, when he heard the tidings of the foreigners being bound by Diarmuid, he loudly summoned the fian of Erin ; and they went forth by the shortest ways and by the straightest paths until they reached the hill where

the three chiefs were bound, and that was torment of heart to Finn when he saw them. Then Finn spoke and what he said was: "O Oisín, loose the three chiefs for me."

"I will not," said Oisín, "for Diarmuid bound me not to loose any warrior whom he should bind."

"O Oscar loose them" said Finn.

"Nay," said Oscar, "I vow that I would fain put more bonds upon them." Then Lugaid and Conan refused likewise to loose them. Howbeit, they had not been long at this discourse before the three chiefs died of the hard bonds that were on them. Then Finn caused to be dug three wide-sodded graves for them; and a tombstone was put over their graves, and their names were written in ogham, and their burial ceremony was performed, and weary and heavy in heart was Finn after that.

(editor's note: Ogham while not the most ancient language was to be seen throughout the country side and was infact used to mark the sites of important events. It is a language made up of a series of horizontal lines marked on one side or other of a vertical line. It was well suited for the edges of large stones.)

At that very time and hour Finn saw coming towards him Deirdriu of Dub Sliab, with her legs failing, and her tongue raving, and her eyes dropping in her head; and when Finn saw her come towards him in that plight he asked tidings of her. "I have great and evil tidings to tell thee, and methinks I am one without a lord"; and she told him the tale from first to last of all the slaughter that Diarmuid O' Duibne had made, and how the three deadly hounds had fallen by him; "and hardly I have escaped myself," said she. "Whither went Diarmuid O' Duibne?" said Finn. "That I know not," said she. And then Finn and the fian of Erin departed, and no tidings are told of them until they reached Almu in Leinster.

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The Pursuit Of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 5 The Quicken Tree

Touching Diarmuid and Grainne, a further tale is told. They went their way eastward to Sliab Luchra, and through the territory of Ui Conaill Gabra, and thence with their left hand to the Shannon eastward to Ros Da Soileach, which is called Limerick now, and Diarmuid killed for them that night a wild deer; then they ate and drank their fill of flesh and pure water, and slept till the morn on the morrow. Muadan rose early and spoke to Diarmuid, and said that he would now depart. "Thou shouldst not do so," said Diarmuid, "for all that I promised thee has been fulfilled without dispute." Muadan did not suffer Diarmuid to hinder him, and took leave and farewell of them, and left them on the spot, and gloomy and grieved were Diarmuid and Grainne after Muadan.

After that they journeyed on straight northward towards Sliab Echtge, and thence to the district of Ui Faichrach, and as they passed through that district Grainne wearied; and when she considered that she had no man to carry her but Diarmuid, seeing that Muadan had departed, she took heart and began to walk by Diarmuid's side boldly.. When they were come into the forest Diarmuid made a hunting booth in the very midst of the forest, and slew a wild deer that night; so that he and Grainne ate and drank their fill of flesh and pure water. Diarmuid rose early and went to the Searban Lochlannach, and made bonds of covenant and compact with him, and got from him license to hunt and to chase provided that he would never meddle with his berries.

As for Finn and the fian, having reached Almu, they were not long there before they saw fifty warriors coming toward them, and two that were tall, heroic, valiant, and that exceeded the others for the bulk and beauty in the very front of that company and troop; and Finn inquired of the fian whether they knew them.

"We know them not," they said, "and canst thou tell who they are, O Finn?"

"I cannot," said Finn; "but I think they are enemies to me."

That company of warriors came before Finn during this discourse, and they greeted him. Finn answered them and asked tidings of them, from what land or region they were. They told him that they were in deed enemies to him, that their fathers had been at the slaying of Cumall the soon of Trenmor O'Baoiscne at the battle of Cnucha, "and our fathers themselves died for that deed; and it is to ask peace of thee we are now come."

"Where were ye yourselves when your fathers were slain?"

said Finn.

"In our mother's wombs," says they, "and our mothers were two women of the Tuatha De Danann, and we think it time to get our father's place and station among the fian."

"I will grant you that," said Finn, "but ye must give me a recompense for thy father."

"Methinks," said Finn, "were one to kill me that it would be an easy matter to satisfy thee in my recompense, O Oisin; and none shall come among the fian but he that shall give me a fine for my father."

"What fine askest thou?" said Angus the son of Art Oc mac Morna.

"I ask but the head of a warrior, or a fistful of the berries of the quicken tree of Dubros."

"I will give you good counsel. O children of Morna," said Oisin:

"return to where ye were reared, and do not ask peace of Finn as long as ye shall live. It is no light matter for you to bring to Finn anything he asks of you, for know ye what head that is which Finn asks you to bring him as a fine?"

"We know not," said they.

"The head of Diarmuid O'Duibne is the head that Finn asks of you, and were ye as many in number as twenty hundred men of full strength, Diarmuid O'Duibne would not let that head go with you, that is, his own head."

"What berries are they that Finn asks of us?" said they.

"Nothing is more difficult for you to get than that," said Oisín, "as I will tell you now. There arose a dispute between two women of the Tuatha De Danann, that is, Aife the daughter of Manannan, and Aine the other daughter of Manannan the son of Lir. Aife had become enamored of the son of Lugaid, that is, sister's son to Finn mac Cumhaill, and Aine had become enamored of Lin of the fairy mound of Finnchad, so that each woman of them said that her own man was a better hurler than the other; and the fruit of that dispute was that a great goaling match was arranged between the Tuatha De Danann and the fian of Erin, and the place where that goal was played was upon a fair plain by loch Lein of the rough pools.

(editor's note: The Tuatha de Dannan (tribe of the goddess Danu) were powerful godlike individuals closely associated with the arts and crafts and medicine. Although they do play roles in warfare they are not warriors. They are also not exactly like the generalized multivalent gods - they are a bit more specialized. One should perhaps associate them with the protection of the crafts- they gave the arts and crafts to the men of Ireland- perhaps they come from a dimension of celtic reality relating to what might be considered craft guilds)

"The fian of Erin and the Tuatha De Danann came to that tryst, and these are the noblest and proudest of the Tuatha De Danann that came there; namely, the three Garbs of Sliab Mis, and the three Mases of Sliab Luchra, and the three yellow-haired Murcads, and the three Eochuids of Aine, and the three heroic Loegaires, and the three Conalls of Collanman, and the three Finns of Finnmur, and the three Sgals of Brug, and the three Ronans of Ath na Ríg, and the three Eogans from Es Ruad mac Badairn, and the Cathbuilleach, and the three Ferguses, and the Glas of Mag Breg, and the Suirgeach Suaire from Lionan, and the Meidir from Benn Liath, and Donn from the fairy-mound of Breg, and the man of Sweet Speech from the Boyne, and Colla Crincosach from Bernan Eile, and Donn Dumach, and Donn of Leinenoe, and Bruitha Abac, and Dolb the Bright-Toothed, and the five sons of Finn of the fairy-mound of Cairn Cain, and the Ilbreac son of Manannan,

and Neamanach the son of Angus, and Bodb Derg the son of the Dagda, and Manannan the son of Lir, and Abortach the son of Ildathach, and Figmuin of Finnmur, and many others who are not enumerated here.

(editor's note: In the celtic world the recording of names and other things in long lists is a very important function of the tale. From any one of the trios of names listed here at least three other stories could be perhaps, remembered and all are linked together. For scholars these lists including those of stories are of great importance as they provide references to the disappeared literature lost to the vikings and other destruction's over time. (in the 19th century mention is made of the careless treatment of ancient manuscripts by the peasantry where it was found that children were playing with pages from ancient works in the farmyard)

"We, the fian of Erin, and they were for the space of three days and three nights playing hurly from Garbaba of the fian, which is called Leaman, to Cromglen of the fian, which is called Glenn Fleisce now; and neither of us won a goal. Now the whole of the Tuatha De Danann were all at that time without our knowledge on either side of Loch Lein, and they understood that if we, the fian, were united, all the men of Erin could not win from us. And the counsel which the Tuatha De Danann took, was to depart back again and not to play out that goal with us. The provisions that the Tuatha De Danann had brought with them from Tir Tairngire (fairy land) were these: crimson nuts, catkin apples, and fragrant berries; and as they passed through the district of Ui Fiacrach by the Muaid; one of the berries fell from them, and a quicken tree grew out of that berry, and that quicken tree and its berries have many virtues; for no disease or sickness seizes any one that eats three berries of them, and they who eat feel the exhilaration of wine and the satisfying of old mead; and were it at the age of a century, he that tasted them would return again to be thirty years old.

"When the Tuatha De Danann heard that those virtues belonged to the quicken tree, they sent from them a guard over it that is, the Searban Lochlannach, a youth of their own people, that is a thick-boned, large nosed, crooked-tusked, red-eyed swart-bodied giant of the children of wicked Cam the son of Noa; whom neither weapons wounds, nor fire burns, nor water drowns, so great is his magic. He has but one eye only in the fair middle of his black forehead, and there is a thick collar of iron round that giant's body, and he is fated not to die until there be struck upon him three strokes

of the iron club that he has. He sleeps in the top of that quicken tree by night, and he remains at its foot by day to watch it; and those, O children of Morna, are the berries which Finn asks of you," said Oisín. "Howbeit, it is not easy for you to meddle with them by any means; for that Searban Lochlannach has made a wilderness of the districts around him, so that Finn and the fíán dare not chase or hunt there for the dread of that terrible one."

Aod the son of Audala mac Morna spoke, and what he said was, that he had rather perish in seeking those berries than go back again to his mother's country; and he bade Oisín keep his people until they returned again; and should he and his brother fall in that adventure, to restore his people to Tir Tairngire. And the two good warriors took leave and farewell of Oisín and of the chiefs of the fíán, and went their way; nor is it told how they fared until they reached Ros Da Soileach, which is called Luimneach now, and it is not told how they were entertained that night. They rose early on the morrow, nor halted until they reached Dubros of Uí Fiacrach, and as they went towards the forest they found the track of Diarmuid and Grainne there, and they followed the track to the door of the hunting booth in which were Diarmuid and Grainne. Diarmuid heard them coming to the hunting booth, and stretched an active warrior hand over his broad weapons, and asked who they were that were at the door. "We are of the Clan Morna," said they.

"Which of the Clan Morna are ye?" said Diarmuid.

"Aod the son of Andala mac Morna, and Angus the son of Art Oc mac Morna," said they.

"Wherefore are ye come to this forest?" said Diarmuid.

"Finn mac Cumáill has sent us to seek thy head, if thou be Diarmuid O' Duibne."

"I am he, indeed," said Diarmuid.

"Well then," said they, "Finn will not choose but get thy head, or the full of his fist of the berries of the quicken of Dubros from us as a fine for his father."

"It is no easy matter for you to get either of those things," said Diarmuid, "and woe to him that may fall under the power of that man. I also know that he it was that slew your fathers, and surely that should suffice him as recompense from you."

"What berries are those that Finn requires," asked Grainne, "that they cannot be got for him?"

"They are these," said Diarmuid: "the Tuatha De Danann left a quicken tree in the district of Ui Fiachrach, and in all berries that grow upon that tree there are many virtues, that is, there is in every berry of them the exhilaration of wine and the satisfying of old mead; and whoever should eat three berries of that tree, had he completed a hundred years he would return to the age of thirty years. Nevertheless there is a giant hideous and foul to behold, keeping that quicken tree; every day he is at the foot of it, and every night he sleeps at the top. Moreover, he has made a desert of the district round about him, and he cannot be slain until three terrible strokes be struck upon him with an iron club that he has, and that club is thus; it has a thick ring of iron through its end, and the ring around the giant's body; he has moreover forced an agreement with Finn and with the fian of Erin not to hunt in that district, and when Finn outlawed me and became my enemy, I got of him leave to hunt, provided that I should never meddle with the berries. And, O children of Morna," said Diarmuid, "choose ye between combat with me for my head, and going to seek the berries from the giant."

"I swear by the rank of my tribe among the fian," said each of the children of Morna, "that I would rather do battle with thee."

Thereupon those good warriors, that is, the children of Morna and Diarmuid, harnessed their comely bodies in their array of weapons of valor and battle, and the combat that they resolved upon was to fight by the strength of their hands.

The outcome of the contest was that Diarmuid vanquished and bound them both upon that spot." Thou hast fought that strive well," said Grainne, "and I vow that even if the children of Morna go not to seek those berries, I will never lie in thy bed unless I get a portion of them, although that is not fit thing for a woman to do being pregnant; and I indeed am now heavy and pregnant, and I shall not live if I taste not those berries."

"Force me not to break peace with the Searban Lochlannach," said Diarmuid, "for he would not the more readily let me take them."

"Loose these bonds from us," said the children of Morna, "and we will go with thee, and we will give ourselves for thy sake."

"Ye shall not come with me," said Diarmuid, "for were ye to see one glimpse of the giant, ye would more likely die than live after it."

"Then do us the grace," said they, "to slacken the bonds on us and let us go with thee privately that we may see thy battle with the giant before thou hew the heads from our bodies"; and Diarmuid did so.

Then Diarmuid went his way to the Searban Lochlannach, and the giant chanced to be asleep before him. He dealt him a stroke of his foot, so that the giant raised his head and gazed up at Diarmuid, and what he said was, "Dost thou wish to break peace O O'Duibne?"

"It is not that," said Diarmuid, "but that Grainne the daughter of Cormac is heavy and pregnant, and she has conceived a desire for those berries which thou hast, and it is to ask the full of a fist of those berries from thee that I am now come."

"I swear," said the giant, "were it even that thou shouldst have no children except that birth now in her womb, and were there but Grainne of the race of Cormac the son of Art, and were I sure hat she should perish in bearing that child, that she should never taste one berry of those berries."

"I may not deceive the," said Diarmuid; "therefore I now tell thee it is to seek them by fair means or foul that I am come."

The giant having heard that, rose up and stood, and put his club over his shoulder, and dealt Diarmuid three mighty strokes so that the wrought him some little hurt in spite of the shelter of his shield. And when Diarmuid marked the giant off his guard he cast his weapons upon the ground, and made an eager exceedingly strong spring upon the giant, so that he was able with his two hands to grasp the club. Then he hove the giant from the earth and hurled him round him, and the iron ring that was about the giant's body and through the end of the club stretched, and when the club reached Diarmuid he struck three mighty strokes upon the giant, so that he dashed

his brains out through the opening of his head and of his ears, and left him dead without life; and those two of the Clan Morna were looking at Diarmuid as he fought that strife.

When they saw the giant fall they too came forth, and Diarmuid sat him down weary and spent after that combat, and bade the children of Morna bury the giant under the brushwood of the forest so that Grainne might not see him, "and after that go ye to seek her also, and bring her." The children of Morna drew the giant forth into the wood, and put him underground, and went after Grainne and brought her to Diarmuid. "There, O Grainne," said Diarmuid, "are the berries thou didst ask for, and do thou thyself pluck of them whatever pleases thee."

"I swear," said Grainne, "that I will not taste a single berry of them but the berry that thy hand shall pluck, O Diarmuid." Thereupon Diarmuid rose and stood, and plucked the berries for Grainne and for the children of Morna, so that they ate their fill of them.

When they were filled Diarmuid spoke, and said: "O children of Morna, take as many as ye can of these berries and tell Finn that it was ye yourselves that slew the Searban Lochlannach."

"We swear," said they, "that we grudge what we shall take to Finn of them"; and Diarmuid plucked them a load of the berries. Then the children of Morna spoke their gratitude and thanks to Diarmuid after the gifts they had received from him, and went their way to where Finn and the fian of Erin were. Now Diarmuid and Grainne went into the top of the quicken tree, and laid them in the bed of the Searban Lochlannach, and the berries below were but bitter berries compared to the berries that were upon the top of the tree.

The children of Morna reached Finn, and Finn asked their news of them from first to last. "We have slain the Searban Lochlannach," said they, "and have brought the berries of Dubros as a fine for thy father's death, if perchance we may get peace for them."

Then they gave the berries into the hand of Finn, and he knew the berries, and put them under his nose, and said to the children of Morna, "I swear," said Finn, "that it was Diarmuid o'Duibine that gathered these berries, for I

know the smell of O' Duibne's skin on them, and full sure I am that he it was that slew the Searban Lochlannach; and I will go to learn whether he is alive at the quicken tree. But it shall profit you nothing to have brought the berries to me, and ye shall not get your father's place among the fian until ye give me the recompense for my father."
(editor's note: the smelling of the berries by Finn attests to his being neither man nor beast but living in between worlds. This is a strong relationship perhaps to a most ancient dimension of the celtic world- that of the gifted insightful huntsman who protected his people in hunter gatherer days by mastering not the elements and crops, nor the crafts, nor other men but by mastering the ways of the animals- learning perhaps of the seasonal migration patterns and the fish runs and being able to direct his people to seasonal hunts. Finn's own family members were said to be wild animals.)



The Fenian Cycle

Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 6 the Game of Chess

After sending away the children of Morna Finn sets out himself to go to the quicken tree.

After that he caused the seven battalions of the standing fian to assemble in one place, and he went his way to Dubros of Ui Fiachbrach; and followed Diarmuid's track to the food to the quicken tree, and found the berries without any watch upon them, so that they all ate their fill of them. The great heat of the noon day then overtook them, and Finn said that he would stay at the foot of the quicken tree till that heat should be past:" for I know that Diarmuid is in the top of the tree."

"It is a great sign of envy in thee, O Finn, to suppose that Diarmuid would abide in the top of the quicken tree, and he knowing that thou art intent on slaying him," said Oisin.

After this Finn asked for a chessboard to play, and he said to Oisin, "I would play a game with thee upon this chessboard." They sat down at either side of the board; namely Oisin and Oscar and the son of Lugaid and Diorruing the son of Dobar O'Baoiscene on one side, and Finn upon the other side.

Thus they were playing that game of chess with skill and exceeding cunning, and Finn so played the game against Oisin that he had but one move alone to make, and Finn said:"One move there is to win thee the game, O Oisin, but I am not there to teach thee that move."

"It is worse for thee that thou art thyself," said Grainne, "in the bed of the Searban Lochlannach, in the top of the quicken tree, with the seven battalions of the standing fian round about thee intent upon thy destruction, than that Oisin should lack that move." Then Diarmuid plucked one of the berries, and aimed at the man that should be moved; and Oisin moved that man and thus turned the game against Finn. They began to play again and

Oisin was again worsted. When Diarmuid beheld that, he cast a second berry upon the man that should be moved; and Oisin moved that man and turned the game against Finn as before. Finn was about to win the game against Oisin the third time, Diarmuid struck a third berry upon the man that would give Oisin the game, and the fian raised a mighty shout at that game. Finn spoke, and what he said was: "I marvel not at thy winning that game, O Oisin, seeing that Oscar is doing is best for thee, and that thou hast with thee the zeal of Diorruiing, the skilled knowledge of the son of Luagid, and the prompting of Diarmuid."

"It shows great envy in thee, O Finn," said Oscar, "to think that Diarmuid O' Duibne would stay in the top of this tree with thee in wait for him."

"With which of us is the truth, O O' Duibne, " said Finn, "with me or with Oscar?"

"Thou didst never err in thy good judgment, O Finn," said Diarmuid, " and I indeed and Grainne are here in the bed of the Searban Lochlannach." Then Diarmuid caught Grainne, and gave her three kisses in the presence of Finn and the fian.

"It grieves me more that the seven battalions of the standing fian and all the men of Erin should have witnessed thee the night thou didst take Grainne from Tara, seeing that thou wast my guard that night, than that these that are here should witness thee; and thou shalt give thy head for those kisses," said Finn.

Thereupon Finn arose with the four hundred hirelings that he had on wages and on stipend, with intent to kill Diarmuid; and Finn put their hands into each other's hands round about that quicken tree, and warned them on pain of losing their heads, and as they would preserve their life, not to let Diarmuid pass out by them. Moreover, he promised them that to whatever man of the fian of Erin should go up and bring him the head of Diarmuid, he would give his arms and armor, with his father's and his grandfather's rank among the fian freely. Garb of sliab Cua answered, and what he said was, that it was Diarmuid's father Doonn O' Donnucda, who had slain his father; and to requite hat he would go to avenge him upon Diarmuid, and he went his way up. Now it was shown to Angus of the Brug, Diarmuid's foster father, what a straight Dairmuid was in , and he came to succor him without

knowledge of the fian; and when Garb of Silib Cua had got up into the top of the quicken tree, Diarmuid gave him a strike of his foot and flung him down into the midst of the fian, so that Finn's hirelings took off his head, for Angus had put the form of Diarmuid upon him. After he was slain his own shape came upon him again, and Finn and the fian of Erin knew him and they said that it was Garb that was fallen.

Then said Garb of Sliab Crot that he would go to avenge his father also upon Diarmuid, and he went up, and Angus gave him a kick, so that he flung him down in the midst of the fian with the form of Diarmuid upon him, and Finn's people took off his head; and Finn said that that was not Diarmuid but Garb, for Garb assumed his own form again.

Garb of Sliab Guaire said that he too would go, and that it was Donn O' Donnuda that had slain his father, and that therefore he would go to avenge him upon O'Duibne, and he climbed into the top of the quicken tree. Diarmuid gave him also a kick, so that he flung him down, and Angus put the form of Diarmuid upon him, so that the fian slew him.

Now the nine Garbs of the fian were thus slain under a false appearance by the people of Finn. As for Finn, after the fall of the nine Garbs of the fian, he was full of anguish and of faintheartedness and of grief.

Angus of the Brug then said that he would take Grainne with him. "Take her," said Diarmuid, "and if I be alive at evening I shall follow you; and if Finn kills me, whatever children Grainne may have rear or bring them up well, and send Grainne to her own father to Tara." Angus took leave and farewell of Diarmuid, and flung his magic mantle about Grainne and about himself, and they departed, without knowledge of the fian, and no tidings are told of them until they reached the Brug upon the Boyne.

Then Diarmuid spoke, and what he said was: "I will go down to thee, O Finn, and to the fian; and I will deal slaughter and discomfiture upon thee and upon thy people, seeing that I am certain thy wish is to allow me no deliverance, but to work my death in some place; and moreover, it is not mine to escape from this danger which is before me, since I have no friend nor companion in the far regions of the great world under whose safeguard or protection I may go, because full often have I wrought the warriors of the world death and desolation for love of thee. For there never came upon thee

battle nor combat, strait nor extremity in my time, but I would adventure myself into it for thy sake and for the sake of the fian, and moreover I used to do battle before thee and after thee. And I swear, O Finn, that I will well avenge myself, and that thou shalt not get me for nothing."

"Therein Diarmuid speaks truth," said Oscar, " and give him mercy and forgiveness."

"I will not", said Finn, "to all eternity; and he shall not get peace nor rest for ever till he give me satisfaction for every slight that he has put upon me."

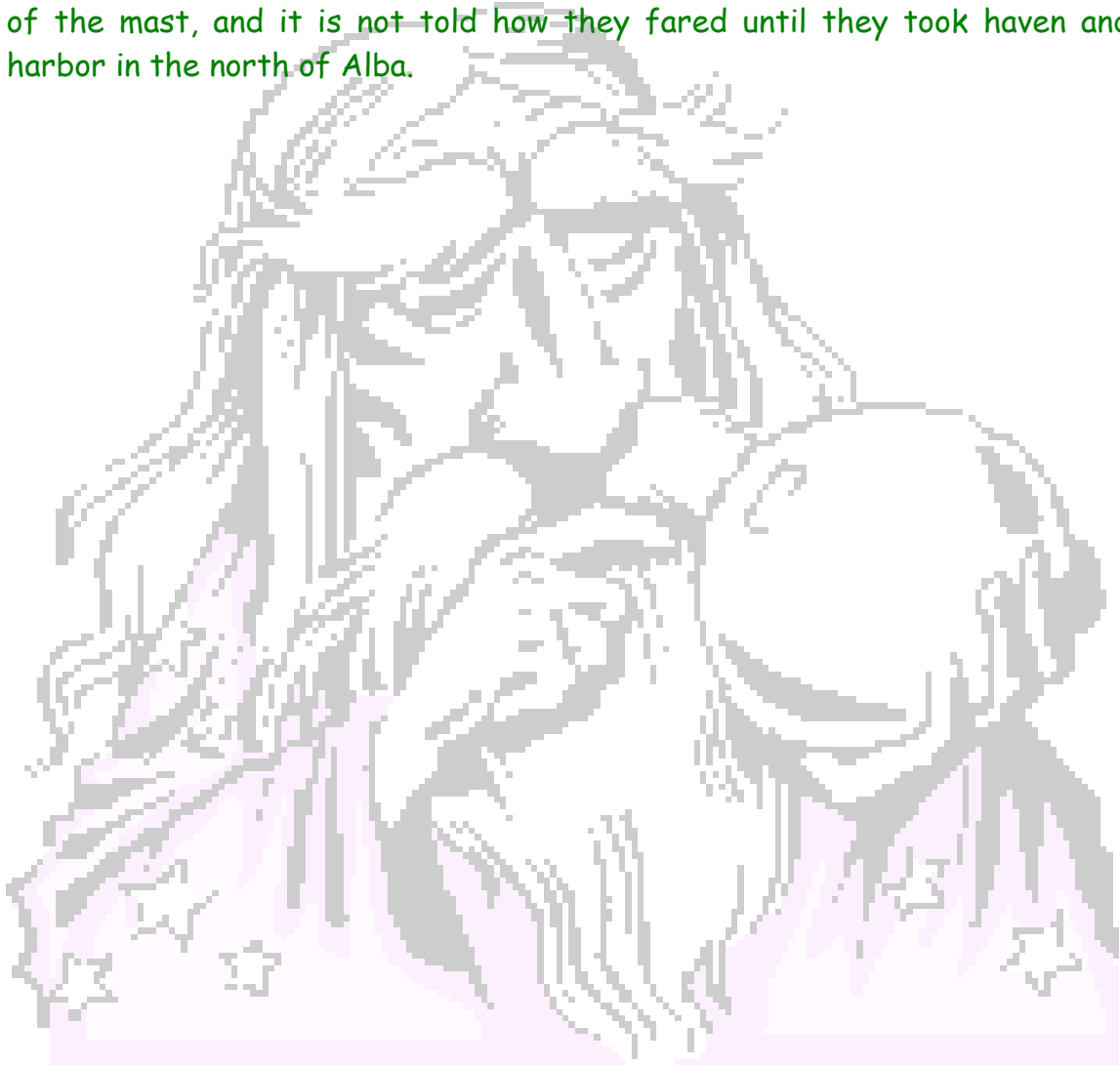
"It is a foul shame and sign of jealousy in thee to say that," said Oscar; "and I pledge the word of a true warrior," said he, "that unless the firmament fall down upon me, or the earth open beneath my feet, I will not suffer thee nor the fian of Erin to give him cut nor wound; and I take his body and his life under the protection of my bravery and my valor, vowing that I will save him in spite of the men of Erin. And, O Diarmuid, come down out of the tree, since Finn will not grant thee mercy; and I take thee, pledging my body and my life that no evil shall be done thee today."

Then Diarmuid rose and stood upon a high bough of the tree, and rose up with an airy bound, light, birdlike, by the shafts of his spears, so that he got the breadth of his two soles of the grass green earth, and he passed out far beyond Finn and the fian of Erin.

After that Oscar and Diarmuid proceeded onwards, neither one or other of them being cut nor wounded, and no tidings are told of them until they reached the Brug upon the Boyne, and Grainne and Angus met them with joy and good courage. Then Diarmuid told them his tidings from the first to last, and it lacked but little of Grainne's falling into the numb stupor of instant death through the fear and the horror of that story.

After the departure of Diarmuid and of Oscar, Finn found nine chieftains and ten hundred warriors in a mangled bloody mass and he sent every one that was curable where he might be healed, and caused to be dug a broad-sodded grave , and put into it every one that was dead. Heavy, weary, and mournful was Finn after that time, and he swore and vowed that he would

take no rest until he should have avenged upon Diarmuid all that he had done to him. Then he told his trusty people to equip his ship, and to put a store of meat and drink into her. Thus did they and, the ship being ready, he himself and a thousand warriors of his people together with him went on board. They weighed her anchors forthwith, and urged the ship forward with exceedingly strong rowing, so that they launched her forth the space of nine waves into the blue-streamed ocean, and they caught the wind in the bosom of the sails of the mast, and it is not told how they fared until they took haven and harbor in the north of Alba.



The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 7 The King of Alba

Once Finn and his men reached Alba they made fast the ship to the mooring posts of the harbor, and Finn with five of his people went to the stronghold of the king of Alba, and Finn struck the knocker upon the door. The doorkeeper asked who was there; and it was told him that Finn mac Cumail was there. "Let him be admitted," said the king. Finn was thereupon admitted, and he himself and his people went before he king. A kindly welcome was given to Finn by the king, and he caused Finn to sit down in his own seat. Thereafter were given to them mead mild and pleasant to drink, and strong fermented liquors, and the king set to fetch the rest of the people of Finn, and he made them welcome in the stronghold. Then Finn told the king the cause and matter for which he was a come from the beginning to end, and that it was to seek counsel and aid against Diarmuid O'Duibne that he was then come. "And truly thou oughtest to give me an army, for Diarmuid it was that slew thy father and thy two brothers and many of thy chiefs likewise."

"That is true," said the king, "and I will give thee my own two sons and a host of a thousand about each man of them." Joyful was Finn at the soldiers that the king of Alba had given him, and Finn with his people took leave and farewell of the king and of his household, and left them good wishes for life and health, and the king sent the same on with the fian. Finn and his company went their way, and no tidings are told of them until they reached the Brug upon the Boyne, and he and his people went ashore. After that Finn sent messengers to the house of Angus of the Brug to proclaim battle against Diarmuid.

"What shall I do about this, O Oscar?" said Diarmuid.

"We will both of us give them battle, and destroy them, and rend their flesh, and not suffer a servant to escape alive of them, but we will slay them all," said Oscar.

The next morning Diarmuid and Oscar rose, and harnessed their fair bodies in their suits of arms of valor and battle, and those two mighty heroes went their way to the place of that combat, and woe to those, either many or few, who might meet those two good warriors in anger. Then Diarmuid and Oscar bound the rims of their shields together that they might not separate from one another in the fight. After that they proclaimed battle against Finn, and then the soldiers of the king of Alba said that they and their people would go to strive with them first. They came ashore forthwith, and rushed to meet and to encounter them, and Diarmuid passed under them, through them, and over them, as a hawk would go through small birds, or a whale through small fish, or a fox through a large flock of sheep; and such was the dispersion and terror and scattering that those good warriors wrought upon the strangers, that not a man to tell tidings or to boast of great deeds escaped of them, but all of them fell by Diarmuid and by Oscar before the night came, and they themselves were smooth and free from hurt, having neither cut nor wound. When Finn saw that great slaughter, he and his people returned out to sea, and no tidings are told of them until they reached Tir Tairngire (fairylane), where Finn's nurse was. Finn came to her, and she received him joyfully. Finn told the cause of his travel and of his journey to the hag from first to last, and the reason of his strife with Diarmuid, and he told her that it was to seek counsel from her that he was then come; also that no strength of a host or a multitude could conquer Diarmuid, if perchance magic alone might not conquer him. "I will go with thee," said the hag, "and I will practice magic against him." Finn was joyful threat, and he remained with the hag that night; and they resolved to depart on the morrow.

Now it is not told how they fared until they reached the Brug upon the Boyne, and the hag threw a spell of magic about Finn and the fian, so that the men of Erin knew not that they were there. It was the day before that Oscar had parted from Diarmuid, and Diarmuid chanced to be hunting and chasing on the day that the hag concealed the fian. This was revealed to the hag, and she caused herself to fly by magic upon the leaf of a water Lilly having a hole in the middle of it, in the fashion of the quern-stone of a mill, so that she rose with the blast of the pure cold wind and came over Diarmuid, and began to aim at and strike him through the hole with deadly darts, so that she wrought the hero great hurt in the midst of his weapons and armor, and that he was unable to escape, so greatly was he oppressed;

and every evil that had ever come upon him was little compared to that evil. What he thought in his own mind was, that unless he might strike the hag through the hole that was in the leaf she would cause his death upon the spot; and Diarmuid laid him upon his back having the Gae Derg in his hand, and made a triumphant cast of exceeding courage with the javelin, so that he reached the hag through the hole, and she fell dead upon the spot. Diarmuid beheaded her there and then and took her head with him to Angus of the Brug.

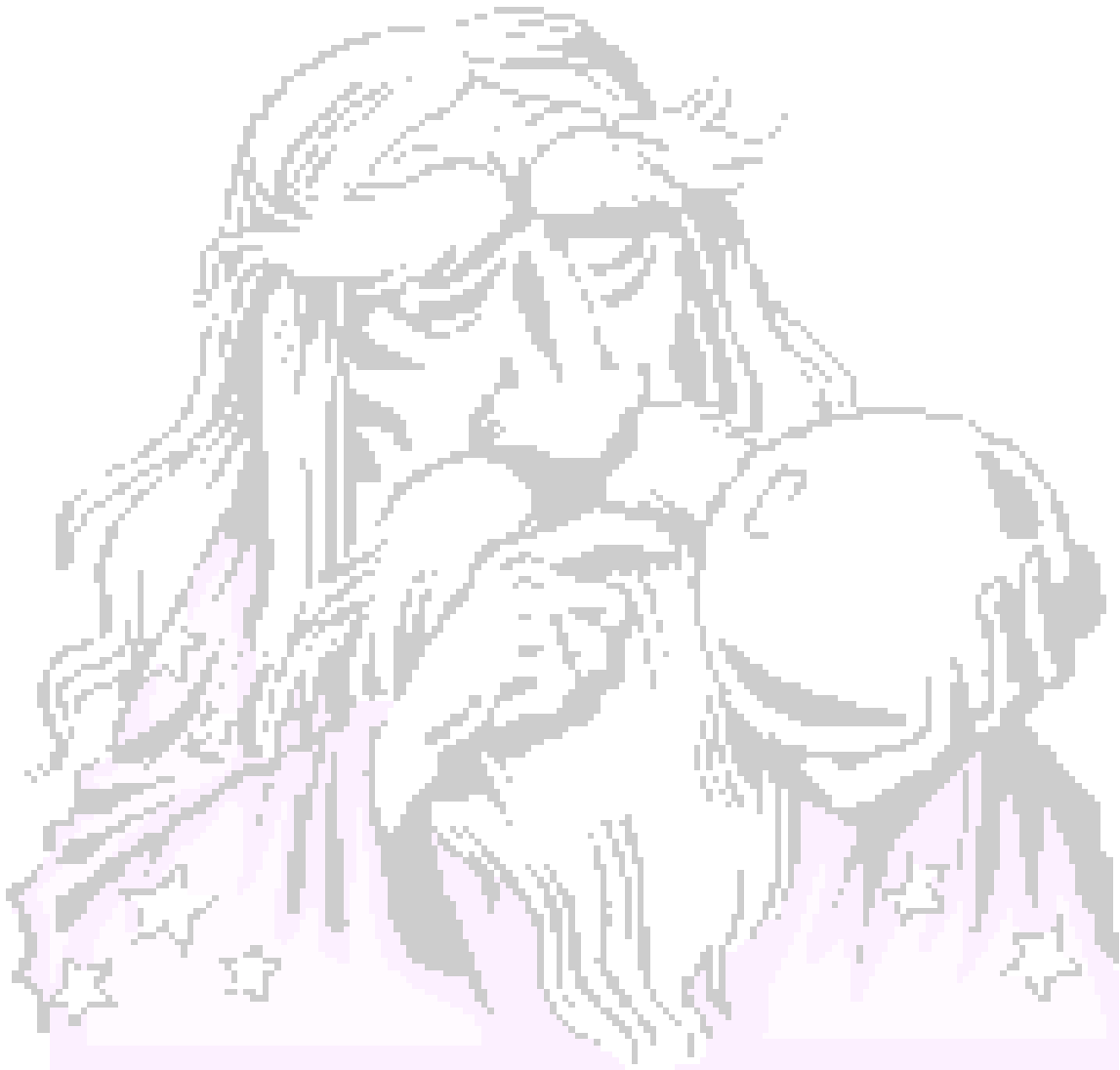
Diarmuid rose early on the morrow, and Angus rose and went where Finn was, and asked him whether he would make peace with Diarmuid. Finn said that he would, in whatever way Diarmuid would make peace. Then Angus went where the king of Erin was to ask peace for Diarmuid, and Cormack said that he would grant him that. Again Angus went where Diarmuid and Grainne were, and asked Diarmuid whether he would make peace with Cormack and with Finn. Diarmuid said that he would if he obtained the conditions which he should ask of them. "What are those conditions?" said Angus.

"The district," said Diarmuid, "which my father had, that is the district of O'Duibne, Finn shall not hunt nor chase therein, and it must be free of rent or tribute to the king of Erin; also the district of Benn Damuis, that is, Dubcarn in Leinster as a gift for myself from Finn, for it is the best district in Erin; and the district of Ces Corann from the high king of Erin as dowry with his daughter; and those are the conditions upon which I would make peace with them."

"Wouldst thou make peace on those conditions if thou wert to get them?" asked Angus.

"I could better bear to make peace by getting those conditions." Said Diarmuid. Then Angus went with those tidings to where the king of Erin and Finn were, and he got those conditions from him every one, and they forgave Diarmuid all he had done as long as he had been outlawed, namely for the space of sixteen years; and Cormac gave his other daughter for wife and mate to Finn, that he might let Diarmuid be, and so they made peace with each other; and the place that Diarmuid and Grainne settled in was Rath Grainne in the district of Ces Corann, far from Finn and from Cormac. Then Grainne bore Diarmuid four sons and one daughter; namely, Donnead, Eochaid, Connla, Selbsercach, and Druime; and he gave the district of Benn

Damuis, that is, Dubearn in Leinster, to the daughter, and he sent attendants to server her there. They abode a long time fulfilling the terms of the peace with each other, and people used to say that there was not living at the same time with him a man richer in gold and silver ,in kine and cattle-herds and sheep, and who made more successful raids, than Diarmuid.



The Fenian Cycle

The Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne

Part 8 and last Part- the Boar of Benn Gulban

Upon a certain day Grainne spoke to Diarmuid and what she said was, that it was a shame for them, seeing the number of their people and the greatness of their household, and that their expenditure was untold, that the two best men in Erin had never been in their house, that is, Cormac the High-King of Erin and Finn mac Cumail. "Wherefore sayest thou so, O Grainne, " said Diarmuid, "when they are enemies to me?"

"I would fain," said Grainne, "give them a feast, that so thou mightiest win their love."

"I permit that," said Diarmuid.

"Then," said Grainne, "send word and messengers to thy daughter to bid her to prepare another feast, so that we may take the king of Erin and Finn mac Cumail to her house; and how do we

but there she might get a fitting husband?" Thereupon two great feasts were prepared by Grainne and by her daughter or the length of a year, and at the end of that space and season word and messengers were sent for the king of Erin, and for Finn mac Cumail, and for the seven battalions of the standing fian, and for the chiefs of Erin likewise, and they were for a year and a day enjoying that feast.

Now on the last day of the year Diarmuid was in Rath Grainne asleep; and Diarmuid heard the voice of a hound in his sleep in the night, and that caused Diarmuid to stir out of his sleep, so that Grainne caught him and threw her two arms about him and asked him what he had seen. "It is the voice of a hound I have heard," said Diarmuid, "and I marvel to hear it in the night."

"Mayest thou be kept safely," said Grainne, "for it is the Tuatha De Danann that are doing that to thee to spite Angus of the Brug, and lay thee down on thy bed again. " Nevertheless no slumber or sleep fell upon Diarmuid then,

but again the voice of the hound roused him, and he was fain to go to seek the hound. Grainne caught him and laid him down the second time, and told him it was not meet for him to go look for a hound because of hearing its voice in the night. Diarmuid laid him upon his couch, and a heaviness of slumber and of sweet sleep fell upon him, and the third time the voice of the hound awoke him.

The day came then with its full light, and he said, "I will go to seek the hound whose voice I have heard, since it is day."

"Well then," said Grainne, "take with thee the Moraltach, that is the sword of Manannan, and the Gae Derg."

"I will not," said Diarmuid, "but I will take the Begalthach and the Gae Buide with me in my hand, and my hound Mac an Cuil by a chain in my other hand."

Then Diarmuid went forth from Rath Grainne, and made no halt nor stopping until he reached the summit of Benn Gulban, and he found Finn before him there without anyone with him or in his company. Diarmuid gave him no greetings, but asked him whether it was he that was holding that chase. Finn said that it was not he, but that a company of the fian had risen out after midnight, "and one of our hounds, being loose by our side, came across the track of a wild pig, but they have not hitherto been able to overtake him. Now it is the wild boar of Benn Gulban that the hound has met, and the fian do but foolishly in following him; for oftentimes ere now he has escaped them, and thirty warriors of the fian were slain by him this morning. He is even now coming up against the mountain towards us, with the fian fleeing before him, and let us leave this hill to him." Diarmuid said that he would not leave the hill through fear of him.

"It is not meet for thee to do thus," said Finn, "for thou art under taboos never to hunt a pig."

"Wherefore were those taboos laid upon me?" said Diarmuid. "That I will tell thee," said Finn.

"On a certain day I chanced to be in Almu in Leinster, with the seven battalions of the standing fian about me, Bran Beg O'Buideain came in and asked me whether I remembered not that it was one of my taboos not to be

ten nights one after the other in Almu without being out of it for a single night; now those taboos had not been laid upon any man of the fian but upon myself alone. The fian went into the great hall that night, and no man staid by me but thy father and a small number of the bards and learned men of the fian, with our staghounds and our other dogs. Then I asked of them that were with me where we should go to be entertained that night. Thy father, that is , Donn O'Donncuda, said that he would give me entertainment for that night, for if thou remember, O Finn, said Donn, "when I was outlawed and banished by thee and from the fian, Croenuit the daughter of Currac of Liffe became pregnant by me, and bore a smooth beautiful man-child of that heavy pregnancy , and Angus of the Brug took that son from me to foster him. Croenuit bore another son after that to Roc mac Dicain, and Roc asked me to take that son to foster him, seeing that Angus had my son, and he said that he would provide a sufficient meal for nine men at the house of Angus every evening. I said that I thought it not fitting to take the commoner's son and I sent to Angus praying him to receive that son to foster him. Angus received the commoner's son, and there was not a time thenceforth that Roc did not send a nine men's meal to the house of Angus for me. Howbeit, I have not seen him for a year, and we shall, as many as there are here of us get entertainment for this night there."

"I an Donn went our way after that," said Finn, "to the house of Angus of the Brug, and thou wast there that night O Diarmuid, and Angus showed thee great fondness. The son of the steward was thy companion that night, and not greater was the fondness that Angus showed the son of the steward, and thy father suffered great derision of that. It was no long time after that that there arose a quarrel between tow of my stag hounds about some broken meat that was thrown them, and the women and the lesser people of the place fled before them and the others rose to separate them. The son of the steward went between thy father's knees, flying before the stag hounds, and he gave the child a mighty, powerful, strong squeeze of his two knees, so hat he slew him upon the spot, and he cast him under the feet of the stag hounds. The steward came and found his son dead, and he uttered a long very pitiful cry. Then he came before me, and what he said was:" there is not in this house tonight a man that hath got out of this uproar worse than myself, for I had no children but one son only, and he has been slain; and how shall I get a recompense from thee, O Finn?" I told him to examine his son, and if he found the trace of a stagehand's tooth or nail

upon him that I would myself give him a fine for him. The child was examined, and no trace of a stag hound's tooth or nail was found on him. Then the steward laid me under the fearful perilous taboos of Drum Fruidecta that I should show him who had slain his son. I asked for a chessboard and water to be brought to me, and I washed my hands and put my thumb under my tooth of divination, so that true and exact divination was shown me, namely, that thy father had slain the son of the steward between his two knees. I offered a fin myself when that was shown to me, but the steward refused that; so that I was forced to tell him that it was thy father that had slain his son. The steward said that the was not in the house a man for whom it was more easy to give a fine than thy father, for that he himself had a son therein, and that he would not take any fine whatever except that thou shouldst be placed between his tow legs and his two knees, and that the would forgive the death of his son if he let thee from him safe. Angus became angry with the steward at that speech, and thy father thought to take off his head, until I separated them. Then came the steward again with a magic wand of sorcery, and struck his son with that wand so that he made of him a cropped green pig, having neither ears nor tail, and he said, "I conjure thee that thou have the same length of life as Diarmuid O' Duibne, and that it be by thee that he shall fall at last. " Then the wild boar rose and stood, and rushed out by the open door. When Angus heard those spells laid upon thee, he conjured thee never to hunt a swine; and that wild boar is the wild boar of Benn Gulban, and it is not beet for thee to await him upon this hill.."

" I knew not of those conjuration's hitherto, " said Diarmuid, "nor will I leave this hill through fear of him before he comes to me, and do thou leave me thy hound Bran beside Mac an Cuil."

"I will not," said Finn, "for oftentimes this wild boar has escaped him before." Finn went his way after that, and left Diarmuid alone and solitary upon the summit of the hill.

"By my word," said Diarmuid, "it is to slay me that thou hast made this hunt, O Finn; and if it be here I am fated to die I have no power now to shun it."

The wild boar then came up the face of he mountain with the fian after him. Diarmuid slipped Mac an Cuill from his leash against him, and that profited him nothing for he did not await the wild boar but fled before him. Diarmuid

said, " Woe to him that heeds not the counsel of a good wife, for Grainne bade me at early morn today take with me the Moralltach and the Gae Derg." Then Diarmuid put his small white colored ruddy nailed finger into the silken string of the Gae Buide, and made a careful cast at the pig, so that he smote him in the fair middle of his face and his forehead' nevertheless he cut not a single bristle upon him, nor did he give him wound or scratch. Diarmuid's courage was lessened at that, and thereupon he drew the Begalltach from the sheath in which it was kept, and struck a heavy stroke thereof upon the wild boar's back stoutly and bravely, yet he cut not a single bristle upon him, but made two pieces of his sword. Then the wild boar made a fearless spring upon Diarmuid, so that he tripped him and made him fall headlong, and when he rose up again it happened that one of his legs was on either side of the wild boar, and his face looking backward toward the hinder part of the wild boar. The wild boar fled down the fall of the hill and was unable to put off Diarmuid during that space. After that he fled away until he reached Es Ruad (the Red Waterfall) of Mac Badairn, and having reached the red stream he gave three nimble leaps across the fall hither and thither, yet he could not put off Diarmuid during hat space; and he came back by the same path until he reached up the height of the mountain again. And when he had reached the top of the hill he put Diarmuid from his back; and when he was fallen to the earth the wild boar made an eager exceeding mighty spring upon him, and ripped out his bowels and his entrails so that they fell about his legs. Howbeit, as the boar was leaving the hill, Diarmuid made a triumphant cast of the hilt of the sword that chanced to be still in his hand, so that he dashed out the boar's brains and left him dead without life. Therefore Rath n h-Amrann (Rath of the Marvel) is the name of he place that is on the top of the mountain from that time to this.

It was no long time after that when Finn and the fian of Erin came up, and the agonies of death and of instant dissolution were then coming upon Diarmuid. " It likes me well to see thee in that plight, O Diarmuid," said Finn; "and I grieve that all the women of Erin are not now gazing upon thee: for thy excellent beauty is turned to ugliness, and thy choice form to deformity."

"Nevertheless it is in thy power to heal me , O Finn," said Diarmuid, "if it were thy pleasure to do so."

"How should I heal thee?" said Finn.

"Easily," said Diarmuid; "for when though didst get the noble precious gift of divining at the Boyne, it was granted thee that to whomsoever thou should give a drink from the palms of thy hands he should after that be young, fresh, and sound from any sickness he might have at that time."

"Thou hast not deserved it of me that I should give thee that drink" said Finn

"That is not true," said Diarmuid, "well have I deserved it of thee; for when thou wentest to the house of Derc the son of Donnartad, and the chiefs and great nobles of Erin with thee, to enjoy a banquet and feast, Cairbre Liffecair son of Cormac son of Art, and the men of Mag Breg, and of Mide, and of Cerna, and the stout mighty pillars of Tara came around the stronghold against thee, and uttered three shouts loudly about thee, and threw fire and firebrands into it. Thereupon thou didst rise and stand, and wouldst fain have gone out; but I bade thee stay within enjoying drinking and pleasure, and that I would myself go out to avenge it upon them. Then I went out and quenched the flames, and mad three deadly courses about the stronghold, so that I slew fifty at each course, and came in having no cut nor wound after them. And thou wast cheerful, joyous, and of good courage before me that night, O Finn," said Diarmuid; "and had it been that night that I asked thee for a drink, thou wouldst have given it to me, and thou wouldst not have done so more justly that night than now."

"That is not true," said Finn; "thou hast ill deserved of me that I should give thee a drink or do thee any good thing; for the night that thou wentest with me to Tara thou didst bear away Grainne from me in the presence of all the men of Erin when thou wast thyself my guard over her in Tara that night."

"The guilt of that was not mine, O Finn," said Diarmuid, "but Grainne put a taboo upon me, and I would not have failed to keep my bonds for the gold of the world, and nothing, O Finn is true of all that thou sayest, for thou wouldst own that I have well deserved of thee that thou shouldst give me a drink, if thou didst remember the night that Midach son of Colgan made the feast of Bruiden Chaorthalnn (the Hostel of the Quicken Tree). He had a stronghold upon land, and a stronghold upon wave (upon an island) and he brought the king of the world and the three kings of Innis Tuile to the stronghold that he had upon the wave, with intent to take thy head from thee. The feast was being given in the stronghold that he had on land, and he

sent and bade thee and the seven battalions of the standing fian to go and enjoy the feast in Bruiden Chaorthainn. Now thou wentist and certain o the chiefs of the fian together with thee, to enjoy that banquet in Bruiden Chaorthainn, and Midach caused some of the mould of Innis Tuile to be placed under the, so that thy feet and thy hands clove to the ground; and when the king of the world heard that thou wast thus bound down, he sent a chief of an hundred to seek thy head. Then thou didst put they thumb under thy tooth of divination, and knowledge and enlightenment was shewn thee. At that very time I came after thee to Bruiden Chaorthainn, and thou didst know me as I came to the stronghold, and didst make known to me that the king of the world and the three kings of Innis Tuile were in the stronghold of the island upon the Shannon, and that it would not be long ere some one would come from them to seek thy head and take it to the king of the world. When I heard that, I took the protection of thy body and of thy life upon me till the dawning of the day on the morrow, and I went to the ford which was by the stronghold to defend it.

"I had not been long by the ford before there came a chief of an hundred to me of the people of the king of the world, and we fought together; and I took his head from him, and made slaughter of his people, and brought the head even to the stronghold of the island where the king of the world was enjoying drinking and pleasure with the three kings of Innis Tuile by him. I took their heads from them, and put them in the hollow of my shield, and brought in my left hand the jeweled golden-chased goblet, full of old mead, pleasant to drink, which was before the king. Then I wrought sharply with my sword around me, and came by virtue of my fortune and of my valor to Bruiden Chaorthainn, and brought those heads with me. I gave thee the goblet in token of victory, and rubbed the blood of those three kings on thee and on the fian, as many of them as were bound, so that I restored to thee thy power over thy hands and the motion of thy feet; and hid I asked a drink of thee that night, O Finn, I would have got it! Many is the straight, moreover, that hath overtaken thee and the fian of Erin from the first day that I came among, you, in which I have periled my body and my life for thy sake; and therefore thou shouldst not do me this foul treachery. Moreover, many a brave warrior and valiant hero of great prowess hath fallen by thee, nor is there an end of them yet; and shortly there will come a dire disaster upon the fian which will not leave them many descendants. Nor is it for thee that I grieve, O Finn; but for Oisin, and for Oscar, and for the rest of my

faithful, fond comrades. And as for thee, O Oisín, thou shalt be left to lament after the fian, and thou shalt sorely lack me yet, O Finn."

Then said Oscar, "O Finn, though I am more nearly akin to thee than to Diarmuid O' Duibne, I will not allow thee to withhold the drink from Diarmuid; and I swear, moreover, that were any other prince in the world to do Diarmuid O' Duibne such treachery, there should only escape whichever of us should have the strongest hand, and bring him a drink without delay."

"I know no well whatever upon this mountain," said Finn

"That is not true," said Diarmuid; "for but nine paces from thee is the best well of pure water in the world."
(editors note: the special powers of mountains, springs and special places is a special dimension of celtic reality they relate well to the dimension of the hunt when stories such as these would help the listener to master the environment)

After that Finn went to the well, and raised the full of his two hands of the water; but he had not reached more than half way to Diarmuid when he let the water run down through his hands and he said he could not bring the water. "I swear," said Diarmuid, "That of thine own will thou didst let it from thee." Finn went for the water the second time, and he had not come more than the same distance when he let it through his hands, having thought upon Grainne. Then Diarmuid hove a piteous sigh of anguish when he saw that. "I swear upon my arms," said Oscar, "that if thou bring not the water speedily, O Finn, there shall not leave this hill but either thou or I." Finn returned to the well the third time because of that speech which Oscar had made to him, and brought the water to Diarmuid, and as he came up the life parted from the body of Diarmuid.

Then that company of the fian of Erin that were present raised three great exceeding loud shouts, wailing for Diarmuid, and Oscar looked fiercely and wrathfully upon Finn and said, "that it was a great pity that Diarmuid should be dead than it would have been had Finn perished, and that the fian had lost their mainstay in battle by means of him."

Finn then said, "Let us leave this hill, for fear that Angus of the Brug and the Tuatha De Danann might catch us; and though we have no part in the slaying of Diarmuid, he would none the more readily believe us."

"I swear," said Oscar, "had I known that it was with intent to kill Diarmuid that thou madest the hunt of Benn Gulban, that thou wouldst never have made it. " Then Finn and the fian of Erin went their way from the hill, Finn holding Diarmuid's stag hound that is Mac an Cuill, but Oisin, and Oscar, and Cailte, and the son of Lugaid returned, and threw their four mantles about Diarmuid, and after that they went their way after Finn.

It is not told how they fared until they reached Rath Grainne. Grainne was before them out upon the ramparts of the stronghold, and she saw Finn and the fian of Erin coming to her. Then said Grainne, "that if Diarmuid were alive it was not by Finn that Mac an Cuill would be held coming to this place." Now Grainne was at that time heavy and pregnant, and she fell out over the ramparts of the stronghold, and brought forth three dead sons upon the spot. When Oisin saw Grainne in that plight he sent away Finn and the Fian of Erin; and as Finn and the fian of Erin were leaving the place Grainne lifted up her head and asked Finn to leave her Mac an Cuill. He said that he would not give him to her, and that he thought it not too much he himself should inherit so much of Diarmuid; but when Oisin heard that he took the stag hound from the hand of Finn, gave him to Grainne, and then followed his people.

Then Grainne felt sure of the death of Diarmuid and she uttered a long exceedingly piteous cry, so that it was heard in the distant parts of the stronghold; and her women and the rest of her people came to her, and asked her what had thrown her into that excessive grief. Grainne told them how Diarmuid had perished by the wild boar of Benn Gulban, by means of the hunt that Finn mac Cumail had made. "And truly my very heart is grieved," said Grainne, "that I am not myself able to fight with Finn, for were I so I would not have suffered him to leave this place in safety." Having heard of the death of Diarmuid, they too uttered three loud fearful, vehement cries together with Grainne, so that those loud shouts were heard in the clouds of heaven, and in the wastes of the firmament; and then Grainne bade the five hundred that she had for her household to go to Benn Gulban, and bring her the body of Diarmuid.

At that very time and season it was shown to Angus that Diarmuid was dead upon Benn Gulban, for he had had no watch over him the night before, and he proceeded, on the wings of the pure-cold wind, so that he reached Benn Gulban at the same time with the people of Grainne; and when Grainne's household recognized Angus they held out the rough side of their shields in token of peace, and Angus knew them. Then when they were met together upon Benn Gulban, they and the people of Angus raised three exceeding great terrible cries over the body of Diarmuid, so that they were heard in the clouds of heaven, and in the wastes of the firmament of the air, and in the provinces of Erin likewise.

Then Angus spoke and what he said was: "I have never been for one night, since I took thee with me to the Brug of the Boyne, at the age of nine months, that I did not watch thee and carefully keep thee against thy foes, until last night, O Diarmuid! And alas for the treachery that Finn hath done thee, for all that thou wast at peace with him." And he sang the following lay:

Alas, O Diarmuid O'Duibne,
O thou of the white teeth, thou bright and fair one;
Alas for thine own blood upon thy spear,
The blood of thy body hath been shed.
Alas for the deadly flashing tusk of the boar,
Thou hast been sharply, sorely, violently lopped off;
Through the malicious, fickle, treacherous one.

Numbing venom hath entered his wounds,
At rath Finn he met his death;
The Boar of Benn Gulban with fierceness,
Hath laid low Diarmuid the bright-faced.
Raise ye fairy shouts without gainsaying,
Let Diarmuid of the bright weapons be lifted by you;
To the smooth Brug of the everlasting rocks-
Surely it is we that feel great pity.

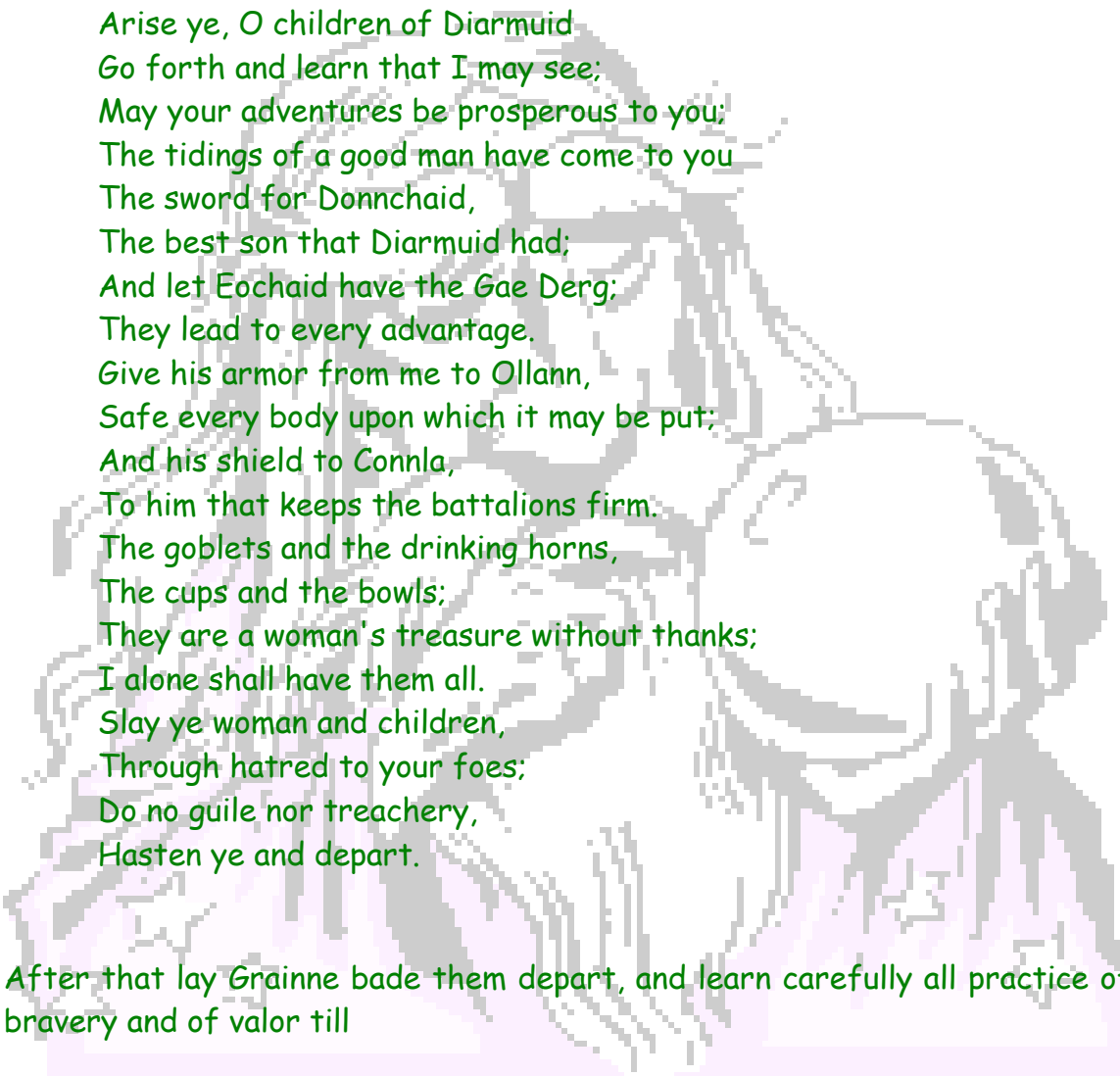
After that lay Angus asked the household of Grainne wherefore they were come to that spot. They said Grainne hath sent them for the body of Diarmuid to bring it to her to Rath Grainne. Angus said that he would not let

them take Diarmuid's body but that he would himself bear it to the Brug upon the Boyne; "and since I cannot restore him to life I will send a soul into him, so that he may talk to me each day." After that Angus caused the body to be borne upon a gilded bier, with his (Diarmuid's) javelins over him pointed upwards, and he went to the Brug of the Boyne.

As for Grainne's household, they returned back to Rath Grainne, and they told how Angus would not let them bring the body of Diarmuid, but that he himself had taken it to the Brug upon the Boyne; and Grainne said that she had no power over him. After wards Grainne sent word and messengers for her children to the district of Corca O'Duibne, where they were being reared and protected; now those children of Diarmuid had sons of warriors and of wealthy chieftains serving them, and each son of them owned a district. Now Donnchad the son of Diarmuid O'Duibne was the eldest son of them, and to him the other sons were subject; that is, Eochaid, Connla, Selbsercach, and Ollann the long-bearded, the son of Diarmuid, that is, the son of he daughter of the king of Leinster; and Grainne bore great love and affection to none of her own children than to Ollann. Those messengers thereupon went to the place where those youths were, and they told them the cause of their journey and of their coming from first to last; and as the youths were setting out with the full number of their household and of their gathering, their people of trust asked them what they should do since their lords were now going to encounter war and perilous adventure against Finn mac Cumail and the fian of Erin. Donnchad the son of Diarmuid bade them abide in their own places, and that if they made peace with Finn their people need fear nothing; and if not, to choose which lord they would have, that is, to ride with Finn or to adhere to their own chiefs as they pleased.

And no tidings are told of them until they reached Rath Grainne, where Grainne gave them a a gentle welcome, and gave a kiss and a welcome to the son of the daughter of the king of Leinster; and they entered together into Rath Grainne, and sat at the sides of the royal stronghold according to their rank, and their patrimony, and according to the age of each one of them. There were given them mead mild and pleasant to drink, and well-prepared sweet ale, and strong fermented draughts in fair chased drinking horns, so that they became exhilarated and mirthful. And then Grainne spoke with an exceeding loud and clear voice, and what she said was: "O dear children, your father has been slain by Finn mac Cumail against his bonds and covenants of peace with him; now you are bound to avenge that upon him well; and there is

your portion of the inheritance of your father," said she, "that is, his arms, and his armor, and his various sharp weapons, and his feats of valor and bravery likewise. I will myself portion them out among you and may the getting of them bring you success in battle. And I myself will have the goblets and the drinking horns, and the beautiful golden -chased cups, and the kine and the cattle-herds undivided." And she sang this lay as follows:



Arise ye, O children of Diarmuid
Go forth and learn that I may see;
May your adventures be prosperous to you;
The tidings of a good man have come to you
The sword for Donnchaid,
The best son that Diarmuid had;
And let Eochaid have the Gae Derg;
They lead to every advantage.
Give his armor from me to Ollann,
Safe every body upon which it may be put;
And his shield to Connla,
To him that keeps the battalions firm.
The goblets and the drinking horns,
The cups and the bowls;
They are a woman's treasure without thanks;
I alone shall have them all.
Slay ye woman and children,
Through hatred to your foes;
Do no guile nor treachery,
Hasten ye and depart.

After that lay Grainne bade them depart, and learn carefully all practice of bravery and of valor till

they should have reached their full strength. And they were to spend a portion of their time with Bolcan, the smith of hell.

Then those good youths betook them to their journey, and they took farewell of Grainne and of her household, and left them wishes of life and health, and Grainne and her people sent the same with them: and they left not a warrior, a hero, nor a woman-warrior in the distant regions of the

world, which whom they spent not a portion of their time, learning from hem until they attained fullness of strength; and they were three years with Bolcan.

When Finn was informed that those children of Diarmuid had departed upon that journey, he was filled with hatred and great fear of them; and forthwith called a muster of the seven battalions of the standing fian from every quarter where they were, and when they were come to one place Finn told them in a loud, clear voice the story of that journey, of the children of Diarmuid from first to last, and asked what he should do. "For it is with intent to rebel against me," said he, "that they are gone upon that journey."

Oisin spoke, and what he said was: "The guilt of that is no man's but thine, and we will not go to make up for the deed that we have not done. Foul is the treachery that thou didst show towards Diarmuid, though at peace with him, when Cormac also would have given thee his other daughter, in order that thou mightiest bear Diarmuid no enmity nor malice. According as thou hast planted the oak so bend it thyself." Finn was grieved at those words of Oisin, nevertheless he could do nothing against him.

When Finn saw that Oisin, and Oscar, and all the Clan Baoiscne had abandoned him he considered within his own mind that he would be unable to crush that danger if he did not win over Grainne; and he went therefore to Rath Grainne without the knowledge of he fian of Erin and without bidding them farewell, and greeted her craftily, and cunningly, and with sweet words. Grainne neither heeded nor hardened to him, but told him to leave her sight, and straightway assailed him with her keen, sharp pointed tongue. However, Finn left not plying her with sweet words and with gentle loving discourse, until he brought her to his own will; and he had the desire of his heart and soul of her. After that Finn and Grainne went their ways, and no tidings are told of them until they reached the fian of Erin; and when the fian saw Finn and Grainne coming towards them in that manner, they gave one shout of derision and mockery at her, so that Grainne bowed her head through shame. "We trow, O Finn," said Oisin "that thou wilt keep Grainne well from henceforth."

As for the children of Diarmuid, after having spent seven years in learning all that beseems a warrior, they came out of the far regions of the great world, and it is not told how they fared until they reached Rath Grainne.

When they had heard how Grainne had fled with Finn mac Cumail without taking leave of them or of the king of Erin, they said that they could do nothing. After that they went to Almu of Leinster to seek Finn and the fian, and they proclaimed battle against Finn. "Rise, O Diorrying and ask them how many they require," said Finn. Diorrying went and asked them "We require a hundred men against each of us, or single combat," said they. Finn sent a hundred to fight with them, and when they had reached the battle field those youths rushed under them, through them, and over them and made three heaps of them, namely, a heap of their heads, a heap of their bodies, and a heap of their arms and armor. "Our hosts will not last," said Finn, "if a hundred be slain each day. What shall we do concerning those youths, O Grainne?"

"I will go to them," said Grainne, "to try whether I may be able to make peace between you."

"I should be well pleased at that," said Finn, "and I would give them and their posterity freedom for ever, and their father's place among the fian, and bonds and securities for the fulfillment thereof to them for ever and ever."

Grainne went to meet them, gave them a welcome, and made them those offers. At last Grainne made peace between them, and the bonds and securities were given to them, and they got their father's place among the fian from Finn mac Cumail. After that a banquet and feast was prepared for them, so that they became exhilarated and mirthful. And Finn and Grainne stayed by one another until they died. *(editor's note- the uniting of Finn and Grainne is of some interest. Grainne represented mortal nobility and Finn as we know inhabited the lands and spaces outside of civilization and had a natural connection to wild animals. Diarmuid however, was one of Finn's men- a member of the Fian. Could it be that the unity of nobility and of the natural outsider was only possible by way of the sacrifice of a warrior? This section of the story is a later addition but it is unclear if it has earlier roots.)*

Thus, then endeth the Pursuit of Diarmuid and Grainne.

from the Editor:

Please take a moment to take this story from the screen or the printed page and give at least a portion of it future life by telling it to another. Thanks!

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