

DIARMUID AND GRANIA
By George Moore and William Butler Yeats
Edited by Robert Becker

George Moore (1852-1933) was a creative Irish writer of modernist fiction, memoir, essay, drama and poetry. He was a contributor to several “movements” and is fondly remembered as a purist who made art for art’s sake.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) was an Irish poet, dramatist, and public intellectual who led the Irish Literary Revival.

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TITLE, CHARACTERS AND CAST

DIARMUID AND GRANIA

A Play in Three Acts
by
GEORGE MOORE
and
W. B. YEATS

*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING CORMAC
FINN MACCOOLE

The High King.
The Chief of the Fianna.

His chief men:

DIARMUID
GOLL
USHEEN
CAOELTE

CONAN THE BALD
NIALL

One of the Fianna.
A head servant.

Spearmen:

FERGUS
FATHNA
GRIFFAN

GRANIA
LABAN
AN OLD MAN
A BOY

The King's daughter.
A druidess.

A YOUNG MAN
A SHEPHERD
THE FOUR TROOPS OF THE FIANNA
SERVING MEN

*

The play was first performed 21 October, 1901, at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, by the F. R. Benson Company at the request of the Irish Literary Theatre. Music for the play was specially composed by Edward Elgar. The cast was as follows:

King Cormac
Finn MacCoole
Diarmuid
Goll
Usheen
Caoelte
Fergus
Fathna
Griffan
Niall
Conan the Bald
An Old Man
A Shepherd
A Boy
A Young Man
Grania
Laban

Alfred Brydone
Frank Rodney
F. R. Benson
Charles Bibby
Henry Ainley
E. Harcourt Williams
G. Wallace Johnstone
Walter Hampden
Stuart Edgar
Matheson Lang
Arthur Whitby
H. O. Nicholson
Mr. Owen
Ella Tarrant
Jean Mackinlay
Mrs. F. R. Benson
Lucy Franklein

ACT I.

The banqueting hall in Tara. A table at the back of the stage on a dais. Pillars in front. There are doors to the right and left. A number of Serving Men are laying the table for the feast. Niall is directing them. There is a spinning wheel to left.

NIALL: Do not put the salmon there; put it in front of the chief man at the feast.

BOY: Is not the King the chief man at a feast?

NIALL: Not at a wedding feast; the chief man at a wedding feast is the man comes to be wed.

BOY: Where shall I put the boar's head?

NIALL: Put it where the old King used to sit, Art, King Cormac's father. Art the Melancholy they used to call him. He was deaf at the left ear, and he was always complaining that the meat was hard, and that the wind came under the door. Yes, Boy, under this roof a hundred kings have sat, right back to Ollam Fodla that made the laws. What meals they have eaten! What ale they have drunk! Before Cormac there was Art, and before Art there was Conn.

BOY: Was that Conn the Hundred Fighter?

NIALL: Yes, Conn the Hundred Fighter they used to call him and he knew a hare was put before him if the fire had been bright behind it; and he knew if the swine's flesh had been dried in the smoke of a whitehorn tree. Put the curds over there; it is not the curds but the trotters and cow-heel that used to be put there, for that was the place of the king's fool. One day he flouted the Fianna on the high road, and they hanged him on an apple tree.

BOY: Did they hang the king's fool in time of peace?

NIALL: Fool, or wise man, war or peace, it's all one to them when their pride is up. But they are great men. Bring the dishes quickly, it is time for their messenger to be here. Put the bread there. Art's wife. Queen Maeve, used to sit there, Maeve the Half Ruddy they called her, and she liked thin barley cakes, and six men got their death because of her. *(To the Servants)*. Bring in the flagons; put them here, where Art's hound used to lie. *(A knocking at the door)*. Here is the messenger of the Fianna. I knew we should not get done in time. Bring in the flagons. *(To the Servants)*. Where are the drinking horns? *(More knocking. He goes to the door and opens it. Conan comes in. He is a fat rough man and is much out of breath. He is followed by three men, who carry bundles of shields on their backs)*.

CONAN: Well, here are the shields. I must tell you the order they have to be hung in; and you will want to know the deeds of all these boasters, that you may tell them to the horse boys and the scullions... but no, I have seen you before. Yes, now I remember, you have been in Tara fifty years and have hung them many a time. Come, the sooner we bring the Fianna, the sooner we shall eat. *(He turns to go out, coining back)*. Well, there is good food on this table and all for the marriage of Finn and Grania. This boar was a fine beast, they fatten well on the acorns of Tara, and you have good big salmon in your river. Many a time I have had nothing but badger's flesh and otter's flesh when I have been in the woods with the Fianna, and the war about us. Give me a horn of ale. *(He is given a horn of ale but the horn is not a big one and he flings it away in disgust. He is given a larger one)*. Ah, you have a good life of it here, but I am tired running the messages of the Fianna. Have I not legs to grow weary, and a body to sweat like another? I am hungry too, but I dare not put a knife in the meat till the Fianna are here.

NIALL: You are one of the Fianna and have just left them. You will be able to tell us when they will be here.

CONAN: I left them at the foot of the hill. A shepherd's wife followed Diarmuid and Diarmuid laughed at her. Goll took her part and Finn took Diarmuid's part for Finn and Diarmuid always stand together. Well, come, let us go hurry them. I will tell them about the boar's head and the salmon. Yes, you have fine salmon in Tara. *(They go out)*,

BOY: The Fianna have a rough messenger.

NIALL: I would have none say that I have said it, but he is a man of little account among them.

BOY: Men wear sheep-skins in my country, but I had thought that the Fianna wore fine clothes.

NIALL: I will tell you why the Fianna made him wear it one of these days, and why Finn made him one of the Fianna. Would you be one of them?

BOY: Yes, if I might be Finn, or Diarmuid, or Caoelte.

NIALL: They are famous for their battles; they are great men, but would you not be Conan the Bald if you could?

BOY: That man with the sheep skin?

NIALL: Well, he eats when he is hungry, and sleeps when he is sleepy and rails at whomever displeases him. Those great men have the best seats at the table, and the fairest women for their bed-fellows, and yet I would not... *(He rushes across the stage to keep one of the men from hanging)*

Goll's shield at the lower end of the table.) Would you put Goll son of Morna's shield below Alvin's and Fergus's; would you have the roof tree burnt over our heads? It is the third shield from Finn's. Let me see now, let me think, it was Cool Finn's father who made this custom of the hanging up of every man's shield above his place. No quarreling, everything settled. I was going to tell you who made the Fianna, Boy; it was Cool. He took a thousand men out of every kingdom, and made them into an army, and set them to watch the shores. No one is old enough except myself to remember those times. The men of Lochland and the men of Mona, and the men of Alba carrying off women here and sheep there, and leaving smoke and fire behind them, and nobody to meet them but men taken from the sheep-fold, and from the plough and from the smithy. Yes, that is where Caoelte's shield hangs. I told you its place last time and you remembered it. *(Returning to the Boy)*. But I was telling you how the Fianna saved the women and sheep. They fight well, but they are proud. Ah, they are very proud. I was telling you Boy, how they hanged the king's fool, and many and many a time they have made war on the king himself. Finn's father. Cool, died fighting against Cormac's father. Art the Melancholy, and it was for that death Finn kept out of the battle Cormac fought against the men of Mona. It has been this way always, and sometimes Eri has been like a shaking sod between them; but this marriage mends all. *(Enter Grania and Laban)*.

BOY: There is old Laban and the King's daughter.

NIALL: Quick, quick put up the rest of the shields — Come away.

BOY: I have heard that there are women who live seven hundred years in the woods, spinning the threads of the long lived people of the woods, and then seven hundred years spinning for men. She is one of them. She has come back after these many years an old witch; they say she has more shapes than one. *(Niall and the Boy go out, and are followed by other serving men)*.

GRANIA: You cannot persuade me. I will not marry Finn.

LABAN: Hush! Hush!

GRANIA: But the Fianna are coming too; you will tell me about them, about the young men. Yes, their shields are here already.

LABAN: Conan has brought them.

GRANIA: You have promised to tell me about the Fianna. If you will not, Niall will.

LABAN: You have been in the woods with Niall lately, and he has shown you where bees make their nests, and you have come home with honeycomb and flowers.

GRANIA: But it was you who taught me the magic there is in the herbs. You took me to a place where Earth breathes out of a cave.

LABAN: I am too old to go far now.

GRANIA: Mother, there are some that say you will never be older than you are. And now we will go over to the shields, because you will not refuse me anything I ask. Niall would not refuse me anything.

LABAN: Do not call him. Let nobody know what is in your mind.

GRANIA: (*Going to the table*). My father sits here, Finn son of Cool sits next to him, and here is my place next to Finn... but it will be empty.

LABAN: Hush! No man matters to you now but Finn.

GRANIA: You told me his hair was grey. Grey hair and brown hair were the same to me a month ago. A month ago I was in the woods...

LABAN: It was spring time when the young find many things among the woods.

GRANIA: I had climbed a little path, and stood on the hill, where the trees grow sparer, looking into the mist.

LABAN: And it was then that you thought about a young man.

GRANIA: The mist was hanging on the brow of the hill, and something seemed to be moving over the world and to come out of the mist. It was beautiful, mother. The world was singing and the singing came into my breasts. But come to the shields and tell me of the men who are to sit under them.

LABAN: I dare not, I dare not.

GRANIA: But you said that to-night would not be my marriage night.

LABAN: No, no child I never said such a thing. Hush, lest they should hear you.

GRANIA: They who are wiser than you said it, Mother. The thread that you spun yesterday, the stars that we watched last night, the pebbles that we threw into the well this morning.

LABAN: Hush, your father will be here; there is no time now. I saw you talking to King Cormac this morning, why did you not tell him of this change.

GRANIA: I took his hands in mine, and thought to tell him.

LABAN: You should have told him.

GRANIA: But he would have sent a messenger, and I should not have seen the Fianna together.

LABAN: So that you might pick a man who would carry you away. It will be long before men come to the end of this mischief. The Fianna shall be broken in two because of it. Oh, why did Cormac shut his ears to what I told him? There will be flights and battles, ruin on ruin, and neither you nor I can do anything.

GRANIA: I would not be a trouble if I could help it. I would not set Finn against any man. I would have Finn and my man friends. I would stand between them. I would hand them their ale. Whose shield is that, mother? That one with the red otter painted upon it.

LABAN: That shield with the red otter is the shield of Fergus. He is taller than all the others, his hair and his beard are brown, and he wears a crimson cloak over a white tunic.

GRANIA: Is he strong and stately? Would he make my heart beat?

LABAN: He is strong and stately, but there is grey in his beard. That red shield with the white deer's head painted upon it is the shield of Usheen. He has yellow hair, and he has long white hands, with fingers hard at the tips from plucking of harp strings, and they say that no woman has refused him her love.

GRANIA: Is he young?

LABAN: There are younger than he. That grey shield with the raven painted upon it, is the shield of Goll, the son of Morna. He is a great hunter, and his arms and legs are as strong as the posts of a door.

GRANIA: Is there mirth in his eyes?

LABAN: He has the quiet of the woods in his eyes. But I see your mind is not set upon one that is strong, but one that is young. That white shield with the green fish is the shield of Caoelte. They call him Caoelte the Swift-Footed, and he is young and a teller of battle tales. But that

silver shield with the flying white heron upon it is the shield of Diarmuid. He is the youngest and comeliest of all. He has brown hair and blue eyes, and light limbs, and his skin is white but for freckles. He is courteous and he is merry with women. It is said of him that he will not be remembered for deeds of arms but as a true lover, and that he will die young.

GRANIA: Diarmuid, Diarmuid, a pleasant sounding name... Diarmuid a sweet sounding name.

LABAN: But, child, how think you that these things will come about?

GRANIA: I believe in your soothsaying, Mother, that a man as young as I am will come and carry me away.

LABAN: No, no, Diarmuid will not break his oath to Finn. Diarmuid has saved Finn's life three times and Finn has saved Diarmuid's life once. They always stand together,

GRANIA: You said his hair was brown, and his eyes blue, and his limbs light, and his skin white but for freckles. It was for such a man that I looked into the mist. But thinking of love makes the brain giddy.

LABAN: What can he do? He cannot overthrow Finn and his army.

GRANIA: (*Waking from a reverie*). You must find a way. Mother, it is for you to find a way.

LABAN: They would hang me from the rafters, child, they would hang me.

GRANIA: You would baffle them: it would not be difficult for you. But how shall I escape from Finn's marriage bed? Shall I run into the woods?

LABAN: The woods are full of wolves.

GRANIA: I do not fear the wolves.

LABAN: They would follow you. You could not escape them. They would tear you to pieces.

GRANIA: If you would not have me go into the woods, find a way of escape.

LABAN: Why will you not marry Finn? You would be the greatest woman in Eri.

GRANIA: I will not marry Finn; and you, mother, who has taken care of me since you could carry me in your arms, you would not have me run alone into the woods.

LABAN: The woods are lonely, Grania, you must not go.

LABAN: Hush! (*Taking her aside*). Child, love has made you wise as the bird in the wood that seeks a mate. There is a way, listen! The greatest among the Fianna sit at table with Cormac and Finn; and Niall and another serving man will wait upon them... But do you say that you will pour out their ale for them, and let them not deny you this. You must say that there could be no denying you anything on your marriage night. Then come to me and I will find a way. Then I will bewitch the ale, and I will put a pale dust into it, and will make a spell over it. (*Enter Cormac with two Councillors*). Hush, here is your father. (*Laban sits down and begins to spin*).

CORMAC: This is the wisest marriage, though I might have made a greater one. I might have married her to the King of Alba, but this marriage will keep our kingdom safe. (*He turns and sees Grania*). My dear daughter, I have been looking for you. Let us sit together and talk to one another. To-night you go away from me, but you go with the chief man in Eri. (*The Councillors withdraw*). Come, dear daughter, let us sit together. Why do you stand with fixed eyes, and I see you have not an ornament upon you.

GRANIA: I have forgotten them.

CORMAC: I should have wished to have seen you in your bracelets and your clasp with the emeralds. Will you wear them?

GRANIA: I can send for them and wear them for you, but I am not minded to wear them.

CORMAC: Why are you not minded to wear them? (*Pause*). What has Laban told you? She was telling you something when I came in.

GRANIA: Father you have often seen me wear my bracelets, and my clasp, and can love me without them, as can any other man. Father, listen, let us sit together, or let us talk as we walk hither and thither. I am going from this house where my mother lived and where I have always lived, with one you call the chief man in Eri, but whom I have never seen, so I have been questioning her spindle, and you know all that she finds in her spindle is true.

CORMAC: And she has told you?

GRANIA: Only that I am going away into the woods.

CORMAC: You are troubled, my daughter, a woman is always troubled when her marriage is at hand. Maybe you think Finn too rough a man to marry — I might have married you to the King

of Alba who is a man of peace: he sent messengers, but Finn is more worthy to be your husband.

GRANIA: I have not seen Finn.

CORMAC: The enemies of Eri have seen him; you know how he has held its borders against them. Finn and his Fianna have made Eri great, as when the Red Branch was at Emain Macha.

GRANIA: You wish me to marry as kings and queens marry, but I...

CORMAC: (*Suspiciously*). You have set your heart upon some boy.

GRANIA: The Fianna are coming. I shall wed this night him who is the chief man among them in my eyes.

CORMAC: That is well, Finn is the chief man of Eri after the high king. (*A sound of trumpets outside. The Councillors of Cormac and the servants enter. The servants open the door. Niall stands by the door*).

NIALL: Way for Finn and his Council. (*Enter Finn, Usheen, Caoelte, Diarmuid etc.*).

CORMAC: Finn is welcome to my house.

FINN: As the marriage law is, I declare the bride price upon the threshold. I give my word to guard this kingdom against all cattle spoilers, that are of the kingdom of Eri, and to guard it before my own country from the men of Lochland and the men of Mona; and I give my word to overthrow all kings of Eri that raise their hand against the high king. I cannot give a king's gift for the Fianna have neither sheep nor cattle, nor towns nor villages, nor great store of silver and gold.

CORMAC: The bride price is worthy of Finn and of my daughter. (*Cormac takes Finn across the stage and presents him to Grania*).

DIARMUID: (*At the door*). And this is Grania.

USHEEN: Do not look at her, Diarmuid, king's daughters are not for us.

NIALL: (*In a loud voice*). Let the hot meats be brought in, way for the heads of the four troops of the Fianna... (*Enter a number of men, they stand about the door, Cormac leaves Finn and Grania and goes towards the door to welcome the Fianna*).

GRANIA: There is a scar upon your cheek. That is the scar made by the sword of Forgael, when you overthrew the men of Aidne.

FINN: Has the tale of that battle come so far?

GRANIA: I have listened all my life to tales of your battles. *(Taking his hand in both her hands)*. This hand has overthrown many kings.

FINN: Grania must not praise me if she would not take my luck away.

GRANIA: Some day you will tell me about your battles. *(She turns away as if already weary of him)*.

FINN: Are my battles more to you than my love? *(Cormac brings Caoelte, Usheen and Diarmuid towards Grania — Cormac and Finn go up the stage)*.

GRANIA: Ah, this is Usheen, I knew him by his harp of red yew. Will you sing us love songs to-night?

CAOELTE: I am Caoelte, and this is Diarmuid.

GRANIA: Welcome Caoelte, teller of battle tales. There is a tale you tell... *(She stands looking at Diarmuid, forgetful of everything)*. And this is Diarmuid. Has Diarmuid nothing to say to me?

DIARMUID: What should I say to you. I see you on your wedding night, Grania.

GRANIA: The wedding feast is spread and I shall be wedded and bedded before dawn if someone does not carry me away.

DIARMUID: If someone does not carry you away!

GRANIA: I know your shield Diarmuid. It has a flying white heron upon it, and this is your sword. *(He gives her his sword and they stand looking at each other)*.

USHEEN: Diarmuid! *(Grania gives back Diarmuid's sword)*.

NIALL: The King and Finn son of Cool are seated, the guests at this table are Usheen, Caoelte, Goll son of Morna, Diarmuid, Fergus, Fathna. The tables for the rest of the Fianna are spread

beyond the arras of the western hall. (*The Fianna and serving men withdraw leaving Niall and one serving man to wait at the king's table.*)

CORMAC: My daughter, why do you not take your place beside Finn son of Cool?

GRANIA: Every night, father, I have poured out your ale, I would do so this the last time, and this night pour out my husband's for the first time.

CORMAC: Grania must not pour out our ale.

FINN: But if this be her wish?

GRANIA: It is the first favour I have asked.

FINN: All here will remember this as an honour. (*The King signs to the serving men to withdraw, Grania returns to Laban.*)

GRANIA: Has this been done well? Give me the ale.

LABAN: Here are two flagons that I have made sleepy... but no, I will make a spell over them.

Do all that I bid you
Pour sleep in the ale horns
That all that have drunk them
May sleep as on pillows
Till cock crow at morning.

Give them this ale and they will sleep till cock crow. Give it to all but Caoelte and Usheen and Diarmuid. (*Laban goes out. Grania passes along the table filling the cups and horns. Caoelte and Usheen are the last who should be served. When she conies to Diarmuid she stands looking at him.*)

CORMAC: Why do you not fill Diarmuid's cup? (*Grania drops the flagon.*)

GRANIA: The ale is all spilled; I will bring another flagon.

CORMAC: Daughter, I do not like the spilling of ale at a marriage feast.

CONAN: It never happens but it brings ill luck.

DIARMUID: Conan sees ill luck everywhere. When will Finn take away his favour from Conan, and let the Fianna give him his deserts?

FINN: Tell us a story Caoelte, and put the spilling of the ale out of our minds. (*Caoelte rises from his place, and takes his harp. He stands touching his harp as if uncertain what story he is going to tell*). Tell us the story of the house of the quicken trees.

CAOELTE: Yes, I will tell you the story of the house of the quicken trees. (*A pause*). It is gone, it went out of my mind of a sudden. A new story is coming to me... it is coming to me... I see a man lying dead and his wife going away with another.

FINN: What quarrel have you with me Caoelte, that you tell such a story at my marriage?

CAOELTE: There is fear on me, Finn, for I saw beyond the world suddenly and clearly.

USHEEN: Let us hear the story of the quicken trees. Tell it to us, Caoelte. Or shall we ask Goll to tell it to us? (*He tries to rouse Goll*). Goll is sleepy.

CONAN: You have no need to tell your stories to make men sleepy. The names of them are enough.

FINN: Let us drink and forget our thoughts of ill luck.

CONAN: The Fianna have had their share of good luck. To-day the ale has been spilt, and a strange tale put into Caoelte's mind.

DIARMUID: I am weary of Conan's bitter tongue, Finn. I would beat him from the table.

FINN: It would be worst of all for blows to be struck at my marriage feast. Conan and Diarmuid, I will have peace.

CORMAC: (*Trying to rouse himself*). Let Conan tell his story or let Usheen tell us a story; I am growing sleepy.

USHEEN: I cannot remember any story — I too have had my thoughts taken away.

CONAN: Diarmuid, Caoelte, and Usheen have forgotten their boasting stories, but Conan has many a pleasant story and no one asks him for one. I will tell a pleasant story. I will tell of the death of Diarmuid.

FINN: I will have no tale of death at my marriage feast. To speak of Diarmuid's death may be to bring death upon him. Be silent or you may take his luck away.

GRANIA: (*Coming nearer to the table*). Will Diarmuid die by sword or will he be made captive?

FINN: I forbid this story.

DIARMUID: The story of my death is an old story, and it no longer makes me afraid. Tell on.

CONAN: (*Obsequiously. Coming from the table*). Oh, my beautiful Grania, this is the way it was. Diarmuid was put out to foster with a shepherd, and no one was so beautiful as Diarmuid when he was a child, except the shepherd's son. The shepherd's son was much more beautiful than Diarmuid and his beauty made Diarmuid's father jealous and one day he crushed the shepherd's son to death between his knees.

GRANIA: Tell me of Diarmuid, tell me of Diarmuid.

CONAN: The shepherd wept and wept. Oh, how he wept. And after a while he took his second son into the woods, and made a spell over him with a Druid hazel stick, and changed him into a black and bristless boar. And some day that boar is to break out of the woods and to kill many men and many women. All the Fianna are to gather for the hunting of him; they are to hunt him round Eri and through Eri and from kingdom to kingdom. Oh what a hunting, oh, what a hunting!

GRANIA: Tell me more of Diarmuid. Tell me quickly.

CONAN: I must drink again, I am thirsty again. (*He drinks*). Diarmuid must go out against that boar and must be killed. It was to kill him that the shepherd made the spell over his second son. He shall be torn by the tusks, and his face shall be foul, because it will be bloody. I would that the women of Eri could see him when he is foul and bloody. (*He staggers*). I am growing sleepy, because I have to run the messages of the Fianna... (*He recovers himself*). I shall live to see him when the tusks have torn him, for it has been foretold of him also that he shall not live long. He shall not be remembered for the deeds of arms but as a lover of women. He shall live as a lover of women, and his life will soon be over. Who has put witchcraft in my ale? Who among the Fianna has done this? (*He falls*).

USHEEN: He said there was witchcraft in the ale, and look, they are all sleeping. Who was it that put witchcraft into the ale, Grania?

GRANIA: Laban, the Druidess has done this for me. I had never a mind to marry Finn. But why does not Diarmuid come to us? (*Diarmuid comes from the table*). It was for you that I ordered witchcraft to be put into the ale.

DIARMUID: For me, Grania?

GRANIA: I had never a mind to marry Finn. I am going away with you to-night, we shall be far away before they awake.

DIARMUID: You and I, and you did not see me before this night!

GRANIA: I desired you and you were in my thoughts before I saw you, Diarmuid. You were in my thoughts, Diarmuid. (*She takes him in her arms*).

DIARMUID: I too desired you and you were in my thoughts — oh beautiful woman! You were in my thoughts, Grania. Let me look at you. Let me put back your hair. Your eyes are grey, Grania, your eyes are grey and your hands... But Finn, but Finn... Grania wife of Finn, why have you played with me?

GRANIA: I am not the wife of Finn (*She goes towards Diarmuid*). And now I cannot be Finn's wife for you have held me in your arms and you have kissed me.

DIARMUID: What is this madness, Grania? Here, here this night and Finn sleeping there.

GRANIA: If he had loved me, his love would have been stronger than witchcraft. (*A pause*). But why do you go away? Is not my hair soft, are not my cheeks red, is not my body shapely? You held my hair in your hands but now, and your lips were on my cheek and lips. Were not my lips soft? You see that he shrinks from me. It may be that no man will take me because he wants me, but only because I am a king's daughter. Would you shrink from me Caoelte, if it were you I had asked to go away with me. Would you Usheen?

CAOELTE: Look, Grania, at the sleeping man whose ale you have bewitched.

USHEEN: If Finn were to wake, he would take some terrible vengeance for this.

GRANIA: What is his vengeance to me now? I will go into the woods and will wander alone there till I die.

FINN: (*In his sleep*). Diarmuid! Diarmuid!

DIARMUID: When I looked into your eyes, Grania, it was as though I had come out of a cave into the dawn. But I cannot, I cannot, we have sworn an oath to Finn. We swore it upon the rock where the earth screamed under Con son of Filmy. If the oath were broken the earth would send famine, the corn would wither, the Fianna would be divided, an enemy would come.

USHEEN: Take down your shield and begone from her Diarmuid.

GRANIA: He looks at me because it has been foretold.

DIARMUID: (*Disengaging himself from Usheen and Caoelte*). What has been foretold? Who has foretold it?

USHEEN: (*Putting his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder*). Diarmuid!

CAOELTE: You will be the first of the Fianna to break his oath.

DIARMUID: The fortune teller has lied, if she has said that I will break my oath to Finn. What did she tell you? What has she said? Has she said this?

GRANIA: She spoke of a woman pledged to marry a man whom she did not love, and of a man who would come and take her away from that marriage bed. She foretold that the man would leave all things and that the woman would leave all things for love's sake. She foretold that they would go away in the middle of the marriage feast, and wander in the unpeopled woods, and be happy by the rushy margin of many streams.

DIARMUID: And the man is I, and the woman is you.

GRANIA: She foretold that it shall seem as if all men had forgotten them, but the wild creatures shall not fly from them. They shall be happy under green boughs and become wise in all woodland wisdom, and as she spoke I too seemed to see them wandering on paths untrodden by the feet of the deer, where there are sudden odours of wild honey, and where they will often throw their arms about one another and kiss one another on the mouth. (*She goes nearer to him*). And she told me, Diarmuid, that we should make our beds with the skins of deer under cromlechs and in caves, and awake from sleep we know not why, as though the dwarfs in the rocks had called to us, that we might see the starlight falling through the leaves. She told me the dwarfs of the rocks and the secret people of the trees should watch over us, and though all the men of Eri were our enemies they should not pluck us out of one another's arms.

DIARMUID: I must not listen or I will take her in my arms. I will awake Finn — Finn, Finn awake!

GRANIA: What would you tell him?

DIARMUID: That the world vanishes, that I see nothing but you.

GRANIA: Is it not said that Diarmuid never refused help to a woman, and who is more helpless than I?

DIARMUID: Had you not told me that you loved me, I would have helped you.

GRANIA: Help me, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID: Caoelte and Usheen have seen my trouble; they will tell Finn of my trouble. She has asked me for help and I must give it.

GRANIA: (*Standing at the door which she has thrown open*). Come, Diarmuid, to the woods, the birds of Aognhus, the birds of love, the birds that the eye cannot see, sing joyously, sing fiercely, they clap their wings and sing.

DIARMUID: She asks for my help and I must give it.

USHEEN: From this night the Fianna are broken in two.

CAOELTE: And the kingdom that was to be made safe is in danger, and Diarmuid's oath is broken.

DIARMUID: My oath is not broken, tell Finn that. Tell him that this sword shall guard her by day, and will lie between us at night. Tell him I will send some messenger, some token that shall say to him — Finn, I bring you word that so many hours or so many moons have passed by and that Diarmuid's oath is unbroken.

GRANIA: The woods are sad with their summer sadness, and the birds of love have become silent, but they are not sleeping, their eyes are bright among the boughs... (*She goes out*).

DIARMUID: I must follow her. Upon whose face shall I after this look in friendship again? (*He takes his shield from the wall and goes out*).

USHEEN: (*Goes to the door and looks after them*). They have gone westward to the woods.

CAOELTE: When Finn wakes, we must tell him that they have gone eastward towards the sea.

ACT II.

Diarmuid's house. A spinning wheel to left. Walls made of roughly hewed timber. Laban sitting before the spinning wheel. Cormac sitting near her. The twilight is slowly deepening. Enter Diarmuid and a shepherd carrying fleeces.

DIARMUID: We have not yet finished our shearing. There are a few more sheep and we shall be done. *(Diarmuid and shepherd go out).*

CORMAC: Every kind of sorrow has come upon this land: the Fianna are divided, and the galleys of our enemies are drawn up upon the shore. Our kingdom will be over-run by the Lochlanders and the hunting of Diarmuid and Grania will begin again.

LABAN: Have your long talks with Diarmuid come to no better end than that?

CORMAC: I talked with Diarmuid late into the night and I could not persuade him. Old woman who has spoken nothing but lies, I told him that the kingdom I had given him would be taken from him, and that I could not save him from Finn, or Eri from the invader.

LABAN: I heard your voices, but I did not hear Grania's voice.

CORMAC: He said "Tell Finn to begone from my valley, let the sod be blown into flame again and the pursuit of Diarmuid and Grania begin again."

LABAN: And Grania stood by the door post watching the moon shining down the valley, looking to where Diarmuid's cattle were feeding and towards the encampment of Finn.

CORMAC: Yes, she stood there saying nothing. I turned to her often, saying, "If I take this message to Finn, you will have to fly into the woods again."

LABAN: And she answered nothing?

CORMAC: Only this: "Where will Laban go if we are driven from this valley?" She said, "Father, you brought her here to be near me and if we are driven into the woods you will see that no harm comes to her." But remember how near the Fianna were to hanging you from a rafter that night at Tara, and if I bring Diarmuid's message to Finn I may not know how to save you from them.

LABAN: They did not dare. The rope fell out of Goll's hand; and Conan told them they could not hang me but with a rope that I had spun, and they tried to make me spin one.

CORMAC: Yes, yes, but Finn has waited for three days. (*Going to the door*). This sunset ends the third day. The horses are waiting and Niall is at their heads. Speak if you have found any meaning in the thread.

LABAN: The thread keeps breaking as it runs from the distaff.

CORMAC: Then the end of somebody is near; the end of Diarmuid or of Grania or of Finn... or the end of Eri. You must tell me before I go for I cannot wait any longer.

LABAN: The thread is breaking; I cannot find a whole thread in the flax.

CORMAC: You have lied to me, old woman. You brought me this long way that you might be near Grania. (*She gets up front the wheel, Cormac puts her back again*). But spin since there is flax in the distaff, the earth knows all things and the flax comes out of the earth.

LABAN: What would you know? If there be forgiveness in Finn's heart?

CORMAC: The men of Lochland have dragged up 70 galleys on to the beach of Rury.

LABAN: You are troubled, being afraid that Caoelte and Usheen may not fight against the men of Lochland because they are angry with Finn. You are afraid that Finn may begin the hunting of Diarmuid and Grania again? You are afraid that Diarmuid and Grania...

CORMAC: Old woman full of wisdom about everything but the danger that waits us, I have to carry Diarmuid's answer to Finn and I would know what will happen to Diarmuid and to my daughter. You sit silent. Will you answer me? (*A long pause, the King walks up the stage slowly and when he turns Laban rises from the wheel*).

LABAN: I see Diarmuid standing by Finn with his hand on Finn's shoulder.

CORMAC: Then they are friends.

LABAN: I see Diarmuid drawing his sword.

CORMAC: Against whom, Laban? And then....

LABAN: I can see Finn drawing his dagger.

CORMAC: His dagger — his sword — look again.

LABAN: It is a dagger that I see.

CORMAC: Now wind the thread tightly round the forefinger. Now hold the thread tightly and look, for the earth knows all and her knowledge is in the flax.

LABAN: The vision has passed from me, I see nothing else.

CORMAC: Spin again, spin another thread.

LABAN: I cannot see more than once, and the thread is broken again, you have broken it.

CORMAC: Then is ill luck in my hands. If the thread had not broken we should know all. You say you saw Finn pull out his dagger, but was not Diarmuid standing by his side with his hand on Finn's shoulder? What is the meaning of this? If you do not tell me I will have you beaten and your wheel thrown into the lake. (*Enter Grania*).

GRANIA: Ah, my father, she can tell you nothing if you speak so loud.

CORMAC: She has told me strange things, things without meaning.

GRANIA: You never believe her words, father, when she speaks them, but afterwards you find out that she had spoken truly.

CORMAC: True or false it matters not since they do not help me. Where is Diarmuid? Does he speak to-day as he spoke last night?

GRANIA: He has said nothing to me. But a day and night have gone since you have spoken to him. His mind may have changed. (*Going up the stage*). This is the hour when the flock comes home. Diarmuid is thinking of the folding of his sheep. You will find him with the shepherd. Or shall I send Laban to bring him? (*Laban gets up and goes out*). The fold is not far from the house, it was brought nearer for the wolves carried off three of our sheep last week... Ah, I see him coming up the path, Laban is going to meet him. (*Grania comes down the stage to Cormac*). But, dear father, three days are not a long while to see you in, after seven years. You will come here again and forget the troubles that kingdom brings. You are lonely at Tara. I used to sing for you. Shall I come to Tara and sing for you again?

CORMAC: But Diarmuid and Finn — you cannot come to Tara until they have made peace. I have persuaded Finn to make peace and I have brought him here... But we go on saying this one thing again and again.

GRANIA: How will it all end? What a broil it has been since that night at Tara.

CORMAC: Never did men sleep as we slept that night over our ale. We sat at that table like stones till the cock crew. We woke together at the crowing of the cock, and Finn cried out, "Grania has been taken from me."

GRANIA: I thought that Finn did not love me, that you made the marriage that you might be stronger than any other king or than any invader.

CORMAC: Ah, Grania, you have your mother's eyes. Your mother was very beautiful, Grania.

GRANIA: I thought nothing but this: that a man should love me among the woods, far among the woods.

CORMAC: And Diarmuid has loved this fair face very dearly.

GRANIA: But in this valley love has become terrible and we are sometimes afraid of one another. And now I would have Diarmuid arm the shepherds and lead them against the Lochlanders and drive them into their galleys.

CORMAC: If you think like this, why did you stand looking down the valley and saying nothing? Diarmuid asked you, and I asked you.

GRANIA: If I had said "yes" to you, I should have said "no" to Diarmuid. I would say nothing but leave things to work out, whatever will may be in them. *(Enter Niall and the King's councillors. Councillors stand in the background. Niall advances).*

CORMAC: Yes, Niall, I have delayed too long.

GRANIA: *(Going to Niall).* You are going now, Niall, and I have had little time to speak with you, and I would have spoken to you about the days at Tara, when you were my only playfellow. How well I remember going with you, one spring morning to a little pool at the edge of the wood. We sat on the high bank fishing for roach. Have you forgotten?

NIALL: No, Princess, I have not forgotten. That same day I showed you a blackbird sitting on her nest. You had never seen a bird sitting on her nest before. But how many things have happened since then: you know the woodland now better than I.

GRANIA: Shall I ever see Tara again? I have wandered a long way.

CORMAC: Five days' journey from here, Grania. We must hurry, neither Niall nor I can keep the saddle for many hours at a time: Diarmuid's cattle are coming this way and their sides are heavy with the rich grass of the valley which I have given you, and the rooks are flying home. (*Enter Diarmuid*).

CORMAC: I shall be with Finn in half an hour and I would not say to him the words you bade me say last night. Do not send me to the man you wronged with the words you spoke last night.

DIARMUID: Tell him to be gone out of my valley.

CORMAC: Then farewell, dear daughter.

GRANIA: Father stay with us, Diarmuid do you not hear? Do you not understand?

CORMAC: Diarmuid knows how great Finn's anger will be when I bring him this answer.

DIARMUID: I have fought Finn and overthrown him. Did I not break out of the house with the seven doors when he had set a watch at all doors? I went out of the door where he himself held the watch and my sword struck the sword out of his hand.

CORMAC: If you will send me with this answer, so be it. I can say no more. Farewell to all here. (*Exeunt Cormac, Niall and Councillors*).

DIARMUID: We thought we should weary of the silence of this valley but it is of their voices that we weary. Why should we listen to anything except one another. But they are gone at last, and care is gone with them, and we are alone again with ourselves and our flocks and herds. Come to the door Grania and see my black bull in the meadow. (*Corning down the stage to her*). Do you not believe that care is gone with them?

GRANIA: You saw my father's face as he went out. His look has put a deep care into my heart.

DIARMUID: These northern raiders will not dare to move from their galleys. They will soon sail away, and should we give up our happiness because we fear they may carry off a few score of cattle?

GRANIA: Let it be as you wish it, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID: But oath upon oath is broken. I broke my oath to Finn, and now I break the oath which binds me to take up arms against all invaders. Grania, you would like to see Tara again. You would like to see Finn again.

GRANIA: I gave up Tara for your sake, Diarmuid, and that was easier than to live in this valley.

DIARMUID: Ah, you are weary of this valley. But Finn and I are divided, Grania, as by the sea, and if the peace your father has made between us is not to be broken, Finn must leave my valley. It is for your sake, Grania, that he would have me among his Fianna again.

GRANIA: He has not seen me for seven years.

DIARMUID: To see you once is enough, Grania.

GRANIA: I think that it is for Eri's sake he would have you among the Fianna again. He does not think of women. Why should a woman think of him? Have I not loved you for seven years, Diarmuid? And my father has told you that Finn is bound by an oath and that he has said, "Diarmuid has his love; let him keep her."

DIARMUID: He will not break his oath, but he will find some way out of it. There is always treachery behind his peacemaking.

GRANIA: He made peace with Goll and that peace is still unbroken. Yet it was Goll's father who plundered Finn's country and murdered his people.

DIARMUID: Goll does Finn's bidding although he might be chief man himself. But Finn has not forgiven. Usheen saw a look in his eyes at Tara.

GRANIA: Ah, how well you remember. That was seven years ago.

DIARMUID: And when I am dead it will be Goll's turn.

GRANIA: Unhappy brooding man, you will neither believe in Finn's oath nor in my love.

DIARMUID: Here we have everything we sought for. But in return for this kingdom your father would have me among the Fianna again. I thought we should live and die here, I thought our children would grow up about us here, if the gods accept my offering and give us children. (*He*

goes up the stage). Come, look at the sleepy evening. These evenings are better than the evenings of battle long ago, and were I among my old companions again, Usheen, Goll, Caoelte, I should look back upon these quiet evenings when the flock came home and you gave me my supper in the dusk. (*Comes down the stage*). If I were to die, Grania, would you be Finn's wife?

GRANIA: How did such a thought come into your mind?

DIARMUID: My life began with you and it ends with you. Oh, that these breasts should belong to another, and the usage of this body. Life of my life, I knew you before I was born, I made a bargain with this brown hair before the beginning of time and it shall not be broken through unending time. And yet I shall sit alone upon that shore that is beyond the world — though all the gods are there, the shore shall be empty because one is not there, and I shall weep remembering how we wandered among the woods. But you say nothing Grania. You are weary of the shadows of these mountains and of the smell of the fold. It is many days since you came to my bed and it is many weeks since I have seen an ornament upon you. Your love is slipping from me, it slips away like the water in the brook, You do not answer, These silences make me afraid.

GRANIA: Then, Diarmuid, go to your old companions.

DIARMUID: My old companions? What shall I say to them?

GRANIA: You will fight shoulder to shoulder with Finn and Caoelte. You will listen to Usheen's harp playing, and I shall love you better when you come to me with the reek of battle upon you.

DIARMUID: We shall be again what we were to one another. You are not that Grania I wandered with among the woods.

GRANIA: You are no longer that Diarmuid who overthrew Finn at the house of the seven doors.

DIARMUID: You speak the truth, Grania. I should have gone to the Fianna. Now it is too late.

GRANIA: Cormac cannot have reached the ford, you will overtake him. (*She goes to her chest and takes out an ornament*).

DIARMUID: Who is the shepherd, Grania? I have never seen him before. Where has he come from?

GRANIA: What shepherd do you speak of?

DIARMUID: There, there in the doorway.

GRANIA: There is nobody there.

DIARMUID: He beckons me — I must follow — (*He goes towards the door*). I see him no longer. A mist must have come in my eyes. I see clearer now and there is no one. But I must follow.

GRANIA: Whom would you follow?

DIARMUID: I see no one now and yet there was a sudden darkening of the light and a shepherd carrying a hazel stick came into the doorway and beckoned me.

GRANIA: No, Diarmuid, nobody has come into that doorway.

DIARMUID: Nobody came for you, but one came for me. Let me go, Grania.

GRANIA: No, no, it is a warning that you must not go.

DIARMUID: That is not how I understand the warning. I am bidden to leave this valley. He beckoned me. I am bidden to the Fianna. (*They go out. Enter Laban, who sits down at her wheel and begins to spin. Grania enters shortly after, she stands by the door looking after Diarmuid*).

GRANIA: He is like one whose mind is shaken. His thoughts are far away and I do not know what they are.

LABAN: He is brooding over that story Conan told him at Tara — it has been in his mind all day.

GRANIA: And before he left me he saw a shepherd where there was nobody.

LABAN: A shepherd with a Druid hazel stick.

GRANIA: It is better that he should live among his old companions. He talks one moment of Finn's crookedness; and at another of my love as if it were waning... In a few minutes, Diarmuid and Finn will meet.

LABAN: In a few minutes, Finn will stand with his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder.

GRANIA: Then I have done well in sending him to Finn. I did it for Diarmuid's sake, and for my father's sake and for the sake of my father's kingdom. I chose Diarmuid because he was

young and comely, but oh, how can I forget the greatness of Finn. He has gone to bring Finn to me. In a few minutes Finn and his Fianna will stand under this roof.

LABAN: That is true, my daughter, sit beside me here and tell me what happened to you when you left Tara.

GRANIA: When we left Tara we came to a little glade on the hillside and we heard there a sudden and a beautiful singing of birds, and we saw a red fox creeping in the grass.

LABAN: And then?

GRANIA: And then we saw a young man sitting in the long grass.

LABAN: What did he say?

GRANIA: He was but a herdsman's son seeking a master and so Diarmuid took him into his service, and yet, Mother, I think that he was greater than Diarmuid or I, for he gave us much good service, and so much good counsel. He never put us in a cave that had not two mouths, or let us take refuge in an island that had not two harbours, nor eat our food where we had cooked it, nor sleep where we had eaten it. He never let us lie for many hours in one place, and he often changed our sleeping places in the middle of the night.

LABAN: What name did he bid you call him?

GRANIA: He bid us call him. Mudham. But I think he had some great and beautiful name did we but know it. Have you ever seen him, Mother?

LABAN: It is said that none who have seen him have been long content with any mortal lover.

GRANIA: I have been content with Diarmuid nigh on seven years.

LABAN: Did you ever hear that beautiful singing of birds again?

GRANIA: Yes, I heard them sing by the banks of a river; I heard them when Diarmuid broke his oath to Finn. We had wandered by the banks of a river nine days, and Mudham fished for us, and every day we hung an uncooked salmon, on a tree as a token to Finn. On the tenth day we hung a cooked salmon, for on the ninth night a sword had not lain between us — but Mother, I can tell you no more. I would have you tell me, you who know all things, what is passing in the valley. Have Finn and Diarmuid made friends? Has Diarmuid passed the fires of the Fianna without speaking?

LABAN: They have spoken, and they are on their way hither, so forget them for a while, and tell me if you are happy in this valley.

GRANIA: I stand by the door of this house, seeing the hours wane, waiting for Diarmuid to come home from his hunting. Nothing has happened until to-day, and now Diarmuid and Finn are walking up the valley together, reconciled at last. I had come to think I should never look on a stirring day again, and I had thought to send all the thread you would spin to be woven into a grass green web on which to embroider my wanderings with Diarmuid among the woods. I should have been many years embroidering it, but when it was done and hung round this room, I should have seen birds, beasts, and leaves which ever way I turned, and Diarmuid and myself wandering among them.

LABAN: But now you have thrown the doors wide open and the days are streaming in upon you again.

GRANIA: Yes, yes, have I done rightly? Had I not sent Diarmuid to Finn, the broil would have begun again... I must put on my jewels. The Fianna will be here in a moment, and Finn has never seen me in my jewels. Spin for me. Mother, spin for me; tell me I have done rightly. But no, they are coming I can hear their footsteps. Go to the serving men and bid them take the drinking horns and the flagons from the cupboard. *(Exit Laban. Grania stands before a long brazen mirror that hangs upon the wall, and puts the gold circlet about her head and the heavy bracelets upon her arm, and the great many-coloured cloak upon her which she fastens with an emerald clasp. She puts a gold girdle about her waist. Enter Cormac, Finn, Caoelte, Diarmuid and others of the Fianna. Diarmuid is talking to Finn. Enter servants with flagons of ale, drinking horns and torches).* Welcome Usheen, welcome Caoelte, welcome Goll and all the noble Fianna into my house. I am happy that such men shall stand under my roof. The shepherds of Ben Bulben will tell each other many years after we are dead that Finn, Usheen, Caoelte, and Goll stood under this roof. *(Grania goes to her father and leads him to a high seat).* You cannot go from us now, for I am too glad for leave taking.

CORMAC: I will stay a little while, and will drink a horn of ale with this noble company who will defend Eri against the men of Lochland.

DIARMUID: We have been here but three moons and have not had time to build a house great enough for ourselves and for our people. This winter we shall build a house of oak wood great enough for two hundred people to sleep under its pillars. All the Fianna who come shall sleep under our roof.

GRANIA: When you speak of their coming, you make us think of their leave-taking, and I would forget that they shall ever leave us.

CORMAC: Eri is safe now that her great men are united.

CAOELTE: For a long while when we lighted our fires at night, there was no fire at which some did not side with Finn, some with Diarmuid. But at last those that were of Finn's party and those that were of Diarmuid's party gathered about different fires. And this year the fires were lighted far apart.

USHEEN: And time wore on until one day the swords were out and the earth red underfoot.

FINN: If all Eri were red under foot, it was but Grania's due that men in coming times might know of the love she had put into men's hearts. *(He puts his hand on Diarmuid's shoulder. Two serving men go round with ale. Grania stops them and takes the flagons from them).*

GRANIA: It is right that I should serve the ale on such a day as this.

CORMAC: My daughter must not pour out the ale.

USHEEN: If Grania pours out the ale we shall sleep sound to-night.

CORMAC: You have spoken folly, Usheen... I, I spoke out of a dream. Grania, since you have taken the flagons from your serving men, serve us. But I would you had not done this. *(Grania goes round filling each one's horn with ale. Diarmuid and Finn are still standing together on the right. She pauses, considering for an instant, and then fills Finn's horn).*

CAOELTE: Diarmuid, we have not spoken to you nor seen you these seven years.

GOLL: Have you no word for us?

USHEEN: We would drink with you. *(Diarmuid goes up the stage and joins the group who are standing half way up the stage, near to where the King is sitting).*

GRANIA: In this ale you will not drink sleep, but you will drink forgetfulness of me, and friendship for Diarmuid.

FINN: Had I known that you would speak like this I would not have come to your house.

GRANIA: But you have come here for this.

USHEEN: It is not enough for Finn and Diarmuid to drink together; they must be bound together by the blood bond. They must be made brothers before the gods. They must be bound together.

CAOELTE: Yes, yes, one of you there by the door — you Finmole — cut a sod of grass with your sword. They must be bound together.

DIARMUID: (*As he comes down the stage, he draws his sword*). Finn, draw blood out of your hand as I draw blood out of mine. (*Finn pricks his hand with his dagger and goes towards Diarmuid and lets blood from his hand drop into Diarmuid's cup. Diarmuid lets the blood from his hand drop into the cup also. He gives the cup to Finn*). Speak the holy words, Finn.

FINN: (*Having drunk out of the cup*).

This bond has bound us
Like son to father
Let him who breaks it
Be driven from the thresholds
Of God-kind and man-kind.

DIARMUID: (*takes the cup and drinks*).

Let the sea bear witness.
Let the wind bear witness.
Let the earth bear witness.
Let the fire bear witness,
Let the dew bear witness.
Let the stars bear witness,

FINN (*Takes the cup and drinks*).

Six that are deathless
Six holy creatures
Have witnessed the binding.

(*A sod of grass is handed in through the door and from man to man till it comes to Usheen and Caoelte who hold it up one on each side. First Finn and then Diarmuid pass under it*).

CAOELTE: They are of one blood.

USHEEN: They have been born again out of the womb of the earth.

CAOELTE: Give back the sod to the ground. Give the holy sod to the Goddess.

(The Fianna pass the sod from one to another and out through the door, each one speaking these words over it in a monotonous and half audible muttering: "Blessed is the Goddess. May the ground be blessed.").

GOLL: This bond has shown that Finn can forgive. It has been said falsely that he never forgives although he has forgiven me. Finn has forgiven Goll. *(Finn turns to Goll effusively).*

CORMAC: Now my errand is done and I shall bid Grania and Diarmuid and all this goodly company farewell. *(He rises but lingers, talking with certain of his councillors).*

DIARMUID: I have done this though you have followed me and hunted me through the woods of Eri for seven years.

FINN: I forgave you because we had need of you, Diarmuid. *(Turning away).* Although you left the Fianna for a woman.

DIARMUID: Grania, pour out the ale for Finn.

FINN: It is right for a man to have a time for love, but now you are with your old companions again.

DIARMUID: I did not accept the peace you offered me at once, because I had taken Grania from you.

FINN: *(Looking at Grania).* It seems a long while ago, Grania. You should have been my wife seven years ago.

GRANIA: Then it was not for me that you followed Diarmuid so many years. Why did you follow him? What reason could you have had, if it all seems so long ago.

FINN: Our marriage was to have mended an old crack in the land. It was to have joined the Fianna to the High King for ever, but it was not for this marriage's sake that I followed Diarmuid. I followed him because he had broken his oath.

DIARMUID: I shall make atonement for the breaking of my oath with fifty heads of cattle, and I will give you my black bull. Come to the door, and you will see him in the valley. He is grazing

on the edge of the herd and you will see what a noble stride he has. But who is this with two of the Fianna, this fat man in the sheep skin. It is my enemy Conan. I shall be glad to drink a horn of ale with him to the forgetfulness of all enmity. *(To the others)*. I have not seen you for seven years and seven years have changed some here a little. I would drink with every one of you. I would that you had but a single hand that I might hold it this day, this happy day. *(Enter Conan with Griffan and Fergus and a shepherd)*.

CONAN: Keep your spears in your hands. We are only just in time... a great beast... come... come... we will be in front of him before he can run into the wood. *(Exeunt Conan and all the Fianna except Finn)*.

DIARMUID: I thought I had driven off the last of the wolves. *(Diarmuid goes out. There are only Cormac, Finn, Grania and a shepherd on the stage)*.

SHEPHERD: He is not a wolf! He is not a wolf! He has gored twenty of my sheep. He broke out by the stepping stones. *(He goes out)*.

GRANIA: The shepherd said it was not a wolf, ask him.

FINN: He said it has gored twenty of his sheep. It must be the boar I heard of as I came hither. It has come out of a dark wood to the eastward... a wood men are afraid of.

GRANIA: Then Diarmuid must not go to this hunting. I will call him. *(She goes to the door)*. He is standing on the hillside. He is coming towards us. That is well. *(Coming down the stage to Finn)*. So it was not for my sake that you followed Diarmuid. This flight and this pursuit for seven years were for no better reason than the breaking of an oath.

FINN: I followed Diarmuid because I hated him.

GRANIA: But now you have forgiven him. You are friends again. Yes, Finn, I would have you friends but my wish can be nothing to you. I was proud to think you followed Diarmuid for me. but you have said it was to avenge the breaking of an oath. This is a man's broil. No woman has part in it.

FINN: Cormac told me that it was you who persuaded Diarmuid to bring me to this house, and but for this, I would not have come.

GRANIA: It was well that you came. Men who are so great as Finn and Diarmuid must be friends. My father fears a landing of the men of Lochlann, and I am weary of this valley where there is nothing but the rising and the setting of the sun and the grazing of flocks and herds.

FINN: Did you send for me because you are weary of this valley?

GRANIA: I wanted to see you because of your greatness. I loved Diarmuid... he was young and comely and you seemed to me to be old, you were grey.

FINN: I am seven years older now, and my hair is greyer. I must seem very old to you now.

GRANIA: No, you seem younger. As you stand there, as you lean upon your spear, you seem to me a young man. I do not think of your grey hair any longer.

FINN: That day in Tara you would not wear your ornaments, but now you wear them.
(*Diarmuid comes slowly down the stage*).

DIARMUID: What have you to say to one another; what were you saying to Grania, Finn? I can see by Grania's face that she is but little pleased to see me again.

GRANIA: Why do you say this? What has happened, Diarmuid? That shepherd said the wolf had killed twenty sheep.

DIARMUID: There is no wolf in the thicket; they do not know what they are hunting. (*Enter Conan*). No matter whether it be a wolf or a boar that is hiding there, I have come in to find you and Finn talking together in a way that is not to my liking. (*Cormac and the Fianna enter*).

FINN: Was it to watch me, Diarmuid, that you came back again? And would you not have me speak to Grania? As you will, then. (*Turning to Conan*). Conan is listening. What has he to say about this beast that has gored twenty sheep?

CONAN: And Diarmuid has come back again because he saw it was a boar and not a wolf, and he remembered that day in Tara, when I told him he is to go out hunting a boar and be killed by it, and Diarmuid is to be tom by the tusks, he is to be bloody, his face shall be foul because it shall be bloody. I told him these things in Tara, and he remembers them, that is why he has not gone out hunting.

DIARMUID: Finn has contrived the trap for me, but I shall not fall into it. There can be no peace between Finn and me. (*He draws his sword*).

FINN: (*Who draws his sword*). By the drawing of his sword, Diarmuid has broken the peace I gave him, and the sight of Grania has brought to mind all the wrongs he has done me.

GRANIA: To you, Finn, I say that I would not have sent for you had I thought that the broil would begin again. To you, Diarmuid, I say that I will speak to what man I please, that no man shall thwart me. Where is my father? (*Turning suddenly towards them*). No, I will not have you fight for me. Forbid them, father. (*She goes to Cormac*).

DIARMUID: Our swords shall decide between us, I shall slay you, Finn.

FINN: One of us two shall die. (*They draw their swords, and the Fianna rush between them*).

GOLL: Finn and Diarmuid cannot fight — fling up their swords, thrust the spear between them. Has Finn forgotten the blood bond? He who raises his hand against the blood bond raises his hand against the gods.

CONAN: (*Coming towards them*). If Finn and Diarmuid cannot fight with one another, let them hunt the boar, and let Grania be given to him who kills it. Aognhus, who watches over lovers and hunters shall decide between them. (*Diarmuid lifts his sword to strike. Leaving her father, Grania comes forward*).

GRANIA: He is not worthy enough for you to strike him — give me your sword.

FINN: (*Standing in front of Conan*). No, Grania, he shall not die, he has spoken the truth. Finn and Diarmuid love the one woman.

CONAN: A tale I once told him has given him no stomach for the hunting of a boar.

FERGUS: The boar is bigger than any beast I ever saw.

GRIFFAN: It is certainly no mortal beast.

DIARMUID: What was its colour, was it covered with bristles?

CONAN: I saw it; it was black and bristless. (*He goes over and stands by Diarmuid*). Finn, Caoelte, Usheen look at us; there is one terror in the heart of Diarmuid and Conan.

GRIFFAN: I saw it too, it was dark like the sea, and it made a noise like the sea in a storm.

FINN: We listen to the idle tales of spearmen. Whatever the colour of the beast may be, we shall slay it. (*The Fianna move up the stage*). Conan has spoken well. Diarmuid has little stomach for this hunting. Why did he ask for the blood bond? It was not I who went to him... it was he who came to me with his hand pricked with his dagger. These are the only wounds he will dare. This

blood bond keeps him from my sword and he speaks of an old tale that he may not go to the hunt. Diarmuid is craven.

DIARMUID: Finn lies; he knows why I will not go to this hunt. He seeks my death because he loves Grania.

FERGUS: If Diarmuid does not go to this hunt, Diarmuid is craven.

GRIFFAN: Finn has said it, he is craven.

CAOELTE: Diarmuid must not go to this hunt. You have done wickedly this day, Conan, and after your kind.

FATHNA: He has a hare's heart. The gods have given him a hare's heart.

FINN: Take up your spears we will go against this beast, let him who will stay behind.

DIARMUID: Go against the boar, but it shall be as if you hunted the sea or the wind. Your spears shall break, and your hounds fly and whimper at your heels. *(Exeunt all except Grania, Cormac, and Diarmuid. After a moment's pause a horn is heard in the distance. Diarmuid takes a spear from the wall).*

GRANIA: Why do you take your spear... you will not go to this hunt?

DIARMUID: This beast came to slay us. This hunt will sweep over us. It is coming through the woods, and I shall be caught up like a leaf. *(They bar the door and stand listening).*

GRANIA: They said the boar ran into the woods — it will have gone into the mountain before this.

DIARMUID: The things to come are like the wind; they could sweep this house away. This image of death is coming like the wind — who knows what enchantment has called it out of the earth? It was not here yesterday; it was not here at noon. I have hunted deer in these woods and have not seen the slot of natural or unnatural swine. No, it will not bear thinking of. I am caught in this valley like a wolf in a pit... *(Pause).* Cormac, you sit there like a stone, why did you do this? You came here with a tale about the men of Lochlann, but you were on the gods' business.

CORMAC: I gave you this valley to be happy in.

DIARMUID: When we are about to die, the gods give us more than we ask. There has been too much happiness here for our hunger, and I would roll up the broken meats in a sack for you to carry them away.

GRANIA: That tale has shaken your mind.

DIARMUID: Then you do not believe in it.

GRANIA: We believe, we disbelieve, and there is a time when we do not know what we think.

DIARMUID: We are always on the gods' business. Cormac in craftiness, you in lust; they put lust into women's bodies that men may not defy the gods who made them. I, too, shall be on their business in this hunting.

GRANIA: You are not going to this hunting.

DIARMUID: I see many ornaments upon you. How long is it since you have worn them for me? You have not worn them... we are common to one another night and day.

GRANIA: Take your Broad Edge, your heavy spear. Take your heavy shield.

DIARMUID: No man shall say Diarmuid went to this hunting with his battle gear upon him. *(Exit)*.

GRANIA: He is gone to this hunting... he is gone that he may give me to Finn. *(She turns her face towards the wall and weeps)*.

CORMAC: Have you ceased to love him? *(Grania walks a few steps towards her father as if she were going to speak but her emotion overpowers her, and she returns to the same place)*. If you have not ceased to love him, follow him and bring him back.

GRANIA: I will follow him in the woods; he will take the path under the oak trees. *(Exit Grania)*.

CORMAC: *(Coming down the stage)*. Laban! Laban! *(Going to the door at the side)*. They have all followed the hunters... there is nobody in the house... but Laban must be here. Laban! Laban! *(He goes to the wheel and takes the distaff in his hand)*. There is no more flax in the distaff. *(Exit)*.

Curtain

ACT III.

(The wooded slopes of Ben Bullben. Diarmuid is sleeping under a tree. It is night but the dawn is beginning to break. Enter two peasants).

OLD MAN: There has been no such night as this these fifty years.

YOUNG MAN: How the wind rages, like the dragon or maybe it is the dragon himself. Listen, a tree has fallen.

OLD MAN: It is only the wind, I have seen wind like this before, and then the sheep were lost in the torrent.

YOUNG MAN: I met a herdsman whose cattle had broken out of their byres, and fifty drowned themselves in the lake.

OLD MAN: The Fianna frightened them... the Fianna came into the forest at midnight sounding their horns.

YOUNG MAN: And at midnight I saw two hosts fighting, one host flying and one following, and among them that were flying an old one-armed man.

OLD MAN: That was Diarmuid's grandfather; he has been dead this fifty years.

YOUNG MAN: But I saw something more.

OLD MAN: What did you see, boy?

YOUNG MAN: A gaunt grey ragged man, and he was driving this beast the Fianna are hunting. He drove it along the edge of the mountain prodding it before him with a spear.

OLD MAN: That was the god Aoghus. He watches over Diarmuid. The deaths of all these great men are foretold, and the end of the Fianna. They will perisli as their forefathers did when Cairbre Cathead called the folk together and broke their power for two hundred years.

YOUNG MAN: Tell me about Cairbre Cathead.

OLD MAN: Not now; we must go in search for our sheep. If I have lost my ram, my ewes will be useless to me. We must go now, for at daybreak the Fianna will be sounding their horns. They were sounding them till the moon went down; it was they who frightened my sheep.

YOUNG MAN: But this hunting, will the boar be killed?

OLD MAN: It is no great matter to us, maybe a little less damage, to our fields that is all. The seasons will be none the better, the cows will have no more milk in their udders; and my lambs, there will be no lambs next year.

YOUNG MAN: When the Fianna have killed the boar they will give us some parts of it.

OLD MAN: The Fianna have no thoughts for such as we. All that they do not eat of the boar they will throw to their dogs; they would not think it well for us to taste meat. They beat back the invader when they can and it is more than our lives are worth to pick up a dead hare from the path.

YOUNG MAN: Hush, there is a man sleeping under the tree. If we do not wake him the beast may come upon him sleeping.

OLD MAN: Better do nothing, we must not do anything against the gods. The god Aognhus will save him if it be pleasing to him to do so, or he may call him away. Let us begone, boy, let us find our sheep. (*Exit*).

DIARMUID: They croak like ravens over carrion — croak, croak, croak. (*Enter Grania*).

GRANIA: I have sought you all night. I have been wandering in the woods since the moon went down.

DIARMUID: What have you come for?

GRANIA: I was afraid and have been running; give me time to draw my breath.

DIARMUID: Your hair is down and your hands are torn with brambles.

GRANIA: Yes, look at my hands, and I am so weary, Diarmuid. I am so weary that I could lie down and die here. That mossy bank is like a bed; lay me down there. Oh, I have come to bring you home with me.

DIARMUID: And you show me torn hands, and you hold out to me wet hair, and would have me go home. You talk of dying too, and would have me lay you on this bank. But what good is there in all this, Grania, for I have no time to listen.

GRANIA: Give up this hunting for I have had warning that you will die if you do not turn back. Turn before we lose ourselves in the darkness of the woods.

DIARMUID: I am in a little way that leads to darkness, but what does that matter to you, Grania? Your way home winds along the hill and down into the valley; my way is a different way, a shorter way, and the morrows that men live frighten me more than this short way. I have no heart for that crooked road of morrows.

GRANIA: (*Wringing her hands*). Come to our home, Diarmuid, come to our house.

DIARMUID: All the roads, the straight road and the crooked road, lead to blackness. If blackness be the end and there is no light beyond it? But what have such questions to do with me? Whatever road I am on, I will walk firmly with my sword out. (*He draws his sword*). But you have come to tell me something. What is it? Out with it quickly for the day is breaking, and when it is broken there will be no hunting.

GRANIA: I have come to ask you to go home with me.

DIARMUID: You would have me in the straight road, and so you have come to tell me that I am in it. For it is certain that a man walks where he thinks he walks. The mind makes all; we will talk of that some day. I tell you that you are lying to me. I am not in the road that leads on and on, and then shatters under one's feet, and becomes flying bits of darkness.

GRANIA: Diarmuid, you are going straight upon your death, if you do not come back with me.

DIARMUID: What do you know of all this that you come like a soothsayer? Who has been whispering in your ear? Who has sent you to me?

GRANIA: I had a warning last night.

DIARMUID: From that old woman who spins? I tell you I have had enough of her warnings. I saw her last night carrying a bundle of new flax through the woods.

GRANIA: No, Diarmuid, I left her in the house.

DIARMUID: I tell you I saw her. She is going somewhere on some evil work. But where is she going with the new flax? What have you come to tell me about her?

GRANIA: I have come to tell you of a dream that came to me last night.

DIARMUID: Well, what did the dream tell you?

GRANIA: I dreamt I was sitting by Finn.

DIARMUID: I do not think much of that dream, for I saw you yesterday walking with Finn and holding his hands.

GRANIA: But I dreamed I was sitting by Finn, and that your shield was hanging among the shields of the slain over our heads.

DIARMUID: Did you not say it was a bad dream? I have heard worse dreams than that. Ah, foolish gods, can you find nothing better than the dreams of an unfaithful wife to vex and shake my will.

GRANIA: Do not blaspheme against the gods for they are near to us now. I have been praying to them to spare you. I have been praying to them all night, while I looked for you.

DIARMUID: Yes, every man is a god in heaven, and on earth we are the hurly balls they drive hither and thither — oh, they are great hurly players. The camauns are never out of their hands. All night I have heard them laughing. I tell you I have heard them laughing. Do you not hear me? Do you not hear me?

GRANIA: I heard, but oh, Diarmuid, take my hands and touch my hair. They may bring some memory to your mind, some softness to your heart.

DIARMUID: Yes, yes, I remember well enough. Your hands and your hair were sweet to me long ago. No, no, yesterday, even yesterday. Let me see your hands. They are beautiful hands, torn as they are. No wonder I love them; and this hair too. You loved me once, Grania, you loved me better than Finn. I remember it all the day before yesterday.

GRANIA: I love you still, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID: My dear one, why did you send me to Finn? It may be that my words have been a little wild. Speak quickly, do not be afraid.

GRANIA: I sent you to Finn, because I wanted you to live among the Fianna as before you saw me.

DIARMUID: All you say is true.

GRANIA: I wanted you to be friends with Finn, because your love had become a sickness, a madness.

DIARMUID: Yes, yes it has become a madness. But it is a long while, Grania, since we were alone together.

GRANIA: No, Diarmuid not long.

DIARMUID: Yesterday is a long while and there may be no other time for wringing this secret from you. There was a thought of Finn in your mind when you sent me to him.

GRANIA: There is no secret in me; I have told you everything. And I come through this wood by night, to bring you from this hunt, as a wife comes to her husband.

DIARMUID: Grania was not meant to sit by the fireside with children on her knees. The gods made her womb barren because she was not meant to hold children on her knees. The gods gave her a barren womb, hungry and barren like the sea. She looked from the red apple in her hand to the green apple on the bough. She looked from me to Finn, even when she first lusted for me, and after Finn there will be some other. The malignant gods made your beauty, Grania. Your hand is very weak, your arm is weak and fragile. Your hair is very soft. (*He takes her by the hair*). I could kill you as easily as I could kill a flower by the wayside.

GRANIA: Kill me if you will, kill me with your sword, here in my breast.

DIARMUID: You would have me kill you. Maybe if I killed you, all would be well.

GRANIA: Hold fast my hair, draw back my head and kill me. I would have you do it... (*Pause*). Why do you not do it? If you would go to this hunting, you must do it; for while I live, you shall not go.

DIARMUID: Let go my spear, I say; let go my spear, if you would have your life. I see that you are thinking of Finn this very moment. I see thoughts of Finn in your eyes. Let me go, or I will let the lust out of you with this sword point.

GRANIA: Kill me, Diarmuid, I would have you do it.

DIARMUID: And leave this white body like a cut flower on the wayside.

GRANIA: Kill me, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID: I have heard the gods laugh, and I have been merry, but if I killed you I would remember everything. And I should wander in the woods seeing white and red flowers — after killing you I might kill myself — oh, that would be a good thing to do. But seeing you there, your soft hair spattered with blood, and your white hands stained with blood, I might not remember to do it. I might remember nothing but yesterday and to-day. I cannot kill you. I would not see your blood nor touch your hands. Your lips and teeth, and all this beauty I have loved seem in my eyes no better than a yellow pestilence. Grania, Grania, out of my sight. *(He goes out driving her before him. A moment after he returns alone)*. That is over, let me think. Yes, yes, there is a beast coming that I am to kill. I should take him so, upon my spear. The spear will be my best weapon, but the land must be steady beneath it. If the point slipped he would be upon me. Maybe it will be better to let him run upon my shield and kill him with my sword, while he digs his tusks into my shield. My danger will be the darkness, for the darkness makes the hand shake, and day breaks but slowly. Higher up in the woods there is a little more light. *(He goes out. Enter Caoelte and Usheen)*.

CAOELTE: We have hardly escaped with our lives. The branches touched me as the tree fell.

USHEEN: What made that great ash tree fall?

CAOELTE: The wind had lulled and yet it crashed across our way as if it would kill us.

USHEEN: I heard a thud and a crackling of branches before it fell, as though a great rock had been thrown against it, though I saw nothing, and for some time I had heard crashings in the woods. I think that hosts have been hurling rocks at one another. All night there has been fighting on the earth, and in the air, and in the water.

CAOELTE: Never was there such a night before. As I came by the river I saw swans fighting in the air, and three fell screaming into the tree tops.

USHEEN: Have you seen how Finn's hounds whimper at his heels?

CAOELTE: They whimper and cry till the touch of his hand gives them courage for a moment. They would not follow him at all were they not afraid of being left alone... *(They walk to and fro — a pause)*. That light must be the beginning of the day. A pale foolish light that makes the darkness worse. The sky and earth would turn to their old works again but they have been

palsy struck. Let us put this darkness out of our minds. Find us something to talk of, Usheen. Where is Diarmuid?

DIARMUID: (*Coming forward*). Diarmuid is here, waiting whatever may befall him. Tell Finn that though the mountain arose like an ox from sleep, and came against me, and though the clouds came like eagles, and the sea upon its feet that are without number, I would not turn from this hunting.

CAOELTE: We have been seeking you. We would have you leave this hunting.

DIARMUID: It may be that you fear, and that Finn fears, because of the fading of trees and the screaming of swans, but I do not fear.

CAOELTE: Turn from this hunting, Diarmuid.

DIARMUID: I would not, had I nothing but a reason no bigger than a pea, and I have weighty reasons.

CAOELTE: It were no wonder if even we, whose death at a hunt like this has not been foretold, should turn from this hunting. For we are following no mortal beast. A man who had been trapping otters followed the footmarks last night, not knowing what they were, and as he followed they grew greater and greater and further and further apart.

DIARMUID: The night is dark.

CAOELTE: But the footmarks were deep. Deeper than any made by a mortal beast

DIARMUID: It came yesterday out of the woods like a blight, like a flood, like a toad stool, and now it grows bigger and bigger. But so much more the need for hunters. Goodbye, comrades, goodbye. (*Exit*).

CAOELTE: I would not follow where he has gone. He is among those broken rocks where I heard screams, and sounds as of battle. They say that dwarfs and worse things have their homes among those rocks.

USHEEN: He is the only one among us who has not been shaken by this night of terror. Look, look something is coming this way.

CAOELTE: A tall staff in his hand, and he moves noiselessly, and there is another following him.

USHEEN: Draw your sword, Caoelte.

CAOELTE: It will not come out of its sheath. It is but a shepherd. We are craven and no better than Conan. (*Enter two peasants*).

OLD MAN: Be of good heart, great deliverer of Eri. I am but a shepherd looking for his sheep, and not, as well might be, some bad thing out of the rocks.

YOUNG MAN: Can you tell me, noble sirs, of any strayed sheep, or what is troubling the water and the air over our heads?

CAOELTE: We have been wandering in the dark all night. We are as blind as you are.

OLD MAN: We must go, sirs, we must find our sheep or starve. (*Exit peasants*).

USHEEN: Maybe he was laughing at us because he was afraid. We must wait here till we hear Finn's horn. If we were to seek him we would lose him, and it may be never come alive out of the woods.

CAOELTE: We had better go further up the hill. Who is this coming? Since dawn began, the wood has been full of shadows and sound. They are coming out of the rocks: they rise out of the rocks.

USHEEN: There is one who seems to be pushed along, and if it is but a shadow it is a heavy one. It is Conan. I can see the sheep-skin. I am glad he has not seen our fear. (*Enter Goll, Conan, Griffan, Fathna and two of the Fianna*).

GOLL: The night is over at last.

CONAN: The night is over, and the last day has begun. Give me a drink for I can go no further without one.

CAOELTE: We must go further up the hill. We must hurry on if we would find Finn again. Have you seen him? Have you heard his horn?

GOLL: No, he has not sounded it, but the beast will be stirring.

FATHNA: The last time I saw Finn he was standing on the rock yonder. He stood facing the dawn and shouting to his hounds. When he saw us he shouted that we were to climb up to him. He bellowed like a bull for its heifer.

GRIFFAN: But I had had climbing enough.

CONAN: Sit down; I will go no further. When a man has got to die, is it not better for him to die sitting down than walking about, and better to die on clean ground than in the mire, or up to his middle in water. Give me your ale skin, Caoelte.

CAOELTE: I will not, Conan; you have been asking for it all night.

CONAN: Give me your ale skin Usheen, it is the last drink I shall ever drink.

USHEEN: I will give him a drink; he will not move until we do. (*Usheen gives Conan his ale skin*). Drink and think no more of death.

CONAN: All the disasters that have come to Diarmuid have come to him because of the spilling of the ale out of the flagon; but I have lost both ale and ale skin and must therefore die.

CAOELTE: (*To Fathna*). We might light a fire, there must be dry leaves under these rocks. (*Fathna and Griffan go together to collect dry leaves and sticks, and they return a moment after with them*).

CONAN: We are shivering since we crossed that river; and it was in that river I lost my ale skin; some one plucked it from behind.

CAOELTE: I too am shivering; the day is bleaker than the night.

CONAN: Ali, be careful with the tinder, be careful, for the first leaves are the dry ones — bring the fire a little nearer, I would die warm though I have to get cold after. Make room for me by the fire. Do you not understand that I am going to die — that Conan the Bald is going to die — you will never flout me for my great belly again, Caoelte.

CAOELTE: You are not going to die, Conan. Here I will give you a drink.

CONAN: Yellow ale, bitter on the tongue, tasting a little of the vat of red yew that it came from... the last drink Conan will ever drink. (*Caoelte and the others talk among themselves*). They think that all this hurly burly is for Diarmuid, but I know better; you are my friends and I will tell you about it.

CAOELTE: Give me my ale skin, Conan.

CONAN: Not yet, I must drink a little more — and now this is the way it was — it was not the loss of the ale skin that told me I was going to die, that only showed me that some great evil was going to happen — it was a swan screaming in the trees that told me I was going to die. Before I was born, and when yet my mother was carrying with me, towards the seventh month she was one day washing clothes in the river, and she saw three geese swimming; and while one was cackling and billing with its mate, an otter caught it by the leg and dragged it under the water; so my mother knew something was to happen to the child under her belt, and she told me never to cross a river when there were geese about.

CAOELTE: They were swans that screamed in the trees.

CONAN: Are not swans a kind of geese; but how do I know it was not swans my mother saw.

CAOELTE; Conan, give me my ale skin.

CONAN: Why did I keep Finn and Diarmuid from killing one another? They could have done it so easily in Diarmuid's house. Why did I bring them to this hunt? Conan has brought his own death upon him. (*Enter Finn*).

FINN: We have come upon the slot of a boar in the hills; he can only just have passed by; if we go to the bend of the stream we should come upon him. (*To Conan*). Why are you lying there? We want every man. Get up, we will put you in the gap yonder. The boar shall not escape unless he escapes throughli you.

CAOELTE: Conan is in terror; he thinks he is going to die.

FINN: Conan, get up or you may have to face this beast alone.

CONAN: Do not believe them; it is not Diarmuid this pig is looking for, it is for me.

FINN: If Conan will not go, let him stay there. Here is a handful more leaves to warm your shins. (*Finn throws some wet leaves on the fire and quenches it*).

CONAN: You have thrown wet leaves on the fire; now I shall die of cold. But are you leaving me? They all go because Finn has bidden them. You leave me, Goll, yet some day Finn who has put out my fire will put out your life. Is it not the oath of the Fianna to protect one another? Caoelte, Usheen, do you not hear me? (*They go out laughing*). They are an evil stony-hearted proud race... Rot in the ear wheat, frogs spawn in the pool, yellow sickness in one's body, henbane in one's drink, lice in my beard, fleas in my sheep skin... A stony-hearted proud race. (*He follows them out. Enter Grania and Finn*).

FINN: You are cold and tired, Grania, and have stumbled through the wood, you are all bruised.

GRANIA: I am bruised and full of wretchedness, and I am very cold; and the dawning of the day frightens me. However, cold as it is, I do not wish to see the sun — but I am cold, oh, the cold.

FINN: There has been a fire here; I will blow the ashes to a blaze.

GRANIA: (*Sitting down*). Why did you not leave me to die where I had chosen.

FINN: The beast we are hunting might have run upon you and you would have been trampled and gored by it. I could not have left you there. The blaze is already beginning; hold your hands to it.

GRANIA: I would that you had left me to be killed by it. You have planned that the death of this boar is to put me on one side or the other, to give me to Diarmuid or to give me to you. But I am no man's spoil. (*Standing up*). You have planned it all between you; your plans are not mine. Go from me, Finn, go to this hunt and kill the boar, make the fire or go where you will.

FINN: Although I lose my chance of killing this beast I must stay with you. I will protect you.

GRANIA; It does not matter. Stay with me here or go to this hunt,

FINN: I will not leave you, if it were to spring upon you from the thicket.

GRANIA: It might be better, for I have done mischief enough. I wished that you and Diarmuid could have made peace and all would have been well, had not this evil thing broken out of the earth.

FINN: Diarmuid and I could not be at peace. The peace we made was a false peace. (*Hunting horns heard in the distance*). The hounds are at the boar's heels now. I can hear my hounds. Yes, it is Bran. Now it is Skealon. They have found their courage and are driving him from cover to cover. (*Going up the stage*). Listen — now it is Lomair.

GRANIA: Finn, I beseech you to put the desire of me out of your heart. Be Diarmuid's friend and save him. Kill the boar and save him.

FINN: If I kill the boar, will you belong to me?

GRANIA: Not because you kill the boar.

FINN: If I were there, and Diarmuid here, and this boar coming against me, would Diarmuid save me?

GRANIA: You have fought side by side. Will you let him die?

FINN: Why do you wish me to do this?

GRANIA: It was I who sent Diarmuid to you; and by the blood bond, you are brothers.

FINN: Should not a woman's breast be more to me than a man's hand?

GRANIA: But the blood bond — he who breaks it shall be cast out by God-kind and man-kind.

FINN: I cannot save Diarmuid, his end has been foretold. I cannot change it. The deaths of everyone of us and the end of the Fianna have been foretold. Many will die in a great battle, Oscar who is but a child will die in it, but I shall die long after by a spear thrust, and Diarmuid by the tusk of a boar, and Usheen will go far away, and Caoelte storm the house of the gods at Assaroe. *(A cry is heard close by, Finn plunges into the thicket and returns with Diarmuid who has been mortally wounded by the boar. Diarmuid struggles to his feet, and leans against a rock).*

DIARMUID: Water, is there no water? My life is ebbing out with my blood. *(Finn goes to a well and comes back with water in his hand, but as he holds up his hand the water drips through his fingers).* If I had water I might not die.

GRANIA: Finn, bring him water in your helmet. *(Diarmuid looks from one to the other).*

DIARMUID: Grania and Finn. *(When Finn returns with his helmet filled with water, Diarmuid looks from one to the other, and then whether by accident or design he overturns the helmet).*

GRANIA: Why have you done this? Why will you not drink the water that Finn brought you? *(She takes up the helmet and fetches the water herself. Again Diarmuid looks from one to another and puts the water away).* For my sake, for the sake of Grania, I beseech you to drink it.

DIARMUID: It is growing lighter. There is a light coming out of the hill.

FINN: Let me bind up your wounds or in a moment you'll be gone.

DIARMUID: They're about me, they're about me. They were always about me though I could not see them.

FINN: He is dying, they are coming for him.

DIARMUID: There is somebody there by the trees... move me a little that I may see him. (*Finn kelps Diarnund and slightly changes his position. He begins swaying his hand as if to music*).

FINN: He hears the harp-playing of Aoghus; it is by music that he leads the dead.

GRANIA: Diarmuid, oh, Diarmuid! Do not look at them. If you do not look at them you will not die. Do not die. You said once that you would be lonely without me among the immortals.

DIARMUID: I cannot hear the harp playing; there is so much noise about me.

GRANIA: He has forgotten me.

FINN: Henceforth his business is with them.

GRANIA: Oh, Diarmuid! Oh, Diarmuid! Oh, Diarmuid!

DIARMUID: Someone spoke to me; No, not the harp player, some other. It was you Finn, who spoke to me. No, no, who was it who spoke to me? (*He falls back dead*).

FINN: He is dead: he has died as the son of the gods should die. A friend against whom I have made war is dead. I warred against him for you, Grania. (*They stand looking at each other for a moment and then Grania goes away and weeps. Enter a young man*).

YOUNG MAN: The beast you have been hunting is dead, killed by a spear thrust. Here is the spear.

FINN: The spear is mine; give it to me. (*Walking towards Grania*). We must send for men to carry the body to the house. (*To the young man*). Go fetch King Cormac, bring him here. (*Exit shepherd*).

GRANIA: (*Trying to overcome her emotion*). What did you say, and what are you saying? That spear with the blood upon it in your hand, where did it come from?

FINN: It is the spear that killed the boar — a thrust behind the shoulder did it. We must send for help.

GRANIA: A great man is dead. Ah, why did I send him to you, Finn? I thought that two who were so great should be friends.

FINN: The gods chose you, Grania, to give him love and death.

GRANIA: (*Wringing her hands*). Finn, we must mourn him. You have to go against the Lochlanders, and this one that I have taken from you will not be by your side. Before the Fianna go against the Lochlanders they must mourn him, all his comrades must mourn him. (*The hunters begin to come in from the wings*). All the Fianna must mourn him, and the shepherds of his valley. (*She goes towards the body of Diarmuid. They make way for her, and when she reaches Diarmuid's body a shepherd coming in from the back gives her Diarmuid's shield and his broken spear*). His shield with the flying white heron upon it shall be laid upon his breast and I will lay beside him the Broad Edge that I bade him take instead of this spear I warned him not to take. Where is my father? Where is King Cormac? He shall see that Diarmuid's burning be worthy of him. (*Enter King Cormac*). Here is my father. (*She goes to her father*). Father, he is dead, one of the great men of Eri is dead. I am telling all these people that you will see to his burning that it may be worthy of him.

CORMAC: My daughter has lost a husband and Eri a defender. The Fianna must mourn him, and all the shepherds of this valley. Finn son of Cool, you too shall watch over this mourning. (*Finn goes over and stands by her*).

GRANIA: There are birch trees upon the mountain that the summer has made ready for the flame. Every shepherd shall bring a tree and they shall be heaped to a great height. Diarmuid shall be laid upon them and when they are lighted all people that are on the western shore shall see the blaze.

CAOELTE: I will send messengers to gather the swift runners, and the swift riders, and the boxers, and the throwers of the weight, that the funeral games be worthy of him.

USHEEN: I shall send messengers who will gather the harpers and gather the women that his funeral songs may be well sung. Many queens shall mourn him to the sound of harps, for when he lived there was none that would not have taken Grania's place, and wandered with him in her stead. It may be that he will come with Aognhus out of the heart of some hill and stand invisible among us and know that he is not forgotten.

FINN: The best of my horses shall be killed with his own horse that he may have noble horses when he awakes. (*Turning to the men who have brought in the litter*). Carry him gently for he was well-beloved when alive. (*They lay Diarmuid's body upon the litter. Finn turns to Grania*). Lay his

shield upon his breast. (*Grania walks again to the body and lays the shield upon Diarmuid. The men lift the litter and carry it slowly to the wood.*)

CORMAC: Diarmuid is dead, but the Fianna are united and the Lochlanders shall be driven into the sea. (*Finn, Cormac, and Grania go up the stage, following the procession. Conan remains warming his shins by the fire.*)

CONAN: Grania makes great mourning for Diarmuid, but her welcome to Finn shall be greater.

AFTERWORD

This ebook of *Diarmuid and Grania* contains authentic text of the first English edition — Dublin: *Dublin Magazine* (April-June 1951), pages 1-41.

The text was transcribed from the printed magazine and edited by Robert S. Becker, PhD. Original spelling is preserved; printing errors are eliminated. Page layout and typography of the printed text are simplified and normalized for readability.

Diarmuid and Grania Manuscript Materials by W. B. Yeats and George Moore, edited by J. C. C. Mays (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) offers a history of the play and thorough textual analysis of the two authors' dispersed manuscripts. The play was unpublished during the authors' lifetimes and a definitive edition of the play has not been published, nor does one seem feasible.