

the collected

SLAINE



mills
mcmahon
fabry



the collected Slaine

7/196510
109



pat mills
mike
mcmahon
glenn
fabry



TITAN BOOKS

"... HE DIDN'T
THINK IT TOO
MANY."

IN ORBIT
EVERY
MONDAY

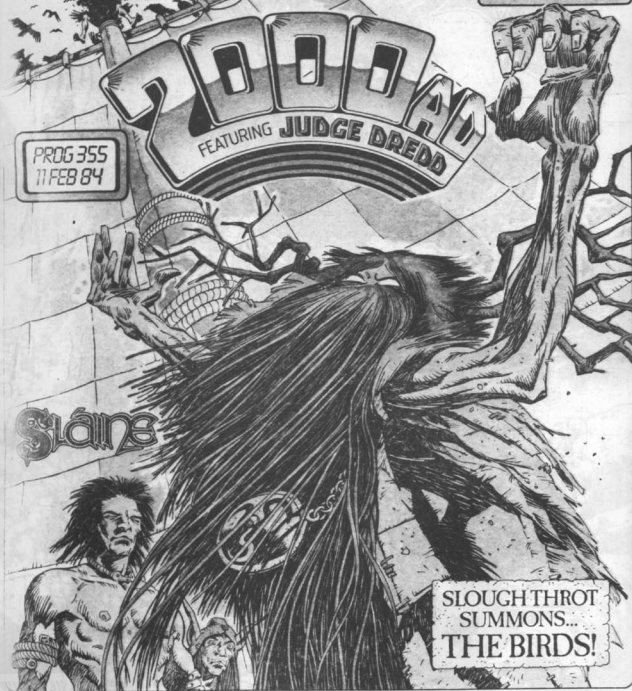
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EARTH
MONEY

PROG 355
11 FEB 84

FEATURING JUDGE DREDD

Slaine

SLOUGH THROT
SUMMONS...
THE BIRDS!



SLÁINE

A GUIDE TO HIS WORLD



CARNUN — *The Horned God*, Lord of the Beasts.

CROM-CRUACH — *The Worm God*, Lord of the Mounds.

Worshipped by the Southern tribes.

DANU — *The Earth Goddess*.

DRUIDS — Priests of the Northern tribes.

DRUNE LORDS — Evil Priest-Kings of the Southern tribes.

EARTH POWER — The spiral force that runs through the *Weird Stones* (Megaliths). It can be used for good or evil. Also known as the *Earth Serpent*.

HALF-DEAD — Warriors killed but trapped between the worlds.

HERO-HARNESS — Worn by warped-warriors, so their clothes don't rip during a spasm.

LUG — *The Sun God*. The Sun and Earth are worshipped by the Northern tribes.

OGHAMS — Early form of writing. Also a sign language.

RED BRANCH — Sláine's tribe's greatest warriors.

SALMON-LEAP — Jumping your own height. A Sessair battle-skill — like shield-jumping and spear-catching.

SESSAIR — Sláine's tribe.

SKULL-SWORDS — Drune soldiers.

SLOUGH — Drune leader who has shed (sloughed) his skin.

SOURLAND — Land warped by sorcery.

THE LORD WEIRD SLOUGH FEG — *Supreme Drune*, thousands of years old.

TIR-NAN-OG — *The Land of the Young*.

TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS — The legendary Northern tribes, including the *Sessair*.

WARP-SPASM — A strange and terrifying battle-frenzy, much worse than a Berserker fury. Caused by *Earth Power* which some warriors can warp through their bodies.

SLAINE

THE ORIGINS

Sláine is based on Celtic history and legend and is set during a legendary golden age of Celts. His world of Tir Nan Og, the Land of the Young, appears in many Celtic myths under different names. They are full of stories of lost lands beneath the waves and terrible disasters. The question was where to locate this lost world. Somewhere close to home seemed most likely. I therefore based it on maps of Britain and Eire as they were thousands of years ago — when the North Sea was a landmass and Britain was still connected to the Continent.

Gaelic Legends

The historical Celts, of course, only arrived in Britain around 700BC, when it was already an island. But in Sláine we are dealing with legendary Celts... memories in myth and legend of earlier peoples who would still have much in common with their historical successors. The Gaelic (Irish) legends are the oldest, so they have provided the best background. But their application is much wider — historians have used them to describe the Celts in Britain and Europe as well. Thus Sláine is really a general Celtic hero — as much British as Irish.

The Earth Goddess

These Gaelic legends are grouped together in 'cycles'. The oldest is the Mythological Cycle featuring the Tuatha De Danaan — the Tribes of the Earth Goddess Danu. They may have come from Britain originally and were skilled in 'science, magic, druidism, witchcraft and wisdom'. One legend describes them flying through the air. They probably built the dolmens and other megaliths. To this day they are connected with prehistoric mounds or 'hollow hills'. As prehistoric peoples are known to have worshipped the Earth Goddess, there's also some historical basis for them.

The Warp-Spasm

Another legendary source was the Ulster cycle that followed. Many feature Cuchulain who went into weird battle-frenzies.



In this he was not unique. Other lesser-known, historical warriors (Murdach and Congal, for instance) had these warp-spasms in which they'd attack friend and foe alike. There are historical records of early Celts charging into battle naked, demented with rage. All this indicates there was once a class of Celtic berserker who put the Viking variety in the shade. Naturally Sláine had to be one.

Cuchulain was famous for his great agility. So, too, were all Celtic warriors. The Romans record how Ancient Britons ran up and down the yoke poles of their chariots as they charged into battle.

A strange spiked spear — the gae bolga — is also mentioned in this cycle. From other records it seems likely it existed and many Celtic warriors used this ghastly weapon.

Finn

The next cycle features Fionn or Finn mac Cumail and his legendary knights, the Fianna. I haven't actually referred to it for Sláine, but Celtic legends present universal themes — stories told again and again, in new ways with new names, so some readers have noticed a connection.

The Red Branch

The Red Branch is a good example. It definitely comes from the Ulster cycle — but several Irish readers refer to Finn and his Red Branch knights. I believe they've been mixed together in Irish folk tales.

In *Sláine* I wanted to have a group of mighty heroes and noticed the similarity between the Red Branch, the Fianna and the Round Table — all groups of mystical, powerful heroes. Also how, in drawings of the Celtic Round Halls, the warriors' compartments faced inwards in a circle — so all were equal before the king sitting at the centre. A striking similarity to the Round Table.

Rather than make up names, I prefer to use the correct titles where I can. Hence the Red Branch in *Sláine* with its great Round Hall. The connection with the sun (see 'Warrior's Dawn') and Celtic occult themes also suggested this was the right name.

Druids

The Celtic Druids, via Roman records, are seen as a wicked, blood-crazed lot. This is at variance with wise sorcerers like Myrddin (Merlin) described in British myths. Hence the two factions — the evil Druines of the south (from *Drunemeton*, which means 'sacred grove') and the good Druids of the north who we should meet later on.

Slough Feg

Wherever possible, real names and real places are used. Thus Slough Feg's gruesome cave exists. It's the *Trois Freres* cave in the Pyrenees, superbly brought to life by artist Bellardinelli, in an episode told not in this current book.

The tunnel approach is remarkably like the labyrinth idea in the Minotaur. In use for over twenty thousand years, there is a drawing of its foul guardian on the wall . . . the famous 'Sorcerer of Trois Freres' is Slough Feg.

Earth Power

Other themes also come into *Sláine* — like Earth Power, the secret energy source of the megaliths. E.P.'s too involved to go into here, but it's intriguing how ideas about the megaliths are changing. Radio-carbon dating shows them to be much older than was once thought. Strange theories about their uses are now given serious consideration.

Even the Druids may be connected with them after all. According to 'The Origins of Britain' by L. and J. Laing: 'There is growing evidence that the Celtic religion of the Druids stemmed from something much older, something which was part of prehistoric European beliefs . . . It can therefore be claimed with some validity that Stonehenge was indeed built by Bronze Age "Druids".'

Celtomania

Everyone has his own, often fiercely held views on all this. One writer believes the Tribes of the Earth Goddess Danu came from the Middle East. Another that they were actually Danes. Few sources completely agree on the Celts. Our serial is, of course, a fantasy, designed basically to entertain. Thus, when I've come across different theories, I've used the ones that fit the serial's concept and are most exciting and entertaining.

Pat Mills



Sláine



— WARRIOR'S DAWN —

IT WAS NEARLY SAMAIN AS SLÁINE OF THE SESSAIR AND I, UKKO, HIS DWARF, RODE ON THROUGH THE SOURLAND — THE SWAMP WHERE THE DRUNES WARPED ALL THE POWER FROM THE EARTH — AND THE HALF-DEAD, TRAPPED BETWEEN THE WORLDS, LIE IN WAIT FOR THE UNIVARY...

WHY DON'T YOU GO BACK TO THE BOG YOU CRAWLED OUT OF?

THAT'S VERY NICE! LEAVE ME IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SOURLAND! IT'S NOT MY FAULT YOU GOT KICKED OUT OF YOUR TRIBE!

SCRIPT:
PAT HULLS
ART:
MIKE McMAHON
LETTERING:
TOM FRAME



WE STOPPED
TO REST OUR
MOUNTS.

I THOUGHT
HAVING A
FOOL FOR A
COMPANION
WOULD BRING
ME LUCK.

EVERYTHING
I'VE DONE FOR
YOU - AND THAT'S
ALL THE GRATITUDE
I GET!



WOULD
YOU LIKE
TO BUY A
SADDLE,
SIR?



WHAT
DID I
SAY?

SLÁINE ALWAYS
RIDES BAREBACK.
IN HIS TRIBE
IT'S CONSIDERED
THE HEIGHT OF
EFFEMINACY
AND SHAME TO
WEAR A
SADDLE.

I BEG
YOUR
PARDON,
LORD. I
MEANT NO
SLUR ON YOUR
CHARACTER.

WE MUST
HAVE A
HIDE OF
BRONZE!

HIS TRIBE
MUST BE
GREAT
WARRIORS.

AND HE
BELONGS TO
THE RED BRANCH -
GREATEST OF THEM
ALL. HE'S TOLD ME
SUCH STORIES...
WHICH YOU CAN
HEAR IF YOU
GIVE ME A
HORN OF OALE.



SLAINE WAS TWELVE WHEN HE BEGAN HIS TRAINING... THE BOYS COATED THEIR HAIR WITH CLAY, COMBING IT INTO SPIKES AND DYEING IT RED.



PAINTING THEIR BODIES WITH BLUE WOOD - SO THEY'D LOOK WARPED, LIKE THEIR FATHERS.

CALL THOSE SPIKES?

WAIT TILL I HAVE A WARD-SPASM - THEN WE'LL SEE WHOSE HAIR IS SPIKIEST, CULLEN OF THE WIDE MOUTH.



THEY WERE TAUGHT TO THROW A TATHLUM... A CONCRETE BALL MADE FROM THE BRAINS OF DEAD ENEMIES MIXED WITH BLOOD AND LIME.



AND THE SALMON FEAT - LEAPING THEIR OWN HEIGHT... THE CHARIOT FEAT - RUNNING ALONG A CHARIOT'S YOKE POLE...

THE SHIELD FEAT - KICKING A SHIELD UP...



...THEN JUMPING ON IT TO DELIVER THE DEATH BLOW.



HOW - IF DEFEATED ON THE GROUND - TO THROW A SPEAR WITH THE FOOT...

QUICKER, CULLEN. WATCH SLAINE.

IT'S STUCK BETWEEN MY TOES, SIR.





THEN SLÁINE HAD HIS FIRST WARP-SPASM... HE SWELLED INTO A MONSTER... HIS HAIR STOOD ON END WITH SPIKES OF FIRE... AND 'BLACK STUFF' SPOUTED FROM HIS HEAD.

DANU'S BLOOD!
HE'S WARPED!



KILL ME, SLÁINE,
AND MY FATHER WILL
REVENGE HIS SON!
REMEMBER HE'S CONN
OF A HUNDRED
BATTLES!



HE'S LOSING
A DAUGHTER!
NOT A SON!



YOU'LL PAY
FOR MY
BOY'S DEATH,
WARPED
ONE!

DON'T MAKE
HIS GRAVE TOO
NARROW, FOR
YOU'LL BE LYING
BESIDE HIM!

AND HE KILLED
CONN, AND LATER,
SEVEN OF CONN'S
KIN. AND HE DIDN'T
THINK IT TOO MANY.



CATHBAD, THE
TRIBE'S DRUID,
HEALED HIS
WOUNDS. THEN
HE WAS TAUGHT
THE SECRETS OF
THE RED BRANCH -
HIS TRIBE'S
GREATEST
HEROES.

AND, AT FIFTEEN,
TAKEN TO THE
GREAT CAIRN - A
HUGE BURIAL
MOUND - FOR
THE INITIATION
CEREMONY.



ONLY THOSE WHO
WERE WARPED
COULD SURVIVE
WHAT WAS TO
BEFALL...



THOUGH HE WAS NOT ALONE... FOR HE WAS SURROUNDED BY HIGH HEROES OF THE PAST...

THOSE HEROES ARE CERTAINLY 'HIGH'!



AT LAST... CATHBAD REMOVED A CRYSTAL SLAB FROM THE ROOF...

SLÁINE IS VERY YOUNG TO BE WARPED. I HOPE HE CAN SURVIVE THIS...



AT EXACTLY MIDWINTER, A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT SHOT DOWN THE PASSAGE INTO THE CENTRAL CHAMBER... ITS RAYS WIDENING OUT LIKE A RED BRANCH.

AND THE POWER OF THE SUN AND EARTH WARPED THROUGH HIM!



MOMENTS LATER...

LUG BE PRAISED!

NOW SLÁINE WAS ENTITLED TO ENTER THE GREAT ROUND HALL AND WEAR A HERO-HARNESSTHAT WOULD EXPAND WITH HIS WARP-SPASM.



AND CATHBAD MADE PROPHECIES ABOUT SLÁINE.

I SEE A HERO SWINGING A CRIMSON AXE, RED-MOUTHED SCREAMS, MOUNDS OF FALLEN, SMASHED SHIELDS, RAVENS GNAWING ENEMIES' NECKS ON THE FIELD OF SLAUGHTER.

SOUNDS LIKE A PROMISING FUTURE, LAD.



AND I CAN ALSO SEE A RAT-LIKE DWARF...! STRANGE...! I BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING TROUBLE WITH MY VISIONS LATELY.



SO WHAT HAPPENED THEN?

I WAS THROWN OUT OF MY TRIBE AND BECAME A WANDERING VAGABOND... A PROUD WARRIOR SUNK LOW...

NEVER MIND, SLÁINE. THERE'S ONE RAY OF SUNSHINE LEFT... YOU'VE STILL GOT ME!

NEXT PROG:
SKY CHARIOTS



"And it came to pass that . . . Slàine and I encountered a wealthy man who wanted us to rescue his daughter Medb, a Priestess of the Badb, who was due to be sacrificed at Samain. This we duly did, only to discover that she did not want to be rescued. Indeed, so infuriated was she by the rescue that, she sought aid from her former captor, to hurry the demise of Slàine and myself. And so, unbeknownst to us, her former captor Slough Trot, the most powerful Drune Lord of Slough Feg, was sent out along with a company of Skull Swords, to hunt us down . . ."



Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - Pt. 1.

SLAINE AND I CONTINUED OUR JOURNEY NORTH TOWARDS HIS TRIBE. UNSURE WHETHER A WAR PARTY BEHIND WAS FOLLOWING US, WE LEFT THE STRAIGHT TRACK SYSTEM THAT LINKED THE VILLAGES AND TRIBES OF TIR-NA-NOG AND TRAVELLED OVERLAND, STOPPING HERE AND THERE, MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND THEN ONCE AGAIN, MOVING ON...

GOODBYE, SABRA.

GOODBYE, SLAINE.

GOODBYE, TANGWEN.

GOODBYE, UKKO.

GOODBYE, CASSIR...
MIDIR... GONERIL...
GORMLAITH...
RAY...

GOODBYE, UKKO!



OUR TRANSPORT WAS
SLOW BUT DOGILE...

THAT'S A LOT OF
GIRLFRIENDS FOR A
LITTLE DWARF.

YOU CAN TALK! YOU'RE
MEANT TO BE GOING NORTH
TO CLAIM NIAMH.

AYE! WE'LL
BE WED AND
SHE'LL SHARE
MY STALL IN
THE GREAT
ROUND HALL.

AND WHAT
WILL HAPPEN
TO ME THEN?
THAT'S WHAT
I WANT TO
KNOW!

STOP
PRATTLING -
I'VE GOT A
SORE HEAD,
AND IN LUG'S
NAME, STOP
RINGING
THAT BELL!!!

IT'S NOT ME!
IT'S COMING
FROM OVER
THERE...

IT'S A
FUNERAL
BELL!

CAW SHEEP-HAIR, THE SHEPHERD BOY, HEARD THE BELL, TOO. IT MEANT THEY WERE BURYING MORGANT GREYBEARD, THE VILLAGE HEADMAN.

MORGANT WAS LUCKY. AT LEAST HE WAS ABLE TO DIE...



CAW LOOKED AT THE PASTURE SLOWLY TURNING INTO SCURLAND - WHERE THE NATURAL LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE BECAME TWISTED AND THE DEAD LIVED EERILY ON...



SOON IT'LL BE TOO LATE FOR THE REST OF US. WHEN WE PERISH, WE'LL BECOME THE "HALF-DEAD".



MANY OF THE SHEEP WERE DYING, AND MOST OF THE CROPS HAD FAILED. NOW THE FEAST OF SAMAIN - "SUMMER'S END" - HAD GONE. THE VILLAGE OF GAYRA FACED A BLEAK WINTER.

MOTHER EARTH IS NO LONGER FERTILE. THE DRUNES HAVE DRAINED ALL THE MAGIC FROM HER...



EVER SINCE THEY BUILT THE GREAT DOLMEN THE LAND HAS BEGUN TO DIE!

CAW RETURNED TO THE VILLAGE.



I SAW THE BEETLE FIRST!

NO! I DID!



HUNGER GRIPPED EVERY INHABITANT.



MADOS STAG-SHANKS!
THE MEAT TUBS ARE
EMPTY! HOW WILL WE
LAST THE WINTER?
HOW...?

STOP
COMPLAINING,
WOMAN! WE'LL
FIND A WAY!



OCH! THERE IS NO
WAY! THE DOLMEN
HAS TAKEN ALL THE
EARTH POWER!

SHE'S
RIGHT.

DON'T YOU
START! ALL
SHE'S DONE
TODAY IS
OGH AND
MOAN!



IN THE FOREST THERE ARE TIV
MONSTERS. PLENTY OF MEAT
ON THEM.

A WONDERFUL
IDEA, CAW!
JUST ONE SMALL
PROBLEM... THE
DRUNKS FORBID
US TO TOUGH
THEM ON PAIN
OF DEATH!



WELL, WHAT ARE
WE GOING TO DO?

YOU'RE OUR HEADMAN
NOW, FATHER.



I DON'T KNOW!
PRAY FOR A MIRACLE!
I'M GOING DOWN THE
DRINKING HALL!



AT THAT MOMENT, WE
RODE INTO GAVRA.

LOOK!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT...



A
MIRACLE?



WH-WHAT
ARE THEY
STARING
AT?



SKY CHARIOTS - 2.

BLAINE HAD GIVEN OUR BEAST TO THE STARVING VILLAGERS OF GAVRA. THAT NIGHT, THEY CELEBRATED WITH A FEAST. MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE DRINKING HALL, CAW SHEAF-HAIR, THE SHEPHERD-BOY WAS STOPPED BY THE SKULL-SWORDS. . .

THE PEASANTS ARE MEANT TO BE STARVING. SLOUGH THROT, YET THIS ONE LOOKS WELL FED. PERHAPS THEY'VE DISOBEYED THE LAW AND KILLED A TIME MONSTER!

NO! I SWEAR WE
HAVEN'T EATEN
THE FORBIDDEN
FLESH!

COME HERE, BOY.
WHAT IS YOUR
NAME ?



AS GAW APPROACHED HE COULD SMELL THE DRUNES' OVERPOWERING STENCH - KNOWN AS THE 'MYSTIC AURA' . . .



HE REMEMBERED THE NIGHTMARE TALES HE'D BEEN TOLD OF WHAT WAS UNDERNEATH THOSE FUR ROBES . . .



... AND HERE WAS A DRUKE THAT HAD REACHED THE SUPREME RANK OF 'GLOUGH' - SHEDDING HIS SKIN . . .

THE DRUNES HAD MASTERED EARTH POWER - USING IT FOR EVIL - BUT THEY HAD PAID A TERRIBLE PRICE IN FESTERING DECAY.



THE SKULL-SWORDS LOOKED ON - THEIR BREATH MASKS PROTECTING THEM FROM THEIR MASTERS' FUMES.

SPEAK UP, BOY!

GAW SHEAF-HAIR, SON OF MADDOG STAG-SHANKS! LORD... IT IS ONLY A HAIRY ONE WE ARE EATING IN THE HALL.



AND HOW CAME YOU BY THIS BEAST?



A MAN CAME TO OUR VILLAGE AND JUST... GAVE IT TO US!

BAH! YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE SUCH AN UNLIKELY STORY?



KILL HIM!



NO!



MOMENTS LATER...

SURROUND THE HALL. LET NO-ONE ESCAPE!



MEANWHILE, INSIDE...

THE DRUNES ARE DESTROYING THE LAND. THERE IS TALK OF A GREAT FLOOD - A RAGNORAK - THAT WILL MEAN THE END OF OUR WORLD. THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED!



ONLY MEN LIKE YOU - FROM THE TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS - HAVE THE COURAGE TO FACE THE DRUNES. IF YOU WERE TO STAY... IF... SLAVE! YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME!



MADOG, MY FRIEND. I HATE THE DRUNES AS MUCH AS YOU. BUT I TAKE EACH DAY AS IT COMES. POLITICS BORE ME. I'M HEADING NORTH.



BUT I DON'T WANT TO!



YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME WITH ME.

A DWARF NEEDS A PROTECTOR IN THESE TROUBLED TIMES.



LET'S TALK OF MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS, MADOG. LIKE WHY MY DRINKING HORN IS EMPTY. WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THAT SON OF YOURS?

YES... CAW'S BEEN A LONG WHILE.

WE BRING YOUR SON, MADOG.



WE SUSPECTED YOU'D BEEN EATING THE FORBIDDEN FLESH.



IT SEEMS WE WERE WRONG.



MADOG STAG-SHANKS WAS A WILD MAN - BUT WHEN HE SAW HIS DEAD SON, SOMETHING INSIDE HIM SNAPPED.

MURDERERS!



EVERYTHING HAPPENED VERY QUICKLY. MADOG'S WIFE SCREAMED -



HIS KIN LEAPT TO THEIR FEET -



AND WERE CUT DOWN BY THE SKULL-SWORDS.

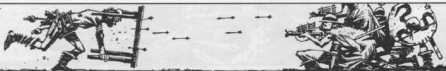


AT THE SAME TIME, SLAINE WAS MOVING, LIFTING THE TABLE, SCATTERING FOOD AND DRINK -

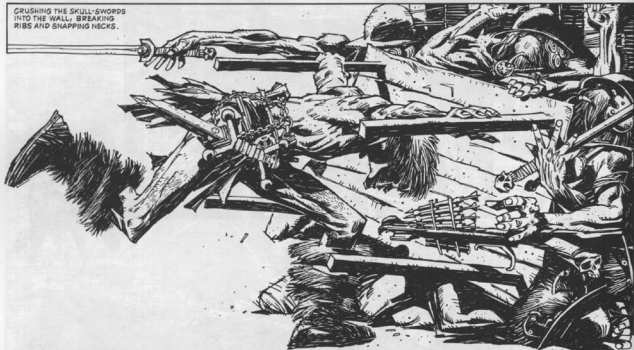
DOWN!
GET D-O-W-N!



USING IT AS
A GIGANTIC
SHIELD --



CRUSHING THE SKULLS/SWORDS
INTO THE WALL, BREAKING
RIBS AND SNAPPING NECKS.



UKKO!
BRAIN-BITER
-- TO ME!



I'LL PUT YOU IN
A WAY YOU'LL
MURDER
NO MORE!



AND THEN THE WARP-SPLASH! GRIPPED HIM. THOUGH NOT A FULL
SPASH, (FOR HE WAS STILL RECOVERING FROM HIS WOUNDS)
HIS FACE TWISTED AND HIS BODY BURNED. IN A MAD RAGE,
HE HURLED SKULL-SWORDS INTO THE FIRE-TRENCH!

WELCOME TO THE
WOUND-FEAST!

NEXT: CLAUDE THE BATTLE-SMITER!

Slaine



SKY CHARIOTS - 3

BLOUGH THROT AND HIS SKULL-SWORDS HAD KILLED A SHEPHERD BOY AND HIS FATHER IN COLD BLOOD, INCENSED BY THE DEATH OF HIS FRIENDS. SLAINE HAD A SEMI-WARP-SPASM (AS HE WAS STILL WEAK FROM HIS GREAT BATTLE AT DRUNEMETON)...

BLOOD YOUR
SWORDS! MAKE
TWO HALVES
OF HIM!

WRITTEN BY
TOM MCGEE
DRAWN BY
JOHN HENNINGSEN
INKED BY
JOHN HENNINGSEN
COLORS BY
JOHN HENNINGSEN

IT WAS ENOUGH OF A WARP-SPASM TO DEAL WITH THE SKULL-SWORDS. HIS BODY BECAME TOO HOT TO TOUCH...

MORE SKULL-SWORDS BURST INTO THE HALL - BUT I WAS READY FOR THEM...



SLOUGH THROT WATCHED THE FIGHT.



SO THIS IS SLÁINE MAC ROTH... THE BARBARIAN SLOUGH FEG ORDERED ME TO KILL...



HIS DEATH WOULD BE A WASTE.



I HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR HIM.



THE PRIEST-KING MADE AN OGHAM SIGN INDICATING HE WANTED US TAKEN ALIVE.



SLÁINE HAD HEWED THROUGH A SKULL-SWORD AND HIS AXE WAS STUCK IN THE WALL BEHIND. BUT AS HE TUGGED AT 'BRAIN-BITER'...

HE WAS STRUCK FROM BEHIND.





HE STILL
BURNS,
LORD.

BRING TUBS OF COLD WATER.
WE MUST COOL HIS FIRE OR
WHEN HE AWAKES HE'LL
HURL HIMSELF ON
YOUR SWORDS.



THE WHAP-SPASH
PASSED...

I'M STILL ALIVE.
THERE MUST BE
A REASON...



YES. I AM TRAVELLING
NORTH BY SKY
CHARIOT. I NEED
A PERSONAL
BATTLE-SMITH.

NO THANKS.
I COULDN'T
STAND THE
STENCH.



YOU'LL GROW USED
TO MY 'MYSTIC
AURA' IN TIME. IT'S
A SIGN I'VE REACHED
THE SUPREME
RANK OF 'SLOUGH'...

...THOUGH YOU CAN
WEAR A BREATH-
MASK TO PROTECT
YOU FROM MY
FUMES.



YOU'LL BE PAID WELL FOR THE
TASK, AND THE VILLAGERS
GIVEN ENOUGH FOOD TO
LAST THEM THROUGH
THE WINTER.



IF I
REFUSE?



GAVRA WILL BE BURN'T TO THE GROUND
AND YOU AND YOUR DWARF SUFFER
THE DEATH OF THE BLOOD EAGLE.

SHORTLY AFTER,
WE LEFT WITH
SLOUGH THROT.

AT LEAST WE GET
A FREE RIDE
HOME.

BUT I'VE NEVER FLOWN BEFORE.
I DON'T THINK I'D LIKE IT!

IF I HADN'T
AGREED, OUR
RIBS WOULD
HAVE PARTED
COMPANY
WITH OUR
BACKBONES
BY NOW.

WE APPROACHED THE NEARBY
DOLMEN - ONE OF A NETWORK OF
STONES ACROSS TIR-NAN-OG.
FROM HERE, SKY CHARIOTS
SAILED FOR THE NORTH.

THE DOLMEN ACTED AS A HUGE BATTERY,
DRAINING EARTH POWER FROM THE
SURROUNDING COUNTRYSIDE... PROVIDING
ENERGY FOR THE VESSELS TO RISE AND FALL.

‘THOUGH THE POWER
WAS NOT EASY TO
CONTROL...’

OCH!

OUR VESSEL WAS A LARGE
MERCHANTMAN - A CLOUD
CURRASH - WITH NO LESS
THAN THREE DRUNES
CONTROLLING ITS WEIRD
STONE...

WELCOME ABOARD,
SLOUGH THROT.
RISE PRAYERS WILL
BE IN ONE HAND'S
TIME.

WE GATHERED ON DECK AND KNELT DOWN. THEN THE
DRUNE LORD MADE OGHAM SIGNS OVER THE STONE...

O LUG, GREAT GOD
OF THE SKY, LOOK
AFTER LITTLE LUG.
EVEN IF THE OTHERS
GET IT...

... MAKE SURE I'M
ALL RIGHT!

IT WOULD RECEIVE POWER FROM THE STANDING
STONES AND TRANSMIT IT DURING THE VOYAGE.

SPIRAL ENERGY - KNOWN AS 'THE SERPENT' -
POURED FROM THE DOLMEN. FOR A MOMENT
NOTHING HAPPENED...



THEN, LO! THE
CLOUD CURRAGH
LIFTED...



...AND
SOARED
INTO THE
SKY!



THE VESSEL SET COURSE
FOR THE NORTH -



I DON'T LIKE IT, SLÁINE. THE
DRUNES HAVE VAST POWERS -
WHY SHOULD SLOUGH THROT
NEED A BATTLE-SMITER?
WHO IS HE
AFRAID OF...?



...AND WHEN A
DRUNE IS AFRAID...
THEN IT'S TIME
TO FEAR!



NEXT PROG:
STRANGE CARGO!

Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS -4-

RAGED WITH THE CHOICE OF THE EXTERMINATION OF HIS FRIENDS IN GAYRA OR BECOMING BATTLE-SMITER (BODYGUARD) TO SLOUGH THROT, SLAINE RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD. NOW, WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRAGH. . .

WE'RE SAILING NORTH-EAST -
OVER LYONESSE. I WONDER
WHERE SLOUGH THROT'S
GOING P

LONG AS WE
GET THERE
SOON!



LOOK OUT
BELOW!



UHHHHH!



STORY
AND ART
BY
MICHAEL
LEWIS
AND
TOM FERRIS

SLOUGH THROT
WAS HUNGRY.

STUPID BOY!
THIS MEAT IS
FRESH! I ONLY
EAT RANGID
FLESH.



BRING ME
SOMETHING
OLD AND
DECAYING.

AT ONCE,
LORD!



HA! HA! YOU'RE SLOUGH
THROT'S BODYGUARD.
SO YOU'LL HAVE TO TEST
HIS FOOD AND MAKE SURE
IT'S ROTTEN ENOUGH!

SILENCE, DWARF!



THAT WON'T BE
NECESSARY, SLAINE.
THIS REPLACEMENT
MEAT HAS REACHED A
FINE STATE OF
DECOMPOSITION!



BUT YOU NEGLECT YOUR
DUTIES IN OTHER WAYS.
"WE" WILL STOP AT NOTHING
TO DESTROY ME! ENSURE
EVERYTHING IS
LOCKED UP BELOW.



WHO IS "WE"?
WHO DO YOU
FEAR?



"HIM"?

WE WENT DOWN INTO THE HOLD, WHERE THE HALF-DEAD - MEN WHO HAD DIED BUT WERE TRAPPED BETWEEN THE PLANKS - WERE KEPT...



HUNTERS WOULD BRING THEM IN FROM THE SOURLANDS AND SELL THEM TO MERCHANTS FOR SHIPMENT NORTH...



WHERE THEY WOULD BE USED BY WARRING TRIBES AS 'BATTLE-RODDER'.



NO!
IN LUG'S NAME,
IT CANNOT
BE!

MY OLD FRIENDS...
KILLER STR! SHAVRAN THE
SURLY, AND, BY THE LOOK
OF THAT ARMOUR,
BRES BLOODSPEAR!



DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME...?
SLAINE OF THE SESSAIR
WE WERE MERCENARIES
TOGETHER! HEY,
SHARWAI! YOU
OLD BEAR!



IT'S NO USE,
SLAINE! HE
DOESN'T KNOW
YOU ANYMORE...



HE'S JOINED
THE HALF-DEAD!



MY COMRADES
DESERVED BETTER THAN
THIS. ONCE THEY WERE
PROUD WARRIORS...
NOW THEY'RE GHOULS
TRAPPED IN TIME!



NOTHING ELSE HAPPENED THAT DAY.



BUT, NEXT MORNING,
SWOLLEN BLACK
CLOUDS APPEARED,
HIDING THE SUN.



A HOWLING GALE
OVERTOOK US...



AND HURLED THE CLOUD
CURRAGH DOWNWARD...



I'VE NEVER KNOWN
SUCH A FURY!
I THOUGHT YOU
DRUNES COULD
CONTROL THE
ELEMENTS?



'HE' IS
TRYING TO
DESTROY
ME!

WHO
IS 'HE'?
ANSWER
ME, THROG,
OR...



THE STONE IS
WEAKENING...



WE MUST
SACRIFICE
A BULL!



SACRIFICIAL BULLS WERE KEPT ON BOARD LARGE SHIPS.
IN TIMES OF DANGER, THEIR BLOOD COULD BOOST THE
POWER OF THE WEIRD STONE WHICH KEPT A SHIP ALOFT.
BUT, TERRIFIED BY THE STORM, THE BULLS BROKE OUT
OF THEIR PEN...



AND
STAMPED
ACROSS
THE
DECK...



NEXT
PROG. **SLAINE THE BEAST TAMER.**

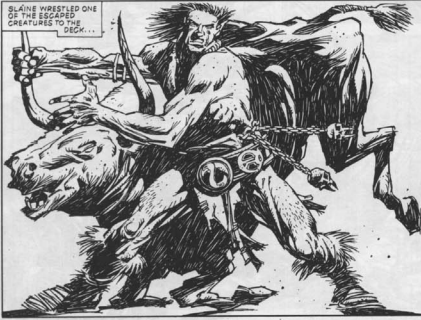
Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - 5

SLAINE RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD, SLOUGH THROT. THEN, AS WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRASH, WE DISCOVERED HE WAS A RENEGADE. WANTED BY THE LORD WEIRD, SLOUGH FEG, A BATTLE OF SORCERY FOLLOWED.

THE SHIP IS SINKING! UNLESS THE WEIRD STONE TASTES BLOOD, WE ARE LOST!

SLAINE WRESTLED ONE OF THE ESCAPED CREATURES TO THE DECK...



ILL BY
ART BY
LOTT
WRITTEN BY
THE FRODO

THE REST SMASHED
THROUGH THE GUNHWALES
CARRYING PASSENGERS
AND CREW WITH THEM...



...GORED
ON THEIR
HORNS.



SLAINE DRAGGED
HIS BEAST BACK
TO THE POUND -



HURRY! THE
MOUNTAIN
PEAKS ARE
BELOW US!



THE SACRIFICE
WAS MADE.



JUGS WERE FILLED
TO BRIMMING WITH
THE BULL'S BLOOD.



THEN POURED OVER THE
SHIP'S WEIRD STONE...



THE STRANGE ROCK DRANK THE
WARM LIQUID GREEDILY...



AND BEGAN GLOWING AGAIN,
THRUSTING THE SHIP UPWARDS...



WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, THE
FURY OF THE STORM ABATED.



I HAVE TRIUMPHED
OVER SLOUGH FEG!
MY MAGIC IS
GREATER THAN HIS!

YOU DIDN'T
SAVE US!
SLAINE KILLED
THE BULL!



LISTEN,
YOU STINKARD,
WHEN I AGREED
TO BE YOUR
BATTLE-SMITER,
YOU DIDN'T TELL
ME YOU'D FALLEN
OUT WITH YOUR
LEADER! FEG
WON'T REST
UNTIL YOU'RE
DEAD...



...AND MAYBE I
SHOULD SAVE HIM
THE TROUBLE!



YES, GO ON!
KILL HIM! WHILE
HE LIVES WE'RE
IN DANGER!



BUT YOU
GAVE YOUR
WORD... THE
WORD OF A
SESSAIR
WARRIOR!



BREAKING MY
WORD TO A DRUNE
IS NO HARSHIP.



ANYWAY, SLAINE GOT KICKED OUT
OF HIS TRIBE - AFTER THAT
TROUBLE WITH NIAMH. SEE,
SHE WAS THE KING'S
CHOSEN ONE, AND HE...

ALL RIGHT,
DWARF, THAT'S
ENOUGH!



NOW TELL
ME WHY
FEG WANTS
YOU DEAD...

...OR I'LL DRIVE A HOLE
THROUGH YOUR BODY A
BIRD CAN FLY THROUGH!



IT MIGHT HAVE
COME BADLY
FOR THE
PRIEST-KING,
BUT AT THAT
MOMENT...

SKYBLADES!



THE VESSELS OF
THE NORSEMEN
WHO PLUNDERED
THE SKY-WAYS!

HOW DID THEY
FIND US? WE'VE
BEEN BLOWN OFF
THE USUAL
ROUTE.

THE LORD WEIRD
MUST HAVE GUIDED
THEIR SAILS! YOUR
EXPLANATION MUST
LIE QUIET FOR NOW,
SLOUGH THROT!

THE SKYBLADES
SWIFT DOWN.
MOST OF THEIR
CREWS WERE
BERSERKERS,
FOLLOWERS OF
THE GOD VODEN,
MEN OF
SUPER-HUMAN
STRENGTH.



THEY WERE HOWLING HORRIBLY,
GUTTING AT THEMSELVES,
AND BITING THEIR SHIELDS!

IN THE FIRST SHIP WERE THORGRIM IRONJAW,
HADRIC HISSING BLADE AND BORK THE BRUTAL...



A FAT PRIZE TO
TAKE BACK TO
MIDGARD! PREPARE
BOARDING BASKETS!

IN THE SECOND SHIP WERE HENGIST THE STRONG BUT
STINGY, RALF RAZORAXE AND HOONI THE NOT-NORMAL...



REMEMBER, MEN,
ALL THE LOOT BELONGS
TO ME! YOU GET
YOUR WAGES!

IN THE THIRD SHIP WERE SKULD THE DEMENTED,
EIRIK CHISELSPEAR AND HERG THE HARD...



THESE WERE THE MEN WHO TORE OUT THROATS
WITH THEIR TEETH AND WRESTLED WITH TREES
OR BOULDERS IF NO ENEMY WAS AVAILABLE!

THE FIRST SKYBLADE
LOWERED ITS
BOARDING BASKETS...

GATHER THE ACORN*
CROP FOR
LORD VODEN!



FOR VODEN!
FOR VODEN!

* ACORNS = HEADS.

MORE BERSERKERS
SLID DOWN GRAPPLING
LINES.



AND...
AND...



AH-A
AAAAA

OUR FELLOW PASSENGERS WERE PANIC-STRICKEN. SOME LEAPT OVERBOARD, RATHER THAN FALL INTO THE NORSEMEN'S HANDS.



SEND A GALE TO DRIVE US FROM THESE MADMEN!



NO USE! SUCH A WIND WOULD ASSIST THEM, TOO!



THE MATTER MUST BE DECIDED IN HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT!

YOU'VE NO RIGHT HERE, NORSEMAN!



HESE TO THAT, STRANGER! TO THE BRAVE BELONGS ALL THINGS!

THAT MAY BE SO, BUT YOU'LL SHRINK IN YOUR HORNS BEFORE ME!



RAH! I DON'T FEAR YOU! I ONLY FEAR THE STRAW DEATH - TO DIE IN MY BED!



THEN REJOICE! FOR I SAVE YOU FROM A BORING DEATH!

AND HADRIC HISSING BLADE DIED!



THEN CAME THE SKYBLADE OF SKULLS THE DEMENTED...

THEY'RE GOING TO RAM US!

NEXT: SKY BATTLE!
PROG.

Sláine

SKY CHARIOTS - 6.

SLÁINE HAD RELUCTANTLY AGREED TO PROTECT THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD, SLOUGH THROT. THEN AS WE TRAVELLED NORTH BY CLOUD CURRAGH, OUR VESSEL WAS ATTACKED BY THREE NORSE SKYBLADES!

THE THIRD SHIP IS RAMMING US! ONE MORE BLOW! AND WE'LL BREAK IN HALF!



WE'LL HAVE TO RELEASE THE HALF-DEAD!

WOLF
BY NAIL
BLACK BLOOD
TOM TERRY



MEANWHILE, THE FIRST SKYBLADE RENEWED THE ATTACK, LED BY THORGRIM IRONJAW, MORE OF ITS CREW LEAPT ABOARD AS IT SWEEP ALONGSIDE —



MY SWORD
'BLOOD-SPURTER'
WANTS TO MEET
YOU !



BUT SLÁINE MATCHED
THEM BLOW FOR BLOW...

WHA-P

AAH!

...WITH SOME USEFUL
ASSISTANCE FROM ME

AS WE FOUGHT,
THE SECOND
SKYBLADE
BEGAN TO
CLOSE ON US...

THE DRUNES CONFERRED
WITH SLOUGH THROT.

IF THEY
GET ABOARD,
NOT EVEN THE
BARBARIAN
WILL BE ABLE TO
WITHSTAND
SUCH ODDS!

THEN YOU KNOW
WHAT YOU MUST DO
TO SAVE THE SHIP...

ACT QUICKLY...
BEFORE SLÁINE TRIES
TO STOP YOU!

NEXT PROG: CHARIOTS ON FIRE!

Slaine



SKY CHARIOTS - 7
SLAINE WAS ACTING AS
BATTLE-SMITER (BODYGUARD)
TO THE SINISTER DRUNE LORD,
SLOUGH THROT. AS WE
TRAVELLED NORTH, OUR CLOUD
CURRAGH WAS ATTACKED BY
NORSE BERSERKS. . .

THE SESSAIR DOG
HAS KILLED
THORGRIM IRONJAW!



COME
HITHER,
SPIKE
HAIR!



I'M GOING
TO SLAKE
MY SWORD
IN YOU!



AFTER
MINE WAS
MADE TWO
HALVES OF
YOU!



IN SLAINE'S TIME
INSULTS WERE
VALUED LIKE
SWORDS.

IT'S YOU WHO
WILL HAVE THE
KNOWLEDGE
OF DEATH.

ART BY
DAVE COOPER
STORY BY
DAVE COOPER
PLOT BY
DAVE COOPER



THE THREE
BERSERKERS
RUSHED
SLAINE -

YOUR GRAVE
OPENS!

BUT HE LEAPT
HIS GREAT
SALMON
LEAP...

AAAAGH!



A CUNNING TRICK,
YET WOUNDS HAVE
LITTLE EFFECT
ON US!



IT WON'T BE LONG NOW
BEFORE THE RAVENS
CROAK OVER YOUR HEAD!



AND NOT
LONG TILL YOUR
WOMEN CRY
OVER YOU,
NORSEMEN!



FOR TONIGHT, I
DRINK FROM YOUR
BRAINBALLS!

AAAAGH!

LIKE MOST TRIBES OF THE EARTH GODDESS, THE GESSAR WERE HEAD-HUNTERS. ENEMY BRAINBALLS WERE GREATLY PRIZED AS TROPHIES AND DRINKING VESSELS.



UKKO!

I SAVED YOUR LIFE, SLAINE! I SAVED YOUR LIFE! NEVER FORGET!

HMMH!

UUUR...

EVEN THOUGH SLÁINE AND I HAD
REPELLED THE BOARDERS, OUR
SHIP WAS STILL IN GREAT DANGER -

SLOUGH THROT:
THE SECOND SKYBLADE
IS GAINING ON US!

IF BOTH VESSELS
ATTACK AT ONCE,
WE ARE DOOMED.

THE MATTER
IS BEING
ATTENDED TO,
CAPTAIN.

HEAR HOW THE
WEIRDSTONE
MOANS AND
WHINES. YES,
YES...PATIENCE
...THEY ARE
BRINGING YOU
SOMEONE!

YOU'RE NOT
GOING TO USE
ONE OF THE
PASSENGERS?
I-I MUST
PROTEST!

THERE
ARE NO
BULLS LEFT.

YOU
CAN'T DO
THIS!

I'VE
PAID MY
PASSAGE!

TAKE HER
TO THE
STONE!

AAAAH...!

BY LUG! WHAT
NEW DEVILRY IS
THE DRUNE
LORD ABOUT P

WHAT - P YOU
MADMAN!

IT WAS NECESSARY.
I NEED ALL THE POWER
OF THE WEIRDSTONE
IF I AM TO DESTROY
THE SKYBLADES.

SEE... BELOW US
THE INSTRUMENT
OF THEIR
DESTRUCTION...

NOR-ALLTACH!
THE FIRE MOUNTAIN!

THE SORCERER MADE
OSHAM SIGNS OVER
THE WEIRDSTONE...

...HARNESSING
THE EARTH POWER
FOR HIS OWN
TERRIBLE ENDS!

AS THE SKYBLADES
PURSUED US OVER
THE FIRE MOUNTAIN...



MOR-ALLTACH EXPLODED!

VODEN
SAVE USSSSSSSSSSS

...A TORRENT OF HOT ASH
HIT THE CLOUD CURRASH...

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

... A TORRENT OF HOTASH
HIT THE CLOUD CURRAGH...

Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - 8
THE SINISTER DRUID LORD,
SLOUGH THROT, USED THE
VOLCANIC FORCE OF MOR-ALLTACH,
THE FIRE MOUNTAIN, TO DESTROY
THE BERSERK SHIPS THAT WERE
PURSUING US.

SCRIPT:
PAUL HOGG
ART:
BRIAN MACRAE
EDITING:
TON FRANK



ON THE BLAZING SKYBLADES,
THE BERSERKS KNEW THEY
WERE DOOMED...THEIR SHIPS
HAD BECOME THEIR FUNERAL
PYRES!



AHOI!
VALHALLA
AWAITS
ME!

BUT THE POWER WAS GREATER THAN
THE DRUIDE LORD COULD CONTROL.



THE DECK OF
OUR SHIP WAS
PELTED WITH
RED-HOT
ROCKS. . .



I TOLD YOU THIS
WOULD HAPPEN, SLAINE...



WE'RE
ALL GOING
TO DIE.

THE SHIP'S
TURNING
OVER!



YOU'RE MY
BATTLE-
SMITER,
SLAINE...



...SAVE ME!

SLAINE SWUNG THE TILLER,
TRYING TO RIGHT THE STRICKEN
VESSEL.







THEN, FROM THE UNDERGROWTH,
SOMETHING HURLED ITSELF AT
SLOUGH THROT...



A BOAR!



SLÁINE!



SAVE ME!



SLÁINE HURLED HIS AXE...



HREEEE

IT'S
TURNED
ON HIM!



I CAN'T
LOOK!



THIS ROCK CAN
ALSO MARK YOUR
GRAVE!



AS THE MERCHANT
HELPED SLAINE
TEND HIS WOUNDS...

SLOUGH FEG HAS
INVOKED CARNUN TO
COME TO HIS AID.
MORE BEASTS WILL
ATTACK!



I MUST DRAW A
MYSTIC CIRCLE TO
PROTECT US!

CARNUN!



AYE...THE
HORNED
GOD...LORD
OF THE
BEASTS!



SLOWLY, THE CREATURES OF
THE FOREST EMERGED...



AND GATHERED OUTSIDE
THE CIRCLE THE SORGERER
HAD HASTILY DRAWN...



I THINK IT'S
TIME YOU TOLD
US WHY SLOUGH
FEG WANTS YOU
DEAD.

WHAT
HAVE YOU
DONE?



NEXT
PAGE SLOUGH FEG'S STORY.

Slaine

SKY CHARIOTS - 9.

SLOUGH FEG WANTED TO KILL THE RENEGADE DRUNE, SLOUGH THROT. TO HELP HIM ACHIEVE THIS, HE HAD INVOKED GARNUN, LORD OF THE BEASTS...

THE BEASTS OF THE FOREST HAVE SURROUNDED US, SLAINE!

I THINK YOU'D BETTER TELL US WHY SLOUGH FEG WANTS YOU DEAD.



BECAUSE I STOLE HIS PLANS FOR THE RAGNORAK - THE DAY OF DOOM!



THE BOOK DETAILS EXACTLY HOW HE INTENDS TO DESTROY THE LAND OF THE YOUNG.



INCLUDING HIS OWN EMPIRE?

SLAINE: THE MOST
WILD & BEASTLY
OF THE
FOREST

OF COURSE! HIS
MASTER IS GROM-GRUACH...
THE WORM GOD WHO
GLORIFIES IN
DESTRUCTION...!

"I TREMBLE AT HIS PLAN!
HE WILL CAUSE A TERRIBLE
WAR..."

"A LONG WINTER OF RAGING
SNOWSTORMS WITH ICE
MOUNTAINS SWEEPING
DOWN FROM LOGHLANN..."

"AND, AT LAST,
THE DELUGE...
AS HUGE WAVES
DROWN THE LAND
OF THE YOUNG..."

BUT FBG WILL BE
SAFE FROM THE FLOOD,
HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS
IN HIS CAVE OF
BEASTS!

HE HAS TO BE
STOPPED!







BUT I'M
TAKING THE
PLANS TO THE
ARCH-DRUIDS AT
GLASTONBURY!
THEY CAN STOP
FEG'S MADNESS!



ER - I THINK
YOU'VE GOT...



COMPANY!

THE CIRCLE HAD PROTECTED
SLOUGH THROT FROM THE
BEASTS - BUT NOT FROM THE
WRATH OF ANOTHER GOD...
THE WORM GOD!



SAVE
ME!!!!!!

BUT HE WAS BEYOND HELP.

THE SECRET PLANS WERE
ALSO DESTROYED.



SLAINE

the King

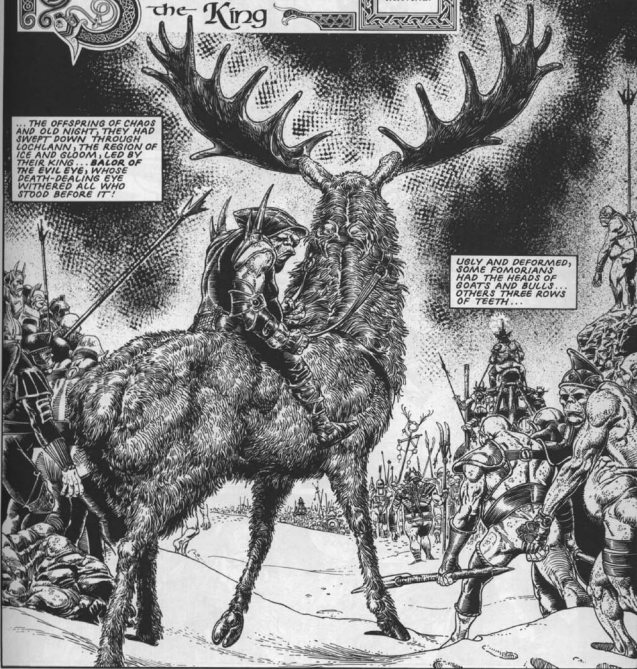
SCENE:
PAT MILLIS
AND
GLENN FARBY
LETTERING:
STEVE POTTER

THE DEATH WINTER
HAD FALLEN ON
SLAINE'S WORLD...

... FROM TORY ISLAND, THEIR
OUTPOST ON EARTH, A RACE
OF MYSTERY AND HORROR—
THE FOMORIAN SEA DEMONS
—HAD WRITTEN GORROW
ON THE LAND OF THE YOUNG...

... THE OFFSPRING OF CHAOS
AND OLD NIGHT, THEY HAD
SWIFT DOWN THROUGH
LOCHLANN, THE REGION OF
ICE AND GLOOM, LED BY
THEIR KING... BALOR OF
THE EVIL EYE, WHOSE
DEATH-DEALING EYE
WITHERED ALL WHO
STOOD BEFORE IT!

UGLY AND DEFORMED,
SOME FOMORIANS
HAD THE HEADS OF
GOATS AND BULLS...
OTHERS THREE ROWS
OF TEETH...





BUT NONE WERE AS GROTESQUE AS QUAGSLIME—THE COLLECTOR OF TAXES...

PLEASE, QUAGSLIME! I NEED MORE TIME TO PAY!



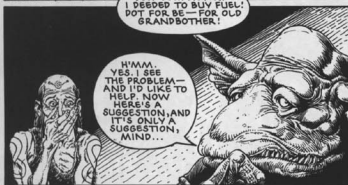
IT WAS QUAGSLIME WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFAMOUS 'NOSE TAX'...

YOU HAD SEVEN DAYS. AS PAYMENT HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED, I REGRET I HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO...



...CUT OFF YOUR NOSE!

DOH! DOH! LISTEN! I DECIDED TO BUY FUEL! DOT FOR BE— FOR OLD GRANDBOTHER!



H'MM... YES, I SEE THE PROBLEM— AND I'D LIKE TO HELP. NOW HERE'S A SUGGESTION, AND IT'S ONLY A SUGGESTION, MIND...



...BUT WHY DON'T YOU KILL GRANNY?

IT WOULD BE A GREAT SAVING ON YOUR FUEL BILL. HAVE A THINK ABOUT IT, ANYWAY.

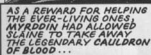


MEANWHILE, I'LL HAVE TO REMOVE THIS ORGAN AND YOU'RE REMINDED THAT IF YOU STILL DON'T PAY, SOMETHING ELSE WILL HAVE TO COME OFF...

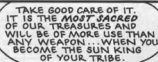
AAAGGH!



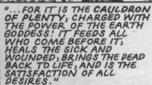




AS A REWARD FOR HELPING THE EVER-LIVING ONES MYRDDIN HAD ALLOWED SLAINE TO TAKE AWAY THE LEGENDARY CAULDRON OF BLOOD...



TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT. IT IS THE MOST SACRED OF OUR TREASURES AND WILL BE OF MORE USE THAN ANY WEAPON... WHEN YOU BECOME THE SUN KING OF YOUR TRIBE.



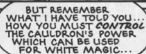
"...FOR IT IS THE CAULDRON OF PLENTY, CHARGED WITH THE POWER OF THE EARTH GODDESS: IT FEEDS ALL WHO COME BEFORE IT, HEALS THE SICK AND WOUNDED, BRINGS THE DEAD BACK TO LIFE AND IS THE SATISFACTION OF ALL DESIRES."



IS THAT ALL?



SUCH A VESSEL COULD UNITE THE TRIBES AGAINST THE FOMORIAN INVADERS!



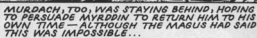
BUT REMEMBER WHAT I HAVE TOLD YOU... HOW YOU MUST CONTROL THE CAULDRON'S POWER WHICH CAN BE USED FOR WHITE MAGIC...



...OR BLACK MAGIC!



AND SO WE LEFT THE ETERNAL FORTRESS...



MURDACH, TOO, WAS STAYING BEHIND, HOPING TO PERSUADE MYRDDIN TO RETURN HIM TO HIS OWN TIME — ALTHOUGH THE MAGUS HAD SAID THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE...

USING ITS FIERY BREATH TO
GAIN HEIGHT, SOARING ON
THE THERMALS, THE KNUCKER
FLEW HIGH OVER SNOWDONIA...

SO YOU'LL BE SEEING
NIAMH AT LAST... YOUR
LONG-LOST LOVE?

NIAMH, IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN (BECAUSE
SLAINE CERTAINLY HAD), WAS THE GIRL HE
HAD DISHONOURLED—CAUSING HIM TO BE
BANISHED FROM HIS TRIBE...

AYE, HER YEARS OF
WAITING FOR ME ARE OVER.
WE'LL BE TOGETHER AND
SHE'LL SHARE MY STALL IN
THE GREAT ROUND HALL
OF HEROES.

I'M GLAD
TO HEAR ONE
OF YOU HAS
BEEN WAITING.
YOU CERTAINLY
HAVEN'T!

SILENCE, DWARF
—OR YOU WILL
FEEL MY WRATHFUL
RIGHT HAND...

... AND STOP THAT
SCRATCHING! I'VE TOLD
YOU BEFORE IT'S TIME
YOU HAD YOUR
YEARLY BATH!

I'M NOT
SCRATCHING!

FUNNY,
THOUGH... I
HEARD IT
TOO...

I THOUGHT
IT WAS COMING
FROM THE
CAULDRON...



SUDDENLY SLÁINE SPOTTED...

OUR
SUPPER...
LOOK!



STABBING WITH THE
NECK GOADS, HE
THRUST THE DRAGON
INTO A STEEP DIVE...

KILL,
KNUCKER...
KILL!



WE MADE CAMP...

JUST AS
WELL WE WEREN'T
RELYING ON THE
'CAULDRON OF PLENTY'
FOR OUR SUPPER: I
JUST HAD A LOOK AND
THERE WASN'T
EVEN A GIBLET
IN IT.

THAT'S
BECAUSE THE
IMPURE AND
SINFUL CANNOT
BENEFIT FROM IT.



WELL, THAT LETS
YOU OUT FOR A START!
IF YOU ASK ME, WE'D
BE BETTER OFF SELLING
IT... OR MELTING IT
DOWN. THAT THING'S
USELESS!

Next:
AVAGDDU!

S L A I N E

the King

SCRIPT: ART HILLS
SET: GLENN KERRY
EDITORS: STEVE POTTER



WHAT'S THE POINT OF CARTING THAT STUPID CAULDRON ALL THE WAY TO YOUR TRIBES? YOU WERE BANISHED FIVE YEARS AGO! THEY'VE PROBABLY FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT YOU.

WITH THE CAULDRON'S HELP, UKKO...

...I SHALL DO THINGS THEY'LL TALK ABOUT FOREVER.

WITH THAT OLD TUB?

DON'T DISMISS ITS POWERS. IT'S ONLY IMPURE AND SINFUL DESIRES IT WON'T GRANT.

ARE THERE ANY OTHER KIND?









MEANWHILE... IN MURIAS—CAPITAL OF SLAINE'S TRIBE—NIAMH HAD GONE TO SEE THE KING...

RAGALL, YOUR PEOPLE ARE STARVING! MY OWN SON WON'T SEE HIS SIXTH SPRING! HOW CAN WE PAY THE FOMORIAN TAXES WHEN OUR CROPS WON'T GROW? IT—IT'S MADNESS!

NOW, NIAMH, I THINK WE SHOULD LOWER THE TEMPERATURE A LITTLE... AFTER ALL, QUAGSLIME, THE COLLECTOR OF TAXES, IS PRESENT...

HOW MUCH LOWER? WE'RE ALREADY FREEZING TO DEATH!

WE FOMORIANS LIKE TO HELP IN CASES OF SPECIAL HARDSHIP SUCH AS THIS. WE'RE NOT CRUEL AND HEARTLESS TYRANTS, YOU KNOW... WE TRY TO BE AS POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE AS WE CAN. TELL ME, NIAMH...

...HAVE YOU CONSIDERED EATING YOUR SON?

I DON'T SPEAK TO FISH.

OUR FEMALES OFTEN EAT THEIR YOUNG.

ER... HUMANS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT, QUAGSLIME. WHAT ABOUT THE BOY'S FATHER, NIAMH? COULDN'T HE HELP?

DON'T EVEN MENTION HIS NAME!

NEXT TO THE FISH, HE'S THE ONE I HATE MOST IN ALL THE WORLD!

Next:
BLOOD
FOR
AVAGDDU.





OF COURSE I HAVE...



WOULDN'T ANY YOUNG WIFE?



THESE ARE TROUBLED TIMES, NIAMH... I INVITED THE FOMORIANS TO ESTABLISH MILITARY BASES ON OILY SOIL, SO THEY COULD PROTECT US.

PROTECT US FROM WHAT, IN LUG'S NAME?



FROM HAVING YOUR GIZZARD RIPPED OUT, YOUR ENTRAILS WRAPPED ROUND A TREE, AND DYING IN AGONY IN NOT ONE OR TWO DAYS, BUT A WHOLE WEEK.



NIAMH DOESN'T MEAN TO COMPLAIN, QUAGSLIME. YOU KNOW HOW HOT-TEMPERED WE CELTS ARE...

AND YOU KNOW HOW COLD-BLOODED WE FOMORIANS ARE...

POOR NIAMH... I UNDERSTAND... IT CAN'T BE EASY FOR YOU, BRINGING UP A SON ALONE...



DON'T PATRONISE ME, YOU-:







SLAINE

the King

WRITTEN BY
JIM HAMIL
ART BY
ANDREW HILLMAN
EDITED BY
JOHN PETER

"From an old and evil custom the Celts always carry an axe in their hand as if it were a staff. Wherever they go, they drag it along with them. In this way, if they have a feeling for evil, they can more quickly give it effect..."

KISS
MY
AXE!



"When they see the opportunity, this weapon has not to be unsheathed as a sword, or bent as a bow, or poised as a spear. Without preparation, it inflicts a mortal blow..."



"At hand, or rather, in the hand and ever ready, is that which is enough to cause death."

Ancient
Chronicle

ANOTHER
FOR
AVAGDDU!



BUT AVAGDDU, DISEASED SON OF THE EARTH GODDESS, COULD NOT WAIT...

BEFORE THE FOMORIANS COULD ALL BE KILLED AND THEIR BLOOD POURED INTO THE CAULDRON, THE CREATURE LEAPT OUT...

GRABBED TWO SEA DEMONS AND DRAGGED THEM SCREAMING...



SPLAT!



...DOWN INTO HIS INNER WORLD...

...WHERE HE QUENCHED HIS THIRST.

WE COULD HEAR HIS INSANE GIGGLES AS HE DRANK THEIR BLOOD, IN THE MISTAKEN BELIEF IT WOULD HALT HIS EVERLASTING DECAY...



MIND YOU, WITH A MOTHER LIKE DANU THE EARTH GODDESS, I'M NOT SURPRISED HE'S OFF HIS HEAD!

SEVEN FOMORIANS LAY STARK DEAD. SLAINE DIDN'T THINK IT TOO MANY.



COME ON - WE SHOULD REACH MY TRIBE BY STARFALL.

IT'LL BE GOOD TO SEE
MY OLD COMRADES AGAIN...
MONGSAN AXE-HEAD... GERS
OF THE THREE FINGERS... AND
MY FOSTER-BROTHER
RAGALL...

MEANWHILE... IN THE ROYAL STALL
IN THE GREAT ROUND HALL...

I CAN'T
PUT IT OFF ANY
LONGER! I'M GOING
TO SEE BALOR...
TELL HIM WE CAN'T
GO ON PAYING
QUAGSLIME'S
TAXES!

RAGALL!
YOU WOULDN'T
DARE!

DON'T THINK I'VE
GOT IT IN ME, EH? WELL,
YOU'LL SEE...

I USED TO
BE REALLY
DARING ONCE
—WHEN
SLAINE AND
I WERE
BOYS.

DID I EVER
TELL YOU ABOUT
THOSE DAYS?

CONSTANTLY.

WE USED
TO DO SOME
CRAZY THINGS!
CLIMBING THE
HIGHEST TREES...
SWIMMING THE
FASTEST RIVERS...
PLAYING WITH
THE FORBIDDEN
WEAPONS... WE
KILLED A WILD
CAT ONCE AND
OFFERED IT TO
THE GODDESS.

YOU?
KILLED A
WILD CAT?

WELL... IT WAS
SLAINE, REALLY. BUT
I HELPED. SLAINE
WAS THE LEADER,
YOU SEE.

HE WAS ALWAYS
GETTING INTO
TROUBLE. HE
WAS NEVER OUT
OF TROUBLE.

AND WHERE
DID IT GET HIM?
THROWN OUT OF
HIS TRIBE AT
SIXTEEN!

AND
EVER SINCE,
THE LAND OF
THE YOUNG
HAS THRILLED
TO HIS
EXPLOITS.

RAGALL... WHEN
WILL YOU REALISE?
YOU'RE THE SUCCESS
—NOT SLAINE!

YOU'RE THE
KING? AND WHAT'S
HE? AN OUTCAST...
A WANDERER WHO
GOES AROUND WITH
A DISGUSTING DWARF.

AND AS
KING I SHOULD
HAVE FOUGHT
THE FOMORLIANS.
SLAINE WOULD
HAVE... HE'D
NEVER HAVE
SURRENDERED.

BUT
YOU TOOK
MY ADVICE—
TO SAVE
LIVES.



BALOR OF THE EVILEYE WAS TESTING A NEW AUTOMATIC CROSSBOW ON HUMAN PRISONERS WHEN RAGALL ARRIVED...

HOW CAN WE PAY OUR TAXES WHEN THE COLD IS DESTROYING OUR CROPS? BE REASONABLE!

BALOR ALWAYS REASONABLE! FOMORIANS VERY KIND... VERY GENEROUS...



COME! YOU EAT WITH BALOR! SEE HOW GENEROUS WE ARE!



THE SEA DEMONS ATE FROM A COMMUNAL FEEDING PIT...

WHAT WRONG? GOT WINDREEKE? NOT LIKE TASTE OF SQUALMOLD?

I'M NOT HUNGRY.



EAT! FILL GUTFEST! OR YOU INSULT BALOR'S HOSPITALITY...

MAYBE HE HAVE TO OPEN HIS EYE!





S L A I N E

the King

DESK: MIY. HILLER
ART: BLANK PARRY
LITTING: STEVE POTTER

BEFORE NIAHMH WENT INTO EXILE, THERE WAS ONE THING SHE HAD TO DO...

THE BOY IS READY FOR ME?

YES.

SERENE
GODDESS, GREAT
EARTH MOTHER,
YOU-WHO-ARE-
MOST-BOUNTIFUL,
I OFFER YOU MY
SON KAI...

IN THE HOPE
THAT BY THE
SACRIFICE OF HIS
LIFE, THE LAND
WILL BE
RENEWED.

CATHBAD THE DRUID WAS
WEARING HIS SACRIFICIAL
HORSE SKULL MASK,
SYMBOL OF THE EARTH
GODDESS...

YOU'RE
SURE YOU CAN
BEAR TO BE
PARTED FROM
YOUR SON
FOREVER?

IT
HAS TO BE
DONE.

I DON'T
WANT HIM TO
END UP A DRIFTER
LIKE HIS FATHER...
NOR A DRUNKARD
LIKE HIS GRAND-
FATHER.

BETTER THIS WAY.

SO BE
IT.

GO... GO
TO CATHBAD,
KAI.

IN THE NAME OF DANU
THE EARTH MOTHER AND
LUG THE SUN FATHER...
DIE!



AND BE
REBORN!



LET THIS
SACRED STRAND
OF MISTLETOE
SHOW THAT HE
HAS BEEN
ACCEPTED AS
A STUDENT
DRUID.

OH, I'M
SO PROUD OF
YOU, KAI!

IT WAS EVERY MOTHER'S DREAM THAT
HER SON WOULD BECOME A DRUID...



IT WILL BE A LONG
COURSE... OUR STUDENTS
SPEND TWENTY YEARS
STUDYING THE HEAVENLY
BODIES AND THEIR MOVE-
MENTS, THE SIZE OF THE
UNIVERSE AND OF THE
EARTH, NATURAL
PHILOSOPHY, AND THE
POWERS AND SPHERES
OF ACTION OF THE
IMMORTAL GODS.

THAT'S
WHY I FELT
HE SHOULD START
AS SOON AS
POSSIBLE.



AND EVERYTHING
MUST BE LEARNED BY HEART—
STOPS OUR STUDENTS GOING SOFT!
DISCIPLINES THEIR MINDS!

AND PREVENTS
OUR SECRETS FALLING
INTO THE HANDS OF
THE VULGAR.



HE'LL NEED
PHYSICAL
DISCIPLINE,
TOO. LOOK AT HIM...
JUST LIKE HIS FATHER.

OH, HE'LL GET IT. PHYSICAL
CHASTISEMENT IS PART OF
THE COURSE. ONLY THROUGH
PAIN AND SUFFERING CAN HE
HOPE TO REACH THE
HIGHER REALMS.



FOR THE HIGHER REALMS
CANNOT BE OBTAINED WITHOUT
SEEING AND KNOWING EVERYTHING...
BUT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO SEE AND
KNOW EVERYTHING WITHOUT
SUFFERING EVERYTHING.

DON'T WANT
TO BE A STUPID
DRUID? WANT TO
BE A WARRIOR AND
CUT OFF PEOPLE'S
BRAINBALLS.

DON'T
TALK LIKE
THAT TO
CATHBAD!



MEDGRIM WATCHED AS THE CHARIOT LEFT MURIAS.

LOOK AT HER GLOATING! EVERY TIME SEE THAT COW, MY GORGE RISES.

DOESN'T YOURS?

WELL... NOT EXACTLY, NIAMH...

YOU'RE TAKEN IN BY HER FAIRNESS OF FORM, LIKE THE OTHERS. CAN'T YOU SEE WHAT SHE'S LIKE UNDERNEATH?

NO. WHAT'S SHE LIKE?

SEVENTEEN GOING ON FORTY!

WHAT SHE KNOWS, SOME WOULD TAKE A LIFETIME DISCOVERING...

NIGHT-SOIL: EVIL THROUGH AND THROUGH: SHE'LL DESTROY OUR TRIBE!

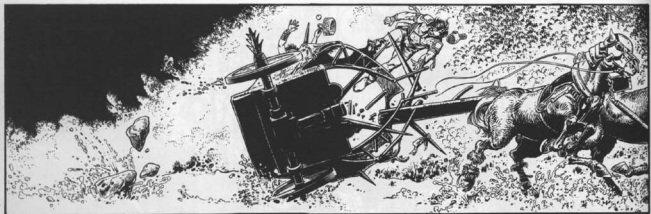
DON'T BE SILLY. SHE'S ONLY SEVENTEEN - A SLIP OF A GIRL.

WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE BOY'S GONE?

JOIN THE FREE TRIBES - AS YOU SHOULD, GERG.

NO... I'M SLÁINE'S CHARIOTEE. I COULDN'T DRIVE FOR ANYONE ELSE.





SLAINE

the King

CHAR: RAY HULL
ART: BRIAN FERRY
COLOR: STEVE PETER

WHILE THE WOLVES
SAVAGED THE
HORSES, NIAHH,
KAI AND GERG MADE
THEIR ESCAPE...





"Nearly all the Celts are terrifying from the sternness of their eyes, very quarrelsome and with great pride and insolence... But a whole troop of foreigners could not withstand one if he called his wife to his assistance..."



"She is usually very strong and with blue eyes... especially when swelling her neck, gnashing her teeth and brandishing her sallow arms..."



"... she begins to strike blows mingled with kicks, as if they were so many missiles sent from the string of a catapult."

Ancient description of Celtic women.



SOMEONE IN TROUBLE DOWN THERE! WE MUST HELP THEM!



WHY?







"OH, THE KING WAS VERY KIND... BUT I WAS HIS PROPERTY. I HAD TO WEAR MY HAIR AND DRESS THE WAY HE LIKED IT..."



"WARRIORS WERE FORBIDDEN TO GO NEAR THE HUT ON PAIN OF TORTURE AND DEATH..."

"BUT, OF COURSE, THAT DIDN'T STOP SLAINE..."



"AND... FOR A LITTLE WHILE... I WAS FREE..."



"UNTIL WE WERE DISCOVERED TOGETHER..."

WAIT TILL THE KING HEARS ABOUT THIS!

YOU'RE DEAD, BOY!



SLAINE ESCAPED THE KING'S WRATH, BUT I DIDN'T WHEN HE KNEW I WAS GOING TO HAVE KAI, HE PLANNED A CRUEL REVENGE...




Next: NIAMH'S PUNISHMENT!

SLAINE

the King


WRITTEN BY
MICHAEL CHODURA
AND
JAMES HAMILTON
ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN BURNETT





"WHEN MY TIME CAME,
THE KING ORDERED THAT
I GO THROUGH IT ALONE
... TO PUNISH ME ...

"... ALTHOUGH
I KNEW
NOTHING.




"I TOLD MYSELF THAT NIGHT...
NEVER FORGET THIS!




"NEVER
FORGET
THIS."



NEVER!

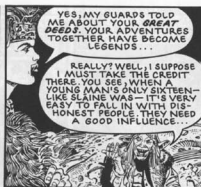


"BUT I WAS NOT ALONE.
I CALLED ON THE GREAT
EARTH GODDESS—
MOTHER OF ALL CREATURES—
—AND SHE ANSWERED
ME... SHE GAVE ME THE
COURAGE AND STRENGTH
I NEEDED..."



"AFTERWARDS, I
WASN'T ALLOWED TO
FOSTER HIM IN THE
TRADITIONAL WAY,
OR TURN TO OTHER
WOMEN FOR HELP. I
HAD TO BRING KAI
UP IN THAT HUT ON
MY OWN..."

"... SO NO-ONE COULD SEE HOW
I'D MADE A FOOL OF THE KING."



"AND WORST OF ALL, WHEN THE TWO OF YOU WERE THROWN INTO A WICKERMAN WITH OTHER CRIMINALS, DRUNKS AND VAGRANTS..."



"AS AN OFFERING TO THE WORM GOD CROM-CRUACH WHO PREFERS THE DRESS OF THE WORLD."

"YOU FORGET, NIAMH, HOW I BROKE OUT TO RESCUE A MAIDEN AT THE TOP OF THE WICKERMAN..."



"MESP... THE BRIDE OF CROM..."



"AN EVIL SORCERESS WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF DEAD!"

"YOU CHOOSE TO REMEMBER ONLY THE BAD AND IGNORE THE GOOD..."



"THAT'S RIGHT, HE DEFEATED THE CYTHRONS, YOU KNOW..."

"THE DARK GODS WHO PLAGUE THE LAND OF THE YOUNG..."



"...AND WAS LEFT SORELY WOUNDED."





S L A I N E

the King

WRITTEN BY
JIM HULLS
ILLUSTRATED BY
ALAN FERRY
EDITED BY
STEVE POTTER

QUAGSLIME LEFT TO COLLECT TAXES FROM THE OTHER TRIBES...



FOOD!

I'M SORRY, I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU - BUT I HAVE TO BE CRUEL TO BE KIND. IT'S TIME YOU ALL LEARNED TO STAND ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET.

THOSE OF YOU WHO STILL HAVE FEET.

FOOD!

POOR WRETCHES. I ONLY HOPE THE NEW KING WILL BRING THE SUN BACK INTO THEIR LIVES.

WHAT NEW KING?

I'M SORRY, MEGRIM - I MEANT TO TELL YOU BEFORE. IT'S BEEN AGREED... I'M TO GO INTO THE EARTH TOMORROW.

BUT A SACRED KING RULES FOR SEVEN YEARS BEFORE HE'S PUT TO DEATH!

NOT WHEN HE FAILS HIS PEOPLE.

IF YOU DO NOT DIE WHEN YOUR TIME IS COME THERE IS LOSS OF EARTH-ROOT! IT IS THE MOST TERRIBLE CRIME!

BUT YOU CAN DO WHAT YOU LIKE - YOU'RE THE KING!

DANU IS CALLING ME NOW... WAITING FOR ME TO MERGE WITH HER...

AND WHAT ABOUT ME? DON'T COUNT!

I AM MARRIED TO THE EARTH GODDESS BEFORE ANY HUMAN WIFE.

I COULD HAVE BEEN
A GODDESS ONCE — THE
BRIDE OF THE MOST
POWERFUL GOD
OF ALL...

YOU MEAN *LUG*
THE SUN? OR *HU* THE
MIGHTY, WHO IS ABOVE
EVEN *LUG*? I KNOW
LITTLE OF YOUR
SOUTHERN WAYS.

NO, YOU
PATHETIC FOOL!
THE GOD WHO
FEEDS ON WAR...
DISEASE... AND
DISASTER...

THE GOD WHO
WILL SAVE US BY
PUTTING AN END
TO THE MISERY OF
LIFE ON THIS
PLANE...

THE
WORM-GOD
...CROM
CRUACH!

MEGRIM!
WHAT ARE YOU
SAYING?

HOW I
LONGED TO
SMELL HIS
FETID BREATH...
TO FEEL HIS
SLIMY FLAGELLUM
AROUND ME... TO
HEAR THE
SCREAMS OF HIS
VICTIMS AS HE
SUCKED THEIR
SOULS...

FREEDING
THEM FROM
THE PAIN OF
EXISTENCE!

NO... MY TRUE NAME
IS *MEGB* — THE INTOXICATING
ONE. THE DRUNE LORDS SENT
ME NORTH TO MARRY A POET
LIKE YOU AND CAUSE THE
DESTRUCTION OF YOUR
TRIBE.

AND I AM MADE
RULER
IN YOUR
PLACE.

THEN
ONE MAN
CHEATED ME
OF POWER...
YOUR
BOYHOOD
FRIEND —
JAINE!

I
DON'T
KNOW YOU
AT ALL.

A TASK I
SHALL COMPLETE
AFTER I'VE
ENJOYED WATCHING
YOU DIE
TOMORROW...

I'LL
KILL YOU
FIRST!

YOU
WON'T! YOU'LL
DO WHAT I WANT
YOU CAN'T HELP
YOURSELF.

HE NEVER COULD.

NEXT DAY...

"When enquiring into matters of great importance, the Druids have a strange and incredible custom... They stab to death a human being... and foretell the future from the convulsions of his limbs and the spurting of the blood..."

Ancient Chronicle.

I RETURN TO
THY EARTH WOMB,
O DANU!

THE WARRIORS OF THE RED BRANCH
WATCHED NERVOUSLY FOR A SIGN
THAT WOULD SHOW WHICH OF
THEM SHOULD SUCCEED RAGALL...

SOTH:
I HOPE
IT'S NOT
ME!

IT NEEDS
A YOUNGER
MAN THAN
I TO MAKE
THE SUN
SHINE
AGAIN.

I DON'T
ENVY WHOEVER'S
CHOSEN. NO-ONE
COULD GET US
OUT OF THIS
MESS.



SLAINE

the King

SCRIPT: PAT MULLS
ART: GLENN FABRY
LETTERING: STEVE POTTER



AS CATHBAD TOOK RAGALL TO THE EARTH WOMB...

A VAGRANT IS TO BE OUR NEW KING? THE SON OF THAT OLD DRUNKARD ROTH BELLYSHAKER?

SLAINE WAS BAD ENOUGH WHEN HE WAS LITTLE. HE'LL BE WORSE NOW HE'S GROWN.

MONGAN-AXEHEAD—

SLAINE IS ALSO MY FOSTER SON, MADAD. AND WHEN YOU INSULT MY FAMILY...

...YOU INSULT ME.

IT WAS THE CUSTOM IN SLÁINE'S TRIBE FOR CHILDREN TO BE BROUGHT UP BY A FOSTER-FATHER...

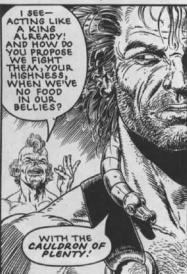
FOR THAT I'LL SEE YOU JOIN YOUR OTHER SON IN THE EARTH!

YOU? I COULD PUT YOU IN THE SPITAL HUT* WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND MY BACK.

* SPITAL HUT—TRIBAL HOSPITAL.



SAVE YOUR ENERGY FOR THE FORMORS! LET'S STAIN THE EARTH GREY WITH THEIR BRAINS—NOT EACH OTHERS!



I SEE—ACTING LIKE A KING ALREADY! AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE WE FIGHT THEM, YOUR HIGHNESS, WHEN WE'VE NO FOOD IN OUR BELLIES?

WITH THE CAULDRON OF PLENTY.

SORRY TO TELL YOU, THIS BUT WE ALREADY HAVE PLENTY OF CAULDRONS...

IT'S PLENTY TO PUT IN THEM THAT'S THE JOB.

NOT HARD TO SOLVE. THIS IS AN ENCHANTED CAULDRON THAT FEEDS ALL WHO COME BEFORE IT!



IT'S CERTAINLY FILLED WITH GOOD ODOURS.

DON'T KNOW IF WE SHOULD EAT ENCHANTED FOOD... WE DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'S COME FROM.

AS LONG AS IT'S FOOD WHO CARES? TAKE IT TO THE ROUND HALL!



INSIDE... EVERY WARRIOR WHO STABBED HIS FLESH FORK INTO THE CAULDRON GOT A PIECE OF MEAT... THERE WAS PLENTY FOR MORGAN-AXEHEAD... PLENTY FOR GURG OF THE THREE FINGERS...



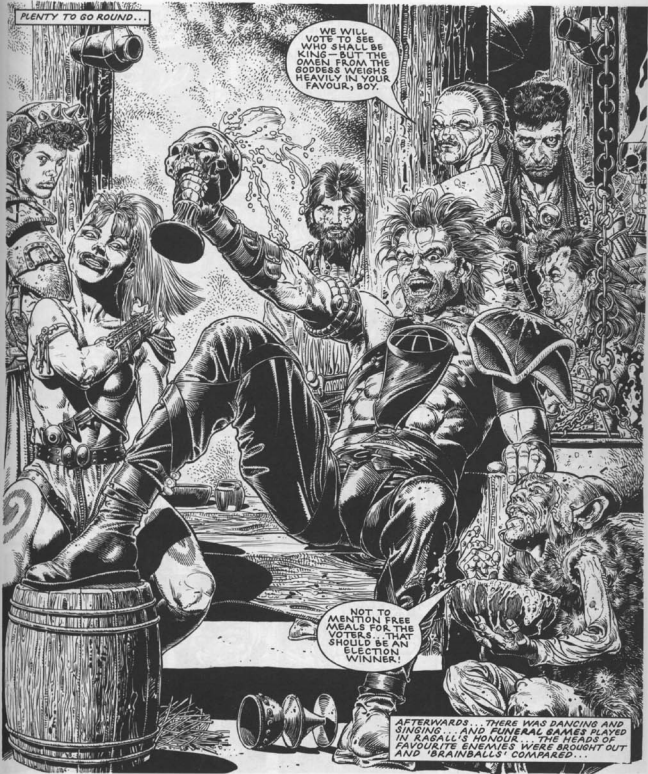
PLENTY FOR MADAD THE GUARRELSOME...

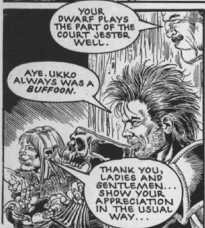
PLENTY TO GO ROUND...

WE WILL
VOTE TO SEE
WHO SHALL BE
KING - BUT THE
OMEN FROM THE
GODDESS WEIGHS
HEAVILY IN YOUR
FAVOUR, BOY.

NOT TO
MENTION FREE
MEALS FOR THE
VOTERS - THAT
SHOULD BE AN
ELECTION
WINNER!

AFTERWARDS... THERE WAS DANCING AND
SINGING. AND FUNERAL GAMES PLAYED
IN KAGALL'S HONOUR. THE HEADS OF
FAVOURITE ENEMIES WERE BROUGHT OUT
AND 'BRAINBALLS' COMPARED...



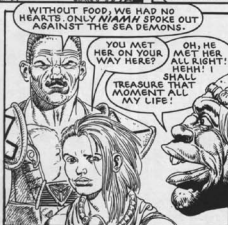
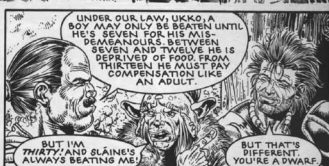


SLAINE

the King

SCRIPT:
PAT MILLER
ART:
ALEXAN FABRY
LETTERING:
STEVE POTTER

IN THE ROUND HALL OF SLAINE'S TRIBE,
MORGAN AND HIS WIFE CRIMORA—
'WOMAN OF GREAT SOUL'—
REMEMBERED THEIR SON...





BUT I
MUST FIND
HER AND...
MONGAN...

MONGAN...
WHAT'S
WRONG?

SEA DEMONS?

AS THE LAST QUARTER'S
TAXES HAVE NOT BEEN
RECEIVED, THE FOLLOWING
WOMEN ARE TO BE TAKEN
IN LIEU AS CUMALS*...

ALVINE—
'EXQUISITELY
BEAUTIFUL'... OITHOVA
— 'MAIDEN OF THE
WAVES'... SULMALLA
— 'SLOWLY ROLLING
EYES'...



SLÁINE WATCHED IN
AMAZEMENT AS THE
WOMEN WERE SEIZED
BY THE FOMORIANS...
AND THE WARRIORS
DID NOTHING...

GUNDAN? MONGAN?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH
YOU ALL? IS THERE A
GLAMOUR ON YOU?

*Cumals—Female Slaves



WHAT CAN WE DO?
THE SEA DEMONS HAVE
TAKEN OUR HEARTS



THAT'S IT...
THAT'S BETTER...
GOOD GIRL!
NOW THE OTHER
EYE...



THEY'LL
FILL BUCKETS
WITH THEIR
TEARS BEFORE
BALORS
FINISHED
WITH
THEM...

AND WHAT
DO YOU WANT,
STRANGER...?



NO, NO, DON'T CRY
DOWN YOUR FACES! USE
THE COLLECTING HORNS!

HUMAN TEARS WERE
GREATLY PRIZED AS
DEMONS DON'T CRY.



YOU,
NIGHT-SOIL.



YOU'VE
TAKEN THE
HEARTS OF MY
PEOPLE...



NOW I...



TAKE
YOURS!



HERE...
THESE ARE
THE ONLY
TAXES WE
OFFER
BALOR...

FOMORIAN
HEARTS!



I SUGGEST
YOU LEAVE NOW,
GENTLEMEN...
BEFORE HE HAS HIS
WARP SPASM.

THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE HE LOVED...
THE GIRLS HE'D GROWN UP WITH...
HUMILIATED... COWERING IN FEAR
FROM THESE SEA CREATURES...
BROUGHT ON SLAINE'S WARP SPASM...

THE POWER OF THE EARTH
GODDESS SURGED THROUGH
HIM...

AND THOSE OF US WHO HAVE
MADE A SPECIAL STUDY OF
SLAINE'S MAGICAL FURIES...
I THINK WOULD AGREE...

IT WAS A PARTICULARLY
FINE WARP SPASM!

PLEASANT
TO ME THE
WHISTLE OF
MY THIRST-
MADDENED
AXE...

...AS IT
SLAKES ITSELF
IN FOMORIAN
BLOOD!

JOIN ME IN
THE HEAD-HARVEST!
DRIVE THE FISH-
MEN BACK TO THEIR
SUBMARINE
PALACES!

SLAINE'S FRENZY
AROUSSED THE
WARRIORS FROM THEIR
STRANGE LETHARGY...

THE AURA OF THE
SUN IS AROUND HIM:
HE SHINES RED:
HE SHINES VERY
RED!

TRULY
IT IS
SAID...

EVERY
WEAPON
HAS ITS
DEMON!

NO FOMORS ESCAPED... AFTER-
WARDS— THEY ROLLED SLAINE
IN THE SNOW TO COOL HIS
HERO-HEAT...

AS CLOSE-BY, MEDB WATCHED...

IT IS ONLY
THE BEGINNING,
SLAINE... WHERE
BRUTE FORCE
FAILED, SORCERY
SHALL PREVAIL...

Next: RETURN
OF THE GODDESS

S L A I N E

the King

SCOTT
ART: MULLS
DIT:
GLADIAN FARRY
LETTERING:
STEVE POTTER

THE TRIBAL ASSEMBLY VOTED UNANIMOUSLY FOR SLAINE TO BE THEIR SUN KING AND SO PREPARATIONS FOR HIS WEDDING TO THE EARTH GODDESS BEGAN...

HIS HAIR WAS DYED THREE COLOURS... BROWN AT THE ROOTS USING THE DUNG OF A WHITE HORSE... YELLOW WITH LIME TO SPIKE IT UP INTO THE RAYS OF THE SUN... AND RED ON THE TIPS IN BLOOD...

...WHILE HIS BODY WAS COVERED WITH SACRED SYMBOLS OF BLUE WOOL.

QUICKLY
NOW, UKKO!
QUICKLY!

JUST A
FEW FINAL
TOUCHES, CATHBAD.
WE ARTISTS
DON'T LIKE TO
BE RUSHED, YOU
KNOW.

JUST ONE
QUESTION, YOUR
HIGHNESS...
WHAT WOULD
YOU LIKE PAINTED
ON THE ROYAL
BOTTOM?

A PICTURE
OF A FOMORIAN...
AND YOU...

AH!...SO
YOU CAN SIT
ON US?

SOME-
THING LIKE
THAT...

AT LAST...

O GODDESS
OF THE EARTH—
MAIDEN, WOMAN
AND HAG... BE WITH
US HERE IN YOUR
FULLNESS OF LIMBS
AS THE GREEN MAIDEN
OF SPRING, THE
FAIR ONE WHO
BRINGS JOY AND
NEW LIFE.



GODDESS!

AVERT
YOUR EYES,
UKKO. IT IS
NOT PERMITTED
FOR THE VULGAR
TO GAZE ON
SUCH
BEAUTY.

EARTH GODDESS AND SUN KING...
WE ARE GATHERED HERE. THOUGH
YOUR COSMIC UNION THE COWS WILL
GIVE MILK, THE CORN GROW
HIGH, AND THE FISH FILL
THE RIVERS ONCE
MORE...

THAT YOU
WILL LIGHTEN
OUR DARKNESS...
BANISH THE
SOURLAND... AND
FREE US FROM THE
FEAR OF ETERNAL
WINTER.

SLÁINE
MAC ROTH... DO
YOU—AS OUR SUN
KING—AGREE TO BE
THE CONSORT OF THE
EARTH GODDESS? TO
KNOW, LOVE AND
SERVE HER FOR
SEVEN YEARS?

I DO AND SHALL.

PLACE YOUR
RIGHT HANDS OVER
THE WAND AND YOUR
KINGS. HIS HAND
OVER HERS.

THE RINGS,
UKKO. THE
RINGS!

EH? UUH?
OH, YES...
SORRY.

I NOW PROCLAIM
YOU HUSBAND AND WIFE.
ABOVE YOU ARE THE
STARS. BELOW YOU THE
STONES. AND LIKE THE
MISTLETOE YOU ARE
SUSPENDED BETWEEN
THEM...

AS TIME PASSES REMEMBER...
LIKE A STAR SHOULD YOUR LOVE
BE CONSTANT... LIKE A STONE
SHOULD YOUR LOVE BE STRONG...
LIKE THE MISTLETOE SHOULD
YOUR LOVE BE FERTILE...

THE SMELL OF INCENSE
WAS OVERPOWERING...
AND CATHBAD'S VOICE
SEEMED TO BE COMING
FROM FAR AWAY... AS
SLÁINE FOUND HIMSELF
SCARING UPWARDS...

INTO THE DREAM-TIME WHERE
HIS SPIRIT CREATURE THE
PHOENIX... THE GOLDEN EAGLE
OF THE SUN... FLEW...

...PURSUING A WHITE
HORSE GALLOPING
FAR BELOW HIM.

ACROSS MARSH AND
MOUNTAINS... SKY AND
STARS HE PURSUED IT...

BUT THE HORSE
WAS ALWAYS
SWIFTER...
ALWAYS AHEAD...

UNTIL HE
FLEW FAST
AS AN
ARROW

AND DIVED INTO
THE SUN

BURSTING
INTO
FLAMES...

AND HEARD ONCE AGAIN
THE MUSIC OF THE SINGING
STONES AT GLASTONBURY...
THE MUSIC OF THE STARS

AS HE WAS REBORN FROM HIS OWN ASHES...



THE LIGHT FILLED HIS MIND... AND HE KNEW THE CEREMONY WAS NO MEANINGLESS BARBARISM - BUT RECOGNITION THAT THE LIFE SOURCE WAS ROYAL AND MUST BE TREASURED.

A WAY OF ENSURING THAT THE SUN KING - NO MATTER WHAT HIS TRIBAL WARS - WOULD NEVER HARM THE EARTH, HIS WIFE...

IF THE DAY EVER CAME WHEN RULERS FORGOT THIS, THEN THE EARTH WAS IN MORTAL DANGER FROM TRUE BARBARIANS...

THEN HE WAS GLIDING DOWN TO EARTH... BACK TO HIS OWN NEST...



HEH, HEH! THE TREASURE'S ALL MINE!



UKKO!



YOU THIEVING LITTLE WEASEL!

SL-SLAINE: TH-THERE'S A PERFECTLY GOOD EXPLANATION... ONLY I HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF IT YET.



NO, SLAINE! NO!

'THE RITE IS ENDED... LET THE SLEEPER AWAKE.'



SLAINE... UUK... WAKE UP! IT'S ME UKKO!



THE GODDESS..?

IS GONE. COME.. IT IS TIME FOR YOUR CORONATION!

AS SOMEWHERE IN THE DISTANCE, HE COULD HEAR CATHBAD CHANTING... 'SUN KING AND EARTH GODDESS... MERRY MEET-MERRY PART'...

Next: THE FINAL ACT

"They appoint their King with a rite altogether barbarous and abominable... A white mare is brought into the assembly and killed, cut up into pieces, and boiled in water..."

Ancient description of a Celtic Coronation

WATER HEAT
AND WATER BOIL!
MAKE THE WHEEL OF
HEAVEN TOIL!
FIRE FLAME AND FIRE
BURN!
MAKE THE WHEEL OF
HEAVEN TURN!

"...Then he who is to be inaugurated, not as a prince but a beast, comes before the people on all fours, confessing himself a beast also..."

NEIGHHHH!

NOW SLAINE WAS A STALLION, CONSORT OF THE WHITE HORSE—SYMBOL OF THE EARTH GODDESS...

... MAKING A RITUAL CIRCUIT OF THE ROUND HALL, LIKE THE SUN CIRCLES THE STARS...

MEDB LOOKED ON BITTERLY...

HAVE YOUR DAY, SLAINE MAC ROTH... BUT MINE COMES SOON...

FOR THE CAULDRON THAT GAVE YOU YOUR KINGDOM IS ALSO THE CAULDRON OF AVAGDDU—DISEASED SON OF THE GODDESS...

... THE DARK SIDE OF EARTH POWER THAT SHALL DESTROY YOU!

THERE WAS ONLY ROOM FOR THE NOBILITY, BUT I MANAGED TO SQUEEZE IN GERS AND SOME OF THE OTHER CHARIOTEERS...

THREE GOLD PIECES YOU CHARGED US TO SEE THE CORONATION!

AND WE CAN'T SEE A THING!

YES, BUT AT LEAST YOU CAN TELL YOUR GRANDCHILDREN YOU WERE THERE!

... EACH OF HIS WARRIORS' STALLS REPRESENTING A SIGN OF THE ZODIAC.



'He sits in the cauldron surrounded by his people and he and they eat of the meat which he gives to them...'



CATHBAD PUT THE ROYAL CLOAK OF GOLDEN EAGLE FEATHERS AROUND HIM...

I HEREBY PROCLAIM YOU SUN KING! LET US REJOICE IN THE ROBE OF YOUR BEAMS!



THEN THE DRUID LAID SEIS UPON HIM... MAGIC TABOOS, BASED ON PAST EVENTS THAT BROUGHT MISFORTUNE TO THE TRIBE...

YOU ARE FORBIDDEN TO... LISTEN TO BIRDS OF LOUGH SWILLY WHEN THE SUN SETS. DRINK THE WATERS OF BO NEMIRIDH BETWEEN DAWN AND DARKNESS. EAT DOG.

WEAR A CLOAK OF MANY COLOURS ON A DAPPLIED HORSE ON THE HEATH OF LONRAD. STILL BE IN BED AT SUNRISE ON LUGNASAD.

IF A KING BROKE HIS SEIS IT WOULD LEAD TO DISASTER AND DEATH.



AS THE REJOICING BEGAN...

AND IT IS MY FIRST DECREE THAT MY DWARF UKKO SHOULD BE APPOINTED TO A POST HE IS MOST SUITED AND QUALIFIED FOR...

THE POST OF ROYAL PARASITE.

OH, SIRE! I AM TRULY HONoured



THE PARASITE'S TASK WAS TO AMUSE AND PRAISE THE KING...

YOU WILL ENTERTAIN ME UNTIL THE TIME FOR MY DEATH, WHEN YOU SHALL BE KILLED ALSO... SO YOU CAN MAKE ME HAPPY AFTER DEATH.

EH?



I-I BEG TO DECLINE, SIRE! THAT THAT WOULD BE TOO GREAT AN HONOUR!

BUT I INSIST, UKKO. I KNOW YOU COULDN'T BEAR TO BE PARTED FROM ME. IT WILL BE YOUR REWARD FOR BEING MY COMPANION ALL THESE YEARS.



I SHALL LEAVE SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO BE THROWN ON MY FUNERAL PYRE—EVEN BEFORE MY HUMAN WIFE AND CONCUBINES.



THEN I BEGAN MY
PUTTIES AS ROYAL
PARASITE AND
SANG THE KING'S
PRAISES...



LET US SALUTE
HIM! THE BATTLE-EAGER
AXEMAN WHOSE HEROIC
HAND SPLASHES GORE!
FOR IT WAS SLAINE WHO
DEFEATED THE GULEPIG OF
CYTHRAUL! SLAINE WHO
ESCAPED FROM THE TOWER
OF GLASS! SLAINE WHO KILLED
THE ICE DRAGON OF THE
GLAMOURLAND! HE WAS A
RAGING STORM! A CRIMSON
BLADE! NOT SOMEONE TO
BEHOLD ON A DARK
NIGHT!

AND I SWEAR
BY THE GODS WE SWEAR
BY! I WILL PROVIDE MORE
CHOPPED FLESH FOR THE
MAGGOT GOD! I WILL DRIVE
THE TYRANTS BACK TO
TORY ISLAND! SO THE
LAND OF THE YOUNG
IS FREE AGAIN!



SLAINE
the King

JOHN HILLIS
JOE BARRY
STEVE POTTER







Slaine

the king

"The Celts are madly fond of war, high spirited and quick to battle, but otherwise straightforward and not of evil character. They so despise death, many descend into battle unclothed. Very terrifying were the appearance and gestures of these naked warriors, all in the prime of life and finely built men, richly adorned with gold torques and armlets. Some stained their bodies with blue dye to give them a more terrifying appearance..."

Ancient
Chronicles

KISS
MY
AXE!

SLAINE* HAD ORDERED A RETURN TO THE CUSTOM OF GOING INTO BATTLE SKYGLAD... FOR HE WAS THE SUN-KING AND THE SUN DOES NOT FEAR THE COLD...

... OR A SESSAIR—A
FOMORIAN SEA DEMON.

(IRISH CELTIC PRONUNCIATION: SHLAWNYE)

ON THE BATTLE EDGE, WIVES AND CHILDREN YELLED ENCOURAGEMENT OVER THE DIN OF BLARING TRUMPETS AND SCREAMS OF THE DYING...


MONGAN!
D'YOU WANT
TO SEE YOUR
WIFE
RAVISHED
BY SEA
DEMONS?

I PITY
THE
FOMORIAN
THAT
TRIES!

FIGHT WELL,
GUNDAN! OR
THERE'LL BE NO
WELCOME IN MY
ARMS TONIGHT...

YOUR SON'S WATCHING,
OSSIAN! WILL YOU BE
SHAMED IN FRONT OF HIM?





GORGED WITH BATTLE LUST, HE SWINGS
'BRAINBITER' INTO THE THROAT...
KILLING FIFTEEN FOMORS TO THE
LEFT AND FIFTEEN TO THE RIGHT
(HE DIDN'T THINK IT TOO MANY)...

EGGED ON BY THE GODDESS...

OH,
YES,
SLAINE...
YES...

... NOW
TURNING
INTO THE
MAD RAGE—
THE HOODIE
CROW...

THE GODDESS OF WAR,
WHOSE BATTLE SCREECH
WAS LOUD AS TEN
THOUSAND MEN...

EYES! EYES!
SWEETER THAN
GRAPES! I WANT
TO PECK OUT
YOUR EYES!



Slaine

the king

SLAINE WAS RIGHT IN THINKING THAT FIGHTING SKYOLAD WOULD AFFORD HIS RED BRANCH THE BLESSING AND PROTECTION OF THE EARTH GODDESS... THEY, TOO, FELT THE SERPENT WRITHE THROUGH THEIR VEINS...

THEIR HAIR STOOD ON END... THEIR BODIES SWELLED UP... AND SOME EVEN TWISTED AROUND IN THEIR SKINS—SO THEIR FEET AND KNEES SWITCHED TO THE REAR AND THEIR HEELS AND CALVES TO THE FRONT!



AS THEY HAD WHAT COULD ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS
A MASS WARP OUT!

HERE IS YOUR TRIBUTE, FOMORIAN: WAR-WALING AND A FULLNESS OF CORPSES!



OVERHEAD, THE GODDESS WATCHED IN HER THREE ASPECTS: BLODEUWEDD... MORRIGU... AND CERIDWEN...

OH, LOOK AT SLAINE! LOOK! OH, ISN'T HE THE BEST!

SHE SAYS THAT ABOUT ALL HER SUN KINGS! I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE WASTES HER TIME WITH THEM: THEY'RE ALL GOOD FOR NOTHING MEN!

YOU KNOW WHAT SHE'S LIKE WHEN SHE'S IN LOVE, MORRIGU... SHE GETS CARRIED AWAY...



I'LL SAY: THE SILLY LITTLE FOOL! SHE EVEN ALLOWED MEN TO MAKE UP A STORY THEY CREATED HER IF YOU PLEASE!

OH, YES, SLAINE... FOR ME...



AND YOU'RE
NOT MUCH BETTER!
YOU LET MEN REMEMBER
YOU AS **MOTHER CARY**
AND **BLACK ANNIS**—
FAIRY-TALE GORGES—
NOT THE MOTHER
OF ALL LIVING...

MEN: THE RATS
TAMPERED WITH THE
LEGENDS SO GODS WERE
MORE IMPORTANT! BECAUSE
THEIR MALE PRIDE COULDN'T
TAKE A GODDESS BEING
THE LIFE-SOURCE! WELL, I'D
LIKE TO SEE A GOD
GIVE BIRTH!

BUT THEY
ALL COME TO
MY BOSOM IN
THE END...

MEN:
I CAN'T WAIT
TO SINK MY CLAWS
INTO THEIR
FLESH!

BELOW... THE
SHOUTING, CURSING
AND SCREAMING,
THE CLASH OF
SHIELDS AND
STRIKING OF
SWORDS, CHARGED
NEARBY STONES
WITH EMOTION...
WITH POWER...

SO THE EARTH FIRE
HISSED AND SPIRALLED
OUT OF THE GROUND...

AS WHAT SEEMED LIKE A VAST
FIRE-BREATHING SERPENT...

AT THE SIGHT OF WHICH THE
FOMORS FLED IN HORROR...

IT WAS THE TRIUMPH OF
THE SUN OVER WINTER...

FIRE
OVER
ICE...

LIGHT OVER DARKNESS

When the celts leave the battlefield, they fasten to the necks of their horses the heads of their enemies and on arriving home nail them to the entrances of their houses. The heads of their most distinguished enemies they embalm and keep in a chest and display with pride to strangers...

YOU
DON'T SEEM
VERY HAPPY,
SIRE.

HOW CAN I
BE, UKKO? WHEN
THEY WHO RAVISHED
MY WIFE HAVE
ESCAPED MY
AXE.

I SUPPOSE
YOU'LL CHEER UP
ONCE YOU'VE WADED
KNEE-DEEP IN
THEIR GORE!

NECK-
DEEP.

NO.

ER-
WAIST-
DEEP..?

NO.



Slaine

the king

GWALCHAZED THE RAM
CHALLENGED DUNDAN
SKULLSMASHER FOR
THE HERO'S PORTION.

In former times, when the
hundredst were served
the bravest hero took the
high piece, and if another
felt claimed it, they stood
up and fought in a single
combat to the death.

1001
PAT HILL
GLANDY PARKY
STEVE POTTER



I CLAIM THE HERO'S
PORTION.

GOOD, WELL, NOW THAT'S
DECIDED. PERHAPS WE
CAN GET ON WITH OUR
DINNER BEFORE IT
GETS COLD.

AFTER THE MEAL, SLAINE
REMAINED IN A DARK MOOD—
DESPITE MY EFFORTS AS
ROYAL PARASITE TO BRING
A SMILE TO HIS FACE.



HOW
ABOUT SOME
RIDDLES?

I LOOK AT YOU
WHENEVER YOU LOOK AT ME.
YOU SEE, BUT I SEE NOT. I SPEAK,
BUT HAVE NO VOICE. MY LIPS
CAN ONLY OPEN
USELESSLY.

SO
WHAT
AM I?

A MIRROR!

ANOTHER,
UKKO!



ALL
RIGHT.
SEE NOT
AND YOU
WILL SEE
ME. SO
WHAT
AM I?

DARKNESS!



ONE MORE!
SPEAK NOT
AND THOU SHALT
SPEAK MY
NAME!





SILENCE!



THAT'S IT!



I MEANT...
SILENCE!



I'M IN NO MOOD FOR
RIDDLES TONIGHT,
DWARF.



YOU GREAT
BULLY!



LET ME BORROW
YOUR HELMET,
MONGAN!



TRY SMACKING
ME ROUND THE
HEAD NOW.



YOU SEEM
SO TENSE, SIRE.
PERHAPS I
CAN HELP YOU
RELAX?



ARE YOU
QUITE SURE?

IT WASN'T FOR
A WOMAN'S LIPS
I TOOK ON THIS
TASK.

WHAT IS IT, SON...?
AREN'T YOU PLEASSED WITH
OUR GREAT VICTORY OVER
THE SEA DEMONS?



IT'S TRUE TO OUR
AXES A MULTITUDE
OF NECKS HAVE
SUBMITTED—

AND YOU
DIDN'T THINK IT
TOO MANY?



BUT
I DIDN'T
THINK IT
WAS
ENOUGH!

SO
HOW CAN
WE INCREASE
THE HEAD
HARVEST?



BY
JOINING
FORCES
WITH THE
OTHER FREE
TRIBES.



NEVER!

THEY'RE
OUR
ENEMIES!

BUT WE ARE
UNITED IN OUR
WORSHIP OF THE EARTH
GODDESS! SO FAR, WE'VE
WON BATTLES WITH
THEIR HELP WE COULD
WIN THE WAR!

THAT WOULD
MEAN THE
APPOINTMENT OF
A HIGH KING!

WHO'D
HAVE TOO
MUCH POWER
OVER US!

NO
DOUBT
YOU HAD
YOURSELF
IN
MIND?

ORDER!
ORDER!







FOR I
WAS ELECTED
YOUR LEADER,
FOR *ONLY SEVEN*
YEARS. AFTER
WHICH, I MUST
BE RITUALLY
KILLED.

BUT WE
HAVE OUR
*CAULDRON OF
BLOOD*... THAT
SUPPLIES US WITH
FOOD AND CAN EVEN
BRING THE DEAD
BACK TO LIFE. WHAT
DO WE *NEED* THESE
OTHER TRIBES
FOR?

BECAUSE
THEY, TOO,
HAVE THEIR
TREASURES...

*THE SILVER
SWORD OF THE
MOON* THAT CUTS
THROUGH ANY
METAL.



*THE
FLAMING
SPEAR OF THE
SUN* THAT HOWLS
FOR BLOOD AND IS
KEPT CAULDRON IN
A CAULDRON OF
CRUSHED POPPIES
TO RESTRAIN
IT.

AND
*THE SACRED
STONE OF
DESTINY*.

ONCE THE
POWER OF THESE
FOUR MOST HOLY
TREASURES ARE
COMBINED, NOTHING
CAN STOP US. WE
WILL DESTROY THE
DEMONS OF THE DEEP
AND TIR NANI OG
WILL FINALLY
BE FREE.

**SLÁINE RETURNS IN
THE HORNED GOD**





KISS MY AXE!



Out of a world of mists and magic, sword and sorcery, comes the ultimate Celtic warrior: Slaine.

Exiled from his tribe, he is forced to roam the land of Tir-Nan-Og with his dwarf, Ukko. Ahead of him lie terrifying ordeals that will require all of Slaine's famed warrior strength if he is to return victorious, to claim his rightful place as King.



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