

**TRISTAN + ISOLDE**

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Britain the Dark Ages

The Roman Empire has fallen.

The land lies in ruins, divided among feuding tribes.

To the west, Ireland has flourished untouched by the Romans,  
protected by the sea.

subdued

Led by their powerful and ruthless King, the Irish have  
the Britons.

Knowing that if Ireland is to prosper, the tribes must never  
be allowed to unite.

[Scene showing images of mountains. A young boy Tristan hunts  
with his father for a rabbit]

**ARAGON**

A year younger than I was for my first.

**TRISTAN**

When can I have a stag?

**ARAGON**

a stag?

**TRISTAN**

Oh come on!

[The two walk home through the mountains. Main title appears]

**TRISTAN + ISOLDE**

**TRISTAN**

Why would they join up against the Irish?

**ARAGON**

Because someone has to stand up to them.

**TRISTAN**

You?

**ARAGON**

Me, Marke, all the tribes. We can't resist alone.

**TRISTAN**

I could.

[Castle Tantallon appears onscreen]

**ARAGON**

Oh my little warrior. We have to be careful.

[Tristan and his father enter the bustling village]

**ARAGON**

Come home without something for your Lady there will be hell to pay.

[Tristan goes to a flower and herb seller]

**TRISTAN**

Can I?

[Aragon continues on into town where he is met by one of his men]

**MAN**

The Angles have arrives my Lord, as well as the Carrods, our fellow Jutes and the Saxons.

**ARAGON**

Good. With Marke, all will be here.

**MAN**

Yeah. It is a great day.

**ARAGON**

Let us hope so.

[They continue on into town. We see Tristan back at the herb sellers]

**TRISTAN**

Thanks.

[The boy starts to make a bracelet out of the herbs. Going up to Lady Marke he hands her the finished wreath]

**LADY MARKE**

We heard the news...

**TRISTAN**

Mother, I made this for you

[Lady Marke smiles and touches Tristan's face lovingly]

[In the Main Hall of Aragon, the assembled tribe Lords gather in meet]

**ARAGON**

Friends, look at us.

[A map of Britain is shown]

**ARAGON**

The tribes of Britain. Divided. Weak.  
Just as the Irish like us. But if we  
were one land united, we would out number  
them two to one. We could defeat them  
once and for all. That is why we are  
here today, to sign this treaty of unification.

**LORD**

But who would be King?

**ARAGON**

The strongest among us: Lord Marke.

[Scene of movement outside of the town]

**ARAGON**

Look if you are happy sending all of  
your gold to Ireland, living as slaves  
then by all means do nothing.

**BARON**

If we were happy doing that then we  
would never have risked coming here.

**MARKE**

Friends. My wife is with child, my heart  
tells me it is a boy. I want him to  
grow old in a land where all of us,  
all the tribes: Pict, Celt, Angle, Jute,  
Saxon are at peace. This island has

not known unity since the Romans left.  
That is why I sign this treaty.

**WICTRED**

And why should we follow you?

**MARKE**

Perhaps, Wictred, because your last attempt to form an alliance without the knowledge of half the Barons in this room has failed.

[A man bursts into the room]

**MAN**

My Lord! The Irish are here!

[Scenes of destruction outside the keep. Inside Aragon grabs Marke]

**ARAGON**

Take all your men. Guard the women!

**MARKE**

But you...

**ARAGON**

Go!!!

[More destruction. All the women and children try to find safety]

**LADY MARKE**

Tristan! Hurry! Come this way.

[More fighting. In the main keep the men await the Irish]

**BARON**

How did they know?

[The Irish break through and a furious battle begins. Tristan tries to fight]

**LADY MARKE**

Tristan!

[Aragon manages to hold his son back and puts him in a hold under the floorboards. Aragon is then killed by Morholt. There is more

destruction and fire breaks out. Tristan reaches up to touch the floorboards above and finds his fathers seeping blood on his hands. Tristan comes out of the hole and surveys the

destruction.

His father and Lady Marke are dead. Suddenly he is attacked by

an Irishman but Marke jumps in to save him, losing his hand in the process]

onscreen. ["Dunluce Castle. The funeral of the Irish Queen" appears

We see a funeral procession. A maid holds the young princess comfortingly]

**BRAGNAE**

She's with the Gods now Isolde, you'll see her again someday.

**ISOLDE**

Will I?

**HENCHMAN**

Morholt returns.

[The King leaves the funeral]

**KING DONNCHADH**

What news of the treaty?

[Morholt hands the King a scroll, which the King tears up]

**KING DONNCHADH**

Good Morholt, good

[Isolde and Bragnae approach a cairn where Isolde lays an urn of her mother's ashes within a niche]

**BRAGNAE**

Your mother loved you so much Isolde

**ISOLDE**

Why did she die Bragnae? Why?

**BRAGNAE**

It was an ill fever that took her. Fever.

**ISOLDE**

No. It was her heart.

["Castle Dor" appears onscreen. A procession of survivors from Marke's retinue return home. They find Dor in ruins. Marke's sister runs up to him and cries in his arms]

**MARKE**

Your husband?

[Edyth shakes her head]

**MARKE**

Oh sister I am so sorry.

**EDYTH: THE EXECUTIONS LASTED A DAY. \***

**MARKE**

A whole generation of men.

**EDYTH**

Who's this?

**MARKE**

Tristan. Son of Aragon. We're his family now.

**EDYTH**

I have a son about your age. Melot!  
Melot! Melot, this is Tristan.

**HENCHMAN**

What shall we do, my Lord?

**MARKE**

Rebuild.

swordsmanship. [Rebuilding is taking place. The youth are practicing their  
Marke is testing his ability with his sword without his hand]

**MARKE**

Don't hold back

other [Marke loses the fight easily. A boy starts yelling to the  
boys]

**BOY**

Tristan won't fight me! Look he's scared!

**MARKE**

Still won't fight?

**GENERAL**

Tristan has the heart of a lion. He just needs some time.

**MELOT**

Why did you take off your helmet? You going to cry? My father died too, but you don't see me crying!

**EDYTH**

Melot!

**MELOT**

Run! Find another trapdoor to hide under.  
Coward!

[Tristan suddenly fights back and beats all the boys single-handedly]

**HENCHMAN**

Tristan!

[Tristan starts walking towards the camera. Suddenly he is grown up and the town is mostly rebuilt]

**SAMMY**

Tristan! Tristan! We've found something!  
Come on, this way.

**MELOT**

You will love it.

**SIMON**

I found a trapdoor!

**MELOT**

You found a trapdoor? Alright Simon,  
will you tell us all how you found it?!  
Look at that!

[The three friends climb down into it]

**TRISTAN**

Where does this lead?

**MELOT**

You'll see. I like that vase, I think  
I'll have that. I always knew the Castle  
was built on Roman foundations but we  
didn't think anything was left!

**TRISTAN**

Must be a burial crypt or something.

[They re-emerge from the tunnel]

**MELOT**

Here we are: the bottom of the keep.

**TRISTAN**

Who else knows about this?

**SAMMY**

Nobody.

**TRISTAN**

Good.

[They exit the keep]

**BODKIN**

The savages have rebuilt the castle  
at Cornwall, only now it's made of stone.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Of Cornwall's next tribute I want slaves.  
Young ones. Their future. If Marke resists  
have Morholt crush him.

**MORHOLT**

My King.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Morholt.

**MORHOLT**

I have led your armies to victory far  
and near. I've made you rich and powerful.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Yes you have. You have been most loyal.

**MORHOLT**

When I return from Cornwall, I was hoping...

**KING DONNCHADH**

What would please you?

**MORHOLT**

A wife.

[The cairn appears once again, with a grown up Isolde leaning  
on it looking out to sea]

**BRAGNAE**

It's dark in an hour.

**ISOLDE**

What do you think is really out there?

**BRAGNAE**

Britannia. The old Roman lands. Full of evil and grief.

**ISOLDE**

I want to see it. Do you know what the future looks like Bragnae?

**BRAGNAE**

I see the life you were meant for. Your father will speak with you.

[Isolde speaks with her father. She is clearly distraught]

**ISOLDE**

Am I just a chattel to be traded at your pleasure? Do I have no say in my own life?

**KING DONNCHADH**

You have a duty to your King.

**ISOLDE**

You are my father.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Then obey me, daughter.

[Isolde runs to her apothecary-like room. Morholt comes to her]

**MORHOLT**

Your father has given you the news?

[Isolde nods]

**MORHOLT**

And you welcome it?

**ISOLDE**

I accept it.

**MORHOLT**

You know, we are more alike than you might guess.

**ISOLDE**

How so?

**MORHOLT**

I too dabble in elixirs. Poison from the livers of a puffer fish. Just a taste paralyses all the senses. So if the blade doesn't kill...

**ISOLDE**

Rendered safe by thistle and bark.

[Morholt holds up a leaf]

**MORHOLT**

And you know the antidote for this?

**ISOLDE**

Yohimbine.

**MORHOLT**

Makes a hard man even harder. The only cure... wild abandon. Till out wedding day. I'm to Cornwall, to deal with rabbles.

Dor]

[The Irish arrive in Cornwall and enter the town of Castle

**BODKIN**

Release them.

[The Irish men spread out and start collecting Cornish men and women as hostages]

**CORNISH MAN**

Leave her!

[He is grabbed by the Irish thugs]

**BODKIN**

Take him there. Get a rope. Any man foolish enough to interfere in any way shall suffer the same fate.

[A girl rushes forward]

**GIRL**

No! No! Please No!

[The man is hung and Tristan rushes forward. He is held back by the Irish men. The Cornish hostages are put in a wagon]

**BODKIN**

If there are any more attacks we shall put our guests to death and raise this entire land. Take the horses.

[Tristan confronts Marke about the Irish]

**MARKE**

When would you strike?

**TRISTAN**

At once. Throw everything we have at them.

**MARKE**

They are hoping you'll do that. On horse they outnumber us two to one. You would lead the men straight to their deaths.

**TRISTAN**

So we do nothing?!

**MARKE**

Donnchadh would like that even more. Me to lose face in front of the other tribes. No, we must act. We must be decisive but we cannot act alone.

[Tristan and Marke enter the hall]

**MARKE**

So. Have the good men of York come to fight with us? Hm? The Saxons of Wessex?

**WICTRED**

My men don't want to follow a Pict into battle. Let alone one leading a pack of Angles and Celts.

**MARKE**

Then why are you here?

**WICTRED**

I thought Tristan should let me command his men.

**TRISTAN**

I make it my habit to follow no one.

**WICTRED**

Except Marke.

**TRISTAN**

Marke delivered me from that place when I was a boy. You ran. So you can understand that when I think of Kings I think of him. When I think of cowards...

**MARKE**

They are one day from their boats on the old Roman road. Now who will ride out with Tristan to fight them?

**LORD**

What is your plan, Tristan?

**TRISTAN**

We will need our two fastest runners.

[The Irish and their hostages make their way through a forest. Suddenly two of the British jump up and shoot at the Irish.

Half

of the convoy follow the two runners]

**IRISH MAN**

Go around!

[They continue to pursue the runners on foot. Suddenly Tristan and his men spring up from hidden holes under the loam and the Irish with their bows. The Irish are attacked from all sides and defeated. Back at the main part of the Irish convoy, Morholt cleans his blade]

shoot

sides

Morholt

**BODKIN**

Morholt, they're back!

[Cloaked figures ride in while the camp cheers. Suddenly they attack and more British spring from the ground. A battle ensues. Morholt begins to kill the hostages, but Tristan springs to stop him. Sammy is stabbed. Tristan is stabbed by Morholt's poisoned blade but manages to kill Morholt. Melot and Tristan run to Sammy's side]

ensues.

stop

poisoned

Sammy's

**MORHOLT**

Kill the slaves!

**TRISTAN**

Simon!

**SAMMY**

I don't want to die.

[Simon dies and Tristan collapses]

**MAN**

Tristan!

**TRISTAN**

I can't feel my legs or my hands.

**MAN**

Poison.

**TRISTAN**

Build a second boat.

**MAN**

Tristan!

[Tristan seems to die]

**MELOT**

He shall have a King's service.

[Tristan is lain on a funeral boat and floated out to sea]

**MELOT**

Farewell, Tristan of Aragon. Death of  
the Irish.

[The boat is set alight by burning arrows. Melot turns to the  
captured Irish]

**MELOT**

When the Irish came to Cornwall and  
my father surrendered. You spared a  
dozen out of a hundred. I am even less  
kind. The leader and 3 shall take this  
message home. As for the rest...

[The surviving British and the hostages return to Dor. Marke  
meets them]

**MELOT**

Victory.

**MARKE**

Tristan?

**MELOT**

Simon too.

**MARKE**

Did I love him like a son or did I misuse  
him for my own purposes?

**EDYTH**

He knew. He knew.

[Tristan floats in the sea, the ship no longer burning. Isolde  
is suddenly woken from sleep and makes her way to the beach

with

Bragnae]

**BRAGNAE**

Where are we going?

**ISOLDE**

Away.

**BRAGNAE**

You're afflicted child. Speak to me!  
Your father will find us and have my  
head. You are my charge. Please!

**ISOLDE**

I am no ones charge!

**BRAGNAE**

You are. And you will be Morholt's Lady!

**ISOLDE**

And live a loveless life like my mam?

**BRAGNAE**

What's that?

**ISOLDE**

Where?

[Isolde runs to the beached boat]

**BRAGNAE**

Isolde. Wait! Don't! Isolde. Don't!  
Isolde!

**ISOLDE**

It's a man.

**BRAGNAE**

Dead?

**ISOLDE**

Alive! Bragnae help me!

**BRAGNAE**

Isolde?

**ISOLDE**

Help me!

[They drag Tristan to a hut on the beachfront]

**ISOLDE**

Start a fire! Quickly!

[Isolde checks his condition while Bragnae tries to light the fire]

**ISOLDE**

His heart falters.

[Isolde starts to undress]

**BRAGNAE**

What are you doing?

**ISOLDE**

He needs heat. Now! Get your clothes off! Quickly!

[Isolde curls up against Tristan while Bragnae starts to undress]

**ISOLDE**

Hurry! Quickly! Smell that? Smell the poison? When he warms we will need thistle and bark.

**BRAGNAE**

I've not been naked with a man for 15 years!

**ISOLDE**

Hello. You've been sleeping a long time. You're in Ireland. Did you know that? Shh... It's alright. You're safe here. No one knows. Don't be scared. Just sleep... sleep.

[Tristan fades out of consciousness]

[Tristan wakes and grabs a stone to use as a weapon when he hears a noise]

**BRAGNAE**

Nooo Nooo Noo!

[Isolde runs in]

**ISOLDE**

It's alright, you don't need that! I forgot to tell him about you...

**BRAGNAE**

I'll wait outside with the other beasts.

[Bragnae leaves]

**TRISTAN**

You said no one else knew.

**ISOLDE**

Sorry... She's... My maid. Sworn to silence. Um... lie down please. Please?

[Tristan lies down]

**ISOLDE**

It's good you are remembering things. This might sting. Do you remember anything else? The boat I found you in? How you got this? Too many questions. Here keep it dry. Here I found bread, you have water and fire. The ocean is outside if you wish a bath. You won't know where you are going so please don't try to leave. Just trust me.

**TRISTAN**

Why are you doing this?

**ISOLDE**

I'll be back

[Isolde leaves the hut and meets up with Bragnae outside]

**BRAGNAE**

This is a dangerous game you are playing. He's English, Isolde.

**ISOLDE**

Then we've got him prisoner.

**BRAGNAE**

Under no circumstances tell him your name, you hear me? Not if you wish him to escape this place. Do you hear me?

[Back in the Irish town Isolde and Bagnae whisper together.  
King Donnchadh enters and they fall into silence]

**KING DONNCHADH**

You've been away.

**ISOLDE**

I had noticed. Yes I have a bit.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Where?

**ISOLDE**

Bagnae and I were spying the convent  
of Brittes ].

**KING DONNCHADH**

Seeking sanctuary?

**ISOLDE**

Some women need it.

**KING DONNCHADH**

You'll find no refuge in a new religion.  
Your place is here, with Morholt.

**ISOLDE**

Any word of my betrothed?

**KING DONNCHADH**

Overdue. But comforted no doubt that  
you yearn for him.

[The King leaves]

[Isolde leaves the town to return to the hut on the beach. She  
sees Tristan bathing in the sea. Isolde tends to Tristan's

wounds

back in the hut]

**TRISTAN**

What's your name?

**ISOLDE**

Oh, I think it's better if we don't  
bother with names.

**TRISTAN**

How can I thank you if I don't have  
your name?

**ISOLDE**

You just did. If you insist... my name is Bragnae. I'm a lady in waiting at the court. My parents are dead. My mother, she is the source of the kindness you find so puzzling. My father would've left you where you fell.

**TRISTAN**

Tristan of Aragon.

**ISOLDE**

Well Tristan of Aragon, I'd guess about you too, but I think I've already seen everything.

**BRAGNAE**

Sir! I hope you appreciate the risks we are taking, and will honour us by leaving as soon as you are able.

[Bragnae leaves]

**TRISTAN**

She likes me. She's right though, you do risk.

[Finishes poulticing him]

**ISOLDE**

There. What of your parents?

**TRISTAN**

They also died when I was a child.

**ISOLDE**

Of what?

**TRISTAN**

A different type of Irish kindness.

**ISOLDE**

Sorry.

[Bragnae returns and interrupts their moment of tenderness]

**ISOLDE**

Tomorrow then?

**TRISTAN**

Tomorrow.

[Tristan sits outside making a shell bracelet. Isolde shortly arrives. Inside the hut the scene continues]

**ISOLDE**

There she who bore you brought you forth.

Set me as a seal upon your heart,

As a seal upon your arm;

For love is as strong as death,

**TRISTAN**

Ridiculous.

**ISOLDE**

I happen to believe what that says.  
Don't you think there is more to life?

**TRISTAN**

Than what?

**ISOLDE**

Something more than duty and death!  
Why are we capable of feelings if not  
to have them? Why long for things if  
they are not meant to be ours? Well  
don't listen to me. You're so sure of  
things. You're certainty, it's like  
armour. I wish I had that.

**TRISTAN**

Why would you need it?

**ISOLDE**

The joy of being a lady? Wanting something  
I can't have. A life of my own.

**BRAGNAE**

Time for sleep now.

**ISOLDE**

I'll follow you later.

**BRAGNAE**

You need to rest. In case your betrothed  
should want to see you.

[Bragnae and Isolde leave]

[Tristan and Isolde look out to sea]

**TRISTAN**

You're promised?

**ISOLDE**

Yes.

**TRISTAN**

What's he like?

**ISOLDE**

Dark. Tall. Nearly twice your size.  
An absolute gentleman.

**TRISTAN**

I thought... earlier when you spoke  
of wanting something you can't have.

**ISOLDE**

I didn't know what I was talking about.

[They leave the shore and go inside the hut, Isolde is crying]

**ISOLDE**

Outside, just past that bluff there  
is a boat. That's how you should go  
when you leave. You should go soon.

[Isolde leaves but Tristan goes after her. They kiss. Inside  
the hut they make love.]

**TRISTAN**

How do you feel?

**ISOLDE**

I don't know

**ISOLDE**

Tristan! They've found your boat. At  
this very moment the King himself is  
scouring the coast. He will find you.  
He finds everyone. The tide is coming  
let's go!

[They drag the boat out to see]

**TRISTAN**

Come with me. Come with me!

**ISOLDE**

I can't

**TRISTAN**

Why not? Please!

**ISOLDE**

Tristan, we've both known this can't be. We've known this from the start. That doesn't mean it isn't true. It is. It just cannot be. I want to know that you are alive somewhere thinking of me from time to time. I want to know that there is more to this life and I can't know that if they kill you. Please?

[They kiss]

**ISOLDE**

Go!

[Isolde leaves to shore while Tristan rows away]

[Back at Dunlane]

**KING DONNCHADH**

A Cornish warrior may be ashore. Beware. We seek him as I speak. Hopefully it is just his rotted corpse we'll find, for he has slain your betrothed. Morholt is dead. Fallen in battle. Isolde? Bragnae, comfort her.

[The two leave, the Irish henchman, Bodkin enters]

**BODKIN**

She's stunned.

**KING DONNCHADH**

As am I by her grief.

**BODKIN**

We should assulat the British straight away. Crush them with maximum force.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Maximum force. Like that of Marke's tribe with the maximum force you speak of? I will not confront them again until our numbers are refreshed. Until then, we'll have cunning divide them.

**BODKIN**

Of what nature?

**KING DONNCHADH**

A prize, perhaps.

[Isolde looks out to sea while Tristan sails back to Cornwall.  
Meanwhile all the British Lords receive a message from

Ireland]

**MELOT**

What's this about a tournament?

**MARKE**

Donnchadh. He has offered his daughter  
and the lands of Lyonesse as dowry to  
whichever English tribe wins. It is  
a clever way of setting us against each  
other.

**MELOT**

Well, the other barons will see through  
that.

[There is a meeting of the Lords in Dor]

**WICTRED**

As baron of Wessex it is my duty to  
fight in this tournament for my people.

**MARKE**

For yourself you mean.

**MELOT**

And what of the support you promised  
Tristan?

**WICTRED**

Tristan is dead. My people have suffered  
enough. They see the wealth of Lyonesse  
as more real than any alliance. My mind  
is set.

**BARON**

And ours as well.

**MARKE**

So be it.

[Tristan rides back into town]

**MELOT**

You're weary, let me rally your friends.  
I'll lead them against D...

**MARKE**

Ah, Melot, Melot, Melot. You are my  
blood and you are a noble presence but.....

Tristan

[They hear the sounds of the townspeople calling welcome to  
outside. Everyone rushes to Tristan]

**GUARD**

Lord Marke! He's back! It's Tristan!

**MAN**

It cannot be!

**EDYTH**

Tristan!

**MELOT**

I saw you dead.

**TRISTAN**

I am delivered.

**MARKE**

How? How?

[There is a celebration for Tristan's return that night]

**MARKE**

A toast! Tristan! Back from the dead.

**MAN**

Tristan. The Irish King offers his daughter  
in tournament to divide the tribes.  
For the power and the wealth half the  
tribes have sent champions to fight  
at the... Tristan!

**MAN**

God knows what happened to him.

[Tristan stares out into the night. The voice of Isolde haunts  
him]

**ISOLDE**

"My face in thine eyes, thine in mine  
appears,

And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;  
Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;  
If our two loves be one, or thou and I.  
Love so alike, that none can slacken, none can die."

[Tristan confronts Marke in the keep with a plan]

**MARKE**

What?

**TRISTAN**

It is the only way to keep the alliance  
alive.

**MARKE**

I fail to see how fighting with our  
partners keeps us allies.

**TRISTAN**

Well they are all going to the tournament  
anyway. By announcing you will share  
the dowry with every Baron that remains  
loyal and in turn offering to support  
whomever prevails, the others would  
be compelled to follow you when you  
win.

**MARKE**

If we win. If we lose we could end up  
following Wictred. I'd need an infallible  
champion!

**TRISTAN**

Me.

**MARKE**

You are not yet healed.

**TRISTAN**

Then this trip will be my tonic. I will  
be ready. I know I will.

**MARKE**

What is the source of this fervour?

**TRISTAN**

Let me go and win you a wife. She can  
make peace without spilling one drop  
of blood, and maybe heal a wound from  
which you still lack.

[The British arrive in Ireland. A henchman approaches Tristan]

**BODKIN**

Truce. You have safe passage.

[The warriors enter the tournament arena]

**TRISTAN**

How do I look?

**HENCHMAN**

How do you look?

**MELOT**

Where is this Princess? What's her name?  
Isolde? I want to see what she looks  
like.

[Maids attend to Isolde as the King enters]

**BRAGNAE**

There. Almost done.

**ISOLDE**

No, not quite. If I am to be a present  
I should be fully wrapped.

[The King takes his seat on the podium overlooking the arena]

**KING DONNCHADH**

See how the bees come to the honey.

**TRISTAN**

Tristan of Aragon.

[He is given a specially prepared tablet]

**KING DONNCHADH**

So he lives.

**BODKIN**

For the moment.

**WICTRED**

Wictred of Glastonbury.

[He is also given a prepared stone]

**WICTRED**

I fight with no champion in my stead.

Know that.

**BODKIN**

Why Wictred?

**KING DONNCHADH**

Because the Barons will never unite  
behind him.

[Isolde takes her seat]

**MELOT**

Do you think she's got the pox?

[The combatants take their positions]

**HERALD**

Since the dawn of time...

[Isolde sees Tristan among the group to be fighting]

**HERALD**

... Begin!

[The battles start]

**WICTRED'S OPPONENT**

Make it for real!

**WICTRED**

What?

**WICTRED'S OPPONENT**

I yield!

**MAN**

You were great!

[Tristan's enemy is given a new sword after losing his weapon]

**KING DONNCHADH**

Allow it!

[Tristan wins the battle]

**MELOT**

It was too easy for you Tristan. Not  
much for a third draw.

[Wictred and Tristan work through their opponents until they  
face each other]

**WICTRED**

Mace.

**MELOT**

One more fight Tristan. Take deep breaths.

**HERALD**

Wictred: Lord of Saxonberg. Tristan:  
Champion of Cornwall. Warriors: Begin!

Tristan

[Tristan and Wictred fight. Wictred is booed by the crowd.  
defeats Wictred.]

**TRISTAN**

Yield!

[Tristan goes before the King]

**KING DONNCHADH**

An impressive victory. Of course the  
man who defeats Morholt might be expected  
to triumph here.

**TRISTAN**

On behalf of Cornwall, I offer your  
daughter a place on our throne. The  
throne of England, united behind one  
leader.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Isolde! Perhaps it is just that he who  
took a husband provides one.

[Isolde comes forward]

**ISOLDE**

I'm yours.

**KING DONNCHADH**

No. Tristan of Aragon has won you on  
behalf of Lord Marke of Cornwall.

**MELOT**

Let's go.

[Everyone disperses]

**KING DONNCHADH**

Let them take her across the sea. After  
the wedding I'll disavow Isolde, the  
alliance will crumble.

[The English sail back to Britain with Isolde and Bragnae]

**HENCHMAN**

Tristan. Princess wants to speak to you.

[Tristan goes to meet Isolde inside the ship]

**ISOLDE**

You risked your life to give me to another man.

**TRISTAN**

You said your name was Bragnae. Why did you do that?

**ISOLDE**

Oh what have I done? Stop this thing. Say something.

**TRISTAN**

I can't. I won you in my King's name.

**ISOLDE**

But I am yours. You touched me and I yielded...

**TRISTAN**

It doesn't matter.

**ISOLDE**

It is the only thing that matters Tristan. Leave with me, I will go anywhere.

**TRISTAN**

Your marriage will end a hundred years of bloodshed.

**ISOLDE**

My marriage to another man!

**TRISTAN**

Isolde. You will live with this. We must.

**ISOLDE**

Don't do this to me.

[Melot enters]

**MELOT**

Tristan, we've made shore.

[The party enter Dor, Marke waits for them]

**MARKE**

What if she's a hag? Or maybe she won't  
have me!

**EDYTH**

She will brother. You're the prize.

[Isolde steps out of the carriage]

**ISOLDE**

My Lord.

**MARKE**

Isolde? Welcome.

[He takes her hand and everyone claps]

hand  
river  
wedding.  
Tristan]

[Isolde's wedding gown is prepared. Marke puts on his metal  
for the ceremony. Isolde - fully dressed- floats down the  
to the wedding ceremony about a decorated ship. She and Marke  
go forward to be wed. There is a celebration after the  
As Isolde and Marke leave the party, Isolde approaches

**ISOLDE**

If things were different. If we lived  
in a place without duty... would you  
be with me?

**TRISTAN**

That place does not exist.

**ISOLDE**

I'll pretend it's you.

their  
window from outside]

[Isolde and Marke retire to their bedroom. Tristan watches

**MARKE**

You're trembling. You are far from home  
and I am a stranger still. But you mustn't  
fear me. My wish is to make you happy,  
as a wife.. as a women and hopefully  
one day, the fact that I am not whole  
will not offend you.

[Marke kisses Isolde and makes love to her]

[Marke and Isolde stand outside the keep surveying the town.  
Mark fingers her shell bracelet]

**MARKE**

That's pretty. Did you make it?

**ISOLDE**

It was a present.

[Tristan goes to Edyths home and knocks on the door]

**MAN**

Tristan?

**TRISTAN**

Might I stay here a while?

**MAN**

Of course.

Dor. [There is a montage of Tristan and Isolde's lives while in  
Finally in the marketplace Isolde is fed food by Mark and they  
laugh together. Edyth sees Tristan watching]

**EDYTH**

Tristan!

[Tristan walks off]

**MARKE**

I've never seen him like this before.

**ISOLDE**

Perhaps someone his own age should speak  
with him.

[Marke lets her go. She finds Tristan]

**ISOLDE**

They believe you are distant. They are  
worried about you. So am I.

**TRISTAN**

I can tell. Laughing at the market,  
holding hands, a caress on the neck  
when he pours you wine.

**ISOLDE**

He is my husband. I remember his Kingdom

comes before my life.

**TRISTAN**

Yes well, I must confess I thought you might find more difficulties in performing your duty.

**ISOLDE**

Am I not permitted a single moment without mourning? Living with this Tristan as you said we must.

**TRISTAN**

I live in torture thinking of these moments. With every look he gives you I get sicker and sicker. There is a burning in me, I feel on fire and guilt and I can't get rid of either. Does it make you happy to know that?

**ISOLDE**

The Roman Bridge. I can get to it without being seen. And I will go there anytime to be there with you.

[All the Leaders meet in Castle Dor to sign a treaty]

**MARKE**

Welcome bands of Anglia, Rothgar and Orick. Wessex: Kaye and Wictred.

**WICTRED**

As you will be King and his daughter Queen, does that mean Donnchadh will be coming to the coronation.

**MARKE**

It does. On the next full moon, all will attend.

**WICTRED**

A lot can happen in a month

**MARKE**

Bearing that in mind, and given the instabilities of our new land I shall be naming a second. My sister has raised one, capable of guiding you if the need should arise. He is a man of passion, fierce in battle who has learnt to tame his heart with his head. I give you Tristan of Aragon.

[Melot is very upset]

**MARKE**

For the first time since the Romans,  
this country stands united.

[After leaving the signing, Tristan chases down Marke]

**TRISTAN**

I can't be your second. Melot must be.  
He is blood. Besides, I wish to journey  
north.

**MARKE**

You no longer sleep at Dor, and now  
you don't want to be my second. Do you  
find no comfort in your home? These  
stone walls that you helped build?

**TRISTAN**

I find these walls a prison.

**MARKE**

Why?

**TRISTAN**

Everything I want seems misplaced.

**MARKE**

Ever since you were a boy you sacrificed  
everything for me. All for one dream.

Now that you reached that dream, it  
is natural that you would feel some  
loss. It doesn't matter if you want  
to be second. You are. I will only be  
king if you are my second. I'd put it  
more gently if I could.

**TRISTAN**

Then I am your second.

**MARKE**

Perhaps it is time that you took a wife!

**TRISTAN**

No!

**MARKE**

Can't live alone forever.

**TRISTAN**

I can!

[Isolde passes]

**MARKE**

Isolde. I was trying to explain to Tristan the importance of loving. It seems he might live without it.

**ISOLDE**

Why?

**TRISTAN**

There are other things to live for. Duty. Honour.

**ISOLDE**

But they are not life Tristan. They are the shells of life. And empty ones and in the end all they hold is days and days without love. Love is made by God. Ignore it and you can suffer as you cannot imagine.

**TRISTAN**

Then I will no longer live without it.

**MARKE**

Good. Very good! Come, we will be late!

**ISOLDE**

Late?

**MARKE**

The warriors ride out on the full moon. It is an old ritual. I shall miss you tonight.

[That night Isolde sneaks out into the forest. Marke and his warriors ride together. Tristan leaves the party to find

Isolde.

They make love together]

**ISOLDE**

How many did you love before me?

**TRISTAN**

None.

**ISOLDE**

And after me?

**TRISTAN**

None.

[While hunting the boar Marke falls off his horse]

**MAN**

Lord Marke! Are you hurt?

**MARKE**

Nothing but for my pride.

[Tristan and Isolde bid each other farewell. Back in the keep there is much dancing]

**MELOT**

Tristan, I need to speak with you.

**TRISTAN**

Go ahead.

**MELOT**

We haven't even had a coronation yet to mark tradition. But now he breaks tradition and scares all the barons by naming you as second.

**TRISTAN**

I tried to convince him you would be better.

**MELOT**

Yes well, peace can be just as treacherous as war and I feel that Marke doesn't really...Listen to me!!! Our attention must be on Cornwall now more than ever.

**TRISTAN**

I am sorry he didn't choose you. I am.

[Melot approaches Marke]

**MELOT**

Can I speak to you?

[Marke leaves Isolde's side, Tristan leaves and Isolde follows.  
They hide in a room were they begin to kiss each other passionately.  
Finishing his conversation with Melot, Marke seeks Isolde.  
Later  
that night, Marke makes love to Isolde]

walls]

[Tristan and Isolde are out in a forest clearing together. It is an old ruins, with paintings of a couple on the broken

**ISOLDE**

What do you think became of them?

**TRISTAN**

They were lives... just lived.

**ISOLDE**

I find myself imaging things in this place. I decorate it. Books, a harp there... a child.

**TRISTAN**

Would it be his or mine?

**ISOLDE**

I would have no way to tell, would I? He is a kind man Tristan, I cannot hate him. Yesterday at the market I saw a couple holding hands, and I realised we would never do that. Never anything like it. No picnics or unguarded smiles. No rings. Just stolen moments that leave too quickly.

[In the marketplace Isolde and Marke shop. Tristan steals some herbs and makes a wreath for Isolde. He surreptitiously slips it onto Isolde's wrist as Merlot and Wictred look on]

[Later, Marke goes to his bedroom but finds Bragnae waiting]

**MARKE**

Where is Isolde?

**BRAGNAE**

I don't know for sure, she was having a walk in the garden before and I'm afraid I got tired so I returned. It's my fault.

secret]

[Bragnae goes to find Tristan and Isolde who are meeting in

**BRAGNAE**

You're going to get caught! Both of you! He's looking for you right now, he'll see you! I told you this would

happen!

**TRISTAN**

There is another door here, forgotten.  
This comes up in the bottom chamber  
of the keep.

**ISOLDE**

I hate this.

**TRISTAN**

Hurry! Go on.

[Isolde and Bragnae go down]

**BRAGNAE**

I'm tired of this. I'm tired of lying  
for you. I'm sick of it.

**ISOLDE**

Then don't.

[Isolde goes to bed with Marke]

**ISOLDE**

There is a servings child, quite ill.  
Doing better now.

**MARKE**

I didn't ask you were you were. Your  
heart is beating so fast.

**ISOLDE**

Is it?

**MARKE**

Isolde. Is there anything I can do to  
make you happier. I want to make you  
happy.

**ISOLDE**

I'm fine.

[Wictred speaks to King Donnchadh in secret]

**WICTRED**

She's in love with Tristan. They're  
intimates. If I expose them it will  
break Marke's heart and his hold on  
the other Barons.

**KING DONNCHADH**

How?

**WICTRED**

With Marke's champion in chains, we'll take Castle Dor. You can man your armies unopposed. There will be no one defending you in the waters.

**KING DONNCHADH**

And your price?

**WICTRED**

I want Marke's throne.

[As the King leaves he talks to Bodkin]

**KING DONNCHADH**

When his throne falls apart, we'll go over and pick up the pieces.

[Marke approaches Tristan as he looks over the town]

**MARKE**

Tristan? Can I speak with you? Is it possible... do you think a man blinded by love... Is it possible that that man might not see treachery right in front of him?

[Takes out wreath]

I found this hidden among Isolde's things. Do you think she has a lover? Has she said anything to you?

**TRISTAN**

No.

**MARKE**

Perhaps you could follow her. I can't ask anyone else. I know. I know what you think - I'm acting like a child. Normally I can read faces, but with hers I feel like... I can't be objective. She's so delicate.

**TRISTAN**

You really love her.

**MARKE**

Oh... I do...terribly. I didn't know how empty I was. She sustains me, she thrills me. And when I see this ring, it is a ring of thorns.

**TRISTAN**

The ring is nothing. She's loyal to

you. I am sure of it.

**MARKE**

... If you say so.

arrive

[Tristan is tortured by Marke's proclamation and burns his and Isolde's meeting place. Isolde finds it in ruins. The Irish on ships for the coronation ceremony]

**MAN**

I count nine

**TRISTAN**

If they move they will warn us with a black flag

[The King of Ireland arrives and shakes hands with a waiting Marke]

**MARKE**

You bring an entourage?

**KING DONNCHADH**

I can let myself be alone in my position Lord Marke. But don't worry, they will stay offshore. I miss you.

**MARKE**

My nephew, Merlot of Cornwall

**KING DONNCHADH**

And Tristan, slayer of my best general, winner of Isolde, defender of the alliance. You are a fortunate man.

**MARKE**

Indeed.

Irish.

[Inside the castle the coronation is held in Latin. Marke and Isolde are crowned and take their seats on their thrones. Back at the lookout point the flag bearers are stabbed by the

Dancing happens at the coronation celebrations]

**MARKE**

Tristan! Seems I worried for nothing.

**WICTRED**

May I dance with the Queen, or does Tristan have the next one?

**MARKE**

That's right, you have never danced  
with Isolde before!

[Tristan is pushed forward to dance with Isolde]

**WICTRED**

A new song for Tristan. Slow.

**ISOLDE**

Why did you burn it?

**TRISTAN**

You know.

**ISOLDE**

Meet me there in an hour or I'll die.

[The dance ends]

**MARKE**

I could still teach you a thing or two,  
dancing being one of them.

**KAYE**

Accuse him now.

**WICTRED**

No, no, no. We'll have more than accusations.

[Tristan leaves]

**MARKE**

Is something the matter?

**ISOLDE**

I'm just feeling a little weary that's  
all. I might just go and have a lie  
down.

**MARKE**

Of course.

[Isolde leaves]

**WICTRED**

Friends, friends hear me! We've forgotten  
the full moon isn't it time to ride  
out?

**GENERAL**

No. Tonight it cause for exception.

**WICTRED**

But the coronation should uphold tradition,  
surely it is not to be neglected already?

**MARKE**

We honour it. In half a night. Ride  
out! Where's Tristan?

[Everyone leaves to hunt while Tristan and Isolde race to be  
with each other]

**ISOLDE**

I miss Ireland

**TRISTAN**

Isolde, this must end.

**ISOLDE**

That's like asking me to stop breathing.

**TRISTAN**

It cannot be.

[Elsewhere Wictred leads the hunt to where Tristan and Isolde  
are]

**ISOLDE**

Please don't leave me. Please!

[They kiss only to have the hunting party come upon them]

**MARKE**

Isolde? There is someone... No.

**KING DONNCHADH**

I see how it is in Cornwall. My money  
is good enough, my alliance is good  
enough, but my daughter you pass among  
your lieutenants like a whore!

**ISOLDE**

It's not like that.

**KING DONNCHADH**

I see no relation to me here! I will  
see this peace end.

**WICTRED**

You have brought the allegiance to shame.  
Who would fight for this?

[Wictred and King Donnchadh ride off]

**MARKE**

Seize him. Seize him.

**MELOT**

Behold your hero uncle I would have  
no heroes now.

King

[Further away the Irish march towards Dor. Bodkin speaks to  
Donnchadh]

**BODKIN**

They're ashore.

**KING DONNCHADH**

Prove your worth.

**BARON**

If a man can't rule his woman, how can  
he govern an entire Kingdom?

**MELOT**

He can't.

**LORD**

We have suffered peace.

**BARON**

It's all been coming apart. I can feel  
it

**LORD**

You're right.

[Wictred rides up]

**WICTRED**

There is very little time. Fortunately,  
Donnchadh has no quarrel with anybody  
here. He's asked me to give you a message.

**BARON**

What's this?

**WICTRED**

It is compensation for the men you will  
lose attacking Castle Dor with Donnchadh  
tomorrow. Let's be honest, our people  
need a stronger leader.

**BARON**

And who might that be, Wictred?

**WICTRED**

Melot. Too long the ablest among us  
has been denied his rightful place.  
I pledge you my legiance and offer him

my services as his second.

**MELOT**

I like this plan.

him] [Tristan is in chains in the keep. Marke comes down to see

**MARKE**

I came to apologise. I've been selfish arrogantly thinking that perhaps I'd given enough. At least enough to merit if not your love then at least your respect. You have a home. A kingdom. Why was it not enough? Tell me. Tell me! You do not know what you have done! Everything is destroyed, everything! All because you did not have enough. She's loyal to you I am sure of it. You bloodsucker. What could it had been had I not stretched out my hand to save your life. How I curse that day, how I curse it. And so be with your defence. Then I will go complete your punishment, Donnchadh marches on us as we speak.

[Marke strides away. Bragnae catches up to him in a corridor. She bars entrance to his bedroom]

**BRAGNAE**

She's young. I will not let you harm her!

[Marke moves Bragnae out of the way and enters the room]

**MARKE**

How long?

**ISOLDE**

Since you thought he was dead. I found him wounded on the beach in Ireland. I hid him from my father and I told him my name was Bragnae. So when he came to the tournament at Dunluce to win Donnchadh's daughter he didn't realise it was me. All this time my heart has been his, and I am sorry. He tried harder than you can possibly imagine because he loves you.

[Marke leaves the room in silence]

[Merlot and Wictred walk through the forest discussing plans]

**MELLOT**

I will coax him out, make sure Donnchadh knows this.

**WICTRED**

Of course, of course. You know as things moved along I suspected them for some time.

**MERLOT**

Tristan and Isolde?

**WICTRED**

You know what I could never work out? How it was conducted. How she got in and out of Dor unseen.

**MERLOT**

The tunnel.

**WICTRED**

What?

**MERLOT**

The Roman Tunnel!

**WICTRED**

Show me.

[A henchman released Tristan from the prison and takes him to the riverside where Isolde and Braghae are waiting with a

boat]

**TRISTAN**

What is this?

**HENCHMAN**

The will of the King. Farwell.

**ISOLDE**

I told him about Ireland. He's given us our freedom. Why does loving you feel so wrong?

**TRISTAN**

Get in.

**ISOLDE**

Tristan, if I do this.

**TRISTAN**

For all time, they will say it was our  
love that brought down a kingdom. Remember  
us.

[Tristan pushes the boat away]

**ISOLDE**

Tristan, don't! Tristan! Tristan! Tristan!  
Why?! Tristan!

[Tristan runs back to Dor]

[At Dor they bring everyone into the castle and close the  
gates.

The armies close in on Dor]

**MARKE**

Get the livestock and fuel undercover.  
Put some archers on the ramparts.

**GENERAL**

All the archers have deserted us as  
has half the household.

**MARKE**

And you stay?

**MAN**

If you are surprised then they have  
won already.

**GENERAL**

Come on, hurry!

[The armies gather outside the keep]

**KING DONNCHADH**

Burn it. Their will is as strong as  
milk. The seas will unravel us. Where  
is Wictred with his key?

[At the tunnel entrance]

**MELOT**

It comes up to the Roman foundations  
at the lowest level.

**WICTRED**

This is a godsend!

follow] [They both enter it and Wictred gestures for his men to

traitorous [There is much fighting as the forces of the Irish and  
move barons besiege Castle Dor. In the tunnel, Wictred and Melot  
towards the keep]

**WICTRED**

What will you say to him?

**MELOT**

That he will not make any more mistakes  
and that it is time for him to move  
ba - what's that?!

tunnel. [The two turn to see Wictred's men following them down the  
stabbed] Melot fights to stop them going down the tunnel but is

attempting [The enemy forces break through the outer gates and are  
to get into the keep]

**MAN**

Aim for the front of the line

**MARKE**

They are waiting.

[As Wictred and his men enter the keep from the tunnel below,  
Tristan enters the tunnel from the forest entrance]

**MAN**

The Irish are inside!

**MARKE**

Follow me!

**WICTRED**

Bar the door make sure no one gets in!

[In the tunnel, Tristan comes upon a wounded Melot]

**MELOT**

You.

**TRISTAN**

What happened here?

**MELOT**

A reward for idiocy. A dozen Irish have  
blazed your way.

**TRISTAN**

Melot, I came to aid Marke.

**MELOT**

Everyone lies.

**TRISTAN**

I didn't lead them here.

**MELOT**

No, I did.

**TRISTAN**

Why?

**MELOT**

I thought someone believed in me.

**TRISTAN**

It will be undone.

**MELOT**

Tristan-I'm for the worms-swear to me  
that you are true.

**TRISTAN**

As we were brothers.

**MELOT**

Build my boat.

[Melot dies]

[Tristan makes his way to the keep while Marke and his men do  
battle with Wictreds]

**WICTREDS MAN**

They're here!

**WICTRED**

Keep them back.

**MARKE'S MAN**

Wictred.

**MARKE**

He's trying to lower the bridge

**MARKE'S MAN**

Traitor!

**MARKE**

Give me your shield, we're pinned down!

[Tristan attacks Wictred and his men]

**MARKE**

Tristan!

**MARKE'S MAN**

Him too?

**MARKE**

No, he's with us!

[Marke and his men jump into battle, but not before Tristan is stabbed. Tristan manages to stop the drawbridge falling with his sword. He is again stabbed by Wictred]

**MARKE**

Tristan!

[Tristan stabs Wictred and kills him. Tristan pulls the sword from his body as the battle subsides]

**MARKE**

Tristan! How did you get here?

**TRISTAN**

Secret. Secrets, in the bowls of the keep.

**MARKE**

In the bowls of the keep.

**MAN**

They have reached the palisades.

**GENERAL**

Then we must keep hope.

[Tristan cuts the head off Wictred's body and slowly stands. Marke nods]

makes  
[As the drawbridge of the keep is lowered, King Donnchadh  
his way to the front]

**KING DONNCHADH**

Get back! Ha ha ha! Ha ha ha!

hands] [Tristan slowly steps out with the head of Wictred in his

**TRISTAN**

Behold! The head of a traitor!

[Marke and his generals step out]

**MARKE**

Will you always be little men, who cannot see what was and could be again? There is no middle ground! So slay us or slay him!

**KING DONNCHADH**

Oblidge them. Oblidge them!

Tristan [He attacks people around him, but is shot in the back by an arrow. Suddenly the Irish and the British start to fight. falls to the ground and Marke runs to his side]

**TRISTAN**

Take me out of here. Take me to the river.

drags [Isolde comes to the battle and is grabbed by General who her to the riverside]

**GENERAL**

Hurry!

**MARKE**

Bring her.

**GENERAL**

Marke, you must come, the battle needs you. We'll lose everything.

**MARKE**

I must heed their call, I am the King.

**GENERAL**

We've driven them back as far as we can but they are holding us at the throat.

**GENERAL**

Goodbye my friend.

side] [Marke and his generals leave and Isolde goes to Tristan's

**ISOLDE**

Know that I love you Tristan. And wherever  
you go, whatever you see, I will always  
be with you.

**TRISTAN**

You were right. I do not know if life  
is greater than death, but love was  
more than either.

[Tristan dies and Isolde weeps. We see Tristan and Isolde back  
in the hut in Ireland as she reads to him]

**ISOLDE**

"My face in thine eyes, thine in mine  
appears,

And true plain hearts do in the faces rest;

Where can we find two better hemispheres,

Without sharp north, without declining west?

Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;

If our two loves be one, or thou and I.

Love so alike, that none can slacken, none can die."

[They kiss]

Marke  
until  
planted  
then

Their love did not bring down a kingdom. Legend says that  
defeated the Irish, rebuilt Castle Dor and reigned in peace  
the end of his days.

Isolde laid Tristan beneath the ashes of the Roman ruin,  
his grave with two willows that grew forever intertwined...  
disappeared.

**END**