

LAND OF WOODEN GODS
Viking era 800 AD

Based on the novell trilogy "Land of wooden Gods"
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1 **EXT. INTRO SCENARIO: THE SETTLEMENT BY THE SEA - AFTERNOON** 1

SCENERY NORDIC VIKING LAND ANNO YEAR 800 AD

The "settlement", a Viking farm next to the water in a Baltic Sea archipelago of islands and islets. Forest surrounding the settlement so that the buildings are difficult to detect even from the sea. The boats are sheltered in a natural harbor. The farm consists of a long house (House of Chiefs), a blacksmith shop, two slave cottages one male and one female where the serfs live with smaller animals and chickens in summer.

There is also a cellar and a pigsty. A wooden made fence surrounding the settlement.

At the beach is an old small boat and a new slightly larger boat under construction.

2 **EXT THE SETTLEMENT OF THE VIKING FARM - AFTERNOON** 2

Smoke singles from the roof nook of the long house.

AUSI
(Woman in labor
cries)

The sound of woman in labor comes from the slave cottage.

3 **EXT. SMITHY - AFTERNOON** 3

The smith serf HOLME is working with an iron. Smashing the red glowing edge with his hammer. Stops listening to woman in labor.

4 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - AFTERNOON** 4

The WARRIORS are seated at their given places at the long table and their shields and weapons hang on the wall behind them.

Women thralls ladle stew from pots and the WARRIORS are served in the order of their hierarchy.

Thralls are crowded close together near the door down at the end of the long table.

Holme and Ausi and some other women serfs are missing. Sound of woman in labor reaches into the long house and everybody hear when the baby is born.

5 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT WOMEN THRALL'S COTTAGE - AFTERNOON** 5

Women Thralls, the older AMBA and Ausi's sister DISA assisting Ausi during labor and childbirth.

6 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT SMITHY - AFTERNOON**

6

With his pair of tongs, Holme removes the iron from the glowing forge and hammers it on the anvil with heavy blows. Holme throws away the iron and steps out of the smithy. He listens to the newborn child's crying coming from the thralls' cottage.

A moment of silence. The yard is empty.

Then Holme sees AUSI enter the yard with her baby THORA in her arms.

She pauses, looking toward the forest as if she would like to escape.

Ausi looks up at Holme, the dark figure in front of the smithy. In the approaching dusk the smoke rises from the forge like a bad omen. Holme stands there, silent and powerful, holding his hammer, but makes no move.

Ausi continues reluctantly towards the longhouse.

7 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - EVENING**

7

Ausi enters the longhouse trying to hide her anxiety and tears. She walks carefully past the TRUSTED thralls BIG and SLIM, along the table behind the warriors, until she is across Chiftain KETTIL.

He inially ignores Ausi.

Holme enters quietly and squats at the end of the table where he closely watches what is happening where Kettil is seated.

Kettil uses his long knife to point to an empty space on the table in front of Ausi and she places Thora. Ausi does not dare to raise her eyes to look into Kettil's eyes.

Kettil sees Holme at the end of the table and meets his dark gaze. Eating from the stew with his long knife.

Bayby Thora is lying on her back in front of him.

With the tip of his long knife Kettil lifts away the blanket covering Thora.

People glances at Ausi's blond hair and all the fighters' blond red hair and then to Holme's black hair.

Warrior STENULF eats and seems not to care what happens.

Chieftain Wife GERUNN looks anxiously at Holme and then at Ausi. She senses Holme's threat and lays her arm around her little son SVEIN.

Kettil nods to the trusted tralls to take away the baby Thora.

SLIM hastens to the table, lifts Thora and quickly pulls her to himself. Ausi gives a silent but heart-rending cry and tries to take Thora from Slim but is stopped by BIG.

Big and Slim are forced to pass Holme on their way out but Holme's eyes do not follow them. His threatening gaze remains focused on Kettil, then he gives Gerunn and their son Svein a brief glance.

Gerunn sees the threat on Holme's face and feels a shiver of fear. She realizes deep inside that Holme is now a very dangerous enemy.

Big and Slim quickly disappear into the darkening woods.

Holme sneaks out after them.

8 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT FOREST - EVENING**

8

Once in the protection of the forest Holme stops, listens and sniffs the air like an animal. He begins to move in one direction, stops, listens and changes direction.

Big and Slim move with rapid strides. Thora whines and Slim instinctively pulls her closer to himself. Big and Slim reach a bog, place Thora as protected as they can and quickly turn homeward without speaking a word to each other.

Holme hears Big and Slim in the forest and by the sound of their steps determines their direction. Holme then decides to take a shortcut over difficult terrain and beats his way through the forest. As he approaches the bog, he instinctively senses the presence of animals and increases his speed. From the bog, he hears Thora crying and suddenly sees that a large BOAR is sniffing at the fabric that is wrapped around Thora.

Holme throws himself over the boar pig, which lets go of Thora and flees.

9 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT YARD THRALLS' CABIN - EVENING**

9

The yard is empty except for a dog that wanders around in the darkness, looking for scraps of food.

Disa and Amba are outside the Thralls' cabin, trying to comfort Ausi.

Ausi sees Big and Slim return without Thora and they quickly slip into the men's thrall cabin. Weeping, Ausi throws herself into Disa's arms.

But Amba does not stop watching the forest.

10 **EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

10

In the middle of the bog, which now is lit by the moon and the stars, Holme stands with his daughter Thora in his arms. He opens up the cloth.

Thora is unharmed except for a cut on her leg. Holme lifts Thora gently with one arm so that his hand can hold her head and then moves quickly and confidently back across the bog, into the almost impenetrable forest, across a swift stream and up a hillside.

11 **EXT. CAVE - NIGHT**

11

Holme stops and listens. Peers into the darkness, the moonlight helping him see their location. He then creeps up the slope next to a rock wall. He puts Thora down on her pelt and moves away bushes hold by a stone to expose a small entrance to a cave. Holme crawl into the cave. He takes off his shirt and places Thora in it, then lays Thora on the pelt. Holme closes the cave entrance with the stone and bush, then runs shirtless down the hillside, across the stream and through the forest to the farm.

12 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT WOMEN'S THRALL CABIN - NIGHT**

12

Amba whispers to Ausi.

AMBA

Holme is gone.

Ausi looks with astonishment at Disa, who nods.

AUSI

(whispering gloomily)

Has he run away and left me?

AMBA

You fool! Don't you understand that Holme is trying to save your child?

Amba glances quickly at the old woman thrall KRAKA, the chatterbox, but Kraka appears to be asleep.

Amba watches the edge of the forest. Suddenly she sees something white, moving along the forest edge. Amba gasps. Holme is alone; he has no baby.

Disa hears Amba and sees her reaction and, squatting, tries to move to the gap in the doorway. Disa's curiosity causes her to move so quickly and jerkily that she bumps into Amba, who loses her balance. Amba tries not to fall against Kraka but bump into her. Kraka whines, sits up and says something, then lays down again but does not wake up. Kraka sleeps like a log.

13 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT THRALL MEN'S CABIN - NIGHT**

13

Holme appears at the edge of the forest as a white ghost with his bare chest. The settlement is lit by the light of the moon.

Holme watches the settlement's cabins and open spaces to ensure that there is no one who can discover him. Then he hears a noise from the female thralls' cottage and backs into the protection of the men thralls' cabin. He recognizes Kraka's whining.

That same moment, Holme sees the warrior Erik walk across the yard towards the female thralls' cottage.

Holme creeps even closer to the wall of the men thralls' cabin and hears someone moving inside.

Suddenly Slim looks out. Slim sees Erik who is on his way to the cabin of the female thralls.

Slim turns his head towards Holme but seems to ignore him then disappears into the thrall cabin again.

14 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT WOMEN THRALLS' CABIN - NIGHT**

14

Erik stands outside the women thralls' cabin.

He is tipsy and urges Disa to come out, but receives no answer.

ERIK

Disa!!

Holme sits watchfully in the shadow and waits to see what will happen.

Disa appears and takes Erik by the hand and leads him down toward the water.

Holme creeps quickly across the yard and listens at the women thralls' cabin.

Holme walks cautiously to the door where Ausi waits.

Kraka moves restlessly, but Amba succeeds in keeping her quiet by gently stroking her head.

Ausi looks into Holme's eyes. She understands that the baby is safe.

Ausi gives Amba's hand a warm squeeze, and goes out.

Ausi and Holme come out into the yard. In the bright moonlight, they can be detected from afar. They have to rush over to the darkness around the male thralls' cabin and hide in the shadows where Slim previously looked out. They must also avoid being detected by Erik.

Holme surveys the situation; the smithy is quiet and everyone seems to be asleep in the thralls' cabin.

Ausi looks at Holme, expecting that they will move to the edge of the forest. But instead of fleeing to the forest, Holme moves towards the smithy. Ausi pulls him by the arm. Holme turns to Ausi and whispers,

HOLME

My axe!

Ausi jerks his arm again, but now more firmly. Holme gives Ausi a sign that she should wait, then he runs to the smithy.

Ausi watches Holme anxiously and hears sounds from within male Thralls' cabin. At the same time she hears the voice of Erik, drunk and swearing as he stumbles up the path from the beach. Ausi realizes that Erik will soon reach the yard of the settlement.

The moment Erik comes up into the yard, Ausi sees Holme coming from the blacksmith's cabin.

But as soon Holme sees Erik, he turns around and disappears behind the blacksmith's cottage again.

Erik stumbles and falls just as he comes into the yard. He lies there, and falls asleep almost at once. Disa comes immediately behind Erik. She spits at Erik with disgust as she passes him and then enters the female thralls' cabin.

Suddenly Holme appears behind Ausi. He has an axe and pelt in one hand, and with the other he pulls her behind the cabin. He takes her hand and they then flee into the forest.

15 **EXT. FOREST - NIGHT**

15

In the dark it is a difficult path to the cave and for Ausi it is hard, her distended breasts are swelling with milk and the pain in her abdomen nearly causes her to faint. But her longing for the baby in the cave gives her strength, and Holme's resolute power helps her to persevere. Sometimes Holme half carries her, sometimes she accepts his support, but in the difficult terrain she also has to walk on her own. They move slowly and Ausi has to stop and rest, but the thought of her baby somewhere ahead drives her forward. Trickle of blood run down her legs. Immediately before the stream the forest thickens; they have to fight through the branches and then they reach the stream. Ausi appears exhausted and Holme has to carry her over the stream.

16 **EXT. CAVE - NIGHT**

16

THORA

(crying)

Ausi struggles up the hillside with her last strength and waits impatiently for Holme to move away the stone and bush.

17 **INT. CAVE - NIGHT**

17

Thora is lying on the pelt, wrapped in Holme's shirt. Ausi crawls into the cave, and carefully lifts Thora from the pelt. Ausi then takes Thora in her arms and starts to breastfeed her.

There is soon a glow from the fire which provides the cave with some heat. Ausi glances at Holme gratefully but to tired to say anything she just lies down.

Holme looks around for a while as if to say something. But instead he goes out, covering the entrance with the bush and disappears down the slope and over the rapids. He is soon swallowed by the woods on the other side.

18 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - MORNING**

18

Holme leaves the edge of the forest. The dogs are outside guarding the longhouse as Holme sneaks by the thralls' cabins. He reaches the root cellar and basement Storage shed without being detected. One dog wakes up and wakes the others with its growl. But then the dogs just silently wag their tails when Holme walks past them into the chieftain's house.

19 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - MORNING**

19

The dawn light comes in through the hole in the roof and provides Holme with a guiding light. He sees the shadows of the sleeping warriors who are scattered on the floor against the walls. He stops and listens but hears only the heavy breathing of the sleeping warriors.

Holme takes a spear which is leaning against the wall and gropes his way stealthily up to a chest, opens it and fills the sack with bread.

Then Holme hears a warrior waken violently and sit up. Holme freezes in position. The warrior looks in Holmes' direction but fails to see him and lays down again and falls back to sleep.

Holme is now in a hurry to leave, but stops and takes a bow and some arrows before he exits the longhouse.

20 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT - MORNING**

20

Holme cuts across the courtyard towards the smithy. There he picks out a few arrowheads, fish spear tips, fishing hooks, a knife, a small, nearly finished cooking pot and a sledge hammer.

Holme picks up the sword that he is making for Kettil, weighs it in his hand, but then puts it back down.

He considers breaking it, but is unwilling to destroy his beautiful craftwork. Instead, he hides it by placing it under the blacksmith's workshop.

With his heavy load he is unable to move as quickly and quietly as before. With the least misstep, the equipment he carries hits against each other and make a lot of noise.

The dawn light comes quickly and Holme should get back to the cave and Ausi, however, Holme stops, looks down towards the water and changes direction. He slips down to the bay where the small and larger boats lie on the shore. He moves as quickly and quietly as he can across the yard and meadow towards the little boat. There he hides the equipment and hammer in a hollow tree trunk in the reeds at the shoreline.

He gazes up at the farm houses. He takes a deep breath, runs across the yard and disappears quickly and smoothly back into the forest toward the stream and the cave.

21 **EXT. FOREST STREAM - MORNING** 21

Holme sees traces of blood on the way up the hillside and realizes this is from Ausi. He goes down to the stream and, using grass, he washes away the tracks. He looks around anxiously, but as yet it seems that no one from the settlement has started to track them.

22 **INT. CAVE - MORNING** 22

Holme cautiously moves away the bush. Ausi is already awake. She smiles with relief when she sees that it is Holme. A satisfied Thora sleeps peacefully. Holme gives Ausi half of some of the bread, which she gratefully accepts. But a worried look in her face.

AUSI

Did anyone see you?

Holme shakes his head and nothing more is said between them. He sits down at the cave's entrance and eats his half of the bread while he watches Thora and Ausi from the side.

Ausi takes out a bag of meal. Holme gets water and they cook some porridge. Holme waves over the fire to disperse the smoke so that it will not reveal them.

Ausi shows Holme the wound on Thora's leg but Holme shrugs as if he knows nothing about it. He does not want to talk about the beast whose teeth made the long cut.

23 **EXT. CAVE - MORNING** 23

Ausi crawls out of the cave and walks slowly out on the hillside, turns and gestures for Holme to stay with Thora.

With small, short steps, she walks slowly down to a patch of grass at the stream where she searches and finds herbs and roots; she grinds them against a rock and wraps them in a big leaf.

24 **INT. CAVE - MORNING**

24

Ausi carefully rubs the herb and root medication on Thora's wound. Holme sees that Ausi also has multiple cuts and gestures that he can do the same for her. Holme reaches for the leaf in Ausi's hand and takes it so he can rub her legs. She looks in wonder at Holme.

Holme sits quietly doing nothing but holding the herb around her leg. Ausi looks at him but then lies down and accepts his nursing. She is physically exhausted. The warming fire makes her sleepy, and now she lets fatigue take over; Ausi lies with Thora cradled in one of her arms.

Holme leans against the cave wall. Although the danger is far from over, he can still feel a certain satisfaction. The fire casts its warm glow over Ausi and Thora. The incredibly beautiful "creature" can now be with their baby girl and sleep safely.

When dawn comes, Holme and Ausi are asleep.

The only person who has opened her eyes is the baby, Thora. The morning songs of the birds can be heard from a distance.

25 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT - MORNING**

25

At the settlement, people are waking to a new day. The thralls are called to work by Big and Slim.

They open the pig sty and herd the PIGS to the grassland in the forest.

26 **INT. THE SMITHY - MORNING**

26

Holme's place is at the smithy, and the underlings FULNER and DRUMB feel lost. They look at each other and wonder where Holme is, but decide not to ask anybody.

Instead, Fulner and Drumb take the opportunity to avoid work and sit peacefully in the shelter of the blacksmith's cottage.

27 **EXT. FOREST PIG VALLEY - MORNING**

27

Holme is standing on a hilltop, looking down into the valley where the thralls Big and Slim are watching over the farm's pigs. Holme sees a pig going astray and it forages at the forest edge.

Slim falls asleep and when Big looks in the other direction, Holme creeps up and thrusts his spear through

the pig's neck. He cuts the throat quickly and the pig dies without making a sound.

With his catch, Holme withdraws back into the forest and behind a large spruce as quickly and quietly as he can. Then he gazes up at Big and Slim to see if they have noticed anything.

Big thinks he hears something, turns and stares in Holme's direction. He looks out over the valley but the pigs are calm.

When Holme is sure that the trusted thralls have not discovered him, he drags the pig into the protection of the forest. Then he cuts a piece of meat and hides the pig among the rocks, covering it with pine boughs and then creeps up among the trees to reassure himself that the theft of the pig has not been discovered. Slim has now gone to lie lazily in the grass and the other pigs continue to root around calmly.

Suddenly Big stands in front of Holme. The pig's blood covers Holme's arms and red blood is still dripping from the knife in his hand. Big whines with fear and stands as if paralyzed.

Holme lifts his knife and convince Big to shut up with his knife addressed against Big's throat.

Not quite awake, Slim sits up and sees a shadow move away from Big down in the valley. The next moment Holme is gone.

Slim does not know what it was he saw and calls for Big.

Holme hides in some bushes and waits for the alarm. But it is quiet.

SLIM

What happened?

BIG

Nothing...

Big had looked death in the face and continues to mumble.

SLIM

What are you mumbling about?

BIG

It's nothing.

Slim returns to his place to sleep for a while. Big sits nervously, keeping watch without revealing what he experienced.

28 **EXT. CAVE - DAY**

28

The meat sizzles on a hot stone and Ausi eats with a good appetite.

Holme branches to disperse the smoke. The smell of the cooking meat could travel far, which worries Ausi also. Ausi continuously glances towards the stream and the forest.

Holme walks into the woods to cut some hay so that they can lay on something soft, and it will protect them from the cold, damp floor of the cave. He puts a big pile of the sun-warmed grass on top of the hay.

Ausi stands idly with Thora in her arms and watches Holme anxiously. Before creeping into the cave, Ausi stops and looks straight into Holmes' eyes.

AUSI

They'll want catch you!?

Holme does not answer, just continues placing the hay and grasses in the cave.

AUSI (CONT'D)

I'd rather die than goes back

29 **EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON**

29

On their way back to the farm, Big and Slim try to figure out how to cover up the loss of a pig. They had not seen anyone killed any pig. And that was true. But how would they explain that the pig was gone?

BIG

Maybe the Chieftain won't notice
it?

Slim looks suspiciously at Big and shakes his head at his words.

Slim shows on his stick how the Chieftain counts the pigs.

SLIM

The Chieftain has his counting
stick and he'll be standing at
the fence, moving his thumb for
every pig that goes in. Do you
think he'll miss any?

30 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT PIGSTY - AFTERNOON**

30

Kettil stands at the entrance to the pigpen, counting the pigs with the help of his counting stick. For each pig that passes, he moves his thumb down a notch. When they are inside, he still has a notch remaining.

KETTIL

One is missing!

Kettil raises his stick, waves it and yells at Big and Slim, who quickly vanish back into the forest to look for the missing pig.

31 **EXT. FOREST PIG VALLEY - AFTERNOON**

31

Big and Slim search in the valley around the grazing area.

Big soon discovers traces of blood and marks in the soil from Holme's slaughter of the pig. He quickly cleans away the tracks.

Slim sees what Big is doing and approaches him puzzled.

SLIM

What are you doing?

BIG

(muttering)

The pig is gone. Let's go home!

Slim speculates on the way home about what could have happened and how Kettil will react when they come back without the pig.

SLIM

What if a wolf has been there and we didn't see anything?

He carefully watch the surrounding.

Big gazes nervously into the forest and he is eager to leave the valley.

32 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT PIG STY - AFTERNOON**

32

Slim and Big return empty-handed expecting to be punished.

Kettil turns away from them and leaves the sty.

KETTIL

(to Big and Slim)

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!!!

33 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - EVENING**

33

At the evening meal, both Holme and Ausi are missing.

KETTIL

Where is Holme?

Fulner and Drumb act as they don't know anything.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

What have you been doing today?

The slaves can't tell their chieftain that they have been sleeping all day so they just gesturing "not knowing".

KETTIL (CONT'D)

WHAT???

DRUMB

(frightened)

He hasn't shown up.

FULNER

Gone. The whole day..

Kettil turns to Amba and then Kraka.

KETTIL

Ausi?

Kraka shakes her head.

KRAKA

Gone!

It is clear that Holme and Ausi are missing. When Kettil realizes this, he begins to breathe in such a way that the Thralls find it best to leave the table and flee into the forest.

Kettil takes out his anger on the table, giving it several blows before he calms down.

All the warriors except for Stenulf stop eating and watch Kettil.

KETTIL

(to himself)

They have to be close by.

Kettil looks at the warriors.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

We'll search the woods! Tomorrow!

All of you!

Stenulf eats calmly.

34 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - NIGHT**

34

The settlement is wrapped in the deep darkness of the heavily clouded night.

Kettil lies in his room with his eyes open, breathing heavily. His indignation keeps him awake for a long time.

Kettil'S hands are clenched in anger. He jumps up and screams into the darkness of the longhouse where the warriors sleep.

KETTIL
 He fries my pig !!! Just follow
 the smell!

Kettil receives grunting noises as responses from the warriors and he returns to the Chieftain's room.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
 Use Your nose! Roasted pork.

Stenulf sleeps heavily.

35 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - EARLY MORNING** 35

Kettil hears something and sits up. He listens; a night bird cries out and he lies down again. Gerunn wakes up. Nothing is said, and both try to go back to sleep. Little boy Svein is sleeping quietly beside a worried Gerunn.

36 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT - MORNING** 36

An early morning mist creeps over the bare rocks, the stream and open terrain of the forest; it spreads low over the marsh and meadows.

The fog helps Holme when he returns to once again enter the settlement's Storage.

The forest is like a dark grey silhouette behind Holme as he stands at the edge of the forest and looks over the little meadow that separates the forest from the settlement. The mist dances around him as he quickly crosses the meadow. Crouching forward, he slips quickly under the cover of the trees closest the Thralls' cabin. He silently continues from one cabin to another until he stands at the Storage shed where the salt is Stored.

Holme sneaks into the root cellar and supplies himself with a salt stone, a pot of salted meat and a cloth bag of meal. When he comes out he hears a noise and stops.

Holme can see Svein stumble across the yard all alone.

Holme has taken what he needs and the only thing that stands between him and the forest is baby child Svein. Where was Svein's mother Gerunn? Holme peers at the doorways of the various buildings, but no motion is heard or seen. It is quiet and peaceful.

It seems that Svein is alone. Holme sneaks out of the Storage shed behind Svein and crosses over to the blacksmith's cabin to avoid being discovered. Holme hears Svein give a howl and Holme stops. Svein has seen Holme and toddled towards him. Holme hides behind the blacksmith's cabin. Svein loses Holme and instead turns his attention to a dog that is sleeping in the yard. Then there is another shriek from Svein.

Holme leans down and quickly picks up a stone and throws it to divert Svein, but hit him in the neck by the stone and Svein falls forward. The dog wakes up and barks. Holme runs quickly across the meadow. At the edge of the forest Holme turns to see if anyone else has discovered him.

Svein is lying lifeless on the ground and Holme looks with surprise at his hand and then Svein, who is lying there, seemingly dead.

The door to the house opens, and Gerunn, comes rushing out, uttering a terrible cry.

Holme hastily withdraws into the forest.

People who are still barely awake come out to see what has happened.

Gerunn lifts Svein and discovers the red and blue bruise on his neck. Gerunn shrieks again.

Kettil comes out with a sword in his hand. His eyes are looking for attackers, but then he sees Gerunn with Svein. Gerunn shows Kettil the bruise on Svein'S neck.

The big stone that Holme has thrown lies close to the place where Svein had fallen.

Kettil picks up the stone.

KETTIL

What has happened?

GERUNN

Svein! My son!

Kettil peers into the forest but sees nothing.

Kettil quickly works up a rage and raises his sword against the Thralls. Now there is no way to stop the Chieftain with words.

Kettil shouts out his accusatory hatred of Holme and shakes his sword toward the thralls.

The thralls flee in all directions, but Amba falls to the ground and Kettil approaches her with his sword raised.

Stenulf steps forward, taking a determined grip on Kettil's arm and holds him until Amba has reached safety.

Stenulf persuades Kettil to lower his sword with the words:

STENULF

A slave can never be worthy of
your sword.

Kettil throws away the stone.

KETTIL
 (shouting)
 Slave offence!

At the same time, Svein wakes and Gerunn weeps with happiness; her child is back.

Kettil walks over to the Storehouse and sees that it is open. The salt stone and the salted meat are gone.

Kettil voices his rage with a wild and tormented shout.

Kettil points to the warriors.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
 Until you catch them you'll eat
 with the pigs.

37 **EXT. FOREST RAPID - MORNING**

37

It is starting to rain.

Ausi looks nervously at the forest.

Ausi sees Holme emerge from the forest and cross the rapids. With everything Holme carries, Ausi knows that Holme has been to the settlement.

AUSI
 Nobody saw you?

HOLME
 Svein. I hit him ... with a stone.

AUSI
 Is he dead?

Holme looks into the forest, in the direction of the settlement.

HOLME
 He silenced.

Holme walks towards the cave.

AUSI
 We must leave. NOW!

HOLME
 Not now.

AUSI
 Why?!

HOLME
 ... Wait for ... dark.

38 **INT. CAVE - DAY**

38

It is raining and they stay in the cave. They have enough food. The only thing that happens is that a FOX that has smelled the scent of meat suddenly stand at the cave entrance. The fox runs away when it sees Holme.

Holme looks down towards the rapids but sees nothing other than the forest.

Ausi lies in the cave on the pelt with Thora, talking to her (she talks to Holme indirectly by talking to Thora).

They hear that it is raining harder, and Holme puts another log onto the fire.

AUSI
(rather securely
to Thora)
When it's raining we can at least
feel more certain that nobody is
out looking for us.

Holme notices that Ausi speaks to the daughter. So he doesn't have to answer. He looks out through the opening of the cave, lays his axe next to him and reclines against the wall of the cave.

39 **INT/EXT. CAVE - AFTERNOON**

39

Gradually, the rain eases; they hear the birds begin to sing again. But then they hear the birds' calls of warning. Ausi is worried.

AUSI
The fox?

Holme puts the axe in his girdle, removes the stone and bush and crawls out.

Holme gasps. Ausi hears his gasp and looks towards the cave entrance.

The figure of the powerful Stenulf covers nearly the entire entrance. Ausi's face turns to horror.

Stenulf cares little about Holme. Stenulf walks to the cave and looks curiously into the opening where he sees Thora in Ausi's arms. He looks at Holme and nods appreciatively.

Holme watches Stenulf with all his senses sharp in order to defend himself at the slightest hint of attack from Stenulf.

But Stenulf is as relaxed as if he was on his way to the afternoon nap behind the chieftains house. Not a hint of wanting to retain the fugitives. For a moment it seems almost as if he wants to walk away and let the pair run.

Stenulf turns around and starts walking; he looks back and Holme remains still. Then Stenulf waves his arm "come on" and looks back over his shoulder toward Holme.

STENULF

Let's go back!

Holme does not move, except to remove his axe from his belt and crouches, prepared to leap against the warrior. This seems to amaze Stenulf. What is the smith thinking? Is he not going to obey? When Stenulf understands that Holme is not only defending himself but also the woman and child, he realizes that he is not ordering a thrall smith. The man before him looked like an animal defending its family.

But he was still a thrall. And a warrior doesn't use his sword against a thrall.

Stenulf waves his hand again.

STENULF (CONT'D)

Come on!

But Holme shows no signs of submission lifting his axe.

Stenulf has not yet drawn up his sword and does not want to do so. He has respect for the strong smith. Holme does not show any sign of following; instead Stenulf realizes that the man is preparing for battle. Stenulf picks up a wooden club, the same one that Holme had used before he brought the spear and axe. Stenulf weighs the wooden club in his hand. Holme attacks at that moment, and using his axe he knocks the club out of Stenulf's hand. Now there is no turning back. Stenulf has to take up his sword.

STENULF (CONT'D)

You know that I do not want to
use my sword against you smith,
but I will if I must.

Stenulf stand ready for attack.

Ausi, sees disaster coming. Holme with an axe, against Stenulf with a sword. The outcome was obvious. Ausi takes the spear leaning against the wall of the cave.

Holme dodges the first sword blow, and it strikes his axe. It is obvious that Stenulf does not want to hurt the thrall smith. But when Holme suddenly attacks Stenulf and strikes him with a lethal glancing blow, Stenulf knows that this is a matter of life and death.

Stenulf raises his sword to hurt.

The next moment Holme sees Ausi come up behind Stenulf with the spear and knows that she intends to attack Stenulf.

Holme, realizing the danger to which Ausi is exposing herself, moves at the same time and launches a violent attack on Stenulf. Stenulf parries the blow of the axe and the next moment Holme is lost to the world. Ausi thrusts the spear into Stenulf as hard as she can and slips and falls down the hillside. This saves her life. Stenulf grabs the spear in his hand and swings his sword around in full force where Ausi had just been standing. The sword passes over Ausi's head and breaks the spear into two pieces.

Holme strikes again and, owing to Ausi's attack, can reach Stenulf from the side. The blow from Holme's axe strikes Stenulf in the neck, between his cheek and ear. Stenulf reacts with lightning speed and with his powerful arm strikes the axe out of Holme's hand. Stenulf directs his next strike against Holme, but Holme ducks in toward Stenulf, which he had once seen Arnfast do, and Stenulf just hits Holme's shoulder with hilt of his sword.

Holme can place his leg behind Stenulf and push with his free arm. Stenulf staggers, but does not fall; instead, he counters and causes Holme to fall against a rock wall. The blood sprays from Stenulf's neck and the broken spear sticks out from his side, bobbing at every move. Stenulf looks wonderingly at the blood that splashes down on the rocks, and puts his hand to his throat with a surprised expression on his face.

Stenulf can now easily cut Holme to death because Holme is unarmed against the rock wall and unable to escape.

Ausi, who narrowly avoided the first sword blow, has fallen backwards and she is also within range of a strike from Stenulf. Stenulf stands still, looking at Holme. But rather than slay Ausi and put an end to the blacksmith, Stenulf stops fighting.

Without giving Ausi a glance, Stenulf backs slowly away from them with his eyes on Holme. He then turns and walks down towards the big rocks by the stream's crossing.

Ausi sits up and Holme, seeing that she is unharmed, runs to her quickly and helps her up. They watch in amazement as Stenulf disappears. But they do not see him cross the stream. They assume that he has crossed further downstream.

Now, they cannot wait any longer. They must flee.

They gather up their belongings. Everything small is rolled into the larger pelt. The rope that holds together the pelt forms a loop so that Holme can hang the roll over his shoulder. Thora is placed in the smaller pelt, which is made into a bag that Ausi can carry. All the time they watch for Stenulf, thinking he would surprise them, or that Stenulf would call out to summon other fighters. But it is quiet and no one comes.

While Ausi prepares herself and Thora to leave, Holme follows the trail of blood from Stenulf and creeps up to the crest of the hillside to be able to see down the slope towards the stream.

40 **EXT. CAVE STREAM - DAY**

40

Holme follows the trail of blood down to the stream, past two large rocks to the hidden stream crossing. Then suddenly he sees the shadow of a man. It is Stenulf who sits, leaning against one of the rocks with his sword between his hands.

Holme throws himself backwards to avoid being seen and hewn by the warrior's sword. But nothing happens. Stenulf might not have seen Holme. Holme runs as fast as he can up the cliff, but Stenulf does not follow.

When Holme comes over the crest, he meets Ausi. He crouches and pulls her down so they will not be seen from the stream.

AUSI

What's happened?

Holme puts his hand over Ausi's mouth.

Ausi tries to see down the creek and gets a glimpse of what Holme has seen. Stenulf sits on a stone

AUSI (CONT'D)

(hissing)

He waits for the other.

Holme takes the club and points in the direction he wants Ausi to go with the BABY so that she can flee if the warrior attacks.

Then Holme creeps over the ridge down behind the stones so he can get behind Stenulf.

When Holme is only few meters from Stenulf, he stops and scrutinizes the seated giant's back. The broken spear leans against the rock. A big puddle has formed from the blood from the two wounds. But he is no longer bleeding.

Stenulf just sits, leaning on his sword and the spear.

With the wooden club in his hand, Holme slips closer and takes a step to the side so he can see the warrior's profile. Stenulf'S frozen face, with his staring eyes, show that the warrior is dead.

Holme gives a signal for Ausi to come down.

Ausi cannot help but stops and looks at the giant. She can hardly believe he is dead. As she walks closer, she and Stenulf are the same height, though he is sitting. Ausi takes a deep breath.

AUSI (CONT'D)
How will he go to Valhalla?

Her question does not concern Holme. But Ausi is worried

AUSI (CONT'D)
We must give him food for his
journey.

Ausi places a bit of meat at Stenulf's feet.

AUSI (CONT'D)
Otherwise, he might follow us.

She sees Holme's questioning eyes.

AUSI (CONT'D)
And how will he be burnt and have
a grave stone? We must...

Holme interrupts Ausi, not with words but with a gesture indicating that she should stop talking.

Holme patiently watches the continued attention Ausi gives to the dead warrior and scrutinizes every movement on the other side of the stream. It has already started to get dark and they had to move on.

Holme leads Ausi over the rapids and they move slowly through the dense woods. They stop often and listen for frightened birds or other sounds.

41 **EXT. FOREST - AFTERNOON**

41

Ausi talks to Thora, but so that Holme hears.

AUSI
Stenulf's warrior spirit was
certainly so great that he could
come and take us, even if he sat
there stiff and dead.

Holme does not answer.

AUSI (CONT'D)
Do you think his spirit is strong
enough, that he can join the
warriors in Valhalla without being
burned?

Holme does not answer.

Thora coos.

AUSI (CONT'D)
That's what you think, Thora. I
think that too.

Holme silences Ausi.

Holme and Ausi approach areas where people from the settlement could be moving about. Holme is constantly fully alert. He walks ahead sometimes, leaving Ausi to wait in the shelter of a big fir tree or a few bushes before he motions her forward.

It is going very slowly.

Suddenly they hear voices and quickly hide behind some trees. Thora, who has as yet not made any fuss, begins to wake up.

Four warriors from the settlement walk along trail next to Holme and Ausi. They are Erik, RUNO, ARVE and Faste. Erik stops and points in the direction of the fugitives. ARVE and Faste start walking towards Ausi and Holme; they will have no chance of escaping being seen.

Just then Big and Slim come along the path that passes the trees where the fugitives are hidden. The pigs are running around them.

The warriors begin to laugh. Erik's brother in arms, RUNO, jokes.

WARRIOR RUNO

In any case, you have good hearing
Erik.

WARRIOR FASTE

(laughing)
But you can't tell the difference
between thralls and pigs!

The fighters laugh. Only Erik was not amused with Big and Slim, who disappear with the pigs in the same direction as the warriors.

WARRIOR ERIK

They'll be captured before supper!

WARRIOR RUNO

Otherwise, you'll be eating with
the pigs again.

WARRIOR ERIK

Why should we have to starve
because he put the child out in
the woods?

Holme motions for Ausi to huddle down on the ground then motions for her to be quiet.

Holme detaches the hammer from his girdle and with quick steps creeps toward the settlement.

Holme watches from his hiding place in the glade as the fighters enter the longhouse, followed by the thralls.

But there is no sign of Amba.

Holme returns to Ausi. The afternoon is quickly drawing to a close. Holme finally explains what he had thought that they would do.

HOLME

We Wait here... When it is dark,
... we take the little boat.

42 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - AFTERNOON**

42

Kettil sits with his men in the longhouse. Stenulf is missing.

ERIK

Maybe he got lost.

RUNO

Or maybe he has stumbled upon the fugitives and is hunting them himself.

KETTIL

Search! I do not want my best fighter should get lost.

43 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT BY THE SEA - AFTERNOON**

43

In the dusk Holme and Ausi slip across the yard, past the longhouse and down towards the moored boats.

The small boat is in place. The big boat with poor ropes is also there. Holme smiles and is perhaps for the first time content with the work of his underlings.

He moves over to the reeds and tree trunk where he had hidden the blacksmith's hammer and the other tools. Everything is there and he places it in the small boat.

He peers across the water, which is now calm and quiet; he goes to the large boat and pulls the rudder. It too was fastened with a weaker device.

He then returns to the bushes. Ausi follows and no words are spoken. They arrive at the shore, but Ausi refuses get into the boat.

AUSI

(pointing to the
sea)

Black Water.

Ausi points to the lake shivering.

Holme sits at the stern and urges Ausi to climb aboard and sit in the fore.

Trembling with fear, Ausi stares out over the water.

Thora wakes up and starts whining. Ausi becomes extremely agitated, which the baby senses.

Holme stretches out his hands to take Thora from Ausi.

HOLME

Shall Kettil get Thora?

Ausi gets into the boat. Holme pushes them away from the beach and soon they slip out on the water.

44 **EXT. SEA THE SETTLEMENT - EVENING**

44

Holme listens intently for sounds, but hears only Ausi moaning quietly in fear.

To reassure Ausi, Holme paddles straight toward the nearest island, the little islet where Old chieftain Bigthor had found Holme as a little baby and named him after it, "holme". Holme told all this to Ausi, to get her to think of something else.

HOLME

The old chieftain found me here
at this Islet he called "Holmen".
That's how I got my name.

Holme points out in the darkness in the direction in which the boat is heading.

HOLME (CONT'D)

The island over there... We built
a hut there... the old chieftain
and I.

AUSI

You never talk otherwise, and now
you're talking so that all the
creatures of the night know where
we are.

HOLME

Give an offering to Njord.

AUSI

Njord?

HOLME

The sea god.
(thoughtfully)
The old chieftain always sacrificed
to Njord.

AUSI

Did you do that?

She receives no response from Holme. Ausi takes some of the Boar meat and throws into the water.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Njord, accept my offering, although
I'm a thrall...
(whispering)
And protect us.

Suddenly a seagull dives to grab the meat floating on the lake.

HOLME

Now Njord is satisfied.

Ausi points to the heaven as she can't understand how Njord could be satisfied being a Lake God.

45 **EXT. HOLME SEA - NIGHT**

45

When they reach the beach Ausi hurry ashore. She still look at the boat and the water with great discomfort.

AUSI

Thank you, Njord.

Holme quickly pulls the boat into the cover of some reeds.

When Holme comes up from the sea he sees Ausi standing under a tree, shaking.

Holme walks further into the forest with determination. A hut, nearly dilapidated, suddenly appears in front of them.

They enter the cabin; where the ceiling had fallen in, the moonlight lights up the inside. But they do have the walls for protection. And beds to lie on. Holme spreads the pelt in front of Ausi and invites her to lie down.

Holme walks over and squats down in front of Ausi. He makes sure that Ausi can lay down. Ausi gradually calms down and relaxes.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Have you prepared this?

Holme doesn't answer.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Did you know that we should flee...
This way?

Holme places himself next to Ausi and the baby and puts his arm around the baby. Together they fall asleep when the moon is at its highest in the sky.

ACT 2

46 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - MORNING**

46

Kettil is in the courtyard giving orders to the warriors and pointing out directions.

KETTIL

(Point at Erik and Runo)

You two are taking the boat. Row out to the islet! Get out! Now!

Erik and Runo hurries down to the beach.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

You two take thralls and go against the stream.

Two fighters have instructions that together with thralls explore the woods in the direction that they have seen Stenulf go the day before. Kettil urging them to leave right away.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

The rest follows me!

They move to the shore.

The Chieftain's wife, Gerunn is worried

GERUNN

Who are you leaving behind to protect the settlement?

Kettil places one warrior on guard to make her feel safer.

GERUNN (CONT'D)

One man against that black smith?

Gerunn is not pleased at all.

Kettil leaves without answering Gerunn. And he calls on his warriors.

KETTIL

Come on then!

47 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT BY THE SEA - MORNING**

47

Two younger Vikings, Erik and Runo, arrive at the beach and wonder hesitantly where the little boat has gone. They search a long stretch along the beach but the little boat is gone.

They must now tell Kettil that little boat is disappeared. They speculate about the chieftain's reaction.

WARRIOR ERIK

Who will keep the chieftain down
if Stenulf is gone?

WARRIOR RUNO

We must have space and time to
escape.

They agree that they need to keep a safe distance from
the chieftain when they give him the fateful message.

WARRIOR ERIK

No, we don't say anything. We'll
search ahead and be gone when he
comes down.

WARRIOR RUNO

So he'll think we're on the water..

Erik and Runo set off along the beach and soon disappear
from sight.

The group, led by Kettil, arrive at the beach and find
that the small boat and the other warriors has already
gone.

They pull the large boat into water.

Suddenly one of the warrior sees the small boat and points.

WARRIOR FASTE

There they are!

WARRIOR

(muttering)

But it is... Holme!

Then they realize that it is Holme and Ausi who have
slipped out from the shore in the small boat.

WARRIOR 2

IT'S THEM!

Kettil runs to the large boat

KETTIL

Push it out! Fast! Get them!

The warriors are too few to be able to catch up by rowing
the large boat so they quickly put up the sail and the
boat immediately catches the wind. The large boat swiftly
approaches the small boat.

Holme sees how quickly the large boat approaches them and
decides to try to reach the shore so they can flee further
into the forest. But the little boat is too far from
land.

The large boat picks up good speed and the filled sail arcs widely. Kettil merely smiles.

All of a sudden the ropes loosen from the sail, bit by bit.

Kettil yells at the warriors to fix the sail.

Kettil sits at the rudder, and suddenly the moorings, which hold the rudder in place, also loosen. It is impossible to control the boat and it instantly goes off course.

In his anger Kettil begins shaking an oar toward the vanishing small boat.

It looks so funny that Holme smiles.

The large boat quickly loses momentum and the elusive pair in the small boat gain distance with each stroke of Holme's oars.

Kettil's temper snaps and he begins to howl in the boat.

Now the warriors have to join forces to keep a strong hold against their chieftain. They all stand up, prepared to be attacked by Kettil. At worst, they could throw him overboard. But Kettil's reaction stops with the loud howl.

The warriors sit down at their oars without a sound and await the chieftain's orders. But it is useless to try to catch up with the elusive little boat with so few men on board and without stable tiller.

AUSI

(exited)

They stopped!

The large boat doesn't catch up with them so the fugitives can escape.

49 **EXT. SEA ARCHIPELAGO - DAY**

49

The little boat with fugitives passes new islands.

All the birds and animals make them forget the turmoil.

The deeper into the inner archipelago they travel, the more islands there are.

Later the same day in a collection of islands and channels they almost collide with three large Viking ship lying in wait. They also see a foreign ship approaching.

50 **EXT. ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO - DAY**

50

Holme rows toward the nearest island and they go ashore.

They do not get very far when they hear a deafening sound. On the other side of the island they see the three Viking dragon ships with oars ready to strike.

When the foreign ship is in the middle of the cape, the Dragon ships emerge from the reeds.

Oars quickly whip up and skim the surface of the water.

51 **EXT. FOREIGN SHIP AND DRAGONSHIP - DAY**

51

The pirates from the Viking ships board the alien ship. The battle is fierce but brief. Trademen aboard the foreign ship are slaughtered and thrown overboard. The battle is over as quickly as it began, the water stained dark red.

Missionary WINFRED in the stern, holding a gleaming cross in front of him. He shows no aggression. He gazes up to the sky and seems to calmly talk to someone up there. A cool breeze comes with the stranger's movement.

From the protection of the bushes Holme and Ausi study Winfred, who does not show the slightest sign of fear or cowardice. With his head held high, ready to die where he stands in the boat, he mutters something that sounds like spells.

After a brief discussion if this mystery man holds a hammer and is talking to Thor, the robbers throw Winfred overboard alive.

To their surprise, Winfred does not sink.

Ausi and Holme, see Winfred moving directly towards them in the water.

The Dragonships sails away with the foreign ship in tow.

52 **EXT. ISLAND ARCHIPELAGO - DAY**

52

Winfred swims close to shore and start wading. He lifts his cross into the air and thanks his god.

At that moment a breeze blows up, sending a cool ripple across the water at the beach.

Winfred's 'hammer cross' is huge and shiny.

Ausi is hypnotized by both the man and his Hammer (cross).

Then Winfred, with his cross dangling on its chain from his uplifted hand, wades ashore.

The dragon ships disappear with the alien ship, while Winfred kneels on the beach with his hands clasped, mumbling something.

Holme and Ausi sit still, remaining in the protection of the bushes.

Winfred stand up to his full majestic height and, looking towards the heaven, he prays in a loud voice.

WINFRED

Thank You my GOD for the new Path
you have shown me.

Ausi crouches behind the bushes and at the same time fascinated by the man.

Suddenly, Thora howls. Winfred looks towards the bushes where the thralls are hidden and sees Ausi and Holme.

Ausi lifts up Thora as Holme quickly puts the boat into the lake.

Then suddenly Winfred is standing on the crest. He looks at Ausi and Thora and then at the boat and Holme.

Holme steps up in the way to protect them. He places his hand on his axe, prepared to quickly strike Winfred with a blow.

But Winfred shows no sign of aggression. Winfred stand with his hands held out, palms up, to show that he has no weapons.

Winfred takes a step towards them but stops when he sees Holme put his hand on his axe again. Winfred begins to speak to them in a dialect that they have never heard before. He points in different directions and says:

WINFRED (CONT'D)

Birka?

Ausi, repeats the words.

AUSI

Birka.

WINFRED

Birka. Birka!

Winfred points back over the water.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

Take me to Birka.

Holme, who always have a plan for everything, seems suddenly uncertain. He is looking out over the archipelago.

Winfred takes out a purse which he opens. From this he picks up a coin and hands it over to Holme.

Holme looking at the coin.

Interested in metal, he takes the coin toss and turn at it. Repairing it with the knife and examine what kind of metal it might be.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

Silver ... Silver

Winfred misinterprets Holmes critical examination of the coin and hand over another coin. But since there is a similar to the one Holme previously received, Winfred got the coin back.

AUSI

Holme, you can exchange it for food. I've seen it.

WINFRED

One like this coin is almost enough to fill the boat ... with food

AUSI

He wants to give you the coin to go to Birka.

(Ausi turning to Winfred)

And that little coin, can give us food?

Holme hesitantly shook his head demanding the second coin without saying anything.

Winfred understood.

Where Holme forth his hand again and soon located a coin in his hand.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Now you were a bit cheeky Holme.
(turning at Thora)
Sure, Holme is a bit too greedy now.

But Holme is satisfied.

Holme shows that the stranger Winfred would settle in the boat. Winfred turns his face to the sky and talking to someone who either Holme or Ausi can see.

How much effort they make, they only see the sky and clouds. The stranger kisses his silver cross hanging around his neck.

53 **EXT. SEA ARCHIPELAGO - DAY**

53

When Winfred gets into the boat, he points at himself.

WINFRED

Evangelist ... Winfred.

Ausi turns to Holme.

AUSI
Aha Evangelist ... Winfred.

WINFRED
No No. My name is Winfred and I
am here to preach evangelic gospel.

Ausi certainly don't know the concept of preaching evangelist but she is impressed anyway. Holme doesn't seem impressed at all.

Then Ausi turns to Winfred.

AUSI
Ausi! My name is Ausi.
(pointing at Holme)
Holme, he is smith... a good smith.
(pointing at Thora)
Thora.

Holme is not happy with the conversation but it doesn't disturb his rowing.

Winfred points in the direction of his own vessel that was taken earlier. Since it is in the same direction that Holme considered to be their escape route, he found no reason to change course. To Winfred's delight Holme chose the direction Winfred pointed out.

Their boat rounds the cape and there is Birka, the trade metropolis of the north.

54 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - AFTERNOON**

54

The sight of Birka frightens Holme and overwhelms Ausi. There are so many people; so many boats and buildings; so much noise.

WINFRED
Birka!

AUSI
Birka!

Ausi put her hand in Winfred's in common joy.

Holme maneuvers the boat to a couple of piers so that they can walk to the beach.

Winfred climbs out into the water where bits of food and all possible kinds of garbage float around. This does not concern Winfred.

Winfred takes a grip on the boat and pulls it up on land, and then gives Ausi his hand to help her disembark. Ausi holds Thora to her chest and gasps at all the new impressions.

Full of excitement over their adventure, Ausi steps off the boat.

Winfred turns to Holme and thanks for having brought him to Birka. Holme is sitting in the boat. His entire body reflects his discomfort. He wants nothing more than to be away from this place.

WINFRED

Good bye, and I hope to see you again. You are more than welcome to my church.

AUSI

Thank You. I would like to. But I don't know what s church is.

Ausi smiles. Then Ausi turns to Holme and smiles.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Come along Holme, you can't be sitting there all day!

Holme stand silently, then follows Ausi, who is already ashore.

55 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE HARBOR - AFTERNOON**

55

Queen GUNHILD, who has many slaves in her retinue, passes on the road in from of Holme and Ausi. Queen Gunhild also has two of the king's hird with two women warrior on either side of her. She is wearing a shimmering gold fabric and the most fantastically ornate jewelry.

Ausi is terribly impressed by the Queen Gunhild's clothing and jewelry.

Holme more surprised of women in fighting armor and with swords.

Holme sees a heavily armed man at the gate stopping everyone else so that Queen Gunhild and her entourage can pass undisturbed.

Holme also sees Winfred stop in front of a German MERCHANT, who is dressed in a foreign way that Winfred recognized.

WINFRED

You are a long way from home.

GERMAN MERCHANT

You to preacher...

WINFRED

Do you know where the king's castle is?

The German merchant smiles.

GERMAN MERCHANT

Castle? Well, you'll find his farm on that island, so you need to get there ... by a boat or take the ferry.

The German merchant watches Winfred with mistrust when Winfred disappears towards the bridge where the ferry is moored.

GERMAN MERCHANT (CONT'D)

(shouts to Winfred)

But I believe he is in his Birka palace now! So you can ask for him there!

The German merchant gazes over at Holme and Ausi. He cannot help but give Ausi an approving glance. This bothers Holme.

GERMAN MERCHANT (CONT'D)

You have a big hammer there. Are you a blacksmith?

HOLME

I'm ... smith ...

GERMAN MERCHANT

You live here in Birka?

HOLME

No.

GERMAN MERCHANT

Too bad. I could use a good blacksmith.

AUSI

Is there no one in Birka?

GERMAN MERCHANT

Sure, but they have so much to do that you have to wait long for their commitment to do what you ask for.

The German merchant looks at Holme and his terribly worn and ragged clothes.

HOLME

What do you want?

GERMAN MERCHANT

What I want? What I need to have done requires a master blacksmith.

AUSI

Master smith?

GERMAN MERCHANT

The best!

HOLME

Where?

The German merchant points to the stock shaped entrance.

GERMAN MERCHANT

Close to Birka chieftains House.
You can't miss it.

Holme starts off suddenly, in that direction, as purposefully as when he was in the woods. Ausi tries to follow as best she can.

56 **EXT. BIRKA TOWN - DAY**

56

The warrior at the entrance to the stockade gives Holme and Ausi a passing glance, and they are soon inside the walls of Birka. Ausi looks at all the new sights and all the people with horrified delight. In every direction, here are buildings as far as their eyes can see.

Narrow wooden footbridges are placed out between the buildings to prevent people from walking down in the soft mud. There are so many people that when they pass, one always has to step down from the footbridges and into the mud. It is obvious that the slaves and the lower class people more or less have to walk around in the mud.

But Holme, with his hammer in his hand, has free passage until pirate viking leader VIGMAR and three other Vikings.

The man in the mud who does not get out of the way in time is unceremoniously pushed into the mud in front of Holme. The pirate viking leader Vigmar and the other three Vikings are about to walk right into Holme, but Holme shows no signs stepping aside.

Ausi tries to talk to Vigmar.

AUSI

Do you know the way to the smithy?

Vigmar ignores Ausi and then walks straight ahead, accompanied by the three other Vikings.

Holme and Ausi are now forced to jump aside.

The man in the mud addresses Holme.

MAN IN MUD

I'll show you the way.

Holme walks up the footbridge again but the man in the mud continues to walk in the mud.

MAN IN MUD (CONT'D)
The smithy is near the Royal House.

57 **EXT. BIRKA SMITHY - DAY**

57

Holme looks carefully into the dark hot forge; he steps in and asks a worker with a soot blackened sweaty face for the master smith.

MASTER SMITH
And what do you want?

HOLME
I'm a ... Smith.

The MASTER SMITH studies Holme.

MASTER SMITH
You are new here.

Holme nods

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)
Do you have a name?

HOLME
Holme.

MASTER SMITH
Where do you stay?

Holme doesn't answer.

The master blacksmith walks back to the doorway with Holme and points in the direction they should go to find housing.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)
You will find some abandoned cabins outside the palisade.

The Master Smith calls the underling.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)
Guide our new friend to a cabin...
(pause)
And Holme! We start early!

58 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE COTTAGES - DAY**

58

Holme and Ausi follow the underling. They go out through the stockade gate and towards the abandoned huts.

The underling stops and points to a cottage further away.

UNDERLING
It's empty.

AUSI
They will not come back?

UNDERLING

Apparently not. They have traveled East.

The underling turns back towards stockade gate

UNDERLING (CONT'D)

See you tomorrow.

Holme nods and goes with Ausi toward the cottage.

59 INT. BIRKA FARM - DAY

59

Winfred is led into the royal hall where KING BJÖRN and Queen Gunhild sit midway between two poles in seats of honor at a huge long table. A large number of warriors are seated along the sides of the long wall. The king's courtiers and then the wealthy are seated closer to king Björn. Birka's chieftain SIGMAR is seated on the right of king Björn.

They all stop eating for a moment when king Björn gestures for Winfred to come and sit by his side.

Old viking Olaf is ordered to place a chair between Chiftain Sigmar and king Björn. The addition of the new chair means that Chiftain Sigmar has to move his chair. Chiftain Sigmar is then ignominiously moved backward. Chiftain Sigmar chooses to stand up. Vigmar, who sits next to him, should stand up and make the room for Chiftain Sigmar. But Vigmar remains seated.

The pirate TORVALD is seated on the other side of Vigmar; he does not rise to give his place to Chiftain Sigmar either. Only a third warrior, stands up to give his place to Chiftain Sigmar. It saved Chiftain Sigmar's face slightly, but not completely.

Bodyguard KAARE leans towards old viking Olaf and whispers.

BODYGUARD KAARE

They boarded Winfreds ship!

Winfred sirs down by Chiftain Sigmar's place and there is silence. Old viking Olaf, dressed in men's bodyguard paint, stand behind king Björn and Winfred. He leans forward and whispers the rumour to his king. King Björn Addresses the Assembly.

KING BJÖRN

I hear that the priest's ship sustained an assault, and I understand the priest comes empty handed. You lost your ship and the gifts that were for me.

Winfred says nothing but smiles with a cool expression on his face.

Winfred's stable security makes an impression on king Björn and the warriors. Winfred stands up.

WINFRED

If God wants me to come to the king empty handed, it must mean something. But I don't know what yet.

Old viking Olaf is asked to interpret the dialect of what Winfred just said. Old viking Olaf declared the meaning of the rumours following Winfred's arrival.

OLD VIKING OLAF

The donations from the priest to the King of Birka is now with the ship that attacked our guest.

Everyone around the table knows who it is and they all looked at Vigmar.

KING BJÖRN

Who ever took this ship. It would now be wise to return the plunder.

While the robbers and Vigmar and Torvald discuss whether it was right for the King to recover a bounty, king Björn takes out a rolled paper and calls to old viking Olaf addressing Winfred.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)

Your King promise's one fully loaded ship per year if you can show that your mission is successful in Birka. Is that so?

Winfred nods.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)

The priest Winfred will work and live under royal patronage.

King Björn looks at Chiftain Sigmar.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)

Assuming, of course, that Birka Chieftain Sigmar gives our guest a free 'Lebens unterhalt' as it says in the letter from his king.

OLD VIKING OLAF

(clarifying)

'Free accommodation...'

WINFRED

Where can I stay?

King Björn points to old viking Olaf to guide Winfred.

On the way to the room passing the Wooden God court with Thor, Odin and Frey. Fighter Olav doing some sort of ritual. And then the sign of the cross against the sky and takes out a Jesus cross behind the tunic.

OLD VIKING OLAF
My name is Olaf, and yes I am
baptized.

Winfred looks surprised at Olaf

OLD VIKING OLAF (CONT'D)
You are not the first man of Your
God to come to Birka. I will
give you an advice.

Winfred stops to listen.

OLD VIKING OLAF (CONT'D)
Do not talk about the son of God
who sacrificed himself for man
(old viking Olaf
pauses)
For it is precisely the way we
here in the north sacrificed
Christian priests to Odin.

Old viking Olaf shows Winfred a staircase leading up to a room that faced north. There is an exterior balcony around the second floor, and from Winfred's room he can walk through a door straight out.

From here he can see over the stockade. He sees the burial ground and many small cabins. Some are abandoned and overgrown. Winfred imagines a church on the open field and envisions a successful mission before him.

He wakes from his daydreaming when he, despite the beginnings of dusk, recognizes Holme and Ausi walking towards one of the abandoned huts. He takes out his parchment and begins taking notes.

WINFRED
Olaf, I will probably need all of
your help to save this mission.

Old viking Olaf nods silently.

60 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - AFTERNOON**

60

Holme and Ausi clearing out the debris in the cottage. There is even firewood nearby; a fire is lit and soon spreads heat around the room.

Holme looks at the half-naked Ausi under the pelt and at Thora. Holme rises and wedges the table against the door.

AUSI
 (wondering)
 Is this our cottage then?

Holme does not answer, but this is no surprise for Ausi; she is accustomed to zero response and gives the answer herself. Ausi lies on her back, dreaming of the homestead.

AUSI (CONT'D)
 What if Amba and Disa could see
 us now, with a cottage in Birka.

Holme lies down beside Ausi and looks up at the ceiling.

HOLME
 When winter is over, we'll move
 on.

Holme closes his eyes and falls asleep immediately. Ausi lies still, looking at Thora and her quiet husband. She is, after all happy.

61 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE COTTAGES - DAY**

61

4 years later

Birka is covered in snow and wild dogs huddle tightly outside cabins, searching the rubbish heaps for food.

Ausi sees the tracks of the wild dogs right next to the door, and their sounds frighten her enough to make her remain in the cottage with Thora. Thanks to Holme's lock, she is safe and can fasten the door.

Ausi hear hymns from Winfred's congregation.

62 **INT. BIRKA CHAPEL - DAY**

62

A short walk from Holme and Ausi's cottage just outside the stockade, Missionary Winfred had turned a house into a chapel where he holds church services. Old viking Olaf stands guard at the entrance. A dozen women sit on benches along the walls while Winfred preaches in a language they do not understand. Yet, they are for him and his voice.

If the wind is right, Ausi can hear his high voice in the Distance and, especially when they sing, she longs for the community that exists among the women in the chapel.

63 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - DAY**

63

Holme is working as a laborer in the dark smithy when the supervisor of the royal palace comes in with a broken sword. The master smith looks anxiously at the sword with its gracefully designed hilt inlaid with amber.

MASTER SMITH
 King Björn's?

SUPERVISOR

Kan you save the broken sword!

The master smith knows it is the king's sword and he more or less promises to save the sword.

The hilt has beautiful ornamentation; it is carved, which not everyone can do.

64 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - CONTINUOUS**

64

The master smith tries to fix the sword, but fails to weld it back together.

For several days the master smith works late in order to solve the problem and Holme sees that he is about to give up.

All who worked in the smithy follow the black face of the master smith.

MASTER SMITH

It isn't possible to make such a sword here in Birka.
Nobody can do it.

HOLME

Why not?

MASTER SMITH

Because there is no one who can make such a sword here; we can forge other swords, but not with these thin blades. They break up, just like that one.

Holme stay after work and borrow anvils and iron. Master smith looks at him with surprise, but doesn't stop him.

65 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - CONTINUOUS EVENING-NIGHT-MORNING**

65

It is hard work, but Holme finds the right temperature and method for hammering a thin blade that isn't broken by a thicker blade. Holme tests the durability by beating sword pieces against each other. He is alone in the smithy and exhausted. Outside it is already morning.

66 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING**

66

Ausi is awake and looks anxiously out the door but there is no sign of Holme. She speaks to Thora.

AUSI

Could something have happened?
He has never been this late.

Then she sees a sooty, dark and tired Holme walk along the path.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Why are you so late?

To her surprise, Holme answers Ausi.

HOLME

I need sleep ...

67 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE COTTAGES - MORNING** 67

Early morning. The Birka smith underling walks toward the cottages.

68 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - MORNING** 68

Holme sleeps heavily.

There is a pounding on the door.

Ausi opens it quickly.

The smith underling is standing there.

SMITH UNDERLING BIRKA

Holme needs to come ... right away.

AUSI

He needs sleep.

The underling looks past Ausi and sees Holme, ready to go.

69 **INT/EXT. BIRKA SMITHY - MORNING** 69

EVERYBODY in the smithy is waiting for Holme.

The master smith gives Holme the newly made sword.

Holme follows the master smith out into the backyard.

70 **EXT. BIRKA SMITHY - MORNING** 70

Another smith has a very big sword and challenges Holme. The smith orders Holme to defend himself and before Holme is fully prepared, the smith strikes towards Holme'S head. Holme defends himself with the new sword with such strength that the smith loses his grip and the bigger sword is thrown out of his hand simply by bouncing off of Holme's sword.

MASTER SMITH

We have already tried it. This sword is better than anything else.

The smiths around Holme look at him with appreciation.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)
Where have you learned this skill?

Holme is a bit worried.

HOLME
Our old smith at the farm.

MASTER SMITH
A farm smith? Impossible!

HOLME
He was from another land.

MASTER SMITH
Saxon? That explains it ...
(looking around
the other craftsmen)
They are very good smiths.

SMITH 1
And what about the hilt?... It
must look the same as the king's?

Holme takes the hilt from the broken sword.

MASTER SMITH
You can't destroy the hilt!

SMITH 2
No we can't do that.

MASTER SMITH
It will cost a fortune to attach
a similar one.

Holme wraps the broken sword in a fabric and leaves the smithy.

The other smiths are astonished that Holme acts so daringly. The master smith smile in content.

71 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - DAY**

71

Holme goes into the cottage where Ausi returned from today's visit to Winfred's congregation. She is humming a hymn and showing interest for what is in the fabric. Holme opens the fabric revealing the hilt of the broken sword.

AUSI
How beautiful!

HOLME
Can you do a similar?

AUSI
Who is it for?

HOLME

The King...

AUSI

I know I can do it but it needs
many coins.

Holme hand her a silver coin barely waiting for it Ausi
is heading for the port and the market there.

Holme picks up Thora and follows her.

72 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - DAY**

72

Holme sits down with Thora while Ausi is cruising around
at the harbor market where she can look for someone who
sells amber and bronze thread.

Ausi is full of energy and joy "doing the market". She
looks at all of the wonderful fabrics and jewelry.

Ausi scrutinizes every woman she meets.

Then she finds the German merchant. Holme watches Ausi
as she is given different things to examine. But Ausi
never seems pleased.

Ausi returns to Holme.

AUSI

There wasn't anything good enough.
But the foreign man there,
(pointing at the
german merchant)
He promised to get it.

Holme holds out his hand for the silver coin.

Ausi doesn't seem to notice his demand. And doesn't give
it back.

Holme, now carrying Thora, accepts the fact that Ausi is
not going to return the coin.

73 **EXT. BIRKA COTTAGE - DAY**

73

Ausi walks proudly beside Holme with the coin in her hand.

AUSI

I need clothes... I need to have
the same as the fine women in
Birka.

Holme grunts his rejection.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Otherwise everyone will look at
me as if I am a thrall... and I'm
(MORE)

AUSI (CONT'D)
not. I am the woman of a master
smith...

HOLME
What about the hilt?

AUSI
I think I know ... or do you?

Holme have to take care of Thora and don't want to answer.

AUSI (CONT'D)
Then I need to ask foreign people
at the market place.

HOLME
Who to?

AUSI
Perhaps I'll need to ask several.

HOLME
(grunts accepting)
Mmm...

AUSI
But not before I have new clothes.

HOLME
The King ...

AUSI
Well... he'll have to wait...
won't he?

Ausi is now full of confidence and skillfully manipulates
Holme in order to gain a better situation.

74 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - CONTINUOUS** 74

Ausi buys fabrics freely.

75 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - EVENING** 75

Holme walks into the cottage.

Ausi's new dress hangs on the wall.

Holme does not see the new dress or at least does not say
anything about it.

Ausi takes it down and shows it proudly to Thora.

AUSI
Now I can borrow what your father
wants.

Ausi turns closer to Thora.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Isn't it nice

THORA

Mum is nice.

Ausi smiles. Holme almost shows an appreciation.

Thora looks in Holmes eyes. And Holme nods mildly.

76 **EXT. BIRKA TOWN - DAY**

76

Ausi walks around in Birka Market dressed in new clothes and asks where she can get hold of different parts for the hilt.

77 **EXT/INT. BIRKA CHAPEL - DAY**

77

Ausi then visits the chapel and looks inside. She meets other women who appreciate her new look.

Winfred welcomes her. But he never speak directly to her.

78 **EXT. BIRKA SMITHY - DAY**

78

Ausi visits the forge and waits for the master smith. She remains standing in a doorway.

MASTER SMITH

God Day Ausi, What gives as the plesure of your visit.

Holme does not seem to be against the visit. But he dislikes the smith FRIENDS' appreciative comments and glances.

SMITH 1

Well Holme, that's a woman..

The master smith calls upon an underling and the strongest and biggest smith and gives him the King's hilt.

MASTER SMITH

You follow Ausi to the market and help her find the right material.

The master smith whisper to the smith.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

And you take a hammer in your belt. Don't you allow anyone to comment on or to talk unappropriatly to Ausi.

The smith gets some coins from the mastersmith and walks in front of Ausi, leading the way. The underling following them.

79 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - DAY**

79

Ausi talks to the German merchant and examines his amber.

We see the master smith from a distance, and there is an obvious connection between the master smith and the German merchant.

Instead of paying, Ausi also gets a coin from the merchant. She then notices the master smith walking away.

The underling stand behind Ausi, taking the material that Ausi has chosen.

The underling returns to the city and Ausi understands with great pride that her mission is completed.

And she tightly holds the coin that she received for her mission. The strong Smith escorting her home.

80 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - CONTINUOUS**

80

The supervisor examines the sword. He looks along the blade and hilt critically.

MASTER SMITH

We have made a new. The old one was impossible to repair.

The supervisor scrutinize the new work comparing it with the old.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

This one is durable and strong.

SUPERVISOR

And this is stronger?

The master smith shudders at the threat in the supervisor's voice. The master smith turns toward the darkness, seeking support from Holme.

Holme will not come forward and master smith replies.

MASTER SMITH

The new sword is better than the old. And the hilt ornamentation is just as beautiful as the old.

The supervisor compares the sword mounts.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

In any case, it is not less beautiful.

The supervisor then takes the sword and bangs it against an anvil. The impact is so forceful that it hurts his hand, but the sword does hold.

The master smith wrapped up the sword in a leather cover and follows supervisor out.

LATER

Holme paces back and forth and joins all the others who are standing inside the gate and looking towards Birka "castle's" major port.

When the master smith returns, he walks straight to Holme.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

The king has ordered 5 similar swords ... without amber and gold inlays... The king said he was very pleased.

All in the smithy looks at Holme with astonishment.

SMITH 2

Now you can work every night!

The other smiths laugh.

MASTER SMITH

You should move into town.

No answer from Holme.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

Here it is safer.

HOLME

It is safe in the cottage.

81 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE HARBOR - EVENING**

81

Holme stand at the palisade looking past the harbor towards the islands and the deep forests. His desire for peace and quiet gets him to walk with his eyes in the distance.

82 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - AFTERNOON**

82

Ausi sews the new coin onto the back of her belt.

Holme walks into the room where Ausi has prepared an evening meal. He is tired, hungry and black with soot and just wants to sleep.

Ausi invites him to dinner.

Holme greedily ladles in his food.

Ausi pokes at her food in frustration.

AUSI

Don't you have anything to tell me? Where the king satisfied with the sword?

Ausi turns to little Thora.

AUSI (CONT'D)
 We were in the chapel today ...
 met the women. The underling's
 woman was also there ...

Holme looks at Thora but says nothing.

AUSI (CONT'D)
 We will go there again tomorrow.
 Won't we Thora?.. Then we can
 here the news about your father's
 success ...

Holme lies down without even responding and closes his
 eyes to sleep.

AUSI (CONT'D)
 (bursting out in
 frustration)
 I had more companionship at the
 homestead than I have here...

Holme tries to sleep.

HOLME
 Home ... stead?... Companion...

AUSI
 I have heard how they sing in
 Winfred's church. I want to be
 there and see it!

HOLME
 So ... go and see it.

Ausi hugs Holme and gets black with soot.

Seeing Ausi black with soot makes Thora laugh. Now also
 Holme understands how he must look.

The snow in the kettle over the fire melts into water and
 Ausi washes both Holme and herself. The beautiful Ausi,
 with her soft white skin and her beautiful blond hair
 looks like a natural essence of the flickering glow of
 the fire. And she lays down near to Holme.

83 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - MORNING**

83

Holme wakes up and thinks that Ausi still is asleep.

HOLME
 If the king sees such a beautiful
 creature, ...

Holme looks at Ausi with love and appreciation.

HOLME (CONT'D)

We are still refugees and you might be recognized.

To Holme's surprise Ausi answers.

AUSI

I'll keep my head down and cover myself with soot .. I'll do anything you say to make you not worrying about me visit the chapel...

HOLME

(to Thora)

It's perhaps better that way, so mother won't be running around being eyed by one greedy warrior after another.

Holme does not talk directly to Ausi. Ausi giggles at Holme's sudden jealousy. So many words at once are rarely heard from Holme.

AUSI

(to Thora)

There are only women in the chapel so your father don't have to worry.

84 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE - MORNING**

84

A pale morning light appears in the distance as Holme and Ausi leave the cottage. Thora is well wrapped and Ausi carries her on her back like a backpack. Ausi has some fabric around her head as a kerchief, and this conceals her face.

As they approach the stockade gate Holme turns to Ausi and adjusts the veil so that her face is hidden.

85 **EXT. BIRKA CHAPEL - MORNING**

85

As soon as Holme and Ausi entered the stockade Ausi wants to go to the chapel. Holme follows with Thora holding his hand.

A converted chapel thrall stand outside the chapel, inviting people to enter.

CHAPEL THRALL

The road to heaven for everyone.
Thrall or farmer, all are equal
before God.

The chapel thrall's words to a FARMER and his WIFE cause the farmer to lift his sword and throw the chapel thrall to the ground. The only thing that prevents the farmer from further hurting the chapel thrall was old viking Olaf, who stand a few feet away with his hand on his sword.

Some people around laugh maliciously at the chapel thrall who struggles in the mud. Old viking Olaf of the Royal house helps the chapel thrall to his feet. Holme and Ausi think it odd that a warrior of the Royal house is helping a slave.

Ausi extends her hand to Thora in order to get her into the chapel. Thora wish to remain with Holme. In the end, she follows mom Ausi.

Holme waits for Ausi and Thora to go into the church building before he walks to the smithy.

86 **INT. BIRKA CHAPEL - DAY**

86

The chapel is so crowded that people have to stand during Winfred sermon. Old viking Olaf interprets and Ausi understands a lot of the meaning of the words. She watches, wide-eyed and awe when he spoke.

OLD VIKING OLAF

First comes faith and hope and
love, but greatest of all is God's
love. To all, woman, serfs, and
men.

At these words, Ausi feels something strong, deep inside herself.

Ausi turns to a woman beside her.

AUSI

What is God's love?

Winfred goes to Ausi and pats her gently on the head. Thora does not like the situation and avoid his hand.

Winfred does not yet have recognized Ausi.

WINFRED

What God gives is like that you
give from your heart without
expecting anything in return.

(pause)

As you give of your breast to
your baby, and asking for nothing
in return.

Ausi looks straight into Winfred's eyes. Suddenly, he recognize Ausi, recoils at the thought of what he just said and he blushes.

AUSI

You said that God gives this to
women and serf and last you
mentioned men.

WINFRED

Yes. God puts the weakest first.

AUSI

Then you must mean children and serfs.

WINFRED

Yes, children, serfs and women.

87 **EXT / INT. THE HOMESTEAD SETTLEMENT NAVE - DAY**

87

Spring is melting the snow at the Homestead. The warriors sit at the long table, speculating over the disappearances of Stenulf and blacksmith thrall. Chiftain Kettil sits on a bench, trying on different lether boots. A traveling SHOEMAKER is by the fireplace, his empty backpack on the floor. Svein (10 years old) tugging at his tools and materials. The shoemaker tries to take back his things and makes Svein sad. His mother, Gerunn, shouts to him to stop bother the shoemaker. Svein has to turn his whole body to see her. There is a big bump where Holme's stone had hit him, and the stiffness in his neck had become permanent.

WARRIOR

You, shoemaker! You have been around in the neighborhood.

SHOEMAKER

Well, I've probably been on every farm from here to Birka.

WARRIOR

Have you seen a giant warrior called Stenulf?

The shoemaker shakes his head while he helps Kettil with a pair of shoes.

WARRIOR (CONT'D)

A blacksmith ... Holme?

SHOEMAKER

Nah.

WARRIOR ERIK

With a beauti... woman ...
(looking at Gerunn)

GERUNN

... With a child, a girl?

SHOEMAKER

Nah ... but ... However, there is a new 'skirtman' from the South.

WARRIOR

What is a 'skirtman'?

SHOEMAKER

He talks about a God in heaven
who you cannot see but who knows
everything about everyone
It is a strange God ... He died
on a cross but still lives.

The shoemaker lays two sticks to form a cross.

SHOEMAKER (CONT'D)

The last 'skirtman' became a slave
and then they nailed him to a
cross to silence him. They'll
probably do the same with this
skirt man also.

Kettil tests walking his new footwear.

KETTIL

If these don't last until we come
back from Birka, I will hang you
in them.

The warriors around the table burst into laughter.

SHOEMAKER

I stand well with the King. He
wears my shoes and boots.

88 **INT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - NIGHT**

88

At night, in the Chieftain's small room Kettil and Gerunn
are laying in bed.

GERUNN

We should look up the King ...

KETTIL

What!!??

GERUNN

And offer him a great blot
sacrifice.

KETTIL

For what reason??

GERUNN

For us and our farm to win the
King's good graces of the blot.

Kettil listens.

GERUNN (CONT'D)

Then Kettil's farm will count on
support.

KETTIL

Support for what?

GERUNN
To capture our fleeing smith.

KETTIL
It was a long ago.

GERUNN
In Birka they might know.

Kettil agrees. There is something in Gerunn's proposal.

89 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT WATER - MORNING** 89

At the shore, the new boat is loaded by the thralls and ready for departure. Kettil, Gerunn and fighters entering the boat.

90 **EXT INT. BIRKA FARM - DAY** 90

Kettil and his entourage stand outside the king's palace in Birka. Kettil and Gerunn walks in.

Kettil asks the guard to get him an audience with the king and holds out his gifts.

The guard from the king's hoard shows the way and Kettil and Gerunn soon stand before king Björn. King Björn is not particularly impressed with the animal sacrifice as promised.

GERUNN
(Whispers to Kettil)
"Present Disa ..."

Kettil somewhat disturbed by Gerunn pushing him.

KETTIL
a beautiful young girl ...

GERUNN
... To ...

KETTIL
Frey, that will ensure future
good harvests ...

GERUNN
(whispers to Kettil)
... And great success for the
King.

KETTIL
... And great success for the
King.

King Björn is full of attention, and everything that Kettil promises the royal court is noted by the supervisor and the courts high AEsir priest.

SUPERVISOR

A promise of a human sacrifice is a major obligation, an obligation that you must satisfy. Does chieftain Kettil understand this?

Kettil nods.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

In return, it means special benefits for the family during the coming nine years, until the next sacrificial ceremony. It provides a right to demand services and to receive the benefits of the King's support at court.

Gerunn nods, beaming.

Gerunn presents her wishes to Kettil

GERUNN

(whispering to Kettil)

We can ask for help for the capture of the escaped thrall couple, and then secure Svein as his future as chieftain.

KETTIL

(In silent but angry voice to Gerunn)

It will be many years before Svein is chieftain!

King Björn has stopped listening and the audience is over. Gerunn is somewhat disappointed by almost being evicted by the bodyguards around the king's court, but Kettil and Gerunn are still satisfied with what they accomplished.

91 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - DAY**

91

Holme stands deep in the blacksmith room when he hears voices from the entrance. Kettil stand there with the sword from the homestead that Holme not had completed. Holme hides under the blacksmith's hut.

KETTIL

I have been with the king ... He has advised me to let you complete this sword ...

The master smith studies the sword.

MASTER SMITH

Well, I know someone who can do that.

The master smith sees Holme backing as far as he can into the darkness.

MASTER SMITH (CONT'D)

Who did this?

KETTIL

My slave.

MASTER SMITH

A slave?

KETTIL

Yes.

MASTER SMITH

This was done by a blacksmith.

KETTIL

Yes, and slave ..

MASTER SMITH

It is not possible that a simple farm blacksmith who is a slave could do this!

KETTIL

If you want to know, he was on our farm and I made him a slave.

MASTER SMITH

So he was a free man. What caused him to become a slave?

KETTIL

(Proudly)

I became chieftain when my father died so I just made him slave!

MASTER SMITH

I've never heard of a master smith being a slave.

Kettil took it as sign of his strength.

KETTIL

But I had one!

Kettil begins to look a little annoyed.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

My father found him as a child and brought the bastard home, so it's up to me what I want to do with him. Isn't it?! I'm the chieftain now!

The master smith nods and Kettil calms down.

MASTER SMITH
Your father treated him like a
slave?

Kettil becomes really angry.

KETTIL
No, he treated him like a... family
even though I was the only son!

The master smith does not seem to care that Kettil is
angry. But he raises Kettil's unfinished sword.

MASTER SMITH
Whoever did this cannot be other
than a master blacksmith.

KETTIL
Anyway, can you complete it?

MASTER SMITH
Yes...

The master smith knows it is Holme's work. When Kettil
disappears, the master smith goes to Holme and gives him
the sword without a word being exchanged between them.

Holme moves slowly towards the doorway and peers anxiously
after Kettil and his entourage. Holme watches them go to
the chapel.

92 **INT. BIRKA CHAPEL - DAY**

92

Winfred is standing in front of his small congregation.
Ausi is infatuated of his charisma.

WINFRED
Tomorrow we will all get baptized,
and be saved in the church of
God.

THRALL
Can slaves go there? ... To God?

WINFRED
A serf is wellcomed to be closest
to God.

Ausi becomes intoxicated by Winfred's talk but a man in
the audience is not happy.

MAN 1
I have done everything. I have
prayed and sacrificed, but have
not received anything that I
desired.

Ausi looks in wonder at Winfred to see how he will handle
the unruly man.

Winfred warmly opens up his arms and urges the UPSET MAN to understand what God meant.

WINFRED

It is "more blessed to give than to receive". What you have done pleases God.

But the upset man remains angry and walks toward the exit.

The door opens and the Chieftain's wife, Gerunn stand there with his son Svein and a woman thrall, it is Ausi's sister, Disa.

Both terrified and happy, Ausi is now forced to hide while she wants to do nothing other than to run up and embrace Disa.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

Welcome to our church.

Winfred walks among the people of the congregation, placing his hand on their heads and asking God to bless them. When he comes to Ausi, she bows down her head, primarily so that she will not be recognized by Gerunn.

Winfred does, however recognize Ausi, although she is dressed as a city woman with fine bronze buckles and bracelets. Gerunn watches Ausi, but sees only her clothes and jewelry. Gerunn looks enviously at the fine bronze buckle and at the adorable beautiful bracelets.

Winfred raises his voice for the closing ceremony and Gerunn forgets about Ausi for the moment. Ausi retreats and hides behind some other women.

93 **EXT. BIRKA CHAPEL - DAY**

93

Holme looks at the open area in front of the chapel and sees that Kettil and his entourage are about to leave. What he did not see was that Gerunn had gone into the chapel.

Holme sneaks out and, with quick steps, he soon arrives at the chapel.

Old viking Olaf opens the door for Gerunn.

Gerunn comes out of the chapel.

Holme and Gerunn meet face to face, but when Gerunn comes out she is dazzled by the bright sunlight. With Holme's face so black with soot, she does not recognize him.

GERUNN

Get away from my face, you ugly creature!

Disa stops just behind Gerunn. At the same time Ausi creeps up to Disa and whispers her name. Disa thinks that she hears something and stops. She turns around and sees Ausi but hardly recognize her.

GERUNN (CONT'D)

Disa! Come on!

When Gerunn orders Disa to come she has to obey immediately.

When Gerunn turns back toward Holme, he has gone back into the smithy.

Gerunn walks quickly down to the stockade and Ausi creeps cautiously towards the door.

Then Disa realize who might have tried to contact her. She whispers to her self "Ausi?" And turns around to see if she is there.

Ausi has returned to the chapel and is hesitating on the threshold.

OLD VIKING OLAF

Are you going out or ... in

Ausi steps out.

Some of the king's bodyguard from the palace show an obvious interest in her beauty. Glancing at her and talking about her.

Holme sees this from his hiding spot behind the chapel, but waits in frustration.

94 **EXT. BIRKA TOWN - AFTERNOON**

94

Holme marches out, takes Ausi by the arm and pulls her away from the bodyguards.

The master smith sees the impending danger, and calls to the underling.

MASTER SMITH

You know where Holme lives. Go ahead of Holme and make sure he does not run into the man who was here just now.

The underling runs down the boardwalk sees Holme turns towards him and motions for him to wait until Kettil has proceeded to the harbor where their boat is.

95 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - AFTERNOON**

95

Ausi and Holme are cleared to go out where they can see Kettil's boat leave the field of vision behind the next island.

Holme sees someone that looks like Thora alone in the harbor.

HOLME
Where is Thora?

AUSI
In our hut.

HOLME
Alone?

AUSI
The neighbor woman has her.

Holme recognizes the neighbor woman who stand and flirts with a merchant and has completely lost track of Thora.

Holme rushes down to the port and lifts Thora. Then he walks with quick steps towards their hut.

Ausi follows.

96 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - EVENING**

96

Holme comes into the cottage with Thora.

Ausi follows shortly after.

Holme cooks but says nothing.

AUSI
She said she would look after
Thora.

Holme tries not to frightened Thora with his frustration.

Ausi sense what is going on in Holme's mind.

AUSI (CONT'D)
So, are you going to lock us in
here?

Holme makes a fire.

HOLME
No, you can do it your way but
then you leave Thora with me.

AUSI
In the smithy?

HOLME
Yes! Or you be with her here!

Ausi goes to Holme to calm him down.

AUSI
 Tomorrow we will all be baptized
 so we can go to paradise.

HOLME
 What?

AUSI
 We will go down into the lake and
 have water poured on our heads.
 So Winfred told us.

HOLME
 You? In the water?

AUSI
 Yes! Winfred will keep us safe.

HOLME
 And?

AUSI
 We can go to paradise.

HOLME
 What?

AUSI
 It is the gate to Valhalla for
 the slaves,

HOLME
 We are no slaves!

AUSI
 And there we will sit next to
 God.

HOLME SCOWLS

AUSI (CONT'D)
 I want you to be there and see
 me. Can you do that please? It
 would make me very happy.

97 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - DAY**

97

The following day Holme and Thora watch as Ausi walks down to the shore where a CROWD has gathered, and the people are wading into the lake one at a time.

Winfred comes up from the water and gently guides Ausi into the water until it is up to her waist. Trembling and scared, Ausi looks at Winfred, who helps her regain her confidence and then baptizes Ausi in the cold water.

WINFRED

Now you are baptized in Christ's name. And all of you have a place in paradise.

Everyone who is baptized is given a wooden cross as proof of their Christianity. Winfred holds a short sermon on the beach.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

To get more room before fall and winter, we must build a church.

Winfred points to a hill behind the stockade.

The reaction among the baptized and viewers goes like a shock wave.

BAPTIZED 1

But that's the old place of execution.

WINFRED

On the contrary. Now it will be a place of peace, blessed as a sanctuary of God, and all the lost souls will have a home.

Ausi listen mesmerized.

Holme sees how Winfred attracts Ausi.

BAPTIZED 2

Surely the spirits of the dead will come to take revenge on us.

Holme takes out his anger by swatting at an insect.

WINFRED

A safe place to rest. Come into God's warm embrace and rest at His bosom.

Holme lifts up Thora, looks at the place where the new church should be and walks away.

98 **EXT. BIRKA COTTAGE - MORNING**

98

The flowing sound of a psalm being sung is heard from the new church building on the place of execution. Ausi sings softly and gazes wistfully towards the emerging church and Winfred, who is leading the construction.

Thora is dancing in the early summer grass. She is now five years old and Ausi makes a new groove in a rod to mark Thora's age. Thora wanders up to Holme, who sits on a stone outside the cottage, his eyes fixed on the deep forests at the horizon. Holme's mind is dark and his mood low.

Holme looks dejectedly at Ausi and lifts Thora and leaves the cottage.

Winfred sees how Holme walks away to the smithy with Thora.

As soon as Holme disappears Ausi hurries to the church building.

99 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - MORNING**

99

Several people at the place of execution are dragging logs, and in the midst of them stand Winfred. With so many helpers the church will be built rapidly. The people all stop working and Winfred gathers them all to the dinner break. Winfred thanks God for the food. The people sing a hymn and sit in the grass and on the logs.

The Christians are cheering happily when Ausi arrives, and she goes straight to Winfred to receive his blessing.

100 **EXT. BIRKA PALISADE - MORNING**

100

Holme puts down Thora and they both walk through the gate to Birka and to the smithy.

101 **INT. BIRKA SMITHY - DAY**

101

Holme pounds on an iron. The only thing that can get him back into balance is for him to pound his sledgehammer against an iron substance.

Master smith asks nothing, but only offers Holme's anvil and the sword that was already being forged.

Suddenly the common enemy, Winfred appears at the entrance to the smithy. With a friendly voice Winfred invites them all to the chapel.

Then the rhythmic clangs of sledgehammers escalate. And soon Winfred's words are drowned by the SMITHS' hammering.

Thora runs to the backyard to avoid the noise.

Winfred smiles gently and leaves the door opening.

The smiths stop and laugh a lot.

Winfred returns in the doorway.

WINFRED

No sledgehammer can overpower the
bright message God wants to give
you.

Another smith blows into the bellows so that a cloud of black soot is sprayed towards Winfred.

All the smiths laugh again and the master smith watches Holme and his blacksmith defiance with a smile on his face.

Black with soot, Winfred walks back to the chapel.

Thora stand at the door to the backyard and sees how the smiths treat the priest.

102 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - DAY**

102

The new church is halfway completed and it is already possible to imagine its magnificence. The CHURCH BUILDERS rejoice at the rapid progression.

Winfred leads the work and does not hesitate to lift weight. Now that Ausi is always nearby and together with him helping with the building, log for log, Winfred is happier than ever.

Winfred and Ausi are on the same side of a log, sweating and panting with effort and their hands and bodies are often in physical contact with each other. Winfred is getting attracted to Ausi. Despite the innocence of Winfred and Ausi's joint effort, there is no escape from what he feels.

103 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - AFTERNOON**

103

The evening sun is low over Birka. Holme walks with a sleeping Thora over his shoulder.

The church is in silhouette owing to the low backlight and the shadows. Yet he sees that the church building is now more than halfway finished and a lot of people are working there.

Holme goes to the church building where he finds Ausi alongside Winfred.

With restrained anger Holme hands Thora to Ausi. Holme takes Ausi by the arm and pulls her back toward their cottage.

104 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - NIGHT**

104

Ausi is wakened that same night by a dreadful noise coming from the direction of the old place of execution and the new church building. Ausi discovers that Holme is gone. She hears logs rolling and a roar when they hit the rocks and stones further down the hill.

When Holme comes home, Ausi lies still. Holme and Ausi see each other in the darkness. Ausi wants to ask what he did, but she already knows or suspects. She also knows that Holme will not respond. Holme lies down and closes his eyes. Holme feels a sort of satisfaction for the first time in quite a while.

105 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - MORNING**

105

It is early the next morning when Winfred sees the devastation. All the work has been destroyed.

Holme is on his way to the smithy and sees Winfred standing in the destroyed building.

As the church builders arrive and discover the mayhem, rumors spread quickly about the rampage of lost souls. The perception is that the place is full of the spirits of the executed who are angry and now want vengeance.

Winfred can see that the soot from the logs is from the blacksmiths hands rather than from evil spirits.

Winfred begins to pull the logs back up the slope alone; the church builder are soon helping him and the building of the church is underway once again.

Ausi is depressed and watches for a while. She knows who carried out the demolition and she is ashamed before the priest. She hears complaining voices.

BUILDER 1

It must have been Thor ...

BUILDER 2

... Showing his anger.

BUILDER 1

... With his hammer ...

AUSI

(to herself)

It was most likely Holme's hammer.

Winfred urges them to see God's intent.

WINFRED

We shall rebuild the church and show that those who are baptized do not give way to anyone other than God in heaven.

Faces black with soot look out from the smithy and grimly watch the reconstruction.

EVENING

Everybody is leaving the church for the night except for Winfred and Old viking Olaf.

Olaf wants to give Winfred a weapon so that he can defend himself. Winfred holds up his cross.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

This is my weapon.

Old warrior Olaf chooses to stay with Winfred at the church building site.

NIGHT

At midnight Winfred wakes up and sees the shadows of three grimy men who are moving around the church building. Winfred gets up and goes to meet them.

WINFRED (CONT'D)

Welcome dear friends.

Winfred gives them God's blessing in a friendly tone and stretches out his hands to show that he means well. The moment Winfred sees Holme he is slapped across his chest and falls to the ground. The other two smiths hesitate, horrified at Holme's direct violence.

Old viking Olaf is awakened by the commotion and gets up with his sword raised in the air.

But Olaf is unable to see anything in the dark, and runs in the wrong direction.

OLD VIKING OLAF

(shouting)

I see you evil makers! The King
will have your arms chopped off!

Olaf swings his sword back and forth so that even Winfred has to keep clear.

SMITH 2

The King will be gone for a long
time;

SMITH 3

Much will happen before he returns.

Holme and the other two smiths retreat into the darkness.

WINFRED

So much strength, so much hatred!
God, why don't you let him be on
my side?

106 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - NIGHT**

106

Ausi is waiting anxiously in the hut with a wooden cross at her breast.

AUSI

Oh GOD protect us from Holme's
anger.

Holme comes in through the door and takes the wooden cross from her and throws into the fire.

HOLME

You are not going there anymore!

107 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - DAY** 107

The next day comes and goes but no Ausi. Winfred sees Holme go to the smithy. The building of the church is now continuing undisturbed, and the structure is growing rapidly again.

Ausi comes out and sees Winfred on his way up the path. Ausi runs into the house to make herself presentable. When Ausi is only half dressed, Winfred knocks on the door and steps inside.

108 **INT. BIRKA COTTAGE - MORNING** 108

Ausi's pure beauty causes Winfred to forget why he came. Ausi's innocence and voluntary humility are an overwhelming temptation.

Winfred stretches out his hand to bless Ausi's head, her strap falls down and reveals her breast. Ausi stands motionless and can feel Winfred's hand move down to Ausi's cheek, shoulder and down to her breast. Winfred stands there, trembling, with Ausi's breast cupped in his hand. Winfred looks into her questioning eyes, and sees complete innocence.

AUSI

Are you praying for me now?

Winfred stops. Suddenly the spell is broken. With something that sounds like a sob Winfred backs out of the door.

Ausi walks towards the door after him sees Winfred disappear into the forest.

109 **EXT. BIRKA AESIR TEMPLE - AFTERNOON** 109

Smiths sit in the temple, drinking their mead. The master smith has just sacrificed a goat and the AESIR TEMPLE priests show their gratitude for the great sacrifice by praising the master smith and telling him that Thor is now content, and the Aesir temple priests smear the wooden statue of Thor with the goat's blood. Mead flows and the smiths are becoming increasingly intoxicated. The master smith tells them all about the forthcoming major festival of sacrifice, the willingness of women and what a great year would come out of it.

MASTER SMITH

Everyone must have been at the big sacrifice at some point. It guarantees fertility and a rich life!

SMITH 1
Yes, but not for all. Some will
be hung from the victims' tree.

SMITH 2
And the women are willing...!

The smiths laugh loudly.

The master smith leans towards Holme.

MASTER SMITH
Only the young and free women can
do as they want.

SMITH 2
And beautiful thrall women do as
we want.

The master smith notices Holme's worried face.

MASTER SMITH
Any woman who already has a man
is safe.

SMITH 2
Safe? There are many youngsters
difficult to stop.

The smiths burst out in laughter. Except for Holme, whose
eyes darken. The master smith shoves smith 2 for not
keeping quiet.

MASTER SMITH
Do you think Holme will come with
us with such talk?

SMITH 2
We'll be together and can take
care of each other.

Holme's uncertainty causes the master smith to be even
more determined to ensure that they will all stick together
and make the journey together.

MASTER SMITH
And we promise you Holme that we
will protect your woman.

The smiths agree loudly. Holme stand up, his legs shaky,
and throws his Tanekard to the ground so hard that mead
flies in all directions. The smiths are so drunk that
nobody reacts. With his outbreak Holme increases the
animalistic and violent celebrations. Several smiths
also throw their Tanekards hard to the ground so that
mead splashes and some smiths pour mead over the wooden
image of Frey with his gigantic erection.

Holme turns around without saying a word and staggers home.

110 **EXT. BIRKA COTTAGE - EVENING** 110

It is still light when Holme staggers up the path and almost falls into the house. Ausi looks at Holme with astonishment, as she has never seen him like this before. Holme takes his tools, fills his backpack with food, lifts up Thora in his arms and walks out.

Ausi runs after Holme and tries to stop him, but Holme waves her away.

Holme is not steady on his feet and drops his tools. He is so intoxicated that he has to sit down on the path to pick them up. Ausi quickly takes Thora from Holme, but Holme does not notice her. Holme falls asleep, sitting on the path and leaning against his backpack. Holme sleeps there throughout the night.

111 **EXT. BIRKA COTTAGE - MORNING** 111

It is dawn and the cold drizzle runs down Holme's face. But this does not wake Holme. A dog lying next to Holme starts to growl. A BIRKA RESIDENT who wants to pass on the trail is approaching.

Holme rises somewhat unsteadily on the muddy trail and starts walking towards the smithy.

112 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - MORNING** 112

On the way to the stockade gate Holme sees Winfred working on the church building with the help of a few slaves. Winfred tries to heave up a log by himself but drops it and in the slippery mud it slides a long way down the hill. A slave on the way to help Winfred sees Holme approach, his sledgehammer half raised. One look at Holme causes the SLAVE to flee. Holme walks around among the Christian slaves and men, half intoxicated and walking dizzily.

With threatening hatred and his sledgehammer Holme scares away the whole assembly. No warrior, nobody from the King's court came to the rescue.

What could they do? Holme just walks around with the sledgehammer over his shoulder. Soon Winfred sits down, exhausted, alone and abandoned in the mud.

113 **INT. BIRKA AESIR TEMPLE - DAY** 113

The blood of the AESIR temple flows in the King's courtyard.

Winfred is powerless and, seeing his former church members also engaged in blood sacrifice, his mission seems hopeless.

Winfred also sees how animals are painted with the special symbols of the Aesir priests.

114 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - DAY**

114

The demolished church's wooden poles lie in a giant pile of wood.

Winfred sees the misery and gives up. Not even the King has made an effort to help the increasingly ostracized and degraded Missionary Winfred.

Old viking Olaf follows him sullenly but Winfred is as socially isolated as if he lived in a deserted Birka.

Winfred turns to the winter sky and tries to talk to his God and his Bible, but he receives no response and no consolation.

Ausi stands in the doorway with a bowl of porridge which Holme takes without a word before leaving for work. His curtness and bad mood have not improved.

Winfred down at the church building site all alone. Holme passing him without a glance.

115 **EXT. BIRKA COTTAGE - DAY**

115

Ausi takes Thora and walks toward the ruined church building.

116 **EXT. BIRKA LOG CHURCH - DAY**

116

Ausi sees Winfred sitting huddled on one of the logs mumbles something monotonous while he wrings his hands. His cross fall in front of him in the mud. He picks up the wet and muddy cross, holds it against his chest and utters a deep and anxious, sobbing lamentation.

Winfred's misery and humiliation gives Ausi clarity.

Ausi turns homeward. Ausi talks to Thora, trying to explain.

AUSI

The priest isn't who I thought he was and neither is his God.

Ausi looks up at the sky as if to receive a sign.

AUSI (CONT'D)

Yes, it sounded beautiful, that all are equal and that the highest will serve the lowest, but we also have to be able to take care of ourselves.

Ausi stops and thinks about what she has said. Her infatuation with Missionary Winfred and his words is over.

117 **EXT. BIRKA HARBOR - MORNING**

117

The boats in the harbor are loaded with people and animals and are all prepared to travel to the great sacrifice in Uppsala.

Thora throws her arms around Holme's neck and Holme looks at the woman NEIGHBOR.

The woman neighbor nods and lifts up Thora to wave goodbye.

Holme and Ausi sit in the smiths' big boat on their way to the mainland and sacrifice ceremony in Uppsala. Ausi is excited over a new adventure. Holme is worried about both Thora and Ausi.

118 **EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE - AFTERNOON**

118

The highest branches of the trees in sacrificial grove are stained yellow by the afternoon sunlight. The place of the great sacrifice is empty except for the TEMPLE PRIEST, but large numbers of people and ANIMALS are approaching from all sides.

The stately gold-plated AESIR temple walls form the foundation of the impressive Wooden God Court. It is now mainly the ceremony for the fertility goddess Freya.

The offerings in front of the wooden idol of Freya are polished.

SCENERY

GOLDEN AESIR-TEMPLE in uppsala is located next to a large ash (tree of life). One can imagine the temple on a raised platform on either natural flat rock disc or flat hill where one might put some sort of exalted tiled floor. There may be a sort of limited ceiling on the pillars without long walls. A ceremony location in the open air.

In the midst of the temple around the exposed spot is four carved wooden deities in male sizes: Odin and Thor, a large chested Freya and Frey with giant erected phallus.

Behind the sacred site shines golden metal that is steeped in a timber fund. The Sacrificial stone is a flat stone and carved with pickled red color. Odin's ravens depicted in models and hovers over the temple and there are also other important portrayed mythological figures. Ships, guns, rectory helmets with horns and more.

in front of them before they are taken to the temple for sacrifice.

Disa, Ausis' sister and the sacrificial gift from Kettil, is painted in Freya characters. She is brought in front of the court and presented to King Björn, chieftains and warriors.

A sound of appreciation follows the presentation of Disa.

People are drunk and excited, waiting for the next victim. In the temple courtyard Disa and a young man for sacrifice appear, scantily dressed, and now Ausi sees that it is Disa.

Ausi wants to rush up to Disa but Holme holds Ausi back.

When Holme sees Disa he understands that Kettil and his warriors are here. Holme keeps Ausi under tight control. Ausi's glazed eyes shows that she cannot handle the situation and it can quickly become dangerous. The MEN around move closer, lusting after Ausi but she does not notice them.

AUSI

(to Holme)

Why is Disa there and what are they going to do with her?

In a heated dance Disa entices the crowd with her sexually provocative dance. Disa is dazed and does not know what is happening. The young man for sacrifice dances with Disa, the light from the fires silhouetting their bodies, performing sexual acts in front of the CROWD who are now in a heightened frenzy. The excitement rises to its peak.

A woman in the crowd makes sexual advances towards Holme. Her intrusion and invitation are so abrupt that Holme loses his grip on Ausi.

Suddenly, in a moment's inattention from Holme, Ausi is torn away from him by a MAN. The other smiths are of no help.

In the confined place with so many people, Holme has no chance of seeing where Ausi has gone and does not know in which direction he should go to look for her.

124 **UPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, BEHIND THE TEMPLE - AFTERNOON** 124

Winfred creeps behind the temple and shoves dry grass into the walls and under its floor. Winfred then lights a fire in several places in the temple's floor boards.

125 **UPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, TEMPLE COURT - AFTERNOON** 125

When Disa and the young man for sacrifice have completed their act, the temple attendants run up and take them to the place of sacrifice.

First the young man for sacrifice and then Disa. The knife slices across the throat of the young man for sacrifice; he dies without a sound. But the proceedings are interrupted when it is suddenly discovered that the Temple is on fire. Disa, now alone, flees into the crowd.

Winfred does not try to flee. In the commotion that ensues, Disa, dazed and confused, is lost in the MASS OF HUMANS trying to save themselves. Disa saw what had happened to the young man and then realized it is her turn.

Winfred is arrested and taken before the King Björn, who knows Winfred but still shows no mercy.

Before his execution Winfred forgives his killers just as Jesus did, and soon Winfred is also hung in the tree.

126 **EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, TEMPLE - AFTERNOON**

126

One of the temple priests walks over to King Björn.

TEMPLE PRIEST

The female sacrifice has not been completed and she's disappeared.

King Björn turns towards the chieftain Kettil who is sitting not far from him.

KING BJÖRN

Chieftain, your offering has escaped, so it is your task to find her or give another woman in her place. Failing that, your wife will take her place.

It takes a moment for Kettil to comprehend that his wife Gerunn may have to take Disa's place.

King Björn points at Gerunn who is seated next to Kettil.

Gerunn gasps in horror.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)

You have until the tomorrow's dawn... and the sun comes quickly this time of year.

Gerunn is taken hostage at the temple court.

127 **EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, CAMPING - NIGHT**

127

Kettil finds his vikings and orders them to search for Disa. But most are drunk and with other women and take no notice.

Kettil has to go out alone on a hopeless search. Just as Kettil starts to get depressed and tired and is about to

give up, Kettil sees Ausi lying in the grass drunk, about to be raped by a warrior.

Kettil rushes forward and knocks away the warrior.

KETTIL

She is mine.

The warrior sees that Kettil is a chieftain and rises up, surly, and looms away without a fight.

128

EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, TEMPLE - DAWN MORNING

128

BEFORE SUNRISE.

Kettil leads Ausi before King Björn and presents the clouded Ausi as the sacrificial offering in compensation for Disa and asks for the release of his wife Gerunn.

Kettil is met by doubt, as the master smith is standing with king Björn.

MASTER SMITH

Chieftain Kettil can't just go
and take any woman he wishes!

Ausi is dressed as a city woman of high rank. King Björn looks at Ausi with appreciation.

KING BEAR

How does Chieftain Kettil claim
this woman?

KETTIL

She is my runaway serf!

None of the king's men believe Kettil. The angry voices of King Björn and the Council attract Holme's attention.

When Holme sees Kettil and Ausi, Holme seizes his axe, ready to die to free Ausi. Holme jumps into the center of the Council with his axe and a murmur goes through the assembly.

The warriors reach for their sword's but King Björn subdues them with a gesture. To draw a sword at a Council seat was forbidden. Here is Holme, a blacksmith, with an axe in his hand. King Björn guesses what is going on.

KING BJÖRN

Chieftain Kettil, you have boldly
taken this man's woman to replace
your own?

KETTIL

He is also my slave!

Kettil points at Holme.

Holme lowers his axe. King Björn recognizes the smith and asks if he is not the one who made the King's sword.

KING BJÖRN
According to your master
blacksmith, you are the one who
made my sword.

King Björn holds out his sword and Holme nods 'yes'. This confirmation makes all but Kettil and his warriors recognize the status of Holme as a free man and master.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)
This black smith, who is well-
known for weapon forging in
Birka... is your slave?

KETTIL
Yes.

KING BJÖRN
No! This will not do.

Then King Björn laughs, and all those around him laugh too.

KING BJÖRN (CONT'D)
You can't be so desperate that
you go and take the first best
woman in town to save your own
wife's skin.

Neither King Björn nor any other think much of Kettil. And Holme discovers with surprise that Kettil is being ignored. His former chieftain is not a danger and Ausi don't risk facing capture or punishment.

Gerunn, not believing her eyes, is angry, frustrated and terrified that she, above Holme and Ausi's social status, is now facing her own dreaded fate.

129 **EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, TEMPLE COURT - DAWN**

129

SUNRISE IS APPROACHING

It will be light so, soon the sacrifice of the female must take place. Gerunn is led by the temple attendants to the altar while the first rays of the sun lick the tops of the trees in the sacrificial grove.

Gerunn is so paralyzed with horror that the temple attendants have to carry her to the altar. Gerunn's body is laid on the alter and the knife is raised.

A temple attendant sees Disa behind the big temple tree and commands some MEN to catch her. The ceremony is stopped.

The MEN lead Disa to king Björn who commands the ceremony to proceed with Disa.

Gerunn is released and falls unconscious to the ground.

In tears, Kettil runs up and embraces Gerunn and carries her away. Kettil tries to fight his emotions but it is too much for him.

130 **EXT. UPPSALA SACRIFICIAL GROVE, TEMPLE - MORNING**

130

Kettil draws everyone's pity for his situation.

By now Ausi is sober and she recognizes her dearest sister Disa. But Holme pulls Ausi away. If Ausi reveals that she knows Disa, she would also reveal to everyone that Kettil was right.

Ausi resists but Holme starts to lead her away. As Ausi turns and looks over her shoulder, she sees her little sister Disa slaughtered.

Holme feels a hand on his shoulder. It is the master smith.

MASTER SMITH

It's best for you and Ausi to get away from here quickly, before your enemies have time to rally their warriors.

131 **EXT. UPPSALA FOREST - EVENING**

131

The smiths find a camp that provides good protection. In the dying embers of the campfire the smiths and their women sleep safely next to each other.

Ausi and Holme are close together and Ausi is unable to stop her silent tears.

Ausi mourns her sister Disa and is afraid that now they will be captured. But Holme comforts her and strokes Ausi's forehead. For the first time quite a while, Holme shows tenderness and Ausi can lay in his arms.

At last they are together as before. Finally Holme and Ausi fall asleep.

132 **EXT. UPPSALA FOREST - MORNING**

132

The master smith is awakened by a kick in his side. It is Kettil who is standing with a sword over his head. The other smiths are also wakened; the smiths grope for their axes, but the axes are gone.

Kettil's warriors and Vigmar's pirates surround the smiths. The master smith recognizes some of them even from the Birka chieftain's court.

Without either excitement or anger Kettil explains that he is only demanding his rights.

KETTIL

I'll take what's mine then you
can go back to sleep. And you'll
get your weapons back later.

Then Holme pulls out his knife. Kettil looks at Holme's knife with amusement and then at the warriors' swords.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

(calmly)

If anyone is considering attacking
us, Ausi will die first. Then
you Holme.

Four Birka pirate warriors are already standing with Ausi and Holme, their swords drawn. Holme is ordered to drop his knife, so he throws it down.

Ausi and Holme are captured. Kettil's warriors tie them up and lead them away.

The master smith picks up Holme's knife.

MASTER SMITH

You'll get it back when you return.

133 **EXT. UPSALA FOREST - MORNING** 133

The Birka pirate warriors receive payment from Kettil. They now have their silver and leave Kettil's entourage.

134 **EXT. UPPLAND SIGTUNA COAST - DAY** 134

Kettil's entourage arrives at the Sigtuna coast where their boat is moored.

Kettil's boat is already in the lake and Kettil orders his warrior to smash up the smiths' boat.

Then they rush to the boat almost overfilled with the addition of Holme and Ausi.

135 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT BY THE SEA - EVENING** 135

The large boat approaches the shore at the settlement.

Kettil and his entourage rejoice. Not Holme and Ausi.

Kettil, his entourage and Holme and Ausi step ashore and are met by the mail thralls; Big, Slim, Fulner and Drumb, the female thralls Amba, Kraka and Klegga.

Kettil turns to the forge helpers Drumb and Fulner.

KETTIL

Bring a strong chain.

Kettil turns to Big and Slim.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
Lock Holme to the anvil.

Kettil turns to the thrall maids Kraka and klegga.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
(shouting)
And the two of you should ensure
that Ausi is kept confined in the
women Thralls' cabin. And is
guarded at all times. If you
fail, I will cut off your ears.
Is that clear?

Kraka and Klegga know very well that Kettil would carry out his threat so they immediately take Ausi in the most harsh way.

Amba, the older female thrall, can only watch and she realizes that Kettil has no confidence in her.

GERUNN
And you, Amba, you will have to
work harder than you've ever done
before; you will have work for
Disa too!

KETTIL
Out in the forest and get wood.

136 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT NAVE - NIGHT**

136

Darkness falls over the settlement and the only sound is the rattle from the forge where Holme is chained to the anvil.

137 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT LONGHOUSE - MORNING**

137

Kettil and his warriors and all the thralls are gathered outside the longhouse.

Ausi, half naked, lies in wooden god courtyard.

KETTIL
I promised that you would get the
whore. But you have to fight to
win her.

Holme hears Kettil from the blacksmith forge and sees Ausi laying on the ground in the wooden gods courtyard.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
Who wants to fight for a little
pleasure with the whore?

All the warriors raise their fists in the air.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
 Everyone, eh? Then I must ask
 Holme if he's prepared to fight
 for her. Well, slave, do you
 want her?

Holme stand up and looks hard at the warriors; the warriors
 are looking forward to the battle.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
 A change in the game, my warriors!
 The first one who defeats Holme
 will win Ausi.

The warriors look inquiringly at Kettil.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
 Yes, he is chained to the anvil
 and will remain so. Those who
 manage to cut his leg will win.

GERUNN
 Cut his leg?

KETTIL
 We need him alive don't we.

GERUNN
 Why?

KETTIL
 To work in the smithy!

WARRIOR RUNO
 What weapon?

KETTIL
 Whatever you prefer.

WARRIOR ERIK
 And Holme?

KETTIL
 Well, if you think he should have
 a weapon, it may as well be his
 hammer then.

WARRIOR FASTE
 And if a warrior gets hurt?

KETTIL
 Holme can't harm a warrior. He's
 chained and you are trained
 warriors with two arms.

The warriors smile at Faste.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

There are two ways to start this fight. One way is the highest ranked begins. The second way is that the highest ranked decides who starts.

WARRIOR FASTE

But then you will decide.

KETTIL

Yes, you're right, but I'm not fighting for the whore so... my highest ranked warrior Faste will start.

Gerunn gives Kettil an appreciative glance.

One of the warriors in the group votes for lots to be drawn, as that would be the fairest way to decide.

WARRIOR FASTE

Then that's the decision! Lots it is!

Kettil puts seven blades of grass of different lengths in his hand.

The young warriors pull first; STIG draws the longest straw and has to begin.

STIG looks at Ausi longingly. Erik, Runo and ARVE have the second longest straws. And Faste draws the shortest. Warrior Faste looks at Kettil with disappointment.

Kettil approaches Faste

KETTIL

(whispering)

When you'll meet a tired Holme you got a chance...

Faste looks surprised at Kettil.

KETTIL (CONT'D)

Believe me. Holme will defeat my warriors even fenced and weaponless.

Holme takes the warriors down one after the other without being seriously injured, and he does not seriously wound any of the warriors.

Holme breaks down the youngest with force so that they have to give up. Holme beats Erik unconscious. Runo becomes unable to continue after a heavy blow to his stomach and Holme just knocks down ARVE and makes him faint by sitting on his chest. Then it is Faste's turn.

Faste has seen that Holme's right arm is hurt and Faste continuously hits Holme there. After several blows Holme's right arm is unusable. The fight is long and hard and Holme, tired after the previous five fights, can hardly manage to defend himself with his left arm. Finally, Holme loses his hammer and Faste can strike him with his sword.

GERUNN

Kill him!

Faste looks at Kettil.

FASTE

You need your blacksmith.

KETTIL

Yes, take off his foot so that he can't run away again.

Ausi pleads for Holme and throws herself in front of Kettil.

AUSI

Spare him!

Faste waits for Kettil'S orders.

138 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT YARD THRALLS' CABIN - DAY**

138

At that moment the farm is attacked by the smiths from Birka. The smiths are rushing with drawn swords and spears and Kettil does not have enough warriors to mount a strong defense.

The master smith sees that Holme's right arm is hanging useless. The master smith's eyes are lit by hatred for the Chieftain Kettil, and the master smith goes in hard to attack, but Kettil is prepared and fells the master smith with a single blow to the leg.

The other smiths stop their attack. Some smiths help the master smith to his feet. The master smith is not badly injured but is bleeding profusely from the cut on his leg.

Now the smiths outnumber the warriors. Holme lifts up a sword with his left hand and, still chained, attacks Faste with a blow to his foot. Faste falls over.

Then, Holme attacks Kettil.

However, Kettil manages to run into Holme and knock him down. Holme is now open for a deadly blow.

Gerunn stops Kettil and looks at the smiths. The warriors are outnumbered and the smiths are ready to kill them all if they harm Holme.

GERUNN
If you kill Holme now, you're
dead we are all dead.

Gerunn cockily challenges the smiths.

GERUNN (CONT'D)
Let the thralls purchase their
freedom.

Kettil hesitates.

MASTER SMITH
How much?

KETTIL
What?!

MASTER SMITH
How much for Holme and Ausi?

Holme watches the master smith.

HOLME
You want to buy me?

MASTER SMITH
Be quiet now, Holme, and let me
handle this.

Gerunn and Kettil are considering what to demand.

GERUNN
How much are a *master smith* and a
fertile and strong slave woman
worth?

KETTIL
I just want to see him crippled.

GERUNN
Me also, but not here.
And if we can get silver for them,
that makes more sense than possibly
losing everything.

Kettil nods.

KETTIL
What should we demand?

GERUNN
He defeated five warriors. So
what are five male warriors worth?

Kettil turns to the master smith.

KETTIL
Holme is worth 20 pounds of silver.

The master smith looks at Kettil with surprise.

KETTIL (CONT'D)
It's not negotiable.

GERUNN
And it is due now. If you can't
pay, Holme and Ausi stay.

The master smith turns to the smith. They talk together
briefly.

MASTER SMITH
Sorry Holme. We don't have so
much. You'll just have to wait
until we get it.

KETTIL
We will not wait.

AUSI
(cries)
Do not leave us. At least buy me
free.

MASTER SMITH
So how much for the woman?

GERUNN
Two pounds of silver

The master smith hands over the requested sum.

Ausi is detached from the rope.

MASTER SMITH
We let Ausi free.

Kettil goes mad when he hears this.

AUSI
How much did you demand for Holme?

GERUNN
As much as 10 whores would not be
enough.

AUSI
I just wonder how much?

KETTIL
18 pounds of silver.

MASTER SMITH
Thor's thunder will punish you
for this exorbitant price.

Ausi loosens her belt and gives it to the master smith with her eyes fixed on Holme and without giving Kettil or Gerunn a glance.

AUSI

Master, please count.

The master smith finds the silver which is sewn onto the back of Ausi's belt.

With great surprise, he counts out an amount that covers the price for Holme. Then he keeps three silver coins.

The master smith takes 15 silver coins and hands them to Kettil.

MASTER SMITH

I'll keep three pounds of silver
for the boat you wrecked.

But Kettil is standing flat-footed.

Gerunn takes the silver instead of Kettil and carries away the precious metal.

Holme is freed from the chain by the smiths.

Holme points at his foster mother Amba. He takes a silver coin from master smith, throws it on the ground and take Amba by the hand to follow them.

Kettil becomes insanely angry when he sees this and rushes towards Holme with his sword drawn.

Holme lifts his hammer and strikes Kettil on the forehead with a single blow.

Kettil falls to his knees, pauses, then falls forward.

Gerunn runs up to the fallen Kettil. She tries to scream out her pain but there is no sound.

139 **EXT. THE SETTLEMENT BY THE SEA - EVENING**

139

The smiths walk down the beach to the waiting boat together with Holme and Ausi and they leave the settlement. Their boat sails out on the lake, headed back to Birka. Somewhere in the south a bell rings.

Ausi hears the bell and watches the black water that's still lit by the evening sun.

140 **EXT. FOREIGN HARBOUR**

140

A foreign ship with a NEW CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY in the bow is setting sail.

END