

Draugr
written by
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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Vast, snow covered mountains. Jagged and ominous, stretch to the horizon.

SIGURD, 50's, heavily bearded, weary eyed, covered in animal furs and leather armor, trudges through the deep snow.

His breath, visible in the frigid temperature, escapes his mouth in large puffs. A sheathed sword hangs from his hip.

He stops, surveys the area.

The extensive landscape seems void of life. Eerie silence, aside from a subtle breeze. Dense, towering vertical clouds loom above.

Sigurd pulls out a leather canteen, takes a sip of water. He lowers it, when:

A black shadow catches his eye. Circular, heavily contrasting to the white surroundings.

A cave.

Sigurd stares at it in the distance. A look in his eye; fear.

He reaches up to his neck, which contains a wooden charm attached to a thin strand of rope. He removes it, closes his fist around it, raises it up to his forehead. Eyes shut tight.

SIGURD

(softly, in Nordic
tongue)

Ek'm mit pe'r, ok pu're mit me'r.
Par til endiinn or timi.

He brings his fist back down and opens his hand, starrng at the wooden charm: a tree, with branches and roots visible, encompassed in a circle.

The sound of wind disappears, replaced with crackling firewood...

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

A cooking fire dances in the middle of a small wooden structure. Sigurd kneels over EMBLA, 40's, who lies in bed asleep.

Sickly and pale, covered in sweat, dark splotches on her face. Staggered breathing.

The wooden charm is around her neck.

Sigurd dabs her forehead with a wet cloth. His eyes... devastated.

Embla opens her eyes, sees Sigurd, smiles weakly.

EMBLA

Hi...

Sigurd smiles back warmly.

SIGURD

My love.

They look into each others eyes. Sigurd dabs her forehead again. His eyes now afflicted. Embla notices:

EMBLA

It will be okay.

Sigurd shakes his head.

SIGURD

Not if I stay here. Not if I...
just sit here, and watch you...

He trails off. Eyes well up.

EMBLA

Sigurd. Look at me.

Sigurd obliges. Her face, intent.

EMBLA (CONT'D)

Whatever happens... Hel decides.
There's nothing you can do.

SIGURD

There is.

Beat. Shadows from the fire dance on Sigurd's face.

SIGURD (CONT'D)

Fornheimr.

Embla stares at him, a sudden panic in her eyes.

EMBLA

No. That's... Sigurd, if you go
there...

(MORE)

EMBLA (CONT'D)

(beat)
No one comes back alive.

SIGURD

I have to try.

EMBLA

Sigurd--

SIGURD

"At Fornheimr's core, that which you seek lies beyond the Draugr."

EMBLA

It's just a tale.

SIGURD

It's not. You know it's not.

Beat.

Suddenly, the sound of a baby, whimpering. They both turn to the other end of the room. FRIGG, 80's, "the grandmother" cradles infant ORVAR, gently bouncing him up and down to comfort him.

Sigurd turns back to Embla.

SIGURD (CONT'D)

He needs his mother.

EMBLA

And what of his father?

Beat.

SIGURD

He shall have both.

Embla looks at her husband. After a moment, she takes off her necklace and hands it Sigurd. He looks at it, then back at her.

EMBLA

"Ek'm mit pe'r, ok pu're mit me'r...".

His eyes well up, takes the necklace from her gently, leans in and kisses her on the forehead.

SIGURD

..."Par til endiinn or timi".

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN RANGE - DAY

Sigurd places the necklace back around his neck, then looks intently at the mouth of the cave in the distance. Thunder rumbles. A distant storm is visible beyond the cave, approaching.

He trudges forth.

EXT. CAVE ENTRANCE - DAY

The storm has arrived. Violent wind, heavy snowfall.

Sigurd fights the wind as he arrives in front of the cave, staring into the dark void. His eyes more fearful than ever. He takes a deep breath before starting forward.

He enters the cave. Wind howls through the tunnel. Strange symbols sprawled out on the walls. He grips the handle of his sword and continues forward. The white glow from outside gradually disappears as he moves deeper into the void.

Then, from within the tunnel, the sound of musical humming. Echoing through the cavern.

Sigurd stops abruptly and listens.

It's a woman's voice; a lullaby.

Sigurd's eyes widen. He hurries forward. Then:

He steps off an unseen ledge. Falls into the abyss, hitting jagged edges along the way before a final, BONE CRUNCHING IMPACT.

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. MEADOW

Embla stands in the middle of a large green meadow, cradling baby Orvar in her arms. She's vibrant, healthy. Looking down at Orvar, she smiles and hums a lullaby, the same one from within the cave.

The clouds above move unnaturally fast. Otherworldly.

Then, Embla looks up, DIRECTLY AT US.

EMBLA

Hurry.

CUT TO:

INT. FORNHEIMR - CHAMBER

Sigurd's eyes pop open and he sits upright, sucking in a sharp breath. He looks around, baffled.

It's almost pitch black, except for the faint flicker of a fire deeper into the cave.

He reaches up and touches his forehead, revealing a large, bloody gash. He slowly stands up, wincing as he does it. A couple feet away lies his sword. He grabs it. Stares up at the ledge he fell from, high above.

Then... the lullaby echoes through the cave again. Sigurd looks in the direction of the flickering light and starts towards it cautiously.

As he draws closer to the light, the lullaby gets louder, and visibility heightens. More symbols on the walls of the cave dance in the flickering light.

He turns a corner, and stops abruptly.

The narrow passageway opens up into a chamber. A torch stands in the middle of it. Illuminated by the torch: a large chest. Something is leaning up against it; grey and motionless.

Sigurd makes his way into the chamber until he's standing next to the torch. The lullaby stops.

The object leaning against the chest is now clear: a skeleton. Gripping the edge of the chest as if it were once trying to get inside.

Suddenly, the torch brightens, further illuminating the dark chamber.

Past the chest, THE FLOOR IS SCATTERED WITH BODIES. All in various stages of decomposition. All wearing different types of armor. Bugs crawling through their rotting flesh and organs. Sigurd begins to back away, disgusted. Then:

The lullaby picks up again, from RIGHT BEHIND HIM.

He spins around, sword at the ready.

Standing there, facing away from him, is Embla. Motionless, gentling humming. Sigurd stares at her, wide eyed.

She stops humming. Then:

EMBLA

(softly)

You left me.

Sigurd is motionless.

EMBLA (CONT'D)

(softly)

You left me to rot. You left your
son... to rot.

Sigurd shakes his head intently.

SIGURD

That won't work with me. I know
what you are...

Embla's breathing suddenly becomes sickly and staggered.

SIGURD (CONT'D)

Draugr.

Embla lets out a loud, guttural shriek. Grotesque and
inhuman.

The torch flickers violently, enveloping the room in blackness
before quickly reigniting.

Embla is no longer there. In her place, facing away from
Sigurd, a figure wearing archaic armor. Its skin rotting,
strings of remaining hair. The DRAUGR.

It turns it's head, half illuminated by the firelight.
Skeletal and decomposed.

DRAUGR

What is it you seek?

Its voice is dry and sinister; ancient.

Sigurd grips his blade.

SIGURD

My wife nears Niflheim. She's been
corrupted by plaguerinn. I seek a
cure.

The Draugr chuckles.

DRAUGR

Most men seek riches. Knowledge.
Power.

(beat)

You waste this opportunity... on a
whore.

Sigurd glares at Draugr.

DRAUGR (CONT'D)

Do you truly believe she gave birth
to your son? All the men she's laid
with before you. Men you call
brethren.

Anger begins to boil over. Sigurd grips his sword tighter,
but controls himself.

SIGURD

Your words mean nothing. I know
your purpose.

Sigurd looks over at the corpses.

SIGURD (CONT'D)

Where they failed, I will suc--

Sigurd turns back to find Draugr INCHES AWAY FROM HIS FACE.
It lets out another grotesque shriek, and attacks with its
sword.

Sigurd blocks it with his own. Blow after blow, metal on
metal. Draugr hectically and violently swings its blade, a
frightening contrast to its previously calm demeanor.

Sigurd keeps his guard up, manages to dodge one of the attacks
and counters, slashing Draugr's rib cage. It lets out another
shriek. Sigurd follows up with a kick, sending Draugr
tumbling across the room.

Sigurd starts toward Draugr, when suddenly, something grabs
his ankle.

He looks down:

ONE OF THE CORPSES CLASPS ON TO HIM.

Beyond that, the other corpses are all moving, squirming in
place or slowly crawling towards him.

Sigurd brings his blade down on the corpse grabbing his ankle,
severing its decomposed hand. He turns back in the direction
of Draugr; who's already lunging at him again.

More metal on metal as the two battle it out. Sigurd is
starting to look winded. Draugr takes advantage, manages to
strike hard enough that Sigurd's blade goes flying.

Draugr SLASHES Sigurd across the chest.

AGAIN, this time across Sigurd's leg.

Sigurd falls back, clenching his teeth.

The nearby corpses start grabbing on to him.

Draugr raises his sword again and BRINGS IT DOWN ON SIGURD'S ARM, pinning it to the ground. Sigurd lets out a horrible scream.

Draugr kneels down; his rotting face and soulless eyes inches away from Sigurd's, ominously illuminated by the torch.

DRAUGR

Your journey ends here.

Sigurd grimaces back at Draugr, suddenly starts chuckling. Draugr looks baffled.

DRAUGR (CONT'D)

A man laughs in the face of death?

SIGURD

You questioned that which I seek. A cure to keep my family together.

(beat)

I seek a cure because I am nothing without my family. Nothing. Just like you.

And with that, Sigurd punches Draugr's arm with his free hand, causing it to lose its grip on the sword. Sigurd grabs the handle of Draugr's sword, and in one swift motion, pulls it out of his arm and slashes it across Draugr's neck, beheading it.

Draugr's body drops to the ground like a sack of bricks, followed by his head. All of the living corpses go still. Everything is silent.

Sigurd catches his breath, slowly gets up, fighting against his bloody wounds.

He walks over to the chest, kneels down in front of it, and opens it.

Dust erupts from the chest as the lid opens. Inside, a small glass jar filled with a black liquid. Sigurd lifts it up, studies it.

He surveys the room one final time before hobbling out of the chamber. Draugr's head lies on it's side, staring into nothingness. The torch extinguishes on its own. Blackness.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. MEADOW - MORNING

Lush and green. The sun is just beginning to rise.

Sigurd, hair slightly greyed, a scar on his forehead, admires the picturesque landscape.

Embla, now healthy, approaches from behind, carrying Orvar, a year older. Their small wooden home stands just up the hill behind them.

Sigurd looks at them and smiles, love in his eyes. Embla smiles back, our first time seeing her warmth and vibrancy. Sigurd ruffles Orvar's blond hair, causing him to giggle. Sigurd smiles, then looks back out past the meadow.

The jagged, snow capped mountain range towers in the distance.

Embla notices a subtle concern in his eye.

EMBLA

You still fear you've angered the gods.

SIGURD

I don't fear it.

(beat)

But Hel will come for me. Eventually.

EMBLA

And when he does?

Sigurd looks back at his wife and son, admirably, then back at the mountain range.

SIGURD

I'll be waiting.

CUT TO BLACK:

END