

Song of the Sea

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SMALL BAY - NIGHT

Waves crash onto the sandy shore, driven by the snowstorm that rages like a banshee.

From within the violent surf, a chant rings out, a single deep bellow followed by multiple strained voices replying as one.

A Viking longboat's prow crests a massive wave, it's Snakehead shape silhouetted against the white surf.

The crew pulls hard on their oars as they try to steer the ship towards the safety of the beach.

The briefest lull in the howling wind and the langskip descends through the brine, catches one last swell, then crashes into the shingle.

The rowing chant stops as the heavily armoured troop of Vikings disembark apace.

They trudge up the beach through the falling snow and disappear into the darkness of the forest.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - NIGHT

Squat wooden huts with turf roofs sit either side of crisscrossed paths, some twenty in total.

Snow falls between the dwellings, settling on the sleeping livestock and reducing visibility in all directions.

To the south of the village is a dense forest, almost hidden by the blizzard.

Indistinct shadows break from the trees and move stealthily towards the huts.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Two sleeping figures huddle together under a coarse fur blanket.

Snowflakes waft in through the chimney hole in the centre of the roof, meets the warm air spiraling up from the flames of the dying fire and melt before they hit the ground.

On the mud walls of the hut are daubed sigils and animal shapes that appear to cavort in the firelight.

A branch cracks somewhere close by.

LEITH, 12, raises his grime smeared head from beneath the blanket and peers into the gloom.

He cocks his head and listens.

LEITH
Someone there?

No other sound beyond the howling wind.

At his side, EABHA, 60s, stirs and pats the boy gently on the head.

EABHA
Shh.

Leith nods.

She silently extricates herself from the blanket.

Naked, dark-skinned and bow-legged, she stands by the embers and turns her palms face up, closes her eyes, and whispers a short rhythmic invocation.

She stops, fear on her face.

LEITH
(whispering)
Vikings?

Eabha nods.

She starts a second incantation.

The sigils move over the walls - not the action of the firelight this time.

Leith watches them dance and smiles as they begin to coalesce into larger shapes.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

A pair of Vikings stand by each hut, poised, weapons raised.

SKARDE, 30s, a towering man mountain, beard down to his prominent gut, holds his finger to pursed lips.

No one moves.

He holds his hand up, five fingers outstretched.

He folds one finger into his palm.

Then another.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Eabha finishes her second spell and opens her eyes.

She drops to her knees, visibly frail and smaller than she was moments ago.

In front of her are two smoky animal forms, one a huge wolf, the other a giant boar.

The smoke-boar moves to Leith's side, the smoke-wolf nuzzles Eabha's hand in greeting.

EABHA
(to the animals)
Feast on their bones.

The smoke forms move to the doorway.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

Skarde folds another finger; just one left aloft now.

A massive gust sends snow surging amongst the Vikings.

A high-pitched howl punctuates the air.

SKARDE
What the...

The leather openings of the huts fly open in unison, and hulking smoke forms spring from within.

In addition to Eabha's wolf and Leith's boar are bears, horses, giant ravens, and a variety of snarling dogs.

Tables turned, the Vikings look to Skarde for answers.

He looks as shocked as his troops and still has one finger held aloft.

Eabha's wolf leaps at Skarde, jaws wide, teeth glistening and dripping ebony ichor.

One savage bite and Skarde's entire hand is gone, raised finger and all.

He screams in agony.

The scream heralds the onslaught of the smoke fiends as they attack as one brutal wave.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Leith moves towards the hut's entrance, lured by sounds of the fight outside.

EABHA

No.

Leith looks to her.

LEITH

I'll nay see it.

EABHA

Aye, for the best.

He slumps to his knees, disappointed that he's not allowed to watch.

EXT. VILLAGE - NIGHT

The scene is carnage.

The storm rages, snow falling thick and fast and mingling with the blood-spattered snow on the ground.

The smoke ravens dart between the Vikings, pecking at eyes and any other exposed flesh.

The wolves, dogs, and bears bite and slash with teeth and claw, as the horses and boars charge and trample.

The Vikings swing their axes and swords into smoke, striking nothing save for the occasional comrade.

Already five of the group are prone, dead, or soon to be as the dogs pull and tear at the bodies.

Skarde, bloody stump jammed into the opposite armpit, knows when he's beat.

SKARDE

To the boat.

The Vikings are brave men, not easily scared, but they've never seen the like of the smoke beasts. They turn tail and run for the forest.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

Eabha moves to the doorway and pokes her head out.

LEITH

So?

She pulls her head back in.

EABHA

Running for the forest.

Leith joins her at the doorway.

LEITH

If they get to the ship...

He leaves the statement hanging in the air.

EABHA

They won't.

She grabs some well-worn clothes and struggles into them.

Leith helps her and grabs a thick fur shawl.

LEITH

Me too?

EABHA

No, stay and usher the spirits back to their realm.

He looks concerned.

EABHA (cont'd)

You are my apprentice, and they will heed thee.

Leith shakes his head.

LEITH

I worry for you, not the beasts.

She smiles.

EABHA

The Vikings need worry. You need not.

With that, she dips through the doorway and into the storm.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

The trees are thick in the woods, the canopy dense.

Terrified Vikings run in the darkness, stumbling and falling over root and branch.

Eabha's wolf takes a straggler down, tossing the corpse around like a rag-doll.

The wolf howls into the night.

EABHA (O.C.)
Here my friend.

The wolf moves to a large tree trunk as Eabha steps out from behind it.

EABHA
Let them go?

The wolf shakes it's head, lips curling into the semblance of a grin.

EABHA (cont'd)
Thought not.

Eabha and the wolf follow the retreating warriors.

EXT. SMALL BAY - NIGHT

The Vikings emerge from the edge of the forest and run onto the beach, the wind, and snow wailing around them.

They struggle through the sand and snow as they head to their ship and safety.

They clamber aboard, throwing their weapons onto the deck before grabbing oars.

SKARDE
(pointing)
You there, shove us away.

The men don't want to get back off the boat.

SKARDE (cont'd)
We'll not move unless you do.

Four men clamber back down, shove their shoulders into the prow of the ship, and push.

The ship slips back an inch or so.

SKARDE (cont'd)
Git you backs into it.

The men redouble their efforts.

At the edge of the forest, Eabha emerges from the treeline, wolf at her side.

Skarde sees her.

SKARDE (cont'd)
By the gods, push!

Eabha trudges towards them, as the wolf breaks into a sprint.

The Vikings who push the boat see the wolf bounding across the sand. Fear fuels their labour, and they shove with all their strength.

The boat moves slowly into the surf.

The Vikings grab their brethren by arm and hand and yank them into the ship as it slips further into the waves.

The wolf leaps high into the air, lands on the back of a Viking, and drags him into the sea.

A pair of Vikings move to help...

SKARDE (cont'd)
Leave him.

The wolf locks stares with Skarde, then pushes the prone Viking's head into the sea with an enormous paw.

SKARDE (cont'd)
Next time you fell beast.

He points his axe at the wolf as his men grab their oars.

Eabha joins her wolf and points back at Skarde.

EABHA
There's to be no next time.

The wolf lets the Viking up to gasp for air and shoves his head back under the water.

Eabha holds her palms skyward, her eyes glaze over as she begins to chant.

SKARDE
Row for the love of Odin, row!

Eabha's chant softens, turns melodious as she starts to sing, volume increasing with each word.

Eabha's song rises above the deafening storm, carries over the pounding sea to the ears of the fleeing Vikings.

SKARDE (cont'd)
(shouting)
Your devilry won't...

His words trail off as he sees the first shapes rising from the depths.

Eabha sings on.

Sea serpents, ten or so, breach the water's surface and make for the longship.

They undulate in a serpentine fashion and circle the ship, heads above water, watching the Vikings.

SKARDE (cont'd)
What are they waiting for?

His question is answered by the first massive tentacle crashing into the ship.

The Vikings nearest it drop their oars and grab weapons. But before they can strike, the tentacle withdraws, only to be replaced by another crashing into the opposite side of the ship.

Every time the Vikings move to strike a tentacle, it's already gone.

The ship lists to one side, taking on water.

The Vikings look to Skarde.

SKARDE (cont'd)
Valhalla!

Skarde, axe in remaining hand, leaps into the sea.

A tentacle meets him half-way down, wrapping him in it's deadly embrace.

Skarde screams in defiance, briefly, as the tip of the tentacle squirms into his mouth and down his throat.

The ship capsizes, sending the remaining Vikings into the rolling sea.

The serpents stop circling and head for the nearest floundering figure.

The sea churns red as the Vikings are torn apart.

The last sign that the Vikings were ever there is Skarde, choking, being dragged beneath the waves by the tentacle wound tightly around him.

Eabha stops singing.

The storm drops a notch.

EABHA

Home.

The wolf nuzzles her hand as they make their way slowly back towards the trees.

Eabha turns and looks to the sea.

EABHA (cont'd)
They'll be back.

The wolf snarls in response.

An answer of sorts.

FADE OUT

THE END