

NORTHWOMAN

By

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EXT. FOREST - DAY

INGRT, 32, broad, blonde braids, boots and clothes stained with dried blood. A sack hangs on her hip.

She digs between the roots of a tall oak. She reaches deeper and her eyes go wide. Ingrt pulls out.

She holds a cluster of small brown mushrooms. She brushes them clean and licks her lips.

BOY (O.S.)
Ingrt?... Ingrt!

She rears her head.

BOY, 10, brown hair, big clothes, stands with a sack on his back and holds mushrooms in his hands.

INGRT
Yes, little-one?

BOY
I forgot what kind, so I took many.

Ingrt walks and stands before Boy. She discards the small white mushrooms from the pile in his hands.

INGRT
Those kill...

She points to the large white ones.

INGRT (CONT'D)
...Those we keep to snack...

She picks the small brown ones and holds them up.

INGRT (CONT'D)
...And these, we get lots.
Understand?

BOY
Aye! I will get all I can find!

INGRT
Good boy.

She returns the mushrooms and Boy scurries off.

Ingrt looks at the cluster she found. She smells them. Sweat rolls down her head.

EXT. FOREST TRAIL - DAY

Ingrt and Boy walk alone with full sacks.

INGRT
Thank you for joining me.

BOY
Father said I must learn when I am
viking on my own.

INGRT
Farmers viking and you make for a
fine farmer.

BOY
Thank you.

She looks at him and smiles.

INGRT
Your mother would be thankful her
husband is raising you well.

BOY
Aye... she would.

They pause.

INGRT
Will you take them?

BOY
I will not, Ingrt.

INGRT
Better to wait for battle. Better
time.

BOY
I mean to never take them. I am
afraid.

INGRT
What is to fear? All you see is
good.

BOY
Saegard went mad. Clawed out a
Saxon's eyes and ate them.

Ingrt snickers.

INGRT

Saegard took more than he should.
Too much vision for fragile brain
and he is no Berserker.

BOY

Neither are you.

Ingrt stops and kneels beside him.

INGRT

True, but mine eyes are blessed to
see the gods eternal.

She moves closer.

INGRT (CONT'D)

They love to see us kill, die, and
plunder.

She shows her hand. It twitches.

INGRT (CONT'D)

My body aches for blood and the
gods call me to work!

BOY

You talk mad, Ingrt. May we hurry
back to camp, please?

Ingrt laughs and picks him up. They walk on.

INGRT

Never grow up, little-one.

EXT. CAMP - DAY

A field of tents sit by a shore, long ships on the beach.
WARRIORS, men and women, eat at fires and spar.

Around a large cauldron sit BERSERKERS, a wolf or bear pelt
on each of their heads. GUNNAR, 62, his skin covered in scars
of runes, sirs a pale soup in the cauldron.

INGRT (O.S.)

Gunnar!

Gunnar and Berserkers look to Ingrt and Boy. They cheer.

The two make their way to the cauldron and empty their sacks
of brown mushrooms into the soup. Gunnar stirs.

GUNNAR

A fine harvest. The gods will grant you a heavy treasure at battle's end.

INGRT

What of the little-one? He found more than I.

Gunnar makes a wide grin.

GUNNAR

How old are you?

BOY

Ten, sir.

GUNNAR

Not long until you are a man. It may happen before the day is done.

Boy slowly smiles.

BOY

Thank you, sir.

GUNNAR

Soon you will call me brother. Take care, friends! Combat draws near!

Ingrt and Boy leave and head towards the tents. She stops and hands him a brown mushroom.

INGRT

Think on what I said and take it if your feelings change.

Boy pockets the mushroom.

BOY

I will. Thank you.

She hugs him before he runs off.

INT. TENT - DAY

Next to a bedroll rests a vest of chain mail against the tent pole. In front of the vest leans a shield painted in a blue and yellow spiral.

Ingrt comes in and moves the vest and shield to the side. A thick belt hangs on the pole with an axe secure in a loop. She puts it on, followed by the vest.

Ingrt kneels to the bed roll and reaches under the pillow. She pulls her hand and smiles at TARNISHED BRONZE CHARM of an eight-legged horse.

She slips the Charm into the side of her boot before a horn BELLOWS outside. Ingrt grabs her shield and leaves.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Warriors stand in a crowd before the long ships.

CHIEFTAIN, 50, wears a gold chain, thick furs, and a helm. THANES stand behind, with spears and bows.

To the side Berserkers stand in a line to the cauldron. Gunnar dips a bowl into the soup and passes it to BERSERKER 1. Berserker 1 downs the soup and steps out of line.

He vomits but forces it back in.

Chieftain steps towards Warriors and stops.

CHIEFTAIN

I want those Stalvnrar boats and every pound of their gear. If you cast one of them into the sea, bring him up and kill him right...

In the crowd, Ingrt clenches her teeth.

INGRT

Finish your talk and put us to work, old man.

WARRIOR 1

Aye. I want some meat and gold.

INGRT

Not an ounce on those ships. The Stalvnars would have packed light to be fast on the water. This is a fight, no plunder, no quarter.

WARRIOR 1

Then what is to gain?

WARRIOR 2

He talks of claiming their blades for war.

WARRIOR 3

If we kill them all, but they kill most of us, we would have more gear than men. There will be no one left to stop the Stalvnars from taking our lands.

WARRIOR 4

My wife could stand in my place. I pray she will fight into old age before I see her again.

INGRT

All we have to gain is life or Valhalla. The gods call to feast, but my man calls for bed. To Hel with this feud.

Some of the Warriors nod.

WARRIOR 2

Aye.

WARRIOR 1

Our lives and homes are our plunder.

WARRIOR 3

Aye.

EXT. SEA - DAY

The long ships move in a line across the water. Warriors row to drum beats. In the distance another line comes their way.

EXT. LONG SHIP 1 - DAY

Warriors sit in twos on either side with an oar. At the bow stands Chieftain with Thanos. Below them sit Berserkers, huddled together. They sweat and shiver.

DRUMMER sits at the stern.

Ingrt rows on the inside, shield at her feet. She stares at Boy beside FATHER. They row together further up the ship.

CHIEFTAIN

Ramming speed!

Drummer quickens his beat. Warriors row faster. The other line of ships draw closer.

CHIEFTAIN (CONT'D)

Oars up!

Warriors pull the oars in. Ingrt reaches for her shield, and stands with the men. She pulls from her pocket brown mushrooms, swallows them, and draws her axe.

The boats collide. Ingrt flies off her feet. The world around her stretches and tears into pitch white.

EXT. FIRST RING - CONTINUOUS

Reality disappears. Ingrt falls. A wind tears her clothes off, scared skin cut with muscle underneath. She keeps hold of her axe and shield.

From the white appear two black FIGURES that shake and jerk like a charcoal scribble. They fly to Ingrt.

She meets them with her shield and puts them down. They explode into black sparks and the white turns blue.

EXT. SECOND RING - CONTINUOUS

The black sparks form FACES around Ingrt. They look like old men and speak in two voices.

FACES

Weak. Woman. Gods curse you. You
make for a pitiful wife.

Ingrt buries her axe in one FACE. Faces screech, burst into sparks, and reform into three Figures. Ingrt kills them and the blue turns yellow.

EXT. THIRD RING - CONTINUOUS

The black sparks form a circle of naked INFANTS around Ingrt. She stares in horror.

Infants cry. Ingrt covers her ears, closes her eyes, and grits her teeth. The cry grows louder and she screams.

Ingrt swings out with her shield and hits another Figure before her, the Infants gone. Ingrt wales on the Figure until her shield shatters.

The yellow explodes into azure striped with white.

EXT. ASGARD - CONTINUOUS

Ingrt hits solid ground and rolls onto her back. She stares up at a clear, sunny sky. She chuckles.

Ingrt sits up. She rests on a hill of grass. In the distance stand great mountains, a forest, and a plain cut with rivers. A pair of giant moons hang in the sky.

Ingrt stands and stares in awe. She rears her head.

Upon the hilltop stands, ODIN, in crimson cloth and silver armor, with a great spear. His one eye blazes like a star.

Perched on his shoulders sit a pair of ravens. Two wolves sit at his feet.

Tears stream from Ingrt's eyes. She raises her arms.

INGRT

WOOTUU --

The air escapes her voice. She looks down at a cut in the side of her abdomen.

QUICK FLASH

A long knife appears in the cut.

QUICK FLASH

Ingrt wears her clothes again.

QUICK FLASH

EXT. LONG SHIP 1 - CONTINUOUS

STALVNAR WARRIOR holds the knife in Ingrt's gut. She breathes hard and looks around. The battle rages across connected ships. Men lie dead at her feet.

Ingrt cries and lets out a screech. She grabs Stalvnr Warrior and sinks her teeth into his face. They fall to the deck. Stalvnr Warrior screams.

Across the ship Boy carries Father, unconscious, on his back.

He watches Ingrt dig into Stalvnr Warrior before three Berserkers pull her off. She thrashes with blood-shot eyes, and struggles for another mouthful.

Stalvnr Warrior howls on before Gunnar cuts his head off.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Ingrt wakes with a gasp, naked on a bedroll next to a fire.

Boy squats by the fire. Father sleeps behind. Boy turns to Ingrt.

BOY
You live!

INGRT
...Aye...

The Boy comes and kneels before her.

BOY
Do you feel well?

Ingrt sits up. The blanket slips off. Fresh stitches line small wounds and the one in her gut.

INGRT
How long?

BOY
Two days.

INGRT
Are we still...

The Boy nods

BOY
Too many wounded. We burned some
this morning.

Ingrt looks to Father.

BOY (CONT'D)
He sleeps still... Are you thirsty?

INGRT
Aye.

Boy steps back to his place and returns with a mug of water and sack. Ingrt finishes the water. He hands her a piece of dried meat from the sack before she chews it.

INGRT (CONT'D)
Who fell? I cannot recall their
faces last I was awake.

BOY
Bragi, Modi, Idunn's father...
Thurd, and some I do not know.

He makes a half-smile.

BOY (CONT'D)
I am thankful you yet live.

Ingrt takes his hand.

INGRT
And I pray your father will wake
just as I.

She kisses it and lays down. Boy returns to his place at the fire.

INGRT (CONT'D)
...Will you lie with me, little-
one?

Boy looks at her with an awkward expression. She chuckles.

INGRT (CONT'D)
Oh, don't be so thick! I mean to
share my bed, not my flesh.

He smiles, takes off his boots, and gets under the blanket, his back to her.

Ingrt holds him tight.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

HUSBAND, 36, large blonde beard, and one arm, stands on a pier extended over the water, with WIVES, MOTHERS, and CHILDREN. They watch the long ships approach.

At the first one to dock, Husband spots Ingrt with Boy. His smile goes straight when he sees her carry a wrapped corpse over her shoulder.

Warriors disembark. Wives, Mothers, and Children rejoice when they see their men and cry when they receive only bags of ash.

Boy steps onto the dock beside Ingrt. Husband follows through the crowd. At a clear spot he grabs her arm. She stops and they smile. Ingrt gestures Boy. Husband lets go and nods.

EXT. BOY'S HOUSE - DAY

On a hill outside town stands the house. Sheep bleat behind a fence.

Ingrt and Boy stop at the front door. She lays the corpse down and kneels before Boy.

INGRT
Do you need help tonight?

He shakes his head.

BOY
Thank you, but I must carry him to shore.

She hugs him.

INGRT
Come stay with us. Maybe not now but when you are ready... We always wanted a son.

BOY
I must settle with father and the gods, then I will think on it.

She kisses his cheek and pulls away.

INGRT
When you are ready, speak to the Chieftain about selling your land. The plot is too big for you alone, little-man.

INT. INGRT'S HOUSE - DAY

Through a forest stands the farm. Goats whine in the background. Husband sits on the door step before Ingrt comes into view.

He walks and embraces her with a kiss.

HUSBAND
I have longed for your touch.

They make for the door.

INGRT
Sorry I lost your shield again.

HUSBAND

I am glad it kept you safe until
the end. I will make one stronger
for this coming season.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ingrt lies on her side in bed. Husband holds her leg from
behind and kisses her neck. They glisten with sweat.

Ingrt stares forward, vacant eyed. She closes her eyes, then
Husband pauses and lets go.

HUSBAND

Do I hurt?

She turns over and smiles.

INGRT

No, my love. Go on.

HUSBAND

You feel in pain and absent heart.
Do you find me unworthy?

Ingrt puts her arms around him.

INGRT

You make me happy... you always
make me happy.

He stares with sad eyes and pulls her close, arm across her
chest. Ingrt interlocks her fingers with his giant hand. They
kiss.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Ingrt wakes alone. Roosters CAW in the backyard.

She moves to sit on the side of the bed and winces. She holds
her stomach, the stitches red.

Ingrt limps to a chest at the foot of the bed. She pulls out
a strip of cloth and wraps it around her gut.

She pulls a simple dress with dirt stains on the skirt. She
retrieves her boots and sits on the bed to put them on.

Ingrt stands, but something isn't right. She takes off one
boot and pulls the Charm out. She stares at it, puts the
Charm in the chest, and sits in silence.

She feels the braids in her hair and slowly unwinds them. She combs with her fingers until her hair lays smooth over her shoulders.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Husband sits under the shade of a wood shed, shaving the bark off a log. He stops and looks to Ingrt coming from the house.

HUSBAND
Sleep well?

INGRT
Aye.

She comes round to his back and hugs him.

INGRT (CONT'D)
Why did you not wake me?

HUSBAND
A long rest is a fine reward after a raid... I only wish I gave you more.

She kisses his cheek.

INGRT
For a big man, you think so little of yourself. I am proud to call such a humble man husband.

He smiles.

HUSBAND
I am starting a new shield. Will you help me split timber?

INGRT
Of course.

Ingrt takes a log, stands it on a block, and chops it with an ax.

LATER

Ingrt works the chicken coop with her sleeves rolled up. She moves them from their nests and deposits their eggs into a basket.

LATER

Ingrt sits on a stool and milks the goats dry with Husband.
She looks bored.

LATER

Ingrt sits on a bench and takes sips from a mug. She looks at her boots caked in mud and feces. She looks at her left hand formed in a slack grip. Callouses dot her palm.

For a moment, she sees a shield in its grasp before it disappears.

HUSBAND

I miss it too.

Husband stands before her.

INGRT

My nerves are restless. Next season seems so far away.

He sits.

HUSBAND

The Stalvnars will come. It may be before winter and you will be back in the shield wall, fresh and ready.

She makes a half smile.

INGRT

We lost many. Perhaps you will join me to fill our ranks

HUSBAND

One must stay to mind the home. I am more useful honoring your name and keeping the bed warm for your return.

Ingrt sniffles, her eyes red.

INGRT

No matter how much I yearned to die, I wanted to see you again. But in your embrace, my bones beg to abandon this work for combat.

She cries and wipes her eyes.

INGRT (CONT'D)

Forgive my selfishness. My heart yet remains yours.

Husband pulls her close.

HUSBAND

Every day I ask the gods to restore
mine arm. But the Norns wove a
different fate so I may support
your turn in the wall.

He wipes her eyes.

HUSBAND (CONT'D)

You are not wrong. Whatever you
desire, be it bloodied or loved, I
will always be at your side.

Ingrt sighs with a smile and they kiss.

LATER

Ingrt picks weeds in the side of the house. She removes a
thick bushel before she pauses, her eyes wide.

In a hollow in the stone foundation sit a cluster of small
brown mushrooms. She picks them and sweat rolls down her
head.

She looks to Husband. He kneels with his back to her on the
other side of the yard.

Ingrt comes up behind and embraces. She puts one hand down
through the collar of his shirt and the other round his side.

She whispers into his ear.

INGRT

The gods call...

She shows him her other hand with the mushrooms.

INGRT (CONT'D)

...Can you hear them?

Ingrt brings his face to hers. They kiss before she brings
the mushrooms to their mouths. They swallow them whole.

They fall to the ground, Husband on top. He bites her neck.
She growls with a smile and pulls his hair. Ingrt tears her
skirt open and closes her eyes.

Ingrt lets out a laugh as Husband thrusts. She moans, grips a
fist of dirt, and opens her eyes.

EXT. ASGARD - CONTINUOUS

The couple lie in the grass. She sits up and embraces Husband. She sees Odin and the vast plain in the distance. Ingrt rests her head on her man's shoulder.