

An Tóraíocht - English Translation

A graphic novel by Colmán Ó Raghallaigh

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P1

A hillock...near Tara of the Kings.

Caoilte and Oisín... on watch.

The rider approaches... at speed.

But...

"Hold on there, friend... or you may lose your head!"

"Eh?"

"Hey, Diarmaid, old friend, we're only fooling!"

"Did you not recognise us?"

P2

Inside the feast is in full swing. Fionn MacCumhaill
(Finn McCool) is now engaged to the beautiful Gráinne.

The best of food and drink...

But...

"What have I done?"

"There's no doubt about it. She's definitely the most
beautiful woman in Ireland."

Then...

The stranger moves towards the table.

"You'll drink the health of Fionn, my friend?"

"Indeed I will. I'm parched."

THE LOVE MARK!!

"Oh!"

P3

"Listen. Who's that young hero over there?"

"Diarmaid Ó Duibhne."

"But forget about him, girl. You're promised to Fionn!"

"Oh shut up, you old fool!"

"Everything's changed now."

Diarmaid detects the eyes piercing through him.

"Ha! Ha!"

"Who's she?"

"Listen..."

"More wine, fellas?"

"Good woman. Fill them up!"

THE SLEEPING POTION!

"Cheers!"

Soon...

"Nnnngh..."

P4

"What's going on?"

"I'm not sure but there's something funny about this."

"YOU!"

"Diarmaid Ó Duibhne. I'm placing you under obligation to take me away out of here."

"Excuse me, dear lady, but I don't think I know you."

"You'll know me very well from now on. I am the Princess Gráinne, daughter of the High King of Ireland."

"Now... through that sunroom, quickly."

"In the name of ... What is she saying?"

P5

The Princess departs... with her head in the air.

"Did you hear what she said? I'm ruined."

"You sure are..."

"But there's nothing you can do about it now..."

"If you're under obligation..."

"You have to go."

But a hero cannot depart through a back door...

"Stand back!"

P6

And so with a mighty leap... over the palisade... to where Gráinne awaits.

"Let's get moving, then."

"As you wish."

"Diarmaid!"

"Diarmaid, wait! Wait for me."

"I'll teach you manners, you little fool!"

P7

"Stop, I say!"

"We can still go back. It's not too late."

"No. Listen to me. You go back and get us a chariot."

"Damn you!"

But he must go...

Later...

"What's that?"

"ÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÚÚÚÚÚ"

"Oh Diarmaid, where are you?"

P8

Finally the hero returns and they move on... to the ford of Áth Luain (Athlone).

A horse is left on either bank... to confuse their pursuers.

"Follow me."

"Into the water?"

They continue on foot...

"Where there is water there won't be any tracks."

"Stop your messing, woman!"

P9

In Doire dá Bhaoth.

Slash!

Although he has built a protective wall for Gráinne,

Diarmaid must remain on watch through the night.

P10

Meanwhile there is consternation in Tara.

"But Diarmaid couldn't do a thing about it..."

"Shut your mouth, you fool!"

Clunk!

"My seven curses on you, Diarmaid of the women!"

"He will never rest easy again!!"

"He'll pay dearly for this, I promise you."

"I'll tear him apart..."

Without further ado, the famous trackers, the family of Neamhain, are sent to hunt them down... but it is with the greatest reluctance that they begin their task

P11

"It's no use... there's no trace of them."

"Huh?"

"Now listen to me! I shall personally string up the lot of you on the bank of the river if you don't find their trail... and fast!"

Finally on the far side of the river...

"No doubt about it. They went this way."

"He's in Doire Dá Bhaoth. I've got you now, little Diarmaid!"

"Do something or they'll be caught."

"We'll send Bran."

So Bran is sent with a warning...

P12

The couple are asleep.

Uuuurr!

"Uh... what? Bran?"

"Wake up, Gráinne, we're in danger."

"We'll have to run for it."

"What good is running. We'll be caught in the end."

Caoilte sends for Fear Goir, a man who possesses an enormous shout...

"Go quickly and warn them!"

Fear Goir moves as fast as he can...

P13

...and gives three roars that are heard far and wide.

"Á...Á...Á..."

"Listen! We're getting close. Surround the woods quickly!"

"We have to get out of here now!"

"Understand this. I'm not going to flee like a coward."

"We'll be able to spot them from this hill, I'll bet."

"Maybe..."

"What did I tell you? There they are!"

"All right, Fionn... How do you like this?"

"Damn you, Diarmaid!"

P14

In the Boyne Fortress... sits Aonghus an Bhrogha. In the flickering firelight the Druid detects the peril which now confronts his foster son...

And moves to rescue him...

Later...

"Diarmaid, you will die if you stay here but you can both flee with me now under cover of my cloak."

"No, Aonghus. But take Gráinne and I will follow you soon."

Without further ado... Aonghus and Gráinne depart.

P15

Now Diarmaid moves from door to door... to see who awaits him.

"Who have I here?"

"Your friends Oisín, Oscar and the clan of Baoiscne."

"Your friends Caoilte and the clan of Rónán."

"Your friends Conán and the clan of Mórna."

"Your friends Fionn Mac Cuán and the Munster men."

"Your friends Fionn Mac Gleoir and the Ulster men."

But at the sixth door...

"Little Aodh and Big Aodha... who will gladly take the head off you!"

And finally... the seventh door.

"Come on, Diarmaid. I'm waiting for you!"

"The old man won't catch me that easily."

And so...

Oiiingg

P16

High through the air...

"Look, there he is!"

"He's getting away!"

"He is, indeed!"

...through the air and safely to the ground.

"AFTER HIM!"

But the hero moves like the March wind... with the enemy at his heels!

"ÁÁÁÁÁÁ... where is he?!"

"This way! Quickly!"

P17

Some time later near Limerick.

"Here they are."

"Well, hello."

"Diarmaid, darling!"

"I knew you'd come!"

"Ummm!"

"Eh... anything to eat?"

"There sure is!"

"Huh?"

"I'm starving!"

Next morning Aonghus warns them solemnly...

"Never go into any tree with one fork, nor cave with one entrance, nor island with one jetty. Never eat where you prepare your food nor lie two nights in the same place nor in any place you eat."

P18

Later in Sliabh Luachra... they follow the advice of Aonghus.

And still they leave a trout bone between them at night.

As dawn breaks...

CRACK

"Diarmaid!"

"Ugh..."

"Just a second. Tell me who you are or I'll slit your throat."

"My name is Muadhán, a soldier in search of a master."

"You can come with us then."

And so...

"Isn't this great?!"

"Hmm..."

P19

That evening...

"We'll be safe here."

Diarmaid and Gráinne go to sleep in the cave...

...while Muadhán stands guard outside.

At daybreak...

"Isn't it a magnificent sight?"

But then... a strange fleet enters the bay.

"You keep an eye on Gráinne, Muadhán, while I check out these people."

"Fine."

P20

Three kings come ashore together with their retinue.

"Greetings, noblemen... and what brings you here?"

"We come in search of Diarmaid Ó Duibhne with a thousand men to kill him."

"Funny. I met someone who met him yesterday... but give me a barrel and I'll perform a feat for you."

"CHEERS!"

"Are you watching?"

Then...

"ÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁ!"

"Well?"

"We could do it better ourselves."

P21

But things are never as easy as they appear...

"íííííííííí!"

"Nnnnngh!"

"Try this one then..."

But again...

"Ugh!"

And...

"Another one?"

"Arrgh!!!"

The invaders are being decimated.

P22

In the end it is Fionn's female messenger who tells them the truth...

"Diarmaid Ó Duibhne was the man who caused all your trouble!"

Meanwhile the trio are making their escape.

"Such idiots!"

"I've never seen the beat of that!"

"Nor I!"

But now the foreigners are thirsting for revenge...

"Look out! Here come the enemy!"

The hounds are released...

"Grrrr"

But...

And...

Crack!

Then

The hounds are finished... as is their master.
"And now your noble majesties..."
"AAARGH!!!"
"Back to the ships quick or he'll murder us all!"

P23

Now Muadhán says farewell...
"Travel safely, my friends."
And Diarmaid and Gráinne make their way to Dubhros (Black Wood).
"We'll have to pass behind that waterfall."
Then...
"Unfortunately, even the drops of water seem to have more courage than the mighty hero!"
"Is that so?"
And in the end... love cannot be denied.

P24

In the middle of the wood stands the magic rowan tree... where the fearsome Searbhán Lochlannach awaits them.
"Stay where you are. Don't take another step."
"Don't worry. We only want to stay here in peace with your permission. We have no interest in the berries."
"All right... but I'll be keeping an eye on you!"
Meanwhile Fionn has another plan.
"Fetch me Aodh and Aonghus of the clan of Mórna... I have work for them."
"We have long desired to join the Fianna. This is our chance."
"True for you, brother."
"Don't be stupid. The Searbhán Lochlannach is invincible!"
"Clear the way, Oisín. We'll get those berries or the head of Diarmaid as we promised."
"Idiots!"
"You're digging your own graves!"

P25

Some time later...
"Diarmaid! Come out here now!"
"Who's there?"
The two explain their case... but Diarmaid is incensed!
"You'll get neither skull nor berries here!"
"Have it your own way then!"
But...
SMACK!
"Uh!"
The duo are given a lesson in fighting... and tied up in knots.
"Let us go or you'll be sorry!"
"Oh shut up, you fool!"
"Diarmaid, tell me about these berries."
"Never mind about them."
"I won't eat or sleep till you fetch them for me."
"Damnation. Is there no end to my affliction?"
"I'll bring that other pair for assistance."

P26

Soon...
"Where's this Searbhán then?"

"Look up there."
"What do you want?"
"A handful of those berries."
"Well, that is something you'll never get! Now watch out, you liar!"
But... Diarmaid proves too nimble for the giant.
"And now... the club!"
"You're done for now, my friend!"
"Nnngh!"
"Damn!"
"Ugh!"

P27

The hero is left alone on the field of slaughter... as the Searbhán lies in a deep hole.
"So...tired..."
Back through the wood then to Gráinne.
"I won't eat a single berry unless you personally get them for me."
"Fine then!"
And in the end...
"Now get back to Fionn but don't tell him that it was I who killed the Searbhán."

P28

"Tell Fionn we've got the berries... and that we finished off the Searbhán."
But Fionn is not easily deceived.
"Mmm... that's the scent of the bold Diarmaid!"
"Get out of my sight or I'll have your heads!!!"
"But if the Searbhán's dead then we can head for Dubhros immediately!"
And so, a little later... a game of chess under the tree.
"I see the move that can win it for you."
"But what is it?"
"I'll show you, friend."
So...
"That's that, I think."
"To hell with you! That's the third game on the trot that Diarmaid has won for you!"

P29

"Diarmaid? But he's not within a mile of us!"
"Do you take me for a fool?! Who's that up there then?"
"Greetings all!"
The nine warriors of Garbh now approach.
"All right. That's it. Finish him off now."
"With pleasure!"
But Aonghus is again watching ...
"Right!"
"Aarrgh!"
Aonghus weaves his magic and transforms the falling warrior into the likeness of Diarmaid himself"
"ÚÚFF!"
"Quick! We have him now!"

P30

Slais!
But then...
"What the...?"
"We've been tricked. It's Garbh."
Then...

The same trick is worked again and again until the warriors of garbh are destroyed.

"ÁÁÁÁÁÁÁÁ!"

"íííííííííííííí!"

Now the Druid appears...

"Come with me, Gráinne."

And so they make good their escape to the Boyne fortress.

Diarmaid now tries to make peace with Fionn...

"Let us end this conflict now, once and for all."

"Never!"

Now Oscar is incensed.

"To hell with you so! I'll stand by my friend to the death if needs be!"

P31

"It's time we were leaving, I think."

From tree to tree...

...and from branch to branch...

"Stick with me, Oscar!"

"After them!"

They neither pause nor rest... only to destroy their pursuers.

Soon in the fortress of the Boyne.

"Diarmaid!"

"Well done, Oscar. You truly are a faithful friend."

"Welcome, my darling!"

P32

Some time later...

"It is long past time to put an end to this madness. Make peace with Diarmaid, I beseech you."

"Very well but I can never forget his treachery towards me!"

And so... Diarmaid and Gráinne settle down with their five children.

"We should hold a feast for Fionn and Cormac to show there is no bad feeling any more."

"A good idea, my dear."

No sooner said than done...

But there is no cure for the jealousy that lurks in the heart of Fionn.

P33

One morning, a short time later, Diarmaid awakes with a start...

"I thought I heard the hunt."

"It's only a trick. Lie back, my love."

But again...

"I must get up!"

Quickly, he sets off.

Soon he reaches Binn Ghulbain (Ben Bulben)... where fifty of the Fianna have already been slain by the wild boar of Gulbain.

"Let me join you."

"I thought there was a bind on you never to hunt?"

"Never mind that. Let's go!"

"Have it your way then... you fool!"

P34

A deer appears...

"Where is it?"

Grrrr!

As the boar charges Diarmaid fires his spear but...

URRRK!

He buries his sword to the hilt in the boar's back but to no avail...
And then Diarmaid is gored in the stomach.
The hero falls in a bloody heap.
"Nnngh. Is this the end of me?"
Úú... úúú...
The hound takes off to bring help...
"Uuugh..."

P35

Soon Fionn and the Fianna arrive...
"So! Don't tell me the traitor has been flattened. Well, how richly you deserve this end."
"What are you saying?"
"Would you say that to me and all the times I saved your skin?"
"You can save him with a drink of water from your hands. Get to the well now!"
But jealousy is a worm in the heart of Fionn...
And... he lets the water run through his fingers.
And again a second time...
"Listen to me! If you don't bring him that water I'll take the head off you!"
But...
"Too late."

P36

"At last!!!"
"Damn you!!!"
"Stop! Isn't one death enough?"
"We'll have to tell Gráinne."
On the ramparts Gráinne stands waiting and watching...
"Where are you, Diarmaid?"
Then she sees the crowd approaching.
"Surely that can't be Diarmaid's hound?"
But it is...

P37

Instantly everything becomes clear...
"DIARMAID!!!"
And she falls over the wall to the ground.
"Oh no! What's happened?"
"She's given birth to triplets... but they're all dead."
"You're the cause of this, you coward. But understand this... she shall have his hound."

P38

"Bring him to me, please, I beseech you."
"Of course we will."
On the side of the mountain Diarmaid is mourned.
"The hero is departed but his spirit shall live on."
"Let us raise three shouts of sorrow for him."
"ALAS! ALAS! ALAS!"
"You may bring him to his lover now."
"A hundred thanks."
"I shall put a magic spirit in him so that I can talk to him a little every day."

P39

Meanwhile...

"Your father died by treachery... but I shall divide his arms among you and one day you shall have your revenge."

"Count on it."

"We promise you that, mother, but come now..."

"How lonely the night seems..."

How lonely indeed.

P40

By the light of the moon Gráinne weeps for her lost love...

"Oh, my darling Diarmaid... my sorrow and destruction... I have lost my one and only love..."

END