

## Journal I

**S**he gave me gall ink, quills and several sheets of vellum today. Finally, I have a chance to record my past, what I can remember of it.

However, the legend remains forefront in my mind. So this is my first entry, the Legend of the Deargh Du. It is the story of my line, my people, and the Goddess who created us. The sun rises soon and the fire is dying. Here is the tale.



*Morrigan, the Tuath Goddess of blood, battle, justice, destruction, and rebirth gazed upon the expanse of the impending battle below. To her south, she could see the massive army of Milesians disembark from their crude, yet seaworthy, vessels. The Iberian invaders wanted to try conquering the rich land of Eire again.*

*She exchanged glances with the others of her family, The Tuatha dé Danann. Her consort, Dagda the All-Father, moved to her side as they assembled for the battle.*

*Morrigan licked her lips in anticipation. Soon spilt blood would mix with the green grass causing a myriad of delightful scents. Soon her ravens could feast again. This time, she would join them.*

*"Remember what Lady Dana, mother to us all, told us, Morrigan."*

*"Dearest, how could I forget?" Morrigan felt her lips turn up into a grimace. Dagda always wanted to be fair, even to his enemies.*

*"I know that look," Dagda whispered into Morrigan's ear. "You are the Great Balancer. Practice some restraint."*

*"They are our enemies," she hissed in reply.*

*"Do not allow your anger at the invaders to overwhelm you. They are our mortal brethren after all."*

*Morrigan sighed, drawing her blade. While her consort provided for her and loved her, Dagda's little rules about peace and harmony always proved to be highly annoying. Life always involved highs and lows, even for immortals. Tipping the great balance toward good or evil always caused ripples in nature. Such ripples made her duties more difficult.*

*Morrigan tilted her head to the side to study the advancing Iberians.*

*"Just another group of invaders," Morrigan chuckled to herself. "They never learn. Perhaps it is time for these rash Milesians to learn not to tread on our lands."*

*As soon as the Milesians gathered into some semblance of a formation, their leader shouted out a blood-curdling battle cry.*

*Morrigan peered into the leader's dynamic diamond-blue eyes and could see no fear. Oh, how she would love to see fear in those eyes of his. Perhaps, she would have that opportunity soon.*

*The roar of the Tuath chariots echoed through Tara as they galloped over the hills to engage the enemy.*

*"Hold back," Dagda pointed to the running Milesians.*

*An itch to plunge her blade into a mortal heart made Morrigan twitch. The enemy charged full force. Every warrior's heart beat faster and faster. The scent of blood created by each beating heart became an aphrodisiac to her bloodlust. Her resolve to stand still and wait for the order to charge dwindled in the face of her hunger to enact vengeance. The Balance had to be maintained. Finally, her hunger for rash action won.*

*"I can wait no longer," she hissed. Morrigan pushed her way past the other swordsmen.*

*She could hear Dagda's grumble of discontent as he and the others joined her as they ran toward the waiting swords.*

*Morrigan lost herself in the tide of redness that overwhelmed the green sloping hills of Tara. Spears whooshing through the air, swords clanging on other swords and shields, and the sounds of men and women grunting and screaming created a sweet song to her ears.*

*One had to admire the Milesians for their fighting skills and bravery. They cut down many immortal warriors. Flush with victory, they continued striking down the Tuaths, unaware of the invincibility of their foe.*

*Fear flooded the ranks of the remaining Milesians as they realized that the dead Tuaths returned to life after being hacked into pieces. The mortal warriors screeched in horror as the Tuaths impaled them with spears. Sleet rain hit the Milesians, pummeling the warriors into submission.*

*Morrigan's pleasure tripled as the majority of the remaining Milesians took flight, heading back to their ships on the beach, calling on their Druid Amairgin for assistance.*

*The ships pushed away from the shores, leaving behind the dead and wounded Milesians.*

*"Come," she called to the others. "We will show them what we do to our enemies."*

*"Peace, Triple-One, we shall ask Dana first," Dagda replied.*

*"They are invaders, Dagda," She muttered.*

*"The Iberian Invaders have no home, remember? The sons of the King Mil left for a new horizon, after their enemy took their lands and cattle," Dagda leaned up against an oak. "Have mercy and let them come forth. Perhaps, they wish for a truce now. Perhaps, they will want to join forces with us against the Fir Bolg. We could use such a worthy, mortal adversary to our benefit. Tara and Eire will remain in our hands."*

*Morrigan sighed. "Fine, work out a truce with our enemies." She thrust her sword in the ground and stomped away, watching the other Gods and Goddesses clear out of her path and form a circle, discussing what terms they should offer. They would allow the Iberians to join them, leave peacefully, or drown in the cold ocean.*

*A fury inflamed her as she remembered the other invasions. If the others wished to be peaceful, they could, however she would enjoy tipping the balance against these warriors any way she could. Morrigan cawed as she transformed into a raven and took to the sky, leaving the others behind. A burning hunger grew within.*

*Morrigan watched the cold flecks of snow fall as the Tuaths left the battlefield, leaving the dying Milesian warriors behind on the hillside of Tara. The remaining ice transformed into slush as mud and blood mixed with the sleet. Deep red pools of vitae spilled from the dead and dying Milesian warriors.*

*The raven flew over the carnage. She paused mid-flight, seeing a pair of limbs flail about as a warrior tried to pull a spear from his own torso. Intrigued, she moved in for a closer look.*

*The leader of the Milesian force lay staked to the ground. A spear pierced his stomach and held him to the land.*

*Morrigan watched the warrior's blood escape from his lips and he ceased shivering. A great warmth surrounded his soul as his spirit prepared to depart for the Otherworld. Then the cold chill of her shadow shattered the warmth, and the skies turned as black as her feathers.*

*She landed on his chest and stared at the prone figure in the snow. Morrigan hopped to the ground and returned to her previous form.*

*Morrigan leaned forward, smelling the blood and closing her eyes. She licked away the reddened trails, losing herself in the fear exuding from the blood. His fears immersed in her consciousness,*

*pushing aside the other concerns of battle. She continued to partake of the man's spilled blood.*

*These new invaders were full of life, their memories sweet and intoxicating. The coast of Iberia, home of the Milesians, became clear in her mind. Then, exhilaration swallowed her whole when another emotion emerged from the warrior, utter fury. So delicious.*

*Morrigan opened her eyes again. The dark skies signaled the time to return home with the others, back to Dagda. She rolled her eyes, thinking of Dagda's displeasure at her blood thirst. She pulled back a lock of her hair and turned back to the dying enemy.*

*She kneeled and slid her tongue across his cold mouth, licking away the remaining blood. As his death drew near, the warrior shook again and turned to face the woman. She pulled out the spear pinning Adhamh to the ground, watching him wince and cry out in agony. She tossed the spear aside.*

*"Who?" he whispered, confusion and anger covering his face.*

*She snorted a laugh and shook her head. "I have many names," she whispered. "Some call me Badhbh, Macha or Neman. For simplicity, most call me Morrigan. You may call me Phantom Queen. I reign over battle, death, destruction, creation, justice, and revenge. I am She Who Maintains the Balance."*

*Morrigan paused and then continued. "I watched you during the battle. You were magnificent, Adhamh." She purred his name. "Just not good enough to survive my immortal clan."*

*His ire sweetened his blood as he stared at her. "I call you by your true name, Witch," he whispered. "Stop taking my essence."*

*Morrigan's battle apron flapped in the cold winds as she sprawled next to him. She leaned over, tracing the remnants of blood surrounding his lips with her index finger, and then raised it to her own mouth. She exhaled as the fury leapt from his blood into her body. Morrigan leaned forward and whispered into Adhamh's ear, "I will do as I please." His annoying impertinence grew tiresome.*

*"You are nothing but a witch, trying to snatch my soul away and keep me from joining my brethren in the Otherworld."*

*Morrigan snarled and then regained her senses. "Fine," she hissed. "I will show you that I am no mere witch." Morrigan sat up and tossed aside a bracer on her right wrist. She brought her teeth to her arm, tearing away at her flesh. She crawled over towards Adhamh, raising her hand over Adhamh's face.*

*"Now, watch a Goddess heal," she whispered, watching him stare up at her.*

*"You bleed as I do," he hissed, "and now I will take your essence back with me to the Otherworld."*

*He seized and latched onto her mending wrist with his own teeth.*

*Adhamh drank some of her blood and then rolled over to his side, clutching his stomach, gagging. His eyes glazed over as he began to giggle and then laugh.*

*Morrigan gasped, horrified. She needed to take care of this mistake and send Adhamh to the Otherworld. At first, she experienced annoyance at finding Adhamh within her mind. She felt a wordless acceptance and gratitude from him.*

*Morrigan relished that the former mortal understood her motives and the reasons behind it. He knew and yet did not flee like the mortals or turn away like the Tuaths.*

*She never realized that sharing her essence could be so satisfying. For once, a calm settled over her. The warrior Goddess closed her eyes, enjoying the understanding between herself and the former mortal about the need for balance and the hunger for bloodshed, destruction, and creation.*

*Adhamh turned back to her and began licking away her bloody wound.*

*Morrigan watched Adhamh's wounds close as the harsh reality of what she did grew clear. A mortal man had ingested her immortal blood. Her family, the Tuatha dé Danaan, would be furious that she had permitted a mortal to share in her essence, even though it was an accident. She could still terminate him, but he seemed to fill a void she did not know she possessed. She could not destroy him now. She manipulated mankind for her own satisfaction.*

*Adhamh looked at the Goddess with his newly changed, glowing green eyes. Morrigan turned to watch him and she felt her face smooth into a small smile.*

*Morrigan clasped Adhamh's cold hand. "We must go now. There is much for you to learn," she told him.*

*They flew far from the battlefield to the hills where the Tuaths held dominion.*

*The Gods, Goddesses, and fae-folk turned away from Adhamh. They found him unnatural, but Morrigan enjoyed her newfound child. Adhamh's thirst for blood matched her own. Adhamh understood her bloodlust, unlike Dagda or the others.*

*The Tuaths and faeries called Adhamh the Deargh Du. He spent his days hiding from the killing sun, and he hunted with Morrigan at night, feasting on the blood of men and the wild creatures of Eire.*

*The years passed, and soon others of Adhamh's kind stalked the night. Morrigan's brood became legendary, forever caught in the world of mortals with the blood of a Goddess in their veins.*

*Beautiful, immortal, deadly.*



*My friend the young Druid leaves me again to rejoin her teachers. Despite her offers of friendship, there is something in her eyes that chills me to my bones. Still, she offers me the secrets of our race, and I long for the friendship of a companion, even a mortal one. I only fear that my hunger will rise again one night, and she will become my victim.*

*She promises to teach me more tomorrow night. Perhaps then the thick fog of the past century will clear.*

- M.G.P.H.