

THE HARD-HEADED STEELING

written by  
Ian F White

Scripted  
  
scripted.com

REVISION 395  
May 10, 2010  
Copyright (c) 2010  
Ian F White and  
Licensed under  
Creative Commons  
BY-NC-ND

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE,

(HERALD, ASSEMBLY, KING CORMAC, DUBDRENN)

SOUND FX: .... A FEAST. MURMOUR OF VOICES. CLINK OF EATING  
UTENSILS

HERALD

All rise for King Cormac, son of Art, son of  
Conn.

SOUND FX: .... SCRAPE OF CHAIRS. FANFARE.

HERALD

Hail the king!

ASSEMBLY

Hail King Cormac!

KING CORMAC

Let the feasting continue.

SOUND FX: .... CHAIRS SCRAPE. VOLUME INCREASES. CLINK OF  
EATING UTENSILS

DUBDRENN

A moment of your time, Herald.

HERALD

Yes, steward Dubdrenn.

DUBDRENN

Who is yonder youth - the one with the blond  
hair who carries a sword which glows with a  
brightness to rival the hearth-fire?

HERALD

That will be Socht, son of Fithel; a newcomer  
to the court. The sword is the one named "The  
Hard-Headed Steeling", once the sword of the  
great hero Cuchulain.

DUBDRENN

Ahh, I see. A new arrival. Thank you,  
Steward.

HERALD

My pleasure, steward.

SCENE TWO,  
(DUBDRENN, SOCHT)

SOUND: ..... FOOTSTEPS.

DUBDRENN

Greetings to you Socht, son of Fithel. I am  
Dubdrenn, steward of the hall. I bid you  
welcome to king Cormac's court.

SOCHT

Thanks you, steward.

DUBDRENN

Call me Dubdrenn; we can be informal while  
the feast is in flow.

SOCHT

As you wish, Dubdrenn.

DUBDRENN

I see you carry a very fine weapon upon your  
harness.

SOCHT

Aye, it is named "The hard-Headed Steeling".  
I hold it now as a family possession.

DUBDRENN

I have heard of the sword. I hear tell that  
at night it shone like a fire.

SOUND: ..... A BURNING FIRE.

SOCHT

Aye.

DUBDRENN

I also heard that if its point were bent back  
to the hilt it would fly back again and be as  
straight as before.

SOUND: ..... BOING

SOCHT

Aye.

DUBDRENN

And that if it was held in a stream and a hair were floated down against the edge, it would sever the hair.

SOUND: ..... RUNNING WATER

SOCHT

Aye.

DUBDRENN

There is also a saying that this sword can make two halves of a man, and for a while that man would not perceive what had befallen him.

SOUND: ..... CHOP

SOCHT

Aye.

DUBDRENN

Will you sell it to me?

SOCHT

Nay.

DUBDRENN

But you do not know what I am offering.

SOCHT

You are wasting your breath.

DUBDRENN

I will give you a ration such as I have each night.

SOCHT

Nay.

DUBDRENN

And four men's food for your family.

SOCHT

Nay.

DUBDRENN

Well, name your price and I will match it.

SOCHT

Nay. The sword is not for sale.

DUBDRENN

Very well. But let me furnish you with the best wine and mead at the court simply for having been in the presence of such a beautiful sword.

SOCHT

Very well.

ACT TWOSCENE ONE,  
(DUBDRENN)

SOUND FX: .... DEEP SNORING.

DUBDRENN

(whispers) Sleep well young master Socht, I shall be but a moment, and I shall require this.

SOUND FX: .... A SWORD BEING DRAWN FROM ITS SHEATH. THE FLAP OF FOLDED CLOTH.

DUBDRENN

My cloak will conceal its glow.

SOUND FX: .... HURRIED FOOTSTEPS. RECEDE.

SCENE TWO,  
(DUBDRENN, CONNU)

SOUND FX: .... HAMMER ON ANVIL. APPROACHES.

DUBDRENN

Connu, stop your hammering a moment.

CONNU

What do you want Dubdrenn?

SOUND FX: .... FLAP OF UNWRAPPED CLOTH.

DUBDRENN

See this sword?

CONNU

Yes?

DUBDRENN

Are you able to open the hilt and later to close it without trace?

CONNU

I am.

DUBDRENN

Good. Take apart the hilt, scribe my name upon the tang and close the hilt again. Do this within the hour and you will be well

(MORE)

DUBDRENN (CONT'D)

rewarded. Send word when you have finished.

CONNU

Expect a message within the hour.

SOUND FX: .... HAMMER ON ANVIL. APPROACHES.

SCENE THREE

(DUBDRENN)

SOUND FX: .... DEEP SNORING. FLAP OF CLOTH. SWORD IS  
SHEATHED.

DUBDRENN

Here is your sword Socht. Sleep well. On the  
morrow, I return north with the king, but we  
will be back next season and then I will  
claim the sword (chuckle).

ACT THREESCENE ONE

(HERALD, ASSEMBLY, KING CORMAC, DUBDRENN, SOCHT)

SOUND FX: . . . . A FEAST. MURMOUR OF VOICES. CLINK OF EATING  
UTENSILS

HERALD

All rise for King Cormac, son of Art, son of  
Conn.

SOUND FX: . . . . SCRAPE OF CHAIRS. FANFARE.

HERALD

Hail the king!

ASSEMBLY

Hail King Cormac!

KING CORMAC

Let the feasting continue.

SOUND FX: . . . . CHAIRS SCRAPE. VOLUME INCREASES. CLINK OF  
EATING UTENSILS

DUBDRENN

(raised voice) My lord high king, I wish to  
bring a matter of dispute before you.

SOUND FX: . . . . THE HALL FALLS SILENT

KING CORMAC

(sigh) Your reputation precedes you Dubdrenn.  
What mischief are you scheming now?

DUBDRENN

You know of the youth named Socht and his  
sword some call "the Hard -Headed Steeling"?

KING CORMAC

Yes.

DUBDRENN

Well, the weapon is mine, not his!

SOUND FX: . . . . UPROAR.

KING CORMAC

Silence! Is Socht in the hall?



SOCHT  
Aye Sire.

KING CORMAC  
What have you to say in answer?

SOCHT  
The sword is mine by long equity, and I shall not give it up.

KING CORMAC  
Explain yourself Dubdrenn.

DUBDRENN  
The sword is mine. I am not saying Socht stole the sword, only that it is mine.

KING CORMAC  
And do you have proof of your claim?

DUBDRENN  
Yes. If it is mine, then my name will be etched upon the tang within the handle.

KING CORMAC  
Then we shall take the sword to Connu and he shall examine it for us.

SOUND FX: .... FOOTSTEPS, VOICES. RECEDE.

SCENE TWO

(KING CORMAC, SOCHT, FITHEL, DUBDRENN, HERALD)

SOUND FX: .... FOOTSTEPS, VOICES. APPROACH.

KING CORMAC  
So the sword is indeed the property of Dubdrenn.

SOCHT  
Nay. It cannot be! It is a family possession, passed down from my grandfather. Father, tell them it is so!

FITHEL

I am having naught to do with your law suits this time son. You have been too apt to blame the pleadings of other men; now plead for thyself.

SOCHT

But--

KING CORMAC

The physical evidence overwhelms your protests Socht. I hereby grant the sword to Dubdrenn.

SOCHT

But--

DUBDRENN

Well, I was prepared to pay handsomely for its return, but you would not listen.

SOCHT

Ah, I see. Well, in that case, I declare the sword to be yours; along with all the obligations associated with it.

DUBDRENN

I accept possession of the sword and all its obligations.

SOCHT

In that case, I too shall invoke the law; I claim blood-fine!

KING CORMAC

(sigh) How so?

SOCHT

My father came into possession of the sword by retrieving it from the dead body of his fateher, Angus. The identity of my grandfather's killer was never known. I am

(MORE)

SOCHT (CONT'D)

not saying Dubdrenn is the killer; just that he is now liable for the sword and its obligations.

FITHEL

Well pleaded son. We always thought it was Cuchulain himself who had slain my father, but as it is proven not to be his sword, then my claim is false.

DUBDRENN

But--

KING CORMAC

Dubdrenn, your scheming has turned upon you. In regard to the claim of blood-fine for the slaying of Angus, I judge you pay to Socht all that you offered him for the sword, in addition to returning the sword to him.

DUBDRENN

But. (sobs) I bore false witness! I took the hilt to Connu that first night of our meeting and bade him etch my name on the tang. It is all a lie. The sword is as they claim.

KING CORMAC

Well, if that is the case, you are not worthy to remain in my service. You are hereby banned from the realm. Take your leave Dubdrenn.

SOUND FX: .... SLOW, RETREATING FOOTSTEPS

KING CORMAC

As for the sword, I too claim blood-fine. As you have sworn the sword to be Cuchulain's, it is well known that it was Cuchulain who slew my grandfather, Conn of the hundred battles. And so the sword passes to me and will take pride of place between the cup and the branch. Let the feasting continue.

SOUND FX: .... CHEERS

HERALD

(SINGS)

With a host, with a valiant band.  
Well did he go into Connacht.  
Alas, that he saw the blood of Conn.  
On the side of Cuchulain's sword.

THE END