

The Bloodless Fight of Rochad

Cú Chulainn sent his charioteer to Rochad mac Fathemain of Ulster to ask him to come to his aid. Now it happened that Finnabair was in love with Rochad for he was the handsomest of the Ulster warriors of the day. The charioteer went to Rochad and asked him to come and help Cú Chulainn if he had recovered from his debility, and he suggested that they should set a snare for the host to entrap some of them and kill them. Rochad came from the north with a hundred men. 'Scan the plain for us today,' said Ailill. 'I see a troop coming across the plain,' said the watchman, 'and a youthful warrior among them. He towers shoulder-high above the other warriors.'

'Who is that, Fergus?' asked Ailill.

'Rochad mac Fathemain,' said he, 'and he comes to help Cú Chulainn. I know what you must do,' said Fergus. 'Send a hundred men with the maid yonder as far as the middle of the plain, and let the maid go in front of them. A messenger shall go and speak to Rochad and ask him to come alone to talk to the maid, and then let him be seized and that will save us from attack by his followers.' This was done then. Rochad went to meet the messenger. 'I have come to you from Finnabair to ask you to go and speak with her.'

So he went alone to speak with her. The host rushed about him on all sides; he was captured and seized. His followers took to flight. Afterwards he was released and bound over not to attack the host until he came with all the Ulstermen. He was promised that Finnabair should be given to him, and then he went away from them. That is the Bloodless Fight of Rochad.

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