

INCIDENT AT FINNESBURG  
(*GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY*)

Screenplay by Diane X. Moos

**THE INCIDENT AT FINNESBURG**

**BLACK SCREEN... FADING TO SCENE OF A MEAD HALL IN FLAMES**

Gloomy lute/ flute music with drum beats...Sound of fire crackling...  
A woman begins speaking in a sorrowful voice:

**Wealhtheow (V.O.)**

I will tell this story about myself, very sad.  
My fate. I can say that!  
Listen! I endured hardships both recent or  
ancient  
after I grew up, by no means more than now.

Often we see that seldom in any place, even for  
the briefest time,  
when a prince falls, does the murderous spear  
relent,  
good though the bride may be...

**EXT. HEOROT---NIGHT**

**PROLOGUE**

IMAGE: HEOROT, twenty years earlier. A very large Anglo-Saxon/  
Danish style mead hall in Denmark.

**FADE TO:**

**INT. HEOROT:** Night. Very large, impressive, smoky Germanic-style wooden hall decorated with ornate carvings, banners, weapons and shields. There is a large stag's head in a prominent place on the wall over a throne-like chair which is covered with bear skins. There is a fire pit in the center of the room, lit. There are trestle tables along the walls with the remains of a large feast and benches alongside, filled with boisterous thanes who are drinking mead. The room is crowded with thanes and other men as well as men and women of all ages. There are hunting dogs under the tables, fighting over scraps. A bard, **AART**, is playing a lute and singing, struggling to be heard over an increasingly restless crowd.

**AART**

(Singing)

The fiend Grendel, spawn of Cain, wrestled with  
 the hero But Beowulf, son of Ecgtheow, was mindful  
 of his mighty strength!  
 The wind-loving Geat had the prowess of thirty men  
 in his right hand!  
 Wondrous gifts the Creator has bestowed upon him  
 who brought down the hell-brute!

**CROWD** growing more restless and beginning to jeer

**UNFERTH**(a Danish warrior, sitting near **HROTHGAR**)

Come now, master bard, we've had a belly full of  
 songs praising this foreigner, useful as he's  
 proven. Don't you know any songs about brave  
 Danes?

**CROWD**

(drunkenly)

Aye! We are weary of songs about these Geats!  
 Let's hear a song about good Danish men of valor!

**ZOOM IN ON HROTHGAR**, an elderly, regal warrior who is sitting  
 attentively on his throne-like chair. He is silent.

**BEOWULF**

(a strapping young hero)

Yes! Let us hear a tale about the well-known  
 Danish courage!

**AART**

Well I do have one song I think you might all  
 enjoy...

**FADE TO BLACK****RESOLVE TO:****EXT. MEDUSLED—AUTUMN—DAYTIME.**

IMAGE: A smaller version of Heorot, less ornate. Blustery weather, leaves swirling

**SUPER: THE INCIDENT AT FINNESBURG**

**FADE TO:**

**INT. MEDUSLED. DAYTIME**, but still dark... A fire is burning in the central fire pit. The hall is empty except for **HOC**, **HNEAF** and **HENGEST**, who are standing near the fire, warming their hands. No armor.

**HOC**

(A frail, elderly man with quavering voice)

What news from Friesland, Hnaef?

**HNAEF**

(A handsome young prince)

The messenger from Finn was here today and brings an invitation from your daughter, my sister, to pass Yuletide with her this winter in Finnesburg.

**HOC**

I have seen too many winters to take leave of my hall. Do you intend to go?

**HENGEST**

(a middle-aged warrior, battle-worn but still fit)

The situation with Finn and his Jutish friends grows more worrisome with each passing year. I am suspicious of this invitation, my lord.

**HNAEF**

Yet we have my sister's son, Frithwulf, to consider. The lad has been living with us for three years now and is almost full-grown and by all rights, should be returned to his father.

**HOC**

I had hoped the boy would have chosen to remain here with his Half-Dane kinfolk rather than return to Finn.

**HNAEF**

Those were my hopes, too, Father, but the boy would like to see his mother again. Frithwulf must be taken back to Frisia. I believe this is the motive behind my sister Hildeburg's invitation although I do not trust her husband Finn. We will have to go to Friesland but we will not go alone.

**HENGEST**

My lads and I will go with you.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. FRISIAN SHORE:** Cold, windy day, ships at anchor in background.

An armed Frisian **COAST GUARD**, clad in armor, is addressing the Danes, who have just disembarked from their ships. They are also wearing their armor. His hand is on his still-sheathed sword.

**FRISIAN COAST GUARD**

Hail, mariners!  
 What is the meaning of this great company of warriors, clad in bright armor?  
 I count sixty men. I have been commanded by my Lord Finn to watch for the arrival of his kin, coming to keep the Yule feast this winter, but we did not expect so many men, and some of you Jutes. Have you come in peace or war?

**HNAEF**

We are indeed the kin of Lord Finn, at least by marriage. We have come to visit our sister Hildeburg and to bring to her son Frithwulf. The seas are treacherous with pirates. Do you question our need for a stout guard? Especially when we bear such a precious cargo: the

heir to Finn's throne? Surely you agree that he is worthy of careful protection.

**ZOOM IN** on a sullen **FRITHWULF**, a boy of about fourteen years of age.

**COASTGUARD**

(peering closely at **FRITHWULF**)

Aye, that's the lad alright. I rightly remember him, although he is a proper man now.  
Follow me.

**COMPANY** follows **COAST GUARD** up a rocky path to the fortress of **FINNESBURG** and to a large mead hall. A group of people are waiting outside. At the front of the crowd stands **FINN**, a robust man of about forty years of age.

**FINN**

Hail Hnaef, son of Hoc!  
What a troop you have brought!  
I see my wife's father missing from your company.

**HNAEF**

Hail Finn, son of Folcwalda, lord of Finnesburg and all Friesland!  
Lord Hoc sends his apologies; he is feeling his age and prefers to pass this winter by his own fire. I have brought Frithwulf to you.

**FINN**

(looking closely at his son)

Frithwulf, what a man you have become!  
It is good and right that you live with your own people now.  
Welcome home, my dear boy.

**FINN** attempts to embrace **FRITHWULF**, who resists.

**FINN**

Ah well, it's been a few years for sure.  
Here is your mother!

**HILDEBURG**, a handsome woman past the bloom of youth embraces  
**FRITHWULF**, who responds warmly.

**FINN**

Hengest, is that you, you old rascal?  
What are you doing, hiding among these Half-  
Danes? Fallen on bad times, eh?

**HENGEST**

Nay, Lord Finn, not at all.  
We adventurers must always be about  
the business of adventuring.

**FINN**

Let us hope no adventures await us this  
Yule, eh?

Hnaef, since you have such a large retinue, I give  
my largest hall this winter,  
entirely for your use.

**HNAEF**

Thank you, my lord. You are most gracious.  
Will you join us for the Yule meal tonight in the  
hall or must we feast alone?

**FINN**

We shall all of us keep the feast together  
Frisians, Danes and Jutes.

**FADE OUT**  
**FADE TO**

**INT. STABLES--FINN** and the Jutish exiled prince **GARULF** are brushing their horses.

**FINN**

Working with these animals is very calming.

**GARULF**

You too feel the tension, eh?

**FINN**

I am concerned that Hnaef brought his entire warband with him and a good number of them are Jutes, led by that pirate Hengest. And these particular Jutes are enemies of yours, are they not?

**GARULF**

One might say so. Hengest and his band have allied themselves with these Danes and as you know, it was a Danish warband that defeated my brave warriors and moved into my homeland. It was not Hnaef himself who led the raid but I do not trust him. Lord Finn, I am grateful that you have offered me hospitality during my woeful exile but I would prefer to be spending this Yuletide drinking mead in my own hall.

**FINN**

(still brushing the horse)

Why isn't Hengest helping you recover your lands? Why is he working for the Danes?

**GARULF**

The Danes are expanding into many lands and this appeals to Hengest, who, I have heard, has plans of his own. He is an opportunist.

**FINN**

Another thing is worrying me. Hnaef has stolen my son's affections. The lad hardly looks at me yet



he was glad to see his mother. I suspect his uncle Hnaef has been poisoning his mind against me. He is half Danish, as you know. I suspect he is in the hall with Hnaef's company even now instead of here with his own father.

**GARULF**

I wouldn't worry too much.  
When his uncle's troop returns to Denmark you will have many opportunities to regain Frithwulf's loyalty and affection.

**FINN**

Not if his mother has anything to say about it.

**GARULF**

(laughing)

Hildeburg will always be a Dane at heart, my lord.

**FINN**

She never wanted to marry me.  
Hoc arranged our union in hopes of  
calming the tensions between our people.  
She has always been a dutiful but resentful  
wife. There is little love between us.

**GARULF**

It's been my observation that such marriages  
seldom bring about peaceful resolution.  
Battles bring more glory than peace efforts do.  
As well as treasure!

**FINN**

Aye, that is the sad truth of the matter.  
Well friend, let's go keep the feast and may we  
all be careful with our speech.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. FINNESBURG HALL: EVENING**

**IMAGE:** Hall is dark except for lights shining through small windows near roofline.

**FADE TO**

**INT. HALL: EVENING---** Fire in central pit, lit torches on walls. Servants moving about preparing the feast. Main dish: Yule Boar, on large platter, apple in its mouth. Bard is practicing a flute in a corner. **HNAEF** and **HENGEST**'s people are present drinking mead boisterously.

**HENGEST**  
(to **HNAEF**)

Tonight's meal should prove interesting.

**HNAEF**

Aye. Let us all watch our tongues.  
Garulf and those exiled Jutes of his are not happy to see us.

**HENGEST**

That's an understatement. But we are guests; let us mind our manners.

**HNAEF**

I have ordered my men to ignore any insults.

You know, you have never offered a good explanation for choosing to side with my Danes over your own Jutish brethren. I have always wondered...

**FRITHWULF**  
(interrupting **HNAEF**)

Greetings, Uncle. It looks like it's going to be quite a feast tonight!

**HNAEF**

Indeed, my lad, if we can all keep our wits about us and [giving **FRITHWULF** a meaningful look] avoid arrogant speech.

**FRITHWULF**

I hate these swinish Frisians.

**HNAEF**

Now that's what I'm talking about!  
Keep your tongue behind your teeth!  
We are guests and Lord Finn is your father.  
You are his heir and all of Finnesburg will be yours someday.  
Show respect!

**FRITHWULF**

I am no Frisian, Uncle. I am a Half-Dane, a son of the Scyldings!

**FRITHWULF** leaves **HNAEF** and **HENGEST**

**HENGEST**  
(to **HNAEF**)

That could be a problem.

**HNAEF**

True enough.  
I have tried to instill in the lad pride in his Danish heritage. And to be honest, I would be very pleased if he chose to return with me to Denmark. Frithwulf is like a son to me.

A commotion is heard as **FINN** and entourage noisily enter the hall.

**FINN**

Let the festivities begin! Take your seats, my brothers! Hnaef, please come sit at the table with me.

Everyone settles in their places as the servants bring out platters of steaming food.

**HILDEBURG** sits with **FRITHWULF**.

**HENGEST** sits with his band of Jutes.

**GARULF** sits with his band of exiled Jutes.

The **DANES** all sit together

The **FRISIANS** all sit together

There is uneasy murmuring.

**ZOOM IN** on various groups of people eating and drinking.

**HILDEBURG** begins to move through the company offering goblets of mead from a tray carried by a female servant. She offers a cup to her husband **FINN** first, and then to **HNAEF** and **HENGEST**. She is especially gracious to the **DANES**.

**HILDEBURG**

(to **FINN**)

Here, my lord, partake of this golden drink and warm yourself on this cold night.

**FINN**

(smiling at his wife)

Thank you, my dear.

**HILDEBURG**

(to **HNAEF**)

Drink, my brother, and be welcome in my house although I cannot feel that this is really my home.

**HILDEBURG**

(to **HENGEST**)

Drink, friend of the Half-Danes and be welcome.

**HILDEBURG** continues moving among the diners

**ZOOM IN** on two unnamed young Jutish warriors, part of **GARULF**'s band. A grizzled old warrior is talking to a younger warrior.

**ELDERLY JUTISH EXILE**

Look lad; see that gleaming torc that sits around the neck of yonder Dane?

I swear I have seen that neck-ring before. Does it not look familiar to you?

**YOUNG JUTE**

Aye, it bears a close resemblance to one my uncle used to wear, which he received from the hand of Garulf's father, King Guthlaf. But I cannot be sure and your eyes are dim, old man.

**OLD JUTE**

My eyes do not deceive me, lad. That is Guthlaf's torc. I was there when he received it. It is an evil thing to see it now upon the neck of that swinish Dane. He is no doubt the very man who slayed your uncle and took that precious thing from his bleeding neck.

**YOUNG JUTE**

Do you really believe that is Uncle's torc?

**OLD JUTE**

Aye laddie, I do.  
What does honor require of you?

**ZOOM IN** on conversation between **SIGEFIRTH** and **ORDLAF**, Danes

**SIGEFIRTH**

(between mouthfuls of roast boar)

I do not know how much longer I can endure the insults from these Jutes.  
And the Frisians are little better.

**ORDLAF**

Aye. Lord Hnaef has commanded that we do not take offense but I do not think I will be able to withstand these offenses to our honor much longer.

**ORDLAF** flashes a huge, insincere smile at nearby Jute, who is glaring at them.

**SIGEFIRTH**

(laughing)

That's the way!

**ZOOM IN** on **FINN**, who is now standing

**FINN**  
(loudly)

It is now midnight!  
Let us all go outside to greet the stars, as  
custom requires on this night.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN:**

**EXT MEADOW---NIGHT.** No stars are visible in the cloudy sky.  
All people are shivering and clutching their cloaks around them.

**HENGEST**

Some custom. Not a star in the sky.

The wind picks up and the clouds begin to move away.  
Moon and stars begin to appear.

In the sky above the crowd, a weird scene begins to unfold. The people stare in amazement as **THE WILD HUNT** begins to race across the sky. A frigid wind is howling from the uttermost north and the people can hear fell voices. The temperature drops. Wraith-like figures are riding black stags with glittering antlers, accompanied by black hounds with hideous glowing eyes. At the front of the pack rides a god-like figure astride a huge eight-legged goat. This is Wodin, riding Sleipnir. The other riders are cadaverous, wraith-like beings, some men, some elves, some dwarves. A horn is sounding and the hounds are baying. It is a terrifying sight and most of the people are cowering and covering their eyes. Some are groveling on the cold ground.

**SIGEFIRTH**

Lo! Look up at the heavens! It is the Wild Hunt!

**FINN**  
(awe struck)

As I live, that is Wodin himself upon Sleipnir!

**HENGEST**

I never thought I would live long enough to see  
the Hunt with my own eyes. Who are these ghostly  
riders and what is their purpose?

**GARULF**  
(horrified)

I see my brother Gareth, who was slain by the  
swinish Half-Danes last summer!  
He is beckoning me with his gleaming sword.

A ghastly figure with glowing eyes turns towards the crowd and  
stares directly at **GARULF** as it gallops across the sky.

**SIGEFIRTH**

Aye, that is surely Gareth himself.

The noise of the hounds and horns fade away as the stampede  
thunders off towards the south and out of view. The wind dies  
down and the cloud cover returns. The spectacle has ended and it  
begins to snow. A few women are heard crying.

**HILDEBURG**

I have heard it said that when the Hunt  
visits, disaster will soon follow.  
We have a doom put upon us this night.

**FINN**

Or it may be that we all had too much mead to  
drink this night. And roast boar.

**HENGEST**

Not so, we all saw it. It is getting colder  
and here comes the first of the winter's  
snow. I am going back inside.

All the Danes and **HENGEST**'s Jutes go head back towards the hall.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE TO**

**INT. STABLES-NIGHT**, lit by a lantern. **FINN** and **GARULF** are having  
a private conversation.

**GARULF**

I swear I saw my dead brother riding one  
of those ghost stags. He beckoned to me.  
I could not hear his words but I know what he  
wants of me this night. He requires that I avenge  
his death at the hands of these Danes.

**FINN**

Garulf, don't be hasty!  
These are not the same Danes who attacked  
you. Hnaef did not lead that attack.

**GARULF**

Different warband, same people.  
We will have our revenge tonight.  
Hnaef and his traitorous Jutish friend are now  
slumbering in their beds, drowsy with mead.  
We will attack the hall and set it afire if we  
must.

**FINN**

(forcefully)

Oh no you will not!  
Is this how you repay my hospitality, by turning  
Finnesburg to ashes?

**GARULF**

Then we will strike a bargain, you and I.  
If you help me attack Hnaef and Hengest, I will  
not use fire.

**FINN**

(reluctantly)

I would rather have neither flame nor sword but to  
save my hall I will help you.  
Where is Frithwulf this night?  
Is he with his mother or is he in the hall with  
his uncle?

**GARULF**

You have a short time to find out, my lord.  
We will attack in one hour.  
Their snores will soon be replaced by screams.

**FADE OUT**  
**FADE TO**



**INT. FRISIAN HALL**-- dark, the fire is smoldering, no torches, men are sleeping on benches and there is the sound of loud snores. **HNAEF** is standing guard, looking through a crack in the front door.

**HNAEF**  
(loudly)

What's that I see out there?  
It's too early for the dawn and that's not a dragon out there.  
The hall isn't on fire.  
Nay, it's our mortal enemies approaching, all dressed in armor.  
What a racket! Birds are crying, wolves are yelping.  
They are clashing their spears upon their shields.  
I see them clearly now that the moon is shining.  
Woeful deeds are beginning!  
Tonight's deeds will bring to a bitter end the enmity between our people.  
Wake up, my warriors!  
Grab your coats of mail and think of deeds of valor!  
Be brave, be resolute!

The men arise from the benches and begin to don their chain mail and locate their weapons.

Men move to guard the hall's two large doors.

**SIGFERTH** and **EAHA** move to the front door  
**ORDLAF** and **HENGEST** move to the back door.

**EXT. HALL-- NIGHT**

The exiled Jutes, led by **GARULF** and the Frisians, led by **FINN**, assault the front door of the hall.

**GUTHERE**  
(an exiled Jutish warrior)

Garulf! Use caution, my lord! You are the heir!

**GARULF**

(in the thick of the assault)

There is no glory to be found among those who hide! Who is holding the door in there? Name yourself!

**INT. HALL**, the Danes and Hengest's Jutes are defending the doors of the hall.

**SIGFERTH**

My name is Sigferth and I am a prince of the Scegan! You may have heard my name!  
I am known for my many adventures and I'm a veteran at these blood-feuds! Tonight you are going to experience the fate you intended for me!

As **SIGFERTH** finishes his speech an arrow flies from the hall through a slot in the wall. The arrow hits **GARULF** in the neck and he dies.

**EXT. HALL**

**GUTHERE**

My Lord Garulf!

Everyone outside the hall gives a cry of despair and Garulf is carried away as a large raven circles overhead, squawking loudly and adding to the anguish.

The battle continues. The attackers attempt to batter the door down with a battering ram but their assault is repelled by the defenders. Many arrows from the hall find their mark and a number of attackers fall to the ground. The scene switches from exterior to interior and both sides labor on for many days. Finally, a Frisian arrow enters the hall through a crack and amazingly hits **HNAEF**, who is killed.

**HENGEST**

My Lord Hnaef!

**HNAEF**

(to **HENGEST** as he is gasping, dying)

We are all going to die here, both Dane and Frisian. They will burn this hall down next. Sue for peace. I leave you in command.

**HENGEST**

(in anguish)

No, my lord!

**HNAEF**

I am going to my fathers. Give my sword to Frithwulf, a worthy young man.

**SIGEFERTH**

My lord, Frithwulf is dead.

**HNAEF**

What a doom has befallen us.  
At least Frithwulf died bravely, with his beloved Half-Dane brethren.

**EXT. HALL-DAY,** Frisian and Jutish attackers in disarray.**BLEEDING JUTISH WARRIOR**(to **FINN**)

My lord Finn, I am wounded.  
Our numbers are greatly diminished.  
Garulf, whose battle this is, is slain.  
How can we bring an end to this disaster?

**FINN**

This attack was never my idea.  
We shall speak to the Danes about a treaty.

(Shouting at the hall)

Hnaef, can you hear me?

**HENGEST**

Hnaef is dead and so is your son, Finn.

**FINN**

(hiding his face in his hands)

O, what an evil day.

**HENGEST**

(shouting from the hall)

Let's call a truce.  
You have few men left to do battle and the stormy  
seas are beginning to freeze.  
We cannot leave this place until spring.

**FINN**

I agree, come out and we'll talk.

**HENGEST**

I would be a fool to trust you after your  
treacherous behavior towards us, who were your  
guests.

**FINN**

Let me come in. I will talk with you.

The hall door is opened a crack and FINN disappears inside.

**INT. HALL** which is in disarray because of the battle. There are  
several bodies lying on the tables, covered.

**FINN**

Let me see my son's body.

He walks over to the table on which **FRITHWULF**'s bloody body lies.

**FINN**

(looking down at the body, tears streaming down his face)

Oh, my dear son.

**FINN** stands quietly by his son's body for a few minutes, and then  
turns to **HENGEST**.

Let us make our treaty. This is what  
I offer. You may retain control of this hall until  
spring, when you will all leave Frisia.  
You will honor me as your lord while you live  
among us. As your lord, I will give your men such  
gifts as they require. Neither side will provoke  
the other by means of harsh words. Let us live in  
peace as brothers until the seas thaw in the  
spring.

**HENGEST**

The ice may thaw but our hearts will not.  
 My men will not want to honor you as their lord,  
 you who are the slayer of their beloved Lord  
 Hnaef. It is an offense to their honor.

**FINN**

There is no choice, other than fighting each other  
 to the death.

**HENGEST**

We accept your terms.  
 I can attempt to control my men's behavior.  
 I cannot control their dark thoughts.

**FINN**

Do your best.  
 I have a funeral to plan.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. MEADOW-DAY:** a clearing with a large pile of logs laid in an  
 orderly fashion. The bodies of all the slain, including **GARULF**,  
**HNAEF** and **FRITHWULF** are laid on top of the wood.

**SIGEFERTH**

The dead from both sides are being burned  
 together? Whose idea was this?

**HENGEST**

It was the Lady Hildeburg's request.

**SIGEFERTH**

I guess this is how it's going to be this  
 winter, maintaining the pretense that we  
 all are not enemies whose greatest desire  
 is to slit each others' throats.

**HENGEST**

Aye, it's going to be a long winter.

**FINN** takes a torch to the pyre and lights it. It bursts into flame and the bodies are consumed in a rather gruesome manner. **HILDEBURG**, who has lost her brother and her son, begins to sing a dirge.

**HILDEBURG**  
(singing)

Where has the horse gone?  
Where the rider?  
Where the giver of treasure?  
Where are the seats at the feast?  
Where are the revels in the hall?  
Alas for the bright cup!  
Alas for my brother, the mailed warrior!  
Alas for the splendor of my son the prince!  
They have passed away  
Under the dark cover of the night  
As if they had never been.

**FADE OUT** on last notes of dirge  
**FADE TO**

**INT. MEAD HALL**, where **HENGEST**'s group is encamped. It is three months since the battle and the funeral.

**SIGEFERTH**

I grow weary of this hall and Finn's lordship over us. Is he not the captain of the band that slew our lord Hnaef?

**HENGEST**

Aye, it is a bitter thing to live here among these treacherous murderers. We are too few in number to avenge his death.

**ORDLAF**

When spring has fully arrived, we can sail back to Denmark and tell our woeful tale to our brethren. They will not allow this treachery to go unavenged.

**SIGEFERTH**

What are you suggesting, Ordlaf? Will you return to Frisia with a warband to finish the job?

**ORDLAF**

Aye, that is exactly what I mean to do. What do you say, Hengest?

**HENGEST**

I have been thinking these same thoughts, Ordlaf and your words do cheer my heart. But we have made an oath with these Frisians. What does our code of honor expect from us? I am uneasy in my mind.

**SIGEFERTH**

With all respect, Lord Hengest, it was you who made this insufferable treaty with Finn, not us. We would have fought to the death.

**HENGEST**

Aye, I know you would have, and that is to your credit. Let me think on this for a while. I will give my decision when spring has fully come.

**ORDLAF**

We Danes, with or without the help of your Jutes, will have our revenge. At the very least, do not fight against us.

**HENGEST**

I can promise I will not fight against you.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**INT. HALL**, two weeks later

**ORDLAF**

(to **HENGEST**, who is sitting on the hall's throne-like chair)

Lord Hengest, spring is here and the seas are calmed. Have you made your decision yet?

**HENGEST**

Which oath to break...  
It is a hard thing to decide.

**HUNLAF**, a Danish warrior puts a sword in **HENGEST**'s lap.

**HUNLAF**

Maybe this will help you decide, sir.

**HENGEST**

This is *Light of Battle*, Hnaef's sword!  
This does stir up my heart.

**HUNLAF**

I hope it does, sir.  
Lord Hnaef was good to us, a good giver of gifts. We drank mead in his hall and ate his good meat. We cannot leave his death unavenged, especially since his death was caused by treachery.

**HENGEST**

(stares at the sword for a minute)

Yes, you are right.  
It is decided.  
The most honorable course of action is to avenge our lord Hnaef.  
Let us make plans.

**SIGEFERTH**

Begging your pardon, sir, but we have already made plans. We Danes will all sail home to Denmark. We will tell the story of the Frisian treachery to our people. If King Hoc is still alive, he will rally his thanes and they will board ships and we will return to this hellish country and will resume our unfinished war.



**HENGEST**

That is a good plan.  
I believe I will stay here in Frisia and make some  
plans of my own. A little behind the scenes  
treachery of my own is in order, I think.

**SIGEFERTH**

Won't Finn be suspicious?

**HENGEST**

I have had my eye on a particular bright-eyed lass  
and he will believe I am staying for her sake.

**ORDLAF**

Then it's settled.  
We sail tomorrow for Denmark.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EXT. MEDUSELD**, a week later. It is springtime, with flowers and  
birds.

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**INT. MEDUSELD**. Many men are assembled. **HOC**, still alive, is  
sitting on his throne-like chair. **ORDLAF** is addressing them.

**ORDLAF**

My lord Hoc, my brothers, listen to my tale of  
woe! You see that Hnaef and Frithwulf have not  
returned with us.  
Nay, they have been slain by the treachery of Finn  
and his Jutish friends. We were their invited  
guests at Finnesburg, glad to share the Yule with  
them. That night we saw the Great Hunt in the sky,  
led by Wodin himself. We knew there was a doom  
appointed for us but we knew not what to expect.

Alas, our lodgings were attacked by the Jute  
Garulf and his fickle host Finn. We fought for  
many days and killed many of their men with  
arrows. But we lost our lord Hnaef and his dear  
nephew Frithwulf.

We called for a truce, although not all of us wanted peace. Some were glad to fight to the last man. But Hnaef, with his last breath, asked Hengest to make peace and so he did.

We spent a miserable winter among those swinish people. We had to call Finn "lord" and were forbidden to make complaints. Our anger grew as we brooded on the wrong done to us. Hengest finally agreed that Hnaef must be avenged. I have come to ask for your help, my brothers, to avenge your lord Hnaef.

**HOC**

(shaking with anger)

What treachery! What villainy!  
We will set sail for Frisia on the morrow!  
Arise, men of Denmark and let us avenge our captain! Yes, I am coming with you! It will be my last stand!

**ALL**

Hurrah! Hurrah! To Frisia!

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EXT FRISIAN COAST.** The Danish warband, led by **SIGEFERTH**, is disembarking and coming up the beach in full armor, swords drawn.

**FRISIAN COAST GUARD**

What is this?

**COAST GUARD** is shot by bow and arrow and killed by **ORDLAF**.

Troop continues up the path to...

**EXT. HALL-DAY.** Frisian warriors are beginning to assemble to fight off the attackers. Women and children are running away to hide. **HENGEST** is coming around the corner of the hall, smiling.

**SIGEFERTH**

Where is Finn, the swine? Bring out Finn.

**FINN**

Here I am. What is the meaning of this?

**HENGEST**

(coming around to the front of the crowd)

Did you really think we would let the murder of our lord Hnaef go unavenged? You are a fool if you thought so.

The battle begins. Swords, spears, shields. Loud clashing sounds and yells.

Unexpectedly, a fire breaks out simultaneously in many of the buildings, including the main hall.

**FINN**

What mischief is this?

**ORDLAF**

(to **HENGEST**)

Is this your doing?

**HENGEST**

Aye, I won't deny I made a few preparations while you were gone.

Battle continues through the smoke, **FINN** and many other Frisians are killed.

**HENGEST**

Round up the survivors and lock them in that barn over there. We will deal with those people later. Where's the queen?

**HILDEBURG**

Here I am.

**ORDLAF**

My lady, we are taking you home to your father, if you are willing.

**HILDEBURG**

More than willing. Now my husband is dead, too.  
Has there ever been a woman more poorly  
treated by fate than I have been?

**SIGEFERTH**

Men, collect all the treasure you can find.  
We sail at dawn!

**FADE OUT**

**FADE IN**

**EPILOGUE**

**INT. HEOROT, NIGHT**--- 20 years later, back to the original scene  
with **AART** singing the Finnesburg Song.

**AART**

(giving his lute a flourish as he strikes the last chord)

And that's the tale of Finnesburg.

**ALL** applaud and stomp.

**DRUNKEN DANE #ONE**

Aye, now THAT'S a good story!

**DRUNKEN DANE #TWO**

The very best kind of story!

**ZOOM IN** on **QUEEN WEALHTHEOW**, who is braiding her young daughter  
**FREAWARUS**'s long blond hair. She is the only one in the hall who  
is not rejoicing. She has a stricken look on her face.

**FADE TO BLACK**

**THE END**

