

## Notes

For ease of reference, I'll differentiate between the religion of the Ancient Britons and those of the various Saxons, Jutes, Scandinavians etc who invaded Britain later by calling the Ancient British religion "Celtic" and the pre-Christian Anglo Saxon one "Heathen".

### Chapter 1

Isolde's senses:	the canine sense of smell is really extraordinary. Although the examples in the book are imaginary, the ability is not. Again, the sense of hearing is much better than ours.
Bogles:	these are a sort of goblin. If you're interested in folklore, I'd recommend "An Encyclopaedia of Fairies" by the celebrated folklorist Katherine Briggs.
Glamour:	a fairy trick of disguise, often in order to enhance attraction, hence our modern usage.
Lawspeaker:	Historical origin: the title given to the President of the Althing in medieval Iceland. It was one Lawspeaker who made the decision that Iceland became a Christian nation, in 999 or 1000 CE. The title came from one of the principal functions of the office, which was to recite the law. Recitation of the law is still a part of the Tynwald on the Isle of Man. In <i>Wyrdwolf</i> the title is applied to the function of a Were judge licensed by the government.
Geas (s), geasa (pl):	(Celtic) In the pagan religion of Ireland, this was a taboo or obligation. I'm told the common pronunciation is 'gaysh/gaysha'.
Domination/submission:	expressions of canine dominance cover a range of behaviours including standing over the submissive dog, growling and raised hackles, and direct staring. Expressions of submission include rolling onto back (exposing belly and throat).
Berserkers/ulhednar:	(Heathen) Warriors who were thought to assume animal shape in battle. Berserkers assumed the shape of bears, while ulfhednar took the form of wolves. There are tales of these warriors turning their aggression on ordinary folk to gain material advantage outside of war, hence, probably the modern meaning of the word 'berserk'. Ulfhednar is the plural form of the singular noun (in Old Norse) ulfhedhinn.
Isolde's oaths:	these are all based on the Heathen religion. "North and down" was the direction one took to reach Hel's Kingdom. Ragnarok is the last battle in which most of the gods die.

### **Chapter 3**

Beltane:	(Celtic) One of four major festivals celebrated in various parts of Celtic pagan Europe.
"Birthright werewolf":	this is a term unashamedly filched from the Society of Friends, where those born into their religion are known as "birthright Quakers". I use it for wyrdwolves.
Thane:	Historical origin: the title of the local Lord in Anglo Saxon England. Used by me for the pack leader.
Daoine Sidhe:	I'm assured one common pronunciation of this is <i>theena shee</i> . Apologies to all Gaelic speakers if I have that wrong. The sidhe are the fairies of Ireland, though the daoine sidhe are the greater of these.
Tuatha De Danann:	Again, I've been given the pronunciation <i>tootha day danan</i> . The TDD are the gods of pagan Ireland. The phrase literally means "people of Danu", Danu being the goddess who founded the race.

### **Chapter 4**

Nine Worlds:	(Heathen) The heathen cosmology placed nine worlds around the world tree, Yggdrasil. These included Asgarth, the world of the gods, and Midgarth (Middle Earth), where humans lived.
Mara:	(Heathen) Powerful spirits who gave us the term nightmare. 'Mara' is Old Norse; the Anglo Saxon is 'mare'.
Wergold:	Historical origin: 'Wer' is Anglo Saxon for 'man', hence werewolf = man-wolf. Wergold is my rendering of wergild: the fine extracted for a crime.
The myth of Isretha:	(Heathen) Although this is imaginary, it's based on a reference in the Eddas (the Scandinavian pagan stories of the gods) to Tyr's wife having a child by Loki/Loki seducing Tyr's wife. Tiw is often taken as the name given by Anglo Saxons to the Scandinavian Tyr. In addition, there is a rare connection between the fetch and the afterbirth, and some folklorists report that the afterbirth was protected in order not to harm the soul of the newborn child. I've used that as a basis for the myth.
Norns:	(Heathen) The tenders of the world tree, and mediators of wyrd. Wyrd is the action and reaction between everything in the Nine Worlds, everything being inter-connected.
Unseelie:	In Scottish folklore, the Seelie Court was the fairy court. The Unseelie are therefore fairies not even accepted by their own kind, and to be avoided at all costs.

Witan: Historical origin: the Anglo Saxon council that advised the King.  
I've freely drawn on both Anglo Saxon and Scandinavian historical resources to create the Were community in the book.

Saywives: my distortion of an Old Norse Heathen term: *seidhr* (pronounced 'sayth').

## **Chapter 6**

Golem: a figure from Jewish folklore. Jewish golems were unable to speak, which seems to have made them fairly easy to spot.

## **Chapter 7**

Sweet fennel: one of the herbs in the Anglo Saxon "Nine herbs charm" for protection.

## **Chapter 8**

Albion: Historical origin: the oldest known name for Great Britain. It forms the basis of the Gaelic name for Scotland: Alba.

Thing: Historical origin: the name for the governing assembly within the pre-Christian Germanic peoples, especially in Scandinavia.

Althing: Historical origin: The Icelandic parliament in pre-Christian (and medieval) times.

Eldormen: Historical origin: the Anglo Saxon word 'ealdorman' (elder man) was the title of a chief noble presiding over a shire. It gives us our term of 'alderman' for a member of a town council.

Moot: Historical origin: the Anglo Saxon equivalent of a local Thing.

## **Chapter 9**

Fetch: Historical origin: Anglo Saxon faecce, Old Norse fylgja was a guardian spirit which was also part of the person. Later English superstition made it into a ghost or apparition which, if seen, presaged death.

## **Chapter 12**

Wish Hounds etc: Gabriel's Ratchets, Wish Hounds and other names are localised variants of a folklore surrounding supernatural

canines which, if seen, are an intimation of certain death. Some of these hounds are part of the folklore associated with the Wild Hunt. They may derive from the mythology of the fetch.

Disir: This is the Old Norse word (Anglo Saxon = Idesa) for maternal ancestresses who often acted as guardian spirits. The pre-Christian Scandinavian peoples held a special feast to the Disir, and it's possible that the pre-Christian Mothers' Night (the night before midwinter) celebration was an Anglo Saxon equivalent.

### **Chapter 13**

Tir Na Nog: (Celtic) Irish fairyland. The actual meaning is 'the land of eternal youth'.

Wild Hunt: a myth common to many north European countries. In Scandinavia the Wild Hunt is led by Odhin; in Britain it might be Herne or Gwydion; in Germany Holle or Berchta. Later versions of the myth involved the devil, fairies and supernatural dogs.

Odhin: (Heathen) one of the gods, acclaimed by some as the principal god. The 'dh' is a common linguistic way of transliterating the Anglo Saxon letter 'eth', which is pronounced as a hard 'th' sound, as in 'the'.

### **Chapter 15**

Undine: a water spirit

### **Chapter 16**

Harrow: (Heathen): Horgr (Old Norse) or Hearn (Anglo Saxon). An altar made of stones.

Orlog: (Heathen) everything that comprises a person: nature, nurture, personality and experiences. Orlog interacts with wyrd.

### **Chapter 17**

Luck: (Heathen) Luck is transferrable, especially to one's progeny, but it may also be loaned or gifted.

### **Chapter 21**

The hand of Tiw: (Heathen) Tiw/Tyr lost his right hand by offering it as a pledge to ensure the great wolf Fenris, the child of Loki, would accept being bound. Once he realised he was caught, Fenris bit off the hand.

Fimbulwinter: (Heathen) the three year long winter at the end of the world, prior to the last battle of Ragnarok.

## **Chapter 22**

Ram horned snake: (Celtic) in European pagan iconography, the snake is associated with healing and fertility. The ram horned snake may be an amalgam to emphasise the association with death and renewal. This image is associated with several gods, but the oldest and most constant seems to be with the Celtic antlered god.

## **Chapter 28**

Outlaw: (Historical) As in other pre-Christian cultures, exile of various types was a criminal punishment in Iceland.

## **Chapter 29**

Danu: (Celtic) founding mother goddess of the race of Irish gods.

The Danelaw: Prior to the Norman Conquest, the invading Vikings set up a kingdom that covered a lot of the East Midlands. They had their own laws.

## **Chapter 31**

Naiad: the Greek equivalent of an undine.

## **Chapter 32**

Mead: mead was the commonest alcoholic beverage of the pre-Christian Heathens and, in the Eddas, is drunk by the gods. It's made from honey. Modern Heathens use mead in rituals to toast to their gods, and I've reflected that practice in the post-Moot drink.

Halefast: my rendering of the modern Heathen greeting/farewell 'wassail' that is based on the original Anglo Saxon and Old Norse. It means 'be well'.

Frithgíven: 'Frith' is an Old Norse word meaning peace.

Laufeyjarson: Icelandic surnames usually comprise the name of the person's father with 'son' (son) or 'dottir' (daughter) tacked on the end. The odd thing about using 'Laufeyjarson' as a surname for Loki is that the giantess Laufey was his mother. But then, nearly everything about Loki runs contrary to the normal rules.

Needle and thread: this occurs in the story in the Eddas of how the gods obtained their treasures.

### ***Chapter 33***

Oath ring: Rings were used for many purposes in the pre-Christian Viking and Anglo Saxon cultures. They were both payment by and a sign of fealty to a Lord. It's a short step from being a symbol of a pre-existing oath to becoming the symbol upon which the oath is sworn.