

## *A Young Daughter of the Picts*

*Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, ca. 1585*

*To Do*

Strut around the shire like I'm all that in my new flower tattoos.

Linger near the visitors from Northumbria, gently holding my spear in case they get mouthy.

Give the side-eye to the Angle hussy, the one who moved in by the watermill showing off her pelts like no one ever skinned a wild boar before.

Promise the Viking I've chained in my hut he can return north to his mama if he obeys my every order.

Swim way out, burst between waves, and yank a whale from the deeps—dinner for weeks.

Wonder, while I'm milking my cow, why we have kings when we insist on matrilineal succession? Gulp cream, pat her flanks fondly, gaze at the distant green hills.

Paint woad over tattoos and leap out at that newcomer, Ninian, when he comes back from that altar he's trying to build. Press foot on his face until he shuts it. Tell him: The day I convert you'll have to tattoo "Moron" across my face, which is never.

Build a bonfire on the mountain to send signals to the Romans. I hear they have cool haircuts?

Make out with that Gael fellow if I feel like it. Ah, that bushy beard! Meat and milk, those bulging thighs!

I swear if that hermit steals from my nettle patch again I'm going to strangle him with my long blond tresses. If I don't have a cup of nettle tea in the morning, I'm irritable.

The Viking spends his time knitting me a wool sweater. Do I look like I'm cold? Idiot.

Why does everyone hanging out in a broch have to sing all the time? Can't a girl have a little quiet in a crannog?

Drop by the kiln and trade wolf skin for a set of sweet new soup bowls.

Get some sand between my toes. Why I don't just take my little boat and float south to see what the Britons are up to? That would be something different.

Ninian says Roman women can't do this or that. I'd like to see them try me, making their stupid laws in their vomitoriums. Just cause you build aqueducts doesn't give you the right.

When I'm hiking with my dog, Hero, I want to be alone. When I'm making leek soup, I don't like to share. When I'm going to bed, I like to ride a Viking like I'm a Valkyrie.

Order a new double-ringed metal choker for the human sacrifice next month.

Bury everyone east of the Forth-Clyde isthmus in the cattle-breeding contest this fall.

Sharpen spear. Consider revenge on the Angles of Bernicia. Uppity bitches need to be reminded who's boss.

Tell Ninian he smells like cabbage. Wipe his tears with my braid. Enjoy his discomfort. That's what you get for insulting my polytheism, snot-head.

In all the seven Pictish kingdoms, can't anyone lend me a hoe that works? Is this the late Iron Age or what?

Spit from the top of the cliff. Ponder the insignificance of it all. Ponder if pirates will come this way. Ponder becoming Pirate Queen.

Ninian waited for me when I was out gathering watercress. He said his god said he could fondle my ass. Oh really? I said my gods said you better not fall into a wolf trap.

In a swap for wild garlic, the local witch warned me about things to come—Christianity, Colonialism, Cops, Capitalism. A sad and terrible future.

For good luck, paint some pebbles with pentacles and crescents. Pass out some charm stones at the goat roast this weekend. It can't hurt.

Make the Viking build me a fantastic funeral boat. Preparing ahead.

Find a worthy pirate, birth a new nation.