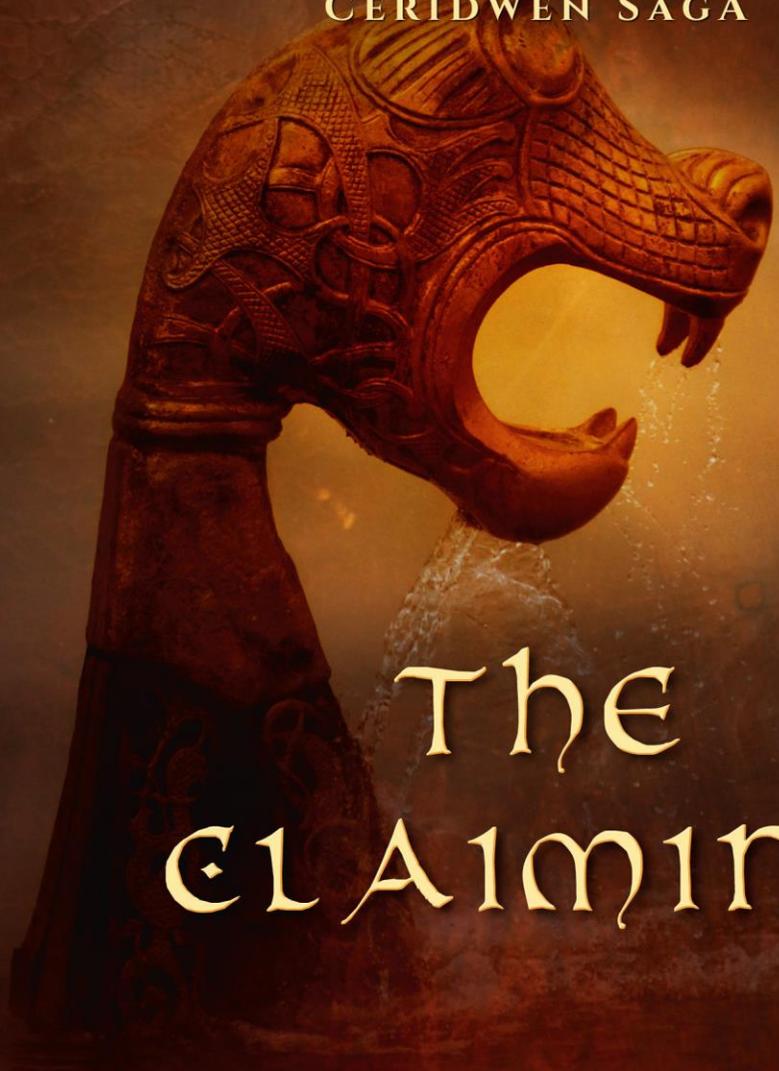


BOOK THREE



THE CIRCLE OF
CERIDWEN SAGA

A large, intricately carved wooden dragon head sculpture, facing right, with its mouth open as if breathing fire or water. The dragon's head is covered in detailed knotwork and scale patterns. The background is a dark, textured brown with a glowing yellow light emanating from the dragon's mouth.

THE
CLAIMING

OCTAVIA RANDOLPH



Map for The Claiming



List of Characters

Ceridwen, a lady of Kilton in the Kingdom of Wessex

Godwin, Lord of Kilton

Sidroc, a Dane

Ælfwyn, a lady of Wessex, wed to Sidroc

The Saxon

Calendar of Feast Days mentioned in the Circle Saga

Candlemas - 2 February

St Gregory - 12 March

High Summer - 24 June

St Peter and Paul - 29 June

Hlafmesse (Lammas) - 1 August

St Mary - 15 August

St Matthew - 21 September

All Saints - 1 November

Martinmas (St Martin's) - 11 November

Yuletide - 25 December to Twelfthnight - 6 January

Anglo-Saxon Place Names, with Modern Equivalents

Æscesdun = Ashdown

Æthelinga = Athelney

Basingas = Basing

Caeginesham = Keynsham

Cippenham = Chippenham

Cirenceaster = Cirencester

Defenas = Devon

Englafeld = Englefield

Ethandun = Edington

Exanceaster = Exeter

Glastunburh = Glastonbury

Hamtunscir = Hampshire

Hreopedun = Repton

Jorvik (Danish name for Eoforwic) = York

Legaceaster = Chester

Limenemutha = Lymington in Hampshire

Lindisse = Lindsey

Lundenwic = London

Meredune = Marton

Scaftesburh = Shaftesbury

Snotingaham = Nottingham

Sumorsaet = Somerset

Swanawic = Swanage

Wedmor = Wedmore

Witanceaster (where the Witan, the King's advisors, met) = Winchester

Frankland = France

Haithabu = Hedeby

Land of the Svear = Sweden

Glossary of Terms

browis: a cereal-based stew, often made with fowl or pork

ceorl: (“churl”) a freeman ranking directly below a thegn, able to bear arms, own property, and improve his rank

cottar: free agricultural worker, in later eras, a peasant

cresset: stone, bronze, or iron lamp fitted with a wick that burnt oil

ealdorman: a nobleman with jurisdiction over given lands; the rank was generally appointed by the King and not necessarily inherited from generation to generation. The modern derivative *alderman* in no way conveys the esteem and power of the Anglo-Saxon term.

frumenty: cereal-based main dish pudding, boiled with milk. A version flavoured with currents, raisins and spices was ritually served on Martinmas (November 11th) to ploughmen.

seax: the angle-bladed dagger which gave its name to the Saxons; all freemen carried one.

scop: (“shope”) a poet, saga-teller, or bard, responsible not only for entertainment but seen as a collective cultural historian. A talented scop would be greatly valued by his lord and receive land, gold and silver jewellery, costly clothing and other riches as his reward.

thegn: (“thane”) a freeborn warrior-retainer of a lord; thegns were housed, fed and armed in exchange for complete fidelity to their sworn lord. Booty won in battle by a thegn was generally offered to their lord, and in return the lord was expected to bestow handsome gifts of arms, horses, arm-rings, and so on to his best champions.

trev: a settlement of a few huts, smaller than a village

tun: a large cask or barrel used for ale

wergild: Literally, man-gold; the amount of money each man’s life was valued at. The Laws of Æthelbert, a 7th century King of Kent, for example, valued the life of a nobleman at 300 shillings (equivalent to 300 oxen), and a ceorl was valued at 100 shillings. By Ælfred’s time (reigned 871-899) a nobleman was held at 1200 shillings and a ceorl at 200.

Witan: Literally, wise men; a council of ealdorman, other high-ranking lords, and bishops; their responsibilities included choosing the King from amongst their numbers.

withy: a willow or willow wand; withy-man: a figure woven from such wands

Additional notes to The Claiming

The retelling of the Wedding at Cana told by the priest Wilgot in Chapter the Third is taken from the *Heliand*, the Saxon gospel, written by an unknown author in the first half of the 9th century. The *Heliand* presents the New Testament in the form of a saga, with Christ as a powerful chief.

The Viking Sun-stone mentioned in Chapters the Nineteenth and Twentieth is a piece of calcite crystal.

The Circle of Ceridwen Saga:

[The Circle of Ceridwen: Book One](#)

[Ceridwen of Kilton: Book Two](#)

[The Claiming: Book Three](#)

[The Hall of Tyr: Book Four](#)

[Tindr: Book Five](#)

[Silver Hammer, Golden Cross: Book Six](#)

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About the Author

Octavia Randolph has long been fascinated with the development, dominance, and decline of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. The path of her research has included disciplines as varied as the study of Anglo-Saxon and Norse runes, and learning to spin with a drop spindle. Her interests have led to extensive on-site research in England, Denmark, Sweden, and Gotland. In addition to the Circle Saga, she is the author of the novella *The Tale of Melkorka*, taken from the Icelandic Sagas; the novella *Ride*, a retelling of the story of Lady Godiva, first published in Narrative Magazine; and *Light, Descending*, a biographical novel about the great John Ruskin. She has been awarded Artistic Fellowships at the Ingmar Bergman Estate on Fårö, Gotland; MacDowell Colony; Ledig House International; and Byrdcliffe.

She answers all fan mail and loves to stay in touch with her readers. Join her mailing list and read more on Anglo-Saxon and Viking life at www.octavia.net.