

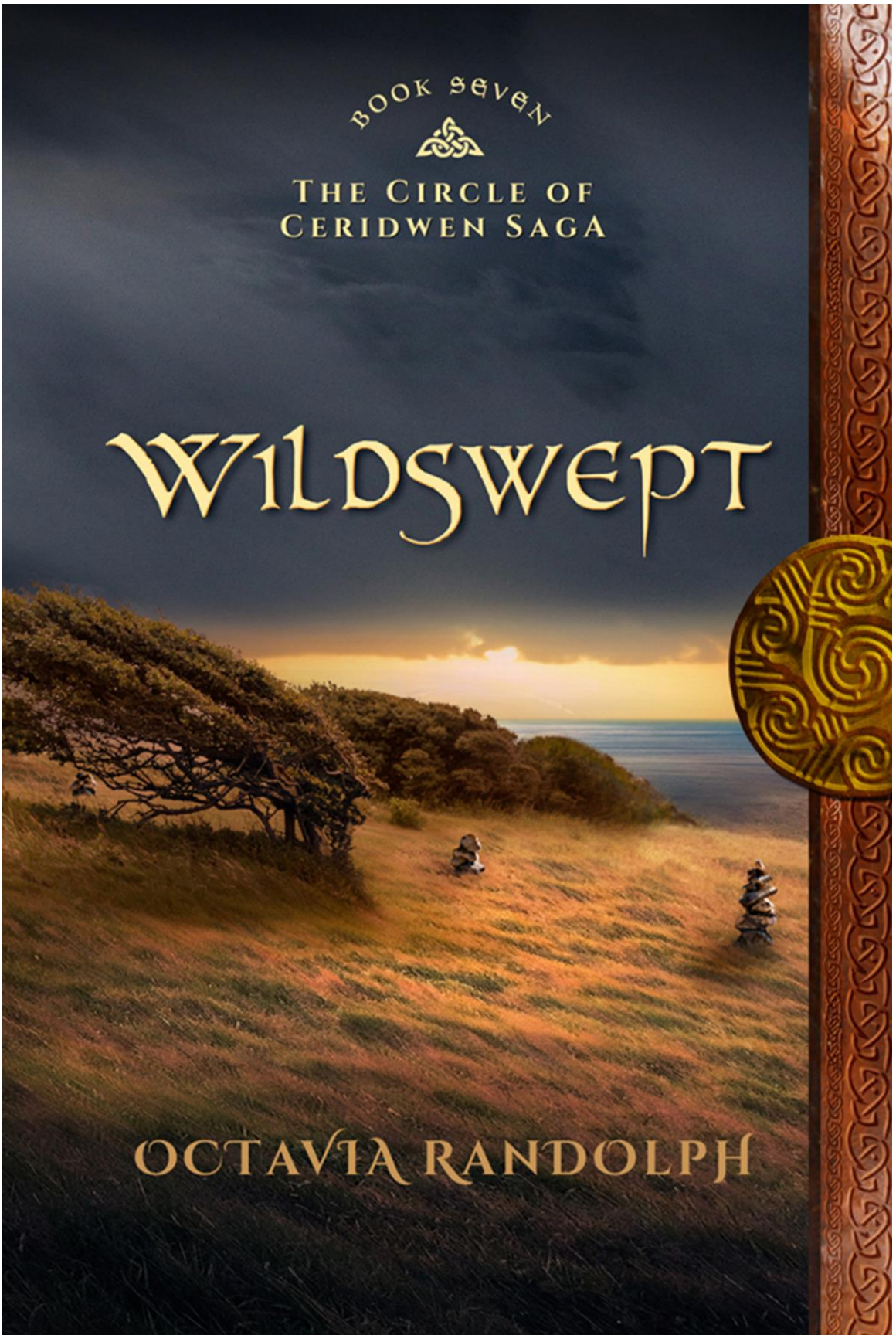
BOOK SEVEN



THE CIRCLE OF
CERIDWEN SAGA

WILDSWEPT

OCTAVIA RANDOLPH



List of Characters

- Sidroc the Dane**, formerly Jarl of the Danish keep of Four Stones in Lindisse
- Ashild**, daughter of Ælfwyn and the late Yrling, Hrald's older half-sister
- Raedwulf**, Bailiff of Defenas in Wessex
- Hrald**, son of Sidroc and Ælfwyn, Jarl of Four Stones in Lindisse
- Ælfwyn**, mother to Ashild and Hrald, widowed of Yrling; marriage dissolved with Sidroc
- Burginde**, companion and nurse to Ælfwyn
- Asberg**, brother-in-law to Ælfwyn
- Jari**, a warrior of Four Stones, body-guard to Hrald
- Runulv**, a trader of Gotland who sails for Sidroc
- Ælfred**, King of Wessex
- Eadward**, Prince of Wessex, son of Ælfred
- Ceric**, son of Ceridwen and Gyric, grandson of Godwulf of Kilton
- Worr**, the horse-thegn of Kilton
- Æthelthryth**, sister to Ælfwyn, wed to Asberg
- Onund**, a warrior of Four Stones
- Ealhswith**, daughter to Ælfwyn
- Eirian** and **Yrling**, twin children of Ceridwen and Sidroc
- Ceridwen**, Mistress of the hall Tyrzburg on the island of Gotland, wife to Sidroc
- Rannveig**, a brewster on Gotland, mother of Tindr
- Tindr**, a bow hunter, and **Šeará**, his Sámi wife
- Juoksa**, their son
- Ring**, a farmer of Gotland, and brother to Runulv
- Osku** and **Ervá**, Šeará's parents
- Modwynn**, Lady of Kilton, widow of Godwulf
- Edgyth**, Lady of Kilton, mother by adoption to Edwin, widow of Godwin
- Edwin**, Ceric's younger brother, Lord of Kilton

Cadmar, a warrior-monk of Kilton

Begu, a village woman of Kilton

Dunnere, the priest of Kilton

Wilfrida, dyer and herbalist of Four Stones

Haward, a young Danish war-chief

Siggerith, a child, daughter of the late Thorfast, killed by Hrald

Inkera, a young woman of the Danes

Dagmar, a young woman of the Danes

Wildswept Year 893



WILDSWEPT

THE YEAR 893



The Wheel of the Year

Candlemas - 2 February

St Gregory's Day - 12 March

St Cuthbert's Day - The Spring Equinox, about 21 March

St Elgiva's Day - 18 May

High Summer or Mid-Summer Day - 24 June

Sts Peter and Paul - 29 June

Hlafmesse (Lammas) - 1 August

St Mary's Day - 15 August

St Matthews' Day - The Fall Equinox, about 21 September

All Saints - 1 November

The month of Blót - November; the time of Offering

Martinmas (St Martin's) - 11 November

Yuletide - 25 December to Twelfthnight - 6 January

Winter's Nights - the Norse end of the year rituals, ruled by women, marked by feasting and ceremony

Anglo-Saxon Place Names, with Modern Equivalents

Æscesdun = Ashdown

Æthelinga = Athelney

Apulder = Appledore

Basingas = Basing

Beamfleot = Benfleet

Beardan = Bardney

Bearruescir = Berkshire

Bryeg = Bridgenorth

Buttingtun = Buttington

Caeginesham = Keynsham

Cippenham = Chippenham

Cirenceaster = Cirencester

Colneceastre = Colchester

Cruland = Croyland

Defenas = Devon

Englafeld = Englefield

Ethandun = Edington

Exanceaster = Exeter

Fearnhamme = Farnham

Geornaham = Irnham

Glastunburh = Glastonbury

Hamtunscir = Hampshire

Headleage = Hadleigh

Hreopedun = Repton

Iglea = Leigh upon Mendip

Jorvik (Danish name for Eoforwic) = York

Legaceaster = Chester

Limenemutha = Lymington in Hampshire

Lindisse = Lindsey

Lundenwic = London

Meredune = Marton

Meresig = Mersea

Middeltun = Milton

Readingas = Reading

Scaftesburh = Shaftesbury

Snotingaham = Nottingham

Sumorsaet = Somerset

Swanawic = Swanage

Turcesig = Torksey

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

Frankland = France

Haithabu = Hedeby

Norse Place Names:

Aros = Aarhus, Denmark

Laaland = the island of Lolland, Denmark

Land of the Svear = Sweden

Glossary of Terms

ard: a primitive plough, typically a mounted iron spike pulled through the soil.

Asgard: Heavenly realm of the Gods.

brewster: the female form of brewer (and, interestingly enough, the female form of baker is baxter...so many common names are rooted in professions and trades...).

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

chaff: the husks of grain after being separated from the usable kernel.

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

cooper: a maker of casks and barrels.

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

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

dísir: female household spirits, celebrated at Winter’s Nights feasts.

drekar: “dragon boat,” a war ship of the Danes.

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.

fulltrúi: the Norse deity patron that one felt called to dedicate oneself to.

fylgja: a Norse guardian spirit, always female, unique to each family.

fyrd: the massed forces of Wessex, comprising thegns – professional soldiers – and ceorls, trained freeman.

hamingja: the Norse “luck-spirit” which each person is born with.

joik: (also, yoik) A chant-like Sámi song, evoking the essence and spirituality of a person, animal, or landscape element, and unique to each recipient.

Jul: (Yule in Angle-land) That ancient end of the year observance of the re-birth of the Sun at the time of the Winter Solstice, predating even the celebration of the birth of Christ.

kith and kine: kin – family members – and cattle.

knorr: also knarr. A merchant ship.

Máttaráhkká: The Sámi Mother Goddess, creator of human bodies, who lives under the floor boards of Sámi dwellings. She is the mother of Sáráhkká, patron of female fetuses,

menstruating women, and those in child-birth, whose domain was under the hearth fire; Juksáhká, guardian of male fetuses, and Uksáhká, patron of children.

morgen-gyfu: literally, “morning-gift”; a gift given by a husband to his new wife the first morning they awake together.

nálbinding: a form of early knitting or crochet, using one’s thumb and threaded needle to form interlocking loops.

quern: hand tool for grinding grain into flour. The domed top stone (the “handstone”) often of sandstone or limestone, sits atop the quern stone, with the kernels of grain in between. The top stone is turned by a wooden dowel inserted in a hole atop the dome. This made grinding grain possible for almost all households.

rauk: the striking sea- and wind-formed limestone towers on the coast of Gotland.

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.

shingle beach: a pebbly, rather than sandy, beach.

skald: a Norse poet and singer of Saga tales, comparable to an Anglo-Saxon scop (see above).

skep: a bee hive formed of coils of plaited straw, built up into a conical shape.

skeggox: steel battle-axe favoured by the Danes.

skirrets: a sweet root vegetable similar to carrots, but cream-coloured, and having several fingers on each plant.

skogkatt: “forest cat”; the ancestor of the modern Norwegian Forest Cat, known for its large size, climbing ability, and thick and water-shedding coat.

strakes: overlapping wooden planks, running horizontally, making up a ship’s hull.

symbol: a ceremonial high occasion for the Angle-Saxons, marked by the giving of gifts, making of oaths, swearing of fidelity, and (of course) drinking ale.

tæfel or Cyningtæfel (“king’s table”) : a board game of strategy.

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.

Tyr: the God of war, law, and justice. He voluntarily forfeited his sword-hand to allow the Gods to deceive, and bind, the gigantic wolf Fenrir.

Tyr-hand: in this Saga, any left-handed person, named so in honour of Tyr's sacrifice.

Urd: the youngest of the three Norse Norns, determiners of men's destinies. Urd makes decision as to one's calling and station in life.

wadmal: the Norse name for the coarse and durable woven woollen fabric that was a chief export in the Viking age.

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.

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

Notes to Wildswept

Chapter the Tenth: To the Land of the Sámi

The Sámi welcoming ceremony for the daughter of Tindr and Šeará is a product of my imagination. The importance of the Mother Goddess Máttaráhkká and her daughter Goddesses in the spiritual and ritual lives of the Sámi is well documented.

Chapter the Eleventh: The Foxes Will Feast

We see here the capture, and later the restoration, of Haesten's wife. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 893/894 notes the capture of this nameless woman and her two sons at Benfleet (OE Beamfleet). "And Haesten's wife and his two sons were brought before the king, and he restored them to him, because one of them was his godson and the other one the godson of ealdorman Æthelred. They had stood sponsor for them before Haesten had come to Benfleet, and he had given him hostages and oaths, and the king in addition had presented him with much property, and he did likewise when he restored the boys and the lady." (G.N. Garmonsway translation, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, J.M. Dent & Sons. LTD)

I have made Prince Eadward the head of this expedition (the actual leader is not named) and have placed Ceric and Worr in the thick of the action.

Chapter the Nineteenth: Do Not Fight Your Fate

The "black mould" which can grow on rye (and other cereal plants) is ergot, a fungus containing lysergic acid. When ingested it is a dangerous and powerful hallucinogenic. Small amounts were used in medieval medicine to induce both abortions and births, as it can severely restrict blood flow and cause muscle spasms. It was also used to help stop maternal bleeding following childbirth. Preparations of ergot-derived drugs are still used for this purpose in modern medicine.

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The Circle of Ceridwen Saga:

[Sidroc the Dane: A Circle of Ceridwen Saga Story](#)

[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](#)

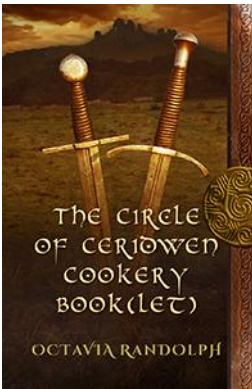
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About the Author

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, Sweden; 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. Follow her on Facebook at Octavia Randolph Writer, and for exclusive access and content join the spirited members of The Circle of Ceridwen Saga Discussion and Idea Group on Facebook.