

## POWESVA AN MYGHTERN

### (The King's Resting Place)

This appeared in An Lef Kernewek, Autumn 1960 (Number 71 1971). This is an original short story written in the first person; although a work of fiction/fantasy it clearly reflects Peter's interests as an archaeologist.

Menhyr Boswelva a-sef Yn Plu Sancras yn Keverang Perrwyth, war leder nans us pell dyworth fordhow had annedhow mabden.

Y ughelder yu dek tros-hes ha moy dhyworth an dor, oll levenhes ha mon; men a vry yu, hag a dekter ynweth, par men-vyth aral y'gan tyr lun a venhyryon, cromleghow, ha mayn erel coth dres rekna bledhynnow. Gwer yu'n wels a dro dhodho, yn mysk eythyn ha reden an leder, ha los yu'n kewny warnodho. An ydhyn ny eseth warnodho, nag an gwarthek ny omruttyons er y byn, nag an dus ny'n gwelons saw unwyth yn bledhynow. Leder ha cam an nans a-n-kel, ha'y wytha rag an bys, mayth yu, del grysaf-vy, an tyller moyha. cuth yn Kernow.

My a-gafas an menhyr-ma nans yu lyes bledhen; newl re-dhothya dyworth an howlsedhas, ha my ow kerdhas a Vorva dhe Sancras, ha my re-gollsa an forth dres an gonyow ha dos dhe'n nans cuth Boswelva. Adnesempys an menhyr a-omdhsyquedhas dre an newl, avel nep jyant los a'n. termyn a-ve; marth o genef weles, rag ow bos antyquary dywysyk, new a-wodhya meyn coth ha tylleryow cuth Penwyth mar dha avel nebonen aral; nyns esa an menhyr tek-ma yn lyver-vyth, ha dyscudhans mur o. My a-wruk gortos rybtho un ur, bys pan omdhrehevys an newl, he kerdhes dhe vargen-tyr Boswelva, esa poll alenna un myldyr dres an gonyow. Yth esa an tyak yn yn arth, ow ton churnys; y os ogas ha hantercans bledhen, du y vlew, den lagasek ha mar gref avel ojyon. My a-wovynnys orto a dro dhe'n menhyr, ha leverel dhodho ow bos antyquary whansek dhe gledhya ena, mar rolla-ef dhym cumyas. Ef a whythras orthyf kepar ha pan ven lader; "Myghtern a-gusk ena yn cres, herwyth whethel o deryvys dhym gans ow thas, ha dhodho gans y das-ef; goef a-drobel y bowes! Denvyth ny-gleth ena hedra wryllyf-vy trygys omma, ha'm henath war ow lerg'h".

Nens esa. namoy dhe vos levery; my a-besyas kerdhes dhe Sancras.....

An bledhynnow a-bassyas; my eth dhe-ves, ha mos ha bos worteweth dyscajor yn unyversya pell dyworth Kernow. My a-gledhyas yn lyes tyller, y'ga nyver nebes menhyryon, mes trawthyow my a-gofhy an menhyr-na yn nans cuth Boswelva ha'y wythyas lel.

Worteweth un jeth my a welas yn paper-newodhow Kernewek, yu danvenys dhym pup seythen-oll, an geryow a-sew:-

"Mernans Tyak coth yn Sancras. Drok vyth gans y gerens clewes bos marow Jamys Trehwella, dek bledhen ha try-ugans y os. Bargen-tyr Boswelva re be dh'y dylu dres lyes, cansvledhen, mes y vap unyk ---- a-ve ledhys y'n bresel, ha lemmyn res yu gwertha an bargen-tyr".

Nyns yu nep-pell wosa henna pan redys-vy Boswelva dhe vos prenys gans nep estren dyworth Gwlas an Haf, dhe nep y-scryfys-vy dystough, ha cuf o y worthyp:- "Why a-yl dos omma ha cledha. yn le may fynnough-why; ny'm dur man a veyn coth." Ha my a-brederys dhymmo ow honen, "A venhyr, my re-wruk gortos ugans bledhen, ha ty re-wruk gortos deu-ugans cansvledhen, mes yn scon y-fynnaf-vy dyscudha dha daclow kelys gans ow lo".

Hag yndella my a-dheth arta dhe Voswelva, ow ton genef dafar rak cledhya; ha my ow kerdehes dres an un dhe'n menhyr, own yth esa dhym na ve-ef dyhevelep a'm covyon, mes my a-n-cafas poran y'ga herwyth. My a-verkyas keheseth dor war du yst an menhyr, hen yu, a'y woless; an encledyas yu moyha menough war an tu-na. My a-droghas an tnoyow gans ow fal, ha'ga. gorra a denewan; tom o an howl, ha cales an ober. Yth esa gwyscas gweras yn dan an ton, hag ena gwyscas meyn pos. My a-s-remuvas gans rach, ha cafos - gwyn ow bys - men compes try - throshes yn pedrak; pen-men kyst vyghan o, hep mar!

Ha my ow myras orto, lef serrys a-sonas adhesempys war ow lerg'h; yth esa benen goth ha pur goynt ow lagata orthyf, hy deulagas lun a gas, hy blew du ha garow, hy dyllas pullenek.

"Goef a-drobel powes an myghtern kens deth brus! Goef! Goef!

"An veyn a-vyn y vrewy avel myryonen! Ha dyfunys an myghtern, y wlasor a-wra. dewheles. Gowhy! Gowhy!"

Hy a-vodhyas kens my dhe allos gortheby yn ewn.

Rak na ylls drehevel an pen-men hep gweres, my eth dhe'n bargaen-tyr dhe whyls an tyak. My a-leverys dhodho a dro dhe'n venen goth; yn-meth-ef, "Hon yu Madge Trehella, myrgh an tyak esa kens ena; hy a-dryk yn talyk an skyber, drefenn hy bos hep arghans-vyth. Gensy ny-vern dheugh; pur vus yu-hy, mes hep drok. Hy a-grys taclow pur goynt adro dhe'n menhyr a gledhyough-why."

An tyak a-dheth genef dhe'n menhyr, ha ny a-dhrehevys an pen-men warbarth hep caletter; a'y woles ny a-welas, herwyth ow gwaytya, peswar glan-men kyst gwres pur dha, ha lenwys a dhor. An tyak eth tre, ha my a-dhallathas craves an dour-na gens ow lo, pur dhour, avel pen-cledhyor gwyr.....

Un ur wosa henna, ha my re-gemersa mes an gyst an dyscudhans moyha y vry, hag ynweth an tecca, re-bya kefys bys y'n ur-na yn Kernos. Vessyl mur o, yn form hag afynans kepar ha pot-pry encledyasek, mes gwres o a owr pur! Hep par o yn Breten, ha martesen y'n bys-oll. My a-n-gorras gans revrons war an wels dhe wolya ow deulagas warnodho. An den coth ha'y vyrgh re-lavarsa dhym yn-why; powesva nep myghtern mur o an tyller hep mar, y esk eskern leskys y'n vessyl adheragof. My a-borthas cof a eryow erel an venen; "Goef a-drobel powes an myghtern; an veyn a-vyn y vrewy avel muryonen." My a-whythras an menhyr, ughel a ughof, hag y'n keth pols-na. ef a-omrolyas wor'tu ha'n lur avel jyant gwyskys. My a-omdewlys a denewan, ha gans son avel taran an menhyr a-squattyas an dor y'n tylller re-wrussen-vy lenwel un pols kens, owth omderry yn dyw ran hag ow skethry meyn an gyst. My a-omdhrehevys, ow mollethy ow gokyneth ow cledhya ryn an menhyr heb y fasya gans gwyvrow, ha my a-wruk kerdhes lent alenna, ow ton genef an vessyl owrek lun a eskern, hag ow crenna whath dre uth ow feryl desempys.

My re-bya ow kerdhes yndella dek myns, pan gonvedhys-vy an termyn-ma bos moy es lowr rak drehedhes dhe forth coth hag a adrus an nans wor'tu ha'n bagren-tyr. My a-gerdhas pols byghan moy, ha drehedhes dhe dyller na-welsen-vy kens; mar vur re-bya ow uth, dhe'm crysyans, may tremensen-vy an forth hep hy gwales! My a-yskynnas leder an nans may whellen-vy an bargaen-tyr; own yeyn a-m-sesyas adhesempys! My a-allas gweles le an bargaen-tyr, mes nyns esa un drehevyans ena. My a-whylas eglos Sanctas, war leder Meneth Golowva yn hy helly; yth esa an meneth, ha menydhyyow eral Penwyth dresto, gothvedhys ha ker dhym aga formow, mes nyns esa nag eglos na kelly.

My whylas an mor; yth esa Mont Sen Myghal, mes nyns esa na castel warnodho nag an mor yn y garghen; an Mont a-sevys yn mysk gwyth try myldyr a'n mor, Carrek Los y'n Cos yn gwyr. My a-borthas cof arta a eryow an venen:- "Goef a-drobel powes an myghtern; ha dyfunys an myghtern, y wlasor a-wra dewheles". Hy mollath uthek re-gothsa warnaf; degys en-vy dre nep pystry dhe dermyn a-ve, kessydhyyans ewn rak cledhyor re harth.....

Ha my owth ombredery, adro dh'ow stuth uthek, my a-glewas lef war ow lerg, ha gweles an keth benen-na. ow myras orthyf, ha cas ha tregereth, yn hy deulagasc "Gowhy" yn-meth-hy, "nep re-wrul tropla powes an myghtern; mar mynnough-why dyank a'n mernans re-wrussough dyndyl, a lader sacrylyjek, gorreugh eskern an myghtern arta yn y veth, ena dhe vos gwythys bys vyken; ha gwreugh yndella kens es an howlsedhas, pan dheth ha bos yn-few an veyn sans".

Ha gans henna, hy a-vodyas. Ysel o an howl y'n nef, ha cot an termyn rag ow omsylwyans; my a-fystynas dhe'n menhyr, ow crafa an vessyl mollotheck. My re-wrussa y asa a hes war an dor, terrys yn dyw ran, ha'n gyst sketrys a'y woles, mes my a-s-cafas arta fest cawal, an yl a'y saf, y gyla ygor hag ow cortos y dresor. Mes boghes dyfelebys o an menhyr a'y stuth kens y godha; nyns esa warnodho kewny-vyth, mes yn y le merkys toulys; formyes noweth o an men. My a-worras an vessyl y'n gyst, ha dalleth hy lenwel arta a dhor, yn-un balas avel den varyes, del en-vy yn-gwyr. Adhesempys my a-glewas cryow garow, ha gweles lyes den ow ponya orthyf, gwyskys yn creghyn, hag ow floryssya mur y'ga domow. My a-fyas dhe'n fo, codha sket war ow fen, ha kelly aswonvos glan..

Deu dheth wosa henna, my a-dhyfunas yn spyty Pensans, wosa my dhe vos kefys ow quandra war an un hep convedhes-vyth, gosek ow fen, ha'm blew devedhys mar wyn avel an ergh.

Ny vynnaf-vy cledhya nefra namoy, na dewheles dhe Benwyth, an tyr hudys-na may cusk an myghtern ryb y venhyr bys dhe dheth brus. Goef a-drobel y bowes!

## English translation by Barnaby Carver

Boswelva longstone stands in Sancreed Parish in the Hundred of Penwith, on a valley slope which is far from roads and mankind's dwellings.

Its height is ten feet or more from the ground, all made smooth and slender; it is a significant stone, and one of beauty also, the equal of no other stone in our land full of standing stones, cromlechs and other rocks old beyond years of reckoning. Green is the grass around it, amongst the gorse and bracken of the slope, and grey is the lichen on it. The birds don't sit on it, nor do the horned cattle rub themselves against it, nor have the people seen it except once in years. The slope and bend of the valley hide it, and keep it from the world, so that it is, as I believe, the most hidden place in Cornwall.

I found this standing stone many years ago; fog had come from the west, while I was walking from Morvah to Sancreed, and I had lost the route through the downs and came to the secret valley of Boswelva. Suddenly the standing stone revealed itself though the mist, like some grey giant of the past times; I was amazed to see, for I was an earnest antiquary, who knew the old stones and hidden places of Penwith as well as anyone else; this beautiful standing stone was not in any books at all, and it was a great discovery. I stayed beside it for an hour, until the mist returned, and walked to Boswelva Farm, which was one mile from there over the downs. The farmer was in the yard carrying churns; he was around 50 years old, with black hair, a sharp-sighted man and strong as an ox. I asked him about the longstone, and told him I was an antiquary wishing to excavate there, if he might give me permission. He looked at me as if I were a thief: "A king sleeps there in peace, according to the story which was told to me by my father; woe betide he who disturbs his rest! No one will dig there as long as I am living here, and my descendants after me."

There was no more to be said; I continued walking to Sancreed...

The years passed; I moved away and eventually became a lecturer in a university far from Cornwall. I excavated in many places, including some standing stones, but now and then I would remember that standing stone in the hidden valley of Boswelva and its faithful keeper.

Finally one day I saw in a Cornish newspaper, which is sent to me every week, the following words:- "Old farmer's death in Sancreed. His family had owned Boswelva farm for many centuries, but his only son -- was killed in the war, and now it is necessary to sell the farm."

It was not much longer after that when I read Boswelva was bought by some strangers from Somerset, to whom I wrote immediately, and his reply was kind: "You can come here and excavate wherever you wish; old stones are of no interest to me." And I thought to myself "Oh standing stone, I have waited twenty years, and you have waited forty centuries, but soon I will discover your lost things with my trowel."

And thus I came again to Boswelva, bringing with me my equipment for excavating; while I was walking across the down to the longstone, I was afraid it might not be as I remembered, but I found it exactly according to my memory> I marked the extent of the ground to the east of the standing stone, that is, at its base; the burial is most often in that direction. I cut the turfs with my shovel and put them to the side; the sun was warm, and the work hard. There was a layer of soil under the turf, and then a layer of heavy stones. I removed them with care, and found – much to my delight – a level stone three feet square; it was the capstone of a cist vean [little box], without doubt!

While I was looking at it, an angry voice sounded immediately behind me; there was an old and very strange woman staring at me; her eyes full of hate, her hair was black and rough, her clothes ragged.

"Woe to he who disturbs the king's rest before judgement day! Woe to him! Woe to him! "The stones will crush him like an ant! And the king awoken, his kingdom will return. Woe to you! Woe to you!"

She departed before I could properly reply.

Because I could not lift the capstone without help, I went to the farm to search for the farmer. I told him about the old woman; he said, "That is Madge Trehwella, the daughter of the farmer that was there before she lives in the barn's attic, because she has no money at all. Don't mind her; she is very crazy, but harmless. She believes very strange things about the standing stone which you are excavating."

The farmer came with me to the standing stone, and we raised the capstone together without difficulty; under it we saw, as I expected, four side stones of the very well-made box, which was full of soil. The farmer went home, and I started to scrape the ground with my trowel, very rigorously, like a true chief-archaeologist...

One hour after that, and I had taken out of the cist the most important discovery, and also the finest, that had ever been found up until then in Cornwall. It was a magnificent vessel, in form and decoration like a clay burial pot, but made of pure gold! Without equal in Britain, and perhaps in all the world. With reverence I put it on the grass to feast my eyes upon it. The old man and his daughter had told me the truth; the site was the resting place of some great king without a doubt, his burnt bones in the vessel before me. I remembered the woman's other words; "Woe to he who disturbs the king's rest; the stones will crush him like an ant." I examined the standing stone, high above me, and at that moment it rolled towards the floor like a knocked-out giant. I threw myself to the side, and with a noise like thunder the standing stone struck the ground in the place I had been filling a moment before, breaking into two parts and shattering the stones of the cist. I got up, cursing my foolishness for excavating by the standing stone without securing it with wires, and I did walk slowly from there, carrying with me the gold vessel full of bones, and shaking still through the terror of my sudden peril.

I had been walking like this for ten minutes, when I realised this time was more than enough to reach the old road which goes across the valley toward the farm. I walked for a short time more, and reached a place I had not seen before; so great had been my terror, as I believed, that I had passed by the road without seeing it!

I climbed the valley slope where I was able to see the farm; cold fear seized me immediately! I could see the site of the farm, but there wasn't a single building there. I searched for Sancreed church on the slope of Beacon Hill in its grove; the hill was there, and Penwith's other hills beyond it, their forms well known and dear to me, but there was neither church nor grove.

I searched for the sea; St Michael's Mount was there, but there was not a castle on it nor the sea around it; the Mount stood amongst trees three miles from the sea, truly The Grey Rock in the Wood. I remembered again the woman's words: "Woe to he who disturbs the king's rest; and wakens the king, his kingdom will return." Her awful curse had fallen on me; I was carried by some sorcery to a time in the past, a suitable punishment for too bold an archaeologist...

While I was pondering, about my awful situation, I heard a voice behind me, and saw that same woman watching me, both hate and mercy, in her eyes. "Woe to you" she said, "who has disturbed the king's rest; if you want to escape the death you have earned, oh sacrilegious thief, put the king's bones back in his grave, there to be kept for ever; and do this before the sunset, when the holy stones become alive."

And with that, she left. The sun was low in the heavens, and the time was short for me to save myself; I hurried to the longstone, grasping the accursed vessel. I had left it out stretched on the floor broken into two parts, and the cist shattered beneath it, but I found them again most complete, the one standing, and the other open and waiting its treasure. But the standing stone was a little different from the state it was in before it fell; there was no lichen on it at all, but tool marks instead; the stone was newly formed. I put the vessel in the cist, and started to fill it again with soil, digging like a changed man, as I truly was. Suddenly I heard rough cries, and saw many men running at me, dressed in skins, and flourishing much in their fists. I took flight, fell straight onto my head, and lost consciousness...

Two days after that, I awoke in Penzance hospital, after I had been found wandering on the moors without understanding anything, my head bloody, and my hair had become as white as snow.

I never again want to excavate, nor return to Penwith, that enchanted land where the king sleeps beside his standing stone until judgement day. Woe betide he who disturbs his rest!