

Nelferch

By

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Based on:

The Lady of Llyn y Fan Fach

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1 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

MOTHER - Old, grey-haired widow. 70+

GWYN - Average-muscular build. Weathered-look but handsome.
Tall (appx 5'10"-6'). 25-30.

MOTHER

[Hands GWYN his lunch wrapped in a cloth]. You nearly forgot this again.

GWYN

Uh. Thank you. I'll need it.

MOTHER

And you might want to avoid Afon Sawdde for a while. It'll most likely be flooded again after all the rain.

GWYN

I thought the same. I was going to go down by the lake again. The cattle seem more at ease there. I'll be back before dusk. 'Bye, MOTHER.

MOTHER

'Bye, son. [Playfully] And no napping.

2 EXT. MONTAGE - DAY

Various shots of GWYN roaming with the cattle in the background. Views to include fields, mountainsides, hills. etc.

3 EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

NELFERCH - Slender with long, dark hair. Earthy looking.
Tall (appx. 5'8"). 25ish.

[PAN] From the cattle to GWYN sitting on a rock(?) eating next to the lake. NELFERCH is some distance away, standing knee-deep in the water, washing her hair. GWYN wraps his lunch back up and begins walking towards her.

4 EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

GWYN stands behind NELFERCH. She turns and smiles at him as she combs her wet hair with a GOLDEN COMB.

GWYN
... (mouth opened agape but no
words come out.)

GWYN closes his mouth and offers his bread instead. NELFERCH shakes her head gently.

NELFERCH
Cras dy fara,
Nid hawdd fy nala.

SUBTITLE: O thou of the crimped bread, it is not easy to catch me.

NELFERCH turns and dives into the water.

5 EXT. LAKESIDE - NIGHT

GWYN is sat by the lakeside looking lost and forlorn. He gets up, gathers his cattle and begins heading home.

6 INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

[CLOSE UP] of the front door as it opens and GWYN steps in. He looks tired and damp (from the rain) and unhappy.

[CUT TO] MOTHER and her worried face.

MOTHER
Where have you been? You're so
late. I was getting worried.

GWYN
You'll never believe what happened
today.

GWYN sits at the dinner table and his MOTHER places a bowl of broth and bread down.

GWYN
There was a maid in the lake. She
was so beautiful. I... I offered
her some bread. She didn't seem to
like it and dived back in. [BEAT]
And she never came back up.

(CONTINUED)

GWYN begins eating again and MOTHER, a sly smile on her face, leans into GWYN to smell his breath. She sits back somewhat confused.

MOTHER
Was it Angharad from over the valley?

GWYN
No.

MOTHER
Sian?

GWYN
No, MOTHER. She isn't somebody we know. I've never seen her before.

MOTHER
Well, there hasn't been anyone move to these parts in over twenty years or we'd have heard.

GWYN
Not if they'd only just moved here.

MOTHER
True enough. So, what was wrong with the bread?

GWYN
I don't know. She just looked at it. She didn't even touch it.

MOTHER
It sounds like you fell to sleep.

GWYN
No, MOTHER. Really. I was awake all day.

MOTHER
Hmm. Did you speak?

GWYN
Er... Well, she did. I was lost for words. After I'd offered the bread. She said, "Cras dy fara. Nid hawdd fy nala."

MOTHER
Maybe she's toying with you. Or. Or testing you. It sounds like she is
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER (cont'd)
in touch with the old ways. You
need to be mindful of that. Stay
away from the lake. If you need to
be with a girl so badly, go to
Llanddreusant.

GWYN
MOTHER, It isn't like that. I **HAVE**
to see her again.

[CLOSE UP] MOTHER's look of concern changes to love and
understanding of her sons need to grow.

MOTHER
Hmm. Then tomorrow, you will go
back and this time you will take
her toes* instead. (*unbaked
dough).

[FADE OUT]

7 EXT. LAKESIDE - PRE-DAWN

GWYN sits by the mist-covered lake, waiting anxiously with
the dough in hand.

Various shots of the passing of time from dawn till late
afternoon.

8 EXT. LAKESIDE - DUSK

GWYN stands, turns and begins walking away. As he begins he
looks over his shoulder.

GWYN
... (Again lost for speech).

GWYN offers her the unbaked bread and NELFERCH shakes her
head again.

NELFERCH
Llaith dy fara,
Ti ni fynna.

SUBTITLE: O thou of the moist bread, I will not have thee.

NELFERCH smiles so sweetly to GWYN before returning back
into the water. GWYN heads home.

9 INT. FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

GWYN enters straight-faced.

MOTHER
You didn't see her?

GWYN
Yes. I saw her. She may not have liked the dough, She didn't like the toes either. But she did give me the most beautiful smile. She looked even more beautiful than ever. I have to try again. What should I do next?

MOTHER
I suppose we should try meeting her half way.

GWYN
Half way?

MOTHER
Tomorrow you will take bread that is half-baked.

10 EXT. LAKESIDE - DUSK

GWYN waited all day. As he stands to leave he sees NELFERCH glide across the water to him. He wades into the wader offering her the bread and leads her to shore when he notices the SANDAL on her RIGHT FOOT is tied in a peculiar manner.

GWYN
Lady, I love you more than all the world besides and want you to be my wife.

NELFERCH
I will not wed you.

GWYN
But you're the most beautiful, most graceful woman I've ever met. Please marry me.

NELFERCH
I will not. For your flattery falls only on the flesh.

(CONTINUED)

GWYN

Please. I must be with you. I don't know why. I feel so drawn to you and I cannot explain it. I am honest and hard working and would do all that I can to make you happy and keep you safe. I must be with you.

NELFERCH

[BEAT] I will wed you. But there is a condition. I will live with you until I receive from you three blows without a cause. When you strike me with the third causeless blow I will leave you forever.

GWYN

I would rather cut of my hand with an old, rusty blade than to cause you such harm and disrespect.

NELFERCH turns and dives back into the water. GWYN stares disappointedly for a while before climbing atop some rock.

11 EXT. ROCK TOP - DUSK

HOARY-HEADED MAN - Stocky, affluent and well-spoken man with greyish-white hair in his late 50's/early 60's.

MAIDENS - TWINS - Slender with long, dark hair. Earthy looking. Tall (appx. 5'8"). 25ish. (One of which is NELFERCH).

GWYN climbs atop a rock over the deepest point of the lake and is about to throw himself in.

HOARY-HEADED MAN

Forbear, rash youth, and come hither.

GWYN climbs down from the rock trembling and walks some way to where the HOARY-HEADED MAN stands with two maids.

HOARY-HEADED MAN

Mortal, thou wishest to wed one of these, my daughters? I will consent to the union if thou wilt point out to me the one thou lovest.

GWYN, unable to see any difference between the two maids takes his time but is unable to decide.

(CONTINUED)

MAID #1 (NELFERCH) subtly pushes her RIGHT FOOT forward and GWYN notices the unusual way her SANDAL is tied.

GWYN

This one. This is the one I wish to wed.

HOARY-HEADED MAN

Thou has chosen rightly. Be to her a kind and loving husband, and I will give to her as a dowry as many sheep, cattle, goats, swine and horses as she can count of each without drawing in her breath. But remember, if thou strikest her three causeless blows, she shall return to me.

GWYN

Sir, I would rather cut off all my limbs with a rusty blade than to bring such harm and disrespect unto her.

HOARY-HEADED MAN

[Smiles and turns to NELFERCH] Now daughter, count your sheep.

NELFERCH

One, two, three, four, five, one, two, three, four, five... [repeated till out of breath]

As many as NELFERCH counted, sheep began running from the water.

HOARY-HEADED MAN

Daughter. Now count your cattle.

NELFERCH

One, two, three, four, five, one, two, three, four, five... [repeated till out of breath]

As many as NELFERCH counted, cows began running from the water.

[REPEATED for goats, swine and horses.]

GWYN looks in awe at all the animals and turns to the HOARY-HEADED MAN to thank him.

(CONTINUED)

GWYN

Tha...

The HOARY-HEADED MAN and MAID #2 have vanished.

12 EXT./INT. MONTAGE

Various shots of the wedding, making home, settling and the birth of three sons. Break at the eldest son at age seven.

13 INT. HOMESTEAD - NIGHT

GWYN walks in, greets the playing children then walks up to NELFERCH who begins serving her husbands supper.

GWYN

[He hugs and kisses his wife on the cheek] NELL, love.

NELFERCH

Husband.

GWYN sits and begins eating. NELFERCH sits by his side.

GWYN

Ioan was fishing by the river today. He invited us to attend the wedding of his daughter at St. Michael's Church.

NELFERCH

In Myddfai? That's quite a way. We'd have to leave early. When is this?

GWYN

Saturday week.

NELFERCH

We will go.

14 EXT. FIELD - DAY

GWYN and NELFERCH walk uphill in one of their fields with horses grazing. NELFERCH is struggling.

NELFERCH

[Panting noticeably] These hills are too much for me. I would prefer to return home now.

(CONTINUED)

GWYN

But we must go. Ioan would
disappointed. Even insulted were we
not there. If you will not walk,
would you ride one of the horses?
Do you catch one as I return home
for a saddle and bridle?

NELFERCH

I will. And also you must bring my
gloves. I forgot them. They are on
the table.

[CUTAWAYS] GWYN collects the saddle and bridle from the
stable and then the gloves from the house. He returns to
NELFERCH to find her standing exactly where he had left her.

GWYN points towards the horses and flicks NELFERCH's arm
playfully with the gloves.

GWYN

Dos, dos.

SUBTITLE: Go, go.

NELFERCH

[Sighs] This is the first causless
blow, my love. Do you not remember
the condition to which we wed?

GWYN

[Shocked and horrified] Yes. Yes,
my love. I do. I am so terribly
sorry.

[SLOW CROSSFADE] to a montage of several years later. The
children are older as are GWYN and NELFERCH.

15 INT. CHURCH CHRISTENING - DAY

A man and a woman stand at a font with baby in arms. The
vicar is performing a Christening. Everyone is happy but
NELFERCH suddenly bursts into tears quite audibly.

GWYN

[Taps NELFERCH's shoulder]. NELL!
Why do you weep?

NELFERCH

[Between sobs] I weep because this
poor, innocent baby is so weak and
frail that it will have no joy in
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

NELFERCH (cont'd)
this world. Pain and suffering will
fill all its days of its brief stay
on this earth, and in the agony of
torture will it depart this life...
And, husband, thou hast struck me
the second causeless blow.

16 EXT./INT. MONTAGE

Another montage to mark the passage of time. To include happy, romantic moments but also a couple of shots of 'near misses' as GWYN playfully/affectionately goes to strike NELFERCH but stops himself in time.

17 INT. CHURCH FUNERAL - DAY

Several months later and GWYN AND NELFERCH are at the funeral of the baby whose Christening they had attended. Sobs from the congregation can be heard.

NELFERCH laughs out loud, happy and relieved. The congregation look on in horrified shock.

GWYN grabs NELFERCH quite harshly.

GWYN
Hush, wife! Why dost thou laugh so?

NELFERCH
I laugh because the poor babe is at
last happy and free from pain and
suffering.

NELFERCH begins to stand.

NELFERCH
And husband. The last blow has been
struck. Fare thee well.

GWYN
What!? Wait!

NELFERCH continues walking away, leaving the heartbroken, sobbing GWYN slumping in the pew.

18 EXT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

NELFERCH
 Mu wlfrech, moelfrech,
 Mu olfrech, gwynfrech,
 Padair cae tonn-frech,
 Yr hen wynebwen.
 A'r las Geigen
 Gyda'r tarw gwyn,
 O lys y Brenin,
 A'r Llo du Bach,
 Sydd ar y bach,
 Dere dithe, yn iach adrel.

SUBTITLE: Brindled cow, bold freckled, spotted cow, white freckled, ye four field sward mottled. And the grey Geigen with the white bull from the court of the King, and thou little black calf, suspended on the hook, come thou also, whole again, home.

19 EXT. FIELD - DAY

NELFERCH walks over to the field where four oxen are ploughing.

NELFERCH
 Y pedwar eidionglas,
 Sydd ar y ma's,
 Deuweh chwithhe,
 Yn iach adrel.

SUBTITLE: Ye four grey oxen that are on the field, come you also, whole and well home.

20 EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

All the animals NELFERCH had summoned follow her across the mountain and down to the lake where they walk into the water.

GWYN follows some way behind, heartbroken and plunges himself into the lake too. His three children almost do the same but come to their senses.

21 EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

[MONTAGE] Time passes and the three now older children wander around the lake hoping to glimpse their mother.

[FADE OUT]

22 EXT. LAKESIDE - DAY

CLIFFHANGER DURING END CREDITS:

Their patience rewarded, their mother appears and leads them to Pant Y Meddygon (Physician's Dingle) where she teaches them the ways of healing through plants and herbs along the way.

FINAL SHOT: A sign post for Pant Y Meddygon and NELFERCH points them towards the village.

NELFERCH

Here is where you will become known
as *The Physicians of Myddfai*.

[FADE OUT]

END