

Quotations from *Deirdre of the Sorrows*

You may want to pay particular attention to these lines from the play for tomorrow.

. . . and he a man would be jealous of a hawk would fly between her and the rising sun. (214)

. . . she's little call to mind an old woman when she has the birds to school her, and the pools in the rivers where she goes bathing in the sun. I'll tell you if you seen her that time, with her white skin, and her red lips, and the blue water and the ferns about her, you'd know, maybe, and you greedy itself, it wasn't for your like she was born at all. (216)

The gods save you, Deirdre. I have come up bringing you rings and jewels from Emain Macha. (218)

. . . A man with his hair like the raven, maybe, and his skin like the snow, and his lips like blood spilt on it. (218)

How would I be happy seeing age coming on me each year, when the dry leaves are blowing back and forward at the gate of Emain? (219)

There's a mountain of blackness in the sky, and the greatest rain falling has been these long years on the earth. The gods help Conchubor: he'll be a sorry man this night, reaching his dun, and he with all his spirits, thinking to himself he'll be putting his arms around her in two days or three. (225)

And it is you who go around in the woods making the thrushes bear a grudge against the heavens for the wetness of your voice singing. (228)

It should be a sweet thing to have what is bet and richest, if it's for a short space only. (230)

I'm in little dread of death, and it earned with riches would make the sun red with envy, and he going up the heavens; and the moon pale and lonesome, and she wasting away. (230)

Isn't it a small thing is foretold about the ruin of ourselves, Naisi, when all men have age coming and great ruin in the end? (230)

By the sun and moon and the whole earth, I wed Deirdre to Naisi. May the air bless you, and water and the wind, the sea, and all the hours of the sun and moon. (231)

It's lonesome this place, having happiness like ours, till I'm asking each day
will this day match yesterday, and will tomorrow take a good place beside the
same day in the year that's gone . . . living on until you're dried and old, and
our joy is gone for ever. (235)

There's little hurt getting old, saving when you're looking back, the way I'm
looking this day, and seeing the young you have a love for breaking up their
hearts with folly. (235)

Well, go, take your choice. Stay here and rot with Naisi or go to Conchubor in
Emain. Conchubor's a wrinkled fool with a swelling belly on him, and eyes
falling downward from his shining crown; Naisi should be stale and weary. Yet
there are many roads, Deirdre, and I tell you I'd liefer be bleaching in a bog-
hole than living on without a touch of kindness from your eyes and voice. It's a
poor thing to be so lonesome you'd squeeze kisses on a cur dog's nose. (238)

Queens get old, Deirdre, with their white and long arms going from them, and
their backs hooping. I tell you it's a poor thing to see a queen's nose reaching
down to scrape her chin. (238)

I'll give you a riddle, Deirdre why isn't my father as ugly and old as Conchubor?
You've no answer? . . . It's because Naisi killed him. Think of that and you
awake at night, hearing Naisi snoring, or the night you hear strange stories of
the things I'm doing in Alban or in Ulster either. (239)

I'll not tell a lie. There have been days a while past when I've been throwing a
line for salmon or watching for the run of hares, that I've a dread upon me a
day'd come I'd weary of her voice, and Deirdre'd see I'd wearied. (241)

I've had dread, I tell you, dread winter and summer, and the autumn and the
springtime . . . but this talk's brought me ease, and I see we're as happy as the
leaves on the young trees, and we'll be so ever and always . . . (242)

. . . and what way would you and I, Naisi, have joy for ever? (242)

It's a long time we've had, but the end has come, surely. (243)

There are as many ways to wither love as there are stars in a night of Samhain;
but there is no way to keep life, or love with it, a short space only. (244)

It should be a poor thing to see great lovers and they sleepy and old. (244)

Dead men, dead men! Men who'll die for Deirdre's beauty; I'll be before you in
the grave. (246)

It's seven years we've had a life was joy only, and this day we're going west, this day were facing death, maybe, and death should be a poor, untidy thing, though it's a queen that dies. (248)

. . . and I more needy, maybe, than the thieves of Meath. . . . You think I'm old and wise, but I tell you the wise know the old must die, and they'll leave no chance for a thing slipping from them they've set their blood to win. (251)

--It's a grave, Naisi, that is wide and deep.

--And that'll be our home in Emain . . . He's dug it wisely at the butt of a hill, with fallen trees to hide it. He'll want to have us killed and buried before Fergus comes. (254)

--There's nothing, surely, the like of a new grave of open earth for putting a great space between two friends that love.

-- . . . it's that grave when it's closed will make us one for ever, and we two lovers have had great space without weariness or growing old or any sadness of the mind. (256)

Do not leave me, Naisi. Do not leave me broken and alone. (258)

Go to your brothers. For seven years you have been kindly, but the hardness of death has come between us. (258)

Emain is in flames. Fergus has come back and setting fire to the world. (261)

I will not leave Naisi, who has left the whole world scorched and desolate. I will not go away when there is no light in the heavens, and no flower in the earth under them, but is saying to me that it is Naisi who is gone for ever. (264)

Little moon little moon of Alban, it's lonesome you'll be this night, and tomorrow night, and long nights after, and you pacing the woods beyond Glen Laoi, looking every place for Deirdre and Naisi, the two lovers who slept so sweetly with each other. (266)

I have put away sorrow like a shoe that is worn out and muddy, for it is I have had a life that will be envied by great companies. . . . It is not a small thing to be rid of gray hairs, and the loosening of the teeth. It was the choice of lives we had in the clear woods, and in the grave, we're safe, surely . . . (267)

It was sorrows were foretold, but great joys were my share always; yet it is a cold place I must go to be with you, Naisi; and it's cold your arms will be this night . . . (267)