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The Hare's Vision: A New Irish Myth

William a Methven

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"*Father Cormac is a good and a brave monk, honed by the desert. He is not so simple. Aba James speaks well of him. I would trust him. Yet he's whimsical like many Celts. He is known to converse with a hare who claims to be the soul of the prophet Zachariah."*

So it was that the Patriarch of Alexandria chose Father Cormac mac Fliande for the task that would bring light to the Dark Ages.

It is a bewitching story of the odyssey in the sixth century of a devout Irish monk, Cormac, his muse Zachariah the hare and their strange band of companions who struggle from Egypt to Ireland to protect The Word, from those who would suppress its inspiring and radical message

In 36AD radical Jewish teacher and zealot, Yeshua ben Pandira lies dying of his wounds in Judaea. Disturbed by a vision that his teachings will be misused by the Roman Empire, Yeshua lives long enough to dictate his final testament, later known as **The Word,** to Joseph of Arimithaea. However because of its radical teachings, **The Word** is suppressed by the early church and completely disappears in the third century.

Then in 2015 **The Word** is re-discovered buried under the ruins of an ancient church in Ireland. How did it get there from biblical Judaea and what are the implications for the modern world of its radical message?

An Irish desert father, Cormac mac Fliande, is called upon by the Coptic Patriarch in Alexandria to deliver these scrolls to Ireland; far enough away from the established church which fears the radical challenge to its authority contained in **The Word**. Cormac is forced to return to the land of his birth: a land he fled after the death of his wife and children during the Justinian Plague in 540AD.

Cormac's companion on the journey and muse is a mystical golden hare who claims to be the reincarnated soul of the biblical prophet, Zachariah. They are accompanied to Ireland by a Greek philosopher, pagan priestess and close friend, Melania, who is escaping persecution in Egypt; along with a young Judaean scholar, Brother Simon of Bethaza. In Ireland they are joined on their odyssey by a young Irish poet, Bretha and helped the eminent Celtic abbot and High Druid, Colum Cille.

Sixth century Ireland is a mystical land where the old pagan beliefs peacefully coexist beside the new Christian religion. In Ireland Cormac and his companions are helped by Iucharba of the Tuatha De, a magical subterranean fairy folk who once ruled Ireland and Feth Fio the ferryman, a changeling who is part otter, part man. This is a world before scientific thought, where the membranes between worlds are very thin. Imagination and superstition are as real as everyday experience and the interactions between humans and the natural world are very different from today.

In this time Rome wishes to suppress all potential challenge to its growing religious power and sends its fearsome emissary, Augustine of Nubea to Ireland to find and secure **The Word** for the Holy See. On his way through France to Ireland Augustine enlists the support of the legendary British military leader, Artur of the Gododdin and plans are laid to invade Ireland to capture **The Word.**

Cormac's mentor as a young monk was Colum Cille, an eminent abbot and High Druid within the Celtic

Christian church. He has a troubled past for which he seeks redemption. Guardianship of The Word offers Colum Cille an opportunity to build a church that would become the salvation of western Christendom.

Then in modern times **The Word** is discovered on an archaeological dig on the north coast of Ireland with few clues as to how it got there. Its discovery once again challenges those in power.

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