

Treatment:**Title: Olwen Wept**

Mam loves Tad. Tad loves Mam. This should be simple- but it isn't. As their relationship breaks down, the shadows in the corners of Mam's vision start to take form- and the line between our world and a strange other place begins to blur. A uniquely Welsh story about mythology, control, and what our past teaches us about our future.

“Olwen Wept” is a drama which examines the historical relationship between Wales and England through the lens of a family. Mam and Tad’s relationship is central to the plot: his insecurities manifest as control as he unintentionally gaslights Mam to a state of fragility. At this point, she is visited by various women from Welsh mythology: the play is steeped in magic so its deliberately unclear whether these visitations are the result of a psychotic breakdown (visual and auditory hallucinations are a side effect of continual mental abuse), or real mythological people visiting from a world beyond our own. These women all come from legends that were centred on a male perspective, and they are given an opportunity to reclaim their own narrative. They all urge Mam to take control of her situation and try to aid her in seeing past the gaslighting she’s experienced. The other central character in the play is Cariad, Mam and Tad’s teenage daughter. Cariad favours her father, who has convinced her of her mothers apparent neuroses, but over the course of the play her friends are demonised and her opinions are stifled as Tad struggles to curb his pathological control. The play ends with Cariad running away, and asking her Mam to come with her: Mam says she’ll follow close behind, but the play ends with her in the house, casting doubt on her future freedom.

In this scene, Mam is “visited” by two famous Welsh mythological figures: Rhiannon and Olwen. They help Mam come to terms with the fact that her relationship- her story- is being controlled by her husband.

Scene VIII

Mam looks around. She is on an island - this is *Gwales*, the island of the underworld. It is craggy and mountainous in the small way islands are when they sit just off the coast of North Wales.

In the distance, a building flickers to life - she walks towards it and inside. Inside the building sits **Rhiannon**, dressed in a smart dark blue business suit. **Olwen** sits next to her. They sit in silence for a moment.

MAM:
Where are we?

RHIANNON:
We're in Hell. *(Beat.)* Hell looks a lot like the Houses of Parliament.

They sit in silence for a while.

MAM:
What am I doing here?

RHIANNON:
I don't know. What are you doing here?

Beat.

MAM: *(to Olwen)* Who are you?

RHIANNON:
She doesn't really talk.

Silence.

RHIANNON:
Look at these walls.

The walls (of St Stephens Hall) are covered in murals of conquest: described on the Houses of Parliament website as the 'discovery' of the New World, the 'influence' in India, and the Union of Scotland and England.

MAM:
English history.

RHIANNON:
All of our history.
We can't deny our part in conquest.

They sit with that guilt for a moment.

RHIANNON:
It's so ingrained.
Their history has to be everyone else's.
The first thing they did

When they came to this island
Was take it from us.
Lloegr.
Lost lands.
We buried my friend's head
Under the Tower of London
Hoping his raven's gaze
Would keep them at bay.

MAM:
Why did you bring me here? To talk about mythology?

RHIANNON:
(with urgency)
Your time is running out.
You have to start making some decisions.

MAM:
What decisions?

RHIANNON:
You know what I'm talking about.

MAM:
I think you're giving me too much credit.

RHIANNON:
I'm not!
(a deep breath)
Your mind has been colonised.

MAM:
What is that supposed to mean?

RHIANNON:
You live in one of the most media rich eras of history.
Surely you realise none of your thoughts are your own
Which begs the question:
Who put them there?

Olwen has been staring at Mam for some time now, with a kind of feral urgency.

MAM:
Why is she doing that?

RHIANNON:
Olwen, stop it.

She doesn't.

RHIANNON:
Olwen!

It's no use.

...

MAM:
Why's she here?

RHIANNON:
Honestly?
I don't know.

Olwen starts pulling on Rhiannon's arm. She ignores her.

RHIANNON:
(she brushes off Olwen irritably)
Olwen!
Enough!

OLWEN:
(she is suddenly snowstorm-esque)
Just because I say nothing
Does not mean I lack opinion!
My story was another man's monomyth.
When you're not the hero
Another's actions become
The consequences enacted
On an unwilling spectator.
It's not glamorous
If you're powerless.

MAM:
What're you saying?

OLWEN:
He is treating you like a battle.
He has commandeered your narrative,
And your daughter is his quest.

Mam finally understands. Or perhaps she has understood all along, but is only now able to admit the terrible truth.

MAM:
I... It's been so long. I don't know what I'd be without him.

OLWEN:
Something new.
A new kind of mythology.