

## **Bricriu's Feast**

Part of a long story from the Book of the Dun Cow

*The acting space is empty except for a chair decorated to look like a throne in the centre. Bricriu comes into the acting space. He swaggers on confidently and speaks to the audience.*

**Bricriu:** If you are looking for one of those big brave heroes who rescue princesses and slay monsters then you have come to the wrong place. *(He turns away but notices that the audience again.)* I don't even like heroes. They show off all the time. *(He turns but changes his mind)* Oh, alright. If you **MUST** have a story then I will introduce myself. My name is Bricriu but people usually call me Poison Tongue. Yes you heard right. People call me that because I love causing trouble. *(He rubs his hands together)*. It's true, I **LOVE** causing trouble.

*Three servants enter the acting space. One of them carries a cauldron shaped pot.:*

**Servant 1:** My Lord, the builders are leaving now.

**Servant 2:** Your new feasting hall is ready at last.

**Bricriu** *(to audience)* It's about time too. The hall has taken a year to build but it will be worth it. Oh, here come my first guests.

*A group of visitors to Bricriu's new hall come in. They are impressed as they looking around. Bricriu stands to one side. He looks very amused.*

**Guest 1:** Wow! This hall is huge!

**Visitor 2:** Look at all the carvings!

**Visitor 3:** And those pillars are covered in real gold.

**Visitor 4:** Have you seen that throne. It can't be for Bricriu. It's a king's throne.

**Visitor 5:** Didn't you know, Bricriu has invited king Conchobar and all his champions to a feast. He built the hall just for that.

**Visitor 4:** Conchobar. and his champions won't turn up. They don't trust Bricriu one bit.

**Visitor 5:** Don't be too sure. Here come Conchobar's champions. I wonder if Bricriu can persuade them to stay for the feast.

*Loegaire the Triumphant enters. He is met by Bricriu*

**Loegaire:** I am Loegaire, known to all as Loegaire the Triumphant. Where is Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** Welcome to my feast.

**Loegaire:** *(haughtily)* Why should I stay for your feast, Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** You are the bravest of all warriors, You deserve the first and best cut of the meat served at my feast. Surely you don't want another of Conchobar's warriors to get it instead of you. It wouldn't look good at all!

**Loegaire:** You are quite right Bricriu. I will stay. *He goes to stand by the throne.*

**Guests** Amazing. Loegaire is staying!

*Conall enters*

**Conall:** I am Conall, known to all as Conall the Victorious! Where is Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** Welcome to my feast.

**Loegaire:** *(haughtily)* Why should I stay for your feast, Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** You are the strongest of all champions, You deserve the first and best cut of the meat served at my feast. Surely you don't want another of Conchobar's warriors to get it instead of you. It wouldn't look good at all!

**Conall:** You are quite right Bricriu. I will stay. *He goes to stand by the throne.*

**Guests:** Amazing. Conall is staying!

*Cu Chulainn enters*

**Cu Chulainn:** I am Cu Chulainn. I am the most famous warrior of all time. Where is Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** Welcome to my feast.

**Cu Chulainn:** *(haughtily)* Why should I stay for your feast, Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** You are the most famous of all the champions, You deserve the first and best cut of the meat served at my feast. Surely you don't want another of Conchobar's warriors to get it instead of you. It wouldn't look good at all!

**Conall:** You are quite right Bricriu. I will stay. *He goes to stand by the throne.*

**Guests:** Amazing. Cu Chulainn is staying!

*Conchobar enters with the queen*

**The Queen:** Conchobar. Why did we have to come. Bricriu just wants to cause trouble

**Conchobar:** I know but it would be worse if we didn't turn up

**Bricriu:** Welcome to my feast. Please take the seat of honour:

**Conchobar:** *(looking at the throne suspiciously)* Where is your seat, Bricriu?

**Bricriu:** King Conchobar, I know you don't like me so I have arranged for my seat to be in the next room.

**Conchobar:** In the next room? That's good of you, thank you.

**Queen:** *(to the king)* Don't trust him. He's up to something.

*The king goes to throne. The queen sits near by*

**Bricriu** *(to the audience)* It's all going just as I planned. Sit back and enjoy the chaos. I am going to watch from the next room.

*He calls to the three servants and whispers something to them before he leaves*

**Servant 1:** Bricriu welcomes you. The feast is ready. And the first cut, given to the bravest warrior goes to ..... *(loudly)* Loegaire the Triumphant

*Everyone applauds. Loegaire bows and takes the pot.*

**Servant 2:** NO! That's wrong. The prize goes to Conall the Victorious

*Everyone applauds . Conall bows and takes the pot. Loegaire looks furious.*

**Servant 2:** NO! No! No!. The prize has to go to Cu Chulainn

**Cuchullain:** Of course it does. Everyone knows that I am the strongest, bravest, warrior in the whole of Ireland!

**Loegaire:** No you are not. I am

**Conall:** No, It's me, it's me

*The three heroes begin to argue calling out, I'm the bravest, It's me, etc. The guests join in, calling for their chosen champion. Then the three heroes draw their swords and face each other ready to fight. Conchobar stands up.*

**Conchobar:** Silence all of you (*he comes down from his throne and puts his hands on the champions' shoulders.*) Look lads, you are all fantastic warriors, the best in Ireland but you can't all get the champion's portion. (*They start to argue again. The king sighs.*) You are my best friends. I can't choose between you. Maybe we can agree on someone else to judge this argument for us.

*They leave still arguing. The guests follow. Bricriu returns*

**Bricriu:** See what I mean? So far so good but I haven't finished yet. Watch this.

*He calls to the three servants and whispers to them. Bricriu leaves looking very pleased with himself.*

**Servant 1:** I have been told to greet Fedelm, Loegaire's wife on her way to the feast.

**Servant 2:** I have been told to greet Lendabair, Conall's wife on her way to the feast.

**Servant 3:** And it is my job to welcome Emer, Cu Chulainn's wife on her way to the feast.

*Fedhelm and her ladies enter to one side of acting area*

**Servant 1:** Fidelm, You are the wife of the bravest champion in Ireland. You should be the first lady, after the queen, to enter the feasting hall

**Fidelm:** (*to her ladies*) It's true. Ledabair and Emer shouldn't be allowed in the hall before me.

**Ladies:** No you should be first. You are the most important lady.

*Lendabair and her ladies enter*

**Servant 2:** Lendabair, You are the wife of the strongest champion in Ireland. No other lady should enter the feasting hall before you.

**Lendabair** (*to her ladies*) I hadn't thought of that. We can't let Fedelm or Emer get to Bricriu's hall before us.

**Ladies:** It would look very bad. You should be first

*Emer and her ladies enter*

**Servant 3:** Emer, your husband, Cu Chulainn, is the most famous champion in Ireland. This means that you have the right to be the first lady, after the queen, to enter the hall.

**Emer:** You are absolutely right. There is no way that Fidelm and Lenabair are going to get there before me.

*The servants leave the acting space, The three groups of girls size each other up*

**Fidelm:** Lendabair, Emer, you might as well slow down. You can't get into the hall until I do.

**Lendabair:** No you slow down, Fidelm. No way are you going to be first.

**Emer:** Give up ladies and follow behind me. Everyone knows that I should be the first.

*They stand silent looking at each other. Emer turns to her ladies.*

**Emer:** Ladies, One. Two, Three RUN!

*They chase each other out of the acting place.*

*The three heroes enter at one side of the acting space. The three wives enter on the other side of the stage. Bricriu stands watching them. They are arguing loudly*

**Cuchullain:** Very well, we will go to Medb and Ailill of Connaught. Maybe they can settle our quarrel

**Emer:** They will tell you that Cu Chulainn is the greatest

*They all go out of the acting space still arguing leaving Bricriu alone.*

**Bricriu:** *(to audience)* I told you that my feast would cause trouble. Good, wasn't it? But that wasn't the end of the story. It took a very long time for them to settle that argument. What happened?  
Go and find the story for yourself. I'm not going to tell you now.  
Why not?  
Well, I'm Bricriu, and I LOVE causing chaos.