

...when they came to Samsø, Hervor told her men she wanted to go out on the island, and that there was hope of treasure in the grave. But all her warriors spoke against it, telling her that there were such evil spirits walking there day and night that it was worse to be there during the daytime than it was to be out at night in other places. Soon enough, the anchor was dropped, and Hervor got in a boat and rowed to land and came to shore in Munarvág at the same time the sun was setting, and there she met a man watching a herd.

He said:

1 “What kind of person
walks on the island?
Be quick and go back
to where you’re staying!”

She said:

2 “I will not go
to where I’m staying,
because I don’t know
the island’s residents.
Tell me now,
before we part:
Where are the graves
of Hjorvard said to lie?”

He said:

3 “Don’t ask about that,
you’re not wise,
friend of Vikings—
you’ve gone astray.
We should go as quickly
as our feet will take us,
everything outside here
is hateful to humans.”

She said:

4 “I wouldn’t care
to humor cowardice,
even if the whole island
were in flame.
Such fighters as we are,
let’s not fear
little things;

tell me what I asked!”

He said:

5 “Anyone is foolish
to go any further,
especially someone going alone
into such grim darkness.
There are embers flying,
the grave mounds open,
earth and swamp burn alike,
let’s run faster!”

Then he started running home to his farm, and they were parted. Now the next thing Hervor saw out on the island was the grave-fire burning, and she went that way and feared nothing, though all the graves were in her path. She waded forward into these fires as though into darkness, until she came to the grave of the berserkers. Then she said:

1 “Wake up, Angantýr,
Hervor awakes you,
the only daughter
born to you and Sváfa;
give me from your grave
your sharp-edged blade,
the one the dwarves made
for Sigrlami.

2 “Hervarð, Hjorvarð,
Hrani, Angantýr!
I awake you all
under the tree roots,
with helmet and armor
and sharp sword,
with shield and harness
and reddened spear.

3 “The sons of Arngrím
are much reduced,
those cruel men
are nearly dust now;
while none of the sons
of Eyfura
will speak with me
in Munarvág.

4 “Hervarð, Hjorvarð,

Hrani, Angantýr!
May you all feel
as though ants
filled your ribs
as you rot in your grave,
unless you give me
the sword that Dvalin made;
it doesn't befit
ghosts to bear a fine weapon."

Then Angantýr said:

5 "My daughter Hervor,
why do you call so?
You are only welcoming
your own evil doom.
You've gone crazy,
you're out of your wits,
thinking wildly,
when you dare to wake up dead men.

6 "It wasn't my father who buried me,
nor other kinsmen;
two men who lived
took Tyrting;
but of them
only one lives now."

She said:

7 "You don't speak true.
May a god leave you
to sit whole in your grave,
if you don't have
Tyrting with you,
you are reluctant
to deliver the inheritance
to your only child."

Then the grave mound opened, and it was as though fire and flame were all over the grave. Then Angantýr said:

8 "Hel's gate draws up,
the grave mounds open,
everything in flame
on the island around.

It's an evil sight
to look out of the grave,
hurry back, young lady,
go back to your ships.”

She answered:

9 “You can't burn
those flames so bright at night,
that the fires will
terrify me;
this woman's heart
will never tremble,
even if she sees a ghost
stand before this door!”

Then Angantýr said:

10 “I tell you, Hervor,
listen to me now,
wise daughter,
what will happen:
Tyrfing will
destroy all
of your family, girl,
if you can believe it.

11 “You’ll have a son
who later
will have Tyrfing
and place his faith in his strength.
Men will call
that man Heidrek;
he will be the most powerful
under the sun’s domain.”

Then Hervor said:

12 “I seemed to be
a human woman
before I decided
to seek your hall;
give me, from out of your grave,
the sword that hates armor,
dangerous to shields,

the killer of Hjálmar.”

Then Angantýr said:

13 “Hjalmar’s killer
lies beneath my shoulders,
covered completely
by flames.
I know of no woman
above the earth
who would dare
to hold that sword in hand.”

Hervor said:

14 “I will keep
the sharp sword,
and take it in hand,
I can have it;
I do not fear
burning flame;
the fire seems to be dying
as I look upon it.”

Then Angantýr said:

15 “You’re a fool, Hervor,
but you have courage,
rushing upon the fire
with your eyes.
I would happily give you
the sword from my grave,
you young girl,
I cannot deny your request.”

Hervor said:

16 “You did well,
son of Vikings,
when you gave me
the sword from your grave.
I think it’s better now,
lord, to have the sword,
than to win the whole
kingdom of Norway.”

Angantýr said:

17 “You don’ t know it, but
you lost in this matter,
fully doomed woman.
Why do you rejoice?
Tyrfing will
destroy all
of your family, girl,
if you can believe it.

She said:

18 “I will go
to the ships,
now this girl
is in good spirits;
I care little,
friend of princes,
how my sons
may later clash.”

He said:

19 “You’ ll own it,
and love it long,
you’ ll have Hjalmar’ s killer
in a secret place.
Don’ t touch the edges,
there’ s poison on both,
it’ s worse for human life
than the cutting blade.

20 “Farewell, daughter.
I’ d have rather given you
twelve men’ s lives,
power and strength,
everything good,
which Arngrim’ s sons
left behind of themselves—
if you could believe it.”

She said:

21 I'm ready to leave.
May you all dwell
whole in the grave,
and I will hurry away.
I seem more than anything
to be between worlds,
when around me
there are fires burning.