

BANSHEE

Overview: The murder of a family of Jacobite sympathisers in the wake of the Battle of Culloden summons forth an ancient spirit of vengeance. A reluctant soldier, pressed into service, finds himself fighting for his life, and the life of his family. Horror, folklore and Celtic myth combine in this heart stopping terror ride set against the stark beauty of the Scottish Highlands.

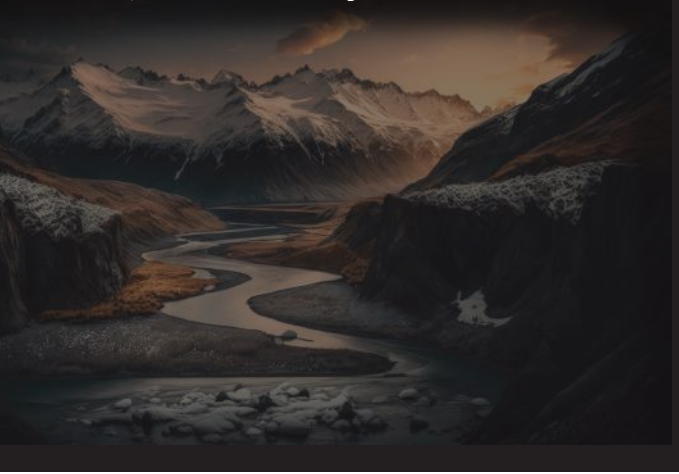
Scotland 1746: The day after the Battle of Culloden, the Jacobite cause is broken and Bonnie Prince Charlie is fled. Angus Cotter, a survivor of the battle, and a very reluctant soldier, pressed into government service, is attached to a new squad. Known as the Black Campbells and under the command of a mounted English officer, Lieutenant Forsyth, Angus's new squad are tasked to hunt down Jacobite-loyalists on land belonging to Clan Campbell's rivals: Clan Fraser. Angus bids goodbye to his camp-follower wife, Fiona, and their infant child.

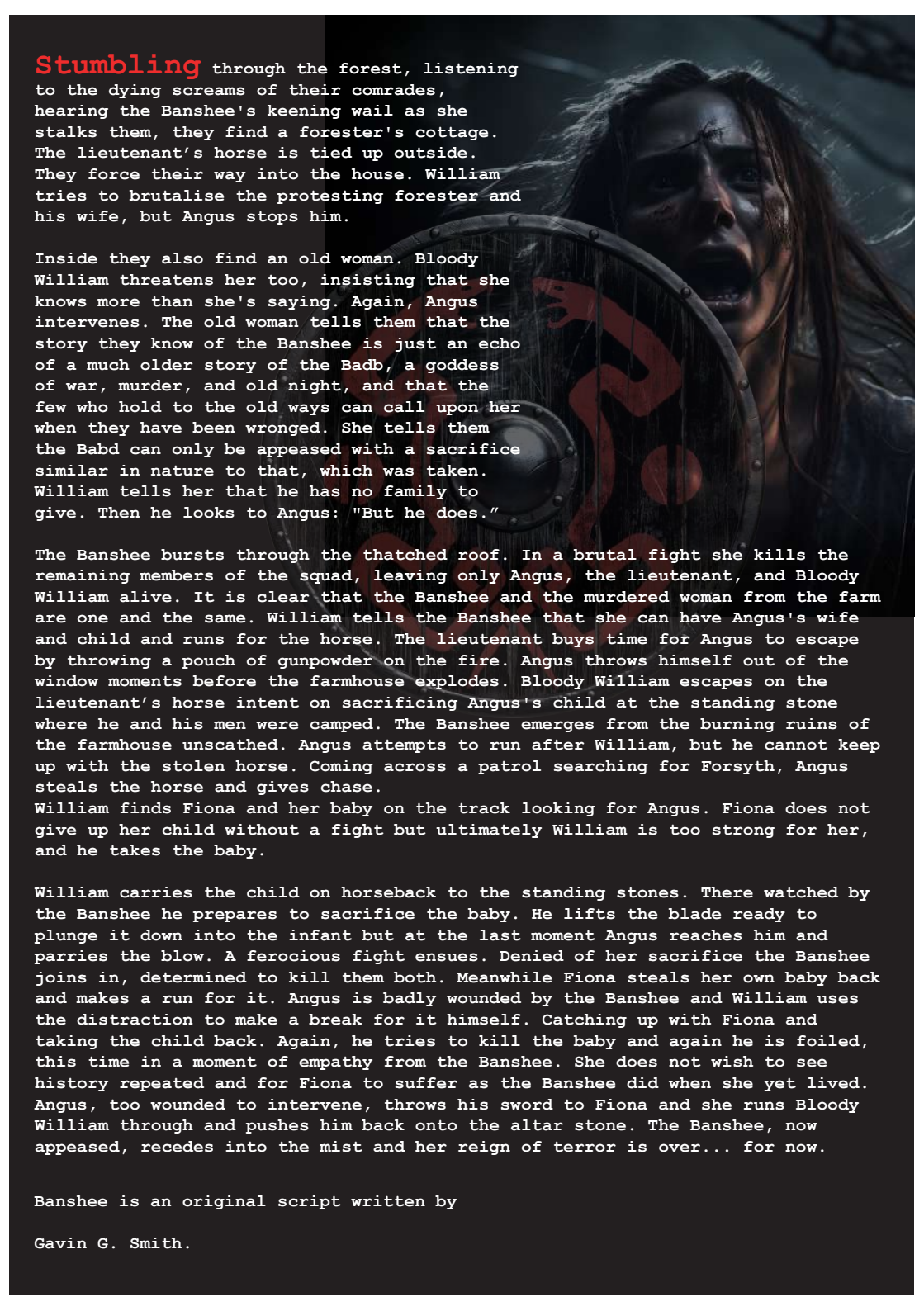
After the Campbells are ambushed on the road and one of their number is killed, they come to a farm on Fraser land. The Campbell's ransack the place, much to the chagrin of their officer. In doing so they find themselves on the sharp end of the woman of the house's tongue. She berates them, for waging war on women and children (the Fraser men are nowhere to be found). Despite Angus's protestations to the lieutenant, Sergeant 'Bloody' William Campbell, the true leader of the squad, takes it on himself to burn the farm.

However, one of the children tries to attack William with a spear and is shot and killed. The woman curses him for a coward and a butcher. William orders her remaining child to be murdered in front of her. Angus tries to intervene but is struck down. The protesting lieutenant is threatened and then ignored. Finally Bloody William has the woman killed as well.

Moving deeper into Fraser land they enter some woods where they believe that the Jacobites that ambushed them are hiding. A keening wail strikes terror into their hearts and causes the lieutenant's horse to bolt. They hear the keening again, and one of the soldiers is snatched away by something unseen. Panicking the groups splits up. Angus and one of the other Campbells give chase. Following the screams of the missing soldier they walk into a primeval scene in a clearing within the woods. Illuminated by the flickering light of balefires they find their erstwhile comrade staked to a tree, his head missing.

The remaining Campbells manage to regroup in the darkness but not before a panicked Forsyth accidentally fires at Bloody William, earning the sergeant's enmity. They hear the keening wail again and then the Banshee is amongst them and another of their number dies. The Campbells, Forsyth, and Angus retreat in a hail of musket and pistol shot. Now they fully understand that they're being stalked and murdered one-by-one.





Stumbling through the forest, listening to the dying screams of their comrades, hearing the Banshee's keening wail as she stalks them, they find a forester's cottage. The lieutenant's horse is tied up outside. They force their way into the house. William tries to brutalise the protesting forester and his wife, but Angus stops him.

Inside they also find an old woman. Bloody William threatens her too, insisting that she knows more than she's saying. Again, Angus intervenes. The old woman tells them that the story they know of the Banshee is just an echo of a much older story of the Babd, a goddess of war, murder, and old night, and that the few who hold to the old ways can call upon her when they have been wronged. She tells them the Babd can only be appeased with a sacrifice similar in nature to that, which was taken. William tells her that he has no family to give. Then he looks to Angus: "But he does."

The Banshee bursts through the thatched roof. In a brutal fight she kills the remaining members of the squad, leaving only Angus, the lieutenant, and Bloody William alive. It is clear that the Banshee and the murdered woman from the farm are one and the same. William tells the Banshee that she can have Angus's wife and child and runs for the horse. The lieutenant buys time for Angus to escape by throwing a pouch of gunpowder on the fire. Angus throws himself out of the window moments before the farmhouse explodes. Bloody William escapes on the lieutenant's horse intent on sacrificing Angus's child at the standing stone where he and his men were camped. The Banshee emerges from the burning ruins of the farmhouse unscathed. Angus attempts to run after William, but he cannot keep up with the stolen horse. Coming across a patrol searching for Forsyth, Angus steals the horse and gives chase.

William finds Fiona and her baby on the track looking for Angus. Fiona does not give up her child without a fight but ultimately William is too strong for her, and he takes the baby.

William carries the child on horseback to the standing stones. There watched by the Banshee he prepares to sacrifice the baby. He lifts the blade ready to plunge it down into the infant but at the last moment Angus reaches him and parries the blow. A ferocious fight ensues. Denied of her sacrifice the Banshee joins in, determined to kill them both. Meanwhile Fiona steals her own baby back and makes a run for it. Angus is badly wounded by the Banshee and William uses the distraction to make a break for it himself. Catching up with Fiona and taking the child back. Again, he tries to kill the baby and again he is foiled, this time in a moment of empathy from the Banshee. She does not wish to see history repeated and for Fiona to suffer as the Banshee did when she yet lived. Angus, too wounded to intervene, throws his sword to Fiona and she runs Bloody William through and pushes him back onto the altar stone. The Banshee, now appeased, recedes into the mist and her reign of terror is over... for now.

Banshee is an original script written by

Gavin G. Smith.