



Tomen y Mur © Keith O'Brien

Blodeuwedd

A bewitching girl that was created by the sorcerers Gwydion and Math from the flowers of broom, meadowsweet and oak to be Llew Llaw Gyffes' wife. She plotted with Gronw Pebr, the lord of Penllyn and as a punishment she was turned into an owl by Gwydion.

After she was created, Blodeuwedd went to live with Llew at Mur Castell (the site of the Roman Fort, Tomen y Mur, near Trawsfynydd today). After time she fell in love with Gronw Pebr and both of them construed a way to get rid of Llew, Blodeuwedd tricks Llew into revealing how he may be killed, since he cannot be killed during the day or night, nor indoors or outdoors, neither riding nor walking, not clothed and not naked, nor by any weapon lawfully made. He reveals to her that he can only be killed at dusk, wrapped in a net, with one foot on a bath and one on a black goat, by a riverbank and by a spear forged for a year during the hours when everyone is at Mass. With this information she arranges his death.

Struck by the spear thrown by Gronw's hand, Llew transforms into an eagle and flies away. Gwydion tracks him down and finds him perched high on an oak tree. Through the singing of an englyn (known as englynion Gwydion)

Gwydion lures Lleu down from the oak tree and switches him back to his human form. Gwydion and Math nurse Lleu back to health before mustering Gwynedd and reclaiming his lands from Gronw and Blodeuwedd.

Gwydion overtakes the fleeing Blodeuwedd and turns her into an owl (in Welsh *tylluan* or *gwdihw*), the creature hated by all other birds, proclaiming:

You will not dare to show your face in the light of day ever again, and that will be because of enmity between you and all other birds. It will be in their nature to harass you and despise you wherever they find you. And you will not lose your name – that will always be "Blodeuwedd (Flower-face)." ^[1]

The narrative adds:

Meanwhile, Gronw escapes to Penllyn and sends emissaries to Lleu, to beg his forgiveness. Lleu refuses, demanding that Gronw must stand on the bank of the River Cynfal and receive a blow from his spear. Gronw desperately asks if anyone from his warband will take the spear in his place, but his men refuse his plea. Eventually, Gronw agrees to receive the blow on the condition that he may place a large stone between himself and Lleu. Lleu allows Gronw to do so, then throws the spear with such strength that it pierces the stone, killing his rival. A holed stone in Ffestiniog is still known as Llech Gronw (Gronw's Stone).