

hilt showing hairy and gnarled, and with his shock of gray, coarse locks straggling around his ears and scowling brow, he looked like one of those ogres I had pictured in the tales my father told me of a winter night. An evil grin spread over his features as he saw the Spaniards point despairingly at the shore, where the men of the clachan were adding fuel to a sudden bonfire.

"Ay!" chuckled Black Jamie, nodding his head at the burning ship. "Ay, ay, ye heathen gomerils. Ye may well put the sign of the cross on your breasts. The whole clachan's sitting on its hunkers waiting for ye, and all hell's singeing in your rear. Ay, skreigh, ye heathen! Skreigh!"—as heart-broken cries came from the Spanish ship.

"Oh, my father!" cried Mistress Mary, turning to the laird with her hands clasped. "Have mercy on them!"

"Mercy!" roared the laird, in sudden fury. "Mercy, is it? Then let them bide where they are. Mercy, is it? Ha!" Black Jamie chuckled. "What for have they come here, but as enemies of the land, to ram Popes and candles and crosses down our very thrapples? Mercy, is it? Come on, Aundra, we'll see to't that they have mercy."

Beckoning to a big kilted vassal who had been standing with a body of serving-men, the laird flung back his plaid from his claymore hilt and started for the shore, grinning and glowering and muttering: