

the LIVING WOOD

A mother's quest to discover the Tree of Life.
An emperor's vision to reclaim Rome for Christ.

Feature Film Pitch Presentation

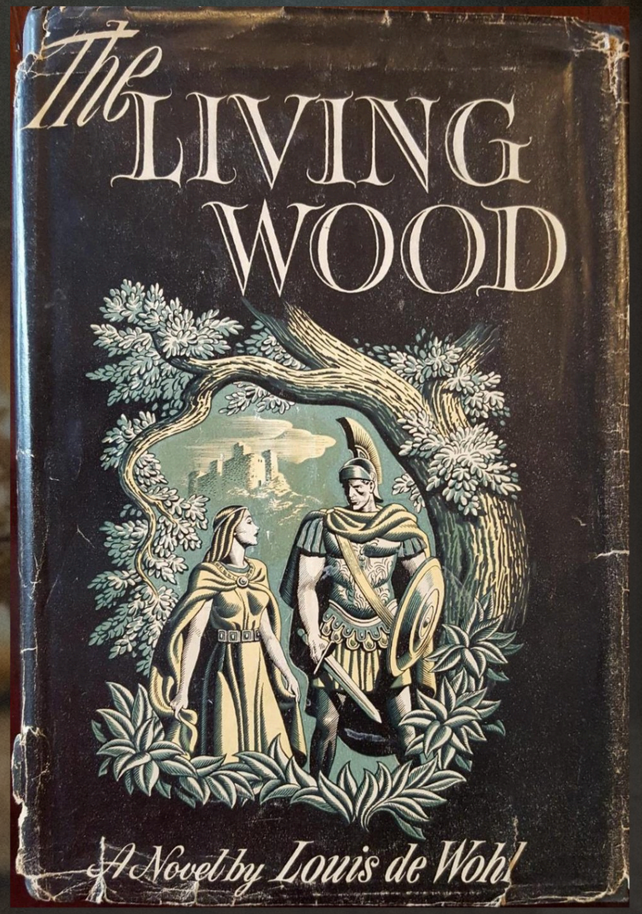
BASED ON THE NOVEL BY LOUIS DE WOHL



1903-1961

Louis de Wohl was a best-selling author and screenwriter who **sold over one million copies across 60+ books** and was translated into 12 languages. **More than 15 of his works became movies, including the film "Francis of Assisi" (1961)**. He also served England with MI5 during World War II.

When "THE LIVING WOOD" was published in 1947, J. Arthur Rank (founder of the famous Pinewood Studios) acquired the screen rights to the novel, although it never came to fruition.



LOGLINE

A Celtic princess embarks on a lifelong journey of love, loss, and faith to fulfill her father's prophecy: to discover the sacred Tree of Life - the wood that redeemed mankind.

DEVELOPMENT STATUS

Rights secured, treatment and screenplay available

GENRE

Historical Epic

ESTIMATED RUN TIME

One hour, 55 minutes



PREMISE

In the foggy cliffs of Britain in 272 A.D., lost Roman Tribune Constantius collides with fiery Celtic princess Helen. They fall passionately in love, marry, and bear a son whom Helen's mystical father makes a prophecy: that he will own all the land he rides on, and she will discover "the living wood", the very Tree of Life from the Garden of Eden itself.

When ambition pulls Constantius back to Rome, he discards Helen for a politically powerful new wife, Theodora, and Britain is seized by the rebel commander Carausius. Alone and hunted, Helen secretly supports the Roman cause from hiding — sending word to Rome and waiting for liberation — while raising her warrior-son Constantine. Amid brutal persecution, she slowly embraces the outlawed Christian faith that becomes her unbreakable anchor.

Decades later, now Emperor, Constantine receives a blazing vision of the Cross before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, crushes his rival, and declares Christianity the empire's future. Yet he has his son Crispus killed, and Fausta dies at his command, officially called an accident — compelling Helen to venture on the quest that will fulfill the prophecy: her epic journey to Jerusalem, where she unearths the True Cross.

Spanning several decades, THE LIVING WOOD is a sweeping tale of devotion, loss, and heartbreak; but above all, redemption and faith's triumph over empire. It is a historical drama intertwined with the timeless mysteries of sacrifice and salvation.

KEY CHARACTERS

HELEN

Helen begins as a young druidic princess wary of Roman occupation, yet falls in love with the Roman tribune, Constantius. When he abandons her for power, she struggles with bitterness, loneliness, and a growing spiritual hunger while becoming more in tune with her father's mystical prophecy. Forced to grow up quickly, she develops a strong maternal devotion to her son, Constantine, and comes to embrace the faith of her Christian friends. She navigates her son through his own crises, and her story culminates triumphantly when she discovers the True Cross, achieving inner peace and saintly serenity.



CONSTANTINE

Constantine starts as a sensitive, observant boy influenced by his mother's devotion and becomes hardened when his parents separate. He wrestles with abandonment and the pressure to prove himself. He grows into a cunning leader with great survival and political instincts and his arc reaches an emotional peak with the vision prior to the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, giving way to faith. Fear overtakes him, however, when, upon hearing rumors of conspiracy, he has Crispus killed, and Fausta later dies at his command. Ultimately, his faith and confidence returns when his mother restores his calm.



CONSTANTIUS

Constantius is ambitious, intelligent, and witty. Despite being a disciplined Roman Tribune, he is drawn towards the mystique of Helen and her father, demonstrating fleeting moments of tenderness and self-doubt. When he leaves Helen, he marries another for power and becomes wholly focused and hardened on matters of the Roman Empire, while still feeling guilt over his former life. In his last days, he reconciles with his past and reunites with Helen and Constantine in a dramatic scene, and names Constantine his successor, ultimately securing his own redemption and family legacy.



SUPPORTING CHARACTERS



KING COEL

Helen’s wise, mystical father who delivers the prophecy of the Living Wood.



FAVONIUS

Loyal Roman Centurion, ally to Helen and mentor to Constantine, embodying honor through turmoil.



ALLECTUS

Cunning usurper who captures Britain, forcing our heroes into survival and resistance.



HILARY

Once a servant of King Coel, Hilary is a close friend, advisor to Helen - and a priest.



RUFUS

A devoted and loyal auxiliary soldier who stands by Helen and Constantine.

FILM TONE

SPIRITUAL & MYSTERIOUS

A strong mystical and mysterious current overlays the movie as Helen is exposed to the religion known as Christians and seeks the legend of the Living Wood

EPIC & SWEEPING

Set against the backdrop of a collapsing Roman Empire and persecution, the settings are built for scale

HEROIC & NOBLE

Constantine’s path to becoming Emperor, his transformation of the Empire, and Helen's quest is akin to a classic “Hero’s Journey” story

PERSEVERANCE

Helen faces dramatic adversity through personal loss throughout but still clings to hope and faith

VISUAL REFERENCE

GLADIATOR
I & II



KINGDOM OF
HEAVEN



LORD OF THE
RINGS



HOUSE OF
DAVID





WHY NOW?

In today's world, there is tremendous hunger for meaningful stories. The faith-based media landscape is experiencing tremendous growth, with Christian films and series delivering high ROI from modest budgets and massive audience engagement.

Recent hits demonstrate the momentum: **Angel Studios' animated David grossed over $80 million domestically** (with worldwide earnings nearing $84 million). The King of Kings (2025) earned approximately $60 million domestically and over $83 million worldwide. **The Chosen has reached an estimated 280 million viewers worldwide**, and its Season 5 theatrical releases (The Chosen: Last Supper) grossed over $36 million combined across three parts. **House of David on Amazon Prime peaked at #1 (and reached #2) on the platform, drawing massive viewership as one of the streamer's top shows.**

The market shows no signs of slowing, with cultural trends leaning toward faith-inspired content and major upcoming projects on the horizon, including Mel Gibson's The Resurrection of the Christ sequels (Part One slated for March 2027) and continued episodes and spin-offs from The Chosen.

The Living Wood follows in the footsteps of these successful historical faith-based films. This historical fiction narrative of Helen's quest for the True Cross taps into an underserved demographic of Christians worldwide, eager for quality crossover-appeal productions like this one. Now is the ideal time to bring this timeless story to audiences hungry for inspiring, epic tales rooted in history and faith.



A WORD FROM THE WRITER

A few years ago, I stumbled upon Louis de Wohl's novel and was immediately captivated by **Helen's quest to discover the True Cross** and her son's adventures to reclaim Rome for Christ. I've always been fascinated by how tangible objects and symbols can move people and spark imagination. After all, it was the Shroud of Turin that led to my own conversion in the first place. I have also always been in awe of the grandeur of cinema and storytelling. Sitting in the movie theater with the community experiencing larger-than-life movies became memories as much as any other significant life events. From this book, I imagine the two colossal historical figures — Helen and Constantine — on the big screen, inviting audiences to experience their own pain, loss and triumphant discovery of the Cross with them.

The Living Wood re-imagines the familiar settings of the Roman Empire and Jerusalem three hundred years following Christ's sacrifice. I want audiences to emotionally invest in the journeys of Helen and Constantine as they experience growth through pain, loss, and triumph. I want parents to relate to Helen as a mother and people of faith to experience her elation when finally discovering the True Cross and pulling it out of the dirt. Perhaps the movie will draw audiences towards biblical archaeology the same way Jurassic Park drew them towards paleontology. I want audiences to be captivated by Constantine as he overcomes his foes - both self-inflicted ones and his rivals. And ultimately, for the audience to walk away inspired with a new rigor towards their own faith, goals and dreams.

MIKE PETERSON

THANK YOU!

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Screenplay and treatment available upon request.