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Prince Valiant

By Dudley Nichols

'In the days of King Arthur
and his knights of the Round Table
'the Christian king of Scandia
was overthrown by a Viking traitor
'and escaped with his wife and son
across the North Sea to Britain.

'The traitor, Sligon,
searched for them relentlessly.

'But years passed, and Sligon
had not found the hiding place
'where King Arthur
had given them sanctuary
'in an abbey in a remote section
of the coast of Britain. '

Father! It's all clear!

It's Boltar!

Boltar!

All pirate ships have been ordered
to search for you, sire.

Last night we sighted
some Viking ships off this coast.

- Sligon's?

- Aye. Aye.

There's something queer
going on.

Does anyone in Britain
know you're here?

Only King Arthur.

I don't like it, sire.

To get his hands on you
and Prince Valiant

Sligon would pay any price.

- Treason begets treason!

- Now, Boltar, I cannot let you...

I don't mean Arthur,
he's your loyal friend.

But why don't you
leave this place?

Go to King Arthur's court at Camelot.

You'd be safe there.

When I leave this island,

God willing,

I've sworn to go in one direction,
Scandia,

to make a try for my kingdom,
my sword and the traitor's life.
- If the time is not yet right...
- It isn't, sire. It isn't.

In that case, I will send my son
to King Arthur.

Alone?

As any young man must go
who seeks knighthood.

I, Prince Valiant,
son of Aguar of Scandia,
do solemnly pledge
on my father's sword,
before me now
only in symbol,
to go to Camelot, and there strive
with honour and diligence
to become a knight
of King Arthur,
son of Uther Pendragon
and most Christian king of the Britons.

And when I have
become a knight
I pledge to return
to my father
and aid him to regain
what is rightfully ours
and to restore the Cross of Christ
to all our Vikings.

Nor shall I ever rest
until Sligon has been destroyed
and the sword he sullied
with pagan hands
has been restored
to this scabbard.

Always be proud
of your Viking blood
but conceal your identity
until you reach Camelot.

- I will, sir.
- Tell no one where we hide.
King Arthur knows.
He'll not inquire.
- To others, answer nothing.

- I won't, sir.

Remember the name of Sir Gawain.

He is our friend.

He will give you good advice.

Follow it.

Pay him homage as a great knight
of the Round Table.

- Yes, sir.

- Son.

Wear this.

God will protect you.

And a good right arm!

Hit a lick first, and pray afterwards!

Boltar!

If for any reason

we should need you here

before you're knighted,

I'll get word to you.

- How, sir?

- I'll send you this.

No one can counterfeit its message.

Remember it well.

I will, sir.

- Goodbye, Father.

- My prince.

Goodbye, Mother.

By Odin, I'd give my soul
to go along.

But he'll make it, sire,

just as sure as one day

you'll win back your throne.

I'll tell you something, Boltar,

I'll never tell another,

not even the queen.

I no longer dream

of winning back my throne.

But my son shall sit on it someday

if he's as good as I think he is

and time alone will tell that.

My master pledges to land

a thousand armed Vikings

on this coast

to do your bidding

three months after you deliver

the exiles into his hands!

Your name, varlet,

before I run you through!

- I'm sorry, sir!

- Speak up! Your name!

- I thought you were somebody else.

- Liar! Look at my armour.

There's not a scullion in all Britain
doesn't know the crest of Sir Gawain.

- Sir Gawain?

- Don't pretend you didn't know!

I didn't!

I swear I didn't!

Sir Gawain, I'm Prince Valiant.

You know my father, King Aguar.

- He's in exile.

- Yes, but I'm not.

Sir Gawain, I bring you
my mother's greetings and my father's.

They told me

you were a good friend.

Wait!

When did Aguar and his queen
see me last and where?

In Scandia, a year before
they were driven into exile.

Fine prince, you turned out to be,
flinging rocks like any lowborn ruffian
I've never been unhorsed
by such a scurvy trick!

If I hadn't lost my weapon, sir,

I would have done it proper.

Don't be impertinent.

If you're King Aguar's son,
why did you fling that rock?

I thought you were the knight
who was after me.

- What knight?

- All I saw was his black armour.

The Black Knight?

You saw him?

I near had his lance in my back.

Who is he, sir?

A ghost.

- Ghosts don't chase a man in daylight.
- Right.
- But you spoke as if you knew him.
- Rumours.

Vague reports at Camelot
how a black-armoured knight
appears and vanishes at will.

I don't believe in ghosts.

Where did you see him?

- On the coast, sir.
- Can you take me to him?

We can try, sir, but after what happened,
I'm sure all the Vikings will be gone.

- Viking ships? Here?
- Yes, sir. Let me tell you what happened.

Tell me on the way.

We must lose no more time.

- I'll show you where I saw him.
- Not now.

We go to Camelot. King Arthur
must hear of this. Get that lance.

Well, can't you mount a horse
as well as you can fling rocks?

But, sir, that's where
a maiden rides.

That's right. Get on.

Stop wasting time.

You don't have to dismount
until we get there, Valiant.

Look!

That's it. Camelot.

Court of King Arthur.

Climb on.

You can't slide off downhill.

And then, sire, I dove
into the water and stayed submerged
until the Black Knight thought
that I'd drowned.

He circled the lake a few times
and then left.

I went on my way to Camelot,
and that's where I met Sir Gawain
and mistaking him for my pursuer, I...
Never mind that, lad!

King Arthur knows we met.
The point is, sire, that what was rumour
now takes human form.
This is no phantom.
Our duty is to find
this Black Knight
and destroy him
before his treason ripens.
Aye.
Where is your sire,
Prince Valiant?
- In exile, sir.
- Where?
There's your answer, Sir Brack.
That's the way
I would have it.
Yes, of course. I hadn't thought.
I agree, sire, with Sir Gawain.
The fellow who goes in black armour
is certainly no knight.
To credit him with that would be
to cast a slur on every knight in the realm.
- Well spoken, Sir Brack.
- And therefore I say
that his unlawful disguise
endangers his life
more than it threatens this kingdom
for even a knave
must know the penalty
for wearing the armour of a knight
when he's not entitled to the honour.
Aye. And the more proof
that he plots treason.
A man does not risk banishment or death
in borrowed armour
unless the stakes are high.
We'll speak no more of it now.
Forewarned is forearmed.
And for that
we owe Prince Valiant.
How shall we repay you,
son of Scandia?
Make me a knight, sire.
You mean you wish

to train as a novice?

- No, Sir King. To become a knight.

- Immediately?

Yes, sire.

A knight of the Round Table.

- Valiant!

- What's wrong?

- Hold your tongue and stand up.

- Let me explain, Sir Gawain.

It is clear that you have little knowledge
of what knighthood means.

In how many tournaments
have you fought?

What deeds have you done?

Have you killed any enemies
of our realm?

Knighthood cannot be had
for the asking.

It is not enough
to be highborn.

Look around.

You will see many kings' sons
concealed behind their armour.

They prefer to be called
Sir Knight.

Sir Gawain,
who brought you here.

Perhaps he failed
to tell you

that he is the son
of our friend, King Lot.

Sir Lancelot would not exchange
his knighthood for any kingdom.

Nor would Sir Tristram,
famed throughout our world.

Nor Sir Galahad,
the pride of Christendom,
who seeks the Holy Grail.

Yonder is Sir Brack,
who claims descent from Constans,
great king of Britain
who was my own father's father.

To be a Viking prince
means nothing here.

I will give you
whatever lies within my power
but knighthood must be won.
If that's where your aim lies,
you must start by becoming a squire.
I'll take him, sire.
Oh, never mind, Sir Brack.
I'll train him.
But I have no squire at the moment.
Nor have I.
I've never had a Viking
for a squire.
Then avoid it.
This lad is full of Viking tricks.
I'll tell you how we met,
though I hadn't intended to.
He crowned me with a rock.
In that case, Sir Gawain,
I think we must assign
Prince Valiant's tutelage to you,
or do you not agree,
Sir Brack?
Of course, sire. I hadn't known
about the Viking fashion of crowning.
I promise Sir Gawain that I shall watch
his new squire's progress
with fascinated interest.
- You see the red spot on that quintain?
- Yes, I do.
Now, keep your eye on it and go!
And don't stop!
Hold that shield up.
Up, to protect your head. Try it.
That's better. Not quite so low.
Try it on me.
See what I mean?
Give me three.
Better, but your footwork is off.
Let the weight come after the blow. So.
You see what I mean?
Keep your shield up. Up!
My... My foot slipped.
Yes, it is a little wet there.
That's enough for today.

You're learning fast, squire.
You handle a horse
and lance like a knight.
As for the sword, well,
that takes time.
Don't flatter him, Brack.
I hear you're going to the coast.
- Why don't you come along?
- No, we'll go out after the black knave
as soon as this Viking learns that a sword
isn't something you butter bread with.
I wish you more luck than Lancelot had.
He combed the entire coast.
He's beginning to think
my squire had a fancy dream.
No, he doesn't, sir.
Neither do I.
I wish you were coming along.
I could use you for bait, perhaps,
and find this phantom.
- He's no phantom, sir.
- Of course not.
Well, another time, Valiant.
All right,
take the swords in.
Excuse that knock, lad.
It'll teach you not to get rough
until you're sure of yourself.
We only learn by knocks.
If your head is sore,
remember that's how we met.
You almost split mine.
- Prince Valiant!
- Can... Can I come along with you, sir?
- Where's Gawain?
- Well, he's not coming, sir.
- Oh.
- Let me come along with you, sir.
I must say, you're a man
after my own heart.
But your vows are to Gawain.
What would he say?
He'll only be ashamed of making fun of me
if we find the Black Knight.

I can show you where I saw him twice.

- Twice?

- Yes, sir.

That's two reasons
I'd like to have you on this quest.
But I can take no responsibility
for what you do, Valiant.

- May I ask you a question, sir?

- Go ahead.

King Arthur said that you claim descent
from a king of Britain.
I don't claim it.
It's a fact.
Unfortunately,
I was not acknowledged.
Except for my mother's word,
I was never born.
Legality is legality. Arthur is the King,
and we must never question it.
That's where I fell from, sir.
Wonder you didn't break your neck.
What were you doing here?

- I was on my way to Camelot.

- Where did you come from?

Oh, forgive my asking.
I forgot.
You saw him twice.
Where was the first time?
Way up there, sir.
The two of them came galloping
along the bank and rode right past me.

- Didn't they see you?

- I was concealed in some bushes.
If there was undergrowth by the water,
you must have been close to the fens.
Well, sir, it was
quite a way from here.
I'll ride that way and take a look.
Get back up there and watch.
Hide your horse.
Keep out of sight.
I'll come back through the woodland
and join you.
All right. Put down your weapons

if you want me alive.
Oh, Ilene! Ilene!
Ilene!
I wonder who he is.
At least he's a Christian,
praise God.
All he needs is a little rest.
He'll come around shortly, milady.
Thank you.
That's Father.
We'd better be going, milady,
he's waiting.
- You go along.
- But I...
- Please.
- I'll tell him you're coming.
Am... Am I in heaven?
No. On Earth, thank heaven.
- Well, where?
- At Ord. My father's King of Ord.
- Yes, but...
- Please, don't talk.
You must sleep
and Father's calling.
- No, wait. Please.
- I'll come back later.
So far, Aleta, I have said nothing
to your nursing the Viking
but now that he's recovering, I demand
that you leave the nursing to the servants.
Oh, but, Father, that wouldn't be kind,
or even Christian.
Don't bring in religion
to confound me!
God help the king
who has two daughters and no sons.
Listen, my child.
It's time that you were married.
And because you are older
than Ilene,
the man you wed
will one day rule Ord with you.
That is why I have accepted
King Arthur's invitation

to attend the tournament
at Camelot.

- There you will find a husband.

- Oh, but, Father...

You will have all the best knights
in Britain to choose from.

You'll be betrothed before you return.

I've sworn it.

Somehow the knights who come here
to seek your hand never seem to suit you.

- They're all so old.

- We don't want striplings.

What's wrong with Sir Brack?

His blood is as good
as King Arthur's.

And he never lets us forget it,
as his own father apparently did.

Well, er, I don't say
there's not a blemish on his birth
but had King Arthur not been born,
Brack might hold the throne.

Legitimate or not,
he is of royal blood.

- So is Prince Valiant.

- But he's a Viking!

Barbarians, pirates,
uncivilised pagans, all of them.

And how do we know that he was
even with Sir Brack?

I'm sure that if

Sir Brack were near

he would have come and paid court to you
as he always does.

Besides, all we know about the Viking
is that he is a Viking!

Who's that arriving?

Why, it's Sir Brack!

He's come to see...

Incredible.

My horse went lame, and when I returned
to where I'd left you, daylight was going.

- There wasn't a soul in sight.

- You saw no armed men, sir?

- I only wish I had.

- I was sure you were in for trouble.
Only the trouble
of searching everywhere for you.
I'm afraid that you have the gift
of encountering things
that no one else can find.
I can't make out
why they only came after me.
They must have seen you.
From cover, perhaps,
and recognised me.
My lance is feared, Val.
The important thing is that you got away.
For that we must be grateful.
We'll take no more chances. I'm waiting
here until you're well enough to travel.
Just what I was going to propose,
Sir Brack. You're more than welcome.
Thank you, sire.
And now I think that this young hothead
has had enough excitement.
The more rest he gets,
the sooner we'll be on our way.
Quite right. Come, Sir Brack.
You must give me all the news of Camelot.
Gladly.
King Arthur has invited us
to see the tournament.
I hope we shall see much of you there.
Aleta!
It's been a long hour waiting.
I had difficulty in getting away
from Sir Brack.
Well, I'm beginning
not to like him.
Forget it.
I'm just jealous.
- I like it.
- Well, I don't.
Ever since he's arrived,
all I get from you is stolen moments.
But wait till we get to Camelot.
Then you'll give me all your time.
Oh, gladly.

It's not only Sir Brack.
It's Father.
He's watching me
like a hawk.
Look. Ilene is standing guard.
She'll whistle
if she sees anyone coming.
Why does she always keep asking me
about Sir Gawain?
She's in love with him.
Sir Gawain?
Oh, I really shouldn't tell you.
It's her secret.
Well, you see, Father took her to Camelot
the year Sir Gawain won the tournament.
She was just
at that romantic age
and she fell
in love with him.
Never got over it.
She vows she'll never
marry another man.
And he doesn't know
a thing about it?
Wouldn't it be dreadful
if he were in love with another?
My knight?
All he loves is a good fight.
Then you must help them
at Camelot.
She'd be broken-hearted
if her dream didn't come true.
Promise me you'll help them.
What do you want me to do?
Propose for him?
Oh, I'm afraid that's one thing
you don't know how to do,
not for yourself, anyway.
Are you afraid of Father,
or... or are you just trifling?
Well, I can't say what I want to.
- Not yet.
- Why not?
It's not only your father.

It's me. It's my father.

I have a vow to fulfil
before I can think of anything else.

Will you wear this?

Put it on.

No, no, no.

Aleta!

What are you doing here?

Well, I came out looking for Ilene
and found Prince Valiant
sunning himself.

There's nothing like sun
to cure an illness, Val.

There's more colour
in your face today.

I thought from my daughter's report
that you were still an invalid.

No, sir, I...

That's what comes of perfect nursing.

Do you feel as sturdy as you look?

Yes, sir.

Then I see no reason to delay
our departure another hour. Do you?

- No, sir, I...

- Very well then.

- Oh, but not today.

- Why not?

Well, we leave ourselves
in three more days.

I thought we were
all going together.

You tempt me, Aleta,
but duty comes first.

If Val is well enough,
we must go.

Of course, Sir Brack,
and so must we.

Why should we wait three more days
and lose Sir Brack's protection?

How much nicer to have three days
at Camelot before the tournament.

Perhaps you are right,
my dear.

- Don't you think so, Sir Brack?

- Certainly.
- Welcome to Camelot, sire.
- Greetings, Sir Kay.
Our arrival is a little premature.
King Arthur and his queen will be
all the more pleased. Will you follow me?
- Prince Valiant.
- Yes, sir.
Does Sir Gawain know
that you've returned?
Well, er, no, sir, not yet.
Where is he, sir?
In his quarters, gravely wounded.
Excuse me.
Valiant!
You're all right, lad.
- What happened, sir?
- Oh, nothing much.
It was after you left, I...
Blast you, boy! You ran off!
I'm... I'm sorry, sir.
Sorry my beef bones!
You broke your word.
Ran off without a by-your-leave.
- I was a fool.
- Don't take the words out of my mouth.
You're a Viking fool.
I'll keep no squire who disobeys.
Go to Brack. Let him...
Forgive me, sir,
and please lie...
Stop interrupting,
and I'll tell you what happened.
When you failed to return,
I went out after you.
- That's how I came on the Black Knight.
- You found him?
Yeah. It would have been a good fight
if the knave had fought fairly.
He was searching the wood
when I challenged him.
We fought,
and he was good
but his lance broke,

and I unhorsed him.

I rode in to finish him when...

when a dozen varlets who had been hiding
came charging out at me.

They were on foot?

Armed with bows?

Aye. It was only luck I got away
through a hail of arrows.

- So did I.

- You what?

I was set upon

by a band of bowmen.

Escaped with an arrow
in my back.

- Where was Sir Brack?

- I don't know.

I was nearly captured

where he told me to wait for him.

Now he says he went back

to search for me and found no one.

Isn't that strange, sir?

- What do you imply?

- Well...

It's hard to put into words, sir,

but could it be

that he covets King Arthur's throne

more than anyone knows?

Sir Brack?

A base suspicion, Val.

Unworthy of you.

I... I suppose it is unworthy.

Infamous is a better word.

Sir Brack may have been born

on the wrong side of the blanket

but he's a knight

of the Round Table

sworn to lay down

his life for our king

and to defend truth,

the weak and the helpless.

- I'm sorry, sir. I...

- Ah, say no more about it.

But control that knavish

Viking imagination.

Now, how did you
get into trouble?
Well, I took Sir Brack down to the...
What is it, page?
Sir, there's a lady outside
who wants to see Prince Valiant.
So that's the kind of trouble
you been getting into, eh?
- Well, just wait till you see her, sir.
- Hold on, lad.
Oh, Ilene.
I- I had to find out about Sir Gawain.
How is he?
- Well, come on in and see for yourself.
- No, no, I can't. I-I just came to ask.
Oh, come on. Don't be shy.
Sir Gawain, may I present the daughter
of the King of Ord, Princess Ilene.
Excuse me, my lady. You find me
in a most unpresentable state.
I heard you were wounded, sir,
and I ran...
I mean, I had to...
I came to see Prince Valiant.
Well, sit down, Ilene.
I want you to get
acquainted with my knight.
Oh, no. I really must...
I'd love to, but...
You can stay a while.
Sir Gawain needs company, and I...
No, no, lad!
Don't leave us.
But, sir, there is someone
I want you to meet.
- I'll be right back.
- But, Val. Valiant!
You...
Oh, sir, they say your lung's pierced.
Oh, no, it's-it's...
It's just a cough.
- You, er, you know Prince Valiant?
- Yes.
- You like him?

- Yes.

I'll wait here.

You tell Prince Valiant I wish to see him.

Oh, that's all right.

You can go in.

He has another lady with him.

Another lady? You wait here.

- Aleta!

- Oh, forgive me. I-I thought...

This is Sir Gawain.

Sir, this is my sister.

Oh, no. No, Sir Gawain.

Please, lie still.

Forgive me,

I'm... slightly wounded.

Not slightly, sir.

I was with Sir Brack when he asked
the king's physician how you were.

It's nothing.

Oh, but he said your wound
was very serious.

Have you a fever, sir?

Have you a fever?

Have you a fever, Sir Gawain?

Sir Gawain?

Have you a fever?

Wonderful.

- Why, you're burning!

- I am?

Ilene, feel his brow.

You see? He's on fire.

Yes... Feel again.

- We must send for his physician.

- I'll go find one.

- I'll go with you.

- Oh, no. Don't leave me.

Oh, please be quiet.

You must rest.

Page, run and fetch
the king's physician.

- Wait! Can't we go ourselves?

- Father's waiting. He'll be furious.

I didn't know

you'd sneaked off too.

Hurry now. Tell him to come quickly.

Sir Gawain is delirious.

- Sir Gawain.

- Here, here, help me, lad. I'm all thumbs.

- You can't get up, sir.

- Stop talking like that fool of a physician.

I'll fetch him, sir,

and please, please, lie down.

"Lie down"?

Don't be an idiot.

I've got to go find her

and make sure I wasn't dreaming.

She touched me here.

I never felt anything like it before.

I- I was tongue-tied.

That's wonderful!

- Are you making sport of me?

- You're in love.

Is that so comical?

Yes, I am in love

with the most beautiful creature

I've ever seen.

You laugh because you think an old

war horse like me won't have a chance.

No, no. Because she's in love

with you.

Oh, don't jest, Val.

I'm too fond of you. It hurts.

I wouldn't lie for the world, sir.

She loves you. On my honour.

- How do you know who it is...

- I know all about it, sir.

She saw you win a tournament years ago,

and she's loved you ever since.

I found out at Ord. She vows

that she'll never marry anyone else.

I can't believe it.

- You think I'd lie to you?

- No, no. I...

I just couldn't dream that...

You don't know

what you've done for me, lad.

I behaved like an idiot.

She kept asking if I had a fever,

and by heaven, I did.
The moment I looked at her,
I was on fire.
And no wonder.
She looked like an angel
when she leaned over me
with all that golden hair.
- What?
- Like a golden halo around her head.
- Aleta!
- Aye, that's her name. Aleta.
But, sir, she came here
looking for me!
No, no, not for you, my cockerel.
For her sister.
The dark-haired lass who came running
after you the minute you arrived.
I'm on to you.
I saw you were in love
before you dragged her in to show her off
and I don't blame you, boy.
She's charming, charming.
Sir Gawain, she's not...
Look at you.
Stammering like a lovesick swain.
You don't have to hide it, Val.
You know my secret,
I know yours.
Oh, I owe you my happiness,
my life, Val.
I- I couldn't dream I had
a chance of winning her!
Listen, Sir Gawain.
I've got to tell you.
Look here.
What's the meaning of this?
What brings you here, Morgan Todd?
This boy,
and a good thing too.
What do you think you're doing?
I was getting up.
You're out of your mind.
Drink this.
- Bah! Take it away!

- Drink this down, or I'll pour it down.

Oh, what did you brew it from?

Dead toads?

Now, lie down. You'll sleep.

My squire's a better leech than you.

He's cured me.

I'll be up for the tournament!

You want to kill yourself?

Come along, squire. He'll sleep
a dozen hours with that potion in him.

- I've got to tell him something, sir.

- Not now. Come along.

Don't mind him, Val.

Say it.

- Well, sir, it's about Aleta. She's...

- Yes?

- Well, I...

- Go ahead. Say it.

- Nothing, sir.

- Come along, squire.

You wanted to reassure me,
is that it?

Yes, sir.

God bless you, Val.

One moment, squire.

I'm glad you're back.

He needs watching.

He's in more danger
than he realises.

Now, stay with him, humour him,
but don't let him leave his bed.

- Do you understand?

- Yes, sir.

Would you excuse me, please?

- Did you find him?

- No, they closed the corridor.

- That's father's doing.

- Look how he's watching.

I might as well be in prison.

Oh, I could murder him.

- Father?

- No, that Viking,
that miserable, hateful Viking.

Telling me we had

only stolen moments at Ord
but we'd have all the time here.

Three days and nights
without a word.

- Maybe he's sick.
- Do you think so?
- Well, it's possible.
- No. No, I know what it is.
- He's in love with someone else.
- Oh, no.

All the time he was flirting
with me at Ord
he's had some little wench
waiting for him here.
Now he's gone back to her
and betrayed me.

No.

Father's right
about those blasted Vikings.

Aleta!

Giving me this
so I'd wait for him.

What a liar.

He wants to break my heart.
And he'll do it too.

Aleta.

- What is going on here?
- We were discussing her suitors.

Discussing them?

Come and join them.

The hour is getting late,
and tomorrow is the tournament.

The tournament!

Come, my child.

- What's the meaning of this?
- What, sir?

Sir Gawain's pavilion
and his armour.

He can't take part in that tournament.
He's got to stay in bed.

He will, sir, but there's never been
a tournament

when his armour wasn't seen.

- So, here it is.

- Well, you'd better keep an eye on him.
He told me to stay here
and guard his armour.
That's just his way
of having you see the tournament.
No, sir. He says maybe I'll get a few ideas
of chivalry into my Viking head.
I see. He never
admits his good deeds.
I'll go have a look at him presently,
make sure he stays in bed.

Aleta!

Have you nothing to say?

No.

Aleta.

Hear ye!

Hear ye, knights of the field!
By royal edict of His Majesty,
the King of Ord,
in this first tournament,
the knight who wins the field
against all challengers
shall win the hand in marriage
of the princess Aleta,
daughter of the King of Ord.

- Father, please, you can't...

- I know what was wrong.

With so many to choose from,
you couldn't make up your mind.

Now we will leave it
to the will of God.

The best knight here
shall be your husband.

- Oh, but, Father, you can't!

- No, no, no, no.

Hear ye. Hear ye.

The four remaining knights
will now take the stand
for the fifth joust of the day.

A new challenger
has entered the list.

- Sir Gawain!

- Are you sure?

- It's Gawain's armour.

- He's ill. He'll kill himself.
It's the Viking! Impostor!
Sit down, Aleta.
Another challenger
has entered the list.
It's Sir Gawain!
Lie down.
For heaven sakes, lie down.
You've opened
your wound again.
- Is he badly hurt?
- Sire...
He ought to be dead,
but he isn't.
We'll have to move him to his quarters
and dress his wound.
- Where's Aleta?
- Here.
By the grace of God,
you've won her hand in marriage.
By this sign,
your troth be plighted.
Ah, it's like a dream.
I owe my happiness
to Prince Valiant.
You very nearly
owe your death to him.
You lied to me.
You ran back and got him out of bed.
- No, leech, you did that.
- Me?
You came around and told me
about the announcement.
I came to make sure
you were in bed.
How could I know
you were seeking a bride?
Just in the nick of time too.
My loyal squire failed me
for once.
Why didn't you come
and tell me, Val?
- He was trying to win me for himself.
- No.

No, don't mock him.

He was afraid I'd get myself killed.

He thought he could wear my armour
and not be recognised. Didn't you, Val?

- Yes, sir.

- Ah, bless you, boy. But it was madness.

I know you meant well
and your heart was right,
but you're in grave trouble.

You know it, don't you?

I don't know what can be done about it.
I'll... I'll do everything I can, but...
You're not going to do anything
except stop talking.

Not another word.

I'm going to take you to your quarters
and dress that wound.

Fetch the litter bearers, squire,
and be quick about it.

Yes, sir.

Will you take the litter in, please?

Guard, halt.

Squire, you'll come with us
by order of the King.

Forward, march.

- I thought I told you not to come here.

- I had to come, sir.

This will tell you why.

King Aguar and his queen
have already been taken.

Now there is only

Prince Valiant.

It grieves us, Prince Valiant,
that you have made no defence
which might diminish your guilt.

We know of your devotion to Sir Gawain
and of the motives

which may have prompted you
to impersonate him,

but to wear the armour and identity
of a knight of the Round Table

is a crime for which

you must be tried.

For your father's sake,

I wish we might hear you plead
that you were not aware
of the gravity of your offence.
Do you so plead?
I... I can't, sire.
In that case, only Sir Gawain's request
delays judgment.
Until he is well enough to appear
before us, you must be confined.
Sire, may I speak?
Since it was I who suffered the indignity
of being challenged
on the field of honour by a squire
in the guise of a knight,
I feel that it is my privilege
to ask a favour for the prisoner.
I ask you all to remember
that he is not a Briton
but a Viking who has led a secluded life
in exile with his father.
And though he does
not deny knowing
that the penalty for his offence
is banishment or worse,
yet he is highborn,
and his word of honour can be trusted.
So I suggest, sire, to save him
the immediate disgrace of imprisonment
that he be left
at large pending trial
if he will swear
to confine himself to quarters.
Aye.
The accused will kneel.
Do you give your solemn pledge
to confine yourself to quarters
until you shall
be summoned for judgment?
I do, sire.
So be it.
Forgive me.
I hate you.
Well, you should.
You're going to marry Sir Gawain, and...

You don't love me.
You lied to me.
- That's right.
- No, no. You're lying now!
Have it your own way.
Oh, Val, you can't go.
You're on your honour.
If you break your pledge,
you'll never dare set foot in Britain again.
It's worth your life
to fail King Arthur.
I've already failed him
as I've failed Sir Gawain and myself.
But I'm not going
to fail my father.
I don't know what you mean,
but you can't break your pledge.
I'll never see you again.
- No.
- Let go. You'll get hurt.
- Are you going away on account of me?
- No, but it's just as well.
No. I hate you! I love you!
I'll never marry anybody else!
Sir Brack!
I've done my part, Viking.
Now let Sligon do his.
My master keeps his pledge,
for it is sworn by Odin.
When you give the word, a thousand
armed men will come to do your bidding.
Traitor!
An ugly word, and false.
You'll find yourself dubbed "traitor" when
you're delivered to Sligon in Scandia,
as your father already is.
"Traitor" is a word that winners
give to losers, and you've lost.
But I shall win a throne
that was mine from birth.
When I march on Camelot,
all the losers will throw down their arms
and hail me as their true king.
Not Sir Gawain. Never!

I've kept my word, delivered him alive.
Now you keep yours.
Val! Valiant!
Val. Val.
A... Aleta.
Run! Quickly!
Run, Aleta! Run!
That's my father's sword!
Where is he?
Be silent, infidel.
You're here to answer, not to ask.
Then I answer Sligon that he sits
on a throne that will never be his
and holds a sword
that will never serve him.
- Be silent!
- I'll tell you a secret.
A secret that's not a legend
but a fact.
The Singing Sword will only give its power
to its rightful owners.
It will never sing
in the hands of a traitor.
You hold your tongue,
or you'll lose it.
Now speak, infidel.
Who are the other Christians here?
Aye, we know we have
Viking traitors in our midst,
cross-worshippers who sought
to bring back Aguar to this throne.
Who are they? Name them!
Name them.
He seems to have
lost his tongue.
Perhaps the other prisoner
can find it for him.
She knows nothing. She's a Briton.
Her capture was a mistake.
She's betrothed to a knight
of the Round Table.
Enough of that.
Call out the names of the conspirators.
I'll check them on this list.

- Say nothing.

- Speak up.

Confirm this list.

Your father named them all.

That's a lie!

Take him out.

You'll need time to think, infidel.

You'll talk or die on the cross.

The cross is our salvation.

You'll burn in hell.

Valiant!

- Father!

- Oh, my son!

My son!

By this sign, ye shall conquer.

They who believe

in our Lord Jesus Christ

shall not fear death

for they shall know

everlasting life.

By this sign, shall ye conquer.

By this sign,

shall we conquer.

- Signs won't conquer Sligon.

- Boltar!

I mean it, brothers.

Words won't save our king.

We must trust in our Lord

and keep the faith.

Would there be any Christian faith

if our people had never fought for it?

The Lord helps those

who help themselves.

Are we going to hide and pray tonight

while our king and his family

die on the cross?

Nay. Nay.

I say we've got to fight.

- We'd be outnumbered 50 to one.

- Twice that.

Sligon sent for every warrior chief

he could count on.

Ship captains too.

All the more reason

we've got to fight.
Once Aguar's dead,
Sligon won't rest till he has crucified
every Christian in Scandia.
Boltar's right.
Yes, but, Boltar, we'd die before
we'd get through the gates.
At least we'd die fighting.
- Would you lead the attack?
- You will. I'll be inside.
I'm the only one here
they'll pass through the gates.
And I'll take Gorlock.
When I get him inside,
he'll make his way to the tower.
You gather every man.
Be armed and ready.
And when you see Gorlock
wave the torch, attack!
A torch waved from the top of the tower.
What will it mean?
That I've taken care of Sligon.
Ah, it's been tried.
No one gets past Sligon's guards.
Leave that to me.
How will I know
when to wave the torch?
Idiot!
Do you think I'll die quietly?
Next.
Next.
- Out.
- Why?
- Out!
- But why? He's a friend of mine!
No arguments tonight.
He's going out.
Get him out.
We don't want his kind in here.
Next.
My father, mother and Aleta...
We've got to get them out
of the dungeon.
- Later. I need you now.

- But, Boltar, I've got to!
Listen to me and do as I say.
Go to the tower. Do you know the way?
Know the way?
You forget, Boltar, I was born here.
The alarm for an escaped prisoner.
That's you. Get to the tower.
Escaped? Where? How?
I'll put you in chains for this.
You get out and find him.
Go ahead!
Get out and find him right away.
Get out, all of you.
Get him and bring him here.
Guard, take your men down
that corridor, and I'll take this one.
Search every room and every passage,
and hurry. He can't be far away.
The signal!
Sligon is dead!
Long live Aguar!
Sligon is dead!
Long live Aguar!
Sligon is dead!
Long live Aguar!
I want Prince Valiant
in chains by morning.
Now go!
To arms, sire! To arms!
The Christians! They're attacking!
Long live Aguar!
Sligon is dead!
Barricade the gates!
Swing 'em out!
Go!
You, take that one. You, get that one.
We'll give 'em another dose.
Boltar!
Get that man! Get that man!
Go on! Get him!
Oh, it's Valiant!
Oh, my son!
As I arrived at the lake,
I noticed someone on the far side.

And as I rode around
to intercept...

- I demand to be taken to King Arthur.

- You will be, under arrest.

Valiant!

Sire, I have found your traitor.

The Black Knight.

You mean Sir Brack?

I do, sire. He used his disguise
to make a pact with a Viking traitor
plotting to seize your throne
as Sligon seized my father's.

The lad has lost his reason.

I called you a traitor
when you tricked me into Sligon's hands.

Now I say it again: traitor!

And hear this.

Sligon, who promised you an army
to overthrow King Arthur, is dead.

He's ill. I pleaded for him once
to save him from imprisonment...

To keep me within your reach
so I could be betrayed
into Sligon's hands.

Because I believed
he would honour his pledge,
but as you know,
his word means nothing.

He lies, sire.

He knew my father had been captured,
for he had his ring.

He wanted me free because he knew
that if I got the ring
my pledge to go to my father
would take precedence
over the pledge I gave you here.

For that, I crave your forgiveness, sire,
and...

...and ask you to hear
my detailed charges.

Pure raving, sire. I call upon you
to put an end to this madness.

And I call on you

to make a better answer.

- There is only one answer. My sword.

- No.

It's my right. I demand my right
according to our code of chivalry.
Prince Valiant, though you broke
your pledge to us here,
we are obliged to consider
your sincerity.

But we have no right to doubt the honour
of a trusted knight
on the word of a squire.

I am sure you share our wish to hear him
answer this mortal charge of treason.

This is my answer,
the only answer this Viking's worthy of.
And I accept that answer.

But, sire, in a fight to the death,
the lad is no match for Brack.

I'll take his place.

He's accused me.

Let him defend his lies. It's my right, sire.

But the lad is no match...

The accused knight demands
a trial by combat.

He cannot be refused.

Prince Valiant, will you accept Sir Gawain
to fight in your stead?

No, sire.

Not here, Sir Brack.

I am the accused.

I have a choice of time and place.

Here and now!

Stand aside.

No, Valiant. No!

Take care of her, sir.

Valiant!

Oh, Val.

Thank you, sir,
for wanting to fight for me.

You'll never need anyone
to fight for you, boy.

I... I brought her
back to you, sir.

No man ever had

a squire like you, Val.
Don't you realise that her sister
told me the truth,
how you were a young fool,
and I was an old one, which is worse.
We both had things to learn.
The truth hurts sometimes, but it's
the only thing to build happiness on.
We thought you were both dead.
Ilene and I began by consoling each other.
Now we're...
we're making a habit of it.
God bless you.
Kneel, squire.
With this sword, Excalibur,
I, Arthur, King of the Britons,
strike thee once, twice, thrice
and dub thee knight
of our most Christian order,
the knights of the Round Table.
Rise, Sir Valiant.