



Ririro

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Havelok Wins Back His Kingdom

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When they were married, Havelok knew not what to do. He had no home whereto he might take Goldborough. Godrich had such hatred for Athelwold's daughter that he would do nought to aid them; and Havelok was in sore straits till he bethought himself of Grimsby.

Straightway he took Goldborough to Grimsby. But Grim himself was dead. Nevertheless his sons welcomed Havelok gladly.

"Welcome, dear lord, and welcome to your fair lady," they said. "We have here horses and nets and ships, gold and silver, and much else that Grim our father bequeathed. But he bade us give them to you; take them, dear lord; they are all yours. You shall be our lord, and we will be your servants in all things."

So Havelok came back to Grimsby. But on the night of his coming Goldborough was sad and sorrowful as she lay beside him, and she could not sleep. Her wakeful eyes fell on Havelok, and she was aware suddenly of a wondrous sight. A bright light, clear and flaming, issued from his mouth, and lit up all the chamber. "What may this mean?" she said to herself in sore dread. "Does it show me that some high fortune shall come upon Havelok?"

She looked again, and saw a new wonder. On Havelok's shoulder a king's mark shone, a noble cross of red gold; and as she looked, an angel's voice spoke to her:

"Goldborough, let your sorrow be; Havelok, your husband, is a king's son and a king's heir. The golden cross signifies that he shall possess all Denmark and England, and shall be king of both realms."

When she heard the angel's voice Goldborough could not contain her joy, but turned and kissed Havelok as he slept. Havelok had not heard the angel, but he started out of his sleep at Goldborough's kiss.

"Dear lady, are you awake?" he said. "A strange dream have I just dreamed. I thought I was in Denmark, on the highest hill that ever I came to; it was so high that I could see, it seemed, all the world spread out. As I sat there, I began to possess Denmark, with all its towns and strong castles; and my arms were so long that I surrounded in one grasp all Denmark, and drew it towards me till every man therein cleaved to me. Another dream I dreamed also, that I flew over

the salt sea to England, and with me went all the folk of Denmark. When I came to England, I took it all into my hand, and, Goldborough, I gave it to you. Dear wife, what may this be?"

"May these dreams turn to joy, Havelok, as I deem they will," answered Goldborough. "I say to you that you shall wear the crown of England in time to come, and Denmark shall kneel at your feet. Within a year this shall come to pass. Let us two go to Denmark speedily; and do you pray Grim's sons that they go with you, all three."

On the morrow Havelok went to church and besought aid of God. Then he betook himself to Grim's three sons, Robert, and William, and Hugh. "Listen now to me," he said, "and I will tell you a thing concerning myself. My father was king of the Danish land, and I should have been his heir; but a wicked man seized the kingdom when my father died, and slew my two sisters, and gave me to Grim to drown, but Grim spared me and brought me hither, as you know. Now I am come to an age when I can wield weapons and deal stout blows; and never will I take comfort till I see Denmark again. I pray you come thither with me; I will reward you well and will give each of you ten castles, with the land and towns and woods that belong thereto."

"We will follow you whithersoever you bid us, Havelok," they answered, "and we will, if it please God, win back your kingdom for you."

Havelok gave them due thanks, and began straightway to prepare all things for his going to Denmark. Soon he had made ready, and they set sail.

Their voyage prospered, and they landed safely in Denmark, in the dominions of one Ubbe, a rich earl, who had been a friend of King Birkabeyn, Havelok's father.

When Havelok heard who was lord of that part of Denmark, he was glad, and set out to go to Ubbe's castle in good hope. He dared not say yet that he was Birkabeyn's son, for if Earl Godard heard of it, he would come against him and slay him before he could win any followers. But he went to Ubbe and spoke him fair and courteously, and gave him a gold ring, and asked leave to settle in that land to be a merchant; and Ubbe, seeing how strong and comely Havelok was, gladly gave him leave, and thereafter bade him to a great feast. Havelok went to the feast, and Goldborough with him, and Grim's sons also; and Ubbe grew to love him so well that when the feast was ended, he sent him with ten knights and sixty men-at-arms to the magistrate of those parts, Bernard Brun, a man of might and substance.

Bernard was a trusty man, and entertained Havelok and Goldborough and all their company well.

But as they sat at meat, there came tidings that a band of sixty thieves, well

armed and fierce, was at the gate, demanding entrance.

At that news Bernard started up and took a good axe in his hand, and went to the gate; and Havelok followed him.

"What do you here, rascals?" cried Bernard, "If I open the door to you, some of you will rue it."

"What say you?" answered one of the thieves. "Think you that we are afraid of you? We shall enter by this gate for all that you can do." Thereupon he seized a great boulder, and cast it mightily against the gate, and broke it.

Havelok saw what befell, and went to the gate. He drew therefrom the great cross-bar, and threw the gate wide open. "I abide here," he cried. "Flee, you dogs."

"Nay," quoth one, "you shall pay for waiting;" and he came running at Havelok, and the two others close behind with him. But Havelok lifted up the door-beam, and at one blow slew all three. Then he turned upon others, and in a moment overthrew four more. But a host of them beset him with swords, and all his skill could not prevent them from wounding him: full twenty wounds had he, from crown to toe. But he began so to mow with the beam that the robbers soon felt how hard he could smite. There was none who could escape him, and in a little while he had felled twenty of them.

Then a great din began to arise, for the rest of the thieves set upon Havelok and Bernard with all their might. But Hugh and his brothers heard the noise, and came running with many other men; and before long there was not one of the thieves left alive.



On the morrow tidings came to Ubbe that Havelok had slain with a club more than a score of stout rogues. He went down to Bernard and asked him what had come to pass; and Bernard, sore wounded from the fight, showed him his wounds, and told him how sixty robbers had attacked his house, and how Havelok had slain great plenty of them; but Havelok also, he said, was grievously wounded.

Others also of Bernard's men told the like true tale; and Ubbe sent for Havelok, and when he had seen his wounds, called for a skilful leech, and took Havelok into his house and cared for him.

The first night that Havelok lay in Ubbe's house, Ubbe slept nigh him in a great chamber, with places boarded off for each man. About midnight he awoke, and saw a great light in the place where Havelok lay, as bright as if it were day.

"What may this be?" he thought. "I will go myself and see. Perchance Havelok secretly holds revel with his friends, and has lit many lights. I vow he shall do no such sottishness in my castle."

He stood up, and peeped in between the boards that shut Havelok from him. He saw him sleeping fast, as still as any stone; and he was aware of a great light coming as it were from Havelok's mouth.

He was aghast at that sight, and called secretly to his knights and sergeants and men-at-arms, more than five score of them, and bade them come and see the strange light; and the light continued to issue from Havelok's mouth, and to grow in strength till it was as bright as two hundred wax-candles.

Havelok's right shoulder was towards Ubbe and his men.

Suddenly, as they looked at the light, they saw the king's mark on the shoulder, a bright cross, brighter than gold, sparkling like a carbuncle stone. Then Ubbe knew that Havelok was a king's son, and he guessed that he must be Birkaheyn's son, the rightful king.

When Havelok awoke, he fell at his feet and did obeisance, he and all his men. "Dear lord," he said, "I know you to be Birkabeyn's son. You shall be King of Denmark; right soon shall every lord and baron come and do you homage." Then was Havelok glad and blithe, and gave thanks to God for His goodness.

Before long Ubbe dubbed Havelok knight; and as soon as he was knighted all the barons and lords of those parts came to him and swore fealty; and anon they crowned him King of Denmark, and set themselves in array to attack the false Earl Godard.

But Godard's knights, being weary of his rule, had all gone over to Havelok; and Grim's son, Robert, sufficed to meet him in combat. Robert wounded him in the right arm, and they bound him and brought him before Havelok.

Sorry now was Godard's lot; all his greatness was gone from him. He came before Havelok and his nobles, and they gave sentence upon him, that he should be flayed alive, and then hanged. And so he came to his end in great misery and torment.

When Godrich in England heard that Havelok was king of all Denmark, and purposed (for Havelok had given out that this was his intent) to come to England and set Goldborough on her throne, he set to work to gather a great host to meet Havelok when he should come; and he spread lying tales to make the English hate and fear Havelok, saying that he would burn and destroy, and oppress them; and by these means he got together many and led them to Grimsby.

Afron came Havelok and his men, and landed at Grimsby; and they fought a great battle. All that day Havelok's men fought with Godrich's men; and on the morrow they fought again, and Godrich came face to face with Havelok himself.

"Godrich," Havelok cried, "you have taken Athelwold's kingdom for yourself; I claim it for his daughter Goldborough. Yield it up, and I will forgive you, for you are a doughty knight."

"Never will I yield," answered Godrich: "I will slay you here."

He gripped his sword, and smote at Havelok, and clove his shield in twain. But Havelok drew his own good sword, and with one blow felled him to the earth. Yet Godrich started up again, and dealt him such a stroke on the shoulder that his armour was broken, and the blade bit into the flesh. Then Havelok heaved up his sword in turn, and struck fiercely, and shore off Godrich's hand, so that he could smite no more, but yielded as best he might.

They seized Godrich and fettered him; and all the English took the oath of fealty to Goldborough, and swore to be her men. Then they passed judgment on Godrich, and sentenced him to be burnt to death.

So Havelok and Goldborough came again into their kingdoms; and Havelok rewarded Grim's sons and made them barons. Havelok was crowned King of England as well as of Denmark; and full sixty winters did he reign with Goldborough in great joy and prosperity.

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