



Ririro

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The King Of Suddenne

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When they had made an end of slaying, Horn revealed himself to Aylmer, and reproached him for giving his daughter in marriage to Modi, whom she did not love; and Aylmer, when he heard of Horn's deeds—for the fame which Horn had won under the name of Cuthbert had gone into many lands—could not but feel sorrow that he had sent Horn away in anger seven years ago; and he begged Horn to stay at his court and wed Rimenhild, for the marriage with Modi was not fully complete when Horn and his men broke up the feast.

"Nay, I am of royal blood," answered Horn. "You thought me a foundling and despised me. For that insult you formerly put upon me, I vow I will not take Rimenhild for my wife until I have won my kingdom of Suddenne back from the Saracens, and avenged my father King Murry, whom they slew. I am a king's son; I will be a king before my wife shall come to me."

Aylmer could not gainsay Horn in his purpose, and once more Horn set out on his wanderings. With him went Sir Athulf and a band of brave knights. They took ship and for five days sailed the sea with a favouring wind, till at last, late at night on the fifth day, they came to the shores of Suddenne.

Horn and Athulf landed, to spy out the country. A little way inland they came upon an old knight sleeping by the wayside; on his shield was the device of a cross. Horn woke him gently. "Tell me, sir knight, who are you?" he asked. "Your shield shows that you are a Christian; but this land is ruled by pagans."

"I am a Christian, truly," said the old knight. "But I serve the pagans perforce. They hold the power, and I must needs fight for them, against my will. This land is in a sorry case. If King Murry's son, Horn, were here, perchance we might drive the pagans out. But I know not where to find him, nor where my own son is; for Athulf, my son, was Horn's dearest companion."

Such changes had the long absence wrought in Horn and Athulf and the old knight that they did not recognise one another. But at these words Horn and Athulf knew for certain that they were indeed in Suddenne. They told the old knight who they were, and learnt that Horn's mother, the Queen Godhild, was still alive, and many knights in the land besides, desirous of driving the Saracens out, but unable to fulfil their desire through lack of a leader and of men.

Horn forthwith summoned his men from the ships, and blew his trumpet for

battle, and attacked the Saracens. There was a great fight, but before long the heathen were defeated, and those who were not slain were driven altogether out of the land.

Thus Horn came into his kingdom again; but he had yet to punish Fikenhild the traitor, who first separated him from Rimenhild (for this Aylmer had told him), and King Modi, who had sought to wed her against her will.

Fikenhild, when Horn came back to Westerness in time to save Rimenhild from Modi, had fled; but he still plotted deep treachery in his heart. By bribes and favours he won many knights to follow him; and he built himself a great castle of stone, set on a rock, surrounded on all sides with water, so that none could come at it easily. Then by stealth one night he carried off Rimenhild, and married her in this castle, holding a great feast at sunrise to celebrate the marriage.

Horn knew nought of this by word of mouth or letter. But in a dream he beheld Rimenhild: she seemed to him as though shipwrecked, calling upon his name; but when she tried to swim to him, Fikenhild appeared and prevented her.

When he awoke, Horn told Athulf this vision; and when they had thought upon the lore of dreams, they agreed that it meant that Rimenhild was in Fikenhild's sea-girt castle, the fame of which was known to all men. Straightway they took a ship and sailed to the land hard by where the castle lay.

There a certain knight named Arnoldin, cousin of Athulf, met them, and told them that Fikenhild had just wedded Rimenhild, and the wedding-feast was now beginning.

They could not come nigh the castle openly as enemies, for none could approach it across the water unless those within were willing to let him enter. But Horn and some of his knights disguised themselves as harpers, hiding their swords under long cloaks.

They took a boat and rowed under the walls of the banqueting-hall, and there they played and sang merrily, till Fikenhild heard them, and called them in to the feast.

When they had come into the hall, they began to sing again, at Fikenhild's bidding. But soon Horn looked once more upon his ring, and then, with a shout, he and his companions fell upon Fikenhild and his men and slew every one of them.



The tale is soon told. Horn made Arnoldin king in Fikenhild's castle. Athulf he sent to Thurston's court, where in a little time he married the princess Reynild;

and Horn went back to his kingdom of Suddenne, and there made Rimenhild his queen. Long and happily they reigned in true love and in fear of God.

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