

Nordic Adventures

'A Hero's Journey, in Music'

NARRATIVE POEM

Lo! In days of yore, yearning for adventure and good fortune,
our fledgling hero takes his flight from homelands far away.

And, as he travels forth, his thoughts toward great deeds do tend —
to battles, conquests, and to meeting maidens fair;
and dreams of castles, kings, and gold-rich dragon's lairs.

And at adventure's end, when all his strength's pent up and nearly
gone, his own demise he sees —
befitting of a hero bold, his body borne aloft with sword and shield
up to the dell, he's cast upon a burning boat into the crystal lake,
within Valhalla's halls to dwell.

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With drums and trumpets boldly bright,
our hero now upon a splendid hall does light.
And there he finds, enthroned and well attended,
a King of great renown,
whose might and glory even beyond these shores resounds.

And with a start, the King leaps up and says:
"You, fortune-hunter bold — of hero's quests we know full well:
how dragons slain and deeds of valour grace the storybooks of old.

"But when all's said and done, what skills bring you besides such
mighty boasts? What wholesome entertainment spurs our people
now to toasts?"

Then, with a modest bow, our hero plucks his fiddle from its case.
“With this”, quoth he, “I’ll spin a tale in sound so sweet,
that mountains, floods and armies all retreat”

And with a gracious nod, the King accepts.
“Evoke us this”, says he, “and great feasts in thine honour will I
throw,
and much acclaim throughout our lands you’ll know.
Let’s bid him welcome, friends, and with your ears his music now
attend.”

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Now, after much carousing, you—the court—to bed retire.
And so, in time, our hero, whose dreams a sunrise did inspire... does
awaken!
And, looking out toward the horizon, he sees for real the sun itself —
Helios arising!

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Then, from the castle flies our hero forth, and thence to sea!
Through choppy waves heaves our hero’s ship upon the mighty
whale-road,
And just when pirate skirmishes were won, the vessel’s path
restored...
Disaster strikes!!

~

In darkest night, far from the wreck our hero floats,
all others having perished.
And then, upon a distant shore,
the waking morning’s gentle rays revive him.
He jumps up, with a start! — A gnarly witch has happ’d upon him,
or does he dream?

At first a hag, but now at once beguiling,
this mystic ‘she’, the enchantress, soon is smiling.

Seductive and transformed to all who glance,
she sets about her magic, weaving skilfully her dance.

But then with craggy voice she speaks: “I know a hero’s heart”, she
cries.

“A proverb once did ring about these parts —
If thou wouldst win a maiden fair, first slay the dragon in its lair”

She points a spindly finger, worn with care, towards the East.
“There must you seek the dreaded beast!”

Then with a cackle she is gone, our hero now sets off alone.
And soon, ’mid thorny forest’s fearful overhang
He finds the cave.
Here many ventured forth, but none so brave.

For hours did our hero grapple with the mighty fiend,
Slashing, smiting, stabbing in vain,
The beast’s dread roar a deafening thunder through the rocks;
until at last with one enormous blow,
he sent the dragon plunging into depths below.

His quest fulfilled, the people of the nearby town rejoice,
For all had lived in fear under the dragon’s crushing voice.

A hymn of praise, a village fête and then a wedding march,
The proverb did hold true, in every part.

The couple now are wed, and garland dances
through the cheerful streets are led.

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Then after this, our hero and his bride set out,
their lengthy journey homeward to traverse.
With danger faced at every turn, yet still they gallop onward.
And finally, with further deeds and further trials surpassed,
Our hero and his bride reach home at last.