

Borrow George

The King's Wake, and Other Ballads



George Borrow

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THE KING'S WAKE

To-night is the night that the wake they hold,
To the wake repair both young and old.

Proud Signelil she her mother address'd:
"May I go watch along with the rest?"

"O what at the wake wouldst do my dear?
Thou'st neither sister nor brother there.

"Nor brother-in-law to protect thy youth,
To the wake thou must not go forsooth.

"There be the King and his warriors gay,
If me thou list thou at home wilt stay."

"But the Queen will be there and her maiden crew,
Pray let me go, mother, the dance to view."

So long, so long begged the maiden young,
That at length from her mother consent she wrung.

"Then go, my child, if thou needs must go,
But thy mother ne'er went to the wake I trow."

Then through the thick forest the maiden went,
To reach the wake her mind was bent.

When o'er the green meadows she had won,
The Queen and her maidens to bed were gone.

And when she came to the castle gate
They were plying the dance at a furious rate.

There danced full many a mail-clad man,
And the youthful King he led the van.

He stretched forth his hand with an air so free,
"Wilt dance, thou pretty maid, with me?"

"O, sir, I've come across the wold
That I with the Queen discourse might hold."

“Come dance,” said the King with a courteous smile,
“The Queen will be here in a little while.”

Then forward she stepped like a blushing rose,
She takes his hand and to dance she goes.

“Hear Signelil what I say to thee,
A ditty of love sing thou to me.”

“A ditty of love I will not, Sir King,
But as well as I can another I’ll sing.”

Proud Signil began, a ditty she sang,
To the ears of the Queen in her bed it rang.

Says the Queen in her chamber as she lay:
“O which of my maidens doth sing so gay?”

“O which of my maidens doth sing so late,
To bed why followed they me not straight?”

Then answered the Queen the little foot page,
“’Tis none of thy maidens I’ll engage.

“’Tis none I’ll engage of the maiden band,
’Tis Signil proud from the islet’s strand.”

“O bring my red mantle hither to me,
For I’ll go down this maid to see.”

And when they came down to the castle gate
The dance it moved at so brave a rate.

About and around they danced with glee,
There stood the Queen and the whole did see.

The Queen she felt so sore aggrieved
When the King with Signil she perceived.

Sophia the Queen to her maid did sign:
“Go fetch me hither a horn of wine.”

His hand the King stretched forth so free:
“Wilt thou Sophia my partner be?”

“O I’ll not dance with thee, I vow,
Unless proud Signil pledge me now.”

The horn she raised to her lips, athirst,
The innocent heart in her bosom burst.

There stood King Valdemar pale as clay,
Stone dead at his feet the maiden lay.

“A fairer maid since I first drew breath
Ne'er came more guiltless to her death.”

For her wept woman and maid so sore,
To the Church her beauteous corse they bore.

But better with her it would have sped,
Had she but heard what her mother said.

SWAYNE FELDING

Swayne Felding sits at Helsingborg,
He tells his deeds with pride;
Full blythe at heart I ween he was,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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