

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR

By HAROLD R. FOSTER

Synopsis: ERIC WAS COMPLETELY BEWILDERED, AS HE TOLD PRINCE VALIANT AFTERWARD. "IN THE MORNING OF THAT DAY I WAS 'ERIC THE SAXON,' A BOLD WARRIOR, DARLING OF THE LADIES, MASTER OF MY SOUL. THEN ALONG CAME INGRID, AN IMPUDENT SMALL PERSON WHOM I COULD LIFT IN ONE HAND... AND BY EVENING I WAS A BATTERED SIMPLETON READY TO DIE FOR HER SMILE!"



"I TOLD HER I WAS TOO PENNILESS TO MARRY, BUT SHE SAID, CARELESSLY, 'I'LL FIX THAT,' AND LEFT ME."



"YOUR MAJESTY, WHEN THE GREAT HALL WAS FILLED WITH YOUR ENEMIES, ERIC SUMMONED YOUR ARCHERS AND THULE WAS SAVED. AND THE FIEF AT HALDERVIN IS VACANT," SHE REMINDS HIM.



"ERIC DESIRES MOST ARDENTLY TO MAKE ME HIS WIFE, BUT HE IS TOO POOR. HE ALSO THINKS I'M ADORABLE." AND INGRID SMILES AT THE KING, MODESTLY, THROUGH LONG, DARK LASHES.



"YOU LITTLE WITCH!" ROARS THE KING ANGRILY. "ALL DAY, FROM MY BALCONY, HAVE I WATCHED YOU DELUDE THAT POOR, STUPID LAD..." "LUCKY LAD, I MEAN," HE ADDS, TAKING A BETTER LOOK AT INGRID, "FOR YOU ARE ADORABLE!"



ERIC IS SUMMONED. "RISE, ERIC, JARL OF HALDERVIN; HOLD YOUR FIEF IN LOYALTY TO THE KING OF THULE!" "THANK YOU, MY KING," SAYS ERIC HUMBLLY. "MAY YOU NEVER HAVE CAUSE TO REGRET YOUR GENEROSITY. BUT I HAVE BEEN THINKING, SIR..."



"... THINKING," AND HE LOOKS FULL AT INGRID WHO QUAILS. "THINKING THAT I HAVE SOMEHOW BEEN FOOLED, CHEATED, DELUDED AND BEWITCHED, AND I AM GREATLY PUZZLED."

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HE REACHES FOR A SMALL FIRM HAND... "PUZZLED THAT SO LOVELY A LADY WOULD WANT A CLUMSY OX LIKE ME!" AND THERE COMES OVER HIS FACE THAT SILLY LOOK SO COMMON AMONG LOVERS.



INGRID LEADS HIM AWAY TO BECOME HER HAPPY SLAVE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE AND PRINCE VALIANT AND THE KING GO BACK TO THEIR BUSINESS.

NEXT WEEK - **Revolt.**

