

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR
BY HAROLD R. FOSTER



Our Story: PRINCE VALIANT AND ALFRED ENTER KING DURWIN'S DINING HALL, ALERT FOR ANY EVIDENCE THAT THE KING IS DEALING WITH THE ENEMY, ALERT TOO THAT THE KING DOES NOT DISCOVER THEIR MISSION.



SEATED NEXT TO VAL IS THE ABBOT WHO, BY HIS PERSISTENT QUESTIONS, CONVINCES VAL THAT HE IS STILL UNDER SUSPICION.



AS THE FEAST NEARS ITS END THE KING REQUESTS VAL TO REGALE THEM WITH TALES OF HIS ADVENTURES IN THE HOLY LAND. HE ARISES CONFIDENTLY AND TELLS THE TRUE STORY OF THE TRIALS AND PERILS OF HIS PILGRIMAGE.



FROM HIS POSITION HE CAN SEE EVERY FACE IN THE HALL. THERE ARE A SUSPICIOUS NUMBER OF WILD DANE, SAXON AND VIKING ADVENTURERS PRESENT, BUT NOT ENOUGH TO PROVE KING DURWIN IS DABBING IN TREACHERY.



AT THE LOWEST END OF THE BOARD SITS ALFRED, GOSSIPING HAPPILY WITH THE OTHER SERVANTS. A SMALL BRIBE TO A WATER ASSURES THEM A GENEROUS SERVING OF MEAD. THERE IS VERY LITTLE THE SERVANTS DO NOT KNOW OF WHAT GOES ON AMONG THEIR MASTERS, AND THEY TALK FREELY AMONG THEMSELVES.



"YOUR GUEST IS NO SPY, SIRE. I GAVE HIM EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO TALK POLITICS, BUT HE WOULD SPEAK ONLY OF HIS PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND."



ALFRED PRETENDS TO MEND VAL'S TUNIC, THAT HE MAY COME CLOSE ENOUGH TO WHISPER:- "THIS CASTLE IS A PLACE OF FEAR; SPIES ARE EVERYWHERE. KING DURWIN IS A TRAITOR ONLY BECAUSE, TO THE WEST, THERE IS SOMETHING MORE TERRIBLE THAN THE WRATH OF KING ARTHUR!"

NEXT WEEK - Westward