

LIL ABNER

A Mighty Oaf Has Fallen!!-

by AL CAPP



Our Story: PRINCE VALIANT THUNDERS INTO THE FRAY, AND ON EITHER SIDE RIDE HIS SQUIRES. CLAUDIUS FIGHTS GRIMLY ON THE LEFT FLANK WHILE ON HIS RIGHT GAY EDWIN SHOUTS JOYOUSLY.



WITH RECKLESS COURAGE EDWIN SPURS INTO THE THICKEST OF THEIR ENEMIES, SO CARRIED AWAY BY THE BATTLE-LUST THAT HE FORGETS HIS ORDERS.



VAL SEES HIM GO DOWN AMID THE SAVAGE FOE. "TO THE RESCUE!" HE SHOUTS, AND HE AND CLAUDIUS SPUR FORWARD.



FORTUNATELY THE BATTLE HAS TURNED, AND THE SAXONS ARE MORE INTENT ON ESCAPE. SO EDWIN IS SAVED, BUT AT THE COST OF LEAVING A GAP IN THE LINES.



"WE WON! WE WON!" CRIES EDWIN GLEEFULLY, BUT AT THE SIGHT OF VAL'S SET FACE, HIS SMILE FADES. "YOU CAUSED A GAP TO BE LEFT IN OUR LINE, THROUGH WHICH MOST OF THE ENEMY ESCAPED TO THEIR SHIPS, TO RAID OUR LAND ONCE MORE!" AND VAL ADDS CRUELLY, "RECKLESSNESS WILL WIN APPLAUSE ON THE TOURNAMENT FIELD; IT IS A HINDRANCE IN BATTLE."



THEN HE TURNS AWAY FROM THE HURT LOOK IN EDWIN'S EYES. FOR HE LOVES THE LAD, AND IT PAINS HIM TO TAKE AWAY THE JOY OF HIS FIRST SKIRMISH.



BUT NOT FOR LONG! SOON EDWIN'S SPIRITS BUBBLE, AND ONCE AGAIN THE CAMP RINGS WITH LAUGHTER. VAL IS WORRIED; TO SEND HIM HOME WOULD BREAK EDWIN'S HEART, BUT HOW MANY BATTLES CAN SUCH RECKLESS COURAGE SURVIVE?

NEXT WEEK- The Empty Boat.