LI'L ABNER When Bachelorhood Was in Flower — by AL CAPP

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD R FOSTER

Our Story: STEPHAN AND HIS MOTHER LOOK UP AS THE DOOR OPENS AND THERE IN THE FLICKERING CANDLELIGHT STANDS DUKE SADONICK, HIS CRUEL FACE ALIGHT WITH TRIUMPH.

FOLLOWED BY A DOZEN ARMED BULLIES, HE SEATS HIMSELF. *"YOU HAVE AVOIDED ME ALL THESE YEARS, STEPHAN; NOW MY TURN HAS COME. SIR VALIANT! RID ME OF MY TROUBLESOME NEPHEW!"*

AS VAL HESITATES, THE DUKE'S FACE BECOMES DARK WITH ANGER. *"YOUR OWN SON AND HEIR STANDS CHAINED TO THE RACK. REFUSE MY BIDDING AND YOU SIGN HIS DEATH WARRANT."*

TO SAVE ARN FROM A HORRIBLE DEATH HE MUST DO A DEED THAT WILL BLIGHT HIS HONOR AND SCAR HIS VERY SOUL. HE DRAWS THE 'SINGING SWORD' AND IT COMES MOANING FROM ITS SCABBARD AND HANGS LEADEN IN HIS HAND, A LIFELESS THING.

THEN VAL STEPS IN FRONT OF STEPHAN AND FACES THE DUKE HIS FACE RESOLUTE, THE LUST FOR BATTLE IN HIS EYES, HE STRIKES THE TABLE WITH THE GLITTERING BLADE AND ONCE MORE IT SINGS, EAGER, TRIUMPHANT!

"GUARDS! KILL THEM, KILL THEM ALL!" SCREAMS THE DUKE. AS THE GUARDS HESITATE BEFORE THE BRIGHT MENACE OF THE SWORD, A TRUMPET SOUNDS.

THE SILENCE OF THE NIGHT IS SHATTERED BY ANGRY SHOUTS AND THE CLASH OF ARMS. STEPHAN POINTS TO THE DOOR. *"MY MEN WERE IN THE FOREST AWAITING YOUR EXPECTED ARRIVAL, DEAR UNCLE, SO THE TRICKSTER HAS BEEN TRICKED!"*

NEXT WEEK—**A Ride for Life**