

Keeping Tryst



ANNIE
FELLOWS
JOHNSTON

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KEEPING TRYST

A TALE OF KING ARTHUR'S TIME

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KEEPING TRYST

A Tale of King Arthur's Time

*"Tis the king's call. O list!
Thou heart and hand of mine,
Keep tryst—
Keep tryst or die!"*

BY
ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON

*Author of "The Little Colonel Series," "Big
Brother," "Joel: A Boy of Galilee," etc.*



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Keeping Tryst

NOW THERE WAS A TROUBADOUR IN THE KING of Arthur, who, strolling through the land with only HIS MINSTRELSY TO WIN HIM A WAY, FOUND IN E BARON'S HALL AND COTTER'S HUT A READY WEL AND WHILE THE BOAR'S HEAD SPUTTERED ON THE OR THE ALE SPARKLED IN THE SHINING TANKARDS, H SUCH TALES OF JOUST AND JOURNEY, AND FEATS OF I KNIGHT ERRANTRY, THAT EVEN THE SCULLIONS LI KITCHEN TASKS, AND, CREEPING NEAR, STOOD ROUNE door with mouths agape to listen.

THEN WITH HIS HARP-STRINGS TUNED TO ECHOI THE WIND ON WINTER MOORS, HE SANG OF DEATH VALOUR ON THE FIELD, OF LOVE AND FEALTY IN THE THOSE WHO LISTENED FORGOILL SAVE HIS SINGING AI the noble knights whereof he sang.

ONE WINTER NIGHT, AS THUS HE CAROLLED IN A EARL'S HALL, A LITTLE PAGE CREPT NEARER TO HI BESIDE THE FIRE, AND, WITH HIS BLUE EYES FIXE

WONDERMENT UPON THE GRAYBEARD'S FACE, STU spellbound. Now Ederyn was the page's name, an ORPHAN LAD WHOSE LINEAGE NO MAN KNEW, BUT TH HE CAME OF GENTLE BLOOD ALL EYES COULD ALTHOUGH AS VASSAL 'T WAS HIS LOT TO WAIT UPON great earl's squire.

IT WAS THE YULE-TIDE, AND THE WASSAIL-1 PASSED ROUND TILL BOISTEROUS MIRTH DROV OFTENTIMES THE MINSTREL'S SONG, BUT EDERYN M NO WORD. SCARCE KNOWING WHAT HE DID, HE CR SO CLOSE HE FOUND HIMSELF WITH UPTURNED FA against the old man's knee.

"HOW NOW, THOU FLAXEN-HAIRED," THE MIN said, with kindly smile. "Dost like my song?"

"OH, SIRE," THE YOUTH MADE ANSWER, "METHI ON SUCH A WING THE SOUL COULD WELL TAKE FLI PARADISE. BUT TELL ME, PRITHEE, IS IT POSSIBL SUCH AS *I* TO GAIN THE TITLE OF A KNIGHT? HOW ONE WIN SUCH HONOURS AND ACCLAIM AND REACH high estate that thou dost laud?"

THE MINSTREL GAZED A LITTLE SPACE INTO TH LOG'S FLAME, AND STROKED HIS LONG HOAR BEARD. '

made he answer:

"SOME WIN THEIR SPURS AND EARN THE RACCOLADE BECAUSE THE BLOOD OF DRAGONS STAINED THEIR HANDS. FROM MIGHTY COMBAT WITH ITS TERRORS THEY COME VICTORIOUS TO THEIR REWARD. AND SOME THERE BE SORE SCARRED WITH CONQUEST OF THE GIANTS THAT EVER PREY UPON THE BORDERS OF OUR FAIR DOMAIN. SOME, WHO HAVE GONE ON FAR CRUSADES TO ALIEN LANDS, AND THERE WITH HEART OF GOLD AND IRON HAND HAVE PROVED THEIR FEALTY TO THE CROWN."

THEN EDERYN SIGHED, FOR WELL HE KNEW A STRIPLING FORM COULD NEVER WAGE FIERCE COMBAT WITH A DRAGON. HIS HANDS COULD NEVER MEET THE BRAUNY GRIP OF GIANTS. "IS THERE NO OTHER WAY?" he faltered.

"I WOT NOT," WAS THE ANSWER. "BUT TAKE AN OLD MAN'S COUNSEL. FORGET THY DREAMS OF GLORY, AND BE CONTENT TO SERVE THY SQUIRE. FOR WHAT HAST THOU TO DO WITH GREAT AMBITIONS? THEY'D PROVE BUT FLAMES TO BURN AWAY THY DAILY PEACE."

With that he turned to quaff the proffered bowl

AND ADD HIS VOICE TO THOSE WHOSE MIRTH ALREADY
SHOOK THE RAFTERS. NOR HAD HE ANY FURTHER SAY
WITH EDERYN. BUT AFTERWARD THE PRETTY LADY
OFTEN IN HIS THOUGHTS, AND IN HIS WANDERINGS ABOUT
THE LAND HE MUSED UPON THE QUESTION HE
asked.

ANOTHER TWELVEMONTH SPED ITS WAY, AND AGAIN
again the Yule log burned within the hall, and once
AGAIN THE TROUBADOUR KNOCKED AT THE GATE,
THE NIGHT AND FALLING SNOW. AND AS BEFORE,
MERRY JESTS THEY LED HIM IN AND MADE HIM
WELCOME. AND AS BEFORE, WAS EVERY MOUTH AGAIN
from squire's to scullion's, as he sang.

ONCE MORE HE SANG OF KNIGHTS AND LADIES
OF LOVE AND DEATH AND VALOUR; AND EDERYN,
PAGE, CREPT NEARER TO HIM TILL THE HARP-
CEASED TO THRILL. WITH HEAD UPON HIS HANDS, HE
AND SIGHED. NOT EVEN WHEN THE WASSAIL-BOWL
PASSED WITH MIRTH AND LAUGHTER DID HE LOOK UP
AND WHEN THE GRAYBEARD MINSTREL SAW HIS GRIE-
thought upon his question of the Yule-tide gone.

"AH, NOW, THOU FLAXEN-HAIRED," HE WHISPERED
HIS EAR. "I BEAR THEE TIDINGS WHICH SHOULD MAKE

THEE SING FOR JOY. THERE ~~IS~~ A WAY FOR EVEN SUCH A
THOU TO WIN THE HONOURS THOU DOST COVET. I HI
IN THE ROYAL COURT WHEN LAST I SANG THERE
king's behest."

THEN ALL AQUIVER WITH ~~ENC~~ERNESSE DID EDERY
KNEEL, WITH FACE ALIGHT, BESIDE THE MINSTREL'S
to hear.

"KNOW THIS," BEGAN THE GRAYBEARD. "'TIS
KING'S DESIRE TO 'STABLISH ROUND HIM AT HIS COU
CHOSEN CIRCLE WHOSE FIDELITY HATH STOOD THE U
TEST. NOT DEEDS OF PROWESS ARE REQUIRED OF T
TRUE FOLLOWERS, WITH NO GREAT CONQUESTS DO
TAX THEM, BUT THEY MUST PROVE THEMSE
TRUSTWORTHY, UNTIL ON HAND AND HEART IT I
graven large, *'In all things faithful.'*

"TO MERLIN, THE ENCHANTER, HE HATH LE
CHOICE, WHO BY SOME STRANGE SPELL I WOT NOT
WILL SEND AN EERIE CALL THROUGH ALL THE KI
AND ONLY THOSE WILL HEAR WHO WAKE AT DAW
LISTEN IN HIGH PLACES. AND ONLY THOSE WILL HEE
keep THE COMPASS NEEDLES OF THEIR SOULS TRU
THE NORTH STAR OF A GREAT AMBITION. THE TI
TESTING WILL BE LONG, THE SUMMONS MANY. TO

and to sorrow, to disappointment and defeat, thou MAY'ST BE CALLED. NO MATTER WHAT THE TRYST IS BUT ONE REPLY IF THOU WOULDST WIN KNIGHTHOOD. GIVE HEED AND I WILL TEACH THEE that answer."

THEN SMITING ON HIS HARP, THE MINSTREL SANG SOFTLY UNDER COVER OF THE NOISE, THAT ONLY I HEARD. THROUGH ALL THE SONG RAN EVER THIS REF SEEMED A BROOKLET WINDING IN AND OUT THRU some fair meadow:

"'Tis the king's call. O list!
Thou heart and hand of mine,
keep tryst—
Keep tryst or die!"

THEN EDERYN, WITH HIS HAND UPON HIS HELM, MADE SOLEMN OATH. "AWAKE AT DAWN AND LISTEN IN HIGH PLACES WILL I AWAIT THAT CALL. WHERE THE COMPASS NEEDLE OF MY SOUL TRUE TO THE NORTH OF A GREAT AMBITION WILL I FOLLOW WHERE IT LEADS AND THOUGH THROUGH FIRE AND FLOOD IT TAKE I MY LIFE I MAKE BUT THIS REPLY:

"'Tis the king's call. O list!

Thou heart and hand of mine,
keep tryst—
Keep tryst or die!"

PRESSING THE OLD MAN'S HAND IN GRATITUDE COULD SAY NO WORD FOR THE STRANGE FULNESS I THROAT THAT WELL-NIGH CHOKED HIM), HE ROSE HIS KNEES AND LEFT THE HALL TO MUSE ON WHAT PASSED.

THAT NIGHT HE CLIMBED INTO THE TOWER, AND HIS FACE TURNED TO THE EAST, KEPT VIGIL ALL BELOW, THE RIOTERS WAXED LOUDER IN THEIR THE KNIFE WAS IN THE MEAT, THE DRINK WAS IN HORN. BUT HE WOULD NOT JOIN THEIR REVELS MORNING FIND HIM SUNK IN SODDEN SLEEP, HEAVY WITH feasting and witless from wine.

AS GRAY DAWN TRAILED ACROSS THE HILLS STARTED TO HIS FEET, FOR FAR AWAY SOUNDED THE FOR WHICH HE HAD BEEN WAITING. IT WAS LIKE THE BLOWING OF AN ELFIN HORN, BUT THE WORDS CAME clearly.

"EDERYN! EDERYN! ONE AWAITS THEE AT NIGHT IN THE SHADE OF THE YEW-TREE BY THE ABBEY TO

Keep tryst!"

NOW THE ABBEY TOWER WAS THE SPACE OF FC FURLONGS FROM THE DOMAIN OF THE EARL, AND FU EDERYN KNEW THAT ONLY BY ESPECIAL FAVOUR O SQUIRE COULD HE GAIN LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR TI JAUNT. SO, FROM SUNRISE UNTIL DUSK, HE WORKED WILL, TO GAIN THE WISHED-FOR LEAVE. NEVER B DID BUCKLES SHINE AS DID THE BUCKLES OF THE SQ ENTRUSTED TO HIS POLISHING. NEVER DID MENIAL CEASE SOONER TO BE DRUDGERY, BECAUSE OF T GOOD-WILL WITH WHICH HE WORKED. AND WHEN DAY WAS DONE, SO WELL HAD EVERYDUTY BEE PERFORMED, RIGHT WILLINGLY THE SQUIRE DID GRA GRACE, AND FORTHWITH EDERYN SPED UPON mission.

THE WAY WAS LONG, AND, WHEN HE REACHED T ABBEY TREE, HE FELL A-TREMBLING, FOR THERE WRAITH STOOD WITHIN THE SHADOWS OF THE YEW FACE HAD IT THAT HE COULD SEE, ITS HAND SUBSTANCE, BUT HE MET BRAVELY, SAYING: "I At Ederyn, come to keep the king's tryst."

AND THEN THE SPECTRE'S VOICE REPLIED: "V HAST THOU KEPT IT, FOR 'TIS KNOWN TO ME THE

MENIAL TASKS THOU DIDST PERFORM ERE THOU CO
COME UPON THY QUEST. IN TOKEN THAT WE TWO
MET, HERE IS MY PLEDGE THAT THOU MAY'ST KEE
show the king."

HE FELT A LIGHT TOUCH ON THE BOSOM OF HIS
VESTMENT, AND SUDDENLY HE STOOD ALONE BESIDE
GRUESOME ABBEY. CLAMMY WITH FEAR, HE KNEW
WHY, HE DREW HIS MANTLE ROUND HIM AND S
HOME AS ONE SPEEDS IN A FEARSOME DREAM. AN
that it was a dream he half-believed, when later, in
THE HALL, HE SERVED AT MEAT THOSE GATHERED
THE OLD EARLE'S BOARD. BUT WHEN HE SOUGHT HIS BE
AND THREW ASIDE HIS OUTER GARMENT, THERE C
COARSE, ROUGH SHIRT OF HODDEN GRAY A PI
GLEAMED WHITE ABOVE HIS HEART, WHERE THE WR
COLD HAND HAD TOUCHED HIM. IT WAS THE TOKI
the king that he had answered faithfully his call.

AGAIN BEFORE THE DAWN HE CLIMBED INTO
tower, and, LISTENING WHEN THE VOICES OF THE W
WERE STILL, HEARD CLEAR AND SWEET, LIKE FAR-
elfin horn, another summons.

"EDERYN! EDERYN! ONE AWAITS THEE AT
MIDNIGHT HOUR BESIDE BLACK KILGORE'S WATER. K

tryst!"

AGAIN TO GAIN HIS SQUIRE'S PERMISSION HE TOOK WITH DOUBLE CARE. THIS TIME HIS TASK WAS COUNT ALL THE SPEARS AND HALBERDS, THE BATTLE-AXES, THE COATS OF MAIL THAT FILLED THE EARL'S ARMAMENT. AND O'ER AND O'ER HE COUNTED, KEEP CAREFUL TALLY WITH A BIT OF KEEL UPON THE BANDED DOOR, TILL THE RED LINES THAT HE MET THERE MADE HIS EYES ACHE AND HIS HEAD SWIM. AT LAST THE TASK WAS FINISHED, AND SO WELL THE KING PRAISED HIM, AND FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS AGAIN WAS FAIR TO speed him on his way.

IT WAS A WOFUL JOURNEY TO THE WATER OF KILGORE. SLEEP WEIGHED ON EDERYN'S EYELIDS, AND HALTINGLY HE WENT THE WEARY MILES, FOOT SORE AND WORN. BUT MIDNIGHT FOUND HIM ON THE SPOT WHERE ONE AWAITED HIM, ANOTHER WRAITH-LIKE ENVOY (THE KING, AND IT, TOO, LEFT A TOUCH UPON HIS HEART) token he had kept THE TRYST. AND WHEN HE LOOKED, ANOTHER PEARL GLEAMED THERE BESIDE THE FIRST.

SO MANY A DAY WENT BY, AND EDERYN FAILED IN HIS HOMELY TASKS, BUT CARRIED TO HIS COMBINATION OF DUTIES ALL HIS MIGHT, AS IF THEY WERE

FEATS OF PROWESS. THUS GAINED HE LIBERTY TO K
the tryst with every messenger the king did send.

ONCE HE FARED FORTH ALONG DANGEROUS ROA
THAT LED HE KNEW NOT WHERE, AND, WHEN HE FO
CROSSED A LOATHLY SWAMP ALL FILLED WITH SLIM
CREEPING THINGS, FAIN WOULD HE HAVE FLED.
PUSHING ON FOR SAKE OF HIS BRAVE OATH, ALTHO
WITH FAINTING HEART, HE REACHED THE GOAL /
THIS TIME HIS TOKEN MADE HIM WONDER MUCH. F
WHEN HE WAKENED FROM HIS SWOON, A SHINING
lay on his heart above the pearls.

NOW IT FELL OUT THE SQUIRE TO WHOM THIS E
WAS PAGE WAS KILLED IN CONFLICT WITH A RO
BAND, AND EDERYN, FOR HIS FAITHFULNESS, WAS T
BY THE EARL TO FILL THAT SQUIRE'S PLACE. SO
that, they left the hall, and journeyed on a visit to a
DISTANT LORD. 'T WAS TO THE CASTLE OF CONTE
came, WHERE WAS A JOYOUS GARDEN. AND NOW N
MENIAL TASKS EMPLOYED THE NEW SQUIRE'S TI
HERE WAS HE FREE TO WANDER ALL THE DAY TH
VISTAS OF THE JOYOUS GARDEN, OR LOITER BY
fountain in the courtyard and watch the maidens at
THEIR TASKS, HAVING FAIR SPEECH WITH THEM AN

THE FLOWERS. AND ONE THERE WAS AMONG THEM
LILY-LIKE IN FACE, SO GENTLE-VOICED AND FAIR, TH
EDERYN WELL-NIGH FORGOT HIS OATH, AND FELT FI
WHEN FOR A SPACE THE KING'S CALL CEASED TO SOI
AND GLADDER WAS HE STILL, WHEN, LATER ON, THE
LONG VISIT DONE, HE LEFT YOUNG EDERYN BEHIN
SERVE THE GREAT LORD OF THE CASTLE, FOR SO TH
FRIENDS HAD AGREED, SINCE EDERYN HAD PLEASED
old lord's fancy.

YET WAS HE FAITHFUL TO ~~WISW~~, AND FAILED N
EVERY DAWN TO MOUNT TO SOME HIGH PLACE, WHE
the voices of the world were still, and listen for the
sound of Merlin's horn. One morn it came:

"EDERYN! EDERYN! ONE WAITS THEE FAR AWAY.
THE BLACK CAVE OF ATROPOS, WHEN THE MOON F
keep thy tryst!"

NOW 'T WAS A SEVEN DAYS' JOURNEY TO THAT C
and EDERYN, THINKING OF THE LILY MAID, WAS LO
LEAVE THE GARDEN. HE LINGERED BY THE FOUNTAI
NIGHTFALL, SAYING TO HIMSELF: "WHY SHOULD I
LONGER IN THESE FOOLISH QUESTS, KEEPING TRYST
SHADOWS THAT VANISH AT THE TOUCH? NO NEARER
TO A KNIGHT'S ESTATE THAN WHEN, A STRIPLING P

listened to the minstrel's tales."

THE FOUNTAIN SOFTLY SPLASHED WITHIN THE GARDEN. FROM OUT THE BANQUET-HALL THERE STOLE THE SINKLING LUTES, AND THEN THE LILY MAIDEN SAI SIREN VOICE FILLED ALL HIS HEART, AND HE FORGOT HIS OATH TO DUTY. BUT PRESENTLY A STAR REFLECTED IN THE FOUNTAIN MADE HIM LOOK UP INTO THE JEWELLED CEILING WHERE SHONE THE POLAR CONSTELLATION. AND THEN HE READ THE OATH HE HAD FORGOTTEN: "With the compass NEEDLE OF MY SOUL TRUE TO THE NORTH STAR. With my great ambition, I will follow where it leads."

THRUSTING HIS FINGERS IN HIS EARS TO SILENCE HIS BELOVED VOICE OF HER WHO SANG, HE MADLY RUSHED FROM OUT THE GARDEN INTO THE BLACKNESS OF NIGHT. THE CASTLE OF CONTENT CLANGED ITS GONGS BEHIND HIM. HE SHIVERED AS HE FELT THE JAR THROUGH ALL HIS FRAME, BUT, NEVER TAKING OUT HIS FINGERS, HE RAN, TILL SCORES OF FURLONGS LAY BETWEEN HIM AND THE TEMPTING OF THAT SIREN VOICE.

IT WAS A STRANGE AND FEARSOME WOOD THAT LAY BETWEEN HIM AND THE CAVE. ALL THINGS SEEMED TO BE MOANING AND AFRAID. HE SAW NO FORMS, BUT EVERYWHERE THE SHADOWS SHUDDERED, AND MOANED.

AND GROANS PURSUED HIM TILL NAMELESS FEAR
CLUTCHED AT HIS HEART WITH ICY CHILL. THEN SUCH
THE EARTH SLIPPED AWAY BENEATH HIS FEET, AND
WAVES CLOSED ABOVE HIS HEAD. HE KNEW NOW HE
HAD FALLEN IN THE POOL THAT LIES UPON THE FAR
THE FEARSOME WOOD,—A POOL SO DEEP AND OF SUCH
WHIRLING MOTION THAT ONLY BY THE FIERCEST STRUGGLE
MAY ONE ESCAPE. GLADLY HE WOULD HAVE ALLOWED
THE WATERS TO CLOSE OVER HIM, SUCH COLD PAIN
SMOTE HIS HEART, HAD HE NOT SEEMED TO HEAR
OLD MINSTREL'S SONG. IT AROUSED HIM TO A FINAL
EFFORT, AND HE GASPED BETWEEN HIS TEETH:

"'Tis the king's call! O list!
Thou heart and hand of mine,
keep tryst—
Keep tryst or die!"

WITH THAT, IN ONE MIGHTY STRUGGLE HE DROVE
HIMSELF TO LAND. A BOW-SHOT FARTHER ON HE SAW
CAVE, AND BY SHEER FORCE OF WILL CREPT TOWARD
IT. WHAT HAPPENED THEN HE KNEW NOT TILL THE
MOON ROSE FULL AND HIGH ABOVE HIM. A FORM SWATH
IN BLACK BOWED OVER HIM.

"EDERYN," SHE SIGHED, "HERE IS THY TOKEN 1

THE KING MAY KNOW THAT THOU HAST MET ME FA
face."

HE THOUGHT IT WAS A DIAMOND FIRST, TI
SPARKLED THERE BESIDE THE STAR, BUT WHEN
looked again, lo, nothing but a tear.

THEN WENT HE BACK UNTO THE JOYOUS GARDE
SLOW DEGREES, FOR HE WAS NOW SORE SPENT. A
AFTER THAT THE SUMMONS CAME FULL OFTEN. WH
ALL THE WORLD SEEMED LOVELIEST AND LIFE MOST
THEN WAS THE CALL MOST SURE TO COME. BEVE
ONCE HE FALTERED. NEVER WAS HE FAITHLESS TO
KING'S BEHEST. UP WEARY MOUNTAIN STEPS HE TO
TO FIND THE SOMBRE FACE OF DISAPPOINTMENT TH
WAITING, AND SUFFERING AND PAIN WERE OFTEN
JOURNEY'S END, AND ONCE A SORE DEFEAT. I
BRAVELY AS THE MONTHS WENT BY HE LEARNED TO
INTO THEIR EYES, NO MATTER WHICH ONE HANDED C
him the pledge of Duty well performed.

ONE DAY, WHEN HE NO LONGER WAS A BEARDL
YOUTH, BUT GROWN TO PLEASING STATURE AND OF
BRAWN, HE HEARD THE HOPED-FOR CALL OF WHIC
LONG HAD DREAMED: "EDERYN! EDERYN! THE K
HIMSELF AWAITS THEE. MIDSUMMER MORN AT L

song, keep tryst beside the palace gate."

AS TRAVELLERS ON THE DESERT, SPENT AND V
SEE FAR ACROSS THE SAND THE PALM-TREE'S GREEN
MARKS LIFE-GIVING WELLS, SO EDERYN HAILED
SUMMONS TO THE KING. THE SOUL-CONSUMING TH
THAT LONG HAD URGED HIM ON GREW FIERCER A
WELL OF CONSUMMATION CAME IN SIGHT. HOPE S
HIS FEET WITH WINGS, AS THUS WITH EVERY NER
STRAIN HE PUSHED TOWARD THE FINAL TRYST. SO FI
WAS HE SOME MISHAP MIGHT SNATCH THE CUP AW
ERE IT HAD TOUCHED HIS THIRSTY LIPS, THAT TE
DAYS BEFORE THE TIME HE REACHED THE VAL
AVALON, AND SAT HIM DOWN OUTSIDE THE ENTRAN
the palace.

NOW THERE CAME PROWLING THROUGH THE V
THAT EDGED THE FAIR DOMAIN THE GNARLED
DO THE WILL OF SHUDDERWAIN. AND SHUDDERWAI
ALL THE GIANTS THEREABOUTS, MOST CRUEL WAS
BE FEARED. KNOWING FULL WELL WHAT PLEAS
WOULD GIVE THE BLOODY MONSTER, THESE DWARFS
EVIL HANDS ON EDERYN. SLEEPING THEY FOUND
AND BOUND HIM WITH HARD LEATHERN THONGS,
THEN WITH GIBES AND IMPISH LAUGHTER DRAGGED

into a dungeon past the help of man.

TWO DAYS AND NIGHTS HE LAY THERE, RAGIN FATE AND AT HIS HELPLESSNESS, TILL HE WAS WEL MAD, BETHINKING HIM OF ALL HIS BAFFLED HOPES. LIKE A MADMAN GNAWED HE ON THE LEATHERN TH TILL HE WAS FREE, AND BEAT HIS HANDS AGAINST STUBBORN ROCK THAT WOULD NOT YIELD, AND himself against the walls that held him in.

THE DWARFS FROM TIME TO TIME PEERED THRU THE SLATTED WINDOW OVERHEAD AND MOCKED him pointing with their crooked thumbs.

"Ha! ha! Thou'lt keep no tryst," they chattered. "BUT IF THOU'LT SWEAR UPON THY OATH TO GO BY THE JOYOUS GARDEN, AND HARK NO MORE FOR MEET CALL, WE'LL LET THEE LOOSE FROM OUT THIS DUNGEON thy Disappointment."

THEN WAS EDERYN TEMPTED, FOR THE DUNGEON WAS FOUL INDEED, AND HIS HEART CRIED OUT TO BACK TO THE LILY MAIDEN. BUT ONCE MORE IN HIS HEART he thrust his fingers and cried:

"To the king's call alone I'll list!

Oh, heart and hand of mine, keep
tryst—

Keep tryst or die!"

ON THE THIRD NIGHT, WITH THE QUIET OF DESPAIR
THREW HIM PRONE UPON THE DUNGEON FLOOR AND
HIS PEACE, NO LONGER GNAWING ON HIS THONGS
beating on the rock. A single moonbeam straggled
THROUGH THE SLATTED WINDOW, AND BY ITS LIGHT
SAW A SPIDER SPINNING OUT A WEB. THEN, LOOK-
DULLY AROUND, HE SAW THE DUNGEON WAS HUNG THICK
with other webs, foul with the dust of years. GREAT
FESTOONS OF THE COBWEB FILM SHROUDED HIS PRI-
WALLS. AS UP AND DOWN THE HAIRY CREATURE SWAYED
ITSELF UPON ITS THREAD, THE HOPELESS EYES OF ELLIOT
followed it.

ALL IN A TWINKLING HE SAW HOW HE MIGHT LIVE
BY THE SPIDER'S TEACHING, AND CLAPPED HIS HANDS
across his mouth to keep from shouting out his joy
SO THAT THE DWARFS COULD HEAR. NOW ONCE MORE
LIKE A MADMAN RUSHING AT THE WALLS, HE TORE
ALL THE DUSTY WEBS, AND TWISTED THEM TOGETHER
LONG STRANDS. THESE STRANDS HE BRAIDED INTO
ROPES AND TIED THEM, KNOTTING THEM AND TW

AND DOUBLING ONCE AGAIN. ALL THE WHILE HE BEWAILING THE STUPID WAY IN WHICH HE WASTED IT "THREE DAYS AGO I MIGHT HAVE QUIT THIS DEN," SIGHED, "HAD I BUT USED THE MEANS THAT LAY AT MY HAND. Full well I knew that heaven always finds a way to help the man who helps himself. NO CREATURE TOO MEAN TO BE OF SERVICE, AND EVEN DUNGEON WALLS MUST HARBOUR HELP FOR HIM WHO BUT GRASPS THE FIRST THING THAT HE SEES AND MAKES IT SERVE HIM."

SO FAST AND FURIOUSLY HE WORKED THAT, BEFORE THE MOONBEAM FADED, HIS COBWEB ROPE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO BEAR HIS WEIGHT, AND LONG ENOUGH TO REACH TWICE OVER TO THE SLATTED WINDOW OVERHEAD. BY MANY TRIALS HE AT LAST SUCCEEDED IN THROWING IT AROUND A SPIKE THAT BARRED THE WINDOW, AND, CLIMBING UP, HE FORCED THE SLATS APART AND CLAMBERED THROUGH. THEN TYING THE ROPE'S END TO THE WINDOW, HE SLID DOWN THE DIZZY CLIFFSIDE IN WHICH THE DWARFS HAD DUG THEIR DUNGEON, AND DROPPED INTO THE STREAM THAT FLOWED BELOW.

LO, WHEN HE LOOKED AROUND HIM IT WAS DAY

MIDSUMMER MORN IT WAS, AND, PLUNGING THRO' THE WOOD, HE HEARD THE LARK'S SONG RISE, REACHED THE PALACE GATE JUST AS IT OPENED TO BLARE OF TRUMPETS FOR THE KING TO RIDE FOR. WHEN EDERYN SAW THE ROYAL CAVALCADE, HE SHED BACK INTO THE WAYSIDE BUSHES, SO ILL-BEFITTING SEEM THAT HE SHOULD COME BEFORE THE KING IN TATTERED GARMENTS, WITH BLOOD UPON HIS FACE WHERE THE SHARP ROCKS HAD CUT, AND WITH dungeon stains.

BUT THAT THE KING MIGHT KNOW HE'D EVER BEEN FAITHFUL, HE SANK UPON HIS KNEES AND BARED HIS BREAST AT HIS APPROACH. THERE ALL THE PLEASURES GLISTENED IN THE SUNLIGHT, IN RAINBOW HUES. 'PAIN HAD DROPPED HER HEART'S BLOOD IN A GLITTERING RUBY, AND HONOUR SET HER SEAL UPON HIM IN A GOLDEN STAR. A DIAMOND GLEAMED WHERE SORROW'S TEAR HAD FALLEN, AND AMETHYSTS GLOWED NOW IN PURPLE SPLENDOR TO MARK HIS PATIENT MEETING OF Defeat. BUT MOSTLY WERE THE PLEDGES LITTLE THINGS FOR LITTLE DUTIES FAITHFULLY PERFORMED; AND THEY SHONE, AND, AS THE PEOPLE GAZED, THEY SAW THE JEWELS TAKE THE SHAPE OF LETTERS, SO THAT THEY READ OUT BEFORE THEM ALL, "*Semper fidelis.*"

THEN DREW THE KING HIS ROYAL SWORD AND LI
SMOTE ON EDERYN'S SHOULDER, AND CRIED: "ARISE,
KNIGHT, SIR EDERYN THE TRUSTY. SINCE I MAY
THEE TO THE UTMOST IN LITTLE THINGS AS WELL
SINCE THOU OF ALL MEN ART MOST WORTHY, HENC
BY THY KING'S HEART THOU SHALT RIDE, EVER TO
faithful guard and comrade."

SO THERE BEFORE THEM ALL HE DID HIM HON
AND ORDERED THAT A PRANCING STEED BE BROUGHT
a good sword buckled on his side.

THUS EDERYN WON HIS SOVEREIGN'S FAVOU
SOON, BY HIS SOVEREIGN'S GRACE PERMITTED, HE W
BACK TO THE JOYOUS GARDEN TO WOO THE LILY MA
WHEN HE HAD WON HIS BRIDE AND BORNE HER TO
PALACE, THEN WAS HIS GREAT REWARD COMPLETE F
HIS YEARS OF FEALTY TO HIS VOW. THEN OUT INT
WORLD HE WENT TO GUARD HIS KING. HENCEF
BLAZONED ON HIS SHIELD AND HELMET HE BORE
CREST—A HEART WITH HAND THAT GRASPED A S
and, underneath, these words:

"I keep the tryst!"

THE END.

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