

Parzival

Wolfram von Eschenbach
English translation by Rob Bocchino

Book III

This book tells of Parzival's childhood, his desire to become a knight, and his first adventures.

Ez machet trûric mir den lîp,
daz alsô mangiu heizet wîp.
ir stimme sint gelîche hel;
genuoge sint gein valsche snel,
etslîche valsches lære:
sus teilent sich diu mære.
daz die gelîche sint genamt,
des hât mîn herze sich geschamt.
wîpheit, dîn ordenlîcher site,
dem vert und fuor ie triwe mite.

genuoge sprechent, armuot,
daz diu sî ze nihte guot.
swer die durch triwe lîdet,
hellefiwer die sêle mîdet.
die dolte ein wîp durch triuwe;
des wart ir gâbe niuwe
ze himel mit endelôser gebe.
ich wæne ir nu vil wênic lebe,
die junc der erden rîhtuom
liezen durch des himeles ruom.
ich erkenne ir nehein.
man und wîp mir sint al ein:
die mitenz al gelîche.

frou Herzeloyd diu rîche
ir drîer lande wart ein gast:
si truoc der freuden mangels last.
der valsch sô gar an ir verswant,
ouge noch ôre in nie dâ vant.
ein nebel was ir diu sunne;
si vlôch der werlde wunne.
ir was gelîch naht unt der tac:

*It causes me grief
that so many bear the name of woman.
Their voices are all similarly bright;
yet some of them are quick to falsity,
while others avoid it:
thus the story is varied.
That all of them should share a single name
brings shame to my heart.
Womanhood, your order
should turn and guide itself to faithfulness.*

*Many people say of poverty
that it accomplishes nothing good.
Yet any faithful person who endures it
can save his soul from hellfire.
A woman once did this;
as a result she received
eternal gifts in Heaven.
It seems to me that few alive today
would renounce earthly riches
for the sake of heavenly reward.
I know of no one like this.
Man or woman, all are one to me:
they all behave this way.*

*The noble lady Herzeloyde
became a stranger in three countries:
she bore the burden of her joylessness.
She was so free from falsehood
That neither eye nor ear detected it.
For her the sun was shrouded in a mist;
She ran away from pleasures of the world.
The night and day were all the same to her:*

ir herze niht wan jâmers phlac.

Sich zôch diu frouwe jâmers balt
 ûz ir lande in einen walt,
 zer waste in Soltâne;
 niht durch bluomen ûf die plâne.
 ir herzen jâmer was sô ganz,
 sine kêrte sich an keinen kranz,
 er wære rôt oder val.
 si brâhte dar durch flühtesal
 des werden Gahmuretes kint.
 liute, die bî ir dâ sint,
 müezen bûwn und riuten.
 si kunde wol getriuten
 ir sun. ê daz sich der versan,
 ir volc si gar für sich gewan:
 ez wære man oder wîp,
 den gebôt si allen an den lîp,
 daz se immer ritters wurden lût.
 “wan friesche daz mîns herzen trût,
 welch ritters leben wære,
 daz wurde mir vil swære.
 nu habt iuch an der witze kraft,
 und helt in alle rîterschaft.”

der site fuor angestlîche vart.
 der knappe alsus verborgen wart
 zer waste in Soltâne erzogn,
 an kûneclîcher fuore betrogn;
 ez enmôht an eime site sîn:
 bogen unde bôlzelîn
 die sneit er mit sîn selbes hant,
 und schôz vil vogeles die er vant.
 Swenne abr er den vogel erschôz,
 des schal von sange ê was sô grôz,
 sô weinder unde roufte sich,
 an sîn hâr kêrt er gerich.
 sîn lîp was clâr unde fier:
 ûf dem plân am rivier
 twuog er sich alle morgen.
 erne kunde niht gesorgen,
 ez enwære ob im der vogelsanc,
 die süeze in sîn herze dranc:
 daz erstracte im sîniu brüstelîn.
 al weinde er lief zer kûnegîn.
 sô sprach si “wer hât dir getân?
 du wære hin ûz ûf den plân.”

her heart knew nothing but that it felt sorrow.

*This sorrowful lady
 left her country, going to a forest,
 a wild area in Soltane,
 and not to see the flowers in the plain.
 Her grief had so completely filled her heart
 that she cared nothing for any garland,
 be it red or faded.
 To escape what might occur she brought with her
 the child of Gahmuret.
 The people that accompanied her there
 attended to the building and the farming.
 She focused her attention on her son.
 Before he came of age,
 she gathered her people together,
 the men and women alike,
 and made them swear on their lives
 that they would say nothing of knights.
 “For if the joy of my heart were to discover
 what the life of a knight is,
 that would cause me great grief.
 Therefore employ the power of your wit
 and refrain from speaking of knighthood.”*

*Their arrangement traveled on an anxious path.
 In this way the boy was brought up
 in the wilds of Soltane,
 deprived of his kingly inheritance,
 with this single exception:
 with his own hands he constructed
 a bow and little arrows,
 and he shot many birds that he encountered.
 But whenever he shot a bird
 who had sung loudly before,
 he would weep and tear his hair,
 which suffered as a result.
 His body was pure and beautiful:
 he washed himself every morning
 in a stream by the meadow.
 He knew nothing of grief,
 except as to the songs of birds,
 whose sweetness touched his heart.
 It swelled his little bosom.
 Tearfully he ran to the queen.
 She asked him, “Who has done this to you?
 You were out on the meadow.”*

ern kunde es ir gesagen niht,
als kinden lîhte noch geschiht.

dem mære gienc si lange nâch.
eins tages si in kapfen sach
ûf die boume nâch der vogele schal.
si wart wol innen daz zeswal
von der stimme ir kindes Brust.
des twang in art und sîn gelust.
frou Herzeloyde kêrt ir haz
an die vogele, sine wesse um waz:
si wolt ir schal verkrenken.
ir bûliute unde ir enken
die hiez si vaste gâhen,
vogele wûrgn und vâhen.
die vogele wâren baz geriten:
etslîches sterben wart vermiten:
der bleip dâ lebendic ein teil,
die sît mit sange wurden geil.

Der knappe sprach zer kûnegîn
“waz wîzet man den vogelîn?”
er gert in frides sâ zestunt.
sîn muoter kust in an den munt:
diu sprach “wes wende ich sîn gebot,
der doch ist der hœhste got?
suln vogele durch mich freude lân?”
der knappe sprach zer muoter sân
“ôwê muoter, waz ist got?”
“sun, ich sage dirz âne spot.
er ist noch liehter denne der tac,
der antlitzes sich bewac
nâch menschen antlitze.
sun, merke eine witze,
und flêhe in umbe dîne nôt:
sîn triwe der werlde ie helfe bôt.
sô heizet einr der helle wirt:
der ist swarz, untriwe in niht verbirt.
von dem kêr dîne gedanke,
und och von zwîvels wanke.”

sîn muoter unterschiet im gar
daz vinster unt daz lieht gevar.
dar nâch sîn snelheit verre spranc.
er lernte den gabilôtes swanc,
dâ mit er mangan hîrz erschôz,
des sîn muoter und ir volc genôz.

*He told her nothing,
in the way that children still behave today.*

*She asked him about it for a long time.
One day she saw him gazing up
at the branches towards the birds.
She knew then that it was their song
that swelled her child's bosom.
His lineage and desire drove him thus.
Queen Herzeloyde directed her anger
towards the birds, although she knew not why:
she wished their song destroyed.
She instructed her farmers and attendants
quickly to construct traps
and catch and kill the birds.
The birds were able to defend themselves:
they evaded many deaths,
so that a part of them remained alive,
and happily they sang.*

*The boy asked the queen,
“What do they have against the little birds?”
He asked for peace.
His mother kissed him on the mouth.
She said, “Why should I turn from His command,
who is the supreme God?
Should birds be robbed of joy because of me?
The boy said to her,
“O Mother, what is God?”
“Son, I tell you this sincerely.
He is brighter than the day,
yet he gave himself
the aspect of a man.
Son, heed this wisdom,
and turn to him in your distress:
His faithfulness has ever helped the world.
Another power, though, opposes him:
a dark one, who is full of faithlessness.
Be sure to turn your thoughts away from him,
and also from the inconstancy of doubt.”*

*His mother explained to him
all about the dark and the light.
After that his eagerness awoke.
He learned to throw a javelin,
with which he brought down many stags,
which his mother and her people put to use.*

ez wære æber oder snê,
 dem wilde tet sîn schiezen wê.
 nu høeret fremdiu mære.
 swennerschôz daz swære,
 des wære ein mûl geladen genuoc,
 als unzerworht hin heim erz truoc.

Eins tages gieng er den weideganc
 an einer halden, diu was lanc:
 er brach durch blates stimme en zwîc.
 dâ nâhen bî im gienc ein sfîc:
 dâ hôrter schal von huofslegen.
 sîn gabylôt begunder wegen:
 dô sprach er "waz hân ich vernomn?
 wan wolt et nu der tiuvel komn
 mit grimme zorneclîche!
 den bestüende ich sicherlîche.
 mîn muoter freisen von im sagt:
 ich wæne ir ellen sî verzagt."

alsus stuont er in strîtes ger.
 nu seht, dort kom geschûftet her
 drî ritter nâch wunsche var,
 von fuoze ûf gewâpent gar.
 der knappe wânde sunder spot,
 daz ieslîcher wære ein got.
 dô stuont ouch er niht langer hie,
 in den phat viel er ûf sîniu knie.
 lûte rief der knappe sân
 "hilf, got: du maht wol helfe hân."

der vorder zornes sich bewac,
 dô der knappe im phade lac:
 "dirre tørsche Wâleise
 unsich wendet gâher reise."
 ein prîs den wir Beier tragn,
 muoz ich von Wâleisen sagn:
 die sint tørscher denne beiersch her,
 unt doch bî manlîcher wer.
 swer in den zwein landen wirt,
 gefuoge ein wunder an im birt.

Dô kom geleischieret
 und wol gezimieret
 ein ritter, dem was harte gâch.
 er reit in strîteclîchen nâch,
 die verre wâren von im komn:

*In springtime and in snow,
 his shooting felled the wild animals.
 Now hear something strange:
 when he shot down a weight
 that would have been a burden for a mule,
 he carried it home by himself.*

*One day his wandering took him
 far away to a mountain slope.
 He broke a tree branch off, so he could make
 Its leaves a reed. Close by him was a path;
 he heard the sound of horses' hooves.
 He raised his javelin
 and said, "What have I heard?
 If only the devil would appear
 in his evil fury!
 I would surely stand up to him.
 My mother says to be afraid of him;
 but I think she is lacking bravery."*

*And so he stood all ready for a fight.
 Now look, here came galloping
 three knights, as fair as anyone could wish,
 and armed from the feet up.
 The boy thought for certain
 that each of them was a god.
 He remained standing no longer
 but fell upon his knee there in the path.
 Loudly the lad cried out,
 "Help, God! You must have help that you can give."*

*The leader became enraged
 when he saw the boy lying in the path:
 "This dim-witted child of Wales
 is holding up our travels."
 Where we Bavarians come in for praise
 I too must praise the people of Wales:
 Though duller than Bavarians,
 they are similarly stout-hearted.
 Anyone who grows up in either land
 is distinguished in this way.*

*Just then a knight, splendidly attired,
 came galloping by.
 He was in a hurry:
 He was pursuing
 two knights*

zwên ritter heten im genomn
 eine frouwen in sîm lande.
 den helt ez dûhte schande:
 in müete der juncfrouwen leit,
 diu jâmerlîche vor in reit.
 dise drî wârn sîne man.
 er reit ein schœne kastelân:
 sîns schildes was vil wênic ganz.
 er hiez Karnahkarnanz
 leh cons Ulterlec.
 er sprach “wer irret uns den wec?”
 sus fuor er zuome knappen sân.
 den dûhter als ein got getân:
 ern hete sô liehtes niht erkant.
 ûfem touwe der wâpenroc erwant.
 mit guldîn schellen kleine
 vor iewederm beine
 wârn die stegreife erklenget
 unt ze rehter mâze erlenget.
 sîn zeswer arm von schellen klanc,
 swar ern bôt oder swanc.
 der was durch swertslege sô hel:
 der helt was gein pîse snel.
 sus fuor der fürste rîche,
 gezimiert wünneclîche.

Aller manne schœne ein bluomen kranz,
 den vrâgte Karnahkarnanz
 “junchêrre, sâht ir für iuch varn
 zwên ritter die sich niht bewarn
 kunnen an ritterlîcher zunft?
 si ringent mit der nôtnunft
 und sint an werdekeit verzagt:
 si füerent roubes eine magt.”
 der knappe wânde, swaz er sprach,
 ez wære got, als im verjach
 frou Herzeloyd diu künegîn,
 dô sim unterschiet den liechten schîn.
 dô rief er lûte sunder spot
 “nu hilf mir, hilferîcher got.”
 vil dicke viel an sîn gebet
 fil li roy Gahmuret.
 der fürste sprach “ich pin niht got,
 ich leiste ab gerne sîn gebot.
 du maht hie vier ritter sehn,
 ob du ze rehte kundest spehn.”

*who had stolen a lady from his land
 and who had a head start on him.
 To the hero this was disgraceful:
 he grieved at the plight of the lady,
 who went before him in a dreadful state.
 The three knights were serving him.
 He rode a fine Castilian horse:
 Very little of his shield remained.
 His name was Karnahkarnanz,
 the Count of Ulterlec.
 He said, “Who is blocking the way?”
 When the boy saw the knight,
 he took him to be a god:
 never had he seen a vision so bright.
 The knight’s surcoat swept the ground.
 His stirrups were adjusted
 to just the right length;
 each of his legs rang out
 with little golden bells.
 His arm chimed with bells
 when he lifted it in greeting or attack.
 It rang together with his sword:
 the hero was eager for fame.
 Thus came the noble prince,
 wonderfully attired.*

*Then Karnahkarnanz addressed the boy,
 that blooming garland of all manly virtue:
 “Young sir, have you seen
 two knights riding past,
 who don’t know how to act in knightly ways?
 They are perpetrating a crime
 and are completely without honor:
 They have kidnapped a lady.”
 Whatever he said, the boy thought
 he was God, just as Herzeloyde the queen
 had told him
 when she explained about His shining light.
 Therefore he said in all sincerity,
 “Now help me, God of help!”
 And the son of King Gahmuret
 bowed down in supplication.
 The prince said, “I am hardly God,
 though I gladly follow what He says to do.
 Here you would see four knights,
 if only you could look properly.”*

der knappe frâgte fürbaz
 “du nennest ritter: waz ist daz?
 hâstu niht gotlicher kraft,
 sô sage mir, wer gît ritterschaft?”
 “daz tuot der künec Artûs.
 junchêrre, komt ir in des hûs,
 der bringet iuch an ritters namn,
 daz irs iuch nimmer durfet schamn.
 ir mugt wol sîn von ritters art.”
 von den helden er geschouwet wart:
 Dô lac diu gotes kunst an im.
 von der âventiure ich daz nim,
 diu mich mit wârheit des beschiet.
 nie mannes varwe baz geriet
 vor im sît Adâmes zît.
 des wart sîn lob von wîben wît.

aber sprach der knappe sân,
 dâ von ein lachen wart getân.
 “ay ritter guot, waz mahtu sîn?
 du hâst sus manec vingerlîn
 an dînen lîp gebunden,
 dort oben unt hie unden.”
 aldâ begreif des knappen hant
 swaz er îsers ame fürsten vant:
 dez harnasch begunder schouwen.
 “mîner muoter juncfrouwen
 ir vingerlîn an snûeren tragnt,
 diu niht sus an einander ragnt.”
 der knappe sprach durch sînen muot
 zem fürsten “war zuo ist diz guot,
 daz dich sô wol kan schicken?
 ine mages niht ab gezwicken.”

der fürste im zeigete sâ sîn swert:
 “nu sich, swer an mich strîtes gert,
 des selben wer ich mich mit slegn:
 für die sîne muoz ich an mich legn,
 und für den schuz und für den stich
 muoz ich alsus wâpen mich.”
 aber sprach der knappe snel
 “ob die hirze trûegen sus ir vel,
 so verwunt ir niht mîn gabylôt.
 der vellet manger vor mir tôt.”

*The lad asked him,
 “I hear you speak of ‘knights.’ What do you mean?
 If you lack Godly power,
 then tell me: who grants knighthood?”
 “King Arthur does that.
 Young sir, if you come to his house,
 he will give you a knightly name
 that you will never feel ashamed of.
 You may well be of knightly lineage.”
 The heroes examined him then;
 in him they saw God’s handiwork.
 I know this from the adventure,
 which was told to me in truth.
 Never had man’s essence been so perfectly realized
 since Adam’s time.
 For this he was praised widely among women.*

*But then the lad spoke again,
 and his speech caused his hearers to laugh.
 “Ah, knight God, what might you be?
 You have so many little rings
 encircling your body,
 up there and down here.”
 And then he put his hand upon the steel
 wherever he could see it on the prince:
 he began to examine the armor.
 “My mother’s maidens
 wear their rings on necklaces,
 and they don’t fit together so tightly.”
 The boy said to the prince
 exactly what was on his mind:
 “What is this for, that fits you so well?
 I can’t remove it.”*

*The prince showed him his sword:
 “You see, if anyone attacks me,
 I must defend myself:
 therefore I wear this armor,
 and it protects me
 against being shot and stabbed.”
 But the boy quickly replied,
 “If a stag wore this kind of covering,
 my javelin would not hurt it.
 As things are, many fall dead before me.”*

Die ritter zurnden daz er hielt
 bî dem knappen der vil tumpheit wielt.
 der fürste sprach “got hüete dîn.
 ôwî wan wær dîn schœne mîn!
 dir hete got den Wunsch gegeben,
 ob du mit witzten soldest lebn.
 diu gotes kraft dir virre leit.”
 die sîne und och er selbe reit,
 unde gâhten harte balde
 zeinem velde in dem walde.
 dâ vant der gefüege
 frôn Herzeloyden phlüege.
 ir volke leider nie geschach;
 die er balde eren sach:
 si begunden sæn, dar nâch egen,
 ir gart ob starken ohsen wegen.
 der fürste in guoten morgen bôt,
 und frâgte se, op si sâhen nôt
 eine juncfrouwen lîden.
 sine kunden niht vermîden,
 swes er vrâgt daz wart gesagt.
 “zwêne ritter unde ein magt
 dâ riten hiute morgen.
 diu frouwe fuor mit sorgen:
 mit sporn si vaste ruorten,
 die die juncfrouwen fuorten.”
 ez was Meljahkanz.
 den ergâhte Karnachkarnanz,
 mit strîte er im die frouwen nam:
 diu was dâ vor an freuden lam.
 si hiez Imâne
 von der Beâfontâne.

Die bûliute verzagten,
 dô die helde für si jagten.
 si sprâchen “wiest uns sus geschehen?
 hât unser junchêrre ersehen
 ûf disen rittern helme schart,
 sone hân wir uns niht wol bewart.
 wir sulen der kûneginne haz
 von schulden hoeren umbe daz,
 wand er mit uns dâ her lief
 hiute morgen dô si dannoch slief.”
 der knappe enruochte ouch wer dô schôz
 die hirze kleine unde grôz:
 er huop sich gein der muoter widr,
 und sagt ir mæ. dô viel si nidr:

*The knights were annoyed by this delay
 due to the boy, who was so naive.
 The prince said, “God protect you.
 Would that I had your beauty!
 God would have granted you every wish,
 if only he had given you wits.
 May God’s might protect you from harm.”
 He and his men rode on,
 traveling quickly
 until they reached a clearing in the forest.
 There the noble man discovered
 Lady Herzeloyde’s plows.
 Unfortunately he didn’t know her people.
 Those whom he saw
 began to plant and then to till,
 driving stout oxen.
 The prince bade them good morning,
 and he asked them if they had seen
 a lady who was experiencing distress.
 They answered what he asked:
 they couldn’t avoid it.
 “Two knights and a maiden
 rode through here this morning.
 The lady complained loudly;
 the others used their spurs
 to goad her along.”
 It was Meljacanz.
 Karnahkarnanz overtook him
 and took the lady from him by force:
 Before that she was bereft of joy.
 Her name was Imane
 of the Beafortane.*

*The men in the fields despaired
 as the heroes rode past them.
 They said, “How has this happened?
 If our young lord has seen
 the helmets of those knights,
 then we have not kept watch here well at all.
 The queen will reprove us
 when she hears of our failure,
 for he came by here
 this morning, while she slept.”
 In fact the lad forgot all about
 shooting stags, small and large:
 he went straight to his mother
 and told her what had happened; she collapsed.*

sîner worte si sô sêre erschrac,
daz si unversunnen vor im lac.

dô diu kûneginne
widr kom zir sinne,
swie si dâ vor wære verzagt,
dô sprach si “sun, wer hât gesagt
dir von ritters orden?
wâ bist dus innen worden?”
“muoter, ich sach vier man
noch liechter danne got getân:
die sagten mir von ritterschaft.
Artûs kûneclîchiu kraft
sol mich nâch rîters êren
an schildes ambet kêren.”
sich huop ein niwer jâmer hie.
diu frouwe enwesse rehte, wie
daz si ir den list erdæhte
unde in von dem willen bræhte.

Der knappe tump unde wert
iesch von der muoter dicke ein pfert.
daz begunde se in ir herzen klagn.
si dâhte “in wil im niht versagn:
ez muoz abr vil bæse sîn.”
do gedâhte mêr diu kûnegîn
“der liute vil bî spotte sint.
tôren kleider sol mîn kint
ob sîme liechten lîbe tragen.
wirt er geroufet unt geslagn,
sô kumt er mir her wider wol.”
ôwê der jâmerlîchen dol!
diu frouwe nam ein sactuoeh:
si sneit im hemde unde bruoch,
daz doch an eime stücke erschein,
unz enmitten an sîn blankez bein.
daz wart für tôren kleit erkant.
ein gugel man obene drûfe vant.
al frisch rûch kelberîn
von einer hût zwei ribbalîn
nâch sînen beinen wart gesnitn.
dâ wart grôz jâmer niht vermitn.

diu kûngîn was alsô bedâht,
si bat belîben in die naht.
“dune solt niht hinnen kêren,
ich wil dich list ê lêren.

*The words he uttered caused her such distress
that she lay before him, unconscious.*

*When the queen
regained her senses,
which had been overcome before,
she said, “Son, who has told you
about the knightly order?
How did you learn about it?”
“Mother, I saw four men
who shone more brightly than God;
they told me of knighthood.
King Arthur’s regal power
shall furnish me a shield
with which to serve and to seek knightly fame.”
This statement caused fresh grief.
The queen did not rightly know
what she could contrive to do
to keep him from the purpose he expressed.*

*The naïve but noble lad
asked his mother to give him a horse.
That caused her to sorrow in her heart.
“I will not deny him that,” she thought;
“but it must be a very bad one.”
The queen thought further,
“How easily the people start to mock!
I shall bedeck my child’s beautiful body
with foolish clothing.
If he is beaten up with fists and clubs,
Perhaps he will come back to me.”
Alas for her terrible grief!
The lady took a sack cloth
and cut for him a shirt and pants
which were all one piece
and partially covered his white legs.
That was the typical clothing of fools.
Over his head he wore a hood.
Two boots
of untanned calf skin
were cut for his legs.
But none of this diminished her great sorrow.*

*After thinking the matter over,
the queen asked him if he would stay the night.
“You should not leave here
until I’ve passed my wisdom on to you.*

an ungebanten strâzen
 soltu tunkel fürte lâzen:
 die sîhte und lûter sîn,
 dâ solte al balde rîten in.
 du solt dich site nieten,
 der werlde grûezen bieten.
 Op dich ein grâ wîse man
 zuht wil lêrn als er wol kan,
 dem soltu gerne volgen,
 und wis im niht erbolgen.
 sun, lâ dir bevolhen sîn,
 swâ du guotes wîbes vingerlîn
 mügest erwerben unt ir gruoꝝ,
 daz nim: ez tuot dir kumbers buoꝝ.
 du solt zir kusse gâhen
 und ir lîp vast umbevâhen:
 daz gît gelücke und hôhen muot,
 op si kiusche ist unde guot.

du solt och wîzen, sun mîn,
 der stolze küene Lâhelîn
 dînen fürsten ab ervaht zwei lant,
 diu solten dienen dîner hant,
 Wâleis und Norgâls.
 ein dîn fürste Turkentâls
 den tût von sîner hende enphienç:
 dîn volc er sluoc unde vienc.”
 “diz rich ich, muoter, ruocht es got:
 in verwundet noch mîn gabylôt.”

des morgens dô der tag erschein,
 der knappe balde wart enein,
 im was gein Artûse gâch.
 [frou] Herzeloyde in kuste und lief im nâch.
 der werlde riwe aldâ geschach.
 dô si ir sun niht langer sach
 (der reit enwec), wemst desten baz?
 dô viel diu frouwe valsches laz
 ûf die erde, aldâ si jâmer sneit
 sô daz se ein sterben niht vermeit.

ir vil getriulîcher tût
 der frouwen wert die hellenôt.
 ôwol si daz se ie muoter wart!
 sus fuor die lônnes bernden vart
 ein wurzel der güete
 und ein stam der diemüete.

*On unknown paths
 you must beware of dark fords;
 where they are shallow and clear,
 then you should boldly ride in.
 When you meet someone,
 you should give him your greeting.
 If a wise old man
 is willing to teach you his wisdom,
 you must listen eagerly
 and not become irritated with him.
 Son, keep this in mind:
 If you can win the ring of a good woman,
 and her greeting, then take it:
 it will provide relief in your distress.
 You should give her your kisses
 and hold her tightly in your embrace:
 that brings good luck and high spirits,
 if she is honorable and good.*

*“Know also, my son,
 that the proud and bold King Lehelin
 took two countries away from your princes.
 These countries, Waleis and Norgals,
 were to have been yours to rule.
 One of your princes, Turkentals,
 met death at his hand:
 he has slain and driven out your people.”
 “If God is willing, I’ll avenge it, mother.
 I’ll pierce his body with my javelin.”*

*When the sun rose the next morning,
 the lad made up his mind
 to go directly to Arthur.
 Queen Herzeloyde kissed him and ran after him.
 Then the sorrow of the world afflicted her.
 When she could no longer see her son,
 who rode away (for who would welcome that?),
 then that lady free of all falsehood
 fell upon the ground, where grief stabbed her
 until all that was left her was to die.*

*The death she suffered, in its loyalty,
 ensured that she escaped the pains of hell.
 How fortunate for her was motherhood!
 She traveled on the path of loyalty,
 a root of goodness
 and a branch of humility.*

ôwê daz wir nu niht enhân
 ir sippe unz an den eilften spân!
 des wirt gevelschet manec lîp.
 doch solten nu getriwiu wîp
 heiles wûnschen disem knabn,
 der sich hie von ir hât erhabn.

Dô kêrt der knabe wol getân
 gein dem fôrest in Brizljân.
 er kom an einen bach geritn.
 den hete ein han wol überschritn:
 swie dâ stuonden bluomen unde gras,
 durch daz sîn fluz sô tunkel was,
 der knappe den furt dar an vermeit.
 den tager gar derneben reit,
 alsez sînen witzten tohte.
 er beleip die naht swier mohte,
 unz im der liehte tag erschein.
 der knappe huob sich dan al ein
 zeime furte lûter wol getân.
 dâ was anderhalp der plân
 mit eime gezelt gehêret,
 grôz rîcheit dran gekêret.
 von drîer varwe samît
 ez was hôh unde wît:
 ûf den næten lâgn borten guot.
 dâ hienc ein liderîn huot,
 den man drüber ziehen solte
 immer swenne ez regen wolte.

duc Orilus de Lalander,
 des wîp dort unde vander
 ligende wûnneclîche,
 die herzoginne rîche
 glîch eime rîters trûte.
 si hiez Jeschûte.

Diu frouwe was entslâfen.
 si truoc der minne wâfen,
 einen munt durchliuhtic rôt,
 und gerndes ritters herzen nôt.
 innen des diu frouwe slief,
 der munt ir von einander lief:
 der truoc der minne hitze fiur.
 sus lac des wunsches âventiur.
 von snêwîzem beine

*Alas that we no longer see her like
 in this, the eleventh generation!
 Instead, many today are false.
 Yet every loyal woman
 should wish the lad well
 who has raised himself above her.*

*Then this handsomely constructed lad
 turned towards the woods of Brizljan.¹
 He rode until he came upon a brook.
 A rooster could have crossed it easily;
 but grass and flowers grew in such a way
 that rendered it all dark,
 and so the lad avoided fording it.
 He rode beside it all that day,
 according to the guidance of his wits.
 He spent the night as best he could,
 until the daylight shone upon him.
 The lad proceeded all alone
 to a clear and well-shaped ford.
 On the other side was a meadow
 on which there was a tent,
 which had been constructed at great expense.
 Made of three-colored samite,
 it was high and wide,
 with smart-looking ribbons decorating its edges.
 It had a leather screen
 that could be pulled over it
 whenever one desired, because of rain.*

*Inside the wife
 of Duke Orilus of Lalander,
 the noble duchess,
 was winsomely reclining
 like a knight's beloved.
 Her name was Jeschute.*

*The lady was asleep.
 She carried the weapons of love:
 A gleaming red mouth,
 the heart's desire of an avid knight.
 As the lady slept,
 the lips of her mouth came apart,
 heated with the fire of true love.
 So lay this image of desire.
 Her teeth were of snow-white ivory,*

¹ A forest in Brittany.

nâhe bî ein ander kleine,
 sus stuonden ir die liechten zene.
 ich wæn mich iemen küssens wene
 an ein sus wol gelobten munt:
 daz ist mir selten worden kunt.

ir deckelachen zobelîn
 erwant an ir hüffelîn,
 daz si durch hitze von ir stiez,
 dâ si der wirt al eine liez.
 si was geschicket unt gesniten,
 an ir was künste niht vermiten:
 got selbe worht ir süezen lîp.
 och hete daz minneclîche wîp
 langen arm und blanke hant.
 der knappe ein vingerlîn dâ vant,
 daz in gein dem bette twanc,
 da er mit der herzoginne ranc.
 dô dâhter an die muoter sîn:
 diu riet an wîbes vingerlîn.
 ouch spranc der knappe wol getân
 von dem teppiche an daz bette sân.

Diu süeze kiusche unsamfte erschrac,
 do der knappe an ir arme lac:
 si muost iedoch erwachen.
 mit schame al sunder lachen
 diu frouwe zuht gelêret
 sprach "wer hât mich entêret?
 junchêrre, es ist iu gar ze vil:
 ir möht iu nemen ander zil."

diu frouwe lûte klagte:
 ern ruochte waz si sagte,
 ir munt er an den sînen twanc.
 dâ nâch was dô niht ze lanc,
 er druct an sich die herzogîn
 und nam ir och ein vingerlîn.
 an ir hemde ein fûrspan er dâ sach:
 ungefuoge erz dannen brach.
 diu frouwe was mit wîbes wer:
 ir was sîn kraft ein ganzez her.
 doch wart dâ ringens vil getân.
 der knappe klagete'n hunger sân.
 diu frouwe was ir lîbes lieht:
 si sprach "ir solt mîn ezzen nieht.
 wært ir ze frumen wîse,

*well-set in her mouth,
 small and close together.
 I don't think anyone will make me used
 to kissing a mouth that garners so much praise:
 seldom has such a thing happened to me.*

*Her sable cover
 reached only her little hips;
 because of the heat she had pushed it down
 when her lord had left her all alone.
 She was well shaped and molded;
 no art was spared on her:
 God himself had constructed her sweet body.
 This lovely lady also had
 a slender arm and white hand.
 The lad saw a ring there.
 It drew him toward the bed,
 so that he put his body next to hers.
 He thought about the counsel of his mother
 when she had spoken to him of women's rings.
 Therefore the handsome lad
 sprang from the carpet onto the bed.*

*The sweet and chaste lady was rudely surprised
 to find the lad in her arms:
 of course she awoke.
 With shame and with no laughter
 the genteel lady said,
 "Who is on top of me?
 Young sir, your eagerness has gone too far.
 It seems you should find something else to do."*

*The lady cried out loudly;
 he ignored what she said
 and pressed her mouth against his.
 Before long
 he was hugging the duchess to himself,
 and he took her ring.
 On her smock he saw a brooch;
 he tore that from her.
 The lady had only a woman's weapons;
 to her his strength was overpowering.
 Yet a great battle occurred.
 The lad complained that he was hungry.
 The lady, whose body was slight, said,
 "You can hardly eat me!
 If you had any sense,*

ir næmt iu ander spîse.
dort stêt brôt unde wîn,
und ouch zwei pardrîsekîn,
alss ein juncfrouwe brâhte,
dius wê nec iu gedâhte.”
Ern ruochte wâ diu wirtin saz:
einen guoten kropf er az,
dar nâch er swære trünke tranc.
die frouwen dûhte gar ze lanc
sîns wesens in dem poulûn.
si wânde, er wære ein garzûn
gescheiden von den witzzen.
ir scham begunde switzen.
iedoch sprach diu herzogîn
“junchêrre, ir sult mîn vingerlîn
hie lâzen unt mîn fûrspan.
hebt iuch enwec: wan kumt mîn man,
ir müezet zûrnen lîden,
daz ir gerner möhtet mîden.”

dô sprach der knappe wol geborn
“wê waz fûrht ich iurs mannes zorn?
wan schadet ez iu an êren,
sô wil ich hinnen kêren.”
dô gienger zuo dem bette sân:
ein ander kus dâ wart getân.
daz was der herzoginne leit.
der knappe ân urloup dannen reit:
iedoch sprach er “got hüete dîn:
alsus riet mir diu muoter mîn.”

der knappe des roubes was gemeit.
do er eine wîl von dan gereit,
wol nâch gein der mîle zil,
dô kom von dem ich sprechen wil.
der spûrte an dem touwe
daz gesuochet was sîn frouwe.
der snüere ein teil was ûz getret:
dâ hete ein knappe dez gras gewet.
Der fûrste wert unt erkant
sîn wîp dort unde al trûric vant.
dô sprach der stolze Orilus
“ôwê frowe, wie hân ich sus
mîn dienst gein iu gewendet!
mir ist nâch laster gendet
manec rîterlîcher prîs.

*you would find some other food to eat.
Over there are bread and wine,
and two partridges as well;
though the serving-girl who brought them
was hardly thinking of you.”
He took no heed of where his hostess sat.²
He ate a hearty portion
and drank deeply.
The lady thought his stay in the pavilion
was far too long.
She thought he was a boy
completely bereft of wits.
She began to sweat with shame.
Nevertheless the duchess said,
“Young sir, you must leave
my ring and my brooch here.
Now go away: if my husband arrives,
you will face some anger
that you had best avoid.”*

*At this the well-born lad replied,
“Why should I fear your husband’s anger?
But if it injures your honor,
then I will go away.”
Then he went up to the bed
and took another kiss.
That caused the duchess grief.
The lad rode off without saying farewell.
He did say this, however: “God shield you, lady.
That’s what my mother told me I should say.”*

*The lad was pleased with his spoils.
When he had ridden for a while,
perhaps a mile or so,
someone arrived; I’ll tell you who it was.
By the dew in the grass he saw
that his lady had had a visitor.
Some of the tent ropes had been trampled,
and someone had ridden over the grass.
This famous and noble prince
found his wife in there, all overcome with grief.
Then the proud Orilus said,
“Alas, woman, how freely
I have given you my service!
So many knightly prizes
have now been lost in shame.*

² According to medieval custom, he should wait for an invitation to sit at his hostess’s side.

ir habt ein ander âmîs.”
 diu frouwe bôt ir lougen
 mit wazzerrîchen ougen
 sô, daz sie unschuldîc wære.
 ern geloubte niht ir mære.

iedoch sprach si mit forhten siten
 “dâ kom ein tôr her zuo geriten:
 swaz ich liute erkennenet hân,
 ine gesach nie lîp sô wol getân.
 mîn fûrspan unde ein vingerlîn
 nam er âne den willen mîn.”
 “hey sîn lîp iu wol gevellet.
 ir habt iuch zim gesellet.”
 dô sprach si “nune welle got.
 sîniu ribbalîn, sîn gabilôt
 wârn mir doch ze nâhen.
 diu rede iu solte smâhen:
 fûrstinne ez übele zæme,
 op si dâ minne næme.”

aber sprach der fûrste sân
 “frouwe, ich hân iu niht getân:
 irn welt iuch einer site schamn:
 ir liezet kûneginne namn
 und heizt durch mich ein herzogin.
 der kouf gît mir ungewin.
 Mîn manheit ist doch sô quec,
 daz iwer bruoder Erec,
 mîn swâger, fil li roy Lac,
 iuch wol dar umbe hazzen mac.
 mich erkennenet och der wîse
 an sô bewantern prîse,
 der ninder mag entêret sîn,
 wan daz er mich vor Prurîn
 mit sîner tjoste valte.
 an im ich sît bezalte
 hôhen prîs vor Karnant.
 ze rechter tjost stach in mîn hant
 hinderz ors durh fianze:
 durch sînen schilt mîn lanze
 iwer kleinöete brâhte.
 vil wênc ich dô gedâhte
 iwerr minne eim anderm trûte,
 mîn frouwe Jeschûte.

You have another friend.”
The lady pleaded
with tearful eyes
that she was innocent;
but he did not believe her story.

Yet fearfully she continued,
“A fool came riding in here.
Of all the people I have ever seen,
his body was the most shapely.
Against my will he made off
with my brooch and my ring.”
“So you found him pleasing,
and you spent time with him.”
She answered, “No, by God!
All the same, his boots and javelin
were too close for my comfort.
You should watch what you are saying:
it is not seemly for a princess
to accept that kind of love.”

But the prince said,
“Lady, I have caused you no harm
unless you are ashamed of one thing:
that you gave up the title of queen
to become a duchess by marrying me.
The situation is to my disadvantage.
Yet my manhood is so strong
that your brother Eric,
my brother in law, the son of King Lac,
may well hate you for it.
That clever man knows
I am held in such high esteem
that nothing can be said against me,
except that before Prurin
he defeated me in a joust.
But before Karnant
I paid him back in full.
In the joust my hand
sent him backwards off his horse:
my lance drove your token
through his shield.
At that time I hardly thought
some other lover would receive your love,
my lady Jeschute.

frouwe, ir sult gelouben des,
 daz der stolze Gâlôes
 fil li roy Gandîn
 tôt lac von der tjoste mîn.
 ir hielt ouch dâ nâhen bî,
 dâ Plihopliherî
 gein mir durch tjostieren reit
 und mich sîn strîten niht vermeit.
 mîn tjoste in hinderz ors verswanc,
 daz in der satel ninder dranc.
 ich hân dicke prîs bezalt
 und manegen ritter ab gevalt.
 des enmoht ich nu geniezen niht:
 ein hôhez laster mir des giht.

Si hazzent mich besunder,
 die von der tavelrunder,
 der ich ähte nider stach,
 da'z manec wert juncfrouwe sach,
 umben spärwær ze Kanedic.
 ich behielt iu prîs und mir den sic.
 daz sâhet ir unt Artûs,
 der mîne swester hât ze hûs,
 die süezen Cunnewâren.
 ir munt kan niht gebâren
 mit lachen, ê si den gesiht
 dem man des hôhsten prîses giht.
 wan kœm mir doch der selbe man!
 sô wurde ein strîten hie getân,
 als hiute morgen, dô ich streit
 und eime fürsten frumte leit,
 der mir sîn tjostieren bôt:
 von mîner tjoste lager tôt.

ich enwil iu niht von zorne sagen,
 daz manger hât sîn wîp geslagen
 umb ir krenker schulde.
 het ich dienst od hulde,
 daz ich iu solte bieten,
 ir müest iuch mangels nieten.
 ich ensol niht mêt erwarmen
 an iweren blanken armen,
 dâ ich etswenn durch minne lac

*“Lady, of course you know
 that my jousting has felled
 the proud Galoes,³
 the son of King Gandin.
 And you were right there
 when Plihopliheri
 rode at me in a joust
 and did not stint in his prowess.
 My jousting threw him over his horse,
 so that he no longer sat in his saddle.
 I have won many prizes
 and have thrown down many knights.
 But now I get no benefit from this:
 instead a great disgrace oppresses me.*

*“They all hate me,
 the knights of the Round Table,
 eight of whom I fought
 (as all the maidens saw)
 for the sparrowhawk of Kanedic.⁴
 I won the prize for you, and glory for myself.
 You saw it, as did Arthur,
 whose house holds my sister,
 the sweet Cunneware.
 No laughter can come from her mouth
 until she has seen
 the man who deserves the highest praise of all.
 Would that such a man might arrive!
 Then there would be a battle
 like the one this morning,
 when I fought and injured a prince
 who challenged me in jousting:
 The jousting that I gave him caused his death.*

*“I will refrain from pointing out in anger
 that many men have struck their wives
 in punishment for lesser guilt than yours.
 If there were any service or favor
 that you by right could ask of me,
 you would have to do without it.
 No longer shall I warm myself
 in your white arms,
 where lately I have lain in love*

³ Here we learn that Duke Orilus is responsible for the death of Gahmuret's brother Galoes, which we learned about in Part II.

⁴ The sparrowhawk is the prize in a tournament in the Arthurian story *Erec and Enide* by Chrétien de Troyes. The Eric referred to here is the main character of that story.

manegen wünneclichen tac.
 ich sol velwen iweren rôten munt,
 [und] iweren ougen machen rôete kunt.
 ich sol iu fröude entêren,
 [und] iwer herze siuften lêren.”
 Diu fürstin an den fürsten sach:
 ir munt dô jæmerlichen sprach
 “nu êret an mir ritters prîs.
 ir sît getriuwe unde wîs,
 und ouch wol sô gewaldic mîn,
 ir muget mir geben hôhen pîn.
 ir sult ê mîn gerihte nemn.
 durch elliu wîp lâts iuch gezemn:
 ir mugt mir dannoch füegen nôt.
 læge ich von andern handen tôt,
 daz iu niht prîs geneicte,
 swie schier ich denne veicte,
 daz wære mir ein süeziu zît,
 sît iwer hazzen an mir lît.”

aber sprach der fürste mêr
 “frouwe, ir wert mir gar ze hêr:
 des sol ich an iu mâzen.
 geselleschaft wirt lâzen
 mit trinken und mit ezzen:
 bî ligens wirt vergezzen.
 ir enphâhet mêr dehein gewant,
 wan als ich iuch sitzen vant.
 iwer zom muoz sîn ein bāstîn seil,
 iwer phert bejagt wol hungers teil,
 iwer satel wol gezieret
 der wirt enschumphieret.”
 vil balder zarte unde brach
 den samît drabe: dô daz geschach,
 er zersluoc den satel dâ se inne reit
 (ir kiusche unde ir wîpheit
 Sîn hazzen lîden muosten):
 mit bāstînen buosten
 bant ern aber wider zuo.
 ir kom sîn hazzen alze fruo.

dô sprach er an den zîten
 “frowe, nu sulen wir rîten.
 kœme ich ann, des wurde ich geil,
 der hie nam iwerre minne teil.
 ich bestüende in doch durch âventiur,
 ob sîn âtem gæbe fiur,

*and whiled many a blissful day away.
 I'll drain the redness from your mouth
 and fill your eyes with it.
 I'll take away whatever joy you feel
 and teach your heart to sigh.”
 The princess looked at the prince.
 Dolefully her mouth said,
 “Uphold your knightly fame in judging me.
 Faithful and wise as you are,
 you also have the power
 to cause me great pain.
 You should hear my defense.
 For the sake of all women, please do so;
 thereafter you can cause me grief enough.
 Were I to die by other hands,
 so long as your honor suffered no harm
 on my account,
 that event would please me well,
 since I am the target of your hatred.”*

*But the prince continued,
 “Lady, you have become entirely too haughty for me.
 This is behavior that I shall correct.
 No longer shall we
 eat or drink together;
 our lying together is forgotten.
 I shall provide you no clothing
 except what you are wearing, sitting there.
 For a bridle you shall have a cord of bast.
 Your horse shall endure hunger,
 and your beautifully-decorated saddle
 shall be destroyed.”
 Suddenly he ripped and tore
 the samite from it; having done that,
 he smashed the saddle that she used to ride
 (her purity and womanhood
 were forced to endure his hatred)
 and tied it up again
 with cords of bast.
 Thus suddenly his hatred came upon her.*

*At that he said,
 “Lady, let us now ride.
 If we were to happen upon the one with whom
 you shared your love, I would be glad of it.
 I would face him in combat
 even if he could breathe fire*

als eines wilden trachen.”
 al weinde sunder lachen
 diu frouwe jâmers rîche
 schiet dannen trûreclîche.
 sine müete niht, swaz ir geschach,
 wan ir mannes ungemach:
 des trûren gap ir grôze nôt,
 daz si noch sampfter wære tât.
 nu sult ir si durch triwe klagn:
 si begint nu hôhen kumber tragn.
 wær mir aller wîbe haz bereit,
 mich müet doch froun Jeschûten leit.
 sus riten si ûf der slâ hin nâch:
 dem knappen vorn ouch was vil gâch.
 doch wesse der unverzagte
 niht daz man in jagte:
 wan swen sîn ougen sâhen,
 so er dem begunde nâhen,
 den gruozte der knappe guoter,
 und jach “sus riet mîn muoter.”

sus kom unser toerscher knabe
 geriten eine halden abe.
 wîbes stimme er hôrte
 vor eines velses orte.
 ein frouwe ûz rehtem jâmer schrei:
 ir was diu wære freude enzwei.
 der knappe reit ir balde zuo.
 nu hœret waz diu frouwe tuo.
 dâ brach frou Sigûne
 ir langen zöpfe brûne
 vor jâmer ûzer swarten.
 der knappe begunde warten:
 Schîânatulander
 den fürsten tât dâ vander
 der juncfrouwen in ir schôz.
 aller schimphe si verdrôz.

“er sî trûric od freuden var,
 die bat mîn muoter grûezen gar.
 got halde iuch,” sprach des knappen munt.
 “ich hân hie jâmerlîchen funt
 in iworm schôze funden.
 wer gap iun ritter wunden?”
 der knappe unverdrozzen
 sprach “wer hât in erschozzen?
 geschahez mit eime gabylôt?”

like a wild dragon.”
Tearfully and with no laughter
that greatly-suffering lady
departed in sorrow.
She cared but little for what she endured;
it pained her that her husband was upset.
His sorrow caused her such great distress
that she would rather have died.
Let us bemoan the way her faithfulness
has caused her to endure such suffering.
Were I to face the hatred of all women,
Still the Lady Jeschute’s pain would cause me grief.
Thus they rode along the trail.
The lad in front of them rode swiftly too.
But he was unaware
that he was being hunted:
Whenever his eyes saw someone,
the good lad would approach him
and greet him, saying,
“That is what my mother said to do.”

So came our simple boy
riding down a slope.
He heard the voice of a woman
beside a cliff.
A lady was crying out in genuine anguish:
for her true happiness was split in two.
The lad rode quickly over to her.
Now hear what the lady was doing.
There the lady Sigune
was tearing her long brown braids
from her head in grief.
The lad observed her:
The prince Schianatulander
lay dead
in the maiden’s lap.
She sat and moaned in her unhappiness.

“Whether of happy or of sad aspect,
all must be greeted: so my mother said.
God help you!” spoke the lad’s mouth.
“Here in your lap I have found
a sorrowful object.
Who gave this knight his wounds?”
The lad continued eagerly,
“Who shot him?
Was the weapon a javelin?

mich dunket, frouwe, er lige tôt.
welt ir mir dâ von iht sagn,
wer iu den rîter habe erslagn?
ob ich in müge errîten,
ich wil gerne mit im strîten.”

Dô greif der knappe mære
zuo sîme kochære:
vil scharphiu gabylôt er vant.
er fuort ouch dannoch beidiu phant
diu er von Jeschûten brach
unde ein tumpheit dâ geschach.
het er gelernt sîns vater site,
die werdeclîche im wonte mite,
diu bukel wære gehurtet baz,
da diu herzoginne al eine saz,
diu sît vil kumbers durch in leit.
mêr danne ein ganzez jâr si meit
gruoz von ir mannes lîbe.
unrehte geschach dem wîbe.
nu høert ouch von Sigûnen sagn:
diu kunde ir leit mit jâmer klagn.
si sprach zem knappen “du hâst tugent.
gêret sî dîn sûeziu jugent
unt dîn antlûtze minneclîch.
deiswâr du wirst noch sælden rîch.
disen ritter meit dez gabylôt:
er lac ze tjustieren tôt.
du bist geborn von triuwen,
daz er dich sus kan riuwen.”
ê si den knappen rîten lieze,
si vrâgte in ê wie er hieze,
und jach er trûege den gotes vlîz.
“bon fîz, scher fîz, bêâ fîz,
alsus hât mich genennet
der mich dâ heime erkennet.”

Dô diu rede was getân,
si erkant in bî dem namen sân.
nu høert in rehter nennen,
daz ir wol müget erkennen
wer dirre âventiur hêrre sî:
der hielt der juncfrouwen bî.
ir rôter munt sprach sunder twâl
“deiswâr du heizest Parzivâl.
der nam ist rehte enmitten durch.
grôz liebe ier solch herzen furch

*It seems to me, lady, that he is dead.
Won't you tell me something
about who killed this knight?
If I could ride him down,
I'd gladly fight with him.”*

*Then the pure lad
reached into his quiver;
he found sharp javelins there.
He also still carried both objects
he had taken from Jeschute
when he had stupidly accosted her.
If he had learned the skills
that his father had been wont to practice,
the mark would have been hit with more success,
for the duchess was all alone;
as it was she suffered much on his account.
For more than a whole year
she had no contact with her husband's body.
That woman was the victim of injustice.
Now listen to what I say about Sigune,
who justly complained of her sorrow.
She said to the lad, “You have virtue.
All honor to your sweet youth
and your lovely face.
Truly you will be rich in blessings.
No javelin slew this knight:
he met his death in a joust.
You are faithful by birth,
to feel such pity for him.”
Before she let the lad ride on,
she asked him his name,
and told him he reflected God's image.
“Good son, sweet son, beautiful son:
so I was called
by those who knew me at home.”*

*As soon as the words were spoken,
she knew him by these names.
Now hear him correctly called
so that you might know
who is the master of this adventure.
He stood by the maiden.
Her red mouth said, without delay,
“In truth the name you bear is Parzival,
which signifies a hole right through the center.”⁵
Great love made such a furrow*

mit dîner muoter triuwe:
 dîn vater liez ir riuwe.
 ichn gihe dirs niht ze ruome,
 dîn muoter ist mîn muome,
 und sag dir sunder valschen list
 die rehten wârheit, wer du bist.
 dîn vater was ein Anschevîn:
 ein Wâleis von der muoter dîn
 bistu geborn von Kanvoleiz.
 die rehten wârheit ich des weiz.
 du bist och kûnec ze Norgâls:
 in der houbetstat ze Kingrivâls
 sol dîn houbet krône tragen.
 dirre fürste wart durch dich erslagen,
 wand er dîn lant ie werte:
 sîne triwe er nie verscherte.
 junc vlætlic süezer man,
 die gebuoder hânt dir vil getân.
 zwei lant nam dir Lâhelîn:
 disen ritter unt den vetern dîn
 ze tjustiern sluoc Orilus.
 der liez och mich in jâmer sus.
 Mir diende ân alle schande
 dirre fürste von dîm lande:
 dô zôch mich dîn muoter.
 lieber neve guoter,
 nu hoer waz disiu mære sîn.
 ein bracken seil gap im den pîn.
 in unser zweier dienste den tût
 hât er bejagt, und jâmers nôt
 mir nâch sîner minne.
 ich hete kranke sinne,
 daz ich im niht minne gap:
 des hât der sorgen urhap
 mir freude verschrôten:
 nu minne i'n alsô tôten."

dô sprach er "niftel, mir ist leit
 dîn kumber und mîn laster breit.
 swenne ich daz mac gerechen,
 daz wil ich gerne zechen."
 dô was im gein dem strîte gâch.

*because of your mother's faithfulness:
 your father left her sorrow.
 I tell you, and not in boasting,
 your mother is my aunt,
 and with no falsehood and no trickery
 I'll tell you who you are.
 Your father was an Angevin;
 your mother's heritage is from Waleis;
 you were born at Kanvoleis.
 I know that this is certainly the truth.
 You also are the King of Norgals:
 Someday, in the capital Kingrivals,
 your head shall wear the crown.
 This prince was slain on your behalf,
 because he defended your land.
 His fidelity never faltered.
 O fair and sweet young man,
 two brothers have caused you much harm.
 Lehelin took two kingdoms from you;
 this knight, together with your father's brother,
 were slain in jousting by Duke Orilus.
 He left me here in grief, as you can see.
 This prince of your land
 served me with spotless honor.
 I was a member of your mother's household.
 Dear and good cousin,
 now hear the tale of how this came about.
 A hound's leash was the cause of all his pain.⁶
 He died serving us,
 and he suffered the pain
 of love for me.
 I was weak-minded
 not to give him my love.
 This is the reason for the sorrow
 that has ground my joy to bits.
 I love him, now that he has suffered death."*

*He responded, "Cousin, I am sorry
 for your sorrow and my failure."⁷
 If I am ever able to avenge
 the death he suffered, I will gladly do it."
 He was eager to seek battle,*

⁵ Wolfram connects the Old French name Perceval to the Old French phrase *perce à val*, or *pierce through*.

⁶ The story behind this obscure sentence is told in *Titurel*, another romance by Wolfram. In that story, Sigune sends Schi-anatulander to recover the leash of a hound that has strayed, and he suffers as a result.

⁷ The failure is Parzival's inability to avenge the knight who has defended him.

si wîste in unrehte nâch:
 si vorht daz er den lîp verlûr
 unt daz si grœzeren schaden kür.
 eine strâze er dô gevienc,
 diu gein den Berteneysen gienc:
 diu was gestrîcht unde breit.
 swer im widergienc od widerreit,
 ez wære rittr od koufman,
 die selben gruofter alle sân,
 und jach, ez wær sîn muoter rât.
 diu gabn ouch âne missetât.

der âbent begunde nâhen,
 grôz müede gein im gâhen.
 Do ersach der tumpheit genôz
 ein hûs ze guoter mâze grôz.
 dâ was inne ein arger wirt,
 als noch ûf ungeslâhte birt,
 daz was ein vischære
 und aller güete lære.
 den knappen hunger lêrte
 daz er dergegene kêrte
 und klagte dem wirte hungers nôt.
 der sprach “in gæbe ein halbez brôt
 iu niht ze drîzec jâren.
 swer mîner milte vâren
 vergebene wil, der sûmet sich,
 ine sorge umb niemen danne um mich,
 dar nâch um mîniu kindelîn.
 iren komt tâlanc dâ her in.
 het ir phenninge oder phant,
 ich behielt iuch al zehant.”
 dô bôt im der knappe sân
 froun Jeschûten fûrsan.
 dô daz der vilân ersach,
 sîn munt derlachte unde sprach
 “wiltu belîben, sîezec kint,
 dich êrent al die hinne sint.”
 “wiltu mich hînt wol spîsen
 und morgen rehte wîsen
 gein Artûs (dem bin ich holt),
 sô mac belîben dir daz golt.”
 “diz tuon ich,” sprach der vilân.
 “ine gesach nie lîp sô wol getân.
 ich pringe dich durch wunder
 fûr des kûnges tavelrunder.”

*but she sent him the wrong way:
 she feared that he would lose his life,
 and she would suffer even greater harm.
 He went along a road
 that led towards the kingdom of the Britons;
 it was smooth and wide.
 He gave his greeting to everyone he met,
 whether riding or afoot,
 knight or merchant.
 He said, “This is what Mother said to do.”
 He did this without meaning any harm.*

*The evening was approaching,
 and suddenly he was very weary.
 Then the companion of simplicity
 saw a good-sized house.
 Inside it was a self-regarding host,
 who was of low birth,
 a fisherman
 devoid of all kindness.
 Hunger caused the lad
 to turn that way
 and tell the host of the distress he felt.
 He said, “I wouldn’t give you half a loaf
 of bread, not if you asked me thirty years.
 The one who asks for generosity
 from me is making ill use of his time.
 For I look after no one but myself,
 and then my children.
 You will not be admitted here today.
 If you had anything of any worth,
 of course I’d let you in.”
 Then the lad showed him
 the lady Jeschute’s brooch.
 When the low-born man saw it,
 his mouth became a smile, and he said,
 “If you would like to stay here, my dear child,
 the residents here will all honor you.”
 “If you feed me well tonight
 and tomorrow you point me correctly
 towards Arthur (I am pledged to serve him),
 then you can keep the gold.”
 “Yes, I will do so,” said the low-born man.
 I never have seen such a handsome person.
 And, though it must be a miracle,
 I’ll take you to the Round Table of the king.”*

Die naht beleip der knappe dâ:
man sah in smorgens anderswâ.
des tages er kûme erbeite.
der wirt ouch sich bereite
und lief im vor, der knappe nâch
reit: dô was in beiden gâch.

mîn hêr Hartmann von Ouwe,
frou Ginovêr iwer frouwe
und iwer hêrre der kûnc Artûs,
den kumt ein mîn gast ze hûs.
bitet hûeten sîn vor spotte.
ern ist gîge noch diu rotte:
si sulen ein ander gampel nemn:
daz lâzen sich durch zuht gezemn.
anders iwer frouwe Enîde
unt ir muoter Karsnafide
werdent durch die mûl gezûcket
unde ir lop gebrûcket.
sol ich den munt mit spotte zern,
ich wil mînen friunt mit spotte wern.

dô kom der vischære
und ouch der knappe mære
einer hauptstat sô nâhen,
aldâ si Nantes sâhen.
dô sprach er “kint, got hûete dîn.
nu sich, dort soltu rîten in.”
dô sprach der knappe an wîzen laz
“du solt mich wîsen fûrbaz.”
“wie wol mîn lîp daz bewart!
diu mâssenîe ist sôlher art,
genæht ir immer vilân,
daz wær vil sêre missetân.”

Der knappe al eine fûrbaz reit
ûf einen plân niht ze breit:
der stuont von bluomen lieht gemâl.
in zôch nehein Curvenâl:
er kunde kurtôsîe niht,
als ungevarnem man geschiht.
sîn zoum der was pâstîn,
und harte kranc sîn phârdelîn:

*The lad remained there for the night;
in the morning he was somewhere else.
He could hardly wait for daybreak.
The host also prepared himself.
He went in front, the lad riding behind;
for both were in a hurry.*

*My lord Hartmann von Ouwe,⁸
a guest of mine draws near
the house of your lady Guinevere
and your lord King Arthur.
Ensure, please, that while there he isn't mocked.
He is no fiddle, nor is he a rote.⁹
So let them play some other instrument
and find amusement for themselves that way.
If not, your lady Enide
and her mother Karsnafide
will go through the mill
and suffer harm to reputation.
My mouth, if ever it speaks mockery,
will do it to support a friend who's mocked.*

*Then the fisherman
and the lad of the story
approached a capital city;
there they saw Nantes.
Then he said, “Child, God protect you.
“That is where you should ride in.”
Then the lad, lacking in wit, said,
“You should lead me further.”
“Not on my life!
Those men are so well bred
that if a low-born man went up to them,
that would be a serious misdeed.”*

*The lad rode ahead alone
through a meadow, not too wide;
there he stood, surrounded by bright flowers.
He had no Curvenal to train him.¹⁰
He knew nothing of courtesy,
as is the case with men who are not taught.
His bridle was made of bast,
and his little horse was frail;*

⁸ Another German author of Arthurian romances, and an older contemporary of Wolfram.

⁹ A rote is a kind of medieval stringed instrument. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crwth>.

¹⁰ Curvenal was Tristan's tutor. In contrast, Parzival has been taught nothing.

daz tet von strûchen manegen val.
 ouch was sîn satel über al
 unbeslagen mit niwen ledern.
 samît, hârmîner vedern
 man dâ vil lützel an im siht.
 ern bedorfte der mantelsnüere niht:
 für suknî und für surkôt,
 dâ für nam er sîn gabylôt.
 des site man gein prîse maz,
 sîn vater was gekleidet paz
 ûfem tepch vor Kanvoleiz.

der geliez nie vorhtlîchen sweiz
 im kom ein ritter widerriten.
 den gruofter nâch sînen siten.
 “got hald iuch, riet mîn muoter mir.”
 “junchêrre, got lôn iu unt ir,”
 sprach Artûses basen sun.
 den zôch Utependragûn:
 ouch sprach der selbe wîgant
 erbeschaft ze Bertâne ûfez lant.
 ez was Ithêr von Gaheviez:
 den rôten rîter man in hiez.

Sîn harnasch was gar sô rôten
 daz ez den ougen rôete bôt:
 sîn ors was rôten unde snel,
 al rôten was sîn gügerel,
 rôten samît was sîn covertiur,
 sîn schilt noch rôeter danne ein fiur,
 al rôten was sîn kursît
 und wol an in gesniten wît,
 rôten was sîn schaft, rôten was sîn sper,
 al rôten nâch des heldes ger
 was im sîn swert gerœtet,
 nâch der scherpfe iedoch gelœtet.
 der kûnec von Kûkûmerlant,
 al rôten von golde ûf sîner hant
 stuont ein kopf vil wol ergrabn,
 ob tavelrunder ûf erhâbn.
 blanc was sîn vel, rôten was sîn hâr.
 der sprach zem knappen sunder vâr
 “gêret sî dîn sîezer lîp:
 dich brâht zer werlde ein reine wîp.
 wol der muoter diu dich bar!
 ine gesach nie lîp sô wol gevar.
 du bist der wâren minne blic,

*it stumbled many times.
 Nor was his saddle covered at all
 with new leather.
 On him one could hardly see
 any samite or soft ermine.
 He had no cloak that needed fastening;
 instead of a jacket and surcoat
 he carried a javelin.
 His father, who had been a model knight,
 was better dressed
 on that carpet before Kanvoleis.*

*He who had never felt the grip of fear
 now saw a knight approaching on a horse.
 To him he gave his customary greeting.
 “God keep you! So my mother said to say.”
 “Young sir, may God reward both you and her!”
 So spoke the knight, the son of Arthur’s aunt.
 King Utependragun had brought him up;
 thereby he claimed hereditary rights
 to all the land of Britain.
 His true name was Ither von Gaheviez;
 but men referred to him as the Red Knight.*

*His harness was so entirely red
 that it made the eyes turn red.
 His horse was red and swift;
 it had a red hood piece
 and a covering of red samite.
 His shield was redder than a fire.
 All red was his padded jacket,
 and well cut.
 Red were the shaft and point of his spear.
 According to the hero’s wish his sword
 was stained bright red;
 and yet the sword was tempered and was sharp.
 This knight, who was the King of Cumberland,
 held in his hand a goblet made of gold,
 the bowl of which was lavishly engraved,
 and which he had removed from the Round Table.
 His skin was white, his hair was red.
 Forthrightly he told the lad,
 “Blessed be your lovely body.
 A pure woman has brought you into the world.
 Good for the mother who bore you!
 Never have I seen someone so handsome.
 You are the true vision of love,*

ir schumphentiure unde ir sic.
 vil wîbes freude an dir gesigt,
 der nâch dir jâmer swære wigt.
 lieber friunt, wilt du dâ hin in,
 sô sage mir durch den dienest mîn
 Artûse und den sînen,
 ine sîle niht flühtic schînen:
 ich wil hie gerne beiten
 swer zer tjost sich sol bereiten.

Ir neheiner habz für wunder.
 ich reit für tavelrunder,
 mîns landes ich mich underwant:
 disen koph mîn ungefüegiu hant
 ûf zucte, daz der wîn vergôz
 froun Ginovêrn in ir schôz.
 underwinden mich daz lêrte.
 ob ich schoube umbe kêrte,
 sô wurde ruozec mir mîn vel.
 daz meit ich,” sprach der degen snel.
 “ine hânz ouch niht durch roup getân:
 des hât mîn krône mich erlân.
 friunt, nu sage der kûnegîn,
 ich begüzzes ân den willen mîn,
 aldâ die werden sâzen,
 die rehter wer vergâzen.
 ez sîn künge od fürsten,
 wes lânt se ir wirt erdürsten?
 wan holent sim hie sîn goltvaz?
 ir sneller prîs wirt anders laz.”

der knappe sprach “ich wirbe dir
 swaz du gesprochen hât ze mir.”
 er reit von im ze Nantes in.
 dâ volgeten im diu kindelîn
 ûf den hof für den palas,
 dâ maneger slahte fuore was.
 schiere wart umb in gedranc.
 Iwânet dar nâher spranc:
 der knappe valsches vrîe
 derbôt im kumpânîe.

Der knappe sprach “got halde dich,
 bat reden mîn muoter mich,
 ê daz ich schiede von ir hûs.

*her defeat and her victory.
 The joy of many women will be yours,
 but after that you will succumb to grief.
 Dear friend, if it's your purpose to go in,
 then please report to Arthur and his men
 on my behalf
 I haven't run away:
 I'll stay right here, and I will gladly wait
 for any who prepares himself to joust.*

*“Not one of them should be surprised at this.
 I rode to the Round Table
 in order to claim possession of my lands:
 My hand took up this goblet
 to press my claim; but clumsily I spilled
 wine in the lap of the lady Guinevere.
 I did that which I had set out to do.
 If I had chosen to invert a torch,
 I would have gotten soot upon myself.”¹¹
 The brave warrior quickly added, “I didn't do it
 in order to steal:
 being a king, I have no need of that.
 Now, friend, please tell the queen
 I spilled the wine on her by accident.
 All those worthy men
 sat there doing nothing.
 They may be kings and princes,
 but why do they allow their host to thirst
 this way? Why don't they come retrieve his goblet?
 Unless they do it, their good name is lost.”*

*The lad said, “I will do
 as you have asked.”
 He rode away from him and into Nantes.
 Little children followed him
 to the courtyard in front of the palace.
 A great commotion sprang up there.
 A crowd gathered all around him.
 Iwanet, a lad free of falsehood,
 approached him
 and offered to keep him company.*

*The lad said, “God keep you!
 That is what my mother said to say
 when I was still residing in her house.*

¹¹ Seizing a goblet and inverting a torch were both symbolic gestures communicating the intent to seize the territory claimed by the Red Knight.

ich sihe hie mangan Artûs:
wer sol mich ritter machen?"
Iwânet begunde lachen,
er sprach "dun sihst des rehten niht;
daz aber schiere nu geschiht."

er fuort in in zem palas,
dâ diu werde massenîe was.
sus vil kund er in schalle,
er sprach "got halde iuch [hêren] alle,
benamn den kûnec und des wîp.
mir gebôt mîn muoter an den lîp,
daz ich die gruozte sunder:
unt die ob [der] tavelrunder
von rehtem prîse heten stat,
die selben si mich grîezen bat.
dar an ein kunst mich verbirt,
ine weiz niht welher hinne ist wirt.
dem hât ein ritter her enboten
(den sah ich allenthalben roten),
er well sîn dûze bîten.
mich dunct er welle strîten.
im ist ouch leit daz er den wîn
vergôz ûf die kûnegîn.
ôwî wan het ich sîn gewant
enphangen von des kûnges hant!
sô wær ich freuden rîche:
wan ez stêt sô rîterlîche."

Der knappe unbetwungen
wart harte vil gedrunge,
gehurtet her unde dar.
sie nâmen sîner varwe war.
diz was selpschouwet,
gehêrret noch gefrouwet
wart nie minneclîcher fruht.
got was an einer sîezen zuht,
do'r Parzivâlen worhte.

der vreise wênec vorhte
sus wart für Artûsen brâht
an dem got wunsches het erdâht.
im kunde niemen vîent sîn.
do besah in ouch diu kûnegîn,
ê si schiede von dem palas,
dâ si dâ vor begozzen was.
Artûs an den knappen sach:

*I see many Arthurs here;
which one will make me a knight?"
Iwanet began to laugh.
He said, "You cannot see the right one here;
but soon you will."*

*He led the lad into the palace,
where the worthy company was assembled.
The lad's voice resounded in the hall.
He said, "God keep all you lords,
especially the king and his wife.
My mother instructed me
to greet them above all;
and those who sit at the Round Table,
because of their great renown,
she bade me greet as well.
But there is one thing I don't know:
Which one of you is the host?
I bring that one a message from a knight
(I saw him; he was red from head to foot).
He's waiting patiently outside the city.
It seems to me he's looking for a fight.
He also says he's sorry that he spilled
the wine upon the queen.
Oh, if only the king had given me
the clothes he wears!
That would bring me joy,
for they look so knightly."*

*The outspoken lad
was pushed around
this way and that.
They noticed his appearance.
It seemed to them
that no lord or lady
ever had a fairer form.
God was in a good mood
when He created Parzival.*

*Thus he who had little fear of anything
was brought before King Arthur.
No one could oppose him,
for he expressed God's will.
The queen saw him too,
before she left the palace
where she had sat before.
Arthur looked at the lad.*

zuo dem tumben er dô sprach
 “junchêrre, got vergelt iu gruoꝝ,
 den ich vil gerne dienen muoꝝ
 mit [dem] lîbe und mit dem guote.
 des ist mir wol ze muote.”

“wolt et got, wan wær daz wâr!
 der wîle dunket mich ein jâr.
 daz ich niht ritter wesen sol,
 daz tuot mir wirs denne wol.
 nune sûmet mich niht mêre,
 phlegt mîn nâch ritters êre.”
 “daz tuon ich gerne,” sprach der wirt,
 “ob werdekeit mich niht verbirt.
 Du bist wol sô gehiure,
 rîch an koste stiure
 wirt dir mîn gâbe undertân.
 dêswâr ich solz ungerne lân.
 du solt unz morgen beiten:
 ich wil dich wol bereiten.”

der wol geborne knappe
 hielt gagernde als ein trappe.
 er sprach “in wil hie nihtes biten.
 mir kom ein ritter widerriten:
 mac mir des harnasch werden niht,
 ine ruoch wer kûneges gâbe giht.
 sô gît mir aber diu muoter mîn:
 ich wæn doch diust ein kûnegîn.”

Artûs sprach zem knappen sân
 “daz harnasch hât an im ein man,
 daz ich tirs niht getôrste gebn.
 ich muoꝝ doch sus mit kumber lebn
 ân alle mîne schulde,
 sît ich darbe sîner hulde.
 ez ist Ithêr von Gaheviez,
 der trûren mir durch freude stiez.”

“ir wært ein kûnec unmilte,
 ob iuch sôlher gâbe bevilte.
 gebtz im dar,” sprach Keye sân,
 “und lât in zuo zim ûf den plân.
 sol iemen bringen uns den kopf,
 hie helt diu geisel, dort der topf:
 lâtz kint in umbe trîben:
 sô lobt manz vor den wîben.

*He said to the simpleton,
 “Young sir, may God reward your greeting.
 I will gladly put my life and all I own
 at your service.
 To do this seems fitting.”*

*“I hope to God that it is really so!
 It seems to me a year has passed
 since I decided to become a knight,
 and more bad than good has come of the delay.
 Don’t make me wait any longer.
 Grant me the honor of being a knight!”
 “That I will gladly do,” said the host,
 “if my honor is enough.
 You are so lovely,
 that any gift I give you
 will be to my benefit.
 Therefore I will not fail to do it.
 But you must wait till tomorrow:
 then I will prepare you properly.”*

*The well-born lad
 paused there, swaying like an idiot.
 He said, “I won’t ask anything of you.
 A knight came riding towards me.
 If I can’t have his armor,
 then I don’t care to hear of kingly gifts.
 Those I can get from my mother;
 for after all, I’m told she is a queen.”*

*Then Arthur said to the lad,
 “I don’t dare give you that armor
 because of the man who owns it.
 As things stand, I’ve lived with worry
 (not because of any guilt of mine)
 since he stopped paying me homage.
 He is Ither von Gaheviez,
 who has pierced my joy with sorrow.”*

*“You would, as king, hardly be generous
 if you refrained from giving such a gift.
 Give it to him,” said Kay then,
 “and let him face the knight upon the meadow.
 So long as someone has to play this game,
 here is the string, and there we see the top.
 Let the child handle this affair:
 the women will praise him for it.*

ez muoz noch dicke bâgen
und sölhe schanze wâgen.
Ine sorge umb ir deweders lebn:
man sol hunde umb ebers houbet gebn.”
“ungerne wolt ich im versagn,
wan daz ich fürhter werde erslagn,
dem ich helfen sol der rîterschaft,”
sprach Artûs ûz triwen kraft.

der knappe iedoch die gâbe enphienc,
dâ von ein jâmer sît ergienc.
dô was im von dem kûnege gâch.
junge und alte im drungen nâch.
Iwânet in an der hende zôch
für eine louben niht ze hôch.
dô saher für unde widr:
ouch was diu louben sô nidr,
daz er drûffe hôrte unde ersach
dâ von ein trûren im geschach.

dâ wolt ouch diu kûnegîn
selbe an dem venster sîn
mit rittern und mit frouwen.
die begundenn alle schouwen.
dâ saz frou Cunnewâre,
diu fiere und diu clâre.
diu enlachte decheinen wîs,
sine sæhe in die den hôhsten prîs
hete od solt erwerben:
si wolt ê sus ersterben.
allez lachen si vermeit,
unz daz der knappe für si reit:
do erlachte ir minneclîcher munt.

des wart ir rûkke ungesund.
Dô nam Keye scheneschlant
froun Cunnewâren de Lâlant
mit ir reiden hâre:
ir lange zöpfe clâre
die want er umbe sîne hant,
er spancte se âne türbant.
ir rûke wart kein eit gestabt:
doch wart ein stap sô dran gehabt,
unz daz sîn siusen gar verswanc,

*The battle must be fought,
and the chance taken.
What matters either of their lives to us?
To hunt the boar, you have to lose a dog.”
“It’s true I do not wish to tell him no;
but I’m afraid that he may meet his death,
when I should help him be a knight instead.”
So spoke Arthur, from true generosity.*

*Soon the lad was to receive the gift,
and it would cause him grief.
For now he wished to leave the king at once.
Both young and old followed after him.
Iwanet led him by the hand
to a balcony, not too high. From there he could see
the length and breadth of the palace.
In fact the balcony was so low
that he heard and saw
something that caused him pain.*

*The Queen had placed herself
at the window
with knights and ladies.
They could all see it.
There sat the fair and noble
lady Cunneware,
she who could not laugh
until she saw the man who had received
or was deserving of the greatest prize.
If not, she’d never laugh throughout her life.
She hadn’t ever laughed,
until the lad came riding by;
and then her lovely mouth began to laugh.*

*Her back suffered as a result.
Kay the seneschal¹²
took the Lady Cunneware de Lalant
by her flowing hair.
He wound her lovely locks
around his hand
and fastened them without a lock.
Her back had never sworn upon a staff;¹³
and yet a staff was used for striking it,
so that when all the striking was complete,*

¹² A seneschal was a chief administrator of a household.

¹³ The allusion is to a legal procedure in which a witness swears an oath on a judge’s staff.

durch die wât unt durch ir vel ez dranc.
 dô sprach der unwîse
 “iwerd werdem prîse
 ist gegeben ein smæhiu letze:
 ich pin sîn vângec netze.
 ich soln wider in iuch smiden
 daz irs enpfîndet ûf den liden.
 ez ist dem künge Artûs
 ûf sînen hof unt in sîn hûs
 sô manec werder man geriten,
 durch den ir lachen hât vermiten,
 und lachet nu durch einen man
 der niht mit ritters fuore kan.”

in zorne wonders vil geschiht.
 sîns slages wær im erteilet niht
 vorem rîche ûf dise magt,
 diu vil von friwenden wart geklagt.
 op si halt schilt solde tragn,
 diu unfuoge ist dâ geslagn:
 wan si was von arde ein fürstîn.
 Orilus und Lâhelîn
 ir bruoder, hetenz die gesehen,
 der slege minre wære geschehen.

Der verswigen Antanor,
 der durch swîgen dûht ein tôr,
 sîn rede unde ir lachen
 was gezilt mit einen sachen:
 ern wolde nimmer wort gesagn,
 sine lachte diu dâ wart geslagn.
 dô ir lachen wart getân,
 sîn munt sprach ze Keyen sîn
 “got weiz, hêr scheneschlant,
 daz Cunnewâre de Lâlant
 durch den knappen ist zerbert,
 iwer freude es wirt verzert
 noch von sîner hende,
 ern sî nie sô ellende.”

“sît iwer êrste rede mir dröut,
 ich wæne irs wênic iuch gevröut.”
 sîn brât wart gâlûnet,
 mit slegen vil gerûnet
 dem witzhaften tôren
 mit fiusten in sîn ôren:
 daz tet Kaye sunder twâl.

*it had cut through her clothes and through her skin.
 Then that foolish man said,
 “Your noble reputation
 is ended in disgrace.
 I am the net that catches it.
 I will pound it back into you
 until you feel it in your limbs.
 Many worthy men have ridden
 to King Arthur’s court
 and to his house,
 and you failed to laugh for any of them;
 now you laugh for this man,
 who can’t accomplish one thing as a knight.”*

*In anger many wondrous things occur.
 He hardly had any right
 to give that maiden such a punishment,
 for which her friends complained on her behalf.
 Even if she had been a knight,
 the beating would have been a disgrace;
 and she was a princess by birth.
 If her brothers, Orilus and Lehelin
 had seen it,
 there would not have been so many blows.*

*Antanor, the one who never spoke,
 was held to be a fool for just this reason.
 His speech and her laughter
 stemmed from the same event:
 he never spoke a word
 until she who had been struck began to laugh.
 But when she laughed,
 his mouth spoke, saying to Kay,
 “God knows, sir seneschal,
 that Cunneware de Lalant
 is being beaten because of that lad.
 However far away he may go,
 his hand will cause your joy
 to be destroyed.”*

*“The first words you have spoken threaten me.
 I don’t suppose that they will bring you joy!”
 Then Antanor too was beaten.
 With blows much knowledge was imparted
 into the ears
 of that clever fool:
 This is what Kay immediately did.*

dô muose der junge Parzivâl
 disen kumber schouwen
 Antanors unt der frouwen.
 im was von herzen leit ir nôt:
 vil dicker greif zem gabilôt.
 vor der künegîn was sölch gedranc,
 daz er durch daz vermeit den swanc.

urloup nam dô Iwânet
 zem fil li roy Gahmuret:
 Des reise al eine wart getân
 hin ûz gein Ithêr ûf den plân.
 dem sagter sölhiu mære,
 daz niemen dinne wære
 der tjustierens gerte.
 “der küneec mich gâbe werte.
 ich sagte, als du mir jæhe,
 wiez âne danc geschæhe
 daz du den wîn vergüzze,
 unfuoge dich verdrüzze.
 ir decheinen lüstet strîtes.
 gip mir dâ du ûffe rîtes,
 unt dar zuo al dîn harnas:
 daz enpfieng ich ûf dem palas:
 dar inne ich ritter werden muoz.
 widersagt sî dir mîn gruoze,
 ob du mirz ungerne gîst.
 wer mich, ob du bî wîzen sîst.”

der küneec von Kukûmerlant
 sprach “hât Artûses hant
 dir mîn harnasch gegeben,
 dêswâr daz tæter ouch mîn lebn,
 möhtestu mirz an gewinnen.
 sus kan er friwende minnen.
 was er dir abr ê iht holt,
 dîn dienst gedient sô schiere den solt.”
 “ich getar wol dienen swaz ich sol:
 ouch hât er mich gewert vil wol.
 gip her und lâz dîn lantrecht:
 ine wil niht langer sîn ein kneht,
 ich sol schildes ambet hân.”
 er greif im nâch dem zoume sân:
 “du maht wol wesen Lâhelîn,
 von dem mir klaget diu muoter mîn.”

*Young Parzival
 could not help but see
 the misery of Antanor and of the lady.
 His heart was sick with their distress.
 Several times he gripped his javelin;
 but there was such a crowd around the queen
 that he refrained from making a throw.*

*Then Iwanet took his leave
 of Gahmuret's son,
 who journeyed alone
 back to Ither in the meadow.
 To him he reported
 that no one in the court
 was willing to joust.
 “The king gave me a gift.
 I told him, as you told me,
 how you spilled the wine
 by accident,
 and how you are sorry for your clumsiness.
 None of them wants to fight you.
 Give me the horse that you are riding on
 and all your armor as well:
 I received that gift in the palace,
 and I need to use it to become a knight.
 If you don't give it to me,
 then I'll refuse to greet you.
 You'll give it to me if your wits are sound.”*

*The King of Cumberland said,
 “If Arthur by his hand
 has given you my armor,
 then he has also given you my life,
 if you can take it from me.
 That is the love he shows towards his kinsmen.
 Whatever your relation to him before,
 your service now has quickly been repaid.”
 “I demand what I deserve,
 and he did make me this gift.
 Stop this foolish talk and give it here.
 I won't be a squire any longer;
 instead I shall carry a knight's shield.”
 He grabbed at the knight's bridle.
 “Perhaps you are Lehelin,
 about whom my mother has complained.”*

Der rîter umbe kêrt den schaft,
 und stach den knappen sô mit kraft,
 daz er und sîn pfârdelîn
 muosen fallende ûf die bluomen sîn.
 der helt was zornes dræte:
 er sluog in daz im wæte
 vome schafte ûzer swarten bluot.
 Parzivâl der knappe guot
 stuont al zornic ûf dem plân.
 sîn gabylôt begreif er sân.
 dâ der helm unt diu barbier
 sich locheten ob dem hârsnier,
 durchz ouge in sneit dez gabylôt,
 unt durch den nac, sô daz er tôt
 viel, der valscheit widersatz.
 [wîbe] siufzen, herzen jâmers kratz
 gap Ithêrs tôt von Gaheviez,
 der wîben nazzu ougen liez.
 swelhiu sîner minne enphant,
 durch die freude ir was gerant,
 unde ir schimpf enschumphiert,
 gein der riwe gecondewiert.

Parzivâl der tumbe
 kêrt in dicke al umbe.
 er kunde im ab geziehen niht:
 daz was ein wunderlîch geschiht:
 helmes snûer noch sîniu schinnelîer,
 mit sînen blanken handen fier
 kund ers niht ûf gestricken
 noch sus her ab gezwicken.
 vil dickerz doch versuochte,
 wîsheit der umberuochte.

Daz ors unt daz phârdelîn
 erhuoben ein sô hôhen grîn,
 daz ez Iwânet erhôrte
 vor der stat ans graben orte,
 froun Ginovêrn knapp unde ir mâc.
 do'r von dem orse erhôrte den bâc,
 und dô er niemen drûffe sach,
 von sînen triwen daz geschach
 die er nâch Parzivâle truoc,
 dô gâhte dar der knappe kluoc.

*The knight turned his spear shaft around
 and hit the lad with such force
 that he and his pony
 fell into the flowers.
 The hero was quick to anger.
 He struck the top of the lad's head
 with the shaft, so that blood ran out.
 Parzival the good lad stood there
 seething with anger in the meadow.
 Then he grasped his javelin.
 Just where the knight's helm and visor
 left an open unprotected space,
 there the javelin went through his eye
 and through his head, so that he died.
 He fell, that enemy of falsity.
 The death of Ither of Gaheviez
 caused women to sigh and hearts to break.
 The women's eyes were full of tears.
 All those who loved him
 found their joy was gone.
 Their play was spoiled,
 and their desire dulled.*

*Parzival the simpleton
 turned the knight over and over.
 He couldn't get the armor off him.
 Here was something strange:
 His white hands
 could not untie or remove
 the helmet laces
 or knee pieces.
 He kept on trying,
 but he lacked the knowledge.*

*Then the horse and pony
 began to neigh so loudly
 that Iwanet could hear it from where he stood
 at the end of the moat outside the city wall.
 He was Lady Guinevere's squire and kinsman.
 When he heard the horse neighing,
 and he saw no one sitting on it,
 he astutely hurried to the spot.
 He did this out of true loyalty
 to Parzival.*

er vant Ithêren tôt,
 unt Parzivâln in tumber nô.
 snellich er zin beiden spranc:
 dô sagerter Parzivâle danc
 prîses des erwarp sîn hant
 an dem von Kukûmerlant.
 “got lôn dir. nu rât waz ich tuo:
 ich kan hie harte wênic zuo:
 wie bringe ichz ab im unde an mich?”
 “daz kan ich wol gelêren dich,”
 sus sprach der stolze Iwânet
 zem fil li roy Gahmuret.
 entwâpent wart der tôte man
 aldâ vor Nantes ûf dem plân,
 und an den lebenden geleet,
 den dannoch grôziu tumpheit reget.

Iwânet sprach “diu ribbalîn
 sulen niht underem îsern sîn:
 du solt nu tragen ritters kleit.”
 diu rede was Parzivâle leit:
 Dô sprach der knappe guoter
 “swaz mir gap mîn muoter,
 des sol vil wênic von mir komn,
 ez gê ze schaden odr ze fromn.”
 daz dûhte wunderlich genuoc
 Iwâneten (der was kluoc):
 iedoch muos er im volgen,
 ern was im niht erbolgen.
 zwuo liehte hosen îserîn
 schuohterm über diu ribbalîn.
 sunder leder mit zwein porten
 zwêne sporen dar zuo gehörten:
 er spien im an daz goldes werch.
 ê erm bûte dar den halsperc,
 er strichte im umb diu schinnelîer.
 sunder twâl vil harte schier
 von fuoze ûf gewâpent wol
 wart Parzivâl mit gernder dol.

dô iesch der knappe mære
 sînen kochære.
 “ich enreiche dir kein gabylôt:
 diu ritterschaft dir daz verbôt”
 sprach Iwânet der knappe wert.
 der gurte im umbe ein scharpfez swert:

*There he found that Ither had been killed
 and Parzival was in a fool's distress.
 Quickly he ran over to both of them.
 Then he praised Parzival
 for the victory he had won
 over the King of Cumberland.
 “God bless you. Now please tell me what to do.
 I don't know what I'm doing. How can I get
 the armor off of him and on to me?”
 “I can easily show you that.”
 So said the proud Iwanet
 to the son of Gahmuret.
 There on the plain before Nantes
 the armor was stripped from the dead man
 and given to the living one,
 whom extreme foolishness still ruled.*

*Iwanet said, “Your boots
 aren't fit to wear with armor.
 Instead you should wear knightly clothing now.”
 These words caused grief to Parzival.
 The good lad said,
 “I won't cast off anything
 my mother gave me,
 whether for good or for ill.”
 To Iwanet that seemed strange enough
 (he was used to courtly ways);
 but all the same he went along.
 He felt no anger at all.
 He fit two shiny steel leggings
 over the boots.
 He fastened two spurs
 not with leather straps but with ribbons.
 It seemed to him that these were made of gold.
 Before giving him the gorget,¹⁴
 he tied on the knee pieces.
 Very soon the impatient Parzival
 was encased in armor
 from the feet upwards.*

*The lad of the story
 then asked for his quiver.
 “I won't let you have a javelin.
 The knightly order forbids it.”
 So spoke Iwanet the worthy lad.
 He fastened a sharp sword around him.*

¹⁴ Armor covering the throat.

daz lêrt ern ûz ziehen
 und widerriet im fliehen.
 dô zôher im dar nâher sân
 des tôten mannes kastelân:
 daz truoc pein hôh unde lanc.
 der gewâpent in den satel spranc:
 ern gerte stegereife niht,
 dem man noch snelheite giht.
 Ywâneten niht bevilte,
 ern lêrte in underm schilte
 künsteclich gebâren
 und der vînde schaden vâren.
 er bôt im in die hant ein sper:
 daz was gar âne sîne ger:
 doch vrâgt ern “war zuo ist diz frum?”
 “swer gein dir zer tjoste kum,
 dâ soltuz balde brechen,
 durch sînen schilt verstechen.
 wiltu des vil getrîben,
 man lobt dich vor den wîben.”

als uns diu âventiure gieht,
 von Kölne noch von Mâstrieht
 kein schiltære entwûrfe in baz
 denn alser ûfem orse saz.
 dô sprach er ze Ywânete sân
 “lieber friunt, mîn kumpân,
 ich hân hie ’rworben des ich pat.
 du solt mîn dienst in die stat
 dem kûnege Artûse sagen
 und ouch mîn hôhez laster klagen.
 bring im widr sîn goltvaz.
 ein ritter sich an mir vergaz,
 daz er die juncfrouwen sluoc
 durch daz si lachens mîn gewuoc.
 mich müent ir jâmerlîchen wort.
 diun rüerent mir kein herzen ort:
 jâ muoz enmitten drinne sîn
 der frouwen ungedienter pîn.
 Nu tuoz durch dîne gesellekeit,
 und lâz dir [sîn] mîn laster leit.
 got hûet dîn: ich wil von dir varn:
 der mag uns bêde wol bewarn.”

Ithêrn von Gaheviez
 er jâmerlîche ligen liez.
 der was doch tôt sô minneclîch:

*He taught him how to draw it
 and said that he must never flee a fight.
 Then he brought over
 the dead man's Castilian horse.
 It had long and slender legs.
 The young man leapt into the saddle
 without using the stirrups;
 people today still speak of his swiftness.
 It was no trouble to Iwanet
 to teach him how to use his shield with skill
 and how to deal out damage
 to his foe.
 Then he put a spear in his hand;
 but the lad objected to it.
 He asked, “What is this for?”
 “If someone rides at you in a joust,
 you must boldly break it
 and run it through his shield.
 The more you do that,
 the more the women will praise you.”*

*As the adventure reports,
 he sat his horse so well
 that no painter from Cologne or Maestricht
 could have rendered a better scene.
 Then he said to Iwanet,
 “Dear friend and companion,
 Here I have achieved what I have sought.
 Go back to the city
 and give my regards to Arthur,
 and tell him also of my great disgrace.
 Return his golden goblet to him.
 A knight saw me and forgot himself
 and beat a lady
 because I caused her to laugh.
 Her cries of pain cause me distress.
 They do not touch the edge of my heart:
 The lady's undeserved pain
 strikes at its very center.
 Do this, please, for the sake of our friendship,
 and for the sake of my shame and grief.
 God keep you. I will leave you now.
 May he preserve us both.”*

*He left Ither of Gaheviez
 lying lamentably on the plain.
 That man, full of joy in life,*

lebende was er sælden rîch.
 wær ritterschaft sîn endes wer,
 zer tjost durch schilt mit eime sper,
 wer klagte dann die wunders nôt?
 er starp von eime gabylôt.

Iwânet ûf in dô brach
 der liechten bluomen zeime dach.
 er stiez den gabylôtes stil
 zuo zim nâch der marter zil.
 der knappe kiusche unde stolz
 dructe en kriuzes wîs ein holz
 durch des gabylôtes snîden.
 dône wolt er niht vermîden,
 hin in die stat er sagte
 des manec wîp verzagte
 und manec ritter weinde,
 der klagende triwe erscheinde.
 dâ wart jâmers vil gedolt.
 der tôte schône wart geholt.
 diu kûnegîn reit ûz der stat:
 daz heilictuom si fûeren bat.
 ob dem kûnege von Kukûmerlant,
 den tôte Parzivâles hant,
 Vrou Ginovêr diu kûnegin
 sprach jâmerlîcher worte sin.
 “ôwê unde heiâ hei,
 Artûss werdekeit enzwei
 sol brechen noch diz wunder,
 der ob der tavelrunder
 den hœchsten prîs solde tragn,
 daz der vor Nantes lît erslagn.
 sîns erbeteils er gerte,
 dâ man in sterbens werte.
 er was doch mässenê alhie
 alsô daz dechein ôre nie
 dehein sîn untât vernam.
 er was vor wildem valsche zam:
 der was vil gar von im geschabn.
 nu muoz ich alze fruo begrabn
 ein slôz ob dem prîse.
 sîn herze an zûhten wîse,
 obem slôze ein hantveste,
 riet im benamn daz beste,
 swâ man nâch wîbes minne
 mit ellenthaftem sinne
 solt erzeigen mannes triuwe.

*was fair in death.
 If knightly deeds had brought about his end,
 if he had died in jousting with a spear,
 who would bemoan his fate?
 Instead a javelin caused him to die.*

*Iwanet gathered bright flowers
 for his funeral.
 He turned the javelin
 into a remembrance of Christ.
 The pure and proud lad constructed a cross
 by attaching a piece of wood
 to the blade of the javelin.
 Nor did he neglect
 to return to the city
 and tell the doleful news
 to many knights who wept
 and ladies who grieved.
 A great lamentation arose.
 The dead man was brought in with great pomp.
 The queen rode forth from the city.
 She bade them bring the holy relics.
 Queen Guinevere
 spoke words of sorrow
 for the King of Cumberland,
 who was slain by Parzival's hand.
 “Woe in the highest!
 Arthur's fame shall break in two
 because of this strange event.
 He who was destined to achieve
 the greatest prize
 lies slain before Nantes.
 He came here to assert his heritage;
 he received death.
 He was one of us,
 and no one ever heard
 of any misdeed that he committed.
 He was free of all wild treachery,
 for he had been purged of that.
 All too soon must I bury
 this treasure chest of fame.
 His heart rich in courtesy,
 the seal upon that chest,
 brought about the best behavior,
 wherever a man
 in true faith
 might bravely seek a woman's love.*

ein berendiu fruht al niuwe
 ist trûrens ûf diu wîp gesæt.
 ûz dîner wunden jâmer wæt.
 dir was doch wol sô rôet dîn hâr,
 daz dîn bluot die bluomen clâr
 niht rôeter dorfte machen.
 du swendest wîplich lachen.”
 Ithêr der lobes rîche
 wart bestatet küeneclîche.
 des tôt schoup siufzen in diu wîp.
 sîn harnasch im verlôs den lîp:
 dar umbe was sîn endes wer
 des tumben Parzivâles ger.
 sît dô er sich paz versan,
 ungerne het erz dô getân.

daz ors einer site pflac:
 grôz arbeit ez ringe wac:
 ez wære kalt oder heiz,
 ezn liez durch reise keinen sweiz,
 ez træte stein oder ronen.
 er dorft im keines gûrtens wonen
 doch eines loches nâher baz,
 swer zwêne tage drûffe saz.
 gewâpent reitz der tumben man
 den tac sô verre, ez hete lân
 ein blôz wîser, solt erz hân geriten
 zwêne tage, ez wære vermiten.
 er lie’z et schûften, selten drabn:
 er kunde im lützel ûf gehabn.

hin gein dem âbent er dersach
 eins turnes gupfen unt des dach.
 den tumben dûhte sêre,
 wie der türne wüehse mêre:
 der stuont dâ vil ûf eime hûs.
 dô wânder si sæt Artûs:
 des jaher im für heilikeit,
 unt daz sîn sælde wære breit.
 Alsô sprach der tumben man.
 “mîner muoter volc niht pûwen kan.
 jane wehset niht sô lanc ir sât,
 swaz sir in dem walde hât:
 grôz regen si selten dâ verbirt.”
 Gurnemanz de Grâharz hiez der wirt
 ûf dirre burc dar zuo er reit.
 dâ vor stuont ein linde breit

*A fruit bearing ever new seeds of grief
 is planted among women.
 Grief emanates from your wounds.
 Your hair was so red
 that your blood could not make
 these bright flowers any redder.
 You have silenced the laughter of women.”
 The richly-praised Ither
 was buried as befits a king.
 His death taught women how to sigh.
 He lost his life because of his armor:
 the simple Parzival’s desire for it
 caused his death.
 Later, when he had learned more,
 he would not readily behave this way.*

*His horse was exceptional:
 It performed great work without tiring,
 in cold or hot weather;
 it never sweated from traveling
 over rocks or woods.
 There was no need to tighten its saddle strap
 by even a single notch,
 even after riding for two days.
 That simple man
 rode further that day in armor
 than an experienced man
 would have ridden in two days unarmored.
 He rode mainly at a gallop, seldom at a trot.
 He didn’t know how to make the horse slow down.*

*Towards evening he saw
 the pinnacle and roof of a tower.
 To the simple man it seemed
 that towers sprang up before him as he rode.
 In fact the towers stood upon a house.
 It seemed to him that this was Arthur’s doing:
 he thought of Arthur as a holy man
 whose powers ranged far and wide.
 The simple man said,
 “My mother’s people are poor farmers.
 None of the crops they plant in the forest
 grow this tall:
 there is always too much rain.”
 He was riding towards the castle
 of Gurnemanz of Graharz.
 A broad linden tree stood there*

ûf einem grünen anger:
 der was breiter noch langer
 niht wan ze rechter mâze.
 daz ors und ouch diu strâze
 in truogen dâ er sitzen vant
 des was diu burc unt ouch daz lant.

ein grôziu müede in des betwanc,
 daz er den schilt unrehte swanc,
 ze verre hinder oder für,
 et ninder nâch der site kür
 die man dâ gein prîse maz.
 Gurnamanz der fürste al eine saz:
 ouch gap der linden tolde
 ir schaten, als si solde,
 dem houbetman der wâren zuht.
 des site was vor valsche ein fluht,
 der enpfienç den gast: daz was sîn reht.
 bî im was ritter noch kneht.

sus antwurt im dô Parzivâl
 ûz tumben witzen sunder twâl.
 “mich pat mîn muoter nemen rât
 ze dem der grâwe locke hât.
 dâ wil ich iu dienen nâch,
 sît mir mîn muoter des verjach.”
 “Sît ir durch râtes schulde
 her komen, iwer hulde
 müezet ir mir durch râten lân,
 und welt ir râtes volge hân.”

dô warf der fürste mære
 ein mûzerspärwære
 von der hende. in die burc er swanc:
 ein guldîn schelle dran erklanc.
 daz was ein bote: dô kom im sîn
 vil junchêrren wol getân.
 er bat den gast, den er dâ sach,
 in füern und schaffen sîn gemach.
 der sprach “mîn muoter sagt al wâr:
 altmannes rede stêt niht ze vâr.”

hin in sin fuorten al zehant,
 da er manegen werden ritter vant.
 ûf dem hove an einer stat
 ieslîcher in erbeizen bat.
 dô sprach an dem was tumpheit schîn

*on the green lawn.
 It was neither broader nor taller
 than it should have been.
 Both the horse and the road
 led him to the place
 where the lord of the castle and the land was sitting.*

*Great weariness caused him
 to carry his shield in the wrong way,
 swinging it too far back and forth
 and not at all in a manner
 that was worthy of praise.
 Gurnemanz the prince sat all alone.
 The linden's leaves provided shade,
 as they should have,
 for that leader of true gentility.
 Then he whose manners fled from falsity
 received his guest according to his duty.
 No knight or squire accompanied him there.*

*Then Parzival said to him,
 without delay and with his simple wits,
 “My mother told me to listen to the advice
 of any man with gray hair.
 Therefore I'll follow what you say,
 since that is what my mother said.”
 “Since you have come here
 seeking advice,
 I should give you advice,
 and you should follow it.”*

*Then the prince of whom I tell
 released a yearling sparrowhawk
 from his hand. It swooped into the castle.
 It wore a little tinkling golden bell.
 It was a messenger; at once there appeared
 several smart-looking pages.
 He told them to lead the guest
 that they saw there and to attend to him.
 Parzival said, “My mother was right:
 an old man's speech does not stray from the truth.”*

*At once they led him to a place
 where many noble knights were gathered.
 In the middle of the courtyard
 they invited him to dismount.
 But he in his simplicity responded,*

“mich hiez ein künec ritter sîn:
 swaz halt drûffe mir geschiht,
 ine kum von disem orse niht.
 gruoꝝ gein iu riet mîn muoter mir.”
 si dancten beidiu im unt ir.
 dô daz grûezen wart getân
 (daz ors was müede und ouch der man),
 maneger bete si gedâhten,
 ê sin von dem orse brâhten
 in eine kemenâten.
 si begundn im alle râten
 “lâtz harnasch von iu bringen
 und iweren liden ringen.”

Schiere er muose entwâpent sîn.
 dô si diu rûhen ribbalîn
 und diu tôren kleit gesâhen,
 si erschrâken die sîn pflâgen.
 vil blûgez wart ze hove gesagt:
 der wirt vor schame was nâch verzagt.
 ein ritter sprach durch sîne zuht
 “deiswâr sô werdecliche fruht
 erkôs nie mîner ougen sehe.
 an im lît der sælden spehe
 mit reiner sîezen hôhen art.
 wiest der minnen blic alsus bewart?
 mich jâmert immer daz ich vant
 an der werlde freude alsôlh gewant.
 wol doch der muoter diu in truoc,
 an dem des wunsches lît genuoc.
 sîn zimierde ist rîche:
 dez harnasch stuont rîterliche
 ê ez kœm von dem gehiuren.
 von einer quaschiuren
 bluotige amesiere
 kôs ich an im schiere.”

der wirt sprach zem ritter sîn
 “daz ist durch wîbe gebot getân.”
 “nein, hêrre: erst mit sôlhen siten,
 ern kunde nimer wîp gebiten
 daz si sîn dienst næme.
 sîn varwe der minne zæme.”
 der wirt sprach “nu sule wir sehn
 an des wæte ein wunder ist geschehn.”

*“A king has said I am to be a knight.
 No matter what happens to me,
 I shall not get off this horse.
 My mother told me I’m to greet you all.”
 They thanked him and her both.
 Then, when the greetings were complete,
 seeing that horse and man were both worn out,
 they made various pleas
 to get him off his horse
 and into a room with a hearth.
 Then they all said,
 “At least you should let us
 remove your armor.”*

*Soon his armor was removed.
 But when they saw his rough boots
 and his fool’s garb,
 the attendants were surprised.
 When they reported their discovery to the host,
 he was nearly overcome with shame.
 One knight graciously said,
 “Truly my eyes
 have never beheld one so noble.
 There is great beauty in him.
 His lineage is high and pure and sweet.
 How can one so lovely be so ill dressed?
 It causes me grief to see
 the joy of the world done up in such a way.
 Yet praised be the mother who gave him birth,
 for everything desirable is present in him.
 His gear is handsome:
 the armor that we took from him
 was knightly indeed.
 But I see
 that he is bloody
 and has a great bruise.”*

*The host said to the knight,
 “It seems that this was done for a woman’s sake.”
 “I think not, sir. The way that he behaves,
 he wouldn’t know of offering his service
 to a woman,
 although he looks like one who should be loved.”
 The host said, “Well, then let us go and see
 this man whose clothing is so strange.”*

Si giengen dâ si funden
 Parzivâln den wunden
 von eime sper, daz bleip doch ganz.
 sîn underwant sich Gurnemanz.
 sölch was sîn underwinden,
 daz ein vater sînen kinden,
 der sich triwe kunde nieten,
 möhtez in niht paz erbieten.
 sîne wunden wuoch unde bant
 der wirt mit sîn selbes hant.

dô was ouch ûf geleit daz prôt.
 des was dem jungen gaste nôt,
 wand in grôz hunger niht vermeit.
 al vastende er des morgens reit
 von dem vischære.
 sîn wunde und harnasch swære,
 die vor Nantes er bejagete,
 im müede unde hunger sagete;
 unt diu verre tagereise
 von Artûse dem Berteneise,
 dâ mann allenthalben vasten liez.
 der wirt in mit im ezzen hiez:
 der gast sich dâ gelabte.
 in den barn er sich sô habte,
 daz er der spîse swande vil.
 daz nam der wirt gar zeime spil:
 dô bat in vlîzeclîche
 Gurnemanz der triwen rîche,
 daz er vaste æze
 unt der müede sîn vergæze.

Man huop den tisch, dô des wart zît.
 “ich wæne daz ir müede sît”
 sprach der wirt: “wært ir iht fruo?”
 “got weiz, mîn muoter slief duo.
 diu kan sô vil niht wachen.”
 der wirt begunde lachen,
 er fuort in an die slâfstat.
 der wirt in sich ûz sloufen bat:
 ungernez tet, doch muosez sîn.
 ein declachen hârmîn
 wart geleit übr sîn blôzen lîp.
 sô werde fruht gebar nie wîp.

*They went to him and discovered
 that Parzival had been wounded
 with a spear that remained unbroken.
 Gurnemanz took him under his care.
 His care was such
 that no father
 who attended his own children
 could do more.
 The host washed and bound the wound
 with his own hand.*

*Then the table was set for supper.
 The young man sorely needed it,
 for he was experiencing great hunger.
 That morning he had left the fisherman
 without breakfast.
 His wound and the heavy armor
 that he had won before Nantes
 made him tired and hungry.
 And he had fasted all day
 during the journey
 from Arthur of Britain.
 The host asked him to eat;
 the guest eagerly complied.
 As if he were feeding in a barn,
 he put away great quantities of food.
 That caused the host to be amused.
 Gurnemanz the faithful man
 earnestly bade him
 to keep on eating
 and to forget about his weariness.*

*When it was time, they took away the service.
 “I suppose you are tired,”
 said the host. “Were you up early?”
 “God knows, my mother was still asleep.
 It’s hard for her to wake up.”
 This caused the host to laugh.
 He led him to a bedchamber
 and told him to prepare himself for sleep.
 He didn’t want to do it, but he had to.
 A coverlet of ermine
 was laid upon his naked body.
 No fairer fruit was ever born of woman.*

grôz müede und slâf in lêrte
daz er sich selten kêrte
an die anderen sîten.
sus kunder tages erbîten.
dô gebôt der fürste mære
daz ein bat bereite wære
reht umbe den mitten morgens tac
zende am teppich, da er dâ lac.
daz muose des morgens alsô sîn.
man warf dâ rôsen oben in.
swie wênic man umb in dâ rief,
der gast erwachte der dâ slief.
der junge werde süeze man
gienc sitzen in die kuofen sân.
ine weiz wer si des bæte:
juncfrowen in rîcher wæte
und an lîbes varwe minneclîch,
die kômen zûhte site gelîch.
Si twuogn und strichen schiere
von im sîn amesiere
mit blanken linden henden.
jane dorft in niht ellenden
der dâ was witze ein weise.
sus dolter freude und eise,
tumpheit er wênc gein in enkalt.
juncfrouwen kiusche unde balt
in alsus kunrierten.
swâ von si parlierten,
dâ kunder wol geswîgen zuo.
ez dorft in dunken niht ze fruo:
wan von in schein der ander tac.
der glast alsus en strîte lac,
sîn varwe laschte beidiu lieht:
des was sîn lîp versûmet niht.

man bôt ein badelachen dar:
des nam er vil kleine war.
sus kunder sich bî frouwen schemn,
vor in wolt erz niht umbe nemn.
die juncfrouwen muosen gên:
sine torsten dâ niht langer stên.
ich wæn si gerne heten gesehn,
ob im dort unde iht wære geschehn.
wîpheit vert mit triuwen:
si kan friwendes kumber riuwen.
der gast an daz bette schreit.
al wîz gewant im was bereit.

*Because of great weariness and sleep
he seldom turned
from one side to the other.
Thus he passed the night.
Then the prince of whom I have reported
ordered that a bath should be prepared
at mid morning, quietly,
in the chamber where he slept.
This was their normal practice in the morning.
They usually put roses in the water.
Though they made little noise,
the sleeping guest awoke.
That sweet and young and worthy man
went straight to his bath.
Although I don't know who had ordered it,
maidens in fine clothes,
lovely in appearance,
attended to him in a fitting way.
Immediately they washed and treated
his bruises
with soft white hands.
He didn't mind at all;
in this case he showed some sense.
He was at ease and he enjoyed himself;
he wasn't rude to them in ignorance.
The maidens, chaste yet bold,
attended to him.
They talked among themselves,
but he remained silent.
He thought it must not be too early,
for in them he saw the light of another day.
Thus radiance contended with itself;
but he outshone them both:
his body did not lack for radiance.*

*They offered him a bath sheet,
but he refused to take it.
The presence of the maidens shamed him so
that he would not put it around himself.
At this the maidens left;
they dared not stay any longer.
I think they would have preferred to see
if he had any damage down below.
Womanhood is always faithful:
it suffers for a friend's distress.
The guest went over to the bed.
A garment all of white was prepared for him.*

von golde unde sîdîn
 einen bruochgürtel zôch man drîn.
 scharlachens hosen rôet man streich
 an in dem ellen nie gesweich.
 Avoy wie stuonden sîniu bein!
 reht geschickede ab in schein.
 brûn scharlachen wol gesniten,
 (dem was furrieren niht vermiten)
 beidiu innen hârmîn blanc,
 roc und mantel wâren lanc:
 breit swarz unde grâ
 zobel dervor man kôs aldâ.
 daz leit an der gehiure.
 undr einen gürtel tiure
 wart er gefischieret,
 und wol gezimieret
 mit einem tiuren fûrspan.
 sîn munt dâ bî vor roete bran.

dô kom der wirt mit triwen kraft:
 nâch dem gienc stolziu rîterschaft.
 der enphienc den gast. dô daz geschach,
 der ritter ieslîcher sprach,
 sine gesâhen nie sô schœnen lîp.
 mit triwen lobten si daz wîp,
 diu gap der werlde alsôlhe fruht.
 durch wârheit und umb ir zuht
 si jâhen “er wirt wol gewert,
 swâ sîn dienst genâden gert:
 im ist minne und gruoze bereit,
 mager geniezen werdekeit.”
 ieslîcher im des tâ verjach,
 unt dar nâch swer in ie gesach.

Der wirt in mit der hant gevienc,
 geselleclîcher dannen gienc.
 in vrâgt der fûrste mære,
 welch sîn ruowe wære
 des nahtes dâ bî im gewesen.
 “hêr, dan wære ich niht genesen,
 wan daz mîn muoter her mir riet
 des tages dô ich von ir schiet.”
 “got müeze lônên iu unt ir.
 hêrre, ir tuot genâde an mir.”
 dô gienc der helt mit wîzen kranc
 dâ man got und dem wîrte sanc.
 der wirt zer messe in lêrte

*A band of gold and silk
 passed through it.
 They stretched red wool hose
 on the legs of him whose courage never failed.
 Oh, how fine his legs appeared in them!
 Their excellent shape was apparent.
 His coat and cloak were long.
 Both were of brown wool,
 well cut,
 and lined with white ermine.
 They were trimmed in front with sable fur
 that was broad and black and gray.
 The gentle young man put them on.
 His coat was fastened
 by a costly belt,
 and beautifully adorned
 with a precious brooch.
 His mouth burned with redness.*

*Now came the host with the strength of loyalty:
 proud knighthood followed him.
 He greeted his guest. When that was done,
 Each of the knights said
 that they had never seen such a handsome person.
 They sincerely praised the woman
 who had brought such fruit into the world.
 From honesty and good upbringing
 they said, “He’ll be rewarded well
 wherever he seeks his fortune.
 Love and welcome are prepared for him.
 May his honor bring him enjoyment.”
 Each of them said the same thing,
 and so did all who saw him after that.*

*The host took him by the hand;
 they went together.
 The prince I have described asked him
 how he had rested
 that night in his house.
 “Sir, I would be in a bad way
 if my mother had not said I should come here
 on the day when I left her.”
 “God bless both you and her!
 Sir, you do me honor.”
 Then the hero lacking lacking wisdom went with him
 to where they sang to God and for the host.
 During Mass the host taught him*

daz noch die sælde mêrte,
opfern unde segnen sich,
und gein dem tiuvel kêrn gerich.

dô giengens ûf den palas,
aldâ der tisch gedecket was.
der gast ze sîme wirt saz,
die spîser ungesmæhet az.
der wirt sprach durch höfscheit
“hêrre, iu sol niht wesen leit,
ob ich iuch vrâge mære,
wannen iwer reise wære.”
er saget im gar die underscheit,
wier von sîner muoter reit,
umbez vingerl unde umbz fûrspan,
und wie erz harnasch gewan.
der wirt erkante den ritter rôt:
er dersiuft, in derbarmt sîn nôt.
sînen gast des namn er niht erliez,
den rôten ritter er in hiez.

Dô man den tisch hin dan genam,
dar nâch wart wilder muot vil zam.
der wirt sprach zem gaste sîn
“ir redet als ein kindelîn.
wan geswîgt ir iwerr muoter gar?
und nemet anderr mære war.
habt iuch an mînen rât:
der scheidet iuch von missetât.

sus heb ich an: lâts iuch gezemn.
ir sult niemer iuch verschemn.
verschamter lîp, waz touc der mêt?
der wont in der mûze rêt,
dâ im werdekeit entrîset
unde in gein der helle wîset.

ir tragt geschickede unde schîn,
ir mugt wol volkes hêrre sîn.
ist hôch und hœht sich iwer art,
lât iweren willen des bewart,
iuch sol erbarmen nôtec her:
gein des kumber sît ze wer
mit milte und mit gûete:
vlîzet iuch diemûete.
der kumberhafte werde man
wol mit schame ringen kan

*how to behave in blessed ways:
to make his offering, to cross himself,
and how to turn his thinking from the devil.*

*Then they went to the palace,
where the table was set.
The guest sat down with his host
and ate heartily.
The host courteously said,
“Sir, I hope you will not mind
if I ask you to tell me
where you are coming from.”
He told him everything that had occurred:
how he had ridden away from his mother,
how he had taken the ring and brooch,
and how he had won the armor.
The host had known the Red Knight;
he sighed in sympathy with his fate.
He did not withhold the name from his guest;
now he called him the Red Knight.*

*When the table was cleared,
then was a wild spirit made very tame.
The host told his guest,
“You speak like a little child.
Why do you always speak about your mother?
Instead you should talk of other matters.
Heed my advice:
it will keep you from doing wrong.*

*“Here is how I begin:
Make sure you never lose your sense of shame.
Of what use is a man who has no shame?
He is always molting,
shedding his honor
and directing his path towards Hell.*

*“You are handsome, and you carry yourself well.
You may well be the lord of a people.
If you are high and you are rising higher,
then be aware
you should have pity on the needy ones:
protect them from distress
with kindness and with generosity,
and always be humble.
The worthy man who suffers hardship
may well struggle with shame*

(daz ist ein unsüez arbeit):
 dem sult ir helfe sîn bereit.
 swenne ir dem tuot kumbers buoz,
 sô nâhet iu der gotes gruoze.
 im ist noch wirs dan den die gênt
 nâch porte aldâ diu venster stênt.

Ir sult bescheidenlîche
 sîn arm unde rîche.
 wan swâ der hêrre gar vertuot,
 daz ist niht hêrlîcher muot:
 sament er ab schaz ze sêre,
 daz sint och unêre.
 gebt rehter mâze ir orden.

ich pin wol innen worden
 daz ir râtes dûrftic sît:
 nu lât der unfuoge ir strît.

irn sult niht vil gevragen:
 ouch sol iuch niht betragen
 bedâhter gegenrede, diu gê
 reht als jenes vrâgen stê,
 der iuch wil mit worten spehen.
 ir kunnet hœren unde sehen,
 entseben unde drâhen:
 daz solt iuch wîzen nâhen.

lât derbârme bî der vrâvel sîn.
 sus tuot mir râtes volge schîn.
 an swem ir strîtes sicherheit
 bezalt, ern hab iu sôlhiu leit
 getân diu herzen kumber wesn,
 die nemt, und lâzet in genesn.
 ir müezet dicke wâpen tragn:
 so'z von iu kom, daz ir getwagen
 undr ougen unde an handen sît,
 des ist nâch îsers râme zît.
 sô wert ir minneclîch gevar:
 des nement wîbes ougen war.

Sît manlîch und wol gemuot:
 daz ist ze werdem prîse guot.
 und lât iu liep sîn diu wîp:
 daz tiwert junges mannes lîp.
 gewenket nimmer tag an in:
 daz ist reht manlîcher sin.

*(that is bitter labor),
 and you should be prepared to offer help.
 When you relieve his suffering,
 then the blessing of God is close at hand.
 For him the situation is worse
 than for one who begs for bread at a window.*

*“You should, as either is appropriate,
 be both poor and rich.
 When a lord wastes his wealth,
 then he does not behave in a lordly way;
 but if he hoards his wealth excessively,
 he also has dishonor.
 Instead, your path should be the middle one.*

*“It seems to me that so far you have not
 received advice like this.
 Let the ill-mannered quarrel with themselves.*

*“You shouldn’t ask too many questions.
 Nor should you refuse to give
 answers that are thoughtful
 and direct
 to those who probe you with their questioning.
 You can hear and see
 and turn around to feel;
 by doing this, you’ll make your wisdom grow.*

*“Temper your pride with mercy. That’s the test
 Of whether you have followed my advice.
 When a man swears that he will surrender
 in combat, unless he has done you such a wrong
 that your heart grieves for it,
 accept the oath and let him live.
 Often you will have your armor on.
 When it’s removed, make sure
 to wash your eyes and hands,
 to clean the iron rust.
 In this way you will have a lovely aspect,
 which women’s eyes will notice.*

*“Be manly and of good temper;
 in this way you will win praise.
 Hold women dear to you:
 that enriches a young man’s life.
 Don’t turn against them, not for a single day:
 that is true manly behavior.*

welt ir in gerne liegen,
 ir muget ir vil betriegen:
 gein werder minne valscher list
 hât gein prîse kurze vrist.
 dâ wirt der slîchære klage
 daz durre holz ime hage:
 daz pristet unde krachet:
 der wahtære erwachet.
 ungeverte und hâmit,
 dar gedîhet manec strît:
 diz mezzet gein der minne.
 diu werde hât sinne,
 gein valsche listecliche kunst:
 swenn ir bejaget ir ungunst,
 sô müezet ir gunêret sîn
 und immer dulten schemeden pîn.

dise lêre sult ir nâhe tragn:
 ich wil iu mêr von wîbes orden sagn.
 man und wîp diu sint al ein;
 als diu sunn diu hiute schein,
 und ouch der name der heizet tac.
 der enwederz sich gescheiden mac:
 si blüent ûz eime kerne gar.
 des nemet künstecliche war.”

Der gast dem wirt durch râten neic.
 sîner muoter er gesweic,
 mit rede, und in dem herzen niht;
 als noch getriwem man geschiht.

der wirt sprach sîn êre.
 “noch sult ir lernen mêre
 kunst an rîterlichen siten.
 wie kômet ir zuo mir geriten!
 ich hân beschouwet manege want
 dâ ich den schilt baz hangen vant
 denner iu ze halse tæte.
 ez ist uns niht ze spæte:
 wir sulen ze velde gâhen:
 dâ sult ir künste nâhen.
 bringet im sîn ors, und mir dez mîn,
 und ieslichem ritterz sîn.
 junchêrren sulen ouch dar komn,
 der ieslicher habe genomn
 einen starken schaft, und bringe in dar,
 der nâch der niwe sî gevar.”

*If you take to lying,
 then you may deceive them for a time;
 but true love does not reward base deception
 for very long.
 The thief complains
 of the dry branch in the woods
 that snaps and cracks
 and alerts the watch.
 Many battles occur
 in pathless clearings.
 Compare this with love.
 True love has a mind
 that sees through falsity and deceptive art.
 If you compromise yourself,
 then you will incur dishonor;
 forever you will suffer painful shame.*

*“Pay attention to this lesson.
 I will tell you more about women.
 Man and wife are one,
 like the sun that shone today
 and that which we call day.
 You cannot separate one from the other.
 Both bloom from one seed.
 It is important to understand this.”*

*The guest thanked his host for his advice.
 He stopped mentioning his mother
 in his speech, but not in his heart,
 as befits a true man.*

*The host spoke of his honor.
 “You must also improve your skill
 in the knightly arts.
 The way you came riding towards me!
 I have seen many walls
 on which the shield hung more properly
 than it did around your neck.
 It is not too late.
 Let us go into the field
 and teach you some skills.
 Bring him his horse, and bring me mine,
 and bring every knight his.
 Let squires come too,
 and let every one take
 a stout spear, and bring it along,
 and make sure they are new ones.”*

sus kom der fürste ûf den plân:
 dâ wart mit rîten kunst getân.
 sîme gaste er râten gap,
 wierz ors ûzem walap
 mit sporen gruozes pîne
 mit schenkelen fliegens schîne
 ûf den poinder solde wenken,
 [und] den schaft ze rehte senken,
 [und] den schilt gein tjoste für sich nemen.
 er sprach “des lâzet iuch gezemen.”

Unfuoger im sus werte
 baz denne ein swankel gerte
 diu argen kinden brichet vel.
 dô hiez er komen ritter snel
 gein im durch tjostieren.
 er begunde in condwieren
 einem zegegen an den rinc.
 dô brâhte der jungelinc
 sîn êrsten tjost durch einen schilt,
 deis von in allen wart bevilt
 unt daz er hinderz ors verswanc
 einen starken rîter niht ze kranc.

ein ander tjostiur was komn.
 dô het ouch Parzivâl genomn
 einen starken niwen schaft.
 sîn jugent het ellen unde kraft.
 der junge sîeze âne bart,
 den twanc diu Gahmuretes art
 und an geborniu manheit,
 daz ors von rabbîne er reit
 mit volleclicher hurte dar,
 er nam der vier nagele war.
 des wirtes ritter niht gesaz,
 al vallende er den acker maz.
 dô muosen kleiniu stückelîn
 aldâ von trunzûnen sîn.
 sus stach err fûnve nidr.
 der wirt in nam und fuorte in widr.
 aldâ behielt er schimpfes prîs:
 er wart ouch sît an strîte wîs.

Die sîn rîten gesâhen,
 al die wîsen im des jâhen,
 dâ füere kunst und ellen bî.

*Then the prince went out to the plain;
 there they practiced knightly arts.
 He showed his guest
 how to bring his horse out of a gallop
 with a sharp dig of the spurs,
 how to make it charge
 by pressing with his thighs,
 how to lower his spear properly,
 and how to hold his shield before himself
 in jousting. He said, “Now you should do the same.”*

*This had the same effect on the foolish man
 as the supple whip
 that punishes bad children.
 Then he called for knights
 to joust with him.
 He brought an opponent
 to the jousting ring.
 There the young man
 made his first joust through a shield;
 he surprised them all
 when he threw the man from his horse.
 The man was skilled in riding, hardly weak.*

*Another jouster approached.
 Parzival took
 a strong fresh spear.
 The young man had strength and spirit.
 With the heritage of Gahmuret
 and his innate manhood,
 this sweet young man without a beard
 rode his master’s horse
 at full tilt
 and aimed at the boss of his opponent’s shield.¹⁵
 The host’s knight did not remain seated
 but measured the field in a fall.
 Little pieces of the splintered spear
 were lying all around.
 He threw down five men this way.
 The host took him and led him back inside.
 Thus he took the prize in the contest;
 later he would prove his worth in combat.*

*All that saw him riding
 and that knew of knightly matters
 said that he had skill and courage.*

¹⁵ Literally, at the “four nails” in the boss.

“nu wirt mîn hêrre jâmers vrî:
 sich mac nu jungen wol sîn lebn.
 er sol im ze wîbe gebn
 sîne tohter, unser frouwen.
 ob wirn bî witzzen schouwen,
 sô lischet im sîn jâmers nôt.
 für sîner drîer süne tôt
 ist im ein gelt ze hûs geriten:
 nu hât in sælde niht vermiten.”

sus kom der fürste sâbents in.
 der tisch gedecket muose sîn.
 sîne tohter bat er komn
 ze tische: alsus hân ichz vernomn.
 do er die maget komen sach,
 nu hoeret wie der wirt sprach
 ze der schœnen Lîâzen.
 “du solt di’n küssen lâzen,
 disen ritter, biut im êre:
 er vert mit sælden lêre.
 ouch solt an iuch gedinget sîn
 daz ir der meide ir vingerlîn
 liezet, op siz möhte hân.
 nune hât sis niht, noch fürsplan:
 wer gæbe ir sölhen volleist
 so der frouwen in dem fôreist?
 diu het etswen von dem sie ’npfienc
 daz iu zenpfâhen sît ergienc.
 ir muget Lîâzen niht genemn.”
 der gast begunde sich des schemn,
 Iedoch kuster se an den munt:
 dem was wol fiwers varwe kunt.
 Lîâzen lîp was minneclîch,
 dar zuo der wâren kiusche rîch.

der tisch was nider unde lanc.
 der wirt mit niemen sich dâ dranc,
 er saz al eine an den ort.
 sînen gast hiez er sitzen dort
 zwischen im unt sîme kinde.
 ir blanken hende linde
 muosen snîden, sô der wirt gebôt,
 den man dâ hiez den ritter rô,
 swaz der ezzen wolde.
 nieman si wenden solde,
 sine gebârten heinlîche.

*They thought, “At last my lord is free of cares.
 Let him live again as if he were still young.
 He should give him his daughter,
 our lady, as a wife.
 If he uses his wits,
 then he can end his suffering and grief.
 The man who has entered his house
 can make up for the deaths of his three sons.
 Fortune has not disfavored him.”*

*In the evening the prince entered.
 The table was set.
 He asked his daughter to come
 to the table: so I have heard the story told.
 Now hear what the host said
 to the sweet Liaze
 when he saw the maiden approach.
 “If you let this knight kiss you,
 you will do him honor:
 he travels according to the ways of fortune.
 For your part, sir,
 you must refrain from taking her ring,
 assuming she has one.
 But she does not; nor does she have a brooch.
 Who would give her such things
 as the lady in the forest had?¹⁶
 She had someone
 to give her those things you took.
 As for Liaze, there’s nothing you can take.”
 The guest felt ashamed,
 yet he kissed her on the mouth;
 it was the color of fire.
 Liaze was lovely in appearance,
 as well as rich in genuine purity.*

*The table was long and low.
 No one was there to crowd the host;
 he sat alone at the end.
 He had asked his guest to sit there
 between his daughter and himself.
 Her gentle white hands would cut up
 whatever the guest wanted to eat,
 this man called the Red Knight,
 whenever he asked.
 Thus they interacted privately,
 and there was no one there to interfere.*

¹⁶ That is, Jeschute, whom Parzival has described to Gurnemanz. Parzival does not know her name.

diu magt mit zühten rîche
 leist ir vater willen gar.
 si unt der gast wâr wol gevar.

dar nâch schier gienc diu maget widr.
 sus pflac man des heldes sidr
 unz an den vierzehenden tac.
 bî sîme herzen kumber lac
 anders niht wan umbe daz:
 er wolt ê gestrîten baz,
 ê daz er dar an wurde warm,
 daz man dâ heizet frouwen arm.
 in dûhte, wert gedinge
 daz wære ein hôhiu linge
 ze disem lîbe hie unt dort.
 daz sint noch ungelogeniu wort.

Eins morgens urloubs er bat;
 dô rûmter Grâharz die stat.
 der wirt mit im ze velde reit:
 dô huop sich niwez herzenleit.
 dô sprach der fürste ûz triwe erkorn
 “ir sît mîn vierder sun verlorn.
 jâ wând ich ergetzet wære
 drîer jâmerlîchen mære.
 der wâren dennoch niht wan driu:
 der nu mîn herze envieriu
 mit sîner hende slüege
 und ieslîch stücke trüege,
 daz diuhte mich ein grôz gewin,
 einz für iuch (ir rîtet hin),
 diu driu für mîniu werden kint
 diu ellenthaft erstorben sint.
 sus lönt iedoch diu ritterschaft:
 ir zagel ist jâmerstricke haft.

ein tût mich lemt an freuden gar,
 mînes sunes wol gevar,
 der was geheizen Schenteflûrs.
 dâ Cundwîrâmûrs
 lîp unde ir lant niht wolte gebn,
 in ir helfer flôs sîn leb n
 von Clâmidê und von Kingrûn.
 des ist mir dûrkel als ein zûn
 mîn herze von jâmers sniten.
 nu sît ir alze fruo geriten
 von mir trôstelôsen man.

*With proper behavior the maiden
 was carrying out her father's wishes.
 She and the guest made a fine couple.*

*Directly after that the maiden left.
 In this way the hero was attended to
 for fourteen days.
 Just one thing
 troubled his heart:
 he wanted to fight better
 before he enjoyed
 the warmth of what is called “a lady's arms.”
 It seemed to him accomplishment like this
 was a worthy goal,
 in this life and the next.
 And still that is no lie.*

*One morning he asked for permission
 to leave the town of Graharz.
 The host rode out to the field with him;
 then his heart felt new sorrow.
 The prince, that paragon of truth, said this:
 “You represent the fourth son I have lost.
 I seemed to me that I had been repaid
 for each of those three times of suffering.
 For after all, there were but three of them.
 If someone were to strike out with his hand
 and hit my heart and sunder it in four,
 and carry off each piece,
 the action would be to my great advantage:
 one piece would be for you who ride away;
 the other pieces for my noble sons
 who bravely died.
 But such are the wages of knighthood:
 they are a whip with sorrow in its tail.*

*“One death crippled all my joy,
 that of my handsome son,
 who was called Schentaflurs.
 He was helping Condwiramurs,
 who refused to surrender her life and kingdom;
 he lost his life
 at the hands of Clamide and Kingrun.
 Because of his death, sorrow has cut my heart
 so that, just like a fence, it's full of holes.
 I am distraught; you ride away from me
 too soon.*

ôwê daz ich niht sterben kan,
sît Lîâz diu schœne magt
und ouch mîn lant iu niht behagt.

Mîn ander sun hiez cons Lascoyt.
den sluoc mir Idêr fil Noyt
umb einen sparwære.
des stên ich freuden lære.
mîn dritter sun hiez Gurzgri.
dem reit Mahaute bî
mit ir schœnem lîbe:
wan si gap im ze wîbe
ir stolzer bruoder Ehkumat.
gein Brandigân der houbetstat
kom er nâch Schoydelakurt geritn.
dâ wart sîn sterben niht vermitn:
dâ sluog in Mâbonagrîn.
des verlôs Mahaute ir liechten schîn,
und lac mîn wîp, sîn muoter, tât:
grôz jâmer irz nâch im gebôt.”

der gast nams wirtes jâmer war,
wand erz im unterschiet sô gar.
dô sprach er “hêrre, in bin niht wîs:
bezal abr i’emer ritters prîs,
sô daz ich wol mac minne gern,
ir sult mich Lîâzen wern,
iwerr tohter, der schœnen magt.
ir habt mir alze vil geklagt:
mag ich iu jâmer denne entsagen,
des lâz ich iuch sô vil niht tragen.”

urloup nam der junge man
von dem getriwen fürsten sîn
unt zal der massenê.
des fürsten jâmers drîe
was riwic an daz quater komn:
die vierden flust het er genomn.

*Alas that I can’t die,
since you are not satisfied
by the lovely maiden Liaze or my land.*

*“My second son was Count Lascoyt.
Ider son of Noyt slew him
in a contest for a sparrowhawk.¹⁷
Because of his death I am bereft of joy.
My third son was Gurzgri.
Beside him rode Mahaute
in her beauty;
her proud brother Ehkumat
had given her to him as a wife.
He rode to Schoydelakurt¹⁸
in the capital city of Brandigan.
There death did not pass him by:
Mabonagrîn slew him.¹⁹
After that, Mahaute lost her beauty,
and my wife, his mother, died.
Great grief commanded her to follow him.”*

*The guest understood his host’s sorrow,
because he had explained it so clearly.
Then he said, “Sir, I am not wise,
but if I win the kind of knightly honor
that lets me ask for love,
then you shall give me Liaze
your daughter, the lovely maid.
You’ve told me of too much sorrow.
If ever I can relieve your suffering,
I’ll do it, so the grief you bear is less.”*

*Then the young man said farewell
to that faithful prince
and all his company.
The prince’s three of sorrows
sadly became a four:²⁰
he had experienced his fourth disaster.*

¹⁷ See the note above on the sparrowhawk contest.

¹⁸ Schoydelakurt is a Germanification of *Joie de la Cour*. This a strange enchanted place in Chrétien’s and Hartmann’s *Erec*.

¹⁹ Mabonagrîn is an antagonist in the *Erec* story.

²⁰ The “three” and “four” are references to throws of the dice.

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