

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF
KING ARTHUR

BY HAROLD R FOSTER



INTRODUCING: PRINCE VALIANT

In 1936, the Canadian-born cartoonist Harold Rudolf "Hal" Foster (1892-1982) had been working away on the newspaper-strip version of Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan* for United Feature Syndicate for close to half a decade, in the process cementing his position as one of the greatest adventure cartoonists of all time.

But Foster had become tired of working on an adaptation, with its attendant limitations (both creative and financial); he decided to emancipate himself by responding to rival publisher William Randolph Hearst's entreaties to come work for him, creating a brand new strip called *Prince Valiant* in the *Days of King Arthur*.

Valiant is a 5th-century Nordic prince from Thule whose friendship with the Arthurian knights Sir Gawain and Sir Tristram earns him entry into King Arthur's inner circle, and membership as a Knight of the Round Table. From that point on, Valiant would roam the world, starting off from his adopted home of Camelot and his birthplace of Thule, visiting virtually all of Europe, some of Africa, the Mediterranean Islands (where

he would encounter his bride-to-be, Aleta), and even, a millennium before Christopher Columbus, the New World. He would have many exciting adventures and meet countless colorful friends and adversaries — and eventually, his children would begin going off on their own exploits, creating one of the great multi-generational sagas of adventure fiction, illustrated or not.

Foster would write and draw *Prince Valiant* every week for 34 years, until advancing arthritis forced him to pass the torch — at least the illustrative torch — to other hands. Beginning in 1971, John Cullen Murphy took over the drawing of the strip (based on Foster's scripts, layouts, and pencils), gradually assuming a greater share of the art. In 1980, Foster retired from the strip entirely,

turning the writing over to Murphy's son Cullen.

More than three decades later, new episodes of *Prince Valiant* continue to appear, now under the stewardship of Mark Schultz (writer) and Thomas Yeates (artist) — one of the few classic adventure strips that continues to thrill newspaper readers every week around the world.

Beginning in 2009, Fantagraphics Books launched the project of reprinting every single *Prince Valiant* strip written and drawn by Foster, scanned from the finest resources available (Foster's own personal collection of "proof sheets") and presented with state-of-the-art digital restoration. The sixth volume (covering 1947 and 1948) appeared earlier this year, and the seventh (which includes the two stories collected herein) will be published later this summer.

We hope new readers will be intrigued by their introduction to this great classic, and Valiant fans will enjoy this sneak peek at our upcoming volume.

—The Publishers

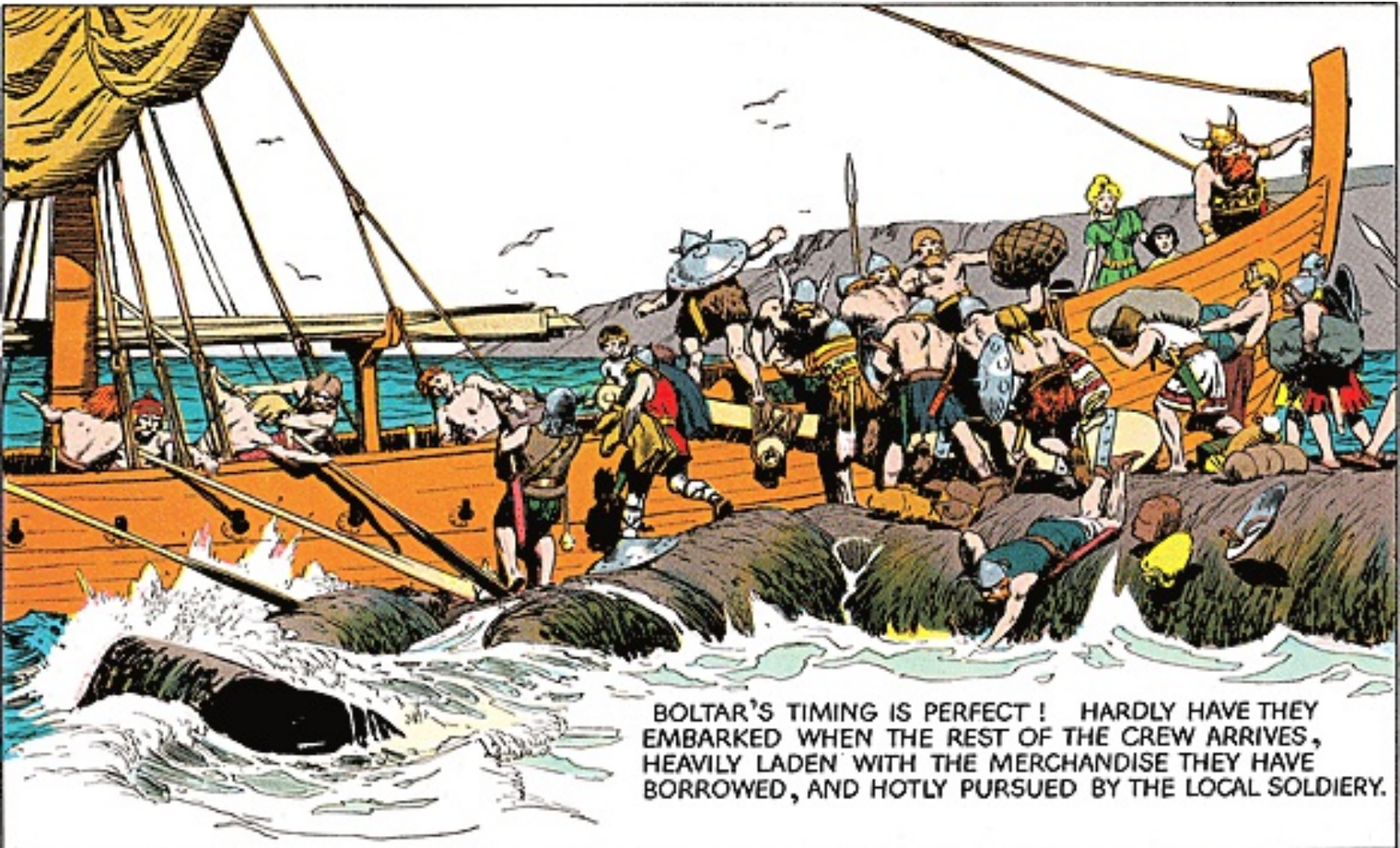
PRINCE VALIANT: FREE COMIC BOOK DAY SPECIAL EDITION contains two sequences from 1950: "The Homecoming" (January-March) and "The Challenge" (March-May). In order to fit within the reduced comic-book format and to eliminate certain narrative redundancies created by the original weekly serialization, certain panels have been modified, omitted, or moved around. The full, original versions will of course be appearing in the forthcoming *Prince Valiant* Vol. 7: 1949-1950. PRINCE VALIANT: FREE COMIC BOOK DAY SPECIAL EDITION is copyright © 2013 King Features Syndicate. All contents copyright © 2013 King Features Syndicate. All rights reserved. You must obtain the publisher's permission to reproduce any portion of this publication. Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115. Publishers: Gary Groth and Kim Thompson. Associate Publisher: Eric Reynolds. Editor: Kim Thompson. Production: Paul Baresch. Special thanks to the Special Collections Research Center of the Syracuse University Library for providing the scans for the strips reprinted in this comic, reproduced from original syndicate proofs. First Printing: April 2013. Printed in Canada.



ON THE MORROW THEY ARE TO SAIL FOR THULE,
SO TONIGHT CELLAR AND CUPBOARD ARE SWEEPED
BARE IN AN EFFORT TO SATISFY THE CELEBRATED
APPETITE OF BOLTAR.



BOLTAR ARRIVES WITH HALF HIS CREW, AND VAL'S HOUSEHOLD
IS MOVED ABOARD SHIP. THE NOISE THEY HEAR IS THE OTHER
HALF OF THE CREW MAKING A MINOR RAID ON THE MERCHANTS
OF NEWCASTLE, FOR, WHEN BOLTAR EMBARKS, HE HATES TO
LEAVE BEHIND ANY UNFINISHED BUSINESS.



BOLTAR'S TIMING IS PERFECT! HARDLY HAVE THEY EMBARKED WHEN THE REST OF THE CREW ARRIVES, HEAVILY LADEN WITH THE MERCHANDISE THEY HAVE BORROWED, AND HOTLY PURSUED BY THE LOCAL SOLDIERY.



A FEW ARROWS COME ABOARD, BUT SOON THEY ARE FAR FROM SHORE AND THE VOYAGE TO THULE IS BEGUN.



BOLTAR SIGHS, FOR THE MERCHANTS OF ANY TOWN HE VISITS ALWAYS SEEM SO UNFRIENDLY WHEN HE LEAVES. THEN HE ORDERS A SHELTER CONSTRUCTED FOR HIS NOBLE PASSENGERS.



THEY TURN NORTHWARD UP THE ROCKY COAST OF CALEDONIA. THE GREAT SAIL IS FURLED AND OARSMEN BEND TO THE SWEEPS FOR THE WINDS ARE UNFAVORABLE.



DAYS PASS, STORMS BUFFET THEM, RAIN AND FOG OBSCURE THE LAND.



THERE ARE ALSO DAYS, SUNNY AND CRISP WITH THE APPROACH OF WINTER, THAT BRING BACK VAL'S STRENGTH AND HE CAN EXERCISE HIS STIFFENED MUSCLES.



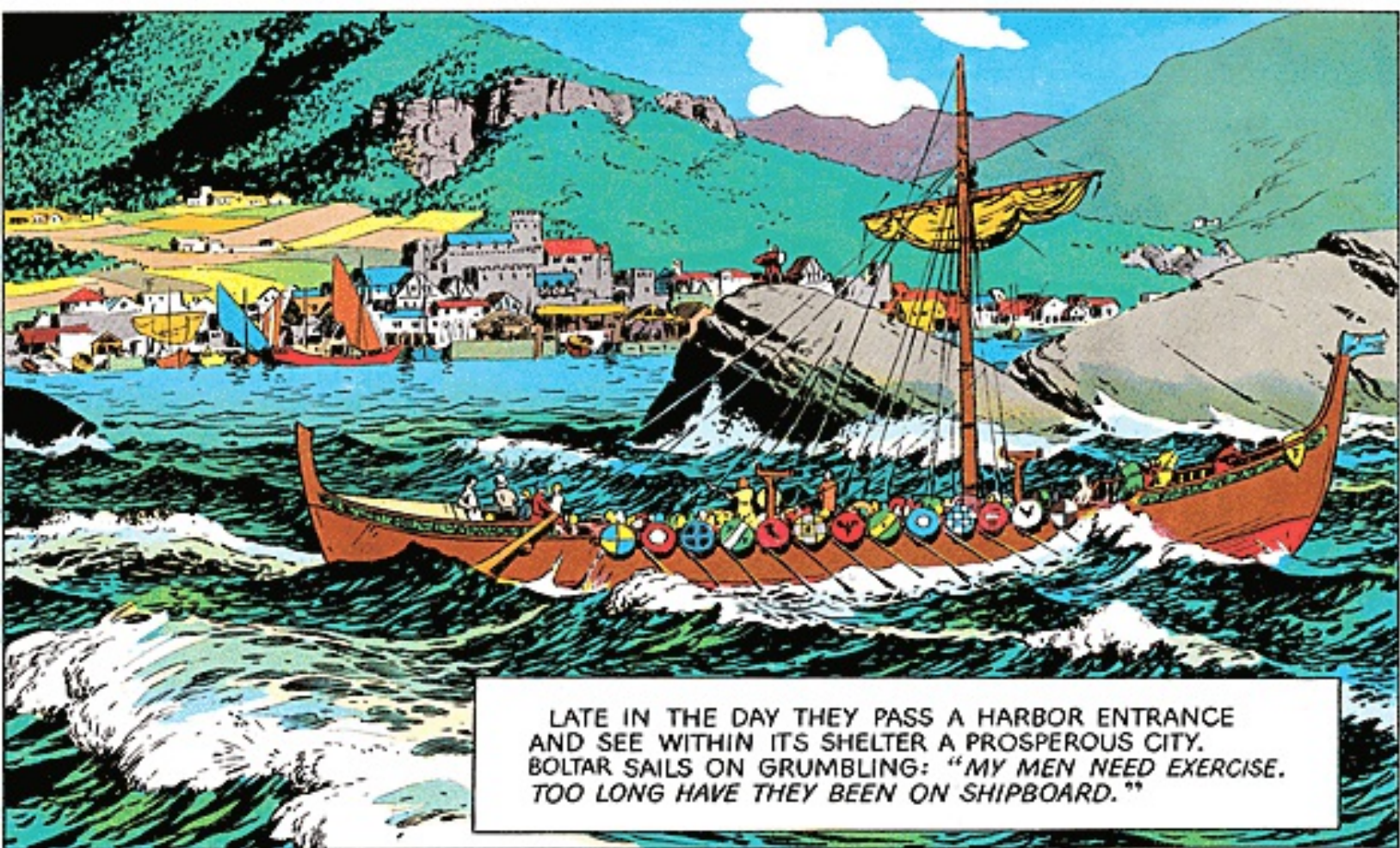
COMES A DAY WHEN WINDS ARE FAVORABLE. THE SAIL IS SET AND THE OARS RACKED. THEN THE MEN PUT THEIR GEAR IN ORDER AND CAREFULLY SHARPEN THEIR SWORDS.



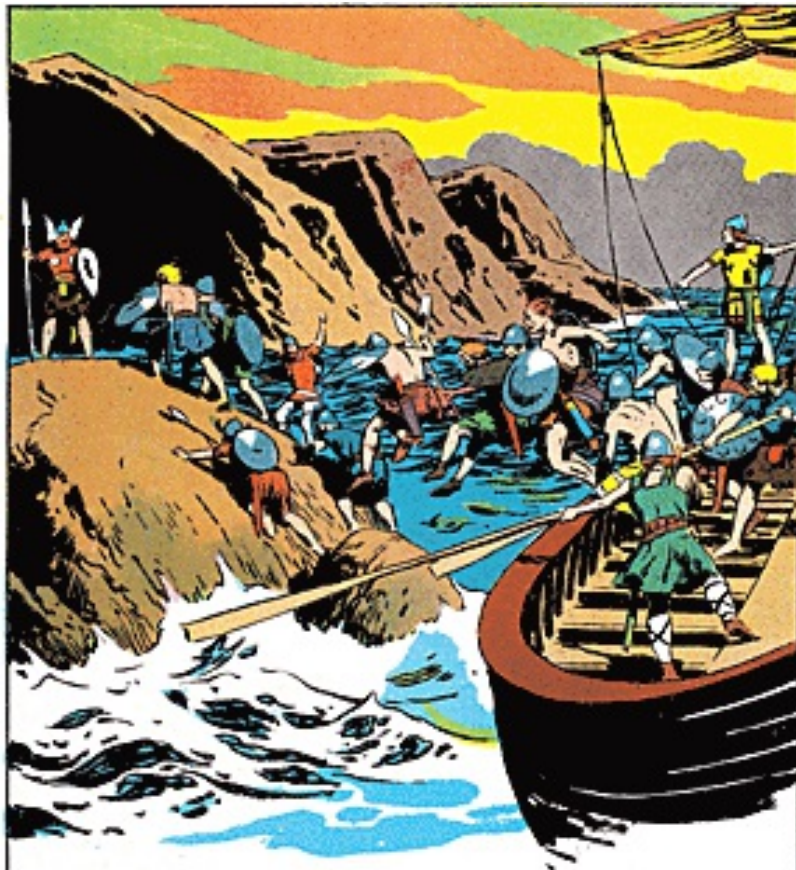
VAL IS SUSPICIOUS OF THIS ACTIVITY. "CAN IT BE THAT YOU PLAN TO RISK OUR NECKS ON SOME PLUNDERING RAID?" HE ASKS.



"YOU HAVE HURT ME DEEPLY, SIR VALIANT, BY HINTING THAT I AM ABOUT TO MAKE A THIEVING RAID!" SAYS THE SENSITIVE BOLTAR AS HE PUTS A NICE EDGE ON HIS AXE. "I MERELY PLAN A LITTLE BUSINESS TRANSACTION."



LATE IN THE DAY THEY PASS A HARBOR ENTRANCE AND SEE WITHIN ITS SHELTER A PROSPEROUS CITY. BOLTAR SAILS ON GRUMBLING: "MY MEN NEED EXERCISE. TOO LONG HAVE THEY BEEN ON SHIPBOARD."



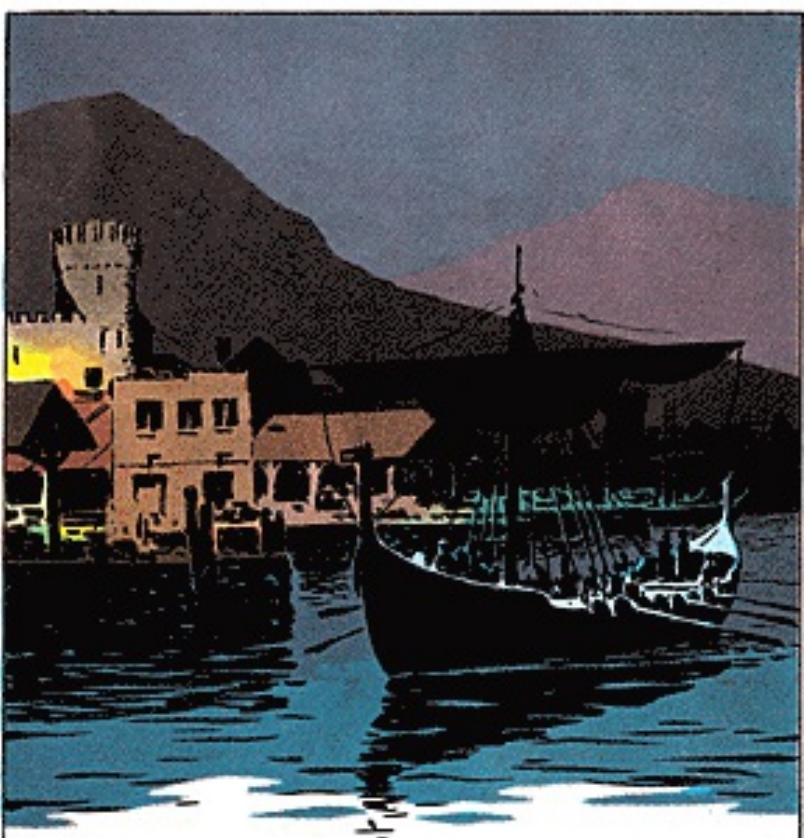
SO, A MILE BEYOND THE TOWN, HE SENDS ALL BUT A FEW ASHORE IN THE GATHERING DUSK.



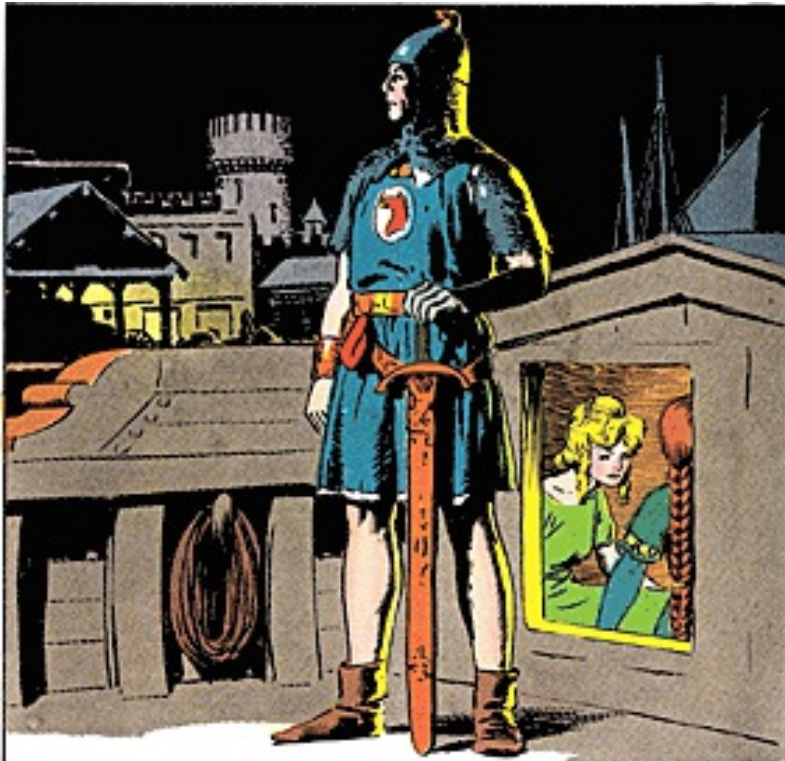
AND THESE MEN OBEY THEIR CHIEFTAIN BY RUNNING. THEY RUN SWIFTLY NOR DO THEY STOP WHEN THEY REACH THE TOWN, BUT RUN RIGHT THROUGH UNTIL THEY COME TO THE QUARTER WHERE STAND THE WAREHOUSES OF THE MERCHANTS.



BOLTAR'S SHIP COMES SLOWLY INTO THE HARBOR, UNCHALLENGED. FOR SOMETHING SEEMS TO HAVE HAPPENED TO THE SENTRY IN THE DARKNESS.



AS THE SHIP GLIDES SILENTLY ALONGSIDE THE QUAY THERE IS A GROWING TUMULT WITHIN THE CITY. THE SOUND OF AXES ON STOUT DOORS CAN BE PLAINLY HEARD !



PRINCE VALIANT BIDS ALETA STAY WITHIN THE SHELTER OF THEIR CABIN AND STEPS ON DECK FULLY ARMED SAVE FOR HIS SHIELD, FOR HIS LEFT SIDE IS STILL WEAK FROM THE WOUND.



BOLTAR AND PRINCE VALIANT LISTEN TO THE GROWING TUMULT WITHIN THE CITY. "NOISY TOWN, ISN'T IT?" REMARKS BOLTAR VIRTUOUSLY. "ITS CITIZENS MUST BE ROISTERING IN THE TAVERNS!"



"I NEVER SHOULD HAVE ALLOWED MY POOR, INNOCENT BOYS TO GO INTO THAT NOISY TOWN!" MUTTERS THEIR CAPTAIN PIOUSLY. "ITS CITIZENS SEEM MOST UNFRIENDLY."



A LANTERN IS HOISTED TO THE YARD TO GUIDE THE SAILORS THOUGH THERE IS PLENTY OF LIGHT, FOR A WAREHOUSE SEEMS TO BE BURNING.



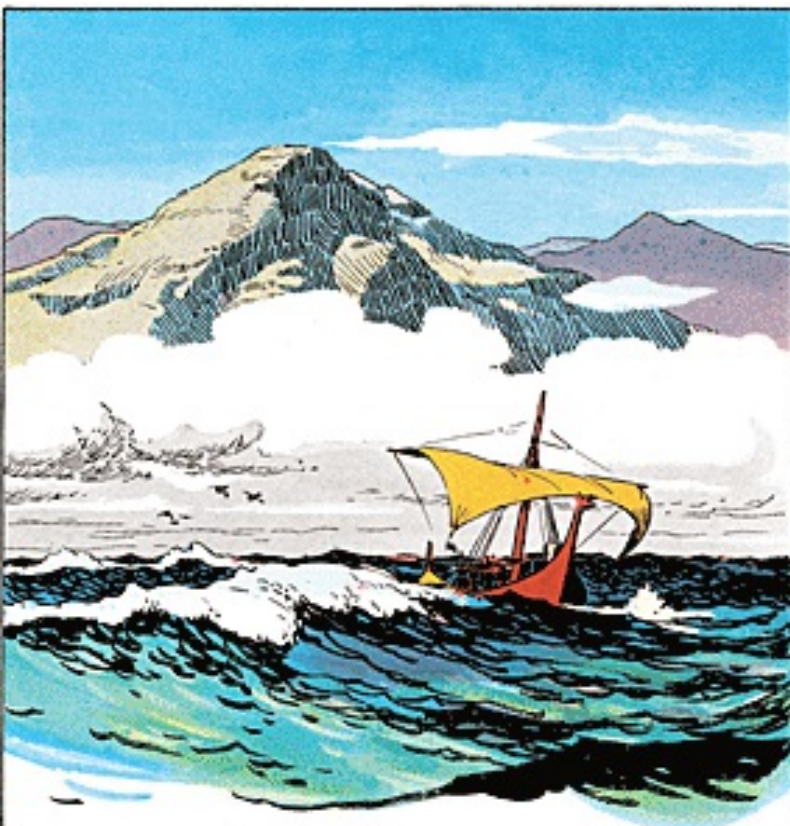
THEN SOME OF THE POOR, INNOCENT 'BOYS' CAN BE SEEN RETURNING, BENDING BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF BOXES AND BALES.



THESE ARE TOSSED ABOARD AND THE 'BOYS' RETURN FOR MORE. BOLTAR TURNS TO VAL. "THE LADS MUST HAVE MADE SOME PURCHASES," HE EXPLAINS.



FINALLY THE WHOLE CREW RETURNS, BACKING SLOWLY TOWARD THE SHIP AMID A SHOWER OF MISSILES. THEN, AS THE VESSEL MOVES AWAY FROM THE QUAY, THEY TURN QUICKLY AND LEAP ABOARD!



BY DAWN THE 'PURCHASES' ARE ALL STOWED, THE MOUNTAINS OF CALEDONIA ARE FAINT IN THE DISTANCE AND AHEAD THE WIDE, WILD EMPTY SEA.



YOUNG ARF CRAWLS FROM HIS QUARTERS, PALE AND SHAKY BUT, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE LEAVING LAND, HE BELIEVES HE WILL LIVE.



THE PASSENGERS COME OUT ON THE SUNNY DECK AND, AS USUAL, THE SIGHT OF KATWIN SETS BOLTAR STRUTTING LIKE A ROOSTER.

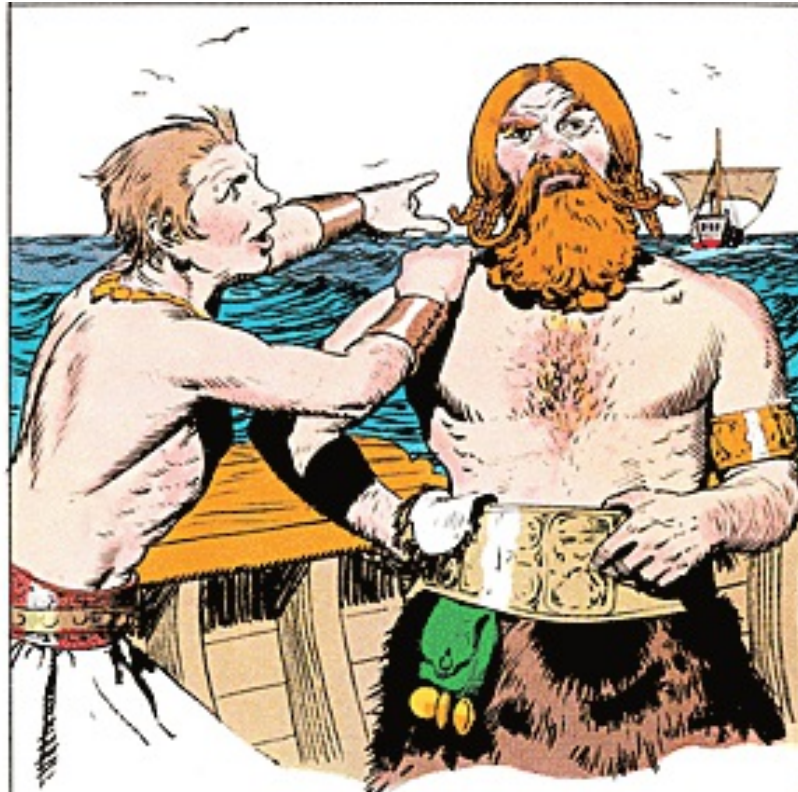


HAL FOSTER

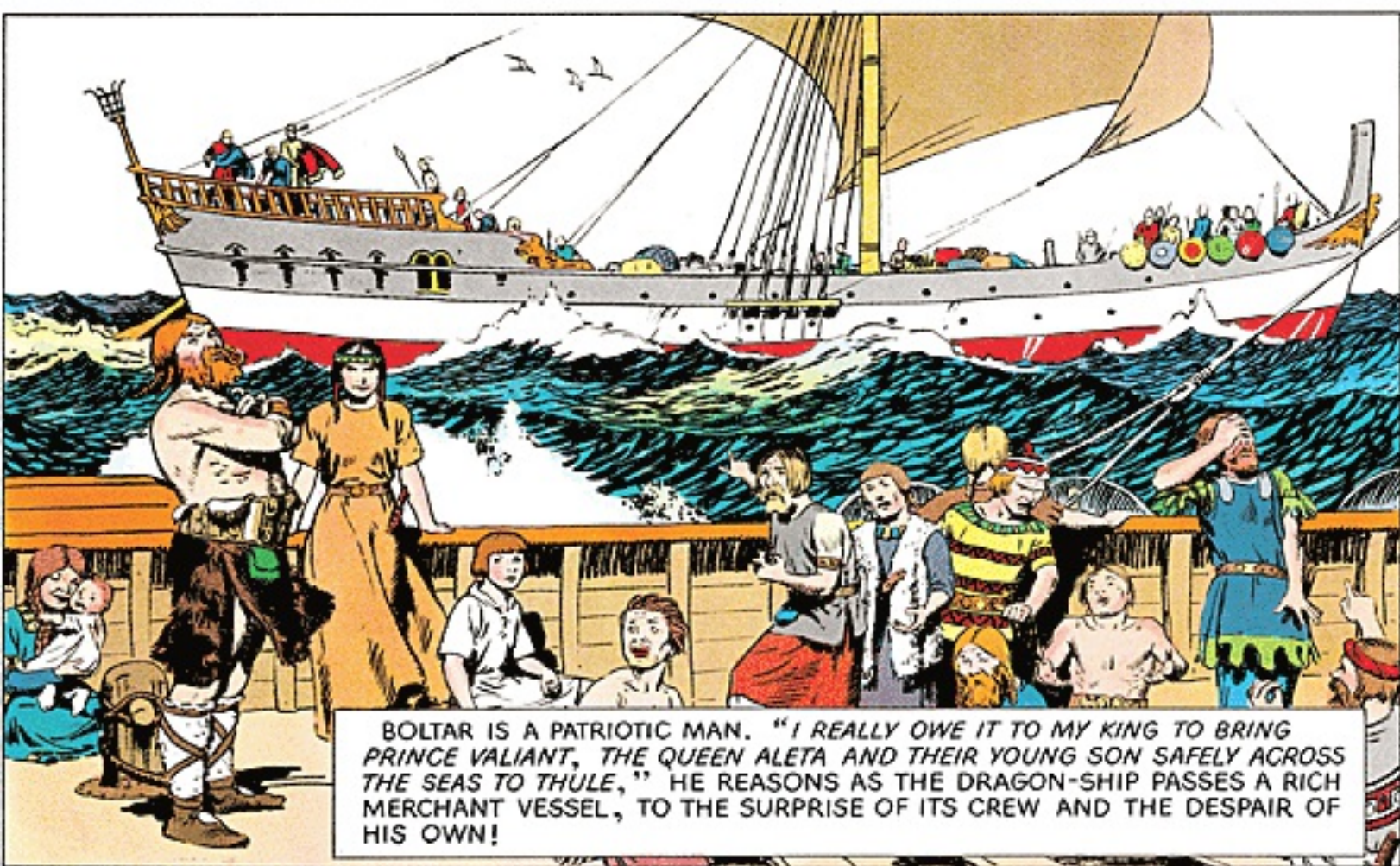
BUT TILlicum HANDS PRINCE ARN TO KATWIN, WALKS UP TO BOLTAR AND SAYS VERY QUIETLY: "ENDANGER THE SUN-WOMAN'S MAN-CHILD AGAIN AND I WILL KILL YOU."



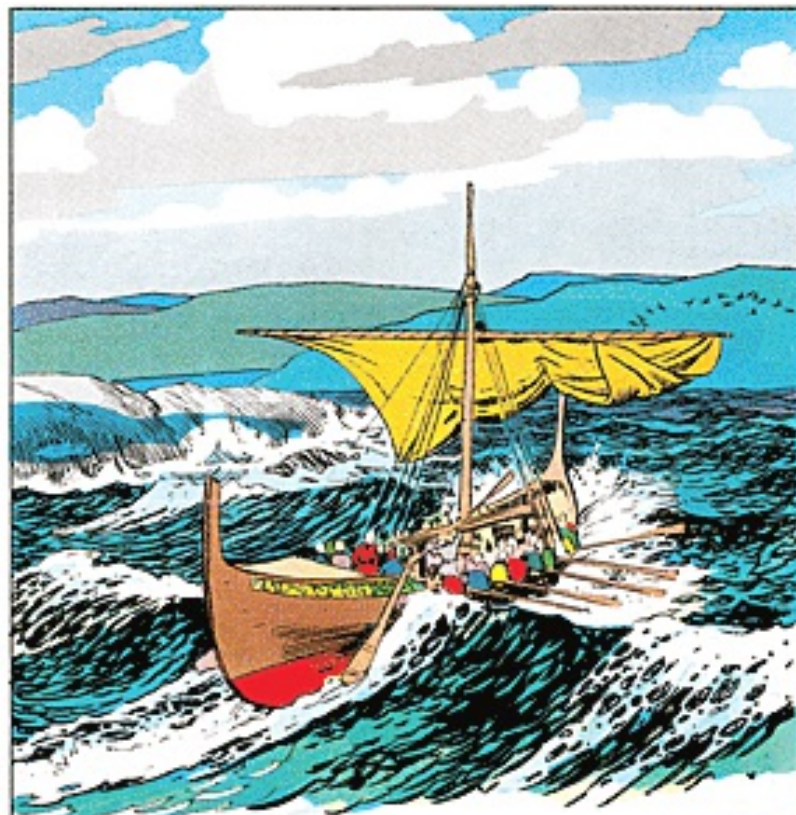
THEN SHE SITS DOWN AND PRINCE ARN CRAWLS INTO HER LAP, AND BOLTAR PULLS ANGRILY ON HIS BEARD. A SCORE OF TIMES HE HAS LAUGHED IN THE FACE OF SUCH THREATS FROM HARDY WARRIORS AND GREAT CHIEFTAINS.....



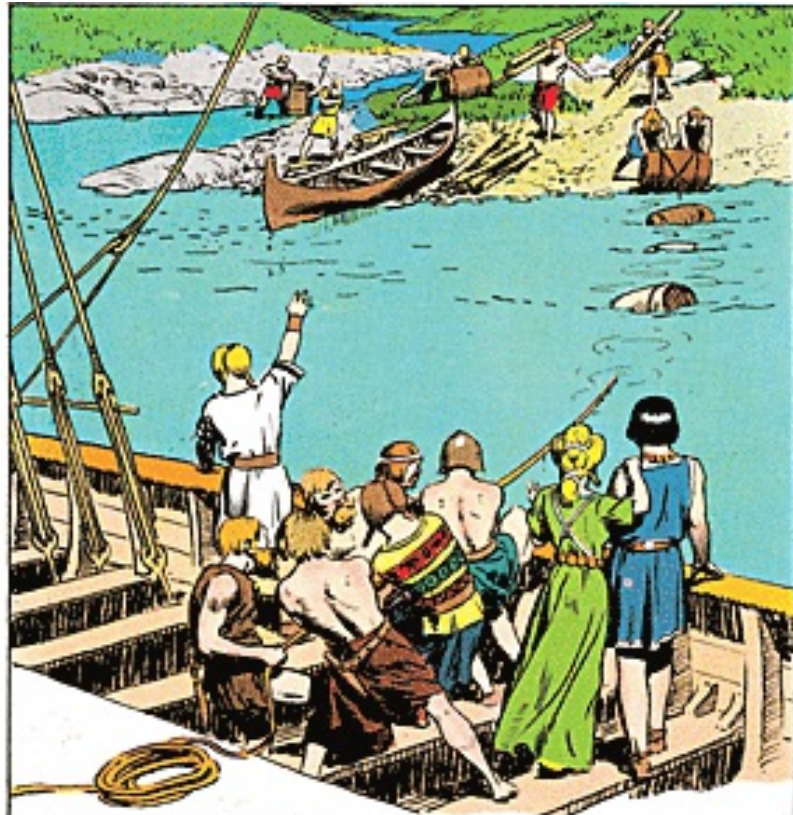
..... BUT THIS QUIET WOMAN HASN'T THREATENED; SHE HAS SIMPLY STATED A FACT, AND COLD SHIVERS RUN THROUGH HIS GREAT BODY.



BOLTAR IS A PATRIOTIC MAN. "I REALLY OWE IT TO MY KING TO BRING PRINCE VALIANT, THE QUEEN ALETA AND THEIR YOUNG SON SAFELY ACROSS THE SEAS TO THULE," HE REASONS AS THE DRAGON-SHIP PASSES A RICH MERCHANT VESSEL, TO THE SURPRISE OF ITS CREW AND THE DESPAIR OF HIS OWN!



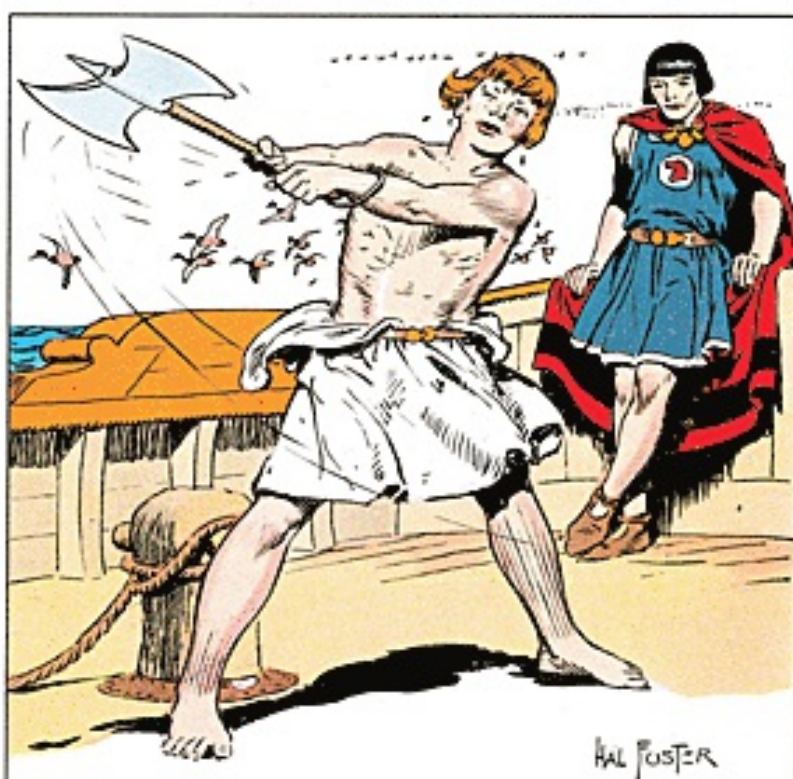
FOR SEVERAL DAYS THEY SAIL IN WEATHER FAIR AND FOUL AND, AT LAST, REACH THE ORKNEY ISLANDS AND THE SHELTER OF SCAPA FLOW.



HERE THEY TAKE ON WOOD AND WATER, FOR AHEAD OF THEM LIES A LONG AND PERILOUS JOURNEY. WITHOUT SEXTANT OR COMPASS, IN SPITE OF WINDS OR CURRENT, A TRACKLESS WASTE OF SEA MUST BE TRAVELED.



YOUNG ARF IS WIDE-EYED WITH AWE AS SEA AND SKY UNFOLD THEIR WONDERS. HE BEHOLDS THE GREAT FALL MIGRATION OF WATERFOWL, WHILE FROM THE SEA HUGE MONSTERS LEAP!



A SHARP COMMAND FROM VAL ENDS THE HOLIDAY AND ARF GOES TO WORK.... FOR KNIGHTHOOD COMES ONLY TO THE BEST.

HAL FOSTER



THE MENACE OF SHRIEKING WINDS AND HISSING WAVES IS FORGOTTEN AS MONSTERS OF THE DEEP GO SURGING BY-- MONSTERS SO HUGE THEY PAY NO HEED TO THE FRAIL DRAGON-SHIP.



WITH NEITHER COMPASS NOR SEXTANT BUT ONLY BOLTAR'S SKILL THEY FIND THEIR WAY ACROSS THE EMPTY WASTE OF SEA TO THE SHETLAND ISLANDS.



IN A SHELTERED COVE THEY REST AND PUT THEIR GEAR IN ORDER, FOR THE WORST IS STILL AHEAD.



WHITE FLAKES HERALD THE APPROACH OF WINTER AND, FOR THE SECOND TIME IN HIS SHORT BUT EVENTFUL LIFE, PRINCE ARN SEES SNOW !



THEN ONCE AGAIN THEY PUT TO SEA, SAILING NORTH BY EAST UNTIL THE NORTH STAR SEEMS ALMOST OVERHEAD. ICE CRUSTS THE SHROUDS AND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS FLAME IN THE SKY !



AFTER ENDLESS DAYS THEY SEE THE TOWERING COASTS OF THULE STANDING AGLOW IN THE DAWN LIGHT. HOMELAND !



INTO A QUIET FJORD GLIDES THE DRAGON-SHIP. THE PERILOUS SEA VOYAGE IS ENDED AND THE WARMTH AND COMFORT OF A VILLAGE INN IS THEIRS.

HAL FOSTER



IN HIS GREAT HALL THE LONELY KING HEARS THE MESSENGER TELL OF HIS SON'S RETURNING AND HIS EYES GROW MISTY.



"I MUST ARRANGE A HUNT SO MY SON AND I MAY ONCE AGAIN RIDE SIDE BY SIDE! AND YOUNG PEOPLE MUST BE INVITED TO COME AND STAY. A BANQUET! I MUST HAVE HIS ROOMS PREPARED.....!"



"..... AND ALETA WILL COME TOO, TO UPSET MY QUIET WITH HER LAUGHTER AND SILLY SONGS, TO MEDDLE IN AFFAIRS OF STATE AND TO TEASE ME LIKE A MISCHIEVOUS SMALL SUNBEAM!"



AGUAR, KING OF THULE, LETS OUT A ROAR THAT BRINGS HIS STAFF ON THE RUN: - "CLEAN UP THIS UNSIGHTLY STABLE! WASH DOWN THE WALLS! SCRUB THE FLOORS! POLISH THE FURNITURE! HANG FRESH TAPESTRIES! SHINE UP THIS OLD BARRACKS UNTIL IT IS FIT FOR THE FUTURE QUEEN OF THULE!"



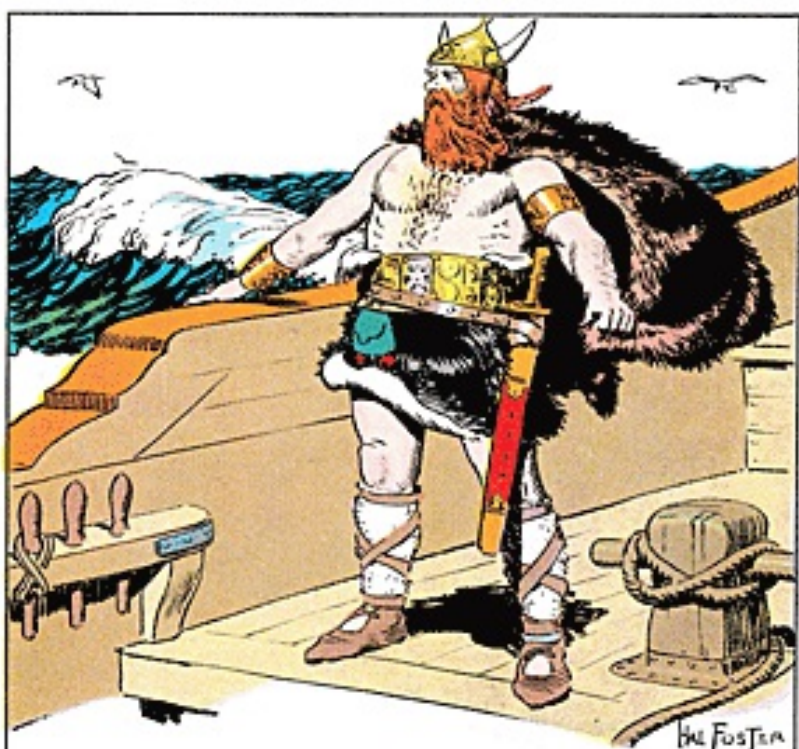
DOWN BY THE SEA OLD FRIENDS BID FAREWELL.
THERE IS MUCH LAUGHING AND LOUD TALK TO
HIDE THE SORROW OF PARTING.



TILlicum SITS QUIETLY APART, HER FIERCE EYES
FIXED ON THE MAN WHOSE LIFE SHE HAD THREAT-
ENED, WHOSE RAID SHE HAD FORBIDDEN. BOLTAR
STRIDES TOWARD HER....



....AND FROM HIS NECK TAKES A HEAVY GOLDEN
CHAIN AND DROPS IT IN HER LAP: — "I WILL
RETURN!", HE WHISPERS.



MANY RIGHTEOUS PEOPLE WILL NOT APPROVE
OF BOLTAR, THE PIRATE. BUT HE LIVED IN THE
BOISTEROUS DAYS WHEN THE RAIDER WAS LOOK-
ED UPON AS A RESPECTABLE BUSINESSMAN WHO
MADE HIS PROFITS BY RISKING HIS LIFE RATHER
THAN BY SHREWD TRADING.

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF
KING ARTHUR

By HAROLD R FOSTER



THE HORSES ARRIVE
FAMILY SET OUT ACROSS
BEEN ON A HORSE IN
INDIAN FASHION SHOW
FOREST-CLAD HILLS
THE WIDE SEAS.



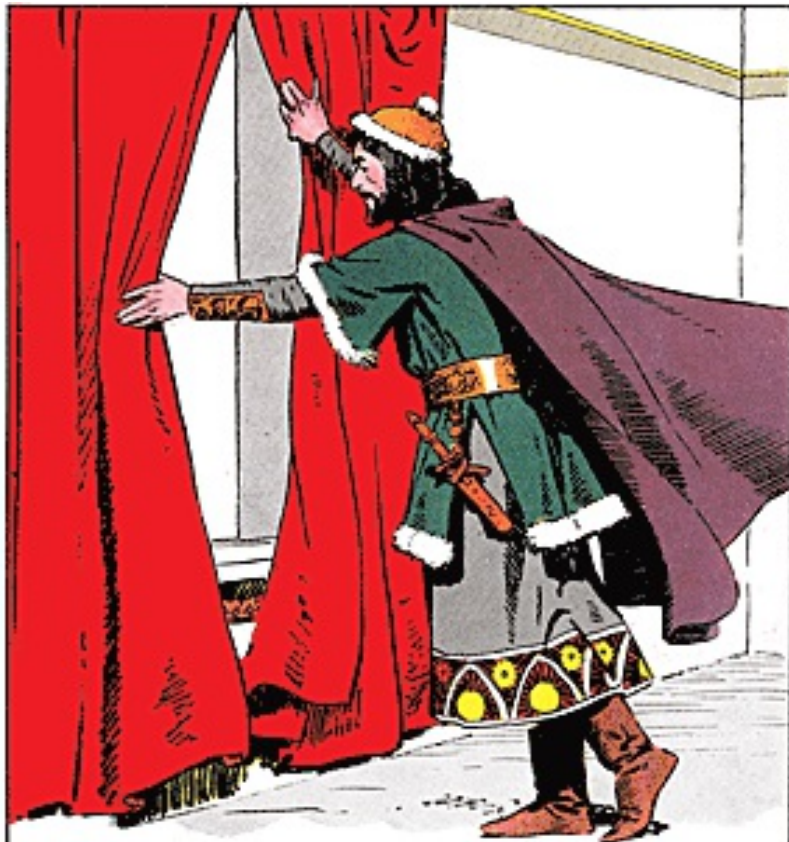
VAL BOWS POLITELY: "I TRUST YOU HAVE
BEEN WELL, SIRE?" THE KING ALSO BOWS:
"SPLENDID," HE ANSWERS—"AND WILL YOU BE
STAYING FOR SUPPER?"



(WE PASS LIGHTLY OVER THE NEXT SCENE
BECAUSE IT IS INCLINED TO BE EMOTIONAL.
SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT AGUAR IS A WISE
AND JUST KING BECAUSE HE DESIRES TO BE
WORTHY OF HIS STALWART SON, AND VAL IS
A GREAT WARRIOR FOR HE COPIES HIS BE-
LOVED FATHER IN EVERYTHING.)



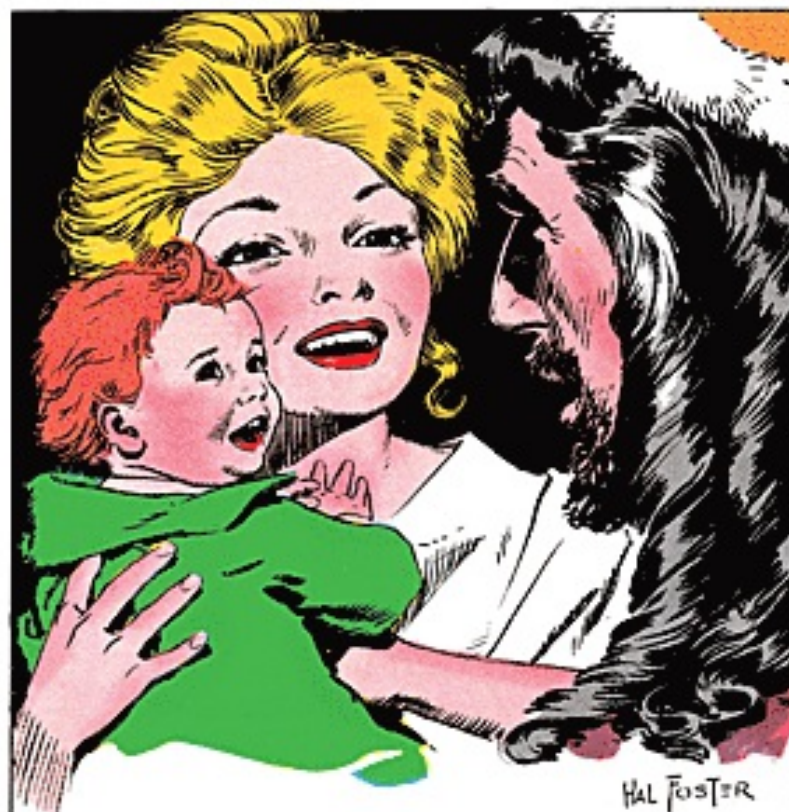
AND PRINCE VALIANT AND HIS
ACROSS THE RUGGED HILLS. TILlicum HAS NEVER
BEFORE NOR WILL SHE TRUST PRINCE ARN TO ONE.
SHE GOES AND HER HEART IS SINGING, FOR THE
HILLS OF THULE ARE JUST LIKE HER HOMELAND ACROSS



KING AGUAR HEARS THE SHOUTS OF WELCOME,
HIS SON'S RINGING VOICE IN GREETING AND THE
RIPPLE OF ALETA'S LAUGHTER.



FROM BEYOND THE CURTAINED DOORWAY
COMES A BEDLAM OF NOISE, SCREAMS,
BELLOWS, SHRIEKS AND SOBS — BAD-
TEMPERED, DEMANDING! "WHAT IN
THUNDER IS THAT?" CRIES THE KING
IN ALARM!



IT IS ONLY PRINCE ARN ASKING FOR HIS
MOTHER. VAL AND ALETA WERE PLANNING
TO SURPRISE THE KING — NO DOUBT THEY
DID!

HAL FOSTER



WINTER COMES TO THE LAND OF THULE, WHITE, CLEAN AND SILENT. THE NORTH STAR BLAZES OVERHEAD AND THE SUN APPEARS LOW OVER THE SOUTHERN HILLS. BUT THE KING IS HAPPY. HIS ONLY SON, PRINCE VALIANT, IS HOME. HIS GRANDSON IS HEALTHY, LOUD AND LOVABLE, WHILE HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, ALETA, LAUGHS AT HIM, BULLIES HIM, RUNS HIS HOUSEHOLD, IS IMPUDENT AND ADORABLE. HE IS CONTENT.



THE WINTER DAYS SPEED BY. JOYOUS, CARE-FREE DAYS, AND THE LINES THAT CARE HAD ETCHED IN THE KING'S FACE DISAPPEAR. BUT FIVE MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE VAL WAS SO TERRIBLY WOUNDED AND HIS LEFT SIDE IS STILL WEAK AND STIFF AND HE IS WORRIED.



THERE IS NO ROOM FOR WORRY AT THE PALACE SINCE ALETA TOOK OVER. THE OLD WALLS ECHO WITH THE LAUGHTER OF YOUNG VOICES AND DANCING FEET. ALETA WAS NEVER SO HAPPY.



THERE IS ALWAYS THAT ONE PERSON WHO THINKS SPARKLING EYES AND LAUGHING LIPS ARE AN INVITATION ESPECIALLY FOR HIM.



"UNDOUBTEDLY THE LADY ALETA IS IN LOVE WITH ME," THINKS THIS HANDSOME YOUNG PRINCE-LING, "BUT I'LL BE GENEROUS AND GIVE HER SOME KISSES AND A SQUEEZE, PERHAPS."



SO HE FOLLOWS HER INTO THE CORRIDOR, SLIPS AN ARM AROUND HER SLIM WAIST AND DRAWS HER TO HIM.....



..... BUT HE DOES NOT KISS HER. INSTEAD HE RELEASES HER AND STEPS BACK. SHE HAS NOT STRUGGLED. OR SPOKEN. MERELY LOOKED COLDLY AT HIM. HE HAS STEPPED OUT OF HIS CLASS !



Hal Foster

THE HISS OF STEEL MAKES THEM TURN, AND THERE IN THE DOORWAY STANDS ARF, FURY IN HIS EYES, A SWORD IN HIS HAND! EVER SINCE HE FIRST BEHELD ALETA HE HAS WISHED THAT HE COULD DO BATTLE, EVEN DIE, IN HER SERVICE. AT LAST HIS CHANCE HAS COME!



ALETA SEES THE EXPRESSION ON HIS BOYISH FACE. "COME, ARF, THE INCIDENT IS CLOSED," SHE SAYS.



BUT ARF PASSES FORWARD. "CLOSED," SHE REPEATS SOFTLY AND THE LAD'S ANGER MELTS AS HE TURNS AND FOLLOWS HER. HE TOO IS DEALING WITH A QUEEN.



ALETA KEEPS HIM BUSY UNTIL SHE FEELS HE HAS FORGOTTEN THE INCIDENT.....



.....BUT HE HAS NOT. THIS IS HIS FIRST CHANCE TO DO BATTLE IN HIS LADY'S HONOR AND HE GOES IN SEARCH OF HER ANNOYER.



HE FINDS TALL EGIL IN THE ARMORY TRYING, BY VIOLENT EXERCISE, TO WORK OFF HIS ANGER AND HUMILIATION, AND STRAIGHTWAY ISSUES A CHALLENGE.



THINGS MIGHT HAVE GONE HARD WITH ARF BUT FOR THE ARRIVAL OF PRINCE VALIANT, FOR EGIL IS IN A FOUL TEMPER.



"HE INSULTED THE LADY ALETA...." EXPLAINS ARF. "SILENCE!" SNAPS VAL, FOR IN A QUARREL BETWEEN GENTLEMEN, A LADY'S NAME MUST NEVER BE MENTIONED!



VAL SMILES AT EGIL BUT HIS EYES ARE HARD.
 "YOUR HAIR IS UNTIDY, SIR," HE OBSERVES.
 "IT OFFENDS MY LOVE OF NEATNESS."
 "I DOUBT, SIR VALIANT, IF YOU ARE SUFFICIENTLY
 QUALIFIED TO QUESTION MY HAIRDRESSER'S ART,"
 ANSWERS EGIL.

"IT IS A SERIOUS MATTER TO QUESTION MY
 GOOD TASTE, JARL EGIL!"

"YET I DO MAINTAIN MOST VIGOROUSLY, SIR
 VALIANT, THAT YOU ARE LACKING IN THAT
 STERLING VIRTUE!"



"JARL EGIL, WE HAVE ARGUED THIS POINT WITH
 KEEN LOGIC BUT HAVE FAILED TO REACH AN
 AGREEMENT. THERE REMAINS BUT ONE THING...."

"I UNDERSTAND, SIR VALIANT. THIS IS TOO IM-
 PORTANT A MATTER TO GO UNSOLVED. A TRIAL
 BY ARMS IS THE SOLUTION!"



FRIENDS ARE REQUESTED TO ARRANGE TERMS
 FOR THE DUEL IN ALL FAIRNESS AND IN SECRECY,
 FOR VAL IS A KING'S SON AND EGIL BUT A MINOR
 PRINCELING.



VAL SEARCHES THROUGH THE ARMORY FOR A SHIELD HE CAN USE, FOR HIS NEAR-FATAL WOUND HAS LEFT HIS SHIELD ARM STIFF AND WEAK.

ARF CREEPS AWAY TO HIS ROOM, ALONE, TO PONDER THE AWFUL THING HE HAS DONE. IN HIS WILLFUL DESIRE TO DO SOMETHING BRAVE AND DRAMATIC HE HAS INVOLVED PRINCE VALIANT IN A DEADLY ENCOUNTER.



TALL EGIL RAGES SILENTLY. ALETA HAS MADE HIM FEEL LIKE A CLOD, HIS FACE WAS SLAPPED BY A LOWLY SQUIRE AND, WHILE A GUEST AT THE PALACE, HE HAS COMMITTED HIMSELF TO A DUEL WITH HIS KING'S SON...



HAL FOSTER

...WHILE VAL RELAXES BY THE FIRE WITH HIS LOVELY WIFE AND PLANS THE MORROW'S DANGEROUS BUSINESS.



AND HE WONDERS IDLY IF THE SOFT, WARM, VELVET LIPS WILL BECOME HARD AND MUSCULAR WITH SO MUCH EXERCISE. FOR THE MUSIC OF HER CHATTERING IS ENDLESS, AND HE CAN MAKE NEITHER HEAD NOR TAIL OF IT, FOR SHE RARELY FINISHES A SENTENCE AND TALKS, PARTLY TO HIM, PARTLY TO HERSELF AND PARTLY TO NO ONE IN PARTICULAR.



CAN THERE BE A LICK OF SENSE BENEATH THAT SHINING MASS OF GOLD? THEN SHE LOOKS UP WITH SERIOUS GRAY EYES AND SAYS: "YOU FIGHT TOMORROW."



VAL SCRAMBLES TO HIS FEET:—"WHO TOLD YOU THAT SECRET? HOW DO YOU KNOW THESE THINGS?"

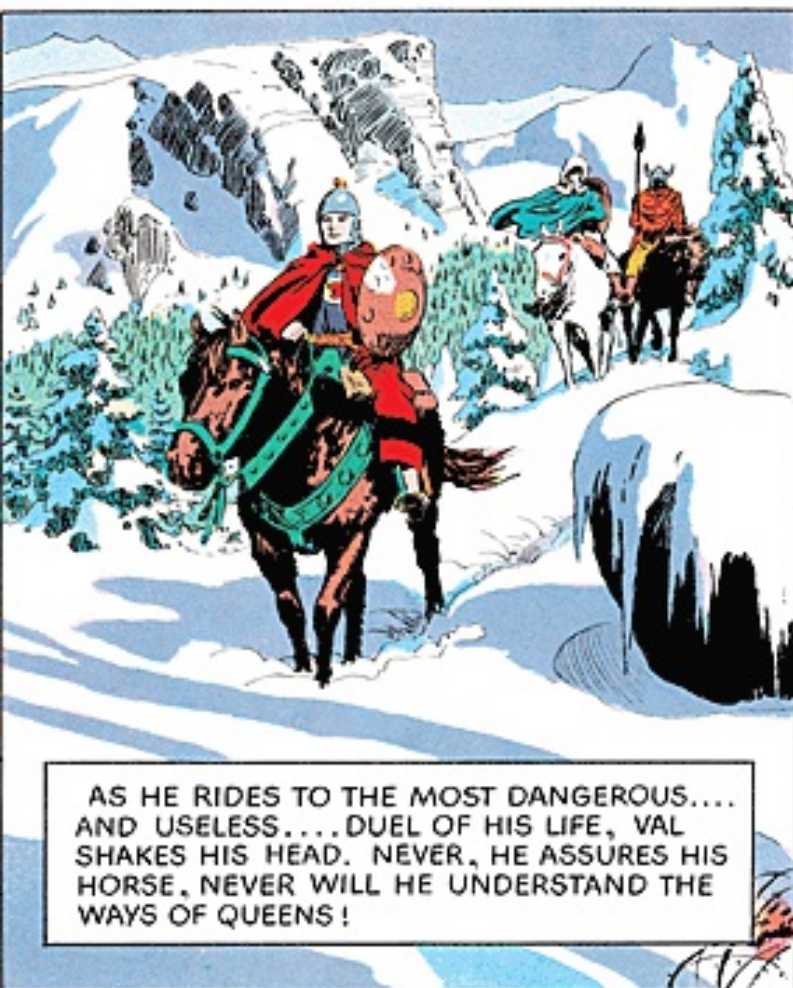
"ON YOUR FACE AND IN YOUR EYES IS THE LOOK YOU HAVE WHEN FIGHTING IS NIGH," SHE ANSWERS.



"AND WHY SHOULD I NOT KNOW YOUR EVERY THOUGHT? FOR I LOVE YOU. WERE I NOT YOUR QUEEN, WILLINGLY WOULD I BE YOUR SLAVE. THERE IS NO SUNLIGHT, MUSIC OR LAUGHTER WHEN YOU ARE AWAY. DO NOT LIGHTLY RISK YOUR LIFE!"



WITH THE DAWN THE SMALL, SWEET GIRL WHO HAD CLUNG TREMBLING IN HIS ARMS HAS BECOME ONCE MORE THE WARRIOR'S WIFE. AS ALETA HELPS HIM ARM, SHE ORDERS: "NOW FIGHT WELL AND WIN QUICKLY SO YOU CAN GET HOME IN TIME FOR SUPPER."



AS HE RIDES TO THE MOST DANGEROUS.... AND USELESS.... DUEL OF HIS LIFE, VAL SHAKES HIS HEAD. NEVER, HE ASSURES HIS HORSE, NEVER WILL HE UNDERSTAND THE WAYS OF QUEENS!



HAL FOSTER

BUT HE GOES FORTH ENCOURAGED BY HER CONFIDENCE IN HIM. SHE HAS GIVEN HIM COURAGE, YES, EVERY LAST BIT SHE HAD.

Prince Valiant

IN THE DAYS OF KING ARTHUR

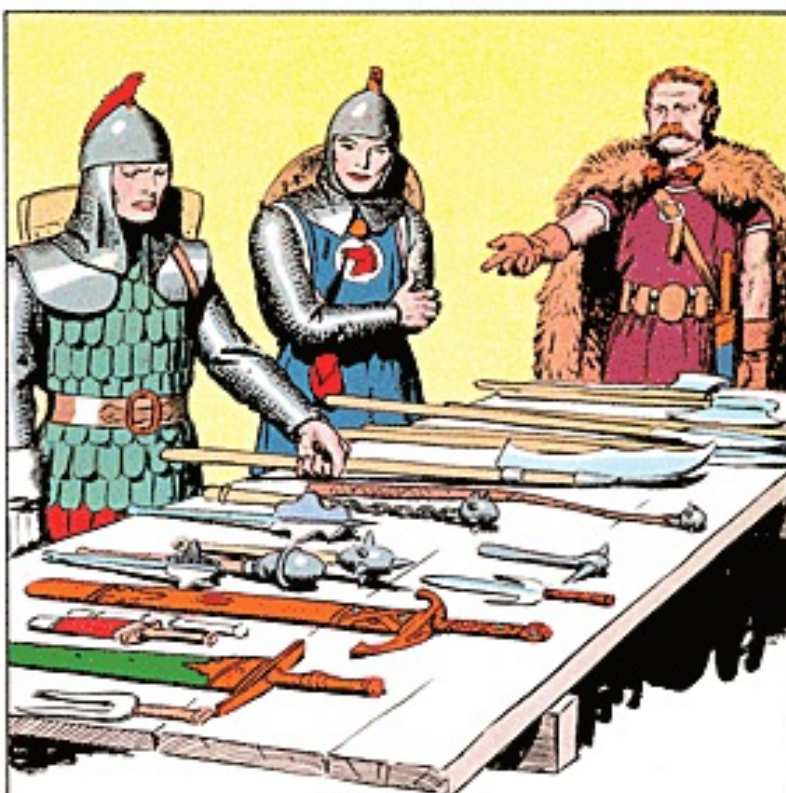
BY HAROLD R FOSTER



PRINCE VALIANT RIDES TO HIS MEETING WITH JARL EGIL. HE DOES NOT FEEL THE FIERCE JOY OF COMBAT; FOR THIS DUEL IS A FOOLISH THING OF BAD TEMPER AND WOUNDED PRIDE.



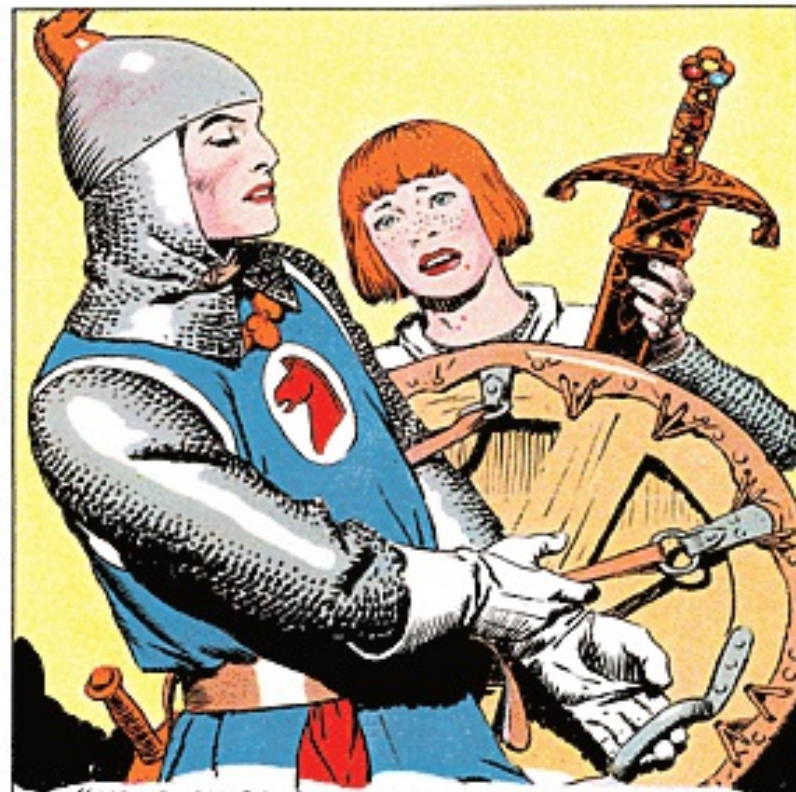
EGIL IS THERE, WAITING. HUMILIATION AND DESPAIR HAVE MADE HIM A DEADLY ENEMY. FOR IF HE WINS HE WILL HAVE TO FLEE THE VENGEANCE OF THE KING.



ARMORED BUT UNARMED, THEY STAND BEFORE THE TABLE AND CHOOSE IN TURN THE THREE WEAPONS ALLOWED BY THE RULES.



EGIL SELECTS THE POWERFUL BUT CLUMSY LOCHABER, A MACE AND HIS SWORD. VAL TAKES THE WHIP-MACE, DAGGER AND A SWORD.



"YOUR SWORD, YOU FORGOT YOUR CHARMED SWORD!" CRIES ARF. BUT VAL SHAKES HIS HEAD. "ON THE BLADE IS THE INSCRIPTION: 'THE SINGING SWORD BEARS A CHARM FOR HIM WHO USES IT IN A GOOD CAUSE,' AND THIS," HE SAYS, "IS NOT A GOOD CAUSE!"



SO THEY MOUNT, SALUTE EACH OTHER, AND THE CONTEST BEGINS.



AT THE FIRST ONSLAUGHT VAL REALIZES HIS WEAKENED LEFT SIDE AND LIGHT SHIELD WILL NOT LONG WITHSTAND THE TERRIBLE BLOWS OF THE LOCHABER!



WITH SUPERB HORSEMANSHIP HE CROWDS HIS ENEMY SO THE LONG-HANDLED WEAPON IS USELESS.



HAL FOSTER

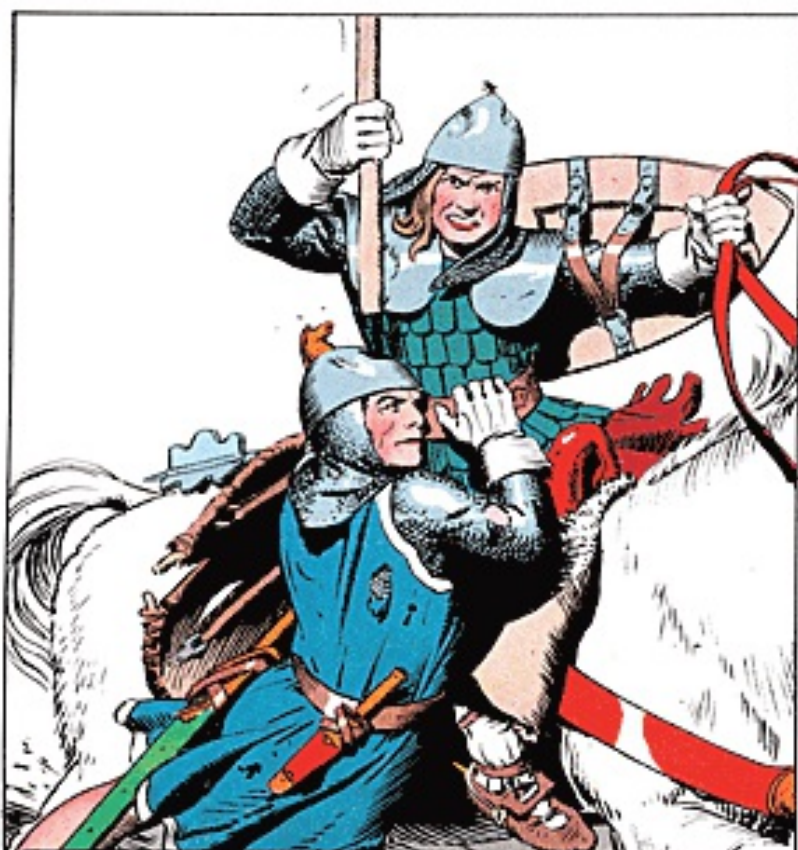
WHETHER BY DESIGN OR BY ACCIDENT A MIGHTY STROKE KILLS VAL'S MOUNT AND THEY CRASH TO THE GROUND IN A HELPLESS TANGLE.



WITH A SHOUT OF TRIUMPH EGIL REINS HIS HORSE BACK AND FORTH OVER VAL'S PROSTRATE BODY TRYING TO CRUSH OUT HIS LIFE UNDER FLASHING HOOFES!



WITH THE STRENGTH OF DESPERATION VAL GRASPS A STIRRUP-LEATHER AND THE PLUNGING HORSE DRAGS HIM FREE OF HIS OWN MOUNT.



SLOWLY HE DRAGS HIMSELF UPWARD, CLINGING CLOSE SO EGIL CANNOT WIELD HIS TERRIBLE LOCHABER.



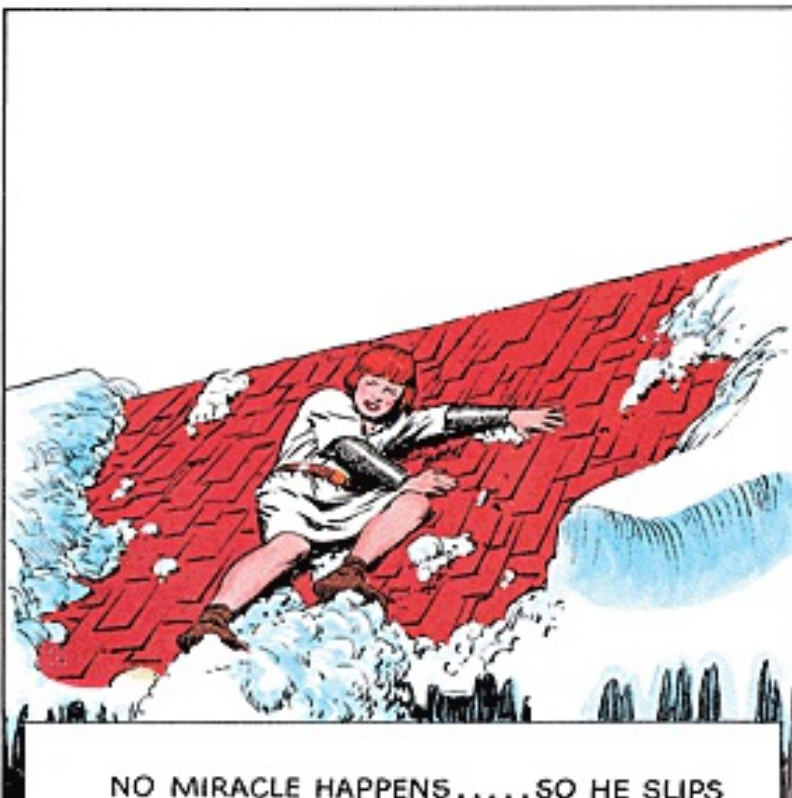
FOR A BRIEF WHILE THEY ARE LOCKED IN A SILENT STRUGGLE.....THEN THE SADDLE GIRTH PARTS.



SWORDS FLASH OUT AND THE DUEL CONTINUES. VAL'S LEFT ARM IS NUMB AND HE MUST USE HIS SWORD TO FEND OFF EGIL'S ONSLAUGHT. STEP BY STEP HE IS FORCED BACK.



YOUNG ARF IS FRANTIC! HIS MASTER, HIS HERO IS BEING BEATEN INTO HELPLESSNESS. HE PRAYS FOR A MIRACLE.



NO MIRACLE HAPPENS.....SO HE SLIPS AWAY UNNOTICED AND CREATES ONE OF HIS OWN!





VAL HAD BEEN DROOPING WITH WEARINESS, SO HE HAS FALLEN LIMPLY AND IS UNHURT.



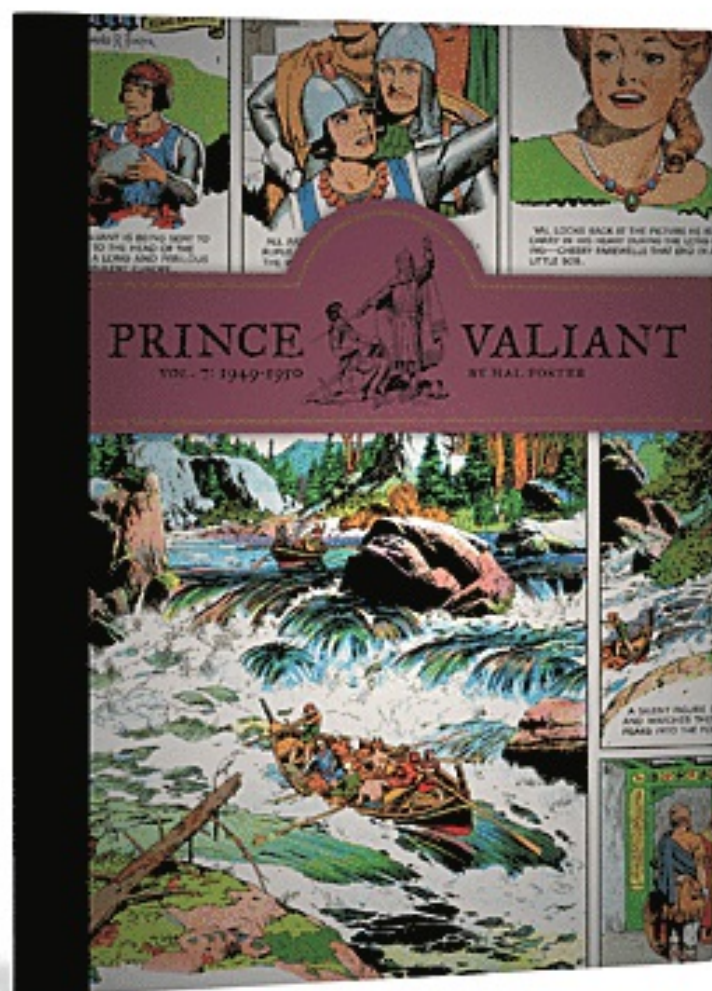
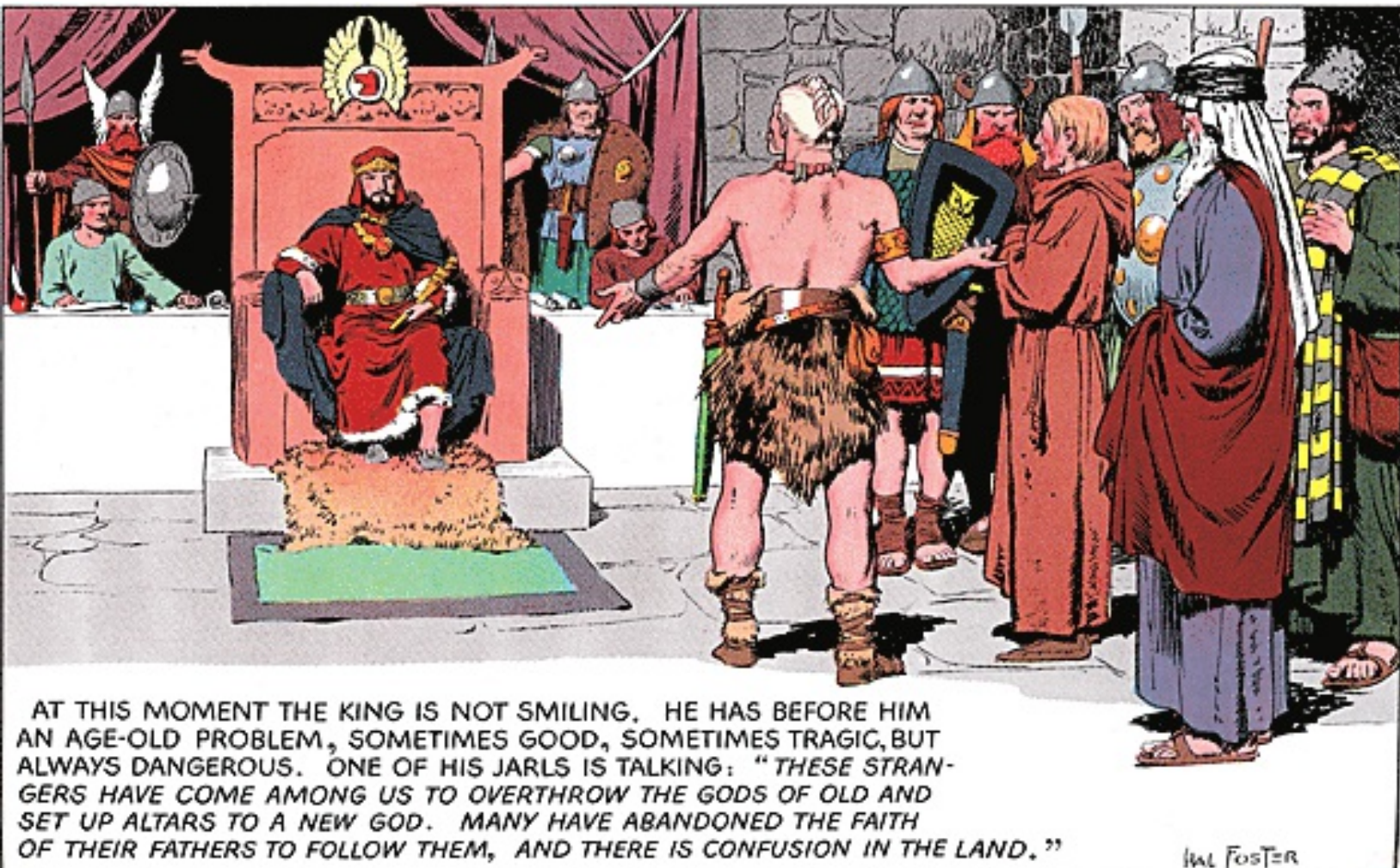
BUT EGIL, MAD WITH RAGE, HAD STIFFENED UNDER THE IMPACT AND SUFFERED A PULLED TENDON.



"I AM READY TO CONTINUE, SIR VALIANT," SAYS EGIL. "IF YOU WISH TO DIE, DO IT NOBLY FIGHTING FOR KING AND COUNTRY, NOT IN A SENSELESS QUARREL," ANSWERS VAL.



VAL SMILES, THEN LAUGHS ALOUD. "IT IS FITTING THAT SUCH A SILLY DUEL HAVE A SILLY ENDING!"

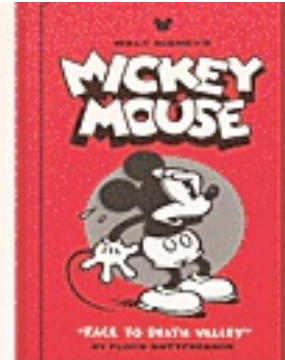


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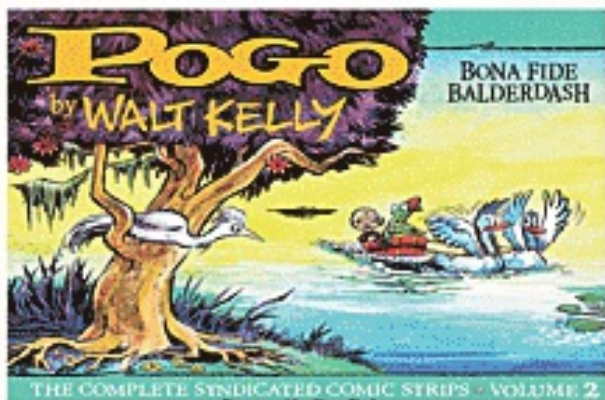
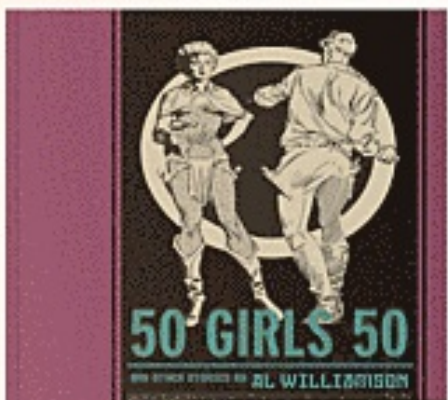


INSIDE: TWO CLASSIC
PRINCE VALIANT STORIES!

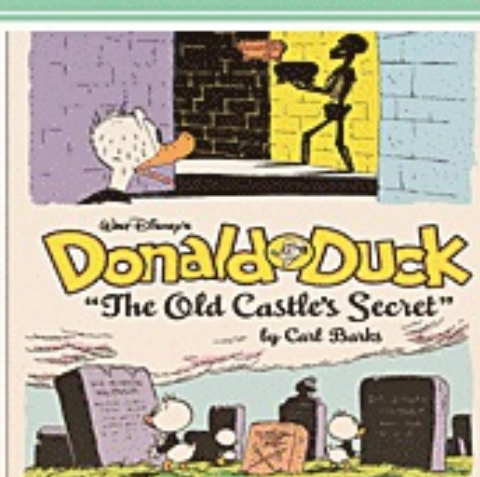


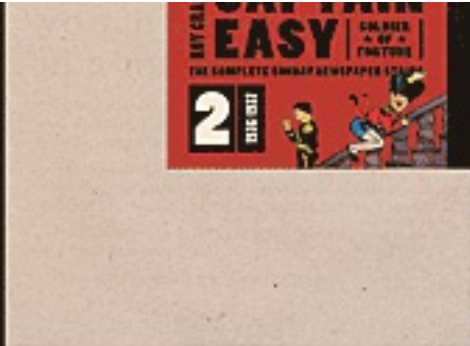
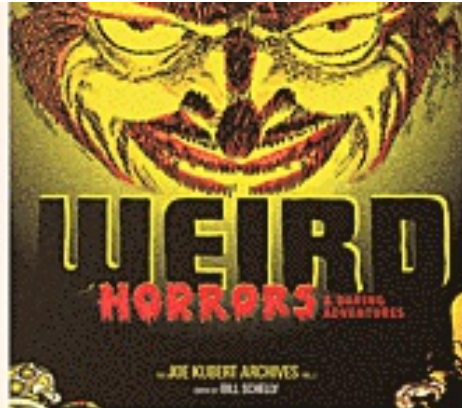


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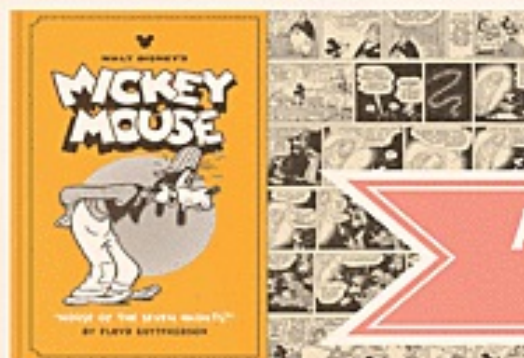
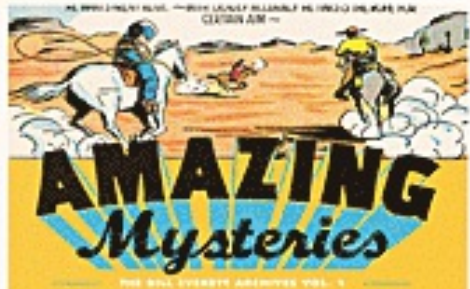
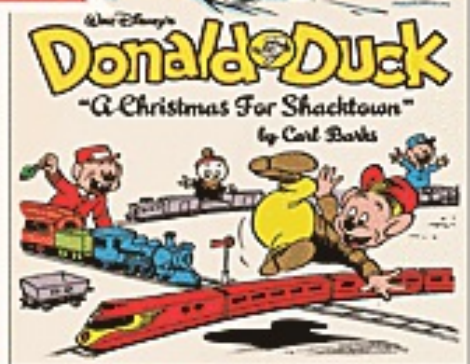
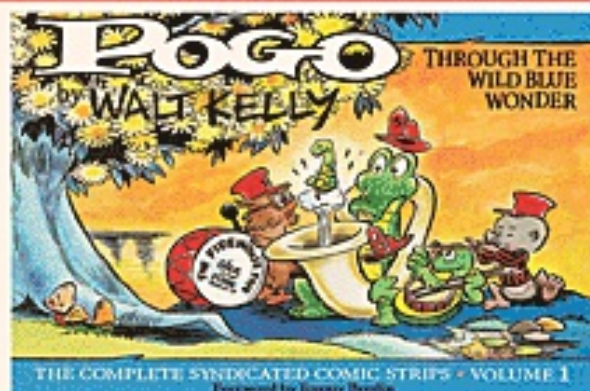
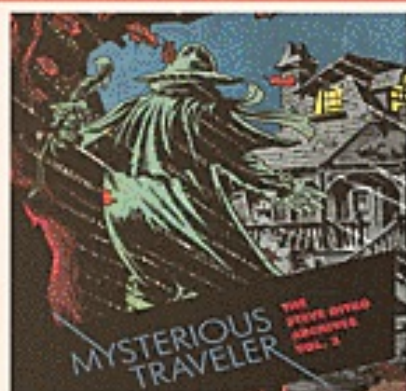


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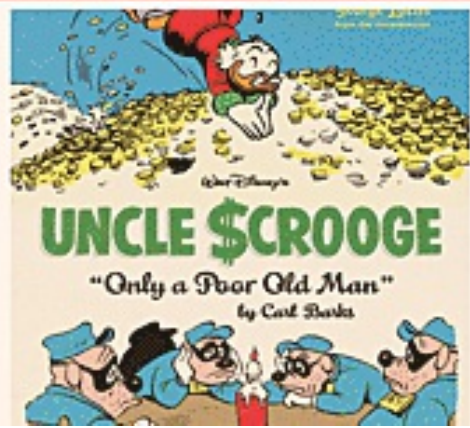




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