

Tristan as a Monk

English Translation by J. W. Thomas

You should know that there was a king of Britain named Arthur. His land enjoyed great renown, as you doubtless have often heard from the reports of those who have been there. The king's wife was the most beautiful woman that ever lived, and she loved a bold knight who is still remembered wherever one tells of great warriors. He was brave, daring, and upright; that is why the highborn lady loved him. He had been at the king's court and with courtesy had so won the queen's affection that she nearly perished with longing when he had been away a long time. She thought that she would announce a festival, as great ladies do, and say that whoever wished to win honor and wealth should come and bring with him the one he held most dear. Why did she think of this? Because her lover too might come, were he to hear of it.

After the lady had thus considered the matter, she left her chamber and went to the king. "Listen, my dear lord," she said fondly, "we haven't had a festival for a long time. With your permission, I'll arrange a merry one and have it published abroad. I'll send word to all of the princes, barons, and knights that every single one should come as soon as he gets the news and bring with him the dearest ladylove he has or can win."

"I approve," said Arthur, so the queen at once had heralds sent out in all directions who told when and where the festival would be held. One of them entered the land where Sir Tristan and his wife dwelt. The lord was never wanting in good manners and always strove for honor, which often

caused him great distress. Hearing that a messenger had come, he ordered that the man be brought to him with courtesy. When the messenger appeared, Tristan received him graciously and asked from whence he had come and whether he bore tidings.

"My lord, the king of Britain, and his wife, my lady the queen," answered the herald, "offer pleasure, their favor, and the best of everything to all high-minded knights. My lady bids me say that she will hold a festival on the first days of Whitsuntide."

"My dear fellow," said Tristan, "how are the king and queen getting on there?"

"They live in state indeed, as is their custom," was the reply.

"I'm glad to hear it," declared Tristan. "Now tell me why you were sent forth."

"Haven't you heard?" asked the messenger. "Whoever has suffered the pangs of love should come to my lord's castle at Karidol for a festival that my lady has announced, and he should bring with him his ladylove. This is what my lady the queen bade me proclaim abroad."

On hearing this, Tristan was bereft of all joy. It seemed more than he could bear, for he could think of no way to win the loved one that he could not forget. This was the fair-haired Lady Ysot whom he always served faithfully, for she dwelt in his heart. Sad to say, he could not have her but still did not want to forgo the celebration--whoever could give good advice now, would do him a great service for he was burdened with care. "It would be better for me to lose both life and honor than to miss these festivities," he told himself.

"Alas for the best of women--whom I should take with me but could

not have if it cost me my life! And should I take my wife, I would lose my lady. I would rather be shorn and made a fool than be to blame for losing the favor of the one to whom I belong now and forever. Should I travel there with my wife, my lady would say that I loved my spouse very much and not her. She would hate me--how could she help it if I should go with my dear wife? My lady would have cause to speak thus: 'I have nothing to show for my pains. I chose Tristan and have done much for his sake, often risking both life and honor, and now he lets it be known that he loves his spouse more than me. From now on I'll detest him."

Tristan was sure that the affection of his lady was at stake. "Of what use would wealth or honor be to me any more were I were to lose her?" he said. "I would rather spend my life in prison than ever do anything to cause her pain." The faithful Tristan was besieged by great distress. "If I shun this gathering that is so close by, I shall never be free of shame and disgrace; moreover my lady, who wants to do what is best for me, might well be very angry. Oh, oh, my grievous misfortune is so unyielding! I don't know how to make this affair turn out well. I must take my beloved Ysot, who belongs to King Mark. But were I to leave my wife behind, she too might fly into a rage."

Let him who might think Tristan's lament too long, now put an end to his indecision by telling him how to go to the festival in accordance with the message he had heard.

Tristan began to consider where he might turn to find some means to help himself and get away from his wife. As soon as he thought of it, he bade the loyal Korneval--who was always concerned when his lord was distressed--come at once.

Tristan addressed him sadly, pouring out his troubles. "Do you know what worries me?" he asked.

"No," was the reply.

"I'm completely at a loss."

"Why, my lord?"

"And I am unhappy."

"What about?"

"I don't know."

"How is that?"

"Well, about the tidings."

"Now just tell me what is bothering you."

"I'm distressed about a message that I've been given."

"Why did you keep it from me?"

"I thought I could find some clever means to help myself."

"Now tell me what's on your mind, my lord, and what makes you so downhearted."

"Did you hear the tidings that the herald made known here?" "Yes, about the festival."

"Since you know how things are with me and what the herald said, tell me: how can I go?"

"How? What did he say?"

"That about the queen's command."

"What?"

"That whoever came was to bring his ladylove, which I can't do, as you know very well. My greatest fear is this: if I don't go to the festival, I'll disgrace myself completely. I'll be despised and for good reason, for warriors never miss such a great celebration. And I fear that I'll be bitterly assailed by my ladylove if I go with my wife. Now tell me how to keep from

losing my honor. Yet I'm more afraid of my lady's ill-will than of shame and guilt, for I'd rather suffer great harm than her wrath. This would keep me from ever again being happy."

"It's better to put love at risk," said the other, "than to lose both honor and love."

"Korneval!" cried Tristan. "What are you thinking of! How could you ever say that I should take the chance of losing my lady's favor? I would sooner let myself be hanged at once for no cause than be disloyal to her."

"I don't advise that, my lord. You know very well that I never counseled anything that would disgrace you. Moreover it would be most painful for me also if my advice led you to anger the queen, who has been so kind to you. You certainly should leave no doubt as to whether you would be faithful to her who for your sake skillfully deceived her husband the king and the mean-spirited duke who hated you. I urge you to do whatever might please her. But now I fear the slander of those who out of jealousy will claim that missing the celebration showed how worthless you were. Therefore you should decide whether to go or not and take suitable precautions."

"I'd like to go if I knew how."

"If you can't, stay here."

"No, my friend, that is out of the question. Nothing will keep me here."

"Then travel there with your wife; that's no disgrace. You can't take the queen, for I'm sure that her husband won't let her go. It is not unseemly for a man to make use of what he has and do without that which he lacks."

Tristan objected forcefully. "I'm afraid that my lady the queen will be offended," he said, "for I am supposed to take my dearest ladylove to the festival."

"Since you have chosen to attend, the matter will turn out well," Korneval assured him. "The queen is too kind to be provoked by anything you do for honor's sake."

"I'll do as you say," replied Tristan, well-pleased with this good advice. Smiling happily, he then went to his wife. "Lady," he said, "if you wish to be highly esteemed, get yourself the best of finery, for we shall journey to a festival. See that you are ready when it is time to leave." She told her husband, that she would gladly do so, and the faithful Tristan thereupon directed Korneval to further his lord's renown by procuring suitable attire for fifty knights and as many pretty ladies.

When Tristan also ordered clothing for his wife--of whom he was the more fond because she, like his ladylove, was called Ysot--they brought him a splendid mantle that I shall describe for you. The outer cloth was of fine, blood-red silk and was carefully trimmed with gold in which were set white pearls, almandines, emeralds, rubies, sapphires, and hyacinths; it was richly bedecked with all sorts of precious stones. The checkered lining was of downy sable and ermine, not of common fur. If my wits don't fail me, I can be certain that any honest man who saw such a mantle, would assure me that a highborn lady could wear it with pride.

The gown that the lady wore was of the same heavy silk, but it was green as grass and was adorned with many kinds of wondrous things, embroidered with gold thread. She looked beautiful in it. Concerning her headdress, I'll say only that it was very pretty and such as a queen might wear on any occasion. All the ladies were well dressed.

Now those were ready who were to journey to the festival, but first palfreys had to be provided for the ladies to ride. Tristan had gathered

horses worthy of them from far and wide: fifty that were as black as a bear. You never saw here or elsewhere such a large number of palfreys that were so alike in color and beauty. The bridles and saddles were elegant--as those used by the ladies of that time were--and even today whoever might observe them would think them suitable for noblewomen.

A fine palfrey had also come for Tristan, sent by a queen who loved him. It had a green foot, a white foot, and a bright red ear. The lady also sent him word that the different colors were symbolic. With the redness of the ear she lamented her distress as she burned with love; the green showed that this was new to her; and the white counseled loyalty, for this color is free of all dross. The riding gear she sent with the horse was so handsome and costly that I can't simply pass over it.

The saddle was wide and well adorned. The saddlebows were splendid; the one in front was of ivory, the other was crystal--a beautiful stone that we all know--in which birds had been carved with such skill that they moved and seemed alive. The bells were fish-shaped, the cushions of red silk, the saddle cover was a heavy silk with gold embroidery. The breaststrap was beautiful; it was a narrow band of fine silk to which gold had been hammered; the figures of many noble beasts in the gold added to its splendor. From the breaststrap hung more little bells, that one could clearly hear as the palfrey moved along. The golden stirrups that hung by silk bands had the form of two tiny dragons, each holding the end of its tail in its mouth. The saddlebags were firm and made of the best silk that had been seen in many years. The girths were rather broad and had gold rings at the ends. As was fitting, many cords of braided silk--red, white, blue, brown, and yellow--hung far down from the saddle. Much had been spent on it.

Now I'll tell you about the bridle, for it was heavy with ornaments. The bit was of steel, the noseband of silver, and the curb of gold. A small beast encircled the upper part, and beside it a beautiful engraving passed many times around the bridle, showing everything that anyone could then portray. In front was set a precious stone that shone at night as if it were day. The rein was braided of silk--from the time reins were first thought of, no better could have been made. I truly don't know how my source knew it, but he told me that when a man took hold of it the song of a blackbird came forth at the command of his lady. If I had seen that myself, I would certainly not doubt him when he maintained that the riding gear was splendid.

All had been prepared well--ladies, clothing, horses--just as Tristan had wanted; his wife was mounted on the most beautiful palfrey. With such a retinue, he could travel in state, as a highborn lord should. Since everything was now ready, they waited no longer but set out for Britain. Tristan's friend Keydin accompanied his sister, and after them came all the knights, each with a lady beside him. Tristan rode by himself.

It was indeed strange: despite whatever joys he had known, there was one grief from which he was never free, that possessed him with the overwhelming power of a mighty love. And the lady's heart was so fettered by love that it could not shelter any other guest. Although he had not seen her for a long time, she would be deeply offended if anything were to replace her in his affections. This was Queen Ysot of Cornwall who often--when luck was with them--made him very happy. Whatever his distress, Tristan always remained faithful, as was fitting. One wonders where he could have found joy. If he ever did, it was in hope of some unforeseen stroke of fortune.

While the good Tristan and his retinue were hurrying through the

open country to Britain, they shortened the long days--as light-hearted people do--with many droll tales. When it was reported at Karidol that a large troop of knights, accompanied by beautiful ladies, would soon be arriving at the court, those already there were delighted. Wanting to see who was coming, they all hurried out to the watchtower. How eager they were to find out! Everyone was curious.

Riding sedately, Tristan and his attendants approached the castle with fanfare; never before had anyone come to a court in such splendid fashion. There was more fiddling and blowing of horns than had been seen for a long time, and the women who skillfully struck the tambourines knew how to drive away sorrow wherever they went. The courtiers at the tower could easily hear all this and would gladly have known whose company it was.

When the news quickly spread that it was the good, honest Tristan's, they were pleased and at once exclaimed: "This is Tristan--one can tell it by his grand manner! He is most welcome!" They rode off at once to give him a festive reception. There was joyous clamor and merry jesting, and a great bohort began. Many ran to Tristan and greeted him warmly; some took hold of him and drew him from his steed. Cries of welcome filled the air; he could not have replied to each in ten days. Because of their fondness for him, the king and queen also went to receive the noble warrior. This was proper, for he had come in splendor and had been most praiseworthy when he was there earlier. Many a man was highly honored now.

On seeing the royal company approaching, the visitors dismounted, and each knight lifted from her palfrey the lady whom Tristan had entrusted to his care. Keydin walked to the great hall with Ysot his sister, where they were received cordially and without reserve. [two verses corrupted] Many

kisses may well have been exchanged. Showing her desire to be esteemed, Queen Ginover kissed Ysot and said: "Welcome! I am honored and exalted by your having ridden to my festival in such splendor. Truly I am greatly indebted to you and fully at your service."

"I thank you, lady, for your kindness," replied the beautiful Ysot in cordial response to her courtesy. They embraced and went happily to a chamber, where they rested in comfort. Taking Tristan's hand, the king led him to a seat; they sat down and, forgetting everything unpleasant, told only of great deeds. Tristan then as always was sorely oppressed by his old sorrow, but he politely concealed it. The other visitors also paired off, each--in so far as he could--with the one he thought the best. The members of the court, as usual, spent the day most pleasantly with many suitable diversions, and their guests did the same.

At dusk the chamberlains set up seats in a stately hall where the guests were to eat, since it was time for the evening meal. They wanted to place Tristan at once at the Round Table, for he had often earned the honor so well that he could not be overlooked; he could not find that boring. But the king bade him sit with his wife and said prudently: "Take Keydin to my place. He is a dauntless knight and in contests has often won the prize and much praise. He well deserves the seat." So at the king's bidding Tristan and Ysot at once sat down beside him, and the others quickly took the places that the chamberlains assigned them.

When all were seated, food and drink were served; the stewards and cupbearers did not forget courtesy. I'll not recount the many kinds of dishes--let a glutton tell of gluttony--but you should know that they dined well. When the meal ended, a great number of performers offered many kinds of amusement, as they still do, each competing with the others.

Everyone was delighted by the lengthy and splendid entertainment, that lasted until it was conquered by night and the ladies' need for sleep. The queen, Ysot, and all the ladies then politely asked leave to retire and went to bedrooms. The knights, as was their custom, accompanied those of high birth but not the others. Some waited there a little while, were wished a good night, and departed. Then for the first time a great, good-natured clamor rose from the knights. There was a frenzy of dancing, singing, leaping, and wrestling--no one could resist it--till nearly midnight. "To arms!" they cried as they sank down and fell asleep on the rushes that covered the floor; they were little concerned about comfort.

Tristan lay among them, and it was there that his misfortune began. While they all were fast asleep, the good warrior dreamed that he was in Mark's land of Tintajoel and, as a lover, had sought out his lady. When she did not deign to greet him, he fell at her feet and tenderly entreated her to bestow her favor. But she stepped back in anger. "May God forsake you, Tristan!" she exclaimed fiercely. "You cask of treachery, I fancied that you loved me more! Sir Tristan, all of my suffering has been for nothing. I chose you to be my lover and was fonder of you than you of me. Now our love is ended, God knows. I have done much for your sake, often risking both honor and life, yet it is clear that you care more for your wife than for me. Truly, from now on I'll detest you and turn my attention to one whose love is greater and who perhaps is pained by my wrath. I reject you!"

Tristan awoke at once. His sorrow was greater than he could bear. "Poor me, unhappy man!" he said to himself, "have I thus lost my lady's favor? Yes, and it's my own fault. What devil led me here? Like a fool, I drag myself forth with my wife. Oh, oh! I never should have done it. I made a wretched mistake and for no good reason. I knew very well that disaster

would strike me if I took my wife. My wits betrayed me. I'll die of love's passion if my lady forsakes me. I'd gladly suffer scorn and disgrace if she would reward me with her love. How can I ever be happy if she won't be my loved one any longer? I'll perish from bitter grief, God knows. May He calm her anger!"

Filled with anguish, he lay there lamenting wretchedly; it seemed to him that day would never come. With the first light of dawn, he arose and, concealing his grief for the moment, called Kornewal. "My friend," he said distraught, "I think I'll ride forth to seek adventure, something that means a great deal to me. Please have my steed brought to me at once." He intended to depart alone. This troubled Kornewal, who, though unbidden, nevertheless accompanied him. The two warriors then rode across a green heath into a delightful forest. Tristan's mind was so filled with all sorts of thoughts that he paid no attention to where he chanced to ride, and, since his manner distressed his companion, nothing was said as they wandered aimlessly in the forest. Tristan could not bring himself to tell Kornewal what had happened, for his thoughts were so confused that he believed the events of his dream to have really taken place.

They had not ridden very long when they came to a grassy clearing in the forest where a knight in armor lay, having died of wounds. Tristan dismounted, happy despite his pain. "I can use him to bewail my sad fate," he thought shrewdly. Folding his hands, he wept bitterly, for he had much to lament, something other than what he saw before him. The dead knight meant nothing to him, the tears flowed because of his lady's wrath. Alas for him! He believed he had lost her.

He began to beat himself so severely that Korneval, thinking him on the verge of madness, dropped to the ground and held him tightly. "No, No, my friend," he cried, "don't act like that! Have mercy on yourself! Everyone will make fun of you if you behave thus. And I would be sorely distressed if we ever had to part. Tell me what troubles you." He then reminded Tristan urgently of his readiness to be of service and entreated the knight for the sake of his own honor to reveal the cause of the sorrow that his companion was so eager to share.

"How could I not be troubled?" said Tristan wretchedly. "I may well lament, for I have found a knight in armor who has been slain like this and I cannot avenge his death."

"Listen!" exclaimed his companion angrily. "Now for the first time it appears that you never were a man. You have lost your wits and behaved like a foolish woman. Now you would do well to tell me what misfortune you suffered here. You don't even know this man. One can easily see that you are mad. Sir, for love of you and because of your courtly manners, I have long been ready to carry out your wishes and commands, but now, by God, I promise you that I'll never serve you again unless you act lighthearted, as in time past. Why would I want a lord who would come to a cheerful throng and spread gloom with his woeful appearance, when he should join them in a praiseworthy manner, as is fitting, and make them all laugh and be merry in a kind and well-bred fashion. I'll pay no attention to him and cannot take care of him." He then asked leave to depart for he wanted to ride off at once.

"No, my friend," said Tristan, "you know very well that I am always inclined to do your will. Misfortune now begins to torment me more than ever with grief. I can't believe that you would let it part us, for one good friend never forsook another who was in such distress. Truly I was

unhappy, which led me to deceive you. Korneval my friend, think better of it and stay. I am deeply troubled. If you leave me—which I would always regret—you will deny me the companionship and loyalty that I counted on from you."

"If you would be forthright," replied Korneval, "I would forever remain your comrade and servant, even at the cost of both life and honor. I would not abandon you whatever the peril and would follow you even to hell; you may be sure of that. I have always striven to serve you well. [2 corrupted verses] He then urged him out of love for his dear lady to reveal under oath the cause of his great sorrow.

When his lady was mentioned, Tristan breathed a deep sigh, for he never denied a request made in her name whether it pleased him or not. Although she had withdrawn her love from him without cause, he did not want to lose her favor by angry raving about such matters. But his friend had to promise faithfully in advance that he would do whatever was asked of him.

"Truly, my lord," said Korneval, "I have done that many years and shall still do it gladly in order to learn the source of this misfortune that has so robbed you of your senses."

Tristan thereupon ceased to lament and related what had happened in the night. "My friend," he began, "I must say that all my happiness depends on you. It seemed to me that my lady was furious at me. Now advise me: what you think? How can I find out whether she hates me now? While I was lying on my bed last night, just before daybreak, it really seemed to me that I saw her and that she thought it shameful of me to bring my wife to the court and not think first of her. This angered Lady Ysot and she

withdrew her favor from me. See, that's the cause of my distress."

"My lady treats you unjustly," replied Korneval, "but I'll gladly do whatever you think best."

"This is my firm intent," declared Tristan: whether it turns out well or badly, I'll find out—God willing—how my lady would lament if I were to die or be slain. I can thus surely learn what I might expect of her." He thereupon slashed the dead knight's face so that no one would recognize him; his armor was like Tristan's. "Comrade," he said to Korneval, "now you must show your loyalty, for I shall try another deception, to see if I can go to her. Be quick! Take this dead man whom we have found to the nearby monastery and say that it is I, who was slain in the forest. Then ride without delay to the court and sadly tell them all—the king in front of his retinue, as well as Keydin and my wife—that I lost my life while seeking glory in combat. Also inform the king that I should be buried at my uncle's castle."

While Korneval was doing his bidding, Tristan rode hurriedly to the monastery and, finding the abbot in front of it, fell at once at the latter's feet. "Have mercy, lord!" he cried, acting very frightened. "I'll surely die and soon if you do not save me!" Greatly surprised that he should plead so, the abbot asked what troubled him. "It was my misfortune to ride here this morning," answered Tristan, "and risk for honor both life and fortune with a brave knight, one of the best the sun ever shone on. To win renown he rode against me in the forest, and we struggled fiercely. He has always been thought one of the greatest warriors and he proved it with his sword. His name is Tristan. As bad luck would have it, I slew him and shall suffer bitterly because of it. The knight was so dear to the king that he will straightway have me hung like a thief; I can't escape."

"This transgression is most surprising!" exclaimed the abbot."

"Sir, for God's sake give me a cassock and accept me as a monk," said Tristan. "I want to become one so that I may atone here on earth for my sin." The abbot and the brothers did not deny his request but sheared him according to their custom and put their robe on him. Then Tristan, for love of his lady, became a monk; it was a strange idea.

In haste to do his lord's bidding, Korneval rode up soon afterwards. Wailing loudly, he brought with him the dead man and told the monks how his lord Tristan, a noble and famous knight, had been slain in the area. The monks quickly laid the corpse out in splendor while chanting: "Truly this death is grievous; he was a praiseworthy knight; I am sad, believe me." Korneval then rode to the court to report the woeful mishap. He threw truth to the winds, for he had to lie for his lord's sake.

The day was now far advanced. King Arthur and his retinue were entertaining themselves under a green linden at a beautiful lookout where he could see who were coming and from whence they came. It was his custom to wait there for those who rode out in search of adventure. Since a few had come and their stories had been heard, everyone declared that they might as well have their meal. But some also said: "Tristan isn't here yet; no one has seen him today."

"It wouldn't be right to start without him," replied Arthur. "We should be glad to wait for him." Then they saw hurrying toward them a knight who appeared to be Korneval and were deeply concerned because he came alone; they feared that some misfortune had befallen Tristan. Moreover Korneval showed his distress with cries and bitter lamenting.

"I bring dreadful news that may well cause you all to mourn," he cried. "Oh why must I bewail this, my heartfelt sorrow! I'll never be free of

it." The company was astonished that he acted so dejected. Since he was not far off, they heard him exclaim over and over: "Oh, how terrible! How terrible!" Then Korneval cried: "Evil must rule over me! My dear lord has been slain." Oh what friendship, that he should lie thus before them all and deceive them with respect to his loss! He acted as if he were in great distress so that his lord might meet his lady. In this one could readily see that he is a good friend to whom one can entrust any task and have him carry it out and keep it secret.

Joy turned to grief as the news of Tristan's sad fate spread over the court. When his wife was told that he had died while seeking adventure, she was bereft of all happiness and nearly of her life and left only with grief for the brave hero. The festive spirit was gone and the meal was forgotten as men and women wept without restraint. Everyone there left the court and set out for the coffin in such haste that no attention was paid to any of the ladies. The king rode in front and dismounted unassisted when he came to the monastery gate: misery had left courtesy so tattered that it was quite neglected.

Going to where the dead man lay, the king spoke thus: "How woeful it is, dear Tristan, that you should come to a festival in my realm only to die here. This pains me sorely. Had you been slain at home, I would be distressed to be sure, but I could more easily master my grief and take comfort in the thought that the suffering would end. Alas that no one tells me who the murderer is that slew you so near us. Because of him I, with all my friends and kinsmen in the lands about, would take action to avenge this deed; he would come to an evil end. In slaying you by treachery, the coward has won only infamy. Had he known who you are, he would have been

faint-hearted. Truly, if he had been acquainted with you, he would never have dared joust. Who is the warrior that could defeat you in a fair combat--so many have been brought down by your bold hand. Oh Tristan, how saddened I am! How your death grieves me!"

The others also lamented: their anguish could not have been greater. When the queen rode up, she was received by the knights and escorted to the coffin, where all mourned. There she solemnly voiced a fitting lament. "May God abandon him who is the cause of our sorrow!" she cried. "We all had just begun my joyous festival, and now it is over. That would have been easy to bear if we had not lost you. Faithful love brings forth constancy, and God knows that womankind will never again see courtly manners and service such as yours. Your death will cause Love to flee in haste from all the lands. She never won your like, and one may now consider her a stranger. You alone cherished her with wisdom, loyalty, and complete devotion. We women must be saddened at your death, for you alone taught all men how to regard Love. Alas, how could God let you, Love, lose a man who gladly did good and abstained from evil!

"Tristan, you were noble, a golden vessel of pure understanding, a mirror of proper love, a fountain of all chivalry, a hilt of courtliness, and a sponsor of wandering minstrels. God has rewarded your virtue rather poorly. Tristan, I grieve that youth and beauty like yours should die and that your lovely wife should be thus bereaved; I grieve moreover not just for you alone, but also that we all should suffer such a loss. I am desolate, and rightly so, because a knight who is praiseworthy in every respect has left us; this takes away all my joy. There is also a reason for my sorrow that must be concealed from others: how will she take the news; how will she mourn for

you? Oh, what am I saying! What did I nearly accuse you of? It's best to say no more today." The queen fell silent.

Then came Keydin and his sister Ysot, whose anguish was more than she could bear; she had to leave the company of her companions hastily because she could not endure it. As soon as she saw the coffin, her heart was so overcome with grief that her blood boiled and she fell from her palfrey.

The virtuous Gawan quickly sprang to the aid of the lady, who clearly showed signs of dire distress, and could reach her in time to catch her. He then carried Ysot in his arms to the bier, where her sorrow was heart-rending--in after days it ended. On seeing her lord dead, she turned pale, then red and other unhealthy colors, and sank down beside the coffin, so overcome with grief that she could not say a word. Keydin tried to console her--as a brother should if he were able--but his own anguish was such that he himself was in need of solace. I'll tell you just what he said at last to comfort her and voice his pain:

"May God sustain you, my dear sister, for one can readily see that your heart is heavy. Good Fortune was your guest while this warrior lived, and now Misfortune, through him, has caused us both to despair. Truly, there was no sense to this death that has robbed us of all joy. Where did you ever see so many warriors quickly brought low without a struggle? Since Misfortune is having its way with me, sister, you must cheer up and spare yourself for my sake, because I would never again be happy if I were to lose you. Take heart, dear sister; stand up and don't give way to grief. Do the best you can. But still you should not forget that we have lost the greatest prize anyone ever won."

"Dear Ysot, if Fortune or God so favors us that we can be happy once more, in truth this warrior--this kind, beloved Tristan who brought us into the land of joy and merriment--would live on. We have paid for our happiness with misery. Almighty God, if ever you have erred in your deeds, you have done so in your treatment of us: by letting him be slain who was, and was known as, the father of virtue."

"Tristan, my dear lord, this is poor Keydin, whom you called brother-in-law and friend. Woe betide you, Misfortune, for having altered my condition! Lord Tristan, since you thought highly of me, I was more widely known in many lands than a host of men who are better than I. Because of your praise, no one spoke ill of me, and, wherever I went in your train, I was shown greater respect than I could have gotten otherwise. Tristan, faultless man, you often gave me support--that I now have lost--and people fancied that I was like you in talents and manners. Because of you luck was with me, but henceforth I'll have a wretched life, for my power is gone. Through you I won renown as a knight, but here and now I renounce chivalry because of you. From this time on I'll care little for life."

Then Tristan's wife Ysot, whom the pain of loss had wearied in body and spirit, stood up. "Alas, how great is my distress, poor woman that I am! Tristan, lord and husband, I have always suffered from grief and care because you loved many others far more than me, and now to my great loss I am relieved of this sorrow. Tristan, loyal husband, I am sore at heart and can never cease to mourn you. Tristan, dear Tristan, no hand can ever write what good fortune was mine, more than that of any other woman, but a dreadful death has taken it from me. Alas, what distress I must endure because of you. Now I must pay dearly for the happiness that, in spite of everything, was mine. Oh how I wish I could die with you! Joy departs with

you, leaving me forsaken and without hope of regaining any of it. I would be foolish to want to live without you. Oh brother! It was that which I lost here that kept me from ever grieving."

The lady's bitter weeping showed her great love for the dead man. She sprinkled his wounds with blood-red tears and now and then kissed his lips fervently, not just once, but a thousand times. She declared that more had been taken from her than all the women before her had ever had. The dead man was highly honored; the lamenting in his own land did not need to be added.

The monk Tristan was well pleased, but he told them all that they were foolish to be so distressed for so little cause. At this Ysot spoke up again: "What pain I bear, my lord Tristan! If I got no more from you than words of praise, it was still for me a precious treasure that I was ever chosen to be the wife of such a splendid man. My loss was greater than that of any other woman. Oh how easily I could forget it if only this parting were such that death might give us a like end!"

"Oh dear hands, why don't you send me to rejoin my husband? Alas that I don't have a sword here to aid me! Truly, there's no help for me. To be sure I can guard against happiness—I'll enter a convent and take leave of the world—but still, my lord Tristan, I must go on living without you." Then she moved back and sat down in such distress that she could say no more. No one could fully describe the long weeping and lamenting of those present, for their grief was not just a matter of form, but was great beyond measure.

King Arthur was carefully considering how he should bury Tristan with honor, when Korneval advised him to send the body across the sea, since Tristan had once asked to be brought to his uncle's land, wherever he

might die. He thought that, despite his uncle's hate, he would rather lie there than any place else. "It shall be so," said the king and queen at once, and the others agreed. They placed the dead man on a horse-borne bier, and everyone there went along as it swiftly departed. The abbot of the monastery and the new monk, who became his assistant, also set out on the journey. With many tears and in great distress, they all bewailed the death of one who had always displayed fine manners. Weeping bitterly, the great throng rode with him to the sea.

Tristan's wife was so racked by grief that she could no longer ride, and they had to persuade her not to go on. But despite her anguish, she would not have remained behind if the king, the queen, and her brother Keydin had not pled with her. The queen did Ysot the honor of returning with her, while the king and his retainers, together with Korneval and Keydin, parted from their companions and set sail with the dead man and two others. They needed to have with them the abbot and his assistant, the new monk; the latter did not ask to go, but that was his advice. No more of the company made the journey.

Many tears were shed during the crossing. On reaching the shore, they carried the coffin with the dead man from their ship and set out for Tintajoel with the cheerless bearing of those who have suffered great loss; their manner showed that they held the lord in high esteem. Galloping ahead, the faithful Korneval soon arrived with the same lie and quickly found the king with some of his men. He then began to wring his hands and cry out pitifully: "Oh! Oh! Alas for my dear lord!"

"What are you talking about?" demanded several of the group. The king, who was greatly surprised and annoyed, wanted to know from whence Korneval had come or what land he had left to enter his country.

"I'll never again ask anything of you," declared Korneval quickly. "Whether you treat me well or poorly is all the same to me, for you have certainly committed a grave murder by driving my lord Tristan from your land because of lies and slander. You are to blame for his being slain. I'll never cease lamenting this, nor will you, if faithlessness would leave you because of so much remorse. Your disloyalty is indeed great, for you learned the truth many times and nevertheless hated him without even knowing why. Remember, proud king, that he often won much esteem for you. Now he has died because of your petty ill will; you couldn't endure him who served you gladly. While he was living, you thought him unneeded and fancied that, whenever he might seem useful, you could quickly win his affection. Now he is dead and we shall see how you can get along without him."

Then Korneval added sadly: "Alas, oh mighty king, you were fond of Tristan when, to save your honor, he slew the bold Morold and thereby suffered sore distress. Moreover, for your sake he has often exposed himself to great danger in many bloody campaigns and fought many battles; he has done much for you. When he brought my lady here to be your wife, he little expected that it would arouse your hate. He thought that he had earned much more from you, my lord: that you would always be fonder of him than of any other man. When one earns the greatest reward from you, you respond only with evil malice. You hate only because you must repay; that does not beseem the crown or royal honor.

"What boundless woe is mine! Dear Sir Tristan, you came into the land just to gain honor, and your kinsman rewarded you with injustice. I don't know what we were thinking of; you were a mighty king, the equal of this monarch and all others. Be happy or remorseful, just as you please," cried

Korneval to the king, "but I am distressed by my lord's faithfulness, that was unshaken by either pleasure or pain [lacuna]. How often I provoked his wrath by trying to turn him away from serving you so loyally! Now it has come to an end that I must forever lament, and I know that, however briefly you mourn him, you will never find his like."

The king was silent and unhappy. There is an old saying that rancor ceases with death, and the king did not hide his tears of grief for the man whom he had hated; neither did his retainers. "This is surely sad news," they said. "His death is lamentable." As the king went sorrowfully to the bier, everyone began to wail loudly; princes and barons wrung their hands.

"Oh what great misfortune we must bear," said the king. "Here lies all my renown. For the first time I am really troubled, for all my happiness depended on this man. Tristan, bold warrior, I am to blame for your death. I'll suffer anguish as long as this world endures, since you were slain in a foreign land as a result of my misdeed and evil persecution. I lament this in misery. May God forsake me! May I be accursed for driving you from my court because of my wife and for letting him stay there a day who always opposed you and defamed you to me. I'll never cease to lament you."

"Tristan, my dear nephew, you won the queen at great risk to yourself and gave her to me. For your sake I might well have willingly left her to you. "Damn those who were always stirring me to anger! Lies caused me to lose you. I don't know what I said. How could I have let you go who never did anything wrong? I am sure that it was only for my sake that you sought her favor. I'll always grieve for you. I learned of your innocence, dear nephew, as I should have, when I was up in the linden and saw you above the spring. I then heard the queen declare that your presence at the court was vexing, since she was often in distress because of you, and that she

would never gain my favor for you. May I die at once and the devil take me for ever harboring the doubts that made me angry at you.

"Tristan, I never knew you to do anything or want anything that was against my wishes. If I were worthy of happiness, I should have given you my realm and lived according to your will, which you had well earned. I shall therefore always suffer remorse, as I should, because of my evil deeds and your loyalty. I could readily see and know the truth, my dear nephew, when I found your sword lying between you and my lady, for you would not have put it there if you had ever intended to dishonor me. I deserve the greatest sorrow. My wife the queen, the purest of women, in fear and trembling proved according to a lawful judgment--obtained by a terrifying ordeal, the carrying of a glowing iron--that she was not guilty of any transgression with you, and it would have been well for me if I had believed it. Since I did not, I'll ask for misfortune and take it to heart with endless pain.

"Tristan, beloved Tristan, you were a fine warrior, courtly, well-taught, and possessed of every virtue. You gladly served the ladies, and no evil found a hiding place in you; if it had, you would still be alive. You had life, courage, and wealth; you were a mighty king; and yet you served me as if you were my squire. For this alone I should forever lament you, which, God knows, I shall do." Then he asked all his men to mourn the death of his dear nephew and began himself to wail in such distress that no one not made of stone could have kept from weeping. "Never before have I known great sorrow," continued the king sadly. "Oh death, how you sever faithfulness and love! But I'm talking foolishly, because I was never faithful to my nephew for a single day, and I shall always regret it."

The king ordered that the coffin be received in state and he himself

helped to carry it. Nobles and servants, high and low, rich and poor wept bitterly over Tristan and clearly showed how dear the lord was to them. While the abbot read from his psalter, his assistant, the new monk who had disguised himself with a cassock, smiled briefly as he peered through his eye lashes over the psalter that he too was supposed to have. He was not troubled by the lamenting of all the others; indeed it pleased him. "How foolish these people are acting!" he thought. "While they mourn me with such a flood of tears, I stand here alive and happy. All surely know that they are behaving like dunces." This was his silent prayer. I'll tell you what he was doing. With excited glances darting very quickly about, he wanted to see if somewhere he might catch sight of her whom he considered his lady. He would gladly have heard her lament, but she had not come.

King Mark wept loudly. Then he went to his wife, embraced her fondly, and said woefully: "Oh noble queen, dear as you always are to me, mourn my beloved nephew, the good knight Tristan. Truly, it is right that you should do so, for he has served you honorably and well." When the queen, Tristan's ladylove, discovered that the king had come lamenting her lover, she was so stricken with grief that she almost fainted. However she remained composed and asked what was amiss. "Sad to say, my excellent nephew has been slain," he replied.

"I'll not grieve for him," declared Ysot.

Almost beside himself with rage, the king would have fiercely railed against her if kindness and courtesy had not restrained him. "How can you talk like that?" he demanded.

"Are you sure that he is dead?" she asked.

"Yes, he is."

"Then I can live untroubled from now on, for I have endured much

because of him. I'm glad he is dead and shall thank God if it is really true." This was a clever ruse to conceal her great sorrow.

The king was indignant. "May God in Heaven rue woman's treachery!" he exclaimed angrily. "If you were fond of me and he were a thief that had often suffered loss without much gain, it would be your wifely duty to grieve for him whom I lament so bitterly. Now show how you love me and do as I do."

"I can't help it, my beloved lord," she said. "I could readily be sorry about his death, were it not that I, though blameless, have often lost your good will because of him."

"Dear lady," he replied, "he would not have let you suffer for his sake if he could have prevented it; moreover he has undergone great trials because of you, which I shall always regret. Now I beg you, dear queen to lament my beloved nephew." But however much he besought her, she was so unyielding as to declare that she could easily forget Tristan. Only after the king had asked many times that, for love of him, she mourn his nephew and had declared her innocent of any misdeeds, did the queen let herself be persuaded, like all good women, to do what she really wanted to do. "I am sorry about it," she said, "and I really believe that in him we have suffered a great loss. He was a gallant man and served you faithfully."

"Truly," said the king, "if you do not lament his death as bitterly as I do, I shall cease to love you."

The lady did as he commanded--her love for the foreign warrior also forced her to it. She could not have resisted any longer, even without the king's order, but would have shown her grief even if it meant the instant loss of both life and honor. Going to the coffin, the beautiful woman wanted to take the dead man in her arms, but she did not dare in front of all those present. "Since I first saw you in Ireland, noble knight," she said, "I have

suffered because of you and you because of me, and now an evil fortune has conquered you." The queen wept as she spoke and mourned Tristan with well-bred restraint. It was wise of her to be on her guard even though inwardly her heart bled with pain. I think that she would rather be dead herself than see the beloved Tristan in such a state and be unable to rage and speak as she wanted.

A friend of Tristan, Lord High Steward Tinas, cried sadly: "How painful it is to find you here dead!" and the king's retinue could not have shown greater sorrow. Tristan was greatly lamented by many: some beat themselves, others tore their hair.

Seeing their distress, the grief-stricken woman said to herself: "There is so much sorrow here that I can do as I wish. They are so distraught with grief that they will pay no attention to me." Thinking them all blind--thus does Love make her children wise--she threw off the lid of the coffin to look at her lover. The wounds were unbound and bloody, and the man was so disfigured that she could not see or know who he was. The abbot's assistant had seen to this when he had begun the deception. If the dead man could have recovered, she would have been his physician, as had happened before. The queen broke open his wounds and examined them carefully, but she had no other ointment than the flood of great tears that she let fall into the wounds.

"Oh that I should find you dead--with so many wounds, dear Tristan--and be unable to help you!" she cried. "This will grieve me the rest of my life." She wiped his lips with her sleeve and kissed him lovingly. You see, she was finally able to do this without contention.

How the abbot's assistant wished that he could have had the kiss that the dead man got! He didn't like it at all and told himself: "That fellow lying

there is profiting too much from what is mine."

Ysot, faithful to love, mourned her dear lover just as her heart was directed by the sweet and ever-present goad of constant love. She thus took upon herself the pain that she knew would be great. "Tristan, man of all virtues, whom no one can lament enough," she said wretchedly, "how can it be that you, having survived so many conflicts, have now been slain like this in a foreign land. And no can tell us what happened. I declare to you before everyone that my lord's troops will never recover from this loss and that his retinue here will never cease to grieve for you. I too have reason to mourn. Although I have suffered because of you, you have more than made up for it, so it is right that I should lament your death."

"Tristan, bold warrior, when with manly strength and by perilous means you brought me under your care in Ireland, you at once showed yourself to be an excellent knight. Since then you suffered much hardship because of me, which is the reason for my grief. When you slew the dragon in a fearful struggle and were borne into my chamber, I took care that you were healed and fed. But now I'm without you; you have died and misfortune has robbed me of happiness.

"Gallant Tristan, if you were alive, I should never cease to serve you, for you enabled me to become a queen when I had almost become a steward's wife. I should always be subject to you, because your valor kept me from falling to such a low station; but for your help I would have become the bride of a servant and my joy would have sunk to the depths. You, Tristan, proved that the steward's arrogant claims were lies when they had nearly deceived my father. He urged the king to give me to him as his wife because he had slain the dragon, and you quickly showed that I should be yours. Now I am not yours, nor are you mine, for death parts us. My distress at this will never end."

"If she were to cool her wrath and be my dear lady," thought the chaplain, "I could still fully recover and might well come in such a manner that we both would be happy sharing a bed."

"Tristan," the lady continued, "may God regret that because of loyalty you did not want to make me your wife! You said that I was better suited to be Mark's queen, but this faithfulness has rewarded your love of him only with death; I can therefore never be free of sorrow. My father and mother trustingly committed me to your care, noble Tristan, and you have left me without blessing or farewell. May I now be requited for the loss of every joy! Dear sweet Tristan, I must curse this land. Why did you ever bring me here! Yet you took very good care of me and served me zealously without reproof, which was most pleasant. You might still be alive, were it not for that evil hate which put an end to my joy and your life.

"Alas, poor woman that I am, there can never be any help for me. I would much rather overlook in you what is called an offense than have to lament you thus. I know no better way to mourn you than to swear that, if my misfortune is so steadfast that I cannot die with you, the best of men, I want at least to be granted the death of my senses, for I cause them such distress that they promise to be the death of me, should they foresee anything good ahead. Tristan, you joy without sorrow, throughout your life you were always ready with your joy. Your beloved without question had more joy than all other women, as long as your dear, sweet self returned joy for love. But a hateful, joyless day is the only reward for this lovely feast. Since joy now parts from love, may all who have known happiness help me lament this beloved man. Tristan, God loves joy; how then could the dear God's command take away my good fortune?

"Good man, you made me very happy, but, poor me, I shall never again be so blessed. A monstrous enmity denies me pleasure. I am

oppressed at the thought of your kindness, the loss of which I must strive harder to endure. May great good and happiness be my recompense! Since joy must now part painfully from love, may all who ever loved help me lament the dear man. Alas Tristan, dear warrior, this poor woman must now renounce bliss for the rest of her life. I would think it a gift of God if I might lie dead beside you, for such a burden of grief has quickly descended upon me that I would rather be dead than remain in this state. Oh Tristan, how thoughtless you were! What did you hope to gain by riding forth on this ill-starred journey to seek adventure? But, alas, this was always your custom; your heart's desire was to be where one could gain honor or a prize with sword and spear. You were a graybeard in wit while still a child in years. How sad it is that not everyone joins in lamenting you.

"Oh why did my mother bear me, unhappy woman that I am! I was accustomed to having your aid, whatever troubled me; now I am left here alone and no one cares for me with such faithfulness as you did. Oh Tristan, who now will protect me from sorrow? Alas, poor me, what grief I have suffered because of you! Alas for Tristan and alas for me that you ever saw me, for this great misfortune befell you because of pitiful me, since you would have remained here if you had never seen me. Because of me, you were driven away, to where you lost your life. May God deign to forgive him who gave the false advice that caused your uncle the king to have you, innocent as you were, driven away, which unfortunately led to your death. Now the rancor has ended.

"Let anyone who wishes come and speak well or ill of Tristan, for he cannot avenge himself; whoever betrayed him may now jest and rejoice. Yet those to blame for my grief should be fully aware that, were it not unseemly for women to be cruel, I would teach them how to make an enemy fear for his life. But as a woman, sad to say, I must not seek vengeance and can only

weep. Alas, what I've often heard is true: that great joy often leads to great sorrow, although till this moment I thought it a lie. I have now learned something that I didn't know before. Oh poor Korneval, why did you desert him when this strange deed occurred?" With solemn oaths Korneval swore that he had not been with Tristan at the time.

Whoever might be displeased at this dear lady's wailing would seem to me quite foolish, for the earth never bore a finer warrior than he, the monk then sitting nearby, whom she thought lay before her. When her lament ended, the casket was lifted up and the knight was carried sorrowfully from the shore. He was placed before the portal of the cathedral, where there was a great outcry of mourning.

Night came on, and it was time for the people to return to the castle. Then Tristan the chaplain went to the altar and read from his psalter. He often wept and looked up toward heaven, but his prayer before the altar was only that God would grant him this blessing, that the blond Ysot would have an opportunity to see him. He pondered as to how this might happen so safely and secretly that no one would be aware of it, for he knew very well that the king hated him and he also feared that his ladylove might come to harm. Thus oppressed by doubt and care, he thought: "If I wait till tomorrow, the daylight may well make it impossible for me to speak with her." And he finally considered it best not to delay till morning.

Just then Mabenagris, his abbot, approached and said: "Benedis, brother."

Tristan bowed and replied politely, "Master, dominus," as was prescribed by his monastery; I fancy he would have become really austere if he had remained a monk for long.

"Brother Wit," continued the abbot, "have you finished your evening prayers?"

"No, master," answered Tristan.

"And why is that?" asked Mabenagris.

"I don't know," was the reply, "but I couldn't do any more." "Did anything happen today that kept you from reading them all?"

"Yes, master; I felt bad [lacuna] when I left you out there. Now I would like to rest here and wait till I recover."

"It seems to me, brother," said the abbot, "that it would be better for you to get up and go with me to join the court. That is what I advise."

"No," protested Tristan, "I'm not a courtly man. Sir, you should not feel pained at leaving me behind. And it is time for you to appear there."

"I am going," replied the abbot, "but you should yield to my request and come with me, for, believe me, I can't conduct myself as well outside the monastery as I could if you were beside me." When Korneval saw the abbot leave Tristan to go to the court, he quickly returned to his lord. "Sir," he said, "what do you have in mind? Do you want to see my lady?"

"Yes I do," declared Tristan, "if this can be done without anyone knowing it."

"I assure you," said his companion, "that you will be able to go to her and leave without danger."

"My dear Korneval, tell me by what cunning we can enlighten her about this deception without making the situation worse."

"I can take care of that, my lord. I'll reveal everything to her: that you are alive, are here, and want to talk with her this very night somewhere near by; that this fraud was devised because of Arthur's festival; and that I know nothing about the dead knight lying here, whom she laments so ardently."

"Perhaps she won't believe you."

"She will when I give her the ring with the sapphire that she sent you by Diamire and also the letter--sealed with the ring for the same purpose--in which you, my lord, wrote of the events that drove you here. But I must wait for a while."

"No, good Korneval, hurry!"

"I really don't want to, sir."

"Why not?"

"King Mark left many knights with my lady today. When he asked and ordered her to stop acting so distressed and go to bed with him, she began to reprove him, saying: 'Sir, how can you talk thus? Until Tristan is buried neither requests nor threats will keep me from lamenting. So you should say no more about it. Bid the knights with you depart and come back another time. Korneval and the good Diamire will still be here, and they are enough to care for us.' I also heard that Mark placed the casket with the corpse in the custody of two strong warriors; one is a Spaniard, the other is from England. Look, they don't know our tongue, and I am sure that they would never repeat it if I told them of a murder. These two would keep silent, for they can't say more than 'yes' and 'no', which takes little knowledge. But it is time for me to go to my lady--I fancy that the knights are still there--and you should fall on your knees here and pray that God may enable me to fully reconcile the two of you."

"I shall do so," declared Tristan, and Korneval went out. The knights had now set out for home and no one remained--so we are told--but the two warriors, Yes and No, and the noble maiden Diamire, with whom Ysot was left alone. The latter's tears had flowed so freely, sad to say, that she could weep no longer. I am really sorry that she did not learn the true story sooner. But, waiting no longer, Korneval went to her at once. She wished him a good evening and he thanked her.

"Tell me," she said, "where have you been all evening?"

"Lady," he replied, "I couldn't come any sooner."

"Did anything keep you?"

"Yes, my lady, a man out there was telling me some news."

"See, that could very well take place tomorrow and all year long. I now know very well the truth of the saying: regret often follows joy, but loyalty ends with death."

Kornewal knelt at her feet. "My lady," he said, "listen to what I've been doing that delayed me. I asked the higher ranking monk over there, to whom my lord often made his confessions, if my lord was repentant at his death. The monk assured me that he had never seen another knight lament his sins so bitterly; I heard so much about his distress that I wept. My lord also gave his confessor this letter, my lady; as yet, no one has read what is written therein. I know very well what occurred: my lord wrote the letter himself and gave it to the monk just as it is; except for me, no one else was present. Take it, my lady, and restrain yourself until you have read what he wrote."

As soon as he told her this, Ysot took the letter, broke the tie of its binding, and removed the charming signet ring with which it was sealed, as I said earlier. She felt better when she slipped it on her finger, because it helped her remember Tristan. I fancy that she was in a hurry to learn what was in the letter; indeed, she acted as many true-hearted people still do. Ysot opened the letter--which was in French--and read what she found written there. "I entreat you, lady," it began, "to receive with decorum what I shall make known to you and not be unduly shocked. One morning I set out to hunt and, riding across a field, caught sight of a knight lying in a furrow. A spear had entered his breast and come out behind at the shoulder, as would

have happened in a joust. When I saw the man from a distance, I rode to him and, lifting him up, saw that his hip had been broken by the fall and that he was dead. I let him sink to the ground, and Kornewal, who was there too, joined me in a lament.

"By then it had become quite light and the sun appeared on the horizon. We two thereupon agreed that Kornewal would go as a messenger to the company of the Round Table and report that I had recently been slain with a spear in a joust; he did not know by whom or when it happened. He was also to say that I had asked not to be buried there but to be transported to Mark's castle, accompanied by King Arthur and his fair company. Kornewal did this without delay: he went to the festival and told Arthur, the soul of honor, that I had died in a joust. Thereupon I waited no longer but, as soon as he rode away, so slashed the dead knight that no one could tell whether it was he or I. Then, to carry out my plan, I set out for a monastery and asked the abbot to take me in as a brother. It was the same abbot with whom I am now here and beside whom I stood in the garb of a monk.

"Now, my lady, advise us as to how beloved may come to beloved so that both may be happy. For if vile custody so spoils this companionship that one causes the other such sorrow that they part, then love will never bring anything lovely to one who has become a thief of love, to poor me whom love's distress and longing is driving to the grave. If you promise to be mine, high spirits will lead to love's desire, and I shall be free of joy burdened by sorrow. These two, joy and sorrow, are engaged in a mighty struggle here. Lend your aid, my lady, so that joy may win and sorrow may not return to trouble it. For if joy falls before sorrow, sorrow will turn joy into pain and it will never again be joyous; but if joyous loveliness defeats

sorrow--may it do so--then joy is firmly joined to love and untouched by sorrow. Nothing could be better."

Startled to read that her lover was not dead, but alive and nearby, Queen Ysot turned pale, then red. "Is this true?" she demanded. When Korneval gave his word that he would bring the two together, she urged him to hurry, but so that she need not be afraid of attracting people's attention.

"Well, my lady," he replied sensibly, "tell me where you wish to talk with him, for I don't know and want to go at once." "I'll say that I am too warm here," she replied, "and wish to go out to cool off. I'll leave these two men inside the castle to watch over the casket. Then indeed we shall have nothing to fear. You must bring your lord to the grassy plot by the spring in the garden, where he was with me last year. I'll go now and wait for him there."

"It shall be done," said Korneval, and the lady went out to the garden.

When Korneval did not return at once, Tristan grew very impatient and ran away from the altar where he had been saying his prayers. "This fellow is taking too long," he said to himself. "I must see my dear lady if I can. Alas that you are dead, Brangæne, you were always a great help to me; your heart was full of loyalty. Diamire is becoming less useful. How could she let my beloved and me stay separated this way! I am surprised that Misfortune has conspired against me, for I have lost Good Fortune. Damn you, Misfortune, you will be the death of me!"

While he was lamenting thus, his squire Korneval appeared. "Sir, take off the monk's cowl, put on my clothes, and go to the lady. She is now free of care."

"May I see my dearest?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where will that be?"

"There by the spring, my lord."

Tristan ran quickly to where his heart's delight waited. Longing for love, he embraced her, and she rewarded him well with a love beyond measure. They had their fill of joy until midnight, when they had to part. I know well that it was painful for them to give up this comfort and pleasure so soon. "May you be accursed, night," cried Ysot, "for fleeing so soon. You should be aware that I am no friend of yours. Know this: never since my mother bore me, have you caused me such bitter pain. You can well believe it." She then hurried back to her quarters and never kissed the dead knight again. The lady declared that she suddenly felt ill, but it was really because she did not want to see him.

The king returned to find Diamire holding the queen on her lap. The lady appeared to be in great pain; anyone would have thought it more than a person could bear. Looking at his beloved wife, Mark thought her condition perilous. He kissed her fondly and said: "Lady, your health means more to me than Tristan's life. God has so burdened me with shame and heartache, that I have good cause to be forever sad. And if for some unknown reason I should also lose my dear wife, I would suffer untold anguish. Gracious God, don't take my darling away, for no one ever parted from a dear wife with such distress as would be mine. Believe me, almighty God! Beautiful, charming, faultless Ysot, always so well-mannered and gay; blessed Ysot, nothing but good was ever spoken of you. Life without you would be empty indeed!"

"May you fare well," she replied, "and may our Lord God ordain that we go on living together."

"Dear lady," the king continued, "I wonder if one could get some medicine that would help you."

"I can't tell you," said the lady (who was in the best of health). "Don't be annoyed, but I have lost all this knowledge of which I was once a master. However you should have someone ask the abbot if he knows anything that would cure the sickness and delay my death. His Brother Wit, who is here with him, is a very wise man and is familiar with the best healing skills that a physician from Salerno would have. He is just the one we need for this distress." The king sent at once for the abbot.

When Tristan heard that he had been named as one who was skilled in medicine--of which he knew nothing--he feared for his life. He was greatly embarrassed at the request for his services and resisted with all sorts of excuses. "Brother Wit," said the king, "you are acting contrary to God's will in being so hard to persuade. You do not follow God's command when you deny someone the skill that is yours through His grace."

"My lord," replied the monk, "according to our precepts, he who turns away from the world should not practice medicine. Sir, ask my master, the abbot, if the rules of our order permit it."

"I don't know much about them, believe me," admitted the abbot. "But whatever my lord wishes that is not expressly forbidden you should do, brother, without a reward; that is godly. If this is a sin, I will answer for it."

Ysot was delighted at the news. She sank down beside the casket, as if in a faint, and at once was carried mournfully to her chambers. The master physician Wit had to save her from this fearful affliction, for the king commanded it and the abbot had given his permission. He therefore took hold of her head and smeared it with a salve. She revived at once. "This is

the best physician of all Salerno!" the king exclaimed to the abbot when he saw this. "God sent him here."

"It would be well if you were to leave us alone for a while," said Master Wit then. The king drove them all out until no one remained in the room with Ysot but Diamire and the monk.

"It's time to bury the dead man," declared the abbot, and there was a great outburst of weeping and wailing by the entire court. I can't tell how each one lamented, but will only say that both Arthur and Mark shed many tears. The mass was sung, the dead man was supported by prayers in keeping with his station, and--as was formerly done--was buried in the earth. The people then left. Mark went at once to the queen's chamber and asked her how she felt. "Much better," she replied, "thanks to this good man who knows so well how to treat me. If he were to attend to me for a while, I would soon recover."

"My queen," said Mark, "the abbot will let him stay with you as long as you wish."

"Oh, sir!" cried the lady. "Arrange for him to stay here a long time. I never saw such an excellent physician." Mark sent at once for the abbot and asked him to have Brother Wit stay there until the queen was cured. The abbot agreed to do so. Alas, what a physician the king chose for his wife! If he had known who the man was, Mark would gladly have been rid of him. The king acted just as Ysengrin did, when the latter left his wife Hersant in the custody of Reinhart, who took care of her only too well. Monk Wit recited his horae canonicae to Ysot at all hours of the day--he could do so skillfully--and gave her such a present that she could trip lightly wherever she wished. At last, after considering the situation, the monk and the physician took counsel with the knight, her lover Tristan, for, should

somebody recognize any one of the three, it would be unfortunate for all of them. Therefore with good will they reached the agreement that it was time to leave. Brother Wit then went before the king and said: "May God's grace preserve you, sir! You should permit me to leave for the monastery since there is no reason for me to remain here longer. My lady has fully recovered. If she ever needs me again, I shall gladly serve her as before."

"If you want anything that we have, good master," said Mark, "just tell me and it shall be yours."

"No, my dear lord," replied the physician, "you should be a friend of the monastery and let it benefit if I have been of service to you."

Having said this, the good monk started out on his way, but unfortunately could not find the road that led to the monastery. By chance he came upon another, that separated Cornwall and England, and, turning onto it at once, rode into his land of Parmenie. The honest knight remained there until his hair grew out and never became a monk again.