

Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775- 1818)

10 *The Erl-King's Daughter*

Danish.

*The Original is in the Kiampe-Viiser.*

O'er mountains, through vallies, Sir Oluf he wends  
To bid to his wedding relations and friends;  
'Tis night, and arriving where sports the elf band,  
The Erl-King's proud daughter presents him her hand.

— “Now welcome, Sir Oluf! oh! welcome to me! 5  
“Come, enter our circle my partner to be.” —  
— “Fair lady, nor can I dance with you, nor may;  
“To-morrow I marry, to-night must away.” —

— “Now listen, Sir Oluf! oh! listen to me!  
“Two spurs of fine silver thy guerdon shall be; 10  
“A shirt too of silk will I give as a boon,  
“Which my queen-mother bleach'd in the beams of the moon.

“Then yield thee, Sir Oluf! oh! yield thee to me!  
“And enter our circle my partner to be!” —  
— “Fair lady, nor can I dance with you, nor may; 15  
“To-morrow I marry, to-night must away.” —

— “Now listen, Sir Oluf! oh! listen to me!  
“An helmet of gold will I give unto thee!” —  
— “An helmet of gold would I willingly take,  
“But I will not dance with you, for Urgela's sake.” — 20

— “And deigns not Sir Oluf my partner to be?  
“Then curses and sickness I give unto thee;  
“Then curses and sickness thy steps shall pursue:  
“Now ride to thy lady, thou lover so true.” —

Thus said she, and laid her charm'd hand on his heart; — 25

Sir Oluf, he never had felt such a smart;  
Swift spurr'd he his steed till he reach'd his own door,  
And there stood his mother his castle before.

— “Now riddle me, Oluf, and riddle me right:  
“Why look'st thou, my dearest, so wan and so white?” — 30  
— “How should I not, mother, look wan and look white?  
“I have seen the Erl-King's cruel daughter to-night.

“She cursed me! her hand to my bosom she press'd;  
“Death follow'd the touch, and now freezes my breast!  
“She cursed me, and said, “To your lady now ride;” 35  
“Oh! ne'er shall my lips press the lips of my bride.” —

— “Now riddle me, Oluf, and what shall I say,  
“When here comes the lady, so fair and so gay?” —  
— “Oh! say, I am gone for awhile to the wood,  
“To prove if my hounds and my coursers are good.” — 40

Scarce dead was Sir Oluf, and scarce shone the day,  
When in came the lady, so fair and so gay;  
And in came her father, and in came each guest,  
Whom the hapless Sir Oluf had bade to the feast.

They drank the red wine, and they ate the good cheer; 45  
— “Oh! where is Sir Oluf! oh, where is my dear?” —  
— “Sir Oluf is gone for awhile to the wood,  
“To prove if his hounds and his coursers are good.” —

Sore trembled the lady, so fair and so gay;  
She eyed the red curtain; she drew it away; 50  
But soon from her bosom for ever life fled,  
For there lay Sir Oluf, cold, breathless, and dead.

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