

## King Horn

by: Ronald B. Herzman (Editor), Graham Drake (Editor), Eve Salisbury (Editor)

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1997

### *Opening lines*

- 1 Alle beon he blithe  
That to my song lythe!  
A sang ich schal you singe  
Of Murry the Kinge.
- 5 King he was biweste  
So longe so hit laste.  
Godhild het his quen;  
Faire ne mighte non ben.  
He hadde a sone that het Horn;
- 10 Fairer ne mighte non beo born,  
Ne no rein upon birine,  
Ne sunne upon bischine.  
Fairer nis non thane he was:  
He was bright so the glas;
- 15 He was whit so the flur;  
Rose red was his colur.  
He was fayr and eke bold,  
And of fiftene winter hold.  
In none kinge riche
- 20 Nas non his iliche.  
Twelf feren he hadde  
That he alle with him ladde,  
Alle riche mannes sones,  
And alle hi were faire gomes,
- 25 With him for to pleie,  
And mest he luvede tweie;  
That on him het Hathulf child,  
And that other Fikenild.  
Athulf was the beste,
- 30 And Fikenylde the werste.  
Hit was upon a someres day,  
Also ich you telle may,  
Murri, the gode King,  
Rod on his pleing
- 35 Bi the se side,  
Ase he was woned ride.  
With him riden bote two -  
Al to fewe ware tho!  
He fond bi the stronde,
- 40 Arived on his londe,  
Schipes fiftene

With Sarazins kene  
He axede what hi soghte  
Other to londe broghte.  
45 A payn hit offerde,  
And hym wel sone answarede:  
"Thy lond folk we schulle slon,  
And alle that Crist luveth upon  
And the selve right anon.  
50 Ne shaltu todai henne gon."  
The king alighte of his stede,  
For tho he havede nede,  
And his gode knightes two;  
Al to fewe he hadde tho.  
55 Swerd hi gunne gripe  
And togadere smite.  
Hy smyten under schelde  
That sume hit yfelde.  
The king hadde al to fewe  
60 Togenes so fele schrewe;  
So wele mighten ythe  
Bringe hem thre to dithe.  
The pains come to londe  
And neme hit in here honde  
65 That folc hi gunne quelle,  
And churchen for to felle.  
Ther ne moste libbe  
The fremde ne the sibbe.  
Bute hi here laye asoke,  
70 And to here toke.  
Of alle wymmanne  
Wurst was Godhild thanne.  
For Murri heo weop sore  
And for Horn yute more.  
75 He wente ut of halle  
Fram hire maidenen alle  
Under a roche of stone  
Ther heo livede alone.  
Ther heo servede Gode  
80 Aghenes the paynes forbode.  
Ther he servede Criste  
That no payn hit ne wiste.  
Evre heo bad for Horn child  
That Jesu Crist him beo myld.

....

***Horn wishes to prove his knightwood***

601 He fond o schup stonde  
With hethene honde.

He axede what hi soghte  
 605 Other to londe broghte.  
 An hund him gan bihelde  
 That spac wordes belde:  
 "This lond we wullegh winne  
 And sle that ther is inne."  
 610 Horn gan his swerd gripe  
 And on his arme wype.  
 The Sarazins he smatte  
 That his blod hatte;  
 At evreche dunte  
 615 The heved of wente;  
 Tho gunne the hundes gone  
 Abute Horn a lone:  
 He lokede on the ringe,  
 And thoghte on Rimenilde;  
 620 He slogh ther on haste  
 On hundred bi the laste,  
 Ne mighte noman telle  
 That folc that he gan quelle.  
 Of alle that were alive,  
 625 Ne mighte ther non thrive.  
 Horn tok the maisteres heved,  
 That he hadde him bireved  
 And sette hit on his swerde,  
 Anoven at than orde.  
 He verde hom into halle,  
 630 Among the knightes alle.

***First climax (Rescue 1)***

1215 He wipede that blake of his swere,  
 And sede, "Quen, so swete and dere,  
 Ich am Horn thin oghe.  
 Ne canstu me noght knowe?  
 Ich am Horn of Westernesse;  
 In armes thu me cusse."  
 Hi custe hem mid ywisse  
 And makeden muche blisse.  
 "Rymenhild," he sede, "I wende  
 Adun to the wudes ende:  
 Ther beth myne knightes  
 Redi to fighte;  
 Iarmed under clothe,  
 Hi schulle make wrothe  
 The king and his geste  
 That come to the feste.  
 Today I schal hem teche  
 And sore hem areche."

Horn sprong ut of halle  
And let his sclavin falle.  
The quen yede to bure  
And fond Athulf in ture.  
"Athulf," heo sede, "be blithe  
And to Horn thu go wel swithe.  
He is under wude boghe  
And with him knightes inoghe."  
Athulf bigan to springe  
For the tithinge.  
After Horn he arnde anon,  
Also that hors mighte gon.  
He him overtok ywis;  
Hi makede swithe muchel blis.  
Horn tok his preie  
And dude him in the weie.  
He com in wel sone:  
The yates were undone.  
Iarmed ful thikke  
Fram fote to the nekke,  
Alle that were therin  
Bithute his twelf ferin  
And the King Aylmare,  
He dude hem alle to kare,  
That at the feste were;  
Here lif hi lete there.  
Horn ne dude no wunder  
Of Fikenhildes false tunge.  
Hi sworn othes holde,  
That nevre ne scholde  
Horn nevre bitraie,  
Thegh he at dithe laie.  
Hi runge the belle  
The wedlak for to felle;  
Horn him yede with his  
To the kinges palais,  
Ther was bridale swete,  
For riche men ther ete.  
Telle ne mighte tunge  
That gle that ther was sunge.  
Horn sat on chaere,  
And bad hem alle ihere.  
"King," he sede, "thu luste  
A tale mid the beste.  
I ne seie hit for no blame:  
Horn is mi name.  
Thu me to knight hove,  
And knighthod have proved

To thee, king, men seide  
 That I thee bitraide;  
 Thu makedest me fleme,  
 And thi lond to reme;  
 Thu wendest that I wroghte  
 That I nevre ne thoghte,  
 Bi Rymenhild for to ligge,  
 And that I withsegge.  
 Ne schal ich hit biginne,  
 Til I Suddene winne.  
 Thu kep hure a stunde,  
 The while that I funde  
 In to min heritage,  
 And to mi baronage.  
 That lond I schal ofreche  
 And do mi fader wreche.  
 I schal beo king of tune,  
 And bere kinges crune;  
 Thanne schal Rymenhilde  
 1300 Ligge bi the kinge."

***Second climax (Rescue 2 + Restoration)***

1485 He dude Horn in late  
 Right at halle gate.  
 He sette him on the benche,  
 His harpe for to clenche.  
 He makede Rymenhilde lay,  
 And heo makede walaway.  
 Rymenhild feol yswoghe  
 Ne was ther non that loughe.  
 Hit smot to Hornes herte  
 So bitere that hit smerte.  
 He lokede on the ringe  
 And thoghte on Rymenhilde:  
 He yede up to borde  
 With gode swerdes orde:  
 Fikenhildes crune  
 Ther he fulde adune,  
 And al his men a rowe,  
 Hi dude adun throwe.  
 Whanne hi weren aslaghe  
 Fikenhild hi dude todraghe.  
 Horn makede Arnoldin thare  
 King after King Aylmare  
 Of al Westernesse  
 For his meoknesse.  
 The king and his homage  
 Yeven Arnoldin trewage.

Horn tok Rymenhild bi the honde  
And ladde hure to the stronde,  
And ladde with him Athelbrus,  
The gode stward of his hus.  
The se bigan to flowe,  
And Horn gan to rowe.  
Hi gunne for to arive  
Ther King Modi was sire.  
Athelbrus he made the king  
For his gode teching:  
He gaf alle the knightes ore  
For Horn knightes lore.  
Horn gan for to ride;  
The wind him blew wel wide.  
He arivede in Yrlonde,  
Ther he wo fonde,  
Ther he dude Athulf child  
Wedden maide Reynild.  
Horn com to Suddenne  
Among al his kenne;  
Rymenhild he made his quene;  
So hit mighte wel beon.  
Al folk hem mighte rewe  
That loveden hem so trewe:  
Nu ben hi bothe dede -  
Crist to hevene hem lede!  
Her endeth the tale of Horn  
That fair was and nocht unorn.  
Make we us glade evre among,  
For thus him endeth Hornes song.  
Jesus, that is of hevene king,  
Yeve us alle His swete blessing.

1545 Amen.

***King Horn*** (c. 1250)

Alle beon he blithe  
That to my song lythe!  
A sang ich schal you singe  
Of Murry the Kinge.  
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He was bright so the glas;  
He was whit so the flur;  
Rose red was his colur.

***Havelo(c)k the Dane*** (c. 1280-90)

Herkneth to me, gode men -  
Wives, maydnes, and alle men -  
Of a tale that ich you wile telle,  
Wo so it wile here and therto dwelle.  
The tale is of Havelok imaked:  
Whil he was litel, he yede ful naked.  
Havelok was a ful god gome -  
He was ful god in everi trome;  
He was the wicteste man at nede  
That thurte riden on ani stede.  
That ye mowen now yhere,  
And the tale you mowen ylere,  
At the biginnig of ure tale,  
Fil me a cuppe of ful god ale;  
And wile drinken, her I spelle,  
That Crist us shilde alle fro helle.  
Krist late us hevere so for to do  
That we moten comen Him to;  
And, witthat it mote ben so,  
Benedicamus Domino!  
Here I schal biginnen a rym;  
Krist us yeve wel god fyn!  
The rym is maked of Havelok -  
A stalworthi man in a flok

### ***The Tale of Gamelyn* (c. 1350)**

#### **Fitt 1**

Lithes and listneth and harkeneth aright,  
And ye shul here of a doughty knyght;  
Sire John of Boundes was his name,  
He coude of norture and of mochel game.  
Thre sones the knyght had and with his body he wan,  
The eldest was a moche schrewe and sone bygan.  
His brether loved wel her fader and of hym were agast,  
The eldest deserved his faders curs and had it atte last.  
The good knight his fadere lyved so yore,  
That deth was comen hym to and handled hym ful sore.  
The good knyght cared sore sik ther he lay,  
How his children shuld lyven after his day.  
He had bene wide where but non husbonde he was,  
Al the londe that he had it was purchas.  
Fayn he wold it were dressed amonge hem alle,  
That eche of hem had his parte as it myght falle.  
Thoo sente he in to contrey after wise knyghtes  
To helpen delen his londes and dresen hem to-rightes.  
He sent hem word by letters thei shul hie blyve,  
If thei wolle speke with hym whilst he was alive

### ***The Green Knight* (late 14<sup>th</sup> c.)**

List! wen Arthur he was King,  
He had all att his leadinge  
The broad Ile of Brittain.  
England and Scotland one was,  
And Wales stood in the same case,  
The truth itt is not to layne.

He drive allynce out of this Ile.  
Soe Arthur lived in peace a while,  
As men of mickle maine,  
Knights strove of their degree,  
Which of them hiest shold bee;  
Therof Arthur was not faine.

Hee made the Round Table for their behove,  
That none of them shold sitt above,  
But all shold sitt as one,  
The King himselfe in state royall,  
Dame Guenever our Queene withall,  
Seemlye of body and bone.



### ***King Horn*** (31-62)

Hit was upon a someres day,  
Also ich you telle may,  
Murri, the gode King,  
Rod on his pleing  
Bi the se side,  
Ase he was woned ride.  
With him riden bote two -  
Al to fewe ware tho!  
He fond bi the stronde,  
Arived on his londe,  
Schipes fiftene  
With Sarazins kene  
He axede what hi soghte  
Other to londe broghte.  
A payn hit ofherde,  
And hym wel sone answarede:  
"Thy lond folk we schulle slon,  
And alle that Crist luveth upon  
And the selve right anon.  
Ne shaltu todai henne gon."  
The king alighte of his stede,  
For tho he have nede,  
And his gode knyghtes two;  
Al to fewe he hadde tho.  
Swerd hi gunne gripe  
And togadere smite.  
Hy smyten under schelde  
That sume hit yfelde.  
The king hadde al to fewe  
Togenes so fele schrewe;  
So wele mighten ythe  
Bringe hem thre to dithe.

### ***The Tale of Gamelyn*** (9-63)

The good knight his fadere lyved so yore,  
That deth was comen hym to and handled hym ful sore.  
The good knyght cared sore sik ther he lay,  
How his children shuld lyven after his day.  
He had bene wide where but non husbonde he was,  
Al the londe that he had it was purchas.  
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That eche of hem had his parte as it myght falle.  
Thoo sente he in to contrey after wise knyghtes  
To helpen delen his londes and dresen hem to-rightes.  
He sent hem word by letters thei shul hie blyve,  
If thei wolle speke with hym whilst he was alyve.

Whan the knyghtes harden sik that he lay,  
Had thei no rest neither nyght ne day,

Til thei come to hym ther he lay stille  
On his dethes bedde to abide goddis wille.  
Than seide the good knyght seke ther he lay,  
"Lordes, I you warne for soth, without nay,  
I may no lenger lyven here in this stounde;  
For thorgh goddis wille deth droueth me to grounde."  
Ther nas noon of hem alle that herd hym aright,  
That thei ne had routh of that ilk knyght,  
And seide, "Sir, for goddes love dismay you nought;  
God may don boote of bale that is now ywrought."  
Than speke the good knyght sik ther he lay,  
"Boote of bale God may sende I wote it is no nay;  
But I beseche you knyghtes for the love of me,  
Goth and dresseth my londes amonge my sones thre.  
And for the love of God deleth not amyss,  
And forgeteth not Gamelyne my yonge sone that is.  
Taket hede to that oon as wel as to that other;  
Seelde ye seen eny hier helpen his brother."  
Thoo lete thei the knyght lyen that was not in hele,  
And wenten into counselle his londes for to dele;  
For to delen hem alle to on that was her thought.  
And for Gamelyn was yongest he shuld have nought.  
All the londe that ther was thei dalten it in two,  
And lete Gamelyne the yonge without londe goo,  
And eche of hem seide to other ful loude,  
His bretheren myght yeve him londe whan he good cowde.  
And whan thei had deled the londe at her wille,  
They commen to the knyght ther he lay stille,  
And tolde him anon how thei had wrought;  
And the knight ther he lay liked it right nought.

Than seide the knyght, "Be Seint Martyne,  
For al that ye han done yit is the londe myne;  
For Goddis love, neighbours stondest alle stille,  
And I wil delen my londe after myn owne wille.  
John, myne eldest sone shal have plowes fyve,  
That was my faders heritage whan he was alyve;  
And my myddelest sone fyve plowes of londe,  
That I halpe forto gete with my right honde;  
And al myn other purchace of londes and ledes  
That I biquethe Gamelyne and alle my good stedes.  
And I biseche you, good men that lawe conne of londe,  
For Gamelynes love that my quest stonde."  
Thus dalt the knyght his londe by his day,  
Right on his deth bed sik ther he lay;  
And sone afterward he lay stoon stille,  
And deide whan tyme come as it was Cristes wille.

# The Tale of Gamelyn

by: Stephen Knight (Editor), Thomas H. Ohlgren (Editor)  
from: Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales 1997

## Fitt 5

### *Gamelyn and Adam's escape*

547 Now lithen and listen so God geve you good fyne!  
And ye shul here good game of yonge Gamelyne.  
Four and twenty yonge men that helde hem ful bolde,  
Come to the shiref and seide that thei wolde  
Gamelyn and Adam fette by her fay;  
The sheref gave hem leve soth for to say;  
Thei hiden fast wold thei not lynne,  
To thei come to the gate there Gamelyn was inne.  
They knocked on the gate the porter was nyghe,  
And loked out atte an hool as man that was scleghe.  
The porter hadde bihold hem a litel while,  
He loved wel Gamelyn and was dradde of gyle,  
And lete the wikett stonde ful stille,  
And asked hem without what was her wille.  
For all the grete company speke but oon,  
"Undo the gate, porter and lat us in goon."  
Than seide the porter "So brouke I my chyn,  
Ye shul saie youre erand er ye come inne."

"Sey to Gamelyn and Adam if theire wil be,  
We wil speke with hem two wordes or thre."  
"Felawe," seide the porter "stonde ther stille,  
And I wil wende to Gamelyn to wete his wille."  
Inne went the porter to Gamelyn anoon,  
And saide, "Sir, I warne you here ben comen youre foon;  
The shireves men bene at the gate,  
Forto take you both ye shul not scape."  
"Porter," seide Gamelyn, "so mote I the!  
I wil alowe thi wordes whan I my tyme se.  
Go ageyn to the gate and dwelle with hem a while,  
And thou shalt se right sone porter, a gile."

"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "hast the to goon;  
We han foo men mony and frendes never oon;  
It bene the shireves men that hider bene comen,  
Thei ben swore togidere that we shal be nomen."  
"Gamelyn," seide Adam, "hye the right blyve,  
And if I faile the this day evel mot I thrive!  
And we shul so welcome the shyreves men,  
That some of hem shal make her beddes in the fenne."  
At a postern gate Gamelyn out went,  
And a good cartstaf in his hondes hent;

Adam hent sone another grete staff  
For to helpen Gamelyne and good strokes yaf.  
Adam felled tweyn and Gamelyn thre,  
The other sette fete on erthe and bygan to flee.  
"What" seide Adam, "so evere here I masse!  
I have right good wyne drynk er ye passe!"  
"Nay, by God!" seide thei, "thi drink is not goode,  
It wolde make a mannys brayn to lyen on his hode."

Gamelyn stode stille and loked hym aboute,  
And seide "The shyref cometh with a grete route."  
"Adam," seyde Gamelyn "what bene now thi redes?  
Here cometh the sheref and wil have our hedes."  
Adam seide to Gamelyn "My rede is now this,  
Abide we no lenger lest we fare amys:  
I rede we to wode gon er we be founde,  
Better is ther louse than in the tounne bounde."  
Adam toke by the honde yonge Gamelyn;  
And every of hem dronk a draught of wyn,  
And after token her cours and wenten her way;  
Tho fonde the scherreve nyst but non aye.  
The shirrive light doune and went into halle,  
And fonde the lord fetred faste withalle.  
The shirreve unfetred hym right sone anoon,  
And sente aftere a leche to hele his rigge boon.

### ***In the forest with the outlaws***

Lat we now the fals knyght lye in hys care,  
And talke we of Gamelyn and of his fare.  
Gamelyn into the wode stalked stille,  
And Adam Spensere liked right ille;  
Adam swore to Gamelyn, "By Seint Richere,  
Now I see it is mery to be a spencere,  
Yit lever me were kayes to bere,  
Than walken in this wilde wode my clothes to tere."  
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "dismay the right nought;  
Mony good mannys child in care is brought."  
As thei stode talkinge bothen in fere,  
Adam herd talking of men and right nyghe hem thei were.  
Tho Gamelyn under wode loked aright,  
Sevene score of yonge men he seye wel ydight;  
Alle satte at the mete compas aboute.  
"Adam," seide Gamelyn, "now have I no doute,  
Aftere bale cometh bote thorgh Goddis myght;  
Me think of mete and drynk I have a sight."  
Adam loked thoo under wode bough,  
And whan he segh mete was glad ynogh;  
For he hoped to God to have his dele,  
And he was sore alonged after a mele.

As he seide that worde the mayster outlawe

Saugh Adam and Gamelyn under the wode shawe.  
 "Yonge men," seide the maistere "by the good Rode,  
 I am ware of gestes God send us goode;  
 Yond ben twoo yonge men wel ydight,  
 And parenture ther ben mo whoso loked right.  
 Ariseth up, yonge men and fette hem to me;  
 It is good that we weten what men thei be."  
 Up ther sterten sevene from the dynere,  
 And metten with Gamelyn and Adam Spencere.  
 Whan thei were nyghe hem than seide that oon,  
 "Yeeldeth up, yonge men your bowes and your floon."  
 Than seide Gamelyn that yong was of elde,  
 "Moche sorwe mote thei have that to you hem yelde!  
 I curs noon other but right mysilve;  
 Thoo ye fette to you fyve than be ye twelve!"  
 Whan they harde by his word that myght was in his arme,  
 Ther was noon of hem that wolde do hym harme,  
 But seide to Gamelyn myldely and stille,  
 "Cometh afore our maister and seith to hym your wille."  
 "Yong men," seide Gamelyn, "be your lewté,  
 What man is youre maister that ye with be?"  
 Alle thei answerd without lesing,  
 "Our maister is crowned of outlawe king."  
 "Adam," seide Gamelyn, "go we in Cristes name;  
 He may neither mete ne drink warne us for shame.  
 If that he be hende and come of gentil blood,  
 He wil yeve us mete and drink and do us som gode."  
 "By Seint Jame!" seide Adam, "what harme that I gete,  
 I wil aventure me that I had mete."

Gamelyn and Adam went forth in fere,  
 And thei grette the maister that thei fond there.  
 Than seide the maister king of outlawes,  
 "What seche ye, yonge men, under the wode shawes?"  
 Gamelyn answerde the king with his croune,  
 "He most nedes walk in feeld that may not in toune.  
 Sire, we walk not here no harme to doo,  
 But yif we mete a deer to shete therto,  
 As men that bene hungry and mow no mete fynde,  
 And bene harde bystad under wode lynde."  
 Of Gamelyns wordes the maister had reuthe,  
 And seide, "Ye shul have ynow have God my trouth!"  
 He bad hem sitte doun for to take rest;  
 And bad hem ete and drink and that of the best.  
 As they eten and dronken wel and fyne,  
 Than seide on to another, "This is Gamelyne."  
 Tho was the maistere outlaw into counseile nome,  
 And tolde howe it was Gamelyn that thider was come.  
 Anon as he herd how it was byfalle,  
 He made him maister under hym over hem alle.  
 Withinne the thridde weke hym come tydinge,  
 To the maistere outlawe that was her kinge,

That he shuld come home his pees was made;  
And of that good tydinge he was ful glade.  
Thoo seide he to his yonge men soth forto telle,  
"Me bene comen tydinges I may no lenger dwelle."  
Tho was Gamelyn anon withoute tarynge,  
690 Made maister outlawe and crowned her kinge.