

**Borrow George**

**The Tale of Brynild, and  
King Valdemar and His Sister:  
Two Ballads**



George Borrow

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Valdemar and His Sister: Two Ballads**

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# **Borrow George**

## **The Tale of Brynild, and King Valdemar and His Sister: Two Ballads**

### **THE TALE OF BRYNILD**

Sivard he a colt has got,  
The swiftest 'neath the sun;  
Proud Brynild from the Hill of Glass  
In open day he won.

Unto her did of knights and swains  
The very flower ride;  
Not one of them the maid to win  
Could climb the mountain's side.

The hill it was both steep and smooth;  
Upon its lofty head  
Her sire had set her, knight nor swain  
He swore with her should wed.

Soon to the Danish monarch's court  
A messenger repaired,  
To know if there was any one  
To try the adventure dared.

'Twas talked about, and Sivard then  
His purpose soon made known;  
Said he: "I'll try upon my colt  
To bring Brynilda down."

He rode away, the way was far,  
The path was of the worst;  
He saw the shining Glass Hill, where  
The maid her durance curs'd.

And he away proud Brynild bore,  
Nor deemed the adventure hard;  
To bold Sir Nielus her he gave  
To show him his regard.

Proud Brynild and proud Signelil  
Those maids of beauteous mien,  
Down to the river's side they went  
Their silken robes to clean.

“Now do thou hear, thou proud Brynild,  
What now I say to thee,  
Where didst thou get the bright gold ring  
I on thy finger see?”

“How did I get the bright gold ring  
Which on my hand you see?  
That gave me Sivard Snareswayne,  
When he betrothed me.”

“And though young Sivard gave thee that  
When he his love declar’d,  
He gives thee to Sir Nielus now  
In proof of his regard.”

No sooner than did Brynild hear,  
The haughty hearted may,  
Than to the chamber high she went,  
Where sick of rage she lay.

It was the proud Brynild there  
Fell sick, and moaning lay;  
And her the proud Sir Nielus then  
Attended every day.

“Now hark to me, thou Brynild fair,  
My mind is ill at ease;  
Know’st thou of any medicine  
Can cure thy sad disease?”

“If there be aught this world within  
Can make thee cease to moan,  
That thou shalt have, e’en if it cost  
All, all the gold I own.”

“I know of nought within this world  
Can do my sickness good,  
Except of Sivard Snareswayne  
It be the hated blood.

“And there is nothing in this world  
Which can assuage my pain,  
Except of Sivard Snareswayne  
The head I do obtain.”

“To draw of Sivard Snareswayne  
The blood I have no might;  
His neck is hard as burnished steel,

No sword thereon will bite.”

“O hark, Sir Nielus, hark to me,  
My well beloved lord,  
Borrow of him his Adelring,  
His famous trusty sword.

“Tell him thou needest it so oft  
When thou dost wage a fight,  
But soon as ’tis within thy hand  
Hew off his head outright.”

It was the bold Sir Nielus then  
His mantle puts he on;  
To Sivard, his companion true,  
To the high hall he’s gone.

“Now hear, O Sivard Snareswayne,  
Thy sword unto me lend,  
For I unto the field of fight  
Full soon my course must bend.”

“My trusty faulchion Adelring  
I’ll freely lend to thee;  
No man be sure shall thee o’ercome,  
However strong he be.

“My trusty faulchion Adelring  
To thee I’ll freely yield,  
But, oh! beware thee of the tears  
Beneath the hilt conceal’d.

“Beware thee of those frightful tears,  
They all are bloody red;  
If down thy fingers they should run  
Thou wert that moment dead.”

Upstood the bold Sir Nielus then,  
Drew out the sword amain;  
One blow and off the head is hewn  
Of Sivard Snareswayne.

Beneath his mantle then he takes  
The head, distilling blood,  
And hurrying to the chamber high  
Before Brynilda stood.

“Behold the head, the bloody head,  
Thou didst so crave to gain;

For thee I've done a felon deed  
Which gives my heart such pain."

"O lay aside the bloody head,  
It fills my heart with fright;  
And come to me, my dearest lord,  
Beneath the linen white."

"I crave thee, woman, not to think  
I came for sport and play;  
Thou wast the wicked cause that I  
From honour went astray."

It was the bold Sir Nielus then  
His faulchion he drew out;  
It was the beauteous Brynild whom  
He all to pieces smote.

"Now have I slain my comrade dear,  
And eke my lovely may,  
Yet still I am resolved in mind  
A third, a third to slay."

So then against the hard stone floor  
He placed the trusty glaive;  
To his heart's root the point in went,  
And him his death wound gave.

'Twere better that this maid had died  
Within her mother's womb,  
Than that these princely men through her  
To such an end should come.

Now will I rede, each honest man  
Well to deliberate ever;  
Unequalled woman's cunning is,  
Though guiles of men be clever.

She laughs when 'tis her wish to laugh,  
And weeps when she will weep;  
Whene'er she wants thy heart to move  
Fair words on thee she'll heap.

Be she sick, or be she well,  
In woman ne'er confide;  
In murder red, by woman led,  
His hands Sir Nielus dyed.

## KING VALDEMAR AND HIS SISTER

See, see, with Queen Sophy sits Valdemar bold.  
About little Kirsten much parlance they hold.

“Now hark, my good Lord! I have this to propose,  
That thou shalt give Kirsten to Buris for spouse.

A sister thou hast, I a brave brother own,  
A wedding we'll have ere this good year be flown.”

“It never shall happen, as long as I live,  
That I to a horse-thief my sister will give.

My sister's a princess so fair and so bright,

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