

**ERIC AND THORA. A
STORY FOR
CHILDREN. PP. 6-71**

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Eric and Thora. A story for children. pp. 6-71 by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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CHILDREN. PP. 6-71**



ERIC AND THORA.

A Story for Children,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ST. PETER’S DAY.”

“ Let no earth-stain thy robe of glory mar ;
Wrap it around thy bosom undefiled ;
Yet spread it daily in the clear Heaven’s light,
To be new-bathed in its own native light.”

Lyra Innocentium.



LONDON :
MOZLEY AND SMITH,
6, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1878.

for Thora and Eric, nobody would have noticed the child.

When they arrived at the castle, Thora's first thought was of her rescued guest. Eric had told her in a few words all that he had learnt concerning her, and, satisfied to find that she did not belong to Thiodolf's enemies, Thora was ready to receive her as a new sister. She had often longed for one, and she rejoiced at the strange chance which seemed to have come on purpose to fulfil her wish. She led her into the great hall of the castle, where the serving-maidens were preparing supper for the young chief and his men; and taking her into a wide-spreading window, her own favourite seat, she began to talk and to try and comfort her.

"Don't cry," said she, "you shall be my sister and Eric's, and we will take you to our favourite cave in the rock, and you shall see the falcon Eric tamed. But you are not listening," continued she, in a disappointed tone.

The stranger-child looked up on hearing the change in her companion's voice. She put her hand in hers and spoke slowly, as

though in a tongue to which she was not accustomed—

“You are kind,” she said, and her voice was very sweet, Thora thought, “you are kind; but I must cry a little, because all my people are gone, and though you are kind, you know you are a stranger too.”

“Oh, but I will be your sister,” said Thora eagerly; “you will not call me a stranger then, and Eric will be your brother; he is so kind and brave, and he will take care of you as he does of me.”

“The cruel men killed my dear sister, and carried me away; if my brother had been at home he would have protected us. Alas, alas,” and the child’s tears fell fast.

“Are you not glad you are here with me?” said Thora, “and that my brother has killed those wicked men? How glad you must have been! I almost think I would have got a sword and fought too if I had been you.”

“Oh no,” said the child, “I was not glad they were killed, but I am glad I am with you and not with them. If only Father Clement could have been saved too.”

"Was that the old man who was with you, was he your father?"

"No, not my father; but he has taught me always, and he saved my life when the men burnt our castle and killed my sister, and then they took us prisoners."

"Who killed him?" asked Thora.

"One of the men who had taken us was wounded and was lying on the ground, and one of your men came with a spear to kill him, and Father Clement ran between them, so the spear struck him instead, and he died."

"But why did he do that?" asked Thora. "I should have thought he would rather have helped to kill him."

"Oh no, he never fought."

"Why not? was he a coward?" said Thora wonderingly.

"Oh no, he was braver than any one I ever knew."

"Then why did not he kill the man instead of trying to save him?"

"It would not have been very brave to kill a wounded man," said the child.

"But did not he want to be revenged on

him for killing your sister and burning your castle ? ”

“ Oh no, it would not have been right.”

“ What can you mean, you strange girl ; I never heard any one speak so before ! But tell me your name and where you come from ; you do not speak like us.”

“ My name is Hilda,” said the child, “ and I come from a very long way off. Our castle was near the sea, and my brother and all his men had been summoned away to a meeting of the nobles. There was only my sister, myself, and a few serving-men in the castle, for we thought of no danger ; but the Northmen landed and set fire to our castle ; our men fought bravely, but they were too few. The Northmen rushed in ; they killed my sister as she was kneeling in the chapel, and they would have killed me too, but they did not see me ; Father Clement was succouring the wounded. I do not know how long I was in the chapel ; I did not know what they did then, for I was lying crying by my dear sister, when I saw it was all on fire, and Father Clement came through the flames and caught me up

and carried me back through them, and we left the burning castle. Afterwards some of the men came by, and there was no place for us to hide. I suppose they were tired of killing people, for they took us with them as prisoners to their ships. They were very cruel to us though, and I was very much frightened ; but Father Clement helped me to bear it, and he was so patient, that I was ashamed not to try and be patient too. We had not long landed when we saw your troop coming, and the men who were with us made ready to fight, and you know the rest."

"Poor little Hilda," said Thora tenderly, "you shall be happy now you have come to us. My father and my brothers are great warriors, and you will be quite safe here."

"Oh yes, I know I am safe," said the child. "I am safe always," she continued, dreamingly looking up into the starry sky.

Thora looked at her, as she had looked before, wondering ; and then it struck her that Hilda must be very weary, and she said, "Come with me to Gudrun, my dear old nurse, and she shall put us to sleep. She