

**EARL HAKON
THE MIGHTY**

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Earl Hakon the Mighty by Oehlenschläger

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OEHLENSCHLÄGER

**EARL HAKON
THE MIGHTY**

EARL HAKON THE MIGHTY.

BY OEHLENSCHLÄGER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH

BY

FRANK C. LASCELLES.



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1874.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

- OLAF TRYGVESON, King of Dublin.
HAKON, EARL OF HLADE, surnamed the Mighty, Ruler of
Norway.
ERLING, his son.
THORER KLAKE, merchant.
CARLSHOVED }
JOSTEIN } Olaf's kinsmen.
EINAR TAMBESKJÆLVER, a young archer.
BERGTHOR, smith; spokesman of the Trondhjem peasants.
GUDRUN }
ASTRID } his daughters.
ORM }
THORWALD } betrothed to GUDRUN and ASTRID.
THYRA, the Earl's mistress.
THANGBRAND, a priest.
ANDEN, an old one-eyed man.
GRIB, Thorer's thrall.
KARKER }
STEIN } the Earl's thralls.
LEIF }
A MESSENGER.
INGER, Thyra's handmaid.
Priests, Warriors, Peasants, and Thralls.



EARL HAKON THE MIGHTY.

ACT I.

HLADE.

A place surrounded by trees, outside the Earl's Castle; in the background part of the building with open windows. KARKER and GRIB are seated under the trees with a dish of meat and a jug of beer. Sounds of merriment are heard inside the Hall.

KARKER.

Hark, what a noise they make,—what merriment!
I hear the voice of Thorer Klake, thy master;
He talks about his voyages abroad.

GRIB.

He's right to do so. 'Tis worth while to listen
How cunningly he has disposed his wares
On every coast around, in every town,
And massed up gold and silver in exchange;

Earl Hakon the Mighty.

My master has a shrewd and cunning head ;
He should have lived in Harald Greyskin's time.

KARKER.

And why in his ?

GRIB.

Because he was a king
Who helped the trades' and lands' development ;
A king, who for his country's welfare did
Put off his purple cloak and all its gold,
And clad himself in sheepskin, modestly.

KARKER.

And therefore people call him Harald Greyskin ?

GRIB.

To his eternal honour, yes. For that
He was a king of hucksters ; all his fleet
Composed of trade ships ; his sceptre was an ell.
A noble hero.

KARKER.

Well, but take good care,
And do not praise him overmuch just now ;
Now rules the Earl, and he cannot endure
To hear others too much talked about.

GRIB.

Thanks for your council, crafty friend.

KARKER.

No thanks.

But now, can you not tell me something new ?

We ne'er hear anything ; here we must sit
And wonder, silent in our solitude.

GRIB.

Ha ! He who would venture now to enter there,
Sit down at table, and with unchained hand
Seize the gold horn among the other freemen,—

KARKER.

Forbid it, gods ! What strange depravity !
Beware, and be contented with your fate,
For you and I were both in thralldom born.

GRIB.

And thus in torpor would you lull your soul ?

KARKER.

And wherefore not ? That which one cannot change
Must be, and will be as it is.

GRIB.

Oh ! yes.

KARKER.

What is't we want ? Have we not got on well ?
You Thorer Klake supports, and Hakon me.
Now, it is plain that I am better off
Than you ; your master is a merchant, whilst
Mine is much greater ; yes, he is an Earl,
And the most mighty Earl in all the land,—
Has all the other sixteen under him.
And now, indeed, he is almost a king.
How ! is my fate not happy ? Formerly

I had to drive the plough, to heap up dung,
And find my rest in pigsties many a night.
Now I have got good clothing, plenteous food,
Little to do, in winter a warm room,
Am seldom beaten.

GRIB.

You were born for it.

KARKER.

My master Hakon oft has said the same.
He had sought long before he found a man
Like me. He has his fancies, mark you well ;—
He says, and it is true, a thrall should be
Obedient, faithful, without pride himself,
And strong to fight, his master to protect.

GRIB.

In short, all that is wanted in a dog.

KARKER.

As soon as Hakon had set eyes on me
He found me such a one as he would have ;
He saw my broad low forehead, and he saw
My short thick fingers, and my flattened nose,
My steady carriage also he remarked,
And found that all was just as he desired.
Now I am with him daily ; there are few
Who are so well informed about the things
Which occupy him through the years and day.