

**KÖNIGSMARK; THE  
LEGEND OF THE  
HOUNDS AND OTHER  
POEMS; PP. 22-244**

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Königsmark; The Legend of the Hounds and Other Poems; pp. 22-244 by George H. Boker

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**GEORGE H. BOKER**

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KÖNIGSMARK;

THE LEGEND OF THE HOUNDS

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

GEORGE H. BOKER.

UNIV OF  
CALIFORNIA

PHILADELPHIA

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1869

Do not forget Duke Anthony. You men  
 Who start so wildly seldom reach your end  
 Unless by the first effort. Königsmark,  
 You are a greyhound, running by your sight;  
 One dash, and all is over; let the game  
 But gain a space upon your eager bounds,  
 And you have no nose to follow.

KÖNIGSMARK.

A while ago  
 You said I triumphed ere my victory;  
 I vow 'tis not your habit to reward  
 Before a service.

SOPHIA.

I am paid. Farewell!

[*Exit.*]

KÖNIGSMARK.

Had I no fear my prayers would anger Heaven,  
 I'd call on Heaven to bless her. How dare I,  
 So stained with sin, so draggled and bemired  
 With the vile cleavings of my reckless course,  
 Insult her innocence with my foul love?  
 Her swinish husband's brutal appetite  
 But errs by instinct: I have given a mind  
 Stored with more riches than he ever knew  
 To the same service. In regard to her,  
 I am Prince George's better but in this,  
 That I am not her husband. Heavenly gifts  
 I have perverted to most earthly ends.  
 My heart, my intellect, my subtle eye,  
 That lays the mysteries of humanity  
 As bare to me as the dissector's knife  
 The body's secrets—that transcendent boon,

Imagination, by which poets talk  
 Full front with angels, and attain to heights  
 Of wondering knowledge, from which reason turns  
 Dizzy with weakness—these I have debased—  
 To what?—to mean ambition, avarice,  
 And the poor triumph of frail woman's tears.  
 I loathe my life. I know not where to hide  
 From the sharp glance of memory. Henceforth  
 The beast within my nature shall consume,  
 Die out amid its ashes. Hear me, Heaven!  
 I'll sin no more. Lo! even while I pray,  
 Temptation comes, and a despairing sense  
 Of unforgotten guilt, to close the gates  
 Of heaven against me.

(*Re-enter* COUNTESS VON PLATEN.)

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Ha! Count Königsmark!

Alone—no woman—not a sign of one!  
 You slight your old employment. Nay, look there!  
 Whose robe is that which flutters up the path?

KÖNIGSMARK.

I cannot tell.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Or will not. Have you seen—  
 Pray look at me; you are discourteous, Count—  
 Have you not seen the Princess?

KÖNIGSMARK.

Seen what princess?

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Sophia Dorothea.

## KÖNIGSMARK.

KÖNIGSMARK.

Since when, madam?

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Since the creation. Pshaw! you answer me  
With question upon question. Fear you me?  
Philip, I am your friend.

KÖNIGSMARK.

I am not yours;

You know it, madam. I am false as air;  
And for that falsehood, where it fell on you,  
You ought to hate me. Why, have you forgotten  
The night you clung to me with desperate strength,  
Sobbing and cursing, praying and commanding  
That I would stay a moment; or at least  
Utter one word of love before I went?  
I wounded you in woman's tenderest spot;  
I have not hoped to be forgiven.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

You then

Have not forgotten?

KÖNIGSMARK.

No.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Nor I. But, come,

Let us forget. I bear no malice now;  
Besides, you are in danger.

KÖNIGSMARK.

What of that?

Do you suppose I live my life without



Counting its dangers coolly? Any day  
A jealous husband, or an outraged brother,  
May call me to the field. I weighed this thing,  
And practiced fencing.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

But your peril now  
Is one you cannot master. Long success  
Has made you over-confident. Your aim  
Is too ambitious, dangerous to achieve,  
And certain death to fail in. I believe  
Sophia's temper colder than your heart ;  
Her virtue deeper than your wickedness ;  
Her duty more than your ingratitude ;  
And all her good so overbalancing  
Even your ill, that failure is as sure  
As after punishment.

KÖNIGSMARK.

Why, this is news !  
Her station cuts me off from intercourse.  
Had I the wish, the opportunity—  
On which hang all things in affairs like this—  
Is wanting. Bah ! impossibilities  
Are not the things I cope with. I must have  
At least the common chances.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Save your words  
For simpler hearers. You should recollect  
The dainty falsehoods you have helped me to,  
And fear a surfeit, Count. I am your friend ;—  
Believe or not, the fact remains the same ;—

And I would warn you—and inflame you, too,  
Or I misjudge your nature. (*Aside.*)

KÖNIGSMARK.

Be at rest,  
If your kind heart can find no other care.  
Besides, my old pursuits begin to pall:—  
You know my fickle character. I think  
Of taking up religion, for the nonce,  
By way of change. You know that the relapse  
Will be—ah, so delicious!

(*Enter PRINCE GEORGE.*)

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

In good time—  
Your Highness has come in quite *à propos*.  
Here's a disciple for you, Königsmark. (*Aside to  
him.*)  
What does your Highness think the Count designs?

PRINCE GEORGE.

Heaven knows.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

To take religion up.

PRINCE GEORGE.

Ha! ha!

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

But for what purpose, think you?

PRINCE GEORGE.

I suppose  
To ruin it.

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

No ; for the luxury  
Of a relapse into his sins again

PRINCE GEORGE.

By Jove, that's rare !

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

But you must be devout,  
You must outgo Saint Peter in your zeal,  
Else you will not receive the fullest zest  
From the relapse.

KÖNIGSMARK.

I'll found a monastery.  
My patron saint shall be—

COUNTESS VON PLATEN.

Saint Anthony :  
You know how he was tempted.

KÖNIGSMARK.

You shall sit  
Before the door, and be temptation. You  
Shall be the world, the flesh, the devil, Countess,  
All merged in one.

PRINCE GEORGE.

O monstrous slanderer !

KÖNIGSMARK.

I wished to show how safe my house will be  
With such a mild temptation.