

it, and take it to her yourself with a loving greeting from me.

*Ivar Bodde (who has run his eye over the parchment).*

My lord—you say here this very day—!

*Haakon.* There is a favourable wind now; it is blowing down the fairway.

*Dagfinn (slowly).* Remember, my lord King, that she lay all last night on the altar steps in prayer and fasting.

*Ivar Bodde.* And no doubt she is weary after the Ordeal.

*Haakon.* True, true. My good, kind mother!—*(Collects himself.)* Yes, if she is too weary, let her wait until to-morrow.

*Ivar Bodde.* It shall be as you say. *(Lays a fresh sheet of parchment before HAAKON.)* But about the other, my lord?

*Haakon.* The other?—Ivar Bodde, I cannot do it.

*Dagfinn (pointing to the letter to the Queen Mother).* And yet you could do that.

*Ivar Bodde.* Every bond that is sinful must be broken.

*Bishop Nicholas (who meanwhile has come closer to the King).* Bind Earl Skule's hands now, King Haakon.

*Haakon (gloomily).* You think I *must* do it?

*Bishop Nicholas.* You will never buy your country's peace on any cheaper terms.

*Haakon.* Then I *can* do it. Give me the pen.

*[Writes.]*

*Skule (to BISHOP NICHOLAS, who has crossed the room).* You have the King's ear, it seems.

*Bishop Nicholas.* For your advantage.

*Skule.* Do you mean it?

*Bishop Nicholas.* Before this evening you will thank me. *(Moves away.)*

*Haakon (holding out the parchment to SKULE).* Read that, my lord.

*Skule (reads, then looks amazedly at the King, and says, scarcely audibly).* You are breaking absolutely with Kanga?

*Haakon.* Yes, with Kanga, the maiden whom I have loved better than anything in the world. From this day forth she must never cross the King's path.