

2335

Then spake the King of Rhineland: "Ruediger to bear away  
Came they in company hither; whose corse to them deny  
I bade, despiting Etzel, nor with aught malice more,  
Whereupon did Wolfhart begin to rage thereat full sore."

2336

Then spake of Bern the hero: "'Twas fated so to be.  
Yet Gunther, noble monarch, by thy kingly courtesy  
Amends make for the sorrow thou here on me hast wrought,  
That so thy knightly honor still unsullied be in aught.

2337

"Then yield to me as hostage thyself and eke thy man;  
So will I surely hinder, as with best might I can,  
That any here in Hunland harm unto thee shall do:  
Henceforward shalt thou find me ever well disposed and true."

2338

"God in heaven forfend it," Hagen spake again,  
"That unto thee should yield them ever warriors twain  
Who in their strength reliant all armed before thee stand,  
And yet 'fore foes defiant may freely swing a blade in hand."

2339

"So shall ye not," spake Dietrich, "proffered peace forswear,  
Gunther and Hagen. Misfortune such I bear  
At both your hands, 'tis certain ye did but do aright,  
Would ye for so great sorrow now my heart in full requite.

2340

"I give you my sure promise and pledge thereto my hand  
That I will bear you escort home unto your land;  
With honors fit I'll lead you, thereon my life I set,  
And for your sake sore evil suffered at your hands forget."

2341

"Ask thou such thing no longer," Hagen then replied.  
"For us 'twere little fitting the tale be bruited wide,  
That twain of doughty warriors did yield them 'neath thy hand.  
Beside thee is none other now but only Hildebrand."