

*Margrete.* Yes, it had to be. The mere title of kingship would never have been enough for him.

*Ragnhild.* Of whom do you speak?

*Margrete.* Of Haakon.

*Ragnhild.* I was speaking of your father.

*Margrete.* There are no more splendid men living than they two!

*Ragnhild.* Do you see Sigurd the Ribbung? How crafty he looks, as he sits there—like a wolf in chains.

*Margrete.* Yes, look at him—how he sits with his hands crossed on his sword-hilt in front of him and his chin resting on them.

*Ragnhild.* He gnaws his moustache and laughs—

*Margrete.* How hatefully he laughs!

*Ragnhild.* He knows that not a voice will be raised in his favour—that is what angers him. Who is it that is speaking now?

*Margrete.* It is Gunnar Grjonbak.

*Ragnhild.* Is he for your father?

*Margrete.* No, surely he is for the king—

*Ragnhild (looking at her).* For whom, did you say?

*Margrete.* For Haakon.

*Ragnhild (looks out; then says, after a short silence):* Where is Guthorm Ingesson sitting? I do not see him.

*Margrete.* Behind his men—there, right at the back—in a long cloak.

*Ragnhild.* Ah, yes.

*Margrete.* He looks as though he were ashamed.

*Ragnhild.* He is—on his mother's account.

*Margrete.* Haakon need not be that!

*Ragnhild.* Who is speaking now?

*Margrete (looking out).* Tord Skolle, from Ranafylke.

*Ragnhild.* Is he for your father?

*Margrete.* No—for Haakon.

*Ragnhild.* How unmoved your father sits, and listens.

*Margrete.* Haakon sits quiet in thought—but full of strength nevertheless. (*Impetuously.*) If any chance wayfarer stood here, he would pick out those two amongst all the thousand others.

*Ragnhild.* See, Margrete—Dagfinn is bringing forward a gilded chair for Haakon—