

## IN TIME'S MORNING

Nothing that troubled him very much, apparently, for his haggard face had grown radiant with gladness. Yet he was enough afraid of the reaction to answer her as gravely as possible: "It is Rothgar Lodbroksson, whom I met coming from the City as I was journeying back from my errand in Northampton. Little affection has ever passed between us, and this time something more than usual seemed to have stirred him against me, for —"

"He tried to kill you!" The words were not a question but a breathless assertion as she remembered the Jotun's last threat.

"He tried to kill me," the Marshal assented quietly. "And his blade did manage to pierce my mail; he is a giant in strength as in other things. But it cut no more than flesh; and after that, Fortune wheeled not toward him."

"You slew him!"

Her lips were white as she gasped it, but he knew now that it was no love for the Jotun that moved her, and he answered promptly to her unspoken thought: "No, sweet, — for the King's sake, I spared him. Before this, his men have taken him aboard his ship and England is rid of him."

Murmuring broken phrases of thanksgiving, she stood holding the cloak she had grasped, but he dreaded too much the moment of her awakening to await its coming inactive. Slipping his arms around her, he began to speak swiftly, the moment her silence gave him an opening.