

# GUTHRUNARHVOT

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### GUTHRUN'S INCITING

Guthrun went forth to the sea after she had slain Atli. She went out into the sea and fain would drown herself, but she could not sink. The waves bore her across the fjord to the land of King Jonak; he took her as wife; their sons were Sorli and Erp and Hamther. There was brought up Svanhild, Sigurth's daughter; she was married to the mighty Jormunrek. With him was Bikki, who counselled that Randver, the king's son, should have her. This Bikki told to the king. The king had Randver hanged, and Svanhild trodden to death under horses' feet. And when Guthrun learned this, she spake with her sons.

1. A word-strife I learned, | most woeful of all, A speech from the fullness | of sorrow spoken, When fierce of heart | her sons to the fight Did Guthrun whet | with words full grim.
2. "Why sit ye idle, | why sleep out your lives, Why grieve ye not | in gladness to speak? Since Jormunrek | your sister young Beneath the hoofs | of horses hath trodden, (White and black | on the battle-way, Gray, road-wonted, | the steeds of the Goths.)
3. "Not like are ye | to Gunnar of yore, Nor have ye hearts | such as Hogni's was; Vengeance for her | ye soon would have If brave ye were | as my brothers of old, Or hard your hearts | as the Hunnish kings'."
4. Then Hamther spake, | the high of heart: "Little the deed | of Hogni didst love, When Sigurth they wakened | from his sleep; Thy bed-covers white | were red with blood Of thy husband, drenched | with gore from his heart.
5. "Bloody revenge | didst have for thy brothers, Evil and sore, | when thy sons didst slay; Else yet might we all | on Jormunrek Together our sister's | slaying avenge.
6. ". . . . . | . . . . . The gear of the Hunnish | kings now give us! Thou hast whetted us so | to the battle of swords."
7. Laughing did Guthrun | go to her chamber, The helms of the kings | from the cupboards she took, And mail-coats broad, | to her sons she bore them; On their horses' backs | the heroes leaped.
8. Then Hamther spake, | the high of heart: "Homeward no more | his mother to see Comes the spear-god, fallen | mid Gothic folk; One death-draught thou | for us all shalt drink, For Svanhild then | and thy sons as well."
9. Weeping Guthrun, | Gjuki's daughter, Went sadly before | the gate to sit, And with tear-stained cheeks | to tell the tale Of her mighty griefs, | so many in kind.
10. "Three home-fires knew I, | three hearths I knew, Home was I brought | by husbands three; But Sigurth only | of all was dear, He whom my brothers | brought to his death.
11. "A greater sorrow | I saw not nor knew, Yet more it seemed | I must suffer yet When the princes great | to Atli gave me.
12. "The brave boys I summoned | to secret speech; For my woes requital | I might not win Till off the heads | of the Hniflungs I hewed.

13. "To the sea I went, | my heart full sore For the Norns, whose wrath | I would now escape;  
But the lofty billows | bore me undrowned, Till to land I came, | so I longer must live.
  14. "Then to the bed— | of old was it better!— Of a King of the folk | a third time I came; Boys  
I bore | his heirs to be, Heirs so young, | the sons of Jonak.
  15. "But round Svanhild | handmaidens sat, She was dearest ever | of all my children; So did  
Svanhild | seem in my hall As the ray of the sun | is fair to see.
  16. "Gold I gave her | and garments bright, Ere I let her go | to the Gothic folk; Of my heavy  
woes | the hardest it was When Svanhild's tresses | fair were trodden In the mire by hoofs  
| of horses wild.
  17. "The sorest it was | when Sigurth mine On his couch, of victory | robbed, they killed; And  
grimmiest of all | when to Gunnar's heart There crept the bright-hued | crawling snakes.
  18. "And keenest of all | when they cut the heart From the living breast | of the king so brave;  
Many woes I remember, | . . . . . | . . . . .
  19. "Bridle, Sigurth, | thy steed so black, Hither let run | thy swift-faring horse; Here there sits  
not | son or daughter Who yet to Guthrun | gifts shall give.
  20. "Remember, Sigurth, | what once we said, When together both | on the bed we sat, That  
mightily thou | to me wouldst come From hell and I | from earth to thee.
  21. "Pile ye up, jarls, | the pyre of oak, Make it the highest | a hero e'er had; Let the fire burn |  
my grief-filled breast, My sore-pressed heart, | till my sorrows melt."
  22. May nobles all | less sorrow know, And less the woes | of women become, Since the tale of  
this | lament is told.
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