

GUTHRUNARKVITHA I

GUTHRUNARKVITHA III

THE THIRD LAY OF GUTHRUN

Herkja was the name of a serving-woman of Atli's; she had been his concubine. She told Atli that she had seen Thjothrek and Guthrun both together. Atli was greatly angered thereby. Then Guthrun said:

1. "What thy sorrow, Atli, | Buthli's son? Is thy heart heavy-laden? | Why laughest thou never? It would better befit | the warrior far To speak with men, | and me to look on."

Atli spake:

2. "It troubles me, Guthrun, | Gjuki's daughter, What Herkja here | in the hall hath told me, That thou in the bed | with Thjothrek liest, Beneath the linen | in lovers' guise."

Guthrun spake:

3. "This shall I | with oaths now swear, Swear by the sacred | stone so white, That nought was there | with Thjothmar's son That man or woman | may not know.
4. "Nor ever once | did my arms embrace The hero brave, | the leader of hosts; In another manner | our meeting was, When our sorrows we | in secret told.
5. "With thirty warriors | Thjothrek came, Nor of all his men | doth one remain; Thou hast murdered my brothers | and mail-clad men, Thou hast murdered all | the men of my race.
6. "Gunnar comes not, | Hogni I greet not, No longer I see | my brothers loved; My sorrow would Hogni | avenge with the sword, Now myself for my woes | I shall payment win.
7. "Summon Saxi, | the southrons' king, For he the boiling | kettle can hallow." Seven hundred | there were in the hall, Ere the queen her hand | in the kettle thrust.
8. To the bottom she reached | with hand so bright, And forth she brought | the flashing stones: "Behold, ye warriors, | well am I cleared Of sin by the kettle's | sacred boiling."
9. Then Atli's heart | in happiness laughed, When Guthrun's hand | unhurt he saw; "Now Herkja shall come | the kettle to try, She who grief | for Guthrun planned."
10. Ne'er saw man sight | more sad than this, How burned were the hands | of Herkja then; In a bog so foul | the maid they flung, And so was Guthrun's | grief requited.

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