

# The Sword of Angantyr

Danish—M. G. Lewis

*The original is to be found in Hicks Thesau. Ling. Septen. I have taken great liberties with it, and the catastrophe is my own invention. Several versions of this Poem have already appeared, particularly one by Miss Seward.*

## HERVOR.

Angantyr, awake! awake!  
Hervor bids thy slumbers fly!  
Magic thunders round thee break,  
Angantyr, reply! reply!

Reach me, warrior, from thy grave  
Schwafurlama's magic blade;  
Fatal weapon, dreaded glaive,  
By the dwarfs at midnight made.

Hervardur, obey my charms,  
Hanri too, and Angantyr:  
Hither, clad in bloody arms,  
Haste with helmet, sword, and spear!

Hasten, heroes, hasten all;  
Sadly pace the spell-bound sod;  
Dread my anger, hear my call,  
Tremble at the charmer's rod!

Are the sons of Angrym's race,  
They whose breasts with glory burn'd,  
All deprived of manhood's grace,  
All to dust and ashes turn'd?

Where the blasted yew-tree grows,  
Where the bones of heroes lie,  
What, will none his grave unclose,  
None to Hervor's voice reply?

Shades of warriors cold and dead,  
Fear my wrath, nor longer stay!  
Mighty souls to Hela fled,  
Come! my powerful spells obey.

Either instant to my hand  
Give the sword of mystic power,  
Which the dwarf and spectre-band  
Bathed in blood at midnight hour;

Or, in Odin's hall of cheer,  
Never shall ye more repose,  
Never more drink mead and beer  
From the skulls of slaughter'd foes!

ANGANTYR.

Hervor! Hervor! cease thy cries,  
Nor oblige, by impious spell,  
Ghosts of slaughter'd chiefs to rise:  
Sport not with the laws of hell!

Know, nor friend's, nor parent's hand  
Laid in earth's embrace my bones:  
Natives of a distant land  
Raised yon monumental stones:

I the Tyrfing gave to these;  
'Twas but justice; 'twas their due.  
Hervor! Hervor! rest in peace,  
Angantyr has told thee true,

HERVOR.

Dar'st thou still my anger brave?  
Thus deceitful dar'st thou speak?  
Sure as Odin dug thy grave,  
Lies by thee the sword I seek.

I alone may call thee sire,  
I alone thine heir can be;  
Give me then the sword of fire,  
Angantyr, oh! give it me!

ANGANTYR.

Hervor! Hervor! cease, and know,  
It endures no female hand;  
Flames around her feet shall glow,  
Who presumes to touch the brand:

But from thee a son shall spring,  
    (So the Valkyries declare)  
Who shall reign a mighty king;  
    He the magic blade shall wear.

Hela! Hela! thrice around  
    This enchanted spot I pace:  
Hela! Hela! thrice the ground.  
    Thus with mystic signs I trace.

While I swear by Odin's might,  
    Balder's locks, and Sculda's wing,  
By the god renown'd in fight,  
    By the rhymes the sisters sing,

Still the dead unrest shall know,  
    Still shall wave my magic rod,  
Still the shivering ghosts shall go  
    Round and round this spell-bound sod,

Till the sword, the death of shields,  
    Shall my sire to me resign;  
Till my hand the Tyrfing wields,  
    As in *his* grasp, fear'd in mine!

#### ANGANTYR.

Bold enchantress, since no prayer.  
    Can this impious zeal abate;  
Since thy haughty bosom dares  
    To dispute the will of Fate,

I no more retard thy doom:  
    Arm'd with magic helm and spear  
Seek the Tyrfing, seek my tomb,  
    When the midnight hour is near.

#### HERVOR.

Stormy clouds around me lour!  
    All is silent, mortals sleep!  
'Tis the solemn midnight hour!  
    Angantyr, thy promise keep.

'Tis the time, and here the grave:  
Lo! the grate with pain I lift:  
Father, reach me forth the glaive,  
Reach the dwarfs' enchanted gift.

ANGANTYR.

Know beneath my head it lies,  
Deep embrown'd with hostile gore.  
Hervor, daughter, cease thy cries,  
Hervor, daughter, ask no more.

Flames curl round in many a spire,  
Flames from Hilda's mystic hand;  
Ne'er may woman touch the lire,  
Ne'er may woman wield the brand!

HERVOR.

Wherefore, father, this delay,  
Wherefore break the word you gave?  
Coldly burn the flames which play  
In a breathless warrior's grave.

Give me straight the spell-fraught sword,  
Then my potent charms shall cease:  
Be the dead to sleep restored,  
Rest, sad spirit, rest in peace!

ANGANTYR.

Oh! what dæmon's direful power,  
Hapless Hervor, fires thy brain?  
Fain would I retard the hour,  
Destined for my daughter's pain!

Yet be wise, the sword forego:  
It endures no female hand;  
Flames around her feet shall glow;  
Who presumes to touch the brand.

HERVOR.

Wilt thou still the brand conceal?  
I must haste my friends to join,  
Where Hidalvar, clad in steel,  
Leads his troops, and waits for mine:

Father, now the sword bestow;  
Soon 'twill hew my path to fame;  
Soon 'twill make each trembling foe  
Shrink with fear at Hervor's name!

ANGANTYR.

Hark! what horrid voices ring  
Through the mansions of the dead!  
'Tis the Valkyries who sing,  
While they spin thy vital thread.

—“Angantyr!“ I hear them say,  
Sitting by their magic loom,  
—“Yield the sword, no more delay,  
“Let the sorceress meet her doom!

“Soon the proud one shall perceive,  
“Anguish ends what crimes begin:  
“Lo! her web of life we weave,  
“Lo! the final thread we spin!”—

I obey the voice of hell,  
It ensures repose to me:  
Hervor, now unbind the spell,  
And the Tyrfing thine shall be.

HERVOR.

Since thy dread commands, my sire,  
Force the Tyrfing to forego,  
On thine altars, sisters dire,  
Thrice twelve heroes' blood shall flow.

With respect the mandate hear;  
Angantyr, the sword resign:  
Valued gift, to me more dear,  
Than were Norway's sceptre mine.

## ANGANTYR.

I obey! the magic glaive  
Thirty warriors' blood hath spilt;  
Lo! I reach it from my grave,  
Death is in the sheath and hilt!

Now 'tis thine; that daring arm  
Wields at length the flaming sword;  
Hervor, now unbind the charm,  
Be my ghost to sleep restored.

## HERVOR.

Rest in peace, lamented shade!  
Be thy slumbers soft and sweet,  
While, obtain'd the wond'rous blade,  
Home I bend my gladsome feet.

But from out the gory steel  
Streams of fire their radiance dart!  
Mercy! mercy! oh! I feel  
Burning pangs invade, my heart!

Flames amid my ringlets play,  
Blazing torrents dim my sight!  
Fatal weapon, hence away!  
Woe be to thy blasting might!

Woe be to the night and time,  
When the magic sword was given!  
Woe be to the Runic rhyme,  
Which reversed the laws of Heaven!.

Curst be cruel Hilda's fire,  
Which around the weapon curl'd!  
Curst the Tyrfing's vengeful ire,  
Curst myself, and curst the world!.

What! can nothing cool my brain?  
Nothing calm my anguish wild?  
Angantyr, oh, speak again!  
Father! father! aid your child!

ANGANTYR.

'Tis in vain your shrieks resound,  
Hapless prey of strange despair!  
'Tis in vain you beat the ground,  
While you rend your raven hair!

They, who dare the dead to wake,  
Still too late the crime deplore:  
None shall now my silence break,  
Now I sleep to wake no more!

HERVOR.

Curses! curses! oh! what pain!  
How my melting eye-balls glow!  
Curses! curses! through each vein  
How do boiling torrents flow!

Scorching flames my heart devour!  
Nought can cool them but the grave!  
Hela! I obey thy power,  
Hela! take thy willing slave!