

Quemar Press

Marie de France



Lanval

Translated by Katharine Margot Toohey



It is not necessary to be able to read the Medieval French original included underneath, as this English version translates all the text.

Lanval by Marie de France

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Medieval French text is from manuscripts of *Lanval*

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Preface

Marie de France's Medieval Anglo-Norman Romance, *Lanval*, may be seen often as a story in which a Knight, a city and all those within it are affected by an ethereal force, far-reaching, capable of the act of rescue, a force surrounding and intrinsic to a sprite-like Lady, the Ladies who serve her and the spaces around her. Some translations of the text might mirror this interpretation. In the original text, however, the Lady might not be seen as only an aspect of an enchanted process. Instead, she has active agency and distinct emotions, judges the best course of action and decides to act. She asks that the titular hero, the Knight *Lanval*, be brought to her when he lies in a water-meadow, dejected by the Court's injustice. In candour, she tells him that she could never appear visible before him again if he let anyone know of their affection. When her existence and her presence are the only things that can rescue him from the Court's corruption, she rides openly through the city, having decided to speak unconcealed before *Lanval* and the Court. Just as she is an entity distinct from elements surrounding her, *Lanval* is also never at one with the Court. In light of this, Quémener's new Modern English translation tries to preserve the text's focus on creating characterisation that enhances a character's distinctness and independence from their situation.

This translation also tries to reflect the text's original speed and urgency by suggesting Marie de France's powerful four stresses to a line and her couplet rhyme-scheme. Considered the earliest female French poet, she based her late 12th Century *Lais* on traditional Breton *Lais*, and she recounts the romances speaking as a storyteller commenting within the text. Quémener's translation tries to retain her direct, humane tone.



In this Romance, instances in which injustice is prevented by public truth are as important as enchantment. Here, the female hero can stand focused and otherworldly in a corrupt Court or a Knight can renounce the Court to ride fast with her to Avalon, her living place, an enchanted orchard-island distant and fair in all senses.

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Quemar Press



Lanval

In another Lai, there is an adventure

- and I'll tell you more:

what happened to a wealthy vassal -

in Breton called 'Lanval'.

The King rested in Carduel -

King Arthur, courtly and noble -

for Picts' and Scots' war bands

now destroyed the country's lands:

they were in Logres to stay,

their damage of it underway.

Pentecost time, in summer,

the King spent resting there,

gave rich gifts, tokens

to all the counts, to all the barons,

to those men of the Round Table,

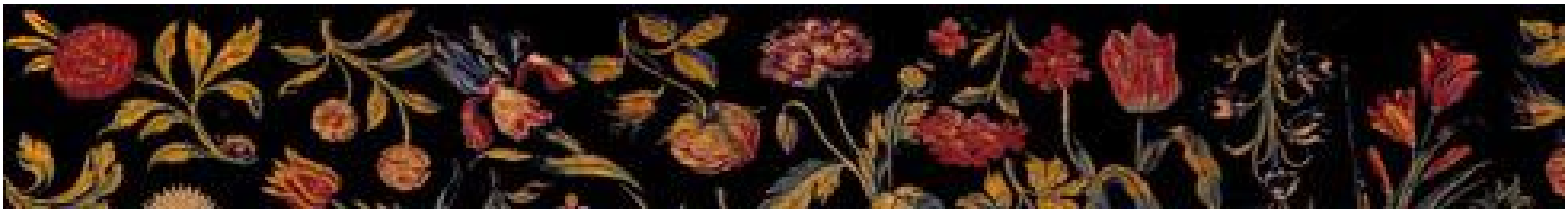
such gifts before unimaginable:

prized lands, honours bestowed

on all, but one, who served.



Lanval alone was the exception,
passed by for such possessions.
For his fine valor, for his fine charity
for his fine beauty, for his fine bravery,
the many held him in affection,
clear ever in love's devotion.



L'aventure d'un autre Lai/Cum il avint vus cunterai;/Feit fu d'un mult riche vassal,/En
Bretun l'apelent Lanval./A Cardueill séjurna li Reis/Artus, li prex è li curteis,/Pur les
Escos è pur les Pis/Qui destruisieient mult le païs;/En la terre de Logres esteient/Et mut
suvent la damageient./En la Pentecuste en esté/I aveit li Reis séjurné;/Assez duna de rices
duns/E as Cundes è as Baruns,/A cex de la Table Réunde/N'ot tant de tex en tut le
munde./Honurs è terres départi/Fors à un seu qui le servi;/Ce fu Lanvax, ne l'en
suvint,/Ne nus des siens, bien ne li tint./Pur sa valor, pur sa largesse,/Pur sa biauté, pur sa
pruësce,/L'en ameit bien tut li pluisur;/Tès li mustreit si tant d'amur,





If ill came to the knight, if misadventure,

they'd never feel pleasure.

A King's son with noble lineage,

here away and far from heritage,

now of King Arthur's hearth,

now ever without wealth

for the King gave to him never

and Lanval wouldn't ask his favour.

Lanval in this instance much surprised

was then pensive, sorrow-seized.

Lords, do not wonder:



a man without guidance, a stranger
is in dolour strange on foreign earth
when he seeks an unknown path.
This knight, I speak to you truly,
who had served the king abundantly,
in day climbed upon his charger
and then they travelled further,
and soon they'd left the town,
and came to a water meadow alone,
descending towards water running
but his horse stepped back, trembling.
He released it, untethered
to rest here within this field.
He folded his mantle partly
beneath his head, to rest utterly,
pensive because of his hardship,
nothing pleasing at all to help.
Thus, he lay here.
He looked down the river



at two ladies approaching then -

the most beautiful yet seen,



S'au Chevalier mèsavenist,/Jà une fois ne l'en plaisist./Fix à Roi fu de haut parage,/Mais
luins fu de sun hiretage,/De la maisnie le Roi fu,/Mais sun avoir ot despendu./Car li Rois
rien ne li duna,/Ne Lanvax ne li demanda;/Or est Lanvax mut entrepris,/Mut est dolans,
mut est pensis;/Segnur ne vus en merveilliez,/Hum estranges, descunseilliez,/Mut est
dolans en autre terre/Quant il ne set ù se cors querre./Li Chevaliers que je vus di/Ki tant
aveit le Rei servi,/Un jur munta sun destrier/Si s'en ala esbanoier./Fors de la vile en est
issus/Tut seus est en un pré venus,/Vers une eve curant descent/Mès ses chevaux fors va
tremblant./Il le descengle, si le let,/Enmi le pré vautrer le fet;/Le pan de sun mantel
ploia/Desous sun chief, puis se coucha./Mut est pensis pur se mèseise,/Il n'oït cose qui li
pleise/Là ù il gist en cel manière;/Garda à-val lès la rivière;/Si vit venir deus
Dameiseles,/Unques n'éut véues si beles,





ladies wearing rich dresses,
dresses tied with tight laces,
which purple garments encircle,
their faces finely beautiful.

Here, the older of the ladies held
a basin of a well-wrought gold.

From me to you, unfailing, truthful:
the other lady carrying a towel,
they continued directly walking
to where the knight lay resting .



Lanval, well-taught knight,
rose up quickly to his feet.
They spoke and greeted him,
told him their message then:
'Sir Lanval, my lady,
of such beauty and such courtesy,
sent us to bring you:
come back with us, too.
We'll lead you safely.
Look, her pavilion is close by.
The knight followed them away,
not worried for his horse that day,
before him, grazing in this field.
They led to the tent ahead
in elegance, set so firmly
that Queen Semiramis surely
when she owned more,
more wisdom, more power,
or even Roman Emperor Octavian



couldn't afford half this pavilion.

Atop, a golden eagle was in place.

I cannot speak of its price

nor the ropes, nor the pillars,

holding up the tent's interior.

No king under heaven

could afford such possessions.

And inside the tent, the lady

- the new rose, the white lily,



Vestues furent richement,/E laciées estreitement,/De dex bliaus de purpre bis,/Mout par
aveient biaux les vis./L'ainsnée purteit un bacins/D'or esmeré, bien fais et fins;/Le voir
vus en dis-jeo sans faille./L'autre purteit une touaille;/Eles en sunt alées dreit/Là ù li
Chevaliers giseit./Lanvax qui mut fu ensegniez/Cuntre eles s'est levés en piez;/Celes l'unt
primes salué,/Le message li unt cunté./Sire Lanval, ma Dameisele/Ki mut est curteise et
bele,/Ele nus enveie pur vus/Car i venrez ensamble od nus./Sauvement vus i
cunduiruns,/Véez, près est ses paveilluns./Li Chevaliers aveuc s'en veit,/De sun cheval ne
tient nul pleit/Ki devant lui paiseit ù pré;/Desi qu'al tré l'unt amené/Qui mut fu biax è bien
assis./La Roïne Sémiramis/Qant ele eut unques plus avoir/E plus poisçance et plus
saveir;/Ne l'Emperère Octévian/N'esligascent le destre pan./Un aigle d'or ot desus
mis,/D'icel ne sai dire le pris,/Ne des cordes, ne des paisçuns,/Qui del' tref tiennent les
giruns,/Sous ciel n'a Roi qui s'esligast/Pur avoir que il en dunast./Dedenz le tref fu la
Pucele,/Flurs de lis è rose nuvele,



the rose that blooms ever in summer

her beauty surpassed it here,

and the bed she lay in beautiful,

its sheets worth a castle.

She wore a blouse only

to wrap all her fair body,

her precious white ermine mantle

covered by fine Alexandrian purple

cast away in the warmth of the sun.

All the side was uncovered along



her face, her neck, her breast ever

all whiter than thorned flowers.

The knight went forward then

and now the lady called to him,

so he sat at the bed's end.

She: 'Lanval, fair friend,

I came from my land, searching,

came from Lains, for you, seeking.

May you be valiant, courtly -

emperor, count, king, truly

hadn't such wellbeing, bliss

for I love you most.'

In haste, love pierced him

to set his heart in flames.



Quant ele pert ù tans d'esté/Trespasseit-ele de biauté./Ele jut sor un lit mult bel,/Li drap
valeient un castel;/En sa cemise sanglement,/Mut ot le cors è bel è gent./Un cier mantel
de blanc ermine/Cuvert de purpre Alissandrine,/Eut pur le caut sur li geté,/Tut eut
descuvert le custé,/Le vis, le col è la poitrine,/Plus ert blanche que flurs d'espine./Li
Chevaliers avant ala,/E la Pucele l'apela,/Puis s'est devant le lit assis./Lanval, dist-ele,
biax amis,/Pur vus ving-jeo fors de ma terre,/De Lains vus sui venue querre./Si vus estes
prox è curteis/Enperère, ne Quens, ne Reis,/N'eut unques tant joie ne bien/Car je vus aim
sur tute rien/Amurs le point isnelement/Que sun cuer alume et esprent.



'Beautiful one, if you consent
it'll be my great content
if you want to love me.
Nothing you'd ask truly
I'd not do in my power:
a mad misdeed or a thing wiser.
I'll do as you command,
for you renounce my own kind
and wish to leave you never.
Is that as you'd wish here?'



When the lady heard the speech
of the one she loved so much,
she granted her love, her heart,
to set him on his correct path,
bestowed a gift on him later
one that was worth greater
than all he desired:
give and spend as he aspired,
he'd have from her as much.

Lanval was amazed by this:
the more he'd spend ever,
the more gold his, and silver.

'Friend', she said, 'take cautioning.

I pray of you, imploring:
reveal this love to no man.

I'll tell as I can:

Ever were I lost to you
if any other human knew.





Bele, dist-il, s'il vus plaiseit/E icele joie m'aveneit/Que vus me vausisiez amer,/Ne ne sariez rien cumander/Ke je ne face à mun pooir,/Tort à folie u à savoir./Jeo ferai vos cumandemens/Pur vus geupirai-jeo mes gens;/Jameis ne quier de vus partir/Ce c'est la riens que plus desir?/Quant la Pucele l'ot parler/Celui qu'ele puet tant amer,/S'amur è sun cuer li otreie;/Or est Lanvax en dreite veie./Un dun li a duné après,/Icele rien ne vaudra mès/Que il ne l'ait à sun talent./Doinst è despende largement,/Ele li trouvera assez/Mut est Lanvax bien asenez;/Cum plus despendra largement,/E plus ara or et argent./Amis, dist-el, or vus casti/Si vus cumande è si vus pri,/Ne vus descuvrez à nul hume,/De ce vus diroi-jeo la sume./A tus-jurs m'ariez perdue,/Se ceste amurs esteit séue;



you would see me never
nor grasp me closer.'



He answered her then:
to hold to all asked of him.
Now in the bed beside her,
Lanval had found shelter
with her, the midday dawning,
stayed with her until evening -
even longer if he might,
she his companion pleased by that,
but said: 'Friend. Rise to go.
You cannot remain so.
Leave now. I'll stay,
but this, to you, will say:
if you want to speak with me,
you'll not wonder needlessly.
None should detect a companion
with any reproach or ill intention.
I'll be with you instantly
when you ask it immediately.
I will be seen by none,
none hear my words spoken.'
Hearing her, he was happy,
kissed her and stood by.
The ladies who had brought him



equipped him with rich clothing.
As a lord he was dressed again.
None was as beautiful under heaven.
He could be common never.
They brought washing water
and a hand towel for drying.
They brought food for dining.
With her, his friend, he had supper.
Nothing at all was refused there.
They served him with courtesy.
He received with great joy.
There was one whole delicacy
which pleased the knight greatly:
his friend's frequent kiss here,
their arms around each other.
After eating, as they rose,
the ladies brought his horse.
It wore a fine saddle.
It had been tended well.
He mounted, uttered a goodbye,
rode away towards the city.





Mès ne me purriez véoir,/Ne de mun cors sésine avoir./Il li respunt que bien tenra/Tut çou qu'on li cummandera./Dalès li est ù lit couciés,/Or est Lanvax bien herbegiés;/Ensemble od li la relevée,/Demura dusqu'à la vesprée,/E plus i fust se il poïst,/E s'Amie li consentist./Amis, dist-ele, levez sus,/Vus ne poez demurer plus;/Alez vus-ent jeo remeindrai./Mais une cose vus dirai,/Quant vus vourez à mei parler,/Jà ne sarez cellui penser,/U nus hum puist truver s'Amie,/Sans repruce et sans vilonie,/Ke je ne vus seie en présent/A faire vo cumandement;/Nus hum fors vus ne me verra/Ne me parole n'en ora./Quant il l'oï mult en fu liez,/Il la baise, puis est dréciez./Celes qui el tref l'amenèrent,/De rices dras le cunrèèrent;/Quant il fu vestu de nuvel,/Sous ciel n'eut plus bel Dameisel;/N'esteit mie fort ne vilains./L'ève li dunent à ses mains,/E la touaille à essuier./Après li dunent à mangier;/Od s'Amie prist le souper,/Ne feseit mie à refuser./Mut fu servis curteisement,/E il à grant joie le prent;/Un entremès i eut plénier,/Ki mult plaiseit au Chevalier,/Car s'Amie baiseit suvent,/Et acoleit estreitement./Quant del' mangier furent levés,/Sun cheval li unt amené,/Bien li eurent la sele mise,/Mut a truvé rice servise./Il prist cungié, si est muntés./Vers la cité en est alés,





Often he looked back.

Lanval rode wonderstruck,

thought of the affair, the adventure, travelling

even in his courage, doubting,

unsure what to do, in amazement.

He wondered his direction in astonishment.

He returned to his lodging,

found his men in rich clothing.

He kept fine accommodation,

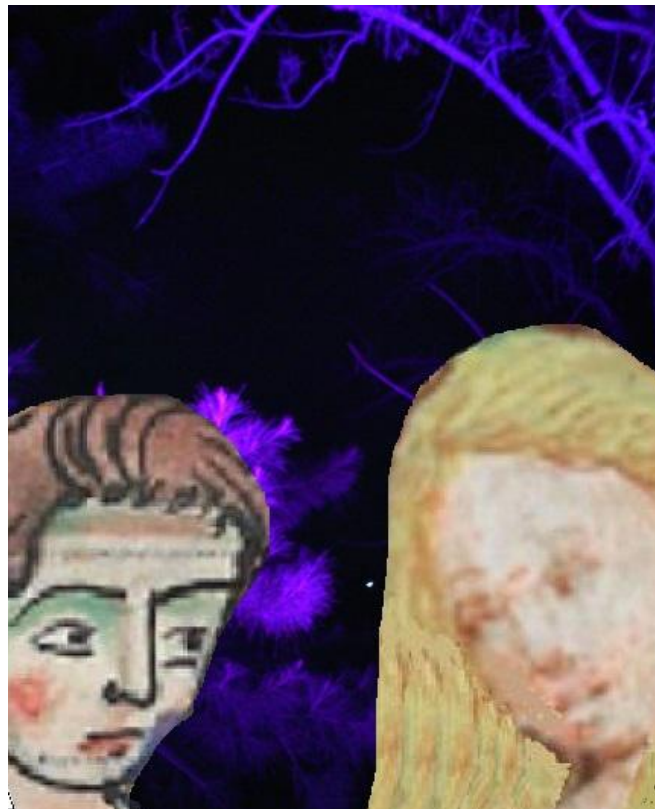
but uncertain from where his money came.

In the town, no knight ever

had to work to find shelter,



for Lanval bid him come in
and then richly catered for him.
Lanval gave rich tokens.
Lanval bought freedom from the prisons.
Lanval finely clothed the minstrels.
Lanval bestowed honours well.
None close and no stranger
Lanval wouldn't assist here.
Lanval had much joy, delight,
be it in day or in night:
able to see her often.
Everything was his to summon.



Suvent regarde arière sei,/Mult est Lanvax en grant estrei,/De s'aventure vait pensant,/Et en sun curage dutant,/Esbahis est, ne set que faire,/N'en cuida jà à nul chef traire./Il est à sun hostel venus,/Ses humes truve bien vestus;/Icelement buen ostel tint,/Mès il ne set dunt ce li vint:/Dans la vile n'eut Chevalier,/Ki de séjur éust mestier,/Qu'il ne face à lui venir,/E ricement e bien servir./Lanvax duneit les rices duns,/Lanvax raiembe les prisuns,/Lanvax vesteit les jonglêurs,/Lanvax feiseit les grans honurs./N'i eut estrange ni privé,/A cui Lanvax n'eust duné;/Lanvax eut mut joie et déduit/U seit par jur, u seit par nuit,/S'Amie puet véoir suvent,/Tut est à sun cumandement.



The same year, in my opinion,
after the feast of Saint John
up to thirty knights went
to stroll forth then in merriment
in a meadow under the tower
where the Queen stayed that hour.



Gawain was there below with them
and, too, his noble cousin Yvain -
Gawain, the graceful knight, the courtly,
who was beloved by all greatly,
said, 'By God, we do wrong,
Lords, by Lanval, our companion -
who is so generous, courteous ,
his father a king of such riches -
for not bringing him today.'
So they headed away,
back to his lodging shelter,
and brought Lanval by prayer.
At a latticed tower window,
the Queen leant watching now -
with three ladies there together,
each one chosen by her -
knowing Lanval, studied him,
and called to one of her ladies then.





Ceo m'est avis, méisme l'an,/Après la feste Saint-Jehan,/Desi qu'à trente
Chevalier,/S'èrent alé esbanoier,/En un vergié desous la tur,/U la Roïne ert à
séjur./Ensanble od eus esteit Gauvains,/Et ses cousins li biaux Ivains./Ce dist Gauvains li
biaus, li prus,/Ki se faiseit amer à tus;/Por Diu, Segnur, ne feisum mal/De nustre
cumpagnun Lanval,/Ki tant est larges è curteis,/E ses pères est si rices Reis,/Ke nus ne
l'avuns amené./A-tant se sunt aceminé,/A sun ostel revunt arière,/Lanval ameinent par
proière./A une fenestre entaillée,/S'estoit la Roïne apoiée;/Trois Dames ot ensanble od
li,/Li une d'eles ad coisi./Lanval cunut et esgarda,/Une des Dames apela;





Soon, she commanded her ladies -
her most clever, most lovely,
to go walking with her now
down to the orchard meadow,
led thirty with her, more.
They descended the steps of the tower.
The knights went to meet them,
to have great joy then,
take by the hand each one.
The knights' speech was never common.
Lanval went elsewhere again,
far from the others: for too long
he hadn't held his companion
to kiss, touch, embrace in emotion.
Other joy weighed light
if he had not her delight.



Seeing him solitary, the Queen
went straight to the knight alone,
sat beside and spoke clearly,
as she summoned all her bravery:
'Lanval I've honoured so -
I've treasured and adored you.



Tantost manda ses Dameiseles,/Les plus cointes è les plus beles,/Od li s'iront
 esbanoier/Là ù cil èrent ù vergier,/Trente en mena od li è plus,/Par les degrés descendent
 jus./Li Chevalier encuntre vunt/Qui pur eles grant joie funt;/Il les unt prises par les
 mains,/Cil parle nient n'est pas vilains./Lanval si s'en va autre part/Loins des autres; mult
 li est tart/Ke s'Amie puieste tenir,/Baisier, acoler è sentir;/L'autre joïe prise petit,/Se il n'en
 ad le sien délit./Quant la Roïne seul le voit,/Au Chevalier en voie droit,/Lès li s'asist, si
 l'apela,/Tut sun curage li mustra./Lanval, mut vus ai honuré/E mult cieri è mult amé;



You may have my love in all,

and any wish of it can tell.

When I grant my love to you,

rejoice about me so.'

'My Lady, let me be:

your love doesn't involve me.

I've been long in the King's trust,

and don't want to discredit faith!

Never for you, for your love never

would I betray my lord forever.'

Then the Queen became furious,

and enraged she spoke with malice:

'Lanval, I believe sure

you'd hardly like this pleasure:

they tell me often

you've no wish for women,

but gave menservants favours,

then with them had your pleasures.



Common coward, dark and feeble,
my lord is helped so little,
with you around him, he suffers
and I believe should sever.'

Hearing this, he was in sorrow.

He responded in haste now -

also with ill-intention -

words he repented often:

'I don't know that business,

Lady, and can't help with this.

I love and I'm loved.

She deserves honour above

all those I know.

I'll say a thing to you:

know well, discover:

any who serve her,

her most poor maiden,

surpass you, Lady, the Queen,





Tute m'amur puez avoir,/Car m'en dites vostre vuloir./Qant ma druerie vus otrei,/Mut devez estre liés de mei./Dame, fet-il, laisciés m'ester/Jeo n'ai cure de votre amer,/Lungement ai servi le Roi,/Ne li vuel pas mentir ma foi!/Jà pur vus, ne pur vustre amur/Ne mefferai vers mun seignur./La Roïne se cureçat/Iriée fu si mesparlat./Lanval, fait-ele, bien le quit/Vus n'amez gaires ce déduit;/Assez le m'a-t'un dit suvent/Que de femme n'avez talent./Valletz avez bien afaitiez,/Ensanble od eus vus déduisiez;/Vilains couars, mauvais faillis,/Mut est me Sire mal-baillis,/Ki entur lui vus a suffert/Mien ensient que dui en pert./Quant il l'oï mut fu dolens/De respundre ne fu pas lens;/Tel cose dist par mal-talent/Dunt il se repenti suvent./Dame, dist-il, de tel mestier/Je n'en rien sai nient aidier,/Mais je aim è se suis amis./Celi qui deit avoir le pris,/Sur tutes celes que je sai;/E une cose vus dirai,/Bien le saciez en descuvert,/Une de celes qui la sert,/Tute la plus povre mescine;/Vaut mix de vus, Dame Roïne,





excelling in form, face, loveliness,
and in your education and your goodness.'

The Queen left soonafter,
ran crying to her bed-chamber,
still suffering, so irate
at so much belittling hate,
in bed, slept sickly there:
said she'd rise never
if the king did no justice
to that cause of such distress.





The king returned from the forest,
had that day enjoyed his rest,
and entered the Queen's bedroom.
She saw and called to him,
knelt at his feet, cried for succour,
said Lanval shamed her honour:
had asked her love from her,
and, when she'd yield never,



treated her with hatred, scorn,
but boasted of his dear companion
who was noble, proud, and clever,
said the chambermaid working for her,
her most poor serving maiden,
surpassed herself, the Queen.
The King became enraged at this.
He swore and gave his promise:
if the knight can't explain in court,
I'll have him hanged or burnt.
The King left the chamber then
and called forth three barons,
away for Lanval sent them.
Lanval was in enough dolour and pain.
He'd returned to his hostel lodge,
now firm in sad knowledge
he'd lost her, his companion.
He had revealed her affection.
Now in a chamber, alone completely,
alone in anguish, thinking pensively,
calling for her, his friend, often,
and now nothing would happen.





De cors, de vis, è de biauté,/D'enseignement, è de bunté./La Roïne s'en part à-tant,/En sa canbre s'en va plurant;/Mut fu dolente et curécie/De ce que si l'eut avillie./En sun lit malade cucha/Jamès, ceo dist, n'en lévera/Si li Reis ne li feiseit dreit/De ce dunt ele se pleindreit./Li Rois fu du bos repairiés/Mut ot esté le jur haitiés;/As chambres la Roïne entra/Quant el le vit si se clama/As piez li ciet, merci li crie,/E dist que Lanvax l'a hunie;/Ke de druerie la requist/Pour çou que ele l'escundit,/La laidi mut et avilla;/De tele amie se vanta,/Ke mult ert cointe et noble et fière,/E mix valeit sa canberière/La plus povre qui la serveit/Que la Roïne ne feiseit./Li Reis s'en cureça furment,/Juré en ad sen sairement,/S'il ne se puet en Curt deffendre,/Il le fera ardoir u pendre./Fors de la canbre issi li Rois/De ses Baruns demanda trois;/Il les enveie pur Lanval/Ki assez a dolor è mal/A sun ostel ert revenus,/Jà s'esteit bien apercéus,/K'il aveit perdue s'Amie,/Descuverte ot sa druerie./En une canbre fu tut sox,/Pensix esteit et angusox;/S'Amie apèle mult suvent,/Mès il ne li valeit noient.





In tears then, he was sighing,
one hour on another, pacing,
cried a hundred times to his companion
to speak to him in compassion,
and cursed his heart, cursed his mouth
(a marvel he rejected death),
and knew not which cry,
self-debate or self-injury,
could bring her mercy to him,
or just make her visible again!



Alas, what can someone enjoy at whim

if the King declares war on them?

The Barons came to speak next:

travel to Court without rest,

at request, now at command of the King,

because the Queen had accused him.

He left in great despair:

if he was killed, didn't care.

He stood before the King,

the Knight in pensive silence, unspeaking.



Il se pleigneit è suspireit,/D'eures à autres se pasmeit,/Puis lui crie cent fois merci,/K'ele parlust à son ami?/Sun cuer è sa buce maudist/C'est merveille que ne s'ocist;/Il ne set tant crier ne braire,/Soi débatre ne soi detraire,/K'el en voelle merci avoir/Seul tant qu'elle puisce véoir!/Las, cument se cuntentera/Cil cui li Rois guerroyera./Cil sunt venu, si li unt dit/K'à la Curt viegne sans respit,/Li Rois l'aveit par eus mandé,/La Roïne l'ot encusé./Lanvax i va, à sun grant doeil;/Cil l'euscent ocis sien voeul./Il est devant le Rois venus,/Mout est pensis, taisant è mus



There the Knight's pain was evident,
and the King told him, malevolent:
'Wronging me, servant-knight,
you started a commoner's fight,
to disgrace, mistreat me, and demean,
dishonour so and wrong the Queen,
and then boast away in madness
about your own companion's greatness:
and say even a maid in her chamber
excels the Queen in beauty, grandeur.'
Lanval spoke to defend his name
before his Lord, lessen the shame.
Word by word, he spoke
what the Queen had asked,
and including that, his version
was correct in truth and in reason,
that his Love praised by his boast,
is now his sorrow. She's to him lost,



and he'll obey all their decisions:

anything the Court envisions.



De grant dolor mustreit sanblant./Li Rois li dist par mautalent/Vassal, vus m'avez mut
meffait;/Mut cumençastes vilain plait,/De moi hunir è laidengier,/E de la Roïne
avillier./Vantez vus estes de folie/E trop par est vustre amie/Quant plus est bele sa
mescine/E plus vaillans que la Roïne./Lanvax deffent sa deshunur/E la hunte de sun
Ségnur;/De mot en mot, si cum il dist,/Que la Roïne le requist./Mès de ce que il ot
parlé,/Recounut-il la vérité,/De l'amur dunt il se vanta,/Dolans en est, perdue l'a;/De ce
lur dist que il fera,/Quanque li Cours esgardera.





The King, in fury at the Knight then,
there beseeched all his men:
tell him what to do,
to escape any wrong so.
They did as he commanded,



some fair, some marred,
and away they left together,
away to judge, away to consider:
that Lanval have a day in court:
with surety pledged here to his Lord,
that he await the judgement,
soon return under agreement,
and be held the Court's prisoner,
or go to his lodgings, remain there.
Then the Barons returned to the King,
let him know their reasoning.
So the King asked for surety,
for here the Knight was lost and lonely
without companion, without kindred.
But Gawain came forward and pledged-
and all his friends then after -
told the King: 'I offer
all you have of mine:
and all our lands, estates, combine.'



Li Rois fu mut vers li irés/Tus ses humes ad cunjurés/Pur dire droit qu'il en deit faire,/Cum ne le puisse à mal retraire./Cil unt sun cummandement fait./U eus seit bel, u eus seit lait;/Cummunément i sunt alé/Si unt jugié et esgardé,/Ke Lanvax deit avoir un jur;/Mais Plège truiست à sun Seignur,/K'il atendra le jugement,/E revenra en sun présent./Si sera la Cors enforcie,/Car or n'i a fors la maisnie;/Au Roi revienent li Barun,/Si li mustrèrent la raisun;/Li Rois a plèges demandez;/Lanvax fu seus et esgarez./N'aveit ni parent ni ami,/Gauvains i va qui le plevi,/E tut si cumpaignun après,/E dist li Rois relevuns plès/Sur quanque vus tenez de mei,/Fiés è terres cascuns par sei.



When they'd pledged all
for his need, he returned to his hostel.
The knights went with him from the Court,
reproached him, remained as escort
for the Knight, who was faced with desperation.
They cursed his insane passion,
and every day went to him
again, then again, to confirm
that he ate and drank daily,
for fear he'd lose his sanity.
The day came he was called,
and there all the Barons were assembled,
there the King waited with the Queen.
His pledgers surrendered him then
in true anguished sorrow for him -
I believe there was a hundred of them -
who did all they could there,
but no man could free him here:
he was accused of grave wrong;



now this enquiry was ordered by the King,
a defence must answer the accusations,
and everything depended on the Barons,
who left to judge their best.

They were pensive, awkward and lost
for this noble man from elsewhere
powerless among them here.

Many wished him ill,
following the King's own will.

The Duke of Cornwall spoke this,
for without fail the right was his -
whoever cried or was glad -
and, with that right to come forward, said:
'The King has spoken of his servant-knight
- you know as Lanval, this subject -
the King accused him of immorality,
of much evil hereby,
to boast that his own love was fairer,
so that my Lady suffered anger.



None complains of him but the King -

by my faith I am speaking -

and who wants to speak honestly

should always answer only

his own lord, no other,

and should do all with honour.

We can hold Lanval to a promise,

if the King will pardon us,

that Lanval can guarantee his word

by his Love coming forward.



Quant plévi l'unt dunt n'i ot el/Alés s'en est à sun ostel;/Li Chevalier l'unt cunvéié,/Mut l'unt blasmé et castoïé,/K'il ne face sa grant dolur,/E maudient sa fole amur./Cascun jur l'aleient véoir,/Pur çou qu'il voleient savoir,/Se il béut, se il mangast,/Mut dutoient que ne s'afolast./Al jur que il eurent noumé/Li Barun furent asanblé;/Li Rois é la Roïne i fu/E li Plège unt Lanval rendu./Mut étoient-il pur lui dolent,/Jeo quit qu'il en i ot trois cent,/Ki fésissent tut lur pooir,/Pur lui saus par délivre avoir./Il est retés de mut grant tort;/Li Rois demande le recort,/Selunc le claim è les respuns,/Or est del' tut en ses Baruns./Il sunt au jugement alé,/Mut sunt pensiu et esgaré,/Del' franc hume d'autre païs,/Qui entre eux est si entrepris;/Encunbrer le veulent plusur,/Pur le volonté lor Segnur:/Ce dist li Duc de Cornouaille,/Jà en-droit nus n'i ara faille./Car qui k'en plort ne qui k'ençant,/Se droit estuet aler avant./Li Rois parla vers un vassal/Que je vus oï irou ni Lanval,/De félounie le reta,/E d'un meffait l'ocoissonna,/D'une amur dunt il se vanta,/E ma Dame s'en cureça./Nus ne l'apele fors le Rei,/Par cele fei que je vus dei;/Qui bien en veut dire le voir,/Jà n'i déust respuns avoir,/Se pur çou nun que sue Seignur,/Doit-hum faire par-tut honur,/Un sairement l'enwagera,/E li Rois le nus pardonra;/E s'il poet avoir sun garant,/E s'Amie venist avant,



If his talk of his loved companion was truth,
the Queen shouldn't feel wrath
and he should have mercy's compassion,
for spoke not in ill-intention.
If he can't promise now,



we'll make him know
he'll leave the King's service,
and thus leave the King's presence.'

They sent word to the Knight:
prove his words by this sight:
may he make his love appear
to defend, protect him here.

He: 'It isn't in my power -
she'll help me never.'

They circled back to the judges,
who expected no developments.

The King hurried them firmly
for the Queen, who waited impatiently.

As they were about to leave then,
appeared in sight two maidens
upon two white palfreys,
there approaching in such beauty
clad in light silk's crimson
wrapped tight against their skin.





E ce fu veirs que il en dist,/Dunt la Roïne ne se marist,/De ce aura-il bien merci,/Quant pur vilté nel' dist de li,/E s'il ne poeut garant avoir,/Ce li devuns faire saveir,/Tut sun service part del' Rei,/E si le cungie de sei./Al Chevalier unt envoié,/E se li unt dit è pruvé,/Que s'Amie face venir,/Pur lui tensor è garantir./Il leur a dît qu'il ne purreit/Ne jà par li securs n'areit;/Cil s'enturnent as jugéors/Ki n'atendeient nul secors,/Li Rois les hasteit durement,/Pur la Roïne qui s'atent./Quant il deveient départir,/Deus Puceles virent venir,/Sor deus blans palefrois anblans,/E mut par eseteint avenans;/De vermax cendax sunt vestues,/Tut senglement à lor cars nues.





Gawain and three knights together
eagerly watched the maidens closer,
then he went to Lanval
to tell and show him their arrival,
and, pleased, implored him strongly
to say if one was his loved lady?
The maidens still forward went,
there in such beauty apparent.
They descended before the dais
where the King sat in place,
and, here, in their beauty,
they spoke this in courtesy:
'King, ready some chambers
with silken fabric all over,
where my Lady may stay and retire



for she wishes to shelter here.'

Willingly, he agreed then,

calling two knights from his men

to upper chambers to lead them,

who were now silent, at the time.

The King asked his barons to commence

the Court's judgment and Lanval's defence,

and said it caused his fury

that they delay this duty.

They: 'It was distracting, Sir,

when the Ladies came here.

We haven't made our observation

and now we'll go to deliberation.'

Then they reassembled the council,

now pensive in dispute and turmoil,

with quarreling between the barons.

And appeared two new maidens

shining in bodices with gold thread,

each with a Spanish mule for her steed.





Cil les esgardent volentiers;/Gauvain, od lui trois Chevaliers,/Vait à Lanval, si li
 cunta,/Les deus Puceles li mustra./Mut fu haitiés, furment li prie/K'il li désist se c'ert
 s'Amie?/Celes sunt alées avant/E tut par itel beau sanblant,/Descendirent devant le
 dois/Là ù esteit asis li Rois./Eles furent de grant biauté/Si unt curteisement parlé./Rois,
 faites canbres délivrer,/E de pailles encurtiner/U ma Dame puisse descendre,/Car avec vus
 veut ostel prendre./Il lur otreie volentiers:/Si apela deus Chevaliers,/Es canbres les
 mainent lassus/A cele fois ne disent plus./Li Rois demande à ses Baruns,/Le jugement è le
 respuns,/E dist que mut l'unt curécié,/De çou que tant l'unt délaïé,/Sire, funt-il, nus
 départimes/Pur les Dames que nus véimes,/Ni aviuns nus esgart fait/Or cumenceruns
 nustre pleit./Lors rasanblèrent tut pensif/Assés i eut noise et estrif:/Quant il èrent en cil
 effrei/Deus Puceles de grant conrei,/Vestues de dex bliaus frois,/Chevaucent deus muls
 espanois,





Down the street, the Ladies rode.
The King's subjects were so glad,
saying Lanval was now safe -
Lanval, enduring, sage and brave.
Gawain went away with them,
his companions, and led them to him,



saying, 'Sir, be well
and now for God's love tell:
two Ladies come near,
adorned in all beauty here,
one must be your companion!'
Simply, Lanval answered the question:
he'd seen them never,
known nor loved them ever.
The new Ladies continued riding,
then dismounted in front of the King,
two Ladies lauded by many
for fine colours, for fine beauty,
to some this fineness more than
than perhaps that of the Queen.
The elder Lady, wise with courtesy,
now gave her message fittingly:
'King, for us, prepare chambers -
for with us our Lady shelters.
She comes to speak with you.'



He: 'Lead these Ladies, too,
to the others arrived lately,'
and that was done agreeably.
When arrangements were complete,
the King commanded the Barons meet.
He ordered the verdict's return -
as it was held too long,
and the Queen grew furious with anger,
since her guilt was in doubt longer.
They began to leave quickly,
as, riding tensely through the city,
appeared a Lady urgent on her steed,
none more beautiful in the world.



She rode a white palfrey.
It carried her well and gently,
its neck and head beautiful,
under Heaven no fairer animal,
one adorned in rich finery,
under the skies, no King's money
could ever acquire this
without selling lands or pledges.
The Lady, too, was dressed alike -
in a fine chemise clad white
admired by all she passed,
the cloth in two parts laced,
her form fair, with small haunches,
neck whiter than the snow on branches,
her eyes were grey, with white face,
beautiful her even nose and mouth,
brown brows on her fine temple,
her hair curling gold and ample.
Her mantle was of dark purple colour



partly wrapped around her.

She'd a sparrowhawk on her hand,

and following her close, a greyhound.



Virent venir la rue à-val/Grant joie en eurent li Vassal:/Entre eux dirent k'or iert
 garis,/Lanvax li prox è li hardis./Gauvain en est od li alés,/Ses compaignuns i ad
 menés,/Sire, dist-il, rehaitiés vus,/Pur amur Diu parlez à nus./Jà viennent ci dex
 Dameiseles,/Mut acesmées è mult beles,/C'est vostre amie vraiment!/Lanvax lur respunt
 simplement,/E dit que pas nès' a véues,/Ni amées, ne cunéues./A-tant furent celes
 venues,/Devant le Roi sunt descendues:/E mut les louent li pluisur,/E de biauté è de
 coulur;/N'i ot celi mix ne vausist/Que la Roïne ne fésist./La maistre fu cortoise et
 sage/Avenement dist sun mesage./Rois, car nus fais canbres baillier,/Aveuc nos Dames
 herbregier,/Ele vient ci à tei parler,/Il les coumanda à mener,/Od les autres qui ançois
 vindrent,/Unques depuis nul plait ne tindrent./Quant il fu delès délivrez,/Puis a tus ses
 Baruns mandez,/Si lur a dit que seit rendus,/Li jugemens trop est tenus:/La Roïne se
 cureçeit/De çou que trop i demereit./Jà le départissent aiant,/Qant par la vile vint
 pognant,/Tost à ceval une Pucele,/En tut le monde n'ot si bele./Un blanc palefroï
 cevauçoit/Qui bien è souef le porteit:/Moult ot bien fait è col è teste,/Sos ciés n'out plus
 gente beste;/Rice ator ot el palefroï,/Sous ciel n'en ot si rice Roi,/Qui tot le peust
 acutier,/Sans tere vendre u engagier./Ele est vestue en itel guise,/De cainse blanc è de
 cemise,/Ke tout li costé li paroient,/Qui de deus pars lacié estoient:/Le cors ot gent, basse
 la hance,/Le col plus blanc que nois sor brance;/Les ex ot vairs è blanc le vis,/Bele bouce,
 nés bien assis;/Les sorcils bruns è bel le front,/Le cief crespé è auques blond./Ses
 mantiaus fu de pourpre bis,/Les pans en ot entour li mis:/Un espervier sor sun puing tint,/E
 uns livrers après li vint.



There was no one in the city,
 subject, sergeant, peasant or nobility,
 not enthralled in close attention



as they watched her traverse the town,
in her authentic beauty, authentic grace.
She maintained a quick pace,
and all who watched her closer
held her in esteem and wonder
and all who observed her then
with justified love became warm,
and those who loved Lanval
came to tell him all:
the lady who'd come to them,
if God pleases, may save him:
'Sir, friend, a lady is here,
not those with brown or auburn hair,
and none more beautiful ever
of all there is in this world over.'
Lanval sighed at what was said,
knew her well, lifted his head,
then blood rose to his face,
when he said in haste:



'In faith, it is my companion Lady.

Now they can hardly kill me,

if she has compassion for me here,

for seeing her will be my cure.'

Soon the Lady entered the palace.

Such beauty was never at this place.

She dismounted at the King's throne,

held the attention of everyone,

as she shed her mantle,

and her form was now more visible.

The King, well-taught in courtesy,

stood up to meet her quickly.

All others stood, attentive,

to offer her their service.



Then, when their watching was repleted,
and when her beauty's praise completed,
she spoke in such measure,
not caring to remain there:

'King, I've loved your servant-knight,
Lanval, Lord, in your plain sight.

In your court he has been blamed.

I wish him unharmed.

You know his every word,
how the Queen unjustly erred!

On no day he asked her favour.

To speak about his boasting earlier:

if I bring about his acquittal,
may your Barons free Lanval,
as by right they guaranteed.'

'It may be so', the King agreed,
and there were none who claimed
that Lanval never explained.



Seeing, they freed him,
and so the Lady left then.
The King could not detain her,
nor his men retain her ever.
There was placed outside the room
a single block of grey stone.
Men mounted their horses from it,
who came from the King's court.
Lanval climbed onto this space,
and when she'd left the palace,
away on her palfrey, as it galloped,
to ride behind her, he leapt.
They went to Avalon that day,
in Brittany people often say,
to the ethereal island's fairness, ever,
to live there in delight together
- nothing else was heard at all -
and I have no more to tell.





Il n'ot el' Borc petit ne grant,/Ne li Vallet, ne li Sergant,/Qui ne la voïssent esgarder,/Si
 com il la voient errer;/De sa biauté n'est mie gas,/Ele venoit plus que le pas./Tout li Hume
 qui l'esgardoient,/A grant merveille la tenoient;/N'i ot un seul qui l'esgardast,/De droite
 amur ne s'escaufast:/Cil qui le Chevalier ameient,/A lui vindrent si li cunteient,/De la
 Pucele qui venoit,/Se Diu plaist sel' déliveroit./Sire conpaing, ci en vient une,/Mais ele
 n'est fauve ne brune,/C'est la plus bele de cest munt/De tutes celes qui i sunt./Lanvax l'oï,
 si suspira,/Bien la conut, sun cief leva,/Li sans li est muntés el vis,/De parler est auques
 hastis:/Par foi, dist-il, ce est m'Amie;/Or ne m'est gaires que m'ocie,/S'ele n'en a merci de
 moi,/Car garis sui qant jeo la voi./La Pucele entre ù palais,/Unques si bele ni vint
 mais,/Devant le Roi est descendue,/Si que de tus fu bien véue:/Sun mantel a laiscié
 caïr,/Que mix puissent sun cors véir./Li Rois qui mut fu ensegniés/Il s'est encuntre li
 dréciés,/E tut li autre se levèrent,/E de li servir se penèrent./Qant il l'eurent bien
 esgardée,/E sa biauté asez loée,/Ele parla en tel mesure;/Car de demourer n'avoit
 cure./Rois, g'ai amé un tien vassal,/Veéz le là, seignor, Lanval:/Acoisonés fu en ta
 Cort,/Ne voeus mie que mal il tort;/De ce qu'il dist, ce saces tu,/Que la Roïne a tort
 éu!/Unques nul jor ne le requist,/De la vantance que il fist./Se par moi puet estre
 aquités,/Par vos Baruns soit délivrés,/Ce qu'il engagerunt par dreit;/Li Rois otroie que si
 seit./N'i a un seul qui n'ait jugié,/Que Lanvax a tout desraisnié;/Délivrez est par lor
 esgart,/E la Pucele s'en despart:/Ne la pot li Rois retenir,/Assez ot gent à li servir,/Fors de



la salle aveit-un mis,/Un grant peron de marbre bis,/U li poisant hume munteient,/Qui de
la Curt le Roi esteient./Lanvax esteit muntés desus,/Qant la Pucele ist fors de l'us,/Sor le
palefroï dérier li,/De plain eslais Lanvax sali./Od li s'en vait en Avalon,/Ce nus racuntent
li Breton,/En une isle qui mut est biax,/Là fu ravis li Damoisiâx./E nus n'en oï plus
parler,/Ne jeo n'en sai avant cunter.



THE END

FIN

