

“SAVAGE!”

‘What ails thee that thou would shake the heavens with thy shouting?’

“Tis with pleasure to see thee old friend”

‘Upon my soul. William Dunbar. What brings thee from thy dank and dreary cave?’

“Why the pleasure of the alehouses of fair Calais and the search for a Free company that will fight for little pay against fierce and relentless enemies”

‘ Which of the Barbarian Kings are you fighting again this time Will?’

“I fight the Queen. The only King left in the north is the King of the Hebrides and I count him a friend . . . for now”

‘So tell me truly; is there money to be had? We are well paid to train the Duke of Suffolk’s men but they will be away to campaign against the emperor soon and we must either travel with them or seek new employ.’

“ I have funds enough to employ your company for three months and the promise of plunder taken to sweeten the task. That Danish whore Margaret has called upon her family to aid her against her own son. Not that I have much faith that he would be a better King than his father. My father has agreed to fight with Lord Home for his own reasons and so I do what I must to aid him.”

‘I’ll own it would be good to stand on the soil of Albion again even if it be in the land of Heathens’

“Heathens is it? So says the man exiled for striking a priest.”

‘Is it priests we are fighting then?’

“No it is not and they will be well armed and armoured. In the old style of the north, with maille and helms and long spears and their great axes. You will need more than a wooden tankard to fell these warriors.”

‘ So more like Berwick then when we fought the Grahams and I pulled thee from that ditch by the old mill and saved thee from those Castillians’

“ I thought they were Moors”

‘It did not stay thy hand. I’ll warrant there are few battles fought with turds and pebbles that ended so well’

“A true warrior fights with any weapon that will serve”

‘Only a fool would let themselves be left without a stout weapon to defend themselves in the midst of battle. Whoever told you such nonsense?’

“That would be a fool by the name of Master Edward Steel”

‘I know not from whence it gets these vaporous thoughts’

“From you Walter when we had that fight on Pisswell Street armed with a bedpan and a chair leg”

‘Ah Edward you are here. Like I said, wise words indeed...Don’t stare at me so lad. Now then let us agree a price and we shall see about these Northmen’