

# WHERE VALOR LIES

ADELE AND CATEAU DE LEEUW

Illustrated by William Plummer



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PART ONE. RUNAWAY APPRENTICE

February 1248

For just a moment Richard was happy. He stood in the narrow Paris street, carefully straddling the foul-smelling kennel in the center, and laughed to see the antics of the monkey. The little beast, held by a long leather thong, climbed a stick, grimaced at the crowd of shopkeepers and apprentices, turned himself about and poised head down, then flipped a somersault and landed on the outstretched arm of his owner.

Now, *there* was a life to appeal to a lad with blood in his veins! What fun it must be to wander the roads of France, to see new places and strange people, to make money (for the little creature was circling the crowd now with a begging bowl in its clawlike hand), to do as one pleased, to have the company of a pet like that monkey!

He turned away, for the monkey was nearing him, and he had not a single denier—the smallest coin of the realm—to his name. Better to pretend he was walking off than have to refuse the pleading in that wizened little face. He pushed through the crowd half angrily and went on his way, worried that his delay would have been noticed when he got back to his master's house.

It had been, but not by Gaucher, his master, he was glad to see. Eudeline met him at the door, one hand holding her skirts aloft from the wood shavings on the floor of the shop. "Richard! Where have you been so long?"

"Did you get it? Where is it?" Gaucher's daughter thrust her face close to his, her pale eyes searching his to see if he had betrayed her secret.

Richard fumbled in his tunic and brought forth a small packet, carelessly wrapped in a rag, which she snatched from him. "What did she say? Did she know who you were?"

He mocked her, glad to be able to pay her for some of the embarrassment she had given him with her errand. "She said, 'Now what would a fine upstanding lad like you be wanting with a complexion ointment? You'll be having a beard to cover those red cheeks before long; you're wasting your money!' And then she went off to get the stuff in the filthiest den you ever saw. I'd be feared to put anything from such a witch on *my* face, and I'm no—"

"Richard! Hold your saucy tongue!" Eudeline drew herself up haughtily. With the coveted unguent in her hand, she cared little for Richard's remarks. It was apparent that the woman had not known he was attached to Gaucher as apprentice.

She turned away, then swung back suddenly. "Oh, I almost forgot. Father wants you to sharpen the big chisel, and do it right. He says you made a botch of it this morning." Pleased that she had been able to administer a rebuke in her turn, she went through the door that led to the living quarters in back of the shop.

Richard shrugged. What did he care for the chidings of a pimply-faced girl of sixteen? One who was so smitten on the journeyman joiner, Simon, that she had made

a fool of herself more than once in begging her father to employ him, when there was not even enough work for the three of them here.

He picked up the offending chisel and squinted at the edge. It did look a little nicked. Most likely that was Eustache's doing, for Eustache, whose apprenticeship was nearly over and who was, besides, the son of his master, was sly about such things. Too many times slovenly work had been blamed on Richard because of Eustache's maneuverings; too many times Eustache had sneaked out to game with his friends near the riverbank, leaving the work to Richard. Richard knew he was not yet ready for such fine work; he knew, too, that old Gaucher could spot the difference in a trice. But did Gaucher ever blame his son for shirking his share? Not a bit of it; he, Richard, got the blame for a poor quality of labor and was censured besides for having had the effrontery to work on a fine piece and thereby spoil it.

He rubbed his back reminiscently, feeling again in memory the thrashings he had had in this past year and more. And most of them because of Eustache. In a sudden burst of independence he threw down the chisel and went outside.

"Hola, Richard!" The voice was familiar, but at first he could not locate it. Then he saw the stooped figure of Henri, his brother. Henri worked—when he would find work—as a journeyman baker. He was only six years older than Richard, but already he had the look of an old man. He was too thin, for one thing, and his clothes were patched and worn where they weren't plastered

with the flour of his trade. He bore a tray of cakes aloft, managing to keep it from being tilted to one side by the movements of the crowd and flicking his gaze upward at intervals to make sure no urchin had snatched one of the goodies. Richard knew Henri would have to account for every one of them, in actuality or in money paid, when he returned to the bakery.

His mouth watered. He knew it was useless to ask, but he couldn't help it. "Give me one, Henri?" he begged.

Henri shook his head with a chiding air. "You know I can't. You know I have to sell them," he began, but Richard interrupted.

"How can I pay? But just this once, Henri . . . Look, I promise you the next time I lay my hands on a bit of money—"

Henri's grin was broad. "And where's the 'bit of money' to come from?" he demanded.

"Eustache is out gaming now. If he wins, he may be in a good mood; he may—"

Henri guffawed so hard that the cakes trembled on the tray. "Eustache *give* you money?" he cried. "You'd best wake up, lad. You're dreaming and you don't know it!"

Richard started to turn away. Yes, he was dreaming, for it was ridiculous to think of Eustache becoming generous without demanding something in return for whatever he gave. But he turned back again and followed his brother into the crowd halfheartedly, watching and listening as Henri cried his wares, made an occasional sale, and stuffed the money for it into his gypsire.

A shout made him begin to run. Ahead of him he saw

a lean-shanked urchin weave, stooping, through the press of people. Instinctively Richard took after him, collaring him just as he was about to round a corner. The boy—no, he was a man, but so thin and stunted he seemed no more than a boy—had his cheeks bulging with one of the cakes and, seeing Richard hard upon him, he dropped the other.

Of course Richard bent to pick it up, and in that moment the thief had jerked loose and disappeared. Henri came up, puffing and panting. "Did you get him? Two of them he stole. Two of my best. The master will take it out of my wages, and I'll go hungry again." Tears stood in Henri's eyes, but they did not fall. After all, he was a man grown.

Wordlessly, and with more of a wretch than he would have thought it would cost him, Richard handed him the salvaged cake. It was dented where it had been clutched by the thief; it was grimy from where it had fallen into the street. But it was still whole.

Henri groaned when he saw it. "I can't sell that one," he said. "No one will buy it. . . . You might as well eat it," he added with an effort. "At least you did your best."

"No, *you* eat it," Richard insisted. The fare was not rich at Gaucher's, but it was ample, and if it lacked sweets, it had a good, belly-filling quality to it.

Henri shook his head in distaste. "That's all I get—too often," he said. "I'm sick of the stuff. Nothing but left-over cakes and sweets, when what I want is a bit of meat to sink my teeth into. I'll not be having them long, either,

at this rate." He laughed hollowly, showing Richard the gaps where some were missing.

Richard hesitated only briefly, then he popped the cake into his mouth. "I'll pay you the minute I lay my hands on some money," he promised, speaking thickly through the mouthful of sweetness.

His brother shrugged and went on his way. Richard too decided that it would be wise to return to his work, for although his master Gaucher was gone today, buying wood for the order which had been given him by a wealthy burgher for a carved cupboard, who knew when he might return? He walked slowly back toward the shop.

The sound of a penetrating, persuasive voice made him pause as he passed the mouth of one of the cross streets. Down near the Petit Pont he could see a crowd of people gathered about a figure which stood higher than the others. A tonsured head gleamed in the ray of sunlight which struck it, making the reddish hairs shine like gold. It was almost like a halo, Richard thought, almost like the picture of one of the saints which still shone faintly from the walls of the church he attended. Could it be a sign? Was this truly a saintly man? Surely the chance to meet such a one should not be foregone. His willing feet led him down the street to the edges of the crowd.

"And now that our good king Louis IX has set himself to this task, now that he is about to go forth, carrying the message of the true Cross over the seas and to the infidel, shall we who remain be able to find grace in our luxury and idleness?"

Richard snickered and whispered to the man next him, "Not much luxury and idleness where *I* work!" The other barely glanced at him, seeming intent on catching the speaker's words. Richard turned to the stranger on his left, a stooped, twisted caricature of a man, whose clothing was a conglomeration of rags, whose lined face wore an air of stubborn bitterness.

"What is he talking about?" Richard asked him.



The cripple stared at him a long moment before answering. "Have you not heard of King Louis' crusade? Where are your ears, lad? He's been preparing for it these past two years and more."

"Of course I've heard of it!" Richard retorted indignantly. "But what does the holy brother want?"

"Recruits, no doubt," the lame one replied. "They can always use more men than they have on these expeditions. Crusades are costly in every way, you know, and men are the cheapest commodity of all."

Richard's eyes flashed scorn. "No need to belittle those who go," he cried, "just because you can't!"

"Oh, but I did go," the other answered with slow emphasis. "That's why I am the way I am. I was once straight and strong and proud . . . and young and foolish," he added, again with the bitter note in his voice.

Richard was silenced, yet, as he listened to the friar's fiery words, he soon forgot to glance sideways at the deformed creature. In this year of our Lord 1248 the crusade was at last to become a reality. The friar's words made it so, for, though Richard had heard it preached from the pulpit, his enthusiasm had never been fired as it was now. When he did come to himself at the end of the talk, it was to find that the cripple had walked away and was nowhere to be seen.

The sun stood high in the heavens and was past the zenith. Richard, with a clutching of fear in his breast, realized that he had stood there much too long. He began to run toward the shop with swift, loping steps. If old Gaucher had come back and found him gone, and no



work done this day, his hide would suffer. It was bad enough sleeping in the cold under the counter, with only a few rags to make his couch, but when his back was sore from a thrashing, he had scant rest at night and every movement in the daytime was freshly painful.

"Richard! Richard!" He would not have halted if he had not recognized the voice. It was Eustache. Of all people to find him like this, Eustache was the one who would make most use of his knowledge! He slowed to a walk, glancing over his shoulder. "Richard, come here!"

He had to go. There was no evading it. He walked unwillingly toward his master's son. Eustache set down the small carved oak chest he was carrying. "Here!" he said roughly, and it was obvious that he had had no success at his gaming, for the corners of his mouth turned down sharply and his little pig's eyes darted menacingly at Richard. "Here, you lazy lout, carry this to Messire Broncard's house, and see to it that you get payment for it too."

"But—but," Richard stammered, "your father said yesterday that *you* were to deliver it. I heard him myself."

"I know it!" Eustache retorted crossly. "But the cursed thing is heavy, and I'm in no mood to brook that haughty fuller's remarks when it comes a day late. So you'll have to take it."

"And what if I won't?" Richard dared to ask.

Eustache's eyes were hard as bits of agate. "You will," he said with confidence, "or I'll tell your master you've been out skylarking all day."

"And *I'll* tell him you've been down by the river, gaming! . . . And losing!" Richard added triumphantly.

"Oh no, you won't." Eustache's voice was deadly serious now. "Eudeline will swear I was at the shop all day and working hard, and since my mother knows no different, that's safe enough. . . . If you think to get out of *that* with some cock-and-bull tale of running strange errands for Eudeline, I'll back her up that you did nothing of the sort."

Richard was trapped and he knew it. When it came to a showdown between them, Eustache always won. He pressed his lips together and bent to pick up the oaken box. It was surprisingly heavy, but, although he had done little of the work on it, being yet too new to his apprenticeship to be trusted with much use of the carving tools, he felt a small thrill of pride in its sturdy handsomeness.

"Here!" Eustache's voice, always rough, was rougher with concern. "Watch how you carry it! At the bottom, and don't tilt it or raise the lid." Before he had finished speaking he was gone, his long legs covering the ground with surprising speed.

Richard, his arms growing more tired with every minute, made his way slowly and carefully to the house of Broncard, the fuller. The house was heavily timbered and boasted three stories, each one leaning out over the one below. He entered the shop downstairs, calling for the master, and one of the two young boys working there scurried off to find him while Richard set the box down on the counter.

Broncard was short and stout. His hair was thin and graying, but his cheeks were ruddy with good living. He puffed when he walked, and the floor shook as he approached. "Well," he cried loudly, a frown between his full eyes, "Gaucher promised me this yesterday. Why was it not delivered then?"

"He wanted it to be perfect, sir," Richard said quickly. "And rather than send you a piece which was not perfect in every respect, he held it over another day to make sure that the carving was of the finest and that there was no faintest flaw."

"Hmph!" It was more of a snore than a snort. "Let me see it." A heavy hand touched the carving briefly, then lifted the lid, and the ruddy face bent to peer inside.

"The scoundrell!" It was a roar of rage. "The evil, skimping, lying craftsman! How dare he send such a piece to me—Broncard? I'll report him to his guild! He'll be sorry he ever tried to palm off such a piece of shoddy workmanship on a man of my substance! I'll—I'll—" Out of breath, the fat man could only stand and glare.

Richard wanted to turn and run, but he did not dare. He could not imagine what was the matter but was afraid to ask. Broncard enlightened him as soon as his breath returned. "To send me a piece of work like that! Cracked from end to end! It's not worth a denier, much less the fancy price he would have liked to charge me! Oh, I'll report him, never fear!"

Cracked! But the box had been whole and handsome when last Richard had seen it in the shop. The thoughts that raced through his mind were jumbled and panic-

stricken. How could it have become cracked? He had carried it so carefully ever since he got it from Eustache.

Eustache! Of course that's how it happened. The master's son had probably dropped it somewhere. Perhaps he had had it with him when he went gaming and there had been a rough-and-tumble fight when he had lost. That was why he had been so determined to make Richard the one to bring it to the customer. Then Richard would have to bear the blame. Richard would be the one to suffer, for how would he ever be able to prove that it had been cracked when Eustache handed it to him?

No use asking for payment; no use leaving the box here. Perhaps it could be repaired somehow. But Richard had scant hope of that. The crack, he could see now, went right through the carving. Pale and shaking, he picked it up again and left the house, Broncard's angry voice following him out to the street.

Where could he go? What could he do? To return to the Gauchers' was unthinkable. He would be beaten to within an inch of his life. And for nothing! Despite his fourteen years and his tall, manly frame he felt a small frightened boy underneath. Without stopping to think, he headed for his old home.

Richard's father was a draper and lived on one of the small streets opening off from the rue de la Draperie, for his wares were of the poorer kind, and he catered to lesser folk than the rich merchants on that street. Blindly, fear still blanketing his senses, Richard passed the fishmongers near the palace gate, went down the street of the drapers, and bore left to the little house and shop

where his father lived with his family. If the shop was small, the living quarters of that house were even smaller. Richard, after almost two years of apprenticeship, was used to larger quarters now and found them unbelievably cramped whenever he made a rare visit home.

His mother and father, his oldest brother Jacques, who worked with his father, his sisters Blanche, Doulee, and Marie, who were still unmarried, all had to crowd together in the one tiny apartment.

Even before he neared the house Richard's fear was heightened by the noise issuing from it. His father, lean and tight-lipped, was bent over the rough counter, trying to sell a length of woolen fabric to a man who seemed to want to edge away. "It's the best cloth you will find anywhere for the money," Richard's father was shouting, above the din that came from the house behind him. "Finer, I'll venture to say, than any you will discover here in the city of Paris. Where else would you have such texture—feel it yourself, good sir, feel it!—and such excellent dyeing—this has been wet only last night when that light shower we had—surely you remember it?—caught me unawares and drenched some of my stock before I could pull it inside. Yet not a whit of color did it shed. And of course it did not shrink! This has been fullled by the house of Broncard, I swear it"—Richard winced at the name—"and you know what that means. Hold it up, sir; hold it up, and tell me honestly if you have ever seen a better bargain. No, you cannot," he hastened on, before the man could utter a word, "because there *is* no better bargain anywhere to be had . . ."

He was still talking as Richard edged past him, carrying the oaken box which was beginning to make his arms ache. He stumbled into the half darkness of the room beyond and almost fell over his two brothers, Jacques and Albert, who were wrestling together.

"Try this hold," Albert cried—he was the stronger one—"and see if you can throw me."

Richard touched him on the arm. "Albert, what am I to do? This box—see how it is cracked? But I did not do it! Only Eustache will say I did, and—"

Albert, engrossed in the wrestling match, shook him off impatiently. "Not now," he said hurriedly. "Some other time. I have only a few minutes, and I want Jacques to learn this before I have to leave."

Richard bit his lip and turned to the back of the room where his mother was busied over the charcoal brazier. "Do get on with the plucking of that chicken, Marie," she was crying as he approached. "And try to leave the skin whole. It's little enough to feed all these hungry mouths . . . Oh, it's you, Richard? What did you want? Blanche," she continued, without pausing to take breath, "you've not yet scoured the floor, and I told you to do it early this morning." She shook her head and sighed a little.

"Mother," Richard began, "I do not know what to do! This box I was to deliver is cracked, and Broncard the fuller won't accept it."

"Best mend it then," she said, not unkindly, but with her mind obviously on other matters.

"But it wasn't my fault," Richard said quickly. "It was Eustache who did it, I'm sure."

"If you didn't do it, then surely you have nothing to fear," she told him. "No, no, not that way, Marié. Now watch while I do it." She took the chicken from her young daughter's hands.

"But he'll *say* I did it," Richard cried despairingly.

His mother nodded, but he was sure she had not understood a word of what he had said. She had too much to do, and her attention was constantly being pulled in several directions at once. "Come tell me about it tomorrow, Richard," she said now. "Everything has gone wrong today, and I scarce know where to turn."

Richard found himself on the street again with no clear idea of how he had come there. He had been foolish to hope his family could help him. He was apprenticed—therefore he was no longer one of the immediate family circle. His problems were his own, to meet and to solve. The mingled fear and anger which had been submerged for a while rose to confront him once more.

The gray mass of Notre Dame loomed ahead of him, and his steps turned toward it instinctively. Perhaps in the quiet of the cathedral he would be able to find a way out. He went in reverently and, placing the damaged oaken box upon the floor, knelt down.

He did not know just when the idea came to him, but when it did he was startled by its simplicity. The crusade! Perhaps the beam of sunlight on the friar's head *had* been a sign, pointing the way for a troubled lad. He who took the Cross was excused from his worldly obligations,

wasn't he? If Richard took the Cross, he would no longer be under the jurisdiction of Gaucher. . . .

Before his closed eyes rose a vision of the Holy City, all shimmering with light and beauty. Why should not he be one of those who freed it from the infidel? Why should not he be one of those who fought for the Cross?

He rose to his feet with decision and glanced down briefly at his stalwart form. "I am almost as big as a man," he said, half aloud, "and bigger than some I could name. What if I have no beard as yet? I could pass for seventeen or older, I know."

But what to do with the box? He looked at its four-square bulk and shivered. If he left it here—if he left it anywhere but at Gaucher's—he would be proclaimed a thief. A man could be hung for stealing a valuable piece like this—even if it *was* cracked! But how to get it back to the shop without being seen? For that matter, how to find the friar again? Where had he gone?

Still, with something definite in mind to do, Richard was cheered. He rose to his feet and picked up the box once again.

He would begin to ask for the friar right away. The other problem would probably solve itself later.

"That red-haired Dominican—the one preaching King Louis' crusade?" a wizened saddle maker said in answer to Richard's questions. "Yes, he was here, blocking the street for more than half an hour and keeping customers from my shop, and little work did I get from this lazy fellow," cuffing his apprentice in an absent-minded fashion, "the while he was here."

"Which way did he go afterward? Did you notice?"

"I was too glad to be rid of him at the last," the saddler replied, with an annoyed air. "But likely he went toward the Grand Pont."

"No," the little apprentice said quickly, before his master could stop him. "He went the other way, and I heard someone say he would stay the night at St. Germain-des-Prés."

"Get on with your work, boy!" the saddler shouted. "If you gave half as much attention to your stitchery as you do to useless gossip, I'd be a rich man!"

St. Germain-des-Prés . . . But what if I go there, expecting to find him, and he is not there? Richard thought. A runaway apprentice could expect to suffer for his misdemeanor. He went down the street to ask others. It would be wise to be as sure as possible.

Since there was some agreement that St. Germain-des-Prés was the friar's destination, he turned to the question of the box. The cellar storeroom under Gaucher's shop was the likeliest place to leave it. But could he make his way there unnoticed? Perhaps if he waited until the family was at supper . . .

It was cold where he crouched just inside a narrow alleyway, waiting for the February dark to fall. His teeth chattered, as much with anxiety as with cold, for if he did not get the box hidden soon it would be too late to leave the city for the night. The gates would be closed. Everything now would depend on luck.

When he deemed the time right, he stole forth cautiously. He hoped no one was abroad who knew him and

who might call him by name. He hoped Eustache would have been careless in closing the cellar opening, as he so often was. He hoped that the alarm had not been sent out for him but that they were expecting him to be driven back by hunger. He hoped . . .

He peered about furtively before he pressed open the cellar door. The busy street was comparatively silent. Those figures still in sight were hurrying homeward, eager for their suppers, or anxious to get under cover before dark and the threat of footpads overtook them. The door—thanks to St. Joseph—opened at his touch, and he crept down the shallow steps, one at a time, holding his breath lest he make a noise. He could hear voices coming from the solar above.

"He'll come, never fear"—that was Eustache—"when his stomach tells him to."

"I'm not sure." That was old Gaucher. "The lad has been acting peculiar of late. You say he asked to deliver the box himself? You should not have let him do it."

"I couldn't see any harm in it," Eustache said easily. "He'd hardly be fool enough to pocket the money for it and run away, would he?"

"It would mean taking his life in his hands if he did," growled Gaucher.

"Mayhap he went gaming with some other lads," Eudeline chimed in. "And if he won, he could be in some tavern or cookshop, spending his winnings."

"Gaming with what?" her father demanded scornfully. "He had no money that I know of."

Richard, half choking with rage at what he had heard,

took another step and stumbled against a piece of wood which fell to earth with a clatter. Heaven! There had been nothing in that spot this morning! Was it some of the new wood his master had gone to buy today?

"What was that?" Gaucher shouted above him.

"Some wood in the cellar," his wife replied dryly. "You were in such a hurry for your supper, I doubt you and Eustache stacked it properly."

"I did, naturally," her husband said pompously. "But Eustache here—"

"Probably a rat knocked it over," Eustache said hastily.

Richard, thinking that someone would come to investigate before long, set the box down on the floor, then sped back up the steps and closed the door.

He began to run. He ran all the way to the Petit Pont and all the way across the bridge and to the Petit Chastellet. Not until he was through the gate and headed toward St. Germain-des-Prés along the rue de la Huchette did he pause to get his wind.

The houses thinned out soon and their lights with them. He stumbled along the road in the near-dark, his breath whistling between his teeth, his heart like lead within him. When a burly form rose up before him, he uttered a faint cry but was too exhausted to turn and escape.

A large hand caught him by the shoulder. "Why, it's nothing but a lad!" a big voice boomed. "Where to in such a lather, son? Or is it that you are running *from* something?"

Richard gulped. Strangely, that hand upon his shoul-

der was the most reassuring thing that had happened to him throughout this entire day. He said quickly, "I'm trying to reach the abbey before it gets late." He gulped again. "There's a friar staying there—at least I think he is—who's preaching the king's crusade . . . And I want to join!"

There was a little silence. Then the man said, much more seriously, "Aren't you a mite young for the fighting, lad? To take the Cross is a worthy thing, but too many who take it will never return. Have you thought on that?"

"I—I'm not so young—as I look," Richard stammered. "And I'm big and strong. I—"

"Let be," the man said quietly, and the hand was taken from his shoulder. "No doubt what you are running from looks worse to you now. And who am I to persuade you against it? I am on my way to join up myself . . . Shall we go together, lad?"

"Yes . . . oh yes." Gratitude made Richard's voice shake a little, to his acute embarrassment. But the other pretended not to notice.

The hand which had rested upon his shoulder now reached out and grasped Richard's hand in a smothering clasp. "Then let's get on with it, son. My name's Aimar, and when I was not much older than you I went on the fifth crusade. . . ."