

The Brothers of Good Deeds  
by Ricardo Boca

His reading was interrupted by the galloping thunder of approaching horses. The smile on his face was one of relief he had sought. He knew how many horses arrived and how many men there were because he had summoned them. He was waiting for this moment for a long time and he knew that this was his chance to make his life fulfilled.

The head butler entered the lord manor's large library.

"My lord, Sir James of..."

"Yes, Mister Gerard. I know who it is. Invite him in and please provide sleeping quarters for his men. Instruct the stable master to tend to the horses with utmost care."

"Yes, my lord."

"Gerard, we will all dine in the grand hall. This is a special occasion."

"Yes, my lord." Gerard left with obsequies that becomes a head butler for the master of the estate.

He heard the approaching footsteps. He was ready for whatever Sir James had in store for him.

"Thomas!" Sir James announced boldly while flinging the doors wide open.

"James! Thou lazy son of a mangy whore-son dog!" Thomas unsheathed his sword.

"Didst thou call me a dog, thou spoiled flea infested swine?"

"Thou dost insult me, Sir James! I am no swine!"

And the sword fighting began.

The clanging of the swords could be heard throughout the manor and the seven men who had accompanied Sir James quickly came to witness the fight.

Both Sir James and Lord Thomas were excellent swordsmen and it was a match equal in skill, strength and speed. Without respite, the two men fought diligently for the upper hand hoping one would find an opportunity to gain the upper hand and win the battle.

And then it happened.

Sir James tripped on a small fold in the oriental rug and fell, leaving him vulnerable to Lord Thomas's attack.

As quick as lightning, Lord Thomas thrust his sword at Sir James's chin.

"Thou art compromised, James."

"Thomas, dost thou remember thine own words when I had thee in a similar position?"

"I do. That I permitted thee to win. Wherefore hast thou not cut thy beard?"

"'Tis not for wanting, brother."

Lord Thomas put out his hand. Sir James clasped the out stretched hand and was hoisted into the open arms of Lord Thomas.

"I have missed thee, brother."

"As I have thee. So! Welcome brothers all!"

Yes. They all were brothers but they were not brothers of blood. Blood brothers have been known to betray one another. These brothers had a deeper bond; they were what they called themselves Brothers of Good Deeds. They belonged to a global moral code of Brothers of Good Deeds that would never permit betrayal because death would be their punishment. Theirs was a solemn covenant and an oath to fealty, though some of them came from poor, humble and destitute beginnings, all were equal in deeds: the pursuit of wisdom, the maintenance of temperance, the adherence to justice, and to question ones own courage.

The dinner was one common among the aristocracy yet those of low birth cherished the moment Lord Thomas had provided for them. Lord Thomas treated each one as equals in his fold and no servant in his manor would condescend to any of his sworn Brothers.

The pheasants were richly spiced. Although the wines were poured liberally, all knew temperance. Therefore intoxication was to break from their moral code. They each only had one glass which was savored to enhance the delicate meal.

"So, Brother Thomas, how may we be of service to thy grace?"

"It is a woman," answered Lord Thomas.

"How has the woman in question wronged thee? Has she broken thy heart?"

All the brothers had a hearty laugh which filled the dining room with joy.

"Nay! Not how she has wrong me, brother. Though she has broken my heart but not out of will but out of shame. I had asked for her betrothal and my bequests have been regularly smited. I am young, handsome and an Earl, therefore I needed to find the cause for her repugnance of me. After much investigating, it had been revealed that she had been wronged. She had been ravaged by a mouse of man who is no friend to our cause."

"Who, pray tell, can that be? Almost all who know of our existence are no friends of ours," interjected Brother Patrick. Brother Patrick was an Irish exile of humble beginnings now living in England. He is one of the sharpest marksmen of bow and arrow in the surrounding six counties.

"The scoundrel who stole my lady's maiden head is non other than Robert of Lambershire," answered Brother Thomas.

"The Duke of Norfordshire?"

"Yes, the same. I propose to undo him of his haughty pride in the presence of my wife to be and..."

"But Brother, she has not her virginity. Art thou certain thou needs..."

"Do not question my heart. Her maiden hood was stolen from a vicious dog who has no respect for women of virtue. She mayhap no longer retain her virginity and for that she has rejected my advances but she is still pure in heart."

"Who is this lucky woman who will grace thy life?" asked Brother Theo, a former sailor, now happy with his life as a shepherd.

"I will speak of it but the secret lives among us. The woman is Lady Catherine, daughter to the late Earl of Greybury."

Silence fell upon the room. The Lady Catherine was known throughout the land as one of great beauty and for austerity and strong Christian faith.

"We will help our brother. What 'tis thy plan?" asked Sir James.

Brother Thomas unfolded his plan to them. It was meticulous and there was no room for error. There was only one small detail which would make the brothers abort their plan and that was if the Lady Catherine would not consider such an offer.

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The journey on horse to the estate of the late Earl of Greybury took several days. Lord Thomas wished to make the best impression possible to the Lady Catherine. No expense was spared. Lord Thomas provided well for his brothers.

Lord Thomas had decided to approach the Lady Catherine on the sabbath after morning prayers.

"Your humble servant, Lady Catherine."

"Good morrow, Lord Thomas. What brings you to the county of Greybury?"

"Your beauty, mi lady."

"I have answered each of your protestations and my answer is firm."

"Perhaps your answers were firm in your letters but I must needs object one last time and ask for you to hear my plea in my presence."

"But nothing has changed, Lord Thomas."

"Nothing has changed with you but it has changed with me. I have made inquiries as to the cause of your pent up reclusion and wherefore hadst chosen such a life. It would be a shame if your great beauty would end with you and not have little ones to love."

"Alas, it has been fated that I shall not have children."

"It is not fate which has turn you. It is the crime of one Duke of Norfordshire."

Lady Catherine went pale. "Good day, Lord Thomas!" She spoke these words as a wounded fawn would bleat deep in the forest. She walked past him toward her awaiting carriage.

He followed her and blocked her way toward her carriage. "My dearest lady, I mean you no harm and only wish I can undo the harm and injustice done to you."

"So now that you know my shame you wish to use me as a common whore!?"

"No, mi lady, my offer of marriage still stands firm. You are the consumation of moral duty and regard for all things good."

"What has been do to me cannot be undone."

"For that, I am fully aware of your plight."

"The answer is still no."

"Lady Catherine, is this gentleman causing you trouble?" briskly asked her coachman.

"We will leave in a moment, Stephen," answered Lady Catherine.

"I beg of you, Lady Catherine, I can right this wrong and make him pay dearly for his injustice to you. If I can prove my love to you by such an act, would you be mine as wife? I love you, mi lady. My life is not complete without you in it."

This stopped her. She turned to him and spoke these words, "I am not one who seeks revenge on others."

"This is not revenge. It is law. An ancient one that says an eye for an eye." This caught her attention. "The injustice done to you mayhap cause you distress but I will love you kindly and gently and do everything in my power to give you comfort and joy. To seek justice from ... um, to call him Duke brings dishonor to that title therefore I shall address him as a mouse of a man and coward. He, who does such things to bestow dishonor upon the honorable, I can give you my word, he will think on his crimes forever more."

"Lord Thomas, I will accept your offer of seeking justice for the daughter of the late Earl of Greybury. It is by no means a promise to your other request of my hand in marriage. However, if I am satisfied with your attempt to apply justice to the Duke's personal crime against me, then I

shall humbly obey my husband and be his subservient and you shall be the next Earl of Greybury."

"Lady Catherine, if I will have the honor of your hand in marriage, you will never be my subservient but you shall be my equal. When the Good Lord took a rib from Adam to create Eve, it was so woman would stand by his side, not to be trod upon under foot."

He put out his hand and she put her hand in his. He gently kissed it. "Thank you for giving me hope, my lady."

Lady Catherine's heart fluttered.

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The following day, they prepared for the plan of attack upon Duke of Norfordshire, known only to the Brothers of Good Deeds and the Lady Catherine henceforth as "the mouse of men."

The Lady Catherine would dress in man's attire and had to learn to ride astride a horse, instead of sidesaddle. They had until Friday for the plan to work. It was well known by the upper aristocracy that the Duke of Norfordshire would go to his usual gambling houses each fortnight, and Friday was his day to gamble. The Duke's attempts to keep secret were futile since he owed his creditors great sums of money. His gambling nights would always end with a night of debauchery, drunkenness and whoring. But this night would be different for the Duke, Lord Thomas and his brothers would make sure of that.

The Brothers of Good Deeds accompanied Lady Catherine, dressed as a manservant, to the hidden road that the Duke of Norfordshire's carriage would use. It was well known that he instructed his coachman to use this road since it was not well trod and regarded as safe from highwaymen.

The brothers and Lady Catherine waited all day on that road and not a single carriage nor horseman came through it. As twilight approached, they heard the thunder of approaching steeds and carriage. They all put on their masks and hid. Three of the brothers armed their bows with arrows and the other three armed their crossbows.

And so the plan began.

The approaching carriage had to stop for a fallen tree. Unbeknownst to the driver, the tree was placed there on purpose by the Brothers.

The coach driver announced to the Duke inside the carriage that he had to stop in order to clear debris on the road before they can continue. The coach driver dismounted from the top of the carriage. The coach porter stayed on top.

As the coach driver approached the fallen tree he heard, "thou hast three arrows pointed at thee and thou too, porter. Don't assume thou canst shoot thy flint gun for thou wouldst be worms meat if thou tries. We want no harm to come to thee."

"We will give thee all we have!" Spoke the carriage porter.

"We are not common thieves, my good man. We come not for money or goods." Spoke Lord Thomas to the two coach men.

"What 'tis thou needs?"

"We have come for the Duke of Norforshire. Porter, please thee to climb down from the coach and maintain slow moves with thy hands away from thy pockets."

The brothers quickly tied and gagged the two coachmen to a tree.

"Duke of Norfordshire! We know thou art in the carriage. Exeunt the carriage slowly."

The brothers waited a long time but the Duke did not emerge. They could hear him rustling about inside.

"Do not bring difficulty upon thyself, Lord Robert, it is not thy riches we seek. But perhaps since thou hast so much owed to creditors, with all thy gambling and whoring, 'tis hard to know what riches art still in thy possession."

The brothers all had a hearty laugh at that.

From inside the carriage the Duke spoke out, "didst thou murder my footman and driver? How can I trust thee?"

Lord Thomas removed the gag from the driver, "speak to thy master."

"Lord Robert, we are tied to a tree. No harm has come to us and..." Lord Thomas quickly stuffed the driver with the cloth.

"'Tis true, Lord Robert, we brought no harm to thy coachmen."

The stalled time permitted two brothers to stealthily approach the carriage, one on each side not knowing which door the Duke would appear from. The door opened and the Duke came out with his flint pistol in hand. Brother Theo quickly placed a dagger to the Duke's throat.

"Lord Robert, with only one shot in thy pistol, how dost thou expect to escape with thy life? Put thy flint pistol down for we have not come for thy murder either."

Brother Theo grabed the flint pistol.

The following was swift and well planned.

The brothers tied Lord Robert of Lambershire, the Duke Norfordshire, firmly to a tree facing his two coachmen.

"Who are ye? Reveal thyself! I command it!"

"Lord Robert, thou art tied to a tree! Thou art in no position to make demands of us. We are ones who seek justice for those who cannot seek justice for themselves."

Lady Catherine, also masked and dressed as a manservant, approached Sir Thomas and stood next to him.

"Is this the mouse of a man who wronged you?"

She nodded her head.

Sir Thomas's use of the formal 'you' rather than the less formal 'thee' to address Lady Catherine was a small clue to Lord Robert.

"That is no manservant behind that mask! Unmask thyself!"

Brother Theo stuffed Lord Robert's mouth with a cloth because they were all disgusted by the protestations.

"Please thee to accept my sincerest apologies for what thou art about to witness." Lord Thomas addressed the two coachmen with utmost kindness and sincerity. "But, alas, it is also important that thou witness the punishment for which the Duke of Norfordshire shall endure. Thou mayest needs to expel bile from witnessing the punishment and for that I shall remove thy mouth bondage." He removed the cloth gags from them.

Sir James used his dagger to cut Lord Robert's pantaloons to fully expose his manhood to the two coachmen, and all the masked brothers and Lady Catherine.

"Behold, gentlemen, the size of this mouse of a man's manhood. I suppose the higher ones birth the smaller the manhood. Hast thou ever satisfied even one whore with such a mite?"

Lord Thomas played with Lord Robert's penis in such a manner that brought discomfort to him. Lord Thomas brought the dangling prepuce all the way forward and pulled and pulled. Lord Robert began to scream through his cloth gag.

The brothers laughed for they all knew what was to come. When the laughter calmed, Lord Thomas pulled from a pocket a short length of yarn. He pulled Lord Robert's prepuce as forward as he could and tied the yarn so the head of his member was in front with the long dangling prepuce ready for its demise. He tied the yarn very tight which brought more muffled screams from Lord Robert.

"Lord Robert, henceforth thou wilt be less of a man than thou art now. These two witnesses of thy employ will know henceforth that thou wilt be less of a man. And rumors will flow throughout the realm and shame wilt be brought upon thee."

Lord Thomas unsheathed his dagger and placed it firmly upon Lord Robert's manhood directly in front of the tightly tied yarn. Lord Robert's muffled screams came to a new level of urgency and he struggled against his bondage. All the brothers stood in stoic silence.

"Thou wilt not know if the rumors came from us or from whom thou hast wronged or from thine own trusted coachmen but soon all the whores wilt know and laugh at thy deformity. Men wilt look upon thee and laugh. And thou wilt discover that pleasure from sex wilt cease to be. And thy ladyship wilt turn thee away from her bed."

Lord Thomas's dagger blade began pressing into Lord Robert's skin. The muffled scream and struggle was unlike anything heard from him before.

"Lord Robert, is that what the virgins with whom thou had raped sounded like? We're their pleas equally unswayed as mine? Say farewell to thy pleasure."

No more words were spoken. With a quickness that surprised even Sir James, Lord Thomas cut off Lord Robert's prepuce in one swift slice and threw it on the ground. The muffled howls of pain from Lord Robert were unceasing. Hot tears poured from his face.

And as predicted, the two coachmen vomited up bile on themselves to witness something they never before imagined.

"Be happy thy mouths hadst not been bond or mayhap thou wouldst drown in thine own bile. What thou coachmen had witnessed requires a higher degree of courage to stomach." Sir James spoke these words with profound stoicism.

All the Brothers and Lady Catherine mounted their steeds. Brother Patrick, the marksman, armed his bow and without fail brought the arrow directly onto the hemp bonds of the two coachmen and set them free.

"Tend to thy master. He will heal in time," Brother Patrick commanded to the two coachmen.

With that last act, all the Brothers of Good Deeds fled to return to their own lives until another time justice was called for.

Lady Catherine and Lord Thomas rode side by side in silence for several miles until they stopped at a cool stream to give their horses fresh water and rest. Lord Thomas set up a small area for Lady Catherine to change out of her manservant's clothing and into a lady's riding attire. Lord Thomas changed her steed's saddle for a sidesaddle appropriate for a lady of her nobility. At last, Lord Thomas changed his own clothing for one more fitting for his.

Still no words were spoken to each other. And he waited upon one knee for Lady Catherine.

Finally, she approached Lord Thomas.

"You have ruined him. Never have I witnessed such a ruination. Had I known I would have never.."

"Lady, please, I beg of you. Hear me."

"My mind is not changed. Such a destruction of a man I would have never agreed to."

"My dearest Lady. No such thing has occurred. Please let me explain! I implore you."



After a moment of silence, Lord Thomas spoke.

"My dearest lady, I am a man who has also experienced that "destruction" as you describe it. But I urge you to undertake my worldly knowledge of such things. It is not destruction which I have experienced. It was a new beginning. I am not less of a man. I am more of a man. Myself and my brothers all have made vows and voluntarily sacrificed a small piece of ourselves to become better men. The Mohammadans of Arabia and the wandering Hebrews have for centuries made such sacrifices upon themselves. It is called circumcision. It is spoken about in the Good Book that all those followers of the God of Abraham must needs make this sacrifice. When my brothers and myself traveled abroad we ventured into the holy land and there we learned how to become better men and we did so. Even our Lord Jesus Christ had..."

"But how do you breed?" interrupted Lady Catherine.

"We are all just as virile as before. If not more so, it is said that in this state that we have become stronger in love, not weaker."

"How do you know?"

"I know my body. And I know I can bring you children. Let it be known to you that I have never known woman in flesh but I assure you I will leave you satisfied with every ounce of my being."

"But you told Lord Robert that he will now be less of a man."

"True. But virility and manhood is in one's soul, my lady. It is not on what one possesses. I put the seed of doubt into his soul and now for the rest of his days he will think of himself less of a man than other men. Yet I have seen the world beyond our realm and I know the virility of these men who have undergone the same sacrifice as myself and my brothers. And also that of Lord Robert. The sacrifice is the same but myself and my brothers went into it willingly and for that we are men. Lord Robert's sacrifice was stolen from him by me.

"Just as you thought yourself to be less of a woman and less desirable because you believed he stole your virtue from you. I don't believe that. He stole nothing from you, my lady. Because you are just as virtuous and as wise as you were before he forced himself upon you. You will always be a Lady of the highest order. Please make me the happiest man on God's great earth."

Still on one knee, he looked up at her with an honesty and openness she had never before seen in any man. He was pure and unspoiled. And he was ALL MAN. She stood there gazing upon a god amongst men.

No words were uttered. Wind passed through leaves in the trees. The fragrance of flowers filled the air. And her proud steed nudged her forward toward Lord Thomas.

"Yes, I will be thine."

That word "thine" announced that all formality would be dropped between them and her heart was his.