

A question of Faith

And Benjamin did have three sons in turn, Joseph who did share his countenance, Jacob who did share his stature, and Abraham, who did not resemble him. Benjamin was a good man, and found room in his ear for the words of priests, and so, did raise his sons rightly, in faith.

As the years advanced to ripen youth, and find the strong cord of knotted muscle within each tender soul, the boys found in the lesson of faith and love of their father, firm resolve amongst newfound strength, save Abraham, who never held to the words which did cling within his siblings' breast, for Abraham, had no faith.

The years turned slowly from golden yellow summer, spilled sweetly as wind upon wheat over the curve of distant hills, to evening's bashful cool, and Benjamin did call his children unto him, for he was wise, and felt life's ending close rightly around the last of many days nobly spent. And Benjamin did implore them, to remember, of faith. "I have held a secret from you, dear children, now grown and strong are you, and you may know the secret which has sustained me. I will soon be gone, but never gone, and my soul shall spill, even after life's tether is last clipped, into the mind of Hassad the priest, and within him, I shall live, and speak to you. For you must remember my words, and know of faith."

Then but soon, the day had come, now empty and dark was their world, for their father Benjamin was gone. And the boys, now men...were alone, save for the lesson and words they did carry in the hollow of their broken breast. For each did but love him in their own heart, and found the evening wet with the dew of tears. For they did love him.

Each boy set out to taste of life, and fill the empty cup of days, with life's promise and bounty. In three far flung lands, they did cast young eye and strike root, now with wife were they, and children did anoint the sound of morning's quiet, with childish laughter, and the scent of food, now warm as the day...and in happiness did they live.

Upon the door of Joseph, a knock did sound, and Joseph, did find in the shadow of hope, the priest Hassad, with a question. "I am but the spirit of Benjamin, and Joseph, I ask of you but one thing: Do you have faith?" And Joseph did nod deeply, and spoke the word 'Yes,' and did affirm it, and in solemn tones, they did then part.

The word had been spreading, and Joseph did hear of it, the hordes of vermin, mad and strange, men upon horseback who came as a wind of death, and consumed all that stood before and beneath them, as if having was a right which they alone did covet. Joseph, was not afraid, and knew, nothing could harm him, so potent and severe was his faith...and its protection.

He spoke to his children, and frightened wife: "Do not tremble my children, and do not

weep, my sweet wife. For we love God, and have faith. In him you may trust, and in faith, the world will be recast. See my still heart, and calm hand? I know, of faith. Join me, and we may sup. All is seen, and known, all is understood. You must know of God, and know...of faith.”

And they did find in his steadfast courage and certain heart, the anchor and reason, to believe.

The cloud of dust and stink, fell over the countryside, and the wind did bring the stench of an unclean thing to fill the air, as the distant sound of horse’s hooves beating the earth grew louder, and soon, did fill the hollow ear. A cloud of blight, men who were worth nothing, proud and vengeful, filled with ugly lust and cruel pleasure, set his home to the match, and did wait, in happy expectancy and glee, as they did flee from the covetous silence, now torn asunder. And they did hold him, Jacob was but one man, and they were many, and soon, he did see it, the circle drawing around what was precious, his wife and daughter, began to tremble, and weep. For his daughter, was but a small girl. And he did watch, as what was precious was held, torn open...consumed, and disgraced. Jacob’s heart, became still and dark, to know what was now, and forever—lost. He did hang his heavy head, and knew of hope’s last vanishing. The slip of steel cutting was then sweet, and unto his father’s breast, Joseph did pass...in silence.

Jacob did live amongst the perfect wood and grasses, so sweet was the air, in summer’s noon, and fall’s first crisp did stain the cool wind with sweet smoke, and within the heart of time’s spending his happiness was founded. Jacob was a farmer, and his children were plump and round, strong and beautiful as the days were long, so was the bounty of his world. And he heard a knock upon hollow wood, and behind the door was Hassad, grey of beard, and frail, was the shadow of hope. The priest Hassad, did greet him with a question. “I am but the spirit of Benjamin, and Jacob, I ask of you but one thing: Do you have faith?” And Jacob did nod deeply, and spoke the word ‘Yes,’ and did affirm it, and in solemn tones, they did then part.

The months grew hot, and the crackling of flame and choking dark clouds of roiling smoke, did crest the distant hills, until the snapping of fire filled the air, and a poisonous stink, of burnt smoke and embers did stain the clear wind. Jacob did take his family, and held them in his steady arms, to calm their trembling. “Have faith, oh weak children, and tender wife. We do love God, and he will sustain us through this horror. It is nothing for him, and he is mighty, we need but faith. See my easy countenance, and firm hand, I do not tremble and feel fear, I am strong and safe, nothing can harm us, for we are right, we do love God, and have faith.” And they did take comfort and solace in his strength and right words, and did understand him.

Before long, the sound of fire and the bitter taste of heat and burnt smoke, did fill their mouths, and they did suffer, then burn. In sheets of flame, their skin but slipping and slick, falling as weight and loose fat spent from bone, now liquid slipping away and

down, their flesh swallowed up...into heated earth. Little remains, once heat has tasted the tender places. Time...flees. So was their reward.

Abraham did live in wooded timber, and of his own hand, found salvation is farmed and cut from the wrinkled brow. Each day he did prepare, and work. He did teach his family rightly, and all knew their place. Abraham was clever, and strong. The sound of horse hooves crushing the earth did approach him, and he was prepared. He did pierce the necks of the filthy animals set as stink upon horseflesh, and arrows did find the soft throat of what was worth little. For that which consumes a precious flower in lust, is worth nothing. So did he pierce them in the tender places, and did then lay the dead thing into the earth, and sweeten its moist heart. For that which is worth little, may serve the bounty of the earth, as it does moulder. So did his garden rise up, to be fed.

And he did hear the flames upon the tinder grass, and had long known he must work, and cut back the forest's tender bounty, so he might allow the flames, the golden spark of hope, for flame, does but cleanse the wood, and let her heart again beat unencumbered.

Abraham did hear a knock upon hollow wood, and did open his door up, to see a broken and brittle figure, the priest Hassad. The priest Hassad, did greet him with a question. "I am but the spirit of Benjamin, and Abraham, I ask of you but one thing: Do you have faith?" Abraham looked upon him in contempt and did speak: "You offend me with your foolish, guilty question. I have faith in the only thing which is deserving of it. Faith is a fool's virtue. And you are a fool. I have faith in but one thing. I have faith—in myself."

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