

Amity's Vow

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The way to the chapel was strewn with rubble and bloody corpses. As Amity trod along the stone floor, she could hear the soles of her bare feet squelching on the stone floor. She shivered as she reasoned that the stickiness that adhered itself to her feet was the blood that flowed from the slaughtered victims of the Duke of Warwick's revenge. However, she was less concerned than she might otherwise have been for the cleanliness of her feet. Her naked body was already a mess of dirt, scratches and bruises. A little more made no difference at all.

But before she bathed her body in a stream or even in the castle's filthy moat, in which faeces floated amongst the corpses of the brave defenders of the Baron of Flint's demesne, she had more pressing duty to attend. And this was to give her praise to the Lord God for sparing her from the gruesome slaughter that had delivered every man, woman and child within the castle walls to a premature encounter with their maker. She hoped only that their souls would be spared the pains of eternal damnation she was certain their murderers must surely endure when their time should come.

Amity was shocked to see that his cloth had not spared the priest who served in the chapel any more than it did his congregation. Amongst the piled bodies, slumped over the pews and under the shelter of the holy relics that had failed on this occasion to save believers from the knights and mercenary warriors of a vengeful Duke, there, on the very spot where the faithful celebrated the blessed Eucharist, was the body of the priest, his body slumped over the now drying blood he had shed in defence of the holy sacrament.

It was at the feet of the carved image of the Saviour, raised high on the cross commemorating the moment of His great sacrifice, that Amity bent down, her naked

body normally so incongruous in such a holy place, and made her obeisance. As the Lord Jesus Christ had saved the world from its sins, so too had He seen fit to spare her from the fate of her fellows. And in gratitude of that, Amity's first priority was to pray to the Lord to express her gratitude for His infinite mercy and also to request that this mercy should extend to the souls of the freshly massacred, whose corpses filled every room and open space within the castle walls; and no doubt throughout the estate of the now deceased Baron of Flint whose foolishness had brought such disaster upon his servants and family.

She confirmed the vow she had earlier made as she prayed to the Lord her Saviour. As she knew of no sacrifice appropriate for a young woman of no worldly wealth, she vowed instead to eschew forever any possessions of any kind for the rest of her natural life. This was a vow not only to accept no reward for her labours beyond that necessary to stay alive but to own not even clothes to shroud her naked flesh. A vow she intended to keep forever and one that would remind not just her, but anyone who saw her, of the extent of her gratitude to her saviour.

In truth, clothing was something she rarely wore anyway. The recently decapitated Baron, like his father, treated his serving wenches as nothing better than whores. They were his mere playthings from whom he demanded sexual favours whenever he wished and paid no regard at all to their own desires. Only the barest rags were ever allowed to cover the wenches in his service and he took pleasure in their humiliation.

The Baron was one who believed that just as he owned every ox, sheep or swine in his estates, so too did he own the villeins and serfs who tended them. Not for

him was there any intention to reciprocate the fealty extended to him. He never promised nor provided any protection or kindness. The English peasantry in his service were his to dispose as he felt fit and the young Baron followed his father's example in his dereliction of any duty towards those living within his estate.

In any case, he was unable to provide the protection the serfs most desired. The greatest source of their misery and the cause of their most bitter complaints had always been the depredations of the Baron himself.

Although he professed to the Christian faith, he frequently damned even the Lord Jesus Christ and treated the ministers of the chapel as servants whose prime purpose was to avail him absolution from the many sins he committed. And should a priest show any reluctance to do so, or ever display the temerity to question the Baron's wisdom, he would be treated with as little respect as that shown by the Duke of Warwick's knights to the now deceased Father Jacques de Calais whose bloody body draped the steps to the nave.

Initially, she had welcomed the opportunity to serve as a wench for the elder Baron of Flint. Like many in the manor, she naively believed that the violence and petty slights visited on her by the Baron's knights was not representative of their liege. Her new servitude was also rescue from the abuse she suffered from her natural father who treated his daughter and wife with as little kindness as did his Norman overlords. She had long lost her virginity to her father's perverse passion from which her mother was unable to protect her daughter any more than she was able to protect herself from a man who believed only too well that she was there solely to honour and obey.

But, as Amity discovered, all that happened was that she exchanged one

misery for another, with the additional burden of having to learn, with no formal tuition, the French language that was all the Baron's court spoke or understood.

As Amity's facility in French improved, she learnt not only the words necessary to serve her duties as a wench to the portly, balding Baron but also those words for profanity and obscenity freely mouthed in the company of the Baron's equally foul-mouthed knights and directed with no restraint at the wenches who served him. These profanities were just the accompaniment to the indignities and humiliations met upon Amity and the other women who served his table. She soon learnt that unless a fellow baron or a member of the royal family should visit the Baron's castle, she would be denied the modesty she yearned for, and that the abuse she had known all her life before was to be exceeded by the horrors that were limited by only the Baron's imagination.

After her first day in his service, shivering under the rag which served as her only clothes and also her bed linen, her tears and shame could not be consoled even by the tender caresses of her companions who were now much more inured to the Baron's despicable lust. She soon learnt that the only solace available were her hours of sleep or those waking hours in the company of her equally unfortunate fellows in the execution of their many and arduous menial duties. She wondered how anyone could be so cruel and heartless as the Baron and his knights.

She rejoiced on the occasion of the old Baron's death in a hunting accident witnessed only by his eldest son, the new Baron. Perhaps the young lad, barely needing to shave and so inept on the saddle, would treat his servants and villeins with more respect.

Her hopes were dashed when the young Baron continued in the tradition of his father, made worse by the fact that he was more virile and so able to pursue his rapacious assaults with more energy and persistence. Only the proscriptions ordained by the church prevented her from taking her own life to bring her misery to its end.

She became a frequent visitor to the chapel, avoiding those times when the Baron or his knights made attendance, rare though these were, and prayed to the Lord for deliverance. She found comfort in the images of the Holy Mother Mary and of the blessed saints whose images filled the chapel as they did every church in Christendom. And most of all she took comfort and strength from the example of Jesus Christ, who like her, had suffered so much and had yet, through His suffering, brought the blessing of the Holy Spirit to the world.

“Fucking Warwick!” exclaimed the young Baron not many months after assuming the mantle left by his father. “The cunt slighted me. He even accused me of being the cause of my father’s death.”

“He was a close friend of your father, my liege,” remarked Sir Guillaume, one of the older knights who had lost an ear and a hand in the Crusades. “It is natural he should be aggrieved.”

“Are you suggesting that it was I, you fuckface whoreson, who was in some way responsible for my father’s death?”

“Not at all, my liege! But many have wondered how it is his own arrow should bring him so low.”

“Don’t you fucking accuse me, you cockless ass. My father’s arrow was deflected by a tree between him and the boar we hunted. Were it not for my urgent

ministrations his death would have been sooner. Was it not I who raised the alarm?"

"I make no accusations, my liege, but words have been said in the Royal Court..."

The young Baron eyed his knight with a true glint of menace that clouded his misleadingly innocent face. "It is not right for the Duke of Warwick to slur my character. Not only I, but others in the Royal Court, heard him slander my good name and should the opportunity arise I shall take my blade and force it deep inside the same orifice of his as I shall soon be embedded within of the cuckold's daughter, Amity, here."

Unfortunately, the Baron was true to his word and Amity soon lay beside her sated master, shivering from the chill of the banqueting hall and her own shame, while the Baron resumed his drunken revelries with his other knights who had similarly taken advantage of the many pretty young women who served his table, slaved in the kitchen and throughout cared for their many needs beyond those of their carnal desire.

It was not many days after this that Sir Guillaume fell low in a sword-fight, to be discovered by three other knights who wept while wiping clean their blades of the blood that they claimed belonged to the assailants, whose bodies, unlike that of Sir Guillaume were never to be found.

And from that day hence no suggestion was made by the late Sir Guillaume's fellow knights of the rumour rife within the Baron's manor that it was the young Baron Reynard who had been responsible for his father's untimely demise.

This was not, alas, the last time the Baron referred to the slights he had endured from the Duke of Warwick. Not many days after Sir Guillaume had been laid

to rest, amongst great weeping in the chapel, Amity heard the Baron once again curse the name of the Duke. She lay beneath the snoring body of Sir Henri, his penis still between her legs and her arse still sore from the Baron's simultaneous violation.

“The whoreson declared that in battle against the treacherous Comte de Boulogne, he would not choose to serve beside me. He said that he could no more trust me than should my father when hunting. Is there no limit to the hogfucker’s impertinence? Am I not, as much as he, a servant to the King?”

The other barons expressed horror at the Duke’s most recent example of courtesy, vying with each other to recount the vile unholy deeds he had committed and the extent to which his arse deserved to be abused.

“There is a village but one day’s ride hither that should feel the wrath of your steel,” remarked Sir Simon. “They deserve as surely as their master to feel the vengeance of a baron dishonoured.”

The Baron of Flint laughed. “Every wench will know a knight’s cock in their arse and their babes in arms the lethality of his steel.”

The evening was enlivened from thence by speculations of the Baron’s righteous rage, whose concomitant sexual excitement was similarly stimulated to the further shame and distress of the abused serving wenches. This was a night whose bruises pained Amity and her fellows for many days after, while, receiving no sympathy and no respite, they continued to serve their masters in their menial and amorous chores.

“I pissed on as many whores as I had piss in my bladder!” boasted the Baron after he and his knights had enacted their revenge, fired up with mead, hemp and

wine.

“And I their pathetic children!” boasted Sir Henri, whose lascivious hands groped the naked flesh of poor Edwina, who had just this day began her service in the Baron’s kitchen and suffered the most from the knight’s predations.

“Not one villein or serf alive! And every ox, ass and swine removed to our kitchen!” echoed Sir Yves with a cruel laugh. “The Duke of Warwick now knows that the Baron of Flint is not a man to cross.”

However, there was no immediate reprisal and the Baron was frustrated by the lack of concern the Duke showed to those in his estate, although a formal complaint was made to the King to compensate the Duke for his loss.

As the days and weeks passed by, Amity heard more accounts of the atrocities the Baron chose to inflict on the peasants labouring on the Duke of Warwick’s fields, whilst suffering, as did the other wenches, the drunken self-congratulation of the knights of Flint.

The Baron’s frustration at the Duke’s stoical inaction mounted at the same pace as his boldness in the extent of his murderous incursions into the shires and boroughs who owed allegiance to the Duke. Amity shivered, despite the extent of her own misery, at the accounts of the knights’ depredations. No woman or child, let alone man or livestock, was spared the sword or carnal lust of the knights and their armed servants. Each horror was recalled in detail of women raped, children abused and men disfigured before, without exception, all but the valuable beasts of the estate were slaughtered or put to the flame.

Like the other wenches, accustomed now to a court that treated them with no

respect, but at least spared their lives and refrained from mutilating their young bodies with the swords and knives never far from their person, Amity was frightened that an excess of mead or ale might be enough for the court to extend their perversions beyond that which they normally felt free to express on the Duke's servants.

And then one evening, there was a dread morose silence in the court. A messenger from the King had arrived, guarded by the Royal privilege whose potency defended him from the rage the Baron was so near to expressing on the trembling servant.

"The King has declared that he will offer no protection should the Duke take what he considers due recompense for the wrongs he has suffered!" the Baron exclaimed, not for the first time that evening.

As it was Amity who was at this moment enduring the Baron's drunken amorousness in the sullen and cheerless atmosphere that had engulfed the court in their post-dinner orgy, she particularly trembled as she heard the Baron's words. Would he visit on her the blows that poor Matilda had suffered when the Baron was similarly angry and it was she who was fellating him? Would Amity also earn a broken nose and bruises that took more than a week to subside?

On this occasion, no! The Baron's despondency left him disinclined to do more than drink and moan, showing rather more anger towards his knights whom he accused, long and vociferously, of showing excessive zeal in their ravishments of the Duke's properties, both human and animal.

"I am a man who has been wronged not only by the insults of a Duke, but also by the excess of my own court!" the Baron swore. "You are all nothing but the open

cunts of pox-ridden whores!"

And later still in the evening, the serving wenches, Amity amongst them, huddled together in unwilling attendance of the court's possible lusts, the Baron's anger extended to insulting the King, who had unfairly sided with the vicious Duke, and, even, (and this shocked Amity to the core) to God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, who had so abandoned the Baron in his hour of need.

It was these shocking profanities that convinced Amity, who soon afterwards retreated to the chapel to beg forgiveness for the sins she had committed in the duty of the Baron, that her lord and master would be damned in this life as he would surely be in the next. As she bent down, wearing only the filthy rags that maintained her last few shreds of modesty, she begged that the Lord Jesus should spare her; although she understood that His justice should be extended to those who so impertinently desecrated His name.

It was late afternoon not many days later that Amity first heard word of the Duke's vengeance of the slights he had suffered.

The Baron's court was sat around the table, venison and boar sating their hunger and the bodies of Amity and the other wenches their rapacious lust. On the table was the hookah pipe and imported opium prepared by his servants and costing, so the Baron boasted, more than ten hide of oxen. It was then, Amity suffering the slow and inexpert thrusts of the narcotised Sir Louis, that the captain of the guards entered the chamber and in his halting French announced the long-feared arrival of the Duke of Warwick's army.

"Shit! Fuck the Lord Christ!" swore the Baron, rudely throwing off poor

Edwina. Despite the pleas of his knights, the Baron had not prepared any additional defence against this promised assault. “What terms can we plea?”

“The Duke’s messenger says that if you surrender yourself at once to his justice, he will spare the court and your peasants. But should you show the least reluctance to face the punishment he has planned for you, every man, woman and child, whatsoever their estate, will fall to his soldiers’ steel.”

“Fuck! No choice at all!” exclaimed the Baron. “His gaolers and torturers are infamous throughout the land for the sick perversity by which they mete the Duke’s so called ‘justice’. We must needs fight to the death.”

“Is that wise, my liege?” ventured Sir Jean de Calais, who was even more a victim than Sir Louis to the disorientation of the opium he had so greedily inhaled.

“Are you suggesting that your lord to whom you owe fealty should bend his knee to the accursed Duke?” snapped the Baron, rudely shoving Edwina onto the floor, her master’s semen trickling from her vagina, and standing breechless and shameless in front of his court.

“Not at all, my liege,” pleaded the knight.

“In that case, you shall join the captain of the guard and fend off the assault. Only in that way, by being amongst the first to display your loyalty, shall you be spared from my own wrath.”

Reluctantly, Sir Jean pulled on his hose, as did the other dishevelled knights of the court, and followed the captain of the guard through the door of the Baron’s banqueting hall to what he clearly believed was his ultimate fate. The Baron snorted as he pulled his own hose to his waist.

"Fetch me my armour!" he commanded Edwina. "And you other sires, prepare yourself to defend me, if needs be to the death!"

The knights were visibly reluctant to move, but the Baron stood up and placed his hand on the hilt of his sword. They then stood up and shuffled off to their chambers to clothe themselves in oxhide, metal and steel.

Amity and the other wenches remained in the banqueting hall. Where better to be as the Duke's knights besieged the castle walls than in this, the most heavily defended sanctum of the entire castle? Naked and shivering from fear more than from the cold, the wenches huddled together against the walls, hoping that their presence in a hall otherwise denied them except in the service of their lords should pass unnoticed in the few hours left to them.

Not all knights returned to the banqueting hall, arraigned in their armour. Amity wondered, as did the Baron more vocally, whether those absent knights were proving their mettle in the defence of their master or whether they were cowering in their chambers, hoping to escape the Duke's retribution. However, the extent of the Baron's trust of those knights who returned was most visibly displayed by his reluctance to let even one of them leave his sight and join the many serfs and guards, where surely their services were most required, to defend the castle walls with bow and arrow, cauldrons of boiling tar, and sacks of loose stone. Instead the Baron partook of yet more opium and mead, and preoccupied himself more in the invention of profane and obscene oaths than in devising a stratagem for the defence of the men, women and children whose lives depended on his wisdom and vigilance.

Every few minutes, another guard entered the chamber, sometimes bloodied by

the rocks and stones launched over the castle walls, and in one case, limping from the wound of an arrow that had ascended the castle walls. And with each report, the news was worse and the Baron's advice to his men more hysterical and progressively less practical.

At last, the outer walls were breached and the news was of true savagery. Babies had been snatched from their pleading mother's arms and impaled by sword and pike. Women were raped by one or more assailants, irrespective of their youth or maturity, before they too were killed in ways that sometimes matched the perversity of their blood-soaked lust. No man was spared, but was treated more summarily and often with unnecessary cruelty. Only livestock was reprieved the slaughter met upon Christian folk, perhaps only to later provide benison for the Duke's table.

Throughout the siege, the Baron's banqueting hall was also besieged, not by the Duke's warriors but by an increasingly desperate mass of peasantry clamouring to share the protection of those knights still defending their mostly incoherent and now totally drunk Baron. He had by his side his wife, poor Alinor, who was treated with almost as little respect as his wenches, her bosom exposed from beneath her ripped gown and serving as a suckling toy for the hysterical Baron.

Never before had Amity felt pity for the Baron's wife who was normally spared the indignities reserved for his wenches and for whom conjugal duties were provided rarely and in privacy.

The anxious peasants were denied the sanctuary of the knights' protection, which was at the moment most dedicated to denying them this privilege, while Amity held tight to Edwina's naked body, relishing again the flesh that had been her closest

companion on those many nights where Amity experienced the only love she had ever known. A love far more passionate and true than Amity had ever known from the brutish Norman knights who held all Saxon wenches in the lowest contempt. They were accustomed to being treated lower than the horses, hounds and falcons to which the knights expressed greater affection than those they fucked almost every night.

At first, the only report of the approach of the Duke's soldiers was that provided by the messengers, but soon these were supplemented by the resounding thumps against the walls of the inner keep as unknown but undeniably large objects thudded on its frame. A chunk of wall burst open, letting in more light than normally penetrated the arrow slit holes that lined the walls and normally provided the only evidence of daylight that Amity had known since her first day of servitude to the Baron. Crumbling masonry and stone fell onto the Baron's table, scattering the wooden platters and toppling a flagon of mead onto the floor where it shattered into shards.

Along with the constant thump of projectiles came the echo of the agonised screams of the women pressed against the doors of the banqueting hall, no longer opened even to the pleads of messengers or guards, as the Duke's soldiers one by one reduced their cries to whimpering and finally silence.

The banqueting hall's doors were finally breached despite the best efforts of the Baron's knights holding them close with the weight of the banqueting hall's oaken tables. The knights were thrown asunder along with the makeshift defences they had erected. The head of a wooden battering ram emerged, pushing the knights to the floor where they nursed their bruises, while Amity could glimpse at last the enemy that had

distantly caused her so much fear.

There was no more shit left in her to add to the pile at her bare feet, nor urine to splatter on her already foul-smelling thighs. From her other cowering companions, ignored for so long, there came a wailing of cries of mercy as some at least relieved themselves of what little their fright had not already loosened onto themselves and the stone floor.

Little time was wasted in dispatching the Baron whose head rolled onto the floor and whose body was slashed to pieces by the invading warriors' swords. No mercy was shown either to the knights whose defence of their liege was soon forgotten in the much more urgent task of defending themselves. Dead bodies were scattered around the floor, blood seeping onto the stone floor and trickling past Amity's shivering feet. The authors of this onslaught stood in the room, proud and victorious after their bloody assault wondering what little was left on which to sate their bloodlust.

And so soon after the door was breached, Amity, no more than her fellows, nor Edwina who had mercifully fainted from despair and dread, barely comprehended the extent of the horrors meted on the Baron's wenches when they too became the object of the knights' attention.

To Amity, these knights were no better than those who had raped her so many times before and with so little mercy while in the service of the now deceased Baron. They were nothing more than further manifestations of the overbearing invader of her native land who for more than a century treated the natives of Albion with less respect than the fields they tilled or the oxen that pulled their till. And her sympathy for poor

Alinor, the first woman to be raped, was lessened dramatically by her fears that she would also not long survive after one of these knights should choose to thrust between her oft parted thighs.

The rape she suffered was even more violent than that she'd become accustomed to, as, one by one and severally, the Duke's knights fucked both her and her fellows. Her groin felt like it was bleeding as surely her body would soon from the thrusts of blades rather than engorged penises, seemingly not lessened at all by affects of the mead and wine the knights treated themselves from the Baron's table.

And then, a miracle occurred.

Surely, the very miracle for which Amity had prayed at the feet of Lord Jesus Christ when she had last begged for mercy in the chapel.

The beams which supported the ceiling to the banqueting hall had been weakened by the onslaught of the siege engines and gave way, bringing with them, not only timber but the weight of the masonry they supported. And in that collapse, which she was only later to evaluate, it brought low all the knights who attacked her. And also all her companions.

And so it did too the knight who was at that moment engaged in violating her much-despoiled vagina, killed almost instantly by a rock that smashed open his skull but left his erect penis inside her. The first Amity was aware of was the blood that splattered her face and then the collapsed body of the now dead knight who had shown her such little respect.

It was only many hours later, too frightened and too abused to stir, that Amity at last pulled herself free from the knight's corpse. Her body shivered uncontrollably.

All around her was the stench of death, shit and urine. Blood covered her entire body and she was not at first sure how much was hers and how much was of the dead knight or of the other corpses around her. But God's mercy was great. The only blood she had shed was that inside her vagina and arse from the assault she had suffered, and this was not the first time she had experienced the bloodletting of too eager fucking, so she was soon able to differentiate it from any more lethal wounds.

And when she emerged, she knew that of higher priority than tending for her wounds or concern for others who like her might have been spared by God's mercy the fate of most of the Baron's subjects, was the duty to give thanks to the Lord that she had escaped death.

He had bestowed upon her a miracle. He had intervened to save her life and Amity had a vow which she had made and one which she now had the duty to observe.